

INDIAN CHRONICLE

15 October, 2024 | Tuesday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:210

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

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Inspired by KTR, Telangana NRI supports poor student's medical education

Hyderabad: Inspired by BRS working president KT Rama Rao, Telangana NRI Dudala Venkat extended financial support to a poor student, B Gowri, from Wanaparthy district, to pursue her MBBS education. Rama Rao along with Venkat's father Ravinder handed over a cheque of Rs 1.65 lakh to Gowri in the presence of her parents at Hyderabad on Monday. Gowri, from Kalvarala village in Veeapanagandla mandal, secured a medical seat but faced difficulties in paying her first-year fee due to her family's poor financial condition. The issue was brought to Rama Rao's attention via social media, and he promptly assured that he would support Gowri's education in his personal capacity.

Heavy Rain Forecast in Andhra Pradesh for 4 Days: Schools Closed in Some Districts

The Indian Meteorological Department has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall across Andhra Pradesh for the next four days. Districts like Bapatla, Prakasam, Nellore, Kurnool, Nandyal, Kadapa, Annamayya, Chittoor, and Tirupati are expected to witness significant rainfall. Meanwhile, moderate showers are likely in parts of Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Kakinada, and Konaseema districts. In response to the weather forecast, the state government has set up control rooms in several districts to monitor the situation and provide assistance if needed. Authorities have urged the public to stay cautious during the heavy downpour.

Delhi CM Atishi calls on PM Modi, first time after taking oath



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Atishi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Monday. This is the first meeting after she became chief minister of Delhi. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) put out just one line on X, saying, "Chief Minister of Delhi, Atishi, called on PM Narendra Modi." Atishi later posted on X, saying, "Called on Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji today. I look forward to full cooperation between the Centre and the Delhi government for the welfare and progress of our capital."

Atishi took over as the chief minister from Aam Aadmi Party supremo Arvind Kejriwal on September 17. However, she took charge on September 25 drawing parallels between her leadership transition and the epic Ramayana, likening her situation to Bharat's refusal to sit on Lord Ram's throne, highlighting her personal connection and loyalty to Kejriwal. She pointed to the media the empty chair and said that this will remain vacant till Kejriwal returns to power.

Atishi is the third woman to become Chief Minister of Delhi and also the youngest to hold the top post. Her succession to the CM post followed Kejriwal's resignation as the Chief Minister after his bail in the liquor policy scam by the Supreme Court. Atishi, who represents Delhi's Kalkaji constituency, is not only the third woman to serve as Delhi's Chief Minister but also the youngest to hold the position. Her tenure began amid tensions between the AAP-led Delhi government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre. One of the recent flashpoints has been the controversy over the allotment of the Chief Minister's residence, Sheesh Mahal, and projections from the Finance Ministry suggesting Delhi is facing a revenue deficit for the first time in its history.

Kishan Reddy demands stringent action over vandalism of temples



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Hyderabad: Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy on Monday voiced concern over a series of incidents of desecration of Hindu temples in Hyderabad and demanded the Telangana government to take stringent action against the culprits.

Kishan Reddy condemned the vandalism of the idol at Muthyalamma temple in Secunderabad. Talking to reporters after visiting the temple, he alleged that the state government was trying to cover up the incidents by terming them the handiwork of mentally unstable individuals or thieves. Kishan Reddy, who is a Lok Sabha member from Secunderabad constituency, said a person attacked the Muthyalamma temple in Kurmagutta around 4 a.m. He alleged that a deliberate attempt was being made for the last few days by some communal elements to damage Hindu temples. He referred to the vandalism of the Durga idol at the Exhibition Grounds four days ago. "Whenever such incidents are happening, the police are saying that the persons involved came for theft or they were mentally unstable. In today's incident, the man did not come for theft. He came from some other place to attack the temple," he said. He demanded that the state government take stringent action against those involved and provide protection to temples.

Kishan Reddy, who is also the state BJP president, said he spoke to Police Commissioner C.V. Anand. He said he would take the issue to the notice of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and if necessary make a representation to the Governor. State BJP has condemned Monday's incident in Secunderabad. "Another attack on a Hindu Temple — not in Bangladesh or Pakistan but in Hyderabad, Telangana. Two Non-Hindu men enter the Matha Muthyalamma Temple located in Secunderabad & desecrated the Vighram inside the temple, Incidents in Chandrayangutta, Nampally and now Secunderabad — highlight an alarming rise in attacks on Hindu temples since the Congress party's return to power in Telangana," reads a post by the state BJP's official handle on X. "The administration remains a mute spectator as Congress govt in an effort to safeguard its 'vote bank' is shielding the perpetrators."

Free Fortified Rice for a Healthier India

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

"There was a time when India's food security was a global concern, today India is providing solutions for global food and nutrition security" - Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During India's 75th Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the need to combat malnutrition, underscoring that every citizen, especially the underprivileged, deserves access to nutritious food for a healthier, stronger India. In line with this vision, committed to ensuring the holistic nutritional well-being of the people, the Union Cabinet recently gave its approval to distribute fortified rice under all government schemes. It marks a significant milestone in realizing the Prime Minister's vision for a malnutrition-free India.

The Cabinet has taken a pivotal decision to extend the universal supply of fortified rice under all government welfare schemes, including the



Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), from July 2024 until December 2028. It approved of the implementation of the Rice Fortification initiative under the various schemes of the government as a central sector initiative to be 100% funded by the Government of India. The existing mechanism of meeting the cost towards the supply of fortified rice as a part of PMGKAY (Food Subsidy) under the already approved allocation of ₹11,79,859 crore of the PMGKAY Scheme has been given go-ahead. This initiative aims to provide vulnerable populations

GDP terms. Since the launch of the rice fortification pilot scheme in 15 states in 2020, the programme has seen significant progress. Between 2019-20 and March 31, 2024, approximately 406 lakh metric tonnes of fortified rice were distributed through the PDS, enhancing the nutritional intake of millions across the country.

In February 2016, the MoWCD (Ministry of Women and Child Development) highlighted rice fortification to combat malnutrition and anaemia, focusing on children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, with involvement from key stakeholders like Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Food Corporation of India (FCI), National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). A task force by the Ministry recommended mandatory rice fortification in government programs via FCI, with phased implementation in May 2016. In March 2024,

According to the World Health Organization's meta-analysis, rice fortification can reduce the risk of iron deficiency by 35%. With an estimated annual outlay of Rs 2,565 crore, this initiative has the potential to avert 16.6 million Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per year, resulting in healthcare savings equivalent to Rs 49,800 crore in

EAM Jaishankar set to arrive in Pakistan on Tuesday to attend SCO meeting

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Lahore: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is set to land in Pakistan on Tuesday to attend a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), in the first high-level visit from India in years amid continuing strain in ties between the two neighbours. Shortly after he arrives in Islamabad, the external affairs minister is likely to attend a banquet reception hosted by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to welcome the delegates from the SCO member nations, people familiar with the matter said. Both sides have already ruled out any bilateral talks between Jaishankar and his Pakistan counterpart Ishaq Dar on the sidelines of the SCO heads of government summit. It will be for the first time in nearly nine years that India's foreign minister will travel to Pakistan, even as the ties between the two neighbours remain frosty over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. It is learnt that Jaishankar will stay in Pakistan for less than 24 hours.

Pakistan is hosting the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting on October 15 and 16. The last Indian Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan was Sushma Swaraj. She had travelled to Islamabad in December 2015 to attend a conference on Afghanistan. In August, Pakistan invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the SCO summit. Jaishankar's visit to Pakistan assumes significance as it is seen as a significant decision on New Delhi's part. In his recent address at an event, Jaishankar said, "Like with any neighbour, India would certainly like to have good relations with Pakistan." "But that cannot happen by overlooking cross-border terrorism and indulging in wishful thinking." The decision to send the senior minister is seen as a display of India's commitment to the SCO. The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-



Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack. The relations further deteriorated after India announced the withdrawal of special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and the bifurcation of the state into two union territories on August 5, 2019. Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties with India after New Delhi abrogated Article 370. India has been maintaining that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan while insisting that the onus is on Islamabad to create an environment free of terror and hostility for such engagement. Pakistan's then foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited India in May 2023 to attend an in-person meeting of the foreign ministers of SCO nations in Goa.

Karnataka Home Minister defends withdrawal of Hubballi riot cases

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Parameshwara stated that the BJP, when in power, had similarly withdrawn cases, in states governed by it. "Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had cases against him and withdrew them while serving as the Chief Minister. So, what is the BJP accusing us of?" Parameshwara questioned. Apart from the Hubballi case, we have also withdrawn cases related to protests by farmers, students, and the general public, Home Minister Parameshwara clarified. He further stated that the withdrawal process was done within the legal framework. If the court approves, the cases will be withdrawn; otherwise, they will continue.

"We received 56 cases, of which 43 have been withdrawn. These cases are not solely related to minorities. There are cases where farmers, students, and common people protested at various times. All these cases have been withdrawn. If only the Hubballi case or 43 cases related to minorities had been withdrawn, then we could accept the allegations made by the BJP. But that's not the

case. We have to treat everything equally," he said. "There is a process to withdraw cases. They have submitted petitions claiming that false cases were filed, improper sections were imposed, or different incidents were registered as cases. To review these, a cabinet sub-committee has been formed, usually chaired by the Home Minister. We forward the petitions we receive to the department, which reviews the FIRs registered at the police station and any lapses in evidence collection before presenting them to the sub-committee."

He mentioned that the sub-committee is discussing the cases, including the Hubballi case, where a petition was also submitted. "The necessity of filing cases against so many people was debated, and the cabinet decided to withdraw them," he said. "We must inform the court, and if the court agrees, the case can be withdrawn; otherwise, it cannot. We must proceed cautiously at every stage. It cannot be done simply because someone says so," he said. "We cannot blindly approve the withdrawal of cases. Neither I nor the Chief Minister can make decisions on our own."

BRS opposes Navy Radar Station; KTR demands Damagundam forest be declared eco-sensitive zone



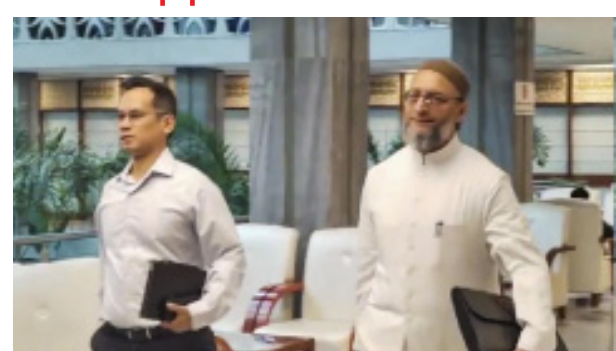
GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao announced that the party was opposed to the establishment of the proposed Very Low Frequency (VLF) radar station for the Indian Navy in the Damagundam forest area of Vikarabad district. He said his party, in association with environmentalists, would continue to fight against the project, which threatens the environment and endangers the Musi River, a vital water source in the region.

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, along with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, is slated to lay the foundation for the construction works of the proposed radar station on Tuesday. In a statement, Rama Rao questioned the State government's contradictory stance, expressing surprise that while plans for a Rs.1.5 lakh crore Musi River beautification project were in motion, the same government was supporting a radar project that could cause irreversible damage to the river's source. He demanded that the Damagundam forest, where the Musi originates, be declared an "Eco Sensitive Zone" to protect it from harmful development. He emphasised the need to safeguard Telangana's natural heritage and the Musi River for future generations.

"Why is a radar station being set up in Telangana's dense forests, endangering not just 2,900 acres of land, but also 12 lakh trees and also Musi River's origination point?" he asked, highlighting the severe environmental damage that would result from the project. He criticised Revanth Reddy for backing the foundation laying of the radar station, stating that the Congress government was betraying Telangana's interests for unclear benefits.

Waqf committee meeting boycotted by opposition MPs



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi with Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi arrives for a Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024, in New Delhi, on October 14, 2024. Several opposition MPs on Monday (October 14, 2024) boycotted a meeting of the parliamentary committee examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, alleging that the panel is not functioning in accordance with rules and regulations.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, FAROOQ KHAN S/O MOHAMMED MUSTAFA KHAN (old name) born on 20-08-1982 at Adilabad earlier was Holding Passport No. Y3436816 DT: 11-06-2024 hereby changing my Name and henceforth in future I would be known as MOHAMMED FAROOQ KHAN S/O MOHAMMED MUSTAFA KHAN (new name) H.No. 2-5-805, Tirpally, Adilabad-504001, Telangana State.

DECLARANT.
MOHAMMED FAROOQ KHAN
S/O MOHAMMED MUSTAFA KHAN
Place: Adilabad
Date: 13-10-2024

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

A bitter defeat

THE Congress is showing all signs of a sore loser following its decisive defeat in the Haryana Assembly elections. The party has let its narrative slip, failing to build on the momentum from the earlier parliamentary successes. But, rather than accepting the people's mandate and honouring India's post-Independence tradition of smooth transitions, the Congress has chosen to indulge in an unproductive blame game. Accusing the incumbent BJP-led government of manipulating electronic voting machines (EVMs), it filed an official complaint with the Election Commission. Such an unprecedented move reeks of little more than arrogance and desperation.

Fortunately, a glimmer of pragmatism has prevailed. The Congress has since toned down its EVM accusations, opting to pause the line of attack until it gathers "enough evidence." However, other developments following the results point to deeper challenges for the grand old party. Rather than addressing the in-fighting that likely contributed to its downfall, the Congress seems poised to let its divisions deepen. Key figures in the Haryana unit, such as Bhupinder Hooda and Kumari Selja, were conspicuously absent from the high-command meeting convened to discuss the devastating loss. The long-standing feud between these two leaders exemplifies the toxic factionalism that plagued the Congress' election campaign, undermining the party's strength on the ground. To make matters worse, Rahul Gandhi has distanced himself from responsibility. He has, instead, attributed the loss to the self-interest of local leaders, accusing them of placing personal ambitions above party goals. While these allegations may hold some water, deflecting blame without introspection will only perpetuate the fractures within the party.

IAF successfully holds trial run at Navi Mumbai airport, operations set to begin in March 2025



The trial run, conducted between 11 am and 2 pm on Friday, took place in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Cooperation, Murlidhar Mohol.

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Navi Mumbai IAF trial These tests followed the commissioning of the Instrument Landing System (ILS) at NMIA, which is crucial for ensuring the airport's operational readiness. Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), set to begin operations in March 2025, witnessed its first aircraft landing on Friday, October 11 as part of a trial run conducted by the Indian Air Force (IAF). The trial included the landing and takeoff of IAF aircraft, including an Airbus C295 transport aircraft and a Sukhoi fighter jet, as a key part of the runway testing ahead of the airport's official launch.

The trial run, conducted between 11 am and 2 pm on Friday, took place in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Cooperation, Murlidhar Mohol. CIDCO chairman Sanjay Shirsat was also in attendance along with other dignitaries. The event had been initially scheduled for October 5 but was later postponed. Speaking to the media, Shinde said, "The trial run at NMIA, coinciding with Dussehra, is a significant gift from the Mahayuti government to the public. The airport will surely be India's no. 1 airport, with an annual capacity of 9 crore passengers. We also have plans to connect Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport with NMIA through a metro link, as well as terminal-to-terminal connectivity for passenger convenience." Shinde praised the NMIA team for their expedited work and referred to newly appointed CIDCO Shirsat as a "lucky muse" for the project. He assured that the airport will be completed by the March deadline, if not sooner. These tests followed the commissioning of the Instrument Landing System (ILS) at NMIA, which is crucial for ensuring the airport's operational readiness. The ILS system assists pilots in making precise landings by providing horizontal and vertical guidance through radio beacons. Earlier attempts to test the ILS in July and August had been delayed due to heavy rains.

During the trial, a few flights into Mumbai were expected to face delays of 30 minutes to an hour to accommodate the turboprop aircraft conducting the ILS tests at Navi Mumbai. However, the flights at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport were not affected, according to officials. Meanwhile, Maharashtra Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the cyber police headquarters at Mahape, Navi Mumbai. Addressing the press at that event, he said, "We are pleased to announce the successful trial landings at NMIA, a milestone for our government's dream project. This development is expected to boost the GDP of the MMR, benefit passengers, and increase cargo movements. Following these tests, the airport will be made available to the public as soon as possible."

8-year-old mauled by street dog, bitten twice on head in Chandigarh



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

An eight-year-old boy fought for his life after being viciously mauled by a street dog near his residence in Sector 47, Chandigarh. The child was bitten multiple times on his head and left arm, and the attack only stopped when his father rushed to his rescue, causing the dog to flee. According to Roshan Lal, he was parking the car near their residence when Girik stepped out to walk the short distance to their home. The father and son duo had returned after watching Ramleela in Sector 46.

"It was hardly fifty feet from the residence. Suddenly,

a dog came out of nowhere and viciously attacked Girik," Lal told s.Girik, already vulnerable with a fractured right arm from an earlier fall, was unable to defend himself. "He couldn't fight much due to his fractured arm. The dog pulled him down, and before I could react to his screams, it had already bitten him twice on the head and on his left arm," Lal recounted. Roshan immediately rushed to his son's aid. "Had I not acted quickly, the situation could have been much worse. The dog ran off when it saw me approaching, but by then, my son's head was bleeding profusely," he added.

The child was rushed to a local hospital for treatment. "He sustained two wounds on his head—one measuring 7.5 cm and the other 3.5 cm. He was also bitten on his left arm," said Roshan. Initially, Girik, a student of Class 3 at the Government Model Senior Secondary School in Sector 47, was referred to the Sector 32 hospital, but according to Roshan, the hospital did not take the matter seriously. "We took him to the Sector 45 hospital instead, where he received proper treatment," Roshan informed. The family has since lodged a Daily Diary Report (DDR) and informed the Medical Officer of the Municipal Corporation's health wing. Despite the severity of the attack, the street dog remains at large in the sector, causing concern among local residents.

Karnataka Cabinet withdraws cases on Hubli riots, provocative speech by former BJP MLA Renukacharya, among others



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The Karnataka Cabinet Thursday withdrew a total of 60 cases – including the 2022 Hubli riot case, the case of provocative speech against minorities by former BJP MLA M P Renukacharya, and the assault on a girl student from a minority group by two of her seniors – filed against various people. Cases registered against farmer leaders for various protests, including the one held against the controversial farm laws passed by the Union Government were also withdrawn.

The Hubli riot case was related to a derogatory post against a minority faith by an individual, who was nabbed by the police following the incident in 2022. According to the FIR, a large group had arrived at the police station following his arrest and demanded that the accused be

handed over to them. During the melee, stones were pelted at the police station due to which a tense situation had prevailed in the city. The case was withdrawn following a petition by the members of a relief committee constituted under Anjuman-E-Islam, Hubli, and D B Chalawady, president of the association of various Dait organisations, old Hubli. The case against Renukacharya was filed in 2020, after the former BJP MLA at a public event had accused minorities of hoarding weapons and cultivating a 'culture of terrorism'. Renukacharya had also said that he would divert the funds meant for minority neighbourhoods, triggering a row.

Another controversial case was related to the assault on a girl from a minority community, pursuing her graduation in Arts by two male B Com students, who pulled her Hijab during the pro- and anti-Hijab protests in 2022. The incident that took place at Harihar in Davanagere district had stoked communal tensions in the region. The Cabinet also decided to withdraw a 2022 case at Aland, Kalaburagi district, filed against a pro-Hijab protest under AIMIM leader Zaheeruddin Ansari. Other cases withdrawn include one where the police were assaulted during the protests against farm laws at Gadag in 2020. In another case, stones were pelted at police officials during a Valmiki Jayanthi celebration near Mysuru in 2019. The Cabinet also withdrew the cases filed against the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation employee association for protests carried out in 2021 demanding a hike in wages, among others.

Diabetic retinopathy screening guidelines will help prevent irreversible vision loss: Pune doctor

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

diabetic retinopathy (RSSDI) along with Vitreo Retinal Society of India (VRSI) have collaborated to formulate these screening guidelines which will help doctors educate their patients regarding diabetic retinopathy. As the first-of-its-kind diabetic retinopathy screening guidelines were released on Thursday, Pune-based Dr Sanjay Agarwal, said that diabetic retinopathy, if left untreated, can cause severe and often irreversible vision loss. "These guidelines will play a key role in increasing awareness among general physicians and diabetologists about the critical need for timely diabetic retinopathy screening," Dr Agarwal, secretary general, Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI), told The Indian Express. RSSDI along with Vitreo Retinal Society of India (VRSI) have collaborated to formulate these screening guidelines which will help doctors educate their patients regarding diabetic retinopathy.

The guidelines recommend that individuals with Type 2 diabetes undergo screening for diabetic retinopathy at the time of diagnosis. According to the International Society of Paediatric and adolescent diabetes (ISPAD) guidelines in Type 1 diabetes, it is recommended to start DR screening after 11 years of age with 2-5 years of duration of diabetes. With a national prevalence of 12.5 per cent of diabetic retinopathy and 4 per cent of vision-threatening 'Diabetic Retinopathy', approximately 3 million Indians are at a risk of vision loss. This highlights the critical need for timely screening of every patient with diabetes to prevent an irreversible loss of vision, which goes undetected in its early stage. He added that this initiative aims to empower healthcare professionals—often



the first point of contact for those living with diabetes—the with the tools and knowledge necessary to promote early detection and intervention, ultimately reducing the risk of severe vision impairment and blindness caused due to diabetic retinopathy. For women with known diabetes who are planning to conceive, it is crucial to assess their risk of developing DR. Therefore, it is recommended that they undergo their first screening for DR prior to conception. Additionally, it is advised for these women to have a follow-up screening during the first trimester of pregnancy to monitor any changes in their retinal health. Dr Sudha Chandrashekar, former executive director, National Health Authority – Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Dr R Kim, president, VRSI, Dr Manisha Agarwal, general secretary, VRSI, Dr Rakesh Sahay, president, RSSDI, and others were present at the launch event in Delhi.

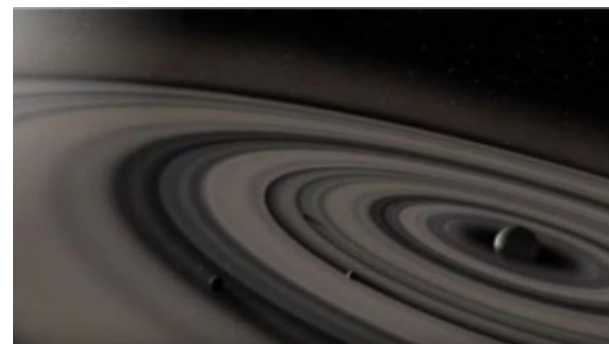
Top PMO official expresses concern over slow pace of clearing Delhi's landfills



GNS News Agency, Oct 14 While reviewing measures to curb air pollution in Delhi, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, P K Mishra on Friday expressed concern over the slow progress in clearing landfill sites in the national capital. The three landfills at Bhalaswa, Okhla and Ghazipur were meant to be cleared by 2026 as a

part of the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 which was launched in 2021, however, the deadline has been pushed back. Chairing a meeting of the high-level task force to combat air pollution, Mishra "expressed concern over slow pace of clearance of landfill sites in Delhi and delays in implementation of waste to energy plans by MCD", an official statement said. Mishra asked the Union Environment and Housing & Urban Affairs Ministries and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to resolve the issues. The meeting was attended by officials from the Delhi government, Union Housing and Urban Affairs and Environment ministries, Delhi Police, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Development Authority, New Delhi Municipal Council and the Commission for Air Quality Management. Delhi Chief Secretary Dharmendra presented a report on the air quality management efforts made in 2024, highlighting that construction dust, burning of biomass and vehicular emissions continue to be the key sources of pollution in the winter.

Moon to eclipse Saturn next week; here's how you can



On the night of October 14, the Moon will come directly between the Earth and the ringed planet Saturn, Arvind Paranjypte, Director, Nehru Planetarium, Nehru Centre said on Friday. "This occultation of Saturn by the Moon will be visible from India. It can be seen with the naked eye, but a pair of binoculars or a small telescope will be most helpful. If you have a good telescope, the event will be most enjoyable. The event will take place about half an hour after midnight on October 14," Paranjypte said in a statement issued on Friday. In astronomical terminology, occultation occurs when one astronomical object hides the other. One is advised to observe the Moon and Saturn from about 11.30 pm on October 14. Saturn will be to the East of the Moon. As time progresses, the separation between the two will be seen reducing. Then, at some point, Saturn will start disappearing behind the Moon. After about an hour, Saturn can be seen coming out from behind the Moon.

Gangster module busted in Punjab's Mohali, 4 held



GNS News Agency, Oct 14 In a joint operation, the Punjab Police's Anti Gangster Task Force and the local police in Mohali busted a gangster module and arrested four men, including three Rajasthan-based illegal weapon suppliers. The police identified one of the arrested accused as Navjot Singh alias Jota and said that he had 21 cases of heinous crimes registered against him. In a major breakthrough against organised crime, Anti Gangster Task Force (#AGTF) in a joint-operation with SAS Nagar Police busts a gangster-module and apprehends 3 #Rajasthan-based illegal weapon suppliers and a key associate, Navjot Singh @ Jota. "The module was backed by foreign-based radicalised gangsters Paviter #USA & Manjinder #France," Gaurav Yadav, Punjab Director General of Police (DGP), said in a post on X. A consignment with an automatic pistol, pistol and eight live cartridges was recovered, he added. "Navjot Singh @ Jota was tasked to eliminate a recently bailed out rival gangster by his foreign-based handlers. The three arrested Rajasthan-based weapon suppliers have a criminal history," DGP Yadav further said in his post.

Pune police arrest 1 accused in Bopdev Ghat gang rape case

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

pune bopdev ghat gang rape case "A search is on for two more accused, they have been identified," a police officer said. The Pune police on Friday arrested an accused in the Bopdev Ghat gang rape case where a 21-year-old woman was allegedly raped by three men while she was out with her friend.

Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar confirmed the arrest in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at a programme being held at the Shivaji Nagar police headquarters. "A search is on for two more accused, they have been identified," a police officer said. The incident took place on October 3 and was reported the next day. According to the police, the woman and her 22-year-old friend, both college students who do not hail from Pune, went to the Bopdev Ghat area on a motorcycle. At around 11 pm, three men came to the spot on their bikes and allegedly threatened them. The accused allegedly tied the man up with a rope, dragged the woman to an isolated area and gang-raped her.

HMWSSB warns of strict action against anyone trying to encroach its land

GNS News Agency, Oct 14 Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has warned of strict action against anyone attempting to encroach on its land and premises.

According to a press release issued here on Friday, when the water board officials sought to fence their 8072 square meters land in Mahindra Hills, a local person resisted claiming the land to be theirs. The water board senior officials too were confronted when they along with vigilance team, went to inspect the site.

Following this, the HMWSSB registered a complaint with police and the mandal revenue officials who inspected the land and confirmed that it belonged to the water board. Meanwhile, a criminal case was registered against a person who illegally collected money from a tanker driver working under the water board. According to a press release, Arra Saikumar alias Sairam claiming to be working in the vigilance department called a private tanker driver and demanded Rs.20,000 on the pretext that the tanker was working against the rules of the board. Later he collected Rs.3,000 thousand from the driver.

3 stubble-burning cases reported in Delhi ahead of winter



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Data from the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute shows that five stubble-burning cases were reported in Delhi in 2023, 10 in 2022, four in 2021, and nine in 2020.

However, at present, the contribution of stubble burning to air pollution is only 2 per cent and the transport sector is the major pollutant with 11 times more contribution at 22 per cent, according to data from the Decision Support System for Air Quality Management in the

capital. According to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee's air quality index (AQI) monitors and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), at 1 pm on Friday, the station that logged the worst quality air was Anand Vihar with an AQI of 343, in the 'very poor' category, closely followed by Mundka with an AQI of 205 in the 'poor' category. The IMD has forecast mainly clear skies on Friday, and partly cloudy skies in the next five days. The maximum temperature will be around 34 degrees Celsius and minimum at 21 degrees Celsius, as per the forecast. The minimum temperature on Friday was a notch below normal at 20.3 degrees Celsius, the IMD said. The stubble-burning cases were reported on a day when Delhi recorded an AQI of 132 in the 'moderate' category. North-westerly winds with speeds of 6-14 kmph dominated the weather landscape of the city as per the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune. According to its forecast outlook, the wind pattern is expected to continue, influencing air quality over the next few days. The air quality is likely to remain moderate, with winds shifting to west-northwest directions at speeds of 4-12 kmph. It is likely to fluctuate between moderate and poor, IITM, Pune, said in its long-term outlook for six days.

From Gwalior to Bengal, Jaipur markets bring in artists as they compete for best Diwali decorations

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

From Ayodhya temple to the 'Rising Rajasthan' investment summit, theme-based decorations and lighting are the flavour of the month as Jaipur market associations prepare for major Diwali celebrations across the Walled City. With Jaipur Municipal Corporation holding its annual contest for best market decorations, market associations around the city have decided to opt for different themes this year. Markets will be lit up from October 28 to November 5. For instance, Johari Bazaar is basing its decorations on the Ayodhya temple, with special artists being called from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh. Said Vypaar Mandal president Kailash Mittal: "Through our decorations, we'll pay our tribute to Lord Ram and at the same time, make it exciting for the public to visit the market. Colorful lights will be installed all over the market with special effects".

Not to be outdone, Chandpol Vapaar Mandal is going patriotic, opting for electric candles in the Tricolour. Here too, artists have been brought in from Bengal. "We'll install thousands of candle electric lamps all over the market. Then a Tricolour charka will be installed on every pole of the market. Artists from Bengal have already started work. We'll also put posters of Swachh Rajasthan messages all over the market and there will be a grand 'Swagat Dwaar' (welcome entrances) at Chandpole Gate," said Chandpol Vypaar Mandal president Shubash Goyal.

The market association of MI Road – one of the largest markets in Jaipur – will have six 'Swagat Dwaars':



one each at Ajmeri Gate and Government Hostel and four at Panch Batti. "More than 200 poles are being installed for lighting and decoration. Moreover, MI Road traders have decided to promote Rising Rajasthan themes in which they will put posters and banners of heritage places of Rajasthan and would motivate people to invest in the state," MI Road market president Suresh Saini said, referring to the Rising Rajasthan global investment summit that will be held in Jaipur from December 9-11. Rising Rajasthan will also be the theme for Jayanti market, the biggest electronic market in the city. While markets such as Chaura Rasta, Babu Bazar, Radio market are not opting for themed decorations, others such as Kishanpole, Hawa Mahal market, Chandi ki Taksal, and Sanjay Bazar are still to decide on their themes. Meanwhile, a public Laxmi Poojan will also be held at Choti Chaupar, attended by all market associations of the Walled City as well as some of the city's MLAs.

Mahadev app case 'kingpin' Saurabh Chandrakar arrested in Dubai, month after CBI takes over

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The arrest came after the Central Bureau Investigation (CBI) took over the probe in August and followed an Interpol red notice to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest Chandrakar. Confirming the development, Enforcement Directorate's (ED) counsel Saurabh Kumar Pandey told The Indian Express the process to arrest Chandrakar began on September 4 when a special court in Raipur issued a non-bailable warrant against him and Uppal. "This warrant was used to issue a red corner notice based on which he (Chandrakar) has been arrested. Yesterday (Friday), we approached the special court again to receive the necessary documents to complete the extradition process. Now, this document will be sent to the respective court in Dubai. On our part, we'll be sending this document to the central government," he said.

First having come to the light under the Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government, the Mahadev betting app is an online betting platform that enabled illegal gambling on various games, including poker, card games, and cricket, and even extended to placing bets on Indian elections. According to the ED, which has been investigating the case since 2022, the Dubai-based Saurabh Chandrakar, a former juice seller, and his accomplice Ravi Uppal are promoters and "kingpins" in the case. The agency has also alleged the involvement of various high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh, including former chief minister Bhupesh Baghel. The case had become a major political flash-point



between the then ruling Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with both parties leveling allegations against each other for shielding Chandrakar and Uppal. In its first Prosecution Complaint last October, a total of 14 accused had been booked in the case – including the app's promoters Chandrakar and Uppal. In November, the ED alleged that Chandrakar and Uppal paid bribes of Rs 508 crore to Baghel and mentioned the former CM in its supplementary chargesheet filed in January this year. However, Baghel has yet been named as an accused in ED's case. On his part, former CM Baghel has denied any involvement, claiming he was being "targeted as part of a political conspiracy." "The ED, at the behest of its political masters, is arresting people fraudulently and pressuring them to give statements against me and my colleagues. The allegations of money transactions made in these statements have no basis," Baghel said in January.

Around 150 militants waiting at launchpads across LoC: BSF officer

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Around 150 militants are waiting at launchpads across the Line of Control (LoC) to infiltrate into the Kashmir valley as winter approaches, but security forces would foil any such bid, a senior BSF officer said on Friday. "Attempts of infiltration continue to take place. Based on the intelligence inputs we receive from various agencies, we coordinate with the army to establish a domination plan along the border." "We also keep in mind the number of terrorists at the launching pads, which helps us shape our strategy and domination plan to ensure we foil any plans," BSF Inspector General (Kashmir Frontier) Ashok Yadav told reporters here. He said the security forces would ensure any infiltration attempt is thwarted. Asked how many militants were waiting at terror launchpads now, he said, "The number of terrorists at the launching pads usually varies between 130 and 150, at times it may be slightly higher." On the challenges after conducting peaceful assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Yadav said the security forces coordinated closely with the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the administration to ensure fair and peaceful polls.

"There were numerous threat inputs, but with our well-coordinated domination plan, we prevented any attack, and the elections were successful." "Now, with winter approaching, preparations are in place. Before winter sets in, terrorists often attempt infiltration, and we are dominating the area accordingly," he said, adding there are inputs about possible infiltration attempts along the LoC. Asked about the volatile West Asia situation having any impact in the Valley, the IG BSF said while the security forces do not have specific inputs on militants trying to take advantage of the crises "we keep these international developments in our analysis and factor them into our operational plans". On a question about narcoterrorism, Yadav said narcotics comes in from across the LoC and is a good source for terror financing. "There are some villages along the LoC, some vulnerable patches like Tangdhar and Keran sectors, but we have deployed mobile bunkers and women troopers as well because there were inputs that they might use some women as couriers, to stop the inflow of narcotics. There has been huge impact and we have been successful in bringing it down to a large extent," he added. The BSF officer said

Odisha is looking beyond temple tourism. So what will the state focus on next?



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

temple tourism, odisha temple tourism, puri temple tourism, temple tourism, puri temples, Jagannath Temple, Odisha government, Nirmala Sitharaman, Indian express news, current affairs. The plan comes after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced special assistance for the development of the tourism sector in Odisha. Identifying potential tourism clusters beyond the traditional circuit, roping in private players to develop properties, and attracting high-end tourists to the state are among the new focus areas of the Odisha government as it prepares a special plan to make the state a tourism hub. The plan comes after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced special assistance for the development of the tourism sector in Odisha. "Odisha's scenic beauty, temples, monuments, craftsmanship, wildlife sanctuaries, natural landscapes and pristine beaches make it an ultimate tourism destination. Our government will provide assistance for their development," Sitharaman had announced in the Union Budget.

Among the potential locations identified for development include Hirakud, the longest earthen dam in the world, which stands across the Mahanadi river; the Satkosia gorge, carved by Mahanadi; Bhitarkanika, India's second-largest mangrove ecosystem after the

Sunderbans; Deomali, Odisha's highest mountain peak; the Buddhist circuit; tribal areas; and beaches like Gopalpur and Talsari. "Compared to other states, Odisha draws fewer tourists and those who come are largely concentrated in Puri, Konark, and Bhubaneswar – the state's most popular tourism circuit. Tourists come to these places for religious tourism, visiting the Puri Jagannath Temple, the Konark Temple and the Lingaraj Temple," a tourism department official said. While "high-end" tourists also visit these places, they mostly don't stay due to a lack of adequate accommodation facilities and other basic infrastructure. "It's high time we address those issues to attract high-spending tourists to the state," the official said. Considering the state's vast scope for nature tourism, including long beaches, mountains, lagoons, and wildlife sanctuaries, sources said the government is now looking at developing such largely untapped locations.

According to officials, in accordance with the Centre's assurance of support to the state with special assistance for tourism development, the state government will soon submit a report specifying areas that need to be addressed. It is likely to revisit the tourism policy prepared by the previous BJD government in 2022. Officials said the government cannot develop the tourism sector on its own, and needs to rope in private players to develop good properties near potential tourism locations as well as market the state's tourism potential to the national and international audience. The state's plan also includes involving local communities. Though Odisha has seen a steady growth in the arrival of domestic tourists, with over 1 crore footfall recorded in 2023, the state has failed to find a place in the itinerary of foreign tourists coming to India. According to state Tourism Department data, the number of domestic tourists in 2020 was 46.32 lakh, while in 2021, it was 37.44 lakh, and in 2022, it was 78.90 lakh. The number of foreign tourists was 10,206 in 2020, 2,269 in 2021 and 22,121 in 2022.

Puducherry SSP becomes first IPS officer to win gold at Commonwealth powerlifting

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

While sitting through long-drawn meetings on law and order in Puducherry, IPS officer Anita Roy would turn to her diary to jot down the words – "I will win". So she did, at the Commonwealth international classic bench press competition held in South Africa's Sun City on October 4. At 46, Roy became the first IPS officer to bag the gold medal in this powerlifting competition by lifting 70 kg. She competed and won among competitors from 43 countries. The rare honour has not come at the cost of her profession, the woman IPS officer, posted as SSP Puducherry, says, adding there's "always time to care for fitness" even in the middle of hectic work-life schedules. It was in 2019 that Roy started strength training. However, she contracted Coronavirus in 2021 and was quarantined. "I realised that the most important thing in life was to stay healthy. I decided to concentrate greatly on fitness and competitive training," she said. In 2022, she won the Delhi state level powerlifting championship. When she thought her lifting career would sail through, she sustained a knee injury. "This made me realise that I will not be able to squat and deadlift. I started concentrating on bench press," she said. In 2023 she won the National bench press championship held in Bengaluru to be nominated to the world bench press championship held in Texas. She didn't win a medal because of a "technical flaw" in her lift. Life, however, had other plans as she lost



her father to cancer in 2023. "This was a major blow and I almost gave up on my lifting career," she said, adding, "Mental focus is absolutely necessary to compete in powerlifting." She continued to lift weights to make her widowed mother Sumitra Roy smile, she said. "When I won in the commonwealth bench press, she was the first one to congratulate me. I think my victory also brought back joy in her life," she said. "I was posted in the most difficult of positions from the very start of my policing career. So when I started competing, I made sure that I trained everyday, even if it were late at night," Roy said. "I wanted to convey a message to women who have crossed their 40s that there is always time to care for oneself," Roy said.

Hizb-ut-Tahrir banned, MHA says group intends to 'establish caliphate'

Hizb-ut-Tahrir, HuT, Hizbul, Hizb-ut-Tahrir banned, mha, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Indian express news, current affairs. In a notification, the MHA said the HuT is involved in radicalisation and motivation of gullible youth to join terrorist organisations, such as ISIS, and raising funds for terror activities. The Centre on Thursday banned Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT), a global pan-Islamic group set up in Jerusalem in 1953, under UAPA, saying that the organisation aims to establish Islamic state and caliphate globally, including in India, through jihad and terrorist activities. In a notification, the MHA said the HuT is involved in radicalisation and motivation of gullible youth to join terrorist organisations, such as ISIS, and raising funds for terror activities.

The ban will be effective on HuT and all its manifestations and front organisations. Later, Union Home Minister Amit Shah's office said on X, "Pursuing PM Shri @narendramodi Ji's policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism, the MHA today declared 'Hizb-Ut-Tahrir' as a 'Terrorist Organisation'. The outfit is involved in various acts of terror, including radicalising the gullible youths to join terrorist organisations and raise funds for terror activities, posing a serious threat to the national security and sovereignty of India. The Modi government is committed to securing Bharat by dealing the forces of terror with an iron fist." "The HuT is promoting terrorism by using various social media platforms and secure apps, and by con-



ducting 'Dawah' meetings to encourage gullible youth to indulge in acts of terrorism," the MHA notification said. "The HuT is an organisation which aims to establish Islamic state and caliphate globally, including in India, by overthrowing democratically elected governments through jihad and terrorist activities by involving citizens of the country, which is a grave threat to the democratic setup and internal security of the country," it states.

In August, The Indian Express had reported that two months after the Chennai police arrested six alleged sympathisers of the HuT, including two brothers and their father, the NIA registered a fresh FIR against them for allegedly holding secret meetings to spread their ideology to establish "Islamic rule" in India.

HMWSSB warns of strict action against anyone trying to encroach its land

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has warned of strict action against anyone attempting to encroach on its land and premises. According to a press release issued here on Friday, when the water board officials sought to fence their 8072 square meters land in Mahindra Hills, a local person resisted claiming the land to be theirs. The water board senior officials too were confronted when they along with vigilance team, went to inspect the site.

Following this, the HMWSSB registered a complaint with police and the mandal revenue officials who inspected the land and confirmed that it belonged to the water board. Meanwhile, a criminal case was registered against a person who illegally collected money from a tanker driver working under the water board.



Post Haryana results, Telangana government under pressure to deliver six guarantees

Hyderabad: The rumble over the electoral debacle in Haryana and the quagmire in which the Congress government in Karnataka finds itself in over the MUDA scam, seemed to be leaving the Congress government in Telangana in a tight situation. The Revanth Reddy government is now being pushed to a corner over fulfilment of its electoral promises, as the main opposition – The Bharath Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has been upping the ante in its criticism.

The Congress Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had gone to town over his electoral promises of six guarantees assured to people, while his counterpart in Karnataka won the battle at the hustings by promising five guarantees. In Haryana, the Congress came up with seven guarantees but had to bite the dust in the electoral arena. With the Haryana people refusing to believe in the seven guarantees, focus is now shifting to Telangana, where the Congress had only fulfilled a minuscule part of its electoral promises.

Perhaps, the delay in implementation of the electoral promises in Karnataka and Telangana had played a role in Haryana too, with voters refusing to fall for the guarantees. Simultaneously, the situation in Karnataka is turning adverse for the Congress. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is now booked by the ED in the infamous MUDA scam. There is growing demand for seeking a change of leadership in Karnataka, both from the Opposition groups and also the internal groups in Karnataka Congress now.

With the assembly elections slated to be held in Maharashtra, Delhi, Jharkhand and Bihar, pressure is mounting on Telangana government to perform. This

apart, local bodies elections are also fast approaching in the State. Considering the State government's inability to implement the six guarantees, the AICC leadership appears to be worried a lot, especially over the probable impact on the poll prospects in other States. In Telangana, the Congress had assured to fulfil the six guarantees within 100 days. It has been nearly 300 days, only two sub-components were launched so far out of the 13 assurances under Abhaya Hastham. Similarly, crop loan waiver was to be completed by August 15 and still many farmers are running from pillar to post to get their loans waived.

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) keeps cornering the Congress over its promise to fill up two lakh jobs in one year after coming to power. Taking a sarcastic jibe at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, BRS Working president KT Rama Rao had said on X "Rahul ji, Youth in Ashok Nagar are waiting to thank you for delivering on 2 lakh jobs in 1 year. Also thank you for the 5 lakh Yuva Vikasam assistance and revamp of TSPSC. Welcome back to Hyderabad to meet with the youngsters since your guarantee is done." "What is more worrying the Congress leaders" are the unilateral decisions being taken up by the State leadership. After sidelining the implementation of six guarantees, the State government is embroiled in controversies over HYDRABAD demolitions and eviction of residents from River Musi bed, marking houses for demolitions. In this regard, save for a couple of Ministers, many seniors in the cabinet and in the party, are maintaining a strategic silence over these issues. It appears to be a matter of time before this silence could erupt into open dissidence.

Adaraa mental health app developed by teens for teens



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Hyderabad: Driven by the urge to prevent the surge in instances of self-harm among teenagers, two youngsters from Hyderabad have developed a unique mobile app 'Adaraa' to serve as an emotional support hub for adolescents. The duo of Sreya Jampana and Hasini Kolla describe Adaraa as more than just technology. "It's a lifeline, offering practical help and encouragement to teenagers to prevent self-harm and nurture mental well-being during vulnerable moments. With a holistic approach, Adaraa empowers adolescents and promotes mental health through various features," says Sreya. Imagine someone facing the aftermath of a difficult day at school, where bullying and negative thoughts overwhelm them. "They turn to their phone for relief, opening Adaraa, our app, which offers a lifeline. Whether it's a journal for expression or engaging games to divert their mind, Adaraa serves as a support hub, reminding them they're not

alone," says Sreya, a class XII student of Sreenidhi International School.

The youngsters collaborated with software developers to come up with the feature-rich mobile app Adaraa and entered the prestigious Technovation innovation challenge. "Our mobile app, which is expected to be launched in the coming months, was also selected as top 3 apps by teenagers in India. Our app Adaraa was 1 of 5 teams selected from India by Technovation," says Sreya. Talking more about the origin of the app that supports mental health only for adolescents, Sreya says, "Adaraa was born from a deeply personal motivation, witnessing the silent struggles of the adolescents amidst a troubling spike in suicide rates. Realizing that most mental health platforms did not effectively cater to teenagers, I took the initiative to create something that could".

From the idea of just an app, both Sreya and Hasini have managed to go beyond by developing it into teen mental health organization. "In-person, teenagers tend to hesitate to talk or open-up about their mental health. That's why thought of reaching out through this app. Adaraa now offers specialized wellness sessions within schools, equipping students with the knowledge and tools to support one another. Peer-to-peer guidance has been central to Adaraa's mission, empowering teens to be active participants in their own mental health journeys," she says. Some of the unique features that are part of Adaraa are guided daily journaling, self harm tracking, personalized positive affirmations, 24/7 live support, which will be offered by the professional therapists in the near future, stimulating games and guided meditation videos.

Real estate sector is hit with a double whammy

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Hyderabad: The real estate sector in the State is hit with a double whammy. As it is, consumer sentiment to buy is not so strong and the government appears to be not keen on initiating any measures to address the issues being faced by builders and developers. This is even after builders and developers listing out the issues and making appeals before the government. As a result, the real estate sector, which was in the pink of health till last year, is now going through a lean patch. The Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI) Telangana had listed out several issues to be sorted out by the Government and had even made some suggestions in August and yet there was no progress, rues a CREDAI member. To begin with, the real estate body had expressed its extreme concern over the inordinate delay in granting approvals for layouts in districts.

The issue was highlighted during a programme attended by the Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy. The grant of permissions was getting delayed in districts, though the Collectors were entrusted with responsibility of approving permissions for layouts, but in their busy schedules, least importance was being given to this task, members say.

This apart, applications in the districts have to be enclosed with NOCs from revenue, irrigation, panchayatraj, and R&B departments. Despite all the documents being attached with the applications, officials were insisting for NOCs from all departments again and this was delaying the process further, the CREDAI had pointed out. It wanted the government to examine extending incentives for affordable housing projects. The Central government levies one percent GST and extends loan-based interest subsidy under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, besides income tax exemption for builders on the total project. Emulating the same, the State government could offer a few incentives, besides reducing stamp duty for such houses.

Since a new master plan is being proposed by the State government, the CREDAI State unit pointed out that there were differences in the regulations for city and districts in the master plan. A uniform model should be adopted, the body had suggested. This apart, the government was planning to revise the market values. Though CREDAI said it was supporting the decision, it wanted the government to slash the registration charges from 7.5 percent to five percent. In case, if the property was being registered by a woman, an additional one percent reduction should be offered, the CREDAI State unit urged. Further, it wanted relaxation of norms in the suburban zones. As per existing rules, constructions are per-



mitted in only 25 percent area in these zones and as a result, not many layouts have come up. The government could impose height restrictions and relax a few norms to trigger a buzz. As per GOMs 106, the past government had insisted that layout approach roads have to be 60 feet. While, this was possible to follow for new layouts but it would be challenging for existing layouts where 30 to 40 feet roads have been laid and they should be exempted, the CREDAI had appealed. Growth corridors have been identified covering one km on either side of the ORR. However, there were no grid roads in these corridors and this was hampering the construction activities in those areas. Post COVID there was a rise in farm plots sales and most of these were coming up in the conservation zones. However, there was no policy on farm plots and CREDAI appealed to the government to explore possibilities of permitting farm plots ranging from 1500 to 2000 square yards.

High command has not asked for any explanation over Konda Surekha, says PCC president

Hyderabad: Despite rising criticism from all quarters over Forest Minister Konda Surekha's objectionable comments over film actresses, especially Samantha's divorce, TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud said the high command has not sought any explanation over the Minister's issue. It was opposition parties' false campaign that the Forest Minister would be dropped from the cabinet. The Minister had tendered apologies and withdrew her comments and the entire episode was closed, he reportedly said during an informal chat with media here

'Bangabandhu', 'Muktijuddho' and the Agartala connect: This Tripura club is making heads turn with a unique Durga Puja theme



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Known for its unique ideas and incisive rhetoric in Durga Puja themes, Agartala's Blood Mouth Club has taken a bold step this year with a theme centred around 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Walking down Rannagar's streets toward Ker Chowmuhani, named after the indigenous Ker Puja of Tripura, one is greeted by the sounds of Rabindranath Tagore and Qazi Nazrul Islam's verses, along with defiant songs by university student and singer Sarker Sangit. These songs, criticizing recent incidents in Bangladesh where statues of 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were desecrated, blast through the loudspeakers.

Blood Mouth Club's sudden shift in theme Speaking to indianexpress.com, Blood Mouth Club Secretary Sebak Bhattacharjee revealed that the decision to shift this year's Durga Puja theme to 'Bangabandhu' was a sudden but necessary response to the current political situation in Bangladesh. "We based our theme on social reformer and renaissance icon Raja Rammohun Roy last year. This year was supposed to be all about Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. But considering the context of the Bangladesh situation and its significance, we have changed our theme and adopted 'Bangabandhu' for this year, keeping Netaji for next year," Bhattacharjee said.

International impact and radical threats Bhattacharjee, who also runs several socio-cultural organizations and a local television channel, noted that their Puja theme has garnered international attention, particularly in Bangladesh. "Our Durga Puja theme has succeeded in sending out its message internationally, especially in Bangladesh, where many have endorsed the idea, but a few others have also issued threats of retribution after NE India would supposedly be occupied by Bangladesh," Bhattacharjee added. Noted author and Agartala Press Club President Jayanta Bhattacharya reflected on Sheikh Mujib's legacy, emphasizing Tripura's emotional connection with Bangladesh's Liberation War. "Change of regime might be an internal issue of Bangladesh, but people of Tripura will never forget Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's commitment to secularism, tolerance, and his intrinsic connection with Agartala. I feel choosing Bangabandhu as the theme for Durga Puja is a great tribute to the history and legacy of Tripura's connection with the Liberation War," he said. This year's Durga Puja theme is heavily focused on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his connection with Tripura, the 1971 Liberation War, and the contribution of Indian soldiers. Partha Chakraborty, the organizing secretary of this year's Puja committee, explained, "We have built our pandal as a replica of Dhakeshwari Mandir of Dhaka. We have set up separate tableaux portraying Bangabandhu and Tripura's connection with the Bangladesh Liberation War. People are liking our pandal very much. We have also got positive messages from abroad." The club has set up tableaux on both sides of the road depicting significant historical events, such as the Muktijuddho Shahid Minar, Bhasha Shahid Smarak, Sheikh Mujib's visit to Agartala, and his imprisonment in the Agartala Conspiracy Case from 1967-

68. They have also portrayed scenes from the 1971 war, including the Pakistani army's surrender to Indian General Jagjit Singh Arora.

However, Chakraborty mentioned that the Puja organizers have been receiving threats on social media from a few radicals, who claim they do not believe in idolatry and would not tolerate such Puja themes in North East India, suggesting it would become part of Bangladesh in the future. Chakraborty echoed Bhattacharjee's sentiments, explaining that the club has also sought to portray the growing anti-Indian sentiments in Bangladesh, drawing comparisons between attacks on intellectuals and minorities in Bangladesh today and the mass killing of intellectuals by the Pakistani army before the Liberation War. "We have tried to show this by comparing how the attack on intellectuals and minorities in Bangladesh today is similar to the mass burial of intellectuals by the Pak Army before the liberation of Bangladesh and the Jewish Holocaust in Nazi Germany. We have tried to make it contextual for people to think," Chakraborty said. Public reaction: A different kind of theme Many pandal hoppers feel that the message is being well-received. Chunilal Goswami, a government official from Agartala, who was visiting Puja pandals with his family, said, "We have seen previous themes on nationalistic and patriotic issues. I believe this theme has Indian nationalistic elements apart from the emotional connection with Bangladesh as well. They have portrayed the supreme sacrifice of Lance Naik Albert Ekka, who laid down his life at the Gangasagar operation."

Referring to Tripura's 856 km border with Bangladesh, Goswami added, "History shows any major incidents in the neighboring country have the potential to affect Tripura. We have seen East Pakistani refugees before 1971. Anything happening in Bangladesh is a matter of serious concern here. A democratic government was thrown out, anti-Indian sentiments are rising... these are matters of concern for us." With a modest budget of ₹6 lakh, Blood Mouth Club has focused on historical and emotional significance rather than erecting large structures like other big-budget Puja organizers. Despite its unassuming pandal, the club's theme this year is hard to miss and has left a lasting impression on Durga Puja celebrations in Agartala. Tripura's crucial role in the Bangladesh Liberation War Back in 1971, with a population of 1.5 million, Tripura provided refuge to nearly 1.4 million East Pakistani refugees. The state also hosted several Muktijoddha (liberation warrior) training camps, with the government stepping in to care for the influx of people, supported by the central government. The struggle for Bangla language rights, beginning in the 1950s, later saw Sheikh Mujib emerge as the leader of the movement. Tripura, as one of the hubs of liberation war activities, played a vital role in supporting the Mukti Bahini fighters. Tripura's significance in Bangladesh's liberation was further cemented with the 'Agartala Conspiracy Case,' which involved Sheikh Mujib's 1963 visit to Agartala. His meeting with then Chief Minister Sachindra Lal Singha helped lay the groundwork for the toppling of Pakistan's President Ayub Khan and boosted the Mukti Bahini's rebel activities, leading to the birth of Bangladesh. Deep ties between Tripura and Bangladesh Since Bangladesh's liberation in 1971, Tripura has maintained strong emotional ties with the nation. Many who fled from East Pakistan before March 1971 were granted Indian citizenship under the 1974 Indira-Mujib Pact, further intertwining the people of Tripura and Bangladesh. These deep-rooted connections make the recent desecration of Sheikh Mujib's statues and rising anti-Indian sentiments in Bangladesh all the more painful for the people of Tripura.

Security forces have breached the Naxal red line. Now, a Chhattisgarh village hopes development will follow

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Kosru Wade (30) from Gawadi village in Abujhmad was at home around noon on October 4 when he first heard the sound of firing in the jungle barely 3 km away. Hours later, he saw a helicopter land a little away from the village, evacuate an injured jawan and zoom away. "We heard firing till night but didn't leave our homes," he told The Indian Express. "Next, we heard of the encounter." Gawadi is the closest village to the site of the October 4 encounter in which 31 Naxals were killed. Nestled deep in the dense forests of Abujhmad, the village, home to 100-odd residents, is approximately 16-20 km from the nearest police station, Orcha. To get there, one has to navigate over hilly terrain, encountering several rivulets. With security forces striking deep inside Naxal territory, this largely agrarian village hopes what comes next are better facilities.

"The biggest issue we face today is water supply. The government installed a borewell here just two months ago, but the water isn't enough for all of us. We use the river for all purposes but by January, the rivulets run dry, leaving us



Just 3 kilometres from the site of a October 4 encounter, Gawadi village in Abujhmad has a long list of demands

in crisis for the next six months. We need five-six more borewells and tap water that we can use for all purposes, including irrigation," Wade, whose family has been living here for five generations, said. Medical facilities are another major challenge. For basic medicines, the village depends on a community health worker, whom residents called Mitani didi, for the Chhattisgarh Mitani health programme. But for other healthcare needs,

they must travel to Orcha. Electricity too remains elusive. According to another resident, except for a few houses where authorities installed solar lights, the entire village plunges into darkness. "We want a solar light connectivity which powers the entire village," says 25-year-old Kamlu Mandavi. Police sources, however, say villagers – "influenced by Naxal ideology" – have resisted projects such as roads in the past. For instance, Mandavi, a resi-

dent, wants schools, but not roads. "If roads are made, police camps will be made, and they will take away our land," he says without elaborating further. However, a senior officer hopes that the plans of a police station will bring along development. "The villagers in Abujhmad love playing football and volleyball. This year, the villagers of Kutul at the center of Abujhmad bagged the third prize in volleyball and we felicitated them and gave them a cash prize," he says.

Ethel Kennedy, social activist and wife of Robert F. Kennedy, has died



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Ethel Kennedy, the wife of former U.S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who raised their 11 children after he was assassinated and remained dedicated to social causes and the family's legacy for decades thereafter, died her family said. She was 96. "It is with our hearts full of love that we announce the passing of our amazing grandmother," Joe Kennedy III posted on X. "She died this morning from complications related to a stroke suffered last week." It is with our hearts full of love that we announce the passing of our mother, Ethel Kennedy. Please keep our mother in your hearts and prayers. pic.twitter.com/bdlQF5C0CS

"Along with a lifetime's work in social justice and human rights, our mother leaves behind nine children, 34 grandchildren and 24 great-great-grandchildren, along with numerous nieces and nephews, all of whom love her dearly," the family statement said. U.S. President Joe Biden called her "an American icon — a matriarch of optimism and moral courage, an emblem of resilience and service." "For over 50 years, Ethel traveled, marched, boycotted, and stood up for human rights around the world with her signature iron will and grace," Biden said.

The Kennedy matriarch, mother to Kathleen, Joseph II, Robert Jr., David, Courtney, Michael, Kerry, Christopher, Max, Douglas and Rory, was one of the last remaining members of a family generation that included President John F. Kennedy. Her family said she had recently enjoyed seeing many of her relatives before falling ill. A millionaire's daughter who married the future senator and attorney general in 1950, Ethel Kennedy had endured more death by the age of 40, for the whole world to see, than most people would in a lifetime. She was by Robert F. Kennedy's side when he was fatally shot in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968, just after winning California's Democratic Presidential primary. Her brother-in-law had been assassinated in Dallas less than five years earlier. Her parents were killed in a plane crash in 1955, and her brother died in a 1966 crash. Her son David Kennedy overdosed, her son Michael Kennedy died in a skiing accident and her nephew John F. Kennedy Jr. in a plane crash. Another nephew, Michael Skakel, was found guilty of murder before the Connecticut Supreme Court ultimately vacated his conviction. And in 2019, her granddaughter Saoirse Kennedy Hill died of an apparent overdose. "One wonders how much this family must be expected to absorb," family friend Philip Johnson, founder of the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation, told the Boston Herald after Michael Kennedy's death.

"She was a devout Catholic and a daily communicant, and we are comforted in knowing she is reunited with the love of her life, our father, Robert F. Kennedy; her children David and Michael; her daughter-in-law Mary; her grandchildren Maeve and Saoirse and her great-grandchildren Gideon and Josie. Please keep our mother in your hearts and prayers," the family statement said. Ethel's mother-in-law, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, initially wondered how she would handle so much tragedy. "I knew how difficult it was going to be for her to raise that big family without the guiding role and influence that Bobby would have provided," Rose recalled in her memoir, "Times to Remember." "And, of course, she realized this too, fully and keenly. Yet she did not give way." Ethel Kennedy founded the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights soon after her husband's death and advocated for causes including gun control and human rights. She rarely spoke about her husband's assassination. When her filmmaker daughter Rory brought it up in the 2012 HBO documentary, "Ethel," she couldn't share her grief.

"When we lost Daddy ..." she began, then teared up and asked that her youngest daughter "talk about something else." Many of her progeny became well known. Daughter Kathleen became lieutenant governor of Maryland; Joseph represented Massachusetts in Congress; Courtney married Paul Hill, who had been wrongfully convicted of an Irish Republican Army bombing; Kerry became a human rights activist and president of the RFK center; Christopher ran for Illinois governor; Max served as a prosecutor in Philadelphia and Douglas reported for Fox News Channel.

Her son Robert F. Kennedy Jr. also became a national figure — first as an environmental lawyer and more recently as a conspiracy theorist spreading false theories about vaccines. He ran for president as an independent after briefly challenging Biden, and his name remained on ballots in multiple states after he suspended

Trump has no plans to address needs of Americans: Kamala Harris

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

U.S. Democratic Presidential candidate Kamala Harris has blasted her Republican rival Donald Trump, saying he is only focused on himself and has no plans to address the needs of the American people. Addressing thousands of her supporters in the battleground State of Arizona on Thursday (October 10, 2024), Ms. Harris said that Trump officially ruled out any more debates with her ahead of the November 5 election, describing it a "dis-service" to the voters. "I also think it's a pretty weak move. But even if he will not debate, the contrast in this election is already clear," she said. She said many issues matter to the people in the country but Trump has nothing to say about that. "We will always fight to keep our nation secure and honour our military service members. These and so many others are the issues that matter to you and your families. ... But that is not what we hear from Donald Trump. We don't hear about these issues," she said. "Instead, from Donald Trump, it's the same old tired playbook. He has no plans for how he would address the needs of the American people. He is only focused on himself. Well, it's time to turn the page," she said. "America is for a new way forward and ready for a new optimistic generation of leadership," Ms. Harris said. "Which is why, Democrats, Re-

his campaign and endorsed Donald Trump. Ethel Kennedy did not comment publicly on her son's actions, although several other family members denounced him.

Decades earlier, she seemed to thrive on her in-laws' rising power, enthusiastically backing the 1960 campaign and hosting some of the era's most well-attended parties at their Hickory Hill estate in McLean, Virginia, including one where historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. was pushed fully clothed into the swimming pool. In the Kennedy spirit, she also was a highly competitive tennis player. "Petite and peppy Ethel, who doesn't look one bit the outdoorsy type, considers outdoor activity so important for the children that she has arranged her busy Cabinet-wife schedule so she can personally take them on two daily outings," The Washington Post reported in 1962. Accompanying her husband on a round-the-world goodwill tour, she said it was important for Americans to meet ordinary people overseas. "People have a distinct liking for Americans," she told the Post. "But the Communists have been so vocal, it was a surprise for some Asians to hear America's point of view. It is good for Americans to travel and get our viewpoint across." She divided her time between homes in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, and Palm Beach, Florida, after Hickory Hill, which they bought from John and Jackie Kennedy in 1957, was sold in 2009 for \$8.25 million.

Born Ethel Skakel on April 11, 1928, she grew up in a 31-room English country manor house in Greenwich, Connecticut, as the sixth of seven children of coal magnate George and Ann Brannack Skakel. She met Robert Kennedy through his sister Jean, her roommate at Manhattanville College. The newlyweds moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, where he finished his last year of law school at the University of Virginia, and helped expand her world view by introducing her to people like Ralph Bunche, the first person of color to win the Nobel Peace Prize. They decided the safest place for him to stay during his visit was in their home.

"He was so charming and non-complaining, but they did throw things at our house all night long. It was so unthinkable and outrageous, but you got a little taste of what Black people in our country had to go through at that time," she said in the documentary. Robert Kennedy became chief counsel to the Senate Select Committee in 1957, and then was appointed attorney general by his brother in 1960. She supported his successful 1964 campaign for the U.S. Senate in New York and his subsequent presidential bid. Pregnant with their 11th child when he was gunned down by Sirhan Sirhan, her look of shock and horror was captured in images that remained indelible decades later. The assassination traumatized the family, especially son David Kennedy, just 12 years old when he watched the news in a hotel room. He never recovered, struggling with addiction for years before overdosing in 1984. In 2021, she said Sirhan should not be released from prison, a view not shared by some others in her family. Two years later, a California panel denied him parole. Although Ethel Kennedy was linked to several men after her husband's death, most notably the singer Andy Williams, she never remarried. On the 40th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., she visited Indianapolis, where a monument commemorates the speech her husband gave that night in 1968, credited with averting rioting in the city. "Of all the Kennedy women, she was the one I would end up admiring the most," Harry Belafonte would write of her. "She wasn't playacting. She looked at you and immediately got what you were about. Often in the coming years, when Bobby was balking at something we wanted him to do for the movement, I'd take my case to Ethel. 'We have to talk to him,' she'd say, and she would." In 2008, she joined brother-in-law Ted Kennedy and niece Caroline Kennedy in endorsing Sen. Barack Obama for president, likening him to her late husband. She later went to the Obama White House to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom and meet Pope Francis. Obama called her "a dear friend with a passion for justice, an irrepressible spirit, and a great sense of humor." "She touched the lives of countless people around the world with her generosity and grace, and was an emblem of enduring faith and hope, even in the face of unimaginable grief," Obama said on social media, one of many high-profile eulogies. Obama and former President Bill Clinton held her hands as they climbed stairs to lay a wreath at President Kennedy's grave site on the 50th anniversary of his death. Clinton remembered her on Thursday as a "fierce fighter for justice and equality" who built "one of the most effective human rights organizations in the world." "The center she founded still advances human rights through litigation, advocacy, education and inspiration, giving annual awards to journalists, authors and others who have made significant contributions to human rights. She also was active in the Coalition of Gun Control, Special Olympics, and the Earth Conservation Corps. And she showed up in person, participating in a 2016 demonstration in support of higher pay for farmworkers in Florida and a 2018 hunger strike against the Trump administration's immigration policies. "She could be found anywhere human dignity was at stake, from picket lines to prisons, on every corner of the map," Clinton said. "She was fearless and indefatigable, a true force of nature, guided by the teachings of her faith that call upon all of us to serve others."



publicans, and Independents are supporting our campaign. They know we need a president who works for all the American people... We are exhausted with those who would try and have us as Americans point fingers at each other," she said. This election is about two very different visions for America, she said. "One, his (Trump's), focused on the past. The other, ours, focused on the future including being focused on the issues that matter most to working families across America, like bringing down the cost of living, investing in small businesses and entrepreneurs," she said.

Zelensky denies ceasefire with Russia under discussion on trip



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday (October 10, 2024) a ceasefire with Russia was not under discussion with European allies and urged more Western support ahead of a tough winter during his lightning tour of four capitals. Mr. Zelensky was seeking a military and financial boost during a 48-hour trip to London, Paris, Rome and Berlin, amid fears of dwindling support if Donald Trump wins the U.S. presidency next month. The Ukrainian President travelled to Rome for a working dinner with Giorgia Meloni, after which the Italian Prime Minister announced the city would host the next "recovery conference" to help Ukraine's reconstruction on July 10-11, 2025. "Ukraine is not alone and we will stand with it for as long as needed," Ms. Meloni told reporters after the supper. Before that, Mr. Zelensky held talks with France's President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, after which he denied media reports that he was discussing the terms of a ceasefire with Russia.

"This is not the topic of our discussions," he told the press in the French capital. "It's not right. Russia works a lot with media disinformation so it [such reports] is understandable," he added. Mr. Zelensky has rejected any peace plan that involves ceding land to Russia, arguing Moscow must first withdraw all troops from Ukrainian territory. Mr. Zelensky also said he and Macron had discussed Kyiv's "victory plan" to defeat Russia. "Before winter we need your support," he added, acknowledging "a difficult situation in the east" and a "big deficit" in terms of some equipment. Without elaborating, Mr. Macron said Mr. Zelensky had outlined Ukraine's "plan for the next weeks" and the pair had discussed strategy for the coming "weeks and months". Mr. Macron emphasised he had reaffirmed France's support "for the Ukrainian resistance against the Russian invasion". Mr. Zelensky said later on Telegram that they had discussed the possibility of France and Ukraine jointly producing arms. Ukraine is facing its

South China Sea dispute: U.S. concerned about China's increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities in the region



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Southeast Asian leaders on Friday (October 10, 2024) that the U.S. is concerned about China's "increasingly dangerous and unlawful" activities in the disputed South China Sea during an annual summit meeting, and pledged the U.S. will continue to uphold freedom of navigation in the vital sea trade route. The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations' meeting with Mr. Blinken followed a series of violent confrontations at sea between China and ASEAN members Philippines and Vietnam, which have fuelled concerns that China's increasingly assertive actions in the waterways could spiral into a full-scale conflict. China, which claims almost the entire sea, has overlapping claims with ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei, as well as Taiwan. About a third of global trade transits through the sea, which is also rich in fishing stocks, gas and oil. Beijing has refused to recognize a 2016 international arbitration ruling by a U.N.-affiliated court in the Hague that invalidated its expansive claims, and has built up and militarized islands it controls. "We are very concerned about China's increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities in the South China Sea which have injured people, harm vessels from ASEAN nations and contradict commitments to peaceful resolutions of disputes," said Mr. Blinken, who is filling in for President Joe Biden, in his opening speech at the U.S.-ASEAN summit. "The United States will continue to support freedom of navigation, and freedom of overflight in the Indo Pacific." "The U.S. has no claims in the South China Sea, but has deployed navy ships and fighter jets to patrol the waters in a challenge to China's claims. Chinese and Philippine vessels have clashed repeatedly this year, and Vietnam said last week that Chinese forces assaulted its fishermen in the disputed sea. China has also sent patrol vessels to areas that Indonesia and Malaysia claim as exclusive economic zones. The U.S. has warned repeatedly that it's obligated to defend the Philippines — its oldest treaty ally in Asia — if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. complained to summit leaders on Thursday (October 10, 2024) that his country "continues to be subject to harassment and intimidation" by China. He said it was "regrettable that the overall situation in the South China Sea remains tense and unchanged" due to China's actions, which he said violated international law. He has called for more urgency in ASEAN-China negotiations on a code of conduct to govern the South China Sea. Singaporean leader Lawrence Wong earlier this week warned of "real risks of an accident spiraling into conflict" if the sea dispute isn't addressed. Malaysia, who takes over the rotating ASEAN chair next year, is expected to push to accelerate talks on the code of conduct. Officials have agreed to try and complete the code by 2026, but talks have been hampered by sticky issues including disagreements over whether the pact should be binding. Chinese Premier Li Qiang was defiant during talks on Thursday (October 10, 2024).

toughest winter since the full-scale invasion started in February 2022, as Russia launches strikes on the country's power grid and advances across the eastern frontline.

'Just end to war' Mr. Zelensky arrived in Paris from London where he had had talks with U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and NATO chief Mark Rutte. Speaking after his Downing Street meeting, Mr. Zelensky said he had "outlined the details of our victory plan", adding that it "aims to create the right conditions for a just end to the war". The meeting, Mr. Starmer said, had been a chance to "go through the plan, to talk in more detail".

Mr. Zelensky says Ukraine desperately needs more aid to fight back after Russia captured dozens of small towns and villages in the east. He is also pushing for clearance to use long-range weapons supplied by allies, to strike military targets deep inside Russia. Washington and London have stalled on giving approval over fears it could draw NATO allies into direct conflict with Russia. Mr. Zelensky said he had raised the subject at the Downing Street meeting. Mr. Rutte told reporters: "Legally, Ukraine is allowed to use its weapons, if they can hit targets in Russia, if these targets present a threat to Ukraine." But he added: "Whether individual allies do, that's in the end, always up to individual allies." Mr. Rutte and Britain cautioned against placing too much focus on long-range missiles. Mr. Starmer's spokesman said the talks were instead about "the range of support" for Ukraine. A planned meeting of Ukraine's allies in Germany on Saturday was postponed after U.S. President Joe Biden called off his visit to focus on the threat from Hurricane Milton. On the ground, questions are growing about the long-term strategy of Ukraine's counteroffensive into Russia's Kursk region, given Moscow's push in the east of Ukraine. "If this is a short-term operation, it will strengthen us," Bogdan, one serviceman sitting at a cafe in Druzhkivka, near Kramatorsk, told AFP. "If it's a long-term operation and we plan to stay in Kursk, it will deplete our main resources." On Thursday, the Kremlin said its missiles had struck two launchers of a U.S.-made Patriot air-defence system, which Ukraine uses against Russian missiles. Ukraine relies on billions of dollars' worth of U.S. aid to fight Russia's invasion, and the U.S. presidential election in November could prove pivotal. The German-based Kiel Institute warned Thursday Western military and financial aid to Kyiv could halve to about 29 billion euros (\$31 billion) in 2025 if Trump wins the November 5 election. Trump has promised to end the war "in 24 hours" if he is elected — a prospect Kyiv fears means being forced to make massive compromises to achieve peace.

He called South China Sea a "shared home" but repeated China's assertion that it was merely protecting its sovereign rights, officials said. Li also blamed meddling by "external forces" who sought to "introduce bloc confrontation and geopolitical conflicts into Asia." Li didn't name the foreign forces, but China has previously warned the U.S. not to meddle in the region's territorial disputes.

In another firm message to China, Mr. Blinken said the U.S. believed "it is also important to maintain our shared commitment to protect stability across the Taiwan Strait". China claims the self-ruled island of Taiwan as its own territory and bristles at other countries' patrolling the body of water separating it from the island. Mr. Blinken also attended an 18-nation East Asia Summit, along with the Chinese premier, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and leaders from Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. ASEAN has treaded carefully on the sea dispute with China, which is the bloc's largest trading partner and its third largest investor. It hasn't marred trade relations, with the two sides focusing on expanding a free trade area covering a market of 2 billion people. Mr. Blinken said the annual ASEAN summit talks were a platform to address other shared challenges including the civil war in Myanmar, North Korea's "destabilizing behavior" and Russia's war aggression in Ukraine. He said the U.S. remained the top foreign investor in the region, and aims to strengthen its partnership with ASEAN.

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Nihon Hidankyo for anti-nuclear activism

Oslo: The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded Friday to Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese organisation of survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for its activism against nuclear weapons.

Jørgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said the award was made as the "taboo against the use of nuclear weapon is under pressure." He said the Nobel committee "wishes to honour all survivors who, despite physical suffering and painful memories, have chosen to use their costly experience to cultivate hope and engagement for peace." Efforts to eradicate nuclear weapons have been honoured in the past by the Nobel committee. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons won the Peace Prize in 2017 and in 1995 Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs won for "their efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms." This year's prize was awarded against a backdrop of devastating conflicts raging in the world, notably in the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan. Alfred Nobel stated in his will that the prize should be awarded for "the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." Last year's prize went to jailed Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi for her advocacy of women's rights and democracy, and against the death penalty. The Nobel committee said it also was a recognition of "the hundreds of thousands of people" who demonstrated against "Iran's theocratic regime's policies of discrimination and oppression targeting women."

Centre imposes import restrictions on laptops, tablets and computers for security reasons



apply for a license from August 4. The trader should have to be a regular importer to get a license. "The idea is not to ban imports but to regulate the inbound shipments of these goods," the official said. When asked if the move would have an impact on domestic prices, the official said "no". However, industry experts have flagged apprehensions that it could lead to price rise of these instruments. The restrictions are also there on micro computers, large or mainframe computers, and certain data processing machines. Import of all these items would be allowed against a valid license. It added that there is an exemption from seeking import licensing for up to 20 items per consignment for R&D, testing, benchmarking and evaluation, repair and return, and product development purposes. These curbs are also not applicable to imports under baggage rules, under which one old and a new laptop is allowed in a baggage. Over and above this, exemptions from import licensing requirements are also provided for import of one laptop, tablet, personal computer, or ultra small form factor computer which are purchased from e-commerce portals, through post or courier. However, these imports shall be subject to payment of duty as applicable, it said adding exceptions would also be there if these goods are used as an essential part of capital goods like a machine. According to a report by think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), India's 65 per cent imports from China are limited to just three product groups — electronics, machinery and organic chemicals. It has stated that India is critically dependent on China for day-to-day use and industrial products like mobile phones, laptops, components, solar cell modules, and ICs. The government has taken several steps to boost domestic manufacturing of electronic items such as rolling out of the production-linked incentive scheme and increasing customs duties on the number of electronic components. Leading electronic brands which are sold in the market include HCL, Samsung, Dell, LG Electronics, Acer, Apple, Lenovo and HP. India imports about USD 7.8 billion worth of these goods every year. The country has imported personal computers including laptops worth USD 5.33 billion in 2022-23, as against USD 7.37 billion in 2021-22. Imports of certain data processing machines stood at USD 553 million in the last fiscal, against USD 583.8 million in 2021-22. Similarly, imports of micro computers/processors stood at USD 1.2 million in the last fiscal against USD 2.08 million in 2021-22.

New Delhi: The government on Thursday imposed import restrictions on laptops, tablets, and certain types of computers with immediate effect for security reasons and the need to promote domestic manufacturing. The move will also curtail inbound shipments of these goods from countries like China and Korea. Importers of these items would now have to seek permission or license from the government for their inbound shipments.

A senior government official said that there are a variety of reasons for imposing these restrictions but the primary is "to ensure that the security of our citizens is fully safeguarded". The official also said that internet penetration is increasing in the country in a bigger way and in this background Indian citizens need to have an environment and ecosystem, where they are not exposed to machines or instruments which might have security risks.

"Some of the hardwares could potentially have security related issues and could compromise sensitive and personal data, we have taken into account few of those goods," he added. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) in a notification, however, said certain exemptions have been given against these curbs. "Import of laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers, and ultra small form factor computers, servers... is 'restricted' with immediate effect," it said. The official further said that "safety is the top most priority" of the government and the move is in compliance with the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Under the transition provisions of the foreign trade policy (FTP), if the bill of lading and letter of credit has been issued or opened before August 3, that import consignments can be imported. An importer can

Entities violating digital data protection norms to face penalty of up to Rs 250 cr: DPDP 2023

GNS News Agency, August 9

New Delhi: Entities misusing or failing to protect digital data users may face penalty of up to Rs 250 crore, according to the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2023 which lays down obligations of entities handling and processing data as well as rights of individuals. The bill which was introduced in Parliament on Thursday moots creation of Data Protection Board of India and provides protection to the Centre, the board and its members, on "action taken in good faith". The bill has relaxed penalty norms compared to the proposal made in the draft DPDP that was circulated for public consultation in November 2022.

"If the board determines on conclusion of an inquiry that breach of the provisions of this Act or the rules made thereunder by a person is significant, it may, after giving person an opportunity of being heard, impose such monetary penalty specified in the schedule," the bill said. Under the schedule, maximum of Rs 250 crore and minimum Rs 50 crore can be imposed on entity violating the norms.

"No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against the central government, the board, its chairperson and any member, officer or employee thereof for anything which is done or intended to be done in good faith under the provisions of this Act or the rules made thereunder," the bill said. Provisions under the bill enable the Centre to block access to content in the interest of general public on getting reference in writing from the



board. Minister of State for electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the bill after it is passed by Parliament, will protect rights of all citizens, allow innovation economy to expand and permit the government's lawful and legitimate access in national security and emergencies like pandemics and earthquakes etc. "It will take a lot of the concerns and lot of misuse and exploitation that is done by many of these (online) platforms. Puts a break on that once and for all. This is certainly a legislation that will create deep lasting behavioural change and create high punitive consequences for any or all platforms that misuse or exploit personal data of any Indian citizen," Chandrasekhar said.

Bank of England raises its key interest rate to 15-year high to fight inflation

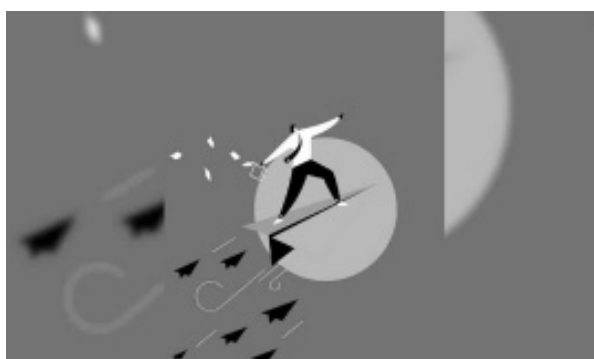
London: The Bank of England raised its main interest rate Thursday to a fresh 15-year high as it tries to bring down persistently high inflation, poised to bring more pain to people who are seeing rents and mortgages rise during a cost-of-living crisis. The quarter-percentage point increase to 5.25 per cent, which was widely anticipated by economists, was the central bank's 14th hike in a row. The bank said some of the risks from more stubborn inflation, notably higher wages, had "begun to crystallise," leading it to push borrowing costs higher.

There had been fears, certainly among hard-pressed households and businesses, that the bank would repeat its outsized half-point increase from June. But figures last month showing that inflation fell more than anticipated to 7.9 per cent eased the pressure to act as aggressively again. "Inflation is falling and that's good news," Bank Gov. Andrew Bailey said. "We know that inflation hits the least well off the hardest, and we need to make absolutely sure that it falls all the way back to the 2 per cent target." With inflation four times that level, the bank is expected to hike again over the coming months, and it indicated Thursday that rates would need to stay higher for longer.

The US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank also raised rates last week, but they are thought to be nearer to taking a pause because inflation has come down more sharply than in the UK. Price spikes have eased to 3 per cent in the United States and 5.3 per cent across the 20 countries that use the euro currency.

Central banks around the world have been raising borrowing costs to combat inflation unleashed by higher energy prices after Russia invaded Ukraine and supply chain backups as the global economy recovered from the coronavirus pandemic. Higher interest rates help dampen inflation — but also economic growth — by making it more expensive for consumers and businesses to borrow to buy homes, cars or equipment. Several reasons point to the UK's higher inflation. Many economists blame Britain's departure from the European Union, as Brexit impeded trade and raised costs for businesses.

Others put more of the blame on the Bank of England itself — for being too slow in starting to raise interest rates, thereby allowing inflation to root itself more widely in the economy, most notably in higher wages. Whatever the balance of blame, it's been a par-



There had been fears, certainly among hard-pressed households and businesses, that the bank would repeat its outsized half-point increase from June.

ticularly painful time for UK households whose mortgage rates or rents have skyrocketed while they struggle to make ends meet during a cost-of-living crisis marked by higher costs for food and energy. In forecasts accompanying the decision, the central bank said inflation is expected to drop to 4.9 per cent by the end of the year, with food price rises set to moderate. But for many, the pain has yet to hit. Unlike in the US, most homeowners in Britain lock in mortgage rates for only a few years, so those whose deals expire soon face the prospect of much higher borrowing costs.

Around 2.5 million such deals are due to expire by the end of next year, with around a million households facing a 500-pound (USD 640) monthly increase in their mortgage repayments by 2026, Bailey said.

"As a result, pass-through of the recent interest rate rises to outstanding mortgages has been limited so far," said Michael Saunders, senior economic adviser at Oxford Economics and a former rate-setter at the Bank of England. On Thursday, two of the nine members of the rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee voted for a half-point increase, while six backed the quarter-point rise and one opted to keep rates unchanged.

What happens to the body when you give up wheat for a month?



Wheat and grain-based foods have become an all-pervasive part of our diets. We love our bagels, pasta, bread and breakfast cereals. For many, the thought of removing these staples from their diets becomes impossible. But a growing number of people are choosing wheat-free diets—and for good reason. For many people, wheat can lead to severe health risks such as gluten sensitivity, weight gain, autoimmune conditions and high blood sugar levels.

In such a scenario, is it advisable to eliminate wheat from our diet entirely? Additionally, what changes can occur in the body if we don't consume wheat for a month? To answer all these questions, we reached out to an expert to find out. "In recent times, people are increasingly curious about alternative diets and cutting out specific foods. For instance, abstaining from wheat for a month is a common experiment. However, it's crucial to consider the impact on our body and evaluate the pros and cons," Lakshmi, Senior Dietician, Kamineni Hospitals, Hyderabad told indianexpress.com. Here are the potential benefits of a wheat-free diet: "Stabilising blood glucose levels: Wheat is a big contributor to glucose in the body. Eliminating wheat from your diet may lower blood glucose levels, which is especially helpful for diabetics. It can also help prevent other conditions such as gluten intolerance and even obesity.

*Improves digestion: Consuming too much of this carbohydrate rich food can lead to intestinal blockages or sluggish digestion, which may cause gas, bloating, nausea, stomach pain, vomiting and cramping. Eating less wheat can give the digestive system a break. *Weight

loss: Refined carbs can wreak havoc on your weight such as white bread, pizza, crackers, burgers, pasta etc. These foods also don't provide satiety. Additionally, your caloric intake will decrease on a wheat-free diet, which can contribute to weight management. *Decreased risk of celiac disease: Eating wheat puts you at a risk of developing celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder which occurs in genetically predisposed people where the ingestion of gluten (a protein component of wheat) leads to damage to the small intestine. However, the dietician highlighted that determining whether to eliminate wheat from one's diet depends on multiple factors. "If diagnosed with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, eliminating wheat is crucial for effective management. Healthcare professionals like registered dietitians should be consulted for proper guidance and meeting nutritional needs. However, for individuals without specific medical conditions, complete wheat elimination is generally unnecessary. Wheat provides essential nutrients like fibre, vitamin B, iron and magnesium, thereby supporting overall health." Cons of cutting off wheat from your diet:

*Increased risk of chronic constipation: Less processed foods which contain wheat are rich in fibre, which makes sure the digestive system functions optimally. Eliminating fibre-rich wheat from your diet can lead to chronic constipation. *Vitamin B deficiency: Wheat is a source of vitamin B. Without this essential nutrient, your body won't be able to function properly as this vitamin is needed to create energy from food and repair and renew cells and tissues.

If you are planning to cut off wheat from your diet, the expert suggested the following alternatives, including, some popular options like quinoa, a complete protein source with fibre, iron, and magnesium; oats, providing soluble fibre for heart health; brown rice, high in fibre and essential minerals; jowar (sorghum), a gluten-free grain rich in fibre, antioxidants, and minerals like phosphorus and potassium; and bajra (pearl millet), another gluten-free grain high in fibre and important nutrients like iron and magnesium. Concluding, Lakshmi said, "A wheat-free diet offers benefits like improved digestion, relief from gluten-related symptoms, and increased energy levels. However, it's important to note that these effects may vary among individuals, and more research is needed to establish concrete conclusions."

You can now rent Gwyneth Paltrow's home in Montecito, California

Do you often find yourself dreaming of living the "Goop" life like the founder, actor Gwyneth Paltrow? Well, now you can. With Gwyneth Paltrow herself in tow, Gwyneth Paltrow said in an Instagram post on Tuesday that she was getting ready to rent out the "beautiful little guest house" at her enormous Montecito, California, property on Airbnb.

Throughout the video post, Paltrow takes viewers on a tour of the inviting home, which has a soaking tub, a wood-burning fireplace, vaulted ceilings, and Goop skincare goods. "Loneliness is a human condition, but in the past few years, increased isolation and our lack of community has made our lives even more fragmented... I'm inviting you to come stay at my Montecito guesthouse for a night," Paltrow stated in the caption of the post. "While we may begin as strangers, I hope we'll find connections and commonalities over a delicious meal. Lay by the pool, go on one of my favorite hikes and of course you'll have a bathroom stocked with my favorite Goop products for a truly luxuriating stay," Paltrow continued. "Hope to host you soon." After displaying a wine room, she said her visitors would be free to join her and her husband, Brad Falchuk, for dinner there.

The peaceful home includes a kitchen, a fireplace, a queen-sized bedroom with plenty of light, and a spa-like bathroom with white marble tiles and gold accents. A second fireplace can be found outside, along with a lounge area covered in a pergola, a large dining table right outside a series of wall-to-wall French doors, and access to Paltrow's luxurious pool and spa. The secluded garden is lined with a variety of beautiful foliage, including cypress trees.



Several activities are offered as ways to assist guests reach "the ultimate Goop retreat" on the Airbnb listing for the "Goop-inspired Stay with Gwyneth Paltrow" including guided meditation, a spa day, and a Goop-inspired lunch. Additionally, Paltrow guarantees to pay close attention to any pressing requests visitors may have, such as accommodating allergies or dietary limitations. On Tuesday, August 15, at 10 AM Pacific Time, reservations for Paltrow's Montecito guesthouse's one-night stay for two people go on sale. The visit will occur on September 9. For \$4.9 million in 2016, Paltrow and Falchuk bought the Montecito property to be torn down, according to Page Six. After that, they invested years in constructing a 14,000 square foot "eco mansion" on the property. Along with the guest house, it has an Olympic-sized pool. The actor gave Architectural Digest a tour last year, and the magazine described the house as "designed to nurture mind, body, and soul".

For Mira Kapoor, it is time for 'annual detox' based on Panchakarma; know more about the 'ayurvedic cleanse'

Mira Kapoor is extremely particular about her lifestyle and takes out time to dedicate enough to her health. As such, being fond of Ayurveda and its multitude of wellness aspects, Mira, recently took to her Instagram Stories to apprise her fans and followers that she is all set to undertake her annual detox. "Time for my annual detox. It is an ayurvedic cleanse based on panchakarma but tailored to my constitution and concerns," she said tagging the ayurvedic practitioner. Further, Mira shared that she has been doing it once a year for six years now. "I'm so looking forward to a complete reset!" According to Mira, monsoon is the best time for detox. "Did you know the best time to do a detox is the monsoon season?" she mentioned. Taking a leaf out of her monsoon detox, here's what to know about the procedure.



Dr Santosh Pandey, naturopath and acupuncturist, Rejua Energy Centre, Mumbai called annual detox as a "good idea as it may help reset and rejuvenate the body". "Detoxification varies from person to person based on their lifestyle, dietary habits, and overall health. Detox programs should be done responsibly and with proper guidance to avoid potential risks. Before starting an annual detox, it is crucial to consult with a healthcare professional and the best time to do a detox treatment depends on individual preferences and goals," said Dr Pandey. He also explained that panchakarma, as an integral part of Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine from India, is a set of five therapeutic treatments aimed at detoxifying and rejuvenating the body, mind, and spirit.

According to Dr Pandey, "some people prefer to do it during monsoon due to the 'increased humidity and cooler weather', which can be beneficial for the body during the detox process. 'The body's pores open up and it becomes more receptive to healing and the process of getting rid of toxins,'" said Dr Pandey.

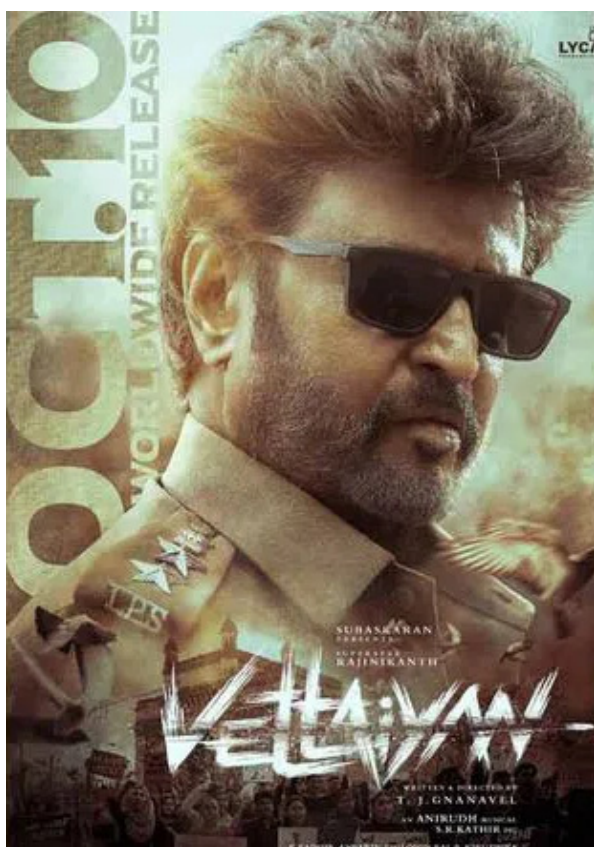
Elaborating, Sharmilee Kapur, co-founder and director, Atmantan Wellness Centre said that according to Ayurveda, the calendar year is made up of two solstices

Detoxification varies from person to person based on their lifestyle, dietary habits, and overall health, said Dr Santosh Pandey, naturopath and acupuncturist, Rejua Energy Centre, Mumbai

— the northern solstice and southern solstice. "The monsoon, which goes from mid-July to mid-September, happens to be the first season of the southern solstice. During this period (i.e., southern solstice), human strength is said to be comparatively high," said Kapur. She added, "We also recommend Panchakarma in monsoon because the detoxification is stronger during this period, as the body naturally sweats more in a humid culture."

Kapur mentioned that the "healing properties of Ayurveda Panchakarma and the subsequent detoxification, improved gut health, weight loss, improved joint and bone health, improved metabolism, good clarity of the senses organs, improved skin health, anti-ageing, and longevity are just a few of the many benefits in this ancient healing science".

Why Telugu titles for dubbed movies matter



love for their language. Where is our pride in our own language? Why is the Telugu film industry, which has united for the sake of the Akkineni family, not standing up against this attack on the Telugu language

The use of Tamil titles in Telugu films or the influence of Tamil cinema is not about linguistic diversity or cultural exchange. It is an attempt to marginalize Telugu by gradually replacing it with another language. The film industry holds the power to shape public culture, language preferences, and identity. By giving preference to other languages over Telugu in Telugu films, we are undermining our own language and cultural identity. Telugu is one of the world's oldest and most beautiful languages, with a literary tradition spanning nearly a thousand years. Great poets like Nannaya, Tikkana, and Yerrapragada enriched our language and literature. This language is not just a medium of communication; it is a symbol of the history, emotions, and aspirations of millions of Telugu people. If movies continue to promote Telugu titles and content, we can pass on our linguistic heritage to future generations.

Language is a significant marker of our identity. For generations, Telugu people have taken pride in their linguistic and cultural uniqueness. However, the growing trend of using Tamil titles in Telugu films, or the increasing influence of Tamil cinema, signals the gradual erosion of Telugu identity. This is not a competition between the two languages, but the influence of Tamil in Telugu films may push our language to the background. Movies strongly influence young minds. The frequent use of Tamil titles in Telugu films could weaken their connection to their mother tongue. Language reflects our emotions and culture. If Telugu is sidelined in popular media like cinema, future generations may lose touch with their roots.

The Telugu film industry must play a key role in preserving our language and culture. Directors, producers, and actors are not just artists but cultural ambassadors. By using Telugu titles and telling stories that reflect Telugu life experiences, they can ensure that our linguistic and cultural heritage is passed down to future generations. Additionally, if we look at the global success of films like Baahubali, Pushpa, and RRR, they succeeded by honoring Telugu language and cultural elements. This proves that respecting our language can also be commercially successful. For all Telugu speakers, it is our duty to promote and respect our language. While all languages deserve respect, we should not let our own language take a backseat to others. The Telugu film industry must lead the way and take necessary steps to give Telugu the prominence it deserves. If we don't respect our language now, we won't just lose a language, but also many of the cultural connections tied to it.

The Telugu film industry, commonly known as Tollywood, is not only renowned for its cinematic brilliance but also for upholding the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of the Telugu people. However, recent trends such as the influence of Tamil films and the use of Tamil titles for Telugu films are diminishing our cultural pride. The big question here is: why are the senior members of the industry, and the film distributors, promoting this? Why is our own language, Telugu, not being supported, even in our own film industry? If the Telugu film industry doesn't protect our language, who will?

Take, for instance, the latest Tamil remake film Vettaiyaa, which is being released in Telugu with its original Tamil title. This film was bought by our distributors for crores of rupees, and industry bigwigs are promoting it. What message does this convey? What is the censor board doing? How did they allow this Tamil title? Are Tamil filmmakers so confident that Telugu audiences will watch anything they produce? If a Telugu film were remade in Tamil, they wouldn't allow it to be released there without giving it a Tamil name, which reflects their

Black movie review: Jiiva, Priya Bhavanishankar shine in a gripping, intriguing melange of genres



The best part of Black is how it reels you in right in the first ten minutes. The film starts in 1964. There is a couple eloping with the help of a friend (Vivek Prasanna). It is raining like crazy. Their journey is briefly interrupted by a vehicle in the ditch. This vehicle carries a marble statue of a guardian angel. There is thunder and lightning. Soon enough, this friend, who has sinister intentions, hears two gunshots. He rushes in to ask the couple what happened? Cut to black. Literally. The title credits pop up, and we are in 2024.

Now, the stage is set with the right amount of intrigue because, of course, you know this prologue will have a payoff. But before that, we have to be introduced to the protagonists of the present — Vasanth and Aaranya. If the opening of the 1964 phase was sinister in its setting, the 2024 timeline begins with Vasanth being interrogated by the cops over the disappearance of his wife, Aaranya. When the cop (Yog Japee) asks what happened to his wife, Vasanth simply says, "I don't know how to make you understand." The film cuts to the brief introduction to the lives of Vasanth and Aaranya, their relationship, a bar fight, two songs, a lead to the reason for them to leave the safe confines of their city house to suddenly be the only inhabitants of a row of beach villas, the first power cut, the static electricity, random occurrences, and bam! we are back to the police station in no time. Director KG Balasubramani presents to us a very knotty affair in Black, and tries to neatly unravel it all by the time the end credits pop up.

On this front, Balasubramani is very effective, especially since the narrative is wittingly convoluted with a mix-and-match of genres and a 'high-concept' premise. It has elements of horror, and the judicious use of jump scares. It has elements of a thriller in ensuring the unpredictability is actually intriguing rather than disengaging. It has elements of a sci-fi with names of Schrodinger and Bermuda Triangle thrown into the mix, but never once tries too hard to impress. It has elements of a romantic tragedy since we know the happiness of the couple is just superficial right from the first time we meet them. It has elements of a road-rage film too. And impressively, Black manages to be all of this, and yet always has something up its sleeve to keep us on the edge of our seats.

Black is the official remake of the 2013 English film, Coherence, but I would suggest people to not read any-

thing about it before watching the film, because for such movies, it is the surprise factor that is most important. However, Balasubramani does the basics right by adapting the original script to cater to both a new audience and ones that have already watched the original. The changes in the writing are actually quite effective because reducing the characters to just a couple changes the dynamics of the narrative. Even though the film runs the risk of feeling repetitive, the writing ensures we are too invested in the plights of the protagonist, and empathize with their predicament.

The biggest support system for the filmmaker in this endeavour is his strong technical team, and his actors. Priya, fresh off the success of Demonte Colony 2, proves that she has the acting chops that perfectly fit a suspense thriller. In such films, it is not just important to sell the shock and trepidation, but also get the wide-eyed stares and loud shrieks right, and Priya is on point. Black also proves that there is no genre that Jiiva doesn't feel natural at. He is completely at home in this home invasion-type of a film, and it is on their shoulders that Balasubramani mounts a rather ambitious debut. The performances get even more elevated thanks to the wonderful work of cinematographer Gokul Benoy, editor Philomin Raj, and composer Sam CS. The three of them are so much in sync, and it is their work that ensures we never feel a sense of lethargy while watching a similar scene unfold for the 13th time. More often than not, Sam is terrific in this genre, and Black is one of the more meatier films to have come his way in recent times, and he delivers. But not all is hunky dory with Black mainly because of certain choices that feel hurried, and more of a cop out. Take, for instance, the recall to the prologue. It feels a bit too verbose, and rushed. The writing plays around with the rules of the film's world, and it is a bit too conveniently wrapped up. The highs of the build up to the end isn't really felt to the same levels when the punchline is dropped. Yes, there is an epilogue after the credits start rolling, and it is an interesting setup, for sure. But the resolution to the film feels rather rushed. It is almost like buying a nice and thoughtful gift, getting a fantastic and wonderful wrapping paper, ironing out the edges, and slightly messing up the bow on top. Nevertheless, Black is one of the more assured debuts in recent times, and when read alongside the other films backed by Potential Studios — Maya, Maanagaram, Monster, Taanakkaraan, and Irugapatru — it feels perfectly at par with the quality.

Made In Heaven actor Arjun Mathur marries his longtime girlfriend Tiya Tejpal.

Hours after a photo of Arjun Mathur's wedding went viral, the actor shared the photo himself on his Instagram handle, confirming the news. Sharing a picture from his wedding mandap with his bride Tiya Tejpal, Arjun revealed their wedding date in the caption. The couple tied the knot on October 9.

In the shared picture, Tiya, who is a production designer and longtime girlfriend of the Made In Heaven actor, could be seen dressed in a beautiful red saree, while Arjun complimented his bride in a matching kurta set. The couple can be seen sitting in front of a mandap, smiling as they looked at each other with love. Their mandap was decorated with beautiful marigold flowers, looking like a scene right out of Made In Heaven series. The couple seemingly had an intimate ceremony with just family and close friends in attendance.

Talking about his wedding, Arjun Mathur told Hindustan Times, "Tiya and I have been as good as married for many years now, and it was simply time for us to solemnise. We were extremely fortunate to be able to keep it as small and intimate as we wanted. We believe that intimacy is beautiful, as long as it stays private. Once public, it becomes something else, which we have all seen enough of in recent times."

He added, "We had a beautiful ceremony, and are extremely grateful for every wish and blessing. We would



like very much to maintain our privacy as we celebrate our togetherness at this joyous time." Sharing the photo, Arjun Mathur wrote, "T & A - 09.10.2024." His caption was accompanied by hearts and infinity emojis. As soon as the actor posted the wedding photo, actor Sonam Bajwa and Oscar winning filmmaker Karitiki Gonsalves congratulated the couple. The Elephant Whisperer director wrote, "Congratulations to you and T and a wonderful life ahead! So happy for both of you." Meanwhile, mom-to-be Sonam commented: "Congratulations both of you." Actor Cyrus Sahukar too congratulated the couple and wrote, "Loads of love and blessings to you two gorgeous people."

A collaboration brewing between Fahadh Faasil and Ram Gopal Varma? RGV's new social media post fuels rumours

Cinephiles in India woke up to a surprise on Friday morning as renowned filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma's latest social media post led them to believe he was announcing a new movie. While Varma, popularly known by his initials RGV, no longer generates much excitement or hype among audiences due to the perceived decline in the quality of his recent films, this post made many jump to the assumption that he was finally poised for a grand comeback and that too with one of India's finest contemporary actors.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter) on Friday, RGV shared a picture of actor Fahadh Faasil standing in what looked like a cave set, with golden light illuminating his tilted face. In the photo, Fahadh stands with his hands behind his back, dressed in a blue t-shirt and



striped pants. A person with long hair sits on the ground in front of him, facing away. "1st ever shot I took of Fahadh Faasil and the expression on his face, he directed himself??" RGV captioned the image. The post quickly went viral, sparking speculation about a potential

laboration between the two. But within two hours, RGV posted a selfie with Fahadh Faasil to clarify that the previous photo wasn't a film announcement. "For the dumbos who believed the pic in my previous tweet that it was a film shot, it was just a random pic shot in a decorative tunnel at RGV

DEN when Fahadh Faasil visited me ??????" he wrote. Fahadh Faasil is currently basking in the success of his latest film, Vettaiyaa, directed by TJ Gnanavel, where he shares the screen with Rajinikanth, Amitabh Bachchan and Manju Warrier, among others.

Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story review: A moving, well-made documentary

It is perhaps hard to remember now what it felt like to see Superman come alive on the big screen for the first time. But whether you did it when Superman was first released in 1978, or over the years when men in leotards and masks were not yet an annual ritual, you never forgot Christopher Reeve.

There was something in that combination of gentleness and non-threatening masculinity, the kind eyes and the shy smile, the high cheekbones and the curl of hair resting just so on the forehead, that made Reeve both a superman who could have descended from space or just an exceptionally handsome man who lived next door. That Reeve's story panned out the way it did further solidified his image as the Man of Steel, as the actor paralysed from the neck down at the age of just 42 chose to live out his remaining years advocating for the cause of the disabled. This documentary on the man that was Superman understands this juxtaposition very well, bringing to jarring attention the world's caginess around the disabled — our vision clouded by discomfort to pity to guilt, never letting us see or treat them as just human. In fact, as Reeve movingly recounts, in the days following the fall from a horse that left him paralysed, as he kept thinking



about all that had been and all that stretched ahead for him, he told his wife Dana: "Perhaps, it's time we let me go." She holds him tight and tells him it is his choice to make, but that they all still love him: "You are still you." Those four words start Reeve's slow road back to somewhat recovery — which includes relearning everything, from bowel and bladder movement to speech therapy, to loss of touch. Directors and co-writers Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui intercut between Reeve's early life growing up, his superstardom, his flings, his true love Dana and his children, to give us a full profile of the man. It is a largely rosy picture, including long stretches where Reeve's three children Matthew, Alexandra and Will talk about their

dad, but it is also a documentary that tells us about a layer of Hollywood that we rarely see.

In the relationships that sustain Reeve — as he says, he increasingly grew to value their worth after his accident — there is his long friendship with Robin Williams, while others such as Susan Sarandon, Glenn Close, Whoopi Goldberg and Jeff Daniels drop in to talk about him. It's hard to reconcile now that Reeves, who would forever and ever be Superman, trained at Juilliard, started his acting career with Broadway, and was looked at with disdain by his close circle, particularly his strict poet-scholar father, when he chose to go down the path of Hollywood. The fact that Williams, a roommate at Juilliard, followed him down that road made the

journey certainly easier, and the documentary fleshes out the special bond they shared, which only grew after the accident. Close says at one point: "I believe that had Reeve been alive, Robin (who committed suicide in 2014) would have been too. I truly believe that."

While the documentary is clearly devoted to Reeve and his hero's arc, it is as generous to people such as Williams and his wife Dana, who leaps off the screen as a ray of sunshine and warmth. Their foundation working for the disabled is now called the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation — and for good reason. Reeve says that the biggest transition the accident brought about in his life, earlier full of constant activity, was the change from being "participant to observer".

In Sharjah against Australia, Shafali Verma must look to get back to boundary-hitting best



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Under the floodlights in Sharjah, a young Indian batter was making her mark as a fearless strokemaker. Length ball from Ayabonga Khaka – one of the best pacers in the world – was swatted over midwicket for four. Next ball, slightly fuller, the ball went flying over cover. Another full ball, a bit straighter, was whacked over midwicket.

In the space of four deliveries, 16-year-old Shafali Verma hit three fours in the Women's T20 Challenge in November 2020. Sure enough, her innings would come to an end in the same over as she kept going for the boundaries, but ended up getting caught at deep midwicket. But at 16, the world was witnessing the start of something special from the swashbuckling Haryana batter. Fast forward four years, Shafali will be back in Sharjah in a match with much higher stakes. A match that will decide India's future at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. India will be desperately hoping their match-winner comes good at the top of the order, if they are to stand any chance of stopping the juggernaut that is Australia.

In the four years since that exhibition series – one where she had the best strike rate among all batters albeit with cameos – Shafali has been through a lot. It's also been four years since she was in a T20 World Cup final with the senior team, playing a stellar role in India's run to the title clash in Australia – another tournament where she was top of the strike rate charts overall, going at 158.25. She has led the Indian U19 side to a World Cup title. She has crossed plenty of milestones along the way, most of them to do with the "youngest" to do something or the other. It's easy to forget sometimes she is still only 20.

The 2024 World Cup, however, has been a bit of hit and miss for the young opener. The pitches, stadium dimensions and the sheer heat in Dubai have been hot topics of discussion in the press conferences. There has been an admission from India that they have been somewhat surprised by the conditions overall, which saw them

struggle in the first two matches. It was only against Sri Lanka that they managed to fire in unison for a comprehensive win.

Festive offer Shafali Verma vs Pakistan, Women's T20 World Cup 2024 India's Shafali Verma plays a shot during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and India at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates, Shafali's scores so far have been 2, 32 and 43 and her overall strike rate in the tournament is less than 100 (77 runs at 97.46 with 7 fours and no sixes). While it is true that run-scoring has been difficult, 19 batters have a better strike rate than Shafali so far in the tournament.

This is perhaps why she had a chuckle when she discussed what the team has been trying to do in trying to counteract the slowness of the pitches. "With the boundary sizes nearly 70m, it's been very difficult to hit the sixes but we're thinking of taking the first run fast and targeting doubles," she said, which Smriti Mandhana too mentioned in her assessment of India's batting against Sri Lanka. Running between the wickets has never been Shafali's strong-suit – there was a compilation on the ICC broadcast during the match against Pakistan, of how she was slow off the blocks from the non-striker's end. But where Shafali has struggled the most so far is boundary-hitting. In her T20I career, she scores a six every 26.18 balls, and a boundary every 5.08 balls. At this World Cup, she is yet to hit a six and her boundary-scoring frequency is once every 11.29 deliveries.

When Shafali is at her best, she has a stable base and hits through the line. She also likes the ball coming onto the bat, which hasn't been the case in UAE with even the faster bowlers largely resorting to change of pace. But in the match against Sri Lanka, Shafali had started to show signs of getting used to the pace, and trying to clear the infield when possible. All three of her fours were aerial hits. However, after the powerplay, she slowed again as the field spread out and she wasn't given any pace to work with – that is where she'd have to improve against Australia. Luckily for India, when Shafali started to slow down, Mandhana had found her groove and as such, the partnership gave them a strong enough platform. "If neither of us struggled, I think we could have scored 200-250 runs," Shafali joked before adding, "So, we try to give a strike to the one who is getting the ball better on the bat. For Sharjah, we will have a few days off. So, we will work on the process and we will focus on what we can do to be confident." It was Australia who caused the biggest heartbreak in Shafali's career – she was inconsolable that day in Melbourne after India lost the final in front of a record crowd. On Sunday, Shafali could have the chance to heal some of that hurt if she can find her groove and provide India an explosive start.

How Ratan Tata's intervention helped Nihal Sarin's career take off when he was 10



GNS News Agency, Oct 14

Nihal Sarin never met Ratan Naval Tata. But when news broke late on Wednesday that the industrialist had passed away in Mumbai at the age of 86, Nihal – who is currently in London playing in the Global Chess League – posted an emotional social media message. "Rest in Peace Ratan Tata sir. Thank you, to you and everyone at Tata Trusts for that call to my father in 2015 that changed my life for the better. Truly sad day," Nihal wrote on Instagram with screenshots of an email exchange. Tata's imprint on chess is well known. Two of the world's premier chess tournaments – the annual Tata Steel Masters tournaments in the Dutch village of Wijk aan Zee (called the Wimbledon of Chess) and the Tata Steel India event in Kolkata are backed by the conglomerate.

But what is little known is how the Tata Group played a role in the rise of Nihal, one of India's top prodigies, who is on his way to become one of the world's top chess players. "In 2015, the Tata Group offered me sponsorship. And they didn't ask for anything in return. It was really nice of them. It really meant a lot for my chess career. Chess is an extremely expensive sport when you factor in travel for events and such things," Nihal Sarin told The Indian Express after the GCL clash between his team PBG Alaskan Knights and Triveni Continental Kings at the Friends House in London. Nihal said it all started with a phone call to his father, Dr Sarin Abdulsalam, when the player was just 10 years old. RIP Ratan Tata sir – thank you to you and everyone at @tatatrusters for that call to my father in 2015 that changed my life for the better. Truly sad day. pic.twitter.com/EyCK1MIKOnThe story goes that after unprecedented success in 2013 and 2014, where Nihal won medals at the U-10 World Blitz Championship and the U-10 World Youth Chess Championship besides medals at the national and Asian meets, it started to become apparent to his father that chess was an expensive pursuit.

"Back then, we had to spend a lot of money to send Nihal to some events abroad because organisers would sometimes only send one ticket. While a ticket was issued for Nihal, there was no ticket for the accompanying



person. And he was barely 10, so I couldn't have sent him there alone," recalled Sarin. "Besides travelling, there was also the coaching costs. So it was taking a huge toll on finances. We were searching for sponsors, but it was difficult." After all, Nihal was not yet an International Master back then. This led Sarin to make one of the toughest decisions he's had to make: to reduce Nihal's participation in chess tournaments internationally and only send him to events that he could afford to pay for from his own pocket. That interview had an instant impact. Within a couple of days of the article getting published, he had an email from Bollywood actor Naseeruddin Shah, who wanted to help the family out. Sarin replied, requesting him to introduce them to some sponsors. The actor warned the father against picking any sponsors that came their way because they would demand "their pound of flesh" in return for funding. "He asked me to name the tournaments I was planning to send Nihal for in the coming months, and that he would help us find sponsors for two or three tournaments at a time," Sarin said. "We exchanged a few emails. Then a week later, one night around 10:45 pm while I was half asleep, I got a phone call from an unknown number. Back then there were scam calls happening, so I ignored the call. The next morning again, at 6:45 or 7, I got a call from the same number. This time I answered and the person on the other side informed me that he was speaking on behalf of Ratan Tata." The conversation revolved around what tournaments Nihal was planning to play in and the costs involved for him to do so. The person on the other side also told Sarin that someone would come out to Thrissur to visit the family. "But that never happened. Instead, after a few days, they had transferred the money into my account. It happened so quickly. Usually, we would have to spend a lot of time convincing sponsors how chess is and so on. But that support from Tatas was unconditional and for three years," says Sarin. While he doesn't want to divulge how much the amount was, he does say it was in lakhs. But that support, when Nihal was not even an international master, was what steered his meteoric rise. Very soon Nihal had his first international master norm. The rest is history in the making.

'You can't fight genetics': Bangladesh assistant coach Nic Pothas explains his team's drought of sixes

GNS News Agency, Oct 14

The biggest disparity between India's batsmen and their Bangladesh counterparts in this series had been their six-hitting prowess. India's batsmen racked up 22 sixes in two games; Bangladesh could manage only eight, the same tally as Nitish Kumar Reddy, in perfectly placid surfaces. When asked about the difference, Bangladesh assistant coach Nic Pothas pinned the blame on the genetics. "They have much stronger players. We are working on our strength and conditioning, but you can't fight genetics," he said.

The South African then elaborated the point. "If one player weighs 95-100 kg and another is 65 kg, naturally the heavier player will hit the ball further. Of course, timing and technique are important, and we are constantly working on those aspects," he said. He also credited the Indian Premier League for enhancing the power-hitting capabilities of India's batsmen. "You also have to look at the IPL. It's the best competition in the world, with top-quality players. The IPL prepares players for the international stage. Comparing India's six-hitting with ours is like comparing how many sixes the West Indies hit compared to us," he said. India's batting coach Ryan ten Doeschate though dwelled on the precision of lengths India's bowlers have managed so far in this series. "The



way we bowled, we made it difficult for Bangladesh batsmen to hit sixes," he said. Historically, Bangladesh batsmen had been six-shy, even in T20s, where the six is the most valued currency. In 178 games, they have struck only 697 sixes, that is a decimal less than four. Their highest six-hitter has been Mahmudullah, whose 77 sixes have come in 129 innings. In comparison, Suryakumar Yadav has struck nearly twice as many sixes (139) in half the innings (70). Even their talisman highest run-getter in this format, Shakib Al Hasan, consumes 40 balls for a hit over the ropes.

Is Pakistan Test cricket down in the dumps or has Bazball peaked? Stats Corner's intriguing numbers

Things were smooth for two days in Multan when the hosts asked England to bowl and reached 556 – their highest score since the manic Rawalpindi Test against the same opposition in 2022. Pakistan took 149 overs to get there in nearly two days. In almost the same time and only six additional deliveries, England whooshed to a jaw-dropping 823/7d on Thursday, the fourth-highest Test total. The mayhem on Day 4 culminated with two record-breaking knocks and a partnership for the ages. And Pakistan, in capricious but fairly obvious nature these days, drew closer to defeat from a position where no outright result was expected.

Crumbling to 220 all out on Friday after a 115-run deficit hung before them overnight, Pakistan suffered the ignominy of having the highest first-innings Test total to result in a defeat. England's gigantic 823/7d, the fastest of the 26 700-plus totals in Test history at 5.48 RPO, consequently became the second-highest Test score to enforce an outright win. Since that Rawalpindi Test in December 2022, the early days of the "Bazball" fad, England have smashed 500 runs in an innings with a 5-plus run rate on four occasions. Save for those accomplishments, there have only been five other instances in the same bracket in all of Test history combined. The ongoing 2024 calendar year is the fastest-scoring Test season for batters in history, building on the now second-placed 2023 season which held a cumulative 3.52 run rate across 34 Tests, 28 of which had a winner. In 33 Tests this year, the combined run rate has jumped up to 3.62 across 32 wins and a solitary draw. England have been at the forefront of this radical shift, leading the batting strike rates in both years. Their latest act of belligerence had Root and young superstar Harry Brook construct a record partnership with contrasting individual

methods. Their 454-run association was the highest-ever for the fourth wicket or lower in Tests and the fourth-highest ever. It also bettered a 90-year record held by Don Bradman and Bill Ponsford (451 v England at Oval) for the highest Test partnership away from home. Root and Brook also became the first English pair to record two 300-plus Test stands, having stacked up a 302-run stand against New Zealand in Wellington last year. Multan's new Sultan

A stupendous start to Brook's Test career was impressive when he reached 1000 Test runs in only 17 innings. He could only add 558 in his next 13 but Brook's incredible 317 has put him on course to become the quickest batter since 1939 to reach 2000 runs. With his marathon effort, Brook's average spiked from 53.72 to 62.50 in two days. His 303-ball triple hundred was only bettered by the swashbuckling Virender Sehwag's 278-ball triple against South Africa in 2008 in terms of speed. Building on Sehwag's knock in Multan in 2004, a blistering 309 off 375 balls, Brook has recorded the highest score by a visiting batter at the venue. It was also his fourth hundred in as many Tests in Pakistan, making him the first batter to achieve the feat in the county. Meanwhile, the 32-year-old Root is catching up to Mt. Tendulkar rapidly – only 3257 separates him from the top. His 35th Test ton propelled him past Alastair Cook as England's highest run-getter. Root wore down the Pakistan bowlers to record his highest Test score (262) with his sixth double hundred, one short of Wally Hammond's English record. But Root's latest masterclass was a testament to his evolving legacy as a Test maestro. The knock marked his third double-hundred in Asia, the most among all visiting batters in the continent. Root has struck one each in India (2021), Sri Lanka (2021) and Pakistan, making him only the third batter to achieve the feat after Sehwag and Mahela Jayawardene.

Making of allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy: From idolising Virat Kohli to following diet prescribed by Hardik Pandya

When the selectors picked Nitish Kumar Reddy for the T20s against Bangladesh, his father Mutyala wondered if the comeback call had come too soon. "Only rarely do we see players who are injured get back into the team straightaway. We know how difficult it is for an opportunity to come again," he says. He was referring to the hernia that heartbreakingly ruled his son out of the Zimbabwe tour, the day after he was picked, last June. He remembers those minutes that dragged on like months. "The squad was announced and within 24 hours this bad news came. Everyone felt sad. We did not know how big the injury was and was worried if he could get an opportunity for India again," he recounts.

But Nitish was too precious a talent—he belongs to the scant tribe of seam-bowling all-rounders in the country—to be hidden. He was picked for the Bangladesh series, and in his second outing showed that the opportunity had not come too soon. Heartbreaks and resurgence, though, has been an inseparable undercurrent of his life, like the movies of his Bollywood idol, Mahesh Babu. In a show with a regional channel, he reproduces his favourite line from his hero's movie, roughly translated as, "Blocks could clog my life, but I will find my own paths." It rings true in his life too. The first adversity of his hitherto smooth life came when he was 12. His father, an employee at Hindustan Zinc was transferred from Visakhapatnam to Udaipur in Rajasthan. "Since I did not know Hindi, I was in two minds whether to go or not," he says. The dilemma stewed in his mind for weeks, so much so that Nitish had begun to take Hindi lessons. But eventually his father decided to stay back, not because of linguistic barriers, but "only because of Nitish's cricket." It invariably meant he had to resign, although he and some of his colleagues staged a fruitless dharna. "Though he hadn't played for the state, he was playing well in district cricket. His coaches insisted that Nitish had a good future. So I decided to quit the job and shape his career," he says.

The extended family criticised the decision, and they ran into financial troubles, as Nitish's father's business forays collapsed. His first cricket gear was his uncle's gift, since his father couldn't afford one. But Mutyala was convinced his son would prosper in cricket. The positive was that he could pick-up and drop him everyday from the VDCA academy to home. One of the coaches, Srinivas Reddy remembers him as a quiet but eager boy, "willing to practise and train." "Right from that age, he was driven and committed, never missing a training session," he says.

In his formative years, Nitish was a batsman who occasionally bowled seam-up. His body of willow work was

gargantuan. In the 2017-18 edition of the Vijay Merchant tournament, he amassed 1237 runs including a quadruple hundred against Nagaland, which he then regretted that he could not convert to a 500, in just eight outings. But when he moved to the ACA Academy in Kadapa, former Services captain Charles David Thomson reasoned that a seam-bowling all-rounder stood better prospects of climbing rungs than a batsman, well-stocked as they are country-wide. Besides, he was so naturally fit—morning jogs along the enormous Vizag coastline, one of his old habits, certainly helped—that he recovered fast. Explains coach Nirmal Kumar, another influential figure in his life: "No matter if he bowled or batted, his recovery used to be quick because he always gave prime importance to fitness. Even when we used to give breaks Nitish always worked in gyms. He didn't get tired quickly. In junior cricket, he was the best batter and bowler. So as he grew we started to use him in both departments. Even as a youngster, he observed his senior players. He got the fitness fetish from his idol, Virat Kohli. Not just the master batsman, he used to keenly watch senior players. "He always played in an age-group higher than his age, so played a lot with the seniors. He used to observe their game, routines and diet," his father chimes in.

He now follows the diet advised by Hardik Pandya. "He always takes advice from Hardik. The diet which Nitish is following at the moment has been advised by Hardik. It is almost a similar diet," Reddy senior says. He is touted as Hardik's successor, rather ambitiously. There is no shortage of skills. He bowls lively medium pace, can shape the ball away, and nip the ball inwards with a conventional seam position and brisk pace. He has conventional attacking shots, accentuated by a sweet batting, as well as a sturdy defensive technique. Nirmal, hyperbolic as childhood coaches could be, draws a lofty parallel: "From his early days he wanted to bowl quick, just like Kallis. Whatever kind of cricketer Kallis is, Nitish has the same capabilities." Realistically, at 21 and just two IPL seasons and as many T20Is into his career, he is still a study in progress. His SRH captain Pat Cummins delves on a virtue of him that could take him heights. "He always wants to learn, always looks to value-add some part of his game," he said in a post-match chat last season. One of those facets has been his power-hitting. In his first season with the SRH, he realised the need to enhance his power-hitting range. So dialled Nirmal's services again. "He always had the ability and power but last year we worked extra with him. We have worked on the downswing a lot, where you make the impact for the ball to for a six where you have to use that power.