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## 161 students of DIET college get teacher jobs in DSC

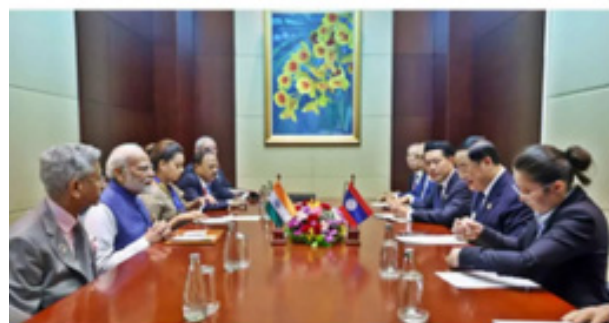
Karimnagar: Government DIET (District Institute of Education and Training) college, LMD colony, Karimnagar, is seemingly providing quality education to students since a number of students from the college got teacher jobs in the recent DSC. A total of 161 students studied in the college got Secondary Grade Teacher (SGT) and School Assistant teacher jobs in the DSC.

While 134 students were selected in Telugu/English medium, 27 were from Urdu medium. It is a classic example of how the institute is imparting quality education to its students.

## Illegal bike racing becomes routine on Knowledge City road

Hyderabad: Non-stop illegal bike racing has reportedly become a regular occurrence on the Knowledge City Road in the city, with police allegedly leaving the situation unattended. Videos of the dangerous races are being posted on social media. Many onlookers have been spotted witnessing the dangerous stunts, while the local police allegedly leave the issue unattended. In response to a tweet highlighting the issue, the Cyberabad Traffic Police acknowledged the problem, stating, "We take the issue of bike racing seriously as it endangers public safety. We will increase patrolling in the affected areas and take strict action against those involved."

## PM Modi holds bilateral talks with Lao PDR counterpart



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The two nations inked agreements in the field of defence, broadcasting and Customs cooperation in the presence of the state heads. The two leaders discussed several avenues of enhancing bilateral cooperation in fields like capacity building, disaster management, renewable energy, heritage restoration, economic ties, defence collaboration, and people-to-people ties. They also discussed strengthening India-Laos civilisational and contemporary ties. They also noted that the ongoing restoration and conservation of Vat Phou, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, under Indian assistance from the Archaeo-

logical Survey of India (ASI) imparts a special dimension to bilateral ties.

PM Modi congratulated Lao PDR counterpart on successfully hosting the 21st ASEAN-India and 19th East Asia Summits. The Laos PM expressed gratefulness for India's flood relief assistance, in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi. Besides MoUs, three Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation were also exchanged in the presence of two leaders. The QIPs relate to the preservation of the heritage of Lao Ramayan, the restoration of Wat Pakea Buddhist temple with murals related to Ramayan, and support to shadow puppetry theatre on Ramayan in Champasak province. All three QIPs have a provision for grant assistance of about USD 50000 each. Besides, India will also provide grant assistance of about USD 1 million to improve nutrition security in Lao PDR. Earlier addressing the 19th East Asia Summit, PM Modi stressed on ASEAN's central role in the Indo-Pacific region and said that India's participation in the East Asia Summit was an important pillar of its Act East Policy. PM Modi also met Thailand PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Vientiane. This was the first meeting between the two Prime Ministers.

## CM Revanth Reddy Lays Foundation for Kondurg Young India Integrated Residential School Complex



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reiterated his government's commitment to building a healthy and prosperous Telangana by providing quality education and healthcare to the poor, especially those living in remote villages, tribal areas, and slums. Speaking at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Young India Integrated Residential School in Kondurg, Rangareddy district, CM Reddy emphasized the importance of accessible education for the underprivileged. On the occasion of Dussehra, the Chief Minister launched the construction of the integrated school, stating that it was born out of discussions with intellectuals and social philosophers who shared the belief that no child should be deprived of education

due to poverty. He emphasized that the idea behind these schools is to foster a sense of unity and brotherhood among students from different backgrounds, including SC, ST, BC, and minorities, all within a single 25-acre campus.

The government is investing Rs. 120 to 150 crore in each campus to provide state-of-the-art facilities for underprivileged students. Each residential school is expected to accommodate around 2,500 students, offering them a holistic learning environment. CM Reddy expressed the hope that these students will grow into successful individuals who contribute to the nation's development.

Highlighting the government's focus on education, the Chief Minister pointed out that after the formation of Telangana, around 5,000 schools had been closed, disproportionately affecting Dalits and tribals. He stressed that this trend must be reversed to ensure that no child is left behind. CM Reddy also praised the efforts of government officials working for the welfare of the poor and announced the promotion of 21,000 teachers and the transfer of 34,000 teachers without any disputes, aiming to improve education standards in the state. Local representatives and officials attended the event, and CM Revanth Reddy extended his warm Dussehra wishes to the people, praying for prosperity, good harvests, and a bright future for children.

## Noel Tata appointed Chairman of Tata Trusts

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Noel Tata, the half-brother of late Ratan Tata, will be the next Chairman of Tata Trusts, sources said on Friday. The 67-year-old Noel was chosen by the board to lead the string of philanthropic trusts that control the Tata empire. Having functioned mostly under the shadows of his illustrious half-brother, Noel will now have the responsibility of leading the Tata Trusts—broadly comprising Sir Ratan Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts—that hold a controlling 66 per cent stake in Tata Sons, the holding and promoter firm of Tata Group companies. He is already a trustee on the boards of Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust.

Known to keep a low profile, Noel has been a trustee on the important trusts, and was also seen at the cremation of his half-brother on Thursday. The meeting of the Tata Trusts board was held to choose the successor to Ratan Tata after his demise on Wednesday. A formal announcement of the successor is expected later in the day. Noel has been involved with the Tata Group since 1999, and chairs the successful retail arm Trent, which looks after chains like Westside and Zudio and commands a market capitalisation of over Rs 2 lakh crore. He is also the chairman of Voltas and Tata International. Noel is married to Aloo Mistry, the sister of the late Cyrus Mistry and a part of the Shapoorji Pallonji family, which is the single largest private shareholder of Tata Sons with more than 18.4 per cent holding. Relations between the Shapoorji Pallonji group and the Tatas have not been warm since the sacking of Cyrus Mistry from the chair-



manship of Tata Sons.

Tata Sons operates all commercial enterprises in the group and collectively reported revenues of USD 165 billion last year. Noel was seen as a front runner to succeed Ratan Tata at Tata Trusts, and there was also speculation about Ratan Tata's long-time confidante Mehli Mistry. According to some reports, Mehli, who is already a trustee on the Tata Trusts, is being considered to be made as a permanent trustee. However, there was no confirmation of the same.

## Over 30 hospitalized in Gujarat after food poisoning from 'prasad'



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Surendranagar: More than 30 people from Dedadra village in Gujarat's Surendranagar were hospitalised after suffering from food poisoning, reportedly caused by consuming 'prasad' at a local event. The attendees on Thursday night experienced severe symptoms, including vomiting and diarrhoea, shortly after consuming the offering. Health officials responded swiftly, admitting those affected to various hospitals in Dedadra, Kothariya, Wadhwan, and the Civil Hospital in Surendranagar. The health department has collected samples of the 'prasad' for testing to identify the source of the contamination. However, delays in timely treatment at the Civil Hospital led to chaos, causing concern among the families of the affected patients.

"People were admitted to a nearby government hospital. There was a Navratri celebration and also a puja before the event. Over 60 people had gathered for the event. The event occurred on October 10th night, and the people are still admitted and under observation. The people who prepared the prasad are also being contacted. It didn't take time to turn a celebratory atmosphere into a serious one where people had to rush in the night. One hospital couldn't admit them all, so they were taken

to nearby hospitals," said a source from Surendranagar. The incident has raised concerns about food safety in such gatherings, prompting authorities to take necessary steps to prevent future occurrences. The health department is investigating the matter and will take further action based on the results of the sample tests. Earlier in September, more than 100 people, including 30 children, fell ill after attending a feast during Ganeshotsav celebrations in Elgin Society, located in the Hapa area of Jamnagar. The incident occurred after residents consumed a meal of rice, potatoes, and 'modak' offered as prasad following the Ganesh aarti at the society's pandal. Symptoms of vomiting and diarrhoea surfaced shortly after the meal, causing widespread panic among attendees.

## Singapore PM pays homage Ratan Tata, calls him true friend of his country

GNS News Agency, Oct 11 Singapore: Prime Minister Lawrence Wong has paid homage to Ratan Tata who made valuable contributions to Singapore's economic transformation, calling him a true friend whose legacy will be cherished in the country.

The former Tata Group chairman passed away on Wednesday evening aged 86. In a post on Facebook and other social media platforms, Wong on Thursday said Ratan Tata had a long association with Singapore.

"He was a true friend of Singapore and we will cherish his contributions and legacy." "He was a strong advocate of our country, and made valuable contributions to our economic transformation," said Wong.

## Telangana launches work on 28 Young India Integrated Residential Schools

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The Telangana government on Friday commenced the exercise to establish Young India Integrated Residential Schools, aimed at providing quality education with international-standard facilities to the poor and weaker sections. Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy laid the foundation stone for two such schools in Khammam and Nalgonda districts respectively.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will lay the foundation stone at Kondurg in Shadnagar constituency of Rangareddy district while Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is scheduled to launch work on the residential school in his Assembly constituency Madhira in Khammam district. Each school with an ultra-modern and well-equipped campus will be spread over 25 acres of land providing ample space for education and extra-curricular activities. The government said each of these English medium residential schools from Class IV to Class XII will be net zero campuses harnessing wind and solar energies and will have an intake of 2,560 students and 120 teaching staff. They will be equipped with digital libraries, smart boards and computer labs. These schools will transcend caste, religion and class boundaries and will have facilities like dedicated cricket, football grounds and basketball and tennis courts. Deputy Chief Minister Vikramarka described the initiative as a Dussehra gift to students and their parents. He appealed to people to get their children admitted into these residential schools for high-quality education. According to him, the architectural design of these schools is based on sustainability and



inclusivity with climate response planning. The designs with rainwater harvesting systems would comply with global standards for differently abled students to ensure that no one was left out. He exuded confidence that these integrated residential schools would become role models for the entire country. While handing over appointment letters to 10,000 newly recruited teachers on October 9, the Chief Minister had said that one Young India Integrated Residential School would be opened in each Assembly constituency to impart corporate-level education to students. The state has 119 Assembly constituencies and the government plans to spend Rs 125 crore on each of these schools. A committee of senior officials from different departments was constituted to supervise the entire exercise for bringing the idea of integrated residential schools into proper shape. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held a teleconference with the Collectors of the respective districts to finalise arrangements for the foundation laying programme.

## Congress extends formal support to National Conference to form the new J&K government



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The Congress on Friday (October 11, 2024) formally extended its support to the National Conference (NC) to form the new government, first since the Centre scrapped J&K special status in 2019, with Omar Abdullah as a joint chief ministerial candidate. The Congress Legislature Party meeting was attended by all six legislators, including J&K Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra. The legislators passed a resolution and signed letters of support to the NC. "The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting unanimously passed a resolution and authorised the party's central leadership to choose our CLP leader. We have extended our support to the National Conference and we will hand over the letter of support to them. We accept Omar Abdullah as Chief Minister," Mr. Karra said. Ruling out any differences on portfolios, Mr. Karra said the alliance partners will sit and decide on distribution of portfolios after the government formation. "There are no demands as such. For the spirit of the INDIA bloc, we are supporting the NC for the people of J&K. It's for a noble cause. We will sit with them formally and at that time we will discuss what the model

of governance will be like. The spirit of this alliance is far beyond the game of numbers and ministerial posts. It's a pan-India spirit," Mr. Karra said. The NC is likely to approach the Raj Bhawan on Saturday to stake claim for government formation in J&K.

Meanwhile, the NC has swelled its kitty from 42 seats to 7, with one more elected legislator extending the support. The INDIA bloc numbers in J&K have risen to a strong 54 members in the 90-member J&K Assembly.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), headed by Arvind Kejriwal, also submitted a formal letter of support to the NC before the Lieutenant Governor's office. AAP candidate Mehraj Malik defeated Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Gajay Singh Rana from the Doda seat in the Jammu region. "The AAP will extend support to the NC government in J&K," an AAP spokesman said. With numbers on their side, the NC is mulling to send NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah to Rajya Sabha once elections are held for the same. The J&K Assembly can elect four Rajya Sabha members from the Union Territory (UT). Sources said Dr. Abdullah's name was discussed during the recent Legislature Party meeting in Srinagar and his candidature was approved for a Rajya Sabha seat.

National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah said the party will approach the Lieutenant Governor tomorrow and ask for the date of forming the government

"We have to end hatred. False propaganda was spread in Jammu that stone pelting, terrorism would start again. We have to eliminate that propaganda from their hearts. We want to live peacefully. We want the Center to restore statehood here so that the government can work here. Jammu and Kashmir is the crown of the country, if the crown does not shine then how will the country shine," Dr. Abdullah said.

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Save Buddha Nullah

THE recent review of the Buddha Nullah rejuvenation project underscores the urgent need to restore this vital waterway. A tributary of the Sutlej river flowing through Ludhiana, it has long been a significant resource for the region. However, rampant pollution has turned it into a toxic drain, threatening both public health and the environment. The Central and state governments' commitment of Rs 840 crore to rejuvenate the nullah is promising, yet progress has been sluggish, with pollution sources still unchecked. Industrial waste from Ludhiana's dyeing units, untreated sewage and solid waste have severely polluted the nullah.

One major problem is the lax enforcement of pollution control regulations. Although the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) recently ordered three common effluent treatment plants to stop discharging into Buddha Nullah, compliance remains spotty. These facilities continue to disregard the ZLD (zero liquid discharge) mandate, and over 120 pollution points remain unchecked, adding to the degradation. A recent decision to form a joint task force by the Centre and the Punjab Government is a step in the right direction. This team of experts is set to inspect critical pollution points, address infrastructure gaps and recommend long-term solutions. This collaborative approach underscores that restoring the nullah requires strict oversight, improved waste management and community involvement.

The situation is critical. For the residents of Ludhiana and surrounding areas, the pollution in the nullah results in contaminated drinking water, increased health risks and degraded agricultural lands. Civil society and environmental groups have advocated for stronger pollution controls, immediate action at the pollution sources and public awareness on waste management.

## Hooked on 'ilish-ious' hilsa: The fish that inspires Bengal's art, culture, and poetry

GNS News Agency, Oct 11 Few things capture the heart of a Bengali quite like the hilsa, a fish that evokes not just culinary delight but cultural pride. It swims through the 'lifeblood' of India and Bangladesh, appearing at festivals and ceremonies.

Its silvery sheen and delicate taste have inspired fierce arguments over whether the Padma or Ganga produces the superior catch. Bengali-American food historian Chitra Banerji perfectly captures the cultural weight of this fish, describing it as the "darling of the waters" and a "prince among fish." For many Bengali families, Durga Puja is incomplete without their beloved ilish (hilsa). Some even offer it to the Goddess, believing that without it, the puja would be incomplete. But the story of hilsa extends far beyond the festivals and the dining table. For centuries, it has captured the imagination of poets, writers, and artists – whether in traditional Kalighat paintings or as a majestic, mermaid-like goddess in contemporary depictions. The Bengali love affair with hilsa is intricately woven into its literary tradition. In Brihadbhara Purana, one of the 18 Upapuranas, fish is praised as a delicacy fit for Brahmins, even as orthodoxies debated its consumption. "This text said that Brahmins could eat the rohu (rui in Bengali), the swamp barb (punti), the snakehead murrel (shoul), and other white and scaly fish," writes Ghulam Murshid in his book, Bengali Culture Over A Thousand Years. On how the hilsa won favour despite religious taboos, Murshid writes: "It was not however easy to forever resist, in the name of religion, the delicious yield of river fish, or even a widely accepted food culture." The 11th-century Bengali scriptural scholar, Bhabadab Bhatta, went on to extol the virtues of fish-eating, while the scholar Jeemutbanha praised the hilsa and its oil. Murshid notes that the scholar Sarbananda, too, did not forget the hilsa when he slammed fish-eating in his Teekasarbasya in the 12th century. Satyendranath Dutta's poem Ilsh Gundi romanticises the monsoon rains associated with hilsa fishing. Dutta's verses evoke the rhythmic dance of the hilsa during the monsoons: "Ilsh Gundi! Ilsh Gundi/ Hilsa fish eggs/ Ilsh Gundi Ilsh Gundi/ Frost during the day./ The sun laughs at the limit of the clouds/ Ilsh Gundi dances/ Hilsa fish dancing."

Manik Bandyopadhyay's Padma Nadir Majhi further explores themes surrounding the riverine culture that hilsa embodies, weaving it into the fabric of Bengal's social and economic life. Meanwhile, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, in his ode to the hilsa, evokes a sense of culinary devotion: "...my heart remains prostrated, overwhelmed by devotion, and refuses to leave that site of pilgrimage." Hilsa A Kalighat Painting from 19th century Kolkata (then called Calcutta) in Maxwell Sommerville's 'Ethnological East Indian Collection'. A visual and artistic symbol in the visual arts, the hilsa's distinct form has long been a recurring motif in traditional and contemporary art in Bengal. Ancient finds, like the 4th-century slab with a fish image at Chandraketurgarh, reveal that the love for fish runs deep in the culture. "Fish images also appear in many of the terracotta slabs that were made at Paharpur and Mainamati from the 8th century," writes Murshid. In more recent times, hilsa appears frequently in Bengali folk art, such as patachitra and Kalighat paintings, symbolising abundance and sustenance. One famous 19th-century Kalighat painting, painted on brown paper with thin, bright pigments and a touch of silver, features a stylised cat holding a fish in its mouth, "representing the hypocritical ascetic or monk who renounces the world but continues to indulge in earthly pleasures." "The hilsa is always on the mind of a Bengali, though its season is limited to the monsoons. Recently, I've noticed the image of motsokonya appearing in the work of London-based artist Arinjoy Sen. It was stunning how he depicted a Goddess with a body half fish," says Ina Puri, a London-based arts impresario, curator, and writer. "Contemporary artists are also engaging with the hilsa through different mediums. Take Delhi-based sculptor Prerna Sharma who makes ceramic fish." "What I remember of the hilsa is from my childhood as a joda hilsa (pair of hilsa) is what is offered to Saraswati. It is part of our folklore, music, art, and literature, and of course is very relevant to our cuisine. At my own wedding, we had a hilsa in our alpna, which is considered auspicious; during the baby shower, the fish is offered to the mother-to-be.

## Relief for those who have applied for solar panels, not for those who haven't, says DC



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Deputy Commissioner Vinay Pratap Singh Wednesday said no relief or additional time shall be given to those who have not applied for solar panels after the notice of resumption (taking over) has been sent. "The decision was taken after it was suggested in a meeting that for those who have proceeded to install solar rooftop plant by way of successfully applying on PM Surya Ghar portal, some more time for installation may be given by Estate Office on a case-to-case basis," Deputy Commissioner Singh On October 5, Chandigarh Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria had asked officials to grant some more time to people who have been served notices of resumption of their property for failing to install a solar plant. A senior officer of the estate office said, "This additional time or extension shall be given to those people who have applied for solar plants on the portal." He added, "This relief is for those who have applied for plants. No relief to those who have not applied yet." Thousands of house owners have been served notices for resumption (taking over) of their property if solar power plants are not installed at their houses within two months.

The notices have been issued by the Chandigarh estate office for violation of building rules. The notices served on over 4000 houses of 500 square yards and above by the Chandigarh estate office say that in case the owner doesn't ensure compliance within two months of this notice, his property shall be resumed/cancelled under the provisions of the said bylaws. According to officials of Chandigarh Administration, 1,867 house owners have installed solar power plants at their houses while over 4,500 are yet to do it. Earlier, the administration had

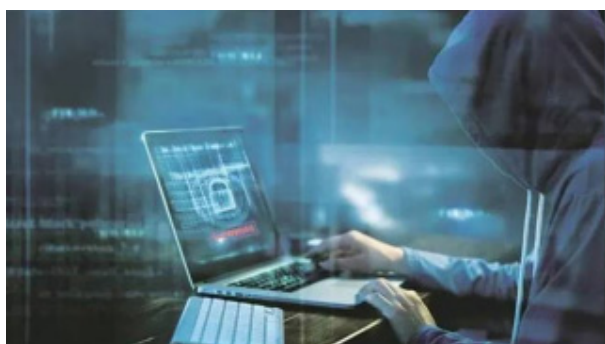
made it mandatory for houses above 500 square yards to install solar plants. The Administration intends to send notices to 250 square yards and above as it has been revised to 250 square yards, that is owners of houses 250 square yards and above need to mandatorily install these plants. "As for the category of 250 square yards and above, we will be serving notices on them after Diwali," the officer added.

What does the notice say?

"Whereas you are the lessee/transferee/allottee of plot number as mentioned above. As per data received from Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society (CREST), Chandigarh Administration, it has been noticed that you have not installed solar photo voltaic rooftop power plant which is compulsory requirement as per Rule 4.1 of Chandigarh Building Rules (Urban), 2017 for this category of property." "As this allotment is governed by provisions of Capital of Punjab (Development and Regulation Act) 1952 as amended from time to time, hence rules made there under i.e. CBR(U), 2017, Chandigarh Estate Rules, 2007 and so on are applicable to you. Hence, you have breached the terms and condition of sale/lease provisions and building bylaws," the notice says. According to the Chandigarh Administration, the requirement of 'Solar Photo Voltaic Rooftop Power Plant' as per Rule 4.1 of Chandigarh Building Rules (Urban), 2017 says that one canal house is to have plant of 1 KWp, two canal house to have a 2 KWp capacity plant, above two canal, a 3 KWp plant.

The notice sent by Assistant Estate Officer says, "Now, therefore, the undersigned by virtue of the powers conferred upon me under Section 8A Capital of Punjab (Development and Regulation) Act, 1952, I, hereby, direct the allottees/less/transferees and the occupier of the site to install the rooftop solar photo voltaic power plant: submit compliance to this office. In case of non-receipt of confirmation of compliance within two months, the proceedings shall be initiated against you under Section 8A of the Capital of Punjab (Development & Regulation) 1952 read with Rule 10 & 14 of the Chandigarh Estate Rules, 2007 as amended from time to time for resumption/cancellation of the site for violation of provisions of Chandigarh Estate Rules, 2007 Chandigarh Building Rules (Urban), 2017."

## 'Doc at top US hospital': 75-year-old falls for fake profile, loses Rs 17 lakh



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

USING a fake social media profile of a "widower doctor working at a top hospital in the US", cyber criminals swindled a 75-year-old woman in Pune of Rs 17 lakh. The victim made over 80 online transfers as she was told that the 'doctor' had been arrested at IGI Airport in Delhi and the money was required for his release. An FIR has been registered at Chandan Nagar police station by the 75-year-old resident of Pune. A few months ago, she received a friend request on Facebook from a person who identified himself as a "doctor working for a top hospital in the US".

As the two started chatting with each other, the 'doctor' told the complainant that he had lost his wife a few years ago and that he has a young daughter. A while

later, the 'doctor' told her that he wanted to visit India for tourism and to buy property. To make her believe his story, the 'doctor' sent the victim fraudulent documents like his approved leave application from the hospital, his full itinerary and his flight tickets.

Sometime later, the complainant received a call from the 'doctor' saying he had been arrested by authorities at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi because he was caught travelling with more than permissible US dollars in cash. He also said that various expenses will have to be incurred for his release and the release of his money, which he wants to keep for purchasing land.

Over the next few days, the victim was not just manipulated but also threatened to make as many as 86 online transfers totalling Rs 17.8 lakh. She was made to transfer money to several fraudulent bank accounts on the pretexts like customs clearances, no objection certificates, legal fees, case expenses, charges for the release of the seized money etc. She received calls by people posing as government officials, officials from various investigation agencies and embassies. As the suspects kept demanding money using fake reasons and coercion, she realised that she had been cheated. She subsequently approached the cyber crime cell. After the preliminary verification, a case was registered at Chandannagar police station. An officer said that a probe had been launched into the phone numbers and bank accounts used by the cyber criminals.

## Over 200 petitions allege irregularities, HC stays panchayat polls in some Punjab villages



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The petitioners moved the HC, alleging their nomination papers for the post of sarpanchs were rejected in "an arbitrary and illegal manner". The panchayat On Wednesday, the petitioners moved the HC, alleging their nomination papers for the post of sarpanchs were rejected in "an arbitrary and illegal manner". The Punjab and Haryana High Court Wednesday refused to stay the panchayat elections in Punjab but stayed further election process in villages from where a bunch of more than 200 petitions, alleging irregularities in the nomination process, were

filed. Hearing the matter, the division bench of Justice Sandeep Moudgil and Justice Deepak Gupta sought the Punjab government's reply on the charges levelled by the petitioners. The court has yet to release a detailed order. The petitioners moved the HC, alleging their nomination papers for the post of sarpanchs were rejected in "an arbitrary and illegal manner". In a petition filed by Hardeep Singh and others from Wazirabad village in Fatehgarh Sahib, through counsel Nikhil Ghai, it was argued that they were aggrieved by "the arbitrary acts of the Punjab government for rejecting their candidature

without passing any order and without according a personal hearing". The petitioners claimed that they had filed complete nomination papers with the required documents and affidavit for the panchayat elections in Wazirabad village in Fatehgarh Sahib district, but the returning officer on the day of scrutiny October 5 informed them that "our candidature could not be considered without giving any reason or any opportunity of personal hearing". The petitioners further said, "Since we are contesting against the ruling party candidates, unconstitutional and arbitrary acts are being committed to win the one-sided

election." Similarly, other petitioners also alleged irregularities in the nomination process and the rejection of their candidature by officials without passing any order and without any opportunity for a personal hearing. Hearing the matter, the court flayed the Punjab government for its handling of the electoral process and sought an explanation for the appointment of the State Election Commissioner (SEC). The bench also expressed concerns over the prevailing chaos and potential breaches of democratic norms, and orally noted, "The government must clear whether it intends to withdraw the election notification and undertake a more efficient electoral process, and if not, the court will have no choice but to issue strict orders". The bench then stayed the election process in villages from where petitions alleging irregularities in the nomination process were filed. Hearing a petition filed by Karam Singh from Achal gram panchayat in Nabha tehsil of Patiala district, alleging that he was "not permitted to fill his nomination papers and was man-handled by the police authorities", the HC on Tuesday ordered,

## Accused sent to 10-day police remand in GST evasion case



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

A day after the Ahmedabad Crime Branch made arrests in an alleged GST scam where suspects are said to have floated bogus firms and availed input tax credit, a court on Wednesday (October 9, 2024) sent the accused persons to police custody for 10 days. In a remand application, the police stated that custodial interrogation was required to unearth the conspiracy to create losses to the government.

One of the suspects arrested in the case is The Hindu's Gujarat correspondent Mahesh Langa. Mr. Langa's counsel Vedanta Rajguru said that the journalist is neither a director nor promoter of the company, DA Enterprise, which has been named in the First Information Report (FIR). In the remand application, police said that he was running DA Enterprise in the names of his relative and wife.

The company in question is owned by Mr. Manoj Langa, a relative of Mr. Mahesh Langa, and the latter's wife is a silent partner with no rights to undertake any transaction or access bank accounts. "The police case hinges on a statement made by Manoj Langa that he carried out the transactions on the instructions of Mahesh Langa. There is no transaction, signature in Mahesh's name," Mr. Rajguru said. The police said that Mr. Mahesh Langa was unable to explain the presence of ₹20 lakh recovered from his home. The counsel claimed that the ₹20 lakh found in his home was kept for financial exigencies and denied that it was linked with the alleged scam. The FIR states that the alleged fraud was committed between February 1 and May 1, 2023 and the prime accused is Dhruvi Enterprise, which allegedly created six firms from a single PAN to transfer and receive a bogus input tax credit under GST to unscrupulous recipients by issuance of fake invoices without the supply of goods.

## Pak Punjab CM calls for climate diplomacy over stubble burning



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

S. Jaishankar, stubble burning, climate diplomacy, climate diplomacy over stubble burning. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Indian express news, current affairs A farm worker burns stubble after harvesting of paddy crop at a village near Patiala. Ahead of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's proposed visit to Islamabad next week, Pakistan's Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif Wednesday called for "climate diplomacy" with India to combat smog during the winter months from October to February due to the stubble burning in India's Punjab.

"We should talk to them, this is called climate diplomacy. We should do it with India," said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She said that because of the direction of the wind, the smog is carried from India's Punjab to Pakistan and the two nations needed to coordinate actions to counter this issue. "Even if we do something here, but from Indian Punjab, because of the direction of the wind, the stubble burning brings the smog to this side," she said. Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council of Heads of Government on October 15-16.

## Delhi Police arrest 2 men with drugs worth Rs 12 lakh

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Delhi police, drugs During questioning, Lal revealed that he used to procure Heroin from Mukesh and Charas from one Monu, both residents of Uttar Pradesh, and supply them in the area of Delhi and NCR.

The Delhi Police have arrested two drug traffickers and seized Rs 12 lakh-worth contraband consisting of 1,200 grams of charas (cannabis resin) and 9 grams of heroin from their possession. A team of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) of the Crime Branch laid a trap near Vikas Marg, near Laxmi Nagar Metro Station on August 29 and nabbed Ajay Babu Lal, 63, with the drugs, the police said. Based on Lal's inputs the ANTF arrested his associate Mukesh, 30, an Uttar Pradesh resident, the next day. During questioning, Lal told the police that he procures heroin from Mukesh and charas from one Monu and supplies them in Delhi and NCR. "Ajay Babu Lal has a history of criminal activity, including a previous conviction in a cheating case in Nepal. Mukesh was involved in drug trafficking to earn a livelihood," said a police officer. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime), Devesh Chandra Srivastva, on Wednesday, said the investigation is progressing and the police are working to identify and apprehend other members of the drug trafficking syndicate. Mukesh, a labourer, procured the drugs in small quantities from various suppliers in Bareilly and Badaun and supplied them to different parts of Uttar Pradesh, the investigators said. The accused have been arrested under sections 20 (Punishment for contravention in relation to cannabis plant and cannabis) and 21 (Punishment for contravention in relation to manufactured drugs and preparations) of Narcotic Drugs And Psychotropic Substances Act.

## Backward classes panel recommends inclusion of 7 castes, sub-castes from Maharashtra in central OBC list



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

obc, backward classes, National Commission for Backward Classes, other backward classes, central OBC list, Indian express news, current affairs The commission then vets the data and recommends it to the Centre for their approval. Subsequently, the Centre then notifies the recommended list of castes. Ahead of the Maharashtra elections, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) Wednesday recommended the inclusion of seven castes and sub-castes from the state in the Central list of Other Backward Classes (OBC).

Speaking to The Indian Express, NCBC chairperson Hansraj Ahir said: "We had been processing Maharashtra government's proposal since last summer. Four to five meetings were held by the commission on this issue and after examination, we have recommended the inclusion of these castes in the Central list of OBC." The castes and sub-castes recommended for inclusion are — Lodh, Lodha, Lodhi, Suryavanshi Gujar, Leve Gujar, Reve Gujar, Reva Gujar, Dangari, Bhojar,

Pawar, Kapewar, Munnar Kapewar, Munnar Kapu, Telanga, Telangi, Pentarreddy, Bukekari. NCBC chairperson Ahir and commission member Bhuvan Bhushan Kamal held two hearings on the issue, on July 26 and October 17, at Sahyadri state guest house in Mumbai, an NCBC statement said. The statement said it had decided to "tender its advice" to the Union government on the issue.

All the castes recommended for inclusion are already part of the state OBC list, officials of the state government said. In the case of Powar, Bhojar and Pawar castes, the central list had already included them as Powar, Bhojar Pawar and Bhojar. However, the communities had submitted representations that they should be included separately. Hence, in this instance, the NCBC has recommended adding all three separately. The Bhojar, Powar and Pawar communities are concentrated in Vidarbha region of eastern Maharashtra, especially in Bhandara and Gondia districts. They were first added to the central list between 1996 and 1998, as per public records. The Gujar sub-castes recommended for inclusion are largely concentrated in north Maharashtra across Nashik, Jalgaon, Dhule and Nandurbar. As of now, 261 castes from Maharashtra are on the Central list of OBCs. In their proposals, state governments have to back recommendations for addition of castes with data on the social, economical and educational backwardness of the communities. The commission then vets the data and recommends it to the Centre for their approval. Subsequently, the Centre then notifies the recommended list of castes. The communities added to the list are eligible for availing reservation in central government jobs, institutes of higher education and scholarships.

## In digitisation push, BBMP releases draft e-khatas for 22 lakh properties in Bengaluru



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

To digitise property records, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has released draft e-khatas (document identifying properties) for approximately 22 lakh properties across the city. This move is part of the BBMP's ongoing efforts to streamline its property management systems and enhance transparency. Property records are now accessible online through the BBMP's eAasthi portal at [BBMPeAasthi.karnataka.gov.in](http://BBMPeAasthi.karnataka.gov.in). Residents can now search for their draft e-khata based on the ward where their property is located. Property owners can find their ward name and number on their property tax receipt and then access a list of all the draft e-khatas for that particular ward on the portal. The BBMP clarified that since this is the first time property records are being digitised, a unique e-property ID has been created for each property. Currently, property owners can only search for their e-khata by their name. To simplify the search process, the lists have been organised alphabetically by owner name (in English) within each ward. Visit the official website at

[BBMPeAasthi.karnataka.gov.in](http://BBMPeAasthi.karnataka.gov.in). Locate your ward name and number, which can be found on your property tax receipt. Once you have that information, open the relevant ward's list on the portal and search for your property by the owner's name, as the list is arranged alphabetically. The BBMP has acknowledged that the current search options are limited to name-based queries, which has been done to expedite the digitisation process. This initiative aims to ensure that residents can access their eKhata without the need to visit any BBMP offices or interact with officials in person.

Support available for residents Recognising that the transition to digital systems may pose challenges for some residents, the BBMP has established help desks at all assistant revenue officer (ARO) offices across Bengaluru. Additionally, the BBMP is working on making the e-khata system available at all Bangalore One centres shortly, offering further convenience for those seeking assistance with accessing their records. BBMP Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath said, "This is a key step in our efforts to digitise property records and improve transparency. We are committed to making the process as easy and smooth as possible for citizens, and the new eKhata system reflects that commitment." He added, "Citizens will now have access to their property documents without needing to approach BBMP offices, eliminating the need for physical interactions with officials, and thus reducing delays and potential bottlenecks." BBMP officials also stated that as part of its property digitisation initiative, efforts are underway to enhance the search functions and ensure that the eKhata system is more robust and comprehensive in the future. To further streamline the process for residents, more search parameters, such as property location or e-property ID, are being considered.

## Delhi High Court reiterates no vote counting until defacement of public property is cleaned up

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Delhi University Students' Union Polls, delhi university, dsu elections, DUSU polls voter turnout, delhi university student union election, delhi university, ramjas college, hindu college, miranda house, Indian express news The division bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela was dealing with an application filed by candidates from Ramjas College alleging ballot box tampering. The Delhi High Court on Wednesday reiterated that it will allow the counting of votes for the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) polls only after the defacement of public property by the candidates is cleaned up.

The division bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela was dealing with an application filed by candidates from Ramjas College alleging ballot box tampering.

While the counsel representing the candidates informed the court that not all candidates were indulging in such activities of defacement of properties, CJ Manmohan remarked, "Please convince the rich candidates who have been coming in Bentleys for campaigning... Free food was being distributed, I have not even seen this (expenditure) in a general election... You, as candidates, must correct the system. DU is not seizing the leadership; there is a crisis of leadership... You get it cleaned and repainted



first, we will allow the counting to take place the next day." "Every day in the city, some crisis or the other is happening. There is dengue, malaria. It's all because we are littering... And this is a festival of democracy, it is not supposed to be a festival of money laundering," CJ Manmohan remarked. On September 26, the Delhi High Court directed that the counting of votes for the DUSU polls, held on September 27, be stayed until the defacement of properties is cleaned. The direction came after advocate Prashant Manchanda, in an application before the court, pointed out the large-scale defacement of public and private properties during the DUSU election campaign.

## AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora's firm concealed facts, misused industrial land for residential project: ED

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Two days after the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Jalandhar, raided properties related to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP-cum-industrialist Sanjeev Arora in Ludhiana in connection with the alleged land fraud case, the central agency said on Wednesday that Arora's firm "concealed facts, misused industrial land for residential purpose and cause huge loss to Punjab government." "During the search operations, various incriminating documents, mobile phones and digital devices were found and seized," the agency stated on Wednesday. In its report on October 7 said that the raids at Arora's properties were linked to the alleged misuse of the land allotted to his firm by the Punjab government for industrial purposes. Quoting an ED source, it said that the land was used to develop a luxury residential project.

ED raided Hampton Homes, a luxury apartments' residential society developed by Arora's firm Ritesh Properties and Industries Limited (RIPIL) on Chandigarh road of Ludhiana on October 7. The raids were held at 17 different business and residential premises related to Arora and realtors, including Ludhiana-based Hemant Sood, Pardeep Kumar Aggarwal, Gurmeet Singh and Jalandhar-based Chander Shekhar Aggarwal, who were also allegedly involved in the project, according to the ED.

"The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Jalandhar, has carried out search operations on October 7 at 17 different premises related to M/s Hampton Sky Reality (erstwhile Ritesh Properties Industries Limited (RIPIL)) and its directors/partners Sanjeev Arora, Hemant Sood and Chander Shekhar Aggarwal; and that of M/s Royal Industries Ltd (RIL), its directors Gurmeet Singh and Pardeep Kumar Aggarwal across state of Punjab covering districts of Ludhiana and Jalandhar and Chandigarh, Delhi and Gurgaon," the ED said. The action by the ED was in line with a criminal complaint registered against Arora's RIPIL in a Ludhiana court and a First Information Report (FIR) registered by Ludhiana Police against Royal Industries Limited, said the ED.

The probe agency said that it was found that Hampton Sky Reality and Royal Industries Ltd were allotted



industrial lands by the Punjab Government with certain conditions with an objective to promote industries but RIL had sold the allotted land by breaching the conditions of allotment. ED investigation further revealed that Hampton Sky Reality alienated the land use without the permission of Punjab Government, and later developed residential project and business park on it by concealing material facts at the time of seeking permission of Punjab Government for the project. "By all these wrongful activities, M/s RIPIL and M/s RIL caused loss to the Punjab government and generated huge Proceeds of Crime (POC). Further investigation is under progress," said the ED. Ludhiana-based Arora is the chairman cum managing director of Ritesh Properties and Industries Limited (RIPIL), a company with business interests in real estate, women's clothing and fashion industry. The company has developed Hampton Court Business Park, a sprawling industrial park on Chandigarh Road in Ludhiana. The venture also includes a housing project offering luxury residential apartments by the name 'Hampton Homes'. Arora also runs the Krishna Pran Breast Cancer Charitable Trust in Ludhiana. The AAP nominated him to the Rajya Sabha in 2022. While he mostly lives at his Gurgaon residence, his camp office-cum-residence in Ludhiana is housed at Hampton Homes. In a post on X, Arora had said, "I am a law abiding citizen, am not sure about the reason for search operation, will cooperate fully with agencies and make sure all their queries are answered."

## A Heartwarming Reunion: Nagpur rehab reunites 'Usha' with her family after 12 years of separation



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

She calls herself 'Usha' but her brother told the psychiatrist and nurse at Nagpur's Shradhdhawan Rehabilitation Centre that she would never remember her name. Twelve years ago, Usha, then in her early 30s, was married and had two sons before she wandered off. Usha's husband, a school teacher in Jabalpur, remarried after a few years while her mother and brother from Dungariya village in Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh also lost hope. Efforts made by the Nagpur branch of Shradhdhawan Foundation- headquartered in Karjat helped 'Usha' reunite with her brother and mother on October 7 this year.

The foundation, established two decades ago by noted psychiatrist and Magsaysay award winner Dr Bharat Vatwani to address the issue of mentally-ill destitutes wandering aimlessly on streets, opened their Nagpur centre this year. On June 24, Shradhdhawan project coordinator and social worker Mayuri Bhong responded to a report about a mentally ill woman wandering near Bhole petrol pump in Dharampeth, Nagpur. "Usha had been roaming the area for 3-4 years in a dishevelled state, with matted hair and no change of clothes," Chetna Naitamkar, nurse at Shradhdhawan rehab, Nagpur, told The Indian Express. "Locals had noticed her but did not know how to help her. It was with the assistance of the Sitabuldi police station that the Shradhdhawan team was able to rescue her and helped her reunite with her family on October 7 this year," Dr Swarali Kondwilkar, associate psychiatrist at the rehab said. "One needs to look beyond oneself, at the weakest in the society. There would have been no closure had concerned citizens not reported it," Dr Kondwilkar said. Dr Dilip Gupta, president of Swami Vivekanand Medical Mission, who supports Shradhdhawan in providing concessions on medical investigations for admitted destitutes informed the Shradhdhawan team, who along with Sitabuldi police and Seoni police worked towards rehabilitating Usha. While the team at the centre treated her mental illness (diagnosed as schizophrenia), Dr Sudhir Mahajan, secretary, Nagpur's Psychiatric Society, said they would regularly visit the centre and follow up on Usha's recovery.

"The woman, after receiving treatment, provided her mother's address in Keolari district, Seoni in Madhya Pradesh. She had been missing 12 years, ever since she wandered away. Her brother, Santkumar, confirmed that they had long lost hope of ever seeing her again, assuming she had passed away. Their joy was beyond words when they were informed that she was alive," Dr Kondwilkar said. On October 7, 2024, after months of care at Shradhdhawan, Usha was declared fit for discharge by the treating psychiatrists. "The task of finding her exact home, however, proved difficult. At first, Usha could not recognise anyone, and the villagers had no recollection of her either. At this critical juncture, local police officers provided remarkable support. After searching tirelessly and sending word to nearby villages, the police received a call from her brother, who confirmed that Usha was indeed his long-lost sister," Dr Kondwilkar said.

## Purushottam Express halted for 3 hrs over presence of 'terrorists' on train



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

New Delhi: Puri-New Delhi Purushottam Express was halted for over three hours at Tundla Railway Station in Uttar Pradesh early Thursday after railway authorities were alerted about some suspected terrorists travelling with explosives, according to officials. However, the information, received from an X user, turned out hoax as nothing "suspicious" was found after intense checking carried out from around 2.30 am to 6 am, they added. "Around 2.30 am, every passenger in all coaches were woken up and their luggage were checked thoroughly with metal detectors and dog squads but nothing was found," a railway official from Prayagraj Rail Division said. He added, "

## 'Safe Neighbourhood' campaign: Punjab DGP visits Mohali, listens to grievances, assures fast action

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

As part of the 'Safe Neighbourhood' campaign, Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav on Wednesday started a public meeting initiative. This proactive approach aims to address pressing security concerns, gather firsthand feedback on police performance, and listen to grievances, fostering a spirit of collaboration and trust. The first meeting took place at Phase 11 in Mohali, where the DGP accompanied by DIG (Ropar range) Nilambari Jagdale and Mohali SSP Deepak Pareek engaged in an open dialogue with representatives from various Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs) and listened to their concerns. During the meeting, the residents voiced concerns over various critical issues, including the shortage of police personnel in Mohali, lack of outreach by Station House Officers (SHOs), traffic congestion, insufficient CCTV camera surveillance, tenant verification, rise in petty crimes, heavy vehicles plying in city limits, and vendor encroachments. DGP Yadav assured the residents that their genuine concerns will be addressed promptly, demonstrating the Punjab Police's commitment to community-centric policing. He announced several key measures to address these issues, including the deployment of additional forces for route/VIP security, increased police presence based on temporal and spatial analysis of crime hotspots, reinvigoration of the beat system in coordination with chowkidars and security guards, and an increase in police personnel allocation by 200 in Mohali. To effectively tackle traffic woes, the DGP directed the SSP to conduct a thorough traffic engineering survey, which will help in identifying bottlenecks and optimising traffic flow. He also directed the SSP to carry out crime mapping to identify crime hotspots and points of sale of drugs in the district. The DGP added that the Punjab Police will intensify CCTV camera saturation at snatching and drug sale hotspots across the state. Control rooms will be established at



district and sub-divisional levels for real-time monitoring, enhancing response times and crime prevention. The SSP was directed to launch a crackdown against speeding and drunken driving to ensure road safety. Emphasising transparency, DGP Yadav stressed the importance of equipping police personnel with body-worn cameras. Reaffirming the Punjab Police's commitment to results-driven policing, DGP Yadav committed to delivering tangible outcomes within a month. He directed SSP Pareek to convene a follow-up meeting with RWAs exactly after one month to present progress report. "We are starting work on your feedback from today onwards, and you will see outcomes in just one month," he assured. SSP Pareek was asked to ensure tenant verification and conduct anti-encroachment drives jointly with local bodies. After holding the meeting with RWAs, DGP Yadav made a surprise visit at Phase 11 police station in Mohali and thoroughly examined the police station's infrastructure, including the SHO room, munshi room, malkhana, waiting area for the public, IO's rooms, barracks for NGOs, and the dining/kitchen facility. He also interacted with the staff and public, and listened to their problems, demonstrating his commitment to addressing concerns and boosting morale of the police force.

## Supreme Court interprets what makes the offence of 'abetment of suicide'



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The Supreme Court has interpreted the crime of 'abetment of suicide', saying the offence is made if the accused's "direct and alarming encouragement or incitement" left the deceased with no other option but to take the fatal step. A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the "extreme action" of dying by suicide could be on account of a "great disturbance" leading to psychological imbalance.

The order followed an appeal filed by persons who were senior officials in a private company. They were accused of abetting the suicide of an employee by compelling him to retire. He died in his room at a hotel where the company had met for a meeting on the issue in 2006. The Allahabad High Court had refused their plea to quash criminal proceedings under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Abetment of suicide continues to be an offence under Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which has replaced the IPC. The punishment is up to 10 years' imprisonment and fine

if found guilty by a court. Sentimental ties

Dissecting the provision, the Supreme Court said 'incitement' to die by suicide could be caused by "sentimental ties or physical relations" between the deceased and the accused. The second category was when the deceased was linked to the accused in an official capacity. "In the case of the former category, sometimes a normal quarrel or the hot exchange of words may result in immediate psychological imbalance... In the second category, the tie is on account of official relations, where the expectations would be to discharge the obligations as provided for such duty in law and to receive the considerations as provided in law," the court differentiated in its order of October 3. Sentimental ties cannot be equated with an official relationship. The former rode on expectations while official relations were based on obligations dictated by law, rules, policies and regulations, the Bench classified. Allowing the appeal, the court laid down illustrative, not exhaustive, parameters to check if a case fits that of 'abetment of suicide'.

The court said the first question would be whether the accused had created "a situation of unbearable harassment or torture, leading the deceased to see suicide as the only escape". Secondly, whether the accused exploited any emotional vulnerability to make a person feel "worthless or undeserving of life". Thirdly, was it a case of threats to the deceased of harm to his or family or financial ruin. Lastly, were there false allegations that may have damaged the reputation of the deceased and pushed him to die by suicide due to public humiliation and loss of dignity. Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies could seek help and counselling by calling any of the following Suicide prevention helpline numbers

## In Jharkhand battle of sops, BJP's offer of 2,100 to women is met with a JMM counter: Rs 2,500



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The ruling coalition in Jharkhand, led by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Wednesday submitted a memorandum to the state's Chief Electoral Officer seeking permission to implement the 'JMM Samman Yojana' in the state. Under the scheme, the party plans to transfer Rs 2,500 per month to underprivileged women. The JMM's contention behind the memorandum is the BJP's promise of giving a monthly allowance of Rs 2,100 to every underprivileged woman in the state if it comes to power in the Assembly elections. The BJP has started distributing forms recording the details of the likely beneficiary.

A major drama is unfolding in Jharkhand over wooing women voters in the upcoming Assembly elections. The ruling coalition and the opposition BJP in Jharkhand are taking measures and countermeasures, promising the electorate — including 1.26 crore women — direct cash transfer benefit leading to allegations and counter allegations over misuse of Representation of People's Act (RPA). It first started in August when Chief Minister Hemant Soren started Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana (MMSY) wherein the government started giving Rs 1,000 to all underprivileged women in 18-50 age group. The state government has so far given three installments to the beneficiaries. The BJP, which came out with its 'Panchpran (five resolutions)' last week, has promised DBT of Rs 2,100 per month to all underprivileged women in the state from the first month of coming to power in the state. Following the BJP's 'Panchpran', the JMM has alleged that the Election Commission is "sleeping" while the BJP is flouting the rules.

The JMM shared a press note of the Election Commission, dated May 2, 2024, which stated that the exercise of political parties and candidates seeking voters' details on the pretext of surveys for their "proposed beneficiary schemes" are considered a "corrupt practice of bribery" under the Representation of People's Act. Chief Minister Hemant Soren took to X and directed all the Deputy Commissioners to take "strict action" against those flouting the EC's rules. High-level sources said the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) instructed all Deputy Commissioners to write to the EC on the flouting of the EC's directive issued on May 2.

A top source in the government said: "DCs have been asked to write a letter to the EC, however, they don't have any locus standi sending a letter to the EC directly and many are in a fix on how to address this problem. At least three deputy commissioners have sent a letter to the CEO office in Ranchi seeking directions based on the CMO's instructions." The office of the CEO, however, denied receiving any letter from any districts. Jharkhand's Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar said: "The government has sent letters to the EC in the past and they have received responses. Our office has no role to play in it. We are not aware of any CMO instructions." BJP Chief Babul Marandi dared the government to register a case against him in this issue. Sources said politically JMM and Congress may not "benefit" from such letters even if they are sent. On Wednesday, the JMM submitted the memorandum to the CEO Office seeking its approval to start the new scheme — JMM Samman Yojana — in a bid to counter the BJP's proposed DBT scheme. JMM general secretary Vinod Kumar Pandey told reporters outside the office of the CEO that the process cannot be started without permission as per a press note issued on May 2, by the EC. He said, "If it (EC) finds that the BJP's proposed scheme is not illegal, it should also permit the JMM's scheme. The BJP form asks for details like name, address, mobile number, panchayat, block, district name and other details and the scheme promises to Rs 2,100 to each woman on the 11th of every month and Rs 25,000 per year. This is a sheer violation of Representation of the People's Act and is aimed at luring voters ahead of the Assembly polls."

## India plays crucial geopolitical role from American standpoint: USISPF president Mukesh Aghi

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

"India plays a pivotal role geopolitically from an American perspective and offers the U.S. companies the opportunity to de-risk from China in the manufacturing sector," the head of a top India-centric American business and strategic advocacy group has said. "The economic growth story of India is tremendous. India is among very few large economies which are growing 7-8%," Mukesh Aghi, the president and CEO of the U.S.-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF), said on Wednesday (October 9, 2024). "From an American perspective, India plays a 'pivotal role' geopolitically," he said. "India is one economy which is providing market opportunity, especially to the U.S. companies that come in and invest and gain market share. It is an economy which is providing de-risking from China itself in the manufacturing area," Mr. Aghi told PTI in an interview. "What we are seeing is the Indian economy is not just becoming a market opportunity, it's becoming an opportunity for manufacturing. But more important is we are seeing a growth of global capability centres in India," Mr. Aghi said. "The Indian economy is expected to gain momentum in 2025," he said. India is exporting roughly almost \$125 billion of services.

Mr. Aghi's remarks came ahead of the annual India Leadership Summit of the USISPF on October 14. Several top American business leaders, including CEOs of Fortune 100, are heading to New Delhi to attend the event. The summit will feature thought-provoking sessions and panel discussions to advance and strengthen the India-U.S. partnership.

"We have potential investors and also in startups and looking at technology companies. We have a perfect ecosystem looking at the U.S.-India relationship, both from a geopolitical perspective and also from a business perspective," he said. The USISPF's visiting Board Delegation will convene in New Delhi and interact with India's key decision-makers in a day-long agenda packed with riveting discussions to dissect the pertinent issues across trade, defence, technology, energy, and people-to-people ties. "This is our annual summit where we assess the last 12 months of the progress between the two countries.



That could be geopolitical. It could be economic. It could be people-to-people or technology itself, investment very much," Mr. Aghi said. He said, "At this time the USISPF, is playing the role of a matchmaker between American companies and India. Our agenda is to make sure that these companies invest in India, they create jobs in India, they bring in technology into India, and become part of the source of the de-risking supply chain." He said the stress point between China and the U.S. will go higher and deeper, regardless of who comes in after the November 5 Presidential election. "China has its ambition. China also will not treat India as an equal partner. So, there's an incentive for India to cautiously look at its partnership with China. But more important is that India needs to create jobs. I strongly believe it's the U.S. companies who can bring in the investment, who can bring in the technology, who can bring in the governance structure, who can bring in the supply chain into India itself," he said. "Yes, there are other countries also, but I think the U.S., with its muscle, both from a technology perspective and also capital perspective, can help create jobs for 1.5 million Indians who are coming to the job market," he said.

"India must leverage the United States both from a geopolitical- and an economic partnership perspective," he said. "I think when we look at the relationship, it is a win-win relationship, and the focus has to be on trying to drive at least top 50 companies coming to India and make them successful," Mr. Aghi said.

## A National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Addressing reporters in New Delhi, Union Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the project aims to showcase India's 4,500-year-old diverse maritime heritage. He said that once fully developed, it will be the world's greatest maritime complex, adding that the project is being developed by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

The proposed complex will have several components including a Lighthouse Museum and a five-dimensional theatre offering interactive experiences. It will be completed in two phases. While the project's Phase 1A is already under implementation with more than 60 per cent physical progress and is planned to be completed by 2025, the Cabinet accorded in-principle approval for Phase 1B and Phase 2, as per the masterplan, by raising funds through voluntary resources/ contributions and their execution (will be carried out) after raising of the funds, as per a statement issued on Wednesday. The construction of the Lighthouse Museum in Phase 1B will be funded by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships.

A separate society will be set up for the development of future phases, to be governed by a council headed by the Shipping Minister. The museum at the complex will have six galleries, also including an Indian Navy & Coast Guard gallery envisaged to be one of the largest in the country with external naval artefacts (INS Nishank, Sea Harrier war aircraft, UH3 helicopter), and a replica of Lothal township surrounded by open aquatic gallery, and a jetty walkway. Phase 1B will have eight more galleries,



a Lighthouse Museum planned to be world's tallest, and a bagicha complex (with car parking facility, food court). On the other hand, Phase 2 will have Coastal States Pavilions (to be developed by respective coastal states and union territories), hospitality zone (with maritime theme eco resort and museum hotels), a maritime institute and hostel and theme based parks. Lothal was one of the southernmost sites of the Indus Valley civilization, located in the Bhal region of what is now the state of Gujarat. The port city is believed to have been built in 2,200 BC. According to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Lothal had the world's earliest known dock, connecting the city to an ancient course of the Sabarmati river. Lothal was nominated in April 2014 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Recently, researchers from IIT Gandhinagar uncovered fresh evidence that supports the existence of a dock in Lothal, one of the most important Harappan sites in India. Lothal was discovered in 1954.

## Stray dogs of south Mumbai lose their best friend, Ratan Tata



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Bombay House is different from any other conglomerate's headquarters. While every visitor is frisked at the entrance of the colonial-era building, one should not be surprised to see a street dog stroll in nonchalantly. For decades, specific instructions have been issued to the staff to allow a free entry and exit for the strays who may want to come in. All of it is courtesy the love and concern for the canines of one man, Ratan

Tata, who held office as the chairman of Tata Sons between 1991 and 2012, and came back later for a short stint. The former Tata Group chairman breathed his last at Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital on Wednesday. He was 86.

Legend has it that once Tata was moved to see a stray dog battling it out in the rain outside Bombay House, which led to the specific instruction on allowing full access to the premise for canines. The empathy for the strays was so deep that when the

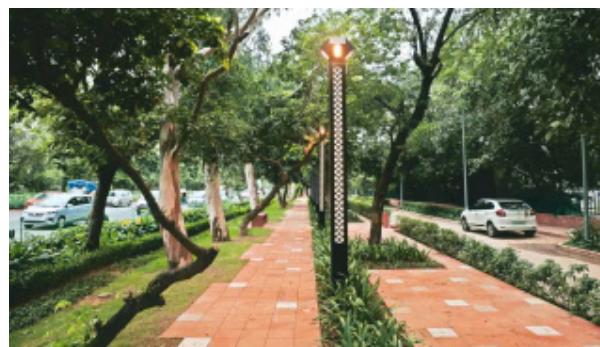
Group gentrified the Bombay House a few years ago, a dedicated kennel was built on the ground floor of the property from 2018 onwards.

The kennel spread across a large room is equipped with a slew of amenities, which would also catch the average human's envy. For starters, there is a dedicated area where they are bathed by an attendant, and then there is a bunk bed which they can climb on for taking naps. There are blinds to ensure that the entire

room with large windows has climate control to make it truly the best rest which a dog can get.

A few of the strays are permanent Bombay House residents, but often, there are visitors as well who are allowed and get the same treatment. Ratan Tata's love for pets, and particularly strays, extends far beyond the ones in the immediate vicinity of Bombay House. Earlier this year, a guest staying at the Tata Group's IHCL-run Taj Hotel shared a heartwarming tale of a stray dog sleeping peacefully at the premium hotel's entrance and was told about its roots being in Ratan Tata's instructions. Tata Trusts, which was headed by Ratan Tata, had also built a small pet hospital at a prime place in south central Mumbai's Mahalaxmi. In fact, it was the shared concern for pets which connected Ratan Tata with his long-time assistant Shantanu Naidu. According to some reports, Pune-based Naidu wrote to Tata about a dog collar with reflectors to ensure safety of the dog.

## Centre okays building of 2,280 km roads in border areas of Rajasthan, Punjab



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Rajasthan, Punjab, Rajasthan roads, Punjab roads, Rajasthan roads construction, Punjab roads construction, Indian express news, current affairs This is also reflected in the works budget allocated to the BRO this fiscal, which saw a 30 per cent hike from last year to Rs 6,500 crore this year. The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved construction of 2,280 km roads in Rajasthan and Punjab at an estimated cost of Rs 4,406 crore emphasising development of infrastructure in border areas.

A statement issued by the government said that the project is a result of a "change in mindset" that has accorded "special focus on development of border areas with facilities similar to other parts of the country." It added that the decision will have a major impact on the road and telecom connectivity, and facilities of water supply, health and education. It will also enhance rural livelihood, ease travel, and ensure connectivity of these areas with the rest of the highway network. The decision comes amid border infrastructural work picking up pace in the last three years, including in the eastern Ladakh region and the northeast. This includes construction of major military infrastructure such as border roads, bridges, habitat, ammunition depot, tunnels and helipads by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under the Ministry of Defence along the country's northern, eastern and western borders. This is also reflected in the works budget

allocated to the BRO this fiscal, which saw a 30 per cent hike from last year to Rs 6,500 crore this year. The budget allocation for BRO this year is 160 per cent higher than what it was in 2021-2022.

## ASI official among 3 booked for 'threatening' minority panel ex-chief

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Archaeological Survey of India An FIR was registered at the Jagdishpura Police Station of Agra Circle under sections 351 (2) (criminal intimidation), 352 (threatening) and 61 (2) (Criminal Conspiracy) of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita. The Agra Police on Monday booked a senior official with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and two unidentified men for allegedly insulting and threatening former chairperson of the Uttar Pradesh Commission for Minorities, Ashfaq Saifi, officers said on Wednesday. An FIR was registered at the Jagdishpura Police Station of Agra Circle under sections 351 (2) (criminal intimidation), 352 (threatening) and 61 (2) (Criminal Conspiracy) of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Saifi, in his police complaint, said that last month, he complained against Patel to the officials of Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi and other constitutional bodies. "Apparently angered by this, around 8 am on Monday, two unidentified men barged into my house and asked me to withdraw my complaint. They said that they were sent by Patel and threatened me by saying that if the complaint is not taken back, I will have to face the consequences," claimed Saifi.

"I have learnt of the FIR," Patel told The Indian Express on Wednesday. "I am a law-abiding person. The matter has to be investigated by the police. All I know is that I have not done anything wrong," he said.

## Yes, calling someone 'mentally disabled' causes real harm



forced by the rise of statistics as a discipline, grew more and more important when it came to intellectual function.

Once statistics took off and people started the process of norming, or coming up with what the average human should look and think like, statisticians and laypeople grew to rely heavily on the bell curve, a useful but inaccurate means of measuring all sorts of characteristics, chief among them being intelligence. Forced sterilization, institutionalization By the 1880s, intelligence, now a characteristic quantified by IQ testing, was used to "prove" the inferiority of anyone whose behaviors, ways of talking and even ways of thinking threatened the social order. That characterization was part of the theory of eugenics, in which people labeled inferior were discouraged – or actively prevented – from having children and, in some cases, from living at all. As historian Douglas Baynton points out in his 2013 essay *Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History*, many would-be immigrants were turned away by officials at Ellis Island if they had "any mental abnormality whatever," be it a cognitive disability, a stutter or even depression. The language becomes even more horrific when race is brought in. In the racial science of the early 1800s, both the "idiot" skull and the "African" skull resembled the orangutan more than they resembled Shakespeare or Napoleon. Africans and people considered "idiots" were seen to be animalistic and unreasonable, in need of protection by their wards or owners.

In the early 20th century, these same ideas about racial and cognitive inferiority resulted in forced sterilization of women with intellectual disabilities as well as women of color, many of whom were considered "unfit" to birth the next generation of American children. In addition to sterilization, those considered to have low IQs or to be mentally disabled were placed into unhygienic institutions located in places far from populated urban centers. Unseen and unthought of, these people were kept at places such as the Willowbrook State Developmental Center on Staten Island in New York Bay, where they often had no clothing, no means of sanitation, and were subject to abuse. Institutions still exist today where people with intellectual disabilities are housed. The U.S. does not have an educational system in which people like my daughter can learn every day with neurotypical kids – kids whose brains work in a way deemed normal. Special education classrooms are disproportionately filled with students of color, most often diagnosed with behavioral disabilities. These students often end up in the school-to-prison pipeline. These classrooms show how something as "simple" as an IQ test – something as innocuous as a label – can end up sentencing the country's children to lives of segregation and social oppression.

Temperatures are running high during this presidential election. Yet Trump's words about Harris, while extraordinarily coarse and ugly for a presidential candidate, are often found among disparaging descriptions used by both sides. These phrases are part of a culture that uses measures of intelligence as a way to measure the worth of a human being. Words are powerful: They can either, like the literature I teach, broaden perspectives of the world, or they can serve to reinforce limiting ideologies that perpetuate oppression. Terms such as "low IQ," "idiot" and "mentally impaired" have a traumatic history, one that many cognitively disabled, lower-class and minority people continue to live with today. I believe politicians and their constituents should understand the destructive history of these terms – and think twice before using words like these as an easy means to attack one another.

## Kamala Harris seeks to define herself on media, Trump pegs her to Biden policies



Creating distance between herself and Mr. Biden's policies might have, however, become harder for Ms. Harris, when she said on *The View* that she would not have done anything differently from the current President (with the exception of appointing a Republican to her cabinet).

Mr. Trump, who has previously responded to his opponents with sexist and personal insults – called Ms. Harris's statement "Election Defying" as he referred to the "dumb women" on the show. He also called Mr. Stern a "beta male". While Ms. Harris deployed Ms. Cheney, Mr. Trump deployed Elon Musk, a billionaire entrepreneur and owner of social media site X. Appearing at Mr. Trump's rally in Butler County, Pennsylvania, last Saturday, Mr. Musk said "the other side [Democrats] wants to take away your freedom of speech", adding that the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment (right to bear arms) was there to protect the First Amendment (freedom of expression).

Mr. Trump's campaign and his supporters have argued that Democrats, including Ms. Harris, want to clamp down on the freedom of expression, based on comments Democrats have made in the context of curbing misinformation and hate speech. Mr. Musk has also taken it upon himself to drive voter registration in favour of Republicans. He announced an offer of \$47 to each person who could get a swing state registered voter to sign a petition supporting the First Amendment and Second Amendment in a swing state. Mr. Musk recently said in an October 7 interview with Tucker Carlson that if Mr. Trump did not win in November, it would be "the last election". According to Mr. Musk, a Harris administration would end the notion of 'Swing States' by flooding them with illegal migrants, who would eventually become citizens and vote for the Democratic Party. Mr. Trump, however, has already suggested that this will be the last election if he does win. Addressing Christians at a Florida event on July 28 he had said, "In four years, you don't have to vote again, we'll have it fixed so good you're not going to have to vote."

## Biden phones Netanyahu; leaders to stay in 'close contact' as Israel vows Iran attack



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Joe Biden and Benjamin Netanyahu agreed Wednesday (October 9, 2024) to stay in "close contact" as Israel mulls its response to Iran, with the U.S. President also urging the Israeli premier to "minimize" harm to civilians in Lebanon, the White House said. Mr. Biden and Mr. Netanyahu's call was their first in nearly two months and came amid mounting pressure from Washington not to strike Iran's oil or nuclear facilities less than four weeks before the U.S. presidential election. A White House read-out of the call did not directly mention possible retaliation for an Iranian missile strike on Israel last week but said Mr. Biden had condemned Tehran's attack "unequivocally" and pledged "ironclad" support for Israel.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Netanyahu "agreed to remain in close contact over the coming days, both directly and through their national security teams," the readout said, adding that Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris also joined the call. The call came as Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who had been

due to discuss Israel's response in Washington on Wednesday before the last-minute postponement of his visit by Mr. Netanyahu, pledged on Wednesday: "Our attack on Iran will be deadly, precise and surprising." Mr. Biden and Mr. Netanyahu also discussed Israel's offensive against Iranian ally Hezbollah in Lebanon, the White House said. The U.S. president "reaffirmed" Israel's right to defend itself against Hezbollah rocket attacks "while emphasizing the need to minimize harm to civilians, in particular in the densely populated areas of Beirut," it said. Mr. Netanyahu had warned earlier Wednesday that Lebanon faced "destruction" like that in the Palestinian territory of Gaza, which has been under relentless bombardment since Hamas's October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel. Hostages in Gaza. On Gaza, the two leaders also "discussed the urgent need to renew diplomacy to release the hostages held by Hamas." The White House had earlier described the call lasting around 30 minutes as "direct," "honest" and "productive." The U.S. and the Israeli government have had discussions since last week since after the Iran attack. Those discussions continued with the president and the prime minister, Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said. "We're going to continue to have those discussions with Israel on how they're going to respond." Ms. Jean-Pierre also reacted to Mr. Netanyahu's comments on Lebanon, saying: "We cannot and will not see Lebanon turn into another Gaza."

But she would not comment on a new book by veteran U.S. journalist Bob Woodward detailing growing tensions between Mr. Biden and Mr. Netanyahu. Mr. Biden had told Mr. Netanyahu in July that "the perception of Israel around the world increasingly is that you're a rogue state, a rogue actor," The New York Times reported the book as saying.

## Elon Musk's X is back in Brazil after its suspension, having complied with all judicial demands

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

The social media platform X began returning to Brazil on Wednesday, after remaining inaccessible for more than a month due to a clash between its owner, Elon Musk, and a justice on the country's highest court. Internet service providers began restoring access to the platform after Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes authorised lifting X's suspension "TWITTER IS ALIVE," Lucas dos Santos Consoli, known as Lucas on X, wrote on the platform to his more than 7 million followers. "I'm happy that the platform decided to follow the laws of Brazil and finally adapted, after all I've been using the app for almost 15 years so I can't deny that I was missing it," the 31-year-old told The Associated Press.

De Moraes ordered the shutdown of X on August 30 after a months-long dispute with Musk over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation. Musk had disparaged de Moraes, calling him an authoritarian and a censor, although his rulings, including X's nationwide suspension, were repeatedly upheld by his peers. Musk's company ultimately complied with all of de Moraes' demands. They included blocking certain accounts from the platform, paying outstanding fines and naming a legal representative. Failure to do the latter had triggered the suspension. "This sends a message to the world that the richest person on the planet is subject to local laws and constitutions," said David Nemer, who specialises in the anthropology of technology at the University of Virginia. It could set a precedent as to how other countries that are clashing with Musk – such as Australia – could move forward, as it shows Musk is not unbeatable, he added. Brazil – a highly online country of 213 million people – is one of X's biggest markets, with estimates of its user base ranging from 20 million to 40 million. "X is proud to return to Brazil," the company said in a statement posted on its Global Government Affairs account. "Giving tens of millions of Brazilians access to our indispensable platform was paramount throughout this entire process. We will continue to defend freedom of speech, within the boundaries of the law, everywhere we operate." Julia Bahri, an 18-year-old law student, said she was delighted with X's return. She said that losing access to the platform had led to "one of the most desperate feelings I've experienced for a while," adding that she had felt lost with regards to news. Bahri said she uses X to express herself, whereas Instagram and Snapchat are mostly for posting photos. The August 30 ban came two days after the company said it was removing all its remaining staff in Brazil. X said de Moraes had threatened to arrest its legal representative in the country, Rachel de Oliveira Villa Nova Conceição, if the company did not comply with orders to block accounts. Brazilian law requires foreign companies to have a local legal representative to receive notifications of court decisions and swiftly take any requisite action – particularly, in X's case, the takedown of accounts.



Sleeping Giants Brazil, a platform for activism that seeks to combat fake news and hate speech, said the resumption of X's activities in Brazil marked "a significant victory for Brazilian democracy." "It is crucial to remain steadfast against efforts to weaken democratic state authority, institutions and values," it said in a statement. Some of Brazilian X's users have migrated to other platforms, such as Meta's Threads and, primarily, Bluesky. It's unclear how many of them will return to X. In a statement to the AP, Bluesky reported that it now has 10.6 million users and continues to see strong growth in Brazil. Bluesky has appointed a legal representative in the South American country. "Never get back with your eX," Paul Frazee, a developer at Bluesky, wrote on the platform.

X is returning to Brazil weaker than it was before the ban, said Nemer, noting that X is now worth less than a fifth than when Musk bought Twitter. The platform has lost a lot of users, especially in Brazil, he said. Brazil was not the first country to ban X – but such a drastic step has generally been limited to authoritarian regimes. The platform and its former incarnation, Twitter, have been banned in Russia, China, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Venezuela and Turkmenistan. Other countries, such as Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt, have also temporarily suspended X before, usually to quell dissent and unrest. X's dustup with Brazil has some parallels to the company's dealings with the Indian government three years ago, back when it was still called Twitter and before Musk purchased it for \$44 billion. In 2021, India threatened to arrest employees of Twitter (as well as Meta's Facebook and WhatsApp), for not complying with the government's requests to take down posts related to farmers' protests that rocked the country. Musk's decision to reverse course in Brazil after publicly criticising de Moraes isn't surprising, said Matteo Ceurvels, research firm Emarketer's analyst for Latin America and Spain. "The move was pragmatic, likely driven by the economic consequences of losing access to millions of users in its third-largest market worldwide, along with the millions of dollars in associated advertising revenue," Ceurvels said. "Although X may not be a top priority for most advertisers in Brazil, the platform needs them more than they need it," he said.

## China seeks deeper economic ties with ASEAN at summit talks as South China Sea disputes lurk

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Chinese Premier Li Qiang called for deeper market integration with Southeast Asia on Thursday (October 10, 2024) during annual summit talks where territorial disputes in the South China Sea are likely to be high on the agenda. The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations' meeting with Li followed recent violent confrontations at sea between China and ASEAN members Philippines and Vietnam that raised unease over China's increasingly assertive actions in the disputed waters. Mr. Li didn't mention the row in his opening speech at the summit talks but said that intensifying trade relations between Beijing and ASEAN – a market of 672 million people – are beneficial for the bloc. "The global economy is still seeing a sluggish recovery, protectionism is rising and geopolitical turbulence has brought instability and uncertainty to our development," Mr. Li said. "An ultra large-scale market is our greatest foundation for promoting economic prosperity. Strengthening market coordination and synchronization is an important direction for our further cooperation," he said. ASEAN and China said they made progress in negotiations to upgrade their free trade pact and expect to conclude the talks by next year. Officials said the expanded pact will cover supply chain connectivity, the digital economy and green economy. Since the two sides signed the free trade pact in 2010, ASEAN's trade with China has leaped from

\$235.5 billion to \$696.7 billion last year. China is ASEAN's No. 1 trading partner and its third-largest source of foreign investment – a key reason why the bloc has been muted in its criticisms of Chinese actions in the South China Sea. ASEAN leaders have repeatedly called only for restraint and respect for international law. ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei along with Taiwan have overlapping claims with China, which claims sovereignty over virtually all of the South China Sea and has become more aggressive in its attempts to enforce its claims. ASEAN members and China have been negotiating a code of conduct to govern behavior in the strategic waterway for years but progress has been slow. Sticky issues include disagreements over whether the pact should be binding. Chinese and Philippine vessels have clashed repeatedly this year, and Vietnam said last week that Chinese forces assaulted its fishermen in a disputed area of the sea. Beijing has said it was defending its offshore territories. China has also sent patrol vessels to areas that Indonesia and Malaysia claim as exclusive economic zones. The Philippines, a long-time U.S. ally, has been critical of other ASEAN countries for not doing more to get China to back away. The U.S. has no claims in the South China Sea but has deployed Navy ships and fighter jets to patrol the waterway and promote freedom of navigation and overflight. China has warned the U.S. not to meddle in the disputes.

## The Tata imprint on India's biggest leap of faith in the tech sector — semiconductors



The year 2022 was ending. It'd been nearly a year since India has announced its ambitious \$10 billion plan to kickstart semiconductor production in the country. Just one problem: there was nothing to back the ambition with on the ground. The criticism had started getting vocal, with some wondering whether India even had the wherewithal to become home to chip making, which is considered the most cutting edge process in the technology world today, and is controlled by a handful of companies globally. Months later, a high-profile deal between mines to minerals conglomerate Vedanta and contract manufacturer Foxconn, best known for making iPhones, has fallen through.

Then, earlier this year, came the big announcement. In February 2024, the Union Cabinet cleared a \$11 billion fabrication plant to be set up in Gujarat by the Tata Group with help from technology by Taiwan's Powerchip, and a chip assembly and packaging plant also being set up by the Tatas in Assam, along with another project.

"Today, the state government of Assam in partnership with the Tata group will make Assam a major player in sophisticated semiconductors. This new development will put Assam on the global map," Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of Tata Sons who passed away on Wednesday, said in a post on X at the time. His imprint was there on the way the deal shaped up. These projects, alongside the others — assembly plants announced by Micron Technology, CG Power and Kaynes Semicon — hold the key to establishing India as a viable ground for making chips. But the real breakthrough, and the crown jewel in many ways, is the chip fabrication plant that the Tatas are setting up as it signifies a big step up in India's production capabilities. Most modern-day semiconductors are integrated circuits, also referred to as 'chips' — essentially a set of minute electronic circuits comprising transistors and diodes, as well as capacitors and resistors, and the myriad interconnections between them, layered on a wafer sheet of silicon. Fabs are the highly specialised semiconductor manufacturing facilities that print the miniaturised inte-

grated circuits from the chip design into the silicon wafers. The fabrication process is intricate and requires clean rooms designed to maintain sterile conditions to prevent contamination by air particles. There could be between 500 and 1,500 steps in the overall manufacturing process of semiconductor wafers, requiring multiple inputs that include silicon wafers, commodity chemicals, speciality chemicals, and other infrastructural prerequisites such as clean water supply and uninterrupted power supply. But, more than the complexity of the manufacturing process itself, having a domestic fabrication plant is a big boost for India's economic and strategic imperatives given that these chips are used in practically all downstream industries — from rockets to power steering in a car and toasters in the kitchen. The development is also significant given its timing: the world faces geopolitical tensions, the relationship between the US and China — two of the most influential countries in the technology value chain — is at an all-time low, and India hopes to assume an ever growing role in the space, with help primarily from government-funded schemes to boost the local industry. The global semiconductor chip industry is dominated by some countries and a handful of companies — Taiwan and South Korea make up about 80% of the global foundry base for chips; and only one company, the Netherlands-based ASML, produces EUV (extreme ultraviolet lithography) devices, without which it is not possible to make an advanced chip. Cambridge, UK-based chip designer Arm, where Nvidia is a stakeholder, is the world's biggest supplier of chip design elements used in products from smartphones to games consoles. It's a nearly closed manufacturing ecosystem with very high entry barriers, as China's SMIC, a national semiconductor champion that is now reportedly struggling to procure advanced chip-making equipment after a US-led blockade, is finding out. In this market, Nvidia, which comprehensively dominates the chips used for high-end graphics-based applications, has come to dominate multiple end-use sectors including gaming, crypto mining, and now AI.

## Ratan Tata's auto journey: From the Nano's botched marketing to the emergence of Tata Motors as India's EV leader

While super and hyper cars adorn the glossy covers of car magazines, it's the humble people's car that has caught people's fancy throughout automotive history. There is, after all, a certain charm in creating an affordable means of transportation for millions of common folk. Today, the Tata group is leading the electric transition in India's automotive scene. But nearly two decades ago, Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of Tata Sons who passed away on Wednesday, wanted to make a car for the people. Little did he know that what would follow were protests against the land that was given to the company, court cases over the settlement until eventually the factory had to be moved to a different state, and a key lesson on the collective psychology of Indian people.

The Tata Nano was launched in 2008. Ratan Tata said it was "always meant for all our people". The Nano was often referred to as India's first 'lakhtakia' — a car which costs all of Rs 1 lakh, a few thousands more expensive than two-wheelers. It was marketed as the cheapest car in the country. But there was a problem: no one seemed to want one. "What really motivated me, and sparked a desire to produce such a vehicle, was constantly seeing Indian families on scooters, maybe the child sandwiched between the mother and father, riding to wherever they were going, often on slippery roads... At first we were trying to figure out how to make two wheelers safer, the doodles became four wheels, no windows, no doors, just a basic dune buggy. But I finally decided it should be a car. The Nano was always meant for all our people," Tata wrote on Instagram in 2022. Even before the Nano could hit Indian roads, it faced many speed breakers. The car was initially supposed to be manufactured in West Bengal's Singur, and the former Left front government had even allocated the land for it. Then came the protests, with Mamata Banerjee, then in the Opposition in the state, creating enough of a stir which ultimately resulted in the plant being shifted to Gujarat's Sanand. A few years after the Nano's launch, the numbers weren't ticking and realisation dawned on Tata. Just about five years after its launch, the Nano was being gradually written off. In an interview in 2013, Tata admitted that its image of being a poor man's car had acted as a "stigma".

The tryst with Ford, and a symbolic win The Nano is such a pivotal moment in the Tatas' automotive history that it is easy to forget that they did make cars much before the Nano — and that too had a rocky start. Right around the corner when the Tata Group was working on the concept of the Nano, the conglomerate was also considering selling its passenger car division after its debut hatchback, the Indica, had failed to deliver on its expectations. A lot is known about the famous unsuccessful deal between Ford and Ferrari which prompted the former to build a car that could defeat the Italian powerhouse at the 24 hours of Le Mans, an endurance focused car race. But, the Tatas have their own underdog story, when after initial discussions, the Ford Motor Company decided not to purchase their passenger car business.

In 2008, Tata Motors acquired Jaguar Land Rover



(JLR) from Ford for \$2.3 billion — the price was just half of what Ford had paid for the iconic British brands a decade earlier. That same year, the global financial crisis struck, severely impacting key markets like the US and the UK. Between June 2008 and March 2009, JLR's sales plummeted 32 per cent, from 2.5 lakh units to 1.7 lakh units. During this period, the company also posted a net loss of 281 million pounds. "When we bought (JLR), my friends distanced themselves from me, saying, 'What are you going to do with this?' Quite frankly, I didn't know. And that refrain changed to 'How stupid could you be to buy this?'" Tata said in 2019 at an event in Brussels. At the time, Tata Motors had acknowledged the challenge of keeping JLR afloat amid the financial crisis. The company believed, however, that new products and aggressive marketing could help it weather the storm, though it would require changes in traditional practices and a strong commitment to cost-cutting and "reduction of development and production time".

By 2010-11, the turnaround had begun: global sales rebounded to 2.4 lakh units, and profits before tax soared to 1.1 billion pounds. Tata attributed the revival to "recreating" and "reigniting" the brands' images. "I'm pleased to say I did nothing more," he recalled. Fast forward to 2023-24, JLR sold over 4.3 lakh units, generating a record 29 billion pounds in revenue, up 27 per cent year-on-year, with a net profit of 2.6 billion pounds. Now, JLR aims to achieve net zero across its supply chain, products, and operations by 2039, with plans to transition Jaguar to an all-electric brand and launch electric models for its Range Rover, Discovery, and Defender collections by 2030. Today, Tata Motors, the conglomerate's vehicle division, is at the forefront of the electric vehicle (EV) revolution in the country and has seen a turnaround in its fortunes in the internal combustion engine market as well. With demand for its cars falling even as rivals like Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai were competing for the top spots, Tata Motors drew up a revival plan. In 2019-20, they made the 'Turnaround 2.0' strategy with an aim to share common platforms for operational efficiency and also the push the company into the EV segment. What followed were one hit after another. First came the Tata Tiago, a small family hatchback, which was shortly followed by a sedan, the Tigor. Then came the Nexon in 2017, and with it the real turnaround of the company.

## Answered: If Punjabis really have a gene that makes them lactose tolerant

Dr Niraj Rai, a DNA expert, recently said that Punjabis are built muscular, which is attributed to a gene responsible for making them 'lactose tolerant'. "This means you can drink more milk. In India, the North Indians comparatively have a higher capacity to digest milk," Dr Rai told Ranveer Allahabadi in his YouTube podcast. Dr Haricharan G, senior consultant physician, HoD, internal medicine, Gleneagles Hospitals, Lakdi Ka Pul, Hyderabad said, "Yes, Punjabis, like many other groups from South Asia, exhibit a higher prevalence of lactose tolerance, and this can be linked to genetic factors."

Lactose tolerance is influenced by the lactase enzyme, which helps digest lactose, the sugar found in milk. However, Dr Harikishan, HOD, Department of Medicine, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals, mentioned that lactose tolerance is not equally distributed across populations globally, with varying degrees of tolerance based on historical diets and genetic adaptations. According to Dr Haricharan, while lactase production typically declines after childhood in many populations, specific genetic variants allow continued production of this enzyme into adulthood. "In the case of Punjabis, they exhibit a higher prevalence of the lactase persistence gene, which allows individuals to continue digesting lactose into adulthood," said Dr Harikishan. "Studies show that populations with a long history of dairy consumption, such as Punjabis, have a higher lactase persistence rate due to an evolutionary adaptation. Historically, Punjabis have consumed dairy products like milk, yogurt, and paneer as dietary staples, which may have led to natural selection favouring individuals with lactose tolerance," elucidated Dr Haricharan.

The second factor contributing to the observed physical traits, such as height and strength among Punjabis, is



genetic selection over time. According to Dr Harikishan, historical fluctuations in population, including periods of population growth and decline, likely led to natural selection, where the surviving population evolved more vital genetic traits. "This selective pressure may have contributed to the taller, stronger physique commonly seen in Punjabis today," said Dr Harikishan. As populations faced environmental challenges, "those with advantageous physical traits, such as resilience, stature, and lactose tolerance, were more likely to survive and reproduce", Dr Harikishan explained.

However, it's important to note that lactose tolerance can still vary within any population, including among Punjabis. "Although genetic predisposition plays a significant role, lifestyle factors and dietary habits also influence how well individuals tolerate lactose. From a medical perspective, anyone experiencing lactose intolerance symptoms should consult a doctor for dietary guidance, as it varies from person to person," said Dr Haricharan.

## Trainer Yasmin Karachiwala reveals how she kept Alia Bhatt focused on workout during pregnancy despite her short attention span

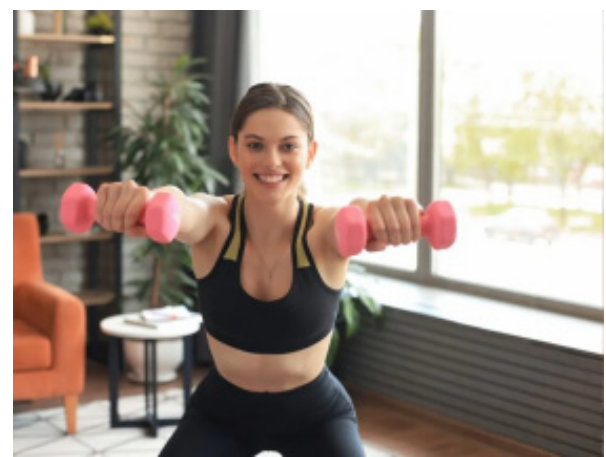
This is apparently something that actor Alia Bhatt struggles with, according to her trainer Yasmin Karachiwala. In an episode of a podcast with nutritionist Ryan Fernando, she mentioned how she had to tailor Bhatt's workout to keep the actor engaged. The Jigra star wanted to stay active even during her pregnancy, leading to custom workout plans designed to meet her needs. "Working with Alia was funny and beautiful. She came to me saying, 'I'm pregnant but I need to exercise.' We customised her workouts to keep them interesting because Alia is someone who exercises daily and doesn't want to feel limited by her body. I had to keep her routines engaging since Alia has a short attention span — if I give her 20 repetitions, I've lost her by the eighth one. Her workouts need to be crisp and varied to keep her focused," Karachiwala stated.

This comes after Bhatt revealed in an interview recently that she has Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) because of which it becomes uncomfortable for her to spend over 45 minutes on a make-up chair. In fitness, especially when performing exercises that require precise movements like Pilates or weight training, losing concentration can lead to incorrect posture or inadequate repetitions. In fitness, especially when performing exercises that require precise movements like Pilates or weight training, losing concentration can lead to incorrect posture or inadequate repetitions (Source: Freepik)

How do short attention spans affect an individual's fitness training?

Dr Vajalla Shrivani, MPT and Certified Pilates Coach at Tone 30, Bengaluru, tells indianexpress.com, "Short attention spans can make it difficult for individuals to stay mentally engaged throughout a workout, which can affect focus, form, and consistency. In fitness, especially when performing exercises that require precise movements like Pilates or weight training, losing concentration can lead to incorrect posture or inadequate repetitions, reducing the effectiveness of the workout. Additionally, the mental fatigue that comes with a short attention span can increase the risk of injury as individuals may rush through exercises without proper form."

For people with shorter attention spans, workouts must be engaging and dynamic. "Incorporating HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) is particularly beneficial as it involves quick, intense bursts of activity followed by



rest. This keeps the routine fast-paced, which helps maintain engagement," informs Dr Shrivani. Circuit training and mixed-modality workouts (alternating between cardio, strength training, and flexibility exercises) also prevent monotony. By frequently switching between different exercises, such routines not only keep the mind engaged but also ensure the entire body is being trained. Mental and physical benefits of exercising for someone who loses focus quickly

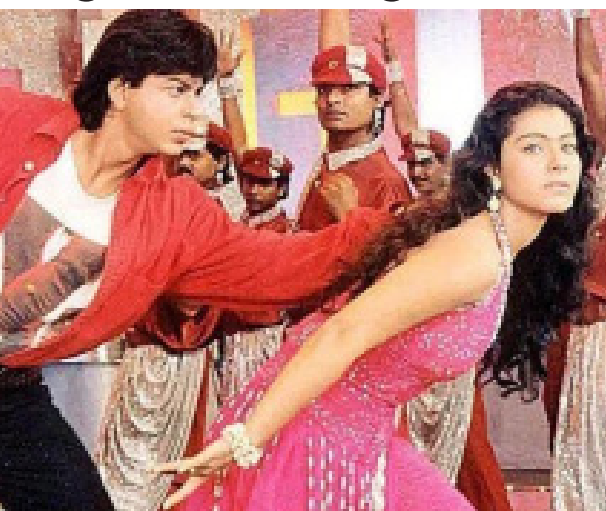
For individuals with short attention spans, Dr Shrivani says, exercise offers both mental and physical benefits. Regular physical activity releases endorphins, which improve mood, reduce stress, and enhance focus. "Studies show that engaging in exercises like Pilates, which integrates mental focus with physical movement, can improve cognitive function over time. This is especially important for those who struggle with maintaining focus during longer activities." Dr Shrivani highlights that for pregnant women, the benefits of staying active are twofold: physically, exercise helps maintain healthy weight, boosts circulation, and reduces discomforts like back pain, while mentally, it can improve mood, reduce anxiety, and enhance focus. "Activities such as prenatal Pilates, which emphasises gentle stretching, breathing, and controlled movements, can help pregnant women remain engaged and attentive during workouts, despite potential hormonal shifts that might otherwise impact focus," she concludes.

## Did you know Gauri Khan designed Shah Rukh's outfit for this iconic song from Baazigar?

Gauri Khan has established herself as a prominent figure in the film industry and the world of interior design. As a successful film producer, Gauri has also played a pivotal role in several of her husband Shah Rukh Khan's hits including Main Hoon Na, Om Shanti Om, But it was not until Gauri revealed a fascinating detail about her involvement in Shah Rukh Khan's iconic look in the song "Ye Kaali Kaali Aankhen" from Baazigar did we realise the trajectory of

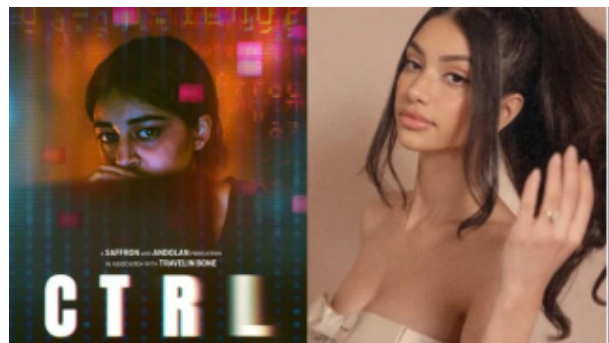
"#Gaurikhandesigns." Sharing a nostalgic memory on Instagram in 2019, Gauri said that she designed King Khan's look in the song! "Can't believe I designed this look in the 90s... Those jeans, #legwarmer tee, bullet belt and a red shirt thrown over. The hand-painted jeans were my favourite. #Gaurikhandesigns has come a long way (sic)," she wrote in the caption.

In a previous interview



with Zoom TV, Gauri Khan opened up about her experiences designing her husband Shah Rukh Khan's outfits for his films. While she admitted to designing his looks in six movies, she candidly described her work as a "disaster." Reflecting on the iconic "Ye Kaali Kaali Aankhen" look, Gauri expressed her fascination with Shah Rukh's appearance in the song. She reminisced about her youthful enthusiasm in her 20s, admitting that it was a "great fun" experience. However, her enjoyment came to an end when Karan Johar entered their lives, she said laughingly. Karan's reaction to her designs was a turning point. He questioned her abilities as a stylist for Shah Rukh, leading Gauri to reconsider her work. She realized that the "Ye Kaali Kaali Aankhen" look was not her finest achievement. Consequently, she handed over the styling responsibilities for Shah Rukh's future projects to Karan. Gauri and Shah Rukh tied the knot on October 25, 1991. Together, they founded Red Chillies Entertainment in 2002. The couple has three children: Suhana Khan (born in 1997), Aryan Khan (born in 2000), and AbRam Khan (born in 2013 via surrogacy).

## Ananya Panday says she drew inspiration from cousin Alanna Panday and her husband Ivor for CTRL: 'They make vlogs about everything'



Ananya Panday, currently basking in the praise for her role in Vikramaditya Motwane's CTRL, recently shared how she didn't have to look far for inspiration for her role as a social media influencer. Ananya revealed in a recent chat that she drew inspiration from her cousin Alanna Panday and her husband Ivor, who vlog about their lives and are social media influencers.

In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Ananya talked about the extensive details that went into crafting her character, mentioning how she and Motwane dis-

cussed every aspect of it. Reflecting on the influences behind her role, she said, "Sumukhi Suresh was part of the writing team, and she knows a lot about influencers." Ananya went on to elaborate, "I see a lot of influencers, but my cousin Alanna and her husband are couple bloggers. They make vlogs about everything — from when they met, to her wedding, to her pregnancy, and even her journey with their baby. They've covered it all on their YouTube channel. Watching them was a close-to-home reference, helping me understand the sacrifices required to be a public figure, especially when your life is exposed even more than an actor's."

In CTRL, Ananya plays Nella, one-half of the ideal influencer couple alongside her boyfriend Joe. But when he cheats on her, she uses an AI app to erase him from her life, only for it to take control in unexpected ways. Ananya's cousin Alanna Panday is currently starring in The Tribe, a show about a group of Indian influencers aiming for global fame in Los Angeles. Produced by Karan Johar's Dharmatic Entertainment, The Tribe also features Alaviaa Jaaferi, Srushiti Porey, Aryaana Gandhi, Alfia Jafry, and Hardik Zaveri.

## Devara director 'would love to see Ranveer Singh or Ranbir Kapoor' in the sequel: 'I don't know whether that can happen or not'



Director Koratala Siva and his team have already begun discussions about Devara: Part 2, much to the excitement of Jr NTR's fans. Director Koratala Siva recently expressed his desire to see Bollywood actors Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh be part of the Devara world.

Despite opening to mixed responses — contrary to the expectations of its makers — director Koratala Siva's Devara: Part 1, featuring NT Rama Rao Jr (popularly known as Jr NTR), Saif Ali Khan and Janhvi Kapoor in the lead roles, continues to perform well at the box office and is inching closer to the Rs 500 crore gross worldwide milestone right now. Meanwhile, Siva and his team have already begun discussions about Devara: Part 2, a sequel to the action drama, much to the excitement of Jr NTR fans. Nonetheless, the director is fully aware of the significant responsibility this entails, requiring extensive and meticulous planning, and he recently said he is committed to ensuring the project is successful. Interestingly, unlike many recent big-budget films, Devara does not include cameo appearances from big stars. It seems that Siva is not interested in that, but wishes to bring on board

some prominent names from the film industry for Devara 2 to play key roles. "I won't say cameos also, they are very important characters in the film and we are going to unveil very soon, character by character," Siva told Zoom when asked if the sequel will have guest appearances by any of the superstars. Siva, nevertheless, did not refrain himself from revealing the list of actors he wishes to rope in for Devara 2. "Actually, I have my own wish list. I don't know whether that can happen or not. To be very honest, I would love to see Ranveer Singh or Ranbir Kapoor in the world of Devara. I won't take too many names from the Telugu or Tamil industries. If I reveal some names there will be too much of assumptions and speculations," he added. Also starring Prakash Raj, Srikanth and Shine Tom Chacko in key roles, Devara: Part 1 hit the screens on September 27 and as of Monday, the movie has grossed over Rs 466 crore globally. In his review of the movie, The Indian Express' Avinash Ramachandran wrote, "The Jr NTR film starts off really strong, only to suffer an extended downward slide that is finally salvaged by a bloody finale that is equal parts engaging and outlandish."

## Triptii Dimri says she's 'been a fan of Kartik Aaryan since her childhood', he responds with a witty reply: 'Main inke bachpan se...'



Kartik Aaryan is back as Rooh Baba and on Wednesday, the actor launched the trailer of his upcoming film Bhoolaiya 3 in Jaipur. At the event, Kartik was accompanied by the film's lead cast including Vidya Balan and Triptii Dimri. At the launch event, when Triptii was asked about her experience of working with the popular star cast, she described it as a "dream come true experience" and said, "To get to be a part of such a big franchise is a big deal for any actor. I was over the moon when I was offered the part. I have always been a fan of Anees Sir." The Animal actor added that she has watched all films by the director with her family and went on to say, "I have always been a fan of Rajpal Sir, Vidya Ma'am, Madhuri Ma'am, Kartik. Inn sabke saath kaam karne ka mauka milna bohot badi baat hai (It's a big deal to work with all of them). I had a lot of fun shooting this film."

Triptii then added, "Bachpan se main Kartik ki fan hun (I have been a Kartik Aaryan fan since childhood)," which left everyone in splits. Reacting to this comment, Kartik said on a lighter note, "Main inke bachpan se filmein dekh raha hun. (I have been watching movies since her childhood)." Kartik Aaryan went on to add, "But honestly

speaking, I had a great time working with Triptii. I did not feel that I was acting with her for the first time. Sometimes it happens that you hit it off with your co-star from the word go. She is very hardworking and talented."

## Samantha Ruth Prabhu finds joy in fashion again

Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu loves getting dolled up and revealed that fashion is fun again for her. Samantha took to Instagram, where she posted a string of pictures dressed in a nude hued skirt with fringes and a crop top. She chose statement gold chunky jewelry and subdued make-up to complete the look. Samantha keeps experimenting with her looks and shares it on her social media to treat her fans and followers.

Last month, the actress for the promotions of her spy action series "Citadel: Honey Bunny" posted mesmerising pictures, showcasing her elegance in a stunning white outfit. She donned a white tube top designed in a flower shape, adorned with pearl embellishments, paired elegantly with matching trousers. In her post, she included a sparkle emoji and tagged her location as London, UK.

Meanwhile, on September 25, she attended the screening for 'Citadel: Honey Bunny', along with Priyanka Chopra in London, UK. Priyanka stars as the lead in the American version of 'Citadel', Samantha's upcoming series serves as a spin-off prequel to the show. Samantha started her acting career in 2010 with Gautham Vasudev Menon's Telugu film 'Ye Maaya Chesave', alongside former husband Naga Chaitanya.

## The Office star Jenna Fischer opens up about beating breast cancer: 'If I had waited 6 months longer...'



Actor Jenna Fischer, best known for her role as Pam Beesly on the NBC sitcom The Office, recently shared that she was diagnosed with "aggressive" breast cancer in 2023. However, she also informed her well-wishers that she is now cancer-free after undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

Jenna posted a lengthy note on Instagram, accompanied by a photo of herself celebrating with her husband and kids after beating cancer. She captioned the post, "October is breast cancer awareness month. I never thought I'd be making an announcement like this but here we are. Last December, I was diagnosed with Stage 1 Triple Positive Breast Cancer. After completing surgery, chemotherapy and radiation I am now cancer free. I wanted a photo of myself in my patchy pixie looking happy

and healthy to go along with this news."

In a series of slides, Jenna detailed her battle with cancer. She explained how her cancer was "aggressive" but also treatable. She underwent a lumpectomy, a surgery to remove a portion of breast tissue. Jenna elaborated that although the cancer was removed from her body through surgery, she still needed to go through chemotherapy.

She also shared that "some great wigs and hats with hair" helped her conceal her cancer struggle for a year. Jenna urged her followers and fans to be proactive and take measures to catch cancer at an early stage. "My tumor was so small it could not be felt on a physical exam. If I had waited six months longer, things could have been much worse. It could have spread ... Consider this your kick in the butt to get it done," she wrote. She added, "As anyone who has had a cancer diagnosis knows, your life changes immediately. It becomes all about doctor appointments, test results, treatments and recovering from treatments. Suddenly everything in your life is geared around one thing: fighting cancer." Jenna expressed that it takes an "amazing village" to combat cancer and thanked her family, friends, and medical professionals for their support during her fight against the disease. Fischer portrayed Pam Beesly on The Office for all nine seasons from 2005 to 2013. She was last seen in the musical film adaptation of Mean Girls.

## Rajinikanth says Amitabh Bachchan helped him in landing Andhaa Kaanoon: 'They initially wanted Mithun Chakraborty'

Emphasising Amitabh Bachchan's versatility, Rajinikanth said he can do both comedy and serious moments seamlessly. At the audio launch of Vettaian, Rajinikanth heaped praise on Amitabh Bachchan and shared how the veteran actor was instrumental in helping him break into Bollywood. Two of the biggest superstars Indian cinema has ever seen, Amitabh Bachchan and Rajinikanth are all set for the release of their upcoming movie Vettaian, which marks their on-screen collaboration after 33 years. While the two worked together for the first time in Andhaa Kaanoon (1983), Big B and Rajinikanth shared the screen two more times, in Geraftaar (1985) and Hum (1991), and needless to say, all three movies were massive hits upon their release.

At the audio launch of Vettaian in Chennai recently, Rajinikanth, fondly referred to as Thalaivar (leader) by his fans, heaped praise on Bachchan and shared how the veteran actor was instrumental in helping him break into Bollywood. Thalaivar also elaborated how Big B remains a role model to all with his discipline and dedication to work. Must Read | Amitabh Bachchan left everything at height of fame, lived alone in Switzerland for 1-2 years: Rajinikanth recalls how Big B inspired him

"I got the chance to work in Andhaa Kaanoon only because of Amitiji. The remake of Sattam Oru Iruttarai (1981)... they initially wanted Mithun Chakraborty to do that role. Kamal Haasan had just made a mark there with the success of Ek Duuje Ke Liye (1981). So, Amitiji suggested my name and promised to do the guest role if they casted me. That's how I landed that role. Then we did Geraftaar, in which I played a cameo role, and Hum. All three became big hits," he recalled. Praising Bachchan's work ethics and dedication, Thalaivar said, "Hindi artistes mostly come to shoot only around 11-11.30 am. Amitiji, even at the peak of his career, would go for dubbing at 7 am, finish it by 8, and then come to the set at 9 with full make-up. He was that punctual and has such level of



discipline. Once he arrived, he would immediately ask for the day's scenes, almost as if he were starving for them. Once you give him the scenes, he would take the script, go sit in one corner and read it silently." Mentioning that this would bring a hush over the set, Rajinikanth said Bachchan would want the writer nearby during this time. "Once he's done, Amitiji would return and ask the writer and director a lot of questions in detail. 'Why is this character speaking like this? Would they speak like this? What's the scene before and after this?' He wanted all the details and logical answers to his queries. Once convinced, he would go back to his corner, jot down a few things and then ask the makers if he could tweak a particular word to ensure smoother delivery and flow. With his father (Harivansh Rai Bachchan) being a renowned Hindi poet and writer, Amitiji too has a very strong command of language. His suggestions were always clear because he had read the script in detail." Emphasising Big B's versatility, Rajinikanth said he can do both comedy and serious moments seamlessly

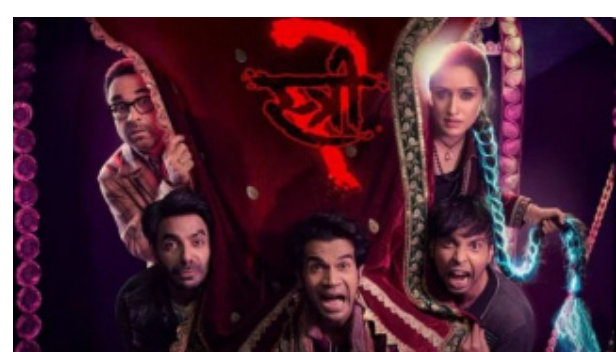
Also starring Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati, Manju Warrier, Ritika Singh and Dushara Vijayan in key roles, Vettaian will hit the screens worldwide on Thursday.

## Stree 2 debuts on OTT after breaking box office records; here's where you can watch it

Rajkumar Rao-Shraddha Kapoor led horror comedy Stree 2 is now streaming. Rajkumar Rao-Shraddha Kapoor led horror comedy Stree 2 is now streaming. Oh Stree Kal Aana — but she is here today. After breaking the box office records of mighty blockbusters, Stree 2 has made its way to streaming. The Amar Kaushik directed horror comedy, starring Rajkumar Rao and Shraddha Kapoor, is now streaming on an OTT platform after a blockbuster theatrical run that began on August 15.

The film took everyone by surprise by breaking the Hindi language record set by Shah Rukh Khan's Jawan and netting more than Rs 620 cr at the box office. The only record that it didn't break was becoming the highest-earning Hindi film across India, which is still held by Jawan, with Rs 640 cr. Now, after a historic run, Stree 2 is streaming on Prime Video. The film, backed by Dinesh Vijan and Jyoti Deshpande under the banner of Maddock Films and Jio Studios, respectively, also starred Pankaj Tripathi, Abhishek Banerjee and Aparshakti Khurana.

Manish Menghani, director of Content Licensing, Prime Video India, said that Stree 2 captivated audiences with its powerful storytelling, "fortifying horror-comedy as a successful and sought-after genre." Producer Dinesh Vijan said that Stree 2 is a special film for the team, and stands as a testament that "strong and loved characters and a well-rounded narrative" can be the driving force



behind a film's success. "We're truly humbled by the success of the film and the love the cast has received. It has reinforced our belief in the power of storytelling. After a super successful theatrical run, we're thrilled to bring this story to the Amazon Prime audience across India and the world." Producer Jyoti Deshpande, President — Media & Content Business, Reliance Industries, added, "We are delighted that Stree 2 will make its OTT premiere on Amazon Prime Video starting today, and you will also find the OG Stree Part 1 there. Hoping the die-hard fans of this amazing franchise will come together to smash OTT premiere viewership records on this one...kyu ki woh stree hai aur woh kuch bhi kar sakti hai."

## Akshay Kumar surprised female autorickshaw driver with Rs 10,000, his team pursued her for a week for an interview: 'Akshay sat in my auto'

When Akshay Kumar chanced upon a video of one of Mumbai's first female auto rickshaw drivers, he made it his mission to get in touch with her. In a recent interview, Chhaya Mohite, who was one of the first female rickshaw drivers in Mumbai, opened up about her surprise meeting with Akshay and how his team pursued her for days to sit for an interview. Chhaya recalled how Akshay randomly chanced upon her video, and said that it took him two months to acquire her details. Talking to Siddharth Kannan, Chhaya recalled that Akshay's team went from one RTO to another to find her, as they only had her name and photo. Chhaya recalled that Akshay's assistant would call her every single day for an interview, but

never disclosed that she was associated with the celebrity. Chhaya said that in those days, many media personnel would show up at her house and would make videos about her daily life as a homemaker as well as a rickshaw driver. Chhaya said that by this time, others around her were telling her that she should start charging money for interviews, but she wasn't interested in that. When Akshay's team called, her husband wasn't keen on her going for the interview. Chhaya insisted, and went anyway. After an entire day's shoot, when Chhaya was asked to ride to the Sun-n-Sand Hotel, she got a surprise. "I stopped my rickshaw right there. Akshay Kumar was in my auto," she recalled.

## India vs Bangladesh: We don't have that habit of scoring big runs and that is reality, says Taskin Ahmed



Taskin Ahmed Bangladesh's Taskin Ahmed reacts after bowling a delivery during the second T20 cricket match between Bangladesh and India in New Delhi, India. Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain after their loss in Gwalior had said that "their batters don't know how to score 180 runs" and on Wednesday, Taskin Ahmed repeated the inability to come up with good totals is because they are not accustomed of playing on good pitches at home.

"They score 180 to 200 runs regularly. For us that is 130-40 at home," Taskin told reporters after Bangladesh lost the second match by 86 runs. "We don't have that habit of scoring big runs and that is reality. Hopefully, in the coming days, our home condition will get better and at that point, we can chase big runs and defend as well. "At the same time if we can play different franchise leagues we will have better experience. Our cricket will develop when the structure of our domestic cricket is strong." Taskin was the pick of the bowlers for Bangladesh as he returned with the bowling figures of 2 for 16. Taskin Ahmed

has said the team paid the price for dropping Nitish Reddy early when he was only on 5 by wicketkeeper Litton Das. Nitish made the most of the chance and brought up his maiden fifty, off just 27 balls, in just his second international appearance. He scored 74 runs in just 34 balls. "Catch drop is always costly, especially against an opponent like them who are best in the world. The margin of error is very small and so it was costly," Taskin said. "Look in the power play we did well but they batted well in the end and unfortunately spinners had a bad day. Normally we don't have this kind of bad days but in T20 anything can happen on any day. The spinners could not grip the ball as there was dew. We were in the game till the 11 or 12 over and this wicket if we could keep them under 180 runs it was chasable. We could not score a lot of runs and that is our failure but this wicket is very good for batting," he added. Not producing good wickets in Bangladesh according to Taskin, the main points of difference between the two teams is the habit of Indian batters playing on good wicket from their very early stage.

"This habit that they have grown due to playing in good wicket from the early stage of their career is their biggest strength," he said. "Unfortunately we could not improve a lot in T20 and that is our fault. We need to improve our skill at the same time if we could play in good wicket." The pacer has also urged letting go of Gamini de Silva, the head curator of Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium will improve their wickets. "It can happen though the decision lies in the hand of the board. We have already informed the board to prepare good wickets and take decision in that direction and board is thinking about it. The board will help us to have better condition and how board will do that lies to them," he said.

## PT Usha refutes CAG charges of favouring Reliance: 'Assumption does not hold good'



Indian Olympic Association president PT Usha has refuted the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India's charge of favouring Reliance Industries Limited (RIL). Usha's 61-page response, dated October 8, comes after the CAG, through a notice last month, had pointed to IOA's 'loss of Rs 24 crore due to faulty agreement with RIL and undue favour to RIL'. The issue relates to a Rs 35 crore contract signed by IOA with RIL to build a hospitality lounge at the Paris Olympics. In her response, the track and field legend, while stating the CAG's 'assumption does not hold good', blamed the earlier administration for its 'flawed' process. She has also requested the auditors to 'settle' the matter.

Her response includes a copy of the initial contract signed in 2022 and the internal correspondence between the officials from the International Olympic Committee, the IOA and RIL about the renegotiation of the Rs 35-crore deal. In July 2022, the IOA invited bids to build a 'hospitality lounge' on the sidelines of the Paris Games, where among other things India could lobby for the hosting rights of the 2036 Olympics. Documents enclosed by Usha as a part of her reply show that Reliance got the contract, which was enforced in July 2022 and signed on behalf of the IOA by former Secretary General Rajiv Mehta. As per the deal, Reliance would pay Rs 35 crore in instalments during the six years from 2022 to 2028. In return, the contract states that Reliance would get 'exclusive naming rights' to the India House and become the IOA's 'principal sponsor' during the said period. According to Usha, in June 2023, she wrote an email stating: "...No NOC (National Olympic Committee) sponsor branding can be visible from the outside of your NOC House." Usha has supplied a copy of the communication in her reply. The IOC's rule meant Reliance could not enjoy the exclusive naming rights for the India House, as agreed in the initial contract. Consequently, on September 7, 2023, Siddharth Shanker, Vice-President and Head of Reliance Foundation Sports, proposed revisions to the contract.

In an email, Shanker sought a 'reduction in the total rights fee by 50 per cent' — which Usha said would bring down the value of the contract from Rs 35 to Rs 17.5. Further, Shanker asked for modifications in how the revenue generated from the India House would be shared and proposed to 'add applicable editions of Summer

Youth Olympic Games (2026 and 2030)' where Reliance would be 'designated as a Principal Partner'. Further, the email mentioned that 'for any additional sponsor agreements executed by Parties for India House, such additional sponsors shall be granted entitlements of Associate Sponsor of IOA, in addition to the India House rights'.

In other words, any company that paid just for the sponsorship of the India House would also be the IOA's Associate Sponsor. Usha said she was 'alarmed' at the 'proposed terms of renegotiation by RIL' and 'convened a meeting of RIL representatives and Mr. Rohit Rajpal (Chairman of the IOA's Sponsorship Committee) on 20th September 2023 at Olympic Bhavan, New Delhi'. Following negotiations that lasted a month, according to a mail trail, on October 20, 2023, it was 'agreed that there would be no rights fee reduction and the IOA was able to salvage the deal', Usha wrote. According to the CAG documents, the sponsorship agreement was 'amended' and Reliance was made the IOA's principal partner for the 2026 and 2030 Youth and Winter Olympics. The revised contract was signed in December 2023. On September 12, 2024, the CAG's audit team issued a memorandum to the IOA, titled: 'Undue favour to the Company (RIL). It observed that giving away sponsorship deals for the youth and winter events — in addition to the Commonwealth and Asian Games in 2022 and 2026 as well as the Paris and LA Olympics — led to a 'loss of Rs 24 crore' to the IOA. The amount was calculated on the basis that the IOA was to receive Rs 6 crore on average per Games from Reliance. The CAG also pointed to the revenue-sharing clause. In the revised deal, Reliance promised to transfer the additional earnings from the India House after recouping the costs incurred in building the lounge. The auditors asked Usha: "How many companies were engaged in Olympics 2024 with respect to Additional Rights Revenue by RIL? The copies of the agreements may be furnished to audit signed with them by RIL."

Usha, in her reply on October 8, argued that unlike the CWG, Asian Games and Olympics, the Youth and Winter Olympics have 'no meaningful media or public interest'. "Additionally, the size of the contingents and probability of winning medals at these events is very small compared to other Games such as CWG, AG (Asian Games) and OG (Olympic Games)," she wrote. She added: "The calculation by the CAG audit team assumes that each of the six events... would bring in uniform sum of Rs 6 crore per event to the IOA and therefore, additional four events should have also drawn in similar sums. As explained above, such an assumption does not hold good." Usha pointed fingers at the earlier administration, calling their tender process for the India House 'flawed as it did not specify that the granting of naming rights... to a sponsor would be governed by the IOC guidelines'. She concluded: "In view of the details provided above, it is requested that the half margin maybe settled."

## How old guards Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur fashioned an 83-run win to bolster net run rate and knockout chances

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

It took a couple of matches for India to warm up to the conditions at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and on Wednesday they finally managed to put together their most complete performance to beat Sri Lanka by a massive margin of 83 runs. Leading the way was their two leaders—vice captain Smriti Mandhana and captain Harmanpreet Kaur. The pair didn't bat together, they only crossed paths as the former was dismissed and the latter walked into bat once more at No 3. But in the time they spent on the pitch, they covered the 20 overs — with Smriti falling for a 38-ball 50 in the 13th over and Harmanpreet remaining unbeaten on a blistering 27-ball 52 for her fastest half century in this format. Together, the two knocks powered India to 172/3 — the highest team total set so far at the World Cup, going past South Africa's 166 from just a few hours earlier. In response, Sri Lanka managed only 90 in 18.5 overs, as India registered their win biggest in terms of run-margin in the history of this tournament. That South African effort earlier in the afternoon perhaps came at the right time for India too, knowing that there was a chance to go big if they won the toss. There has been a lot of talk about the pitch, the heat, and the outfielders in both Sharjah and Dubai that have made this a low-scoring World Cup so far. But after their go-slow against Pakistan in the run-chase, India didn't waste much time to get going against the Asian champions.

The early impetus came from Shafali Verma, who struggled against Pa-



It took a couple of matches for India to warm up to the conditions at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and on Wednesday they finally managed to put together their most complete performance to beat Sri Lanka by a massive margin of 83 runs. Leading the way was their two leaders—vice captain Smriti Mandhana and captain Harmanpreet Kaur.

kistan despite catching up later on. It is not often you see Shafali not score a single boundary in the powerplay if she bats the 6 overs. But the intent felt different from the world go, even if it didn't necessarily result in a fast start. Indian openers started to play at their best, with both batters looking to go aerial when possible. By the end of the 5th over, Shafali had managed to find the boundary three times.

Smriti, however, was on 6 off 10 balls at that point and took her time to get going. A lofted shot in the 6th over seemed to have unlocked the free-flowing left-hander that the world is used to watching. From there, she smashed 34 runs off the next 18 balls to overtake Shafali, who started to struggle for timing post the powerplay. The Smriti acceleration came at the perfect time for India. But when the openers were dismissed off back-to-back deliveries in the 13th over, the focus shifted to

Harmanpreet. Not known to be a fast starter, it helped India that for a brief while when new batters had walked in, Jemimah Rodrigues played a nice little cameo to ease the pressure on the Indian captain. But once she found her footing, Harmanpreet played one of her best knocks in recent times, peppering both sides of the wicket. A majority of her runs came in the arc between cover and midwicket, as she smashed 8 fours and a mammoth 84m six, the longest of the tournament so far.

"We were really pumped up today to come, Shafali batted really well in the powerplay and she got us off to a good start. Towards the end the way Harman batted was brilliant to watch," Mandhana said. "The wicket and conditions are not what we thought it would be when we came to the World Cup, so we had to change our game quite quickly," she added. The last two-three days, thus, have been

about understanding the shots that worked on these pitches, she said. "As a team we spoke about running really hard between the wickets and targeting twos. This is a hard-working wicket. But Harman definitely did not make it look difficult at all, the way she timed the ball was amazing. I think it was not like a flat wicket to bat on. But once you are set, you start seeing the ball well and then you know which areas to target." Sri Lanka needed a big effort from their top three if they stood any chance but they were reduced to 6/3 by the third over, and from there it was just a question of India's victory margin and NRR boost. For Chamari Athapaththu's side — who came into the tournament with plenty of belief — it's been a forgettable outing as their batters have collectively failed to fire. But Harmanpreet and Smriti ensured India adapted to the conditions, finally clicking into top gear as a unit.

## Rinku Singh on batting advice from Gautam Gambhir and Suryakumar Yadav: 'Maarte jao har ball ko'

Rinku Singh says the batting advice from coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Suryakumar Yadav is to "keep hitting". "Coach and captain has asked us to play our game, whatever the situation is. Maarte jao har ball ko (Just keep hitting every ball)," Rinku told reporters. "I have been told to back myself and hit the ball. Gautam bhai has given us the freedom." Rinku Singh scored a blistering 29-ball 53 and put on a superb partnership of 108 runs for the fourth wicket with player of the match Nitish Kumar Reddy in the second T20I against Bangladesh at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in New Delhi. Rinku was not picked for the T20 World Cup and was in the standbys. The southpaw also didn't get much chance to bat during Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) title triumph in the Indian Premier League (IPL). "There was no anxiety. The way team was playing, our matches were getting over early. Important was to win," he said.

Rinku, who is playing as a finisher explains his batting methods when he steps in the field. "My batting order is such that there is no fix time when I will come to bat. When wicket falls early then my plan is to keep the scoreboard ticking with ones and twos and wait for the poor balls to cash in. If when only two and three overs are needed, I try to score as many runs as possible and hit fours and sixes," he said. Rinku Singh, IND vs BAN, India vs Bangladesh, Rinku Singh hits a six in the second T20I match against Bangladesh at Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Wednesday. Rinku, who has been ignored in the earlier rounds of the Duleep Trophy is looking to do well in the Ranji Trophy and considers himself an all



format player. "I will not get enough chance to prepare for the Ranji Trophy match. October 12 is our last match. I will get a couple of days. It is very tough to play red ball after playing the white-ball. When I will go to Lucknow, I will bat more in the nets," he said. "I see myself as a three format player. Jahaan mauka milega wahaan khelenge (wherever I will get the chance I will play)," he added. On the Delhi pitch, Rinku said: "At the start the pitch was bit double paced. Sanju bhai and Surya bhai got out to the balls, which gripped in the surface. When I came out to bat Reddy told me how the pitch is behaving and I batted accordingly.

The wicket improved a lot later. We were talking to build a partnership and punish the poor deliveries. The momentum shifted when Nitish Reddy got that free hit."

## Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura play out terse draw



GNS News Agency, Oct 11

Hikaru Nakamura responds to Magnus Carlsen's statement on no-increment rule "Ultimately, Magnus Carlsen's opinion should not hold as much weight as a casual fan's if we're trying to grow chess for a bigger audience," believes Hikaru Nakamura. (Michal Waluszka/GCL) Hikaru Nakamura and Magnus Carlsen, the world's top two ranked players, played out a 48-move draw as the Alpine SG Pipers defeated the American Gambits in their Global Chess League match up on Wednesday at

the Friends House in London.

Playing with white pieces, Nakamura opted to start with a Nimzo Larsen Attack, pushing his pawn to b3, a hyper-modern opening named after Aron Nimzowitsch and Bent Larsen, which allows the player with white to control the center of the battlefield with a bishop rather than a pawn. In response, Carlsen, who had lost his game to Maxime Vachier-Lagrave yesterday, opted to respond with the Modern Variation: playing e5 and then jumping his knight to provide cover to the solitary pawn from white's bishop. The bloodshed began from the fourth move itself with Carlsen pocketing Nakamura's pawn. By the 29th move, both players had lost their queens, three pawns each and a bunch of minor pieces. But, as expected from a clash between the world's best players, the evaluation bar had its quietest nights of the tournament, never needing to move more than a few millimeters in either direction. Eventually, both players started repeating moves as the game ended in a draw on the 48th move. Meanwhile, Praggnanandhaa defeated Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Elisabeth Paehtz took down Kateryna Lagno to nullify Jonas Buhl Bjerre losing to Daniel Dardha.

## Bangladesh's Taskin Ahmed calls Indian players 'the best in world'

GNS News Agency, Oct 11

New Delhi: Indian players are the best in the world and can bat well in any conditions, said Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed while conceding that batting frailties have let down the visitors in the T20I series, which the hosts lead 2-0 with one match left to play. Bangladesh face a potential series whitewash after losing the second T20I by 86 runs, having lost the first match by 7 wickets. "There is no doubt that they are (the) best in the world, not only in their (home) conditions but all over the world. They are more experienced and better players than us," Taskin told the media on Wednesday

The pace trio of Taskin, Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Mustafizur Rahman outfoxed the Indian top order inside the powerplay, putting Bangladesh in a strong position. However, the spinners couldn't maintain that advantage, allowing the pair of Nitish Kumar Reddy and Rinku Singh to rescue the hosts and get to a formidable total of 221/9. "In the powerplay, we did well, but they

batted well in the end and unfortunately spinners had a bad day. Normally, we don't have these kind of bad days but in T20 anything can happen on any day," Taskin said. "The spinners could not grip the ball as there was dew. We were in the game till the 11th or 12th over and on this wicket, if we had kept them under 180 runs, it was chaseable," said Taskin, who was the pick among the bowlers with 4-0-16-2. In reply, Bangladesh managed a mere 135/9 in their 20 overs, a total that would have been even lower if not for the veteran Mahmudullah's contribution of 41 runs off 39 balls. "We all know the Delhi ground is a high scoring (venue), the average (score) is more than 200. But unfortunately we didn't bat well in both the games (in the series). Both wickets were pretty good to bat but as a team we didn't play to our best potential," he said. "They batted really well till the end. It doesn't matter if a few wickets fell, they were still coming at us and because of the big total (to chase), we tried to hit and lost a couple of wickets early on and also the momentum."