

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

23 November, 2024 | Saturday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:243

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

## Caste census survey applications found scattered again

Hyderabad: The caste census survey applications have been found scattered again and this time near Tarnaka Metro station in the city on Friday. This is the second such incident being reported in the State. Last week, the caste census survey applications were found scattered on the roadside from Rekula Bavi crossroads to Yellampeta in Medchal. Videos of the applications scattered on the Tarnaka main road are going viral on different social media platforms. Unlike last time, this time the applications were filled in by the households as can be seen in the videos. Disqualification petition

## Telangana TET- II 2024 sees a significant drop in registrations

Hyderabad: The Telangana Teacher Eligibility Test (TG TET) – II 2024 recorded a significant drop in registrations, raising concerns about the future of teacher education in the State. In response to the TG TET – II notification issued by the School Education department, 2,75,773 candidates applied as the registrations closed on Wednesday. This number of applications represents a significant drop from 2,86,386 this year and a staggering decrease from 4,78,055 in 2023. According to details released by the department, 94,335 candidates registered for the paper – I, conducted for aspirants seeking teaching eligibility for Classes, I to V. As for paper – II, held to determine eligibility to teach Classes VI to VIII, 1,81,438 aspirants applied.

## President Droupadi Murmu highlights India's cultural heritage and calls for unity

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

"All citizens must understand India's cultural and intellectual heritage and strengthen our invaluable traditions. Diversity provides a rainbow of beauty to our fundamental unity. Whether we are forest dwellers, villagers, or city dwellers, we are all Indians," said President of India Droupadi Murmu during her address at the inaugural session of LokManthan 2024, held in Hyderabad on Friday. LokManthan, being organised at Shilpakala Vedika from November 22 to 24, is a colloquium of nation-first thinkers and practitioners to promote a unified national approach. Speaking on historical and contemporary challenges to national unity, the President remarked, "Efforts have been made by adversaries to divide and weaken our society in every possible way. Artificial distinctions have been created to disrupt our shared unity. Yet, imbued with the spirit of Indianness, our people have kept the flame of national unity alive." She highlighted the role of medieval saints, poets, and freedom fighters in preserving and advancing India's emotional cohesion.

President Murmu also highlighted the significance of decolonising mindsets, citing recent efforts to break free from colonial legacies. She mentioned the replacement of outdated 19th-century laws with the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. Other examples included renaming



Rajpath to 'Kartavya Path', and Rashtrapati Bhavan's Durbar Hall to 'Gantantra Mandap'. The unveiling of a new statue of Lady Justice at the Supreme Court, with uncovered eyes, was also highlighted as a symbolic shift towards an evolving Indian identity, she said. The event was also attended by Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma, Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy, Minister for Women and Child Development Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka), and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat. Union Minister Kishan Reddy described LokManthan as a "Kumbh Mela of scholars, academicians, and thinkers." Minister Seethakka commended Hyderabad for exemplifying diversity, calling it a city that welcomes people from all walks of life.

## SC takes note on increase in stubble-burning areas in Punjab and Haryana, orders CAQM to submit report

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The Supreme Court on Friday (November 22, 2024) took note of an article published by The Hindu and directed the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas to submit to the court by Monday, data and a document cited in the newspaper article and also give clarifications. The article in question states that the Central government-constituted CAQM had information that the 'burnt area' of paddy fields in Punjab and Haryana increased and many farmers were burning stubble after satellites passed over the area to avoid detection, according to multiple sources and documents. But the CAQM continued to inform the Supreme Court time and again that over the past couple of years there has been a "significant reduction" in stubble burning incidents, as per the article. A Bench Justices A.S. Oka and Augustine George Masih was hearing a plea on air pollution in northern India, especially NCR. In an earlier hearing, the court's amicus curiae, senior advocate Aparijita Singh, provided a "shocking" revelation that claims of a considerable dip in stubble burning may not be true. The report quoted The Minutes of the Meeting (MoM) of the first sitting of the committee formed for estimating AQI on March 7, 2024, which mentioned "many of the farmers in Haryana receive the information regarding the timing of satellite passes; hence they carry out the burn-



ing activity after the pass." Despite this, the CAQM in seven affidavits or reports submitted to the Supreme Court from August 31 to November 16 this year did not refer to the increase in paddy burnt area or the concerns raised at the March 7 meeting. Visited two villages in Punjab and Haryana, many farmers knew about the satellite pass and the number of farm fires were also noticeably high after around 4 p.m., when the satellite completes its pass over the region and fires will not be recorded. Many other farmers, who did not know about when the satellites passed, said that farms generally burn after 4 p.m. as officials are unlikely to visit the fields towards the end of the office hours.

## KTR demands Telangana government to cut ties with Adani Group

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao demanded the Congress government in Telangana to cancel its agreements with the Adani Group, worth Rs 12,400 crore, and return the Rs 100 crore donation made by the group for the Skill University. The demand follows charges of corruption and bribery against industrialist Gautam Adani in a US court. Rama Rao also pressed the Congress and BJP to clarify their stance on the matter.

Addressing the media at Telangana Bhavan, Rama Rao highlighted that smaller nations like Kenya terminated their deals with Adani following the indictment. "Why cannot Telangana do the same?" he questioned, accusing both Congress and BJP of double standards. He challenged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to explain their association with Adani, alleging complicity and hypocrisy. "With Adani indicted in the US for corruption, India's global reputation has suffered another blow," he stated. Rama Rao criticised the BJP-led Centre for failing to launch a Joint Parliamentary Committee or investigative probe into Adani's activities, despite repeated demands from the BRS earlier. He argued that this has led to investor losses and diminished India's standing internationally. The BRS working president charged the Congress government in Telangana with laying a red carpet welcome for Adani Group into the State, contrasting it with the BRS government's decade-long resistance. Within months of Revanth Reddy assuming office, the government announced investments totaling Rs 12,400 crore, including Rs 5,000 crore each for green energy and data centers, Rs 1,400 crore for a cement factory, and Rs 1,000 crore for aerospace sector.

He reminded that shortly after Adani donated Rs 100 crore, the Chief Minister sought to privatise power distribution companies in favour of Adani and allow establishment of Ambuja cement factory at Ramannapet, despite opposition from locals. Pointing out Rahul Gandhi's criticism of Adani nationally, Rama Rao called out the Congress's double standards. "If Adani is a fraud at the national level, why is he welcomed in Telangana?" he asked. He demanded Rahul Gandhi clarify if the Adani deals in Telangana had his



approval and whether he supported Revanth Reddy's decisions. The former Minister also questioned what benefits Adani might have sought in exchange for his donation to the Skill University, referencing Rahul Gandhi's earlier comments that such donations from industrialists/businessmen often come with expectations of favours. "How is Modi corrupt for associating with Adani, but Revanth Reddy is not?" he asked. Targeting the BJP, Rama Rao criticised its silence on the Adani controversy in Telangana and accused it of a tacit understanding with the Congress. He asked whether India's reputation did not take a beating due to Adani's indictment and whether they endorse Revanth Reddy's agreements with the group. He also demanded an explanation for Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy's recent secret meeting with Adani in Hyderabad and subsequently, releasing no information on the recent raids of Enforcement Directorate on the Minister's residence. Accusing Congress of shielding its leaders, he challenged them to disprove his allegations. Notwithstanding Revanth Reddy's rhetoric and abusive politics, Rama Rao reaffirmed that the BRS will continue exposing the failures of the Congress government. He suggested the Chief Minister to visit Lagacherla and address farmers' grievances.

## Telangana HC suggests Assembly Speaker to act in timely manner on MLAs disqualification petition

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: The State High Court on Friday delivered its verdict on the disqualification petitions of MLAs who have defected from their parties, suggesting that the Assembly Speaker should take a decision on these petitions in a timely manner. A division bench led by the Chief Justice Alok Aradhe recommended that the Speaker should decide on the disqualification petitions, keeping in mind the anti-defection law under the Tenth Schedule and the five-year term of the Assembly. The division bench overturned the single bench's order, which had directed the Speaker to take a decision within four weeks. The division bench clarified that there is no specific time frame for the Speaker to take a decision. The single judge had previously allowed petitions filed by BRS MLAs on September 9, which were challenged by Assembly Secretary V. Narasimhacharyulu and another petitioner. Advocate General Sudarshan Reddy argued for the cancellation of the single judge's order, while senior



advocates Mohan Rao and J. Ramachandra Rao represented the BRS MLAs, stating that the Speaker had not accepted the petitions against the defected MLAs, leading them to approach the High Court.

## Telangana Govt appoints new governing bodies for 11 more agricultural market committees



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: The State government has issued orders appointing new governing bodies for 11 agricultural market committees across the state. Minister Tummala announced the appointments on Friday. The newly appointed market committees are – Shadnagar (Ranga Reddy District): Chairperson- A. Sulochana, Vice Chair-

person- Mohammad Ali Khan, Husnabad (Siddipet District): Chairperson- Kandi Tirupathi Reddy, Vice Chairperson- Banka Eilayya, Vemulawada (Rajanna Sircilla District): Chairperson- Rondi Raju, Vice Chairperson: Kanikarp Rakesh Medipalli (Jagtial District): Chairperson- Madham Vinod Kumar, Vice Chairperson- Mittapalli Rajareddy, Rudrangi (Rajanna Sircilla District): Chairperson- Chelukala Tirupati, Vice Chairperson- Bojja Mallesham, Kathalapur (Jagtial District): Chairperson- Pundra Narayana Reddy, Vice Chairperson- Puli Sirisha, Konaropeta (Rajanna Sircilla District): Chairperson- Kachakayala Eilayya, Vice Chairperson- Tallapalli Prabhakar, Parigi (Vikarabad District) Chairperson- Bhumannagari Parushuram Reddy, Vice Chairperson- Syed Ayub Hussain, Kalwakurthy (Nagar Kurnool District): Chairperson- Paka Manil, Vice Chairperson- Desineni Pandit Rao, Amangal (Ranga Reddy District): Chairperson- Yatta Geetha, Vice Chairperson- G. Bhaskar Reddy, V. Saidapur (Karimnagar District): Chairperson- Donta Sudhakar, Vice Chairperson- Nyadandla Raj Kumar. In all 125 agricultural market committees have been assigned new governing bodies across the state so far. Minister Tummala congratulated the newly appointed governing body members.

## Mumbai, Delhi ranked among top 5 prime residential markets in Asia-Pacific

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Mumbai: Mumbai and Delhi have been ranked among top 5 Asia-Pacific prime-residential markets to record higher annual price growth, according to a report on Friday, as India was cited among the emerging markets in Asia-Pacific, along with Vietnam and Thailand, to experience significant growth. Mumbai ranked third on the annual prime residential price growth index for the APAC region in the report by Knight Frank, recording an 11.5 per cent YoY increase in luxury property prices in Q3 2024. "Mumbai's outperformance is in line with the performance of Indian stock markets.

The investment sentiment remains very strong in the economy, and this is reflected in the growth of the equity indices which have scaled all-time highs, as well as the prime residential prices in this BFSI sector-dominated city which saw equally strong price growth," said the report. Moreover, Mumbai is noted to be the 14th most expensive APAC prime residential market at an average price of \$ 953 per square foot. In the city, \$1 million can secure approximately 103 square feet of prime real estate property. Furthermore, Delhi ranked fifth on the annual prime residential price growth index for the APAC region, reporting a 6.5 per cent increment in luxury property prices. The city is noted to be the 19th most expen-



sive market with an average price of \$ 452 sq ft during Q3 2024, the report mentioned. "India's residential real estate sector is experiencing remarkable growth, fuelled by economic expansion, infrastructure advancements, and evolving consumer preferences," Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director, Shishir Bajjal, said. With Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, and Bengaluru leading in prime residential price growth, the market is demonstrating resilience and establishing itself as a key hub for prime real estate investments. "The interplay of a growing economy and evolving lifestyle aspirations positions India as a distinctive and attractive prospect for investment opportunities," said Bajjal.

## Govt notifies telecom cyber security rules; sets timelines for telcos to report security incidents

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The government has notified the telecom cyber security rules, that aim to safeguard India's communication networks and services, through a host of measures including specified timelines for telcos to report security incidents and make disclosures. The rules also empower the central government/ its authorised agency to seek traffic data and any other data (other than the content of messages) from a telecom entity for the purpose of ensuring cyber security. Telecom entities would also be required to adopt telecom cyber security policy, that would include security safeguards, risk management approaches, actions, training, network testing, and risk assessment.

"The central government, or any agency authorised by the central government, may, for the purposes of protecting and ensuring telecom cyber security, seek from a telecommunication entity, traffic data and any other data, other than the content of messages, in the form and manner as may be specified by the central government on the portal; and direct a telecommunication entity to establish necessary infrastructure and equipment for collection and

provision of such data from designated points to enable its processing and storage," according to the rules framed under the new Telecom Act. The government and any agency authorised by it to collect data under these rules, as well as persons with whom such data is shared, will place adequate safeguards to ensure that such data is stored and maintained in strict confidentiality and prevent any unauthorised access, it said. "...no person shall endanger telecom cyber security by misuse of telecommunication equipment or telecommunication identifier or telecommunication network or telecommunication services or by fraud, cheating or personation; transmitting any message which is fraudulent; committing or intending to commit any security incident; engaging in any other use which is contrary to the provision, of any other law for the time being in force; or any other means which may have security risk on telecom cyber security," according to the rules," it said. Under the rules, every telecom entity will be required to implement specified measures to ensure cyber security, including adopting a telecom cyber security policy (security safeguards, risk management approaches, actions, training, best practices and technologies, to enhance telecom cyber security).

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## White elephants

It's an intriguing paradox — tourism continues to be the prime money-spinner for Himachal Pradesh, yet properties owned by the HP Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) are not attracting tourists in droves. The Himachal High Court has ordered the closure of 18 such properties as it is no longer financially viable to run them. The order is aimed at ensuring that public resources are not wasted by the corporation in the upkeep of these 'white elephants'. With the HPTDC failing to optimally utilise these establishments, the exchequer is bearing the financial burden at a time when the debt-stressed state government is busy tightening the purse strings.

The hill state played host to no less than one crore tourists in the first six months of this year, but most of them seem to have preferred private hotels to those operated by the tourism body. This is a sad reflection on the authorities' commitment to promoting properties at picture-perfect locations in popular as well as remote areas. The HPTDC has allowed matters to drift for too long. It was only recently that its board of directors decided to hand over some of its hotels, restaurants and cafes to private players — with the rider that the state government would continue to have their ownership. This process should be conducted in a fair and transparent manner so that business entities with a proven track record in tourism get a chance to bring about a much-needed turnaround. There is a perception among common tourists that state-run hotels are accessible only to influential people such as politicians and bureaucrats. The HPTDC needs to dispel this notion by reaching out to the masses through a multi-media publicity campaign. The involvement of travel agents and other stakeholders can spur this endeavour. The corporation should also be open to suggestions for putting its house in order and providing quality services to tourists.

## At polling booths in housing societies in Pune district, it's a work in progress



Booth level officers Suvarna Gogawale, Ratnamala Pimpale, and Sangeeta Misal said they hoped this exercise would help drive up the voting percentage. Jalindar Singhare, another poll officer, said this would help the electorate. "We feel the polling percentage would be over 60 as most people would come to vote," said Gogawale.

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

For the Maharashtra Assembly elections underway Wednesday, the Election Commission has set up polling booths at the 126 housing societies in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. For the Maharashtra Assembly elections underway Wednesday, the Election Commission has set up polling booths at the 126 housing societies in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. After the success of its experiment with polling booths set up within cooperative housing societies in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has decided to take the initiative to a much more granular level for the ongoing Maharashtra Assembly elections. For the Maharashtra Assembly elections underway Wednesday, the Election Commission has set up polling booths at the 126 housing societies in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. But as teething troubles remain, voters hoped the matters would be resolved soon.

Booth level officers Suvarna Gogawale, Ratnamala Pimpale, and Sangeeta Misal said they hoped this exercise would help drive up the voting percentage. Jalindar Singhare, another poll officer, said this would help the electorate. "We feel the polling percentage would be over 60 as most people would come to vote," said Gogawale. At Kendriya Vihar Cooperative Housing Society in Moshi, chairman Suresh Bhosale said they were approached by poll officials to install polling booths within the premises. "After a discussion with the members, we agreed. We have three polling booths in our community hall," he said. The society has around 1,000 residents as voters and the booths have around 4,000 people enrolled to vote. Bhosale said around 50 per cent of the residents were listed at the society booth for voting while the rest were sent to the old polling booth in Borhadewadi, around 5 km away. "It is a relief that our senior citizens can vote within their society, but we should have all the voters here," he said.

The Netaji Nagar Cooperative Housing Society at Lullanagar is among the 126 polling booths in the Pune district. The 49-year-old housing society has 582 flats across 39 buildings, with a voting population of 1900. Its chairman Ravindra Mhaskar said voting had been a smooth process so far. "Our efforts have been to reach out to residents who have flats in the society but now stay elsewhere. At least 50 per cent of the residents have moved out due to small flats here. We have reached out to several," added Mhaskar.

Shankar Karasgikar, 82, a retired professor at the College of Engineering Pune Technological University, said voting within the society premises was a different experience. However, all is not well in other societies in Pune. At Voyage Cooperative Housing Society in Moshi, only 20 per cent of its residents have their names registered at the booth there. Nitik Singh, the property manager of the housing society, said they started the process of enrolling voters in the last two months. "All those forms are still in our office. There are mostly outsiders who have come to vote here," he said. At Raheja Garden Federation Cooperative Housing Society, Wanowrie, polling booth level officer Asha Bhosale guided residents of nearby societies as they waited to figure out the booth where they could cast their votes.

## Faulty supplies to DRDO unit in 2009: Karnataka HC reserves orders in US businessman's plea against CBI case



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Karnataka High Court, Surya Sareen While Sareen's counsel sought a stay in the proceedings in the trial court in the CBI case, the high court reserved the matter for judgment and observed that the central agency should not precipitate the matter until the judgment in the case is delivered. The Karnataka High Court has reserved its verdict in a plea filed by an Indian-origin American citizen seeking that a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) case over irregularities in the supply of radio frequency generators to a Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) unit in 2009 be quashed. Surya Sareen is the CEO of California firm Akon Inc which bagged an over one million dollar order in 2009 to supply 35 'voltage controlled oscillators based RF generators' to the DRDO's Defence Avionics Research Establishment. The CBI has sought Sareen's extradition after non-bailable warrants issued for his appear-

ance in a 2020 case charge-sheeted in 2023 failed to be executed. While Sareen's counsel sought a stay in the proceedings in the trial court in the CBI case, the high court reserved the matter for judgment and observed that the central agency should not precipitate the matter until the judgment in the case is delivered. The high court was informed by Sareen's counsel that the businessman was a 79-year-old with ailments and that the process of extradition is likely to be initiated at the behest of the CBI in a case involving "commercial liability" and not criminal liability. Sareen's counsel also pointed out that there was a long delay between 2009 when the supplies of the VCO-based RF generators were made, and 2020, when the CBI lodged an FIR after a preliminary inquiry based on a defence ministry reference.

The CBI counsel argued that the faulty supplies had resulted in delays in the installation of high-end radars on the borders of India. The delay in the filing of the case was on account of the allegations of the involvement of two senior scientists in the wrongful procurement of "dummy" products which required careful verification, the counsel added. Last week, Sareen had approached the Karnataka High Court for a stay in the matter stating that a Red Corner Notice was being issued for his presence in a case involving "contractual liability". Akon Inc supplies products for aircraft, shipping and space industries. Last year, the CBI filed a chargesheet against Sareen, Akon Inc, and two former DARE employees — former director U K Revankar and senior scientist Priya Suresh — and sought Sareen's appearance for the start of the trial.

## Onions at Rs 70-75/kg, potatoes at Rs 35: Rising vegetable prices in Kolkata irk buyers; officials predict price dip in coming days

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Kolkata residents are grappling with soaring vegetable prices, particularly for potatoes and onions. Despite government intervention, prices remain high, causing significant financial strain on households. A recent surprise inspection by a state task force, led by Ravindra Koley, revealed significant price disparities between wholesale and retail markets in areas like Maniktala, Bagmari, and Gurdas Market. Onions were found to be selling at Rs 70-75 per kg, while potatoes were priced at Rs 32-35 per kg. An official said Koley Market near Sealdah station has recently received new onions at Rs 1,600 per bag. Earlier, the same bags cost the vendors Rs 2,700. The task force also observed price variations across markets in Kolkata. Sources revealed that Koley Market is offering onions at Rs 50-55 per kg while North Kolkata's Baranagar Market are recording prices as high as Rs 75-80 per kg. Koley expressed hope for a price decline in the coming weeks, and said, "By November 30, five lakh metric tonne of potatoes will be released from the cold storages. Within seven days, the prices of vegetables will come down with supply of local crops in the market." He also urged businessmen to expedite the



process to alleviate the price pressure.

The high price of onions is attributed to factors like supply chain disruptions and recent heavy rainfall in onion-producing regions like Nasik in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Meanwhile, homemakers like Sapna Jajharia are frustrated by the exorbitant prices. "Cauliflower, usually affordable in winter, is now selling for Rs 40 per piece," she said.

## 'Pollution happens every year, can't remain cooped up in room': Fitness enthusiasts at Lodhi Garden unfazed by Delhi air crisis

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Groups of people were scattered across the rolling lawns of Lodhi Garden. Some did their stretches, while others performed almost perfectly synchronised yoga routines. Joggers made their way along the paved paths, their breath visible in the cold air. Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) remained in the 'severe' category on Wednesday, but in Lodhi Garden and Sundar Nursery, joggers and walkers remained unfazed by the pollution and continued their daily routines.

Shivani, 41, an interior designer on her first round of jogging, said, "It's much better today. It was worse a few days ago. I think Lodhi is still much better off than the rest of Delhi because of the tree cover. Otherwise, it gets really hard to breathe outside." Natar Kumar, 31, a professional cook, had finished a round of callisthenics with his friends. "Oh, yes, my eyes burn a lot when I go out. But working out is part of my routine... I need to go out and move my body a bit, it gives me the energy to do my job. This pollution happens every year but I can't remain cooped up inside my room all the time," he said. The common refrain among these fitness enthusiasts is that working out is part of their routine and they could not stop doing it no matter what. "If I don't come for my daily walk and pray to this tree here in the morning, I feel like my day is incomplete," he said, pointing to the saffron and tinsel scarf-clad Bael tree next to him.

"I also feel like my immunity is much stronger than these days' youngsters, so all this pollution doesn't affect me... I don't feel any different," he said. "Whether there's rain or heat, I've never failed to do my morning routine. We have a group of about 50 people who join us... Only a few have stopped coming since the pollution. That, too, is only because their children forbade them from going out. Otherwise, they would be here with us," added Kumar. Some of the older joggers believed that pollution was not a very se-



rious matter. In Sundar Nursery, a group of older men sat sipping tea on a wooden picnic bench after their morning walk had concluded. "These news channels make a huge issue out of it and call Delhi a gas chamber... I don't feel anything when I walk. My breathing is fine, and my eyes don't burn. I cough a little but that's just because of my age," said Narender Singh, 62, a retiree. Mahesh Bansal, 60, a chartered accountant, agreed. "Sometimes I feel a little itch in my throat but it's not as bad as everyone seems to believe. I've done this routine since 1984. So, maybe, I'm more used to the pollution than the others. But because my morning walks have been a part of my routine for over 40 years, I don't think I'll be able to stop doing it so easily," said Bansal. The security guards at both parks agreed that the number of joggers and walkers had not reduced since the air worsened in Delhi. "They come here... like clockwork, people start trickling in around 6 am. After that, the crowd reduces only after it gets dark in the evening. People come more during the winter months because the weather is pleasant... Fewer people come during the summer," said Rakesh Yadav, a gardener and caretaker at Lodhi.

## Fake job certificates issued to create 869 ESIC cards in Bengaluru; 4 held

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The Central Crime Branch of the Bengaluru police said on Tuesday that they have busted a racket that involved creating hundreds of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) cards for ineligible people after setting up fake companies and fabricating job certificates. The police announced the arrests of four accused — Sridhar, 42, a retired Armyman; Ramesh B K, 54; Chandra Kumar S H, 37; and Shivaganga, 38 — and said that they were employed in various hospitals across Bengaluru. According to the police, Ramesh launched the scam in 2018 but operations halted during the Covid-19 pandemic before resuming in 2022 when Sridhar allegedly joined him.

An ESIC card is issued to workers earning a monthly salary below Rs 21,000 and grants access to medical services at ESIC-affiliated hospitals. According to the police, the accused targeted underprivileged patients at private hospitals, offering ESIC cards for a nominal fee. They allegedly



set up fake companies and fabricated job certificates so that the ESIC card eligibility criteria were met. Using these documents, they allegedly generated 869 ESIC cards. They also collected Rs 500 monthly from the beneficiaries as "account charges", the police added.

## Union MoS Sukanta Majumdar arrested on his way to Murshidabad days after communal clashes, BJP slams CM for 'destroying social fabric of Bengal'

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

BJP's West Bengal President Sukanta Majumdar was arrested on Wednesday while on his way to Beldanga in Murshidabad district to "assess" the situation following alleged communal clashes in the area.

According to local eyewitnesses, Majumdar's convoy was stopped by a large police force around 70 km from Beldanga. He and his followers sat on the road to protest against the police for not allowing them into the area, while he insisted that his presence wouldn't threaten law and order and requested police guidance to nearby administrative offices. Following this, Majumdar was arrested.

According to the police, Majumdar, who is also the Union Minister of State for Education, and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), was stopped due to prohibitory orders imposed in the area. The police claimed "his visit might create further tension in the area". Clashes had erupted on Saturday night between groups in Murshidabad's Beldanga over an "objectionable" message on a digital display board at a temporary gate of a Kartik Puja pandal. "Dr Sukanta Majumdar, President BJP West Bengal and Union Minister, has been arrested, on his way to Beldanga, to be with grieving Hindu families, who have been ravaged by marauding Muslim mobs. Mamata Banerjee's administration is doing everything possible to destroy the social fabric of Bengal," BJP IT cell-in-charge Amit Malviya posted on X. BJP Chief Spokesperson and MP Samik Bhattacharya called for road blockades in different areas to protest the arrest. He said, "(Majumdar) was going to stand with the people of Beldanga who had been tortured. Our mothers and sisters are suffering. Police stopped him, our (Union) Minister Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, and blocked his way. At any cost, we want to restore peace in the state. This government is a total failure and has done everything to appease a community and create a divide." On Saturday night, after news of the alleged objectionable message spread, groups of people gathered, lobbed bricks and crude bombs, and torched a police vehicle. Shops in the town were ransacked, alongside a few houses. Six people were injured in the clashes, while 17 were arrested. Later that night, prohibitory orders were imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (which prohibits gatherings of more than five people), and internet services were suspended. While the police claim the situation is under control, locals say the area continues to be tense.

## For most sugarcane cutters, voting means losing a day's wages

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Sugarcane Maharashtra The issue of voting rights for cane cutters had become a major bone of contention in Maharashtra's sugar industry as the sugar commissionerate had not issued permission for crushing till the last moment. Bhaskar Gardhe gave sugarcane cutting a miss and travelled to his village Chinchkhandi in Beed district's Ambajogai taluka to cast his vote. "We hired a car and travelled from Nanded to Ambajogai to cast our votes," he said.

Gardhe, who is a muggadam (middle-man) employed with Bhaurao Chavan SSK in Nanded, admitted that this meant the loss of a day's pay but felt it was his duty to exercise their right. "There are around 200 people from our village. Almost half of them went for voting," he added. The issue of voting rights for cane cutters had become a major bone of contention in Maharashtra's sugar industry as the sugar commissionerate had not issued permission for crushing till the last moment. Officially, the sugarcane crushing season was to start on November 15 but with the Election Commission of India (ECI) fixing the polls on November 20, the question of voting became a problem for cane cutters. Unlike Uttar Pradesh, sugar mills in Maharashtra arrange for the harvest and transportation of cane with the cane cutters mainly coming from Beed, Nanded, Ahmednagar, Yavatmal, Amravati, and Nandurbar regions. Of the 12.5 lakh cane cutters, around 5 lakh are from Beed. Located in Kallam taluka of Dharashiv district (erstwhile Osmanabad), Natural Sugars and Allied Industries (NSAI) arranged for the travel of their cane cutters from Beed and nearby areas. Thus Ankush Jadhav, a muggadam from the area, said he took his 20 labourers to vote in the village. "While this does translate into a day's wage loss, voting is important," he said. However, Jeewan Rathod, chairman of the Maharashtra Sugarcane Cutters and Transporters Association, said that around 60 per cent of the cane cutters have not been able to return to their villages to vote. "Those who are employed in mills nearby came back, but those who are in faraway regions have not," he pointed out.

## Woman's body found stuffed in sack at UP's Karhal amid bypolls, family members point at political pressure

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The body of a 23-year-old Dalit girl was found stuffed in sack at Karhal in Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri district on Wednesday, the police said. The incident came to light on a day when the bypolls were underway at the Karhal Assembly constituency. The victim has been identified as Durga, who had gone missing for two days. Vinod Kumar, Mainpuri Superintendent of Police (SP), told the ANI that the victim's family has alleged political motives behind the crime. "The body of a 23-year-old girl from Karhal was found this morning. A case has been filed by her father against two individuals: Prashant Yadav and Mohan Katheria. Both have been arrested. The victim's parents have stated that their daughter was murdered in order to prevent her from voting for the BJP. Further investigation is ongoing," the Mainpuri SP said, as per ANI. Quoting the victim's parents, state BJP chief Bhupendra Chaudhary reacted to the incident and alleged that the crime was committed by the 'Lal topi wale gunde (red cap goons)' of Akhilesh Yadav. "Samajwadi Party leaders are trying to taint the bypolls in Uttar Pradesh with blood. Crossing all limits of hooliganism and putting humanity to shame, the brutal killing of a Dalit woman in a village near booth number 13 by those wearing red caps has shocked us all," he said.

## Death row convict Balwant Singh Rajoana comes out on parole for 3 hours to attend bhog ceremony of brother



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Balwant Singh Rajoana, a death row convict in the case of the assassination of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, reached his native village of Rajoana Kalan in the Ludhiana district of Punjab on Wednesday to attend the bhog ceremony (prayer meet after the funeral) of his brother Kulwant Singh Rajoana. This was after the Punjab and Haryana High Court granted him parole for three hours to attend the event following Kulwant Singh's death.

Rajoana has been lodged in jail for over 28 years since his arrest in December 1995. He is now seeking the commutation of his death sentence on the grounds of "extraordinary" and "inordinate delay" in deciding his mercy petition by the President. The hearings on the plea are currently ongoing in the Supreme Court, with the next hearing scheduled for November 25. Rajoana was taken from Patiala Central Jail to Gurdwara Manji Sahib at his native village amid tight security by the Patiala police. The Ludhiana rural police also deployed heavy security in the village where Rajoana will stay for three hours. Varinder Singh Khosa, Deputy Superintendent of Police in Dakha, said, "The Patiala police team has brought him from the jail and will take him back after three hours. We have also deployed adequate security in the village and the gurdwara." Earlier, on January 31, 2022, Rajoana came out on parole for an hour to attend the bhog ceremony of his adoptive father Jaswant

## Death row convict Balwant Singh Rajoana comes out on parole for 3 hours to attend bhog ceremony of brother

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Balwant Singh Rajoana, a death row convict in the case of the assassination of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, reached his native village of Rajoana Kalan in the Ludhiana district of Punjab on Wednesday to attend the bhog ceremony (prayer meet after the funeral) of his brother Kulwant Singh Rajoana. This was after the Punjab and Haryana High Court granted him parole for three hours to attend the event following Kulwant Singh's death. Rajoana has been lodged in jail for over 28 years since his arrest in December 1995. He is now seeking the commutation of his death sentence on the grounds of "extraordinary" and "inordinate delay" in deciding his mercy petition by the President. The hearings on the plea are currently ongoing in the Supreme Court, with the next hearing scheduled for November 25.

Rajoana was taken from Patiala Central Jail to Gurdwara Manji Sahib at his native village amid tight security by the Patiala police. The Ludhiana rural police also deployed heavy security in the village where Rajoana will stay for three hours. Varinder Singh Khosa, Deputy Superintendent of Police in Dakha, said, "The Patiala police team has brought him from the jail and will take him back after three hours. We have also deployed adequate security in the village and the gurdwara." Earlier, on January 31, 2022, Rajoana came out on parole for an hour to attend the bhog ceremony of his adoptive father Jaswant Singh, held at Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh in Ludhiana. Since that was being held ahead of the Punjab Assembly polls, Rajoana addressed the attendees and appealed to them to vote in favour of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). Rajoana was adopted by Jaswant Singh in 1993 after his own father Malkeet Singh had passed away. Rajoana was a police constable who had joined the Punjab Police on October 1, 1987. Currently lodged in Patiala Central Jail, he was allegedly sympathetic to the views of Babbar Khalsa International. He justified Beant Singh's assassination, blaming the former chief minister for "extra-judicial" killings of several Sikh youths. Convicted for the August 31, 1995, assassination of Beant Singh and 12 others in Chandigarh, Rajoana was

Singh, held at Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh in Ludhiana. Since that was being held ahead of the Punjab Assembly polls, Rajoana addressed the attendees and appealed to them to vote in favour of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). Rajoana was adopted by Jaswant Singh in 1993 after his own father Malkeet Singh had passed away. Rajoana was a police constable who had joined the Punjab Police on October 1, 1987. Currently lodged in Patiala Central Jail, he was allegedly sympathetic to the views of Babbar Khalsa International. He justified Beant Singh's assassination, blaming the former chief minister for "extra-judicial" killings of several Sikh youths.

Convicted for the August 31, 1995, assassination of Beant Singh and 12 others in Chandigarh, Rajoana was sentenced to death in 2007 by a special court of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) filed a mercy petition on his behalf in March 2012. In September 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) wrote to Punjab proposing commutation of his death sentence into life imprisonment to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, but the proposal was never implemented. On the occasion of the commemoration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the Centre in September 2019 recommended processing the case of Rajoana for commutation of the death sentence under Section 72 of the Constitution (under which the President is empowered to commute the death sentence). A correspondence to this effect was sent to respective States/UT in September 2019 by the MHA.

However, in December 2019, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated in the Lok Sabha that no pardon had been granted to Rajoana after former Congress MP Ravneet Singh Bittu, grandson of former CM Beant Singh, during the Question Hour sought a response from Shah as to why "Rajoana was pardoned". Since then, an appeal has been filed by Rajoana and is pending in the Supreme Court. Ravneet Singh Bittu, now BJP leader and Union minister, said he has no objection if the Centre decides to pardon Rajoana and other "Bandi Singhs" (Sikh prisoners) imprisoned for years.



sentenced to death in 2007 by a special court of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) filed a mercy petition on his behalf in March 2012. In September 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) wrote to Punjab proposing commutation of his death sentence into life imprisonment to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, but the proposal was never implemented. On the occasion of the commemoration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the Centre in September 2019 recommended processing the case of Rajoana for commutation of the death sentence under Section 72 of the Constitution (under which the President is empowered to commute the death sentence). A correspondence to this effect was sent to respective States/UT in September 2019 by the MHA.

However, in December 2019, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated in the Lok Sabha that no pardon had been granted to Rajoana after former Congress MP Ravneet Singh Bittu, grandson of former CM Beant Singh, during the Question Hour sought a response from Shah as to why "Rajoana was pardoned". Since then, an appeal has been filed by Rajoana and is pending in the Supreme Court. Ravneet Singh Bittu, now BJP leader and Union minister, said he has no objection if the Centre decides to pardon Rajoana and other "Bandi Singhs" (Sikh prisoners) imprisoned for years.

## 19-year-old Delhi man stabs one to death, injures another over bullying

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The Delhi Police Tuesday arrested a 19-year-old man after he allegedly stabbed a man to death and critically injured another in a fit of rage over purported bullying in Pitampura's Maurya Enclave. Abhishek Dhania, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North-West) said Wednesday that on November 19, the police rushed to Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital after they received a PCR call at Maurya Enclave Police Station reporting the admission of two injured people. On reaching the hospital, the police found that one of the victims had succumbed to multiple stab wounds to his abdomen, and another had multiple stab wounds to his back. The police lodged a case under sections 103(1) and 109 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) based on the survivor's statement. An investigation team was formed to be led by Inspector Madan Lal Meena, Station House Officer, Maurya Enclave, and under the supervision of Shalendra Singh Chauhan, ACP, Subhash Place.

After conducting multiple raids and gathering intelligence, they arrested Vikas, a resident of Pitampura, and recovered the murder weapon, a knife. "During interroga-



tion, Vikas confessed to the crime, stating that the altercation began when the deceased, Manish, allegedly bullied him. Unable to tolerate the humiliation, Vikas retrieved a knife from his home and attacked both victims," said DCP. The officer said no prior criminal record of the accused was found during the primary investigation. "Further efforts are being made to trace his possible involvement in other cases," he added.

## For research on dengue, PGI scientist bags IVS — Young Scientist Award

Dr Priyanka Thakur, a research scientist from PGIMER, has been awarded the Prestigious IVS — Young Scientist Award 2024 (Medical) for her original research work on the "Role of NLRP-3 inflammasome and Beclin-1/LC3B autophagy gene markers in the mediation of virus replication and cytokine storm in the severity of dengue patients". It was awarded at the recently held International Conference of the Indian Virological Society (VIROCON 2024), Gwalior. Dengue is a self-limiting arboviral infection, being transmitted by the Asian Tiger mosquito, the Aedes aegypti, which has a preference to bite during dawn and dusk, and the circulation of the virus is maximum during

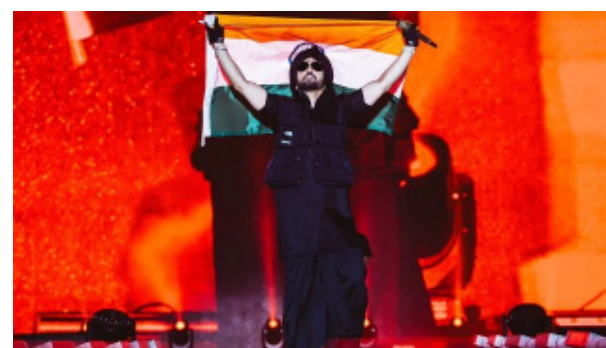
the post-monsoon season in north India. The transmission of virus continues till the atmospheric temperature falls below 15 degrees Centigrade, coinciding between the first week and second week of December. Because of low atmospheric temperatures, mosquito breeding falls to a minimum level, thereby halting dengue transmission.

The question that remains unanswered is: why the self-limiting dengue leads in 5-10 per cent of cases into complicated dengue in the form of dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) or dengue shock syndrome (DSS), where secondary dengue remains to be a predisposing factor.

## Diljit Dosanjh in Chandigarh: Venue yet to be confirmed for soldout concert, resale portals list tickets at Rs 3.5 lakh

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Even though the venue for renowned singer Diljit Dosanjh's concert in Chandigarh on December 14, as part of his 'Dil-Luminati India Tour 2024', is yet to be confirmed, officially, all the tickets are sold out. On Zomato Live, the official ticketing partner for the concerts, the pre-sale tickets went live on September 10, followed by the general ticket sale on September 12. The tickets were sold out within a few minutes. However, some resale ticket portals have listed tickets for his concert at 50-80 times the original price. Karan, a resident of sector 28 in Chandigarh who has purchased 10 tickets in the initial draw, said he is eagerly waiting for the venue to be announced. The 'Dil-Luminati India Tour 2024' kicked off with a concert in Delhi on October 26. Several people who could not attend the event in Delhi are coming to Chandigarh to attend the concert on December 14. "A couple of friends couldn't attend the concert in Delhi as they couldn't get the tickets. They were in for a surprise when I gifted them the tickets. They are excited and will travel from Delhi to Chandigarh to attend the concert," Karan. The pre-sale was meant only for HDFC Pixel Card holders, and Karan said he got a bank card for this purpose only. "They were all sold out in the first half an hour. I managed to purchase 10 tickets and know a friend who purchased six tickets." He said the tickets were sold on the official site at Rs 3,000 (silver) and Rs 6,000 (gold). A resale portal offers "fan pit" tickets at Rs 3.48 lakh for clear and "standing view" and



lounge tickets at Rs 1.81 lakh. Certain categories of gold and silver tickets are being offered for amounts up to Rs 70,000. "Since the venue has not yet been announced, there is speculation that it will be held at the Sector 16 stadium, as over 10,000 people are expected to attend. Many friends from Punjab will also be coming," said Karan. Saurabh, a resident of Sector 12 in Panchkula who has purchased five gold tickets, said, "The confusion persists because a club in Chandigarh is also showing Dosanjh's arrival there on the same day. And at the mall, it will be highly chaotic... So we are waiting for the official venue announcement." "When the draw started, I tried several times to take the platinum tickets, but within a few minutes, they were sold out, so I tried for gold and got five of them," he added.

## Bitcoin misappropriation: Will fight BJP's allegations legally, says Congress leader Nana Patole

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

nana patole, bitcoin, maharashtra news, indian express The Congress leader Nana Patole lashed out at the BJP for resorting to such "gimmicks" on the eve of voting. (FB) Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Wednesday slammed the BJP for dragging him in its allegations of Bitcoins misappropriation to influence the state polls and said he would take the legal route to fight the "fake" charges against him. Talking to reporters after casting his vote in Bhandara district, Patole said he is a farmer and has nothing to do with Bitcoins.

The BJP on Tuesday played purported voice notes of Patole and NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule to allege attempts to encash Bitcoins to influence the state assembly elections, claiming it poses a serious question on the conduct of polls in a free and fair manner. Sharing the audios in which the voices and signal chats purportedly belonging to the two opposition leaders stress the Bitcoin transactions for allegedly funding their poll campaign, BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said it is clear that the MVA has seen the writing on the wall that it is facing defeat in the polls. Lok Sabha member Sule has denied the charges and said they have filed a criminal complaint to the ECI and the Cybercrime Department against the fake allegations made of bitcoin misappropriation. Patole also dismissed the BJP allegations and said, "The voice in the clip being circulated is not mine. Even (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi recognises my voice." "Similarly, Ravindra Patil who is mak-



ing the allegations is an IPS officer. He is fake and was in jail," Patole charged. The Congress leader lashed out at the BJP for resorting to such "gimmicks" on the eve of voting. Patole said a FIR has been registered against Sudhanshu Trivedi and others for allegedly making false allegations and a defamation suit will also be filed. "We will fight this legally," he said. Speaking to reporters in Pune, Sule also refuted the BJP's allegations against her. "Yesterday, the BJP posed five questions too. My answer is 'No' to their allegations. It is not my voice in that audio clip. Anyone can check. I am not at all linked to this matter," she said. Sule said she is ready to reply to all the allegations of the BJP NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar said BJP's allegations against his daughter Sule and Congress leader Patole are not worth taking note of.

## 'White elephants': Himachal HC orders to shut 18 unprofitable government-run hotels

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Referring to government-run hotels operating at a loss as "white elephants", the Himachal Pradesh High Court has directed the state Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) to close 18 of its 56 hotels immediately. The order, issued by Justice Ajay Mohan Goel on Tuesday, came during the hearing of a petition concerning the non-payment of financial benefits to retired employees of the corporation. The court instructed the HPTDC Managing Director to comply with the closure orders by November 25, setting the next hearing date for December 3. The corporation operates 56 hotels across the state, many of which have been running at a loss for years. It has struggled to pay salaries and pensions, with the matter of pensioners' service benefits still pending in court.

The 18 hotels ordered to close include The Palace Hotel, Chail; Geetanjali, Dalhousie; Hotel Baghal, Darlaghat; hotels Dhauladhar, Kunal, and Kashmir House in Dharamshala; Apple Blossom, Fagu; Chanderbhaga, Keylong; Hotel Devdar, Khajjiar; Giriganga in Kharapathar; Hotel Meghdoot in Kiarighat; Sarvari in Kullu; Log Huts, Hadimba Cottage, and Kunzam in Manali; Hotel Bhagsu, Mcleodganj; The Castle, Naggar; and Hotel Shivalik in Parwanoo.

The court order stated, "On December 3, the Managing Director of the Tourism Development Corporation shall file a compliance affidavit regarding the implementation of the order passed today and furnish a list of retired Class-IV employees and deceased employees. The funds generated from the dues received by the Tourism Development Corporation shall be ordered to be released in favour of the retired employees and the families of deceased employees. The Tourism Development Corporation shall also update the court on the amount received from dues payable by the government and private entities to the Corporation." "To ensure public resources are not wasted... on these 'white elephants,' it is hereby ordered that the prop-



erties listed shall cease operations effective November 25, 2024, as their continued functioning is financially unfeasible," the court added.

In compliance with earlier court orders, HPTDC had submitted occupancy data for its 56 hotels. The court permitted "skeletal staff" for essential property upkeep and allowed the corporation to transfer the remaining employees elsewhere. The court noted that hotels with less than 50 per cent occupancy were a "burden on the state" and criticised the corporation for failing to utilise its properties profitably. It observed, "The continuation of these properties' operations is a burden on the state exchequer. The court takes judicial notice of the state's financial crunch, which is frequently highlighted in cases involving finances." Meanwhile, government-run hotels with occupancy rates above 50 per cent include Hotel Hamir in Hamirpur; Jwalaji, Jawalamukhi; Ros Common (Old), Kasauli; Tourist Inn, Rewalsar; The Suket, Sundemagar and Himachal Bhawan, Chandigarh. Notably, on November 18, Justice Ajay Mohan Goel ordered the attachment of Himachal Bhawan, the state's premier guesthouse at 27 Sikandra Road, New Delhi, for potential auction over unpaid dues to Seli Hydro Electric Power Company.

## School director grabbed collar of official, harassed inspection team

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

chandigarh protection of child rights official harassment During the inspection, the commission said it found some students, who are not officially enrolled with the school, are studying in class taken by faculty members of the coaching institute on the school premises.

The Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CCPCR) alleged on Tuesday that a school's director "grabbed" the collar of one of its officials and "physically harassed" its team after the commission reportedly confronted a coaching centre for running its classes on the school premises during school hours. Earlier, the CCPCR received a complaint against a school in Sector 37,

Chandigarh for running the coaching classes of a private institute on the school premises for the non-Medical students of classes 11 and 12 during the school hours.

Taking suo-moto cognizance, the commission conducted an inspection of Stepping Stones School on Tuesday. During the inspection, it was confirmed that coaching classes were being conducted without appropriate authorisation, a statement by the commission said. The CCPCR claimed it observed several violations of the Affiliation Bye-Laws, 2018 of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), raising "serious concerns regarding the proper functioning and adherence to the CBSE guidelines by the institution".

# The dangers of high-altitude sickness | Explained



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The story so far: In September, a trekker from Idukki, Kerala, died in Uttarakhand while attempting to scale Garur Peak due to respiratory failure. Every year, numerous tourists like this succumb to the effects of high-altitude sickness in the pristine but challenging inner Himalayas. These regions present hidden dangers due to their extreme altitudes, where thinner air and reduced oxygen can lead to potentially fatal conditions.

What is high-altitude sickness?

High-altitude sickness, or Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), occurs when the body cannot acclimatise to high elevations, typically over 8,000 feet (2,400 metres). As altitude increases, the air pressure and oxygen levels decrease, leading to hypoxia — a shortage of oxygen in the body's tissues. Early symptoms of AMS include headache, nausea, fatigue, and shortness of breath. If left untreated, it can escalate into high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), a life-threatening condition where fluid accumulates in the lungs, or high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE), where fluid collects in the brain. Both conditions require immediate medical intervention, and descent to lower altitudes is often the only way to prevent fatal outcomes. At higher altitudes, the body tries to adjust by increasing the breathing rate, which can cause hyperventilation, and produce more red blood cells to carry oxygen, which thickens the blood and strains the heart. In cases of HAPE, fluid accumulation in the lungs exacerbates breathing difficulties, while HACE causes symptoms like confusion, hallucinations, and even coma.

What are the infrastructural issues?

While the Himalayan States witness a steady stream of tourists, healthcare facilities beyond major towns like Shimla are inadequate to handle cases of high-altitude sickness. Leh, in the Union Territory of Ladakh, serves as a model, having developed specialised facilities for high-altitude ailments. Yet, most high-altitude regions lack this kind of infrastructure. Immediate and preventive health measures are also lacking. Basic preventive screenings or health checks at entry points for tourists venturing into high-altitude areas could save lives. Such protocols could mirror

## 12 Pak Army soldiers killed in suicide car bomb attack in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

At least 12 Pakistan Army soldiers were killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after a suicide bomber rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a joint checkpoint in general area Malikhel. According to Pakistan Army's media wing Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), "The terrorists attempted to attack a joint check post in general area Malikhel in Bannu district late on Tuesday night but their attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted by troops." "The suicide blast led to collapse of portion of perimeter wall and damaged the adjoining infrastructure, resulting in the death of "12 brave sons of soil" including 10 soldiers of the security forces and two soldiers of the Frontier Constabulary," quoted the ISPR statement. The Pakistan Army said six "terrorists" were killed in gunbattle. The PTI report stated that the injured have been admitted to a local hospital. Build cutting-edge AI solutions with MIT's expert-led program Start Now

A breakaway faction of the Pakistani Taliban, known as the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, claimed responsibility for the attack, AP reported. "Sanitization operation is being conducted in the area and the perpetrators of this heinous act will be brought to justice," the statement said. Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa witness surge in violent

the erstwhile "Inner Line Permit" system, whereby tourists entering high-altitude zones such as Kinnaur or Lahaul-Spiti undergo screenings at base hospitals.

What about a registration system?

To better manage high-altitude tourism, it is essential to implement a mandatory registration system for tourists entering remote mountain areas. Registrations, stored in a State government database, would allow authorities to monitor tourist movement and respond swiftly in case of emergencies. Such records would also support research on high-altitude illnesses by tracking demographic patterns and risk factors, helping scientists better understand how altitude impacts various populations.

What about early intervention?

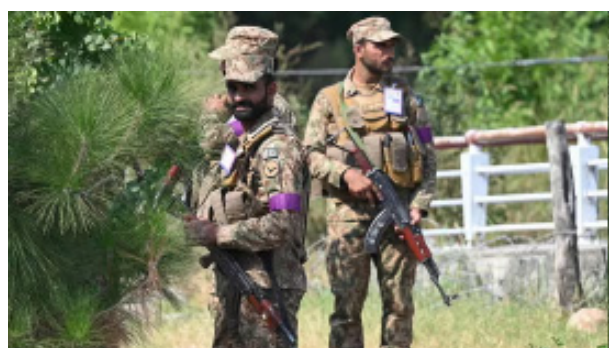
The primary cause of high-altitude sickness is rapid ascent without allowing the body time to acclimatise. Gradual ascent, which allows the body to adapt to lower oxygen levels, is the best way to prevent high-altitude illnesses. According to the Wilderness Medical Society, travellers ascending above 3,000 meters should take a rest day every 3-4 days and avoid increasing their sleeping elevation by more than 500 metres per day. For travellers at moderate to high risk of AMS, doctors recommend medications like Acetazolamide, which aids acclimatisation by promoting better oxygenation, or Dexamethasone, a steroid that reduces inflammation in severe cases. Those with a history of HAPE may take Nifedipine as a preventive measure, starting a day before ascent. However, no prophylactic medication guarantees complete immunity, and anyone travelling to high altitudes with pre-existing health conditions should first consult with a doctor familiar with altitude-related risks.

What are the treatment strategies?

When high-altitude sickness does develop, the most effective treatment is immediate descent to lower altitudes. Symptoms usually improve significantly with a descent of 300-1,000 metres. Supplemental oxygen or a portable hyperbaric chamber, if available, can also help alleviate symptoms of AMS and HACE in emergencies. Pharmacological treatments, such as acetazolamide and dexamethasone, may provide short-term relief, but descent remains the cornerstone of treatment.

What are the policy recommendations?

The following steps are recommended — establish state-of-the-art medical facilities in high-altitude regions of the Himalayas; create research centres dedicated to studying high-altitude illnesses; equip Himalayan States with air-ambulance services for rapid medical evacuation in emergencies; and provide health and safety information on government websites and at check-in points. Tikender Singh Panwar is a former deputy mayor of Shimla and is working in the Himalayan region for sustainable development. Dr. Malay Sarkar is Head of the Department of Pulmonary Medicine, IGMC, Shimla



incidents There has been an increase in terror-related incidents in Pakistan, including Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) has said that a third quarter of 2024 witnessed a 90 per cent surge in violence in Pakistan.

On Wednesday, Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif announced a new military offensive against separatists in southwestern Balochistan province, which borders Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is home to key Chinese Belt and Road projects, after a spate of attacks in the area.



ice formation in supercooled clouds by dispersing efficient ice nuclei like silver iodide or dry ice, which triggers ice nucleation and subsequent precipitation. Where was it used previously? Cloud-seeding has not yet been implemented in India as a method to improve air quality. While IIT Kanpur had planned to conduct an experiment last year, it has been conducting test runs along the Western Ghats since 2018, though the impact on air quality has not been evaluated. In December 2023, cloud-seeding was carried out in Lahore, Pakistan, which led to an improvement in the Air Quality Index (AQI) from 300 ("poor") to 189 ("moderate"). However, the AQI worsened again within two days.

Not a practical solution?

Scientists and experts have labelled the artificial rain proposal as "impractical," saying that its effectiveness is not assured. They said that artificial rain is not a viable solution to Delhi's winter pollution issue and more research is needed. "Until we have enough data or research to prove its effectiveness, this could be a waste of funds. Additionally, the environmental impact of silver iodide needs to be studied before considering its use," said Mukesh Khare, an air pollution expert from IIT Delhi. Sachin Ghude, a scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune, which conducted cloud seeding experiments in the Western Ghats from 2015 to 2018, explained that not all clouds are suitable for seeding. "

## Elevate your skills with ISB Executive Education's Certificate in IT Project Management



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

As digital transformation accelerates, organisations are increasingly relying on robust IT infrastructure to stay competitive. Global IT spending is projected to surge significantly in 2024. As per the latest forecast by Gartner, Inc the 'worldwide IT spending is expected to total \$5.74 trillion in 2025, an increase of 9.3% from 2024'. As Artificial Intelligence (AI) and GenAI transform businesses and drive automation, organisations have to adapt to agile technologies, acclimatise to new IT project management tools and upskill professionals to remain competitive or face closure. Gartner predicts that by 2030, 80% of project management work will be managed by AI. In IT project management, automating low-value tasks enables project managers to focus on strategic objectives and drive success. IT professionals must also navigate digital disruption, implement lean methodologies, and leverage adaptable tools in agile environments. Effective IT project management directly contributes to enhanced business profitability and heightened customer satisfaction.

The Certificate Programme in IT Project Management by ISB Executive Education helps professionals gain skills in software project management, risk mitigation, and value creation. It covers managing projects, adapting to trends, and leading IT initiatives, with integrated Generative AI masterclasses, AI use cases, and practical AI tools for hands-on learning.

ISB Executive Education's IT Project Management programme covers agile software development tools like Trello, Confluence, Asana, and JIRA. A dedicated PMP Certification Training module provides 35 hours to boost participants' confidence for the PMP Certification Exam and their future roles as project managers. Professionals will learn to deep dive into different phases of project lifecycles and monitor IT projects. An important highlight of this programme is the live masterclasses focused on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). It covers AI applications in risk assessment, reporting, and decision-making. This programme also delivers hands-on experience with project management tools, including JIRA, Asana, and Wrike. Participants also get to explore real AI use cases in areas like scheduling, resource management, and demand forecasting. Industry-specific case studies in manufacturing, BFSI, and construction further strengthen practical skills. Another significant aspect of this programme is that professionals get to take advantage of its self-paced, flexible online learning experience. They can study using pre-recorded videos

from reputed ISB faculty through a three-month period. It requires them to dedicate 4-6 hours per week, followed by a 4-week Capstone project. As discussed above, it also includes a PMP certificate training, equipping professionals with essential project management skills to advance their careers and multiply their organisational impact.

ISB Executive Education Advantage Ranked India's #1 B-school and #5 in Asia by the Financial Times Global MBA Ranking 2024, ISB Executive Education provides exceptional expertise in the field of project management. This certificate programme blends theory with practical insights, making it an invaluable investment for career advancement in project management. Here are a few other highlights of this programme: By the end of this programme, professionals will master IT project management essentials, tackling technology-specific challenges, stakeholder analysis, agile methods, and large-scale project planning. They will learn to develop detailed project plans, oversee software life cycles, and gain expertise in scheduling, monitoring, and evaluation. The programme also provides advanced insights into risk assessment, real-time reporting, and AI-driven tools through live GenAI masterclasses by industry experts. Participants will explore AI use cases in schedule optimisation, resource allocation, and demand forecasting, with hands-on training on tools like JIRA, Asana, and Wrike.

Who Is This programme For?

Primary audience: Early-career professionals wanting to improve IT operations, systems, and best practices. Mid-level professionals looking to advance their IT project management skills, lead teams, and manage risks effectively. Secondary audience: Consultants aiming to guide clients in IT strategy, analytics, and process optimisation.

ISB Executive Education empowers participants with the skills, mindsets, and networks required to manage and lead in this evolving landscape, enabling them to achieve their distinct personal and professional goals. Recognised as #1 in India for the third consecutive year and #26 globally in the Financial Times (FT) Executive Education Custom Rankings 2024 and #3 in India, #65 globally in the FT Executive Education Open Ranking 2023, ISB Executive Education is committed to preparing working professionals to excel in the new global business environment. This is achieved through fostering engaging exchanges between renowned industry leaders and academia and drawing globally renowned faculty from the world's top business schools. Through meticulously designed programmes, participants gain from both advanced management research and the vast experiences of their peers, ensuring they are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape. About Emeritus

Emeritus is dedicated to delivering future-focused skills through accessible, affordable, high-quality education globally. Partnering with over 50 top universities across the U.S., Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia, India, and China, Emeritus offers short courses, degree programmes, and certificates. Its innovative model—combining advanced technology, cutting-edge curriculum, and expert guidance—has transformed the careers and lives of over 300,000 learners across 200 countries, impacting individuals, businesses, and organisations worldwide.

## BJP's Sukanta Majumdar arrested while heading to violence-hit Beldanga

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The West Bengal Police on Wednesday afternoon made "preventive arrest" of BJP's state president Sukanta Majumdar in Krishnanagar area in Nadia district when he was moving towards violence-hit Beldanga in adjoining Murshidabad to take stock of the situation there, a senior officer said. The action was taken under Section 170 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which states that such arrests are made to prevent the commission of cognisable offences, he said. "Majumdar's preventive arrest was made under Section 170 of BNSS. He was heading towards a place where prohibitory orders were in place," a senior officer of Krishnanagar Police District told

"I was trying to go to Beldanga to review the situation there. Our party workers have put up road blockades in other areas in protest against the police preventing us from going to Beldanga," Majumdar said, soon after his arrest by Kotwali police station. Earlier in the day, Majumdar's convoy was stopped by the police while he was on his way to Beldanga, where around 17 people have been injured in clashes between two communities. Police cited the imposition of prohibitory orders in the area and that the BJP leader's visit might have disrupted peace. Clashes erupted between two communities in Beldanga on Saturday night over an objectionable message on a display board at a temporary gate erected for Kartik Puja. A huge police team stopped Majumdar's convoy at Krishnanagar, following which the BJP MP staged a sit-in. "Police are saying that prohibitory



orders have been imposed in the area, hence I cannot go there. They stopped me around 70 km from Beldanga. We are not going there to create any law and order situation. We have asked them to escort us to the DM or SP office, but they are unwilling to let us go there," Majumdar told reporters. According to a senior officer of Krishnanagar police district, Majumdar was stopped as a precautionary measure since they feared his visit to Beldanga might have disrupted peace in the area. "We cannot allow anyone to enter Beldanga as prohibitory orders have been imposed there. That is the reason Majumdar was stopped today," the IPS officer told PTI. At least 17 people have been injured and properties damaged in the clashes in Beldanga, following which the district administration imposed prohibitory orders and suspended internet services in the area.

## What is cloud seeding? All about artificial rain used when AQI is high

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Cloud-seeding is a technique used to modify weather by releasing silver iodide (AgI) into the atmosphere to enhance the cloud's ability to generate rain. Delhi air pollution: With record pollution levels choking the capital, the Delhi government on Tuesday pushed for "cloud-seeding" or "artificial rainfall" as an emergency measure to combat pollution. Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai called on the Centre to hold an urgent meeting to address the situation and approve the plan to induce artificial rain over the city. A similar proposal was made last November, but it was abandoned due to unfavourable weather conditions. Build cutting-edge AI solutions with MIT's expert-led program Start Now

The Delhi government had previously said that it would cover the entire cost of the experiment. The plan, divided into two phases, was estimated to cost ₹1 crore per 100 square kilometres. The first phase was expected to cover 300 square kilometres at the cost of ₹3 crores, with the second phase potentially covering 1,000 square kilometres at the cost of ₹10 crores, depending on the success of the initial phase.

What is cloud seeding?

Cloud-seeding is a technique used to modify weather by releasing silver iodide (AgI) into the atmosphere to facilitate the formation of ice crystals, enhancing the cloud's ability to generate rain. Silver iodide aids in the creation of ice nuclei in clouds, which are necessary for artificial rain to occur. In the process of cloud-seeding, chemicals like silver iodide, potassium iodide, and dry ice are dispersed into the sky via airplanes and helicopters. These chemicals attract water vapour, helping form rain clouds. Typically, it takes around 30 minutes for this method to produce rainfall. According to ScienceDirect, cloud-seeding can be categorised into two types: Hygroscopic Cloud Seeding: This method accelerates the merging of droplets in liquid clouds, creating larger droplets that eventually lead to precipitation. Salt particles are generally released at the cloud's base. Glaciogenic Cloud Seeding: This technique induces

## Sharmila Pawar accuses NCP workers of issuing 'death threats to her son's cadres'

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Maharashtra assembly election 2024: Tension erupted outside a polling booth in Baramati, Maharashtra's Pune district on Wednesday, after Sharmila Pawar, the mother of NCP (SP) candidate Yugendra Pawar, accused workers from the rival NCP faction, led by sitting MLA Ajit Pawar, of "intimidation and death threats". Sharmila Pawar alleged that one of their party members had been intimidated by workers from the opposing faction. "When I received the information, I reached the spot and saw that some voter slips bearing the symbol of their (NCP) party were being circulated and our people were being intimidated and given death threats," she told Sharmila Pawar further said that a complaint would be filed with the Election Commission regarding the alleged incident.

Yugendra Pawar, the grandnephew of NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, is contesting against his uncle, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, in a high-profile race in the Pawars' stronghold. Meanwhile, Kiran Gujar, the election-in-charge for Ajit Pawar's party in Baramati, claimed that Sharmila Pawar, not an election official, had no right to enter the polling station. "As far as voter slips bearing our party's symbol are concerned, why does the election officer of the polling station not take objection? It shows that when the system is working fairly, you are trying to defame the system," he said. Gujar also challenged the opposition to prove that his party distributed the slips. Ajit Pawar, who has held the Baramati seat since 1991, denied the allegations, asserting that his party workers followed the election code of



conduct. Maharashtra election 2024: The Baramati tussle. The contest for Baramati is more than just a rivalry between two candidates. It is a battle within a family over a constituency that has long been their stronghold. Amid the assembly elections, accusations and counter-accusations have flown, with Ajit Pawar promoting a development-focused narrative, while Sharad Pawar appeals to emotions. On the final day of campaigning, Sharad Pawar addressed a rally in support of Yugendra Pawar but refrained from launching any personal attacks on his estranged nephew, Ajit Pawar. Political analysts speculate that this restraint might be a strategy to leave room for post-election reconciliation or to prevent Ajit Pawar from gaining sympathy votes. For years, Ajit Pawar, known as Dada in the region, campaigned effortlessly, confident of an easy win.

## Elon Musk-Donald Trump bromance could shape the future of digital data flows, including for India



Tesla CEO Elon Musk's growing influence over the White House, following his backing of Donald Trump's re-election bid, is expected to usher in a new era of deregulation for Big Tech companies in the United States. Among other changes, this could see the Trump administration rolling back Biden-era antitrust litigation against tech giants and pushing for policies favourable to Big Tech, particularly ensuring the free flow of data across borders through US leverage at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Policy experts suggest a second Trump administration could reverse Biden's approach, returning to the 2019 stance of advocating for the WTO e-commerce rules that promote free cross-border data flows while prohibiting data localisation mandates by WTO member countries. While this may benefit tech firms like Tesla, it could create tensions between developed countries like the US and EU and developing nations such as India and South Africa who are aiming to develop their own digital sector, promote local champions, and reduce reliance on foreign American Big Tech firms, especially in the digital payments sector. The Biden administration had been creating policy space to regulate Big Tech. For instance, in 2023, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai abandoned long-standing US demands for digital trade rules prohibiting data localisation at the WTO. This aligned with India's ambition to develop a \$1 trillion internet economy by 2030, driven by a surge in online usage. However, Musk and other Silicon Valley companies, including Facebook, Mastercard, Visa, American Express, PayPal, Amazon, and Microsoft, are expected to receive government backing from the new administration in Washington in pushing India to lower its barriers on data flow.

During Trump's first term, disagreements over data localisation were a major source of friction between India and the US. While India resisted altering its stance on data localisation under any plurilateral agreements at the WTO, it also tightened its norms, notably in April 2018, when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mandated that payment system providers such as Mastercard and Visa store payment data for Indian residents within India. Despite these efforts, India's draft e-commerce policy, which includes strong localisation provisions, remains stalled, possibly under US pressure. The Data Gold Rush Regulations on cross-border data flows are among the most contentious topics at the WTO, especially with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Effective AI systems — seen as the cornerstone of the Fourth Industrial Revolution — require diverse datasets from multiple countries. This has sparked a fierce race for data among Silicon Valley firms, including Tesla.

Elon Musk's negotiations with China to advance self-driving vehicles underscore the importance of cross-border data flows. In May, following extensive lobbying, Musk secured Chinese approval for cross-border data sharing, boosting Tesla's stock. This data was crucial for developing Tesla's self-driving technology. Notably, Musk visited China for this negotiation, skipping a planned meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of India's general elections. Abhijit Das, an international trade expert and former head of WTO Studies, said that China has altered its stance on data flows as it seeks to build a robust AI ecosystem. "If AI is developed solely using Chinese data, it will have limited utility. Therefore, China seeks access to data from other countries," he explained. China participates in the WTO's Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on E-Commerce, a plurilateral effort launched in 2019 to establish global rules for electronic commerce. The JSI tackles issues such as free cross-border data flows and restrictions on data localisation. Over 80 WTO members, including the US, the EU, China, and Japan, are participants.

Despite its historical focus on digital sovereignty, China joined the JSI to bolster its leadership in AI and e-commerce. However, India has opposed the JSI, choosing to remain outside the initiative and its rulemaking process. India's domestic e-commerce policy, drafted in 2019, which emphasises data localisation, has yet to be finalised. The Importance of Data Regulation for India 2018 UNCTAD report, "Power, Platforms, and Free Trade Delusion", highlighted the importance of data for innovation. It noted that control over data creates "market power and barriers to entry for new players". This was echoed in a 2022-23 Standing Committee on Finance report, which criticised Big Tech's anti-competitive practices. It noted Google Play's dominance as the primary app source on Android devices, its mandatory use of its payment system for paid apps and in-app purchases, and its unfair promotion of Google Pay. The report stated, "Manipulation of features on a dominant platform may serve as a potent tool to divert traffic to new apps, undermining competition on the merits." UNCTAD also pointed to the benefits of data localisation, including encouraging foreign investment in domestic digital infrastructure, enabling enforcement of national laws, and safeguarding privacy and cyber sovereignty. Countries like Vietnam and the Philippines have implemented such measures to promote local capabilities and protect infant industries. Trump Musk President-elect Donald Trump and lawmakers listen as Elon Musk explains the operations ahead of the launch of the sixth test flight of the SpaceX Starship rocket.

India's Data Advantage "There is significant data asymmetry between early commercially successful movers and others," said Abhijit Das. Sharing government data equally between Indian and American Big Tech firms, he argued, would not reduce this disparity. However, exclusive sharing with Indian firms could help level the playing field, he said. Das noted that India has a significant advantage due to its vast user base and data potential. "The success of any digital product depends on its user base — essentially the data it can leverage. India can replicate global digital products and, with its data advantage, become a powerful player in the digital sector. However, robust regulation is essential. While firms at the technological forefront may not require regulation, India cannot afford to neglect it," he said.

## Nuclear threat in Russia-Ukraine war? Who's saying what



Russia-Ukraine War: Russian President Vladimir Putin lowered the threshold for using nuclear weapons, a move that has sparked global concern, after Ukraine's use of US-supplied missiles to strike targets within Russian territory. Nuclear threats heighten amid escalation in Russia-Ukraine war. The ominous sounds of nuclear sabre-rattling echoed around the world after Ukraine struck inside Russia for the first time with long-range missiles supplied by the US, drawing a furious response from Moscow.

As the war between Russia and Ukraine reached its 1,000th day, Kyiv launched ATACMS missiles, targeting Russian territory, after US President Joe Biden lifted restrictions on the use of the powerful weapon to bolster the war-ravaged country's fightback. In response, Russian President Vladimir Putin lowered the threshold for deploying nuclear weapons, signalling readiness for retaliation against conventional attacks from Ukraine and its allies.

The Kremlin described the move as a deterrent, warning the West that its support for Ukraine risks severe consequences. But the increasingly bellicose rhetoric has led to mounting international concerns of an imminent nuclear strike. Amid fears of escalation, the US embassy in Kyiv temporarily closed, citing "specific information" about a significant air attack. The State Department urged US citizens in Ukraine to prepare to shelter in place if an air alert is announced. As the conflict deepens and nuclear threats loom larger, global leaders are grappling with how to prevent the war from reaching an even deadlier phase.

US 'IMMENSELY CONCERNED' The US State Department said it saw no need to adjust its nuclear posture following Russia's announcement but criticised Moscow's nuclear rhetoric. "We urge Russia to cease this irresponsible behaviour," said State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller. He added that Washington remained "incredibly concerned" about Russia's hybrid warfare and was in close contact with European allies.

RUSSIA DEFENDS NUCLEAR DOCTRINE Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov sought to temper fears, stating that Moscow remains committed to avoiding nuclear war. "We strongly support doing everything to prevent nuclear conflict," Lavrov said during the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, adding that Russia continues to advocate for a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Kremlin reiterated that nuclear weapons are solely a means of deterrence, while making clear the inevitability of retaliation if Russia is attacked.

MACRON WANTS CHINA TO STEP IN French President Emmanuel Macron called on China to play a mediating role in de-escalating tensions. Meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G20 summit, Macron urged Beijing to pressure Putin to exercise restraint and end the war. "China has a key role to play in ensuring this conflict does not spiral further," Macron said. He also denounced North Korea's decision to send troops to Ukraine, arguing it heightened the stakes for global security. EUROPE, UK CALL OUT RUSSIA European leaders condemned Russia's actions, with ministers from major EU countries accusing Moscow of "systematically attacking European security architecture" during a meeting in Brussels. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer reaffirmed the UK's unwavering support for Ukraine, dismissing Putin's rhetoric as "irresponsible." "We will not be deterred by these threats," Starmer said at the G20 summit, urging Putin to end the war. ERDOGAN BACKS RUSSIA Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, however, struck a more cautious tone, suggesting Russia's actions were defensive. "Russia must take steps to protect itself," Erdogan said. He said Turkey would continue to call for peace despite Ukraine's missile attack on Russia, which he said was "not positive". NUCLEAR THREAT OR POLITICAL POSTURING? French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot downplayed Putin's decision to change Russia's nuclear doctrine as mere "rhetoric".

## 60 people poisoned after semi-trailer truck containing chlorine gas cylinders overturns in Iran

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Tehran: A chlorine gas leakage in the central Iranian province of Isfahan poisoned 60 people, official news agency IRNA reported. At 13:40 local time on Sunday, it was reported that a semi-trailer truck carrying chlorine gas cylinders had overturned on an intercity road in Shahreza County, 80 km south of the provincial capital Isfahan. Xinhua news agency reported. Following the accident, rescue teams were immediately sent to the scene, Mansour Shisheforoush, Director General of the Provincial Crisis Management Department, said. Due to the chlorine gas leakage from one of the cylinders, 60 people in nearby areas suffered pulmonary toxicity and were immediately transferred to medical centres, said Shisheforoush. He added that teams from the Provincial Crisis Management Department, the Red Crescent Society, traffic police and law enforcement agencies had restored safety in the area, allowing the road where the incident took place to reopen.



## Is Joe Biden pushing us towards World War III; why?



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

On January 6, 2021, pro-Trumpers entered Capitol Hill, the government's centre in Washington DC, to protest against the results of the 2020 election that went against President Donald Trump. Democratic candidate Joe Biden called this riot an "unprecedented assault". The tables have turned in the 2024 elections. And after a Trump win and in the transition period, President Biden has done something that could alter the course of history. He handed over long-range US-made missiles to Ukraine and allowed their use to hit targets deep inside Russia. Without losing any momentum, Ukraine attacked Russia with six of these missiles on Tuesday. This could well lead to the much-feared World War III. What everyone is asking is whether Biden did this to disrupt the transition. Is this Biden's very own Capitol Hill assault?

While several Trump allies have condemned this effort by Biden in the last leg of his Presidency, Biden has remained committed tens of billions of dollars to Kyiv's war effort. The Ukraine-Russia War saw its 1,000th day on November 19. With Biden allowing the use of missiles, a dangerous escalation in the war was seen. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree lowering the threshold when Russia could resort to the use of nuclear weapons. The forces of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy fired six US-made missiles into Russia. This was a red line that Putin had drawn. Biden helped breach that. Biden crossed a long-standing line on Ukraine's use of American weapons to launch an attack against Russia. Donald Trump Jr, the President-elect's son, even tweeted how Biden was trying to start World War III. He hinted how it was an attempt to queer the pitch before Trump took over in January. "The military industrial complex seems to want to make sure they get World War Three going before my father has a chance to create peace and save lives," he said. When Biden's team was

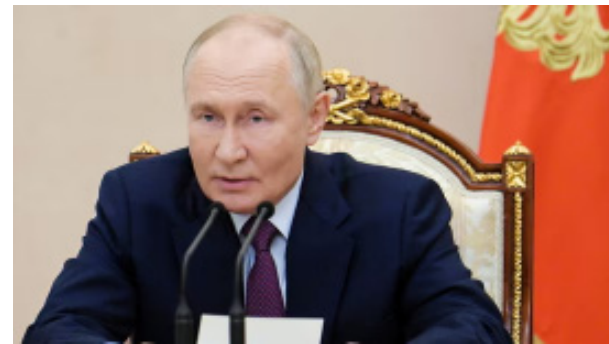
asked if a President could take such an important decision in a transition period? Biden was "elected to a four year-term, not a term of three years and 10 months." When Trump takes over, he can take a different decision, said Biden's team. But many in the US think that Biden is leaving behind a chaos which would be difficult for Trump to manage. James Gilmore, who was Trump's ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, told the BBC that Biden's intent was visible in how late in his term he was lending support to Ukraine. "My criticism of Biden is the same as every other conservative and supporter of Trump - which is that the Biden administration slow-walked this," he said. Biden's move to help Ukraine shocked many. "Why would Joe Biden allow Ukraine to fire American-made long-range missiles into Russia knowing that this is Putin's nuclear red line?! He's risking World War III with just 62 days left in office. This is IMPEACHABLE," said Glenn Beck, a US political commentator. Some are even calling it "Biden's attempt to plunge US into war." "Only Congress can declare war, but the Biden admin is doing everything it can in its final days to provoke war with Russia. Congress must ask itself what can be done to prevent this admin from escalating its proxy war with Russia into a direct nuclear conflict. Joe Biden is trying to plunge us into WW3," said Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene. This also pushes the world closer to a nuclear war. To many, this last-minute approval by Biden looks like an attempt by the US President to cling onto power.

"This administration is so desperate to cling to power that they are willing to gamble with our future just as America is on the verge of restoring competent leadership. Potential World War III... what a lovely parting gift," said Alexandra Lains, a commentator on X. Even in his political campaign, Trump promised he would stop the war. But now many in the US and across the world are in fear of a nuclear war. This is because Ukraine has been allowed to make use of long-range American missiles. It has earlier also had UK and French Storm Shadow and Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) but was never allowed to use it. Putin's spokesman has also said that the US was "adding fuel to the fire". The fear of an imminent escalation in war that could first impact NATO countries in Russia's proximity, has made Sweden, Finland and Denmark issue emergency guidelines, asking citizens to stock up on food and water. Biden's approval of missile use has dangerously escalated the war and left many asking if this was a coup against the incoming President. The world is on the edge, and there are at least days before Trump's inauguration. Will there be a slip between the cup and the lip?

## Russia claims US doing 'everything it can' to prolong Ukraine war, says Putin ready for 'negotiations'

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Russia on Wednesday accused the outgoing Joe Biden's administration in the United States of "doing everything" to prolong the war in Ukraine. It reiterated that President Vladimir Putin is ready to make "contacts and negotiations". Kremlin's comments after Washington said it would send antipersonnel mines to Kyiv. "If you look at the trends of the outgoing US administration, they are fully committed to continuing the war in Ukraine and are doing everything they can to do so," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. The decision to provide Ukraine with antipersonnel land mines to shore up its defences against Russian forces comes after Washington allowed Ukraine to use US-supplied long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory. The mines to be supplied by the US are called "non-persistent" as they go inert after a set period of time when their battery life runs out. The Biden administration has asked Ukraine to deploy the mines only on its "own territory" and avoid using them in heavily populated areas to avoid damage to civilian lives. A global anti-landmine group condemned the US decision and termed it "terrible". The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) said Ukraine "must clearly state they cannot and will not accept these weapons" and also said it will work towards persuading the US to reverse its decision. The Kremlin spokesperson on Wednesday said the option of "freezing" the war did not suit Russia, but reiterated that President Vladimir Putin was open to negotiations. Earlier, news agency Reuters had re-



ported, citing anonymous Russian officials, that Putin was willing to talk with incoming US President Donald Trump on a ceasefire deal in Ukraine that could roughly "freeze the war" along the current front lines. Reuters reported that Putin may agree to discuss a carve-up of four regions in Ukraine — Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson — that Russia annexed in 2022, but doesn't fully control. Ukraine, called the most mined nation in the world, has been seeking global help to clear its territory of mines planted by invading Russian forces since the beginning of the war in February 2022. Ukraine's prime minister Denys Shmyhal sought international help to clear landmines and unexploded bombs at a meeting in Switzerland last month. "The scale of this challenge is truly massive. I call on the entire civilised world to increase support for Ukraine in the field of demining," Shmyhal told a meeting in the city of Lausanne.

## An ominous threat of escalation on the Ukraine war front

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

It has been predicted that the war in Ukraine will end once the US President-elect Donald Trump takes office because, simply put, he entered the electoral race with a promise to end ongoing wars. However, the outgoing US president, Joe Biden, who wants the US to continue arming Ukraine in its defence against Russia, has just revealed a last trick up his sleeve. On November 17, the US, along with the UK and France, approved the use of long-range missiles by Ukraine. On Tuesday, the Ukrainian forces launched strikes inside Russia using the American-made ATACMS rocket, which has a range of 300 km.

This is a critical development in the conflict in Ukraine. In the recent past, after Ukrainian forces entered Kursk, the Russian army officially began their Kursk offensive in September. Kyiv, in retaliation, asked for permission from the US and the UK to use the ATACMS and Storm shadow long-range missiles to launch attacks on Russian cities.

Washington was willing to listen to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's request. Meanwhile, Russia's security council proposed new offensive changes to Moscow's nuclear doctrine. Following Moscow's aggressive posturing, the US and UK decided against permitting Kyiv to launch the missiles. However, quite clearly, as Biden's days in the White House are numbered, the president aims to keep Washington in the fight. There is a general perception of a likely, and upcoming, ceasefire ending the war in Ukraine. Various plans of an endgame are in circulation including a 20-year moratorium on Ukraine's Nato membership, freezing the conflict by creating a demilitarised zone governed by non-UN/US peacekeepers and the cessation of military aid to Ukraine, forcing Kyiv to negotiate with Russia. The Kremlin, however, is not very optimistic about a ceasefire as Moscow holds the view that the previous Trump administration was happy about sanctions and that the US is leveraging Europe to make Nato countries spend more in arming Ukraine. However, the Biden administration, citing recent changes in the battlefield, with Russian forces making quicker gains in the Donbas and the news of North Korean troops deployed in the conflict, allowed Ukraine to use long-range weapons.

Ukraine using long-range weapons to strike inside Russia will trigger a rapid escalation of the conflict. Within the outer fringes of the ATACMS range falls the regions of Smolensk, Kaluga, Tula, Kursk, Bryansk, Oryol, Voronezh, and Rostov on-Don. These regions have military bases, airfields, and large-scale troop concentrations that have the potential to slow down Russia's advance in Donetsk and Lugansk. The Chairman of Russia's Duma Committee on Foreign Affairs and the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, Leonid Slutsky, warned of the consequences of such an attack. He said it would imply the direct participation of the United States and European nations in the conflict in Ukraine, as troops from the US, UK and France would have to liaise with Ukrainian forces to use the weapons system. This would entail "the harshest response from Russia," referring to a nuclear escalation.

However, the timing of the permission to use long-range weapons is not ideal for Kyiv as it came after a significant delay. The Ukrainian forces have had to grapple with similar delays in receiving other weapons platforms such as the HIMARS, Abrams tanks, and F16s from Washington. With close to 60 days until the next administration takes office, Ukraine may not be able to receive enough ATACMS to significantly change the course of the war. The US signals this development not as a last-ditch effort to sustain Washington's support to Ukraine but as a retaliation against Russia's alleged deployment of North Korean troops in Kursk, as, in Biden's calculus, Russia's escalation could not be overlooked. The decision, even though rooted in symbolism, also is a very calculated step. Moscow, factoring in the ground realities of Ukraine using these weapons and the nature of Ukraine's future attacks, may not rapidly escalate the tempo of its invasion in Ukraine, as an endgame is still in sight. A day after Ukraine was granted permission, six ATACMS missiles were launched at an arms depot in Bryansk Oblast; Russia intercepted five missiles and damaged one. President Vladimir Putin, in response, signed a decree approving the changes to the fundamentals of the Russian Federation State Policy in the Field of Nuclear Deterrence, which was initially proposed in September.

## Guidelines for incentives worth Rs 2,000 crore for EV charging stations to be out soon: Official



ises to invest \$500 million in setting up a local factory. According to the Ministry of Commerce, the scheme "is designed to attract investments in the e-vehicle space by reputed global EV manufacturers" and seeks to "provide Indian consumers with access to latest technology, boosting the Make in India initiative, strengthening the EV ecosystem by promoting healthy competition among EV players, reducing imports of crude oil and reduce air pollution". More charging infra will reduce anxiety.

The PM E-DRIVE scheme aims to support approximately 25 lakh electric two-wheelers, 3 lakh electric three-wheelers, and 14,000 electric buses through demand incentives. However, compared to its predecessor the FAME-2 scheme, incentives in the latest subsidy are significantly lesser. They also make a significant omission—electric cars.

"One school of thought believes that no incentive should be given to electric vehicles in the shape of upfront demand subsidy. Rather, there should be taxation benefits and there should be adequate charging infrastructure. If adequate charging is there and people do not have any anxiety, it will make life easier for them and they will buy EVs on their own. And partly, that is what we have adopted in the PM E-DRIVE scheme," Qureshi said. "The charging infrastructure outlay was Rs 1,000 crore in the FAME-2 scheme, which was a 5-year scheme. Now, the outlay is Rs 2,000 crore in the PM E-DRIVE scheme, which is only a 2-year scheme. There will be 22,100 chargers for electric four-wheelers. There is a tentative list of top 40 cities and top 50 highways with high-density traffic. Chargers for two- and three-wheelers will be around 48,000 and for buses and trucks, there are about 1,800 chargers, all for high-density corridors," he added. At the event, Sulajja Firodia Motwani, CEO of Kinetic Green Energy & Power Solutions Ltd and chairperson of the Electric Vehicle Committee at FICCI, said that GST on replacement batteries and charging services needs to be reduced to 5 per cent from the current 18 per cent. "This will make charging more affordable for our consumers and it will make batteries more affordable for replacement. It will also help the OEMs to reduce the fund blockage due to the inverted duty structure," Motwani said. She also highlighted that incentives under the PM E-DRIVE scheme are beginning to run out. "We do believe that the allocations under the scheme are already beginning to exhaust themselves. (For) three-wheelers, we have already run out of money and that just means that the scheme has been very well received. We would like to urge MHI to look at an extension of the scheme and to allocate higher budgets towards this green dream," Motwani said. In response, Tarun Kapoor, Advisor to Prime Minister, said, "(For) three wheelers, we've run out of subsidies, so that I think is a success, it's not a failure. But the subsidy was restored yesterday, so it's not that we've run out of money. It's just that the sanction was for a particular number in the first year and we did that in a few months".

The final guidelines for disbursing Rs 2,000 crore in incentives under the new PM E-DRIVE scheme to support the installation of public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations will be issued within a month, Hanif Qureshi, Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Heavy Industries, said Tuesday. The ministry will also release detailed guidelines for implementing the scheme to boost domestic production of electric cars, which it had notified in March earlier this year to attract investments from global EV manufacturers, Qureshi said at a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) event. The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) scheme, which was notified in September with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore over two years, sets aside Rs 2,000 crore for charging infrastructure, twice that of its predecessor the FAME-2 scheme. Qureshi said the ministry has done a number of stakeholder consultations and framed draft guidelines on the disbursement of the total quantum of incentives. At the moment, the draft guidelines have been shared with state governments and the ministry is awaiting their feedback. "Basically, there will be committees formed in each state at the level of the Chief Secretary where the demand for chargers in the state will be aggregated. Each state will also be sending a proposal to the Ministry of Heavy Industries, and then both will be sanctioned," he said.

He added that incentives will be disbursed depending on parameters like the number of EVs in a city and the vehicular traffic that passes through the highways. "We will be prioritising on the basis of whether a state has an EV policy or not, whether they have some of their own incentives or not. Because we may receive proposals that are in excess of Rs 2,000 crore," Qureshi said. The final guidelines will also allocate incentives for upstream infrastructure that will be developed by electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs), as many of them are facing financial challenges. Qureshi added that the detailed guidelines for the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SPMEPC), which was notified in March, will also be out within 3-4 weeks. The scheme essentially lowers import duties to 15 per cent from 100 per cent on car models costing over \$35,000 if its manufacturer prom-

## FLY91 announces new services to Mumbai, Goa from Solapur

Fly91FLY91 currently connects cities such as Mumbai, Pune, Jalgaon, Sindhudurg, and Solapur in Maharashtra, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad as well as Agatti in Lakshadweep. Regional air carrier FLY91 on Tuesday announced the launch of flight services connecting Solapur with Mumbai and Goa, starting December 23. The commencement of these two new direct routes, Goa-Solapur and Mumbai-Solapur, would take the total number of the destinations operated by the airline to nine, FLY91 said. The Goa-headquartered airline commenced operations in March this year.

This introduction of the two new direct routes reinforces the airline's vision of improving regional connectivity, aligning with the Central Government's regional air connectivity scheme UDAN, which aims to enhance air travel accessibility and connectivity in underserved and remote areas, it said. Fly91's growing flight map "FLY91 will be the only airline providing direct connectivity between Mumbai, the country's commercial capital and Solapur, renowned as a textile hub, a major centre of industry, and a pilgrimage hub.



Connecting with Goa will open up Goa as a conveniently reachable tourism destination for the residents of Solapur," said Manoj Chacko, managing director and chief executive officer, FLY91. FLY91 currently connects cities such as Mumbai, Pune, Jalgaon, Sindhudurg, and Solapur in Maharashtra, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad as well as Agatti in Lakshadweep.

## Boeing issues layoff notices to 400-plus workers as it begins drastic cuts



said on an October call with analysts that it did not cause the layoffs, which he described as a result of overstaffing. Boeing, based in Arlington, Virginia, has been in financial and regulatory trouble since a panel blew off the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines plane in January. Production rates slowed to a crawl, and the Federal Aviation Administration capped production of the 737 MAX at 38 planes per month, a threshold Boeing has yet to reach.

Boeing Layoffs Boeing announced in October that it planned to cut 10 per cent of its workforce, about 17,000 jobs, in the coming months. Boeing has delivered layoff notices to more than 400 members of its professional aerospace labour union, part of thousands of cuts planned as the company struggles to recover from financial and regulatory trouble as well as an eight-week strike by its Machinists union. The pink slips went out last week to members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, or SPEEA, union said the cuts had affected 438 members. The union's local chapter has 17,000 Boeing employees who are largely based in Washington, with some in Oregon, California and Utah. Of those 438 workers, 218 are members of SPEEA's professional unit, which includes engineers and scientists. The rest are members of the technical unit, which includes analysts, planners, technicians and skilled tradespeople. Eligible employees will receive career transition services and subsidised health care benefits for up to three months. Workers will also receive severance, typically about one week of pay for every year of service. Boeing's unionised Machinists began returning to work earlier this month following the strike. The strike strained Boeing's finances. But Ortberg

Boeing announced in October that it planned to cut 10 per cent of its workforce, about 17,000 jobs, in the coming months. CEO Kelly Ortberg told employees the company must "reset its workforce levels to align with our financial reality". The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, or SPEEA, union said the cuts had affected 438 members. The union's local chapter has 17,000 Boeing employees who are largely based in Washington, with some in Oregon, California and Utah. Of those 438 workers, 218 are members of SPEEA's professional unit, which includes engineers and scientists. The rest are members of the technical unit, which includes analysts, planners, technicians and skilled tradespeople. Eligible employees will receive career transition services and subsidised health care benefits for up to three months. Workers will also receive severance, typically about one week of pay for every year of service. Boeing's unionised Machinists began returning to work earlier this month following the strike. The strike strained Boeing's finances. But Ortberg

## Is work from home beneficial for Indian companies?

New Delhi: The ability to hire employees from spatially-dispersed locations may help to promote more balanced geographical development, in addition to alleviating pressures of various kinds on major metropolitan areas in India, according to a study by apex business chamber CII and the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), Delhi, on Monday.

The study, titled "Work-from-Home: Benefits and Costs: an Exploratory Study in the Indian Context", stated that Covid has given rise to many alternative systems, and work from home is a prominent outcome altering the employment ecosystem. Since then, many organisations have adopted remote and hybrid work practices. The study found that the new model has led to moderate savings in office rental costs and enabled a moderate reduction in costs involved in meeting and working with clients. "The savings in employee commuting and accommodation costs have allowed for adjustments in employee compensation structures to a limited extent," the findings showed.

There is significant reduction in commuting stress for employees leading to greater energy levels. However, the study also found that working from home has led to less effective communication and that remote working is detrimental to teamwork. It suggests that remote working could hinder the development and sustenance of organisational culture. As far as the costs and benefits for employees are concerned, respondents were of the view that remote working is particularly beneficial for parents with young children and for caregivers.

## Breaking Down Diabetes: Awareness, Prevention, and Sustainable Management



considers the right mix of carbs, proteins, fats, and fiber rather than isolated foods. Instead of focusing on individual foods, like switching to chapati or adding millets, the focus should be on a well-rounded plate that balances all macronutrients.

The rise of diabetes in children and adolescents signals a pressing need to change lifestyle habits early in life. With the increase in processed foods, sugary snacks, and excessive screen time, children are now at risk for a disease once largely seen only in adults. Families should prioritize reducing junk food, opting for balanced homemade meals, and encouraging children to participate in physical activities instead of prolonged screen time. Encouraging children to develop healthy eating and exercise habits from a young age is essential. They should learn to enjoy fruits, vegetables, and whole foods rather than fast foods and sugary snacks, which are high in calories and low in nutrients. Screen time should also be limited, as excessive sedentary behavior can lead to obesity, which increases the risk of diabetes.

Diabetes is an increasingly common condition worldwide, more so in India, but one that remains poorly understood by many. While the prevalence of diabetes has risen sharply in adults over recent decades, what's more alarming is that this is no longer considered just an adult disease. More children and adolescents are now being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes than ever before, primarily due to lifestyle changes and unhealthy dietary habits.

Diabetes rates are climbing globally, with millions unaware they may have the condition. A lack of awareness means many people don't get screened early, missing the chance to detect diabetes in its initial stages. Routine screenings are critical, especially for those with risk factors like obesity, family history, or sedentary lifestyle. Early detection can lead to better management, fewer complications, and healthier lives. Physical Activity: Physical activity is essential in managing diabetes, but it needs to go beyond just cardio. Strength training, which helps build and maintain muscle, is crucial. Muscle tissue is highly effective at using glucose, and stronger muscles can improve blood sugar regulation. For people with diabetes, adding strength training to their routine can be highly effective in controlling blood sugar levels, improving insulin sensitivity, and promoting overall metabolic health. Complex Carbohydrates: Choose whole grains, legumes, and fiber-rich foods, which are digested more slowly and have a lower impact on blood sugar levels. Lean Proteins: These help in stabilizing blood sugar and promote muscle health, which is essential for managing blood glucose levels. Healthy Fats: Incorporating sources like olive oil, ground nut oil, gingly oil, nuts, and seeds is beneficial for heart health, which is often at risk in people with diabetes. However deep frying should be avoided. Fiber: A high-fiber diet aids in slowing down glucose absorption, helping to maintain steady blood sugar levels throughout the day.

Instead of obsessing over individual foods, it's vital to balance these macronutrients on the plate, practice portion control, and focus on overall dietary patterns that support glycemic stability. Changing Attitudes and Misconceptions About Food Choices: Many people focus on individual foods that might lower blood sugar, like chapati or certain millets, expecting that adding them will solve their problems. But without proper portion control and balanced macronutrients, even these foods won't be effective on their own. Managing diabetes requires a comprehensive approach to eating that

## Delhi pollution crisis: This is when you should take your pet for a walk

As Delhi's average air quality index (AQI) continues to be in the 'severe' category Wednesday, it's not only humans but also our four-legged friends who are bearing the brunt of the rising pollution levels. While it is ideal to keep them inside as much as possible, it is also important to take them out for a walk. To understand the ideal time to do so and help pet parents navigate the effects of deteriorating air quality, we reached out to experts.

When is the best time to take pets for a walk?

Dr Gautam Anand, senior veterinary consultant at Dr Anand's Pet Clinic, Delhi, said that the best time to take your pet out in severe air quality is early in the morning. "There is less traffic, almost no factory pollution, and considerably less noise pollution to discomfort the animals at that hour," he told indianexpress.com. Dr Vinod Sharma, veterinarian at DCC Animal Hospital, Noida, advised pet owners to keep their pets mostly inside and take them out when the smog is less. "Use air purifiers with safety, and exercise caution, especially when it comes to small and brachycephalic breeds," he added.

How does air pollution affect animals?

Dr Sharma said that air pollution can cause respiratory illnesses, allergies, and, in extreme cases, even lung cancer in pets, which can shorten their lifespan. "Dogs are especially susceptible to poor air quality. They can contract temporary respiratory issues, and it can also lead to life-long diseases like asthma or bronchial congestion." Nishma Singhal, Founder of Zoivane Pets, added that exposure to harmful pollutants can cause respiratory issues, skin irritation, weakened immunity, and overall



discomfort in furry friends.

What can you do to keep them safe during and after walks?

Singhal recommended the following tips: 1) Ensure that your pet's water intake is adequate. Add a drop of lemon or give them orange-infused water to ensure their vitamin C intake and hydration needs. Pet parents can also give fruit juices rich in vitamin C to soothe and protect their throats from irritants caused by pollutants. 2) Make sure your pets wear masks when you take them for walks, and if feasible, bring them in a closed vehicle. Pet owners are likewise encouraged to take their animals out while fully clothed. Light clothing can protect their skin from dust and grime. 3) After outdoor activities, clean their paws with wet wipes and apply paw butter to keep them moisturised and infection-free.

## Here's how many calories astronauts need in space to stay energetic, fit

Just like on Earth, where a reduction in calorie intake affects body weight, the same happens in space. Experts say the effect is compounded with microgravity or very little gravity. "Microgravity can affect bone and muscle turnover. There is rapid caloric loss and protein deficiency coupled with nutritional deficiency, which can lead to a shift in fluid and electrolyte balance in prolonged stay in space," said Dr Rajiv Kovil, head of diabetology, Zandra Healthcare and co-founder of Rang De Neela Initiative. He added that being in space causes astronauts to burn calories quickly and lose some critical nutrients with prolonged stay. "On Earth, we don't usually think about gravity helping our muscles and bones stay healthy, but it's always there, gently pulling us down and giving our bodies a natural workout. Without this constant pull, the body has to work harder in space, which uses more energy and nutrients," elaborated Dr Kovil. Without strong gravity, Dr Kovil explained that astronauts' bones and muscles don't get as much exercise as they do on Earth, so they start to weaken. "To keep them strong, astronauts need to exercise a lot—around 2 to 3 hours every day," said Dr Kovil. This is why astronauts can have less protein, vitamins, and minerals in their bodies, which are crucial for staying healthy. "Also, because of these changes, astronauts' bodies might lose balance in important fluids and electrolytes. Hence, they need to follow a strict diet and exercise routine to stay as healthy as possible during long trips in space," said Dr Kovil. So, how many calories does an astronaut need? Dr



Kovil shared that astronauts need around 4,000 calories to meet their daily needs. "It's usually double what you require on Earth," said Dr Kovil. Typically, a male astronaut requires around 2,700-3,700 calories daily, while female astronauts may need about 2,000-2,700 calories, said Dr Birali Swetha, chief dietician, Gleneagles Aware Hospital, LB Nagar, Hyderabad. "

## AR Rahman's wife Saira Banu's lawyer shares major reasons behind Bollywood divorces: 'Boredom, adultery...'



Composer AR Rahman and his wife Saira Banu announced their divorce on Tuesday after 29 years of marriage. Saira, through her lawyer Vandana Shah, shared a statement announcing their divorce. Just a few days before the announcement, Vandana Shah in a podcast had shared common reasons behind divorces among Bollywood couples.

Speaking to Deepak Pareek on his YouTube channel, Vandana stated, "Their lives are very different. I don't think infidelity is the cause of breakdown of marriages. The actual cause is boredom... People in a marriage feel they have seen it all. This is very peculiar to Bollywood and super rich families. This is one thing that I have not seen in a lot of other marriages." She added, "Secondly, they all live very different sexual lives. The expectations of their sex life is much higher in these setups than a non-Bollywood marriage." She further explained, "Third, adultery happens very much and one-night stands don't really matter as much. I

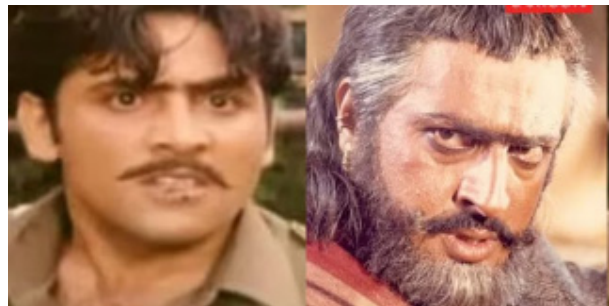
am not part of Bollywood, but these are my observations from the cases that have come to me." In the recent years, celebs like Malaika Arora-Arbaaz Khan, Sohail Khan-Seema Sajdeh, Hardik Pandya-Natasa Stankovic, Aamir Khan-Kiran Rao, Masaba Gupta-Madhu Mantena, Arjun Rampal-Mehr Jesia, Samantha Ruth Prabhu-Naga Chaitanya, Jayam Ravi-Aarthi, and Dhanush-Aishwarya Rajinikanth announced their separation.

On behalf and instruction of Mrs. Saira and her husband renowned musician Allahrakka Rahman (A.R. Rahman), Vandana Shah and Associates issue the following statement regarding the couple's decision to part ways. After many years of marriage, Mrs. Saira and her husband Mr. A.R. Rahman have made the difficult decision to separate from each other. This decision comes after significant emotional strain in their relationship. Despite their deep love for each other, the couple has found that the tensions and difficulties have created an insurmountable gap between them, one that neither party feels able to bridge at this time. Mrs. Saira and her husband Mr. A.R. Rahman emphasize that they have taken this decision out of pain and agony. Mrs. Saira and her husband Mr. A.R. Rahman request privacy and understanding from the public during this challenging time, as they navigate this difficult chapter in their life. Post her announcement, AR Rahman took to his X handle to confirm the news as he wrote, "We had hoped to reach the grand thirty, but all things, it seems, carry an unseen end. Even the throne of God might tremble at the weight of broken hearts. Yet, in this shattering, we seek meaning, though the pieces may not find their place again. To our friends, thank you for your kindness and for respecting our privacy as we walk through this fragile chapter." The couple had tied the knot in 1995. They are parents to Khatija Rahman, Raheema Rahman, and AR Ameen.

## Rakesh Roshan recalls firing Gulshan Grover from Karan Arjun because of his tardiness: 'He would show up at 4 pm for 11 am shoot'

Rakesh Roshan's Karan Arjun, which starred Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan, is ready for a re-release and Rakesh, across many interviews, has been sharing many anecdotes from the making of the film. In a recent interview, Rakesh was asked about the popular dialogue 'What a joke!' which was said by Aasif Sheikh's character Suraj. The character was previously supposed to be played by Gulshan Grover and Rakesh even shot with the actor for a couple of days but had to fire him because of his tardiness. In a chat with Siddharth Kannan, Rakesh said, "Gulshan Grover is a very fine actor. He was my first choice for the film. But he was doing a lot of films at that time. For 11 am reporting time, he would show up at 4 pm. This happened for a couple of days." After observing this for a couple of days, Rakesh decided to make some changes and requested Gulshan to step aside.

"I called him and said 'Gulshan, I won't be able to work like this'. He suggested 'Rakesh ji, take my close up and let me go'. I said 'no, that's not how this works'. I told him that we will work in some other film," he said and shared that they were already in the middle of the shoot at that time when he told Gulshan, "Let's part ways. He left." Rakesh



shared that he cancelled the shoot on that day and decided to look for another actor so they could continue the shoot. "That very evening I went to look for another actor to cast and I found Aasif Sheikh. That day, the shoot was cancelled. Next day, he joined us. He was very new then. I explained everything to him. I told him that you have a line here 'What a joke!' I told him that I won't prompt you and it's not written anywhere, you use it as you like it. When you organically feel that you have to use this line, you say it. He only said it whenever he felt like it and I would say yes, this is the right way," he said.

## Hours after AR Rahman-Saira Banu's divorce announcement, his bassist Mohini Dey splits from husband

Just hours after music composer AR Rahman announced his separation from his wife, Saira Banu, ending their 29-year marriage, bassist Mohini Dey, a key member of Rahman's troupe, also revealed her divorce from her husband, saxophonist Mark Hartsuch. The couple shared the news in a heartfelt joint statement on social media.

Their note on Instagram read: "Dear friends, family, fans, and followers, With a heavy heart, Mark and I announce that we have separated. First, as a commitment to our friends and family, this is a mutual understanding between us. While we remain great friends, we both have decided that we want different things in life and separation through mutual agreement was the best way to proceed." Despite their personal separation, the two emphasized their commitment to working together, "We will still be working on several projects together including MaMoGi and Mohini Dey groups. We have always prided ourselves on working well together and that will not be stopping any time soon :) The big thing we want to wish is love to everyone out there in the world."

The couple also urged fans to respect their privacy and avoid passing judgments. "We appreciate your support in all of the ways you have given it to us. Please honor the decision we have made by being positive towards us at this time and respecting our privacy. We would appreciate no judgements. ??????", the statement concluded. Mohini Dey has long been celebrated as a musical prodigy, starting her professional journey at the age of 11. Mentored by jazz maestro Louis Banks, she has become a significant figure in the music world. She is known for her work on projects such as Gaan Bangla's Wind of Change and Coke Studio India. Over the years, she has extensively collaborated with AR Rahman and worked with legends like Zakir



Hussain, Sivamani, Steve Vai, Marco Minnemann, and many other renowned musicians. Meanwhile, AR Rahman announced his separation from Saira Banu in an emotional Twitter post shared at midnight. "We had hoped to reach the grand thirty, but all things, it seems, carry an unseen end. Even the throne of God might tremble at the weight of broken hearts. Yet, in this shattering, we seek meaning, though the pieces may not find their place again. To our friends, thank you for your kindness and for respecting our privacy as we walk through this fragile chapter." he wrote.

## Ayushmann Khurrana reacts to a fan throwing dollars at his US concert

Mumbai: Actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who is currently touring the US, paused his New York show after an audience member threw dollars on stage. A video of the incident has gone viral on social media. In the clip, the actor is seen performing when a fan suddenly throws a pile of dollars on stage as a token of appreciation for his electrifying performance. The 'Bala' actor paused his performance and kindly asked the audience member to use the money to make a donation to a charity instead. In the video, Khurrana can be heard saying, "Bro, don't make such gestures. Don't do this, please. You can donate this to charity or do something good with it, but please don't do this. Love you for this love, but please donate it to charity without telling anyone."

One of the audience members posted the video on Instagram and wrote, "It's disheartening to see such a disrespectful act at a live concert. During Ayushmann

Khurrana's recent NYC performance, a fan threw a bunch of dollars on stage while he was singing. Instead of enjoying the music, this individual chose to flaunt their wealth in a tasteless manner." The post continued, "Ayushmann, known for his humility and grace, paused the show and politely requested the audience to consider donating to charity instead of such frivolous gestures. His response was not only classy but also highlighted the importance of using wealth for good. Let's hope this incident serves as a reminder to everyone attending live events to respect the artists and the experience for all." Khurrana kicked off his US tour with his band Ayushmann Bhava in Chicago on November 14. He and his band will tour four other cities, including New York, San Jose, New Jersey, and Dallas, until November 24. In a statement, Khurrana shared, "As an artist, I always look forward to connecting with people who appreciate my music and movies."

## Upasana shuts down netizen who tried to school her on Sabarimala customs after Ram Charan's visit to Ameen Peer Dargah



Upasana Kamineni recently shared a photo of Ram Charan, dressed in the customary black attire for those observing Sabarimala deeksha, offering prayers at the Ameen Peer Dargah. Ram Charan recently visited and offered prayers at the Sri Vijaya Durga Devi temple and Ameen Peer Dargah in Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh. At a time when religious fanaticism and Islamophobia are steadily rising in the country, actor Ram Charan recently upheld the true spirit of Indian secularism by visiting and offering prayers at two significant religious sites in Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh — the Sri Vijaya Durga Devi temple and the Ameen Peer Dargah. Though his gesture was widely appreciated, some took issue with it, claiming that offering prayers at the dargah while observing the Sabarimala deeksha (which Charan is reportedly undertaking) was inappropriate. While many kept their discussions to their own social media timelines, some took it to that of Ram Charan's wife, entrepreneur Upasana Kamineni. Nonetheless, she, without even using words, effectively silenced one such critic who attempted to lec-

ture her about Sabarimala customs.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter) on Tuesday, Upasana shared a photo of her husband, dressed in the customary black attire for those observing Sabarimala deeksha, offering prayers at the Ameen Peer Dargah. "Faith unites, never divides. As Indians, we honor all paths to the divine ?? our strength lies in unity. ??? #OneNationOneSpirit #jaihind. @AlwaysRamCharan respecting other religions while following his own ??," she wrote. While many people praised the couple's inclusive outlook, one netizen commented, "Ma'am respecting other religions doesn't mean you go to their dargah in ayyappa Mala. We can respect their religion by not insulting their faith and respect what they do without interfering in our religion! ??."

In response, Upasana, the vice-chairman of Apollo Charity and chief editor of B Positive magazine, replied with a link to a photo gallery from The Times of India titled, "Embracing harmony: Sabarimala's unique tradition of praying at the mosque of Vavar." The article explores the tradition of paying respects at the Vavar mosque, a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity, before pilgrims begin their journey to Sabarimala. The Vavar Juma Masjid is located at Erumeli in Kottayam district, Kerala, 45 km from the Sabarimala temple. "The mosque is dedicated to Vavar, the renowned Muslim companion of Lord Ayyappa. The legends surrounding Vavar are numerous. In different versions of the story, he becomes an Arab pirate, a Muslim saint, a foreigner from Syria or someone who belonged to the Pandya kingdom. Whoever Vavar might be, one thing that is uncontested is his friendship with Lord Ayyappa," states the official website of the District Tourism Promotion Council, Kottayam. Ram Charan visited Kadapa with Buchi Babu Sana, the director of his upcoming film tentatively titled RC16. During the visit, fulfilling an old request by Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman, the actor also participated in a mushaira at the Ameen Peer Dargah. Meanwhile, his arrival caused a commotion in the locality as massive crowds gathered, leading to chaos on the streets, prompting the police to resort to a lathi charge to manage the situation. Ram Charan will next be seen in director S Shankar's Telugu political action masala Game Changer, which will mark Bollywood star Kiara Advani's debut in Tollywood. Also starring SJ Suryah, Anjali, Samuthirakani, Srikanth and Sunil, the movie will hit the screens on January 10, 2025, coinciding with Sankranti.

## Senior citizen complains to Akshay Kumar how toilet donated by him at Juhu is rusted, actor 'promises to address this to BMC'

In 2018, a year after his social awareness film Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Akshay Kumar sponsored a mobile toilet near Juhu beach. The actor bore an overall expenses of Rs 10 lakh to get the portable toilet installed in the area. Six years later, on Wednesday, a senior citizen approached the actor outside a polling booth in Mumbai and shared that the toilet is completely rusted, and requested him to install another toilet. A video of the same is going viral on social media. In the video, the senior citizen is seen approaching Akshay Kumar, who shook hands with the actor. During his conversation with the star, the old man complained, "The toilet you installed is rusted. I have been still maintaining it for the past four years." A surprised Akshay said, "Oh you are? Okay, I will address this issue to BMC." The old man then said, "You just donate the toilet, and I will get it installed." Akshay laughed as he said, "I have already sponsored it. I will now ask the BMC to get it fixed and maintain it."

Akshay Kumar had sponsored the mobile toilet months after his wife had tweeted about people openly defecating at the Juhu beach. She shared a picture of a man defecating in Versova beach and wrote, "Good morning and I guess here is the first scene of Toilet Ek Prem Katha part 2." Confirming the news, Prashant Gaikwad, the municipal commissioner of K-ward told PTI, "We welcomed his initiative and installed the toilet near the Juhu beach four days ago. The actor bore all the expenses, Rs 10 lakh, for setting up



the portable toilet". He added, "If anyone comes forward to maintain it, then the facility can be provided on a pay-and-use basis." Akshay Kumar was recently seen in Rohit Shetty's cop drama, Singham Again. The actor is currently gearing up for his films, Jolly LLLB 3, Welcome To The Jungle, and Hera Pheri 3.

## Nayanthara on changing her religion, wanted to marry at Tirupati temple: 'I was born a Christian... but have become a Hindu'

Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivan had one of the most lavish and dreamy wedding. The couple, who met on the sets of Naanum Rowdy Dhaan in 2014, dated for several years before tying the knot in 2022. While they shared their dreamy pictures from the wedding, it is only now that they revealed the chaos that went behind putting it altogether. It was all planned in just ten days at Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort and Spa in Mahabalipuram after their plan to get married at the Tirupati temple didn't work out due to logistical issues. Born Diana Kurien, Nayanthara changed her name when she entered films; she subsequently changed her religion in 2011 and wanted to tie the knot with Vignesh at Tirupati Tirumala temple.

Nayanthara's wedding was planned by Shaadi Squad, the team behind several celebrity weddings including Virat Kohli-Anushka Sharma, Katrina Kaif-Vicky Kaushal, and Priyanka Chopra-Nick Jonas. Speaking to the camera in the documentary, Nayanthara: Beyond the Fairytale, Tina and Saurabh of Shaadi Squad shared, "The day we got a call that Tirupati is not happening, we immediately flew down to Chennai. Despite the venue was changed, they didn't want to change the date."

They added, "There were about 7,000 people working overnight. On the wedding day, about 200 security personnel were hired for just manning the structure. Nobody's phone was allowed at the venue." Nayanthara shared, "I was quite unsure if we could pull it off by that time. To get it all together for a grand wedding in just 10 days, it all seemed quiet impossible." The actress also shared how she wanted a typical Hindu wedding as she had changed her religion from Christianity to Hinduism. She said, "Because I am a born Christian, my mom always wanted to see me in that Christian attire—the wedding gown kind of a thing. But, since I have become a Hindu, and we have to do a Hindu wedding, I just thought it should be like a beautiful mix of both a Hindu and a Christian wedding. So we kept it a Hindu wedding with an English touch."



For her special day, she opted for a red saree which had her and Vignesh's name on it. She said, "I didn't want to go the Kanjeevaram saree route because I have done it so many times in a lot of my films. So, it wouldn't feel like my wedding for me." Nayanthara shared she was so involved in her wedding preparations and making sure everything was perfect that she wasn't prepared to have fun at her own wedding. The actress hadn't planned any pre-wedding festivities. However, on the demand of her family, friends and eventually Vignesh, they had an impromptu mehendi ceremony just the night before the wedding. The actress shared, "Until the wedding day, I was only checking, and organising things around my wedding, but it was after they put my wedding veil, a wave of emotion hit me so hard that I couldn't even breathe." Nayanthara's wedding was attended by several who's who of Indian cinema including Rajinikanth, Mani Ratnam, Shah Rukh Khan, Atlee, Suriya and Jyotika, among others. A day after their wedding, the couple visited the Tirupati temple to seek blessings. Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivan are now parents to two sons, Uyir and Ulag. They welcomed them via surrogacy.

## Why the stereotypes associated with Rafael Nadal are not exactly what they seem



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

It is frivolous to use imagery of war to describe elite sport. The idea that multi-millionaire athletes who knock around a ball for a few hours have anything to do with the tragedy of the battlefield, especially in today's times, is a ridiculous stretch. Yet, over the 20-odd years Rafael Nadal has spent atop the tennis world, that comparison has become so commonplace that while using it today, one risks slipping into cliché. Veteran tennis writer Christopher Clarey is working on a book on Nadal titled 'The Warrior.' Maria Sharapova described him as the 'ultimate fighter.' In his famous New York Times essay, titled 'Federer as a religious experience', David Foster Wallace called Nadal "mesomorphic" and "totally martian": a "man's man." Wallace delved deeper into why Nadal was categorised so; how men find it easy to use the binaries of the "symbolology of war" to profess their love for sport, or anything, before himself raving about how Nadal "beat the absolute sh\*t" out of Andre Agassi at Wimbledon in 2006 and describing the preview to the final between Federer and Nadal as "king vs regicide." At any rate, from his first arrival on to the tour as a clay specialist to his last moments at this week's Davis Cup, Nadal has carried that stereotype: small-town Iberian simpleton with a never-say-die attitude and warrior-like game.

The 38-year-old 22-time Major winner officially called time on his career early on Wednesday. In the most routine fashion, Nadal was defeated by Dutchman Botich van de Zandschulp 6-4, 6-4 in his Davis Cup opener before Spain lost the tie to the Netherlands 2-1, bringing his career to a full stop. In reality, Nadal's career at the top echelons of men's tennis ended quite some time ago. The two and a half years since he won his last major, at the French Open in 2022, have seen him attempt various injury comebacks that never materialised. Contradictions within the same stereotypes charting his legacy, an acknowledgement must be made of the contradictions within the same stereotypes that have created his legend.

The many attributes that have endured him to the public – grit and determination, courage and resilience, humility and modesty – are not as single-minded as they seem. The famed humility that Nadal showed was a true manifestation of his own self-belief. Nadal knew he could extract more from his talent and achieve even greater heights than his already celestial success. True confidence is also born out

of doubt. Few have been able to replicate the purity of Nadal's ball-striking and the angles he found on the court, any court. (AP Photo) Few have been able to replicate the purity of Nadal's ball-striking and the angles he found on the court, any court.

The bravery, and obsessive fight, were also a manifestation of his fears, of not being able to play and win for as long as he desired, and a certain desperation, to hold on to his peak level of performance and success for as long as he possibly could. The physical resilience was a product of his own fragility. The central, most impactful injury of Nadal's career was the diagnosis of his chronic foot issue, which flared up before he even won his first Major. In a way, he has always played in pain because it is the only way he has known how. The famous relentless fighter, who won the French Open in 2022 by taking pain-numbing injections for his foot, is, as he reveals in his autobiography, afraid of the dark, and of dogs.

For all the bravado and hypermasculinity that he allegedly elicits on the court, Nadal is famously timid in front of a microphone or at public appearances, to the point that it has become something of a joke for tennis insiders. Even more so when he has been made to speak in English – Nadal seemingly has no designs to be a multilingual resident of the world; tennis has always been the thing, his thing. No wonder he has been desperate to draw this out for as long as he can. It is these contradictions that were in play as Nadal signed off to his adoring home audience in Malaga on Wednesday. The 38-year-old is among the greatest athletes that Spain has ever produced, and has reiterated that he wishes to end his career on the court on his own terms. But it is this fact that made him a sideshow, even a liability, at his own farewell.

Before the start of the tournament, he asserted that this would not be his retirement party, he was there to do a job for his team. After his defeat on Wednesday, he himself admitted it was not the right decision to allow him to play singles. He was afforded that one last tussle on his own for a fitting farewell, but it proved detrimental for his team, in total contradiction to the 'win-at-all-costs' ethos that has seemingly defined his legacy. Nadal is not merely a power-baseline, ball-bashing clay courter – he had generational shotmaking talent; few have been able to replicate the purity of his ball-striking and the angles he found on the court, any court. In the same way, he is not merely a bullfighting warrior.

Perhaps as he has desperately tried to hang on in his thirties, as the bulging biceps and long mane have made way for wrinkles and a receding hairline, the softer side of his personality, his fallibility, has emerged. In expressing his doubts and fears, he has shown an ocean of courage; just not in the way that is stereotypically associated with him. In this golden generation of tennis, Nadal will neither go down as his most universally admired, nor most successful. Federer and Djokovic, respectively, have beaten him to that. But with his unique blend of kindness and bravado, and humility and passion, he has endeared himself into the hearts of people in his own way. His absence will weigh just as heavily on this sport as it weighs on him.

## 'Anytime I walk out to bat, I'm s\*\*\*ing myself': Mitch Marsh on improving mental strength to revive Test career

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Mitchell Marsh said he had to overcome a tremendous fear of failure to revive his Test career. Mitchell Marsh said he had to overcome a tremendous fear of failure to revive his Test career. Australia all-rounder Mitchell Marsh's brutal initiation to Test cricket and a first half of a career bogged down by expectations to perform ended with a ruthless snub in 2019. For nearly five years since debut in 2014, Marsh's red-ball career hinged on potential over consistency, with two Test hundreds in the 2017/18 Ashes even elevating him to the vice-captain's role ahead of the ball-tampering-marred series 2018 series in South Africa.

Marsh lasted for three more games and was dropped from the side during the 2019 Ashes in England. While Mitch's elder brother Shaun and father Rod Marsh had relatively successful Test careers, Mitch admitted that being booed by the local crowd during the 2018 Boxing Test against India at MCG marked the nadir of his career. "The truthful answer is I'm human, and anytime I walk out to bat, I'm s\*\*\*ing myself like any other bloke," Marsh told Fox Cricket. Marsh's dramatic return to the XI occurred four years later, again in the 2023 Ashes in England, as a like-for-like replacement for Cam Green. Having worked on several aspects, including his mental fortitude, Marsh struck a century in his comeback innings at Leeds while picking up two wickets. He has since made the No. 6 spot in the line-up his own and has seen a white-ball rejuvenation as



well, after being promoted to the T20I captaincy.

"I've worked really hard on the mental side of my game, to be able to walk out there and get straight into my pre-ball routines, no matter how nervous I am," Marsh said. "For me, it's all about my preparation. If I prepare as well as I possibly can, I go into a game or an innings really confident, then if I fail, I can look at myself in the mirror and say that I've actually done all I can. Sometimes it's a good ball, sometimes it's a mental error. You learn from that, and you move on quickly." Marsh, who became a father earlier this week, resumed practice with the Australia team ahead of the first Border Gavaskar Trophy Test in Perth. The 33-year-old Marsh is also slated to take up bowling duties again after having bowled five overs since May.



XI on a green top wicket at Perth, solely because of the experience which the veterans bring in. "I think both Ashwin and Jadeja should play. Jadeja is very good in the first innings, I think with the ball skidding on over here with the greener wickets, but as the wicket wears down, this is where Ashwin comes into it, so they have got two spinners that are unique in a sense that they are going to give the team benefit on the different days of the Test match," Hogg added in the same interaction.

Debut on cards for Nitish Reddy?

However, India's bowling coach Morne Morkel has strongly hinted at a potential debut for 21-year-old all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy ahead of the first Test against Australia in Perth.

## Tilak Varma overtakes Suryakumar Yadav to become India's highest-ranked T20I batter



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

ICC T20I Rankings: Tilak Varma became the highest-ranked Indian T20I batter after jumping 69 spots to the No. 3 position in the latest rankings. Tilak hit hundreds in back-to-back T20Is in South Africa in November. Tilak Varma rose a whopping 69 spots to No. 3 in the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) rankings for men's T20I batters on Wednesday, November 20. Tilak became the highest-ranked Indian T20I batter, overtaking captain Suryakumar Yadav in the coveted list. The Mumbai Indians star is only behind Australia's Travis Head and England's Phil Salt.

Tilak Varma has broken into the top 10 for the first time in his T20I career. The rise comes after his twin hundreds in India's dominant T20I series win in South Africa in November. Tilak Varma won the Player of the Series after India clinched it 3-1. He scored 280 runs at a strike rate of 198, smashing 20 sixes across four matches. Captain

Suryakumar Yadav, who held the No. 1 spot earlier this year, has slipped to No. 4. He made a selfless call and sacrificed his No. 3 spot for Tilak. He managed just 26 runs in four Tests, batting only in three innings.

Meanwhile, Sanju Samson, who also hit two hundreds in the series, climbed 17 spots to 22nd in the latest batting rankings. Samson has been in sensational form in the shortest format of the game, having scored 3 hundreds in his last five innings. Samson seems to be enjoying the backing from captain Suryakumar and coach Gautam Gambhir. Samson needed five years since making his T20I debut to score his first hundred in the format. In the last 40 days, Samson has scored three, flaunting his renewed hunger and consistency. Meanwhile, Hardik Pandya reclaimed the No. 1 spot in the ICC rankings for men's all-rounders in T20Is. He dethroned England's Liam Livingstone. It was a sensational finish to India's run in T20Is in 2024 as they dominated South Africa. In the series finale, India rode on hundreds from Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma to post 283 on the board. The partnership for the second wicket was 210 runs as India went on to break a series of batting records. Captain Suryakumar confirmed that Tilak would continue to bat at No. 3, revealing the conversation between them after he hit the first of the two hundreds in South Africa. "What can I say about Tilak Varma. He came to me (in Gqeberha), asked me if he could bat at three. I said to him it was his day and to enjoy himself. I knew what he was capable of doing and very happy for him. He is batting at three going forward definitely (smiles). He asked for it, he delivered."

## Nitish Reddy to debut in Perth Test? Morne Morkel hints at all-rounder's inclusion

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

India's bowling coach, Morne Morkel, has offered the strongest indication that 21-year-old Nitish Reddy could make his Test debut in Perth. Praising the young all-rounder, Morkel expressed confidence in Reddy's ability to "hold one end up" for India during the upcoming five-Test series against Australia. India's bowling coach Morne Morkel has strongly hinted at a potential debut for 21-year-old all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy ahead of the first Test against Australia in Perth. The young seam-bowling all-rounder from Andhra Pradesh has been turning heads with his performances in 2024 and appears primed to don Test whites for the first time.

Speaking in a pre-match press conference, Morkel praised Reddy's skill set and versatility, describing him as a player who can "hold one end up" and provide crucial support to India's pace attack during the gruelling five-Test series. "He [Nitish Reddy] is one of the young guys. [There's] all-round ability. He'll be one guy who can hold one end up for us, especially for the first couple of days," Morkel said. "[He's a] wicket-to-wicket bowler. Any team in the world would want an all-rounder who can help pacers. It'll be on Jasprit [Bumrah] how he uses them. Definitely a guy to keep an eye on in the series." Nitish's rapid rise began with an outstanding IPL season earlier this year, which was followed by his T20I debut. Despite having played only 23 first-class games, his ability to bowl medium pace and contribute valuable runs in the lower-middle order has addressed a long-standing need for India on overseas tours—a genuine seam-bowling all-rounder.

Reddy was part of the India A squad that toured Australia earlier, featuring in two unofficial Tests against Australia A. Although his numbers from those matches weren't extraordinary, the experience of adapting to Australian conditions proved invaluable. He bowled 31 overs across four innings, maintaining an economy of under three runs per



over in three of them. Additionally, his partnerships with Dhruv Jurel showcased his potential as a reliable lower-order batter. In the lead-up to the series opener, Reddy impressed the team management during match simulations at the WACA in Perth. His disciplined bowling and adaptability in seam-friendly conditions solidified his case for selection, especially with the Optus Stadium expected to produce a green top. India's team combination for the first Test is expected to feature three specialist pacers, one spinner, and an all-rounder. Nitish Reddy's inclusion as the fourth seamer could alleviate the management's dilemma of choosing between spin-bowling all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar or specialist spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. Reddy's presence strengthens the balance of the side, providing depth in both batting and bowling. His seam-bowling skills can complement India's pace attack led by Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and Akashdeep. Meanwhile, Ashwin is expected to play a pivotal role as the primary spinner, targeting Australia's left-handers such as Usman Khawaja and Travis Head. Should he make his debut, all eyes will be on how Nitish Reddy handles the pressure of the Test arena and whether he can translate his promise into performance on the grandest stage.

## Akash Deep is potential replacement for Mohammad Shami: Matthew Hayden

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Matthew Hayden said that Akash Deep could be the potential replacement for Mohammad Shami in the first 2 Tests at Perth and Adelaide vs Australia. Shami was not included in India's 18-member jumbo squad for the Border Gavaskar Trophy series. Former Australian cricketer Matthew Hayden picked Akash Deep as India's 3rd seamer for the 1st Test between India and Australia for the Border Gavaskar Trophy series. Hayden recalled Shami's brilliant record in Perth, where the 1st Test will be played, and emphasised on his importance in the day and night Test match in Adelaide, where the pink ball swings under the lights. The former player picked Akash Deep as Shami's replacement in the Perth and Adelaide Tests. Shami was not picked in India's jumbo 18-member squad as the BCCI keeps a close eye on his recovery after the ankle surgery.

"One of the aspects I'm looking forward to is the competition within the competition - the world-class bowling line-ups of both Australia and India. There's also the question of who will replace Mohammed Shami, who bowled brilliantly, not just in Perth - where he's the highest wicket-taker with six wickets at an average of 22 - but across the summer. His effectiveness is particularly crucial in day-night Tests, where seamers shine under twilight conditions," the Channel 7 commentator, Hayden, said in the press conference.

"Amongst the three seamers, Hashit Rana, Akash Deep, and Prasad Krishna. A like for like, I know Prasad Krishna did pretty well in the unofficial test matches, but Akash Deep, for me, is probably the nearest replacement to a Mohammad Shami type role, potentially even a little bit taller as well. So I think he'll go really well in both Perth and Adelaide," he added. Akash Deep has been impressive in his recent outings in red-ball cricket in the sub-continent conditions. In 5 matches, Akash has 10 wickets and is known for providing early breakthroughs with the new ball. "Pace batteries will be key"

Hayden felt that the speedsters from both the Indian and Australian sides would be key to them. "For both sides, the key lies in their pace batteries, capable of inflicting serious damage. On the batting side, there's a concern due to limited long-format cricket over the past year. It'll be fascinating to see which batters adapt best to Test cricket under BGT's immense pressure." Hayden gave the example of Nathan Lyon's brilliant record at Perth and highlighted Washington Sundar's all-round role. "It's also worth noting that Nathan Lyon has 27 wickets in Perth at an average of 18. This might prompt India to consider Washington Sundar,



not just for his batting but for his overspin and bounce, which Lyon uses so effectively across Australian venues. There are plenty of exciting battles within battles to anticipate," he added.

## India show promise but settle for draw against Malaysia

Hyderabad: India and Malaysia played out a 1-1 draw in a FIFA International Friendly at the GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium, Hyderabad, on Monday. Despite a valiant performance, head coach Manolo Marquez's search for his first win with the national team remains elusive.

Malaysia struck first in the 19th minute when Paulo Josue capitalised on a defensive error, while India equalised through defender Rahul Bheke's header in the 39th minute. The match saw over 15,000 spectators witness moments of brilliance, resilience, and a few nervy errors. India started brightly, asserting their intentions within six minutes. Midfielder Lalengmawia Ralte's powerful effort from outside the box missed the target. Forward Irfan Yadwad, making his senior national debut after a stellar stint with Chennaiyin FC, spearheaded the attack. His pressing unsettled the Malaysian defence early on, and long balls aimed at him caused frequent problems. In the 15th minute, left-back Naorem Roshan Singh delivered a teasing cross into the six-yard box, but Irfan narrowly missed connecting. At the other end, centre-back Anwar Ali's crucial block in the 17th minute denied Sergio Agüero (not to be confused with the Manchester City legend) a golden chance. The breakthrough came in the 19th minute, silencing the home crowd.