

## Hyderabad real estate stumbles; Property sales drop by 7% YoY

Hyderabad: Extremely sensitive are the real estate sentiments. In a city's march to progress, real estate plays a key role and thus, the sector need to be nurtured and nourished with care. Hyderabad real estate, which exhibited a rare resilience while withstanding the stress and strain of factors such as global financial crisis and Covid pandemic that left many major cities reeling, now seems to be stumbling badly. A decade of transformation, outpacing India's major cities in growth, says Knight Frank report. The reality of realty in the city is increasingly palpable with property seekers caught in a Catch-22 situation and their dilemmas worrying the builders and developers about the fate of their projects. Assessments by leading property agencies over the last few months have been underscoring the emerging real estate scenario of Hyderabad.

In its latest assessment released on Tuesday, Knight Frank India documents a 7% year-on-year (Y-o-Y) and 3% month-on-month (M-o-M) decline in home sales in Hyderabad. Also, during the same period,

residential unit registrations were down by 12% Y-o-Y and 6% M-o-M. The Knight Frank India assessment documents that as against 6,268 units of November 2023, this year November had registrations of only 5,516 units, a drop of 12 per cent. At the same time, November 2024 recorded home sales worth Rs 3,495 crore as against Rs 3,741 crore in November 2023, a drop of 3 per cent.

However, according to the assessment, despite the overall decline in registrations, there has been an increase in the registration of high-value homes in Hyderabad residential market that encompasses four districts – Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy, and Sangareddy.

In Hyderabad, properties priced under Rs 50 lakh typically account for the majority of registrations. However, a notable premiumisation trend has emerged in recent months and the share of homes priced at Rs 1 crore and above rose from 12% to 14% in November 2024 as compared to 2023, highlighting a shift in buyer preferences toward higher-value properties. At the district



level, Medchal-Malkajgiri accounted for 42% of property registrations, closely followed by Rangareddy at 41% while Hyderabad district contributed 17% of total registrations. Shishir Baijal, chairman and managing director,

Knight Frank India, said,

“Overall, property registrations in Hyderabad moderated in November 2024, but demand for high-value homes remains robust, registering a 3% Y-o-Y increase.

## Rythu Bharosa only for land holdings where crops are raised



Hyderabad: The State government, if it proceeds with implementing the enhanced crop investment assistance of Rs 7,500 per acre per crop season, may require approximately Rs 6,000 crore only for the rabi (Yasangi) season. According to the new guidelines that are in consideration, Rythu Bharosa assistance is proposed to be restricted to only the land holdings where farmers raise crops. It would, be leaving around 75,000 to 80,000 acres of net area under Yasangi crop, that will be eligible for consideration of the enhanced assistance. The area under Yasangi crops will be relatively lesser compared to the Kharif season, which typically covers between 1.15 crore and 1.30 crore acres, depending on water availability and monsoon support. The budget required to pay Rs 7,500 per acre for 80 lakh acres during the rabi season would amount to only Rs 6,000 crore or even less. In districts

where farmers are lacking in assured irrigation support, the possibility of raising rabi crops is remote. Approximately 30% of the area previously (during Kharif) used for paddy cultivation remains fallow during Rabi (Yasangi), translating to around 16 lakh hectares of uncultivated land. Farmers often opt for strategic cropping of chickpea, black gram, and green gram during rabi, which can be economically beneficial for them in the long run as it would help improve soil fertility.

However, from this time onwards, keeping land barren may result in losing Rythu Bharosa assistance. During the just concluded Kharif season, the area under cultivation was around 1.15 crore acres. The budget required to pay Rs 7,500 per acre for this area would be Rs 8,625 crore. The inclusion of horticultural crops in the crop investment assistance remains uncertain so far.

The decision will depend on the Cabinet sub-committee on Rythu Bharosa, which is scheduled to meet by the end of the month to finalize the enhanced assistance. Farmers are concerned that more than half of them currently receiving Rythu Bandhu assistance may become ineligible if the new

guidelines align with the PM Kisan assistance scheme. The state's final decision on the Rythu Bharosa guidelines is expected to ensure that the implementation of the enhanced crop investment assistance will no way have any additional financial implications on the exchequer.

## Telangana's micro-sculptor Ajay Kumar sculpts Brazil's "Christ the Redeemer" in the eye of a needle

Warangal: Telangana's micro-sculptor Ajay Kumar Mattewada, internationally renowned for his extraordinary micro sculptures, has come up with yet another wonder on the eve of Christmas. The Warangal based micro-sculptor has created a microscopic statue of "Christ the Redeemer", one of the Seven Wonders of the World located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as a tribute to Jesus Christ marking the Christmas celebration. The original statue, standing at 30 meters (98 feet) tall, has been replicated intricately within the eye of a needle. The miniature statue is 1.1 mm in height. This micro-sculpture beautifully details Jesus' fingers and the wrinkles on his garments with remarkable clarity as seen in the original statue. Speaking to Telangana Today Ajay Kumar informed that he created the sculpture using wax- specially made by him, plas-



tic powder and caterpillar hair for colouring. For detailing, he used delicate tools made from silkworm hair that bend when blown upon. In all, he worked for 90 hours over a period of two months to create the micro-sculpture, which could not be seen normally; one has to take the help of a microscope to see the artwork and it is a hallmark of his works. Ajay Kumar further informed that he created a 0.95 mm tall and 0.17 mm wide microscopic golden cross sculpture of Jesus Christ in the eye of a needle in 2017.



# Gukesh tries to be objective, which is not very usual for Indian chess players: Grzegorz Gajewski

Grzegorz Gajewski commands respect as a coach. Talk to him for a few minutes, you will learn why — if you don't want to go by his stellar record alone. He comes across as a highly intelligent, insightful coach who knows what it takes to produce a World champion. He has, in fact, done just that. His ward D. Gukesh, at 18, became the youngest World chess champion recently. The Hindu caught up with the Polish Grandmaster, who has also worked with Gukesh's mentor Viswanathan Anand, for a lengthy interview at Sentosa, the small island off the southern coast of mainland Singapore that hosted the World Championship. Excerpts:

Which factors, do you think, have helped Gukesh win the title?

He was not at his best here chess-wise, and he has been facing so many difficulties. In the end, he was able to find a way to overcome them. Another thing is his incredible will to beat the opponent. For three weeks, people were scratching their heads thinking what is he doing, why is he pushing every position for a win? The good one, the bad one — in every position he just keeps playing. And then in the final game, he exhausted Ding and made him miss a simple resource. Gukesh just got rewarded for his incredible ambition.

Are you surprised by the speed with which Gukesh stormed to the World title?

I remember the first time we had a serious discussion was last year during the Stavanger Norway Chess, our first tournament together. He told me he would like to be in the top 10 by the end of the year. Back then I had started reading a lot of sports psychology. I got really into that because I realised that these things actually matter. So I kept convincing him not to think about those things. Just focus on the process. The result is only the outcome. I was telling him to take this pressure off because he is so ambitious. He was in the top 10 in two months.

When Gukesh got off to a bad start here, losing the first game, that too with white pieces, were you concerned?

Losing the first game is not easy, but it is not the end of the world. In a sense, it is good to get this warning sign right away. So many people were saying Ding is not the player he used to be, you are going to crush him. And you have to fight those thoughts. Starting with a loss makes it easier. Because you quickly realise he may be weaker, he may be out of form; I don't know yet, but I know for sure he is dangerous, he can beat me in any situation. So I need to stay alert. As a coach, what struck you most about Gukesh? His incredible calculation, and his deep knowledge. He tries to be objective, which is not very usual for Indian chess players, who quite often tend to be optimistic. Especially aggressive players tend to be optimistic. He is a very interesting mix stylistically, because he is a very strong calculator, he is very aggressive, but at the same time he is cautious. Anish Giri told me a couple of months ago that Gukesh had added another layer to his game now, he can shut the position down if he wants to. It is not his natural instinct to play the positional style. But I have been trying to convince him, and I think I have partially managed to convince him. He can actually mimic the style of a positional player. And we have witnessed this



at the Olympiad, when he was basically grinding the win against Wei Yi of China. I think it is the first time in his life where he actually won a game against a top player in such a way that you were just grinding for a couple of hours looking for chances. He will never be a player like Magnus Carlsen in the sense of being an intuitive kind of a player. He likes to calculate and he likes to go deep into position. He doesn't like to make moves just purely based on intuition. He will never play in the Magnus style, but he can very well mimic it. We saw a bit of that here as well. He repeatedly rejected Ding's virtual offers of a draw... He went on playing even for the minutest advantage. That was the overall strategy, to exhaust the opponent. So people must have been thinking — what was he doing, like refusing draws in slightly worse positions? But in the end it paid off. To refuse draws is like a definition of Gukesh. So this is kind of normal, but also here after the Game 3, which he won, we realised that just a long game with pressure and no clear solution could be the way to beat Ding. There was a lot of tension and there were not only variations that you had to calculate, but also positions you had to evaluate. And after each move there would be another task and there would be no clear solution to this task. And that was difficult for Ding. Gukesh had a clear edge in the opening. We did not really prepare for everything. We were not that thorough, especially compared to the old standards. But our approach has not changed in this regard. It was always to surprise as early as possible. And limit your ambitions in terms of what you are going to get after the opening, just to get a playable position. Were you glad that you could finish it off in the classical games? Generally it was thought that Ding might have the edge in the tiebreaker. In Ding's favour was the experience, having already played [at the last World Championship against Ian Nepomniachtchi]. But Gukesh has played so many blitz training games this year. Hundreds literally. We took this part of the game very seriously. Ding had

gone on record about having to get treated for mental health issues and he has been in poor form, coming into the match. I kept telling Gukesh that the man became the World champion. It was not a coincidence. So he might have a difficult period, but he will bring his very best for the match. And he will fight like crazy. That is exactly what happened. So in this regard, I'm very happy that he started with a loss. Because if you start with a loss, you quickly wake up from this dream.

It was a very long journey for Gukesh. Spoiling the winning positions in the middle of the match was a very difficult period for him. After Game 10, he finally made his peace with the fact that his opponent is a World champion and he also wants to win. The last four games he played with the perfect mindset. Less pressure, because you don't feel like you need to win. He was just

able to play his best chess. He lost Game 12 very badly, but he came back to the room and he said, 'I feel fine'. Gukesh must be one of the best when it comes to calculation. Who is the best? Vishy [Anand]. In terms of talent for calculation, perhaps no one in the history of the game could match him. But at the same time, he was so fast that sometimes it became his weakness. Gukesh somewhat resembles a young Fabiano Caruana. How big a role has WestBridge Anand Chess Academy played in Gukesh becoming the World champion? An incredible role. The support from Sandeep Singhal [co-founder of WestBridge Capital, sponsor of Gukesh] and Vishy Anand was great. Vishy was personally involved with starting the academy, even personally involved with some of the lessons. He actually cared for all these students, not just Gukesh. It is incredibly nice of a man with such a brilliant career.

## Ethiopian wolves' taste for nectar! Is Africa's most endangered carnivore a pollinator?

Oxford: Every year in the highlands of Ethiopia, when the rain returns after a parched dry season, a dazzling sight unfolds. Vast fields of a plant known as the Ethiopian red hot poker revive from their crinkled, withered state and bloom into fiery torch-like flowers. From June to November, these bright blossoms offer a precious resource: a profusion of sweet nectar.

Among the humming flash of sunbirds and insects drawn to the flowers, an unusual visitor appears: the Ethiopian wolf. Approaching a cone-shaped flower head, it licks the bottom, lapping up nectar and looking quite visibly pleased. As it moves from flower to flower, its muzzle becomes dusted with pollen. Can a wolf actually be a pollinator?

The Ethiopian wolf is a slender canid about the size of a large dog, with a reddish

coat, white markings on its throat and chest, and a black bushy tail. It lives only in Ethiopia, in a few areas of high-altitude "sky islands" that emerge above the tropical forests below. With fewer than 500 alive today, it is Africa's most endangered carnivore. I'm part of a team of scientists, working under the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme, who have detailed this surprising nectar-feeding and the wolf's potential role in pollination. We recently published our findings in the journal *Ecology*.

The conservation programme, a joint initiative between the University of Oxford and Ethiopian colleagues, has worked to protect Ethiopian wolves for more than 30 years. While these findings were only published recently, Claudio Sillero, founder and director of the programme, first observed wolves feeding on flowers years ago.



# Success of good governance depends on Niyat, Nishtha and Niti: Haryana Chief Minister



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), December 25- Stating that the success of good governance depends on Niyat, Nishtha and Niti, the Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini, said that when our government assumed the responsibility of public service in 2014, we launched a campaign of governance reform, transitioning from good governance (Sushasan) to service (Sewa). He said that the success of such a campaign depends on Niyat (intent), Nishtha (commitment), and Niti (policy). For good governance, he said, there must be a genuine intention to serve, and the policies must be designed in a way that leaves no room for corruption. On the strength of Niyat, Nishtha, and Niti, our government is successfully realizing the true essence of good governance, said Nayab Singh Saini. In a function held in Gurugram, Haryana chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini addressed the State-level Governance Day programme on Wednesday. In his speech, the Chief Minister emphasized the importance of sensitivity and empathy in government administration, urging officers to view their roles as an opportunity to uplift society and ease the hardships of the common people.

The Chief Minister urged the officers to view each case with compassion, stating that when someone approaches their office with a problem, they should not simply see it as a piece of paper. Instead, they should recognize it as a symbol of the individual's pain and hardship. He said that if we can understand the story behind that paper, we will have truly succeeded in our efforts towards good governance. The Chief Minister also paid tribute to Bharat Ratna awardees Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee on their birth anniversaries, reflecting on their monumental contributions to the nation. He said that today's day is not only a memorable occasion for all of us, but it also inspires us to strengthen our commitment towards building a better and more empowered nation. He said that Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership was truly transformative for India. His vision and policies were pivotal in shaping the country's progress on

both domestic and international fronts. His leadership laid the foundation for the India we see today, and it is this vision of a 'Vikist Bharat' that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is dedicated to realizing. In another program organised at Kurukshetra, Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatraya on Wednesday emphasized that information technology is the most effective means of ensuring transparency, implementing good governance and curbing corruption.

Speaking at the Good Governance Day event organized at LNJP Hospital, Kurukshetra on the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Dattatraya highlighted the state government's efforts in transitioning from outdated systems to creating a public-

friendly framework, which has yielded significant success. Before addressing the event, the Governor paid floral tributes to a portrait of Late Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, distributed fruits to patients and extended greetings of the Good Governance Day to the people of the state. The Governor formally inaugurated the Good Governance Day programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. During the event, he interacted with patients, exchanged views with hospital doctors and staff and participated in a commemorative group photograph. Dattatraya noted that the state government is organizing programmes in every district on Good Governance Day to reinforce the principles of governance. Reflecting on Sh. Vajpayee's legacy, he remarked that the former Prime Minister dedi-

cated his entire life to society, working tirelessly for the country's progress through inclusive development. Sh. Vajpayee was a true patriot who selflessly served the nation, and his birth anniversary is now celebrated across the country as the Good Governance Day, said Dattatraya, while emphasizing the need for the younger generation to draw inspiration from Sh. Vajpayee's exemplary life. The Governor further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following the path shown by Sh. Vajpayee, has implemented welfare-oriented policies aimed at eradicating poverty and ensuring holistic development. These initiatives have been coupled with governance reforms and the introduction of Digital India to make such schemes accessible to every citizen.

## Is our moon actually a planet?

Hyderabad: Answer is technically no, the Moon is not a planet. It is Earth's natural satellite, meaning it orbits around our planet. A planet, by definition, is a celestial body that orbits a star, is spherical due to its gravity, and has cleared its orbit of other debris. The Moon, on the other hand, orbits Earth, not the Sun directly, and therefore does not meet the criteria to be classified as a planet. An object must meet three key criteria set by the International Astronomical Union (IAU), to be classified as a planet.

Orbiting the sun: A planet must orbit the Sun directly, rather than orbiting another planet or object. This means it must be part of a solar system, moving around the star at the center of that system. Sufficient mass for a round shape: A planet must have enough mass for its gravity to pull it into a nearly spherical shape. This means it must be large enough for gravity to overcome other forces and form a shape that is close to round. Cleared its orbital path: A planet must have cleared its orbit of other debris and objects. This means it must be gravitationally dominant in its region of space, with no sig-



nificant competing objects sharing its orbital path. If an object meets these criteria, it is considered a planet.

Objects like the Moon, which orbit other planets, do not qualify under this

definition. While the Moon is similar in size and composition to some of the smaller planets in our solar system, it lacks its own independent orbit around the Sun. Instead, it shares Earth's orbit, which is why it is considered a satellite of Earth, not a planet.





ICBM-School of Business Excellence (ICBM-SBE), one of Hyderabad's premier PGDM colleges, successfully conducted its 17th Convocation Ceremony. The event celebrated the achievements of the 2022-24 graduating batch, marking a significant milestone in their academic journey.

The ceremony commenced with a warm welcome address by Prof. Shamshuddin Zarar, Director-Principal of ICBM-SBE, followed by an inspiring speech

by Prof. P. Narayan Reddy, Director General of the Institute.

The convocation was graced by eminent dignitaries, whose presence added value to the occasion: Chief Guest Dr. T.V. Rao, Chairman, TVRLS & Ex. Professor, IIM (A), shared his wisdom on leadership and career growth. Guest of Honor Mr. Srinivas CR, CHRO & Vice President, Human Potential Development & Admin, NACL Industries Limited, who emphasized the impor-

ance of fostering talent and innovation. Other guest of honors were Mr. Ned Mody, Country Head & Executive Managing Director, Newmark and Ms. Shalini K, Global Strategic Marketing - Digital Industries, APAC, Siemens AG, who is also an Alumini of ICBM-SBE, highlighted the latest trends in digital marketing and its relevance to future leaders.

The convocation oath, underscoring ethical conduct and responsible leadership,

was administered by Dr. Ritu Zarar, Chairperson of ICBM-SBE and informed that ICBM-SBE, is SAQS accredited, AICTE approved, and holds MBA equivalence from AIU.

The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Jitender Govindani, Dean-Academics, who expressed his gratitude to the distinguished guests, faculty, staff, and students for their contributions to the success of the event.

## Mahakumbh: Tracing the legacy of India's grandest religious gathering

The upcoming Mahakumbh festival at Prayag (earlier called Allahabad) is being projected as the largest gathering of people in the world. With more than 450 million expected to bathe at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati, over 45 days, it is also a massive logistical challenge. The duodecennial congregation is being touted as the grandest: luxury tents and golf carts will be available for the wealthy pilgrim while at least a handful of common pilgrims will also be able to enjoy modern amenities like air-conditioned sleeping pods at the Allahabad railway station. Even 1,400 years ago, way back in the 7th century, when Yuan Chwang, a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim and traveller, attended a similar river festival at Prayag, he found it to be majestic and described arrangements that would appear similar to present times. King Harshavardhan of Kanyakubja (Kannauj) was the reigning monarch of most of north and central India at the time, having established control over Gujarat and Bengal. Chwang's account is perhaps the oldest eye-witness account of the festival at Prayag which was considered

extremely sacred because of the confluence of the two rivers and the crescent shape of the land. During Harsha's 30-year rule, the river festival was held quinquennially or every five years. As Harsha had converted to Mahayana Buddhism he labelled the festival 'Mahamoksha Parishad' where 'daan' or charity was the biggest showstopper. When Chwang and Harsa reached Prayag, they were greeted by over 500,000 people who belonged to various Hindu sects, Jains, the poor, orphans, and others from various parts of India. Chwang's memoirs provide a vivid description of the festival which was conducted within an area of 7-8 km in circuit. The arrangements for the solemn ceremony were completed before the arrival of the royal cortege. A great square space was marked off by a bamboo hedge 1,000 paces on each side, and in the middle "many scores of thatched buildings" were erected to deposit all the treasures (intended for distribution) to wit, gold, silver, fine pearls, red glass, and other valuables. The less costly articles such as silk and cotton garments, the gold and silver money, were placed in several hundred store-houses constructed by the side

of the above. Outside this quadrangle were pavilions for refreshments, and there were also constructed "some hundred or so long buildings in which some thousand people might sit down for rest", Chwang recalled in his memoirs. Besides Harsha's royal tent which was pitched on the north bank, 18 other kings had come to attend the 'Mahamoksha Parishad'. On the west of the confluence was the camp of Dhruvabhata, the Valabhi (Gujarat) king who had been subjugated by Harsha. King Shashanka of Assam was camped south of the Yamuna and between these two camps were the ordinary alms receivers. While the confluence was a holy spot, the ceremonies centred on the image of the Buddha, which was set up in a shrine. On the first day of the festival, flowers, various precious clothes and other articles were offered. On the second and third days, images of Aditya (the sun) and Shiva were worshipped with similar devotion. However, as Buddhism was the state religion, its adherents were given more alms than other sects. Chwang's memoirs recall that "to each of the selected ten thousand of the religious

community" (Buddhist monks probably) were given one hundred pieces of gold, one pearl, one cotton garment, various drinks and meats, flowers, and perfumes. During the next twenty days, the Brahmans received generous gifts. After these two communities came the Jains and other sects finally followed by other mendicants, the poor, orphans, and other destitute. King Harsha understood very well the importance of projecting and legitimising power through religious patronage and charity. By the end of the 75-day festival, Harsha gave away virtually his entire treasury. As a Buddhist King, Harsa wanted to emulate Buddha's actions and showcase his piety. After his coffers had emptied out, writes Chwang, "in imitation of the Prince Siddhartha Gautama at the hour of his great renunciation, Harsa freely and without stint gave away his gems and goods, his clothing and necklaces, earrings and bracelets, chaplets, neck-jewel, and bright head-jewel... all being given away, he [Harsa] begged from his sister [Rajya Sri] an ordinary second-hand garment, and having put it on the paid worship to the Buddhas of the ten regions".



# Hyderabad Public School Unveils Landmark Coffee Table Book "Flight of the Eagle" to Mark Centenary Celebrations

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Public School (HPS) is proud to announce the launch of "Flight of the Eagle", a spectacular coffee table book that commemorates the 100th anniversary of the institution. The book, which highlights the school's century-long legacy of academic excellence, cultural achievements, and societal impact, will be officially launched at a special ceremony on 24th December 2024, with two of the school's most distinguished alumni—Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, and Shantanu Narayen, CEO of Adobe—gracing the event as the Chief Guests. "Flight of the Eagle" offers a captivating journey through the history of HPS, which began as Jagirdars' College in 1923, evolving into one of India's premier educational institutions. The book spans both the pre- and post-independence eras, showcasing the significant milestones, rich traditions, and growth of the school across decades. Created through extensive archival research and interviews with alumni, teachers, and staff, this book blends personal stories with historical insights. It not only offers a rare glimpse into the school's storied past but also looks forward, shedding light on HPS's future goals and the benchmarks it seeks to set in the coming years. "We wanted to create a book that not only honors the incredible history of The Hyderabad Public School but also celebrates the remarkable individuals who have contributed to its success over the years," said Kishor Krishnamoorthi, Chief Editor of the book. "The stories and visuals featured in this book reflect the spirit of the school and its impact on generations of students who have walked its halls."

The coffee table book is a work of love



and dedication by a team of passionate contributors, including Chandra Shekhar Reddy Kundur and Faiz Khan, Co-Chairs of the Coffee Table Book Sub-Committee; Pranav Pingle, Creative Head; Sanjiv Chakravarthy, Head Researcher; Anish Penti, Head Designer; and Alok Yepuri, Lead Writer. "It has been a delight to spearhead this landmark publication that commemorates the Centenary of The Hyderabad Public School. The book is intended to be a comprehensive collection of information about the history of the school, the experiences of the students, the vast infrastructure, and an intention to summarize the X factor of the school that cre-

ates global leaders." said Chandra Shekhar Reddy Kundur, Co-Chairperson of Coffee Table Book Sub-Committee. The launch event, to be held at HPS, will also include the felicitation of Satya Nadella and Shantanu Narayen, along with speeches from distinguished guests including Gusti Noria, President of the HPS Society, and Skand Bali, Principal of the school. The book will be unveiled during a special ceremony, featuring students and staff carrying the books in a symbolic representation of the school's dynamic community. "Flight of the Eagle" is more than just a book; it is a tribute to a century of educational excellence and an endur-

ing symbol of the school's commitment to shaping future leaders. It serves as a perfect keepsake for alumni, parents, educators, and anyone who cherishes the rich history of one of India's finest schools. About The Hyderabad Public School Founded in 1923, The Hyderabad Public School (HPS) has grown into one of India's premier institutions, known for its rigorous academic programs, rich cultural heritage, and a strong sense of community. HPS has consistently been at the forefront of shaping the future of young minds, with a deep commitment to nurturing academic, artistic, and leadership potential in its students.

## The novel was a dominant art form last century

THE NOVEL is dead; the novel is dying; prestige television has killed it. These familiar complaints are oddly comforting, both because hand-wringing over the state of the novel is a time-honoured pursuit, and readers who pick up the remote instead of a book after dinner—as your correspondent does more often than he should—can feel they are engaging with culture's dominant narrative form rather than just relaxing on the couch. Novels are not, in fact, dying: bookstores flog ever-changing stacks of new ones. But neither are they as culturally central as they were in the 1900s, when they were "the literary form of the time, prestigious, popular, taken as both mainstay of cultured conversation and of democratic culture", argues Edwin Frank of the New York Review of Books Classics Series.

The novel achieved that status by changing its focus. In the 19th century novels were principally concerned with illuminating social mores and characters' inner lives: think of George Eliot, Henry James and Anthony Trollope. But over the course of the next century the novel matured, as writers responded to a rapidly changing world by experimenting with form, structure and subject. "Stranger Than Fiction" weaves historical overview and close reading into a biography of the form. Mercifully, the author does not plod through the years, directly tying

books to events. Artistic creation is subtler than that, and books that an author intends for one purpose often serve another. Novels can also inspire each other. "Mrs Dalloway", for example, was shaped by Virginia Woolf's loathing of James Joyce's "Ulysses". Mr Frank deftly captures how novelists translate, react to and sometimes shut out turbulent global events. (Returning to Trieste after the first world war, Joyce told an acquaintance, "Oh yes, I was told there was a war going on.")

The first landmark 20th-century novel, Mr Frank argues, was "Notes from the Underground", published in 1864 by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. The narrator whines, hectors and obsesses; he is both emotionally honest and thoroughly unreliable. The plotless book tries to make sense of and to embody a frenzied world, offering none of the safety or resolution readers typically found in novels from the 19th century, which deployed "character and situation, expressed and explored through a reliable interplay of dialogue and description conducted under narrative oversight". Though plenty of contemporary novels still fit this description, Dostoyevsky was early to show they did not have to.

The ghost of the unnamed narrator flickers at the edges of works written throughout the next century. His lunatic babbling prefigures stream-of-consciousness works from

Joyce and William Faulkner. It is no accident that this voice and disordered, confessional work emerged from Russia, rather than western Europe, in the late 19th century. Until the first world war western Europe was largely peaceful, prosperous and bound by class and social conventions. The solid, reliable real world birthed the solid, reliable worlds of the social novel. Russia had its hierarchies and conventions but was wilder; its authors could borrow from European tradition while living in a world beyond it.

The two world wars changed all that, but authors born before the cataclysms retained their concept of what a novel should be and do. Reconciling beliefs nurtured in a stable world with an unstable one produced towering works. For example, "The Magic Mountain" (1924) by Thomas Mann, a German writer, is a long series of digressions and meditations that "preserves an image of unity by telling the story, down to the last detail, of a world whose pieces no longer come together", writes Mr Frank. "In Search of Lost Time" by Marcel Proust did something similar. Despite its languid tone and convoluted sentences, it has at its centre a desire to remember and tell readers everything about a vanished world (including the transporting aroma of madeleines). Vasily Grossman, a Soviet writer, displayed the same encyclopedic bent in two works, "Stalingrad" and "Life and Fate", which are

among the most ambitious and best fiction written about the second world war. Penned in a plain style and a self-conscious attempt to mirror "War and Peace", Russia's greatest novel from the 19th century, his writing fell foul of censors (who wanted him, among other things, to remove a sympathetic Jewish character). Grossman died in 1964; "Life and Fate" would not be published in Russia for another 24 years. After the war, Mr Frank's survey turns almost perversely idiosyncratic. He mentions great writers including Saul Bellow, Toni Morrison and Philip Roth only in passing, yet devotes an entire chapter to the banal, unreadable "Life: A User's Manual" by Georges Perec, a French novelist. Still, one of the pleasures of reading "Stranger Than Fiction" is arguing with it. And the number of impassioned arguments that this book starts proves that the literary novel is not dead to everyone. Nor is it still the unquestioned king of narrative expression. Television has grown more sophisticated: "The Wire" drew justified comparisons to Charles Dickens. Millions of books are published each year, but the number of people who read daily for pleasure, as well as the amount of time they read, have been steadily declining. From 2017 to 2023 Americans aged 15 and older spent just 15-16 minutes a day reading "for personal interest", 18% less than in 2013-15, according to America's Bureau of Labour Statistics.



# Are militants in Manipur using Starlink satellite internet? | Explained

The story so far: Billionaire Elon Musk has denied claims that his space company SpaceX's satellite internet technology Starlink is being used by militants in Manipur. This came after the Indian Army and police seized weapons and what looked like a Starlink-branded satellite router and antenna. Starlink is still pending regulatory approval in India, though it will be starting in neighbouring Bangladesh and Bhutan in 2025. However, the discovery of the Starlink devices in Manipur raises questions about whether or not militants and other non-state actors can bypass geographic restrictions on the Starlink technology.

What is Starlink and how does it work?

Starlink uses an extensive low Earth orbit satellite constellation to deliver broadband internet that has high speeds and low latency. This means that rather than restricting users to essential or emergency functions, they can also stream content, play games online, make video calls, or carry out other high data rate activities, per the company. It is a popular choice for users worldwide in remote areas, sea vessels, disaster-struck regions, or places where oppressive regimes have throttled access to more mainstream internet services. There are thousands of satellites in the Starlink system, and they orbit Earth at around 550 km. Though they cover the entire globe, per SpaceX, the company is not authorised to provide its services to users in some regions. "Additionally, if a vessel strays into the waters of a country which prohibits Starlink from operating within it, our satellites will be unable to communicate with it effectively," said Starlink on its website.

What is the controversy surrounding Starlink?

The Spear Corps of the Indian army on December 16 shared photos on Elon Musk-owned X of guns, ammunition, and country-made mortars that Indian army and police units had seized in Manipur. X users spotted a small satellite device and router, with the latter bearing the SpaceX logo. In response to an X user who claimed that Musk's technology was being used by terrorists, the billionaire replied, "This is false. Starlink satellite beams are turned off over India." The Starlink device also had "RPF/PLA" written on it, which refers to a Myanmar-based Meitei extremist group that is banned in India. Per Starlink's website and coverage map, the service date for Myanmar is unknown. However, this is not the first time SpaceX has become embroiled in controversy in India. Last month, smugglers originating from Myanmar were caught by the Andaman and Nicobar islands police with over 6,000 kg of meth and a Starlink device that was allegedly used for navigation and communication, despite service being prohibited in Indian waters. Furthermore, in August this year, Starlink equipment was seen being sold on the B2B platform IndiaMART.

Can Starlink satellite internet be controlled or intercepted?

International borders are not solid and it is not easy to refine satellite internet coverage to such a precise degree that service is activated or halted exactly in line with a nation's border. An additional complication is that many international borders are con-

tested or unclear, while satellites moving above them are continuously transmitting encrypted signals. This encryption stops satellites from being hacked by militants or other malicious actors trying to intercept the service. The key question is whether militants in Manipur can effectively use Starlink satellite internet within India. "If these [Starlink] boxes have been purchased from outside of India, by whatever means, they can be used because then, that box is authorised. The only thing is, do they have a position location feature? In that case, yes, if you buy a [Starlink] terminal in the U.S. and bring it to India, because of the geographical location change, it might not work. But that is provided the terminal has a built-in geographic location identifier," theorised former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) engineer, Arup Dasgupta. Starlink supports VPNs that use TCP or UDP, per the company website, though this can affect the app's performance. So, can users buy foreign Starlink terminals and then use VPN services in order to access satellite internet in India? "It depends on the internals of the Starlink hardware," Dasgupta explained. To help visualise how Starlink stops users in prohibited regions from accessing its satellite internet, Dasgupta used the analogy of a set-top box that does not let TV watchers access some channels while others who have access can watch these channels.

Musk in February this year also strongly trashed news reports claiming that Starlink devices were being sold to Russia, and later explained on X that Starlink satellites would not close the link in Russia. However, this did not allay concerns of Starlink being used by the Russian military in occupied regions of Ukraine. With regards to seized Starlink devices, Dasgupta pointed out that by tracking the unique identification code of the Starlink terminal, it might be possible to find the buyer. However, this too could prove difficult due to dummy organisations or shadow companies obfuscating the trail of likely illegal buyers. In essence, more information is needed from SpaceX and Musk to understand how the company ensures that Starlink satellite internet does not reach the countries yet to allow Starlink, while enabling service for neighbouring countries or waters that do allow Starlink service. The Hindu was also able to download the Starlink app from the Google Play Store in India and go through the set-up process up to the point a plugged-in Starlink device was needed. The app may collect users' approximate and precise locations for functionality reasons but these are optional, per the app's profile. This is in stark contrast to banned apps like TikTok, which are unavailable on the app store.

How are militants in Manipur using Starlink?

This is not yet known, as more information is needed both from Musk's SpaceX as well as the Indian authorities. Musk has said that satellite beams for India were never on in the first place, but there are questions about the cross-border use of Starlink devices over land, sea, and air. It is also not yet confirmed whether the seized satellite equipment in Manipur was actually functional. Starlink this year said that if it finds out about its terminals being used by sanctioned or unauthorised parties, it can take



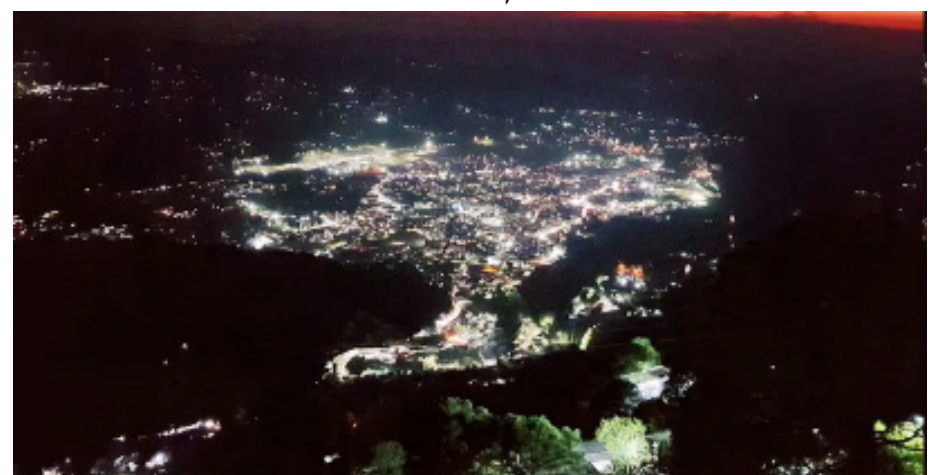
action to deactivate the terminal after an investigation.

What does Indian law say about Starlink usage?

India strictly regulates and restricts the use of satellite-based communication devices, even by Indian civilians and citizens in conflict-free zones. Everyday gadget users within the country would have noticed that even key satellite-based emergency features on premium phones that are easily available for users overseas are not enabled for use in India. Under section 6 of the Indian Wireless Act and Section 20 of the Indian Telegraph Act, the use of Thuraya/Iridium satellite phones is illegal in the country. Indian embassies worldwide warn both Indian and

foreign travellers that they cannot carry satellite phones into the country and may face confiscation of the devices and legal action if they do so without official permission. These restrictions are in place largely to combat militancy and terrorism. In 2022, Indian officials reported that evidence of Iridium satellite phone usage was discovered in the Kashmir Valley. Starlink is currently trying to enter the Indian market, but finds itself in competition with billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance. The latest discovery of the Starlink hardware in Manipur could further affect SpaceX's entry, due to doubts over its compliance with Indian regulations and possible misuse by non-state actors.

## Vishno Devi Shrine Board approves tripartite MoU to address landslide, rockfall risks on track



Jammu: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has approved a tripartite MoU to identify and mitigate areas prone to landslides and rockfalls along the tracks that lead to the sacred cave shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district. Several landslides and rockfalls along the tracks have resulted in several casualties and injuries over the last three years. This year, on September 2, three pilgrims died in a landslide en route to the shrine.

The Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, who chaired the 73rd meeting of the board, approved the Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU), a board spokesperson said. The agreement involves collaboration with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and THDC India Limited (THDCIL) to identify and stabilize vulnerable slopes along the yatra route between Adhkuwari and Bhawan, he said. The initiative aims to ensure pilgrim safety by mitigating risks associated with unstable terrains, the spokesperson said.

The LG directed the board to conduct detailed analyses of services, security, and disaster management measures. He also emphasized the need for improved mobile connectivity and an enhanced pilgrim feedback mechanism.



# What makes the ratel or the honey badger — street fighters of the animal world — my favourite animal?

I've been asked umpteen times — usually by children — what my favourite animal is. I never gave the matter much thought and so probably must have noncommittally mumbled 'tiger' or 'leopard' or 'elephant' or maybe 'snow leopard'. But then I suddenly realised that there was one small animal that took the pants off these much larger beasts and has got to be number one. Sadly, I haven't seen it in the wild — but what I've seen of it on television documentaries was more than enough to seal the deal. It's the ratel or the honey badger. Ratels are members of the weasel clan but minus all the slithery, sly notoriety of typical weasels. Set very low to the ground they are handsome dudes (and dudettes — sexes are alike though the dudes are larger) about a foot long, clad in handsome black-and-white striped silvery-grey cloaks, with charcoal underparts. Small but powerfully snouted they are armed with a mouthful of sharp teeth, their ears are small and lie flat against their heads. They are thick-skinned and wear their shaggy cloaks loosely over their bodies — all of which have as we shall see survival value. They are common in Africa and found in the Middle-East and in India — though here, sadly they have been hugely neglected. We know very little of how many of them live in India — they have been reported sporadically from all parts of the country in scrub jungles and grasslands, and are considered to be pretty rare. What drew me to them was their never-say-die, street-fighter attitude. These guys are eager to take on all comers. On one show, I watched in shock and awe, as one of the clan defiantly took on a pride of increasingly bemused and nonplussed lions who obviously thought they were on to a quick tasty snack. No chance. Yarring and snarling, the feisty little animal lunged and twisted and leapt at the kings of the jungle making them leap back in alarm and perplexity. What the heck was this pipsqueak up to — and watch it! It'll have that shaving-brush at the tip of your tail off in a second and with it all your pride! Of course, the lions did lunge and paw at the furious little animal — but it wears its coat so loosely over its body that it is easy for it to twist itself free and in a trice launch a savage counter assault. In most cases, the lions beat a hasty — and as dignified — retreat as they could: no point tackling this clearly demented, apoplectic lunatic! What's worse was that it would often pursue them as if to say, 'abbe kaha bhagta hain aake lado — main batata hoon (Where are you running away to, come and fight if you have the balls, I'll show you)! While being confronted by hunting dogs honey badgers reputedly scream like bear cubs! Dogs find it almost impossible to get a grip on these animals — what with their very tough and loose skins. Interestingly, it is being posited that tiny cheetah cubs, also wear silver-grey fur cloaks on their backs like the ratels, so they would be left alone by prospective predators!

While not shredding the dignity of inquisitive lions and leopards, ratels go hunting for smaller animals with the same degree of ferocity — and are vital in keeping the number of such animals — rodents, lizards and the like under control, raking them out of their dens and keeping the ecosystem in balance. They eat pretty much everything and care a hoot about bees and their stings

as they raid their hives for honey and bee larvae. Their powerful claws can take apart termite mounds with ease. Sheep, pythons, black mambas — they are all on the menu. In India they are thought to dig up and presumably consume human corpses! However, it doesn't appear to be true that honeyguides lead honey badgers to beehives and the animal kindly leaves a bit of the hive for its benefactor! They are believed to love chicken and are considered a serious risk in chicken coops, where they kill far more than is necessary. They balance this carnivorous diet with berries, roots and bulbs. Usually a loner (who would like to be besties with such an incandescently tempered animal?), lunging and plunging through the grasslands, the honey badger joins up with a partner during the breeding season, doubling the danger to one and all! Not much is known about its family life — except that two cubs may be born. Their lifespan in the wild is unknown though captive animals have lived up to 24 years. What's amazing about this little animal is its sheer fighting, never-say-die spirit — ever ready to take on all comers, no matter what their size or weight or numbers. You don't have to be built like a gorilla to be able to intimidate others, something all those (and even nations) who have been bullied ought to think about. Just go for the jugular and keep on going until your enemy flees or is ripped apart! Sadly, very little research has been



done on these animals in India — though they probably do have their collection of open-mouthed fans. While considered of 'least concern' by the IUCN, they are rare in India and accorded the highest level of protection (Schedule I) by the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

Hunting, poaching and habitat destruction, remain a threat to these rarely encountered spitfires and while one ought not to get too close to one, observing a ratel on a hunt, or dealing with the mighty tiger would be an experience of a lifetime!

## Jat strongman and five-time Haryana chief minister

Near-mythologised for his rustic charm, Om Prakash Chautala, the eldest son of former deputy Prime Minister Chaudhary Devi Lal, was a force to reckon with. Om Prakash Chautala, who died of cardiac arrest on Friday at the age of 89, was sworn in chief minister of Haryana five times in his five-decade-long career, with his shortest stint being for five days, and his longest, five years. For almost two decades, from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s, he was a force to reckon with in Haryana politics.

Near-mythologised for his rustic charm, Chautala was the eldest son of former deputy Prime Minister Chaudhary Devi Lal. In 1978, after Chautala was detained by the customs officials for carrying a large number of wristwatches from an overseas trip, Devi Lal distanced himself from his son, but in late 1989, when he became deputy PM, it was Chautala who took his place as CM of Haryana, elbowing out his younger son Ranjit Singh. That appointment was followed by the infamous Meham bypoll in February 1990 which Chautala had to win to grant legitimacy to his appointment as the chief minister. The Election Commission (EC) cancelled the bypoll and ordered a fresh one in May 1990 which also it eventually set aside. Not surprisingly, his first stint as CM ended on May 22, 1990, although he returned for a second stint (of five days) between July 12 and July 16 the same year, and a third one for 15 days between March 22 and April 5 the following year. He had a relatively longer



stint in his fourth attempt, 223 days between July 24, 1999 and March 2, 2000, before finally serving a full five-year term between March 2, 2000 and February 5, 2005.

That was the peak of the Indian National Lok Dal, founded by Devi Lal and Chautala in 1996, from the remains of the Samajwadi Janata Dal, which the former and Chandrashekar founded in 1990, and which itself was a splinter of the Janata Dal. Known for a sharp tongue, Chautala, a six-time MLA, was feared by his contemporaries and government functionaries. His former cabinet colleague, Sampat Singh said that Om Prakash Chautala had a tremendous grip on

the administration. "When it came to running the government, his abilities were second to none. No one could take him for a ride." His five-year term helped revive Haryana's fortunes according to some. Former Haryana minister and a fierce Chautala critic, Karan Dalal said that the INLD leader "was a brave man and unlike many politicians, he had the courage to take tough decisions. He imposed levies like local area development tax and value added tax (VAT) despite knowing these were unpopular — but they provided financial vibrancy to the state exchequer." But Chautala's stint as chief minister was also peppered with controversies: the firing on protesting farmers in Kandela.



# We make stories and stories make us

"Nobody likes me. I am unlikeable." "I am going to die alone." "I don't deserve to live." How do the stories people tell themselves reach this dead-end of despair? Did it start with abuse at home for not living up to the family's expectations? Or maybe it was the ridicule by teachers for not being fast enough? Each "not enough" being notched in the scorecard shaping their sense of who they are, their identity. Until they reach a point in their life when the burden of these problem-saturated stories is too heavy to carry. Others might look at them and wonder, "What's wrong with them?" When the question is really, "What have they been up against and what are the adversities they have faced that have shaped their stories of themselves?" Human beings are meaning-makers. Stories we tell ourselves help us provide structure for meaning-making. A father gives the child an angry look and the child reckons, "I have done something bad." The father looks at the child with anger most of the time and the child reaches the conclusion, "I am bad." Our meaning-making is influenced by the cultural soup of 'not enoughness' we live in. The normative ideas of worthiness, and success that we constantly measure ourselves against.

"I keep feeling that there is something wrong with me. I am pathetic" Vani shared this with me with hunched shoulders and a trembling voice. She was 11 years old and was already talking about being a "disappointment to my teachers and a burden on my parents." She was neurodivergent and did not fit in with the ableist pedagogies drilled out in schools. So the inevitable stories she was telling herself were what she had been told. The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voices and the way we talk about them, and subsequently, they talk to themselves become their life stories. What stories were told about you when you were growing up and what are the stories you are telling about yourself to yourself now? These might be affirming narratives where you describe yourself as vivacious, caring, and funny alongside dismissive ones of being lazy, irresponsible or even shaming ones of being a failure, a loser etc. They can all co-exist but there is always a dominant story that starts shaping the way we see ourselves and the way the world sees us too. This story is influential as it shapes our identity. That is the reason it becomes so significant for us to examine this dominant story as at times, like for Vani, it can become very restrictive and damaging. If Vani's storyline of her life continues to be, "I am unworthy" as she grows and becomes an adult then that will hold her back from having faith in her abilities, seeking meaningful friendships and having a sense of agency in her own life. She might end up spending most of her life feeling ignored, isolated and invisible.

How can we reclaim the storytelling rights of our lives?

Characterise – Reflect on one problem story that might be defining your life. In this exercise, it becomes very important that we create distance between ourselves and this problem story. Since when has it been around? What situations do you feel it makes its presence felt? What name would you give it (e.g. anxiety, inadequacy, loneliness etc)? Maybe go one step further and give it a colour, a shape, a voice. If it was a cartoon character what would it look and sound like? How convincing is it? What language does it

use to push these identity conclusions on you? How does it compare you to others? What predictions does it make about your future? Do you see how the problem story that you have internalised is due to the insidious pressure we all face to fit into normative ideas of success and worthiness? What if we could build mindfulness that reminds us that the "problem is not me, it is the pressure of fitting in society's standards." What if we could locate the problem where it belongs?

Inner compass – I came across a compelling set of questions. "What breaks your heart, what heals it and what steps can you take to be part of the healing?" What breaks my heart is injustice towards children and the steps I can take towards this healing is to amplify the message of "Children First" in whatever I do through therapy, teaching and my writings. It shakes me up, pains me, sustains me and restores my faith in humanity. At every step. What would your inner compass be and what are the micro-actions you can take to sustain you in this journey?

Alternate voice – There will be times when the problem story will try to take charge and bring in self-doubt, inadequacy, fear, etc. That is inevitable. The turning point for us is our act of reclamation of our lives by making space for an alternate voice or story to emerge. We can give it a name, a character, a shape, a tone too. In my conversations with people, this voice has taken various names – Courage, Joy, Curiosity. Rahi, a 12-year-old lived in a home where there was a lot of violence and blame directed to him.



When I met him, he had internalised the violence at home as, "Something wrong with me and I am to blame." We externalised the blame through characterisation and then explored how much he valued compassion and care. He preferred to see the alternate voice as of a caring parent who would gently keep him safe when violence broke out at home. At times people prefer to give it a name from mythology or an inspiring character from a book or movie. Vani preferred to call her alternate voice Durga. Every time the

problem story of "You are pathetic," chimed in, she would gently remind herself of Durga's voice and tell herself, "You are strong, I am with you, and you can do it." In time, her parents also started believing in Vani and became her staunch advocates. We all have to stand alongside each other if we have to bring about change. It is not an individual responsibility but a collective one. In the words of late Aunty Barbara Wingard, First Nations Australian Narrative Practitioner, magic happens in, "Telling our stories in ways that make us stronger."

## Why an India-made Chikungunya vaccine is good news

Serum Institute of India will manufacture Valneva's anti-Chikungunya vaccine for India and select Asian markets, addressing a major public health issue. The Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) and France-based Valneva SE on Thursday announced that they have signed an agreement under which SII will manufacture the latter's anti-Chikungunya vaccine for the Indian market and a few other Asian countries. Under the agreement, both the companies will conduct a technology transfer of the current drug product manufacturing process. Valneva will supply its chikungunya vaccine drug substance to SII, which will complete manufacturing and be responsible for seeking and maintaining regulatory approval of the vaccine in India and other countries in Asia.

Chikungunya virus (CHIKV) is a mosquito-borne viral disease spread by the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes that causes fever, severe joint and muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. Joint pain is often debilitating and can persist from weeks to years. The vaccine can prove to be a boon for India as the disease is a major public health concern here. According to the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control data, the disease is endemic in almost all states with thousands of cases reported each year. The Centre, which is under the Union ministry of health and family welfare, reported 11,477 cases last year, and 12,587 this year so far. "In 2006 Chikungunya



re-emerged in the Country. Almost all states are affected by Chikungunya," said the centre in a document on the disease situation in the country. In the past, a Chikungunya epidemic fever was reported in 1963 (Kolkata), 1965 (Pondicherry and Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, and Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh; Sagar in Madhya Pradesh; and Nagpur in Maharashtra), and 1973, (Barsi in Maharashtra). Thereafter, sporadic cases also continued to be recorded especially in Maharashtra state during 1983 and 2000. Nearly 100,000 confirmed cases have been reported from across the country and hundreds of thousands of suspected cases

in the past five years, according to government data. In 2004, the disease began to spread quickly, causing large-scale outbreaks around the world. Since the re-emergence of the virus, CHIKV has now been identified in over 110 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Valneva's chikungunya vaccine is the world's first and only licensed chikungunya vaccine, currently approved in the US, Europe, and Canada for the prevention of disease caused by the chikungunya virus in individuals 18 years of age and older. Regulatory reviews to expand the age range to individuals 12 years of age and older are currently ongoing, said Valneva in the statement.