

Hyderabad housing market witnessed 19% sales drop and 58% decline in new launches: Report

Hyderabad: Once flourishing and an envy of every metro in the country, Hyderabad residential real estate seems to be fumbling to a steep decline, both in terms of sales and also new launches. The latest to highlight what could be described as a tragic dwindling of real estate market fortunes in the city is the 'Real Insight Residential Report' by PropTiger.com. The report which examined eight residential markets of the country during July-September quarter of 2024 revealed that Hyderabad faced a notable decline, with sales dropping 19 per cent year-on-year (YoY) compared to last year. While 14,191 units were sold in Q3 of 2023, the numbers dwindled to 12,296 in Q2 2024 and further dropped to 11,564 units in Q3 2024.

Not just sales, the prevailing market trend also shows a massive drop of 58 per cent in the new projects launched during this year quarter i.e., the Q3 2024. In the 'New Launches Comparison (YoY Q3 2024 vs. Q3 2023)', PropTiger.com report said, "Hyderabad experienced a sharp 58% YoY

decline, with new launches falling to 8,546 units from 20,481 in the previous year." Though the report points out that the number of new residential units launched in the top eight markets had a significant 25% drop, the highest drop has been registered in Hyderabad. Also, the city's drop comes in the backdrop of Delhi NCR witnessing a robust 76 per cent YoY rise in new launches, Mumbai dropping by 13 per cent, and Pune's new supply contracting by 3 per cent. In terms of sales too, Delhi NCR saw a significant sales surge of 29 per cent YoY and Mumbai, while leading in overall volume, experiencing a slight 1 per cent dip, the PropTiger.com said. Bengaluru's sales decreased by 11 per cent YoY and Ahmedabad recorded a 9 per cent YoY drop, it added. PropTiger.com report said a sharp increase in home prices, averaging a nearly 20 per cent increase across the top eight cities, impacted affordability leading to a 5 per cent YoY drop in overall sales. New launches witnessed a more significant 25 per cent YoY



decrease compared to the same quarter in 2023. Vikas Wadhawan, CFO of REA India and Business Head of PropTiger.com, said, "With the festive season kicking off with

Navratri, renewed buyer interest and a spike in sales activity are anticipated. The market frenzy has slowed, creating a more stable environment for end-users."

Farmers from CM Revanth's constituency intensify protests against Pharma Villages



Hyderabad: Protests against the proposed Pharma Villages in the State are getting louder with villagers, especially farmers and Opposition parties staging demonstrations, opposing the move. The farmers clashed with the police near Hakimpet on Wednesday, while they were on their way to the Dudyal Mandal Revenue Officer's office in Kodangal constituency, represented by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Farmers at Hakimpet have been protesting for the last 27 days, raising concerns over environmental pollution caused by the Pharma Village, a cluster for pharma companies. The farmers gave a call for Maha Padayatra from Polepally

to the Dudyal MRO office on Wednesday, but were stopped by the police near Hakimpet in Dudyal Mandal, where the government proposes to set up the Pharma Village. Former BRS MLA Patnam Narender Reddy and other BRS cadre joined the rally in support of farmers. However, the police personnel deployed in large numbers stopped the protesters from moving forward and arrested them.

The protesters stated that Revanth Reddy and his brothers were forcibly taking their lands to allocate them to pharma companies, threatening their livelihoods. They vowed to continue their protest and intensify them until the State government

withdrew its proposal. Villagers from Yacharam mandal in Ibrahimpatnam constituency also staged demonstrations and played Bathukamma in protest against the Pharma Village in their agricultural lands. They demanded that the State government withdraw its proposals, failing which they would intensify their struggle. The previous BRS government had proposed the Hyderabad Pharma City project on 14,000

acres of land in Yacharam Mandal in Rangareddy district. After Congress came to power, the Chief Minister announced that the government would scrap the Pharma City plan and instead establish Pharma Villages. However, the State has also been making contradictory announcements, telling the High Court that the Pharma City plan was still very much on.

Paddy procurement begins in Nalgonda district

Nalgonda: Paddy procurement operations have commenced in Nalgonda district, with an estimated 7.50 lakh metric tons of paddy expected to arrive at the purchase centers during this rainy season. To facilitate smooth operations, the government has set up 375 buying centers across the district. The only deterrent for the farmers at the beginning of the season was that they were advised to ensure that their paddy meets the quality standards, particularly maintaining a moisture content of no more than 17 per cent. To prevent the illegal transportation of paddy from neighboring Andhra Pradesh, check posts have been set up at Vadapalli and Nagarjuna Sagar. This measure is in response to the Rs 500 per quintal incentive offered by the Telangana government for fine rice



varieties. The arrival of paddy at the centers has already begun to pick up pace. Officials overseeing the procurement process are requiring farmers to present their pattadar passbooks and bank account details to sell their paddy stocks. Separate centers have been designated for fine varieties and coarse varieties to streamline the process.

India and fielding — from flashes of brilliance to a consistent sparkle

Epictetus was certainly not referring to fielding and/or catching when he made that remark. He was a stoic philosopher who taught that it was 'most important to know oneself and have internal control over thoughts and emotions'. These tenets are keys to success in any walk of life, so why not transpose them to cricket too, in general, and to fielding, more specifically? The era of picking extraordinary batters alone or exceptional bowlers alone, even if they were downright poor fielders, is long past. Even before the 20-over bug bit the sport in the first half of the 2000s, fielding had come to be accepted as a third crucial discipline, not just an addendum to batting or bowling. Some of the great teams of the past had either electric fielders or assured catchers or both. Indeed, according to Sunil Gavaskar, the greatest Indian fielding team of all time was the one that clinched the World Championship of Cricket crown in Melbourne in 1985, a side that was replete with all-rounders in every sense of the term.

The profusion of T20 cricket has triggered new approaches and elevated fielding to a glorious spectacle. Boundary-line catches where the fielder somehow manages to latch on to the ball, toss it up in the air when they are about to cross the rope, and then comes back into nonchalantly pouching it, are no longer the exception. They also don't come about by accident. One only needs to watch a fielding session of an age-group state side, let alone a franchise or a senior international outfit, to see how meticulously and uncompromisingly the players attempt and complete what once were considered outrageous snaffles. There is no denying the fact that the T20 format has compelled fielders to become better and better. Tales of Colin Bland hitting one stump time after time are legendary and have attained a mythical status because there isn't ready or extensive television footage, but when Jonty Rhodes, all bustle and energy and athleticism and low centre of gravity, showcased his brilliance upon South Africa's return from isolation in 1991, the cricket world was truly captivated. Thousands flocked the ground to merely watch the Rhodes show, though it must not be forgotten that possibly the first cricketer to win a Player of the Series award primarily for his catching was Gavaskar himself. At the four-nation Rothmans Cup in Sharjah in 1985, almost immediately after their unbeaten run to the WCC crown, India expertly defended 125 against Pakistan — Gavaskar made only two but held four catches — in the semifinal and then edged out Australia by three wickets in a low-scoring final. The Aussies were bowled out for 139 with Gavaskar taking the catch that got rid of their highest scorer, Kepler Wessels (30). Gavaskar, who had ceded the captaincy to Kapil Dev after leading the side to the Melbourne high, was run out for 20 during India's stuttering chase. His net returns for the tournament were 22 runs and five catches.

Until three and a half months back, the most talked-about catch in Indian cricket was the one Kapil took at Lord's on 25 June 1983, in the final of the last 60-over World

Cup. With Viv Richards threatening to make India's 183 appear remarkably miniscule and Madan Lal imploring his captain to give him one more over so that he could have another crack at the great Antiguan, Kapil obliged, then ran a million miles back from mid-wicket to grab the pull that seemed destined to send the ball towards the ropes. Kapil's loping strides and fierce focus as he kept his eyes on the ball over his left shoulder left no room for doubt long before he had completed the formalities. One just knew that there was no way he was not going to hold on to the catch; such is the lot of geniuses that we take even amazing slices of brilliance for granted. That Kapil catch energised India as they defended their small total with tigerish zeal, eventually turning the world order upside down with one of the upsets of the cricket world. The bookmakers had given India odds of 66 to 1 to go all the way. All the way they did go, triggering a revolution that has catapulted Indian cricket to the dizzying perch it occupies today. The fielding medal isn't just an acknowledgement of how crucial the discipline, once a poor cousin to batting and bowling, has become but also a recognition of the not-so-glamorous performances that can easily slide by unnoticed. The 1983 World Cup was the last time India went into a global cricketing event as rank outsiders. Apart from perhaps the inaugural T20 World Cup in South Africa in 2007 — India had played just one international in that format, the 'big boys' were all missing and Mahendra Singh Dhoni's band wasn't really expected to pose a major threat — the Indians have entered all subsequent World Cups as among the strong favourites. Commensurate success hasn't followed, and the clamour for a World Cup trophy kept growing with each successive barren run after the ultimate success at the 2011 50-over World Cup at home. It took a screamer from Suryakumar Yadav off the first ball of the final over of the T20 World Cup final against South Africa on June 29 for India to end their long drought. There's no gainsaying what might have transpired had David Miller's strike off a Hardik Pandya full toss cleared the long-off fence; SKY ensured there was no necessity for speculation, no needless panic, no fraying of nerves, no furious attacks on fingernails, with the most ridiculous show of composure under extreme pressure, pulling off the catch-the-ball-toss-it-up-in-the-air-exit-playing-arena-and-return-to-complete-the-catch routine with consummate ease, as good as assuring that Rohit Sharma would wrap his hands around the elusive piece of silverware. Just a week back, Rohit himself was in the limelight for a stunning overhead catch at mid-off to evict Litton Das on day four of the Kanpur Test against Bangladesh. The loss of 235 overs over the first three days threatened to scupper India's hunt for World Test Championship points, but the captain's sensational grab when the Bangladesh stumper charged needlessly Mohammed Siraj roused his colleagues. Siraj, not necessarily one of the more athletic or assured fielders, himself reprised his skipper's magic with a fabu-



lous one-handed catch running back from mid-off to pack off Shikab Al Hasan. The twin blows, not long separated, provided the impetus on which India rode to a scarcely believable seven-wicket victory. The batters have been eulogised for maintaining a run-rate of 8.22 per over across 34.4 overs, the bowlers have been celebrated for picking up 20 wickets in a mere 119.2 overs on a reasonably unresponsive deck. As they should be. But less extolled has been the catching, not just of Rohit and Siraj but also at gully to the pacers of Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is showing himself as an excellent replacement at that position for his Mumbai colleague, Ajinkya Rahane. While the outside world might be taken in by the magnificence of strokeplay or the luminescence of a Jasprit Bumrah spell, within the contours of the team, the focus on work in the field is massive. "I was just informed that out of the 24 catches that came our way, we took 23 of them, which is a great result," Rohit remarked in the immediacy of the 2-0 lead that consolidated India's position at the helm of the WTC points table. "It may look easy on television, but it isn't." India have had a series of wonderful fielding coaches over the last decade and a half. R. Sridhar, who was with the side for seven years between 2014 and 2021, has been widely credited with changing attitudes, mindsets and approaches to fielding and catching, while his successor T. Dilip, a fellow Hyderabad, has won the trust and the admiration of the playing group for his innovative methodol-

ogy. Dilip is principally responsible for the introduction of the 'fielding medal'; the pomp and ceremony surrounding the award of that medal has taken social media by storm and the players might not entirely be truthful if they say that there isn't a healthy competition amongst them to be the recipient of that coveted medal. The fielding medal isn't just an acknowledgement of how crucial the discipline, once a poor cousin to batting and bowling, has become but also a recognition of the not-so-glamorous performances that can easily slide by unnoticed but which play substantial roles in altering the balance of a game at a critical juncture. India will need to be on top of their fielding game in Australia during the five-Test series starting in November. They will need to grab everything that comes their way when the pacers create chances, which they invariably will. The emergence of Shubman Gill as an excellent poucher at slip to complement Jaiswal's great hands, and the increasing assurance with which the once-jumpy Virat Kohli and KL Rahul man the slip cordon are reassuring developments. But as much as the catching, India's ground fielding too must step up. The bigger grounds Down Under and the propensity of the Australian batters to look for two and a half when only one might appear par for the course will test their fitness, agility, throwing arms and staying power. It might be a slight exaggeration to state that fielding will prove the difference, but only a slight one, mind.

Orange Group launches new Tata Curvv Electric SUV in Hyd

Hyderabad: The Orange Group Auto Private Limited, Karkhana on Monday unveiled Tata Curvv, the mid-sized electric SUV. The electric version of Curvv boasts of a range of over 150 kilometers travel with just 15 minutes of top-up. The Curvv comes loaded with features including key safety features like airbags, acoustic alert system, modern, uncluttered, and spacious interior, integrating state-of-the-art technologies and HMI (Human-Machine Inter-

face). The cabin is designed with a bold and smart color scheme, providing a premium feel. The car comes with a huge display and a large touchscreen infotainment system, both providing advanced connectivity options. Smart, Pure, Pure S, Creative, Creative S, Creative S, Accomplished S, and Accomplished A. The Orange Group Auto, in addition to the electric variant is also offering the petrol and diesel variants of Curvv.

ZS expands its India footprint with a new office in Hyderabad

ZS, a leading global management consulting and technology firm, today opened its newest office in Hyderabad, India. The new office will meet growing client needs for a strategic partner providing end-to-end global capability center (GCC) offerings.

“Our new office in Hyderabad marks an exciting chapter in ZS’s India journey. The move reflects our long-term vision for transforming healthcare and beyond. We can now leverage the city’s skilled workforce and culture of innovation to support the dynamic GCC ecosystem. ZS will help clients with an optimal mix of advisory services, managed operations, platform development and operations, and expertise augmentation at scale. Our expansion creates new opportunities for local talent across these services in the GCC industry, which has emerged as one of the most prominent and rapidly growing sectors in India,” said Mohit Sood, regional managing principal, ZS. With more than 13,000 employees in over 35 offices worldwide, ZS is recognized for its people centricity, investments in continuous learning and development. Through its strong commitment to inclusion, the firm empowers diverse ZSers to thrive and drive meaningful change. ZS’s new office is located at Salarpuria Knowledge City, Raidurg, Hyderabad. Hyderabad joins Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi NCR and Pune as a ZS location in India.



AI, Quick commerce, Micro-Influencers, and Regional Language Content Fueling Festive Shopping This Year: Meta Report

With the festive season in full swing, Meta has unveiled findings from its study on prevailing festive trends. The study commissioned by Meta and conducted in September by consumer insights platform GWI, one of the leading consumer research platforms, sheds light on this year’s festive shopping trends. Said Arun Srinivas, Director & Head, Ads Business (India) at Meta, “The study clearly shows that festive shopping trends in India are undergoing a dramatic shift with AI, adoption of quick-commerce, rise of micro influencers, and prevalence of regional language content playing a leading role in influencing festive purchases. On our platforms specifically, we are seeing strong adoption of all our key products this festive season - from AI powered ad formats to business messaging and Reels.” One of the standout trends from the study indicates that e-commerce is on the rise and Quick Commerce is expanding into new categories with 1 in 4 electronics buyers and 1 in 3 personal care buyers purchasing via Quick Commerce. The insights also reveal that over half of this year’s festive season shoppers expect to shop more through e-commerce platforms.

The study also indicates that micro influencers with 10k to 100k followers are

just as influential in driving festive purchases as macro influencers with 100k to 1 million followers. Among the shoppers who rely on influencers to discover brands, deals, and sales events during the festive season, 40% consumers are influenced by micro-influencers, 39% by macro-influencers, and 23% by nano-influencers (less than 10K followers), revealed the study. Additionally, regional language ads drive engagement during festive sales as over 3 in 4 consumers say it’s important for them to see advertising in their local language during festive shopping. Another key trend is around AI-powered discovery propelling discovery of brands, deals and sales during the festive period. The study revealed that 80% of the festive shoppers discover deals and products on Meta. Furthermore, an impressive 85% of consumers are aware of at least one sales event through Meta. The study with GWI overall indicates an optimism in consumer sentiment with half of respondents planning on spending more than last year. The study also tells us that festive shopping trends continue to see disruption with 96% of shoppers expecting their shopping pattern to change this year on the back of online shopping, e-Commerce penetration, and the rise of quick commerce.



The story of prabasi Bengalis and their Durga Puja traditions

Twenty-one years ago, Anjan Kumar Chaudhary left the vibrant chaos of his Calcutta neighbourhood and moved to the picturesque hill town of Dehradun in search of a brighter future. All he wanted was a satellite dish to access his beloved Bengali channels, but instead, what he found was a thriving Bengali community that felt both distinct and comfortingly familiar. Beyond the prestigious Doon School, where Anjan teaches, lies Durga Bari — a temple that serves as a Sunday sanctuary for adda (chit-chat) and cultural programmes. But during Durga Puja, it transforms into something extraordinary. His partner, Rituparna Chaudhary, a teacher at Ann Mary School, shares the hustle of the season: “It’s that time again when I juggle school work with preparations at Durga Bari, waking up at dawn to make bhog (food for the deities) and create alpana (floor paintings) before heading to school.” “It’s here, at Durga Bari, that the Bengalis of Dehradun have built a home away from home,” Anjan asserts, emphasising that for them Durga Puja is more than a religious festival — it’s a link to their roots and a way to instil these cultural values in their daughter, who is growing up as a Bengali in prabas (foreign land).

The introduction of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, an agreement between the East India Company and the landlords of Bengal in 1793, significantly shifted migration patterns. While land revenue for landlords was fixed, they could raise it without restrictions, devastating the peasantry and contributing to the decline of domestic industries. This situation spurred many to seek opportunities elsewhere. In 1814, a group of Bengalis from Chittagong, now in Bangladesh, reportedly escaped from a British East India Company ship at Otago Harbour, New Zealand, furthering the Bengali presence abroad. Scholar Aditi Chatterji, in her book *Landscape and the Bengali Diaspora: Skilled Prabasi Bengali Migration within and beyond India*, highlights a mix of push and pull factors in migration: the lack of opportunities in South Asia contrasted sharply with better prospects in the West.

As Calcutta emerged as the financial and administrative centre of the British Raj in the mid-19th century, it drew labourers from nearby provinces, particularly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. At the same time, a wave of ‘travelling babus’ — Bengali professionals, clerks, and teachers — fanned out across north India in service of the imperial government. This period also saw the spread of English education and the press. Wealthy upper-class Bengalis established a tradition of sending their children to prestigious institutions like Oxford, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics. In 1845, four Bengali Hindus accompanied Dr Henry Hurry Goodeve, a professor of anatomy at Calcutta, to University College London. Between 1865 and 1885, Chatterji notes, around 700 individuals from Bengal travelled to England, primarily to study law, medicine, and the Indian Civil Service. The shift of the Indian capital to Delhi in 1911 marked a decline

in Calcutta’s influence, which became a hotspot of political rebellion during the Partition of India as well as during the creation of Bangladesh, prompting further migration. Another key factor, as Chatterji points out, was the over 30-year rule (1977-2011) of the Communist government in West Bengal. While communal harmony and public health improved, industrial decline followed, as foreign investors turned away from the Communist regime. This created a surplus of job seekers against dwindling opportunities, leading to an exodus of qualified Bengalis to other parts of India and beyond.

Prabasi Bengalis, as journalist and author Sudeep Chakravarti describes in his book *The Bengalis: A Portrait of a Community* (2017), refers to “any Bengali who has migrated from Bengal irrespective of the distance of that geographical separation.” Through Durga Puja celebrations, prabasi Bengalis have bridged the gap between nostalgia and unity, fostering a shared sense of identity that connects them across the globe. Bengali literature also offers a fascinating glimpse into the lives of prabasi Bengalis. A standout example is Bengali writer Santa Devi’s early-twentieth-century biography of her father, Ramananda Chattopadhyay, a journalist and patriot. His journeys across India and a visit to his sister in Rangoon, Burma, reflect his adventurous spirit, inspiring him to found and edit the journal *Prabasi* (April, 1901). Journalist Ramananda Chattopadhyay (Source: Wikimedia Commons) Journalist Ramananda Chattopadhyay (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

The Bengali diaspora Scholar Manas Ray, in his article *Life of the Past: Indian Bengali Diaspora and the Politics of Nostalgia*, observes that the Indian Bengali diaspora primarily comprises professionals and students, with a smaller number of skilled workers. This contrasts sharply with migration patterns from Bangladesh, where most emigrants until the late 1960s came from peasant families in the city of Sylhet. Initially, Indian Bengali migration focused on Britain; however, from the late 1960s to early 1970s, migration to the USA and Canada surged as immigration laws were revised to permit the entry of professionally trained individuals from the sub-continent and other developing countries. During this period, Chatterji notes a significant ‘brain drain’ of Bengali talent to universities, hospitals, and urban institutions abroad.

Her research, conducted between May 2014 and May 2015, highlights key urban centres for the diaspora: Oxford and Aberdeen in the United Kingdom; New York and the Bay Area of California in the United States; and Indian cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Patna, Dehradun, Shimla, and Allahabad. According to her cited statistics, Delhi has approximately 208,000 Bengalis, Bengaluru is home to over 300,000, and Dehradun has more than 8,000 Bengali residents. In the US, around 60,000 Bengalis live in New York, primarily in Queens County, while 3,700 reside in the Bay Area. Chakravarti mentions that



there could be about 15,000 Bengali Hindus in Canada, between 30,000 and 50,000 in the United Kingdom, and a few hundred in France and Germany. He accurately sums up the situation, stating, “Several million Bengalis are part of a great scattering on account of personal persuasions and insecurities, even victimization, of politics and economics.”

Indeed, the network of Bengalis is as diverse as the reasons that lead them there. However, acclimatising is rarely a problem. “As far as the new physical or built environment is concerned, Bengalis adapt to local architecture while transforming interiors with prayer rooms. Beyond the domestic scene, they construct temporary heterotopic ‘pandals’ for housing Durga, Saraswati, and Kali Puja idols, as well as for celebrating the Bengali New Year (15 April) and Tagore’s birth anniversary (8 May),” notes Chatterji. “Connected by Bengali thread” New Delhi, the national capital, is home to a large Bengali community, particularly in enclaves like Chittaranjan Park (CR Park) and Kashmere Gate. According to Chatterji, the first wave of Bengali settlers in Delhi made their way in 1864, followed by a second wave in 1911 when Delhi was made the capital. Kali Bari, established in the 1930s at Mandir Marg, features an idol reminiscent of the one at the Kalighat Kali Temple in Kolkata and began hosting one of the city’s earliest Durga Puja celebrations in 1931. The only older celebrations in the city are at Kashmere Gate, dating back to 1910, and the Timarpur Puja organised by the Timarpur and Civil Lines Puja Samiti, established in 1914. Dashami Sindur Khela at Kali Mandir, Delhi, 1990s (Source: Collection of archival photographs, Neighborhood Diaries, Shapno Ekhon) Dashami Sindur Khela at Kali Mandir, Delhi, 1990s (Source: Collection of archival photographs, Neighborhood Diaries, Shapno Ekhon) “We were seeking better opportunities, and for the past two years, I’ve been fully immersed in the Pujo celebrations. Here, it feels like we’re all connected by one big Bengali thread — so different from the sprawling festivities in Kolkata. It is a cosy, localised community, and that sense of togetherness makes our diaspora experience truly special,” says Rupanjali Mitra Basu, who moved from Kolkata to CR Park eight years ago. Co-resident Shahana Chakraborty emphasises that they don’t identify as prabasi. “My geography doesn’t make me any less of a Bengali.” Chakraborty explains that the Durga Puja celebrations in CR Park, formerly the EPDP colony, began in 1970 with a small group of original settlers. In the evenings, people would gather to watch Bengali cinema or jatra. “The festival was truly a community affair, with residents enthusiastically participating in cultural programmes and rehearsing for months on their rooftops. However, many residents now yearn for that sense of community, as cultural activities increasingly rely on large organisers and corporate sponsorships,” she says. In contrast, many Bengalis in Uttar Pradesh seldom identify with Bengal. “I was born in Lucknow and attended boarding school in Nainital, but Ayodhya is my home now,” says Indroneel Banerjee, a homeopathic doctor. “My grandmother came from East Bengal, while my grandfather was from Varanasi. One of his brothers settled in Gorakhpur, and another in Ayodhya (then Faizabad), so my sense of home and family is rooted far from Bengal.” Reflecting on Pujo, Banerjee says, “We celebrate all the festivals, but Pujo is particularly personal. One question I never tire of answering is why we enjoy non-vegetarian food during Puja days, even though it’s strictly prohibited during Navratri.” The Banerjee family’s Pujo celebration in Ayodhya, 2010 (Source: Indroneel Banerjee) The Banerjee family’s Pujo celebration in Ayodhya, 2010 (Source: Indroneel Banerjee) Similar is the story of Dinabandhu Rakshit, a confectioner in Varanasi. “Although my village is in Bankura, West Bengal, my forefathers moved to Varanasi a century and a half ago and loved it so much that they decided to stay.” Today, he runs the family’s century-old sweet shop, Kalika Mishtan Bhandar, located in Bangali Tola, Varanasi. This area once had around 2.5 lakh to 3 lakh Bengalis, many of whom have since moved to the outskirts, like Sundarpur. “Durga Puja, though slightly different here, is celebrated with 20-25 pandals in town.

Leg-up for BJP ahead of Maharashtra, Jharkhand, task cut out for Congress

Haryana, J&K Election Results 2024: If a week is a long time in politics, even a day can shape perceptions — and larger political narratives. Tuesday was such a day for the BJP: four months after it suffered a setback in the Lok Sabha elections losing seats in several north Indian states, falling to 240 from 303, and prompting the Congress and the Opposition to celebrate, the ruling party created history in Haryana registering a resounding victory that would give it a third term in power there. It also improved its tally in Jammu and Kashmir and, more importantly, its government at the Centre claimed credit for ensuring that elections were held and that an elected UT Assembly was in place — its powers severely limited — for the first time since the state was split and its special status abrogated. The verdict holds multiple messages.

The Congress hoped a victory in Haryana would have strengthened its narrative that the BJP was losing its grip. And that the Congress — as also the INDIA bloc — is reviving under Rahul Gandhi with his aggressive focus on caste mobilisation. A 240-rattled BJP, on the other hand, wanted a win to dispel the perception that June 4 had pushed it onto the backfoot. The BJP managed to dispel both, the Congress made noises like a sore loser. The primary message of these elections — the first to be held after the Lok Sabha polls — is that the BJP machinery still retains its core votes and the Congress has a long way to go before it can unseat the BJP in what has become its strongholds in the 2014-2023 period. In Haryana, a state he Congress was sure of winning — almost all exit polls predicted this — and cried foul after its defeat, the BJP seemed set to win 48 of the 90 seats, with the Congress at 37. Even in terms of vote share, the BJP, with 39.94% votes, was above the Congress's 39.09%. The Haryana victory of the BJP is also significant given the aggressive attack that the Congress and the opposition had been waging against it over caste.

The BJP has managed to counter the perception that OBC as well as Dalit voters are deserting it in the face of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's repeated charge that the BJP was anti-Dalit and anti-OBC and that it was standing in the way of the caste census. The Jammu verdict, too, is significant for the BJP as it trumped the Congress in direct contests in the region which matters for it. Recording the highest vote share of 25.64%, the BJP is set to win 29 seats in the Jammu region, with the Congress bagging just one. In Jammu and Kashmir, it can claim victory with six seats but only as riding on the coat-tails of the National Conference that won 42 of the 90 seats when results last came in. The NC's vote share was 23.43% and the Congress's 11.97%.

The message as far as the BJP is concerned is loud and clear: it has the decisive upper hand in national politics. For the Congress, it's a wake-up call yet again: that it needs more than an anti-Modi campaign and new-found rhetoric on caste to trounce the BJP. Its Constitution-is-at-peril refrain may also have lost its edge after the



June 4 verdict. The verdict has come as a big boost to the BJP as it heads for crucial Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand next month, followed by Delhi in January-February. This also has the potential to puncture the Congress narrative that the BJP's curve is downward. Since the winter of 2018, the Congress has not won a single Assembly election in Northern India barring the victory in Himachal Pradesh in 2022. A victory in Haryana would have added spring to its step, allowing it to approach the elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand on a stronger footing. But now, as some of its leaders admitted in private, the Congress appears to have snatched a defeat from the jaws of victory in Haryana.

A Haryana victory would have helped the Congress at the seat-sharing table in Maharashtra and Jharkhand and possibly Delhi later. The poor show in Jammu is also staring in the Congress's face. It has proved to be the weak link in the NC-Congress alliance. While the NC won 42 seats, up from 15 in 2014, the Congress numbers almost halved. The party, which had won 12 seats in 2014, managed to get just six. The party's allies have taken note. "What is important is that there was a fertile ground to win. They need to introspect why they lose whenever there is a direct fight. They similarly lost in Madhya Pradesh. For Maharashtra, seat-sharing talks are on. But with the new reality in Haryana, we will also look at that. What is important is to get the current dispensation out. We have to also look at ground realities," Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi told The Indian Express. Haryana Assembly Election Results BJP workers celebrate the party's win in the Haryana Assembly polls. (Photo: PTI)

Although the BJP's state units in both

Haryana and J&K focused on local issues during the campaign, the flagship schemes had been a crucial part of the BJP campaign in the rural areas keeping Modi ki Guarantee slogan as a theme. In Haryana, issues like farm laws to protest by women wrestlers and the uneasiness over the Agniveer scheme were heavily loaded against the BJP, but it managed to beat back anti-incumbency. The outcome is also expected to strengthen the control of both Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the organisation. The key players for both the states were handpicked by the two. Both will continue to have their stamp on every decision of the party, including the selection of the new party president, BJP sources pointed out. Vinesh Phogat Wres-

tlar and Congress candidate from Julana seat Vinesh Phogat celebrates her win. (Photo: PTI) It will also leave a positive message for national president J P Nadda, who is expected to be replaced by a new party president. The BJP which is currently in talks with its allies in the NDA for seat distribution both in Maharashtra and Jharkhand will be emboldened. With the results boosting the morale of the workers across the country, its ideological parent RSS, with which its ties faced some strains, is also expected to throw its full weight around the party's electioneering in these states. The RSS is considered to have a robust network on the ground in Maharashtra and border areas of Jharkhand.

Telangana plans to resume Kaleshwaram operations to save Rabi ayacut

Hyderabad: In a significant move, the State government is planning to operationalise at least two of the three key barrages under the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS). Farmers, who have been deprived of Godavari water for two seasons, along with their elected representatives, are pressing for the resumption of pumping operations to utilize potential flows from the Pranahita river, a tributary of Godavari, the sole supporting source for the ayacut under KLIS, thus forcing the State government to fall back on the Kaleshwaram project, though the Congress had ran a campaign deriding the project.

The State officials are meeting officials of the National Dam Safety Authority

(NDSA) on October 11 in Delhi as part of the mission. The three barrages—Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla have remained idle since they were emptied for inspection and rehabilitation in April and May, leaving the Rabi ayacut without irrigation support. The Irrigation Department managed to supply water for the Kharif season by drawing from the Yellampalli reservoir at a reduced capacity of little over one TMC per day. The delay in resuming pumping operations has been attributed to the NDSA, which was tasked with investigating the project's construction. Interim reports from the NDSA did not facilitate the rehabilitation of the project before the monsoon. With the monsoon now withdrawing, inflows are expected to recede.

BJP's new social engineering strategy in Maharashtra

As Maharashtra gears up for fiercely contested Assembly elections, the ruling Mahayuti, predominantly dominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is experimenting with new social engineering strategies designed to consolidate support among various caste and community groups. Experts suggest that these tactics are part of a broader electoral strategy to counter the challenges posed by the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) - a coalition of the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) - which has been aggressively campaigning across Maharashtra after it dealt a rude jolt to the ruling alliance in the Lok Sabha results by leading on 30 of the 48 seats in the State.

In the recent cabinet meetings chaired by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, alongside his deputies - BJP's Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar of the NCP - the Mahayuti government approved over 100 decisions as the Election Commission is likely to announce the election days after the results of the Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir elections on October 8. Among these decisions is the establishment of economic welfare corporations for minority and micro-minority communities, including Brahmins, Arya Vysyas (Bania), and Jains, as well as OBC subgroups like Teli, Bari, Lonari, and Hindu Khatik. These groups, especially the micro-minorities, have historically felt marginalised in the State's political landscape. By creating economic platforms for their benefit, the ruling is attempting to ensure that Opposition narratives do not sway these communities. "After the outcome of the Parliament results, the BJP has realised that the Assembly elections will be a tough battle for them. As a result, they're trying every possible approach to consolidate voters. The creation of these welfare corporations is an attempt to broaden their social coalition, ensuring they don't alienate their 'bonded [not loyal] voters' - the upper castes," political commentator Abhay Deshpande says. "They are engaging in caste-based politics now. More than providing financial benefits to these communities, they are playing with emotions. Naming the corporation for Brahmins after Parashuram sends a clear emotional message," he added.

However, the context of these decisions cannot be ignored. As the Maratha community continues to demand reservation benefits, tensions with OBC groups - who fear losing their entitlements - have intensified. In this politically charged environment, BJP leaders have understood the need to reinforce their 'core voter base' of upper-caste communities, who may feel marginalised. "The move could be seen as an attempt to ensure their 'bonded voters' don't feel sidelined amid these reservation negotiations," Mr. Deshpande said. Party insiders suggest that these tactics are part of a broader electoral strategy to offset challenges posed by the MVA. "Lok Sabha elections made it clear that Marathas are not in our favour, despite announcing reservation. So, we had to



come up with a new strategy apart from the existing Ma-Dha-V strategy, aimed at consolidating the Malis (Ma), Dhangers (Dha), and Vanjaras (V), which are OBC," a senior BJP leader said. 'Cow' and 'Love Jihad' are back in addition to the caste-based corporations, the BJP has brought back two familiar and controversial themes to the forefront: 'cow' and 'love jihad'. These issues, known for their potential to polarise voters, have resurfaced in the speeches of BJP leaders, including Mr. Fadnavis, in recent weeks. Analysts claim that the ruling Mahayuti alliance appears to be leaning heavily on these divisive topics to galvanise its core voter base, which largely consists of Hindu conservatives. "Not just the upcoming elections, even in the second part of the Lok Sabha election, the BJP has realised that they cannot come to win unless there is polarisation, as a result, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign changed its course from development to mangal sutra," Mr. Deshpande says. He said that the BJP leaders believe Hindu votes are not consolidated, especially in the backdrop of the ongoing reservation fight between dominant Marathas and the OBC. "With the ongoing reservation issues, even the Hindu votes are not consolidated and adding to it, their alliance with the Ajit Pawar has come as a major setback in several pockets," Mr. Deshpande said. Recently, the cabinet conferred the title of 'Rajya Mata' (State Mother) on the cow, symbolising its cultural and religious significance. It declared the Indigenous cow breeds as 'Rajya Mata-Gomata' and announced ₹50 per cow per day subsidy for the rearing. Meanwhile, Mr. Fadnavis, speaking at a public meeting, reignited the issue of 'love jihad,' claiming it posed a real threat with 'over one lakh cases' reported across the State. He went further,

attributing the results in 14 of Maharashtra's 48 Lok Sabha seats in the recent elections to what he described as "vote jihad," subtly referencing the population demographics in those constituencies. "Cow and love jihad have never been viewed as mere electoral nar-

ratives by the BJP. It is only the Opposition that attempts to label them as our 'key strategy' during elections. For us, these issues are not just electoral agendas; they represent a larger picture - respect for religion," Nitesh Rane, BJP MLA, son of former Chief Minister Narayan Rane, told The Hindu.

India advances to Tier 1 in Global Cybersecurity Index 2024

New Delhi: India has jumped to Tier 1 in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024, released by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), when it comes to role-modelling as part of the country's cybersecurity commitments and resulting impacts. The 'GCI 2024' used a new five-tier analysis, a shift that allows a greater focus on each country's advances with cybersecurity commitments.

The report placed 46 countries in Tier 1, the highest of the five tiers, reserved for "role modelling" countries that demonstrate a strong commitment in all five cybersecurity pillars. India topped the chart for adopting measures like legal, technical, capacity development and cooperation as areas of relative strength. Organisational measures was a listed as an area of potential growth for the country.

"The Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 shows significant improvements by countries that are implementing essential legal measures, plans, capacity building initiatives, and cooperation frameworks especially in strengthening incident response capabilities," said Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU's Telecommuni-

cation Development Bureau. "ITU's cybersecurity projects and programmes are supporting those national efforts to more effectively manage cyberthreats," Zavazava added.

Worrisome threats highlighted in the report included ransomware attacks targeting government services and other sectors, cyber breaches affecting core industries, costly system outages, and breaches of privacy for individuals and organisations. "Building trust in the digital world is paramount," said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General. "The progress seen in the Global Cybersecurity Index is a sign that we must continue to focus efforts to ensure that everyone, everywhere can safely and securely manage cyberthreats in today's increasingly complex digital landscape." Most countries are either "establishing" (Tier 3) or "evolving" (Tier 4) in terms of cybersecurity. The 105 countries in these tiers have largely expanded digital services and connectivity but still need to integrate cybersecurity measures. A "cybercapacity gap" - characterised by limitations in skills, staffing, equipment and funding - was evident in many countries and across all regional groups, according to the report.

Exploring the secret lives of ancient monuments

A love for astronomy drew Srikumar M. Menon to megaliths, stone structures erected by ancient people in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, continuing through the Iron Age and Early Historic period. "I was fascinated by stories of Stonehenge and its claims of astronomical connections," says Menon in an interview following a recent event titled The Secret Life of Monuments held at the Bangalore International Center.

He did not know there were similar structures in India until he discovered a research paper about Indian megaliths and their connection to astronomy, recalls the architect associated with Bengaluru's National Institute of Advanced Studies. So he began visiting some of these megalithic sites, even going on to do his PhD on the astronomical significance of megalithic monuments in India. "I have been walking around in many of these sites for the last 20 years," he tells Vinay Parameswarappa, the founder of experiential tour company Gully Tours, with whom he was in conversation with at the event. These two decades spent exploring these various places inspired his book, *God on the Hill & Other Stories*, published earlier this year. The collection of 10 short stories draws from the locales, monuments and myths associated with many of the ancient monuments he studied, including megaliths in Kerala and Karnataka, a Buddhist stupa in Karnataka, and an exquisite little rock-cut temple in the Kumaon Himalaya. "Wherever I go to any historical site, there are usually stories there that do not have a direct impact on academic research. But they are important because people nearby believe it or that sort of thing," says Menon. He says the book, an atonement of sorts for all the legends and myths he has ignored or busted, took nearly 15 years to write. "The oldest story in this is probably started in 2005 or something like that, so it has been a while in the making," he says. "I didn't conceive of it as a book when I started. I was just writing a story whenever I felt like it." "I've been incredibly lucky that I get to see some out-of-the-way spots, and I'll have tried to capture the essence of some of these places," says Menon before taking his audience at the event to the settings of some of these stories, using a series of stunning photographs. Three stories in the book are set in megalithic sites, which can range from menhirs (upright stones), dolmens (burial chambers), cairn circles (circular stone arrangements) and burial cists (underground stone enclosures), among others. "They have something to do with death," says Menon, pointing out that they are often burial sites or structures set up to commemorate a person or spot of some importance. He adds that the origins and significance of some, such as the various stone alignments, are still a mystery.

A few of the sites in India that Menon refers to include the dolmens of Mallachandram, 75-odd km from



Bengaluru near Krishnagiri; Hire Benakal near Hampi, one of the largest and most diverse megalithic sites of South India; and the menhirs of Heragal and Nilaskal in the Hosanagara taluk. He delves into the stories and local legends around these historical sites, many of which have shaped his short stories. For instance, Hire Benakal is locally known as 'Moriyara Mane' or house of the Moriyas, a mythical race of "small people who lived long ago that were endowed with superhuman strength," he says. "They could split the stones with their bare hands, and they (are believed to have) made these structures."

He also ventures into the function of a hero stone or *veeragallu*, stone monuments commemorating the valorous death of a hero, be it in battle or while defending people and cattle from predators like tigers. Sharing a photograph of a *veeragallu* on the Indian Institute of Science campus that portrays a hunter shooting a tiger, he says it celebrates a person who possibly lost his life battling the animal. "There are stone slabs nearby which suggest that it was enclosed in a small kind of shrine made of other stones," he believes. These ancient sites are also important from an architectural and social perspective, in his opinion. "They look so crude and primitive, but the thing is that the seeds of much of later architecture are sown in these," he says. "This is when they learned stone working... using stone slabs from the bedrock... learning how to shape and erect them." Additionally, ancient megaliths offer valuable insights into the people and societies who have built these structures. "You can imagine these being put up, the kind of ceremonies which had happened, the person who had been commemorated, how important they were to the populace around, and

what led to them being commemorated in such a grand way," says Menon.

Beyond the prehistoric Menon also takes his audience to a relatively more recent past: Kanaganahalli, situated about 3 km from Sannati in Kalaburagi district on the banks of the Bhima River, where two of his other stories are set. "I think it is the archaeological discovery of the second half of the 20th century in India," he says. For millennia, this site was best known for the Chandralamba Parameshwari temple, where pilgrims coalesced to worship Chandralamba Devi, an incarnation of the Goddess Lakshmi. In 1986, the roof of the shrine within the temple collapsed, breaking the idol, so a new one had to be installed; when they removed the idol from the Panipeetha or base slab, inscriptions were found on it, which turned out to be Ashokan edicts. "All of a sudden, Kanaganahalli and all that came into the southern limits of the Mauryan Empire," he says, adding that the entire area is rich in Buddhist heritage. According to him, many other marvellous monuments and inscriptions were discovered here, including a Maha Stupa, stone slabs rendered with Jataka stories and even a sculpture of Emperor Ashoka with his name etched on it. During the interaction, he also discusses the universality and power of narrative and the intricacy of these carvings and monuments that have often been created using very basic tools. So spectacular are some of these ancient marvels that sceptics often assume that many marvels, including the Kailasa Temple in Ellora, were created by aliens, says Menon. But, "I think we underestimate the power of the mind." The idea of the continuity of commemorative traditions crops up repeatedly during the talk. Menon says new meanings are often

attributed to ancient artefacts, using a photo taken at Avathi in the Devanahalli Taluk near the airport to drive this point. Pointing to a collection of vermillion and turmeric-smeared stones, he explains that these are stone axes from the Neolithic period, which have been repurposed into deities and are now being worshipped, says Menon. A similar transformation of meaning can be found in other megalithic sites. "Even if there's cultural discontinuity happening, people of one culture find what was sacred or special to certain earlier cultures special as well, and they often build their monuments the same place," he says, pointing out that in many regions, temples are found close to rock art or megalithic sites. This transformation of meaning also plays a vital role in conservation. "I've seen a dolmen in a school in Kerala being used as a dustbin," he says. But in the same region, where they are worshipped as shrines, people have looked after these sites better. "There's a sense of ownership in that case."

Ownership is necessary because many of these prehistoric sites are frequently at risk of being cleared for development, vandalised or neglected, leading to an erasure of our heritage. Menon makes his point using the tragic example of the destruction of Hanamasagar in Kalaburagi, one of India's largest stone alignments, cleared to make room for agriculture. "What people must have laboured on for long periods can be removed in a matter of minutes by your bulldozers," says Menon, who believes that creating awareness about our ancient monuments is critical to preserving them. "I think awareness is a first step towards protection," he says. "When you know what a thing is and start visiting its site, you will feel its value. And what we like, we protect."

MicroRNA, gene regulation: What 2024 Nobel Prize for Medicine was awarded for

The Nobel Prize for Medicine this year has been awarded to scientists Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for their discovery of microRNA — tiny molecules which play a crucial role in how genes function. “Gene regulation by microRNA, first revealed by Ambros and Ruvkun, has been at work for hundreds of millions of years. This mechanism has enabled the evolution of increasingly complex organisms,” the Nobel press release for the announcement stated. According to the press release, the scientists were honoured for their “discovery of a fundamental principle governing how gene activity is regulated”. Here is an illustration to explain just what this means. Think of chromosomes, which carry genetic information in the form of DNA, as a large toolbox. Every cell in the body has the same toolbox, containing identical tools (or genes). But different cells need to use different tools depending on their job — while a nerve cell might grab a tool that helps send signals, a muscle cell might choose a different tool to enable movement. The key to these differences is gene regulation, a process that helps each cell pick the right tools for its specific tasks. In other words, only the appropriate set of genes is activated in each type of cell. Ambros and Ruvkun were curious about how gene regulation works. Their research led them to the discovery of microRNA, which provided a whole new way of understanding how bodies of complex organisms such as humans function.

Why is understanding gene regulation significant?

Genetic information is stored in DNA inside the nucleus of each cell. This information is copied to the mRNA, a molecule that contains the instructions that direct cells to synthesise appropriate proteins. Proteins handle all kinds of important jobs in the body, such as making muscles contract or helping nerves communicate. Different tissues in the body create different proteins, depending on their specific functions. This differentiation among cells is governed by gene regulation, which effectively turns on or off specific genes in a cell in order to allow it to carry its specific task. Faults in gene regulation can result in serious diseases like cancer, diabetes, or autoimmune conditions. Understanding gene regulation, thus, holds the key to understanding — and potentially treating — many of these conditions. In the 1960s, scientists found that specialised proteins, called transcription factors, could bind to specific regions of DNA, and control which genetic messages were produced. These transcription factors essentially acted like switches, turning genes on or off depending on the needs of the cell. This was a huge leap in understanding how genes are regulated, and for many years, it seemed like the mystery of gene regulation had been mostly solved. Thousands of transcription factors were identified, and it appeared that the scientific community had figured out the key to how cells control the flow of genetic information. Then, in 1993, this year’s Nobel winners published findings that revealed an entirely new process by which genes are regulated, one which no one had an-

anticipated.

How was microRNA discovered?

In the late 1980s, Ambros and Ruvkun were working under Nobel Prize-winning researcher Robert Horvitz, studying a tiny roundworm called *C. elegans*. Despite being just 1 millimetre long, this worm had many of the same cell types found in larger animals, making it an ideal candidate for understanding how tissues develop. Ambros and Ruvkun were particularly interested in two genes in these worms: *lin-4* and *lin-14*. These genes played important roles in determining when different cells matured. The scientists’ curiosity was piqued when they noticed that certain mutant worms had problems with this timing. Ambros discovered that *lin-4* seemed to inhibit *lin-14*, but the scientific process behind this was unclear. After setting up his lab at Harvard, Ambros began further investigating the *lin-4* gene. To his surprise, he found that *lin-4* produced a tiny RNA molecule that did not code for proteins like most genes do. Instead, this “micro” RNA simply blocked the activity of *lin-14*. Meanwhile, Ruvkun, in his own lab, was closely examining the *lin-14* gene when he discovered that *lin-4* was not stopping the production of *lin-14*’s mRNA which carried genetic instructions for making its protein. Rather, it was preventing *lin-14* from making the protein itself. As Ambros and Ruvkun compared their findings, a breakthrough emerged — the short RNA from *lin-4* matched a specific part of *lin-14*’s mRNA, allowing it to latch on and effectively turn off *lin-14*’s protein production. This discovery revealed a fas-



inating new way in which genes could be controlled through tiny RNA molecules now called microRNAs. Initially published in 1993, the discovery got little notice as most scientists believed that this peculiar process was limited to *C. elegans*.

However, everything changed in 2000 when Ruvkun’s team discovered another

microRNA, called *let-7*, which was found across many species, including humans. This finding sparked widespread interest, leading to the identification of hundreds of microRNAs. Today, we know that microRNAs play a crucial role in gene regulation for nearly all multicellular organisms, including humans.

Night owls at higher risk of type 2 diabetes

New Delhi: Night owls — a person who is habitually active or wakeful at night — tend to have a higher body mass index (BMI), larger waists, and more hidden body fat and thus are almost 50 per cent more likely to develop type 2 diabetes (T2D) than those who go to bed earlier, shows new research on Monday. Previous studies have indicated that late chronotype — people who prefer to go to bed late and wake up late — live an unhealthy lifestyle, and are at higher risk of obesity and metabolic disorders including type 2 diabetes. The new study showed that a late chronotype had a 46 per cent higher risk of developing diabetes, which suggests that the increased risk of T2D can’t be explained by lifestyle alone. “We believe that other mechanisms are also at play,” said lead researcher Dr. Jeroen van der Velde, from Leiden University Medical Centre, in the Netherlands. “A likely explanation is that the circadian rhythm or body clock in late chronotypes is out of sync with the work and social schedules followed by society. This can lead to circadian misalignment, which we know can lead to metabolic disturbances and ultimately type 2 diabetes,”



van der Velde added. To explore, the team studied the association between sleep timing, diabetes, and body fat distribution in more than 5,000 individuals who were divided into three groups: early chronotype (20 per cent), late chronotype (20 per cent), and intermediate chronotype (60 per cent). The team measured all participants’ BMI and waist circumference, while vis-

ceral fat and liver fat were measured in 1,526 participants, using MRI scans and MR spectroscopy, respectively. About 225 were diagnosed with diabetes after a follow-up of 6.6 years. Late chronotypes were found to be at higher risk of developing diabetes, had a 0.7 kg/m² higher BMI, 1.9 cm larger waist circumference, 7 cm² more visceral fat,