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Land owners complain of submerged plots to HYDRAA chief

Sangareddy: Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) Commissioner AV Ranganath on Tuesday inspected the Ameenpur Pedda Cheruvu following a request from land and plot holders who complained that their plots were submerged by the lake. The landholders alleged that the water of Ameenpur Cheruvu spread over 460 acres against its official full tank level of 93.15 acres. Since the lake's weir and sluice were closed for various reasons by irrigation officials a few years ago, the landholders complained that the water spread area increased to 460 acres by submerging thousands of plots.

Gold heist in Warangal: Jewellery worth Rs.10 crore stolen from SBI

Warangal: In a major bank heist, thieves stole gold jewellery worth Rs.10 crore from the State Bank of India (SBI) Rayaparthi Mandal branch around midnight on Monday. According to reports, the thieves entered the bank by cutting the window with a gas cutter and broke lockers and took away gold jewellery. The incident came to light after the bank employees noticed the door open and lockers broken on Tuesday morning.

The bank manager lodged a complaint with the police. Police are scanning footage from CCTV cameras in the surrounding areas to track down the burglars. Fingerprint experts are assisting them with clues.

India, U.K. to re-launch trade talks in new year: Starmer



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

India and the U.K. have decided to re-launch discussions to conclude a 'free trade' deal in the new year, following the election of a new Labour government in the U.K. The announcement of the imminent resumption of talks, which began in 2022 during the Boris Johnson Conservative government, was announced by U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, following a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Rio de Janeiro, on the fringes of the G20 Summit. "A new trade deal with India will support jobs and prosperity in the UK – and represent a step forward in our mission to deliver growth and opportunity across our country," Mr. Starmer said. Bilateral trade between the two countries is valued at £42 billion (USD 53.2 billion) in the twelve months to June 2024, according to official UK data.

India and the U.K. have concluded most of the 26 chapters under discussion but talks have dragged on with over 14 rounds of trade talks which have outlasted

two U.K. Prime Ministers (Mr. Johnson and Rishi Sunak). The last round of talks was held in March, after which India - and then the U.K. - went to the polls. "India is the fifth largest economy in the world and a vital trading partner for the UK. We believe there is a good deal to be done here that works for both nations," said U.K. Business and Trade Secretary Johnathan Reynolds. The U.K. is seeking to deepen cooperation in areas education, security, technology and climate change, Downing Street said in a statement. "They also welcomed the recent launch of the Technology Security Initiative, and discussed the opportunities for further cooperation on defence and security," Downing Street said, adding that the prime ministers reaffirmed the strength of the cultural ties between the two countries as a basis for further cooperation. Prime Minister Modi announced the opening of two consulates in Belfast and Manchester, the government said in its readout of the meeting. Mr Modi also brought up the issue of economic offenders. "[The] Prime Minister noted the importance of addressing the issue of economic offenders from India in the U.K.. The two leaders also agreed on the need to make progress on issues related to migration and mobility," the readout from New Delhi said. The government has been seeking the extradition of businessman and former politician Vijay Mallya and diamond merchant Nirav Modi. Both readouts refer to the India-U.K. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership but are silent on the '2030 Roadmap', a pathway to deepening the relationship, agreed in 2021 by the Johnson and Modi governments. The Hindu reached out to Downing Street for comment on whether the Starmer government was committed to the Roadmap, but did not receive a response.

Unemployed youth resolve to hold padayatras against Congress government

GNS News Agency, Nov 19. Hyderabad: Reiterating their demand to revoke GO 29, which violates the rules of reservation, the Group - I aspirants and unemployed youth resolved to hold padayatra and bus yatras in Telangana State against the Congress government, if their main issue remains unresolved.

Unemployed Youth JAC leader, A Janardhan while interacting with press persons on Tuesday said that from December, the unemployed will hold padayatra and bus yatras to create awareness among students and people on how the Congress party betrayed the unemployed youth through its youth declaration released by Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, which promised two lakh jobs and unemployment allowance. "We will be visiting every house-hold from Adilabad to Khammam to talk about how the Congress government betrayed the unemployed youth," he said.

While Rahul Gandhi advocates for Constitution protections and increased reservation, the Congress government, on the other hand, has undermined these principles with GO 29, he lamented. A recent five-judge bench led by former CJI, DY Chandrachud has established said that rules cannot be changed after the issuance of recruitment notification, Janardhan said, adding that Congress government tweaked the rule of reservation after 503 Group - I posts were notified.

"This will not stand in the court," he said and hoped that the High Court will pass judgment in their favour in GO



29 case, which is up for hearing on Wednesday.

Janardhan wondered why the TGPSC cancelled the Group - I services notification for 503 posts when the High Court directed the Commission to re-conduct examination over the biometric attendance issue. Unemployed youth rallied behind the Congress party during the elections hoping justice and jobs. However, the grand-old party turned out to be a curse on the jobless youth, said Indra Naik, a Group - I aspirant. He said GO 29 has created a lot of injustice to the candidates from the reserved categories and demanded its cancellation. Questioning the State government claims of filling up 50,000 posts, Naik said majority posts that were filled up were notified during the previous BRS government.

BRS condemns obstruction of civil rights activists from visiting Lagacherla for fact-finding



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Hyderabad: The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on Tuesday criticised the Congress government for the obstruction of fact-finding committees, civil rights activists and curbing democratic freedom to visit Lagacherla in Kodangal constituency. The party found fault with the police high-handedness in stopping women's rights groups and civil rights activists seeking to investigate the incident where tribal women were assaulted and their family members were arrested during midnight raids by the police last week.

In a statement, BRS working president KT Rama Rao criticised the Congress for restricting access to the affected areas, questioning why Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's government was suppressing the truth. "Is Kodangal on the borders of Pakistan or is Lagacherla a turbulent area on the Indo-China border?" he asked. He condemned the unprecedented move to suspend internet services and deploy heavy police security in the area. He called the restrictions a blatant attempt to cover up the government's failures and demanded the Chief Minister to tender an apology for stopping women civil rights activists' fact-finding teams. Rama

Rao urged the government to lift restrictions immediately and allow transparency, asserting that the truth about the Lagacherla incident cannot be hidden forever. The issue has now grabbed national attention, sparking debates in Delhi about the Congress's misuse of power, he added. Senior BRS leader T Harish Rao also lambasted the Congress regime as tyrannical. "Is this the seventh guarantee of democratic governance that Revanth Reddy promised – a regime of oppression and restrictions?" he asked. He charged the Chief Minister with stifling dissent, detaining journalists, and filing false cases against civil rights activists.

Madras Music Academy restrained from presenting award to TM Krishna in MS Subbulakshmi's name

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Chennai: The Madras High Court on Tuesday restrained the Madras Music Academy from presenting the Sangita Kalanidhi M. S. Subbulakshmi Award to celebrated musician T. M. Krishna. This year, the Sangita Kalanidhi Award has been conferred upon T. M. Krishna in recognition of his sustained excellence throughout a long career in Carnatic music.

However, Justice Jayachandran of the Madras High Court, in an interim order, ruled that while the award could be presented, it must not be in the name of M. S. Subbulakshmi.

Revanth Reddy inaugurates Kaloji Kalakshetram in Hanamkonda



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Warangal: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday inaugurated the Kaloji Kalakshetram, a multi-purpose cultural convention centre, at Balasamudram area in Hanamkonda. The Chief Minister also unveiled the statue of Kaloji and a short film on Kaloji's life and the development of the Kalakshetram was also shown as part of the event. The entire cabinet was present on the occasion. Constructed on 4.25 acres at a cost of Rs.95 crore, the Kalakshetram is dedicated to the memory of renowned poet of Telangana, Kaloji Narayana Rao.

The Kaloji Kalakshetram project, a brainchild of former

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao and for which the foundation was laid by him in 2014, was executed by the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation and supervised by the Kakatiya Urban Development Authority (KUDA). The construction responsibility was transferred from the Department of Tourism to the KUDA in 2022. All the major works were completed during the previous BRS government's tenure.

The four-story structure houses an auditorium with a seating capacity of 1127, a mini meeting hall, dining facilities, and VIP suites, as well as an art gallery, library, offices, lobby, kitchen, and storage areas, all equipped with the latest state-of-the-art amenities. The Kalakshetram spans a built-up area of 1.77 lakh square feet. The state-of-the-art auditorium is equipped with advanced audio-visual facilities, making it an ideal venue for cultural programmes, theatrical performances, and art festivals. The Kalakshetram has features such as an elaborate entrance lobby, landscaped gardens, streetlights and a decorative fountain. At its forefront stands a statue of Kaloji, paying homage to his unmatched contributions to Telugu literature and culture. The Kalakshetram includes four mini halls designed for diverse events and an AC art gallery. The gallery, showcasing photographs, memorabilia, and awards of Kaloji, offers visitors an immersive cultural experience.

11 Manipur MLAs get notice for not attending CM Biren Singh's meeting

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

The Manipur Chief Minister's Secretariat has served notices to 11 MLAs, including ministers, for not attending a meeting convened by Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh on Monday (November 18, 2024) to discuss the law-and-order situation in the State. The MLAs asked to explain their absence included Kshetrigao's Sheikh Noorul Hassan of the National People's Party (NPP), which withdrew support to the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government on Sunday. The NPP, too, served show-cause notices to three of its seven MLAs for attending the meeting despite the party having withdrawn its support from the Biren Singh-led government on Sunday (November 17, 2024). These MLAs are Mayanglambam Rameswar Singh representing the Kachhing constituency, Thongam Shanti Singh (Moirang), and Irengbam Nalini Devi (Oinam). "Our Tamenglong MLA, Janghemlung Panmei did not attend the meeting but someone faked his signature to show he was present," an Imphal Valley-based NPP leader told The Hindu. "Our State Committee wrote to our national president and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, who issued a show-cause notice to the three MLAs who defied the party's stand," he said.

Barring Mr. Hassan and Sapam Nishikanta Singh, an independent MLA who represents the Keishamthong seat, all legislators served notices by the Chief Minister's Secretariat are BJP members. Among them, Khumukcham Joykisan (Thangmeiband) and Md Achab Uddin (Jiribam) had switched from the Janata Dal (United). Two "absentee"



NPP legislators – N. Kayisii of Tadubi constituency and Khurajaim Loken Singh of Wangoi – were not given any notice, unlike Mr Hassan. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh referred to the turnout at Monday's meeting to assert that the "writing on the wall is clear" for the BJP in Manipur. "The Manipur Assembly has 60 MLAs. Last night, the CM of Manipur called a meeting in Imphal of all MLAs belonging to the NDA. Other than him, only 26 showed up. Of these 26, 4 belong to the NPP whose National President has already written to the BJP National President withdrawing support to the present CM," he posted on X. Among the attendees was Manipur's Rajya Sabha member Leishemba Sanajaoba. After the NPP pulled out, the NDA in Manipur has 46 MLAs. Eight of them, including seven of the BJP, are Kuki-Zo MLAs who left the Imphal Valley after the ethnic clashes broke out on May 3, 2023.

Telangana High Court Strikes Down GO 16



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Telangana High Court has struck down Government Order (GO) 16, which was issued by the previous BRS government to regularize thousands of contract employees, particularly in the education and health sectors. The court declared that the regularization of contract employees under GO 16 was unconstitutional, setting the stage for uncertainty among those who were recently regularized.

The government order, which was implemented by the

previous BRS government, aimed to offer permanent positions to a large number of contract workers, primarily in key sectors such as education and healthcare. This decision had been hailed as a major step toward job security for many temporary workers. However, the High Court's ruling has now reversed this, leaving many workers who had gained regular status under GO 16 in a state of anxiety. In its verdict, the court ruled that the regularization of contract employees through GO 16 violated constitutional provisions. It has also suggested that the employees who were regularized may be reverted to their previous contract status, which has sparked concerns and protests from those affected. Petitioners who challenged the government order have welcomed the court's decision, stating that the ruling brings clarity on the issue.

The regularized employees, who were initially optimistic about their new status, are now expressing their dismay over the uncertain future that lies ahead. Many fear they may lose their regularized positions and be reverted to contract roles, which would mean a loss of benefits and job security. Officials have stated that once the official court order copy is received, further clarity will be provided on how to proceed with the implementation of the judgment.

Cold wave hits AP, Telangana: temperatures plunge to single digits

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Temperatures continue to drop across the Telugu states as residents brace for an unusually cold season. Early mornings have become a shiver-inducing experience for many, especially in the Alluri Sitarama Raju district, where temperatures have reached alarming lows. In a significant weather development, the Paderu agency recorded a chilling 9 degrees Celsius today, marking the first instance of single-digit temperatures this winter. Nearby areas like Munchingiputtu also reported similar lows, with officials

noting that Minumuluru experienced the same frigid temperatures. Meanwhile, Paderu recorded a relatively milder 12 degrees Celsius. The cold wave has been severe enough to drive locals to build cold fires for warmth, as temperatures continue to drop progressively. There are heightened concerns that conditions may worsen further, especially in regions bordering Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Despite the biting chill, the cold weather has attracted a surge of tourists to the scenic hilltops, with many flocking to Paderu and Vanjangi to witness breathtaking sunrises through the clouds.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Ragging scar

THE Supreme Court had laid down stringent guidelines while banning ragging in educational institutions, with zero tolerance to the initiation ritual as the norm. Yet, ragging of freshers — that often entails humiliation, abuse and coercion, resulting in profound physical and psychological scars — continues to cast a long shadow. The death of a first-year student of a Gujarat-based medical college after he was allegedly made to stand for three hours underscores the severity of the issue.

Fifteen seniors have been suspended and booked. When even the prospect of harsh punishment is not an effective deterrent, it calls for a rethink on actionable strategies to combat ragging. Fostering a safe learning environment is a fundamental requirement for an institution. While it holds the primary responsibility, any incident of ragging is also a societal failure. It's a telling reminder of the missing links of basic decency and civility at so many levels — at home, in college and in society at large.

There is no denying that entrenched social hierarchies and cultural biases play a role in both the scale and intensity of ragging. What is lacking in the anti-ragging strategy is understanding the psychological triggers on an individual basis. Why do a handful of students behave the way they do, and why do their problematic traits go unchecked over the years? Like in the case of sexual harassment, the slightest whisper of ragging, or of violent bullying, needs to be taken seriously and acted upon. Mental health remains the most neglected area, too, with very few institutions using the services of qualified counsellors. Anti-ragging cells, safety committees, orientation programmes, security surveillance and legal action are part of the mandated multifaceted approach to combat ragging. What's imperative is a collective outrage — a firm 'no' to any form of ragging.

Faridkot farmer's formula: Innovation, daily earnings, zero debt, 120% happiness



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

In Kothe Ramsar village of Kotkapura tehsil in Faridkot, 61-year-old Dalip Singh has redefined farming. At a time when many farmers struggle with debts and uncertainties around crop sales, Dalip is an example of self-sufficiency, innovation, and sustainable agriculture. Managing 9.5 acres — 8 acres of his own and 1.5 acres belonging to his brother — he has achieved a remarkable milestone. He is entirely debt-free, earning daily from his farm without relying on crop loans or bank limits. He also bypasses the six-month wait for mandi sales of his crops by doing multiple crop farming, employing innovative practices, including mulching, to convert paddy straw into a valuable resource. His journey showcases how sustainable farming can be both profitable and environmentally conscious.

Dalip's farming philosophy challenges the conventional reliance on seasonal harvests. Unlike most farmers in Punjab who take two crops paddy and wheat and wait for five-six months to sell their crops in mandis, he has diversified his approach. By cultivating a combination of traditional crops such as wheat, high-value cash crops such as garlic, vegetables like cauliflower, turnips, and Jhaar Karela, which has medicinal value and good for the diabetics, beets and Basmati, he has unlocked the potential of his land to provide daily earnings. "I've never needed a bank loan or a crop limit. With hard work, I've managed to meet my expenses," says Dalip, adding that his motto is to sell the crop daily and earn daily. A stepping stone in Dalip's success is his adoption of stubble mulching. After harvesting Basmati, he uses a repeater to chop stubble into small pieces, which he then spreads across his fields. Wheat seeds are either sprayed manually or planted using a seeder, with the stubble serving as a natural mulch. Mulch is the layer of a material applied to the surface of soil, which conserves soil moisture, improving fertility and health of soil, reducing weed growth, and enhancing soil organism such as earthworm.

"The stubble keeps the soil moist, reduces the need for frequent irrigation, and suppresses weeds, saving me money on weedicides," says Dalip, adding that as the stubble decomposes, it enriches the soil, reducing the need for fertilizers. His wheat yields often reach 26 quintals per acre — significantly higher than the state average of 19–20 quintals but some times weather plays spoil spot.

For garlic, Dalip employs a similar mulching technique but adapts it to the crop's needs. He removes the stubble first and dumps on the sides of field, sows garlic on raised beds, and then spreads the dumped stubble over the beds to conserve moisture and maintain soil health. "For garlic on one acre, I need the stubble of two acres to cover the crop. His meticulous approach to garlic farming is a key factor in his award-winning produce. This year alone, PAU gave him first award for producing one of the best qualities garlic in PAU Mela in September," he says. Dalip's strategy of cultivating vegetables has been another game-changer. By planting cauliflower twice a year — once from July to October and again from November to April — he ensures a steady income throughout the year. From his vegetable crops, he earns Rs 50,000 per acre and above after meeting expenses within four months, and in peak seasons, he has earned up to Rs 5-6 lakh per acre in just 90 days. "Dalip's journey is a testament to the transformative power of innovation, hard work, and sustainability in agriculture. His methods not only ensure financial stability but also contribute to healthier soil and a cleaner environment," said Amrik Singh, Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) in Faridkot who recently visited his fields to see his mulching technique.

Dalip Singh's success has not gone unnoticed. His innovative practices have earned him accolades from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), and even a CM's award.

Second accused in Gogi gang member's murder arrested: Delhi Police



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch has arrested the second accused in the murder of Amit Lakra, a member of the Gogi gang and the right-hand man of leader Ankesh Lakra. Tushar, 20, aka Kali, was arrested in the early hours of Saturday from Sonipat, the police said. According to the police, information was received that a stolen Black Pulsar bike on which accused Nihaal and Tushar were riding when they shot down Lakra in Mundka on November 7 was hidden near Rasoi Dhaba in the Kundli area of Sonipat. "A tip-off was received that Tushar was going to come at around 5 am on November 16 to take the bike," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sanjay Kumar Sain.

642 redevelopment projects carried out in Delhi villages under Gramodaya Abhiyan

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, darupadi murmu Since the launch of the Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan (DGA) initiative in March this year, 642 projects aimed at transforming Delhi's villages have been carried out, as per information presented to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena during a recent review meeting. Since the launch of the Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan (DGA) initiative in March this year, 642 projects aimed at transforming Delhi's villages have been carried out, as per information presented to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena during a recent review meeting.

Representatives from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), along with officials from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department, attended the meeting regarding the initiative. As officials from the L-G office stated, the DDA is responsible for funding and partially implementing projects under this scheme, which has a budget of over Rs 960 crore. "Work in these villages commenced following the inauguration of the DGA in March this year by Home Minister Amit Shah, and progress has been steady. Out of the 642 projects being undertaken, 111 have already been completed, 296 are in the advanced stages of completion, 118 are in the early stages of implementation, and 117 are in the sanctioning and pre-implementation stages," an official stated. The official stated that piped gas connections have been completed in 93 of the 200 identified villages under the DGA programme. Work on the remaining 107 villages

A team was constituted, led by Assistant Commissioner of Police Umesh Barthwal and Inspector Rakesh Sharma, and a trap was laid near the dhaba, the police said. Tushar arrived at the location and upon seeing the police, tried to escape on the stolen bike. "The accused was overpowered and arrested and further investigation is underway," DCP Sain said. According to the police, Tushar aka Kali hails from Jaurasi Khas village in Panipat and knew co-accused Nihaal from his childhood. "He came in contact with the Bambiha gang through Nihaal and started working for the Tajpuriya gang, which is in alliance with Bambiha in Delhi," a police officer said. Tushar aided Nihaal in stealing a black Pulsar from Rani Bagh on November 7 before they went on to shoot down Amit Lakra near the Mundka Metro station on November 9, a police officer said. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police on Thursday arrested Nihaal after a brief encounter near Shahbad dairy during which he was shot in his leg, an officer said. The rivalry between the Jitender Gogi and Tajpuriya gangs dates back to 2010. Initially close allies, Gogi and Tajpuriya fell out during a student union election. Over the years, this conflict has resulted in the deaths of at least 25 individuals, according to police sources. Gogi was shot and killed inside the Rohini court in 2020, allegedly at the behest of Tajpuriya, who was incarcerated at the time. In August 2023, Tajpuriya was stabbed to death inside Tihar Jail, allegedly by members of the Gogi gang.



is expected to be finished by March 2025, with 43 of these villages set to receive piped gas connections as early as December of this year. "The connections provided by Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) under the DGA are not funded by the allocated amount of Rs 960 crore. The work being undertaken under the DGA includes the development of parks, gymnasiums, roads, sewers, water bodies, cremation grounds, pastures, and other civic amenities," the official said. The officials stated that these projects were chosen after extensive consultations with residents. District magistrates engaged with the community over three rounds, staying in villages and holding organised camps for this purpose. "Other projects are also in the pipeline and are being considered by a committee constituted by the DDA being approved by the L-G," the official added.

A daughter of Punjab travels to Pakistan, reconnects with her roots — and fulfils her grandfather's last wish



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

When Kiran Kaur Ghuman, 52, set foot in her ancestral village in Sialkot in Pakistan's Punjab recently, flower petals, delicacies and tears of joy awaited her — as if she was visiting home for the first time after marriage. On October 24 this year, United Kingdom-based Kiran fulfilled her grandfather's dying dream — over 75 years after Partition, she returned to their ancestral Ganjanwala Kalan village in Pakistan's Sialkot. "My grandfather Bahadur Singh and one of his brothers Wadhawa Singh had moved to India during Partition, while their other brother Ujagar Singh had stayed back. Years later we got to know that he had converted to Islam and his new name was Ghulam Mohammad. Then our families started connecting via letters. I had sent him my wedding invite years ago, but no one was able to attend due to the bitter ties between both countries. They had even preserved my wedding card," says Kiran, a therapist based in Leicester, who went to Pakistan via the Attari border.

Though she had several apprehensions before travelling to Pakistan, she was welcomed "like a married daughter visiting her parents' home for the first time since her wedding." My uncle Nazeer Ahmad Ghuman (Ujagar Singh's son) cried hugging me and took me around the village. They had preserved everything that my grandfather used to tell me about — the peepal tree in their family's fields, the old chakki (traditional grindstone), the letters that they had written to his brother in Pakistan," Kiran told The Indian Express over telephone from Sialkot. "Though I was very young at that time, I remember my grandfather crying because he missed his brother and wanted to meet him. That's when I decided that I would one day go to my family's ancestral village in Pakistan to fulfil his dream," says Kiran. In India, Kiran's grandfather and brother re-settled in Jalandhar district after migration during partition. Though the family on Indian side wrote multiple letters to Ujagar Singh, she says he received a reply only in 1986. "We learnt that Ujagar Singh had converted to Islam. Despite converting to Islam, they still used Ghuman as their surname. The exchange of letters continued, and even I used to write letters to Pakistan. We would write in Gurmukhi (Punjabi script) and get replies in Urdu. I would request my school's peon to translate them for me. The exchange of letters briefly ceased after my grandfather and his brother (Ujagar Singh) both passed away and I too shifted to the UK in 1997," she says.

Spooked over the deteriorating relations between India and Pakistan, she says her family and in-laws both discouraged her from writing to her family in Pakistan. But Kiran kept sending letters to Pakistan.

"Amdad Ghuman, a nephew of my uncle Nazeer Ahmad Ghuman, then started replying to my letters. Later, we also stayed in touch via telephone. However, the stringent visa rules and other issues made travel impossible," says Kiran, adding that her visit was coordinated by Jeevay Sanjha Punjab, an organisation that helps reunite families living across the border. Kiran, who lost her father in 2015, says her paternal uncle Santokh Singh was reduced to tears when she told him about her travel plans to Pakistan. "Tayaji (elder paternal uncle) said, 'Take me with you', before he started crying. Since he is wheelchair-bound, I decided that I would take some soil from the family field for him. I had told him, 'Otthon di mitti laike aaungi, tuhade kaleje nu thandak pau (I will bring the soil from the village and your heart will be at peace)'," says Kiran, adding that she also paid her respects at Ujagar Singh's grave. Though Kiran is scheduled to return to India soon, she says her only regret is that her grandfather died without ever seeing Ujagar Singh again. "My family's loss in 1947 — the brothers getting separated — can never be recovered. This pain can only be felt by those who were actually separated. For others, it's just in their conversations and stories," she says.

No decision yet on Bangladesh in Kolkata Book Fair: Organiser

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Kolkata: In a departure from previous years, Bangladesh is absent from the list of participating countries at the 48th International Kolkata Book Fair, which will kick off on January 28, 2025. The fair will feature Germany as the focal theme country, showcasing its rich cultural heritage and literary legacy, organisers said.

Bangladesh is conspicuously missing from the list of participating nations, a statement by the Publishers and Booksellers Guild said. Guild president Tridib Chatterjee said, "Except for 2007 and 2021, the two years when the fair could not be held due to unavoidable circumstances, Bangladesh had been a

However, he added, "In view of the current situation in the neighbouring country over the past three months, when even visas are not being granted except for serious medical emergencies, the Guild cannot make any decision on its own. We have to seek advice from the Ministry of External Affairs for policy decisions and from the state government regarding law and order concerns."

Lokayukta summons Karnataka minister Zameer Ahmed Khan in disproportionate assets case



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

The Karnataka Lokayukta police have issued a notice to Housing, Waqf, and Minority Welfare Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan in a disproportionate assets case. A Lokayukta police officer confirmed on Saturday that the senior Congress leader had been directed to appear for questioning on December 3. "This is a routine notice as part of the ongoing investigation. We need to record his statement regarding certain aspects of the case," the officer stated without providing further details.

The case dates back to 2021 when the Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted searches at properties linked to Khan following revelations in the IMA ponzi scam. Investigations suggested that Khan allegedly possessed assets valued at 2,031 per cent of his known sources of income. The ED's findings revealed a Rs 9.38 crore transaction via cheque between Khan and IMA promoter Mansoor Ali Khan. According to sources, Mansoor claimed he had given Khan Rs 29.38 crore in cash and another Rs 25 crore, which had not been returned. The ED submitted its report to the now-defunct Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB), which registered a case in 2022. After the ACB's abolition, the case was transferred to the Karnataka Lokayukta. In November 2023, the Karnataka High Court dismissed Khan's petition challenging the proceedings. Investigations into the case are ongoing.

Justice Surya Kant calls upon law graduates to begin with district courts to hone their skills



"One of the reasons for this is, perhaps, several youngsters feel practising before district courts is not as glamorous and satisfying as appearing before High Courts and the Supreme Court," said Justice Kant, while advising young law graduates to be mindful of their duties and responsibilities towards the profession and society at large.

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Supreme Court judge Justice Surya Kant on Saturday said that a concerning trend has emerged, there is a lack of passion among young law graduates, particularly from the premier law schools, to join the Bar and practice before district courts. "One of the reasons for this is, perhaps, several youngsters feel practising before district courts is not as glamorous and satisfying as appearing before High Courts and the Supreme Court," said Justice Kant, while advising young law graduates to be mindful of their duties and responsibilities towards the profession and society at large.

Justice Kant said the judicial system is set into motion at the grassroots level and district courts are the first meeting points of the consumers of justice, where young lawyers can work efficiently. "Legal profession is a noble one, and is not to be mistaken as a common trade," Justice Kant said speaking at the 6th Law Convocation held at Panjab University (PU) in Chandigarh, where more than 650 students were awarded degrees. The Chief Guest at the occasion was SC judge Justice B R Gavai, who along with Justice Kant and Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, attended the convocation programme.

Quoting Dr B R Ambedkar, Justice Kant said, "However good a Constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad. However bad a Constitution may be, if those implementing it are good, it will prove to be good," asking the law graduates to "become the custodian of Justice". If the foundation is not strong, the structure will not be sustainable, he said. "The art of drafting, which is the soul of the legal profession, cross-examination, ability to argue and other skills are best sharpened at the district court level. So, practising before district courts can bring these opportunities which the fresh law graduates must explore," Justice Kant said.

Justice Kant advised law graduates, "If they initially begin with practising at district courts, then to High Courts and the Supreme Court, it will help them to develop a better understanding about initial drafting of cases." Justice Gavai in his convocation address focused on championing justice for the marginalised and the importance of hard work, and motivated the students to aim for higher goals in their lives. Justice Gavai also highlighted the possibility of working in new emerging areas where lawyers could hone their skills. Earlier, Director, UILS, Professor Shruti Bedi and Professor Dr Vandana Arora, chairperson of the Department of Laws felicitated the guests of honour and extended a warm welcome to all. PU Vice-Chancellor Professor Renu Vig inaugurated the 6th Law Convocation and delivered the opening remarks, elaborating upon the purpose of education, building strong character, handling various challenges of life and becoming financially independent.

'Unfortunate that employee was deprived of pensionary benefits for 56 years': HC asks Punjab to disburse pension benefits to man who retired in 1964



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Justice Sudeepti Sharma ruled in favour of Punjab State Transport Department employee Ram Lal Prabhakar, granting him pensionary benefits from the date of his resignation's acceptance on July 7, 1964. Justice Sudeepti Sharma ruled in favour of Punjab State Transport Department employee Ram Lal Prabhakar, granting him pensionary benefits from the date of his resignation's acceptance on July 7, 1964. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has termed it "unfortunate" that a man was denied pensionary benefits for 56 years, despite completing the qualifying service. Justice Sudeepti Sharma ruled in favour of Punjab State Transport Department employee Ram Lal Prabhakar, granting him pensionary benefits from the date of his resignation's acceptance on July 7, 1964. The case stemmed from Prabhakar's petition challenging a 2001 civil court decision that dismissed his plea for pension. An appellate court upheld the dismissal in 2003. Prabhakar joined the Punjab State Transport Department on May 18, 1948,

as a permanent employee in a pensionable post. He was deputed to the Punjab State Small Industries Corporation on November 21, 1962. His deputation ended on October 30, 1963, but he was neither recalled to his parent department nor absorbed permanently by the corporation. In December 1963, Prabhakar wrote to the corporation expressing his willingness to forego pensionary benefits if absorbed. However, he was neither absorbed nor reinstated, forcing him to resign effective June 19, 1964, with his resignation accepted on July 7, 1964. The petitioner argued that the courts below misinterpreted Rule 3.17, dismissing his suit and appeal on the ground of limitation. He contended that pensionary benefits constitute a recurring cause, making limitation inapplicable. The state counsel, however, defended the lower courts' decisions and cited Rule 3.17(A)(1)(5) to argue that Prabhakar was not entitled to pensionary benefits.

Justice Sharma observed that Prabhakar's letter expressing willingness to forego pensionary benefits was contingent on absorption, which never materialised. She held that the letter could not be used as estoppel against his pension rights. The court noted that Prabhakar served in a pensionable post for 14 years from 1948 to 1962 before his deputation and completed 16 years of service by the time his resignation was accepted in 1964. As the qualifying service for pension at the time was 10 years, Prabhakar met the criteria. The judgment emphasised that pensionary rights cannot be denied to individuals in pensionable service, stating that the respondent department's actions violated established rules. Justice Sharma directed the state to grant Prabhakar his long-overdue pension.

Tracing the history of Sarai Kale Khan: Gujjar stronghold to Bhagwan Birsa Munda Chowk



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

A bastion of Gujjar-dominated villages boasting fierce warriors, with land spread out from Purana Qila in the North-west to Taimoor Nagar in the South of what is now Delhi. Or a place of rest and recuperation for weary travellers? — Sarai Kale Khan is famous for many things but finding a mention of it in official government records is a tough task. On Friday, the Sarai Kale Khan Chowk was renamed 'Bhagwan Birsa Munda Chowk', with Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurating the tribal cultural icon's statue on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary year. Zafar Hasan, in his exhaustive work, List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments, Volume IV, mentions Sarai Kale Khan being situated in a village named Bahlolpur Bangar. He wrote, "The sarai of Kale Khan which is constructed of rubble masonry was originally surrounded by arched cells, with their outer walls crowned by battlements. Most of these cells have now fallen down, and the rest which stand are used by villagers as residential houses. It is said to have contained a gateway on the north and west, but both of them have disappeared." Maulvi Hasan also mentioned a tomb 150 yards from the sarai, constructed of plaster and rubble, which was in a dilapidated condition and contained no grave. Who is the mysterious Kale Khan though? To unravel this, one must first understand where the sarai system came from.

In the chapter, Caravanserais Along the Grand Trunk Road in Pakistan, Saifur Rahman Dar points out in the book, The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce, that no one knows when exactly the Grand Trunk Road was built. Precursor forms of the road existed during the time of Panini and Chandragupta Maurya, and repairs were undertaken under Sher Shah Suri's rule.

During the arterial road's reconstruction, Sher Shah

Suri would emphasise the need to build rest stops for travellers. In his article, Sarais in Mughal India, history professor Nazer Aziz Anjum writes, "(Sher Shah Suri) initiated building of sarais on a large scale on routes basically for the need of state and partially for the need of wayfarers... it was during the Mughal period that work of building sarais was carried out on an extensive scale." Meanwhile, history presents three possibilities for the person behind the name — Mubarak Khan Lohani, whose eternal resting place in South Extension is named Kale Khan Gumbad; Kale Khan, a Sufi saint from the reign of Sher Shah Suri, whose tomb now rests near Delhi Airport's Terminal 2; and Kale Khan, the spiritual advisor and friend of Mirza Ghalib, whose house Ahata Kale Khan still stands in Ballimaran's Gali Qasim Jan. Delhi chronicler and journalist R V Smith seemed to be equally baffled by the three men who shared the same name. However, he agreed that Sarai Kale Khan was likely named after Ghalib's friend. "Kale Khan who built a sarai in Southeast Delhi was probably born in the early nineteenth century and lived on to see the Mutiny of 1857 and its aftermath," writes Smith in his book, Delhi: Unknown Tales of a City. Sarai Kale Khan According to local Vicky Choudhary, Kale Khan was a peer and a sant, a devout Gaud Brahmin forced to convert to Islam to save his life.

He explains further that Khan was probably born with another name, but received the nickname 'Kale Khan' because of his dark complexion. Smith also mentions that Kale Khan would have probably witnessed the 1857 Mutiny since a snippet of history does emerge from the area just after the violence had died down. Gujjars pastoralists and farmers have long been settled in the area since the land near the Yamuna provided rolling grasslands for their cattle to graze on. However, in the short duration of lawlessness after the Mutiny, many local Gujjars from Sarai Kale Khan formed raiding parties and wreaked havoc on neighbouring villages. In the present day, the urban village of Sarai Kale Khan is still dominated by Gujjars. But their version of the area's history differs. According to local Vicky Choudhary, Kale Khan was a peer and a sant, a devout Gaud Brahmin forced to convert to Islam to save his life. "He was the one who made the sarai for travellers... in 1650, the Gujjar community from Khanpur shifted near the sarai... land was good and there were vast fields for the cattle to graze in," he said. Another popular folk tale from the area goes that the Gujjars of Khanpur saved a royal retinue from being attacked by highwaymen on the way to Nizamuddin dargah from Mehrauli. Impressed by their act of bravery, the king awarded them land near the dargah to protect all those who travelled on the route and ensure the safety of those who spent the night in the sarai.

Anubrata Mondal in Trinamool's Birbhum panel

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Mondal, considered a close aide of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has been serving as the president of the TMC's Birbhum district since 2009 and his inclusion in the core committee comes after his recent bail from Tihar Jail, where he was being held in connection with a cattle smuggling case. After his arrest in August 2022, no new president was appointed. Additionally, it was also decided in the meeting that every leader will have separate jurisdiction and nobody will enter into another leader's jurisdiction without permission. Last week, senior TMC leader and party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, had proposed that the Birbhum district organisation should be controlled by the core committee, even after its district president Anubrata



Mondal got bail and was released from Tihar jail.

Two years ago, after Mondal's arrest, the Chief Minister had formed a "coordination committee" of district leaders, MPs, and MLAs — who also conducted the Lok Sabha elections this year. Abhishek Banerjee, last week, had reportedly proposed that this core committee should "control" the party's Birbhum unit. Meanwhile, the core committee now has seven members — Bikash Roychowdhury, Kajal Sheikh, Sudepta Ghosh, Abhijit Sinha, Ashish Banerjee and Chandranath Sinha and Mondal (also known as Kesto da). Members have also denied any infighting within the core committee. Convenor of core committee Bikash

Roychowdhury said, "There is no infighting in Birbhum. We are all united and work unitedly in the coming days." Kajal Sheikh, considered a key rival of Mondal, said, "We will work together under Kesto da's guardianship." Some party leaders in the district feel that Mondal's freedom to move around Birbhum is now being curtailed. "If Kesto da wants to go to someone's area, then he should inform in advance! It's incredible!", a district leader said.

India test-fires long range hypersonic missile

New Delhi: India has successfully test-fired a long range hypersonic missile from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday. The missile was test-fired on Saturday, according to officials.

Singh described the test-firing of the missile as a historic moment as it put India in the group of select nations having capabilities to develop such critical technologies. "India has achieved a major milestone by successfully conducting flight trial of long range hypersonic missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, off-the-coast of Odisha," the defence minister said on 'X'. "This is a historic moment and this significant achievement has put our country in the group of select nations having capabilities of such critical and advanced military technologies," he said. Singh congratulated the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the armed forces and the industry for what he described as a "stupendous" achievement.

All mafias linked to SP, now peace prevails here: CM Yogi Adityanath



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

CHIEF MINISTER Yogi Adityanath on Saturday again targeted the Samajwadi Party, saying that during SP's rule, mafias associated with that party to target innocent persons, grab their properties, kidnap traders, threaten women, occupy religious places and disrupt festivals. Adityanath emphasised that such chaos no longer exists in UP, as there are "no curfews or riots anymore and peace prevails now." He said, "Every dreaded mafia is closely linked to the Samajwadi Party. They rely on them for their livelihood and even provide them shelter. The atrocities faced by Jaya Pal and Puja Pal are well-known. BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai, Ramesh Yadav, Ramesh Patel and seven others, were murdered." Samajwadi Party MLA from Chayal seat in Prayagraj, Pooja Pal, is campaigning for BJP candidate in the bypoll.

The CM urged the public to vote for BJP candidate Deepak Patel from Phulpur assembly and Surendra Diler from Khair. He said the SP has no interest in development, youth, farmers, or traders. Their only principle is 'Sabka Sath, Saifai Parivar Ka Vikas' (development of the Saifai family). He stated, "We promised to make UP riot-free and take strict action against all mafias, including those involved in illegal mining, cheating, and cattle and forest related crimes, and we have delivered on those promises." The CM added, "When the government works for the benefit of the youth and conducts fair exams, it bothers the SP. From

day one, we made it clear that we would act against those playing with the future of the youth and crack down on cheating mafias. The government and recruitment boards are ensuring that competitive exams are conducted with integrity."

Yogi said that the Prayagraj Kumbh has been recognized worldwide as a cultural heritage symbolising humanity. He criticised the Samajwadi Party (SP) for opposing initiatives such as the Ram Temple, Deepotsav, Dev Deepawali, fair examinations, development projects, and welfare schemes for the poor. He accused the SP of "believing in divisive politics, using caste to create divisions, and acting like adversaries." He also highlighted that the Ganga Expressway will connect Prayagraj to western Uttar Pradesh, reducing travel time to Meerut to just 6-7 hours. He warned people against being misled by SP's divisive campaigns on social media. The CM alleged that during SP's coalition government, new scams surfaced daily. He stated that for BJP, elections are a mission of service, while for SP and BSP, they are a way to carry out corrupt activities, exploit the public, and spread chaos. Adityanath, while addressing a gathering in Khair, claimed that the region's value would soon surpass Delhi's due to initiatives such as the Jewar Airport, Film City, and Toy City, which will primarily benefit the local population. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Adityanath on Saturday held a roadshow at Vijay Nagar to garner support for the BJP candidate Sanjeev Sharma. According to party estimates, more than two lakh people thronged to get a glimpse of Adityanath during the roadshow. "This was the CM's second visit to Ghaziabad in a month. This will ensure that BJP wins the bypoll," said BJP's media-in-charge Pradeep Chaudhary. With Delhi Assembly polls set to be held next year, BJP MLA from Loni, Nand Kishore Gurjar, said: "Whatever happens in Ghaziabad transcends to Delhi. This was CM's fourth visit before the bypoll and this seat is important." Ghaziabad is one of the nine Assembly seats that are going to bypolls in Uttar Pradesh. The others are Katehari in Ambedkar Nagar district, Karhal in Mainpuri, Meerapur in Muzaffarnagar, Majhawan in Mirzapur, Sishamau in Kanpur city, Khair in Aligarh, Phulpur in Prayagraj and Kundarki in Moradabad.

In Lucknow, survey on beggars to find what govt facilities they lack

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

VIJAY, A 42-YEAR-OLD labourer from Saharanpur, lost both legs around eight years ago while trying to board a moving train in Meerut. Lacking other skills to support his family of four, he turned to begging to make ends meet. His wife, Seema, was pregnant at the time of the accident. A few months later, Vijay brought his family to Lucknow, settling near the Charbagh railway station. He cites two main reasons for the relocation: First, to escape the "social stigma" he faced and second, because begging in Lucknow is "more lucrative than in other cities across the state." People in Lucknow have a higher spending capacity compared to residents of other districts in UP, Vijay pointed out. He also claimed that he would quit begging only after the state government provides him with a "proper house and work that he is capable of doing."

Vijay shared these details with a joint team from the Lucknow district administration, which is gathering comprehensive information about beggars. The survey, launched under the directives of Lucknow's Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob, aims at identifying and collecting data on beggars to assess which government facilities they are not getting access to. A 15-day pilot project, which commenced on October 19, was completed recently. Five separate "static teams," each comprising representatives from five state departments — Mahila Kalyan, the Municipal Corporation, the Police, Samaj Kalyan and the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA) — have been formed to collect data from beggars. Each team includes one woman from Mahila Kalyan and three police constables. These five static teams, stationed at key intersections, are supported by two mobile teams known as 'Nigrani,' which also includes representatives from all five departments, including Mahila Kalyan.

The 15-day project was extended until November 7 due to festivals during this period, said a senior official from the Mahila Kalyan department. The static team has been provided with an eight-point proforma — created collaboratively by the five departments — on which specific questions are based for each beggar. The points include personal details of the individual and their family members, as well as information on how long the person has been engaged in begging. Under the pilot project, five major intersections in Lucknow, known to have a high number of beggars, have been selected. The joint teams are stationed at these intersections to record details from beggars. The locations include Hazratganj, Lal Batti, Polytechnic, Charbagh Railway Station and Awadh Crossing. The mobile teams patrol designated routes regularly and their work is to identify men, women and children engaged in begging and relay that information to the static teams, which respond immediately. The static teams focus on gathering detailed information from beggars. Among the key details gathered from beggars are whether they possess Aadhaar cards, ration cards, voter IDs and bank accounts. The team is also assessing whether they are receiving benefits of government schemes, including pensions and old-age support, as well as what assistance they need to leave the begging profession. "We face many challenges during this process, as many beggars deny being involved in begging when they see a large presence of people, including police personnel. They often come up with various excuses for being there. When questioned, some even create a ruckus, putting us in a difficult situation at times. We have to reassure them that they will not be harmed and that the government will provide support. Only then do they feel comfortable sharing their details," said a member of a static team.

Over the past few days, the team has collected data from 130 beggars. "The main purpose of the program is to find ways to connect these beggars with mainstream society and identify which government services they may be lacking," said Saurabh Tripathi, project officer at DUDA. He added that without understanding the underlying reasons, no effective solutions can be developed. "The next steps will be determined on the basis of the outcomes of the project," Tripathi noted. Another key objective of the administration is to explore how these persons can transition away from begging. According to a recent survey conducted by an NGO, there are nearly 4,000 beggars in the state capital.

According to the survey team, during the pilot project, they found that mostly beggars come from nearby districts such as Barabanki, Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, and Amethi, representing various religious backgrounds. Among



the beggars from the Hindu community, many belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It was found that many beggars migrate to Lucknow with their families and often settle in areas overlooked by the administration, such as under highways, near railway stations and bus stands, in abandoned parks and other similar locations. "While the younger male members of the family typically work as labourers, while women and the elderly engage in begging. These beggars usually begin their activities around 9 am and return to their shelters by 6 pm," said a team member.

A large number of beggars were found to possess Aadhaar cards, ration cards, voter IDs, and even bank accounts. Several elderly persons and widows receive pensions and some beggars claim to own mobile phones. An officer said it has been found that only a small percentage of beggars are doing so out of necessity, while the remaining 95 per cent are professional beggars. Some of these beggars once had technical skills or artistic talents that have become obsolete due to modernisation. According to officials, on average, each beggar collects around Rs 200-300 per day, with the highest earnings among pregnant women and those carrying infants, who can earn up to Rs 600-800 daily. It was also found that pregnant women typically have their deliveries at home or in community or primary health centres. "Begging has become a profession; the more money you make," said an official from the static team. Several elderly and widowed beggars were found to be receiving pensions from the government. "A distinctive feature of beggars' families is their lack of religious affiliations. Most of them name their children after festivals, months, dates, or familiar objects, making it difficult to determine their religion based on their names," noted a team member. He added that beggars could be referred to as "shuttling beggars" as they return to their native places every 25-30 days or so. After a three-day break, they come back to resume begging. Each beggar has designated areas for their activities, which helps prevent conflicts among them, an officer said. "We have not found any syndicate operating behind the beggars so far. However, the presence of a gang cannot be ruled out," said a policeman accompanying the static team. Police personnel are deployed with the teams to ensure their safety.

Gurukulam school principal enters into controversies

Jagtil: Gurukulam school principal enters into controversies. During the event, students alleged that the principal failed to address their concerns and restricted proper interaction with their parents. They accused her of using abusive language when questioned and imposing penalties on students returning late to the hostel after vacations, citing school development. Additionally, they claimed they were denied cosmetic charges sanctioned by the state government.

Jagtil: Laxmipur BC Welfare Residential School Principal Edelli Mamatha has been in controversy in the recent past. Close on the heels of an attack by her husband and brother, students of the school staged a protest against her on Saturday. Students staged a protest demanding the transfer of the school principal. Students, who came out from the school during the lunch hour, staged dharna on the road. Speaking on the occasion, students alleged that the principal never focused on solving problems. The principal would not allow them to interact with their parents properly.

Delhi AQI back in 'severe' zone, junior classes in Gurgaon may move online



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Delhi's air quality plummeted to the 'severe' category again Saturday, with an AQI of 417 against Friday's AQI of 396. After Delhi, the Haryana government has decided to authorise districts to shift schools to online mode for students up to Class 5. "Letters have been written to all district deputy commissioners on behalf of the Directorate of School Education in this regard. Given rising pollution, the government has given the DCs authority to temporarily close schools up to Class 5, giving priority to the health of children," the state government's Department of Public Relations posted in Hindi on X.

GRAP Stage-III restrictions, which came into effect Thursday, include a ban on private BS-III petrol and BS-IV

diesel vehicles; switching to online mode for junior classes; staggered government office hours, and prohibition of interstate buses other than EVs/CNG/BS-VI. The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM), in a review meeting Saturday, directed NCR states to ensure strict enforcement of actions under different stages of GRAP. Daily reporting of actions under GRAP Stage III needs to be shared without fail, CAQM noted. It also called for prioritising identified pollution hotspots in NCR states. Expressing dissatisfaction over the rate of resolution of pollution-related complaints from citizens on different apps and social media, it directed NCR authorities to resolve all pending complaints within a week, while tagging the CAQM during the closure of the complaint. It further asked states to intensify the issuance of challans on vehicles for non-possession of pollution under control certificates and impounding end-of-life vehicles. Meanwhile, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai inspected Kashmere Gate ISBT to check compliance with GRAP Stage III restrictions. He also accused the BJP governments of being behind the worsening air pollution, claiming that despite the ban on BS-IV diesel buses, they are still being sent to Delhi. On Saturday, both the maximum and minimum temperatures dipped further — the Safdarjung station recorded a maximum of 29.6 degrees Celsius while the minimum temperature was 15.3 degrees Celsius. The stubble-burning contribution has been on the rise, according to data from the Decision Support System — on Friday, it was at 37.5%. The top domestic emissions source was the transport sector at 11.6%.

Modi repeating whatever Congress says: Rahul Gandhi

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Taking a "memory loss" jibe at PM Narendra Modi, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said the former is nowadays repeating what Congress leaders are saying in their speeches. "My sister told me that she had heard Modi's speech. And whatever we say, Modi is saying the same thing these days. I don't know. Maybe he has lost his memory," said Rahul at a rally in Vidarbha's Amaravati. "For the past one year, I have been saying in my speeches that BJP has been attacking the Constitution. PM Modi is saying the Congress is attacking the Constitution... I repeat in every meeting that we (INDIA bloc) will remove the 50% reservation cap. But he says Rahul Gandhi is against the reservation... I have demanded caste census. In the next meeting, he will say Rahul Gandhi is against caste census," said Rahul. Rahul attacked the ruling Maharashtra government and said, "Do not forget that the present Maharashtra government was formed by theft. This government was formed after violating the Constitution." Gandhi alleged that crores of rupees were spent to spoil his image by attacking him in media, because he decided to oppose the land acquisition in Bhatta-Parsaul.



"It was done because I stand to protect your land. And that's why I say that if the Dharavi land of few lakh crore (under Dharavi redevelopment project) is going to be given to Adani, then thousands of crore should also be given to the farmers of Maharashtra," he said. Exuding confidence that the Congress would form government in Maharashtra, he promised, "7,000 per quintal MSP will be given to soybean farmers."

From Baltimore collapse to home in India: Crew recall tragedy, closure

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

D Ancila returned home with her children from her regular church visit on March 26, 2024 to find a crowd of about 15-20 people at the doorstep of her home 40 km from Thoothukudi. It took her a few minutes to absorb the news they had gathered there to give her: that the merchant ship MV Dali, on which her seafarer husband Dominic Dobus Peeris worked as a Motorman, had collided with the Baltimore bridge in the United States. Thousands of miles away, Peeris was trying to make sense of what had happened as he scurried about the engine room, following orders. "I was extremely busy onboard, and the thought of calling my family didn't even occur to me. But thankfully before I could call her, the company officials did and assured her that I was safe." "I finally managed to speak to her after about 12 hours," says the seafarer who is among the 11 crew members allowed to come back home to India after MV Dali collided with the Baltimore bridge following a power failure.

Six people, who were on the bridge had died, while the ship was extensively damaged. "It occurred after midnight when most of the crew were resting. I was asleep at the time and woke up to an announcement on the vessel's PA system. Along with the Chief Cook, General Steward, and an AB (Able Seaman) I rushed out, trying to comprehend what had happened. The entire crew was shocked and apprehensive. This vessel had always been well-maintained, so the incident was deeply unsettling for all of us. The feeling of uncertainty was palpable," recalls Peeris, from his home to which he returned in June this year, three months after the accident that made headlines the world over. Festive offer From Baltimore collapse to home in India: Crew recall tragedy, closure A drone view of the Dali cargo vessel, which crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge causing it to collapse, in Baltimore, Maryland. (Photo: Reuters/File)

MV Dali, a container ship, named after the Spanish painter Salvador Dali, owned by Singapore-based Grace Ocean Ltd and managed by Synergy Marine, left Baltimore port with a crew of 22 Indians and two Maryland pilots on March 26.

It was bound for Colombo in Sri Lanka and carried a cargo of around 4,700 containers. Shortly after it sailed out, the ship lost power and propulsion and struck a support pillar of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, leading to the bridge's collapse. Even though traffic had been stopped on the bridge after a Mayday call from the ship, averting what could have been a much bigger disaster, six construction workers on the bridge were killed. None aboard the Dali were injured, except for one. Forty-six year old Selva Kumar, a Seaman from Chennai, was going to the ship's forward through the underdeck passage when he suddenly felt a jolt and dashed against the ship's steel structure and got hurt. "I needed a few stitches, which were promptly arranged for by the company and the Indian embassy in the US," says Kumar for whom the injury was minor compared to the difficult days that followed.

The ship stayed near the collision site where salvage operations and initial assessments were conducted. The full crew was on board during this time, with the company arranging regular delivery of pre-prepared Indian food to give some respite to the cook and also two extra deck hands to share the enhanced work load with more people on board, given that the investigation into the incident by the FBI started almost immediately. "In the days after the incident, the atmosphere on board was understandably tense, and quite frankly, the main question on everyone's mind was, 'How



It was bound for Colombo in Sri Lanka and carried a cargo of around 4,700 containers. Shortly after it sailed out, the ship lost power and propulsion and struck a support pillar of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, leading to the bridge's collapse.

did this happen to our vessel? This incident shook us all deeply. However, there was a strong sense of unity among us, which made a real difference. We supported each other and focused on our roles, helping one another maintain composure and calm. We were all in this together.. The regular check-ins with officers and access to support made a big difference as well," said Kumar adding that people from his company's Emergency Response Team, from both Singapore and the US, were on site in Baltimore the very next day. Representatives from the Indian Embassy in Washington and the Director General of Shipping of India also visited the ship soon after, giving them much-needed reassurance. "Other than regular counselling sessions on board and our continuous communication with our loved ones back home, what also helped was hearing both US President Biden and Maryland Governor Wes Moore express their thanks to our ship's crew for issuing a Mayday warning before the impact, which they said likely saved lives. That recognition made us feel positive about our actions during a difficult time," says Peeris. Adds Kumar, "However, the news of the loss of life of those repairing the bridge remains the saddest part of this experience. "Three months later in June, 11 members of the crew, hailing from states like Kerala, Goa, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, were allowed to disembark and go back to their homes, while 11 others (mainly the officers) are still in the US as investigations continue. They have been moved from the ship to service apartments.

"Returning home was a huge relief—not just for me, but for my family as well. There was a lot of joy in that reunion, and being with them helped me put the experience behind me," says Kumar, who is ready to go back to the sea and will join a new ship on November 26. "It is what I do. It's all I have done all my life." Peeris, who, too, has been assigned a new vessel, hopes that his 11 colleagues who are still in the US will return home soon. "It has been a challenging time for all of us, and reuniting with their families would bring them the same comfort and closure I've experienced," he says. Meanwhile, in May, MV Dali berthed at Baltimore port from where it went to Norfolk in Virginia to offload cargo and undergo temporary repairs. In November, she arrived at Fuzhou port in China for more extensive repairs, to be followed by inspection and preparations before resuming operations. While the Baltimore port and channel reopened for ships in June, the Francis Scott Key Bridge is expected to be rebuilt by 2028.

How gangs and gangsters are inching closer to the heart of Delhi



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

— September 13: Greater Kailash, 10.30 pm: Showered with bullets, gym owner, businessman and police informant Nadir Shah is killed, allegedly by jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's associates.— September 20: Greater Kailash: Music composer Aman Batra receives an extortion call from gangster Rohit Godara, an associate of Lawrence Bishnoi, demanding Rs 5 crore.— September: Sainik Farms: Godara calls a builder in Sainik Farms, threatening him with dire consequences if he did not pay him Rs 5 crore.— September 30: Vasant Vihar: Real estate developer gets a WhatsApp call from a man claiming to be US-based gangster and Lawrence Bishnoi associate Goldy Brar, who demands Rs 2 crore from him.— September 26: Naraina: Twenty rounds of bullets are fired at a luxury car showroom. The shooters leave behind a note: 'Bhau Gang, Since 2020'.— June 18: Burger King at Rajouri Garden, 9.30 pm: Three men on a bike walk up the stairs of the popular eating joint, fire 39 rounds at Aman Joon, killing him. Gangster Himanshu Bhatt, Lawrence Bishnoi's rival, claims responsibility for the killing.— January 22: Sarai Kale Khan: Over a dozen shots ring out as a team of the Delhi Police pursue two men allegedly associated with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, wanted for the murder of an Air India crew member in Noida a week earlier. A decade ago, Neeraj Bawana and Tillu Tajpuriya were among Delhi's most wanted gangsters. They took on the names of their villages in North West Delhi and Haryana. These monikers not only declared their regional loyalties but also the areas they dominated. Gangsters of today, in whose names extortion calls are made and to whom several young men swear allegiance, have little to do with the city. They have transcended the limits of rural Delhi and are closing in on the heart of the National Capital. While Lawrence Bishnoi is lodged in the Sabarmati Jail in Ahmedabad, Himanshu Bhatt is believed to be in the US. Bhau, police said, formed an association with gangster Navin Bali, a close associate of Neeraj Bawana. Bawana has an alliance with the Punjab-based Bambiha gang.

Police investigation has shown that the number of extortion and shooting cases in Delhi is rising, even as the shots are being called from inside jail and other countries. It was Nadir Shah's killing in September, in the upmarket Greater Kailash neighbourhood, that shook Delhi. It was a crime scene that most in Delhi would previously have seen only in movies or in CCTV camera footage of a crime that occurred in parts of Outer Delhi.

It is 10.30 pm. Shah — who ran a gym called Sharx in the E block of this posh neighbourhood — is talking to another man standing next to a black SUV on the road, 300 m away from the GK police station. Another man enters the frame and pumps several bullets into his tail frame. Seconds later, the assassin hops onto a motorcycle and flees. The hit, police said, was ordered by jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi. Extortion calls in Greater Kailash and Sainik Farms that followed the incident were allegedly made by gangster Rohit Godara, an associate of Bishnoi. Reports of shootouts, encounters and complaints of extortion have trickled in regularly from Bawana, Narela and Alipur in outer and outer north Delhi over the years. The gangs, however, are now expanding their activities to areas like Vasant Vihar, Greater Kailash, Rajouri Garden and Pitampura too. According to Delhi Police data, 144 cases of extortion have been reported in the city till August this year, much like 2023, when 147 cases were registered. In 2022, however, the number was 119. In South Delhi, 14 cases were reported this year and 16 last year, as compared to 10 in 2022.

With men allegedly affiliated with Lawrence Bishnoi and his internationally-based aides Godara and Brar recruiting young men who are looking to make a name for themselves in the world of crime, there is no limit to their area of influence either. On the night of October 12, Madhur alias Mota Armaan, accused of killing Shah in Greater Kailash, was chased by the Delhi Police Special Cell sleuths in Narela. He was shot in both legs and arrested, the police said. A few hours later, three men shot dead former MLA and NCP leader Babs Siddique in Mumbai. The common thread connecting these two incidents was Lawrence Bishnoi. Both the shooters allegedly belonged to his gang. In September, a Delhi businessman whose son, a bookie, was arrested in the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal, allegedly received a threat from Godara. On Diwali, the businessman's associate Akash Sharma and his nephew were gunned down in Shahdara's Farsh Bazar.

Motive, modus operandi The aim of the gang to inch closer to the heart of Delhi, according to the police, mostly is extortion. They target businessmen and indulge in violence when they don't comply. The Lawrence Bishnoi gang is not alone. Besides Lawrence Bishnoi, Godara and Brar, the police said that gangs like UK-based gangster Kapil Sangwan's Nandu gang and Jitendra Gogi gang, among others, are following similar modus operandi in Delhi, resulting in an increase in cases of extortion being reported in the city. An officer of the Special Cell said the members of the gangs usually fire a couple of rounds outside a home or a shop to threaten major businessmen of an area.

As per the police, it is not that the ground presence of these gangs has increased. There are more "shooters-for-hire" juveniles being approached and used by them. According to the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) chargesheet against Bishnoi, his gang hires shooters and new members using social media. "They upload posts on criminal/terrorist activities on social media, attracting new members, who (send requests seeking) to join the gang... The gangs then scrutinise their requests and shortlist members," it alleged.

"The activities of gangs in Delhi have increased because they no longer rely on traditional shooters for hire or even gang members. They target people who are either from low-income groups or are juveniles, and provide them with ammunition for one-off shootings. The price is anywhere in the range of Rs 5,000 to Rs 20,000 for a warning shot, depending on the expertise of the shooter," said a senior officer with the Delhi Police. "Lawrence Bishnoi isn't in contact with any of these shooters, and operates via Brar and Godara. They are both international fugitives. Their presence outside the country and lack of any regular link with hired shooters makes these shootings difficult to control,"

the officer added. However, no one gang continues to rule without a challenger. In the case of Lawrence Bishnoi, it is the Bambiha gang. The Bambiha gang, named after its founder and slain gangster Davinder Bambiha — who was gunned down in 2016 — has been active mostly in Punjab and Haryana. This gang was never directly operating in the Capital, a Special Cell officer said.

This, a Delhi Police officer said, changed after the death of Davinder. The gang was taken over by gangster Kaushal Chaudhary and his associate Amit Dagar. Their rivalry with the Lawrence Bishnoi syndicate, which led to the Bambiha gang allegedly killing Akali Dal leader Vicky Middukheda in 2021, started their association with his rivals in Delhi, the Neeraj Bawana-Navin Bali-Himanshu Bhatt syndicate, a police officer said. On October 26, two members of the Bambiha gang opened fire outside a businessman's house in Pitampura, and demanded Rs 10 crore. The shooters were arrested on October 29. "Usually, Bambiha gang members are not directly involved in extortion demands in Delhi. However, they have started to operate through the Bhau and Bawana alliance," an officer said.

A major tool for jailed or fugitive gangsters to hire and direct shooters are end-to-end encryption apps. On August 23, shots were fired by alleged shooters of Kapil Sangwan's Nandu gang outside Singla sweet shop in Tilak Nagar. The police said the gangsters had demanded Rs 2 crore. "Sangwan was in touch with shooters throughout via an app, instructing them from the UK. He was telling them when and how to open fire," an officer said. According to the police, juvenile shooters are usually arranged for the gangs by middlemen and financiers, who also arrange for the weapons. "We are trying to track the financiers and second and third rung men in the hierarchy of these gangs... We have been able to identify some," said a senior officer.

A senior officer further said that the juveniles are a major hindrance in controlling such crime. "The gang leaders convince juveniles that because of their age, they won't be prosecuted like adults. They would rather be celebrated," he added. The officer insisted that there "has been an overall reduction in arms distribution networks over the years". On Tuesday, in a major crackdown on gangs and their operations, the Delhi Police apprehended over 1,200 people with alleged associations to notorious gangs. Among them, around 700 were arrested. An officer had said those detained and arrested were associated with multiple gangs including those led by Lawrence Bishnoi, Neeraj Bawana, Kaushal Chaudhary, Tillu Tajpuriya, Kala Jatheri, Manjeet Mahal and Kapil Sangwan. Reliance on juveniles, youths

A senior officer said that with the right-hand men of gangsters going in and out of hiding or operating from abroad, their reliance on juveniles and youngsters in awe of them would continue to increase. "The glamorisation of weapons on social media and the ability of gangsters to make contacts from jails are the major challenges," the officer added. Former additional commissioner of police (Crime Branch) Ashok Chand said, "Every gang lord begins his career with activities that do not immediately attract harsh police action. Once they amass wealth, they use it to protect themselves and their associates." In response to a detailed questionnaire on the rising threat of gangs, particularly to South Delhi businessmen, operating out of jails and abroad, Special Commissioner (Perception Cell) of Police, Sagar Preet Hooda said: "Delhi Police is cognizant of all these issues and is committed to work towards keeping Delhi safe... detection of all reported crimes and sincere prosecution of the involved criminals." Another feature of the recent gang-related activities has been alliances forged between gangs, the police said, mostly inside the jail. One of the reasons is to maintain control and avoid rebellions. Abdul Nasir, a dreaded gangster in Delhi-NCR, saw his gang being taken over by one of his trusted lieutenants, Hashim Baba. Similar fear plagues most jailed gangsters, said police.

"Since Lawrence Bishnoi and Hashim Baba joined forces, after meeting in Tihar in 2021, gangsters Neeraj Bawana, Cheenu Pehelwan and Himanshu Bhatt have also come together. This has helped them get a wider reach and demand extortions from across Delhi," an officer said. Sunil Kumar Gupta, who served as a jailer, legal adviser and spokesperson at Tihar, said gangsters are able to maintain their contacts despite being held in maximum security prison. "All notorious gangsters, who are maximum security prisoners, get a time slot for meeting family and friends... We aren't allowed to record their conversations," Gupta said. "They also talk in code language to send out information to their associates."

Gupta claimed the connivance between the prison staff and the gangsters in jail is also a factor because contraband — such as cellphones, weapons, and other communication devices — is smuggled to them from outside jail premises. "No matter how hard you try, the phones will reach the gangsters somehow," he added. Gupta also pointed out that threats from gangs create fear among jail staff. "The Tamil Nadu Special Police (TNSP), as far as I know, is equally scared for their families and their lives. Thus, they turn a blind eye." The TNSP is a security agency that guards inmates at Tihar Jail.

A Tihar Jail spokesperson, in response to Gupta's observations, said, "The Tamil Nadu Special Police team does regular checks of the jail staff, cells, and inmates for mobile devices. If we receive any information on jail staff helping the inmates, we take strict action against them. Our staff also keeps a vigilant eye out for any contraband that may have entered the jail premises. Every jail staff member is thoroughly checked before they enter the jail compound." "On how high-security inmates are able to convey their messages to their associates outside Tihar Jail, the spokesperson said, "Inmates in Tihar are allowed to visit and talk to their family and friends twice a week. They are also given phone call privileges, subject to good conduct. As per rules, jail authorities cannot record or listen to these conversations." "Tihar jail officials categorically denied that the proverbial call was coming from inside the house. "We have jammers on the ground floor and also a tower jammer that blocks all phone signals... it would be impossible for inmates to relay orders to the outside world, even if they managed to smuggle in phones," said a senior jail official. "If calls were made from inside Tihar, we ask the police to provide us with call record details... the time and location from where the call was made, and who they called... The absence of such records and the fact that the police haven't yet come to us for any action, says a lot," he added.

"We conduct regular checks of the jail staff, we also check inmates' cells... of course there have been instances of connivance, but we have taken strict action in such cases," he said.

The official gave details of alternative methods jailed gangsters could use to relay their messages. "...when prisoners go out of the premises for court hearings, they can relay their message through the people they know. They could also ask another prisoner who is going for a court hearing to pass on their message... there are countless ways this can happen," he said.

Hezbollah firing in Haifa: Israel issues evacuation orders for Beirut residents



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Israel issued evacuation orders on Sunday (November 17, 2024) for parts of south Beirut where it is targeting Hezbollah militants, hours after the Iran-backed group said it fired on several Israeli military bases around the coastal city of Haifa. Israel ordered residents of three areas in the capital's southern suburbs to leave ahead of planned strikes on multiple buildings, in a warning published on X by military spokesman Avichay Adraee. What to know about Hezbollah's capabilities after its recent ... Further south, overnight Israeli airstrikes and artillery shelling hit the flashpoint southern town of Kham, some 6 km (four miles) from the border, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported early Tuesday. The bombardment came after Israel's military reported a "heavy rocket barrage" on Haifa on late Saturday (November 16, 2024) and said a synagogue was hit, wounding two civilians. Israel has escalated its bombing of Lebanon since September 23 and has since sent in ground troops, following almost a year of limited, cross-border exchanges of fire begun by Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in support of Hamas in Gaza. Two flash bombs fired into garden of Netanyahu's home in north Israel in the Palestinian territory, where Hamas's attack on Israel triggered the war, the civil defence agency reported that 24 people killed in strikes on Saturday (November 16, 2024).

Security services in Israel said two flares landed near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in the town of Caesarea, south of Haifa, but he was not home. The incident comes about a month after a drone targeted the same residence, which Hezbollah claimed. Israel's military chief said on Saturday (November 16, 2024) Hezbollah had already "paid a big price", but Israel will keep fighting until tens of thousands of its residents displaced from the north can return safely. AFP TV footage showed fresh strikes on Saturday (November 16, 2024) on the southern suburbs of Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold, after Israel's military told residents to leave. The Israeli military said aircraft had targeted "a weapons storage facility" and a Hezbollah "command centre". Hezbollah fired around 80 projectiles at Israel on Saturday (November 16, 2024), the military said. The agency earlier reported strikes on the southern city of Tyre, including in a neighbourhood near UNESCO-listed ancient ruins. Israel's military on Saturday (November 16, 2024) said it had hit Hezbollah facilities in the Tyre area.

In Lebanon's east, the Health Ministry said an Israeli strike in the Bekaa Valley killed six people including three

children. Hezbollah said it fired a guided missile that set an Israeli tank ablaze in the southwest Lebanon village of Shamaa, about 5 km from the border. Late Saturday (November 16, 2024), Hezbollah said it had targeted five military bases including the Stella Maris naval base. In eastern Lebanon, funerals were held for 14 civil defence staff killed in an Israeli strike. "They weren't involved with any (armed) party... they were just waiting to answer calls for help," said Ali al-Zein, a relative of one of the dead. Lebanese authorities say more than 3,452 people have been killed since October last year, with most casualties recorded since September. Israel announced the death of a soldier in southern Lebanon, bringing to 48 the number killed fighting Hezbollah.

Famine imminent in northern Gaza: UN-backed assessment in Hamas-run Gaza, the Israeli military said it had continued operations in the northern areas of Jabalia and Beit Lahia, the targets of an intense offensive since early October. Israel said its renewed operations were aimed at stopping Hamas from regrouping. A United Nations-backed (U.N.) assessment on November 9 warned famine was imminent in northern Gaza, amid the increased hostilities and a near-halt in food aid. Israel has pushed back against a 172-page Human Rights Watch report this week that said its mass displacement of Gazans amounts to a "crime against humanity", as well as findings from a UN Special Committee pointing warfare practices "consistent with the characteristics of genocide". A Foreign Ministry spokesman dismissed the HRW report as "completely false", while the United States — Israel's main military supplier — said accusations of genocide "are certainly unfounded". The Gaza Health Ministry on Saturday (November 16, 2024) said the overall death toll in more than 13 months of war had reached 43,799. The majority of the dead are civilians, according to Ministry figures, which the United Nations considers reliable. Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack that sparked the war resulted in the deaths of 1,206 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Demonstrators in Tel Aviv on Saturday (November 16, 2024) reiterated demands that the government reach a deal to free dozens of hostages still held in Gaza. The protest came a week after mediator Qatar suspended its role until Hamas and Israel show "seriousness" in truce and hostage-release talks. A statement from the group on Saturday (November 16, 2024) confirmed that "prominent leader" Abdel Aziz Minawi and external relations chief Rasmi Yusuf Abu Issa had been killed in the air raid on Qudsaya, in the Damascus area. Islamic Jihad still holds several Israeli hostages taken during the October 7 attack. Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad are all backed by Israel's arch-enemy Iran, which said on Friday (November 15, 2024) it supported a swift end to the nearly two-month war in Lebanon. With diplomacy aimed at ending the Gaza war stalled, a top government official in Beirut said on Friday (November 15, 2024) that U.S. Ambassador Lisa Johnson had presented a 13-point proposal to halt the Israel-Hezbollah conflict. "It includes a 60-day truce, during which Lebanon would deploy troops to the border. Israel has yet to respond to the plan," the official added.

Trump names fossil fuel executive Chris Wright as Energy Secretary

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President-elect Donald Trump has selected Chris Wright, a campaign donor and fossil fuel executive, to serve as energy secretary in a second Trump administration. Mr. Wright, CEO of Denver-based Liberty Energy, is a vocal advocate of oil and gas development, including fracking, a key pillar of Trump's quest to achieve U.S. "energy dominance" in the global market. Mr. Wright has won support from influential conservatives, including oil and gas tycoon Harold Hamm. Hamm, executive chairman of Oklahoma-based Continental Resources, a major shale oil company, is a longtime Trump supporter and adviser who played a key role on energy issues in Mr. Trump's first term.

Hamm helped organise an event at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in April where Mr. Trump reportedly asked industry leaders and lobbyists to donate \$1 billion to Trump's campaign, with the expectation that Mr. Trump would curtail environmental regulations if re-elected. Mr. Wright has been one of the industry's loudest voices against efforts to fight climate change and could give fossil fuels a boost, including quick action to end a year-long pause on natural gas export approvals by the Biden administration. Mr. Wright has criticised what he calls a "top-down" approach to climate by liberal and left-wing groups and said the climate movement around the world is "collapsing under its own



weight". Mike Sommers, president of the American Petroleum Institute, the oil and gas industry's top lobbying group, said Mr. Wright's experience in the energy sector "gives him an important perspective that will inform his leadership" of the Energy Department. "We look forward to working with him once confirmed to bolster American geopolitical strength by lifting DOE's pause on LNG export permits and ensuring the open access of American energy for our allies around the world," Mr. Sommers said. Jackie Wong, senior vice president for climate and energy at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group, called Mr. Wright "a champion of dirty fossil fuels" and said his nomination to lead the Energy Department was "a disastrous mistake."

Super Typhoon Man-yi pounds the Philippines



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Super Typhoon Man-yi battered the Philippines on Saturday (November 16, 2024), with the national weather forecaster warning of a "potentially catastrophic and life-threatening" impact as huge waves pounded the archipelago's coastline. More than 650,000 people fled their homes ahead of Man-yi, which is the sixth major storm to hit the disaster-weary country in the past month. Man-yi brought maximum wind speeds of 195 kilometres (121 miles) per hour as it made landfall on the sparsely populated island province of Catanduanes as a super typhoon, the weather service said, adding gusts were reaching 325 kilometres an hour. "Potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation looms for northeastern Bicol region as Super Typhoon 'Pepito' further intensifies," the forecaster said hours before it made landfall, using the local name for the storm and referring to the southern part of the main island of Luzon. Waves up to 14 metres (46 feet) high pummeled

the shore of Catanduanes, while Manila and other vulnerable coastal regions were at risk from storm surges reaching up to more than three metres over the next 48 hours, the forecaster said. The weather forecaster said winds walloping Catanduanes and northeastern Camarines Sur province -- both in the typhoon-prone Bicol region -- posed an "extreme threat to life and property". Power was shut down on Catanduanes ahead of the storm, with shelters and the command centre using generators for electricity. "We're hearing sounds of things falling and things breaking while here at the evacuation centre," Catanduanes provincial disaster operations chief Roberto Monterola told AFP after Man-yi made landfall.

"We are unable to check what they are as the winds are too strong. They could be tree branches breaking off and falling on rooftops," Monterola said, adding there had been no reports of casualties. At least 163 people died in the five storms that pounded the Philippines in recent weeks, leaving thousands homeless and wiping out crops and livestock. Climate change is increasing the intensity of storms, leading to heavier rains, flash floods and stronger gusts. About 20 big storms and typhoons hit the Southeast Asian nation or its surrounding waters each year, killing scores of people, but it is rare for multiple such weather events to take place in a small window. Evacuations Man-yi could hit Luzon -- the country's most populous island and economic engine -- as a super typhoon or typhoon on Sunday afternoon, crossing north of Manila and sweeping over the South China Sea on Monday. The government urged people on Saturday to heed warnings to flee to safety. "If preemptive evacuation is required, let us do so and not wait for the hour of peril before evacuating or seeking help.

Will Riyadh summit have an impact on Gaza war?



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Saudi Arabia hosted a summit of leaders from Arab and Islamic countries last week to discuss the Palestine question. The summit demanded an immediate end to Israel's military aggression on Gaza and Lebanon.

What did leaders say?

In their closing statement, the leaders condemned the Israeli military's "shocking and horrific crimes", its "crime of genocide", and "ethnic cleansing" in Gaza, and called for an "independent, credible" international committee to investigate these crimes. It urged for measures to end the Israeli occupation and "establish an independent, sovereign Palestinian state on the lines of June 4, 1967, with occupied Al-Quds [Jerusalem] as its capital, based on the two-state solution, and in accordance with the approved references and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002."

What is the significance of the summit?

In recent years, Arab countries had shown a willingness to improve or even normalise ties with Israel bypassing the Palestine question, in violation of the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative, which promised recognition to Israel in return for the creation of a Palestine state. In 2020, the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan normalised ties with Israel in an agreement called the Abraham Accords. In the past, Arab-Israeli normalisation — Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994 — came with some Israeli compromises. Israel signed the Framework for Peace in the Middle East with Egypt in 1979 (following the Camp David Agreement), agreeing to establish an autonomous Palestinian self-governing authority in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and the Israel-Jordan agreement (the Wadi Araba Treaty) following the 1993 Oslo Agreement, which laid the foundations of the Palestine National Authority. But when the Abraham Accords were signed, the Palestinians got nothing. After the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack and Israel's retaliatory war on Gaza (and the West Bank), Arabs condemned the Israeli actions but stopped short of provoking the Jewish state. However, their unease and anger over the war Israel was carrying out were on display. In the Riyadh summit, they came together and expressed their collective anger and sent a message to both Israel and the U.S. that resolving the Palestine question is key to peace in West Asia.

Two flash bombs fired into garden of Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu's home in Caesarea

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Two flash bombs were fired towards Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home in the northern Israeli town of Caesarea on Saturday (November 16, 2024) and fell into the garden, police said. Neither Mr. Netanyahu nor his family were present and there was no damage reported, it added in a statement. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said the incident crossed "all red lines" in a post on X early on Sunday (November 17). "It is not possible for the Prime Minister of Israel, who is threatened by Iran and its proxies who are trying to assassinate him, to be subject to the same threats from home," Katz said. He also called on security and judicial agencies to take the necessary steps. Israel's President Isaac Herzog condemned the incident in a post on X and said an investigation was underway. "The incitement against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu crosses all boundaries. Throwing a flash bomb into his house tonight is crossing another red line," Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir also said on X. In October, a drone was launched



towards the premier's home in Caesarea, without causing any harm. To the north, Israeli forces have been trading fire with Lebanon's armed Hezbollah group since October 2023. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Saturday's incident.

U.S. health officials report first case of new form of mpox in traveller



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Health officials said Saturday (November 17, 2024) they have confirmed the first U.S. case of a new form of mpox that was first seen in eastern Congo. The person had travelled to eastern Africa and was treated in Northern California upon return, according to the California Department of Public Health. Symptoms are improving and the risk to

the public is low. The individual was isolating at home and health workers are reaching out to close contacts as a precaution, the State Health Department said. Mpox is a rare disease caused by infection with a virus that's in the same family as the one that causes smallpox. It is endemic in parts of Africa, where people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals. Milder symptoms can include fever, chills and body aches. In more serious cases, people can develop lesions on the face, hands, chest and genitals. Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of mpox in Africa that was spread through close contact including through sex. It was widely transmitted in eastern and central Africa. But in cases that were identified in travellers outside of the continent, spread has been very limited, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 3,100 confirmed cases have been reported just since late September, according to the World Health Organization. The vast majority of them have been in three African countries — Burundi, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

China is ready to work with new U.S. administration: Xi tells Biden in APEC Summit

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

China's leader Xi Jinping met for the last time with U.S. President Joe Biden on Saturday (November 16, 2024) but was already looking ahead to President-elect Donald Trump and his "America first" policies, saying Beijing "is ready to work with a new U.S. administration". In their talks on the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru's capital, Mr. Biden was expected to urge Mr. Xi to dissuade North Korea from further deepening its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. Without mentioning Mr. Trump's name, Mr. Xi appeared to signal his concern that the incoming president's protectionist rhetoric on the campaign trail could send the U.S.-China relationship into another valley. "China is ready to work with a new U.S. administration to maintain communication, expand cooperation

and manage differences so as to strive for a steady transition of the China-U.S. relationship for the benefit of the two peoples," Mr. Xi said through an interpreter. Mr. Xi cautioned that a stable China-U.S. relationship was critical not only to the two nations, but also the "future and destiny of humanity". "Make the wise choice," he said. "Keep exploring the right way for two major countries to get along well with each other." Xi, who is firmly entrenched atop China's political hierarchy, spoke forcefully in his brief remarks before reporters. Mr. Biden, who is winding down more than 50 years of public service, talked in broader brushstrokes about where the relationship between the two countries has gone. He reflected not just on the past four years but the decades the two have known each other. "We haven't always agreed.

How bitcoin's surge since Trump's win could play out in India



sixth biggest cryptocurrency by market cap. Memecoins are generally seen as indicators of retail investors' interest in cryptocurrency. It is usually a marker of investors' risk appetite at any given point in time. Surging memecoin values generally indicated that retail investors are participating in the market.

In India, the crypto journey has been topsy-turvy, and investors might not share the same enthusiasm as their American counterparts owing to factors like a high taxation rate on incomes from cryptocurrencies, and the overall banking sectors' less than kind outlook towards the asset. In 2018, the Central Board of Direct Taxes had submitted a draft scheme to the finance ministry for banning virtual currencies and a month later, the RBI restrained banks from dealing in cryptocurrencies, a decision that had to be reversed by the Supreme Court in 2020. Despite this, the banking regulator has been vocal about its problems with crypto-assets, having identified them as "a macro-economic risk". In July 2022, underscoring that the RBI had sought a ban, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Parliament that "international collaboration" would be needed for "any effective regulation or ban" on cryptocurrency as the digital currency is borderless in nature. The government had, in 2022, imposed a tax on "any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset" at a rate of 30 per cent, along with a 1 per cent tax deduction at source (TDS) on each transaction.

However, a paper that was prepared by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Financial Stability Board (FSB), at the request of the Indian G20 Presidency last year, called for licensing crypto service providers, while suggesting that an outright ban might not work given the borderless nature of cryptocurrencies. On account of the latest surge in cryptocurrencies, Bernstein in a recent note asked whether India can "afford to ignore Bitcoin". The note further added that the crypto narrative in India "has been caught in this false premise of Central bank digital currencies (CBDC) and what the government calls private crypto". "This framing is its own pitfall," the note said, even as it acknowledged that following India's success in providing digital payments solutions, and that a CBDC would be the "next logical path". But the note emphasised that Indian investors had "missed the strong proposition" of bitcoin by framing it as private currency. It said the cryptocurrency could be a way for governments to build reserves. "India has de-risked gold custody by moving almost 100 tonnes of gold back to India from the UK. Bitcoin is a way for governments to build 'digital gold' reserves, without the risk of censorship by nations that physically custody gold, in a world where international relations are fragile and dollar reserves are subject to US fiscal risks," the Bernstein note added.

After Trump's win, India Googles immigration and H1B, Americans on ways to leave the US

In India, the biggest concern many have following Donald Trump's surprise victory in the US elections is any potential impact on immigrating to the country, after the businessman turned politician drummed up anti-immigration rhetoric in the run up to the elections. These concerns were clearly visible in the way many Indians looked up information on Google, as per data on the website's 'Trends' section. Queries around 'legal immigration', 'H1B visa' and 'US birth citizenship' spiked on November 6, when Trump was declared victor. In the US, users in Democratic-leaning states like Vermont and Minnesota, looked for ways to move to Canada, and those in Republican-leaning states like Mississippi and Alabama, looked for birth control options in their states, according to the Google Trends listings.



H1B visa and legal immigrationThe search for 'legal immigration' in India spiked on November 6 – when Trump was announced victor – from virtually no search interest a month before that, even though Trump had spoken about the actions he would take on what he called illegal immigration if he came to power. Google users in Punjab led the search for the query on Google, followed by those in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Kerala. Users in India who searched for the phrase legal immigration, also searched for terms like 'Trump legal immigration,' 'legal immigration under Trump' and 'Stephen Miller'. Trump has appointed longtime aide Miller, who is known to have a hardline stance on immigration, as Deputy Chief of Staff. He played a central role in many policy decisions, particularly on immigration, including the 2018 family separation policy. With him back as a Trump adviser in his second term, it is widely expected that rejections for visas like H1B – which many skilled Indians rely on to work in the US – could go up. Google search queries for H1B visa also spiked on November 6, with more people searching for the term than anytime in the month before that. These people also searched for phrases like 'Donald Trump H1B visa,' and 'US birth citizenship'. The phrase H1B visa was searched the most by people living in Telangana, followed by Chandigarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

I-T Dept nudges taxpayers to disclose foreign assets correctly

Income TaxThe Department, it is learnt, will also begin an e-campaign in the next few days to facilitate filing of details of foreign assets and income by taxpayers, a government official said. In an explicit nudge to taxpayers citing compliance with global disclosure norms, the Income Tax Department has urged them to disclose details of foreign assets and income correctly in their income tax returns and file revised returns by December 31, if there is a requirement to update the information. The Department, it is learnt, will also begin an e-campaign in the next few days to facilitate filing of details of foreign assets and income by taxpayers, a government official said.

The campaign is being launched with the aim to reach out to those taxpayers who have not disclosed details of their foreign income and assets correctly in their income tax returns but the tax department has received information about them through various information-gathering and sharing agreements of India with other countries, an official said. "There is substantial information being received from other countries about ownership of foreign income and assets. This campaign will provide a window to taxpayers to disclose their information of foreign income and assets correctly in their income tax returns," the official said. The Income Tax Department has urged taxpayers that by ensuring full transparency in tax returns, taxpayers can "avoid



legal hassles and contribute to national development". "If you have not disclosed your foreign assets and income in your original ITR, there is an opportunity to rectify this through filing a revised return. The Income Tax Department allows taxpayers to correct any omissions or inaccuracies by filing a revised return. For the AY 2024-25 revised return can be filed up to 31.12.2024," the Department said in a note. The details about foreign assets and income are shared between the countries in line with international reporting frameworks such as the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) and the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) aimed to tackle tax evasion by increasing transparency and cooperation among tax authorities globally.

What is the Maori Haka dance, which New Zealand's MPs performed in parliament in protest of a bill?



A viral video of New Zealand's Members of Parliament performing a powerful Maori haka in parliament has reignited global interest in this powerful dance form. The youngest MP in Parliament, Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke, made headlines when she led a traditional haka performance in Parliament on November 14. This time, the traditional Maori dance was a protest against a controversial bill that aimed to redefine the Treaty of Waitangi. The dramatic display led to a temporary suspension of Parliament. The haka, often associated with New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team, is much more than a pre-game ritual; it is a cornerstone of Maori culture, embodying history, identity, and emotion.

Origins of the hakaThe haka traces its roots to the Maori people, the indigenous Polynesian inhabitants of New Zealand (Aotearoa). Traditionally, the haka was a ceremonial dance or challenge performed by warriors before battle. It was designed to intimidate opponents with synchronised movements, powerful chants, and piercing expressions. Beyond warfare, the haka also served as a means of storytelling, a way to express communal griev-

ances, celebrate triumphs, or honour ancestors. The chants, or waiata, convey deep messages about Maori heritage, values, and connection to the land. The haka is not a single dance but a category of performances. The most well-known haka, Ka Mate, was composed in the early 19th century by Maori chief Te Rauparaha of the Ngati Toa tribe. It celebrates a narrow escape from enemies, blending themes of resilience and unity. Other haka forms serve distinct purposes: Haka powhiri: Performed to welcome visitors. Haka taparahi: A ceremonial, non-war dance, used for social occasions. Peruperu: A war haka featuring weaponry and leaping movements. Each haka carries symbolic gestures and expressions, such as wide eyes, protruding tongues, and forceful stomps, representing strength, defiance, and solidarity.

Evolution over timeWhile the haka remains a vital aspect of Maori culture, its significance has grown far beyond its traditional boundaries. Sports and Global Recognition: The New Zealand rugby team, the All Blacks, popularised the haka internationally, performing it before matches as a show of unity and respect. Protest and Solidarity: The haka has been used in political protests, honoring Maori rights and advocating for social justice. State Ceremonies: It is now a feature of state functions, honouring visiting dignitaries and marking national milestones. The haka continues to inspire awe worldwide, symbolising unity, pride, and respect for indigenous traditions. Its viral resurgence not only amplifies Maori culture but also fosters global appreciation for the depth and diversity of indigenous art forms. In the words of the haka, "Ka ora, ka ora" – It is life, it is life. The haka thrives, bridging the past and present, uniting New Zealanders and captivating the world.

Here are four dietician-approved vegetarian superfoods to lower your blood sugar levels

Managing one's blood sugar levels can be testing, especially if one relies on conventional medicines. Thankfully, organic remedies have always been around; while some aim to deliver, others fail to qualify. But since Indians do love a quick home-fix, we've got a special curation for you, which actually makes the cut, when it comes to managing your diabetes – vegetarian superfoods. Kannika Malhotra, dietician and diabetes educator, explains the importance of these superfoods and their relation to lowering the risk of diabetes. Artichoke is rich in fibre, which helps slow down "the absorption of glucose". Moreover, it contains inulin, a type of prebiotic fibre that can "improve insulin sensitivity", Kannika said. It's also a good source of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, vitamin K, folate, iron, magnesium, and potassium. Cabbage, nutrients It contains essential minerals like potassium, calcium, and manganese. Your local cabbage may just be more than a Thursday-night soup entree. Turns out, cabbage is low in carbohydrates and high in fibre, making it a "blood sugar-friendly" vegetable, Kannika shared.

It contains essential minerals like potassium, calcium, and manganese. Additionally, its sulfur-containing antioxidants can aid digestion. Barley contains whole grains rich in "beta-glucan, a type of soluble fibre that has been shown to lower blood sugar levels", according to Kannika. It additionally provides a steady release of energy, preventing blood sugar spikes. Barley is a good source of B vitamins and minerals like magnesium, potassium, and selenium. As a



plant-based protein source, tofu can help stabilise blood sugar levels. It's low in carbohydrates and fat, making it a suitable option for individuals with diabetes. Tofu is also a good source of calcium, iron, and manganese.

How can we inculcate these superfoods in our diet?

Besides incorporating these foods multiple times during mealtimes, Kannika suggests. Combine with other blood sugar-friendly foods: Pair them with lean protein and healthy fats for balanced meals. Be mindful of portion sizes: While these foods are beneficial, overconsumption can still impact blood sugar levels. Consider cooking methods: Steaming, grilling, or roasting are generally healthier options than frying.

Try dandelion tea in the mornings to slim down your waist and reduce bloating

You must have come across various concoctions on social media claiming to be the next solution for a fitter waist. But can dandelion tea be it? Thought to benefit digestion by boosting bile production, dandelion tea is widely regarded as a good cure for bloating. Learn below how it can be helpful in reducing bloating.

How does dandelion tea work to reduce bloating?

According to Kannika Malhotra, dietician, and diabetes educator, "Owing to its diuretic characteristics, dandelion tea can help in reducing bloating, which can help reduce water retention. Also, increased urine production may help decrease the feeling of fullness or puffiness associated with bloating." The effectiveness of dandelion tea in treating bloating varies from person to person. While some people may feel relieved, others may not see major improvements. It is also crucial to exercise caution because dandelion tea may interfere with some drugs or produce allergic responses in certain people. If bloating persists, see a doctor to rule out underlying causes such as gastrointestinal diseases, food intolerances, or other health issues. People with allergies to ragweed or related plants may experience allergic reactions. Additionally, individuals with specific medical conditions, such as kidney or liver disease, should consult their doctor before consuming dan-



dalion tea. It's also important to note that dandelion tea can interact with certain medications, including diuretics, blood thinners, and blood sugar medications. Fennel tea can also help reduce bloating and gas. Moreover, ginger tea aids in digestion and can alleviate bloating. These beneficial bacteria can improve gut health and reduce bloating, says Kannika.

People can't tell difference between human, AI-generated poetry — new study

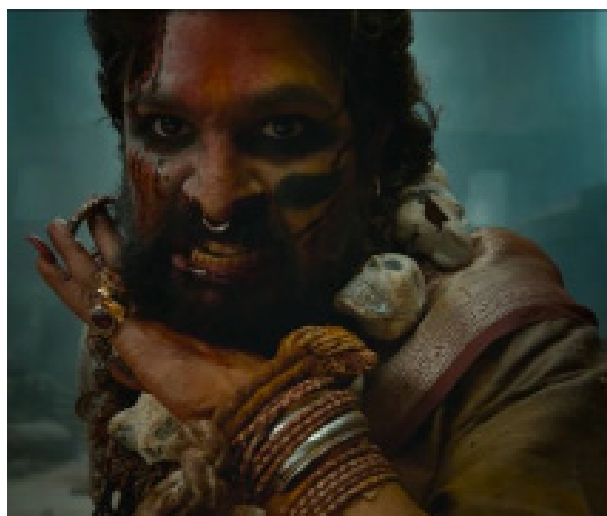
Has the bell finally tolled for Shakespeare and Byron? New research conducted by philosophers of science Brian Porter and Edouard Machery suggests that the latest AI-generated poetry is "indistinguishable from human-written poetry" and "rated more favourably". Ten poets, from the medieval Geoffrey Chaucer to modern writer Dorothea Lasky, were successfully impersonated by AI chatbots, with most of the 696 participants slightly preferring the imitation to the real thing.

Porter and Machery conclude that "the capabilities of generative AI models have outpaced people's expectations of AI". But they don't say AI has been proven an adequate replacement for human poets – and rightly so, as such a conclusion would require a great deal more testing. That the research participants were fooled is not particularly worrying. Porter and Machery set out to include a wide range of poem types, which meant choosing poets who mostly belong to ages past. In such cases, modern readers are likely to have a hard time looking past the obvious signs of antiquity – outdated diction, rigid formalism, and obscure cultural references. It's not so hard to disguise yourself as someone when that person is chiefly known for the odd clothes they wear.

But what about the matter of preference? As well as

overall quality, the researchers asked participants to rate poems on a range of qualitative dimensions. How was the imagery, rhythm, sound or beauty? How "inspiring", "lyrical", "meaningful", "moving", "original", "profound", "witty" (and so on) was it? AI won out over Shakespeare and company in nearly every category. Does this mean human poets have been supplanted? Not really. Participants in the research overall reported "a low level of experience with poetry". Lack of familiarity with any artform severely limits our ability to get the most out of it. All the AI has to do is sand off the more challenging elements – ambiguity, wordplay, linguistic complexity – in order to produce a version which is more palatable to those with little interest in the art. If that sounds snobbish, think of it this way: when we aren't used to eating a foreign cuisine, most of us gravitate toward the blandly familiar end of the menu. But poetry is not a medium many look to for instant gratification. The reason poets of the calibre of Byron and Walt Whitman (both of whom were included in this study) continue to command respect is because their poetry rewards extended, rather than cursory, attention. The report agrees on this point, noting that participants complained more often of the human-authored poems that they "don't make sense". Every recent generation of poets has been deeply interested in adapting and absorbing new technologies, along with shifts in cultural mood.

An explosive Allu Arjun is out to stamp his brand in the Sukumar film



the film's craze outside the Telugu States. Interestingly, the teaser of Ram Charan-Shankar's Game Changer was also launched in Lucknow. This shows a clear change of tide in the Telugu cinema market, and the willingness of its stars to ensure the film has a pan-Indian reach.

The film, which continues from the first part, which ended up with an explosive showdown between the characters of Arjun and Fahadh, is expected to be even more explosive with newer characters entering the fray. While the makers have managed to keep the plot developments hidden, they announced that actor Sreeleela will appear in a special song in Pushpa 2. It is to be noted that one of the major highlights of the first part was the presence of Samantha in the superhit dance number.

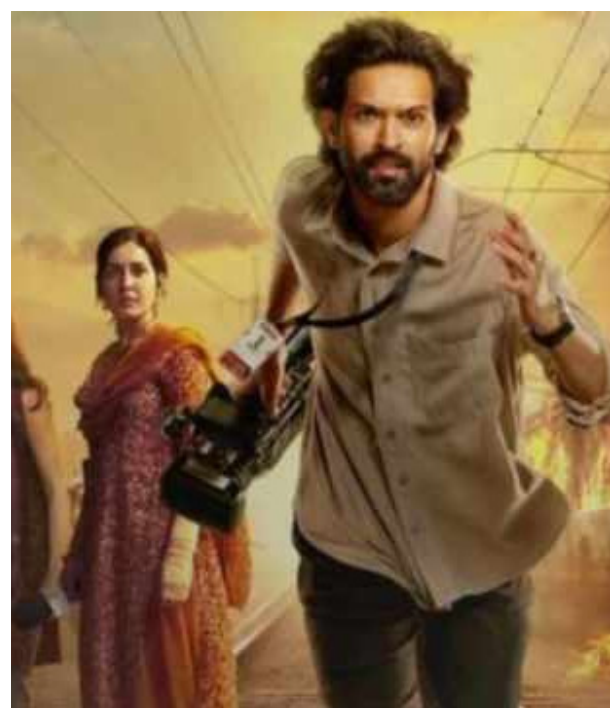
Oo Antava Maama. Interestingly, the film marked the maiden national awards for Allu Arjun and Devi Sri Prasad. However, it is speculated that Devi Sri Prasad will only contribute to the songs of the film while Thaman has been roped in for the background score. There are also reports that certain sections of the film will be scored by Kantara-fame Ajaneesh Lokanath and Kaithi-fame Sam CS. While Thaman confirmed the news in various interviews recently, the other composers haven't confirmed or denied this development. With cinematography by Miroslaw Kuba Brozek, who also shot the first part, Pushpa 2 will also have actors Anasuya Bhardwaj, Sunil, Dhananjaya, and Ajay in pivotal roles. The film will hit the theatres on December 5.

Pushpa 2 Trailer Launch in Patna: With just a couple of weeks left for the release of Pushpa 2: The Rule, expectations are skyrocketing for the much-awaited Allu Arjun-starrer. Directed by Sukumar, the sequel to the 2021 pan-Indian blockbuster Pushpa: The Rise features Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna and Fahadh Faasil reprising their roles from the first part. Backed by Mythri Movie Makers, the trailer of Pushpa 2 will be launched in Patna to capitalise on

Prime Minister Narendra Modi supports Vikrant Massey-starrer The Sabarmati Report: 'Fake narrative can persist only for limited time'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to X (formerly Twitter) to applaud Vikrant Massey's latest film, The Sabarmati Report, which revolves around the Godhra train burning incident of February 27, 2002. The Prime Minister, who was serving as the Chief Minister of Gujarat at the time of the tragic event, shared his thoughts on the film, writing, "Truth is coming out." Modi retweeted a post praising the movie and added, "Well said. It is good that this truth is coming out, and that too in a way common people can see it. A fake narrative can persist only for a limited period of time. Eventually, the facts will always come out!" Well said. It is good that this truth is coming out, and that too in a way common people can see it. The Sabarmati Report delves into the aftermath of the horrific incident when the S6 coach of the Sabarmati Express caught fire at Godhra Railway Station, killing 59 passengers. Most of the victims were kar sevaks returning from Ayodhya after participating in the Ram Temple movement. This devastating event was followed by communal riots in Gujarat in 2002. In 2022, PM Modi praised Vivek Agnihotri's film The Kashmir Files, which was based on the mass exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the Kashmir valley during the height of militancy in the state.

Since its release on Friday, The Sabarmati Report has seen steady growth at the box office. It opened with Rs 1.25 crore and experienced a 68 percent jump in collections on Saturday, earning Rs 2.1 crore. Its domestic box office total currently stands at Rs 3.35 crore within two days of release.



Akshay Kumar and Twinkle Khanna share a lovable and fun relationship so when Akshay was recently asked if she gets critical about his work, the actor did not hold back from telling the truth. Since Ajay Devgn was also present in the same conversation, the actor shared that his wife Kajol too always tells the truth about his work, along with his kids Nysa and Yug. Akshay Kumar shared with Hindustan Times, "I don't take my wife for screenings so I have to sit with her and show her the film. And it falls in my ears, 'sh*t scene hai, yeh bekaar hai.' She will say it is very bad, the climax is very long, and the remarks keep on coming. The first time I took her for my trial, the producer came and asked how she found the film, she called it bakwas (terrible). That producer never worked with me again."

He also added, "But I envy her for speaking her mind. Whenever she likes something, she praises it. She was very happy with Khel Khel Mein, even though it didn't work, it was a hit film in my heart." Ajay Devgn said that he gets similar reactions from his family. He said, "Kajol and the children are also similar. With the newer generation, we upgrade ourselves, and we know the mindset, so we learn what is working. Where they have to criticise they do it, and thank god there is an invention called AirPods, after a point you can wear them and they can keep speaking." When asked if Nysa lectures him over Gen-Z lingo, the actor shared both his kids do that. At the summit, the actors also spoke of films clashing at the box office, lack of unity in Bollywood, and much more.

Twinkle Khanna once called my film 'bakwas' in front of producer, they never worked with me again: Akshay Kumar



Rishab Shetty's Kantara prequel announces release date for October 2025

Actor-filmmaker Rishab Shetty grabbed national consciousness with his National award-winning performance in the pan-Indian blockbuster Kantara. Backed by Hombale Films, Kantara became an unprecedented success from Kannada cinema, and turned Rishab into a household name across the country. While Rishab won the Best Actor award at the 70th National Awards, the film took home the prize for Best Popular Film providing Wholesome Entertainment. Soon after the success of Kantara, Rishab trained all his focus on the second part, which is said to be a prequel to the first film. Now, the makers have announced that Kantara 2, which is titled Kantara - A Legend will hit the screens on October 2, 2025 on the occasion of Dussehra.

...Kantara 2 is expected to be released in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali, and English. While the film is billed to be a prequel to the happenings in Kantara, details about the central plot haven't been divulged. Written and directed by Rishab, the makers remain tight-lipped about the cast and crew of the film.

Apart from Kantara 2, Rishab is also attached to star in Prashanth Varma's ambitious project, Jai Hanuman. This



film marks the second entry in the Prashanth Varma Cinematic Universe after the 2024 blockbuster film, Hanu-Man, headlined by Teja Sajja. Hombale Films have also been in the news for signing a 3-film deal with Prabhas, which includes Prashanth Neel's Salaar 2

Neena Gupta says her CA husband makes fun of her for keeping money in FDs: 'It gives me peace'



Neena Gupta has always been very vocal about her life, choices, and decisions. Recently, while talking to Kareena Kapoor on What Women Want, Neena Gupta maintained the same stance as she spoke about handling her finances. The actress also shared some details about

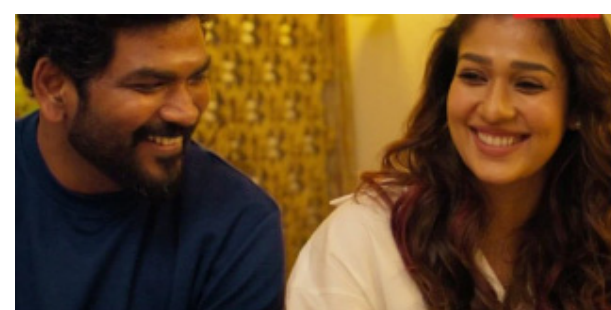
her husband Vivek, who is a CA, and shared how he guides her in making her financial decisions. Talking about how money is very important for one's survival, Neena told Kareena, "I have always been very particular about my money. Since childhood, we have been taught that money is not everything, but I have learned that money can buy you everything. It can buy you love also, so it is everything." Agreeing to her point, Kareena said, "I also tell this to Karisma, and Saif, and would tell my kids also."

Neena shared that she likes to invest her money in fixed deposits, even though she is often told that it doesn't give much return. "I need to have my money also. No matter how caring my husband is and he looks after me, but I need my money in the bank as a security. I get FDs done. My husband is a CA so he says that the stupidest thing to do is FD because it fetches the least amount of returns. But it gives me peace, they all make fun of me," she shared. Neena Gupta also added, "All my friends and I take financial advice from him. He is a very kind man and will help anybody. Masaba will not move ahead with a business decision without asking him. He has helped her a lot in the past and without asking him she doesn't make any business decisions." On the work front, Neena Gupta has three projects in the pipeline. She will be seen in Metro... In Dino, Pachhattar Ka Chhora, and Hindi Vindi.

Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivan share a candid light-hearted moment in new promo for documentary.

Before the release of Nayanthara's Netflix documentary, Nayanthara: Beyond The Fairy Tale, makers released a new promo featuring the star and her husband Vignesh Shivan. The two can be seen sharing a light-hearted moment here. Nayanthara released shared an open letter addressing Dhanush where she claimed that he did not allow her to use the footage from Naanum Rowdy Dhaan in the documentary, and even demanded Rs 10 crore for using a 3-second clip.

The new promo of showed Nayanthara and Vignesh sitting with each other sharing a candid moment. In the clip, Nayanthara hits Vignesh's neck in an attempt to kill a mosquito. Vignesh laughed and said that this was Nayanthara's technique to hit him. "So this is a new technique she follows to hit me. There's no mosquito. This entire house is mosquito-proof. But she will hit me for no reason and blame it on a mosquito," shared Vignesh. He further added, "And I



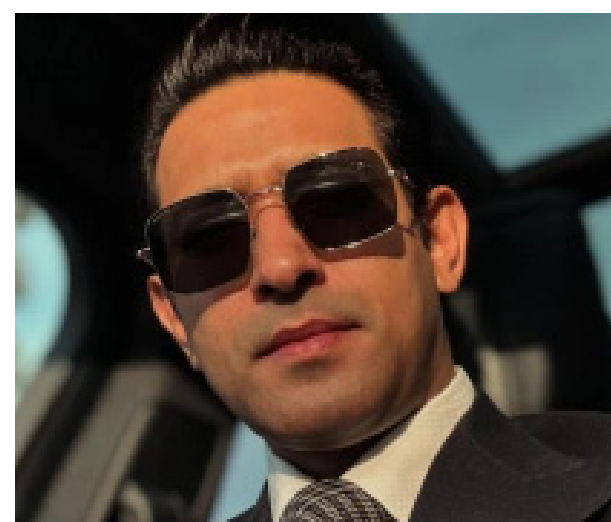
made a script out of this. Based on her new behaviour, I've written a story. It's fully from my heart. It's inspired by my experience. He then offered to pretend that there was a mosquito on his cheek so that she could slap him.

Vikrant Massey recalls selling mobile phone to pay hotel bill during Goa trip: 'We all exhausted our money'

From Dil Chahta Hai to Madgaon Express, many films have captured the quintessential dream of college and high school kids traveling to Goa with friends. Bollywood actor Vikrant Massey recently revealed that he fulfilled this fantasy when he took a trip to India's favorite holiday destination with friends after he started making some money. However, the trip wasn't all smooth sailing. In a recent interaction, Vikrant shared an anecdote about running out of money during the trip, which forced him to sell his mobile phone to cover the expenses.

Speaking to Curly Tales, Vikrant recalled, "I had just started earning and I took Rs 5000 with me. I went with my friends in a Volvo bus. It was the last night of the trip, and we used to split all expenses back then. Like, if we bought a cold drink for Rs 20, we'd split it Rs 10 each. At the time of checkout, we had all exhausted our money. We needed to pay the hotel bill. I had a mobile phone, so I sold it to settle the bill and buy return tickets to Mumbai for all my friends."

Earlier, in a conversation with journalist Faye D'Souza, Vikrant opened up about seeing his parents' financial struggles as a child. He revealed that his parents, who belonged to an affluent family, were thrown out of their home due to a family feud, forcing them to live in a godown. "They used to live in Juhu and were neighbours to the Kapoor



family. Theirs was a classical Hindi film story: they had a family feud, were thrown out of their own home, lived in godowns with a baby for almost a year and then finally moved into Versova," he shared. On the work front, Vikrant's latest film The Sabarmati Report is currently running in theatres.

Navjot Singh Sidhu says wife hid cancer diagnosis while he was in jail: 'Maine devi maa se ek hi baat maangi...'



The recent episode of The Great Indian Kapil Show featured Navjot Singh Sidhu and his wife, Navjot Kaur Sidhu, alongside the celebrity couple Harbhajan Singh and Geeta Basra. The episode was filled with humour and lively conversations, but there was one segment that saw Navjot get emotional as he opened up about a deeply personal time in their lives—when his wife was diagnosed with cancer while he was in jail. Sidhu revealed that his wife had hidden her diagnosis from him as he was behind bars. In 2022, Navjot Singh served a one-year sentence in connection with a 1988 road rage death case.

Speaking about this challenging period, Navjot Singh Sidhu said, "You see, I cannot live without her. Mujhe aisa lagne laga ki isko kuch hogaya toh main kaise jiyunga (I wondered how would I live if something happens to her). It was such a difficult phase, but she was strong, extremely strong. The entire family stood by her. Maine devi maa se ek hi baat maangi ki tu meri lele jaan par isko bacha le (I asked Devi Ma to take my life but spare her). Our kids and I can't stay without her. I was so shattered. She was so brave. During chemotherapy, she didn't express her pain. See her hand, wherever the chemotherapy leaked, her hand would deform. Dard ise hota tha, humein 100 guna hota tha (She suffered the pain, but we felt it 100 times more)."

Navjot Kaur quickly added, "But when the patient her-

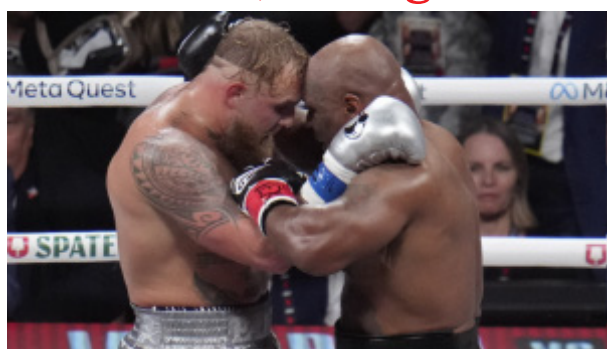
self is smiling, what can the others do? Inko maine udaas hi nahi hone diya (I never let him get sad), because I would always be smiling." However, Navjot countered saying, "Tujhe kya pata, tu toh hass rahi hoti thi, hum kamre ke bahar jaake ro rahe hote the (You didn't know how we used to cry)." The couple also shared how their lifestyle has drastically changed after her cancer treatment. "See how much she has changed, she would eat buckets of ice cream, she would eat kurkure all night. Now, we have changed. Every morning neem, turmeric, lemon, apple cider vinegar. She even quit tea. Today, after four months, I made her have tea. All I want to say is you can defeat cancer. If you have the will then you can," he said.

Karan Johar delighted by 'Kal Ho Naa Ho' re-release success

Mumbai: Bollywood multi-hyphenate Karan Johar is over the moon with the re-release of his home production 'Kal Ho Naa Ho'. On Sunday, the director-producer took to the Stories section of his Instagram, and shared the poster of the movie, as he expressed his gratitude to people's interest in the movie even after 21 years of its release. Karan Johar shows his philosophical side on social media; says 'learn how to be happy alone'

He wrote on the picture, "So heartening to see full shows of our film 21 years later. Looking at people dancing and repeating dialogues of the film in cinemas is so gratifying." 'Kal Ho Naa Ho' is celebrated as a milestone in Hindi cinema because of its urban approach of storytelling (the film was set in New York City and had an elegant urban upmarket styling) and more importantly its path-breaking melody driven music clubbed with Javed Akhtar's lyrics. The film can very well be called a timeless piece of cinema owing to its music, styling, narrative and the dynamics of the characters. Interestingly, Preity Zinta was not the first choice for the role of Naina. Karan in fact, went with the film to Kareena Kapoor Khan, who had then just delivered a massive flop in the form of 'Mujhse Dosti Karoge' which was directed by Kunal Kohli.

8 blood transfusions, 18 out of 97 punches, and 20 million USD payday – What Mike Tyson staked, and got out of the Jake Paul fight



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Jake Paul, the social media star-turned-boxer ultimately impressed Mike Tyson by the end of their much-talked about fight which kickstarted Netflix' sports live streaming ambitions, after claiming a unanimous decision victory over Tyson in the eight round bout Here's 5 eye-popping numbers that sum up the packaged-for-entertainment fight which finished with Tyson calling Paul a "talented fighter half my age" on Twitter, at least. Paul continued to draw flak for pulling out of retirement a washed up boxer, who is more than twice his age. He however can tell his grandchildren tales of beating Mike Tyson, many years on from now, when at 27, he drew out sit-at-home interest, enough to keep the 'Flix tech back-end busy. Jake Paul and Mike Tyson embrace after their heavyweight boxing match in Arlington, Texas. (AP Photo/Julio Cortez) Jake Paul and Mike Tyson embrace after their heavyweight boxing match in Arlington, Texas. (AP Photo/Julio Cortez) Mike Tyson appeared to be gassed out after just the two rounds, and the largely one-sided fight saw the former heavyweight icon, throw just 18 of the 97 punches. Paul won the fight 80-72, 79-73 and 79-73. Tyson's career count took a small sent, as he is now 50-7. The 97 punches itself was considered a very low number of punches traded over 16 minutes, but there was general relief that Tyson emerged out of the ring unhurt.

That's the number of rounds that Tyson went, and it made him suitably proud, also offering an insight into why he could possibly have agreed to the gig – so his children could take in the enormity of their father's feat. "To have my children see me stand toe to toe and finish 8 rounds with a talented fighter half my age in front of a packed Dallas Cowboy stadium is an experience that no man has the right to ask for. Thank you," he wrote on Twitter. He had the power,

but the wheels to take him where he needed to be. Festive offer Jake Paul, left, fights Mike Tyson during their heavyweight boxing match, Friday, Nov. 15, 2024, in Arlington, Texas. (AP Photo) Jake Paul, left, fights Mike Tyson during their heavyweight boxing match, Friday, Nov. 15, 2024, in Arlington, Texas. (AP Photo) The number of blood transfusions Tyson underwent in medical struggles in the lead-up to the fight, where he says, he almost died. "I almost died in June. Had 8 blood transfusions. Lost half my blood and 25lbs (11kg) in hospital and had to fight to get healthy to fight so I won," Tyson posted. The age difference between the two fighters in the ring at Dallas. The Brooklyn-born 58-year-old was originally scheduled to get into the ring on July 20, but that was delayed after Tyson suffered what was then described as an ulcer flare up. As it turned out, he was going through some dire medical issues. Mike Tyson slaps Jake Paul during the final face-off ahead of the bout in Texas. (X/Netflix) Mike Tyson slaps Jake Paul during the final face-off ahead of the bout in Texas. (X/Netflix) The whole thing was met with boos, and called "a horrible watch" by haters. Jake Paul's online pugilistic rival on YouTube, KSI, said, "What a sad watch. The whole thing was sad." Paul's recent wins have been against Nate Robinson (now 40, retired MMA player), Ben Askren (now 40, retired MMA fighter), Tyron Woodley (now 42, retired MMA fighter), Anderson Silva (now 49, retired MMA), Nate Diaz (now 39, semi-retired MMA). It all boils down to that. And ensures a safe financial future for Tyson. That payday, as quoted by the Associated Press. Tyson's peak boxing years made him over \$300 million, but in 2003, still two years shy of retirement, Tyson filed for bankruptcy. A Celebrity Net Worth website quotes Tyson's net worth pre-fight estimated to be around \$10 million, so he made double in that one Saturday. Jake Paul lands a left to Mike Tyson, Netflix Jake Paul lands a left hook on Mike Tyson's face during their heavyweight boxing match, Friday, Nov. 15, 2024, in Arlington, Texas. (AP Photo/Julio Cortez) Jake Paul's net worth is estimated around \$80 million, and he said he made 40 million more from this fight. An internet sensation, he made his bucks by talking as an internet sensatio sharing videos on Vine in 2013, where he reached 5.3 million followers and 2 billion views. His YouTube channel, has 20.8 million subscribers. Netflix claims those many households tuned in, with concurrency peaking at 65 million streams. Gate receipts fetched 18 million in revenues, and 6000 eat&drink places watched. Buffering issues, streaming glitches and low-resolution video complaints were trouble shot at the back-end.

Mohammed Shami should be on the next flight to Australia: Sourav Ganguly

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Bengal's Mohammed Shami celebrates a wicket on the fourth day of a Ranji Trophy cricket match between Madhya Pradesh and Bengal, at the Holkar Cricket Stadium, in Indore. Bengal's Mohammed Shami celebrates a wicket on the fourth day of a Ranji Trophy cricket match between Madhya Pradesh and Bengal, at the Holkar Cricket Stadium, in Indore. Former India captain Sourav Ganguly wants pacer Mohammed Shami to be on the next flight to Australia after the speedster has made a promising comeback to the competitive cricket in the Ranji Trophy.

Shami was not at his best with the ball in the second-innings but the India pacer still powered Bengal to a thrilling 11-run win over Madhya Pradesh at the Holkar Stadium in Indore on Saturday. Besides his bowling exploits of 7/156 in the match, Shami also registered his highest First-Class score for Bengal, knocking a quickfire 36-ball 37 in the second innings. "I will send him to Australia. He doesn't need to play the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. I'll send him to Australia, even if he misses the Perth Test," Ganguly told RevSportz. Ranji Trophy: Shami picked the final wicket as Bengal pipped MP by 11 runs. (PTI) Ranji Trophy: Shami picked the final wicket as Bengal pipped MP by 11 runs. ("He keeps bowling, he should be on the flight, he has bowled today as well. He should be on the next flight to Australia," he added. Although Shami was not named in India's 18-member Border Gavaskar Trophy squad, but his childhood coach Mohammed Badruddin is hopeful that his ward will travel to Australia at some point in the series.



"He will be joining the Indian team after the Adelaide (second) Test. Now that he is back, proved his fitness, picked up wickets, he will be crucial for the team in the second half of the tour," he told the Indian Express. Mohammed Shami Ranji Bengal comeback Bengal's Mohammed Shami celebrates a wicket on the second day of a Ranji Trophy cricket match between Madhya Pradesh and Bengal, at the Holkar Cricket Stadium, in Indore. Ganguly has also backed Prasadh Krishna ahead of the Akash Deep to feature in the Perth Test, starting from November 22. "Shami may miss the Perth Test, but that will be bowling friendly conditions. I think Prasadh will play ahead of Akash Deep, because of the height and conditions. So, Shami should be on the flight and should be ready to play the Adelaide Test," said Ganguly.

Rafael Nadal won't play Davis Cup singles if he's not feeling good enough



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Rafael Nadal announces retirement: 22-time Grand Slam champion to retire after Davis Cup Rafael Nadal announces retirement: 22-time Grand Slam champion to retire after Davis Cup Rafael Nadal is ready to skip singles matches at the Davis Cup finals in Malaga if he feels he is not good enough to help Spain succeed in his farewell tournament. Nadal is retiring after the Davis Cup, the 22-time Grand Slam champion worn down by too many injuries at the end of his 20 years on tour. "I'll try to prepare as best as possible so I can be available to play, but I want to help anyway I can, playing or not playing," the 38-year-old Nadal said on Saturday from Malaga in an interview published by the Spanish tennis federation.

"First we have to see how I'm feeling in training. If I really don't see myself ready to have a chance of winning in singles, I'll be the first who won't want to play." Nadal's singles record in 2024 is only 12-7. His last official competition was the Paris Olympics in August, a second round loss to longtime rival — and eventual gold medalist — Novak Djokovic. Nadal reached the doubles quarterfinals with

Carlos Alcaraz. Last month, he played two exhibition matches in Saudi Arabia. "I have already told (Spain captain David Ferrer) on many occasions not to make any decision based on the fact that this is my last week as a professional tennis player," Nadal said. "The team comes first, and he should not be affected in the slightest by any hype that may come along because of me. He has to do what is best for the team and that is what I want." Spain will open on Tuesday against the Netherlands, and if it wins it will advance to the semifinals on Friday against Canada or Germany. "I'm more than grateful with everything that has happened to me in all these years. I obviously would like for the team to do well and for me to have the chance to win another Davis Cup, whether by playing or cheering from the stands. I'd like to enjoy this week and close a very beautiful and very long cycle of my life ... accepting that everything has a beginning and an end."

Ranji Trophy 2024-25: Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh settle for draw

Hyderabad: Hyderabad skipper Tanmay Agarwal impressed yet again but fell agonizingly short of a century, scoring 95 in the second innings against Andhra Pradesh on Day 4 of their Ranji Trophy Group B clash at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Hyderabad, on Saturday. The match ended in a draw, with Andhra Pradesh earning three points by virtue of their first-innings lead of 147 runs, while Hyderabad settled for one point. Tanmay and opening partner Abhirath Reddy gave Hyderabad a strong start with a 148-run stand after Andhra were bowled out for 448 in their first innings.

West Indies chase down 219 to beat England by 5 wickets in 4th T20



GNS News Agency, Nov 19

West Indies' Shai Hope, right, and Evin Lewis knock gloves during their partnership against England at the fourth T20 cricket match at Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Gros Islet, St. Lucia. West Indies' Shai Hope, right, and Evin Lewis knock gloves during their partnership against England at the fourth T20 cricket match at Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Gros Islet, St. Lucia. (AP) Shai Hope and Evin Lewis made half centuries in a rapid 136-run opening stand as the West Indies completed a record run chase to beat England by five wickets in the fourth Twenty20 international. Hope made 54 from 24 balls and Lewis made 68 from 31 balls, with seven sixes and four fours, in a partnership which lasted only 9.1 overs but enabled the West Indies to reach a winning target of 219 on Saturday.

The West Indies' confident start was shaken when Lewis, Hope and Nicholas Pooran fell to consecutive balls in the 10th over. But captain Roston Chase put the innings back on track with 38 from 23 balls and Sherfane Rutherford competed the chase with successive sixes and an over to spare. There were 32 sixes in the match, 16 from each team. "We had to assess the conditions. That's one thing

we struggled with in the first three games in the power play," Hope said. "We've been losing some early wickets so the main thing was to try and understand what was the best remedy, to understand the conditions and come out of the power play on top." England already had won the five-match series after winning the first three matches by eight wickets, seven wickets and three wickets respectively. Every match in the series and in the previous three-match one-day series has been won by the team winning the toss. After being sent in, Phil Salt and Jacob Bethell who both have deep roots in the Caribbean made swift half centuries as England made 218-5 to equal the highest first Bethell who was born and raised in Barbados made an unbeaten 62 from 32 balls while Salt who was born in Wales but raised in Barbados made 55 from 35 balls at the top of the order. Will Jacks (25), Jos Buttler (38) and Sam Curran (24) also contributed to England's innings of 218-5. The West Indies made a speedy start in pursuit of that total. Hope reached his half century from 23 balls, the West Indies were 69-0 after the power play and their hundred came up in only 7.3 overs.

Lewis was more watchful than Hope at first but when he began to hit out it was with enormous power. He reached his half century from 26 balls and the longest of his sixes traveled 105 meters. The century partnership between Hope and Lewis came from only 45 balls and they had looked impregnable until Lewis played an awkward shot to a ball from Rehan Ahmed which he skewed to Dan Mousley. Hope was run out next ball for the second time in consecutive matches and Pooran was bowled first ball as the West Indies slumped to 136-3. Powell restored some of the early momentum with his 38 before falling lbw to John Turner in his T20 debut. The West Indies needed 21 from the last three overs with five wickets in hand, then 15 from two. After edging towards the target in singles, Rutherford finally found the middle and blasted consecutive sixes from Mously to clinch the win.

India tour of Australia: Glenn McGrath urges Australia to go hard on emotional Virat Kohli

GNS News Agency, Nov 19

Legendary Australian bowler Glenn McGrath has urged Pat Cummins and co to go hard on "emotional" Virat Kohli in the upcoming five-match Test series against India, starting from November 22 at the Perth. "Without a doubt, especially after coming off a 3-0 loss against New Zealand, you've got plenty of ammunition to back yourself up," McGrath told CODE Sports. "So put the pressure on them and see if they're up for it." The 36-year-old has averaged 31.68 in his last 60 Test innings but this calendar year the numbers have fallen further to unimpressive 22.72 from six Tests. But Kohli has shown a special liking for the pacy Australian pitches, averaging 54.08 in four Tours down under. India's Virat Kohli being bowled by New Zealand's Mitchell Santner on the second day of the second test cricket match between India and New Zealand, at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, in Pune. India's Virat Kohli being bowled by New Zealand's Mitchell Santner on the second day of the second test cricket match between India and New Zealand, at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, in Pune. "If they go hard at him, if he gets in the fight with emotions, there's a bit of chat out there, who knows he might sort of lift," McGrath said. "But I think he's prob-



ably under pressure a little bit, and if he has a couple of low scores to start with, he could really feel it. "I think he's quite an emotional player. When he's up, he's up, and when he's down, he sort of struggles a little bit." Former India coach Ravi Shastri reckons Kohli will overcome the recent slump in form and make the best of Australian conditions. "Well, the king is back in his territory," Shastri said on the ICC Review show. "That's all I will tell (the doubters). When you've earned that title after your exploits in Australia, it will be on your (opponent's) mind when you go out to bat."

Are personal coaches better or could Indian shuttlers benefit from training in a group?

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It's been a slow, fraying year for Indian badminton – its first without an Olympic medal in a dozen years. Unsurprisingly, it has coincided with scant results worth noting and a breathless wait by fans for assorted coaches to wave magic wands, that will throw up results, even while the athletes haven't been in peak shape or greatest of headspaces. And while forgetting that there's been a steady slide in the number of matches won, let alone titles secured. For the form that he went into the Olympics with, Lakshya Sen over-achieved. A semifinal finish where neither Chinese nor Indonesians made the Last 4, and a leadup where he himself hadn't been amongst titles, will be considered creditable. For the physical preparation he had put in, and what his eclectic, clever game is capable of, losing to Lee Zii Jia was a disappointment. Especially when top coaches agree he could have even taken down Viktor Axelsen, had he kept his nerve.

The two losses from leading positions in the semis and bronze playoff, simultaneously highlight the importance of the coach in pinpoint strategy, and their helplessness in getting their players to deliver at the crunch. A coach is only as good as the results. This welds into the larger, heated debate of whether personal coaches are good for the shuttlers. And by being good, we solely mean whether they can get the athletes the results on the court, in sheer Ws. Wins. For a long time, the chatter about in-bound foreign coaches, who athletes prefer for personalised attention, has been a source of mid-level annoyance for the national coach, Pullela Gopichand. It's simply because the results have not followed in singles. And doubles went down the same route in Paris. PV Sindhu was good for gold in Tokyo but pushed herself into one right corner, dominated by a coaching conundrum. Park Tae Sang wasn't the smartest of career choices, given the nature of her game, which went into reverse with the defensive overtones. And without a second voice telling her to retain the attacking verve, and nerve. Agus Dwi Santoso was much the same – a brilliant coach for rally specialists, but dimming the spark of the tall athlete's ferocious offensive attack. Prakash Padukone couldn't quite prop up the backsliding game, though Anup Sridhar and Lee Hyun-il will now attempt the improbable. In hindsight, the whole world will chorus in with this insight, but Sindhu opting for a support team with a personal coach, needed the dissenting voice, even if abrasive, to get her back on track five years ago. Both Park and Agus were not particularly strict coaches, they would coax and convince and it kept her in a reasonably happy space. But they weren't necessarily great for her game, and results. Kidambi Srikanth blundered from one wrong call on personal coach to the next, and then the next, looking for that elusive magic wand that could set things right. He reckoned the World Championships silver in 2021 was the formula, and continued to chase the mirage of a wonder-coach. A precociously, creative talent, all he needed was some detached honesty in telling him that physically he wasn't at the level where he



could consistently trouble big names. And beautiful, bold game styles like his, needed a very strong base, to pull it off in big events, where he had a natural disadvantage in his perpetual irritation for slow courts. Srikanth's game was more special than the rest, and everyone from Gopichand to Parupalli Kashyap would agree. But it did not warrant special seclusion, and would have bloomed even in group sessions. HS Prannoy put in those hard yards to resuscitate a career, albeit late in the day. But what he did not demand, as right, was personalised attention of the chief coach, by simply trusting him to plan and chip in exactly when needed. Even B Sai Praneeth briefly fell into the quagmire of wanting monopolised attention and never recovered from that. These are intelligent, highly talented and skilled shuttlers with no malice in them. Passing envy? Sure. But nothing too unhealthy. Lasting resentment? Not at all. They won India a Thomas Cup, on sheer teamwork. They bond reasonably well. But self-defeating career calls on the coaching choices? Those are plenty. Perhaps the one male shuttler who genuinely had the right to feel ignored was Kashyap. Because Gopichand was far too focussed on taking Saina Nehwal and then Sindhu to the very top. He once even left him midway through a match at the World Championships, to tend to Saina's game. It cost him a World's medal, but Kashyap went on to marry the source of his grief, and the two vowed to merrily joke about it, ever after. Kashyap had the maturity to understand that Saina's and Sindhu's careers were headed for dizzy heights. The one notable success was Saina Nehwal, seeking out monastic focus in Bengaluru, as she searched for an elusive World Championships medal. But Nehwal was always self-driven, and could squeeze the best knowledge out of any coach. There's no telling if both she and Sindhu could have achieved far more had they sparred together and not chased exclusivity of attention. At any rate, they extracted plenty out of their rivalry – it added to India's titles. But both careers eventually careened off the track, when even greater feats were possible. Lakshya has demanded a similar bespoke, unique status with his coaching calls, though letting go of Anup Sridhar with whom he won his last title and bringing back the Korean months before Paris are debatable. And he was chastised by Padukone. While it is utmost important for athletes to be happy and relaxed, they often need to step out of comfort zones where they are the centre of their universe, and listen to harsh words, and feel not-so-special, so that the game gets better.