

INDIAN CHRONICLE

9 October, 2024 | Wednesday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:206 | Pages: 8+8 | www.indianchronicle.com | Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State) | ₹ 3



FESTIVAL OF JOBS

DSC - 2024

11,062 TEACHER JOBS



DATE

9TH OCTOBER 2024
04:00 PM

VENUE

LB STADIUM,
HYDERABAD



HANDING OVER OF APPOINTMENT LETTERS
By Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri A. REVANTH REDDY GARU

REALISATION OF THE DREAMS OF YOUTH IN PEOPLE'S GOVERNANCE

6,956

Nursing Officers and Staff Nurses

31-01-2024

441

Compassionate Appointments in Singareni Collieries

07-02-2024

13,444

Appointments in Police, Fire, Transport and Prisons Departments

14-02-2024

1,997

Librarians, Physical Directors and PGTs

15-02-2024

5,192

Lecturers, Teachers & Medical Staff

04-03-2024

687

Assistant Executive Engineers

26-09-2024

1,635

Librarians, PETs, AEEs, Agriculture Officers and Veterinary Assistant Surgeons

06-10-2024

TELANGANA - LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES... ADDRESS FOR YOUTHS' CAREER!

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Farmers lose out

FEW would be surprised by the revelation that farmers in India get only about one-third of the final selling price of fruits and vegetables. Many would put the figure even lower than what a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) research paper indicates. Wholesalers and retailers pocket almost two-thirds of what consumers pay. For the three principal crops, the study puts the farmers' share at 33 per cent for tomato, 36 per cent for onion and 37 per cent for potato. The stark anomaly is attributed to the lack of an efficient supply chain and marketing system. The perishable nature of the crops, shortage of storage facilities and the large number of intermediaries are persistent bottlenecks. The bust-and-boom cycle symbolises the structural inefficiencies. Farmers resort to distress sale and even dump crops in anger when prices drop far below production costs. In the lean season, when the prices shoot up, they do not benefit much. In contrast, egg suppliers get 75 per cent of the final price. For poultry meat, farmers and aggregators receive for 56 per cent of retail price. For cereal and dairy products, farmers receive around 70 per cent. Studies over the years have advocated more investment in research and development, irrigation and logistics. The RBI paper suggests reforms in marketing of vegetable and fruit crops, and their necessity cannot be overstated; it is imperative to create more storage facilities. A pragmatic outlook is the way forward. The authorities must take note of the farmers' concerns — the push for private mandis, for instance, remains a contentious issue — and build consensus on systemic changes. It must no longer be business as usual. Tying demands such as assured price in political knots is to no one's advantage. Work out bipartisan arrangements based on the simple logic that the farmer must not lose out.

107 exceptional students shine bright at PGI's 38th Convocation

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

At the 38th Convocation of PGIMER on Sunday, 107 exceptional students were honoured with medals for their academic brilliance, while 1,547 graduates received their degrees, marking their successful completion of various medical disciplines. For the first time in PGI's history, ethnic wear was introduced as the official dress code for the convocation.

Faculty members and students donned traditional attire, with the theme of beige and gold, with women in sarees and men in kurta-pyjamas, complemented by a customised stole bearing the PGI logo, adding a distinctive cultural touch to the event. Delivering his convocation address, Prof Paul said, "This convocation is not just a milestone; it is the first step towards a new journey of professional excellence. As you move forward, remember that your knowledge and skills are not just for yourself but for the service of humanity. Hold fast to the values instilled in you by this great institution."

Reflecting on his college days in Chandigarh, Prof Paul said, "PGI holds a special place in my heart. As a student at DAV College, I would walk from my hostel in Sector 15 to the college in Sector 10, passing by PGI and witnessing doctors coming in and out of this esteemed institution. I often wondered if I would ever have the privilege of being associated with such a prestigious place." Festive offer PGI Prof Vinod K Paul, Member, NITI Aayog, presents a silver medal certificate to a student. (Express photo by Kamleshwar Singh) He lauded the PGI for its enduring dedication to patient care, medical education and innovative research. Outlining PGI's goals, Prof Paul said, "As an institution, our aspiration is clear: to rank among the top 25 globally, and this milestone is well within our grasp. We have the best training, unmatched potential, and the drive to shape the future. As doctors, you must remain vigilant to ensure that AI and other tools serve all patients fairly, without perpetuating existing biases and without compromising clinical examination."

The guest of honour, Prof Jagat Ram, former PGI director, reflected on PGI's journey, saying that the institution stands as a symbol of excellence, a victim of its success, with overwhelming patient trust leading to a record outpatient and emergency numbers. Earlier, Prof Vivek Lal, Director, PGI, highlighted the institute's achievements and trajectory of excellence: "PGI stands tall among the greatest medical institutions globally. More than 25% of program directors in the US come from PGI — this is the power of our alma mater. A degree from PGI isn't just a certificate; it's a testament to the fact that you can survive in any environment." PGI Prof Vivek Lal, Director, PGI, highlighted the institute's achievements and trajectory of excellence: "PGI stands tall among the greatest medical institutions globally. "This is surreal," says Dr Srinivas Ananth K, as he proudly wears his two medals, a gold and a silver. Dr Ananth did his MBBS from Tamil Nadu and his MD in Nuclear Medicine from PGI. The Kataria Gold Medal is the highest order in medals awarded to the best outgoing candidate judged based on academic and extracurricular activities.

Recalling his years at PGI, Dr Ananth says the initial three months was a bit tough, with the language and food taking time to adjust, but "I can give the faculty and my classmates the credit for these most wonderful years. Nuclear Medicine is a field that is the future, for we can both diagnose and treat patients, predominantly malignancies. I have presented my papers internationally on neuroendocrine tumours. My research thesis is on thyroid cancer, and our Department at PGI is the best in the country, we are the pioneers in PET-guided biopsies, and it has been a privilege to learn from the best and grow as a doctor and a person." The Kataria Gold Medal is for overall academics and co-curricular activities, and according to Dr Ananth, he has a keen interest in dance, art, and poetry, and is a badminton player as well and was chosen Mr Zenith. The key to success, he says, is discipline and consistency, and working closely with the faculty and understanding their vision. Dr Ananth, who worked as a senior resident at PGI and is now in Hyderabad, is preparing for a new phase. During Covid, Suraj Gupta, who did his B.Sc in Medical Laboratory Technology from PGI, realised the power of testing and how it needs to reach the grassroots level. Now working with the Delhi government, he talks about how the degree from PGI equipped him to follow the principles of mass-level testing during Covid.

Bombay HC grants anticipatory bail to Shinde Sena leader booked for 'offensive' remarks against journalist covering Badlapur case



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The Bombay High Court on Monday granted anticipatory bail to Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Waman Mhatre in connection with an alleged offensive remark he made against a journalist reporting on the Badlapur sexual abuse case. While pronouncing the verdict, a single-judge bench of Justice Sandeep V Marne said, "I have allowed the application and granted anticipatory bail to the applicant."

Mhatre was booked on August 22 under provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Preven-

tion of Atrocities) Act and offences punishable under sections 74 (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 79 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). On August 30, Justice Marne granted Mhatre interim protection from arrest, noting that the perusal of the FIR would "prima facie indicate that the concerned utterances by the appellant Mhatre were not made with an intention to humiliate the caste of the complainant". Justice Marne added that Section 3(1)(w)(ii) (using words, acts or gestures of a sexual nature towards a woman belonging to SC or ST, knowing she belongs to the said community) of the SC & ST Act is alleged against the appellant possibly due to gestures made by him while making the concerned utterances.

"Prima facie, it does not appear that the said utterances were again intended only to humiliate the caste of the complainant. Therefore, prima facie the bar under Section 18 of the SC & ST Act may not apply to the present case. Considering the nature of allegations levelled in the FIR, in my view the appellant deserves to be granted interim protection till respondent (complainant journalist) makes an appearance in the Appeal," Justice Marne noted on August 30.

ED raids AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora's residence in Ludhiana

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) began a raid at the residence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora on Chandigarh Road in Ludhiana on Monday morning, a source from the Central agency said. The source from ED said the raid at Arora's residence at Hampton Homes colony was in connection with a chunk of land that was allotted to him by the Punjab government some years ago. "The land was allotted for an industrial project, but the agreement was breached, and the land was used for a residential project," said the source. "The land was allotted to Ritesh Properties and Industries Limited, one of the companies owned by Arora," said the source. In a post on X, Arora said, "I am a law abiding citizen, am not sure about the reason for search operation, will cooperate fully with agencies and make sure all their queries are answered." I am a law abiding citizen, am not sure about the reason for search operation, will cooperate fully with agencies and make sure all their queries are answered.

Condemning the raid, senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said, "Since this morning, ED has been raiding the house of Aam Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora. In the last two years, they have raided Arvind Kejriwal's house, my house, Sanjay Singh's house, Sateyendar Jain's house... Nothing was found anywhere. But (PM Narendra) Modi's agencies are fully dedicated



to filing fake cases one after the other." "These people will go to any extent to break the Aam Aadmi Party. But no matter how much they try, the people of the Aam Aadmi Party will neither stop, nor sell themselves, nor get scared," he added.

Arora is a Ludhiana-based industrialist who owns a real estate and hosiery business. He also runs the Krishna Pran Breast Cancer Charitable Trust in Ludhiana. The AAP nominated him to the Rajya Sabha in 2022. Meanwhile, ED has also been conducting raids at the premises of Hemant Sood, a real estate baron from Ludhiana; Pardeep Aggarwal, owner of a company called Royal City; and Chandra Shekhar, a businessman in Jalandhar.

T-shaped flyover to decongest Mith Chowki partially opens; BJP-Congress workers jostle for credit at the event

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Nearly two years since the construction commenced, the east-west arm of the bridge was inaugurated by Union Minister and Mumbai North MP Piyush Goyal on Sunday. Congress MLA from Malad Aslam Sheikh, BJP MLA Yogesh Sagar as well as senior officials from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), including commissioner Bhushan Gagrani, were present. Ahead of the inauguration, a tiff erupted between workers of the BJP and Congress, over credits and claims on completion of the project. Constructed at a cost of Rs 45 crore, the 800-metre long flyover comprises two arms extending towards the eastern and southern side. While the East-West arm, which connects Marve to the Western Express Highway has become operational, the other arm is slated to become operational by the end of this year. While inaugurating the first arm of the bridge, Goyal said, "The flyover near Mith Chowki junction that connects Marve Road and Link Road in Malad has been delayed. Today, along with all the officials, the contractors have been instructed that the work on the bridge should be completed within the next one or one-and-a-half months." Congress workers carried posters and flags that read that the work on the Mith Chowki bridge was completed with the efforts of MLA Aslam Sheikh, while BJP workers came bearing posters of Goyal, leading to a



scuffle. An officer from Malad police station said the incident was handled by police personnel present and no one was injured. No offence was registered, the officer added. The partially bridge caters to only one way traffic. With the elevated north-south metro 2-A line passing above this bridge, only two-wheelers and light motor vehicles (LMV) are allowed to ply on the bridge, while entry for buses and heavy vehicles will be restricted. While the bridge was initially set for a January 2024 deadline, it got postponed owing to the delays in the piling work for creating the foundations. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde is slated to inaugurate a slew of projects pertaining to the beautification and restoration work of some of the key heritage and tourist places in Mumbai today.

Amethi murders: Minister hands over relief to victims' kin in Rae Bareilly



Sunil Kumar, a native of Rae Bareilly, his wife Poonam Bharti (32), and their two daughters, aged five and two, were shot dead inside their residence in Amethi.

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

yogi adityanath, rakesh sachan, amethi teacher killing, rae bareilly, land, financial assistance, UP police, Indian express news Police at the site in Amethi where four members of a family were killed recently,

A day after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met the family of a 37-year-old government teacher who, along

'Land-for-jobs scam': Delhi court grants bail to Lalu, Tejashwi Yadav in money laundering case



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court on Monday granted bail to Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad, his sons Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav in a money laundering case linked to the alleged land-for-jobs scam.

The case, in which the accused were summoned after taking cognisance of a supplementary chargesheet, pertained to Group-D appointments made in the West Central Railway Zone in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) when Lalu was Railways Minister, allegedly in return for land parcels for his family and associates. All the accused were granted relief on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh each, noting that they were mentioned in the chargesheet, but not arrested. The matter will now be heard on October 23 and 24. The money laundering case stems from a complaint lodged by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which filed a chargesheet in the case earlier. The CBI had alleged that Prabir and son Tejashwi Yadav took control of AK Infosystems in 2014 for just Rs 1 lakh, at Rs 10 per share when the company had owned land worth Rs 1.77 crore. The CBI chargesheet noted that the company, in 2017, "suddenly" paid back Rs 1.35 crore to the promoter-director at a time which coincided with an Income Tax raid on Lalu.

The CBI had earlier pointed out that most of the candidates who were selected were from a few districts in Bihar "wherein Lalu held political/ financial interest". According to the CBI's first chargesheet, Lalu's family had acquired over one lakh sq ft of land for Rs 26 lakh when the then circle rate put the cumulative value of the land at over Rs 4.39 crore. The final report was filed before the court by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on August 6. The ED filed its case based on an FIR lodged by the CBI.

Two minors among 4 held for robbing Nagaland students at Baner Hill in Pune

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The Pune city police on Sunday nabbed four teenage boys, including two minors, for allegedly robbing two other teenagers from Nagaland at Baner Hill on the evening of September 28. The police said two of the accused, identified as Ajimkya Ashok Bobade, 18, of Navi Sangvi, and Nikhil Babasaheb Dongre, 18, of Aundh, were arrested. The two minor accused involved in the crime were detained and sent to observation home, they said.

A 19-year-old youth lodged the FIR in this case at the Athurshringi police station on September 29. The police stated that the complainant is a second-year BA student at Spicer Adventist University on Aundh Road. He and his 19-year-old friend, who also attends the same college, live in Navi Sangvi. On September 28, they went for an evening walk at Baner Hill, the police said. Around 7.30 pm, the accused allegedly threatened to kill the victims by pointing a sharp weapon and snatched a cell phone and other valuables worth Rs 20,000 from them. According to the FIR, when the complainant refused to give the password of his cell phone to the robbers, they allegedly attacked him on his knees, leaving him injured. When the complainant shouted for help, the robbers fled, said the police, adding that the injured victim received treatment at the government hospital in Aundh. Acting on a tip-off, a team led by Sub Inspector Pranil Chowgule identified the accused and nabbed them. A press release by Inspector Mahesh Bolkotgi stated that they seized a motorcycle and a sharp weapon allegedly used by the accused in the crime.

Bengal junior doctors refuse to relent, continue fast-unto-death

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Kolkata: Agitating junior doctors in West Bengal continued their fast-unto-death for the third consecutive day on Monday, demanding justice for the rape and murder of a woman medic of the RG Kar hospital and workplace safety even as the State government remained silent to address their issues.

Six junior medics have been on the fast-unto-death since Saturday evening and later one more joined them. "Our fast-unto-death protest is on. We have not received any message from the State government. We will continue this until all our demands are met. No external pressure will be able to move us from our path of protest seeking justice for our deceased sister... It's now or never," Aniket Mahato, a junior doctor, said.

Mahato of RG Kar hospital joined Snigdha Hazra, Tanaya Panja and Anustup Mukhopadhyay of Kolkata medical college, Arnab Mukhopadhyay of SSKM hospital, Pulastha Acharya of NRS medical college and Sayantani Ghosh Hazra of KPC medical college for the fast-unto-death protest. The junior medics also alleged non-cooperation on the part of the Kolkata Police as they were not allowed to set up bio-toilets at the protest site at Dorina Crossing in the Dharmatala area of the city. To maintain transparency, the junior medics have installed CCTV cameras where their colleagues are holding the strike.

A large number of people and a few celebrities gathered at the protest site to express solidarity with the agitating doctors. On Friday, the junior doctors had called off their "total cease work", which had crippled healthcare services at state-run medical colleges and hospitals.

INDIAN CHRONICLE

Vehicle Fleet Modernisation Policy to be implemented in Telangana

Hyderabad: The State government has decided to implement Vehicle Fleet Modernization Policy in line with the recent amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act and similar to other States, aimed at providing incentives for encouraging a voluntary eco-system for phasing out end of life vehicles in the interest of road safety and clean environment.

Starting January, 2025, the state is likely to begin scrapping vehicles that are 15 years old or more and fail to pass fitness tests. These vehicles will no longer be allowed to register or operate on roads. Owners will have to either scrap their vehicles or face penalties if caught driving them.

Cyberabad police nab interstate gang of burglars

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad police nabbed an interstate criminal gang who were allegedly involved in several burglaries in Telangana and seized weapons including knives and daggers from them. According to the police, the gang was involved in 35 cases of burglaries and an auto mobile theft case reported in Cyberabad (17), Rachakonda (9), Sangareddy (5), Medak (4) and Nalgonda (1). Six of the gang members who were committing burglaries in the State were nabbed in a special operation by the Central Crime Stations teams of Balanagar and Madhapur zones. The gang hails from Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh and visited the State regularly.

Bhatti's presentation on encroachments triggers questions



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Hyderabad: A day after Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka made a presentation on encroachments of water bodies in the capital region since 2014, social media has been abuzz with discussions and observations with many opining that the report cited in the presentation was creating panic among the public, apart from many expressing doubts over extortion attempts and the same impacting Hyderabad's brand image. The discussions are revolving around several major projects that purportedly fall under different lake FTL limits, and whether the government would initiate action against them, and also, what the impact of any such action would be on Hyderabad's real estate sector, which is already facing a slump.

Sharing details of a few high profile projects, an X handle that shares posts on the city's real estate sector, Hyderabad Real Estate and Infra, said: "Any serious action on these projects will push Hyderabad real estate to death bed. I request Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and HYDRRAA Commissioner to spare these for now and focus solely on protecting further violations..." The handle also said that if rules were strictly implemented and these projects were demolished, the loss would of thousands of crores. More importantly, investors would lose confidence on the Hyderabad market altogether.

"All these projects are RERA and HMDA approved. Other repercussions would be that government would lose significant revenue and NRI inflow into Telangana real estate might stop for long periods," it said. Responding to the post, Saikumar Deshavath, an X user, said Revanth Reddy's main idea of bulldozer was to "threaten the big builders by removing small houses and to make money settlement with them". Another user, @MusicOctaves warned that with such moves, Hyderabad would "remain a village with no developments with morons running the government". There were many like Rajashekar Reddy Anreddy who alleged that Congress leaders want to blackmail realtors to make money and send to the Congress high command. Real estate Patashala, another X account posted: "There is no clarity in the report. This is just to create panic in public. It is better that the government does not add more confusion now. Government won't touch big guys as everyone knows...". Echoing similar opinion, a user Gopi Krishna said Hyderabad real estate was already hitting rock bottom. "Action on these projects would most probably put the real estate on rock solid pause. Already people are scared to invest in small projects and now big projects getting impacted is the last nail in the coffin..."

Teachers MLC demands release of pending bills



Kura Raghotham Reddy warned an agitation action plan would be announced if the government fails to address the teachers' issue

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Hyderabad: MLC Kura Raghotham Reddy on Tuesday demanded the State government release the bills, which have been pending since last two years, related to teachers' surrender leaves, GPF, TGLI, medical and retirement benefits, along with regular salaries pending bills, before the Dasara festival. He warned that an agitation action plan would be announced if the government fails to address the teachers' issue.

Participating in the two-day PRU TS 35th State Council meeting, Raghotham Reddy also demanded the government to pay pending bills in lump sum, release five DAs as a Dasara gift besides bringing in PRC report, implement PRC with 50 per cent fitment and extend health cards with cashless treatment to teachers by January.

During the meeting, teachers - Pingili Sripal Reddy and P Damodar Reddy were unanimously selected as the PRU TS president and general secretary respectively. Sripal Reddy was elected as the president for the fourth term, while Damodar Reddy for general secretary post was elected for the first time.

PM Modi congratulates Nayab Singh Saini for Haryana poll victory

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday congratulated Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini for his party's decisive victory in the Assembly elections. Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar -- the former Haryana CM -- praised PM Modi and the BJP's performance, stating: "The people have given a clear message that our work, under PM Modi's leadership, is resonating with the public. For the first time, the BJP has secured a third consecutive term in Haryana, a record-breaking achievement. No party has done as much as we have for farmers, wrestlers, and soldiers." Khattar emphasised that the public's approval of the BJP's governance and policies is evident in this



victory.

"Our high command has announced Nayab Singh Saini as the Chief Minister, though the final decision will be taken by the parliamentary board," he said. "I know that in 2014, when we contested the election in Haryana, we gave the slogan -- Haryana is one, Haryanvi is one. So, I consider all the people of Haryana as family. Our Chief Minister has always worked for the people of Haryana," Khattar said. He

continued: "The people have embraced the BJP's policies and Modi ji's accomplishments, and this has allowed us to secure yet another term in Haryana." Reflecting on the opposition's strategy, Khattar said: "The Congress ran a negative campaign, spreading lies and misleading the public. The people saw through it and chose to reject the Congress." On the question, what went wrong with the Congress, Khattar said that only Congress should answer this. The Congress has accused the Election Commission of slow counting. On this, the Union Minister said that Congress has the habit of blaming something or the other for its defeat. Khattar highlighted the party's work, particularly in supporting farmers and athletes. "The BJP has done more for farmers than the Congress could ever imagine. The electorate's refusal to be misled is a testament to our work. I extend my gratitude to the people of Haryana and the BJP workers for this spectacular victory." According to the latest Election Commission data, the BJP is on course to win at least 50 seats, a comfortable majority to form the government in the 90-member Assembly. This historic win marks a significant moment for the BJP, securing a third consecutive term in Haryana.

Haryana poll results not acceptable, will approach EC with complaints, says Congress after defeat



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

New Delhi: The Congress has decided to approach the Election Commission of India (ECI) with regard to what it describes as irregularities in the electoral process in Haryana. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh expressed disbelief at the Haryana election results, claiming they contradicted public sentiment and ground realities. "The results are totally unexpected and surprising. It goes against what the people of Haryana were seeking -- a mandate for change and transformation," Ramesh said on Tuesday, questioning the credibility of the poll outcome. He also alleged that authorities were intimidated, leading to unexpected losses in constituencies where Congress had been performing well. Ramesh further revealed that serious complaints had been raised about the counting process and the functionality of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in at least three districts.

"We have received complaints about EVM malfunctions in Hisar, Mahendragarh, and Panipat, with issues regarding machine batteries and inconsistent results," he said. These complaints are being gathered and will be presented to the ECI in the coming days. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera echoed these concerns, labelling the election as "a victory for manipulation and a defeat for democracy".

Khera said, "We have received very serious complaints on the process of counting, the functioning of EVMs in at least three districts. We have spoken to our senior colleagues in Haryana and information is still being collected. We will present this to the Election Commission. Serious questions have been raised by our candidates. What we have seen today in Haryana is a victory for manipulation, a victory for subverting the will of the people and it is a defeat of democratic process." He criticised the process, citing disbelief over the unexpected results, and mentioned that Congress candidates had already submitted grievances to local returning officers. The Congress is also focused on the ongoing political developments in Jammu and Kashmir, where the National Conference-Congress alliance has secured a clear mandate.

IMA urges Health Ministry to step in to allow commencement of NEET-PG counselling

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Tuesday (October 8, 2024) urged the government to explore interim measures that could allow the NEET P-G 2024 counselling process to commence, ensuring that the interests of both students and the healthcare system are safeguarded. The IMA has written to Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda drawing his attention to the growing concerns and uncertainty surrounding the delay in the NEET-PG 2024 counselling process, which is currently held up due to an ongoing case in the Supreme Court.

"The delay in the counselling process is causing immense distress to thousands of NEET PG aspirants across the country," the doctors' body said.

Exploitation of Sabarimala pilgrims can't be permitted: Kerala HC

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Kochi: The Kerala High Court on Tuesday spoke tough, directing the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) to take action against those found illegally charging Lord Ayappa devotees visiting Sabarimala temple for the 'pottukuthal' (applying Vibhuthi, Sindoor, or Chandanam) ritual. TDB is the body under the State Minister of Devaswom which manages the administration of the state's premier temple where a large number of pilgrims come from the various South Indian states. The fresh two-month old season begins in the third week of November and hence this directive is expected to be a huge relief for the pilgrims. "Exploitation of pilgrims who are on pilgrimage to Sabarimala to worship Lord Ayyappa cannot be permitted. No devotee or Sabarimala pilgrim can be exploited by any person based on any usage like the one stated in the order (pottukuthal)," said the court.

"It is for the TDB to take necessary steps to ensure no illegal activity by any person is permitted inside the temple premises of either Erumeli temple or any of the temples under its management during Maasa Pooja and Mandala Magaram Velak," the court ruled. The court was hearing a petition challenging a tender notification issued by the TDB which allowed recognised private entities to collect Rs 10 per person at Erumeli -- the main base camp for pilgrims -- for pottukuthal. The petitioners, all devotees of Lord Ayyappa, had argued that the tender notification permitting charges for 'pottukuthal' violated their constitutional right to religious freedom. They further stated that this ritual has traditionally been performed freely by pilgrims, although they also had the option of giving free donations through hundis (cash collection boxes) kept at certain points. However, the TDB following the queries by the court said that it had acted only to prevent unauthorised persons from collecting exorbitant charges from pilgrims for pottukuthal. But with the court



taking a strong position, the TDB has now stated that pottukuthal will be provided free of cost and added that action would be taken if anyone collects a fee for this. Incidentally, this is an age-old practice which is followed as a matter of custom by Sabarimala pilgrims and the TDB informed the court that three mirrors have been installed at key places and Vibhuthi, Sindoor, or Chandanam have been placed to help the pilgrims do the pottukuthal themselves. The rule of this famed Hindu temple, dedicated to Lord Ayappa, bars women who have attained puberty but have not reached menopause from entering it. Sabarimala temple, situated on the mountain ranges of the Western Ghats, at an altitude of 914 meters above sea level, four kilometres uphill from Pamba in Pathanamthitta district in Central Kerala, has become one of the most famous Hindu pilgrim centres in India and has earned itself the tag as the Mecca for Hindus. The temple, on the top of the hill, is accessible only by foot from Pamba. Even though the temple is now open throughout the year, the peak pilgrimage season begins on the first day of the Malayalam month in November and closes on the first day of the Malayalam month in January.

'Ill-founded allegations': EC dismisses Congress concerns over slow counting in Haryana

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Responding to Congress leader Jairam Ramesh's memorandum raising concern over an "unexplained slowdown in updating of results" from the Haryana Assembly election on its website, the Election Commission has on Tuesday said the process was being carried out as per rules. "With reference to your today's memorandum regarding slowdown in updating of results of Haryana on the ECI website, it is reiterated that, entire counting process in Haryana and J&K is unfolding in the presence of candidates, observers and micro-observers as per the statutory scheme," the EC said. "There is nothing on record to substantiate your ill-founded allegation of slowdown in updating of results. Your memorandum also does not bring out any contrary facts as to the delay at any of the constituencies in Haryana or J&K," it said. Ramesh, the Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, had written to the Election Commission earlier on Tuesday about the slow pace of updates from the counting centres. Former Haryana chief minister and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda also raised the issue of slow updates.

"Congress is going to get a majority in the state, and in several seats where the party is winning, the data is not getting updated... For example Ramgarh... I request all my counting agents to stay where they are, and (as-

sure them) that we are getting a majority," said Hooda at a press briefing. The EC pointed out that the party had raised a similar concern during the counting of votes for Lok Sabha elections on June 4, to which the EC had replied by saying the counting was being carried out as per Rule 60 of the Conduct of Election Rules. The Commission said the results available on its results website showed the pace of the counting. "Approximately 25 rounds across all the constituencies are being updated every five minutes, which testifies dissemination of counting process in a speedy manner... the Commission unequivocally rejects your attempt to surreptitiously give credence to irresponsible, unfounded and uncorroborated malafide narratives," the EC wrote. According to EC sources, the Commission had not received any complaints regarding counting from any counting centre or candidate. As per Rule 60 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, the counting is to be carried out continuously in presence of the candidates or their election agents. Rule 60 reads: "The returning officer shall, as far as practicable, proceed continuously with the counting and shall, during any intervals when the counting has to be suspended, keep the ballot papers, packets and all other papers relating to the election sealed with his own seal and the seals of such candidates or election agents as may desire to affix their seals and take sufficient precaution for their safe custody during such intervals."

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SARDA KAMAL KISHOR S/O SARDA RAMPRASAD (old name)** born on 16-04-1967 at Adilabad earlier was Holding Passport No. J7844720 Dt: 26-08-2011 hereby Changing my Name and henceforth in future I would be known as **SARDA KAMAL KISHORE S/O SARDA RAMPRASAD (new name)** H.No.2-5-286/9/6/92 Q.No. 90 G S Estate, Adilabad-504001, Telangana State.

DECLARANT.

SARDA KAMAL KISHORE S/O SARDA RAMPRASAD

Place: Adilabad
Date: 08-10-2024

'Couldn't believe it': For Rose Valley investors, a faint ray of hope as refund process begins



the children," says Bandana, who works as a bidi binder.

Another recipient of the SMS on Friday was Susmita Banerjee, whose husband Amit was a Rose Valley depositor and subsequently one of the main faces of the protests demanding the return of depositors' money. The ordeal, however, took a toll on him, according to his wife, and he died last year of heart disease. "When I got the SMS on Friday at 4.20 pm, I was very happy that ultimately the movement that Amit led became successful, and his stand that money should be returned was vindicated. On the other hand, there is also sadness that he is not alive to see this as he would have been the happiest person today," says Susmita, standing in front of her husband's photo hanging on the wall at their home in Hooghly's Konnagar.

"It was a very difficult day for us when the chit fund was busted... After a few months, he and some agents started bringing affected people together and started a movement. It became his main pursuit in life and he started neglecting his own health. Gradually, he started suffering from heart disease," she says. Last year, Amit went to Guwahati for a depositors' meeting after hearing that the Central government was starting a procedure to return their money. During the meeting, he fell ill and died before he could be taken to hospital.

Susmita says many who have got their money back have not disclosed the fact to others. "Depositors who were also agents fear that once again, people will rush to their house after hearing about the money. Many have taken loans, and this Rs 10,000 will not be enough to repay all those coming with demands," she says. One of the most successful agents for Rose Valley was 39-year-old Jalauddin Laskar, a resident of Karimpur in Nadia district. He had brought in more than 400 depositors, who invested around Rs 2.5 crore. His own family invested around Rs 30 lakh. "When Rose Valley closed in 2014, depositors held us (the agents) responsible. Almost every day, my house was gheraoed. We used to lock up and hide in fear. We faced intimidation and utmost humiliation, but I told everybody that I never syphoned a single penny. I fought for my depositors," says Jalauddin.

He said the movement to get the money back began in 2014, but had "scattered" by 2016. "Again in 2018, we reassembled and revived the movement. We also started our legal fight... Somehow, I joined a service as a salesman. Every month I would go to Kolkata for this legal fight and I am happy that ultimately, people could be getting at least the principle amount back. Our movement was successful," he says. He works as a salesman now after losing his job and a small business that he had during the years since 2014, he says. The lawyer for the depositors, Shubhasis Chakraborty, said he has been fighting their legal battle since 2015 and expressed his happiness that they were starting to get their money back. He explained that after the High Court set up an asset disposal committee, a website was made for depositors to make their claims. "Almost 28 lakh depositors submitted their claims on the website so far... We demanded that by selling properties and land of Rose Valley, depositors' money can be returned. I am personally very happy that lakhs of people who fought for this have got success." All Bengal Chit Fund Sufferers Welfare Association president Rupam Chowdhury has demanded that SEBI allocate Rs 1,000 crore to return money to depositors. He also called on the asset disposal committee to "publish a status paper that will give the number and list of depositors, and the amount of money from Rose Valley that is in the custody of SEBI and ED".

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Sitting on a bed with sheets of papers spread out in front of him, 52-year-old Asim Kumar Baruri recounts how he lost his life savings in Ponzi schemes and that he even contemplated suicide. On Friday, however, he received an SMS that gave him cause for hope. The message said his bank account was credited with `10,000 — a part of the amount he invested with the Rose Valley Group, which allegedly ran one of the biggest financial frauds in the history of West Bengal, until it went bust in 2013. Asim, from Pandua in West Bengal's Hooghly district, is among 7,346 Rose Valley depositors who got part of their money back on Friday in the first phase of the long-awaited restitution process initiated by the Rose Valley Asset Disposal Committee. The committee was constituted in 2015 by a Calcutta High Court order for the purpose of refunding investors, and was headed by Justice Dilip Kumar Seth. The first phase of the process saw 7,346 depositors receiving refunds of `10,200 each. According to the Enforcement Directorate, 31,352 claims by depositors have been processed so far, out of a total 28.10 lakh claims. Companies under the Rose Valley Group are estimated to have defrauded investors of over `17,000 crore — the highest amount among the several chit funds that went bust one after the other in West Bengal starting with the Saradha Group in January 2013.

In 2014, the ED registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against the Rose Valley Group, its chairman Gautam Kundu, and others. Kundu was arrested in March 2015 and remains in judicial custody. The Rose Valley Group is alleged to have defrauded thousands of people by collecting funds through fake schemes and not making repayments. "Friday, at around 3.15 pm, when the SMS came that money had been put into my account, I could not believe it. I had lost all hope. Since 2014, my family has lost all its savings and investments. I won't lie to you, many times I thought of killing myself," says Asim, who deposited `20,000 in Rose Valley, which promised double the amount in five years. He also deposited `1.55 lakh and `2.5 lakh each in two other chit fund schemes called Alchemist and Aspen respectively. All this money was lost. Like several depositors, he also worked as an agent for some chit fund companies that promise greater benefits if they can convince other people to enrol. Bandana recounts the struggles they faced: "We lost all our savings, and on top of that, he (Asim) was an agent for one of the companies and got 24 people to make deposits. After the chit fund companies went bust, every now and then, depositors would come to threaten us and demand their money back. They thought we were responsible. It was such a humiliation. Some threatened to kill my husband." She says they took a big loan, but could not repay all the money that was demanded from them. "In those days, we did not even have money to properly feed

A tourist favourite, Agrasen ki Baoli is grabbing eyeballs for another reason now

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

One of the most iconic pictures of celebrated photographer Raghu Rai is a black and white image of a boy ready to dive into a historical waterbody as a couple of high-rises of Central Delhi seem to peer into the frame from the background. The year was 1971 and the waterbody, Agrasen ki Baoli, a stepwell hidden in the lanes of Central Delhi's Hailey Road. Adequately filled with water in the Rai image, the Baoli lost all its water over the years as is evident from later-date pictures. However, over the past few months, water seems to be making its way back into the baoli, prompting authorities to place barricades, preventing visitors from venturing beyond a certain point. Earlier this year, a team of experts from the Jal Shakti Ministry, National Monument Authority (NMA), and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) visited the site to collect water samples and conduct a thorough survey of the surrounding area, according to official sources. "The central team took samples from the Baoli for lab analysis," said a source familiar with the situation. So far, there is no clarity on how the water returned to the baoli — due to the bountiful monsoon or any external factor.



Express, "It takes its name from Raja Agrasen who is believed to be the founder of the Agrawal community. His reign is connected to both Agra and Agroha (in Haryana). The mystery lies in his connection with the history of the Delhi region. We also don't know about the exact years of his reign." Khan says the present structure of the baoli probably dates from the Tughlaq age (1320-1413 AD) and has been repaired by the dynasties that followed them. "This creates a lovely concoction of history and beliefs from multiple ages all coming together in the most widely clicked baoli of Delhi," he adds.

The visit by the central team involved a close inspection of structures within a 300-metre radius of the monument to identify if any nearby construction projects could have interfered with the water table. Officials from the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) were among those present during the survey, given that Barakhamba Metro station on the Blue Line is in close proximity to the monument. According to the Delhi Tourism Department website, Agrasen ki Baoli is a protected monument under the ASI. When contacted, a senior ASI official refused to comment on the water situation at the structure. Water or no water, the 103-step baoli, over the last few years, has begun drawing people in hordes — from tourists making a quick pit-stop after lunch at a CP restaurant to youngsters creating reels for "likes" to a lone artist longingly gazing at the structure while sketching away on their drawing pads. Journalist and author Sam Miller, in his book, Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity, calls the baoli "Central Delhi's oldest building". On its history, he writes that it is "a mere seven hundred years old, according to historians. Agrasen was probably a thirteenth-century chieftain..."

Miller claims to have met the young boy in the Rai frame, this time a grown man, who, by a curious twist of fate, had ended up as the watchman of the very structure where he was captured in a frame for eternity. "I ask the watchman if he has seen the photograph and he stuns me by saying that he... was that diving boy... In the thirty years in which Bagh Singh has aged so rapidly, the water level at Agrasen's Baoli has fallen..." he writes in the book first published in 2008. Rameen Khan, founder of City Tales, which conducts heritage walks in Delhi and beyond, says, "The most famous baoli of Delhi is also an enigma." Elaborating on the mystery, he tells The Indian

Woman civic volunteer in Kolkata Police alleges molestation by S-I, FIR registered



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

A woman civic police volunteer attached to a police station in Kolkata has accused a local sub-inspector of molesting and sexually harassing her inside the police station. She also alleged that when she complained, the Duty Officer refused to accept it in a letter to Kolkata Police Commissioner Manoj Kumar Verma and state Home Secretary Nandini Chakraborty, the woman civic volunteer wrote: "...on 04.10.24, I was performing my duty from 21:00 hrs. While I was on duty, the said (S-I) officer called me through his guard at his restroom, which is situated on the third floor of the... police station at about 01.10 am... on 5th October 2024." "When I went to his restroom, he gave me a new salwar suit as a Puja gift. While I was receiving the gift, he started to touch me inappropriately... while I opposed... he tried to exert force... The duty officer... ignored the seriousness of the complaint and tried to verbally console me to let it go," she wrote in the letter dated October 5, 2024. She then wrote: "After some time, I called my younger brother to the police station... he

arrived within 15-20 minutes and wanted to lodge a general diary about the said incident. The duty officer refused to lodge the complaint and instead, he tried to settle the matter at the police station... advising me to ignore the incident and move on. Then... my uncle was informed... He took me immediately to the Calcutta National Medical College & Hospital for treatment..."

According to the woman, who has been a civic volunteer since 2017, the accused police officer had made "a similar advance" on September 25 this year. "...the same said officer was in a drunken state and had made a similar advance on me in the computer room of the police station... I immediately informed the guard on WhatsApp, and I overlooked the matter without informing my family," she wrote.

"In the above circumstances, I would like to inform you that I am currently in a very disturbed mental state and I fear for my life and self-respect. Hence, I am feeling insecure and will not attend any duty henceforth till further communication and assurance by higher authorities... It is my moral duty to lodge a complaint against the said officer for his behaviour with the junior staff. Kindly treat this letter of complaint as an FIR, and take necessary legal action against the said person," the woman civic volunteer added. After the letter went viral, the police registered an FIR against the accused sub-inspector on Sunday. The S-I has been booked under Section 74 (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Sources said that the officer has not been arrested. He has, however, been pulled out of duty.

CM Yogi unveils Mahakumbh logo, says no sale of meat & liquor within Prayagraj

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday unveiled the logo, website and a mobile app for Mahakumbh-2025 in Prayagraj, and asserted that the mega event is "an opportunity to showcase India's 'sanatan sanskriti' (eternal culture) to the entire world. The CM, who took stock of the arrangements with ministers and senior government officials, said no sale of meat and liquor should take place within the "traditional boundaries" of Prayagraj. Adityanath asked the officials concerned to co-ordinate with seers and for better management and set December 10 as the deadline for completing all preparations for the mela. Claiming the Mahakumbh will set new standards of cleanliness, security, and convenience, Adityanath said, "Uttar Pradesh had set high standards by successfully organising the 2019 Kumbh, raising the expectations of people for this event. The mela area, which spanned over 3,200 hectares in 2019, will now be expanded to over 4,000 hectares."

More than 7,000 buses would be deployed and over 150,000 toilets installed for the event, the CM announced. Maintaining that nearly 10,000 workers be deployed as part of the sanitation effort, he assured that the Ganga and Yamuna rivers will flow uninterrupted and clean during the Mahakumbh, with zero discharge of waste from Bijnor to Ballia. The CM also directed the officials to ensure the steel bridge is completed by the first week of December to facilitate an easy access to Prayagraj from



Kanpur, Lucknow, Barabanki, and Ayodhya. It was also informed during the review that the mela area will have three police lines, three women's police stations, and ten police posts. Officials were asked to create a "VVIP corridor" from the airport to the fairground and ensure that no VIP movement takes place during the special bathing rituals. Highlighting the importance of effective crowd management, fire services, help desks, parking facilities, and CCTV surveillance, the Chief Minister also announced the installation of an anti-drone system while stressing that security models should make use of "AI tools". Stressing the need for establishing new Government Railway Police (GRP) stations for security, Adityanath asked the officials to ensure better coordination between the railway authorities and the state police.

Mamata Banerjee backs police: Don't get distracted by what others say

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

mamata banerjee, west bengal, police punishment media trials, cybercrime, artificial intelligence, women safety, Indian express newsChief Minister Mamata Banerjee during the unveiling of Surchi Sangho Durga Puja in Kolkata asserting that crime has no colour, caste, or religion, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday directed the police to register the FIR under the POCSO Act in connection with the murder of a schoolgirl in South 24 Parganas district and to ensure that the culprits are "hanged to death capital" within three months.

Speaking at the Kolkata Police Body Guard Lines after virtually inaugurating several Durga Pujas, the CM said: "I want the police to register the case under the POCSO Act and ensure that the culprits get capital punishment within three months... Crime is crime; there is no religion or caste. Strong action should be taken against the criminals." Taking exception to "media trials" in rape cases, the chief minister said these must stop as it could hamper investigations and told the police to not get distracted by it. "Raja chale hazaar, kutta bhonke hazar... Eta mathai rakhte hobee... je kaaj kore, se galagalo khai... etai koli-kaaler niyom... are je kaaj korbe na, ke take galagali debe, tara naki somajer boro boro trata... keu keu bhabchhe tara bhogobaner theko boro (Don't get affected by what others say... Keep this in mind. Those who work are the ones who faces criticism... This is the rule of Kaliyug... Those who don't do any work, they are now society's so-called saviours... They consider themselves bigger than Gods)," the chief minister said.

Talking about the protests, the chief minister said: "After one or two incidents happen, people start shouting. They should do it in a democracy. I have no problem.



But, when these things happen in other states, they remain mute. They put bandages in their mouths." Reiterating her remark, which she had made to her TMC cadres during the beginning of the protests over the rape and murder of a junior doctor at RG Kar hospital, Banerjee said: "Thakur Ramakrishna once said to his disciples, you may not bite, but you can hiss. I am also saying, you can hiss. Police will be soft from the outside, but inside they should be bold."

She also spoke against cybercrime and increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to spread fake news. "Today, AI has come. You will see my picture, my body, and listen to my speech but that is not me. Fake. This is AI. Now, cybercrime is increasing," she said. "I am telling the police that girls who can identify the cybercrime, fake videos and alert the them fast, there will be a reward for them. They will also get jobs, if needed. Not everything is done by everyone. Only girls can help in this," the chief minister said.

Mumbai's first underground Metro corridor from BKC to Aarey opens

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Mumbai: Mumbai's first underground Metro corridor, the aqua line's phase-1, stretching from Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) to Aarey became operational for the public on Monday morning. A large number of people came to experience the ride on the first day of the BKC to Aarey stretch of Mumbai Metro Line 3. The Metro operation on the stretch commenced for the public at 11 am, amid cheers from passengers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the 12.69 km long phase-1 of the BKC to Aarey stretch of Mumbai Metro Line 3.

He travelled from BKC to Santacruz and back during which he interacted with students, beneficiaries of the Maharashtra government's Ladki Bahin scheme and labourers involved in constructing the underground

line. The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC), which is executing the 33.5-km-long Colaba-SEEPZ-Aarey JVLR project, has already notified that the regular operation of the Metro on the aqua line will commence from Tuesday. As per the notification, services will be operated from 6.30 am to 10.30 pm between Monday and Saturday, and from 8.30 am to 10.30 pm on Sundays. The minimum fare for a ride on the Metro line is Rs 10 and maximum Rs 50, as per the MMRC. Passengers can book tickets using the NCMC (National Common Mobility Card), Mumbai Metro 3 mobile app, and ticket vending machines, among other means. The corridor between BKC and Aarey road has 10 Metro stations — BKC, Bandra Colony, Santacruz metro, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) T1,

Tunisia voting ends as Saied eyes re-election with critics behind bars

Tunisia voting ends as Saied eyes re-election with critics behind bars



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Polls closed Sunday (October 6, 2024) night in Tunisia after voting in a presidential election expected to see incumbent Kais Saied secure another five years in office while his main critics — including one contender — are behind bars. Three years after Mr. Saied staged a sweeping power grab, rights group fear re-election will only further entrench his rule in the country which became the only democracy to emerge from the Arab Spring uprisings.

With the ouster of longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011, Tunisia prided itself on being the birthplace of those regional revolts against authoritarianism. But the north African country's path changed dramatically soon after Mr. Saied's democratic election in 2019. The power grab by Mr. Saied, 66, saw him rewrite the constitution and crack down on dissent, sparking criticism at home and abroad. In a speech on Thursday, Mr. Saied called for a "massive turnout to vote" and usher in what he called an era of "reconstruction". The Tunisian electoral board, ISIE, has said about 9.7 million people were eligible to vote, in a country whose population is around 12 million. By 1:00 p.m. — five hours before the 5,000 polling station closed — only 14% of voters had cast ballots, ISIE said. The board's spokesman Mohamed Tlili Mansri later said it was expecting around 30% turnout. That is roughly the same proportion of people who turned out in 2022 for a widely boycotted referendum on the new constitution. "Support Kais Saied" I came to support Kais Saied, a 69-year-old Nouri Masmoudi said in the morning. "My whole family is going to vote for him." Hosni Abidi, 40, said he feared electoral fraud. "I don't want people to choose for me," he said. "I want to check the box for my candidate myself." Tunisia's electoral board said ahead of the ballot that it would not allow two local

independent watchdogs to monitor the vote. By midday in Bab Jeddid, a working-class neighbourhood, there were few voters, and most were elderly men. Mr. Saied cast his vote alongside his wife in the affluent Ennasr neighbourhood, north of Tunis, in the morning. New York-based Human Rights Watch has said more than "170 people are detained in Tunisia on political grounds or for exercising their fundamental rights". Jailed opposition figures include Rached Ghannouchi, head of the Islamist-inspired opposition party Ennahdha, which dominated political life after the revolution. Also detained is Abir Moussi, head of the Free Destourian Party, which criticises a decade of wanting to bring back the regime that was ousted in 2011. Least bad candidate Heavily indebted Tunisia is grappling with weak economic growth, high inflation and unemployment that has led many Tunisians to join mostly sub-Saharan African migrants that use the country as a jumping-off point to Europe. "Many fear that a new mandate for Saied will only deepen the country's socio-economic woes, as well as hasten the regime's authoritarian drift," the International Crisis Group think tank said. Yet, voters were presented with almost no alternative to Mr. Saied. ISIE barred 14 hopefuls from standing in the race, citing technicalities. Wajid Harrar, a 22-year-old student, said that in 2019, while she was too young to vote, "people had chosen a bad President".

This time, she said, "I have the right to vote and I will give my vote to the least bad candidate." Mohamed Aziz, 21, said he was "motivated by the elections because choosing the right person for the next five years is important". On Friday, hundreds of people protested in the capital, some holding signs denouncing Mr. Saied as a "Pharaoh manipulating the law". Standing against him Sunday were former lawmaker Zouhair Maghzaoui, 59, who backed Mr. Saied's power grab in 2021, and Ayachi Zammel, 47, a little-known businessman who has been in jail since his bid was approved by ISIE last month. Mr. Zammel currently faces more than 14 years in prison on accusations of having forged endorsement signatures to enable him to stand in the election. Voting in Marsa, north of Tunis, Mr. Maghzaoui called on Tunisians to "vote in large numbers". On Thursday, Mr. Saied cited "a long war against conspiratorial forces linked to foreign circles", accusing them of "infiltrating many public services and disrupting hundreds of projects" under his tenure. Crisis Group said that while Mr. Saied "enjoys significant support among the working classes, he has been criticised for failing to resolve the country's deep economic crisis".



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Polls closed Sunday (October 6, 2024) night in Tunisia after voting in a presidential election expected to see incumbent Kais Saied secure another five years in office while his main critics — including one contender — are behind bars. Three years after Mr. Saied staged a sweeping power grab, rights group fear re-election will only further entrench his rule in the country which became the only democracy to emerge from the Arab Spring uprisings. With the ouster of longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011, Tunisia prided itself on being the birthplace of those regional revolts against authoritarianism. But the north African country's path changed dramatically soon after Mr. Saied's democratic election in 2019. The power grab by Mr. Saied, 66, saw him rewrite the constitution and crack down on dissent, sparking criticism at home and abroad. In a speech on Thursday, Mr. Saied called for a "massive turnout to vote" and usher in what he called an era of "reconstruction". The Tunisian electoral board, ISIE, has said about 9.7 million people were eligible to vote, in a country whose population is around 12 million. By 1:00 p.m. — five hours before the 5,000 polling station closed — only 14% of voters had cast ballots, ISIE said. The board's spokesman Mohamed Tlili Mansri later said it was expecting around 30% turnout. That is roughly the same proportion of people who turned out in 2022 for a widely boycotted referendum on the new constitution. "Support Kais Saied" I came to support Kais Saied, a 69-year-old Nouri Masmoudi said in the morning. "My whole family is going to vote for him."

Hosni Abidi, 40, said he feared electoral fraud. "I don't want people to choose for me," he said. "I want to check the box for my candidate myself." Tunisia's electoral board said ahead of the ballot that it would not allow two local

UN refugee chief says airstrikes in Lebanon have violated humanitarian law

The status of the civil war in Sudan

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The United Nations' refugee chief Filippo Grandi said on Sunday (October 6, 2024) that airstrikes in Lebanon had violated international humanitarian law by hitting civilian infrastructure and killing civilians, in reference to Israel's bombardment of the country. "Unfortunately, many instances of violations of international humanitarian law in the way the airstrikes are conducted that have destroyed or damaged civilian infrastructure, have killed civilians, have impacted humanitarian operations," he told media in Beirut.



Mr. Grandi was in Lebanon as it struggles to cope with the displacement of more than 1.2 million people as a result of an expanded Israeli air and ground operation that it says is targeting Iran-backed Hezbollah. Fighting had previously been mostly limited to the Israel-Lebanon border area, in parallel to Israel's war in Gaza against Palestinian group Hamas. Mr. Grandi said all parties to the conflict and those with influence on them should "stop this carnage that is happening both in Gaza and in Lebanon today". More than 2,000 people have been killed and nearly 10,000 wounded in Lebanon in nearly a year of fighting, most in the past two weeks, the Lebanese Health Ministry says. Israel says around 50 civilians and soldiers have been killed. Israel says it targets military capabilities and takes steps to mitigate the risk of harm to civilians, while Lebanese authorities say civilians have been targeted. Israel accuses both Hezbollah and Hamas of hiding among civilians, which they deny.

Mr. Grandi said the World Health Organization briefed him "about egregious violations of IHL in respect

of health facilities in particular that have been impacted in various locations of Lebanon", using an acronym for international humanitarian law. Attacks on civilian homes may also be violations, though the matter requires further assessment, he said. The fighting has led some 220,000 people to cross the Lebanese border with Syria, 70% of whom are Syrians and 30% Lebanese, Mr. Grandi said, saying these were conservative estimates. Israel's bombardment of the main border crossing with Syria at Masnaa on Friday was "a huge obstacle", to those flows of people continuing, he said. Many of the Syrians leaving Lebanon had sought refuge and fled war and a security crackdown after the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2011. Now was an opportunity for the Syrian government to show that returnees' "safety and ability to go back to their homes or wherever they need to go is respected", Mr. Grandi said.

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The story so far: On September 26, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) launched a major offensive against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Khartoum and Bahri. Thus, the war which was quiet for a few months has gained momentum again. Eighteen months into the civil war, the UN said that more than 20,000 people have been killed. Additionally, the International Organization for Migration has recorded an estimated total of 10,890,722 internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of October 1. All ceasefire efforts and peace talks have failed so far. The latest offensive comes ahead of the U.S.-led ceasefire talks on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.



The civil war in Sudan between two military factions, the SAF and the RSF has crossed 18 months. It started as a power rivalry between the military heads of the SAF and the RSF, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Hamdan Dagalo respectively. What began as a conflict in the capital city of Khartoum has spread to Omdurman, Bahri, Port Sudan, El Fasher and the Port Sudan cities, as well as the Darfur and Kordofan states. The RSF has an upper hand in multiple war zones. However, since August, the SAF has been carrying out frequent airstrikes and has captured pocket regions around Khartoum. The humanitarian crisis is worsening countrywide amidst limited and restricted access to aid and health care, especially in the Darfur states. The warring sides are also accused of carrying out war crimes including sexual violence and extrajudicial killings in several regions. In August, the UN declared famine in the Zamzam camp in North Darfur which hosts nearly 5,00,000 IDPs. The UN-Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee says that 14 regions in the Greater Darfur, South and North Kordofan, and Jazeera states face conditions similar to Zamzam. According to the latest UN-backed IPC initiative, 25.6 million people, more than half of Sudan's population, face "crisis or worse" levels of food insecurity. Conditions have further worsened amidst heavy rains and floods and the subsequent spread of cholera. The outbreak has killed more than 200 people.

same time, Russia has been supplying weapons to the SAF as well. With abundant external support, both parties have little motive to end the war.

Have there been peace talks?

There were nine rounds of ceasefire efforts led predominantly by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia; all failed in their primary phase. On August 14, the latest round of U.S.-led peace talks were held in Geneva, Switzerland. But, neither of the warring parties attended. SAF boycotted the meeting, blaming the RSF for not adhering to the Jeddah Declaration 2023, including the withdrawal of forces from civilian regions. RSF also pulled out from the talks at the last moment.

The UN, the African Union, the U.S., the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the EU have all urged the parties to end the violence and work together to de-escalate the crisis. Egypt initiated a draft resolution on May 1 at the Arab League meeting in Cairo, calling for an "immediate and comprehensive cessation" of hostilities. Until now, any and all efforts at a long-lasting ceasefire have been ineffective. The RSF and the SAF claim they are open to negotiations but have shown little commitment to comply. They attempt to gain a military advantage during the ceasefire, owing to mistrust between the parties. Both sides have not reached a possible bargaining stage for an effective mediation. Another reason is that international media attention to the war on the ground is limited. International organisations' access to war zones is also restricted. With a limited understanding of the conflict on the ground, mediators like the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are challenged to formulate a ceasefire or peace talk which fit the multifaceted war situation.

What are the regional implications?

More than two million people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries including Chad, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The refugee camps are overflowing and have raised concerns in Europe that many will attempt to reach the continent. In February, dozens of Sudanese drowned when a migrant boat capsized along the Tunisia-Italy route. A lack of state apparatus and institutions has triggered ethnic clashes along the South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea borders. Since January, ethnic violence in the Abiye region, a disputed land between Sudan and South Sudan, has increased, with the UN reporting more than 100 casualties. Frequent clashes over agricultural land are reported in the El Fashaga region on the Sudan-Ethiopia border. The war has jeopardised an oil pipeline from South Sudan to the Red Sea.

What next?

The involvement of multiple actors and extended geography has made the war complex, challenging international actors to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table.

Multiple failed ceasefire attempts and peace talks imply the need to revisit international actors' approach to the war in Sudan. Although SAF has been gaining pockets in Khartoum, defeating the RSF is a long road. The RSF lacks international support to claim legitimacy. And, a RSF-SAF compromise is highly unlikely. The war will likely be prolonged until a major breakthrough.

There is an increasing fear that the military rivals will divide the country, leading to a plight similar to that of Libya's. Sudanese people have started to live with the war, and with much attention given to Gaza and Ukraine, the war in Sudan continues to rage on the sidelines.

U.S. spends a record \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since Gaza war

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The United States has spent a record of at least \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report from Brown University's Costs of War project, released on the anniversary of Hamas' attacks on Israel. An additional \$4.86 billion has gone into stepped-up U.S. military operations in the region since the Oct 7, 2023, attacks, researchers said in findings first provided to The Associated Press. That includes the costs of a Navy-led campaign to quell strikes on commercial shipping by Yemen's Houthis, who are carrying them out in solidarity with the fellow Iranian-backed group Hamas. The report — completed before Israel opened a second front, this one against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, in late September — is one of the first tallies of estimated U.S. costs as the Biden administration backs Israel in its conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon and seeks to contain hostilities by Iran-allied armed groups in the region. The financial toll is on top of the cost in human lives: Hamas militants killed more than 1,200 people in Israel a year ago and took others hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed nearly 42,000 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count. At least 1,400 people in Lebanon, including Hezbollah fighters and civilians, have been killed since Israel greatly expanded its strikes in that country in late September. The financial costs were calculated by Linda J. Bilmes, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, who has assessed the full costs of U.S. wars since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and fellow researchers William D. Hartung and Stephen Semler. Here's a look at where some of the U.S. taxpayer money went: Record military aid to Israel, who is a protégé of the United States since its 1948 founding — is the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in history, getting \$251.2 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars since 1959, the report says. Even so, the \$17.9 billion spent since Oct.

7, 2023, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is by far the most military aid sent to Israel in one year. The U.S. committed to providing billions in military assistance to Israel and Egypt each year when they signed their 1979 U.S.-brokered peace treaty, and an agreement since the Obama administration set the annual amount for Israel at \$3.8 billion through 2028. The U.S. aid since the Gaza war started includes military financing, arms sales, at least \$4.4 billion in drawdowns from U.S. stockpiles and hand-me-downs of used equipment. Much of the US weapons delivered in the year were munitions, from artillery shells to 2,000-pound bunker-busters and precision-guided bombs. Expenditures range from \$4 billion to replenish Israel's Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defence systems to cash for rifles and jet fuel, the study says. Unlike the U.S. publicly documented military aid to Ukraine, it was impossible to get the full details of what the U.S. has shipped Israel since last October 7, so the \$17.9 billion for the year is a partial figure, the researchers said. They cited Biden administration "efforts to hide the full amounts of aid and types of systems through bureaucratic maneuvering". Funding for the key US ally during a war that has exacted a heavy toll on civilians has divided Americans during the presidential campaign. But support for Israel has long carried weight in U.S. politics, and Mr. Biden said on Friday (October 4, 2024) that "no administration has helped Israel more than I have". The Biden administration has bolstered its military strength in the region since the war in Gaza started, aiming to deter and respond to any attacks on Israeli and American forces. Those additional operations cost at least \$4.86 billion, the report said, not including beefed-up US military aid to Egypt and other partners in the region. The U.S. had 34,000 forces in the Middle East the day that Hamas broke through Israeli barricades around Gaza to attack. That number rose to about 50,000 in August when two aircraft carriers were in the region, aiming to discourage retaliation after a strike attributed to Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran.

Why is the war continuing?

There is no sign of an end to the war. Firstly, both warring parties are adamant about gaining ground and legitimising their power. The SAF claims to be the legitimate government, with the UN just about recognising their claims, although it came to power through a coup in 2021. However, the RSF has territorial gains around the capital and other war zones. It opposes the SAF's efforts to represent Sudan internationally, claiming legitimacy. The RSF, a former Arab militia known as Janjaweed, seeks alliances from several Arab countries to support its claim to power.

Secondly, Sudan has been under the UN arms embargo, since the 2004 Darfur crisis, which has recently been extended for another year. However, the embargo has not blocked the flow of weapons. A Human Rights Watch report in July claimed that the warring parties have been using armed drones, drone jammers, anti-tank guided missiles, truck-mounted multi-barrel rocket launchers, and mortar munitions produced by companies registered in China, Iran, Russia, Serbia, and the UAE. Easy weapon procurement and use have aided the continuation of the war.

Thirdly, the war has become complex with the involvement of multiple actors and issues. What began as a military rivalry has now evolved through ethnic lines, involving several regional ethnic militias. Arab and non-Arab militias have taken sides with the RSF and the SAF respectively. The rebel group Sudanese People's Liberation Movement has been fighting alongside the SAF. The RSF and its allied Arab militias have been targeting the Masalit community and other non-Arabs in Darfur states. Ethnic tensions have intensified the war.

Fourthly, the SAF has accused the UAE and previously Russia's Wagner Group of supporting the RSF. Although the Wagner group and the RSF have rejected any direct military engagement, the group is allegedly supporting the RSF by facilitating the supply of UAE's weapons through the Central African Republic. At the



With long delays and steep haircuts, chorus for revamping Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code grows louder



India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant's call for reforms in India's insolvency resolution framework to cut delays and boost creditor recovery is latest in the growing chorus for making the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) more effective. Introduced in 2016, the code promised an overhaul of insolvency resolution with the aim to rescue and reorganise distressed companies through a time-bound process, prioritising their survival as going concerns. Eight years on, while the IBC has had a few successes, it is marred by issues like high case backlog, lengthy delays in admission and resolution, and steep haircuts for creditors. In the recent past, various stakeholders, including RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and the Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance, also flagged concerns and the need to rethink the IBC's design. While the IBC has fostered a culture of accountability and credit discipline among debtors, its efficiency is being undermined by procedural delays, shortage of personnel, deviations from key principles, and slow implementation of critical provisions.

Procedural delays "We must acknowledge some concerns regarding the present functioning of the IBC, indicating a need for a second generation of reforms. Analysis of IBBI's (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India) own data shows that insolvency resolutions at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) averaged 716 days in FY24, up from 654 days in FY23," Kant said Monday. The prescribed resolution timeline is 330 days.

India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, IBC insolvency, bankruptcy, banking reforms, India's insolvency resolution framework, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, insolvency resolution, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance, Indian express newsIn February 2024, the Standing Committee on Finance had flagged delays and their impact on the value of stressed assets, and called for a review of the IBC's design. "...the Committee believe that the design of the Code needs to be reviewed, taking into account the lacunae and roadblocks that have surfaced in implementing the Code so far, so that the very purpose behind its enactment is not defeated. The process of admitting claims also needs to be revisited as huge delays occur at this stage creating a domino effect on the whole resolution process, most critically degeneration of asset value," the panel said in a report. Das, too, had flagged the delays in January. "More concerning is the fact that, the average time taken for admission of a case during FY21 and FY22 stood at 468 days and 650 days respectively. Such long degree of delays will substantially erode the value of the assets. There are multitude of factors playing out here, namely, the evolving jurisprudence related to the Code; litigatory tactics adopted by some corporate debtors; lack of effective coordination among the creditors; bottlenecks in the judicial infrastructure, etc.," he said. Steep haircuts There is an inverse relationship between resolution time and debt recovery. As of March 31, cases resolved within 330 days saw a recovery rate of 49.2 per cent of admitted claims. For those resolved between 330 and 600 days, the recovery rate was 36 per cent. For those exceeding 600 days, the recovery rate was just 26.1 per cent.

Apart from value erosion for creditors, experts argue that delays are pushing outcomes towards liquidation, defeating the process's raison d'etre. Till March 31, liquidation orders took an average of 673 days, compared to 847 days for resolution plan approvals. Of the total 5,647 proceedings that were closed, 44 per cent ended in liquidation, 17 per cent in resolution plans getting approved, and the remaining were a mix of withdrawals and clo-

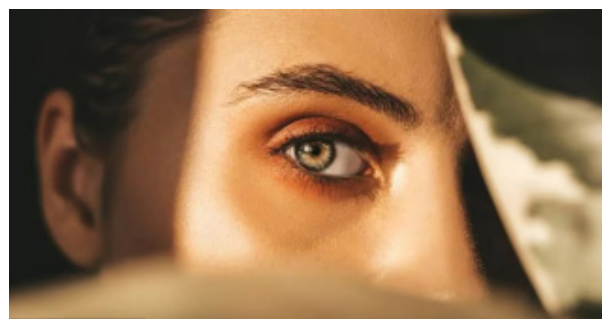
sures on appeals, review, or settlement. IBBI chairperson Ravi Mital recently said IBC cases take time as it is a creditor-led model, not debtor-led, and "the debtor tries his best to ensure that the case is not admitted", which leads to late admissions and consequently higher value erosion and haircuts for lenders.

"We did a study...when cases are admitted into IBC, they have already lost more than 50 per cent of their value. Now, IBC is not responsible if the creditors bring the cases late. IBC is responsible once a case is brought before it, and if you look at recovery as a percentage of fair value, we recover 84 per cent," Mital said. Industry experts agree that admission delays are hurting the process. Abhishek Daffra, Senior Vice President and Group Head, Structured Finance Ratings, at ICRA said: "We continue to find creditors approaching the NCLT to admit a defaulting corporate debtor with substantial delays, which results in significant erosion of assets...IBC is still not seen as the first step to try and ensure that the company remains a going concern. Lenders are taking other approaches before eventually turning to the IBC." While the NCLT should ideally decide on whether a case can be admitted under the IBC within 14 days of an insolvency application, it often takes months and sometimes even over a year to initiate insolvency proceedings. The reason, at least partly, is legal in nature.

"When we speak of admission delays, the law says it is 14 days from the date of filing (the application)...Why doesn't it happen? The Supreme Court has held that (the timeline) is procedural in nature and hence it is directly not mandatory. Possibly, 14 days seems to be a very short duration. Looking at the situation practically in the current environment, our current infrastructure...14 days looks very impractical," a senior lawyer told. In 2022, the apex court had held that admission within 14 days was not a mandatory provision of the IBC and that the NCLT had discretionary powers on deciding whether or not to admit the insolvency application. This means that the NCLT, instead of considering just the default as the sole basis of admission, should also consider the default's circumstances and the debtor's arguments. Kant emphasised the need to "clarify ambiguity on key legal principles," particularly regarding the supremacy of the Committee of Creditors' (CoC) commercial judgement and the established priority of claims. "The Rainbow Papers case highlighted the statutory priorities of VAT (Value Added Tax) versus IBC, stating that the CoC cannot secure their own dues at the cost of statutory dues owed to any government. This seems to contradict the legislative intent behind the IBC, which aimed for lower priority for government dues compared to secured lenders and financial institutions. A statutory amendment or reconsideration by a larger bench is required," Kant said.

Human resource crunch It is no secret that the system is choked and understaffed, with NCLT benches grappling with heavy case burden. While there has been an effort from the government to improve the staffing situation, it is still nowhere close to what is needed. In its February report, the Standing Committee on Finance mentioned that the pendency stands at over "20,000 cases in NCLT at the end of every year", and called for the enhancement of the NCLT's sanctioned strength. "Apart from the human resource gaps, the Committee would like to highlight that the NCLT is functioning with poor infrastructural setup. The Committee recommend that the Ministry (of Corporate Affairs) should prioritise addressing the requirements of the Tribunal urgently and fill the infrastructural and human capacity gaps without further delay. The Committee believe that equipping the NCLT is a crucial step in improving the implementation of IBC especially in timely resolution of cases," the report said. The government is already considering amendments to the IBC after a comprehensive review was undertaken last year. According to Kant, India should also consider moves like outsourcing court management for insolvency proceedings to private players. "It is often said that justice delayed is justice denied...there is a need for tribunal process re-engineering. It is essential to minimise judicial bandwidth on administrative matters while opening non-court functions to innovative non-sovereign or private players to deploy technology for improved court management," he said.

You can change eye colour, but this surgery has '92% rate of complications'



Will you undergo a surgery that has a 92.30 per cent rate of complications, that too, to get the colour of your eyes changed? Well, some do. Eye colour change surgery or iris implants, which involves inserting a coloured, artificial iris into the eyes to alter its colour, is now gaining popularity as a cosmetic surgery. "While originally developed for medical conditions like congenital defects or trauma to the iris, iris implant surgery has gained attention as a purely aesthetic procedure," said Dr Karuna Malhotra, aesthetic physician, Cosmetic Skin and Homeo Clinic New Delhi. According to an August 2024 research by a spectacle brand, Overnight Glasses, it is one of the most "dangerous" surgeries.

What is this surgery, and how is it done?

Dr Nita Shah, MS (BOM), Dr Agarwal Eye Hospital, Chembur, said eye colour is determined by the iris, a ring of pigmented muscle located between the cornea and the lens. "Depigmentation, also known as photoablative iridoplasty, is a procedure that lightens eye colour by reducing melanin, the pigment responsible for the colour of skin, hair, and eyes," said Dr Shah. In this technique, a Yttrium Aluminium Garnet (YAG) laser is used for depigmentation of the iris, which results in a colour change. However, the exact colour that will result after this depigmentation cannot be predicted - some eyes turn bluish, whereas others turn greenish once the pigment is removed with the YAG laser, said Dr Sri Ganesh, chairman and managing director, Nethradhama Super Speciality Eye Hospital, Bangalore. Dr Malhotra explained the process in detail. Pre-operative assessment: Comprehensive eye examination to evaluate overall eye health - Detailed discussion with the surgeon about risks, benefits, and potential complications - Informed consent and selection of the desired eye colour - Local anaesthesia is administered to numb the eye - A small incision is made in the cornea. A folded artificial iris made of biocompatible silicone material is inserted through the incision. The implant is carefully unfolded and positioned over the natural iris. The incision is then closed, and the implant re-

mains in place to change the eye colour. Post-operative care: - Use prescribed antibiotic and anti-inflammatory eye drops to prevent infection and inflammation. Avoid touching or rubbing the eyes. Refrain from strenuous activities, heavy lifting, and swimming for several weeks. - Attend regular follow-up visits with the surgeon to monitor eye health and implant stability. Report any discomfort, vision changes, or redness immediately to the doctor. - Avoid wearing contact lenses for a few days before the surgery. - Disclose any medications, allergies, or previous eye conditions to the surgeon. - Follow specific pre-operative instructions, such as fasting if required. Do the results stay lifelong? The implant is intended to be permanent, but can be removed if complications occur, said Dr Malhotra. "Removal can be complex and may not fully restore the original eye condition," said Dr Malhotra. This is one of the reasons why Venkat, who wanted brown/hazel coloured eyes while growing up, said, "Surgery sounds far-fetched considering the risks and care involved. Part of the inspiration or the desire stemmed from family members who had eyes that weren't black or deep brown. My grandmother's eyes were grey and my cousins had hazel eyes." Is it safe and advisable?

No, the procedure is not considered safe, cautioned Dr Malhotra. "It poses severe risks such as vision loss, glaucoma, cataracts, corneal damage, and chronic inflammation. Many medical associations advise against it," he said. Dr Ganesh concurred and said that the long-term effects of the surgery are unknown. "Increased intraocular pressure can cause glaucoma and inflammation of the iris, known as iritis. This procedure is not FDA-approved," said Dr Ganesh. Although created for medical purposes, iris implants are not approved for cosmetic use in healthy eyes and pose several risks, said Dr Shah, and listed the risks: Elevated intraocular pressure, potentially leading to glaucoma. Cataract development (clouding of the natural lens). Corneal damage, which can impair vision. Iris inflammation, resulting in pain, blurred vision, and excessive tearing. While the implant can be removed if necessary, the removal process has risks. Dr Ganesh also said, "Moreover, the permanence of the pigmentation cannot be guaranteed, as it may fade over time, leading to colour changes. The effects of this procedure have not been extensively studied." What are the better alternatives?

For those looking to temporarily and safely change their eye colour, non-surgical options like coloured contact lenses are a better alternative, provided care is taken. DISCLAIMER: This article is based on information from the public domain and/or the experts we spoke to. Always consult your health practitioner before starting any routine.

Zeenat Aman once shared she has 'forgiven' men from her past; why letting go of grudges is vital



Zeenat Aman, a celebrated Bollywood actor of the 1970s, has evolved into a modern-day social media icon. Known for her graceful ageing and insightful advice, Zeenat has inspired a new generation of fans. Her life has been marked by unconventional choices, both professionally and personally. One notable relationship in Zeenat's life was with actor Sanjay Khan, who was married at the time. Zeenat has previously opened up about experiencing physical abuse during this period, describing it as a "brief" chapter in her past, in a chat with Simi Garewal for her show. In an interview with Rediff in 2021, she expressed forgiveness towards those who had wronged her, emphasising the importance of letting go of negativity and focusing on the present.

"I'm so full of 'now', so happy for the gift of each day. When I walk into the house, the dogs bathe me in such a warm welcome. That's all I need...Yes, I've forgiven them completely. I see no point in holding grudges," the 72-

year-old said. Dr Ashima Ranjan, Consultant Psychiatrist at Yatharth Super Speciality Hospital, Noida, explained why letting go of grudges is important for growing in life. "Forgiveness is crucial for personal well-being and growth. Holding onto grudges can trap us in cycles of stress and overthinking, leading to heightened cortisol levels, potential lifestyle disorders and other mental health problems. This persistent negativity can manifest as anxiety, depression, and even insomnia, significantly affecting our quality of life," she said in an interaction with indianexpress.com. Letting go of grudges is essential for living a peaceful and fulfilling life. It helps reduce stress, improves mental clarity, and opens the door to greater joy and personal growth, Dr Ranjan added. "By releasing past grievances, we free ourselves from the burden of unresolved conflict and create space for positive experiences and relationships. Embracing forgiveness allows us to move forward with a lighter heart, fostering a sense of fulfillment and contentment," she noted.

20 years after nuclear deal, New Jersey firm's proposal for small reactor opens a door

Nearly two decades after India and the US concluded a civil nuclear deal, the first real sliver of hope to belatedly leverage the commercial potential of this landmark pact comes from an unlikely contender: Holtec International, based in Camden, New Jersey.

Unlike Westinghouse Electric Co. and GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, the two US nuclear industry flag bearers that were seen as early frontrunners for entry into India's civil nuclear sector, Holtec is a smaller, privately-held company that is now billed as one of the world's largest exporter of capital nuclear components. Holtec's pitch is for fostering a public-private initiative centred on the American company's flagship small modular reactor, the SMR-300, to potentially help break this stasis in the nuclear engagement between the two countries, with the possibility of using existing coal plant sites in India to deploy its proposed SMR-based projects and the possibility of joint manufacturing at some point in the future.

Kris P Singh, the Indian-American promoter of Holtec International, which was established in 1986 and is now a key part of the nuclear ecosystem in the US and provides spent fuel storage and logistics support for over 140 nuclear plants worldwide, was the only CEO that Prime Minister Narendra Modi met one-on-one during his US visit late last month. A meeting took place at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel on September 23 during the second leg of Modi's US visit, with the discussions focused on Holtec's proposal for "advancing energy cooperation".

These developments come at a time when India is working to get into the manufacturing value chain of small reactors, both as a way of fulfilling its commitment to clean energy transition, and bundling SMRs as a technology-led foreign policy pitch. SMRs - small reactors with a capacity of 30MWe to 300 MWe per unit - are increasingly seen as important for nuclear energy to remain a commercially competitive option in the future, especially in the wake of surging power demand from technology companies, given the massive incremental electricity requirement coming in from AI machine learning applica-

tions and data centres. Over the last couple of weeks, the Holtec team is learnt to have briefed top officials at India's Department of Atomic Energy on SMR-300 - a pressurised light-water reactor that creates energy through fission, uses the same low-enriched uranium fuel as traditional reactors operating today to produce at least 300 megawatts (MWe) of electric power. The company claims it can be designed to operate on an area of land that is little less than a dozen football fields, as compared to a much larger footprint of a traditional reactor project. Holtec's SMR-300 is one of seven advanced reactor designs supported by the US Department of Energy's Advanced Reactor Demonstration Programme. In 2020, the company's SMR project received a \$116-million award to help accelerate design, engineering and licensing activities and is currently in the early design review stages in the United Kingdom and Canada to deploy its small reactor. With a capacity of 30MWe to 300 MWe per unit, SMRs are important for nuclear energy to remain a commercially competitive option. Advantages of SMRs include lower capital investment, greater efficiency, siting flexibility and clean energy transition. But there are nagging issues. On the Indian side, the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, which sought to create a mechanism for compensating victims from damage caused by a nuclear accident, and allocating liability and specifying procedures for compensation, has been cited as an impediment by foreign players such as GE-Hitachi, Westinghouse and French nuclear company Areva (now called Orano). This is primarily on the grounds that the legislation channels operators' liability to equipment suppliers, with foreign vendors citing this as a reason for worries about investing in India's nuclear sector due to fear of incurring future liability. On the American side, the '10CFR810' authorisation (Part 810 of Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (Part 810) of the US Atomic Energy Act of 1954) gives American companies such as Holtec the ability to export to India under some strict safeguards, but does not permit them to manufacture any nuclear equipment or perform any nuclear design work in India.

The curious case of 'ghost poop' and what it means for digestive health

Many people have had the peculiar experience of going to the bathroom and wondering if anything happened. This oddly common phenomenon can be both perplexing and humorous. It often raises questions about digestion, bodily functions, and what constitutes a 'successful' visit to the restroom. Describing this phenomenon, Dr Pranav Honnavara Srinivasan consultant gastroenterologist at Fortis Hospitals Bengaluru, tells indianexpress.com, "Ghost poop" is a term commonly used to describe a bowel movement that leaves no visible residue in the toilet after flushing or where the stool disappears quickly. "While this may seem unusual, many doctors suggest that ghost poop may indicate efficient digestion. He adds, "Stool sinks and disappears without a trace due to its density and lack of excess gas or fat. When the body processes food properly, and the stool is well-formed without excess air or fats, it tends to sink quickly, indicating a healthy digestive process."

Could ghost poop indicate a potential imbalance in digestion or nutrient absorption?

Dr Srinivasan informs, "According to many medical professionals, ghost poop is often a positive sign of healthy digestion. However, some argue that changes in stool appearance - such as consistently sinking stools - could point to issues like fat malabsorption or digestive imbalances, particularly if the stool becomes too compact or difficult to pass." For most people, though, ghost poop is typically harmless and may reflect good digestive health, especially when combined with other signs of a well-functioning system like regularity and minimal discomfort. Festive offer The gut microbiome plays a crucial role in digestion. The gut microbiome plays a crucial role in digestion. (Source: Freepik) Common factors that can influence the buoyancy of stool. Several factors influence the buoyancy of stool and contribute to the occurrence of ghost poop, says Dr Srinivasan. These are: High Fibre Diet: Doctors often point out that a well-balanced diet, particularly one high in insoluble fibre, can produce stool that is firm and dense. Fibre increases stool bulk, which improves digestion and prevents stool from floating excessively due to trapped gas.

Ajith Kumar's back-to-back updates take social media by storm; video with Shalini wins hearts



There is no doubt that Ajith Kumar has remained an enigma for most of his career. Known for staying away from the media, it is interesting how he has turned that around, albeit in his own terms. While he still is far from active on social media, we have seen his passion for racing and bikes come through effectively. If snippets from his professional career as an actor and a motor racing enthusiast are released by his official PR person, nuggets of his personal life are taken care of by his wife and former actor Shalini. And this past weekend, social media was abuzz with updates from all these fronts.

On the racing front, Ajith, who also runs a motorcycle travel group called Venus Motorcycle Tours, released a video where he spoke about the benefits of travel, especially in opening up the minds to the world's diversity. "Religion and caste makes you hate people you've never met. Through travel, you experience different cultures and nationalities. It makes you empathise with people, and makes you a better person. The idea is to get people to travel, and I think it is the best form of meditation," said Ajith, and this video has gone viral ever

since. Ajith also recently revealed that he has launched the Ajith Kumar Racing Team, and they would be competing in various international competitions, including the upcoming 24H Series in the Porsche 992 GT3 cup category.

On the acting front, a recent image of Ajith, sporting his look from Adhik Ravichandran's Good Bad Ugly was doing the rounds. The actor looked suave and dapper in a simple white t-shirt, and his now-iconic salt-and-pepper hairstyle, stylish sunglasses, and tattooed arms. The photo went viral, and received a lot of positive comments for the new look of Ajith. On the personal front, Shalini shared a video of the much-loved couple having a stroll in the streets of Spain. The video, which has become the talk and talk of the town, features Shalini capturing visuals of the streets, and her superstar husband. Sharing the video, she wrote, "Together is a wonderful place to be." A day before sharing the video, Shalini uploaded pictures of herself with son Aadvik as they visited the famous Bernabeu stadium to witness a Real Madrid match in Spain.

Kamal Haasan, Sivakarthikeyan open up on Rajkumar Periasamy's Amaran: 'Major Mukund Varadarajan is a superhero'

Army films is one of the rarest genres to be explored in Tamil cinema. In fact, there are only a handful of films that properly dabbled in the genre, and that's probably why there is intense pressure on director Rajkumar Periasamy to get it right with his upcoming film, Amaran. The film is set to tell the story of one of India's bravest warriors, Major Mukund Varadarajan, who was posthumously awarded the Ashoka Chakra for his bravery in an operation in South Kashmir. With Sivakarthikeyan playing the role of Major Mukund, and Sai Pallavi essaying the character of Major's wife Indu Rebecca Varghese, Amaran is backed by actor-filmmaker Kamal Haasan's Raaj Kamal Films International. In a special show to kickstart the promotion drive for the film, Kamal Haasan, Sivakarthikeyan, Sai Pallavi, and Rajkumar Periasamy were joined by the late Major Mukund's wife, Indu.



The makers shared the video, which has been titled Amaran - An Introduction Part 1, which starts off with a heartwarming AV about the life of Major Mukund. Then, Kamal Haasan, who recently celebrated 65 years as an actor in Indian cinema, was asked what made him back Amaran, and if it joins the list of his conscientious films about lives in uniform like Kadama Kanniyam Kattupaadu and Kuruthipunal. "They were all fiction. This is the truth. This is the truth that happened for us. We can't really question why the story takes certain directions. If you can handle the truth, handle it," said an emphatic Kamal Haasan, who drove home the importance of a supportive family that rallies behind our soldiers. "We might have given Major Mukund a medal, respected him posthumously, but we mustn't forget that the first person to have heard the way the story ended was Indu. His unparalleled bravery was matched by the courage of the people at home. Amaran is about that courage too. I didn't choose this story. We have no part, except to have fulfilled our duty of telling this story." Amaran marks director Rajkumar Periasamy's sophomore film, seven years after making a rather compelling debut with Gautham Karthik's Rangoon. Talking about how an interaction with Indu shaped Amaran into its present form, Rajkumar said, "I knew the start, the ending, and even the journey in between. However, I wasn't sure how to piece this puzzle. The day I met her, I found the film." The filmmaker also asserted how Amaran is more than just a war film or a documentation of a soldier's journey. "This is primarily a love story. A love between a wife and a husband. A love between a brave man and his passion. It is about the greater selfless love, and Amaran started with Indu." Finally, Sivakarthikeyan, who was recently heralded by the next in line to the throne of Tamil cinema thanks to Vijay's symbolic handing over of the gun to him in Venkat Prabhu's GOAT, was asked about the weight of the weapon in his hands. "The gun is always heavy, and we must handle it right," said Sivakarthikeyan, who smartly diverted the question to Amaran. "We have taken the care to ensure the entire team handled it right, and the courage for the same was given by our very own Ulaganayagan (Kamal Haasan)." Mirroring Kamal Haasan's statement that he didn't choose the story, Sivakarthikeyan said, "Major Mukund Varadarajan is a superhero. I see this as an opportunity to bring to screen his real story, and the life he lived." He also pressed upon the increased sense of sincerity that seeped in him while acting in Amaran. "We have a responsibility to do right by the lives of Major Mukund and Indu ma'am. We were more than sincere."

Fawad Khan to make Bollywood comeback in romantic comedy Abir Gulaal with Vaani Kapoor, see first look

The wait is finally over for the Indian fans of Pakistani actor Fawad Khan. The actor will be making his Bollywood comeback with a romantic comedy titled Abir Gulaal where he will be seen sharing screen space for the first time with actor Vaani Kapoor. Fawad Khan has been away from Indian cinema for around 8 years since the ban on Pakistani artists after the 2016 Uri attack.



The film is set against the picturesque backdrop of London and will commence shooting on September 29. The film is directed by Aarti S Bagdi. Sharing about the film's storyline, he shared in a statement that the film explores the journey of two individuals who unintentionally help each other heal, with love blossoming as an unexpected consequence. The makers also excited about Fawad's massive global fan base, and thus anticipate that

audiences will wholeheartedly embrace this film. As per the makers, the film will showcase Fawad in his most endearing role yet. The team is also looking forward to the chemistry between Fawad and Vaani. The film is produced by Vivek B Agrawal, Avantika Hari and Rakesh Sippy. The film will be shot in the UK in October and November.

expecting mothers need double the calories, emphasising that this belief is gradually fading as more women access accurate information on prenatal nutrition.

Rajat Dalal addresses controversy with Carryminati as he enters Bigg Boss 18: 'If someone ridicules...'

Bigg Boss 18's list of contestants is heavily loaded with actors and influencers. Fitness influencer Rajat Dalal entered the Bigg Boss house where Salman Khan asked how his achievements have been overshadowed by controversies. He addressed his face-off with influencer Carryminati as well as time spent in jail. In his introduction video, Rajat said, "Everyone on social media is trying to defame me. I am called a bad boy, a villain. People must have seen my controversies, but no one ever tried to know the reason behind those. I was a professional powerlifter. When I wore medals, no one paid attention. But when I was handcuffed, that's when everyone searched my name."



Later, when he joined Salman Khan on stage, Rajat was asked about the controversies. He went on to share, "The audience likes to see fights, my positive side was never seen, only the negative side got highlighted. As for controversies, I am at fault, but I never start those controversies. I have only messed up with Carryminati once. I never made any hate comments against him until his roast video where he made fun of me. If you influence a huge audience, you should not defame someone." Responding to him, Salman advised Rajat not to be so impulsive. The superstar said, "People have said and written so many negative things about me. I never go behind them. Just let them be." Later, Salman also asked Rajat about another controversy where he had beaten up a self-styled godman. Clarifying his action, Rajat said,

"If someone ridicules my religion or culture to make money, it's not acceptable to me."

As Rajat entered the house, Salman asked him to be a little calm and not act in a manner that gets his family dragged into a problem. Salman said, "You are impulsive, and it's not wrong, but it should not come to your family. They need you more than you need all this."

Who is Bigg Boss 18 contestant Rajat Dalal?

With over 1 million Instagram followers and over 200k on YouTube, Rajat is a fitness trainer and digital creator. He is from Faridabad, Haryana, and was in trouble in September this year after he was booked for rash driving. In June, he was arrested in Ahmedabad for allegedly kidnapping and assaulting a teenager.

Arbaaz Khan responds as fan wants to marry Salman Khan; declares 'bus ho gaya bhai' when asked about his next wedding

Arbaaz Khan recently held an Ask Me Anything (AMA) session on Instagram, which resulted in plenty of laughs for his followers. Known for his wit, Arbaaz responded humorously to fans' questions, especially when a fan expressed a desire to marry his superstar brother, Salman Khan. He also shared the dish his wife, Sshura Khan, cooks best, all the while adding his unique sense of humour.



When one fan asked if she could be his "elder brother's wife," Arbaaz responded with a priceless reply, writing, "What do I say? Lage Raho Munnabhai!" The laughs didn't end there; when someone inquired about his "next marriage plans," Arbaaz replied, "Bus ho gaya bhai (It's done, brother) ????" The session also led to a question about his wife, Sshura, and her cooking. When asked what she cooks best, Arbaaz initially replied, "Stories ???" but quickly followed up, adding, "Just kidding. She cooks mutton biryani well???"

Arbaaz Khan Arbaaz Khan gave hilarious response to fans in latest AMA session. (Pic: Arbaaz/Instagram) During the interaction, Arbaaz also revealed his favorite person: his father, Salim Khan. When asked about the qualities he admires most in his father and brother, he shared, "Salim Khan's integrity and Salman's

dedication." For those unfamiliar, Arbaaz was previously married to Malaika Arora. The couple, married for 19 years, divorced in 2017 but continue to co-parent their son, Arhaan. In 2023, Arbaaz married Sshura, a makeup artist, in an intimate nikah ceremony held at his sister Arpita Khan Sharma's residence in Mumbai.

After the ceremony, Arbaaz took to Instagram to share the happy news, posting, "In the presence of our loved ones, me and mine begin a lifetime of love and togetherness from this day on! Need all your blessings and good wishes on our special day!"

Actor-filmmaker Revathy to direct her first Tamil web series for Disney+Hotstar



Actor-director Revathy made her acting debut in Tamil with Mann Vaasanai (1983). Almost two decades later she made her directorial debut with Mitr - My Friend (2002). Despite winning accolades for her acting in Tamil cinema, including a National Award for Best Supporting Actress for Thevar Magan, Revathy never directed anything in Tamil. However, that is set to change with her

latest announcement about her upcoming project. Revathy revealed on her social media handles that she was directing a Tamil web series for Disney+ Hotstar.

Sharing a photo of the director's copy of the upcoming series, Revathy wrote, "So happy to get back to being the Director! A Tamil series for Hotstar with Siddharth Ramaswamy as co director and cinematographer. 1st day shoot on 5th Oct. The energy is different as a director... I love it!!" Siddharth, known for his work in films like Yaaradi Nee Mohini, and Aravaan, had previously collaborated with the streamer for the 2022 series, Fall, headlined by Anjali. This will be his second collaboration with Disney+ Hotstar as a director. Revathy, who was last seen in the third instalment of Salman Khan's spy franchise, Tiger, has helmed five films, including Salaam Venky (2022), which starred Kajol and Vishal Jethwa. This will also be the first time she is directing a web series, and her maiden collaboration with the streamer. She was recently in the news for winning the Kerala State Award for her role in the 2022 horror film, Bhoothakalam.

'Alia Bhatt has a short attention span, her workouts have to be crisp to keep her engaged': Yasmin Karachiwala

Anushka Sharma and Alia Bhatt Fitness and nutrition experts opened on Anushka Sharma and Alia Bhatt's pregnancies. Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma, known for their passion for fitness, make regular exercise and balanced nutrition essential parts of their routine. In a recent interaction, Kohli's nutritionist, Ryan Fernando, revealed how the star cricketer reached out to him during the Covid-19 pandemic to also create a diet plan for Anushka when she was pregnant with their first child, Vamika.



Ryan explained that Virat follows a vegetarian diet and sought his guidance in crafting a nutritional plan for Anushka's various trimesters. Ryan shared these insights during a conversation with celebrity fitness expert Yasmin Karachiwala on his YouTube channel. Recalling Virat's request, he said, "Virat contacted me around the pandemic time. They were in isolation, and he wanted to elevate his nutrition game. We worked together for several months on his diet." He added, "During this journey, Virat learned that I have a team of medical dietitians, and since they were expecting their first child, he asked if we could develop a nutrition plan for Anushka. He wanted me to handle her trimester nutrition plans, which we did very successfully."

Ryan also discussed a common misconception that

expecting mothers need double the calories, emphasising that this belief is gradually fading as more women access accurate information on prenatal nutrition.

During their conversation, Yasmin, who worked with Alia Bhatt during her pregnancy with her first child, Raha, also shared insights on customising workouts for pregnant celebrities. "With exercise, like with nutrition, you have to tailor it to the specific trimester," Yasmin said. Reflecting on training Alia, she added, "Working with Alia was funny and beautiful."

Sri Lanka appoint Sanath Jayasuriya as permanent head coach till 2026



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Sanath Jayasuriya will be the Sri Lanka head coach until March 2026. (File)Sanath Jayasuriya will be the Sri Lanka head coach until March 2026. Former Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya has been appointed as the permanent coach of the Sri Lankan men's national side Jayasuriya, who was holding an interim position as head coach, overlooked Sri Lanka's recent series against India, England and New Zealand.

While the Lankans endured a 2-1 Test series defeat in England and in the T20Is against India, Jayasuriya's side stunned Rohit Sharma's men in the 50-over format in August.

Sri Lanka also proceeded to blank New Zealand in the two-match Test series at Galle, improving their stand in the current World Test Championship cycle. Jayasuriya's permanent role has come to effect from October 1 and runs until March 31, 2026, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) confirmed. "The Executive Committee of Sri Lanka Cricket made this decision taking into consideration the team's good performances in the recent tours against India, England, and New Zealand, where Jayasuriya was in charge as the 'interim head coach,' SLC said in a post on X. Jayasuriya stepped into the coaching role following the exit of Chris Silverwood after the T20 World Cup in the Americas. In the 445 ODIs he played, the left-hander struck 13,430 runs at an average of 32.36, with 28 hundreds and 68 half-centuries. He was a key member of the Sri Lankan team that won 1996 ODI World Cup. He also served as Member of Parliament from 2010-15.

'Didn't play cricket after IPL injury and directly made India debut': Mayank Yadav reflects on four-month recovery period

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Mayank Yadav said that he had focused on more than delivering speed on his India debut against Bangladesh on Sunday. (Sportspics)Mayank Yadav said that he had focused on more than delivering speed on his India debut against Bangladesh Speedster Mayank Yadav cranked up the pace on his India debut in the first T20I against Bangladesh in Gwalior on Sunday, beginning his international career with a maiden and a wicket in his second over. Mayank's pacy outing in international colours ended with figures of 1/21 in four overs, his first competitive outing since an IPL 2024 fixture for Lucknow Super Giants in April. Mayank was setting the IPL ablaze with his manic speeds, touching 156.7kph during a league-stage match, one of the fastest deliveries ever by an Indian in the tournament. However, the Delhi quick's season was restricted to four games before a side strain ruled him out of action for a considerable period. Interestingly, Mayank's return after exhaustive rehab programs at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) was charted directly through a T20I, without any domestic games. "I was indeed excited but was a bit more nervous. This series marked my comeback after the injury. I didn't play competitive cricket and then directly made my debut. That's why I was a little more nervous," Yadav told Jio Cinema after the match. "The recovery period was tough for more. Quite a lot of ups and downs were there in the last 4 months. But more than me, it was tougher for the people who worked with me," he added.

The 22-year-old insisted that speed was not his solitary goal on debut. "Today I focused more on my body. Also, I was determined to hit the proper lengths instead of bowling faster. I didn't think about my speed. I just tried leaking the least runs possible and bowling at a proper line and length. I did bowl the slower ones in the IPL as well but not much. I had a word with my captain and he asked me to rely on my stock ball more than trying out variations. But coming to Gwalior, the wicket didn't have much bounce so I changed my pace accordingly," he remarked. "Nothing extra, he asked me to stick to the basics and do the things that have yielded positive results for me in the past. He asked me not to think much about trying different things or even think that it was an international game. Following the process was the key," Yadav explained.



The 22-year-old insisted that speed was not his solitary goal on debut. "Today I focused more on my body. Also, I was determined to hit the proper lengths instead of bowling faster. I didn't think about my speed. I just tried leaking the least runs possible and bowling at a proper line and length. I did bowl the slower ones in the IPL as well but not much. I had a word with my captain and he asked me to rely on my stock ball more than trying out variations. But coming to Gwalior, the wicket didn't have much bounce so I changed my pace accordingly," he remarked. "Nothing extra, he asked me to stick to the basics and do the things that have yielded positive results for me in the past. He asked me not to think much about trying different things or even think that it was an international game. Following the process was the key," Yadav explained.

How manager Arne Slot, Jurgen Klopp's successor at Liverpool, was selected by Harvard-educated physicist's data-oriented approach



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

The Reds are buzzing. But the man on the touchline is unfamiliar, almost invisible. He is one of the many faces in the bustling dugout. He could be anyone, the man on the left with a blazer, or the man in the middle with a turtleneck, or that man in a black suede jacket over jumpers. That man who rarely fumes on the technical area, or whispers sweet nothings into the ears of the fourth official. That man who never preens or sniggers. A man who doesn't exist at all. Liverpool would not have chosen a more contrasting manager than Arne Slot as Jurgen Klopp's heir. Klopp on the touchline was a spectacle of emotions in itself, all bristling energy and unshackled emotions. Slot is self-effacing and introverted, as though Liverpool's management wanted an antithesis of Klopp.

Slot's was not a leap-of-faith acquisition. Contrary to public myths that former Reds stalwart and Bayer Leverkusen miracle manager Xabi Alonso was Klopp's heir apparent, and his refusal prompted alternatives, Slot was Liverpool's primary target. Soon after the German manager told the higher-ups of the club that he was not renewing his tenure, the club's research head Will Spearman, a Harvard-educated physicist, and his team of analysts undertook a data-oriented approach to spot Klopp's successor.

Identity was the primary criterion—they wanted someone in the Klopp mode, a practitioner of a high-pressing and possession-centric brand of football. Other gauges included how a potential candidate groomed players, forged team spirit, his working relation with the staff and then board-room, and his equations with players over a minimum three-season time-frame. Slot came out as the runaway topper and it was now merely a matter of striking a deal with the manager and his club Feyenoord. The business was completed discreetly, behind the smokescreen of Alonso reuniting with his former club rumours. He was unfamiliar to most outside the Eredivisie, despite his transformation of Feyenoord from also-rans

to champions, apart from those that had watched him first-hand, who swore by his tactical intelligence and placid demeanour.

Slot is self-effacing and introverted, as though Liverpool's management wanted an antithesis of Klopp. (Reuters)Slot is self-effacing and introverted, as though Liverpool's management wanted an antithesis of Klopp. (Reuters)The 45-year-old is perhaps the most mild-mannered manager in the league. The village he grew up in Bergentheim, located in the Bible belt of the Netherlands, he was a shy midfielder in his playing career for NAC, which spent most of the time in the Dutch second division. He never swore, never engaged in simulation, seldom committed a tactical foul. One of his managers, as the story goes, benched him and told him he would play only if he became more aggressive. His father, a school teacher, formed his ideals, as a person and coach. He fell in love with the game, and later coaching, listening to his father instructing the amateur club he coached. "Once when he was on holiday, he asked, 'can you replace me as a manager at my amateur club?' Already at 21, 22, I was doing these kinds of things, and all my team-mates from my club would probably say they were not surprised I became a manager. So probably from quite a young age," Slot told TNT Sports.

Ironically, when he quit professional football, he didn't head to coaching straightaway. Instead, he started a firm selling captain's armbands with his brother Jakko. But the pull of coaching was irresistible and he started coaching a local club's youth team. In a decade, he is managing one of Europe's most storied and successful clubs. Some managers tremble, seized by stage fright. Slot has enthusiastically hugged the challenge of replacing a cult-figure manager, whose legacy stares him from every corner of the stadium. He inherited a reasonably settled side, didn't spend a dime on transfers, but Slot has looked neither overawed nor out of place. Several managers in his situation would either look to replicate the successful methods of the predecessor or, the more egoistical ones, would tear the principles completely apart. Slot practises moderation. He has already brought more control that Klopp's side exuded. The press is not as effervescent as Klopp's but as efficient. Slot's forwards don't hound the defenders relentlessly. It's comparatively measured, more in rhyme with Pep Guardiola than Klopp. To gain midfield control, he usually deploys two highly technical double pivots. That explains the resurrection of Ryan Gravenberch, who was a peripheral figure in Klopp's schemes. But under Slot, he has flourished into one of Liverpool's most influential players of the season, offering stability in the middle. If foraying through the flanks was Klopp's preferred route to attack, Slot's Liverpool progressed the ball through more central channels. There is a fixation to play from the back, employing short passes like Brighton under Roberto De Zerbi.

Sarin had bishop and a pawn more, Dardha had a rook and 14 more seconds on clock; what happened in this chess dogfight?



GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Daniel Dardha's king rolled over on the chessboard more than once before being picked up roughly and slammed onto a square. Nihal Sarin, with his time shaved down to a handful of seconds on the clock, had to stand up and blitz out his moves. Eventually, there was a draw which was claimed after 99 fast-and-furious moves by PBG Alaskan Knights' Sarin, which was being appealed by Daniel Dardha's team, the Alpine SG Pipers. An unhappy Magnus Carlsen, the icon player of the Pipers, tweeted late in the night: "This happened after Nihal had made several illegal moves and the arbiter never stepping in—we're not a serious sport unfortunately." In sharp contrast, Magnus Carlsen's own battle against Anish Giri in the same Knights vs Pipers match saw a quick surrender after just 20 minutes and 22 moves from Anish Giri. What happened in Nihal Sarin vs Daniel Dardha's game

The Knights vs Pipers clash saw some drama, one that is likely to spill over onto Monday. There is an official appeal that has been registered by the Pipers team captain Pravin Thipsay for Daniel Dardha after the arbiter accepted Nihal Sarin's claim for a draw while he was under severe duress on the clock. The Indian prodigy, in fact, had just three seconds on the clock in a format where there are no time increments. But he was in a completely winning position. His opponent, Daniel Dardha, had 17 seconds left, meaning he could have outlasted his opponent on the clock and won. But Nihal Sarin claimed a draw by stating that there was no way he could have lost the game as he had a bishop and a pawn more on the board.

Excellent presence of mind by @NihalSarin! In a position where he was winning on the board against Daniel Dardha but very low on time, he stops the clock with 2 seconds left and claims a draw. ChessBase India (@ChessbaseIndia) October 6, 2024

The Pipers though were not convinced, taking their protests to the tournament director. Daniel Dardha, after all, had still a rook on the board, and 14 more seconds on

the clock than his opponent. If Nihal Sarin had lost the game, the result would have gone in favour of the Pipers. For now, the Knights have secured the match with a 9-7 margin, and thanks to a five-match winning streak, find themselves on top of the standings as the only unbeaten team in the GCL. "The game came into a big time scramble. I had less time while he kept his time advantage. I managed to pose him really good problems. But he fended off the trouble really well and made my winning process much slower," Nihal Sarin later told the official social media handle of GCL. For the Knights, Tan Zhongyi took down Hou Yifan in the battle of the former world champions from China while Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov defeated Praggnanandhaa in a clash of the prodigies. How one blunder from Anish cost him clash vs Carlsen in 20 minutes and 22 moves, the Anish Giri vs Magnus Carlsen game was over as Anish Giri waved the white flag of surrender. Magnus Carlsen's eyebrows shot up even as he accepted the win, making their clash the shortest decisive result in the second edition of the Global Chess League, being played in London.

For now, the PBG Alaskan Knights have won the battle against Alpine SG Pipers by a 9-7 margin. But if the appeal from the Pipers is upheld, then that result could swing. Playing with white pieces on the icon board, Anish Giri was battling on level terrain against the five-time world champion in a game which saw the Closed Catalan variation on the board at the start. An ill-advised blunder on the 21st move from Anish Giri, when his rook jumped forward three squares on the board to capture an adventurous pawn on the d4 square proved to be Anish Giri's undoing. The evaluation bar plunged in favour of the Norwegian immediately. The right move for Anish Giri at that stage would have been to trade queens on the eighth rank. Magnus Carlsen responded by slaying Anish Giri's knight with his own rook. On the next move, the queens were exchanged. But by then, Anish Giri realised there was no coming from the position he had gotten himself into, that too against a player of Magnus Carlsen's calibre who would be a knight up, and resigned.

'From side-spin to over-spin, it took me more than two years' – Varun Chakaravathy on weaving his mystery web

GNS News Agency, Oct 8

Varun Chakaravathy, who made an impressive comeback to India fold on Sunday, explained how a technical adjustment has helped him get his rhythm back. Playing his first international match in three years, Varun picked up 3 for 31 in his comeback match and troubled the Bangladesh batters who were not able to read his variations. "I used to be a side-spin bowler but right now, I have completely shifted to an over-spin bowler which is a minute technical aspect of spin bowling. From side spin to over spin, it took me more than two years," Varun told reporters.



"I used to be a side-spin bowler but right now, I have completely shifted to an over-spin bowler which is a minute technical aspect of spin bowling. From side spin to over spin, it took me more than two years," Varun told reporters.

It's these three years, the major chunk of work which I put in was in my technical aspect," he added. In the recently concluded TNPL, Varun played a key role in helping R Ashwin-led Dindigul Dragons win the trophy. The off-spinner picked up 12 wickets at an impressive economy of 6.61. Varun thanked his TNPL captain Ashwin for helping him get back the confidence.

"It's (TNPL) is a very good tournament and of a high standard as well. That's a place where I work a lot, with Ash (Ashwin)

bhai also, we won the championship there so that gave me confidence here. I just played it a few months ago. It was good preparation for this series," he told the broadcasters. The 33-year-old spinner, playing only his seventh T20I, and his first in India also spoke about the difficult phase of his career and credited the domestic cricket for helping him find the mojo back.

"It has been a long 3 years and whenever there was a squad announced for a series, I used to feel like 'why is my name not there?' and I used to keep thinking about that. So that

kind of brought the motivation within me that I should not leave this. I should go for the go for all out and I should try to make a comeback. I started playing a lot of domestic games and I started giving importance to it. That kind of helped me," he said. Varun had played a pivotal role in making Gautam Gambhir's return to the Kolkata Night Riders (KKR) memorable. After a slow start to the season, Varun picked up 21 wickets, the second-highest of the season and helped KKR lift the trophy. On reuniting with Gambhir, the spinner said: "He is a

man of few words, so, we didn't talk much during our time in KKR. We only used to talk about the game." "However, this is my first match with him. So, I am waiting to spend more time with him."

On the dropped catch off his bowling in his first over, Varun said it's part of the game. "I am very happy to contribute towards the team. Yes, in the first over the catch could have gone my way but that's how T20s are played. I felt the reverse-sweep six was a good ball but it still went for a six, so it's all mixed emotions."