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## 20-year-old Giraffe 'Tsunami Basant' dies at Nehru Zoo Park

Hyderabad: Tsunami Basant, a 20 year-old male Giraffe, has died due to old age complications at the Nehru Zoological Park, late on Monday night. According to the zoo officials, Basant was born during the Tsunami calamity in the year 2004 in National Zoological Park, New Delhi, and was brought to Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad as part of animal exchange programme in 2009. Basant was suffering with arthritis in the hind legs since last two years and was being treated under the guidance of the Zoo Deputy Director (Vet), Dr. M.A.Hakeem.

## PM Modi Launches Drone Services for Mangalagiri AIIMS



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

In a significant step towards revolutionizing healthcare delivery, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched drone services for the Mangalagiri All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) from the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in Delhi. The initiative aims to leverage technology in providing efficient medical services to patients in remote areas.

Following the launch, AIIMS officials conducted a successful experimental drone test, demonstrating the practicality of the new service. The test involved dispatching a drone from AIIMS to the Nutakki Primary Health Centre (PHC), located approximately 12 kilometers away. A blood sample was collected from a female patient at the PHC and securely flown back to AIIMS for analysis. Officials emphasized that this experimental use of drones is a crucial step towards enhancing medical service delivery, especially in underserved regions. The innovative approach is expected to reduce delivery times for medical supplies and improve overall healthcare accessibility for patients in the area.

## KTR questions lack of transparency in ED raids on Telangana Minister Ponguleti



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao raised serious questions over the lack of action and transparency from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) following its high-profile raids on Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy one month ago. He pointed out that despite extensive media coverage alleging large sums of money were found during the raids, there has been no official statement or case filing from the ED, while both BJP and Congress kept silent. Taking to X, Rama Rao pointed out to an alleged secret meeting between businessmen Gautam Adani and Minister Srinivas Reddy shortly after the ED raids, questioning the nature and purpose of this meeting. "What is the quid pro quo here? Any guesses?" he asked netizens. One Month since ED raids on Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Not a single word from @dir\_ed or BJP or Congress!! No case filed even after media reports of huge quantity of money being found etc

## Soldiers celebrate Diwali along LoC in Akhnoor amid heightened vigilance

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Miles away from their homes, the Army jawans and officers guarding the Line of Control (LoC) are celebrating Diwali, the festival of lights, as a family tradition of the armed forces. Even as they maintain a high degree of vigilance and alertness against adversary attempts to infiltrate terrorists across the border, these jawans light diyas and burst crackers to mark the festive occasion.

"We celebrate Diwali miles away from our homes. The Army is like another big family for us. According to our tradition, we celebrate Diwali with our fellow jawans and officers," an officer said. The jawans performed Lakshmi puja, sang the Lakshmi-Ganesh aarti and also burst crackers during the celebration. Duty and celebration go hand in hand, as troops remain on high alert along the LoC to prevent any misadventure from across the border. "We are on alert round the clock along the border-line. Celebrations and duty go hand in hand. We enjoy the festivities with our men in uniform from various parts of the country," said another soldier patrolling the border.

Another soldier, part of the celebration, was deployed on a surveillance grid, monitoring every movement along the LoC with advanced gadgets and equipment to ensure no lapse in vigilance.

## PM Modi launches projects worth Rs12,850 crore, extends Ayushman Bharat for all over 70 years

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday (October 29, 2024) launched development projects worth nearly ₹12,850 crore and extended his government's flagship health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above. The major push in the health sector was unveiled on the occasion of the ninth Ayurveda Day and the birth anniversary of Dhanvantari, the Hindu god of medicine. Mr. Modi also inaugurated phase II of India's first All India Institute of Ayurveda in the national capital which includes a Panchakarma hospital, an Ayurvedic pharmacy for drug manufacturing, a sports medicine unit, a central library, an IT and startup incubation centre, and a 500-seat auditorium among others. In an innovative usage of drone technology to enhance service delivery and make healthcare more accessible, Modi launched



drone services at 11 tertiary healthcare institutions. These are AIIMS-Rishikesh in Uttarakhand, AIIMS-Bibinagar in Telangana, AIIMS-Guwahati in Assam, AIIMS-Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, AIIMS-Jodhpur in Rajasthan, AIIMS-Patna in Bihar, AIIMS-Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh, AIIMS-Raebareilly in Uttar Pradesh, AIIMS-Raipur in Chhattisgarh, AIIMS-Mangalagiri in Andhra Pradesh and RIMS-Imphal in Manipur. The Prime Minister also launched a helicopter emergency medical service from AIIMS Rishikesh, which will help deliver medical care

speedily. Mr. Modi launched a U-WIN portal that seeks to benefit pregnant women and infants by fully digitising the vaccination process. It will ensure timely administration of life-saving vaccines to pregnant women and children (from birth to 16 years) against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases. Further, the prime minister launched a portal for allied and healthcare professionals and institutes. It will act as a centralised database of existing healthcare professionals and institutes. Mr. Modi also inaugurated three medical colleges at Mandasaur, Neemuch and Seoni in Madhya Pradesh, besides

facility and service extensions at various AIIMS -- Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh, Kalyani in West Bengal, Patna in Bihar, Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, Guwahati in Assam and in New Delhi, which also include a Jan Aushadhi Kendra. Mr. Modi also inaugurated a Super Speciality Block in Government Medical College at Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh and a Critical Care Block in Bargarh, Odisha. The Prime Minister laid the foundation stones of five nursing colleges in Shivpuri, Ratlam, Khandwa, Rajgarh and Mandasaur in Madhya Pradesh, 21 critical care blocks at Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan under the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission, and several facilities and service extensions at AIIMS in New Delhi and Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur. Among other projects, Mr. Modi inaugurated an ESIC hospital at indore.

## Priyanka Gandhi accuses Modi govt of neglecting Wayanad rehab efforts

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday intensified her campaign for the Wayanad bypoll by accusing the BJP-led Central government of neglecting the rehabilitation of the landslide-hit areas of the hill district by not providing any funds for the same. Priyanka said the stand taken by the Narendra Modi government at the Centre indicates its lack of respect for the people and the nation and the same was evident from its policies made during the last 10 years of its governance.

The Congress leader, speaking at a corner meeting at Eengapuzha here, said that policies, including demonetisation, of the Modi government always favour five to six business friends of the prime minister and do not benefit the people. Referring to the Wayanad landslides, she said that the PM came to the district, visited the affected places and people and promised them all kinds of help. However, months later, the Central government did not provide any funds for the rehabilitation of the affected people, she claimed. She further claimed that the Central government had shown no compassion for farmers, taken no steps to address challenges faced by tribal communities across the nation and was allocating land to large corporates rather than addressing public needs.

She also alleged that employment, education, healthcare, and other essential areas have been neglected by the Modi government. "The Modi government has displayed complete disrespect for the people of India. If you lose respect for the people, you lose respect for the country. The politics prevalent in the country today, where only power matters and the people do not matter, needs to be changed," Priyanka said.

She also referred to the almost year-long violence in Manipur and said that trying to stay in power by any means was "wrong politics". More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic strife between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis in Manipur since May last year. To the hundreds gathered here for the corner meeting,

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Visakhapatnam: India is going to be the third-largest economy in the world by 2028, said Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar. Before giving away appointment letters to the new recruits of Rozgar Mela organised at VMRDA Children's Arena in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday, Bandi Sanjay said that the country's economy was in the 11th position before Narendra Modi became Prime Minister. "But now, it is the fifth largest economy in the world, competing with the US and China," the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs stated with a tinge of pride.

Speaking about Andhra Pradesh's development, he stated that Modi is certain to develop AP on all fronts. "The double-engine sarkar that exists at the Centre and in the state has a single-minded dedication towards



Priyanka said she and her family were "indebted" to the people of Wayanad for supporting and voting for her brother at a time when a massive campaign was launched to tarnish his image. She further said that the bond of love, trust, and loyalty forged between the people of Wayanad and Rahul Gandhi holds a special place in his heart and therefore, he was very sad when he had to give up the constituency. Priyanka said that even though the Congress is not in power at the Centre or in Kerala, she will raise the problems of the people of Wayanad in Parliament.

Later in a post on the social media platform 'X', she said that Wayanad always stood for the shared values of social harmony, secularism, and justice which the Constitution "holds dear". "Addressed the wonderful people of Eengapuzha, Thiruvambady today. Wayanad has always stood for our shared values - social harmony, secularism, and justice - values our Constitution holds dear. I promise to uphold these ideals and to dedicate myself fully to Wayanad's progress and wellbeing," she said on 'X'. Priyanka, who marks her electoral debut in this bypoll, is contesting against the LDF's veteran leader Sathyan Mokeri, a former MLA, and the BJP's Navya Haridas, a two-time councillor of the Kozhikode Corporation. The by-election was necessitated after Rahul Gandhi vacated the seat following his victory in the Rai Bareilly constituency in the recent parliamentary elections. The by-election will be held on November 13.

## Centre's support to AP is always there: Bandi Sanjay



progress. As promised during election time, all the projects will be completed as assured, including the Polavaram project.

## Last chance for customers to avail OTS scheme to pay water bills till Oct 31: HMWSSB

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) Managing Director, Ashok Reddy on Tuesday said the last chance to avail the OTS scheme is till October 31 and urged the consumers to take advantage of the opportunity. In a press release issued here, the water board said the government has announced the OTS scheme to pay long pending water bills and if the users pay the principal amount, they get concession on late fee and interest. "This is a good opportunity to clear the bad debts that have accumulated for a long time. The OTS scheme, which started on October 1, will be valid till the October 31," Ashok Reddy said.

## KTR hails victory against power tariff hike, calls for State-wide celebrations



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao called for State-wide celebrations to celebrate the party's victory against the State government's proposed Rs 18,500 crore power tariff hike, which was rejected by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC). Accordingly, the BRS cadre have been asked to organise celebrations in all mandal and Assembly constituency headquarters on October 30 and 31.

He thanked the ERC for rejecting the proposals of the distribution companies by giving its verdict in favour of people of the State. He termed it a significant triumph for citizens and the main opposition. In a statement, Rama Rao noted that while the BRS did not hike electricity charges over its decade-long governance, the current Congress government proposed the hefty hike within just 10 months.

He said the BRS as the main opposition actively participated in public hearings of ERC and argued on behalf of the people, leading to the ERC's decision against the tariff hike. "This is a historic moment where the ERC has fully dismissed the proposals, due to strong public opposition," he said. He stated that the ERC's decision reflected a rare regulatory stance prioritising citizens over the State's mandates. The BRS working president said as per directions of party president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, party senior leaders including himself effectively presented the public concerns before the ERC. "This is a win for every Telangana household, a victory we must celebrate on behalf of the people," he stated.

## Harish Rao demands reversal of "ill-advised" decisions affecting Telangana Special Police

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao found fault with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's decision to exclude the Telangana Special Police from his personal security detail, calling it a "disrespectful" move that undermines the morale of 17,000 State special police personnel. He urged the Chief Minister to initiate corrective measures immediately and revoke the orders. Liking the actions of the Chief Minister to a father not trusting his sons, Harish Rao felt that the Chief Minister's decision sends a wrong message to the forces dedicated to safeguarding Telangana. He reminded that the Telangana Special Police was the State's equivalent of a military unit. "The Chief Minister's decision to sideline them is not only misguided but also damages the morale of those personnel," he said. He suggested that the State government constitute a Cabinet sub-committee to address the issues faced by the Special Police with a fixed timeframe. The BRS legislator reminded that Revanth Reddy had promised to implement Ek Police (Unified Police) system during the election campaign and questioned him over the delay in its implementation. He demanded the immediate reinstatement of suspended and dismissed special police constables to restore confidence within the force. Harish Rao also took exception to a recent circular from the Chief Security Officer of the State Secretariat, which imposed restrictions on the Special Police personnel from discussing their issues. He said they were warned against even "likes and shares" on social media, which could lead to stringent action. "It is unacceptable to strip away the basic constitutional right to freedom of expression from our police personnel. No one has the power to silence their voices," Rao asserted.

## Cops arrest NOIDA man for issuing death threats to Salman Khan

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Mumbai: As the investigation behind the murder of politician Baba Siddique picks up pace, a person who allegedly issued death threats to Baba's friend, Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, has been nabbed. On Tuesday, an X user shared two videos of the person in police captivity. The user wrote, "The accused who threatened Zeeshan Siddique and Salman has been arrested and is being taught a lesson. Salman is counted amongst the biggest personalities of our country. Police arrested accused Gufran from Noida".



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Art or obscenity?

THE Bombay High Court's decision defending artistic expression and ruling that not all nude art is obscene reopens critical conversations on creative freedom. The court's release of artworks by FN Souza and Akbar Padamsee, seized under obscenity claims, emphasises that nudity in art must not automatically be equated with obscenity. Instead, the court argued, the prurient interest test should guide such judgments, advocating for the importance of understanding an artwork's intent and context. Artists across countries have often encountered censorship and opposition over nudity in art. MF Husain faced intense backlash, protests and even legal action for his portrayals of Hindu goddesses, reflecting the thin line between artistic freedom and religious sensitivity. Souza also faced societal resistance for his nudes, challenging social boundaries. Austria's Egon Schiele endured legal consequences for works labelled pornographic by the authorities, underlining a global history of opposition to nude art rooted in conservative societal norms. Adding to these historical challenges, today's digital landscape brings new obstacles for artists who share nude art online. Many social media platforms uphold strict content guidelines, often censoring or banning nude art despite its historical and cultural significance. These policies complicate the sharing and accessibility of nude art, limiting artists' reach and freedom in a digital-first era. Nude art holds profound cultural significance and is celebrated in classical forms as a tribute to human beauty and expression. Yet, its acceptance remains complex, influenced by religious and moral standards. The HC decision underscores the potential of art to provoke, inspire and push societal boundaries. Embracing a more informed, open-minded approach to evaluating art is essential to fostering a culture in which creativity can flourish free from restrictive censorship.

## Insurance firm told to pay Rs 1.35 cr to kin of consumer who paid premium within grace period before his death



The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has upheld the order of the District Commission which directed an insurance company to pay Rs 1.35 crore to the kin of an insured man who died due to Covid-19 in April 2021.

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has upheld the order of the District Commission which directed an insurance company to pay Rs 1.35 crore to the kin of an insured man who died due to Covid-19 in April 2021.

As per the case before the District Commission, "On June 30, 2020, Gaurav Sharma purchased a PNB MetLife Mera Term Plan policy with a sum assured of Rs 1 crore and an annual premium of Rs 22,707.84 — to be paid monthly. The policy allowed 15 days grace period for the premium payment. Gaurav paid his premium for March 2021 on March 31, 2021, which is within the grace period. Unfortunately, he fell ill with Covid-19 in April 2021, was hospitalised, and on April 28, 2021, he passed away."

Complainants Jyotsana Sharma, Gaurav's wife, and their son filed a claim on May 20, 2021, which was denied on June 30, 2021, citing a policy lapse due to non-payment of the renewal premium. The complainants claimed that Gaurav paid a premium within the grace period. PNB Met Life India Insurance Company, contested the complaint, by submitting their written response, which included preliminary objections regarding maintainability, concealment of facts, and cause of action and claimed that "the complainants attempted to mislead the Commission by distorting facts". However, they acknowledged that the deceased life assured (DLA) obtained the policy but asserted that he last paid the monthly premium on February 28, 2021. They further claimed that the premium due on March 29, 2021, was not paid within the grace period, resulting in the policy lapsing and justified the rejection of the claim.

After hearing the counsel of both parties and going through the evidence and record of the case, the District Commission ordered the insurance company to pay the sum assured of Rs 1 crore to the complainants, along with Rs 25,000 as compensation and Rs 10,000 as costs of litigation. PNB Met Life India Insurance Company, however, filed an appeal against the District Commission order at the State Commission.

The State Commission on hearing the matter held that the policy document explicitly indicates that the DLA elected for a monthly premium payment plan, with the last premium payment recorded as being made on February 28, 2021, a fact acknowledged by the appellants. "We have thoroughly examined the receipt, which clearly indicates that the premium due on March 29, 2021, was paid by the deceased life assured (DLA) on March 31, 2021. This payment falls well within the stipulated grace period of 15 days. The District Commission correctly concluded that the DLA made the premium payment within the grace period with the next premium due date specified in the receipt as April 29, 2021. Furthermore, given that the DLA passed away on April 28, 2021, it has been unequivocally established that the policy was valid and in force at the time of his death. The appellants' repudiation of the claim, which was based solely on the assertion that the policy had lapsed, lacks sufficient justification," said the State Commission.

## Stampede at Mumbai's Bandra railway station leaves 9 injured



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The incident happened on Platform No. 1 when people rushed to board the Bandra-Gorakhpur Express at 5.10 am. "On October 27, 2024, Antyodaya Express (Train No. 22921) was being slowly maneuvered from the Bandra Terminus (BDTS) yard to Platform No. 1. Dur-

ing this process, several passengers on the platform attempted to board the moving train, resulting in injuries to two individuals who fell while trying to embark," Western Railway's said in a statement. Of those injured, two — Noor Mohammad Shaikh (18) and Indrajith Sahani (19) — are in critical condition. The remaining seven, meanwhile, are receiving treatment at the government-run Bhabha Hospital. Stampede at Bandra Railway Station An injured person being taken to a hospital after a stampede at Bandra railway station, in Mumbai on Sunday. The Western Railway authorities have launched an investigation to ascertain the cause of the overcrowding and assess platform management protocols to prevent such incidents. In the statement, the authorities further informed: "To accommodate the anticipated increase in passenger volume during the upcoming Diwali and Chhath festivals, Indian Railways has arranged over 130 special festival trains, providing additional connectivity to various destinations, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar."

## In setback to BJP, Rajendra Patni's son Gyayak joins Sharad Pawar's NCP ahead of Maharashtra Assembly elections

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Gyayak Gyayak Patni joined the party in Mumbai with supporters in the presence of NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, state president Jayant Patil, and working president Supriya Sule. In a blow to the BJP, party leader Gyayak Patni, son of the late BJP MLA Rajendra Patni from Karanja, joined the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) on Saturday ahead of Maharashtra Assembly elections 2024. Rajendra Patni represented the Karanja Assembly constituency in Vidarbha's Washim district and passed away in February at the age of 59. Gyayak Patni joined the party in Mumbai with supporters in the presence of NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, state president Jayant Patil, and working president Supriya Sule.

Patni, accompanied by BJP leaders from the Washim district and members from Karanja's zilla parishad and panchayat samiti, expressed deep disappointment with the BJP's recent decisions in the constituency. "We have seen how the BJP, at the last minute, made hasty decisions without taking any of us into confidence. They betrayed Patni saheb and disregarded the work he dedicated himself to," said Patni.

Sharad Pawar emphasised the importance of Maharashtra Assembly elections and the commitment required from all MVA members to bring about meaningful change. "We have to work hard to bring about a transformation in Maharashtra. For that, winning these elections is incredibly important. Every single member of the



MVA will need to work honestly towards our victory," said Pawar. He expressed his satisfaction that Gyayak had chosen the NCP (SP) as the platform to continue his father's legacy. State NCP (SP) president Jayant Patil praised Rajendra Patni's contributions to Karanja and Maharashtra, noting that the BJP had overlooked his son, "a promising young leader". Patil also revealed that he had been trying to contact Patni for the past four days, but Patni had been reluctant to take any steps until he felt the BJP had committed a genuine injustice against him. The BJP is overconfident. Because of this, they are committing injustice against their workers. This overconfidence will be the BJP's downfall in the assembly elections," added Patil. The Maharashtra Assembly elections to elect 288 MLAs will take place in a single phase on November 20. The votes are to be counted on November 23.

## Karnataka HC refuses to quash cheating case against sculptor, observes crores of public money spent despite issues in erecting statue

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The Karnataka High Court has refused to quash a case of cheating against a sculptor, observing that over Rs 1 crore of public money had been spent and still there were issues in installing the statue. The order was passed on October 21 by a bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna. In this case, the Udupi Nirmithi Kendra, a government-sponsored organisation, had commissioned the sculptor to create a statue of Parashurama for a theme park in Udupi District's Karkala. However, eight months after the inauguration in January 2023, alignment work on the statue was allegedly still incomplete. Later, in 2024, a case involving Indian Penal Code (IPC) provisions, including cheating, was invoked. The sculptor then approached the high court with a plea to quash the case.

The counsel for the local gram panchayat, the complainant in this case, argued that while the statue was supposed to be made of bronze, copper and zinc were used. Questions were also raised regarding why Rs 1.2 crore of these of Rs 1.8 crore was paid in advance. It was further argued that the statue was improperly installed and had to be de-erected, and the work had to be completed.

The bench dismissed the argument of the statue's composition, noting that bronze was an alloy where copper was the primary metal. The bench added, "That would



not absolve the petitioner of any investigation... The sculpture did not have the strength to stand, as the alignment was completely erroneous... he has done a shoddy job, prima facie." The court added, "If 1.25 crore is taken and statue is not in a withstandable condition, it is understandable as to what sculpting the petitioner did... It is fortunate that the statue did not fall after its inauguration, threatening the lives of common people. What is paid to the petitioner is neither the proposal funds of Udupi Nirmithi Kendra nor the money of the complainant. It is public money." The court dismissed the petition to quash the case, stating that the matter had to be investigated at least.

## Sutlej keeping their fields waterlogged, Ferozepur farmers turn bane into boon

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

While growing up in a remote village in Ferozepur district, Avtar Singh often saw his father struggle to grow traditional wheat and paddy in their 10 acres. Due to the low-lying lands along Sutlej river, their field along Kunde Road would remain water-logged around the year. The stagnant water meant unpredictable harvests. While for most this would mean a lost cause, Avtar, now in his mid 30s, thought to make profit out of it. With unconventional thoughts and innovative ideas, he stumbled upon a plan to cultivate lotus. He realised the crop is naturally suited to such conditions. He took up lotus farming in 2010 after completing his class XII and witnessing positive results, he started farming the crop in all 10 acres. Gradually, he rented an additional 40 acres of low-lying land for Rs 64,000 annual and further expanded his crop.

Despite being uncommon in the region, lotus farming is gaining traction among farmers who have stagnant water on their fields. Lotus crop not only requires low maintenance but farmers can earn by selling the flower, stem (kamal kaddi), root (kamal kand) and seed (dodi). The seed is used to make foxnut (makhana), which fetches a high price in the market. Avtar now manages a thriving lotus cultivation business, harvesting two crops each year — from February to May and from July to November. After the November harvest, he switches to potato, as by that time, the stagnate rain water gets dried to some extent. "Each acre requires around 200 kg of lotus roots, costing approximately Rs 8,000, plus another Rs

2,000 for transplanting labour. Fertilizer expenses, including DAP and traditional manure (desi rudi), is an additional Rs 12,000 to 15,000. However, the most significant expense is labour for the lotus stem harvest, which costs around Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000 per acre as from one acre, 50 to 60 quintals (5000 to 6000 kg) of stem is harvested and after grading, it is sold between Rs 20 and Rs 80 per Kg," Avtar says. After deducting all expenses including rent, he earns over Rs 2 lakh per acre from the lotus stems and an additional Rs 30,000 to Rs 35,000 from lotus seeds, Avtar says, adding that some farmers even sell the flower if they have to pay rent of the land. In Punjab, white and pink varieties of lotus is grown. Avtar isn't the only one thriving in lotus farming. Major Singh and Manjit Singh from Ferozepur have also been cultivating lotus stem for over a decade. Avtar adds that now several farmers in Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts have been farming lotus as there are several low lying areas located along the banks of the local rivulets and rivers. "Lotus farming requires a lot of water and water-logged lands are perfect for this. Farmers with stagnant water on their fields can turn them into gold mine by shifting to lotus farming," Avtar says. Simran Singh, Horticulture Development Officer in Ferozepur, says that more farmers are recognising the potential of lotus farming in water-logged areas unsuitable for other crops in Ferozepur. "Presently, around 600 to 700 acres in Ferozepur are under lotus cultivation, with the produce reaching markets across India by train, road, and even air. According to experts, lotus stem has several nutritional benefits.

## Jalandhar woman first Indian to win Miss Grand International



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Rachel Gupta, 20, from Jalandhar was crowned Miss Grand International (MGI) 2024 on Friday in Bangkok, Thailand, where the final was being held. Rachel is the first Indian in MGI history to win the Golden crown. Rachel, who previously held the Miss Super Talent of the World 2022 title, won Miss Grand India in August 2024 at Zee Studios, Jaipur, and represented India at Miss Grand International, a crown India has never won before. Miss Grand International is said to be currently the number one Beauty Pageant in the world with over 5 Million followers across the globe. Minhas, her uncle, said, "This is the first time in MGI's history that an Indian won the golden crown and it's a super proud moment for Jalandhar, Punjab and India. Her performance was exceptional and she maintained the top position throughout. She was also awarded the Grand Pageants Choice Award 2024. Rachel now holds the record for the most number of global pageant crown wins by an Indian and is currently tied with former Miss Universe Lara Dutta." Rachel, who has over a million followers on Instagram, will now represent MGI as their ambassador for peace & stability.

## Punjab Vigilance Bureau arrests Muktsar ADC for embezzling funds



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB) on Saturday arrested Muktsar Additional Deputy Commissioner (Development) Surinder Dhillon for embezzling funds from grants released for compensation related to land acquired for the Amritsar-Kolkata Corridor Project in Patiala district.

Disclosing this, an official spokesperson of the VB stated, "Surinder Dhillon, who was posted as the District Development and Panchayat Officer (DDPO) at the time, was named in FIR No. 12, dated 26.05.2022. He faces charges under sections 406 (punishment for criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant, or by banker, merchant or agent) 465 (punishment for forgery), 467 (forgery of valuable security, will, etc. and 120-B (punishment for criminal conspiracy) of the IPC, as well as section 13(1)(A) read with section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (which deal with criminal misconduct by a public servant), as amended by the PC (Amendment) Act, 2018. These charges pertain to embezzlement and failure to perform his duties regarding a grant of Rs 285 crore released for compensation related to 1,103 acres of land acquired for the Amritsar-Kolkata Corridor project, specifically in the villages of Akkri, Sehra, Sehri, Takhtumajra and Pabra in the Shambhu Block of Patiala district." The spokesperson added, "During the investigation, the VB found that 30% of the funds allocated was supposed to be deposited in the account of Secretary wages of the BDPO Office, which was not done properly."

## Breakthrough in 2010 Ahmedabad murder that went into cold storage

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

2010 Ahmedabad murder, cold case, ahmedabad crime branch, confession, body concealment, man found dead in kitchen, Gujarat police, FIR for murder, cold storage, Ahmedabad murder case suspect, Indian express news After the deceased's friend informed the police, an FIR for murder had been filed at the Vejalpur police station at the time. Fourteen years ago, a man was found dead in the kitchen of a rented home in the Vejalpur area of Ahmedabad with his hands and feet tied and his mouth taped. The murderer was said to have stripped the body. He then covered it in a cloth, and hid it under sand and cement.

After the deceased's friend informed the police, an FIR for murder had been filed at the Vejalpur police station at the time. However, police had hit a dead end and the case had gone into cold storage for almost a decade-and-a-half. The Ahmedabad Crime Branch reached a breakthrough in the 2010 murder case with the arrest of suspect Rameshbhai Danabhai Desai, said officials.

Following a deeper probe in the case, officials gradually found that the actual name of the deceased who was initially identified as Manish Gupta was Manish Sahay. After committing the murder, Ramesh Desai had allegedly fled the scene with Manish's two-wheeler. The Crime Branch had recently picked up the matter for re-investigation and activated their intel to track down leads, said DCP Ajit Rajan. According to a statement from the Crime Branch, the suspect was traced to a location near Ahmedabad, en route from Mumbai to Rajasthan. Upon questioning, he initially provided false information but later confessed to his real identity, the statement added. He allegedly admitted that he had a same-sex relationship with Manish, which had led to arguments. On the day of the murder, a physical altercation allegedly took place between the two during which Ramesh attacked Manish with a brick, leading to fatal injuries to the victim.



## BMW dealer told to pay Rs 5.42 lakh charged for repairing car to owner



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has directed a dealer of BMW India in Chandigarh to pay Rs 5.42 lakh charged for repairs/replacement of defective parts of a BMW car. The State Commission modified the order of the District Commission, and dismissed the appeal of BMW India and its dealership Krishna Automobiles.

In his complaint at the District Commission, Pawan Kumar Goel of Panchkula stated that he purchased a BMW 730 LD car from the authorised dealer (Krishna Automobiles). "I have been using the vehicle for eight years, covering nearly 60,000 kilometres. But for the past four years, I have been facing significant maintenance issues," Goel said. As per Goel's complaint, on July 6, 2016, Krishna Automobiles sent him an extended warranty package via email, described as the BSI Plus and Extended Warranty Package. Convinced by the offer, Goel paid Rs 3,74,379 for the warranty extension. On May 16, 2020, the complainant reported a rear suspension issue. Following this, the vehicle was inspected at the dealership's service centre, where it was determined that the problem was with the air suspension caused by a malfunctioning air supply pump. The complainant believed this issue was covered under the warranty policy. However, on the same day, the dealership sent an email with an estimate of Rs 4,67,375.26 for the repairs, which shocked the complainant.

Goel argued that the dealership's claim was unfounded, as he should not have to pay for repairs to parts covered under the warranty package. The complainant said that he immediately raised his concerns, sending an email to concerned authorities detailing the vehicle's maintenance issues. He said that he repeatedly requested BMW India and its dealership to rectify or replace the defective parts in accordance with the warranty terms, however complainant was informed that "the parts in question were not covered under the warranty and would incur additional charges".

BMW India in reply stated that the extended warranty policy was purchased by the complainant on Au-

gust 5, 2016, and this was the fifth year of ownership for the vehicle, which had been purchased on September 8, 2011. Consequently, the repair-inclusive warranty expired in the sixth year of the vehicle's ownership, specifically on September 7, 2017, it stated. It was further stated that the complainant raised the issue regarding the vehicle's suspension on May 16, 2020. "Since this complaint was made well after the expiration of the extended warranty policy, the complainant was not entitled to any benefits under an expired policy," BMW India said. The dealership, Krishna Automobiles in reply clarified that the vehicle in question was purchased in the name of the firm, "Chemical Resources", which operates as a commercial entity. "The invoice and registration of the car were issued in the firm's name, emphasising that the transaction pertains to commercial activities. The warranty period concluded on September 7, 2016," said the dealer, adding the complainant failed to disclose these critical facts, the reasons for which remain unclear.

The District Commission after hearing the contesting parties and going through the material available on record, directed the dealership to carry out the necessary repairs and replace/change the defective parts, and pay Rs 25,000 as compensation and Rs 10000 as the cost of litigation. However, aggrieved with the order of the District Commission, BMW India and Krishna Automobiles moved to the State Commission to set aside the order of the District Commission, whereas the complainant Goel filed an appeal before the State Commission for the modification of the order, seeking enhancement of compensation amount. The State Commission on hearing the matter said the significant sum of Rs 3,74,379 paid by the complainant raises questions about the rationale behind such an expenditure if the extended warranty was to only cover a mere one-year period, particularly when the original warranty would have effectively reduced its value. "Based on the evidence presented and the absence of clear documentation indicating otherwise, this Commission also finds that the extended warranty purchased by the complainant commenced upon the expiration of the original warranty. The District Commission's conclusion in this matter was, therefore, justified and appropriate." The Commission, thus, held that the order passed by the District Commission needs modification. Resultantly, appeal bearing No. 321 Pawan Kumar Goel versus BMW India Private Limited and Krishna Automobiles stands partly allowed. Thus, modifying the order passed by the District Commission, the State Commission directed Krishna Automobiles to refund to complainant Pawan Kumar Goel the entire amount received, which is Rs 5,42,019, for repairs/replacement of defective parts of the vehicle in question, being the same under warranty/extended warranty, and to pay compensation to the tune of Rs 35,000 and cost of litigation to the tune of Rs 20,000.

## Rally on Oct 30: Junior doctors at mass convention

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Five days after withdrawing their hunger strike, the protesting junior doctors in West Bengal on Saturday organised a mass convention to strategise their next move to seek justice for the R G Kar rape-murder victim and ensure that the state government fulfils all their demands. The six-hour-long mass convention held at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's 'Platinum Jubilee building' was attended by doctors from various state-run medical establishments, apart from representatives of civil society.

The West Bengal Junior Doctors Front (WBJDF) announced that their protest movement would continue and decided to organise a rally to the CBI's office here on October 30 demanding justice for the RG Kar victim. The participants, including Debashish Halder, Kinjal Nanda, Rumelika Kumar, Aniket Mahato, also discussed the "threat culture" allegedly prevalent in several state-run hospitals, besides steps to be taken to exert pressure on the state government to make it fulfil their demands. "We have called this mass convention to seek justice for our sister, who was raped and murdered at RG Kar Hospital on August 9," said Mahato. "The protest started by a few doctors has now taken a massive shape. We wanted to know what happened at the seminar hall of the hospital (where the body was found). We had no idea that this movement would continue for so long and we would get the support of so many people," Halder said at the programme. "The state government is highlighting that our health system is number one in the country. You can see after Cyclone Dana... how our health system is working. For emergency cases, the general ward is working despite major waterlogging. This is the face of our health system," said Rumelika Kumar. On October 21, the agitating junior doctors called off their fast, which started on October 5, following a meeting with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who assured them that their demands would be considered.

On Saturday, the junior doctors also alleged that there were attempts to suppress the truth about what led to the rape and murder of the junior doctor at the RG Kar Hospital and that there were attempts to protect the culprits behind the incident. "We wanted to know what was



the truth and that is why we had pressed for a magisterial inquiry. There have been attempts to suppress the truth. We not only want justice but we also want to cleanse the system," Kinjal Nanda, another agitating doctor, claimed. Meanwhile, another group of doctors, whose suspension by an internal committee for allegedly promoting 'threat culture' in medical colleges and hospitals was stayed by the Calcutta High Court, announced on Saturday that they had floated the West Bengal Junior Doctors' Association. Addressing mediapersons, Srish Chakraborty, a junior doctor of RG Kar medical college, claimed that the protest movement, which was "aimed at addressing the systemic failures that led to the crime, but 'cease work' had also led to chaos in the state's healthcare system."

"We are also protesting against this rape and murder but we were against cease work. That is why we were alienated and 'threat culture' allegations were levelled against us," Chakraborty alleged. "Protesting junior doctors basically wanted to end our careers and illegally we were suspended," claimed Chakraborty. Countering the allegations, Halder said, "The rape and murder at RG Kar happened due to threat culture of the ruling party leaders. Now they are campaigning against us... It is very obvious. We will fight against this and are not budging from our demands. We will continue the movement to press for our ten demands," Halder, member of the WBJDF said. During this movement, RG Kar Medical College and Hospital authority suspended 51 junior and intern doctors, a decision that was later stayed by the Calcutta High Court.

## Blanket of smog envelops Delhi as air pollution situation remains grim

New Delhi: A thick layer of smog enveloped the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) Sunday morning as the air quality index (AQI) continued to be "very poor". The pollution situation remained serious due to the slowing down of wind speed, dropping temperatures, high moisture levels and the presence of pollution particles. The Air Quality Index (AQI) was 363 at a 'severe' level with real-time air pollution PM2.5, and PM10. The temperature in the national capital was around 25 degrees C in the morning. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in Delhi the AQI around ITO and surrounding areas was recorded at 361 falling in the 'very poor', in Anand Vihar and Jahangirpuri the level was around 400, categorised as 'severe' and layer of smog engulfed the Nehru Place and surrounding areas. The lowest AQI was reported in IGI Airport which was also in the 'very poor' category. The AQI at the airport was 320.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201

and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. On Saturday, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai declared that the next 15 days are "crucial" for the national capital. He said the seasonal winds from the northwest can carry pollutants into Delhi and surrounding areas, intensifying the pollution crisis. The warning comes days ahead of Diwali, which has proven difficult for Delhi residents. The Minister said there are plans to monitor pollution levels via drones. The Delhi government has roped in drone-based services to identify sources of pollution in the hotspot areas. The national capital has been breathing hazardous air quality for the past several days, forcing the authorities to impose stage two of the GRAP or the Graded Response Action Plan. The restrictions came into force on October 21 after several areas recorded an AQI of over 300 in the 'very poor' category. Under stage two, there will be restrictions on the use of coal and firewood as well as diesel generator sets in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR).

## '85% of the treatment is subsidised and free for patients having no money', says Director of Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital



Dr. Ashish Gulia, Director, Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, New Chandigarh, speaks with on how the specialised central government hospital aims to improve cancer care in north India. Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre is a unit of the Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, an autonomous body under the administrative control of the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. The public must know this is not a corporate hospital. We are here to provide cancer care and treatment of global standards to everyone, including those who don't have money. Here, 85 per cent of the treatment is subsidised and it is free for the patients having no money. All government schemes and various patient welfare funds are available here like the Impact Foundation fund, Zakat fund, women and child cancer fund, aid of Indian Cancer Society and also several private donors are contributing to the cancer treatment of patients. Once you reach this hospital with symptoms, or with a cancer diagnosis, we will take care of the rest. The hospital provides exclusive tertiary care and aims to improve cancer care and treatment in north India. Please share some insights.

Inaugurated in August 2022, with the inpatient department beginning in July 2023, the hospital is now fully operational with all departments needed for cancer treatment and every single service needed to treat cancer, including state-of-the-art machines and world-class technology, available here. Holistic treatment is our mainstay apart from the most advanced treatments matching the global standards, from food to accommodation, transport to psychological healing, we offer all here. We even have

an education programme for the children undergoing treatment for several months and missed their classes. The hospital's dharamshala has 75 beds to accommodate attendants. The aim is to improve cancer care in the entire north India — Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, UP, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Bihar. We not only treat patients but also train doctors and help open cancer treatment units in different states. This will be developed as a research centre, and we will be starting a DM in medical oncology and an MD in radiology, anaesthesia and oncopathology. We have an oncology surgery department with global standards and hope to recruit more onco surgeons soon.

The maximum number of patients is from Punjab. At the Sangrur Centre, around 75 to 80 per cent of patients are from Punjab. However, 52 per cent are from Punjab and 48 per cent from other states, with patients coming from as far as Bihar and Orissa. In this region, breast and ovarian cancers are highest in women, and stomach and oesophagus cancers in men because of high consumption of alcohol and high-fat food. Around 400 patients visit the OPD daily and of 300 beds, 80-85 per cent are occupied. The beds are likely to be fully occupied by the year-end. We have 150 beds at the Sangrur centre. We have 1,580 staff members and 60 consultants in all. We work on a self-sustainability model, as the revenue that we generate from patients who take private and semi-private rooms, we use the funds to subsidise patients who cannot afford treatment. Almost 40 to 45 per cent of the revenue is utilised in operations. Are there any ongoing projects with the Chandigarh Administration? We have collaborations with GMCH-32 and GMSH-16. We are doing several activities with the Chandigarh Administration, including a programme for schoolchildren from Classes VIII to XII on healthy living. One project is for MC workers' employees, with the ongoing campaign aiming to do cancer screening of as many as 12,000 employees. We plan to conduct a study on the entire population of Chandigarh to understand the disease trends.

What is your aim for the hospital? When we started our biggest challenge was to prove our identity. Our aim is to serve people, decrease their pain, and overall, bring down the expenses of people seeking cancer treatment.

## Fraudsters sell NRI brothers' 17 acres using fake papers, one held: Moga SP

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

A gang of at least four fraudsters sold a large chunk of land owned by two NRI brothers based in Canada and England at a throwaway price to a Moga resident using fake documents, duping him of Rs 1.08 crore, said police on Saturday. Police added that one of the accused has been arrested. Moga Police said that posing as the NRI brothers, the fraudsters got fake documents, including Aadhaar, PAN card, and passport, prepared and took Rs 1.08 crore from the buyer in multiple tranches. The deal for 17 acres was, however, finalised for Rs 1.27 crore, police said.

Moga SP (special crime) Sandeep Wadhra said on October 24, a complaint was received from Rajnish Kumar of Aggarwal Enclave, Moga, that a gang of fraudsters sold him 17 acres belonging to NRIs currently settled in Canada and the UK, duping him of Rs 1.08 crore. The SP said the complainant learned about the fraud when he inquired about the credentials of the owners and learned they were still abroad. "He was then told by other villagers that the NRIs hadn't come to Punjab. The complainant then took the contact numbers of the NRIs and got in direct touch with them. The NRIs told him that they never sold any land and were still abroad," the SP said.

Wadhra said the investigation found the land at Churchak village in Moga belonged to NRI Gurinderpal Singh currently settled in Canada and his cousin Satvir Singh living in the UK. The officer said the accused were identified as Gurpreet Singh, alias Gopi of Aulakh Kalan village in Gurdaspur, Ravi Kumar of Batala, Daljit Singh, alias Babli, of Santokh Nagar in Ludhiana, one Bittu and their unidentified accomplices. Gurpreet has been arrested, the SP said.

Divulging details of how the gang duped the complainant, Wadhra said, "Accused Bittu acted as the middleman. He was the first to show the land to the complainant. He introduced himself as Sukhdev Singh of Sidhwan Bet and claimed that he knew the owners of the land. When the complainant expressed his interest in



buying the land, which fraudsters were offering for peanuts, Bittu brought in his accomplices. While Gurpreet, alias Gopi, posed as Gurinderpal Singh (currently in Canada), Ravi posed as Satvir Singh (currently in the UK). "The accused even prepared fake Aadhaar and PAN cards and passports of both NRIs. Believing the documents to be genuine, the complainant finalised the deal for Rs 7.50 lakh per acre, totalling Rs 1.27 crore. On September 24, they entered into a written agreement and the accused took Rs 58 lakh in cash from the complainant, then another Rs 8 lakh was taken on October 6 and further they also took four cheques for Rs 42 lakh," said the SP, adding the complainant paid the accused a total of Rs 1.08 crore.

Gurpreet was arrested by a team led by Inspector Harjit Kaur, economic offences wing when he had come to receive another instalment of Rs 10 lakh from the complainant, the SP said. An FIR was registered under relevant sections of the BNS at the Ajjawal police station, police said. Moga police said Gurpreet, alias Gopi, was a history sheeter and had seven FIRs registered against him in Qadian, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Gurdaspur, Bikaner (Rajasthan) among others, including that for cheating, theft, snatching etc. Police seized Rs 50,000 in cash, four cheques for Rs 42 lakh and fake documents of the NRIs from his possession. Police said his accomplices were yet to be arrested. The cash would be recovered once they were arrested, police said.

## Nadiad couple kill neighbour for gold chain, buy bike, clothes for kids

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Three weeks ago, a couple from Nadiad town in Kheda district allegedly drew inspiration from Bollywood movie 'Drishyam' and then killed a 29-year-old woman — who was their neighbour — to steal her gold chain of 70 grams. The body was then thrown into the Mahi Canal. After allegedly selling the gold chain for about Rs 3 lakh, the couple went on with their lives and used the money to buy a two-wheeler and new clothes for their three children, said police. But they eventually landed in the police net this week. The Nadiad Rural Police on Saturday conducted a reconstruction of the sequence of events. Jaydeep Soni and his wife Lata, the accused, killed their neighbour Saumiya Kalla (29), eyeing her gold chain to overcome their 'financial crisis', said officials.

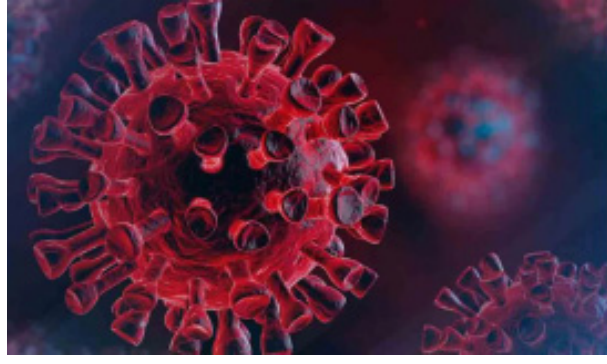
Police said that the accused tried to mislead the officials during the investigation, and claimed that they were travelling — inspired by the plot in Drishyam — at the time of the incident. They showed officials bus tickets to back up their claim, and also "recorded false statements" to evade arrests but were eventually caught due to conflicting versions and technical evidence, including a CCTV footage where they could be allegedly seen travelling on their two-wheeler with the body of the victim in a jute sack to the Mahi Canal. As per the details received from police, Saumiya had gone "missing" from her house on September 28. A missing persons complaint was filed at Nadiad Town police station by her husband, Chidambaram Kalla, a vessel vendor, who spent the day



travelling to different towns and villages to sell his ware. Police said that Saumiya's body was recovered from the Mahi Canal on September 30. The primary cause of the death in the post-mortem was said to be "drowning". However, the police could not begin recording statements or probe deeper into the case as her husband had departed for their native village in Tamil Nadu for her final rites. It was after Kalla returned to Nadiad this week that the police began recording statements and suspected a foul play. Police found that Saumiya, among all the neighbours, only visited the house of the accused in the neighbourhood as they "struck conversations" over food since the couple ran a tiffin service business that had run into hard times. Inspector JH Vaghela of Nadiad rural told The Indian Express that on the day they decided to kill their neighbour, the couple had summoned Saumiya to their house at around 7.30 pm.



## Treating long Covid patients turns major challenge in India



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

New Delhi: Doctors in India are grappling to diagnose and treat unexplained and persistent symptoms of long Covid patients due to limited guidelines, whereas researchers have flagged inadequate studies on the condition. With the World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring an end to Covid as a global health emergency in May last year, focused efforts are under way around the world to estimate the burden of long Covid among the population.

The condition refers to the set of lingering symptoms affecting varied body parts and persisting well beyond the acute Covid infection period, including cough, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, brain fog and difficulty in focusing. The viral disease is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

While studies have suggested that about a third of those moderately or severely infected are likely to suffer from long Covid, region-wise though, incidence could vary. A study by researchers, including those from Harvard Medical School, US, estimated that 31 per cent of the once-infected people in North America, 44 per cent in Europe and 51 per cent in Asia, have long Covid, which is "challenging the healthcare system, but there are limited guidelines for its treatment". It was published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases in September. In India, however, studies on long Covid are few and far between. One such study by Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, conducted from May 2022 to March 2023 on 553 patients who had recovered from Covid, found that about 45 per cent had lingering symptoms, persistent fatigue and dry cough being the most common.

"There is limited exploratory research on the long Covid syndrome with scarce data on long-term outcomes," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Cureus in May this year. Understanding the long-term effects of the virus is important for developing management strategies, optimising healthcare delivery, and providing support to recovered Covid patients in the community, they said. Dr Rajesh Sagar, professor of Psychiatry, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, said, "Looking at the current state of long Covid studies in India, it is too premature to say that we understand the condition well enough to know how to diagnose or treat it." Animesh Samanta, assistant professor at School of Natural Sciences in Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida, said, "While studies in India highlight the growing recognition of neurological complications in long Covid patients, more focused research on neuroinflammation is needed."

Doctors, too, have reported a rise in patients complaining of symptoms that they did not have pre-Covid. "People who never had asthma in the past, post-Covid, with every viral infection, they get a long cough, shortness of breath and wheezing, which require the use of inhalers or nebuliser," senior consultant Dr Neetu Jain, who runs a post-Covid care clinic at Pushpawati

Singhania Hospital and Research Institute, New Delhi, said. Dr Arun Garg, chairman, Neurology and Neurosciences, Medanta-The Medicity, Gurugram, said he was noticing a spike in stroke cases among young patients not suffering from known risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. "Similarly, we are seeing more cases of encephalopathy (swelling of the brain) without reason and having a confused state of mind following one or two days of fever. Their MRI scans show no changes. These patients have increased significantly after Covid," he said. In the absence of medical guidelines to diagnose long Covid, doctors are having to resort to broad, non-specific tests and questionnaires to gauge a patient's 'quality of life'.

Studies have shown that the fatigue experienced in long Covid is similar to that in cancer patients, with a quality of life similar to patients of Parkinson's disease. "We really do not have any test to diagnose long Covid, even though it is definitely a clinical diagnosis. We diagnose long Covid for people who had at least moderate to severe infection, following which they could never regain the quality of life pre-Covid. Checking for inflammatory markers like C-reactive proteins (CRP) can support the diagnosis," Dr Jain said. "Other than routine blood tests that measure inflammation, we do antibody tests to look for direct markers. In many of these patients, we are finding rare antibodies which are very new to us and were not there pre-Covid," Dr Garg said. Inflammation persisting despite recovery from acute Covid infection is thought to lie at the heart of long Covid. However, tests to measure this specific immune response are lacking, even as researchers have been working in this direction worldwide.

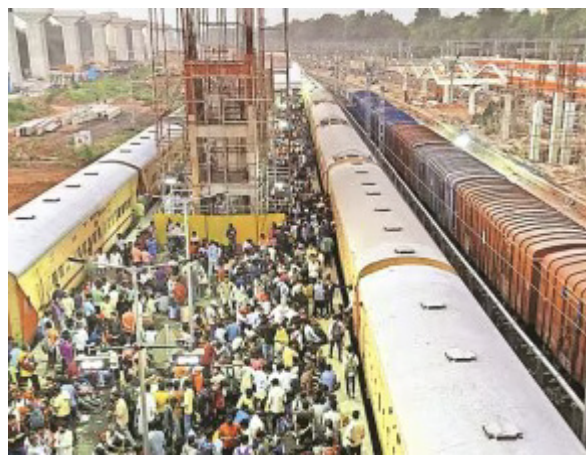
One such effort comes from Shiv Nadar University, where a team led by Samanta has developed a fluorescent probe capable of detecting inflammation in brain cells that can arise due to Covid infection. The probe measures nitric oxide levels in brain cells, especially in human microglia cells, which increased NO levels are linked to the SARS-CoV-2 infection. Microglia are immune cells in the brain that fight disease and help maintain brain health. Lysosomes within microglia, which help clear foreign disease-causing agents like the SARS-CoV-2 virus, produce nitric oxide as part of an immune response to infection. The probe detects nitric oxide produced in lysosomes in response to infection and thereby allows for a measurement of inflammation levels. This examination method can provide "qualitative information on infection status", said Samanta, corresponding author on the study published in the journal Analytical Chemistry in American Chemical Society. He explained that patients with pre-existing conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis (an autoimmune disorder) could exhibit prolonged neuroinflammation and loss of brain cells following Covid infection. While the probe has shown efficacy in cell cultures, animal studies would need to be done, before testing it in humans, Samanta said. Looking at the World Health Organization International Clinical Trials Registry Platform, the study by Harvard Medical School had found that 587 clinical studies were conducted on long Covid, of which about 53 per cent (312) were testing potential treatments. Most of these were found to be conducted in the US (58), followed by India (55) and Spain (20). The trials looked at interventions including physical exercise, psychotherapy, and pharmacological ones such as paxlovid and fluvoxamine. However, "to date, only 11 of these 312 studies have published their results that were not confirmative," the researchers wrote. The team called for studies to look into sleep disorders which were rarely included in the registered clinical studies. Further, interventions targeting the biological processes responsible for long Covid are needed but currently lacking, they said.

## Surat sees action after 2023 stampede, Ahmedabad crowd surge sparks worry

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

In view of the increased footfall of passengers due to the festive season, Western Railway has enhanced arrangements in Surat ahead of Diwali and Chhath Puja, officials have said, by beefing up the number of security personnel at the two major stations in the city and increasing the number of trains. A large number of people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, who live in Surat to earn their livelihoods, travel to their hometowns this time of the year. Meanwhile, in Ahmedabad, attempts are still being made to tackle the surge in crowds. The Western Railway Rail Users Consultative Committee on Saturday urged the Ahmedabad Division authorities to increase the number of trains with a focus on the huge migrant population trying to return homes.

In Surat, the arrangements are expected to prevent unforeseen incidents like a stampede reported last year. A 36-year-old man, Ankit Singh, was killed and two others, including a woman, were injured on November 11, 2023, while trying to enter a Bhagalpur-bound train from the Surat Railway station. Over 5,000 passengers were said to have gathered at the Surat Railway station platform to catch the train to Bihar. Western Railway officials have highlighted a notable increase in the number of reserved trains from 29 last year to 38 this year, marking a 31% increase at Surat and Udhna railway stations. To further assist the passengers, additional ticket counters and shifts have been set up at both the railway stations. At Surat, seven shifts will be operated compared to six last year, reflecting a 16.67% increase, while Udhna will see a 100% increase with six shifts this year, including three night shifts. Similarly, at Vapi, two shifts will be operated this year, a 100% rise from last year's single shift. Meanwhile, permanent holding areas have been established at Udhna and Surat stations, replacing the temporary structures used last year in view of comfort and safety of passengers. Additionally, a new waiting area has been set up near platform-4 at Surat station to accommodate the increased passenger flow. In a bid to prevent stampede-like incidents, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) officials have been deployed on both the railway stations — Surat and Udhna. On Saturday, passengers were seen standing in long queues outside different bogies, and they were allowed to enter one by one after showing their tickets. One of the concerns last year that was linked to the overcrowding of the trains was people boarding trains without reservation or tickets. To keep passengers well-informed, extensive promotion of special trains is being carried out through posters and social media platforms, said sources in the Western Railway. Struggle in Ahmedabad In a letter to Ashok Kumar Mishra, General Manager of Western Railway (WR); as well as Sudhir Kumar Sharma, the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM)



of Ahmedabad Division on Friday, Kinjan Patel, Member of the Western Rail Users Consultative Committee, asked them to send a proposal and start special Diwali and Chhath Pooja trains, especially the Jansadharan Express. He has requested the trains be run between Ahmedabad to Gorakhpur via Patna, Darbhanga, Gaya between October 28 and November 5. The letter stated, "It is known that on Diwali and Chhath festival, maximum (number of) people want to go to their villages in North and East India. The number of general coaches for the working people of the general category, which used to be 6-7 earlier, had been reduced to 2 now, before being increased again to three or four, recently. This is not sufficient for the working class and general class passengers due to which the general passengers are facing a lot of difficulties." The letter highlighted that the committee member had learned that no such demand for trains had been placed by the Ahmedabad Division to the HQ of Western Railway. "Taking cognizance of this, a demand should be sent from Ahmedabad Division to run Jansadharan trains from Ahmedabad to Gorakhpur via Patna, Darbhanga, Gaya, etc. between 28 October and 5 November," it added. Speaking to The Indian Express, Pradeep Sharma, acting PRO for the Ahmedabad Division of WR, said, "We have started 27 special trains from Ahmedabad. There are more trains from Rajkot, Bhavnagar and Okha. Secondly, for crowd management, we have appointed personnel and officers to keep order round-the-clock. We have also made a holding area for passengers in case there is too much crowding at the platforms." Photographs of the severe crowding on platform number 3 to board the Ahmedabad-Darbhanga Jansadharan train 15560 at Ahmedabad Junction station on Friday highlighted the gravity of the issue, said Yogesh Mishra, President of All India Railway Consumers Association, who has also signed the letter along with Patel.

## Judicial services' cadres 256 transferred, Delhi gets 72 new judges



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Delhi high court, judge transfers, pocso cases, brij bhushan singh case, brij Bhushan sexual harassment case, sexual assault case, Indian express news In the DHJS, five will take charge on repatriation. Jagmohan Singh, on repatriation from North-East Delhi riots claims commission, will take charge as the ASJ at Rohini court.

The Delhi High Court on Friday notified the transfers and postings of 256 judges in the cadres of Delhi Judicial Service (DJS) and Delhi Higher Judicial Service (DHJS), including that of the additional sessions judge (ASJ) who was hearing the cancellation report filed by the Delhi Police in the POCOS case lodged against former BJP MP and Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Chhavi Kapoor, Additional Sessions Judge (POCOS) of Patiala House court, was transferred to Rouse Avenue court as a special judge.

In June, the Delhi Police had stated that Singh did not sexually harass or assault a minor wrestler who had lodged a complaint against him. The police also requested the court to withdraw the case on the basis of "no evidence" in the matter. Friday's notification included the transfer and postings of 23 judges in DHJS and 233 in the DJS. They included the induction of 72 new judges — one in DHJS, Harvinder Singh Johal, and 71 in the DJS. Further, judges were appointed to 26 new courts, including three new courts in DHJS and 23 in DJS. With the creation of new courts, the notification — issued by order of the Delhi High Court and signed by Registrar General

Kanwaljeet Arora — spoke about redistribution of work.

The notification in regard to DHJS cadre instructed that principal district and sessions judge (PDSJ) of North "shall withdraw cases from the existing court of district judge (commercial court) and assign the same to the newly-constituted court — district judge (commercial court) 02, North district". The PDSJ New Delhi was instructed to redistribute work from four district courts to the new court of district judge 05, New Delhi district, to also "enable the courts to dispose old matters expeditiously." Additionally, PDSJ/HQs "shall withdraw sufficient number of cases" from the existing 12 central district courts and redistribute the same to the 13th district court. A similar slew of instructions on redistribution of work has been issued to the DJS cadre as well. Three judges have been transferred in the DHJS cadre to preside over vacant courts, including Devender Kumar Jangala, who will replace the vacant court of Dwarka district court judge Aman Pratap Singh, whose services were terminated after a video of him standing up from his chair and shouting at court staff and a counsel had gone viral. Jangala was hearing a Rs 700-crore money laundering case against Supertech chairman R K Arora. North West Rohini ASJ Jitendra Singh will now be posted in the earlier vacant court of a Special CBI court in Rouse Avenue court complex. This court became vacant after the retirement of Special Judge Rakesh Syal, which was hearing the alleged Waqf Board scam involving AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan and the case against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler, related to the killing of three persons during the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. In the DHJS, five will take charge on repatriation. Jagmohan Singh, on repatriation from North-East Delhi riots claims commission, will take charge as the ASJ at Rohini court. The others included Saurabh Partap Singh Lalar, who will take charge as special NDPS judge at Karkardooma court; Dharmender Rana on repatriation from Armed Forces Tribunal, who will take charge as district judge at Patiala House Court; Gomati Manocha on repatriation from NCPDR, who will take charge as additional sessions judge of special POCOS court in Patiala House Court and Harun Pratap, on repatriation from Lokayukta of GNCTD, who will take charge as presiding officer in motor accident claims tribunal at Karkardooma.

## 2 of 3 CT scan machines non-functional at Lok Nayak Hospital over 'pending dues'

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

CT scan, CT scan machine, Lucknow pending dues, Lok nayak hospital, Central Procurement Agency, delhi hospitals, emergency department, CT Tube, Delhi government institution, GB Pant Hospital, Government e-Marketplace, Indian express news Of the three CT scan machines at Lok Nayak Hospital, currently only the one at the Sushruta Trauma Centre, situated more than 7 km away, is functional.

With another CT scan machine, this time in the emergency department, rendered non-functional due to a faulty CT Tube, patients of the government-run Lok Nayak Hospital are forced to travel as far as 7 km to its trauma centre or to the GB Pant Hospital for their scan requirements. The company responsible has refused to undertake the repair owing to prior payment pending with the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) for more than 2 years, it is learned. CPA used to procure medicines and surgical consumables for all Delhi government institutions until the introduction of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) in 2016. However, repair of machines purchased earlier will be done through the agency itself. Of the three CT scan machines at Lok Nayak Hospital, currently only the one at the Sushruta Trauma Centre, situated more than 7 km away, is functional. The other two at the main hospital are both non-functional. Apart from the one at the emergency department, the machine in the main department was condemned, or removed from use, almost a year ago.

This led to a "massive workload" on the device at the emergency department as it had been running continuously throughout the day, said a letter from radiodiagnosis department head Dr Gaurav Shankar Pradhan to medical director Dr Suresh Kumar. The CT scan machine has not been working since October 21. "The company has in an email dated 21/10/24 expressed its inability to repair/replace the same till the prior payment pending with CPA for more than 2 years is cleared. Several reminders have been sent, the last was sent on 08/10/24 to your office," the letter read, urging the director to expedite the release of the payment. He also requested that a new CT scan machine be procured on



"an urgent basis" to replace the condemned equipment. Further, he requested Dr Kumar to have a word with his counterpart at GB Pant Hospital regarding patients being referred to the nearby hospital for scan requirements. In reference to the condemned machine, he wrote, "...there is a fully functional CT machine in the radiotherapy department. Till the time the issue of Emergency CT is sorted, with your permission, the machine in radiotherapy can be used for patient care".

The dearth of functional equipment at Lok Nayak Hospital has emerged amid an ongoing case hearing in the Delhi High Court during which a court-monitored committee recently made a submission on the burden on Delhi government hospitals. The patient backlog of tests or diagnoses have been running into months, the committee claimed. Patients are forced to wait for as long as 3-4 months to undergo tests at the OPD (outpatient department) of Lok Nayak Hospital and 8-9 months for tests at its wards, an affidavit dated October 11 filed before the court by AIIMS Assistant Professor Dr Nishant Sharma, on behalf of the AIIMS director, says. To undergo an MRI at the hospital, a patient has to wait for around 36-60 months at the OPD and 20-30 days at a ward. For a CT scan, the wait is for 7-8 months in the OPD and 10-12 days in the IPD (inpatient department). Following the court's directions on October 4, a proposal for purchasing 20 CT scan, 12 MRI, and 52 ultrasonography machines was put up for approval at a meeting chaired by AIIMS Director Dr M Srinivas.

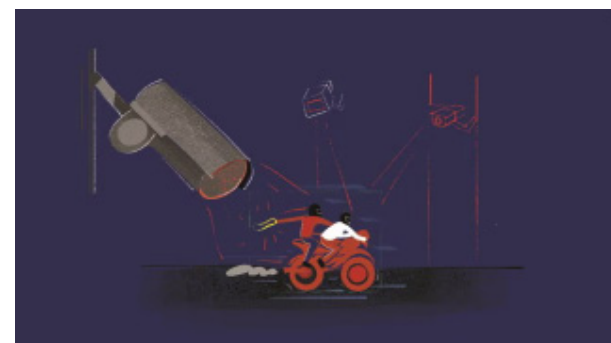
## Police plan to nab snatchers by tracking their favourite getaway vehicle — fast bikes

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

On September 24, twin brothers were arrested for being involved in a spate of snatchings in North Delhi's Burari-On August 19, police busted a gang involved in over 100 snatching cases of gold chains and mobile phones from passersby and arrested two men. What is common between these snatchers, and several others operating across the city, is the vehicles they use to carry out their crimes — fast bikes. To crack down on such cases, the Delhi Police is now planning to use speed cameras and CCTVs to track vehicle details. Senior officers at the Delhi Police Headquarters said incidents in several districts have been reported where snatchers have used fast bikes, mostly KTM and TVS Apache, while snatching either mobile phones or gold chains from victims, often leading to the latter sustaining injuries.

In the Burari case, DCP (North) Manoj Meena said the men were identified as Vishal and Vikash, both 23 years old. Police said they used a TVS Apache, belonging to their father, to commit the snatching. In the second case, where police nicknamed them the 'KTM Bike Gang', the gang members would exclusively use KTM bikes to carry out the thefts. "KTM is a racing bike with a 390 CC engine. This bike has acceleration and speed beyond the speed of normal motorcycles," DCP (Shahdara) Surendra Choudhary had said earlier.

Explaining the plan, an officer said, "Traffic speed cameras, both OSVD (Over-Speeding Vehicle Detection) cameras and RLVD (Red Light Violation Detection) cameras, installed at traffic circles across the city will capture details of sports bikes if they are found violating traffic



laws. Simultaneously, any criminal record or involvement of the two-wheeler will also be checked. "CCTV cameras belonging to Delhi Police will also be used by personnel to keep an eye on sports bikes, especially in districts where snatching incidents involving accused persons on two-wheelers have recently been reported. "Registration numbers of sports bikes which get captured will be checked on a random basis for any criminal record," said another officer. Police said snatchers generally use fast sports bikes whose speed is beyond 400CC horsepower. A senior police officer said these bikes are mostly stolen: "The accused make off with bikes such from parking lots or outside houses... Bajaj Pulsar and Yamaha R15 are also some of the common ones used." The officer said a comprehensive security plan is being prepared under which beat officers and traffic inspectors are being briefed to watch out for fast bikes seen in their areas and get the vehicle details.



## Russian air defence units destroy 51 Ukrainian drones, claims Defence Ministry



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Eighteen of the drones were intercepted over the Tambov region, some 450 kilometres southeast of Moscow. Another 16 were destroyed over the Belgorod border region and the rest over the Voronezh, Oryol and Kursk regions in Russia's south. A Ukrainian serviceman unmanned aerial vehicle at a position near the town of Toretsk in Donetsk region.

Russia's air defence units destroyed or intercepted

51 Ukrainian drones overnight, the Russian defence ministry said early on Monday. Eighteen of the drones were intercepted over the Tambov region, some 450 kilometres southeast of Moscow, the ministry said on the Telegram messaging app. Another 16 were destroyed over the Belgorod border region and the rest over the Voronezh, Oryol and Kursk regions in Russia's south. One woman was moderately injured as a result of the drone attack on Belgorod, regional Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, said on Telegram. He added that a few cars were also damaged. Tambov Governor Maxim Yegorov said a Ukrainian drone fell onto the Michurinsky district, sparking a short-lived fire but causing no injuries or material damage. The Russian defence ministry reports only how many drones its units destroy, not how many Ukraine launches. Russian officials also rarely disclose the full scale of damage inflicted by the attacks, especially when they involve military or energy infrastructure. Reuters could not independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine. Kyiv has often said its attacks inside Russia target infrastructure key to Russian war efforts and are in response to Moscow's continued strikes on Ukrainian territory.

## Hindus forced to resign from jobs in Bangladesh, face 'love trap' propaganda

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The direct attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh appear to have subsided, yet they continue to face mounting threats and discrimination as fundamentalist organisations, empowered by the political climate, target the community through diverse tactics, from physical violence to social exclusion and smear campaigns. Since the interim government, led by Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, assumed power in the south Asian country following the fall of Sheikh Hasina's administration on August 5, fundamentalist groups have gained strength, escalating violence and discrimination against religious minorities. In the latest wave of anti-Hindu moves, members of the community are being removed from government jobs, either through dismissal or forced resignations. Hindu teachers and professors, particularly in prominent universities, are allegedly being pressured to resign. For instance, Rontu Das, an assistant professor in Chittagong University's history department, was reportedly forced to resign. He allegedly received death threats as well. His resignation letter, in which he recounted the discrimination he faced, has gone viral on social media. This wave of pressure extends beyond educational institutions to include Hindu cadets in the police force. Recently, 252 police sub-inspectors who had completed their training at the Sharda Police Academy were dismissed on charges of indiscipline and irregularities, among whom 91 were Hindu personnel. The appointments of these trainees occurred during Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

Additionally, the October 20 pass-out parade for over 600 ASP-ranked officers at the Sharda Police Academy was cancelled, further delaying these officers' placements in government roles. A Hindu trainee, Asit, expressed his distress over these developments, saying, "The boat sank on the shore, God! I was discriminated against in Bangladesh without any discrimination. All I can say is that God will judge and history will judge the time. History has never forgiven anyone. God is the witness". The Hindu community claims that a climate of animosity is building, which is costing them their jobs and other opportunities.



However, the radical groups allege that the previous Sheikh Hasina government favoured recruits close to her Awami League party. Now, with a new government in place, these radicals are reportedly targeting individuals, particularly Hindus. Beyond employment discrimination, a propaganda campaign, similar to the 'love jihad' narrative in India, is being directed at the Hindu community. Extremist groups in Bangladesh have launched a 'love trap' campaign, spreading accusations that Hindu men are allegedly enticing Muslim women, converting them. Posters promoting this narrative have surfaced in multiple areas, urging caution among Muslim women. In addition, instances of vandalism targeting Hindu idols during Durga Puja were reported in various parts of Bangladesh. Police were deployed to maintain order, but radical organisations remain aggressively hostile, bolstered by their perceived support from the recent government. In response to these targeted attacks, the Hindu community has organised numerous protests across Bangladesh, demanding justice and a peaceful coexistence. On Friday, thousands gathered under the Sanatan Jagran Manch at Chittagong's historic Laldighi Maidan to voice their demands. The community is calling for an 8-point agenda, including: India has repeatedly called on the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government in Bangladesh to prioritise the safety of Hindus and ensure that those responsible for attacks on the community are brought to justice.

## US judge blocks efforts to clear homeless camps before Taylor Swift concerts



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

The effort to relocate about 75 people living in tents beneath an overpass near the Superdome began in the days leading up to pop star's shows, which could draw 150,000 visitors to the stadium. A judge in Louisiana has temporarily blocked further efforts by state officials to clear homeless encampments in New Orleans — stalling a push that came ahead of three Taylor Swift concerts in the city this weekend. The effort to relocate about 75 people living in tents beneath an overpass near the Superdome began in the days leading up to pop star's shows, which could draw 150,000 visitors to the stadium. Judge Lori Jupiter granted a temporary restraining order on Friday, directing state law enforcement officials to not "destroy or dispose of the property of unsheltered people without judicial process" and to notify people in the "state-sanctioned camp" that they are "free to leave."

The judge's ruling came in response to a lawsuit filed by homeless people who were subject to the sweep. In legal filings, they argued that state troopers violated their constitutional rights by illegally searching, seizing and destroying their property, disposing of their prized possessions and "forcibly herding" them away. According to the lawsuit, a legal observer overheard state troopers saying "the governor wants you to move because of the Taylor Swift concert." State officials have said the residents were being moved to a new location about two blocks away, where unsheltered people living in the tourist-heavy French Quarter neighbourhood would also be moved.

A spokesperson for Governor Jeff Landry has said that the effort was meant to address homelessness and safety issues, linking the push to the concerts and February's Super Bowl, which will take place in the city. "As we prepare for the city to host Taylor Swift and Super Bowl LIX, we are committed to ensuring New Orleans puts its best foot forward when on the world stage," Landry's communications director, Kate Kelly, said in a statement issued to local media. Advocates argue the effort disrupted the work of local officials to connect home-

less people with social services and help them find more permanent housing solutions. Marthage Kegel, executive director of Unity of Greater New Orleans, a nonprofit that seeks permanent housing for unsheltered people, said the sweep was a needless and harmful endeavour and that many of those in the camp have mental illnesses and are distrustful of authorities and those trying to help them. "Some people were frightened and left, and that's not good," she said. "Because then all the work that we did to assess them and document their disabilities and, you know, work with them on their housing plan has now been wasted." Among those who made the move Wednesday was Terrence Cobbins. Taking a break from gathering his belongings, he said he was told to move because of the concerts.

## Power theft to tune of Rs 8.5 L detected from gangster's house

GNS News Agency, Oct 29

power theft, arif shaikh, meter tampering, high-tension line, torrent power, vigilance department, Ahmedabad police, Indian express news A penalty of Rs. 8.50 lakh has been slapped by the officials. Power theft to the tune of Rs 8.5 lakh from the house of gangster Arif Shaikh alias Arif Minda in Nanpura area of Surat has been detected, officials of Torrent Power said. Acting on specific inputs, officials of the Vigilance Department of the firm — accompanied by Athwalines police staff — reached the Khanderaopura area in Nanpura on Saturday, and carried out surprise checks at his house. The officials checked three meter boxes of Arif Shaikh's building and found meter tampering while the officials also found that he was also allegedly taking power directly from a high-tension line.



A penalty of Rs. 8.50 lakh has been slapped by the officials. Sources said that earlier the family members and others tried to stop the officials but later police intervened and controlled them.

Athwalines police inspector G M Hadiya said, "The raids were kept secret and seeing the criminal background of Arif, the officials of Torrent Power sought our help. The officials detected power theft through meter tampering and direct supply and slapped a penalty amount of Rs 8.50 lakh. The building of Arif Shaikh had three registered meters of the Torrent Power."

## Ground report: Inside US polling booth as around 30 million cast early votes



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

With just days remaining before the United States presidential election, where Republican Donald Trump faces his Democratic rival Kamala Harris, nearly 30 million people have already cast their votes through early voting. The majority of the polling stations across the state are witnessing a steady flow of voters in what many believe to be a closely contested race. Early voting allows citizens to vote before Election Day, either in person or by mail, aiming to provide greater convenience and reduce long lines on November 5. I visited an early voting station in Virginia's Fairfax County, which witnessed a good voter turnout, as both Republicans and Democrats remain hopeful for a favourable outcome. "Most people say this is an important election and they are definitely going to vote, with a few even saying you'd be crazy not to vote in this election," said a volunteer outside the polling booth.

Supporters of both Trump and Harris have set up booths outside polling stations, offering last-minute canvassing and guidance for voters. Here, voters receive a sample ballot and an overview of the voting process before they enter the booth. In Fairfax County, a traditionally Democratic area, many residents remarked that this election feels particularly close. One Republican supporter, who voted for Donald Trump, shared that she believes he has the strength required to be commander-in-chief.

## Leonardo DiCaprio endorses Kamala Harris: Need leaders equipped for climate goals



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

In the video, Leonardo DiCaprio praised Vice President Kamala Harris for her ambitious goals to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and for her efforts to foster a green economy. With 10 days left to go for the US presidential elections, the Oscar-winning Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio endorsed Democrat candidate Kamala Harris for the race to the White House. Shedding light on his decision to support Kamala Harris, DiCaprio, in the video posted on his official Instagram handle, said, "Climate change is killing the earth and ruining our economy; we need a bold step forward to save our economy, our planet, and ourselves. That's why I'm voting for Kamala Harris."

Expressing concern over climate change, the "Killers of the Flower Moon" star started his video while citing hurricanes Helene and Milton. "Make no mistake: These unnatural disasters were caused by climate change," he said. A vocal advocate for climate action, DiCaprio has previously supported Democratic candidates. He attended a Joe Biden fundraiser at the home of former Paramount Pictures chief Sherry Lansing in early 2020. In the video, DiCaprio praised Vice President Kamala Harris for her ambitious goals to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and for her efforts to foster a green economy. He highlighted her role in passing the Inflation Reduction Act, noting that as vice president, Harris cast the deciding

"Kamala Harris isn't suited for this role; Trump is the one," she stated. She acknowledged the race is tight but claimed, "Overall, things are improving" for the Republican side. According to her, the biggest issues in this election are inflation and immigration. "The cost of everything has gone up. Car insurance saw a 700 percent hike, and the prices of food, gasoline—everything has increased. Another issue is immigration; people are scared. It feels like an invasion, with thousands of people entering without checks. It's frightening people," said the Republican supporter. Lee Jordy, who voted for Harris, also commented on the election, saying, "It's going to be a tight fight. I am really worried about the state of our union and want to preserve our democracy. I think Kamala Harris is compassionate and cares for every American, while Trump is focused on big business". Johny Xavier, another voter, also finds Kamala Harris a suitable candidate because "she has done a great job". However, another voter expressed a different opinion, saying people may prefer the Republican candidates as they "know that when the government governs the least, the economy functions better, and there will be less government intrusion into their lives".

**PROCESS OF EARLY VOTING** Once early voting opens in a state, voters can go to their respective polling stations to cast their votes. They need to verify their identification, based on state-specific requirements. At the polling station, the voter checks in with election officials and receives a ballot. They can then proceed to designated areas to mark their choices. In the US, paper ballots are typically used for voting. In most cases, voters mark the ballots by hand, while in some cases, they use a ballot-marking device, which produces a paper printout for submission. After marking the ballot, the voter submits it according to the instructions provided by the polling station staff. For absentee ballots, voters can either drop them in a designated box or mail them. These votes are securely stored until they are counted on Election Day.



vote on President Biden's landmark climate legislation, which passed with solely Democratic support. He also slammed Donald Trump for pulling the United States from the Paris climate accord. "Donald Trump continues to deny the facts. He continues to deny science. He withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Accords and rolled back environmental protections," he said. "Join me in voting for Kamala Harris on November 5th because we cannot afford to go backwards," he said. As the US presidential election day approaches, Kamala Harris has received endorsements from several celebrities, including Beyoncé, Eminem, Taylor Swift, Oprah Winfrey, Meryl Streep, Chris Rock, and George Clooney.

**WHO IS LEADING IN SWING STATES: TRUMP OR HARRIS?** The race in the seven battleground states remains highly competitive, with no candidate holding a clear advantage, according to recent polling averages. In Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and North Carolina, both campaigns have traded narrow leads since early August. Trump now holds a slight edge in each of these states. In Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, Harris led for most of August, often by margins of two or three points. But recent polling shows a tightening race, with Trump now edging slightly ahead in Pennsylvania. These three states, once Democratic strongholds, flipped to Trump in 2016, helping him secure the presidency. Biden reclaimed them in 2020, and if Harris can do the same, her path to victory remains intact.

## Iran should not make mistake of responding to Israel's retaliatory strikes: US

The United States warned Tehran against responding to Israel's strikes on military sites in Iran. The US Defence Secretary, in a call to his Israeli counterpart, stressed the opportunities to de-escalate tensions in the region. As tensions in the Middle East remain extremely volatile following Israel's retaliatory strikes on military targets in Iran, the United States has cautioned Tehran against any plans for retaliation. The Pentagon stated that Saturday's Israeli strikes are intended to mark the conclusion of hostilities between the two nations. "Iran should not make the mistake of responding to Israel's strikes, which should mark the end of this exchange," US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said. The US President Joe Biden said that he hopes strikes on Iran will mark the end of a months-long cycle of escalation. "I hope this is the end," he told reporters on Saturday. Meanwhile, Iran appeared to downplay the attack, saying that it has responsibilities towards regional peace and security. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel selected its targets in Iran based on national interests, not based on American dictates. His remarks were in response to media reports claiming that Israel had refrained from striking Iranian gas and oil facilities due to US pressure. "This is how it was, and this is how it will

be," his office said. Following the attack, several high-level meetings were held in Tehran to determine the scope of Iran's response. Tehran appeared to downplay the attack, saying the damage was "very minimal" but added that several Revolutionary Guards bases in and around Tehran were also hit. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a statement, warned against future attacks, saying, "...these brave people are standing fearlessly in defence of their land and will respond to any stupidity with tact and intelligence". Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran has "no limits" when it comes to defending its interests. Meanwhile, the Israeli army eased certain safety restrictions for residents in northern Israel, suggesting it does not anticipate an immediate large-scale attack from Iran or its regional proxies. The Iran-backed militant group in Lebanon, Hezbollah, warned the residents of more than two dozen Israeli "settlements" to immediately evacuate. The group, in a video warning, said they had become legitimate targets because it said Israeli troops were stationed there. Iran's mission to the United Nations claimed that Israeli warplanes attacked Iran via Iraqi airspace, accusing the United States of complicity in the operation. "Iraqi airspace is under the occupation, command and control of the US military. Conclusion:



## China Shock 2.0: What could it mean for India and the world



earlier this month, said China's external surpluses, resulting from industrial policy measures designed to stimulate exports and support economic growth amid weak domestic demand, could lead to "China shock 2.0" that would displace workers and hurt industrial activity elsewhere. This holds true for India, as imports from China have jumped nearly 60 per cent from \$70 billion in FY19 to \$101 billion in FY24, according to official data. Blocking India's access to solar equipment The Economic Survey 2023-24 warned that in response to India's anti-dumping probe against Chinese entities, China has been quietly blocking India's access to solar equipment. This assumes significance as the renewable energy sector is the fastest-growing sector in the world, and pricing pressure from China is hindering India's growth in the sector. India has plans to achieve 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 and has invested \$4.5 billion to catalyse nascent clean energy manufacturing but 80 per cent of India's solar cells and modules still come from China. This is because, as per International Energy Agency, China dominates the entire solar energy manufacturing supply chain. China produces 85 per cent of the global supply of solar cells, 88 per cent of solar-grade polysilicon, and 97 per cent of the silicon ingots and wafers that form the core of solar cells.

Rising steel imports from China into India The steel industry across the globe has been seeking government intervention to protect it from the inflow of Chinese steel. The Financial Times this week reported that European steelmakers have appealed to trade officials to tackle a surge in Chinese steel exports that have driven European prices below the cost of production. Indian steelmakers have also asked the government to impose anti-dumping duties on Chinese steel, as profits in the industry are being eroded. While steel exports are slowing, steel imports from China have hit a new high. Exports of iron and steel declined nearly 19 per cent year-on-year in August 2024 and 29.4 per cent year-on-year during April-August 2024-25, according to official data. Reuters reported that India's finished steel imports from China hit a seven-year high during the first five months of the ongoing financial year. Meanwhile, India's overall finished steel imports reached a six-year high of 3.7 million metric tons between April and August.

China's dominance in electronics India's mobile phone exports have picked up during the last two years. Considerable investments are coming in from global technology majors such as Apple, which has increased manufacturing in India. However, India's import dependency on China has not seen a significant change. In FY24, India imported electronic components worth over \$12 billion from China and \$6 billion from Hong Kong, with the two accounting for more than half of total such imports to India – suggesting that the country's growing footprint in electronics manufacturing may not yet be translating into reduced reliance on Beijing. Moreover, electronic components imports stood at \$34.4 billion, making them the fifth-largest commodity imported into India, after crude, gold, petroleum products, and coal, according to data sourced from the Ministry of Commerce. 'China shock fuelled right-wing populist movements' An October 2022 Stanford research report on China's shock in 2020 said that the influx of Chinese products caused job losses in several communities in the US and Europe and that the existing policies in the US failed to adequately insulate workers from mass-layoff events such as the China trade shock. Such policy failures, the report said, have fuelled right-wing populist movements in both the US and Europe. However, with Western sentiments turning against the influx of cheap Chinese products, India could benefit from investment under the 'China Plus One' strategy pursued by many global multinational companies.

## Diamond exports set to plummet to decade low level



demand and increase in global lending rates," it said. The credit profile of the diamond players is likely to remain subdued in FY2025 following the reduced scale of operations, lower profitability and continued stretched working capital cycle. However, the impact of decadal low levels of scale of operations will be less pronounced in some entities, which can control their working capital efficiently and limit its dependence on external debt. Thus, inventory management will be critical from the credit perspective, ICRA said.

## 'Made in India' iPhone 16 sells like hot cakes in tier 2, 3 cities

New Delhi: Riding on aspirational India as private consumption surges in tier 2, 3 cities and even beyond, Apple has seen its 'Made in India' iPhone 16 flying off the shelves in the country.

According to trade analysts on Friday, the new iPhone, which has several top-notch features such as Camera Control, a powerful 48 MP fusion lens system (two optical-quality cameras in one), new A18 chip and a better battery life, are selling like hot cakes due to attractive financing schemes and trade-in offers at Apple retail stores as well as online.

Counterpoint Research Vice President, Neil Shah, said that the momentum for new iPhone 16 is really great, driven by Apple's aspirational appeal in the country. According to him, more Indians this time are buying new iPhones rather than going for older generation devices, as purchasing power has increased in the country amid overall economic growth. Moreover, latest consumer research said that 6 out of 10 users in premium segment buy smartphones through a financing scheme, which has worked well for Apple as the premiumisation trend is rising. The Camera Control feature includes a tactile switch that powers the click experience, a high-precision force sensor that enables the light press gesture, and a capacitive sensor that allows for touch interactions.

## Jr NTR says Devara co-star Janhvi Kapoor looks like her mom Sridevi, is 'hungry' to prove herself; how senior colleagues can guide



Telugu superstar Jr NTR is making his much-anticipated return to the big screen with Devara: Part 1, which was released on Thursday. Fans have been eagerly awaiting the action drama, not only for his double role but also for his fresh pairing with Janhvi Kapoor. In a recent interview with Karan Johar and Alia Bhatt, the actor revealed details about his first day of shooting with Janhvi Kapoor, sharing that she looks just like her mother Sridevi, adding that she's worked hard for the movie.

Johar who had launched Janhvi in Dhadak said, "I can tell you one thing about Janhvi, having known her for many years. This is what she's been dying to do from day 1. She's been dying to do that tadakta-bhadakta gaana (a film with action and drama and full songs)." Taraka, as Jr NTR is known among his friends, agreed, adding, "I could see that when she came to the location, sir. She was hungry...and I think she still is. She was hungry to give her best. There was so much nervousness, there was a lot of unpredictability in her. She didn't understand.. there was this fear of dancing, there was this fear of acting, the fear of adjusting, the fear of lines. There was so much happening within that girl and.. and the first shot, she came and she gave. She just killed it. I mean, with so much pressure it was a delight seeing her open up on camera. The lines were so seamless. I mean, she said her dialogues in Telugu, though she didn't dub for the movie in Telugu."

During a scene in Devara, director Koratala Siva was hesitant to approve Janhvi's performance, he said, but NTR was so impressed that he insisted on moving forward. "There is this side of her, which, I think has not been captured. With this platform, people will see a very different Jahanvi. And yes, have to agree, she definitely looks like her mother from many angles," he said. Working with senior colleagues can be challenging and intimidating, as displayed by Janhvi, but Arouba Kabir, Emotional & Mental Health professional, Founder Enso wellness, says the onus to smooth out the environment must lie on the senior colleagues, much like Jr NTR did. "Senior colleagues have gone through the struggles and navigated them to reach a more stable position, often lacking guidance during their journey. By embracing compassion and understanding, they can create an open communication channel that acknowledges the insecurities young team members may face," she explained. This supportive environment allows younger minds to showcase their talents. Mentorship, both giving and receiving, has proven beneficial, as has participating in relevant skill development training, Kabir said. Establishing a culture of constructive feedback fosters growth, while younger members should remain receptive to feedback. Keeping a journal of daily experiences—tracking successes and challenges—can help them reflect on their journey and identify areas for learning and teaching others.

## Are your medical test results trustworthy? Expert weighs in on lab report accuracy in India

When it comes to your health, lab reports play a critical role in guiding diagnoses, treatment plans, and even lifestyle changes. But how often do we stop to consider the accuracy and reliability of these reports? Whether it's a routine blood test or a more specialised screening, the trust we place in lab results is immense. Yet, various factors, from testing methodologies to the lab's accreditation, can influence the outcomes. In India, where healthcare standards can vary widely, the credibility of lab reports becomes even more significant.

This was discussed by integrative lifestyle expert Luke Coutinho in an episode of his podcast with healthcare expert Dhruv Gupta. "Do you ever wonder how much you can trust your lab reports when it comes to your health?" he captioned the post. Questions about the accuracy of lab tests, the methods used, and how to ensure you're choosing a reliable lab are crucial for anyone concerned about their health. Understanding the nuances behind these reports can help you make more informed decisions.

How common are skewed results in lab testing?

Skewed results are not much common in stand-alone labs, informs Dr Sachin Rastogi, director, pathology lab and blood bank, Yashoda Super-Speciality Hospitals Kaushambi. "They are more common in hospital-based labs where clinical history is easily available to pathologists. They may correlate the results with the clinical condition of the patient." Sometimes, like in the case of dehydration, elevated parameters may be seen, he says, which become normal after treating dehydration. Keeping this in mind a skewed report is made. Even a diluted or clotted sample can result in erroneous results. So a pre-analytical check is a must, Dr Rastogi stresses.

How does the lab testing process work in India?

According to Dr Rastogi, for NABL accredited labs, a proper standard operating procedure (SOP) is made to run the test, which includes daily running of controls and their close monitoring is done through the use of Westgard rules (these rules are used for laboratory quality control using 'runs' consisting of measurements of multiple samples, based on information provided by Lean Six Sigma Definition). Other quality parameters are involved in NABL lab like – ILC (Inter Lab Comparison), EQAS (External Quality Assessment Services) and retained sample running. "To ensure the proper running of machines, preventive maintenance is done at specified intervals. At the time of installation of the machine proper standardisation is done by IQ, OQ and PQ procedure. IQ stands for Installation Qualification, OQ for Operational Qualification, and PQ for Performance Qualification," he notes. NABL is an autonomous organisation which ensures laboratory quality control. NABL is an autonomous organisation which ensures laboratory quality control.

What is the 'sink test,' and how does it relate to the accuracy of lab reports?

Dr Rastogi, tells indiaexpress.com, "Sink tests are those samples that are directly discarded to sink without running on a machine and a fake report is generated for the sample. These sink tests are usually done in small non-NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) labs. As these are non-performed tests, no comment can be given over their accuracy."

How important is NABL accreditation when selecting a lab for blood tests?



Dr Rastogi says, "NABL is an autonomous organisation which ensures laboratory quality control. It enforces the lab to keep a daily record of controls and their monthly Levey-Jennings charts preparation to minimise the possibilities of error." Apart from that, he continues, various other quality parameters are there to keep check on quality control. "So, I think NABL should be mandatory for all labs conducting blood tests and patients should be encouraged to get their tests done from NABL-accredited labs only."

## Study shows how Long Covid is debilitating children's health

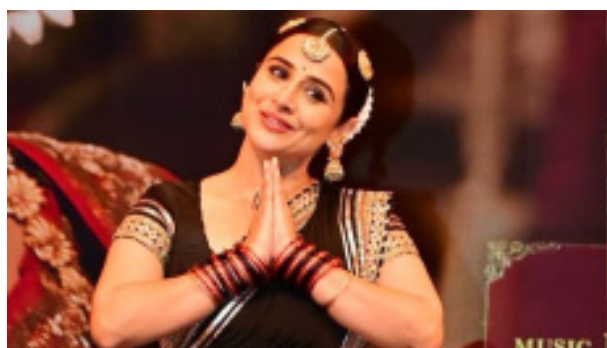
New Delhi: While Covid-19 did not cause much harm to children, yet those affected are likely to suffer from Long Covid which is affecting their daily life with dizziness, fatigue, and brain fog, according to a study.

The study from the Kennedy Krieger Institute, in the US, showed that the majority of children with Long Covid are likely to experience orthostatic intolerance (OI) — a condition that causes the body to struggle with regulating blood pressure and heart rate when standing up. As a result, children often feel dizzy, lightheaded, fatigued, and may experience "brain fog" or cognitive difficulties. The team examined nearly 100 children and found that dizziness (67 per cent), fatigue (25 per cent), and body pain (23 per cent) were the common symptoms, which used to worsen while standing but improved when lying down.

These symptoms can make it difficult to perform everyday activities like exercising, attending school, and socialising, severely impacting their quality of life. Further, the research reveals that OI is prevalent among children dealing with the long-term effects of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for Covid-19. The team found 71 per cent of the patients studied at the Institute experienced at least one orthostatic condition. The findings explain the relevance of screening paediatric long Covid patients for OI, as many have symptoms that could be missed without proper testing, said Dr. Laura Malone, Director of the Pediatric Post-Covid-19 Rehabilitation Clinic at Kennedy Krieger. "Research proves this condition is common," she said, urging for "early diagnosis and treatment" which will help the children to recover and return to their normal routines. While calling for a multi-faceted approach to treatment, the researchers stressed the need to increase salt and fluid intake, exercise training, and physical therapy among children, in addition to medications that manage heart rate and blood pressure.



## Vidya Balan says she rejected Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 because she was 'scared'



it."

Vidya took over and tried to explain how she feared performing the role once again. The actor shared that the first film, which was released in 2007, had given her so much appreciation that she didn't want to ruin that by committing a mistake in her performance. "I'll tell you, the only reason (why) I didn't do 2 (Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2). I wanted to work on Bhool Bhulaiyaa again, (but) I was so scared because Bhool Bhulaiyaa 1 has given me so much. I said, 'maine gaddab kar diya toh sab paani phir jaayega' (what if I end up messing everything this time!) I had told Anees (Bazmee) bhai also that I couldn't take the risk. But, when they came back to me with 3, I loved the script, I was dying to work on this with Anees Bhai and Bhushan, and then it only kept getting better." Vidya added that Madhuri Dixit's presence in BB 3 was another reason that prompted her to take up the project. She continued, "Of course, there was Kartik and I loved Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2. And then the icing on the cake (was Madhuri Dixit). So, it only kept getting better. Maine himmat juta li (I gathered the courage) to do it and I had a great time." She went on to appreciate director Anees Bazmee for making an entertaining film. Vidya said, "I will say this, he (Anees Bazmee) is the king of entertainment. To have had the opportunity to work with him on this was magical." As shown in the trailer of the film, both Vidya and Madhuri play the role of Manjulika in the third film. However, the reality behind their characters, and if they have been pitted against each other in the horror roles, is something that has added to the curiosity around the film. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, also starring Kartik Aaryan, Triptii Dimri, Rajpal Yadav and Sanjay Mishra, among others, is slated to hit the screens on November 1, as the big Diwali release. It is facing a box office clash with Ajay Devgn's Singham Again.

Actor Vidya Balan returns to the Bhool Bhulaiyaa franchise with her iconic role of Manjulika. At an event recently, the actor opened up about her apprehensions of reprising the popular character, and how she decided to come on board the third film, after refusing to do Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2. Vidya was present at the launch of her song Ami Je Tomar 3.0 in Mumbai on Friday, October 25, when producer Bhushan Kumar revealed that she rejected BB 2. The T-Series owner told the audience, "I had approached Vidya ji for Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, but she had refused. When we were launching the trailer, we requested her to at least be a part of it, so she posted the trailer, and she loved the trailer, and she loved the film." Bhushan added that Vidya loved Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 so much that she promised him to be a part of the third film in the franchise. The producer said, "She then committed to me that she'd definitely be a part of the third film. So that was the inspiration for me. Vidya ma'am and Madhuri ma'am joined the cast. I'd never be able to give up on such a big set-up, so we were very excited about

## Manoj Bajpayee shares old video, jokes he was 'innocent' until he met RGV



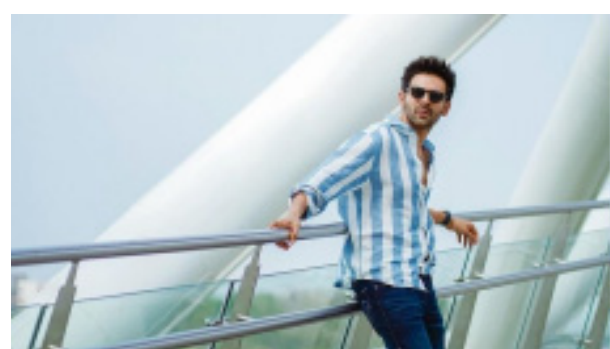
The versatile Manoj Bajpayee recently shared an old video from his theatre days and joked that he was 'innocent' until he crossed paths with director Ram Gopal Varma. Indian actor Manoj Bajpayee shares a long and fruitful association with director Ram Gopal Varma. The actor-director duo have worked together on acclaimed movies such as Kaun and Satya. Recently, Manoj re-shared an old video from his theatre days, where he was seen acting alongside actors such as Piyush Mishra and Rituraj Singh. Sharing the clip, Manoj joked that he was "innocent" until he crossed paths with RGV. After an Instagram user by the handle of Log Kya Kahenge shared

an old video of the actors presumably from a play with a caption that read, "They were innocent until they met Anurag Kashyap," Manoj shared the same clip on his Instagram story and wrote, "No, sir. Anurag was just born. Until (we) met RGV! (sic)." Manoj Bajpayee's career was famously resurrected with Anurag Kashyap directorial, Gangs of Wasseypur Part 1. The movie also starred Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Richa Chadha, Huma Qureshi, Pankaj Tripathi and Piyush Mishra, among others. On the work front, Manoj Bajpayee was last seen in Zee's Bhaiyya Ji. Earlier in the year, he also shared screen space with Konkona Sensharma in Netflix's Killer Soup.

## Kartik Aaryan says he is burnt out: Don't know anything else but work

Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan recently opened up about his work and said that he is so focused on his career that he doesn't care about the noise that surrounds him. Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan has been doing back-to-back projects, without a long break. The actor is admittedly exhausted but still doesn't want to stop because he is laser-focused on the next thing.

Speaking to Indianexpress.com, the actor shared, "I just went for it, the film released, then the second film didn't work and then Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti revived my career, almost like a re-launch. Success, failures, everything kept happening. Even till today, I haven't gotten the chance to relax and think, I've come this far, I haven't had the chance to sit and back reflect, because I am in a race with no finish line." When asked about why he didn't take some time to enjoy his first break, Kartik said, "I don't think I am able to give myself that personal time, because I am always thinking about work, the way forward, what I have not done, what went wrong, what is right. I have been in that space for the longest time. I think I need time



for myself also. I am getting a bit burnt out with this — just constantly been working. But the thing is, I don't know anything else but work. I've tried that, but it doesn't work for me. I am a workaholic x 100." On the work front, Kartik will next be seen in Anees Bazmee's horror-comedy, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, co-starring Triptii Dimri, Vidya Balan, Madhuri Dixit, Rajpal Yadav and Sanjay Mishra among others.

## Diljit Dosanjh wows Delhi with his live performance, fans say, 'Diljit ne toh aaj Dilli hila di'.

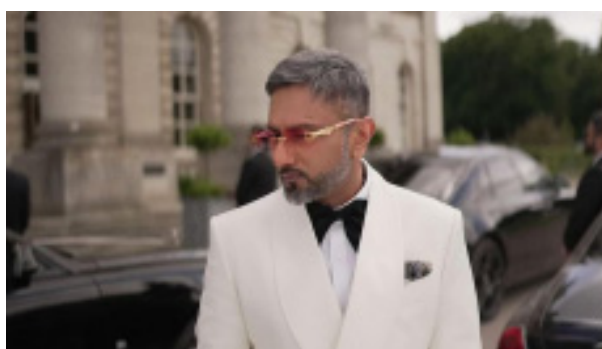
After touring worldwide, actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh has begun the India leg of his tour Dil-Luminati, and his first stop was Delhi. The Dil-Luminati concerts by Diljit has had quite a hype around it and the artiste lived up to that as he performed on Saturday night. Closing the night, Diljit flashed the tricolour to the audience, leaving many emotional. He later even shared how nothing can match the joy of homecoming.

As Diljit Dosanjh shouted, "Oye Punjabi aa gaye apne Deshe!", the audience cheered loudly, and the night only became spectacular. Sharing glimpses from the night on social media, Diljit wrote, "Shut Down, Shut Down Kara Ta Fer Delhi Waleyaa Ne, Kal Milde a Same Time Same Stadium, DIL-LUMINATI TOUR Year 24. (Let's shut down Delhi tonight, will meet you tomorrow at the same time in the same stadium, Dil-Luminati year 24)." Sharing

a series of photos, the singer-actor wrote, "History! Dosanjhanwala Naam DELHI Utey Likheya Khaasa Zor Lagg Ju Mitaun wastey, DIL-LUMINATI TOUR Year 24, Milde an Same Time Same Stadium Day 2. (History! Dosanjh's name has been strongly etched in Delhi's hearts, it will take lots of efforts to erase it now.)"

Reacting to these pictures and videos, many fans complained about how they did not get the ticket for the concert, and a few others went on to call Diljit GOAT and the true superstar of today. One fan wrote, "Bro has a different level of stardom." Another fan commented, "Couldn't attend the show but could feel your vibe in the air till Noida." A third user said, "Paaji delhi hang kr diya aapne to," another one wrote, "Beyond Michael Jackson Level." One fan pointed out how he could hear the concert at his home, while one of them wrote, "Diljit ne toh Aaj Dilli Hila di."

## Singer Honey Singh says he once spent Rs 38 lakh in a night in Dubai



Singer Honey Singh has had an exciting life, full of ups and downs, self-admittedly. Recently, the musician disclosed that over a decade ago, in 2013, Singh spent a whopping Rs 38 lakh in a night in a Dubai club.

Speaking to Mirchi Plus, Singh shared, "Humne zindagi mein na parties mein bohot paise udaye. Pata laga ki bill phatt gaya itna bada, ghar wapas toh khali haat aa rahe hai. 2013 ki baat hai yeh, club hota tha...party

karne gaye hum 8 ladke, saare darubaaz. Us time ki baat bata raha hoon, bohot mehenga hota tha Dubai, ab kaafi sasta ho gaya hai. Party kar rahe hai, bottle aa rahi hai, ladkiyaan aa rahi hai, us table waale ladkiyaan bhi humare table par (I have spent a lot of money in my life on parties. I would often realise that I have paid a bill and that I'm returning home empty-handed. This happened in 2013, 8 of us went to a party at a club. I'm talking about that time when Dubai used to be very costly. Now it's cheaper. We're having a party, bottles are coming to our table and so are the girls)." Singh shared that night he footed a bill of Rs 38 lakh, and it took not one, two, but three credit cards to pay the amount. "Toh 23 ladkiyaan aur 8 ladke humare table pe aur 4 table jod rakhe hai, itna bara humara entourage hai. Aur table pe thapa thap daaru chal rahi hai. Rs 38 lakh ka bill diya hai, 3 credit card lage the ek raat mein (23 girls, 8 guys at our table, four tables were joined -- such a big entourage we had. And drinks are coming. We got a bill of Rs 38 lakh, three credit cards were required in one night)," Singh concluded.

## Sivakumar reminisces about son Suriya's growing up years at Kanguva audio launch: 'I requested him to not embarrass me...'

Veteran actor Sivakumar, known for his acting and oratorical skills, is a highly respected member of the Tamil cinema community. Father of actors Suriya and Karthi, Sivakumar is considered the most dignified statesman of Tamil cinema. The legend was in attendance at the Kanguva audio launch, where he spoke about Suriya's growing up days, and regaled the audience with his narration. Firstly, he assured that Kanguva is certainly up there with the best of Suriya's films. "The real challenge for Suriya is to make a film better than Kanguva," said Sivakumar.

"When we asked for B.Com admission in Loyola College for Suriya, it was rejected. When I asked the principal, he said that legendary actor Sivaji Ganesan's son joined the course, but didn't finish it. The same with legendary producer Balaji's son. Somehow, I convinced him to give Suriya the seat, and he ended up with four arrears at the end of three years," said the veteran as the crowd erupted in laughter. "I told him not to embarrass me and my words, and somehow, he did finish the course, and get the degree." As the laughter subsided, Sivakumar also spoke about how Suriya was a sincere worker in a garments export company before he plunged into the



world of cinema. "He used to ride from Ambattur to Harbour with huge rolls of garment. He swept the office premises every morning. In fact, the company knew that he was my son only six months after he joined it. From there, he is now doing a massive film like Kanguva. I must thank every producer and director, and the almighty for giving him opportunities."

## Saif Ali Khan, Shilpa Shetty, Sidharth Malhotra add glam to Ramesh Taurani's Diwali bash, see photos and videos

Film producer Ramesh Taurani hosted a Diwali bash at his Mumbai residence last night, and celebrities like Saif Ali Khan, Sidharth Malhotra, Tamannaah Bhatia, Vijay Varma, Sonakshi Sinha, Zaheer Iqbal, Shilpa Shetty, Sharvari Wagh, Aayush Sharma and Arpita Khan, among others, were in attendance. At the Diwali bash, Saif looked dapper in a peach kurta and white pyjama look. He greeted the paparazzi with a smile and folded hands. Sidharth made a solo outing and looked stunning in an ethnic attire. Shilpa and husband Raj Kundra came twinning in white for the bash. While Sonakshi was seen with her actor-husband Zaheer Iqbal, Raveena's daughter Rasha Thadani looked lovely in a red lehenga.

Tamannaah Bhatia and beau Vijay Varma had a busy Saturday as they not only attended Ramesh Taurani's Diwali bash, but were also seen at designer Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla's Diwali party. Govinda's wife, Sunita Ahuja, was seen with son Yashvardhan Ahuja



at the bash. Producer Madhu Mantena and his wife, Yoga Acharya Ira Trivedi, Sharvari, Aayush Sharma and Arpita Khan also made it to Ramesh Taurani's Diwali party.

## 'Suriya sir, don't join electoral politics' urges RJ Balaji, Karthik Subbaraj praises Kanguva star for 'not taking stardom and fans for granted'

At the recently conducted audio launch of Suriya's Kanguva, directors Karthik Subbaraj and RJ Balaji were the special guests. They are the filmmakers who are helming Suriya 44 and Suriya 45, respectively. These projects mark their first collaboration with actor Suriya, who is currently on a signing spree. RJ Balaji, known for his refreshing candour, minced no words in responding to Bose Venkat's suggestion that Suriya should join politics. "Politics isn't just about elections. If we are socially conscious, and even help move a fallen tree from the road, we are into politics. Through his philanthropy, especially in the field of education, Suriya sir is already a politician. He has already sowed the seeds of social consciousness. Stick to that kind of politics, Suriya sir. You don't have to join electoral politics," said Balaji. The multi-hyphenate talent also fondly reminisced about his time as an emcee, and now, to take the stage as the director of Suriya's next. "I am honoured to direct Suriya sir. Recently, the assistant directors of a really big Tamil filmmaker asked me why Suriya sir selected me despite the names doing the rounds to direct him next. I just smiled. But thank you, Suriya sir, for the trust. And I am cooking a terrific mass film that will hit the screens next year."

Balaji also pointed out that Suriya's humility in the promotions for Kanguva isn't easy to pull off unless it comes naturally. However, he asserted that Suriya was a huge superstar with an enviable body of work. "Suriya sir says he's not like Prabhas or Rana in terms of physicality. Honestly, you don't have to be all of them. I understand that such a statement can come only from someone who is very confident about the self. For me, you are bigger than everybody else." Echoing Balaji's thoughts, Karthik Subbaraj, who recently wrapped up the shooting of Suriya 44, said, "Apart from his love of cinema, he



strived to choose scripts that would elevate the bar in cinema. Kanguva is important for Tamil cinema." Explaining how the success of Kanguva would open a lot of doors for Tamil filmmakers, Karthik said, "It is an inspiring journey for every filmmaker. When we want to make a film like Gladiator or Troy, we limit ourselves even in the thinking process due to various constraints. Kanguva will help break it." Calling Suriya one of the greatest actors in Indian cinema right now, Karthik added that he has immense respect for the actor. "He never took his stardom or fans for granted."



## 'Allah ne look aisi di hai...log darr jaate hain:' Sajid Khan responding to scaring English batters like Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis



Sajid cut his chin while batting on Friday and had to change his bloodied shirt but returned on Saturday to spin a web around the English batters. "For everyone to stand up and give their best means a lot," said Pakistan skipper Shan Masood, who sealed Pakistan's victory with a six off England spinner Shoaib Bashir. "It is about characters, people you can trust, people you think can bleed for you – Sajid literally bled for us yesterday. After losing the opener, Pakistan took a bold selection call by dropping three frontline players – batter Babar Azam and the pace duo of Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi.

Sajid Khan and Noman Ali are the stars behind Pakistan's remarkable turnaround against England. The hosts trailing in the series after the first Test decided to produce wickets which assisted spinners in the next couple of games, off-spinner Sajid Khan and Noman Ali combined to pick up 39 out of the 40 wickets. "We witnessed that you were scaring England batters with your bowling while Noman was picking wickets, working the same way as Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis used to," asked a reporter after Pakistan's nine-wicket win in Rawalpindi.

Maine to kisi ko nahi daraya. Aap log kehte ho ki daraya hai. Allah ne look aisi di hai ki main hansta bhi hun to log darr jaate hain (I didn't scare anyone, but you people keep saying this. God has given me such a look that even if I laugh, people get scared)," responded Sajid in a comic way. "Thankful to god for the series win. There was no pressure as such. I was making a comeback, but there were people who backed me," Sajid added. "Noman bhai is one of the most experienced spinners in our country. He has been a great mate and has served well. He deserved this PoS award with me. Congrats to the nation for this win," Sajid further said.

## CSK's IPL 2025 season: Dhoni hints at continuing, Rishabh Pant also on target



While CSK are set to retain MS Dhoni for IPL 2025, Rishabh Pant could also be a target for the franchise should he enter the mega-auction. (BCCI) While CSK are set to retain MS Dhoni for IPL 2025, Rishabh Pant could also be a target for the franchise should he enter the mega-auction.

Ahead of a scheduled meeting with Chennai Super Kings management, MS Dhoni stating that he wants to continue playing has raised hopes of the former India captain's participation in the next edition of the IPL. With the deadline for announcing retention nearing, Dhoni's hint is seen as the first confirmation that the franchise may even retain him ahead of the auctions as an uncapped player.

Speaking at an event in Goa, Dhoni said: "I just want to enjoy whatever last few years of cricket I am able to play. When you play cricket like a professional sport, it becomes difficult to enjoy it just like a game. That's what

I want to do. It's not easy." Since playing CSK's last league match at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Dhoni has maintained silence about his future as a player. Having stepped down as captain ahead of the 2024 season, with big auctions around the corner, Dhoni has chosen to play a waiting game.

"The emotions keep coming, the commitments are there. I want to enjoy the game for the next few years. I have to keep myself fit for nine months, so that I can play two and a half months of IPL. You need to plan it out, but at the same time chill a bit," Dhoni said. Though Dhoni had made these comments, he is yet to speak to the franchise officials. "We saw what he said at the event. So when he is ready, what more do we want?" Kasi Viswanathan said. "We will be having a meeting soon with him and then we will have a clear picture about our retentions," he added.

It is understood that the CSK management, Dhoni, captain Rituraj Gaikwad and head coach Stephen Fleming are scheduled to have a virtual meeting in the next couple of days to finalise the retentions. While Gaikwad, Ravindra Jadeja and Matheesha Pathirana are certain to be retained alongside Dhoni if he chooses to play, the franchise is planning to keep RTM options open as well. Irrespective of whether Dhoni plays or not, the franchise is understood to be on the look-out for a wicketkeeper. In case Rishabh Pant comes into the auction pool, there is a strong possibility that all of it could change with the franchise being linked as one of India wicketkeeper's potential new destination. CSK are in for a major overhaul with an eye on the future.

## Man City claim top spot with Saints win, Villa up to third despite draw



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

Manchester City did just enough to beat lowly Southampton 1-0 thanks to an early Erling Haaland goal on Saturday as they provisionally climbed atop the Premier League to tee up Sunday's clash between fellow title contenders Liverpool and Arsenal. High-flying Aston Villa had to settle for a 1-1 draw with visiting Bournemouth after conceding at the death as late goals were a feature of the afternoon's entertainment. Brentford clawed back a two-goal deficit to beat 10-man Ipswich Town 4-3 and Wolverhampton Wanderers escaped Brighton & Hove Albion with a 2-2 draw thanks to a stoppage-time equaliser. Manchester City's Erling Haaland scored an early goal to give the champions a two-point cushion over Liverpool, who are second and visit fourth-placed Arsenal on Sunday. "I will watch (Sunday's game)," said City manager Pep

Guardiola. "I prefer to be on top than not be on top, but it's not the point. Just look what happened today, Villa dropped points and Brighton dropped points because it's so difficult."

While Haaland scored a stunner in Wednesday's 5-0 Champions League thrashing of Sparta Prague, he had gone three Premier League games without a goal before ending that mini-drought in the fifth minute on Saturday. Wrestling with defender Jan Bednarek, the 24-year-old Norwegian, a master of scoring from tight angles, stabbed the ball into the roof of the net with a toe while falling. Unai Emery's Villa climbed to third spot, five points off the pace, and stretched their unbeaten run to 11 games in all competitions, although a late Evanilson header for Bournemouth cancelled out Ross Barkley's opener for the dominant hosts. Villa peppered Bournemouth's goal from the start, squandering several chances before second-half substi-

tute Barkley hooked the ball home from close range in the 76th minute from a Leon Bailey knock-down. Bournemouth went searching for a leveller in stoppage time and struck in the 96th minute when Brazilian forward Evanilson lost his marker and glanced Marcus Tavernier's superb free-kick past goalkeeper Emi Martinez. "We deserved to win, we dominated," Emery said. "They scored in the last moment and we have to accept it. But we were fantastic again, really I'm very happy." Wolves' Matheus Cunha netted a superb stoppage-time equaliser at Brighton as they came from two goals down to grab a point that lifts them off the bottom of the table. The Seagulls dominated the first half but it took until the 45th minute for the home side to break the deadlock with a slick finish from Danny Welbeck. The game looked over when Brighton substitute Evan Ferguson turned and shot into the bottom-left corner in the 86th. But Wanderers' Rayan Ait-Nouri lashed

home a loose ball after a corner two minutes later to set up a grandstand finish, with Cunha rattling the ball into the net in the third minute of stoppage time for a most unlikely draw. The point – only the second of the season for Wolves – takes them up a place to 19th, one ahead of Southampton. Wolves boss Gary O'Neil said: "I'm delighted for the players and the fans really because ... the players have given so much, and I know it cannot always look that way because results can cloud things, but they've given an awful lot, and if you keep doing that, it can't continue to go against you." Bryan Mbeumo's double helped Brentford to their 4-3 comeback win over Ipswich Town that kept up their red-hot home form. Promoted Ipswich looked headed for their first win of the season after going 2-0 up through Sam Szmodics and George Hirst. But Yoane Wissa's strike and a Harry Clarke own goal brought the scores level by halftime and the Bees then led through Mbeumo's second-half penalty conceded by defender Clarke. Ipswich were reduced to 10 men when Clarke was sent off in the 69th but they managed to equalise thanks to substitute Liam Delap's 86th minute goal, only for Mbeumo to win the game for the home side in added time with a long-range effort. Everton were hosting Fulham in Saturday's late game, while there are four games scheduled for Sunday.

## Badminton ejected out of Commonwealth Games is not a conspiracy against the sport or India



Badminton gave India some pathbreaking moments at the Commonwealth Games in the last 18 years. The CWG medals weren't particularly the toughest to win, but as milestones and boxes to tick in a shuttler's career go, every edition since 2006 has proved pivotal. So the general outrage emanating from Indian shores at its omission from the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games is understandable. Hockey had a better competition cohort amongst CWG nations, squash really could have done with a good dress rehearsal at a Games ahead of Olympics and Archery is the most compelling watch amongst the sports left out. Scotland genuinely digs its Rugby which got dropped and even at the height of Andy Murray's ascent, Glasgow 2014 didn't think twice about dumping tennis.

It's perhaps time to bluntly acknowledge – the UK doesn't have money. And no sport was personally targeted, the Commonwealth just can't cough up enough dough to put together the infrastructure beyond their preferences or even host team sports. But this is no specific judgment on badminton's place in the sporting universe. Guests don't dictate menus at weddings, so unless India hosts another edition, badminton stays dropped from the 2026 gig.

But CWG had its uses. And it gave badminton the much-needed impetus 14 years ago. In fact it all started in 2006 Melbourne, when then head coach Vimal Kumar, fielded a 15-year-old Saina Nehwal in a team tie, trusting her to pull out a match with a medal at stake. 2010 was of course seminal with Nehwal and Jwala Gutta-Ashwini Ponappa taking India past England on the medals table with gold. 2014 was interesting. Having won its first Olympic medal in 2012, India was properly the top badminton nation, having overtaken Malaysia and England. Parupalli Kashyap showed Indian men they could break through at a time when even cracking Top 10 used to be almighty difficult. But it was Sindhu's loss to Michelle Li of Canada that led to a massive shakedown, with a fuming coach Gopichand reminding her of her potential and stressing on the need to grow ambition in her heart. Sindhu left Glasgow in tears that morning, but by 2017 when she returned to the same arena, she was an Olympic silver medallist and ended a memorable World Championship silver medallist. Glasgow CWG 2014 bronze, the defeat, the coach's angry monologue, contributed more to the Rio silver than even an early title could have.

2018 saw Indian badminton peak with Saina and

Sindhu in the final. And it can be partly argued that the loss, once again and especially against Saina, firmed up Sindhu's resolve for what followed – 2019 World title, her 2021 Olympics bronze and finally the CWG gold in 2022. Losses can prolong careers in the sense that it keeps the hunger alive, much more than a satiating gold. CWG – though not a patch on competition at the Asian Games – stoked Sindhu's ambition like little else could. The 2022 title for Lakshya Sen gave him confidence he belonged to the big stage – though the opponent once again, wasn't particularly fearsome. It must be noted that Lee Zii Jia skipped the 2022 CWG edition, but showed up when he really needed to, at the Paris bronze playoff. It offers a slantways perspective on the importance – or not – of CWG. Kidambi Srikanth lost the 2018 final, but the seeds of India's Thomas Cup win, of the team vibe, were sown when India won the team gold at the Gold Coast. Satwik-Chirag ticked the CWG box at Birmingham in 2022, and with 3 gold badminton sure chipped in for the final standings.

The CWG has always proved a harbinger of sorts for India's shuttlers, and built Games character. But does its omission spell a knell? That would depend on how the Indian badminton stakeholders react. Sure, a Malvika Bansod or Anmol Kharr or Treesa-Gayatri could have targeted the 2026 gold to announce their arrival into the big league. But there will have to be a recalibration of goals – raising the bar to Asian Games or Tour titles (which don't get even a fraction of that attention). It could have funding ramifications, if Delhi turns short-sighted and pulls back the monies, ignoring the Asian Games in September of same year, giving badminton the short shrift. And the cash-prizes will definitely dry out. But India's top shuttlers would do well to understand the CWG has always been a stepping stone, not the ultimate pedestal, with just Malaysia, Singapore, England and Canada in the fray. Beating Mew Choo Wong at Siri Fort in 2010, Saina Nehwal brought Badminton back into India's consciousness, after nine years of oblivion since Gopichand's All England. Jwala and Ashwini poked England nicely, edging them out of second spot on a glorious Delhi afternoon. Badminton has leant on CWG for some of its best times with Prakash Padukone and Syed Modi winning. It will simply have to reorient energies towards Asian Games, even as it navigates some of its worse years after what is seen as the cold shoulder from the Empire folk. There's a couple of All Englands to show Glasgow what they have missed out on.

## Harshit Rana sizzles for Delhi a day after his maiden Test call-up for tour of Australia



GNS News Agency, Oct 29

With shouts of India level ka bowler hai bhai from Delhi's slip cordon, Harshit Rana rocked Assam's top order and picked up four wickets on a greenish Kotla surface on Saturday. The Delhi speedster, who has earned his maiden Test call for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, justified his selection with a fiery opening spell that read: 5-3-5-2. Rana, who was playing competitive cricket after a gap of one-and-a-half months, got the extra zip from the surface, made the most of the new ball and troubled Assam's top-order in the morning session. He could have taken more wickets as he consistently beat the outside edge in his first spell. It took him fifteen balls to get his first wicket. He found the outside edge of Assam opener Subham Mandal, with Yash Dhull taking a sharp catch at first slip. Two balls later, Rana bagged his second wicket as Abhishek Thakuri, another left-hander, departed without scoring after he was caught at the slip cordon.

Rishav Das (33) and Assam captain Denish Das (18) put on a 49-run stand for the third wicket. Delhi skipper brought Rana back just before lunch and the pacer troubled both the batters with his short-pitch play. The plan worked as Rishav was strangled down the leg side after he failed to keep his pull shot down. However, once the ball lost its shine and the pitch became better for the batting, Rana faced his first resistance. In his third spell, he was hammered for two sixes in one over by Sumit Ghadigaonkar, who remained unbeaten on 120 as Assam ended Day 1 on 264 for 6. Rana picked up his fourth wicket in his fourth spell, where he bowled with the same

accuracy as in his opening spell and got the wicket of Swarupam Purkayastha, who nicked one to Himmat Singh at the first slip. The 22-year-old was also making a return to the Delhi side after missing the 2023-24 season due to a hamstring injury. Rana's stocks skyrocketed, following his IPL exploits with the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), where he picked up 19 wickets. He impressed Gautam Gambhir and Abhishek Nayyar, who have now moved from the KKR dressing room to India's. Rana was picked for the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh but didn't get the chance to play and was among the reserves, who joined India's Test team ahead of the first Test against New Zealand in Bengaluru. Delhi, who had gone with only two front line pacers Navdeep Saini and Himanshu Chauhan against Tamil Nadu overcompensated against Assam with a four-pronged pace attack spearheaded by Harshit Rana and Himanshu Chauhan. Left-arm pacer Siddhant Sharma, who impressed in his two outings last season made a comeback and 24-year-old Money Grewal was handed a debut. The all-pace attack cost Delhi massively as they only managed to bowl 76 overs on the opening day with their left-arm spinner Sumit Mathur bowling 20 overs. Siddhant bowled beautifully in tandem with Rana while Himanshu Chauhan, Delhi's lone shining knight in the last season, struggled with his length. The debutant Grewal was unlucky as he could have got a couple of more wickets had the slip cordon been more proactive. Two catches were dropped, one each by Yash Dhull and Sanat Sangwan off Grewal's bowling.