

INDIAN CHRONICLE

16 October, 2024 | Wednesday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:211

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Date extended to apply for the Nursing Officers posts

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Medical and Health Services Recruitment Board (TSMHSRB) on Tuesday issued a notification extending the last date to submit filled-in online applications forms for the posts of Nursing Officers (Staff Nurse) till 5 pm on October 19, from the earlier date of October 14. Applications will be accepted online only and applicants can edit their applications between 10.30 am on October 21 and 5 pm on October 22. The date of the computer based test for Nursing Officers is November 17. Last Friday, the TSMHSRB had issued notification adding 272 additional posts of Staff Nurse under the administrative control of Director, Insurance Medical Services.

Rajnath Singh Thanks Telangana for Radar Support



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Vikarabad: Union Minister Rajnath Singh expressed his gratitude to the Telangana government for its cooperation in establishing a radar station in Vikarabad. He emphasized that national security should not be a subject of political debate and praised the efforts of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in making the project a reality.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajnath Singh highlighted the significance of the radar station for the country's defense and security, commending the Telangana government's support. He acknowledged Revanth Reddy's dedication, stating that his contribution to this project is commendable.

The foundation stone for the radar station was laid on the birth anniversary of former President and Bharat Ratna, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, making the occasion even more special. The Union Minister reiterated the importance of such strategic infrastructure for enhancing national defense capabilities and thanked everyone involved in the project's progress.

Release funds to BC students for overseas studies: Harish Rao



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao raised concern over the State government's apathy, questioning the delay in release of funds to 65 BC students who were sanctioned financial assistance under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule BC Overseas Vidya Nidhi scheme by the previous BRS government.

In a statement, Harish Rao asked whether the Congress government is planning to discontinue the Overseas Fellowship Scheme envisioned by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao and erase his legacy in Telangana.

"It is easy to change names and statues, but keeping promises is much harder. Does Congress remember the BC declaration made at Kamareddy? What happened to their grand promise of a BC sub-plan in their first assembly session? Does Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy remember it?" he bombarded the Congress leadership with questions.

Holiday declared to schools in rain effected districts in AP

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

In response to the ongoing heavy rains across the state, the Andhra Pradesh government has declared a school holiday on Tuesday, October 15, 2023, for selected districts. This decision comes after the weather department issued a warning about significant rainfall expected to continue for the next three days.

The holiday applies specifically to all schools and Anganwadis in Prakasam, Nellore, and Chittoor districts. Local collectors have issued directives to this effect, urging students and parents to take note of the situation.

In light of the adverse weather conditions, the education department has also instructed that students residing in welfare hostels located in vulnerable areas be relocated to safer accommodations. Furthermore, medical officials have been tasked with ensuring that pregnant women, particularly those close to delivery, are admitted to healthcare facilities as needed.

PM Modi inaugurates 8th ITU-WTSA, highlights India's telecom revolution

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 8th edition of the International Telecommunication Union-World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (ITU-WTSA) at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Tuesday, emphasizing India's rapid strides in telecom and digital technology. Along with the 8th edition of the ITU-WTSA, the Prime Minister also inaugurated the 8th edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC), with the theme, 'The Future is Now'. Addressing the assembly, PM Modi said, "India is one of the most happening countries globally in terms of telecom and related technologies. With 1.2 billion mobile users and 950 million internet users, India handles more than 40 per cent of the world's real-time digital transactions."

"Digital connectivity



here is not only about technology but also a tool for last-mile delivery, making this global discussion on telecommunications an opportunity for global good." PM Modi connected the WTSA's mission with the India Mobile Congress (IMC), stating, "WTSA focuses on global empowerment through consensus, while the India Mobile Congress centres on connectivity. Consensus and connectivity are vital in today's conflict-ridden world. India, through the age-old message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), is

committed to leading by example." The Prime Minister further noted India's efforts to unite the globe, highlighting the nation's leadership at the G20 summit. "When we led the G20, we gave the message of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. India working towards connecting the world by taking it out of conflict," he said. PM Modi also spotlighted India's telecom manufacturing revolution, revealing that in 2014, the nation had only two mobile manufacturing units, while today, there are more than 200. "Earlier, we imported most of our mobile phones.

Today, we manufacture six times more mobile phones than before and are now exporting phones globally. India is not stopping there; we are moving towards producing entirely 'Made-in-India' phones, from chips to finished products. Our investments in semiconductors are substantial," he added. Amid growing concerns over cyber threats, the Prime Minister called for a global digital governance framework. "The time has come for global institutions to acknowledge the need for a framework that governs technology and protects citizens.

Technology today transcends borders, and no country can fight cyber threats alone. We must work together to create global 'dos and don'ts' for the digital age," he said. He also stressed India's Data Protection Act and National Cyber Security Strategy as proof of the country's commitment to a safe digital ecosystem.

Elections in Maharashtra on November 20, Jharkhand on November 13 and 20

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

New Delhi: Assembly elections in Maharashtra will be held in a single phase on November 20, and in Jharkhand in two phases on November 13 and 20, and the results of both will be declared on November 23, the Election Commission announced on Tuesday. The Assemblies of Maharashtra and Jharkhand have 288 seats and 81 seats, respectively. Announcing the poll schedule for Maharashtra, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said that the notification for the polls would be issued on October 22 and nominations would open the same day, and the last date would be October 29. Scrutiny will be held on October 30 and the last date of withdrawal would be November 4.

In Jharkhand, the no-



tification for the two phases would be issued on October 18 and October 22, and nominations would open that day only, and the last date for filing candidatures would be October 25 and 29. Scrutiny will be held on October 28 and 30 and the last date of withdrawal of nominations will be October 30 and November 1.

The CEC, who was flanked by Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, said that the

model code of conduct comes into place right away with the announcement of the poll schedule. Citing the preparations for the polls, the CEC said that they had chosen the middle of the week to deal with the issue of "urban apathy". He said a special meeting would be held soon on this issue. According to the poll panel, the total electorate of Maharashtra comprises 9.63 crore (4.77 crore men and 4.86 crore women), and in Jharkhand, the number of

voters is 2.6 crore (1.31 crore men and 1.29 crore women). The Election Commission said that a total of 1,00,186 polling stations would be set up at 25,789 locations in Maharashtra, and 29,562 polling stations at 20,281 locations in Jharkhand. In Maharashtra, the ruling MahaYuti, comprising the BJP, the Shiv Sena, and the National Congress Party faces the Maha Vikas Aghadi comprising the Shiv Sena-UBT, the Congress, and the National Congress Party-Sharad Pawar. The contest in Jharkhand will be between the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, and its allies, the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Congress, and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, which also comprises the Janata Dal-United, and the Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas, as well as the All Jharkhand Students Union.

Air India's Delhi-Chicago flight diverted to Canada following bomb threat



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

"Flight AI127 operating from Delhi to Chicago on October 15, 2024, was the subject of a security threat posted online and, as a precautionary measure, has landed at Iqaluit Airport in Canada." The aircraft and passengers are being re-screened as per the laid down security protocol. Air India has activated agencies at the airport to assist the passengers until such time that their journey can resume," the airline said in a statement to PTI. The official said the flight received a bomb threat. On Monday (October 14, 2024), an Air India flight from Mumbai to New York was diverted to Delhi following a bomb threat. Following standard security protocols, a thorough inspection was conducted and no suspicious item was found inside the aircraft. Air India also said that the carrier as well as other local airlines have been subject to a number of threats in recent days. "Though all have

subsequently been found to be hoaxes, as a responsible airline operator all threats are taken seriously. The inconvenience to customers is sincerely regretted," it said. Further, the airline said it is extending all cooperation to authorities in identifying the perpetrators of such threats to ensure that they are held accountable for the disruption and inconvenience caused to passenger. Air India also said it will consider legal action against those responsible to recover damages incurred by the airline.

Chennai records 6.9 cm rainfall in 24 hours, reports waterlogging in several areas

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Chennai: Heavy rain was lashing several areas of Chennai, with the city recording an average of 6.9 cm in the last 24 hours. The rainfall volume was recorded from 8.30 a.m. on Monday to 8 a.m. on Tuesday. The Regional Meteorological Centre reported that Ennore, in North Chennai, recorded the maximum rainfall, followed by Manali, Kolathur, and other areas. Ennore received 10 cm of rain, while Manali and Kolathur reported 9 cm.

Woman techie raped by Auto driver, another man in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: A software employee was allegedly threatened at knife point and raped by two men in an auto-rickshaw at Gachibowli on Tuesday early hours. The incident occurred around 2.30am, when the victim was returning home after completing her shift. According to police sources, the woman boarded the auto-rickshaw at RC Puram to reach her home. When the auto reached Masjid Banda area, an unidentified youth boarded the already occupied vehicle midway.

Revanth Reddy to fly to New Delhi for CWC meet



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will be flying to New Delhi yet again on Wednesday to attend the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting on Thursday. The Congress high command is expected to discuss a host of issues, especially Haryana results and preparations for upcoming polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand with the leaders. There is speculation among the Telangana leaders that after the meeting, the Chief Minister would discuss the cabinet expansion and filling up of nominated posts. Considering the weather, there is still no clarity on his visit, party sources said. The cabinet expansion has been long due and there is some unrest among the probable hoping for a berth in the cabinet. The cabinet expansion was to be completed before the Haryana elections but the high command preferred to discuss the issue after the polls.

This was communicated to the Chief Minister when he flew to New Delhi to meet AICC Chief Mallikarjun Kharge and AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal on October 1. However, during his last two few visits to New Delhi, the Chief Minister could not meet the Gandhi family. In August, the Chief Minister accompanied by IT Minister D Sridhar Babu had invited the AICC Chief to attend the former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi's statue unveiling ceremony. But neither the AICC top brass or Gandhi family members participated in the event.

'Congress govt planning to hike power tariff in Telangana'



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Hyderabad: The Congress government which became synonymous with power cuts, is now gearing up to hike power tariff, imposing additional burden on people of Telangana, said BRS working president KT Rama Rao. He stated that the government which is unable to guarantee uninterrupted power supply, is getting ready to give shocks to consumers in the form of increased power charges.

Taking to X, Rama Rao pointed out that within less than a year of taking office, the Congress administration is ready to increase power tariffs, imposing further strain on the public. He mocked their promise of free electricity, stating that the much-touted "Gruha Jyothi" scheme remains out of reach for many eligible citizens, and zero electricity bills are nowhere in sight. He also questioned the handling of the State's finances, stating that despite borrowing Rs 77,000 crore in just nine months, the public is left with nothing but power cuts and additional hardships under the inefficient governance.

On the plight of cotton farmers, the BRS working president also questioned the Congress government's failure and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's lack of action to maintain remunerative price for quality cotton produced in Telangana. He said while "Bada Bhai" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Gujarat is giving top sport to cotton farmers, "Chota Bhai" Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's government in Telangana neglected them.

Rama Rao pointed out that the cotton price stood at Rs 8,257 per quintal, a finer quality cotton in Telangana is being sold for just Rs 5,000 per quintal. He questioned the delay in opening the procurement centres by Cotton Corporation of India in Telangana, paving way for middlemen to make money in the Congress rule. He reminded that cotton was priced at RS 10,000-15,000 per quintal under the BRS regime over the previous years. "Earlier, you have denied Rythu Bandhu investment support to farmers and now, you are not purchasing their produce. Due to the inefficient Chief Minister without a vision, the Congress government is playing with the lives of cotton farmers," he added.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Unsafe in Bangladesh

A SENSE of frustration is visible in India's strong condemnation of the attacks on Hindu temples in Bangladesh. Ever since former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster following the political upheaval in early August, New Delhi has repeatedly voiced concern about the safety and security of Bangladesh's minorities. It is ironic that the targeting of symbols of Hindu identity continues unabated under the watch of Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus. There have been multiple instances of desecration, vandalism and robbery at shrines and puja pandals. Yunus' contention that these attacks are politically motivated and not communal amounts to a singular abdication of responsibility. A systematic pattern of hate is being allowed to gain ground in Bangladesh, despite his assurances of protecting religious freedom and periodic visits to temples.

Certainly, these are testing times for India-Bangladesh ties. New Delhi's reticence over the demand to deport Hasina to face trial is possibly raising hackles in Dhaka. For some in the new regime, riling India is the perfect way with which Bangladesh can look its powerful neighbour in the eye — however misconceived the notion. Still, both sides must be fully aware of the grave consequences of any delay in bridging the growing distrust. Diplomatic channels need to be activated soonest at full throttle. First and foremost, though, Dhaka must crack the whip. To act — or not to act — cannot constitute leverage. Especially not when the reins of power are with Muhammad Yunus, the West's poster boy of all that is noble.

As police confirm Lawrence Bishnoi gang's role in Baba Siddique's murder, why this is an aberration



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

The Mumbai police have confirmed the involvement of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi in the killing of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique on Saturday night. Siddique, 66, was shot dead by three assailants, two of whom have been detained. Though the Bishnoi gang wreaked havoc in the city with threats and firing outside actor Salman Khan's Bandra residence in April, it had not been involved in killings in the city until Siddique's murder. The gang has been involved in extortion killings in north Indian states, including the murder of a gym owner last month in Delhi. Bishnoi, who is currently

lodged at Sabarmati Central Jail in Ahmedabad, has garnered considerable notoriety due to his constant threats to Salman Khan. The actor came on the gang's radar after his reported killing of a blackbuck during a film shooting in 1998. Blackbuck is considered holy by the Bishnoi community. As per the police, Bishnoi's brother Anmol and top aide Rohit Godara, suspected to be based out of the United States and Canada, have been running his gang from the outside. Bishnoi, who enjoys popularity on social media platforms, is known to hire youngsters from north Indian states through social media platforms to carry out hit jobs. An officer said, "So far, one thought he was making threats to create fear among people using it to extort money. Why the gang decided to murder someone is part of the probe." Siddique, a three-time former MLA, was coming out of his son and Bandra East MLA Zeeshan Siddique's office and walking to his car when three assailants fired six or seven rounds at him. Two bullets hit him in the chest, and one hit him in the abdomen. He sustained multiple serious injuries and was rushed to Lilavati Hospital, where he was pronounced dead during treatment. The shooting occurred on a day when the city police were on high alert due to two annual Dussehra rallies held by the Shiv Sena. Siddique ended his 48-year association with the Congress and joined the NCP led by Ajit Pawar this February.

Delhi man suffers heart attack while playing Kumbhakara in Ramlila, dies



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Delhi ramlila Ankit Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South Delhi, said the deceased, Vikram Taneja, a resident of Bhera Enclave in Pashchim Vihar, suddenly experienced chest pain while he was playing the role of Kumbhakarna in Savitri Nagar Ramlila in Malviya Nagar. A 59-year-old man playing the character of Kumbhakarna during a Ramlila performance in Delhi's Malviya Nagar suffered a heart attack and passed away at around 11 pm on Friday, the police said on Saturday. Ankit Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South Delhi, said the deceased, Vikram Taneja, a resident of Bhera Enclave in Pashchim Vihar, suddenly experienced chest pain while he was playing the role of Kumbhakarna in Savitri Nagar Ramlila in Malviya Nagar.

"Initially, he was rushed to Akash Hospital, where he was referred to PSRI Hospital. Later, he was declared dead by the doctors during treatment," the officer said. The police said PSRI hospital made a control room call and informed the Malviya Nagar police station of Taneja's death on October 12. The police also recorded statements from the victim's family members who suspected no foul play.

Breaking free from wheat, marginal farmers in Ferozepur start chilli cultivation, uplift others

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Over the past decade, Shamsheer not only improved his financial standing but is also a part of a group of 20 chilli growers including small and marginal who are purchasing the chilli crop from several farmers in Punjab at a Minimum Support Price (MSP), a price typically not offered by the government for crops other than wheat and paddy. He ensures that the small scale farmers are not left out in the volatile market.

Shamsheer has vegetable nurseries, including a chilli nursery, on 1-acre of his land, which supports the plantation of chillies across 275 acres. To expand his operations, he leases 10 acres at Rs 64,000 per acre annually, where he focuses on chilli farming. He and his group buy chillies from small-scale farmers who struggle to find a market, ensuring they receive a fair price equivalent to MSP. Singh's group purchases chillies from farmers at a guaranteed rate. The chilli farming process begins in early October, when the nursery is planted. After 40 to 45 days, the seedlings are transplanted into the main field. To protect the seedlings from winter, farmers cover them with polythene sheets supported by iron wire in 4-foot-high tunnels, which is called low tunnel farming. These tunnels help maintain optimal temperatures and the sheets are removed by mid-February. The first harvest takes place by March end, and farmers can take up to six pickings of green chilli until July. For red chillies, farmers can take two pickings in April and June. Chilli farming The chilli farming process begins in early October, when the nursery is planted. After 40 to 45 days, the seedlings are transplanted into the main field.

He explains that growing chillies nursery requires an initial investment of 18 to 20 kg of seed per acre, costing between Rs 27,000 and Rs 45,000 per kg. Labour charges for growing chilli nursery in one acre is around Rs 1 lakh. Despite the high upfront costs, the returns are rewarding. A farmer can sell 40-45 days old chilli nurseries for Rs 18 to Rs 20 lakh and earn Rs 9 to Rs 10 lakh within the short period. An acre of green chilli cultivation can produce around 250 quintals, while red chilli yields 80 to 120 quintals per acre. Last year, green chilli prices ranged between Rs 10 and Rs 11 per kg, which was on the lower side, while red chilli fetched Rs 28 to Rs 30 per kg. After deducting all expenses, he adds that farmers can earn about Rs 1.5 lakh per acre from chilli farming — far more than the Rs 50,000 per acre they make from wheat, even when growing on their own land. As Shamsheer takes two crops in a year the land rent costs him Rs 32,000 per acre per crop and even after that he can save more than one lakh per acre from chilli crop. Balwinder Singh Mahalam of Mahalam village in Ferozepur, a fellow farmer in the same group, grows chillies on 20 acres, including 7 acres of his own and grows chilli nursery on less than one acre land to supply to chilli cultivation on 200 acres. He says their group sets the MSP based on the prevailing rates in major chilli markets such as Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, ensuring farmers in Punjab receive a fair deal. The group helps small-scale chilli farmers, who often struggle to find buy-



ers, by purchasing their produce at MSP, providing stability and security. Balwinder said that they are in the process of forming an organisation as currently they are also providing seedlings to the farmers. Chilli farming Shamsheer Singh and his group buy chillies from small-scale farmers who struggle to find a market, ensuring they receive a fair price equivalent to MSP.

He says that there are four selling options for chillies — selling green chillies early if market rates are favorable, waiting for the chillies to turn red if rates are low, dry chilli, the rate of which is Rs 130 to Rs 170 per kg or they can store it if market is not favorable and sell it when the rates improve. "These many options are not available in any other horticulture crop, Balwinder says. This flexibility is one of the major advantages of chilli farming, making it an attractive option for farmers looking to diversify, he says, adding that in Ferozepur and surrounding areas several farmers are now growing chillies and the talks of its export are also going on as the samples of our chilli got passed. "Our chilli has no harmful chemicals as we use the recommended fertilisers and pesticides in a very small amount," he says, adding that director Horticulture department Shailender Kaur has been supporting the chilli farmers in all possible manner so that farmers can earn a fair price from it. Simran Singh, officer of Ferozepur Horticulture Development, says that in Ferozepur around 10,000 acres are dedicated to chilli farming, with farmers cultivating the crop on plots ranging from 1 acre to even 100 acres. "The trend is shifting, with more farmers preferring to bring red chillies to the market as it saves on labour costs. Red chillies require only two pickings, whereas green chillies need more frequent harvesting, leading to higher labor expenses. Additionally, red chillies fetch a better price. Even in a bad season, farmers can earn up to Rs 1 lakh per acre after covering all expenses," he says, adding that they are in talks with senior authorities to explore export opportunities for green chillies.

Odisha woman found with bloodied clothes near Delhi flyover, sexual assault suspected: Police



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Delhi The police were investigating the matter and reviewing the area's CCTV footage to gather more information about the incident. A 34-year-old woman was found near Sarai Kale Khan flyover in Southeast Delhi, her clothes bloodied, on the intervening night of October 10 and 11, the police said on Saturday. The suspected woman, a resident of Odisha, was sexually assaulted elsewhere and abandoned in Sarai Kale Khan.

"She was taken to AIIMS Trauma Centre, where she is currently receiving treatment," said Ravi Kumar Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Southeast Delhi. The police found the victim after a caller alerted them at 3.15 am. "She had moved to Delhi a year ago and was living on rent," said DCP Singh. The officer said a case was registered under sections 70(1) [gang rape] and 115(2) [voluntarily causing hurt] of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and multiple teams were formed to apprehend the perpetrators. The police were investigating the matter and reviewing the area's CCTV footage to gather more information about the incident. "The victim is unable to provide clear details right now. Her family has been informed. They are on their way from Odisha," said the DCP. According to police sources, her parents filed a missing person report after she left her home. Later, on discovering her whereabouts, they visited her in Delhi around two months ago but were unable to persuade her to return home. The victim, a nursing graduate, had reportedly lost her phone a month ago and had been out of contact with her family. She was living on the streets and was seen sleeping near an ATM booth for two days, sources said.

'Alarm bell for common people': Uproar over Baba Siddique's killing in Mumbai as Oppn demands Fadnavis's resignation

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

With the Maharashtra Assembly polls round the corner, the killing of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and three-time MLA Baba Siddique has kicked off a political firestorm in the state, with Opposition leaders demanding the resignation of Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Siddique was shot dead by three persons in Bandra East on Saturday evening, a day when the city police were on high alert due to two annual Dussehra rallies held by the Shiv Sena. According to the police, the assailants fired around 6-7 rounds at Siddique as he left his son's office and was entering his car. Two bullets hit him in the chest, and one hit him in the abdomen. Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi expressed concern over the deteriorating law-and-order situation in the state, calling for accountability from the ruling government.

Taking to X, he stated "This horrifying incident exposes the complete collapse of law and order in Maharashtra. The government must take responsibility, and justice must prevail. Former chief minister and NCP chief Sharad Pawar also condemned the incident stating, "If the Home Minister and the rulers are going to push the cart of the state so mildly, it can be an alarm bell for the common people. There is a need not only to investigate this, but also to accept the responsibility and step down from the position of the rulers.", in a post on X. Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly Vijay Wadetiwar said, "It is unfortunate that former minister Baba Siddique was shot dead despite giving Y-level security. We have been warning about the growing criminal activities in Mumbai but

those were not taken seriously. Mumbai was silent but such incidents are growing. This government has been supporting criminals and we demand that a detailed probe should be conducted." Siddique served as an MLA representing Bandra West from 1999 to 2014 and held ministerial positions in the Congress-NCP government from 2004 to 2008. He had recently switched allegiance from Congress to NCP earlier this year after a long political career spanning nearly five decades. Festive offer baba siddique A view of the location where NCP leader Baba Siddique was shot at, at Bandra East in Mumbai. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, in a post on X, offered his condolences and said that "the tragic demise of the former Maharashtra minister was shocking beyond words." He further urged the state government to take an action against the act stating, "Justice must be ensured, and the present Maharashtra Govt must order a thorough and transparent investigation. The culprits must be brought to book at the earliest. Accountability is paramount." The tragic demise of Former Maharashtra Minister, Shri Baba Siddique is shocking beyond words. In this hour of grief, I offer my deepest condolences to his family, friends and supporters. Meanwhile, NCP (SP) national spokesperson Clyde Crasto said, "The news about Baba Siddique is very disturbing. The concern here is that the law and order situation in Maharashtra, which is failing. The BJP led Mahayuti needs to answer to the people of Maharashtra. People are taking the law into their own hands and feel free to do what they want because there is no fear of the law. The Home Department led by Devendra Fadnavis seems to have failed." Priyanka



Chaturvedi, Deputy Leader of Shiv Sena, taking to X spoke on the recent high-profile murders of political figures such as Sachin Kurmi, member of the NCP (AP), Ganpat Gaikwad, BJP MLA among others highlighting the "grave collapse of law and order" the state is facing, reminiscent of the turbulent 1980s in Mumbai. She stated that the shooting of NCP leader Baba Siddique, despite his Y-category security, underscored a failure to protect even those within the government." Maharashtra hasn't seen such a state of collapse in its law and order. This death is a grim reminder of the 80s decade of Mumbai.

A look back at high profile incidents in this year itself, barring one rest all are allies in the ruling dispensation Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadiya Thackeray also took to X to condemn the crime. "The murder of Baba Siddique ji is shocking.

Amazon told to pay city resident Rs 40,325 'misused' by hackers from her credit card



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

The server was packed with Amazon's artificial intelligence chips that compete with those from market leader Nvidia, Amazon executive Rami Sinno said on Friday, during a visit to the lab. Amazon India and Amazon Pay Later, in their reply, stated, "The complainant contacted our customer support team wherein all orders which were placed had been cancelled and proper and efficient assistance was provided to the complainant against the cancelled orders. Considering the complainant's grievance that her account was hacked, they immediately checked internally and assisted the complainant with sanitising/suppressing her account and ensuring all orders were cancelled to avoid any further issues." Amazon Retail India further clarified that "the payment made into the nodal account is not a payment made to them herein, also that the nodal account is maintained and audited by a bank recognised for such purpose by the RBI, and not by them. They herein are not the account holder or owner of the nodal account and cannot transact at will without restriction on the said nodal account". The Consumer Commission, on hearing the matter, opined, "It is a general practice of online platform that particularly a product before collection at the time of return is verified thoroughly by the collecting agent and the same is collected only after the same is found to be the same as the item delivered. In case of any difference, the product is never collected by the collecting agent. More so, this plea was never communicated at any stage to the complainant and seems afterthought of Amazon Retail India." The Commission said, "All transactions of sale, collection of amounts, ensuring delivery of the product, processing cancellation request, return request and refund of amount are controlled and managed by Amazon Retail India only. But in the present case, the act of Amazon Retail India for not properly handling the situation despite having complete knowledge of suspicious activity and not taking prompt action on the complaint of the complainant ignoring the genuine repeated requests of the complainant and forcing her to indulge in the present litigation proves deficiency in service on the part of Amazon Retail India and Amazon Pay Later." The Commission, thus, directed Amazon Retail India to refund the amount of Rs 40,325 to the complainant along with Rs 10,000 as compensation for causing mental agony and harassment to her, and Rs 8000 as the costs of litigation.

Samita Das of PGIMER, Sector 12, Chandigarh, alleged fraudsters hacked her mobile phone and consequently, her email ID and ICICI Bank Credit Card were also hacked and misused by the fraudsters on September 19, 2023, by placing orders online for the purchase of articles with Amazon Retail India, through her Amazon Account. Initially, apprehending suspicious activity, the orders were cancelled and informed via email at 1.12 pm on September 19, 2023, but certain other orders placed by the fraudsters entertained by Amazon India without verifying the credentials and a demand was raised against the Amazon Pay Later Account, even as the orders placed using the Amazon Pay Later Account have been cancelled and a refund has been assured," the complainant alleged. She alleged further orders were also placed by the fraudsters to purchase articles through Amazon and the payment was made using her ICICI Bank Credit Card on September 19, 2023, subsequently, the orders were cancelled and a refund was assured by Amazon, but to date, the amount, which was to be re-

funded through the same mode as was collected by Amazon, has not been refunded. Das alleged, "The act of demand made it clear that amount has not been refunded by Amazon Retail India and Amazon Pay Later, and the amount collected has illegally been retained by them despite numerous requests for refund having been made."

Amazon India and Amazon Pay Later, in their reply, stated, "The complainant contacted our customer support team wherein all orders which were placed had been cancelled and proper and efficient assistance was provided to the complainant against the cancelled orders. Considering the complainant's grievance that her account was hacked, they immediately checked internally and assisted the complainant with sanitising/suppressing her account and ensuring all orders were cancelled to avoid any further issues." Amazon Retail India further clarified that "the payment made into the nodal account is not a payment made to them herein, also that the nodal account is maintained and audited by a bank recognised for such purpose by the RBI, and not by them. They herein are not the account holder or owner of the nodal account and cannot transact at will without restriction on the said nodal account". The Consumer Commission, on hearing the matter, opined, "It is a general practice of online platform that particularly a product before collection at the time of return is verified thoroughly by the collecting agent and the same is collected only after the same is found to be the same as the item delivered. In case of any difference, the product is never collected by the collecting agent. More so, this plea was never communicated at any stage to the complainant and seems afterthought of Amazon Retail India." The Commission said, "All transactions of sale, collection of amounts, ensuring delivery of the product, processing cancellation request, return request and refund of amount are controlled and managed by Amazon Retail India only. But in the present case, the act of Amazon Retail India for not properly handling the situation despite having complete knowledge of suspicious activity and not taking prompt action on the complaint of the complainant ignoring the genuine repeated requests of the complainant and forcing her to indulge in the present litigation proves deficiency in service on the part of Amazon Retail India and Amazon Pay Later." The Commission, thus, directed Amazon Retail India to refund the amount of Rs 40,325 to the complainant along with Rs 10,000 as compensation for causing mental agony and harassment to her, and Rs 8000 as the costs of litigation.

Delhi gym owner murder: Key accused held after shootout, say police

GNS News Agency, Oct 15 Delhi gym owner murder, gym owner murder Key accused held, delhi gym owner shot dead, gym owner shootout, delhi police, lawrence bishnoi, extortion case, indian express news Madhur aka Mota Armaan was injured in the firing. The Special Cell Saturday arrested the alleged main shooter in the GK-1 gym owner shooting case following a shootout in Narela, Delhi Police sources said. It is learnt that the accused, Madhur aka Mota Armaan, has been injured in the incident that took place around 9.30 pm. According to a police source, the accused was allegedly on a red bike when he was chased by police. "... 12 rounds were fired between the police and the accused. He was shot in his right knee and left ankle, after which he fell off the bike," the source said. Police recovered a semi-automatic pistol and eight live cartridges along with a red motorcycle. The victim, Afghan national Nadir Shah, was shot dead outside his gym in South Delhi's GK-1 on the night of September 12. Nine accused were already arrested in the case.

Police had earlier said their probe pointed towards the involvement of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang in the murder over an alleged extortion bid on a city-based businessman. The Indian Express reported Saturday that jailed gangster Hashim Baba — also arrested in the case — allegedly said in a "judicial confession" that Bishnoi was behind the hit. According to investigators, after initial questioning in the case, Hashim moved an application to



record his "judicial confession" wherein he alleged jailed gangster Bishnoi approached him to kill Shah. "In his judicial confession, he alleged that he was approached by Bishnoi, who is lodged in Sabarmati jail, on VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), or internet calls, around three-four months ago and discussed a plan to eliminate Shah. He asked him to arrange some shooters and also provide all logistical support to the shooters," a source claimed.

Doctor accuses superior at Delhi govt hospital of 'sexual harassment'; sparks political tussle



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

sexual harassment, medical superintendent, Delhi govt hospital, sexual harassment allegations, political tussle Doctor accuses superior, delhi govt hospital, internal complaints committee, aap, bjp, lg vk saxena, health secretary, indian express news In her complaint, a copy of which was presented before the health minister, the doctor alleged she was forced to request a transfer due to persistent and distressing harassment from the MS. "His predatory behaviour was relentless. He would stalk her during her morning walks, making her feel unsafe in her personal space," the ICC complaint details mentioned. The Indian Express reached out to the medical superintendent, but he remained unavailable for comment. The complainant alleged he repeatedly pressured her to accompany him to places unrelated to her professional duties, including unofficial trips and outstation visits, using the lure of promotions and career advancement to manipulate her compliance. On one occasion, he coerced her into attending a social gathering of medical superintendents at a private club, she alleged. According to the complaint details, "his harassment escalated when he demanded that she visit him at a private hospital where he was admitted". The doctor alleged despite her formal request for a transfer, the superintendent "deliberately withheld action on the application, keeping it pending for over three months". Further, she claimed her formal complaint to Health Secretary, S B Deepak Kumar, was referred to ICC. However, the accused repeatedly avoided engaging with the process till he was legally summoned, she alleged. When the ICC upheld the doctor's complaint, she was allegedly transferred to an unfavourable location and stripped of her post as head of department, and replaced by a junior. The complainant doctor also claimed her attempts to meet the health secretary did not succeed. Hitting out at the L-G, MP Singh said, "Officials under BJP's L-G launched an investigation against the doctor who accused her MS of sexual harassment. No action was taken against the MS even after charges were proved in the ICC. The health department transferred the female doctor. Has BJP given L-G authority for transfers, postings, and actions just to protect those who sexually harass women?" Likening the harassment issue to the R G Kar Hospital case, L-G Secretariat officials said the AAP MP was "implicating his own leader Arvind Kejriwal and current Delhi CM Atishi" through such statements.

A woman doctor has alleged sexual harassment by the Medical Superintendent (MS) of a Delhi government hospital where she worked. She alleged despite overwhelming evidence against the MS and a report by the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) upholding her allegations, the accused continues to operate with impunity.

The development triggered a political row between the AAP and L-G VK Saxena's office. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh accused L-G VK Saxena of "protecting" the accused MS, adding that the female doctor went to meet the Health Secretary "several times" over the issue but he was "intentionally avoided". L-G Secretariat officials termed Singh's allegations a "lame attempt to divert attention" from the incident. Following the woman's complaint to the health secretary, the health minister's office sought more information from the hospital, including details from the ICC that probed the matter. Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, in a notice issued to hospital officials, also

'We are down to borrowing medicines': Mohalla clinics, once AAP govt's crown jewel, are running out of essential drugs



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

For the past three months, Ashok and Sanjay Kumar, patients of a blood clotting disorder called Haemophilia A, have been struggling to avail a life-saving medicine. Usually, the injection is available at the Haemophilia daycare centre at Lok Nayak Hospital, but for the past three months, patients have been told it's out of stock. In September, things came to a head when a fight erupted between patients and doctors and staff of the hospital, after they were again refused the injection, meant to prevent or manage bleeding. The injection is one of many essential drugs meant to be provided by the Delhi government's central procurement agency (CPA) to different hospitals, mohalla clinics and dispensaries. Except, for months now, this has not happened.

The Indian Express visited three government hospitals and six mohalla clinics in Southeast, East and West districts and found a shortage of essential drugs — meant to be available for free to patients — across the board. The reason: Non-payment of vendors and a change in tender conditions, as a result of which two-thirds of the companies didn't participate in the tender process this financial year. To put the crisis in context, only Rs 5 crore has been spent to procure medicines from the essential drug list (EDL) this year — a far cry from Rs 164 crore in the financial year 2023-24 and Rs 247 crore the previous year. While larger hospitals are navigating the crisis by procuring the drugs from local vendors, albeit at a higher cost, mohalla clinics and smaller hospitals are faced with a far more dire situation. Officials estimate that even if measures to address the issue are taken now, it will take six months for the situation to normalise. On the ground, desperation at a mohalla clinic in a JJ cluster in Southeast Delhi, patients lined up to meet doctors and collect medicines. Many left not with the drugs they needed, but with white chits scribbled with the names of the medicines. Poonam Devi, a resident of Molarband and a daily wagger, had come to the clinic for severe leg pain and itching. She said the doctor told her to buy the medicine from outside. "Mohalla clinics are a boon for poor people like us. But if medicines are out of stock here, we'll just not buy them since they're expensive," she said.

Delhi drug shortage, healthcare crisis, delhi public health, mohalla clinics, essential drugs, AAP govt, drug shortage at mohalla clinics, indian express news (Left) Patients at IHBAS. (Right) An empty mohalla clinic in Geeta Colony The doctor here attends to around 150 patients a day. "Since we can't write 'out of stock' on their prescription, we are just verbally informing them or giving them chits to get the particular medicine from outside," she said. "We're down to borrowing medicines from each other. We tell colleagues about our requirements on WhatsApp groups and share what we have," she added. This also played out at a mohalla clinic located in a slum in West Delhi, where a doctor anxiously typed on her phone. She was sending a message to a WhatsApp group that has Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) and doctors of other mohalla clinics about the dearth of medicines for treating diabetes, blood pressure, and other serious conditions. The capital has a total of 533 mohalla clinics — once considered a crown jewel in the Aam Aadmi Party's healthcare portfolio — and 30 Delhi government-run hospitals. In Southeast Delhi's Govindpuri, the clinic had been shut for the day, with locals saying the doctors have not been coming regularly ever since medicines ran out. At a mohalla clinic in Geeta Colony in East Delhi, two pharmacists sat inside. "Medicines are not available, so most patients have stopped coming," said

one. The medicines range from those prescribed for pain relief, scabies, skin infection, inflammation, and blood pressure to diabetes. Delhi drug shortage, healthcare crisis, delhi public health, mohalla clinics, essential drugs, AAP govt, drug shortage at mohalla clinics, indian express news This is evident at a pharmacy across the road from IHBAS, where relatives of several patients gathered and paid out of their own pocket. At hospitals under the Delhi government, too, the situation is grim. At the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), the father of a 22-year-old undergoing treatment for schizophrenia has been struggling to get medicines for six months. With no medicines for Parkinson's disease, seizures and anxiety, panic disorder and epilepsy either, patients have to purchase them from outside. This is evident at a pharmacy across the road from IHBAS, where relatives of several patients gathered and paid out of their own pocket. Jatin, a pharmacy store owner, said: "Andar almost sab dawai khatam hai (almost every medicine is over at the hospital)." At Aruna Asaf Ali Hospital in North Delhi, medicines to treat haemorrhoids, seizures, thyroid, gout and kidney stones, fungal infections, pain relief, allergic rhinitis, nerve pain, acidity, depression and bacterial infections are in short supply. What went wrong? Like many other unresolved issues in the Capital, this too is mired in the government-bureaucracy tussle.

In July, Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj held a meeting where he suggested CDMOs were partly to blame. "... availability in terms of EDL being projected to the government is misleading because, in reality, CDMOs are not distributing available medicines to mohalla clinics. Therefore, even though some medicines are shown as available at the district level in its store... those medicines are not available at the mohalla clinic in reality," he alleged. He also wrote to then Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar: "It is the duty of Secretary (Health) and CPA officers, especially the Directorate General of Health Services, to ensure medicines are procured through CPA. In case medicines are not available through CPA, alternate mechanisms should be used to ensure medicines are available at all mohalla clinics." He alleged though CDMOs have been demanding medicines for months, CPA has not placed orders. "They selectively ordered only 5-10% of the type of medicines. The order which had to be placed in March for the first quarter was placed in July, that too for 50%... of the medicines demanded by CDMOs," he claimed. But health department officials pointed to other lapses. Had earlier reported how drug suppliers had not received payment for medicines worth Rs 90 crore from the CPA for over six months. "The dues have now reached Rs 110 crore," said a medicine supplier. On August 14, a group of suppliers wrote to Bharadwaj, stating they had not been paid dues since September 2023. A senior official said that not only was payment delayed, but only around 100 suppliers bid for the procurement tender floated in April, as compared to over 300 the previous time. "Out of these, only 10 bidders qualified, compared to around 175-200 in previous tenders. Out of the essential drug list, of 1,100 medicines, tenders were passed for only 54 drugs for procurement," he said. Recently, a pre-bidding meeting was conducted with the vendors in the hopes of resolving the crisis. However, officials say that even if a tender is floated today, it will take six months to procure the medicines. Officials also said that after the tender process was changed by former Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, only companies with a turnover of over Rs 150 crore annually are now eligible to participate in the bidding. This amount was Rs 18 crore till last year. Sources said manufacturers of generic medicine are diverse, ranging from startups to MSMEs and larger firms. Common medicines or fast-moving items are generally manufactured by smaller firms, having a low turnover. Bigger firms make specialised medicines such as cardiovascular and anti-cancer drugs and antibiotics. "90% of our health facility depends on common medicines generally manufactured by smaller firms. Hence, suddenly increasing the turnover from Rs 18 crore to Rs 150 crore is restrictive," said an official in the Delhi government. In September, a review meeting of health department officials, the minister and L-G was held where the issue was discussed. Subsequently, the EDL has been finalised and tenders floated. They are yet to be awarded.

Probe denial of ration cards to 90,000 poor people: Delhi L-G; BJP welcomes move, AAP hits back

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has directed the chief secretary to probe the AAP government's alleged failure to issue ration cards to 90,000 poor people. The AAP government termed the allegations "baseless, malicious, concocted and mischievous." The directive came after Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Vijender Gupta, accused the AAP-led Delhi government of denying essential food supplies to thousands of families and failing to issue them ration cards. He had also written seeking the L-G's intervention in the matter. Welcoming Saxena's directive to probe the allegations Saturday, Gupta accused the AAP government of exploiting marginalised communities. "The government has snatched food from the mouths of the poor and exploited Dalits," Gupta said.

The issue centres around the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) to supply essential ration to the poorest families in the society, Gupta said. Under the scheme, 1,56,800 families in Delhi were entitled to receive 35 kilograms of ration every month, based on the 2011 census. This included 21 kg of wheat, 14 kg of rice, and 1 kg of sugar. "At the time when the AAP came to power in 2015, 76,458 poor families were receiving ration under the scheme. However, after nearly a decade, this number has dropped to 66,532. Around 10,000 fewer families are receiving ration, while the number should have increased over the last decade. Of the 1,56,800 families eligible, 90,000 individuals have not been issued ration cards, and the Kejriwal government has failed to do so," Gupta alleged.

He further claimed that in July 2019, the Delhi government's Food and Civil Supplies Department had prepared a list of individuals eligible for ration cards and submitted it to department minister, Imran Hussain, for approval. However, Gupta alleged that Hussain halted the process, instructing that the issuance of ration cards be stopped. He criticised the administration for pursuing an "anti-poor agenda" by halting the distribution of



The issue centres around the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) to supply essential ration to the poorest families in the society, Gupta said. Under the scheme, 1,56,800 families in Delhi were entitled to receive 35 kilograms of ration every month, based on the 2011 census

ration. The AAP accused Gupta of having "intentionally misrepresented directions from the Minister of Food and Civil Supplies". "At one point, considering the interest of AAY families and applicants and to prevent the misuse by vested interests, the Minister had directed the F&S (Food and Civil Supplies) department to keep the preparation of ration cards for applicants in abeyance for some time. However, on review of the policy, Minister F&S approved preparing AAY ration cards on priority through a separate queue, and this was put in place by the F&S department via circular dated July 27, 2020. Since then, a separate module in the F&S department has been in existence for preparing AAY ration cards on priority through a separate queue," said AAP.

'Educate, Agitate, Organise': BR Ambedkar invoked as 130 convert to Buddhism



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

the "suppressed history" of the Dalits. It all began when he began reading a book gifted by a friend that posed the question — "What if there hadn't been a Dr Ambedkar?"

Prashant Mehta of the Triratna Mangal Baudhh Sangh, the organiser of the event, said that the ceremony was held in accordance with the law and all the attendees had completed government formalities under the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003. A similar ceremony was held in the Gita Mandir area where 68 people from the Dalit community, including 30 families, accepted Buddhism, said Ramesh Banker of the Gujarat Buddhist Academy and allied organisations. They have been hosting these programmes for nearly a decade. He estimated that about 5,000 people have converted to Buddhism during this time at such events. At this event, a family of five, who had converted to Buddhism back in 2014, helped the sixth and newest member of their family, a daughter-in-law, "embrace" the teachings of Buddha. Abhilash Sakya, 68, a stock trader, who changed his name along with his religion a decade ago, said his younger son's wife Roshni, converted to Buddhism on Saturday. Abhilash and his wife Hira had changed their surname to erase any trace of their history. Growing up in Saurashtra, Sakya said he had seen the face of discrimination change from the very blatant manner in rural areas to a subtle manner in the urban areas. "While I had stopped visiting temples and conducting religious rites long ago, my firm wouldn't eat food before lighting a lamp in the temple. All of that changed in 2014 when we accepted the light of Lord Buddha. There was no point in adhering to a religion that has different standards for me and my brethren," he said. 30-year-old Roshni told The Indian Express, "I've been in touch with this family for the last three years and was married into it last year. My own family is Hindu and very religious but I felt that this simplistic lifestyle of Buddhism is a better fit for me."

"Education is the first word of Babasaheb's motto of 'Educate, Agitate, Organise'. It is only when one is educated about one's past, the history of discrimination and the efforts at emancipation that one can truly be free," said a Central government employee, invoking Dr BR Ambedkar, at an event in Ahmedabad where he, his wife and two daughters converted to Buddhism. He was one of the 62 people from the Scheduled Caste category who converted to Buddhism at a religious event in Vadaj area to mark Ashok Vijaya Dashami — the day that Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty embraced the religion in the third century BC. Two years before he was born, his father had changed the family's surname in the 70s from Parmar due to discrimination, he recalled, while pleading anonymity. He said he had been subjected to hateful comments when he became vocal about caste discrimination. His family was one of three nuclear families who converted together at the Vadaj ceremony on Saturday. However, he said that this was not conversion but rather a "ghar wapsi" (a homecoming) to the religion of his ancestors. He was prompted to accept Buddhism, he added, following a long-drawn process of five years of studying

Uddhav Thackeray flays BJP, RSS for 'satta jihad,' says they need power at any cost

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Uddhav Thackeray, BJP, RSS, satta jihad, Maharashtra Assembly polls, Shiv Sena Dussehra rally, BJP's vote jihad allegations, Hindutva, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Indian express news Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray addresses the party's annual Dussehra rally on the occasion of the Vijayadashami festival Ahead of the Assembly polls, Shiv Sena UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray criticised the BJP and RSS during his party's annual Dussehra rally on Saturday. He condemned their approach to Hindutva and accused the BJP of engaging in 'satta jihad'—a term he used to describe their relentless pursuit of power at any cost. Thackeray's use of 'satta jihad' comes in response to the BJP's 'vote jihad' allegations, claiming that Shiv Sena UBT had garnered significant minority support in the recent Lok Sabha polls. He promised to construct temples dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in every district of Maharashtra if his party regains power. The former chief minister also challenged the RSS to reflect on its contributions to Hinduism over the past century. He questioned why RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat urged Hindus to unite against perceived threats, suggesting that the BJP, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had failed to protect them despite being in power for a decade.

"You (Bhagwat) say Hindus are under threat and should unite. What has Vishwaguru (PM Modi) been doing for the past 10 years? Why should you remain in power if you cannot protect Hindus?" Thackeray said. He further urged the RSS to hold a 'Chintan Shibir' to introspect on its actions and questioned whether it accepted the current state of the BJP, which he claimed had strayed from its original principles. Stating that he respects the RSS and Bhagwat, but not the organisation's actions, Thackeray criticised the BJP for admitting political leaders from various parties. "The BJP today is different from what it was during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's era. It had purity back then, but today's BJP is 'hybrid', having absorbed leaders from other parties. They should be ashamed of calling themselves the Bharatiya Janata Party, as it is neither truly Bharatiya nor a party for the Janata," he said.

Thackeray likened the BJP to the Kauravas, accusing it of arrogance and asserting that the party was infested with 'pests.' Without directly naming Chief Minister



Eknath Shinde and NCP leader Ajit Pawar, he said, "As crops are infested with pests, so too is the BJP with Shinde and Pawar. I feel sorry for the BJP that our old friend is infested with such pests. They are indulging in satta jihad, they need power at any cost." In his more than 40-minute speech, Thackeray reiterated his commitment to the people of Maharashtra and promised to scrap the Dharavi Redevelopment Project if the Maha Vikas Aghadi returned to power. "The government has issued 1,600 resolutions in 11 days. In two months, we will come to power and cancel most of these decisions. We will put officials in jail if we find any irregularities. They are looting Mumbai under the guise of Dharavi redevelopment. When we come to power, we will provide housing for police and other government staff in Dharavi. If any tender conditions for the redevelopment project are flouted, I announce today that we will scrap the tender awarded to Adani. Adani is not my enemy, but if he is going to loot Mumbai, we will not allow it," he asserted.

Thackeray also urged Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud to deliver a "right decision" in the ongoing Sena versus Sena case in the Supreme Court. "I want to tell the CJ that if you want to make history, then give the right decision. If you don't, people will lose faith in the judiciary. People believe only in the judiciary and democracy," he remarked. Promising to build a temple of Shivaji Maharaj in every district, Thackeray criticised Modi for using Shivaji as a political tool. "Modiji, it's not an EVM machine, Shivaji Maharaj is our idol. I promise today, when we return to power, we will build a temple of Shivaji Maharaj in every district—not just in Maharashtra, but in every state of the country," he said.

Only 24 selected for overseas education scholarships for minorities this year

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

For the first time the state government has increased the number of beneficiaries for overseas education scholarships offered under the Minorities Development Department to 75 students. But as the list of selected candidates was declared last week, it included only 24 names which has led to many questioning the scheme. Alleging that at least 50 candidates had applied for the scholarships, students are demanding that the government declare a list of disqualified candidates along with reasons for their disqualification. Whereas questions are also raised on lukewarm response claiming that the government did not create required awareness of the scheme.

Based on similar schemes for meritorious students coming from marginalised sections of society, this scheme under minority development department is for meritorious students coming from minority communities who have secured admissions to various post-graduate (PG) and PhD programmes in universities abroad which are among the top 100 ranked educational institutions as per the QS World University ranking. Last week, the Minority Development Department declared a list of 24 candidates selected for overseas education scholarships for the academic year 2024-25. This included 23 names for PG courses and 1 selection for PhD programmes abroad. But soon after the list was out, many disappointed candidates started raising questions. One of the applicants, Kuldeep Ambekar, said, "I had applied under the Buddhist, which is a minority category. During applications, I was asked to submit certain documents to support it which I followed as instructed. But when the list was out, it did not include my name. I was shocked when I was told that the documents submitted by me did not prove that I am from the Buddhist category. This is absurd as I had submitted documents as asked." An advocate, Ambekar also runs a youth organisation — Student Helping Hand. As he was seeking reasons for his disqualification, a few more students approached him with their complaints. One of them is



Sayed Ansar from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar who has been accepted for admission in John Hopkins Institute, US. His application for scholarship was rejected for not uploading a document — marksheet for degree course and a bond — which Ansar claims was unclear in instructions. "If this is happening for the first time at largescale, the scrutiny team should be more cautious. They could have raised queries on our applications and given time for us to submit. It was a matter of an hour or so to upload those documents, because I have all those. But due to unclear instructions, I have lost the opportunity." Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA from Dharashiv, Kailas Ghadge-Patil has written to the Maharashtra government to declare the list of all disqualified candidates along with reasons for their disqualification. "This is a classic example of a big announcement but no delivery on promising schemes," he said as he also questioned the lukewarm response to the scheme. "The government has failed to create awareness on the scheme. How can the department receive only 50 applications?" he asked. Dharashiv MP Omprakash Rajenimbalkar too has written to the state government regarding the issue. While questions are already raised on a small number of selected students, a senior research scholar from Mumbai University, Shaihebj Maniyar pointed out that the scheme is not implemented properly. "

Now, officials in Delhi-NCR can be prosecuted for poor paddy stubble enforcement: Air quality monitor



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

There were 267 and 187 paddy residue burning events reported during between September 15 and October 9 from Punjab and Haryana respectively, read a statement issued by the Commission Saturday. There were 267 and 187 paddy residue burning events reported during between September 15 and October 9 from Punjab and Haryana respectively, read a statement issued by the Commission Saturday.

District-level authorities in Delhi, NCR areas of Rajasthan, UP, Punjab and Haryana can now take action against officials for ineffective paddy stubble burning

enforcement, following authorisation by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM). There were 267 and 187 paddy residue burning events reported during between September 15 and October 9 from Punjab and Haryana respectively, read a statement issued by the Commission Saturday. According to the statement, the body, taking cognisance of the scenario, directed the respective district administrations and state governments to "shoulder higher responsibility and maintain constant and strict vigil to control any further paddy stubble burning in the harvesting season". The directions, issued on Thursday, empower Deputy Commissioners, District Collectors and District Magistrates to file complaints or prosecute officials before a judicial magistrate, in case of inaction of officials — including nodal officers and supervisory officers — at various levels as well as Station House Officers responsible for effective enforcement towards ensuring elimination of paddy stubble burning. The CAQM has deputed 26 central teams to hotspot districts in Punjab and Haryana to maintain close liaisons with district-level authorities. The statement said this measure is taken to optimise utilisation of all available resources or means for various in-situ or ex-situ management applications, besides setting up a 'Paddy Stubble Management Cell' at Chandigarh, for coordinated and continuous monitoring of field-level actions.

L-G nod to create 200 posts for PGT teachers in Delhi govt schools

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Lieutenant Governor (L-G) VK Saxena approved the creation of 200 additional posts for Post Graduate Teachers (PGT) in Delhi's government schools, Saturday. This decision comes in response to the current shortage of PGTs, which has made it difficult to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities (CWD) at government schools. According to a note from the L-G's Office, more than 9,500 CWD students are enrolled in Delhi's government schools from classes 9 to 12, yet only 283 PGTs are currently employed — leaving 18 out of the 301 sanctioned posts vacant. "609 government schools with children with disabilities enrolled in the senior secondary level require services of PGT (Special Education) to cater to inclusive education needs of such students daily. The current strength of teachers in this category is unable to cover all such children full time," the L-G office said in its statement to the press.

The implementation of inclusive education in Delhi adheres to the provisions of the Right to Education Act, 2009, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the National Education Policy, 2020. The L-G's orders were issued following a thorough process initiated by the Delhi Education Department. The department first assessed challenges faced by teachers and consulted



with the AR, Finance and Planning departments before the final approval was given by the L-G's office, officials said. With the L-G's approval, the newly sanctioned teacher posts will now be filled by the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB). The posts created are in the pay matrix level 8 in Group 'B', which would pay a salary between Rs 47,600 to Rs 1,51,100. The L-G office said, "Saxena has also emphasised permanently filling up vacant posts in all government schools through exams by DSSSB in a time-bound manner." The recruitment process for various teaching posts is currently being handled by the DSSSB.

R G Kar rape-murder case: Mass resignation by doctors not valid, must be done individually, says Bengal govt



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

The West Bengal government announced Saturday that the mass resignation of senior doctors from various state-run hospitals are not valid as the letters have to be submitted individually as per the service rules. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's Chief Advisor Alapan Bandyopadhyay said, "There has been confusion recently regarding the so-called resignation of senior doctors working in government medical colleges and hospitals. We have been receiving certain letters which do refer to mass resignations... Certain pages without any mention of the subject have been annexed to such letters. Those annexed papers contain some signatures without the des-

ignations mentioned. These mass resignations, as they are being described, actually have no legal value... This kind of generic letter has no legal standing..."

"Unless an employee sends in his/her resignation personally to the employer as per service rules, it is not a resignation letter," Bandyopadhyay said at the state secretary Nabanna. Earlier this week, a group of senior doctors at R G Kar Medical College sent a collectively signed "mass resignation" letter in solidarity with their protesting junior colleagues. Subsequently, similar letters were sent by doctors from other state-run hospitals. Third medic rushed to hospital. Another junior doctor, who was observing a fast-unto-death, was rushed to a hospital on Saturday evening after his health condition deteriorated, an official said. Anustup Mukherjee's condition was stated to be "serious" by his colleagues at the agitation site, a medic said. Earlier on Saturday, Alok Varma, a junior doctor at North Bengal Medical College, was admitted to a healthcare facility after his condition deteriorated, an official said. Aniket Mahato, one of the faces of the protest, was taken ill and admitted to R G Kar Hospital three days ago. Meanwhile, doctors of private hospitals called for a 48-hour "partial cease work" from October 14 in medical establishments across West Bengal, in solidarity with the agitating junior medics observing a fast-unto-death.

9 workers die after wall collapses at construction site in Gujarat

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Nine labourers died and one was rescued in Gujarat's Mehsana on Saturday following a wall collapse triggered by soil cave-in, officials said. According to police, the labourers had dug a 16-foot deep pit for a tank at the construction site in Jasalpur village of Kadi town. Inspector P L Vaghela of Kadi police station said, "Nine people have been confirmed dead while one person has been rescued from the site."

"A rescue operation was carried out for around two hours. Nine bodies were brought out from the heap, while one person was rescued... They are in the age group of 20-30 years," Vaghela said. The deceased have been identified as Arvind Samubhai Bhuriya, Raju Shankar



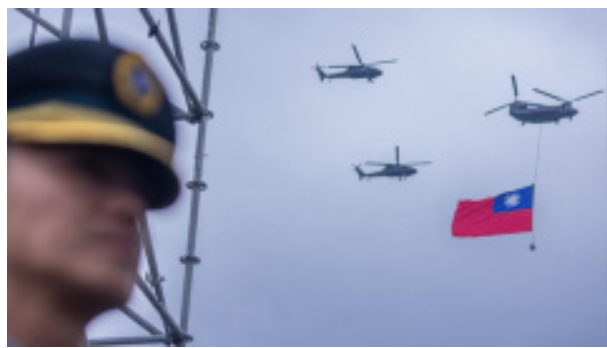
Meda, Sailish Dita Bhabhor, Mukesh Mansang Kamal, Ganga Kamlesh Katara, brothers Jagannath Ramesh Bariya and Mahendra Ramesh Bariya, as well as couple Ashish Ninama and Ayushi Ashish Ninama. The construction site was owned by

the stakeholders of Stellinox Stainless Private Limited, who already operate one unit in Santej, said Milap Patel, DSP, Mehsana.

PM Narendra Modi and CM Bhupendra Patel condoled the deaths of the labourers. In a statement

posted on X, the PMO quoted him as saying, "The accident caused by the wall collapse in Mehsana, Gujarat, is extremely sad. My deepest condolences to those who have lost their loved ones in this. May God give them the strength to bear this pain."

Taiwan spots Chinese carrier, China military video says 'prepared for battle'



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Taiwan reported a Chinese aircraft carrier group sailing to the island's south on Sunday (October 13, 2024), as China's military put out a video saying it was "prepared for battle" amid concerns in Taipei about the possibility of a new round of Chinese war games. China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, detests its President Lai Ching-te as a "separatist", and the Chinese military routinely operates around the island.

Last week at his keynote national day speech, Mr. Lai said the People's Republic of China had no right to represent Taiwan, but that the island was willing to work with Beijing to combat challenges like climate change, striking both a firm and conciliatory tone, but drawing anger from China. Taiwan's Defence Ministry said in a

statement that a Chinese navy group led by the carrier the Liaoning had entered waters near the Bashi Channel, which connects the South China Sea and the Pacific and separates Taiwan from the Philippines. It said the carrier group was expected to enter the Western Pacific. Taiwan's armed forces are keeping a close watch on developments and "exercising an appropriate vigilance and response", the Ministry added, without elaborating. Security sources in Taiwan had said before Mr. Lai's address that his speech could prompt new Chinese war games, last held by the country in May in what Beijing said was "punishment" for Lai's inauguration speech that month. Earlier on Sunday, the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command, which has responsibility for an area that includes Taiwan, put out a propaganda video on its social media accounts entitled "fully prepared and biding ones time before battle". It showed fighter jets and warships operating together, mobile missile launchers being moving into place and amphibious assault vehicles, with a small map of Taiwan included in one of the Chinese characters that make up the video's title. China has not ruled out using force to achieve unification. China's Defence Ministry did not answer calls outside of office hours on Sunday. China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Mr. Lai and his government reject Beijing's sovereignty claims, saying only Taiwan's people can decide their future. Mr. Lai has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing but been rebuffed.

34 nations contributing troops to U.N. Lebanon force issue statement condemning attacks

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

In a joint statement on Saturday (October 12, 2024), 34 countries contributing troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) condemned ongoing attacks on peacekeepers and called on all to respect the UNIFIL's mission and ensure the safety of its personnel. India, which has 903 personnel serving under the UNIFIL, is not among the 34 countries listed in the joint statement but said soon after the statement was issued that it "aligns itself fully" with it. The statement came as the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura continues to be hit in the ongoing ground fighting between Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hezbollah, the latest on Friday (October 11, 2024) night, with at least five peacekeepers injured in the past three days. "As a major troop contributing country, India aligns itself fully with the joint statement issued by the 34 UNIFIL troop contributing countries. Safety and security of peacekeepers are of paramount importance and must be ensured in accordance with extant UNSC Resolutions," India's Permanent Mission to the U.N. in New York said on social media platform X.

After the UNIFIL headquarters came under attack from the IDF on Thursday (October 10, 2024), India had on Friday (October 11, 2024) said it was "concerned" at the "deteriorating" security situation along the Blue Line (which demarcates Lebanon from Israel and the Golan Heights), and stressed that the "inviolability" of U.N. premises must be respected by all. "We consider UNIFIL's role as particularly crucial in light of the escalating situation in the region... We urge the parties of the conflict to respect UNIFIL's presence, which entails the obligation to guarantee the safety and security of its personnel at all times, so that they can continue to implement its mandate and continue their work of mediation and support for peace and stability in Lebanon and the entire region," the joint statement endorsed by 34 of the 50 troop-contributing nations to UNIFIL said. "Last night, a peacekeeper at the headquarters in Naqoura was hit by gunfire due to ongoing military activity nearby and he underwent surgery at our Naqoura hospital to remove the bullet and is currently stable," the UNIFIL said on Saturday (October 12, 2024). "We do not yet know the origin of the fire. Also last night, buildings in our UN position in Ramyah sustained significant damage due to explosions from nearby shelling," it added. "We remind all actors of their obligations to ensure the safety and security of U.N. personnel and premises, including avoiding combat activities near UNIFIL positions," it reiterated. All Indian peacekeepers under the UNIFIL are safe, defence sources here said, adding that the UNIFIL had advised force protection measures to be implemented after it came under attack from the IDF on Thursday (October 10, 2024), which left two Indonesian peacekeepers injured.

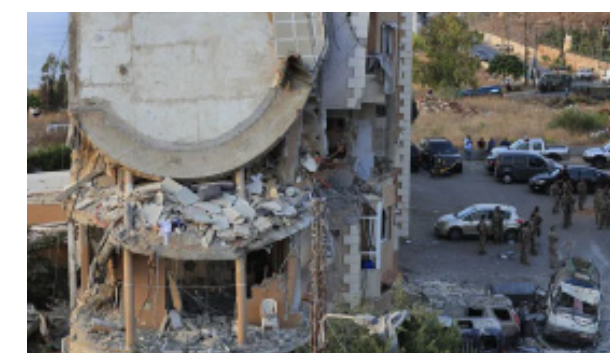
India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had issued a very brief statement on Friday (October 11, 2024) "Inviolability of U.N. premises must be respected by all, and appropriate measures taken to ensure the safety of UN peacekeepers and the sanctity of their mandate," it said. The MEA's subdued response, in the midst of strong condemnation from several countries over the IDF's attack, received criticism on social media. "An anodyne response to a flagrant violation of the sanctity of UN Peacekeepers (including 900 Indian personnel) in Lebanon. IDF targeting a UN post with tank fire conveys huge sense of impunity!" former Navy Chief Admiral Arun Prakash said on X in a reference to the MEA's statement, adding that in May 2023, Indian Colonel Kale (Retd), then a part of the UN staff was "killed in Gaza, by Israeli fire". France summoned Israel's Ambassador on Friday (October 11, 2024) over the attacks, and along with Italy and Spain,

2,255 killed in Israeli attacks on Lebanon so far, over 10,000 injured

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Beirut: The death toll from Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon since the beginning of the Hezbollah-Israeli conflict on October 8, 2023, reached 2,255, with injuries totalling 10,524, said the Lebanese Health Ministry. On Friday alone, Israeli airstrikes killed 26 and injured 144 in Lebanon, Xinhua news agency reported quoting the ministry.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces reported that about 90 rockets and missiles were fired into the country on Saturday, most of them launched from Lebanon into northern Israel. Some launches were aimed at Haifa Bay, including the port cities of Haifa and Akko, while others targeted the Galilee region. The Israeli army said that some of the projectiles were intercepted, and there were no casualties reported. Two drones launched from Lebanon were intercepted as well. The Israeli army has launched intensive attacks on Lebanon since late Sep-



tember in an escalation with Hezbollah, heightening concerns about a broader war as the conflict between Hamas and Israel continues in the Gaza Strip.

Kamala Harris plans to hold campaign event in hurricane-hit North Carolina



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Vice President Kamala Harris will meet African American leaders in North Carolina on Saturday (October 12, 2024) and will further attend church in the State ahead of a rally, according to her campaign. This weekend trip is her second to the battleground State after it was struck by Hurricane Helene. Ms. Harris is stepping back into campaign mode in a place that many Democrats see as a potential pick-up in November's election. The Democratic presidential nominee went to North Carolina last week to survey the destruction caused by Helene and pledged assistance for its victims. She plans to attend church on Sunday (October 13) as part of a "Souls to the Polls" effort in Greenville, a city of roughly 90,000 people on the coastal plain of a state that narrowly backed Republican Donald Trump in 2020.

Democrats view North Carolina as swinging their way this year with its base of Black and college-educated voters, as well as women concerned about the loss of abortion protections. But the aftermath of Hurricane Helene has become a political flashpoint with former President Trump and his allies attacking the Biden administration's response to the natural disaster. On Saturday evening, Ms. Harris will meet with local African American elected, faith, and community leaders at a restaurant in Raleigh, in addition to working with volunteers who are preparing relief supplies for hurricane

victims. After church on Sunday, Ms. Harris plans to speak about the economy at a rally to generate support ahead of the start of early voting in North Carolina beginning on Thursday (October 17). Making landfall on September 26, Hurricane Helene resulted in the deaths of roughly 230 people and wiped out roads, electrical power and cell phone service. Just two weeks later on Wednesday, Hurricane Milton made landfall in Florida and generated an estimated \$50 billion worth of damage and left several people dead. Ms. Harris has also visited Georgia after Helene struck, in addition to virtually attending briefings on the response efforts and rejiggering her campaign schedule. But she's also continued travel to travel for the presidential race with time spent in Nevada and Arizona.

One of her prime messages has been that there should be no price gouging by companies seeking to take advantage of shortages caused by the hurricanes, an issue that she has made central to her campaign as a way to tackle inflation. "To any company or individual that is using this crisis to jack up prices through illegal fraud or price gouging, whether it be at the gas pump, the airport, or the hotel counter, we will be monitoring and there will be a consequence," Ms. Harris said at Friday's briefing. But Trump and his allies have suggested that disaster relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency went to immigrants instead of hurricane victims, while also suggesting that people are not getting the full financial support to which they're legally entitled. At a recent rally in Reading, Pennsylvania, Trump said the response has been worse than how the government handled 2005's Hurricane Katrina, which left nearly 1,400 people dead and caused \$200 billion in damages. "North Carolina's been hit very hard and this administration has not done a proper job at all. Terrible, terrible," Trump said at the rally, adding that Harris was "on a fundraising comedy tour while people are stranded and drowning all over some of our greatest states." President Joe Biden has called Trump's falsehoods about the government's response to the hurricanes "un-American" and told his predecessor to "get a life, man."

Kamala Harris is in excellent health, says medical report as her team seeks to play health card against Donald Trump

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Democratic White House candidate Kamala Harris is in "excellent health" and fit for the presidency, according to a medical report published by the White House on Saturday (October 12, 2024), as she aims to put pressure on rival Donald Trump to publish his own health records. "Vice-President Harris remains in excellent health," her physician Joshua Simmons said in the report, adding that she "possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the presidency." According to Dr. Simmons, Ms. Harris's most recent physical exam, conducted in April, was "unremarkable". Dr. Simmons noted that Ms. Harris suffers from seasonal allergies and hives, which are managed by non-prescription as well as prescription medications. Ms. Harris is also slightly nearsighted and wears contact lenses, the report said.

The U.S. Vice President's team aims to put the spotlight on the physical health and mental acuity of 78-year-old former president Trump, who has so far refused to release any detailed medical information. Republican Trump became the oldest presidential nominee in U.S. history after 81-year-old President Joe Biden withdrew from the White House race in July. Mr. Biden passed the torch to Ms. Harris after a disastrous debate against Mr. Trump raised concerns in the Democratic Party about his own mental sharpness. But Mr. Trump's apparent vitality means that his age has not so far weighed against his chances in the polls, in a knife-edge battle with Ms. Harris in the November 5 presidential election.

Ms. Harris's campaign drew attention to a recent series of articles in the New York Times that raised concerns about the fact that Mr. Trump had failed to disclose



basic information about his health. The newspaper also published an analysis of Mr. Trump's language showing that his speeches are increasingly long, "confused" and vulgar, which it said were seen by experts as a possible sign of cognitive change. Mr. Trump insists he is fully fit, but he has not released any full medical report for his campaign. In late 2023, Mr. Trump released a note from his former White House doctor declaring him to be in "excellent" health, but it was short on details and did not say what tests Mr. Trump had undergone when he had a physical in September 2023. The same doctor, Ronny Jackson, issued a statement in July after Mr. Trump's ear was wounded by an assassin's bullet at a rally in Pennsylvania, saying the former President was doing well. Mr. Trump meanwhile boasted about a cognitive test he had undergone with Jackson while president in 2018 — but then immediately flubbed his doctor's name, calling him "Ronny Johnson." If Mr. Trump wins the election in November, he would be 82 at the end of his second term in the Oval Office.

Heavy Israeli bombardment in northern Gaza as U.N. peacekeepers in Lebanon are hit again

GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Palestinians in northern Gaza described heavy Israeli bombardment Saturday (October 12, 2024) in the hours after airstrikes killed at least 22 people, as Israel warned people there and in southern Lebanon to get out of the way of offensives against the Hamas and Hezbollah militant groups. In Lebanon, the U.N. peacekeeping force said its headquarters in Naqoura was hit again, with a peacekeeper struck by gunfire late Friday and in stable condition. It wasn't clear who fired. It occurred a day after Israel's military fired on the headquarters for a second straight day. Israel, which has warned peacekeepers to leave their positions, didn't immediately respond to questions. Hunger warnings emerged again in northern Gaza as residents said they hadn't received aid since the beginning of the month. The U.N. World Food Program said no food aid had entered the north since Oct. 1. An estimated 4,00,000 people remain there.

Israel's military renewed its offensive in northern Gaza almost a week ago while escalating its air and ground campaign against the Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon. Amid Israel's war with Hezbollah, a top U.N. official, Carl Skau, told The Associated Press he's concerned that Lebanon's ports and airport might be taken out of service. More than 1 million people have been displaced. Israel's military said Hezbollah fired more than 300 projectiles over Yom Kippur, the holiest and most solemn day on the Jewish calendar. Hezbollah claimed a series of rocket strikes on Israeli military positions and said fighters engaged an Israeli infantry unit attempting to enter Lebanese territory. Israel's military also said it killed 50 militants in Lebanon. Claims on either side couldn't be verified. Israeli airstrikes on Saturday hit multiple areas in southern and eastern Lebanon, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Nine were killed in Mairsa village in the northeast. Four were killed in an apartment building on the edge of Barja south of Beirut. Rayak and Tal Chiha hospitals in the Bekaa Valley were damaged. In Nabatieh, eight people were wounded. In Pictures: Israel-Hamas war — a year on October 7, 2023: Hamas militants stormed across the border from Gaza

into Israel in what would become the deadliest attack in the country's history. At the end of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, the militants launched their assault by land, air, and sea. Militants abducted 251 hostages on October 7, 97 of whom are still captive in Gaza, including 33 the Israeli military has said are dead. Soon after the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced "We are at war." He declared a mass army mobilization. "Not an 'operation,' not a 'round,' but at war." Israel battered Gaza on October 8 after suffering its bloodiest attack in decades, when Hamas fighters rampaged through Israeli towns killing 600 and abducting dozens more, as the spiralling violence threatened a major new war in West Asia. Israeli air strikes hit housing blocks, tunnels, a mosque, and the homes of Hamas officials in Gaza, killing more than 370 people, including 20 children, as Mr. Netanyahu vowed "mighty vengeance for this black day." October 27, 2023: Internet and phone services collapsed in the Gaza Strip under intensified bombardment, largely cutting off its 2.3 million people from the outside world and each other, as Israel's military "expanded" its ground operations in the besieged territory. The military's announcement signalled it was moving closer to an all-out invasion of Gaza, where it has vowed to crush the ruling Hamas group after its bloody incursion in southern Israel three weeks ago. This screen grab taken from hand-out footage released by the Israeli army on October 26, 2023, shows a "targeted raid" in northern Gaza with tanks and infantry. November 2023: Israeli forces struck near several hospitals in Gaza City as the military pushed deeper into dense urban neighborhoods in its battle with Hamas militants, prompting increasing numbers of civilians to flee toward the south of the besieged territory. Israel accused Hamas fighters of hiding in hospitals and using the Shifa Hospital complex as its main command center, which the militant group and hospital staff deny, saying Israel is creating a pretext to strike it. In this photo from November 6, 2023, a man walks between the bodies wrapped in shrouds of those killed in Israeli bombardment in Deir Balah in the central Gaza Strip, at the Shuhada Al-Aqsa hospital in the same city.

Rupee hits an all-time low of 84 against the US dollar: factors leading to the fall and the outlook



The domestic currency ended at 84.07 against the US dollar on Friday before dropping to 84.10 during the day. (File Photo) The domestic currency ended at 84.07 against the US dollar on Friday before dropping to 84.10 during the day. The rupee ended above the 84 per US dollar mark for the first time on Friday, closing at 84.07. The fall in the rupee came amid outflows from foreign institutional investors, concerns over a surge in oil prices and higher demand for the greenback from foreign banks.

How much did the rupee fall?

The domestic currency ended at 84.07 against the US dollar on Friday before dropping to 84.10 during the day. On Thursday, the rupee closed at 83.98 per dollar. Analysts said the rupee has not fallen below 84 as the RBI has been protecting the level for the last two months. On September 12, the local currency had fallen to a record low of 83.99 against the US dollar.

What triggered the slide?

The slide in the rupee was mainly on account of concerns over the rise in crude oil prices, outflows from foreign funds to China and an increase in demand for the US currency from foreign banks. "Indian Rupee fell below the 84 per US Dollar mark for the first time on demand from foreign banks amid FII outflows and elevated crude oil prices. Weak domestic markets also weighed on the Rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, the overnight softening of the US Dollar index prevented a sharp fall in the

rupee. The dollar fell on higher-than-expected weekly unemployment claims data from the US which overshadowed a hotter-than-expected inflation. US inflation rose 0.2 per cent month-on-month versus the forecast of 0.1 per cent and core CPI rose 0.3 per cent versus the forecast of 0.2 per cent. Annual inflation also rose more than forecast. Recovery in the domestic equity markets supported the rupee at lower levels, said Rahul Kalantri, Vice President (Commodities), Mehta Equities. However, aggressive selling by foreign investors in the domestic equity markets and higher crude oil prices restricted gains in the rupee.

Why are foreign investors selling?

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been following a strategy of 'Sell India, Buy China' after the Chinese authorities announced monetary and fiscal measures to stimulate the slowing economy. "FPI money has been moving to Chinese stocks, which are cheap even now," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. In the current month (till October 11), FPIs have offloaded Rs 58,711 crore worth of equities and Rs 1,635 crore of debt. The selling in equities from FPIs comes after four consecutive months of buying of local shares. Between June and September, foreign investors bought Rs 1.24 lakh crore of equities, according to the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) data.

What is the outlook on the rupee?

Analysts expect the rupee to remain volatile due to uncertainty over crude oil prices and fluctuation in the dollar index. "We expect the Rupee to trade with a negative bias on selling pressure from FPIs and geopolitical uncertainty amid the ongoing tensions in the Middle East. Overall strength in the US Dollar may further pressurise the rupee," said Choudhary. However, the overall decline in crude oil prices may support the Rupee at lower levels, he said. According to Jateen Trivedi, VP Research analyst, LKP Securities, the rupee may extend its weakness towards 84.25-84.35, especially if it holds below 84. It is expected to get support at 84.20-84.35 levels and resistance at around 83.70-83.80 levels

Industrial output contracts in August for the first time in nearly two years



India's factory output, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), contracted by 0.1 per cent in August for the first time after a gap of 21 months led by a high base effect along with decline in mining and electricity output, data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed. The overall industrial output had grown by 4.7 per cent in July and 10.9 per cent in August 2023. Cumulatively so far in the financial year 2024-25, industrial growth has been recorded at 4.2 per cent during April-August as against 6.2 per cent in the previous financial year.

Mining output recorded a contraction of 4.3 per cent in August as against a growth of 3.8 per cent in July and 12.3 per cent in the year-ago period, reflecting the impact of heavy rainfall in August on mining activities. Electricity output also posted a contraction of 3.7 per cent in August compared with 7.9 per cent in July and 15.3 per cent in the year-ago period. "The slowdown was on account of an unfavourable base. Among the major sectors, mining and electricity sectors witnessed a contraction. Heavy rainfall in the month of August may have had a bearing on the mining sector slowdown," Rajani Sinha Chief Economist CareEdge Ratings said. Manufacturing, which accounts for 77.6 per cent of the weight of the IIP, also slipped to a 22-month low of 1.0 per cent in August, mainly due to high base effect. Manufacturing output had grown 4.4 per cent in July and 10.0 per cent growth in August 2023.

On the basis of use-base classification, the primary goods segment slipped into the negative territory after a gap of nearly 3.5 years, contracting by 2.6 per cent in August mainly due to base effect. It had grown 5.9 per

cent in the previous month and 12.4 per cent in the year-ago period. Capital goods segment, a key indicator of the investment sentiment, grew 0.7 per cent in August as against 11.8 per cent growth in July and 13.1 per cent in the year-ago period. On the consumption goods side, there was a mixed picture. Consumer durables output — an indicator of consumption demand — grew 5.2 per cent in August as against 8.3 per cent growth in the previous month and 6.0 per cent in the year-ago period. However, consumer non-durable goods output, which reflects fast-moving consumer goods, continued to be in negative territory for the third straight month at (-) 4.5 per cent in August as against (-) 4.3 per cent in July and 9.9 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

"A sustained decline in consumer non-durables indicates that the stress in rural demand hasn't bottomed out yet. However, the steady growth in consumer durables is a positive for consumption demand in the economy. Consumer durable goods recorded the highest growth among the use-based segments at 5.2% YoY in August 2024," Pras Jasrai, Senior Economic Analyst, India Ratings and Research said. Sectorally, as per the IIP data, 11 out of the 23 sectors in manufacturing registered contraction in August, with other manufacturing (-8.2 per cent), printing and reproduction of recorded media (-7.1 per cent), manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment (-6.5 per cent), manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products (-6.1 per cent) were among the significant non-performers. Manufacturing of electrical equipment (17.7 per cent), wearing apparel (14.0 per cent) and furniture (13.9 per cent) were among the highest growing sectors. However, experts cautioned that the sectors of wearing apparel and furniture gained mainly on base effect. "Industries like computers and electronics, readymade garments and furniture had witnessed sharp declines last year and hence were buoyed by this statistical effect. Export market has also been weak which is getting reflected in the pharma segment...the readymade goods segment would have benefited to a limited extent from exports which got an impetus due to the problems in Bangladesh. We may expect growth rates to be better from September onwards with a peak being achieved by October end which would be the post-harvest and festival season when spending typically increases," Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda said.

Internship scheme opens for candidates to register, over 80,000 positions listed

Youth applicants aged between 21-24 years can now apply for the PM Internship Scheme, with the government opening the registration window for them on Saturday. Over 80,000 internship opportunities across 737 districts and 24 sectors have been listed on the portal for the scheme, with five states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh accounting for over 56 per cent of the total listed internships. The Prime Minister's Internship Scheme that aims to provide internship to one crore youth in top 500 companies over five years had earlier opened its portal for companies to register their internship opportunities for the pilot phase from October 3.

Over the last one week, the portal has added more than 80,000 internship opportunities across 24 sectors including oil, gas & energy sector, travel & hospitality, automobiles, banking and financial services, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), which is the implementing ministry for the scheme, said in a post on X (formerly Twitter). "PM Internship Portal will go live for the registration of candidates from 5.00 PM today. Candidates can register themselves on the portal through: pminternship.mca.gov.in," it said.

The highest internship opportunities have been listed for the oil, gas & energy sector with over 25,000 positions by companies, followed by over 16,000 listings for manufacturing and automotive sectors, and over 10,000 for banking and financial sector. The highest listings have been for Maharashtra (10,242), followed by Tamil Nadu (9,827), Gujarat (9,311), Karnataka (8,326) and Uttar Pradesh (7,156). "PM Internship Scheme is a transformative initiative by the Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi-led government to ensure the skilling of our youth, which will enhance their employability. It will provide an opportunity to do an internship in the Top 500 companies in India for 12 months and learn from the best," the Ministry said. Mahindra & Mahindra, Alembic Pharma, Max Life Insurance were among the initial companies that had listed their internship opportunities on the portal. The list has now expanded to include other companies like Jubilant Foodworks, Eicher Motors, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance and Muthoot Finance.

Some users complained of not receiving the OTPs via email in their initial registration attempts on the portal. The feedback is being monitored and glitches are expected to be sorted out, officials said. A list of shortlisted entries is expected to be shared with companies from October 27 to November 7. Candidates will have time to accept the offer between November 8 to November 15. In case the candidate does not accept the first internship



offer, two more offers would be made, sources said. The pilot phase of the scheme, which will run through several layers of matching profiles, selection of candidates and offer letters, aims to provide internship opportunities to 1.25 lakh candidates involving a cost of Rs 800 crore for the government. Around 1 lakh youth are expected to be enrolled in the internship scheme by early December.

Selected interns will be paid Rs 4,500 per month as stipend by the government through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). An additional Rs 500 per month will be provided by the company's CSR (corporate social responsibility) funds. The government will also provide a one-time grant of Rs 6,000 per annum for incidentals to cover miscellaneous expenses incurred by the selected candidate during the internship. Candidates who have passed high school, higher secondary school, have a certificate from an ITI, hold a diploma from a polytechnic institute, or are graduates with degrees such as B.A., B. Sc., B. Com, BCA, BBA, B.Pharm are eligible to apply under the scheme. Reservation structure will be the same as government jobs for SCs, STs, OBCs and disabled in the internship scheme. If any of the family members of the candidate earned over Rs 8 lakh income in financial year 2023-24 or any member is a permanent/regular government employee, then such candidates will not be eligible to apply for internship. Graduates from IITs, IIMs, national law universities, IISER, NIDs and IIITs or those having qualifications such as CA, CMA, CS, MBBS, BDS, MBA, any master's or higher degree will also be ineligible. The internship scheme was announced in the Budget for 2024-25 by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as part of the Prime Minister's Package for Employment and Skilling with an overall outlay of Rs 2 lakh crore. It aims to provide skill training to over one crore youth in India's top 500 companies in five years, with a focus on those with lower employability.

Noel Tata is new Tata Trusts chairman: 'Will carry on legacy'

Noel Naval Tata was Friday named the successor of Ratan Tata at Tata Trusts, the majority owner of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata group. He will now guide the \$165 billion conglomerate at a time when the group faces several challenges globally and domestically. In a statement issued on Friday, Tata Trusts said, "The trustees of various Trusts that comprise the Tata Trusts met at a joint meeting held in Mumbai today. They condoled the demise of Mr Ratan N Tata, Chairman, Tata Trusts, and recalled his yeoman services not only to the Tata Group but also to nation building. In separate meetings held immediately thereafter, it was unanimously decided to appoint Mr. Noel Naval Tata as the Chairman of the various Trusts that constitute the Tata Trusts and also designate him as Chairman, Tata Trusts. His appointment comes into effect immediately." Noel Naval Tata, 67, is the son of Naval Tata and Simone Tata (nee Simone Dunoyer), and is married to Cyrus Mistry's sister Aloo Mistry. Tata group insiders say Noel maintains a low profile and is rarely seen at public events or corporate summits. Unlike his brother, Noel is not part of any policy-making forum of the government or regulatory bodies. While he doesn't have the stature and standing of Ratan Tata in the Indian industrial landscape, he has proved his mettle by successfully running companies like

Trent, Tata Investment Corporation and Tata International. On Friday, Trent's market capitalisation stood at Rs 2.92 lakh crore, the fourth largest after TCS, Tata Motors and Titan Company. His role will be that of a guide, guard, and policy maker for the group. He can always step in when Tata Sons or group companies make wrong decisions, said a Tata watcher of many decades. "Just like Ratan Tata intervened when he realised that Cyrus Mistry was going in the wrong direction," he said. Noel Tata was always a strong contender to succeed the Tata legacy given his familial ties and involvement in many group companies. He is Ratan Tata's half brother. Ratan Tata was born to Naval Tata and Soonoo Commissariat. Jimmy Tata, younger brother of Ratan Tata, is not involved in the family business and keeps out of the limelight. He was not seen as a contender, within the group and outside. Following his appointment, Noel Tata said, "I am deeply honoured and humbled by the responsibility that has been cast on me by my fellow Trustees. I look forward to carrying on the legacy of Mr. Ratan N. Tata and the Founders of the Tata Group. Founded more than a century ago, the Tata Trusts are a unique vehicle for undertaking social good. On this solemn occasion, we dedicate ourselves to carrying on our developmental and philanthropic initiatives and continuing to play our part in nation building."

Did you know, the taste of your dish can change depending on how you chop your onion?

Chef Pankaj Bhadouria's social media is full of tips and tricks for one and all — be it a kitchen newbie or a seasoned cook. In a recent post, the MasterChef India Season 1 winner shared how the way onions are chopped can alter the taste of your final dish. Curious, we reached out to experts to find out why that happens and what do the various shapes and sizes of onion indicate about its taste. Jayraj Chandani, Chef de cuisine 689, The Quorum said that onions belong to the allium family along with garlic, scallions, leeks and others. The thing noticeable about onions is that they're barely aromatic before cutting them open and the intensity of the flavour is based on the way you cut them. "The aroma and the flavour comes from a reaction between an enzyme called alliinase and its amino acids. And since they're stored in separate parts of an onion, these two come in direct contact only when the cell walls are ruptured. The more cell walls are ruptured, the more intense the flavour," he explained. According to Chandani, an onion's cell wall runs from its root to the tip. Hence, cutting an onion crosswise ruptures more cell walls versus when you cut it lengthwise.

"While whipping up a salad, lengthwise sliced onion would be your best bet. Because for a salad, using a



finely diced onion which is cut crosswise, might be overpowering. On the other hand, using finely chopped onions and exposing them to heat will result in them browning, hence intensifying the flavours and giving out a 'meaty' kick," he shared. Using sliced onions and controlling the amount of heat they are exposed to will result in a much more subtle flavour, which makes them apt for dishes like onion soup, yoghurt based curries and more. He added that adding a splash of water while sautéing onions enhances their savouriness.

Did you know Coldplay's Chris Martin used to stammer — and still does sometimes? Here's why

Coldplay has been making headlines this past month as tickets for their Mumbai concert went live. Despite the calm, soothing vibe of the band's music, frontman Chris Martin reveals a different energy in conversation. Known for his endearing stammer — often compared to Hugh Grant's — Martin's speech may falter, but his passion always shines through. When he talks about something that excites him, "his eyes light up with little sparks, like a mad scientist detailing plans for world domination." However, his stammer is a lifelong challenge that he continues to navigate while leading one of the world's biggest bands.

Stammering, or stuttering as it is medically known, is a speech disorder that disrupts the normal flow of speech. According to Nikita Kirane, a Consultant Speech and Swallowing Pathologist at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Navi Mumbai, stammering is characterized by repeated sounds, prolonged speech, or blocks where speech seems to stop entirely. It typically begins between ages 2 and 5, as children develop their language skills. Although the exact cause is not fully understood, it is believed to stem from a combination of genetic, neurological, and environmental factors.

Why does stammering persist in some cases?

Even after therapy and significant improvement, some individuals may still experience occasional stammering in adulthood. Kirane explains that factors like stress, anxiety, or emotionally charged situations can trigger temporary speech disruptions. Complex speaking environments or high-pressure moments may also provoke stuttering in individuals who are otherwise fluent. Stammering is a dynamic condition; while therapy can help manage it, external factors can sometimes cause it to resurface. By understanding these triggers, those who stutter can learn to better manage their speech in challenging situations.

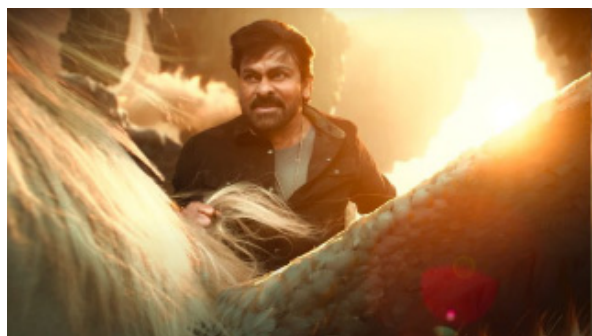
Yes, stammering is treatable and can be effectively managed, especially when intervention begins early. Speech therapy is the most common treatment for stuttering, and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) like Kirane work closely with individuals to improve fluency. Therapy often involves exercises that emphasize breath control and speech pacing, which help prevent the blocks and repetitions that define stuttering. Early intervention in children offers the best chance for long-term improvement, as their speech habits are still developing. However,



Stammering is a dynamic condition; while therapy can help manage it, external factors can sometimes cause it to resurface. By understanding these triggers, those who stutter can learn to better manage their speech in challenging situations.

people of all ages can benefit from therapy, and with the right techniques, many can achieve significant fluency.

Vishwambhara teaser: Gada-wielding Chiranjeevi, blessed by Lord Hanuman, takes on evil in mysterious land



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Vishwambhara teaser: The promo video shows Chiranjeevi standing before a statue of Lord Hanuman, wielding a massive gada, suggesting that his character possesses divine powers. Vishwambhara teaser: As the mysterious land in the movie gears up for the ultimate war between good and evil, we see Chiranjeevi arriving on a winged horse. (Image: UV Creations/YT) Vishwambhara teaser: To make the occasion of Dasara (Vijayadashami) even more special for the fans of Telugu megastar Chiranjeevi, the makers of his upcoming film Vishwambhara unveiled the movie's official teaser, providing a glimpse into its enchanting and fantastical world. The 92-second promo video opens by showing an unfamiliar landscape splashed with colours and inhabited by creatures that seem to blend characteristics of various animals.

Then we see a massive bolt of light streaking across the sky and upon landing, it transforms into a man with sharp eyes filled with evil. "Although the darkness engulfing the universe is spreading, it doesn't mean light won't emerge," a voiceover declares, emphasising that a powerful force will rise to take on the evil. As the mysterious and mystical land gears up for the ultimate war between good and evil, we see Chiranjeevi arriving on a winged horse. The promo further offers a sneak peek into its action sequences, showcasing Chiranjeevi single-handedly battling his rivals. The teaser concludes with Chiranjeevi standing before a statue of Lord Hanuman, wielding a massive gada (mace), suggesting that his character possesses divine powers. Penned and helmed by Mallidi Vassishtha, Vishwambhara marks his sophomore directorial venture after the hit fantasy actioner Bimbisara (2022), starring Nandamuri Kalyan Ram, Catherine Tresa, Samyuktha Menon, Vivan Bhatena and Prakash Raj in key roles. Produced by Vamsi, Pramod, Vikram and under the banner of UV Creations, Vishwambhara's music has been crafted by Oscar-winning composer MM Keeravaani. Vishwambhara's cast also includes Trisha Krishnan, Kunal Kapoor, Meenakshi Chaudhary and Ashika Ranganath. The film's director of photography (DOP) is Chota K Naidu, while AS Prakash serves as the production designer and Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao and Santhosh Kamireddy handle editing. Earlier this year, the makers had announced that the film will hit the screens on January 10, 2025. However, the same has not been mentioned in the new teaser, making one wonder if they are planning a change in the release date.

Boney Kapoor and Khushi Kapoor get emotional as they inaugurate Sridevi Kapoor Chowk in Mumbai.



Late legendary actor Sridevi was recently honoured in Mumbai as a chowk in Lokhandwala was named after her. The ceremony, held on Saturday evening during the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, saw an emotional Boney Kapoor and his younger daughter, Khushi Kapoor, inaugurating the landmark. They were joined by veteran actor Shabana Azmi for the event.

The chowk is located near Green Acres Tower, the residential building where Sridevi lived for many years before her passing in 2018. In a video from the inauguration, Khushi appears solemn and visibly emotional, as if on the verge of tears. Boney also looked deeply moved as he unveiled the new landmark featuring photos of Sridevi. As a mark of respect, Boney gently touched his late wife's image. Shabana stood beside Khushi throughout the ceremony. However, Sridevi's elder daughter,

Janhvi Kapoor, was not present at the event. Sridevi tragically passed away in Dubai on February 24, 2018, after accidentally drowning in a bathtub at a hotel while attending a family wedding. In an earlier interview with The New Indian, Boney Kapoor spoke about her passing, revealing that Sridevi had often followed very strict salt-free diets, which sometimes led to blackouts.

Reflecting on her sudden death, he stated, "It was not a natural death; it was an accidental death. I had decided not to speak about it because I spoke about it for almost 24 or 48 hours together when I was being investigated and interrogated. In fact, the officers said we had to go through this because there was a lot of pressure from Indian media. And they discovered there was no foul play. I went through all the tests, including lie detector tests and all those things. And then, of course, the report which came clearly stated it was accidental."

Baba Siddique: The man who bridged rift between Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan; fostered connections between politicians and film stars at his iftar parties

Even as advancing politically, Baba Siddique also gained fame by hosting lavish iftar parties attended by the who's who of Bollywood, including Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan. Bollywood icons Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan with NCP leader Baba Siddique at an iftar party hosted the latter at Taj Lands End Hotel in Bandra.

The murder of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and former Maharashtra legislator-turned-minister Baba Ziauddin Siddique has shocked not only people of the state and those belonging to his party, but the leaders and activists of rival outfits as well. He was shot dead by three assailants in Bandra East on Saturday evening as he was getting into his car after leaving his son's office. Mumbai police have now confirmed the involvement of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, the prime accused in the 2022 murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, in Siddique's killing. Incidentally, Siddique's murder comes six months after Bishnoi gang members fired shots at Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's home in Mumbai. Given Siddique's connections with B-Town superstars, particularly Salman, police are now investigating potential links between these events.

Siddique, a three-time MLA and former Maharashtra Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies, built a strong relationship with veteran Congress leader and actor-director Sunil Dutt early in his career. While this connection played a key role in helping him secure his MLA candidacy, it also helped him make inroads into Bombay's film circles. Even as advancing politically, Siddique also gained fame by hosting lavish iftar parties attended by the who's who of Bollywood. From Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan to Sunil Dutt's son Sanjay Dutt and Shilpa Shetty, his gatherings attracted numerous A-listers and prominent politicians, thus also fostering interaction between the two groups.

Only In Express | 'Paid reviews, extortion, negative stories': Industry insiders reveal possible reasons behind Dharma Productions putting an end to press screenings with Alia Bhatt's Jigra. The influence Siddique and his parties had on these celebrities became particularly evident to all in 2013 when he played mediator in ending the five-year feud between Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan, as the politician paved the way for the two to hug each other and make up at his iftar party at a five star hotel in Mumbai. Shah Rukh and Salman had never spoken to each other since an ugly brawl at Katrina Kaif's birthday bash in 2008.

However, at the 2013 iftar party, NDTV reported, Siddique seated Shah Rukh next to Salman's father and legendary screenwriter Salim Khan. This setup led to a heartwarming moment where Salman patted SRK on the shoulder and the two soon embraced, effectively ending one of Bollywood's most talked-about rivalries. In the midst of this reconciliation stood Baba Siddique. "They both wanted it... Allah shows the way. I had no role to play," India Today quoted the politician as saying back then, thus maintaining an image of humbleness.

Not just the big stars, the politico also welcomed smaller celebrities to his iftar parties, ensuring they received equal treatment. A photo featuring then-emerging actors Sushant Singh Rajput and Anika Lokhande happily interacting with him highlights this inclusivity. He consistently attracted a diverse array of stars, from Shehnaaz Gill and Kapil Sharma to Urmila Matondkar and Jackie Shroff. At the same time, his connections with these celebrities extended beyond the iftar gatherings. This was evident when Salman, Sanjay Dutt and Shilpa Shetty rushed to Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital, where Siddique was admitted after being shot at. Shilpa was visibly emotional as she left the hospital in her car.

Kareena Kapoor reveals Karisma Kapoor's Bollywood crush was Salman Khan; names her worst film: 'What a bad film you made me watch'



The Kapoor sisters, Kareena and Karisma Kapoor, made a rare appearance together on a recent episode of The Great Indian Kapil Show Season 2, filling the studio with laughter and lighthearted moments as they participated in fun games led by comedian Kapil Sharma. In one segment, Kareena was put on the spot when asked to name her elder sister's "worst film" and the role she found most "cringe-worthy".

For this part, Karisma wore noise-canceling headphones while Kareena responded to Kapil's questions.

Initially embarrassed and hesitant, Kareena eventually named Maidan-E-Jung as Karisma's "one bad film". When Kapil asked about Karisma's first Bollywood crush, Kareena replied with a smile, "Salman Khan." She also revealed what she finds to be Karisma's most irritating habit, "She takes a lot of time to get ready. She can spend up to three hours getting ready!" As for Karisma's most cringe-worthy role, Kareena chose Papi Gudia. When Karisma Kapoor was finally able to listen in, she was asked to confirm Kareena Kapoor's choice of her "worst film". She humorously responded, "I've sent Bebo to watch many of my films, and she would often come back saying, 'What a bad film you made me watch. I got a lot of firings.'" Karisma also admitted she had a crush on Salman Khan. Kapil chimed in with a hilarious quip and how this game could easily spark a sibling feud between the two.

During the episode, the sisters also fondly talked about their legendary grandfather, Raj Kapoor, who motivated them to pursue careers in the film industry and continue the Kapoor family legacy. They also shared how their family encouraged them to prove themselves without any special assistance, challenging them to earn their place in the industry.

Jr NTR film breaches Rs 500 crore mark globally; third highest grosser in India after Kalki 2898 AD and Stree 2

Jr NTR's much-awaited solo release Devara Part 1 has been the talk of the town since its release on September 27. Having amassed an impressive Rs 268.6 crore after 16 days of its run, the makers announced that Devara has entered the Rs 500 crore mark globally. Backed by Yuvarathnaa Arts and NTR Arts, the Koratala Siva directorial has lodged itself in the third position of the highest grossing Indian films of 2024 list. Top of the list is another Telugu film Kalki 2898 AD, and the second place is held by the Hindi film Stree 2. Sharing the announcement on their social media handles, the makers wrote, "A Sea of Blood and a Shoreline of Destruction. Man of Masses Jr NTR's massacre made Devara cross 500 Crores+ GB0C and sending a Notice of being a truly Unstoppable hunt." With the film managing to earn Rs 5 crore on the third Saturday, and a 54.6 per cent occupancy on the 16th day, the makers' claim that Devara is 'a truly unstoppable hunt' doesn't seem too far-fetched. Devara, which marked the Telugu debuts of Hindi actors Saif Ali Khan and Janhvi

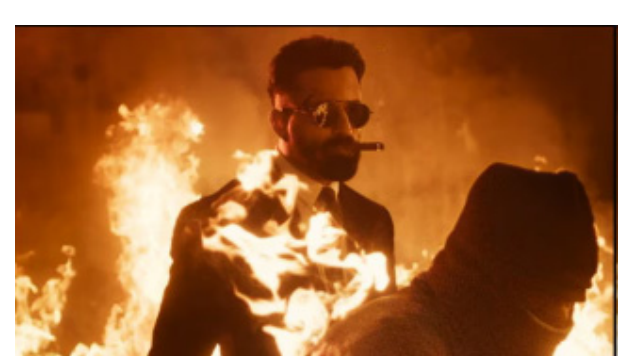


Kapoor, also stars Prakash Raj, Kalaiyaran, Meka Srikanth, and Shine Tom Chacko. With music by Anirudh Ravichander and cinematography by Ratnavelu, Devara is a duology, and the second part is expected to go on floors after Jr NTR completes his commitments to War 2 and Prashanth Neel's next.

Unni Mukundan and Haneef Adeni promise a bloody and gory action thriller

From what we have seen from Unni Mukundan's next, Marco, directed by Haneef Adeni, it is clear that the film is set to be stylish and a bloody action thriller. In fact, it is almost like 2024 has become the year where every film industry in India decides to make the 'most violent film' in that language. Earlier this year, we saw Kill take the bill for the same category, and now, we are set to watch Marco attempt to take the pole position. The makers on Sunday released the teaser of the film to give us a glimpse into what is store when the film hits the screens later this year. The teaser does its job of piquing our interest to know what this Marco is all about, and what carnage he is set to leave when he goes about completing his revenge mission. The mood is sombre, and the various players of the film paint the town red with blood.

Marco was shot for almost 100 days with almost 60 days spent for the action sequence that would be the highlight of the film. In fact, in a press statement after wrapping up the shoot of the film, the makers said, "Major props to our action hero, Unni Mukundan, and the mastermind action director, Kalai Kingson, for making sure every shot is pure fire." This fire definitely blazes through in the trailer, and with the able support of a strong technical crew, including cinematographer Chandru Selvaraj, editor Shameer Muhammed, and composer Ravi Basrur, who understands hype and elevation like no other. Interestingly, Marco is a spinoff of Haneef Adeni's sophomore directorial, Mikhael, which was headlined by Nivin Pauly. Considering how the film ended with Mikhael killing Marco at the top of a building, it is safe to assume that this is an origin story of sorts for the antagonist. This



is an intriguing attempt, and it would be interesting to see how it is received by the audience. Apart from Unni Mukundan, Marco also features Kabir Duhan Singh, Anson Paul, Arjun Nandakumar, Durva Thaker, Yukti Tareja, and Jagadish. The movie will also be released in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi. Backed by Shareef Muhammed and Abdul Gadhaf's Cubes Entertainment in association with Unni Mukundan's home banner, Unni Mukundan Films, Marco marks Haneef Adeni's fourth directorial venture. While he made a successful debut with Mammooty's The Great Father, Haneef's had a disastrous run at the box-office with the two Nivin Pauly films — Mikhael and Ramachandra Boss & Co. Unni Mukundan is currently basking in the success of his Tamil film Garudan, and hopes to have a good run in Malayalam too after a rather sedate 2024 with the mixed response to his Jai Ganesh.

Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video box office collection Day 2: Rajkumar Rao film shows slight improvement, earns Rs 12 crore

Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video box office collection Day 2: Despite negative reviews, Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video, the Dussehra release of the year, has been doing decent business at the box office. While the film, starring stars Rajkumar Rao, Tripti Dimri, Mallika Sherawat, Vijay Raaz, Tiku Talsania, and Archana Puran Singh in key roles, made a collection of Rs 5.25 crore on Day 1 of release, Day 2 was a little better.

As per industry tracker Sacnilk, Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video earned around Rs 6.75 crore India net on its second day. This



took the total collection of the film to Rs 12 crore. The movie opened to overwhelmingly negative reviews. The Indian Express

film critic Shubhra Gupta gave the Rajkumar Rao-starrer a one-and-a-half-star rating and wrote, "It is a sluggish film that relies on

too many cheap jokes. The comedy film has exactly five lines that make you chuckle." She added, "

Ratchanok 'elegant' Intanon's workman shot – the 'running behind-backhand'



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

Balletic, gazelle-like, and deceptive – technically prim and ace at anticipation. Thailand's wondrous shuttler Ratchanok Intanon is all of these adjectives in her often glorious outings on the court. But she also is a workman's verb, when needed. Known for her creative point-construction with oodles of graceful movements and her seriously talented wrist-work, there is one shot that accumulates her labourer-like work rate. Quite apart from the smooth sedan-like manoeuvres, there is a stroke that demands a labourer's work-rate when she plays. Proper mazdoori, as they would say in Hindi / Urdu. It is Ratchanok's scrambling retrieve, running back with the net receding behind her, chasing a shuttle on her backhand side.

It's when opponents catch her off-guard, off-position and start dreaming of a precious point by packing her off in pursuit to the back-court. Forced to turn away from the net, leave the front court pivot from where she has a sort of Wingardium Leviosa – like sorcery on the bird, Ratchanok is instead forced into scurrying-mode. It is to her enduring credit, that she makes even that scuttering look passably refined. This last week at the Arctic Open in Finland where she made the finals brushing aside the leading names of the next generation, Ratchanok offered India's Malvika Bansod a premium seat-view of how she pulls off the back-running backhand. First, by demonstrating the laborious retrieve and then by highlighting how it's conspicuously absent in Malvika's armoury. In the first set, it was a straightforward exhibition as Malvika smartly and repeatedly tugged Ratchanok to the net, and sent her back the next instance. Malvika was leading 15-14 even against the former World Champion. It's when Ratchanok would string together 7 points – repeatedly, diligently, sprinting back, fully turned away from the net, catch up with the racing shuttle and strike it with a meaty whippy backhand across the net. Additionally, those clears and tosses travelled at an elevation, and Malvika was drawn back into the rally.

A bunch of skills were at play. The strong wrist that dragged the vrooming shuttle back into the parallel plane,

the exact striding running back, chunky power on the backhand. And most importantly the ability to get into position for the next return. It doesn't look as spectacular as the across the body low defense on the backhand. And Malvika did well to get Ratchanok to clock serious running mileage, scrambling her back. But the Indian couldn't keep her away from taking the opener. On the hard-working shift.

Ratchanok's determination in chasing down shuttles, the sheer defensive work-rate, is especially underrated because the rest of her classical game is so sublime and easy on the eye. Her deceptive cross drops, the net magic are all made possible because she gets down to the unglamorous run back-scythe the backhand on the move to survive for another day- sort of labour, when opponents out-think her anticipation and yo-yo her along the vertical axis. Another shuttler who doesn't shy away from this hardwork is Tai Tzu Ying, and they can both channel the Nadal-spirit, while essentially retaining their Federer essence. Those like Carolina Marin and Yamaguchi are just naturally adept at getting it done.

In the second set, Ratchanok returned the favour. It wasn't even about Malvika being forced to run back. The Thai simply punched massive holes in the Indian's terribly under-cultivated backhand game, when the shuttle was struck deep and across, flirting with the backline and corner. The Indian was humbled 21-8. Malvika lost 9 of those 21 points, barely even reaching the backhand and swivelling in pursuit as the shuttle whizzed past. The back-running backhand is a wickedly difficult skill because even if you reach under the shuttle, mastering control on the stretched bowstring like shot needs immense control. It's a power shot from a vulnerable position but can easily spray around if you have no control on the whip. Malvika, the few times she reached it, was prone to thwacking it beyond the lines. The Indian lost a further 4 points when she fended off the backhand from the back court, but was miserably late in reaching the next shuttle that inevitably looped close to the net. So even when she executed the backhand, the reaction, and torquing of the body to reach the next shot for the southpaw proved near impossible. Ratchanok can put both a leftie and rightie to the test with her controlled strokeplay – it's one reason why at 29, a dozen years after winning a world title and missing out on Olympics, she can still contend for titles. To put it brutally – Indian women just don't have the backhand control from the back court. It's a power-scythe, and Sindhu and Saina strictly made-do on forearm strength. But India's new generation of women's singles have a long way to go to master the back running, backhand clear, while staying balanced. It's a long leveled jab, the next shot is always the sucker punch.

Sneakers in the playing hall is GCL's dressed down version of chess, even Viswanathan Anand is warming up to it



GNS News Agency, Oct 15

There was an almost familial vibe in all six GCL teams which the highly-individualistic sport rarely evokes in players. (Global Chess League) There was an almost familial vibe in all six GCL teams which the highly-individualistic sport rarely evokes in players. The Light Auditorium in London's Friend's House is bathed in pink light as players from the Ganges Grandmasters and the American Gambits, led by their 'icon' players Viswanathan Anand and Hikaru Nakamura, emerge from a door, sporting bright and colourful jerseys, track pants and sneakers, a break from their usual business suits.

A few hundred spectators, many of them Indian-origin residents of the UK, burst into loud cheers as the two teams line up under a giant, four-sided jumbotron that belongs more to a boxing arena than a chess hall, another break from tradition in a sport where the playing halls can be quieter than libraries. For a sport that generally takes itself very seriously, almost to the point of being a stickler about players' attire during matches, this dressed-down version at the Global Chess League is an attempt to take chess into uncharted territory: packaging the sport to make it look cooler for television and streaming. "I actually enjoy playing with sneakers very much. Normally I'm slightly conservative. Many of the other players dress down much more than me. I, on the other hand, like to come to games in proper shoes and so on. But here where it is insisted upon (to wear sneakers), it's fantastic!" says five-time world champion Anand, who has spent a lot of his professional career wearing sharp suits. "It's nice to do something different. To play in the kinds of tournaments I used to play before, I would need to get ready a lot more. This is more spontaneous. It has an attraction to it as a player because you don't have to work so much." This dressed-down version at the Global Chess League is an attempt to take chess into uncharted territory. (Global Chess League) This dressed-down version at the Global Chess League is an attempt to take chess into uncharted territory. (Global Chess League) Anand is not the only convert to this 'chilled out' version of chess, which has taken plenty of inspiration from the way eSports events are presented.

"This is an attempt to create more of a spectacle and add more of a theatre vibe to what was a very strict kind of environment. You watch an event like the Candidates (an event to decide the challenger to the world champion) and notice that everybody is in a suit. Everybody is very serious. People playing at these events don't smile very often. People just talk about the game (after a game

ends) and then disappear. There's definitely a place for that: If there's a fight for the title of the world champion, it has to be presented how it should be presented. But there's also the more fun and joyous side to chess which I think GCL is trying to showcase. It's a very good idea because chess players are not un-fun people. Bringing that out is going to be good for the game," reasons Russian grandmaster Peter Svidler, who is representing the upGrad Mumbai Masters this season.

The 'joyous side' Svidler is talking about is evident everyday at the Friends House. Everyday since the start of the tournament, fans have been queuing up in the hallway connecting the players' lounge to the playing arena. Rather than players playing out their matches and disappearing into their private worlds, they have been regularly obliging fans for plenty of photos and autographs in the corridor.

In the confines of the players' lounges at chess tournaments, it is often each player for himself with very limited interaction with others. But GCL teams have managed to pull down those walls players tend to put up around themselves during competitions. There's an almost familial vibe in all six teams which the highly-individualistic sport rarely evokes in players. Players from the Alpine SG Pipers have been spotted taking long walks around the playing hall as a team while the American Gambits players recently spent over two hours playing 20 Questions with even World No.2 Hikaru Nakamura playing.

The American chess star has not played in any team events since the Batumi Olympiad six years ago. He was one of the most notable absentees in Team USA at the recent Olympiad. But after observing the first season of GCL closely, he happily made an exception to his rule about not playing in team events. "I played in seven Chess Olympiads from 2006 and 2018 for the USA. In the early years there was a lot of team spirit and chemistry. But in the later Olympiads, from 2014 onwards, the Olympiads started to feel very much like an individualised event for us on the US team. Many of us were top 10 players. So everybody was very serious. Everybody did their own thing. There wasn't any camaraderie. It's one of the reasons why I stopped playing in the Olympiad. But at the GCL, you don't have any of this built-in competition. It just feels like it's going to be a lot of fun," Nakamura tells The Indian Express.

One of the owners of Nakamura's team, P Prachura, reveals that the American player has taken his status as an "icon" player very seriously. "Hikaru has been a great leader for this team. When we lost a game, he messaged me saying that we should have a team dinner. And then when we lost one more game the next day, he again messaged that we should have a team meeting," says Prachura. The packaging of the league, players hope, will also bring in newer audiences.

"This event is very entertaining so a lot of new followers will come to the sport. It's a very different feeling even if you compare it to other team events like the Olympiad. It's really chill. It's about having a good time. There are so many cameras recording everything... it is trying to bring new excitement and new insights to the sport. It's a new experience for every player. I wish there were more tournaments like this," says Uzbek prodigy Nodirbek Abdusattarov.

Five things you need to know about HIL auction: Purse details, top hockey players in the fray, where to watch, and more



Hockey India League's return gathers pace with a pivotal three days coming up, as the franchises build their teams for the 2024-25 edition via the player auction. The HIL auction will take place in Delhi from October 13 to 15, as the eight men's and six women's teams vie for the services of top Indian and overseas talent. Hockey India confirmed earlier this month that the men's league, which returns after a 7-year hiatus, will feature eight franchises, while the women's league – taking place for the first time – will feature six teams. Initially, the plan was for four women's teams but that count went up when the league's return was officially confirmed. It marks a significant development for the women's game. In India's growing landscape of sporting leagues, it is a market only recently tapped by Women's Premier League for cricket.

How will the auction work?

The auction will unfold over three days, with the men's auction taking place on 13th and 14th October, followed by the women's auction on 15th October. Each franchise will build a 24-player squad, comprising 16 Indian players (including four junior players) and 8 foreign players. With Hockey India confirming that they have been given an exclusive international window during the last week of December and the first week of February for the next 10 years, top international stars will be able to participate as well. Players are divided into three base price categories: Rs 2 lakh, Rs 5 lakh, and Rs 10 lakh, based on the value they selected for themselves. According to the league, over 1,000 players have registered overall with a breakdown of: 400+ domestic men's players, 150+ overseas men's players, 250+ domestic women's players, 70+ overseas women's players.

The total purse for the men's teams is Rs 4 crore each, while for the women's teams it is Rs 2 crore each. There is no upper limit on how much an individual player could get at the auction but the purse cap means teams can't afford to splash too much. All eyes will be on Harmanpreet Singh, of course, who is highly likely to fetch the biggest bid. Vice Captain Hardik Singh, and stars like Manpreet Singh and Mandeep Singh will be sought after too. Former Indian hockey legends such as Rupinder Pal Singh, Birendra Lakra, and Dharamvir Singh have also registered. Top international stars include Arthur van Doren, Alexander Hendrickx, Gonzalo Peillat, Jip Janssen, Thierry Brinkman, and Dayaan Cassiem will add global talent and flair to the men's league. Among

the women, Savita Punia, Salima Tete, Vandana Katariva and Navneet Kaur will be among the top billed stars. Delfina Merino, Charlotte Stapenhorst, Maria Granatto, Rachael Lynch, and Nike Lorenz will be top international names available for recruitment.

Where to watch the auction unfold?

The HIL auction will be live-streamed on the newly launched Hockey India League YouTube channel. Apart from the stream, the auction will also be broadcast live on DD Sports in India. On Sunday, the auction starts at 2 pm IST while Monday and Tuesday's events start at 9.30 am.

What about the team owners?

The key aspect of HIL's return is the work that has been done over the last two years so as to not repeat the mistakes from the previous iteration where the league became unsustainable. A private firm was entrusted with laying down certain frameworks to make sure there is a focus on long-term. Here are the owners we know so far. Two women's team owners and cities are yet to be confirmed by Hockey India.

List of Men's Franchises and their Owners

1. Tamil Nadu Dragons (Chennai) – M & C Property Development Pvt Ltd
2. UP Rudras (Lucknow) – Yadu Sports
3. Soorma Hockey Club (Punjab) – JSW Sports
4. Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers (West Bengal) – Shrachhi Sports
5. Delhi SG Vipers (Delhi) – SG Sports and Entertainment
6. Kalinga Landers (Odisha) – Vedanta Limited
7. Hyderabad Toofans (Hyderabad) – Resolute Sports
8. Visakhapatnam (Name TBA) – Team Gonasaika (Was originally Ranchi with Navoyam)

List of Women's Franchises and their Owners (confirmed so far)

1. Soorma Hockey Club (Haryana) – JSW Sports
2. Shrachhi Rarh Bengal Tigers (West Bengal) – Shrachhi Sports
3. Delhi SG Vipers – SG Sports and Entertainment
4. Odisha (Name TBA) – Navoyam Sports Ventures Private Limited

How chess queen Alexandra Kosteniuk helped Triveni Continental Kings win despite both male stars flopping

Alireza Firouzja, the 21-year-old icon player of the Triveni Continental Kings, walked up to the emcee with a wide grin on his face. The Kings had claimed their second title in the Global Chess League defeating the PBG Alaskan Knights in a two-match finale, but the French-Iranian star had lost his individual battle against Anish Giri in the second match after winning the first clash on Saturday. "I'm very thankful to my teammates. They make my mistakes not seem bad," he said sheepishly as the rest of his team burst out laughing.

When the golden confetti had ceased falling and the pyrotechnics had stopped, Firouzja was not the only player who was relieved. Just moments earlier, Azerbaijani grandmaster Teimour Radjabov had also walked into the team huddle in the players' lounge with relief writ large on his face. "Sorry captain. But I had to lose (for the team to win)," Radjabov told Kings captain Loek van Wely before explaining to the rest of his team: "He told me that if you have a good position on the board, the team plays bad." That evoked more chuckles. Even though both their top male stars had lost, the Kings managed to claim the title, thanks to former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk, who took down Tan Zhongyi in both games in the final, which was held across two matches with the two teams taking turns to play with white and black pieces.

Pulling rabbits out of the hat is now becoming something of a pattern for the Triveni Continental Kings. For the second straight season, the team has claimed the Global Chess League title. Most of the six teams in the GCL have stuck to a template on how to build a team: an Indian grandmaster as the captain and at least one Indian superstar in the six-player roster.

But the Triveni Continental Kings have had a unique take on roster-building which has clearly worked wonders for them. The team are the only side to have a non-Indian captain in the form of Dutch grandmaster and national chess coach for the Italian team Loek van Wely, who was also part of the side in the first season. And their team is one of the only two teams – the other being the American Gambits – to not have an Indian player in the

side. "We went on a very strong journey early on to figure out who would be our coach because in my opinion the role of the coach is integral because you're dealing with the top players in a sport. You need to have someone that not only will they respect and respond to but who will also understand what's happening on the board and who will not be fooled by random things. We needed someone to have that kind of gravitas. We looked at multiple options and Luke and I got on a call with van Wely," Akash Premsen, the CEO of Triveni Sports, told The Indian Express. Premsen says that what really clicked between van Wely and him was that "both had a sense of humour". "We spent a lot of our time laughing but we hit it off because it became very clear that his style of working would go very well with the Triveni way of doing things and that he was also incredibly detail-oriented and also similar to me, highly competitive in terms of wanting to win," Premsen added. He points out that they have spent plenty of time working on their team culture, even if it's a short league. "What we're trying to drive as a culture in the team is having a slightly low-stress environment. When my team's in a good mood, everybody's laughing, everybody's smiling, everybody's having a good time. It's not actually non-serious, it's actually incredibly good because that's the vibe being set in terms of being calm," Premsen said. Another unique detail about the franchise is that it had links with the sport much before they bought a franchise in GCL. Dhruv Sawhney, who's the CMD for Triveni Group, was the All India Chess Federation president from 1988 till the year 2000. He was the chief of the Indian chess federation when Viswanathan Anand became a grandmaster. In the first season, their turnaround was even more remarkable. The Triveni Continental Kings were last in the standings at one stage, but managed to overturn the league's apple cart. Pre-tournament favourites like the Ganges Grandmasters and the Alpine team could not even qualify for the final. "It was a kind of like a movie in many ways, dead last halfway through GCL 1 and people making fun of us, saying things to me like, 'oh it's an Indian league and you don't have an Indian player, you don't have an Indian coach, you're trying to be cool'.