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Residents of ten villages live in fear in Telangana's Mancherial

Mancherial: A migrant tigress returned to forests of Kannala village in Bellampalli mandal on Sunday, triggering panic among residents of around 10 villages.

Forest officials said the tigress named B1, which was roaming in the forests of Dubbagudem and Varipet villages in Kasipet mandal till Saturday, came back to the forests of Kannala again. The tigress migrated to the district from Kumram Bheem Asifabad district and had stayed at Kannala before drifting towards Kasipet on February 3. The officials said steps were being taken to track the movement of the tigress, to ensure its safety and to prevent human loss.

Delhi's New Chief Minister To Take Oath After PM Modi's US Visit, BJP Mulls Top Contenders

GNS News Agency, Feb 10

The BJP's landmark victory in Delhi will see a new Chief Minister take oath after February 13, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's return from his US visit. The party secured a decisive mandate with 48 seats in the 70-member Assembly, marking its return to power in the capital after 27 years. The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faced a significant setback, winning only 22 seats, with prominent leaders including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia losing their constituencies. Five prominent BJP leaders have emerged as potential Chief Minister candidates. Parvesh Verma, who defeated incumbent CM Kejriwal in the New Delhi constituency, leads the list. Other contenders include former Opposition Leader Vijender Gupta, ex-state president Satish Upadhyay, Delhi BJP General Secretary Ashish Sood, and RSS veteran Jitendra Mahajan.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva indicated that the party's central leadership will make the final decision, leaving open the possibility of a fresh face or potentially a woman candidate for the position. The timing of the swear-



ing-in ceremony awaits PM Modi's return from his February 12-13 US visit, where he's scheduled to meet President Donald Trump. While a high-level meeting was held at BJP headquarters with Home Minister Amit Shah and party president JP Nadda, discussions about the chief ministerial choice remain under wraps.

Biren Singh resigns as CM, says it was honour to serve people of Manipur



GNS News Agency, Feb 10

Imphal: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on

Sunday tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan, officials said. Singh was accompanied by 14 MLAs belonging to the BJP and NPF. State BJP president A Sharda and senior saffron party leader Sambit Patra was also part of the delegation. After meeting the Governor, Singh went to the CM secretariat. In his letter to the Governor, Singh said, "It has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur thus far.

I am extremely grateful to the central government for time actions, interventions, developmental work and implementation of various projects for safeguarding the interests of every single Manipuri." On Saturday, Singh convened a meeting with BJP-led ruling alliance MLAs at the CM Secretariat in connection with the upcoming Assembly session beginning February 10. The meeting was held in the wake of the opposition Congress seeking to move a no-confidence motion against the government led by Singh.

Telangana Budget 2025-26 likely in March, local body polls take priority

GNS News Agency, Feb 10

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Budget for 2025-26 is expected to be presented in March, with the Congress government prioritising local body elections scheduled after February 15. This marks a shift from the recent practice of presenting the Budget in February, reverting to the earlier tradition of the March presentation. The State has the flexibility to present its Budget before March 31 for the next financial year, and the exercise was traditionally conducted in the second or third week of March. However, following the Union Budget's move to early February, Telangana has been aligning its schedule accordingly for the last couple of years.

Despite the approaching deadline, Budget preparations appear to be moving slowly at the ministerial level. Since December, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy held only one review meeting, and Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is yet to convene departmental consultations. Officials, however, have reportedly completed the initial Budget drafting and are awaiting final reviews. The delay in the departmental consultations is being attributed to the Congress government's plans to focus on the ongoing MLC polls, followed by the local body elections. Amid growing criticism, the Chief Minister is learnt to be keen to win all three MLC seats and a majority of local body elections, including gram panchayats, MPPs (Mandal Praja Parishads) and ZPPs (Zilla Praja Parishads), to prove his strength within the party and outside as well, prompting him to focus on po-



litical issues and regular administration.

A senior Finance Department official confirmed that while the technical work was done, the Budget would be refined after further review meetings with the Chief Minister and Finance Minister in the coming weeks. "The final Budget estimates for 2025-26 are yet to be determined, pending ministerial discussions. The Budget is likely to be presented in the third week of March," he said. He did not rule out the possibility of holding a marathon Budget review meeting by the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister before finalising the outlay. The Congress government presented its first full-fledged Budget in July last year with an outlay of Rs 2.91 lakh crore for 2024-25, slightly surpassing the previous BRS government's Rs 2.9 lakh crore Budget for 2023-24.

Harish Rao demands release of Rs 432 crore as bonus to farmers immediately



GNS News Agency, Feb 10

Siddipet: Former Minister T Harish Rao lashed at the ruling Congress for failing to keep its promise of giving Rs.500 as bonus on fine rice varieties. Speaking to news reporters in Siddipet on Sunday, Harish Rao said Rs.432 crore of the bonus was pending even after com-

pleting the procurement of paddy 48 days ago. Rao recalled that Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy had promised to release the bonus within 48 hours of procuring the paddy. The former Minister wrote a letter to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to release the bonus amount to all the farmers without any delay.

He said the bonus for 8.64 lakh tonnes of fine rice was still pending. Citing the instances of farmers roaming around offices, he said the farmers at Muchinthala in Mahabubnagar district had met the Collector recently seeking the release of bonus. Even though the fine rice was being sold at Rs 2,800 to Rs 3,000 per quintal in the open market, farmers had sold it to the government's procurement centres, hoping for the bonus.

However, the Congress government cheated the farmers. Harish Rao also recalled that the Congress actually came to power by promising bonus to all crops. He said the Congress had failed to complete the loan waiver as well besides breaking a host of promises made earlier.

Telangana farmers against parting with their land for Congress projects

Hyderabad: With farmers standing firm against parting with their land, the Telangana Congress government is facing an uphill task in grounding different projects across the State. The Regional Ring Road, pharma village, multiple irrigation projects, industrial park, Fourth City, Adani cement factory or name any project, farmers are up in arms against the State government.

They are vociferously opposing land acquisition and at many places, protests are being staged against the government. Be it Lagacherla, Yacharam mandal in Rangareddy, Makthal constituency, Mahabubabad or Nalgonda, farmers in all these places are not even allowing officials to conduct land surveys.

CM Revanth Reddy Calls for Unity Among Southern States to Protect Constitutional Rights

GNS News Agency, Feb 10

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has emphasized the need for southern states to unite in safeguarding the constitutional rights and guarantees granted by the Indian Constitution. He urged collective resistance against policies that disrupt the federal spirit, particularly those promoting a "one leader, one party" approach. Revanth Reddy made these remarks at the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL 2025) held in Thiruvananthapuram. Participating in the event organized by the renowned Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, he also engaged in a discussion with Mathrubhumi editor Manoj K. Das and other attendees. Concerns Over Parliamentary Seat Redistribution: The Chief Minister questioned the rationale behind parliamentary seat redistribution based on population, arguing that southern states, which have long implemented family planning policies and robust welfare programs, are now being unfairly penalized. Telangana's Economic Growth: Revanth Reddy highlighted Telangana's "Telangana Rising" vision, aimed at comprehensive and inclusive development. He reiterated the state's goal of transforming Hyderabad into a global city. Investment Boom: Telangana has become a hub for international investments, securing ₹1.82 lakh crore at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos. Welfare Initiatives: The state government is successfully balancing industrial growth with welfare measures, including:



Social Justice Policies: Telangana is the first state to conduct a comprehensive caste survey and initiate SC sub-categorization based on a Supreme Court directive. The government has declared February 4 as Telangana Social Justice Day to reinforce its commitment to equitable resource allocation for BCs, SCs, STs, and minorities. Economic Performance: According to the Union Government's latest economic survey, Telangana has the lowest inflation rate in India and leads in per capita income. Central Government's Disparities: The CM questioned why the Union Government was not supporting states with strong economies, particularly southern states and non-BJP-led governments. He emphasized that Telangana achieving a \$1 trillion economy would benefit India as a whole and urged the Center to extend its cooperation. Revanth Reddy's speech underlined the growing concerns of southern states over central policies, advocating for greater autonomy and cooperation to ensure their economic and political interests are protected.

KTR counters CM Revanth, offers to participate in fresh caste survey

GNS News Agency, Feb 10

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao, who demanded a fresh and scientific caste census, has also offered to participate in it along with party chief and Leader of Opposition K Chandrashekhara Rao and other senior leaders of the party. He was countering Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's claims during the recent Assembly session that BRS and BJP leaders had skipped the caste census to avoid revealing their land ownership details. The Chief Minister listed out that Chandrashekhara Rao, Rama Rao, T Harish Rao, T Padma Rao Goud and BJP MP DK Aruna among others did not participate in the caste survey when it was conducted across the State last year.

Calling the Chief Minister's remarks silly excuses, Rama Rao pointed out that the election affidavits of Chandrashekhara Rao, himself and other BRS leaders were available in the public domain on the Election Commission of India's website. "However, if a resurvey is conducted prop-



erly, we will all participate, including KCR, to prevent injustice to Backward Classes," he declared, emphasizing that BCs were being shortchanged by the Congress government due to miscalculations in the recently conducted survey.

Rohit Sharma hits spectacular ton, eases pressure ahead of Champions Trophy

GNS News Agency, Feb 10

New Delhi: Rohit Sharma the 'Batter' owed 'Captain' Rohit Sharma a favour for the longest time. On a sultry Sunday at the Barabati Stadium, the 37-year-old Mumbaier knew that the batter in him had no options left but to give the skipper a breathing space. A ton of stone might have been removed from his chest but his muted celebrations said it all. It was more of relief and less of happiness. He did that in style with a hundred (119, 90b, 12x4, 7x6) that will always be his personal favourite in terms of pressure quotient when he would have time to reflect on his white-ball career full of milestones. A performing captain is one who commands respect in the dressing room. Not that his stature has diminished in that change room but someone, who has played the game on his own terms wouldn't like men lurking around him with question mark running through the contours of their faces even if it is head coach Gautam Gambhir, who gave away very little while clapping for his skipper's hundred with a customary poker-face. Having endured a wretched run since the start of the New Zealand series at home, the affable Indian skipper faced the most scathing criticism in his 17-plus years at the international level. As much as players speak about "outside noise", an under-pressure man in a high-stakes world would be vulnerable after a point. The memes hurt, conjectures about living on borrowed time must have bruised his champions' ego big time. The criticism was not unwarranted. He was consis-



tently failing in Test matches and it came to a point where he had to drop himself from the playing XI of the Sydney Test match. But only he could have changed it all. Till the opening game in Nagpur, everything that could have gone wrong went wrong for Rohit — till February 9 happened. Finally, the sixes were soaring into the stands and one saw the vintage Rohit, who wasn't pre-empting anything but like good old days reacting to the deliveries.

Unlike Australia Tests where he was standing outside the crease trying to counter the movement, he stood deep inside the crease and things started happening. Just like everything goes wrong when it has to go wrong, things start falling in place when it has to. England bowlers made a cardinal mistake during the first ODI by trying to pepper Shreyas Iyer with short-pitched deliveries.

President Droupadi Murmu to visit Maha Kumbh Mela on Feb 10

GNS News Agency, Feb 10

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Monday and take a holy dip at the Sangam, her office said. Maha Kumbh, which began on Paus Purnima (January 13), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. It will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26. "During her day-long visit to Prayagraj, the President will take holy dip and perform Pooja at Sangam, perform Pooja and Darshan at Akshayvat and Hanuman Mandir, and also visit the Digital Kumbh Anubhav Centre,"



H-1B initial registration period to commence on March 7, 2025: USCIS



GNS News Agency, Feb 10

migration Services (USCIS) said on Wednesday (February 5, 2025). "During this period, prospective petitioners and representatives must use a USCIS online account to register each beneficiary electronically for the selection process and pay the associated registration fee for each beneficiary," it said. The registration fee is \$215.

It's a great programme: Trump appears to side with Musk in H-1B visa row The USCIS further said the FY 2026 H-1B cap will use the beneficiary-centric selection process launched in FY 2025. The U.S. fiscal begins on October 1, 2025. Indians are the main beneficiaries of the H-1B visas, which bring in the best of the talent and brains from across the world. Highly skilled professionals from India walk away with the overwhelming number of H-1B visas - which is Congressional mandated 65,000 every year and another 20,000 for those who received higher education from the U.S. According to the USCIS, under the beneficiary-centric process, registrations will be selected by a unique beneficiary rather than by registration. This new process is designed to reduce the potential for fraud and ensure each beneficiary would have the same chance of being selected, regardless of the number of registrations submitted on their behalf by an employer. "If enough unique beneficiaries are received by March 24, then the agency will randomly select unique beneficiaries and send selection notifications via users' USCIS online accounts," it said. "If enough unique beneficiaries were not received, then all registrations for unique beneficiaries that were properly submitted in the initial registration period will be selected," the statement said.

U.S. officials now say Trump only wants to displace Palestinians from Gaza temporarily



GNS News Agency, Feb 10

President Donald Trump's top diplomat and his main spokesperson on Wednesday (February 5, 2025) walked back the idea that he wants the permanent relocation of Palestinians from Gaza, after American allies and even Republican lawmakers rebuffed his suggestion that the U.S. take "ownership" of the territory. Mr. Trump had called for "permanently" resettling Palestinians from war-torn Gaza and left open the door to deploying American troops there as part of a massive rebuilding operation. But Secretary of State Marco Rubio and White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said he only sought to move the roughly 1.8 million Gazans temporarily to allow for reconstruction. Even that proposal has drawn criticism from Palestinians, who are worried they may never be allowed back in if they flee, and from the Arab nations that Trump has called on to take them in.

Mr. Rubio, on his first foreign trip as secretary of state, described Trump's proposal as a "very generous" offer to help with debris removal and reconstruction of the enclave following 15 months of fighting between Israel and Hamas. "In the interim, obviously people are going to have to live somewhere while you're rebuilding it," Mr. Rubio said in a news conference in Guatemala City. Mr. Leavitt said in a briefing with reporters in Washington that Gaza is "a demolition site" and referenced footage of the devastation.

"The president has made it clear that they need to be temporarily relocated out of Gaza," she said, calling it currently "an uninhabitable place for human beings" and saying it would be "evil to suggest that people should live in such dire conditions." Their comments contradicted Mr. Trump, who said Tuesday night, "If we can get a beautiful area to resettle people, permanently, in nice homes where they can be happy and not be shot and not be killed and not be knifed to death like what's happening in Gaza." He added that he envisioned "long-term" U.S. ownership of a redevelopment of the territory, which sits along the Mediterranean

Sea. In a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Pentagon on Wednesday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the military is "prepared to look at all options" for rebuilding Gaza. "We look forward to working with our allies, our counterparts, both diplomatically and militarily, to look at all options," Hegseth said. Egypt, Jordan and other U.S. allies in the Mideast have cautioned Mr. Trump that relocating Palestinians from Gaza would threaten Mideast stability, risk expanding the conflict and undermine a decades-long push by the U.S. and its allies for a two-state solution.

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry issued a sharply worded reaction to Trump, noting its long call for an independent Palestinian state was a "firm, steadfast and unwavering position." Saudi Arabia has been in negotiations with the U.S. over a deal to diplomatically recognize Israel in exchange for a security pact and other terms. "The duty of the international community today is to work to alleviate the severe human suffering endured by the Palestinian people, who will remain committed to their land and will not budge from it," the Saudi statement said. "The idea of Americans going in on the ground in Gaza is a non starter for every senator," the South Carolina lawmaker told reporters Wednesday. "So I would suggest we go back to what we've been trying to do which is destroy Hamas and find a way for the Arab world to take over Gaza and the West Bank, in a fashion that would lead to a Palestinian state that Israel can live with." Mr. Rubio insisted that Trump's position "was not meant as a hostile move."

"What he's very generously offered is the ability of the United States to go in and help with debris removal, help with munitions removal, help with reconstruction, the rebuilding homes and businesses and things of this nature so that then people can move back in," Rubio said. Still, the White House said Trump was ruling out sending U.S. dollars to aid in the reconstruction of Gaza. But Mr. Leavitt, like Mr. Trump, refused to rule out sending American troops into Gaza, saying of Mr. Trump, "he wants to preserve that leverage in negotiations." The Palestinians, Arab nations and others have rejected even a temporary relocation from Gaza, which would run counter to decades of U.S. policy calling for the creation of a Palestinian state with no further displacement of Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank. The proposals also appear to trash months of negotiations by the Biden administration to draft a "day after" plan for the reconstruction and governance of Gaza. President Joe Biden had tried to lock in that plan - which calls for joint governance of the territory by the Palestinian Authority under U.N. stewardship and a multi-national peace-keeping force - before leaving office by inviting Trump's main Mideast envoy into final talks over a Gaza ceasefire.

Trump meets Japan's PM Shigeru Ishiba as China trade war simmers

GNS News Agency, Feb 10



ister Shinzo Abe but has no relationship with Ishiba, who took office in October. That is something Japanese officials want to change, and they plan to invite Trump to visit Japan. Japan is gearing for Trump to demand concessions to reduce the \$56 billion bilateral trade surplus and stave off the threat of tariffs.

Tokyo has been preparing some concessions, officials told Reuters, including considering offering support for a \$44 billion gas pipeline in Alaska. SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son has also promised to invest hundreds of billions in artificial intelligence in the U.S. Options to increase manufacturing investment in the U.S., semiconductor chips and artificial intelligence are also expected to figure in the discussions. "The Japanese are definitely thinking of ways to both reduce the deficit and create jobs in the United States in industrial sectors that are of particular interest to Donald Trump," said Kenneth Weinstein, head of Japan program at Washington's conservative Hudson Institute think tank. There are areas of tension beyond trade, including the attempted takeover of U.S. Steel by Japan's Nippon Steel. Former President Joe Biden blocked the deal but delayed its enforcement pending legal action; Trump has also vowed to block the deal. However, there are also solid signs of stability and continuity in ties and the two leaders are expected to formally agree to language touting their alliance and common views on the economy and security issues, including China and Taiwan, according to another official familiar with the discussions.

U.S. President Donald Trump meets Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba for the first time on Friday (February 7, 2025) as two allies wary of China's rise in work to boost business and security ties while an escalating trade war threatens to rupture the global economy. Mr. Trump, whose first three weeks in office have shredded norms and shaken foreign capitals from Ottawa to Bogota, has taken a more conventional approach to Washington's longstanding Asia-Pacific allies, including Japan, South Korea, Australia and the Philippines. But those friendships may be tested as Mr. Trump's early fight with China over synthetic opioids and warnings of tariffs against other countries - Japan included - threaten to disrupt commercial relations in Asia and beyond. Mr. Trump put a 10% tariff on all imports from China in what he called an "opening salvo" in a clash between the world's two largest economies, sending consumers and businesses scrambling to adjust.

Japan is especially trade-dependent: it is a major exporter and counts on imports for much of its food and natural resources, and many of its firms are deeply invested in and reliant on China. Tokyo shares the hawkish outlook towards China of Mr. Trump's national security team over Beijing's global ambitions and extensive territorial claims in Asia, including the vital chip-producing island of Taiwan. At the same time, Japanese officials are wary of possible efforts by Beijing to court the U.S. President with promises of cooperation on key global issues, including trade. Mr. Trump spoke to Chinese President Xi Jinping days before taking office and has said he will discuss tariffs with him soon. Japanese officials speaking privately say they are comfortable in dealing with Mr. Trump's China hawks, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and National Security Michael Waltz, but less so with those in the administration with strong business ties with Beijing, such as billionaire Elon Musk, who has developed a significant Washington power base. "There's two foreign heads of state that have been received in the Oval Office," said Rahm Emanuel, Biden's ambassador to Tokyo. "That's Bibi Netanyahu of Israel, and Japan. So that's a good thing, and that's a good sign." Trump was close with the late Japanese Prime Min-

Blowing the cover: America's long-standing affair with television espionage

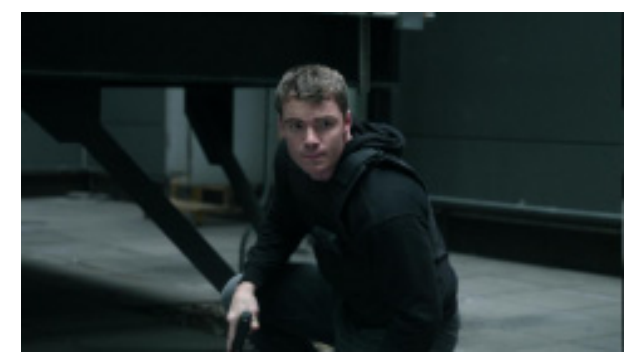
GNS News Agency, Feb 10

For Netflix, 2025 began with a worldwide streaming hit - The Night Agent: Season 2. The pervasiveness of spy entertainment in American media meant that success was more a matter of routine, and Americans have indeed eagerly loved and followed along with the fictional pursuits of their national intelligence agencies. It took a little over a decade since the television boom for spycraft stories to start syndicating over the medium. Since the 1950s, there has not been a decade in American television devoid of a spy staple. With each show shaping, deepening, and reflecting the anxieties of the public watching it, U.S. spy shows have come to define an omnipresent storytelling medium.

The reputation of "the spy" in worldwide media has certainly undergone severe rehabilitation. What was considered in early literature a profession of deceit, has become a personification of national interests. The rise of spy fiction in literature coincided with official efforts following the Second World War to establish a robust intelligence agency. The United States formed the CIA in 1947, and the Agency has since then built a symbiotic relationship with Hollywood.

Through radio shows and then early television, the American audience was made familiar with the "agent". They became an invisible, imagined first line of defence against enemy infiltration. Poring through declassified FBI and CIA files, showrunners created a prototype of the spy that continues to live on our television sets today. Driven by morals of patriotism over the greed of materialism, spies are compelling characters. With the U.S.' tendencies to play World Police, the spy genre has always had an interested audience in need of comfort and reassurance. That comfort is usually found at the end of a long drawn-out violent sequence, which is justified by the fact that the violence benefits American democracy. The plot structure of spy shows has shown little evolution, either safely transporting a secret object from point A to point B, or escaping something or chasing someone. Often, their enemies range from international counterparts, criminal organisations, or domestic terrorists creating mischief at home. The contours of the enemies do not matter as much as their existence.

It may be a lucky accident for the CIA that the commercial usage of television, the peak years of the Cold War, and the most powerful years of McCarthyism overlapped to brew an espionage storm. In the early 1950s, spies on television were less the result of creative imagination and more the derivation of FBI files. With communism as the main villain, shows carried the binary understandings of WWII world order. Scripts often parroted the black-and-white doomsday scenarios promoted by the government and justified the existence of intelligence agencies as guardians of the American ideal. Things had to be more relaxed in the coming decade, even as the American government was running amok internationally. Buoyed by the success of the first few James Bond films, espionage found a loyal audience and television was fast to respond. The 1960s saw television reach a saturation point with multiple shows running parallelly. Shows like The Man from U.N.C.L.E. (1964), and Mission: Impossible (1966) cemented the essentials of the American spy genre. Unlike their predecessors, these shows were optimistic, self-assured in the might of America, comprising a stylish core group who jetted off to European locations and mixed with suspense and humour, while bringing contemporary issues of race and gender to the fore. The decade saw genre blending as well with The Wild Wild West (1965), bringing cowboy spies to the screens. Finally, Get Smart (1969) wrapped the decade up with show-mocking and satirising the genre. The next two decades were a moment of self-reckoning for the American public who would go on to learn some uncomfortable truths about its government. In the last few years, the United States had not only faced the missile crisis, but had also actively contributed to the death toll of the Cambodian civil unrest, and still had troops on the ground in Vietnam. These international tensions were bookended by the Watergate scandal which seemed to blow the lid off. Accordingly, spies on TV ad-



justed and took a flight back home to spend more time on domestic issues. The agents started to become more cynical, with the 80s ushering in the age of the disillusioned spy. The political shift to conservatism, with the landslide 1980 election of Republican Ronald Reagan to the White House, was reflected in Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan novel series which hit the press in 1984 and was appreciated publicly by Reagan. Meanwhile, on television, MacGyver (1985) and The Equalizer (1985) featured disenchanted leads, who were reconsidering the American espionage methods. With the fall of Soviet powers in the early 1990s, the American spy setup had to change its goalpost, and in the meantime invited influences from science-fiction and fantasy to release shows like The X Files (1993). Within two months of the 9/11 terrorist attack, three U.S. espionage shows were airing simultaneously: J.J. Abrams' Alias, Michael Frost Beckner's The Agency, and the Kiefer Sutherland-starring 24. Needless to say, these shows answered President George W. Bush's call for a "war on terror" with a jingoistic spirit that reignited public interest in intelligence agencies. When Sutherland as Jack Bauer completed his decade of American counter-terrorism, Claire Danes' Carrie Mathison came in from the wings to take the mantle of the spy who allayed American fear in Homeland (2011). The show shared the public's espionage enthusiasm with Joe Weisberg's period Cold War drama The Americans (2013). This decade-upon-decade of television media wouldn't have been possible without the tacit support of the agencies portrayed in it. Information about covert missions is not made public in real-time. In this fog of secrecy, these fictional shows occupy the space of facts. The fact that it is common knowledge that the CIA and FBI commonly consult on the scripts, add a veneer of perceived legitimacy. Since the 1950s, the CIA has been eager to consult on scripts. Presently, it has become a more structured affair with FBI/CIA entertainment industry liaisons working closely with Hollywood directors. Homeland producer Alex Gansa, in a 2016 interview to IndieWire, candidly revealed the levels of access Hollywood gets. He admitted that a big part of the pre-production involved spending days in Washington DC, in a "three-to-five-day information-gathering summit with CIA officials and intelligence officers" who inform them of the most relevant risks to the U.S. These, he said, contributed to the Season 5 plot lines referencing Edward Snowden, West Asia, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. These agencies, therefore, script these shows themselves - setting the agenda and deciding the next villain for American television. Spy shows have consistently ranked in the top 10 most-watched American shows each year. They now not only target the American public but seek to invite a global audience. The first season of Night Agent is the seventh most-watched English-language Netflix show ever. Yet, these shows have failed to grasp a semblance of nuance. Truth and facts often find themselves lost in exaggerated plots. Since this escapist thrill is what drives the audience to them, there is little incentive for change. What makes spies compelling to the audience beyond being civilian heroes, is their cool professionalism that ensures the safety of the American public. Maybe not in the real world, but in the world of spies, your national "enemy" is bound to lose. With Night Agent, we see this enemy taking the shape of the U.S. government itself, with corruption seeping into the bones of the White House.

Guatemala gives Rubio a second deportation deal for migrants being sent home from the U.S.

GNS News Agency, Feb 10



no one has to leave the country," Arévalo said. To that end, a high-level Guatemalan delegation, including from the private sector, will travel to Washington in the coming weeks. Arévalo also announced the formation of a new border security force that will patrol Guatemala's borders with Honduras and El Salvador. The force will be made up of police and soldiers and will combat transnational crime of all kinds, he said. Rubio's trip has been dogged by the administration's dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development, including a late Tuesday order abruptly pulling almost all agency staffers off the job. After the news conference with Guatemala's president, Rubio headed directly to the U.S. Embassy, where staffers and their families who were unsure of their futures gathered to hear from their new boss. The meet-and-greet event was closed to the press, as was an earlier similar event in El Salvador. Both Guatemala and El Salvador have significant USAID missions. In Panama on Sunday before the shut down announcement, Rubio's embassy event had been open to journalists. From there Rubio wrapped up his Guatemala stop by visiting a local migration facility near an air force base where deportees are processed for integration back into their home communities. Under the measures announced Wednesday by Guatemala's president, the number of deportees is expected to rise by as much as 40%. The program has been supported by the U.S. State Department and Department of Homeland Security. Rubio also got a briefing on Guatemala's counternarcotics efforts, including the interception of at least four shipments of fentanyl precursors since late November totaling 127.5 kilograms (280 pounds), enough to produce more than 114 million doses of the drug. Rubio, who has offered exemptions to Trump's sweeping freeze on foreign assistance, has signed waivers to allow funding for both programs to continue, officials said.

Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo said Wednesday (February 5, 2025) his country will accept migrants from other countries who are being deported from the United States, the second deportation deal that Secretary of State Marco Rubio has reached during a Central America trip that has been focused mainly on immigration. Under the agreement announced by Arévalo, the deportees would be returned to their home countries at U.S. expense. "We have agreed to increase by 40% the number of flights of deportees both of our nationality as well as deportees from other nationalities," Arévalo said at a news conference with Rubio. Previously, including under the Biden administration, Guatemala had been accepting on average seven to eight flights of its citizens from the U.S. per week. Under President Donald Trump it's also been one of the countries that have had migrants returned on U.S. military planes. El Salvador announced a similar but broader agreement on Monday. Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele said his country would accept U.S. deportees of any nationality, including American citizens and legal residents who are imprisoned for violent crimes. Both Trump and Rubio acknowledged the legal uncertainty of sending Americans to another country for imprisonment. "I'm just saying if we had a legal right to do it, I would do it in a heartbeat," Trump told reporters Tuesday in the Oval Office. "I don't know if we do or not, we're looking at that right now."

Rubio called it a very generous offer but said there were "obviously legalities involved. We have a Constitution." Immigration, a Trump administration priority, has been the major focus of Rubio's first foreign trip as America's top diplomat, a five-country tour spanning Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. The agreements with El Salvador and Guatemala potentially help the Trump administration address what has always been a key sticking point in immigration enforcement since not everyone in the U.S. illegally can be easily sent back home. Venezuela, for example, has been a major source of migrants coming to the U.S. in recent years, but rarely can the U.S. deport Venezuelans back to their home country. But the U.S. already has a robust network set up to send people to several Central American countries. Guatemala will expand its capacity to receive not just Guatemalans, but also migrants from other countries who will then be repatriated to their home countries. The details still need to be worked out. "However, the permanent answer to immigration is to bring development so that

To tackle digital banking frauds, Indian banks to have special Internet domain 'bank.in'



In a bid to tackle cyber security threats and rising instances of digital fraud, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will introduce the 'bank.in' exclusive Internet domain for all Indian banks. This domain, registrations for which will start in April, is expected to help customers identify genuine and legitimate websites of banks, and steer clear of suspicious ones. According to RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, the 'bank.in' domain rollout will be followed by the 'fin.in' domain for the country's financial sector.

Malhotra, who flagged the "surge in digital frauds" in India as a matter of concern, also announced that the central bank proposes to extend additional factor of authentication (AFA) to online international digital payments—using India-issued cards—made to offshore merchants who are enabled for such authentication. Currently, AFA is mandatory for domestic transactions only. "The rapid digitalisation of financial services has brought convenience and efficiency but has also increased exposure to cyber threats and digital risks, which are getting sophisticated day by day. The surge in digital frauds is a matter of concern, warranting action by all stakeholders," Malhotra said while announcing

these two measures in his statement on the central bank's bi-monthly monetary policy. "Banks and NBFCs must continuously improve preventive and detective controls to mitigate cyber risks. They must develop robust incident response and recovery mechanisms, reinforced through periodic testing, for operational resilience," Malhotra added.

According to the Indian central bank, the new exclusive Internet domains for the country's banking and financial sector would help reduce cyber security threats and malicious activities like phishing, while streamlining secure financial services and enhancing trust in digital banking and payment services. "The Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) will act as the exclusive registrar. The actual registrations will commence from April 2025. Detailed guidelines for banks will be issued separately. Going forward, it is planned to have an exclusive domain viz, 'fin.in' for other non-bank entities in the financial sector," the RBI said in a release. On the additional factor of authentication for international online payments, the central bank said that it wants such transactions to have a level of safety similar to digital payments within India. "Introduction of Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) for digital payments has enhanced the safety of transactions which, in turn, provided confidence to customers to adopt digital payments.

This requirement, however, is mandatory for domestic transactions only... In order to provide a similar level of safety for online international transactions using cards issued in India, it is proposed to enable AFA for international card not present (online) transactions as well. This will provide an additional layer of security in cases where the overseas merchant is enabled for AFA. Draft circular will be issued shortly for feedback from stakeholders," the RBI said.

Less restrictive policy and no explicit exchange rate targeting – takeaways from RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra's first monetary policy

Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra made some interesting observations, which are indirect in nature but there are clear signals to the banking sector and other market participants about the rupee, liquidity management and monetary policy changes on the cards. Malhotra said that some banks are reluctant to lend in the uncollateralised call money market. Instead, they are passively parking funds with the Reserve Bank. He asked the banks to actively trade among themselves in the uncollateralised call money market to make it deeper and vibrant for better signal extraction from the weighted average call money rate (WACR). This could be aimed at facilitating the orderly functioning of the market by avoiding any liquidity shortfall. While the market was expecting more liquidity infusion through various means, it has not happened.



RBI has been employing all tools at the RBI's disposal to face the multi-pronged challenges.

It's apparent that he wants many banks which are flush with funds to lend in the call money market to take care of the liquidity shortage in the system. This is at a time when the RBI intervened in the forex market to sell dollars in a bid to prevent a major slide in the rupee. Foreign investors were taking out money from the Indian market. The drainage of liquidity is mainly attributed to advance tax payments in December 2024, capital outflows, forex operations and a significant pickup in currency in circulation in January this year, he said. Currency in circulation has risen by Rs 1.80 lakh crore, or 5.3 per cent, to Rs 35.99 lakh crore as of January 2025

Governor said the RBI's interventions in the forex market focus on smoothening excessive and disruptive volatility rather than targeting any specific exchange rate level or band. While he says the exchange rate of the Indian rupee is determined by market forces, he might be favouring some depreciation in the rupee – a clear change in the stance as during the time of the previous Governor, there were clear efforts to keep the rupee from depreciating sharply. The Indian rupee (INR) depreciated by 3.2 per cent against the US dollar since November 6, 2024, the day the presidential election results were announced in the US, largely mirroring the 2.4 per cent appreciation in the dollar index during the same period. The RBI has used the forex kitty to prevent a crash in the rupee. At the same time, he's hinting that the RBI may not be averse to the idea of a steady depreciation in the rupee in line with other currencies.

The Indian economy, though continuing to remain strong and resilient, also did not remain immune to these global headwinds, with the Indian Rupee coming under depreciation pressure in the recent months. Malhotra said the

Less restrictive policy on the anvil?

Malhotra also hinted the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), while continuing with the neutral stance, felt that a less restrictive monetary policy is more appropriate at the current juncture. This could be an indication that the MPC might change the stance from neutral if the inflation-growth dynamics turns favourable in the forthcoming policies. There are expectations of two more rate cuts in the calendar year 2025 if inflation moves in the projected trajectory. It's clear that the new governor wants growth also picks up and he said "we should aspire for 7 per cent growth". He says the MPC will take a decision in each of its future meetings based on a fresh assessment of the macroeconomic outlook. The RBI is committed to conduct monetary policy and take such measures, as appropriate, which are timely, carefully calibrated and clearly communicated, to facilitate conducive macroeconomic conditions that reinforce price stability, sustained economic growth and financial stability, he said. Though the RBI cut the Repo rate, the markets were not very enthused as the reduction was on the expected lines and they were hoping for a change in the stance from neutral with more liquidity infusion. The benchmark Sensex fell by 198 points, or 0.25 per cent, to 77,860.19 and NSE Nifty lost 43 points, or 0.18 per cent, at 23,559.95. Bank shares languished with the BSE Bankex declining by 0.49 per cent. The initial reaction of bond markets has been one of disappointment, with yields inching up a few basis points. The benchmark 10-year bond yield was at 6.70 per cent. Interest rates are expected to soften over the next few months. The rupee gained 15 paise at 87.43 against the dollar.

'Real estate to make big strides, middle-income home buyers to gain': Experts react to RBI repo rate cut

Marking another major relief to middle income consumers, within a week since the commencement of the Budget Session 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced a repo rate cut of 25 basis points, bringing it down to 6.25 per cent. After keeping the rate unchanged for 11 consecutive policy meetings, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), comprising three RBI members and three external members, made the decision to change the borrowing rate. The move also marks the first rate cut since the pandemic.

As the current year's retail inflation is projected to be 4.2 per cent, the central bank, under the leadership of its new governor Sanjay Malhotra, reduced the rate. The rate was kept constant owing to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation being more than the 6 per cent threshold. With the Budget exempting middle income group I (under Rs 12 lakh annual income) from income taxes, the borrowing rate cut is expected to redirect consumer spending to long term investments, especially in the real estate sector. In light of this, several industry experts have welcomed the move.

BankBazaar CEO Adhil Shetty, said, "With the tax rate cuts earlier this month, the salaried and the middle class have received a double boost to tackle inflation and boost household savings. "If you have a 20-year home loan at a rate of 8.75% and had paid 12 EMIs by March, with a rate cut of 25 bps kicking in from April, your interest savings will improve by 8417 per lakh," he added. Samir Jasuja, the founder and CEO of PropEquity, said, "The 25bps cut in repo rate, along with the announcements in the Budget to-

wards boosting consumption, will help increase economic activity and direct investments towards the real estate sector especially in the affordable and mid-income housing. Making borrowing cheaper will not only help homebuyers, both new and old, but also provide liquidity to the developers." Mr. Garvit Tiwari, the director and co-founder of InfraMantra, said, "While the luxury real estate segment may not be impacted much, this move will immensely benefit affordable and mid-income housing. Declining urban consumption is a cause for concern and with this cut, some reversal is likely in the coming quarters." Vishal Raheja, founder and managing director of InvestoXpert.com, said, "Lower borrowing costs will enhance homebuyer sentiment, making housing loans more affordable and boosting residential sales. The tax relief announced in the Budget, coupled with this rate cut, will increase disposable income and potentially revive demand in the housing sector." Sunil Sisodiya, founder of Geetanjali Homestea, said, "Lower interest rates have historically encouraged fence-sitters to take decisive steps towards property investments, driving demand across residential and commercial segments. With the inflation outlook stable and economic growth projected at 6.7%, we anticipate increased liquidity in the market, making real estate an even more attractive asset class." "We see this as a significant opportunity for first-time buyers and investors looking to capitalize on a more favorable financial environment," he added. Kushal Rastogi, the founder and CEO of Knight Fintech, said, "For fintech lenders, this cautious stance translates into a careful approach to uncollateralized short-term lending.

Social media post claims this exercise is good for diabetics; an expert, netizens are not convinced



After we decoded the benefits of calf muscle tapping for diabetics, we wanted to understand if doing a deep squat with a mobile torso helps diabetics — much like a social media post claimed. On Instagram, physiotherapist Madz Mariwa said: "Simple exercise for DIABETIC patient", and many users wanted to know how the exercise "applies specifically to a diabetic patient".

Since we also wanted an answer to that question, we

turned to Dr Ravi Shekhar Jha, director pulmonology, MD, MRCP, Fortis Hospital, Faridabad who stressed that there isn't a specific exercise that's uniquely designed or exclusive for people with diabetes. "However, regular physical activity, in general, is crucial for managing diabetes because it helps burn calories, improve insulin sensitivity, and control blood sugar levels," said Dr Jha. "In the video, it seems the influencer is trying to target the pancreas which is related to insulin release. However, we must know that the pancreas is an exocrine and endocrine gland and not a muscle (that can be trained by exercise)," said Dr Jha.

According to the expert, when influencers promote a "specific exercise" for diabetes, it might be "more about marketing or emphasising certain benefits of that exercise rather than it being the only or best option". "While some exercises may be particularly effective for blood sugar control, like strength training or aerobic exercises, the key is consistency in any form of physical activity that burns calories and improves overall fitness," said Dr Jha. It's important to approach such claims with a healthy dose of skepticism and rely on guidance from healthcare professionals, who can provide personalised advice based on an individual's health status and needs. "Always remember that a balanced routine combining various forms of exercise — cardio, strength, and flexibility — is typically the most effective way to manage diabetes," said Dr Jha.

Vijay Varma recalls going 'blank' during a crucial night shoot scene on Dahaad set: 'Main atka tha abhi'; why memory lapses happen

"Main atka tha abhi. (I was stuck recently). The recent memory I have is from Dahaad where I went blank. Everyone was there. It was a night scene with four cameras rolling. It's a big moment in the series. Us raat me na mere se dialogue nikal rahe theek se (I was neither able to say the dialogues properly), or I am fumbling or getting blank. I struggled with it for three hours. Just could not achieve it. People were getting anxious," recalled Varma.

What he did next was unanticipated. "I started laughing," shared Varma, adding, "Whenever I was fumbling, I laughed. I said, what to do, it wasn't happening. Aaj nahi nikal raha hai. We had shot for 70 days and this was the first incident there." Stressing that he "didn't want to beat myself for it," the actor continued: "I wasn't even apologising to everybody that I am fumbling because I feel that an actor is not a machine. Emotions need to be generated. It could very well be that something may not work out at one point. It's a human condition. Actors have to allow themselves to fail in front of the camera. It's okay." He further shared that he told the director that he was there in the scene emotionally but "not able to say the lines properly". "Trust me, if the emotions are correct, I will look after it during dubbing. I told him so. I dubbed the entire scene. You wouldn't even find it out," Varma said during a conversation with Sunny Hinduja.

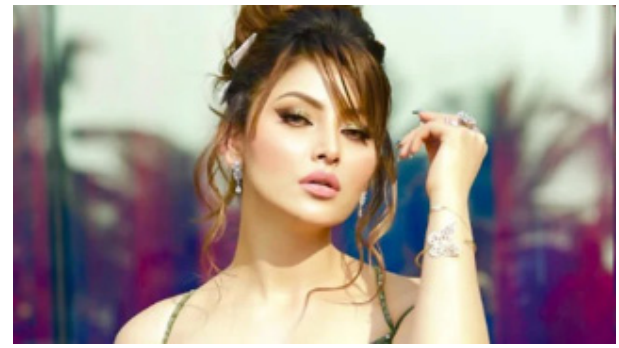


can result in cognitive disturbances. Losing just one hour of sleep may adversely affect memory and other cognitive functions, and it could take up to four days for the cognitive functions to return to baseline," Dr Kumar told indianexpress.com.

"If a person is not focused on a particular task and is trying to do multiple things at the same time, they could suffer from episodes of memory lapses, as attention and concentration may be compromised," said Dr Kumar. Dr Kumar also cautioned that one should not forget a real brain disease. "Episodes of fumbling and memory issues could be a beginning of mild cognitive impairment. If these issues become frequent or if they disrupt the normal day-to-day functioning, a neurologist should be consulted for evaluation," said Dr Kumar.

'After a point woh sab cheezein latak jaati hain': Urvashi Rautela opens up about Botox; can repeated treatments cause skin sagging?

Botox has become one of the most popular cosmetic procedures worldwide, with many opting for it to achieve a youthful appearance. While it promises smoother skin and wrinkle reduction, its long-term effects remain a topic of debate. Actor Urvashi Rautela recently shared her thoughts on the disadvantages of Botox, emphasising how repeated use can lead to sagging skin over time. In an interview with Hindi Rush, she said, "See, botox, about this thing I would say there are a lot of disadvantages also attached with it. Jab bhi koi ladki ya female woh karayegi, so after a point aap dekhenge woh sab cheezein latak jaati hain. Phir aap unko fix karne ke liye dobara usko karayenge, phir uske kuch side effects aate hain... phir aap kuch karayenge, phir side effects aate hain. It is a personal decision."



Dr Vuppapalapati says, "The decision to undergo Botox should be based on individual aesthetic goals, skin condition, and medical history. Consulting with an experienced aesthetic surgeon or dermatologist is essential to determine whether Botox is the best option or if alternative treatments may be more suitable." Before undergoing the procedure, individuals should research the qualifications and experience of their provider. Botox should always be administered by a licensed professional with expertise in facial anatomy to ensure natural-looking results and minimise complications. "It is also important to have realistic expectations," says Dr Vuppapalapati. "Botox does not permanently stop ageing but helps soften wrinkles and prevent new ones from forming. Patients should also disclose any medical conditions, allergies, or medications they are taking, as certain conditions such as neuromuscular disorders may contraindicate Botox use."

Founder and CEO of Karyon Bio, USA, highlights role of AI and Bioinformatics in healthcare

Hyderabad: As AI continues to refine the blueprint of life, the fusion of Bioinformatics and Artificial Intelligence would remain at the heart of personalized medicine, drug discovery, and genomic research, shaping the future of global healthcare, said Srinivas Thirunagari, Founder and CEO of Karyon Bio, California, USA. During an invited talk entitled 'AI, Bioinformatics and the future of Healthcare: Innovations and Opportunities' organized by the Department of Computational and Systems Biology, School of Life Sciences, in association with the Federation of Asian Biotech Associations (FABA) here.

So, can repeated Botox treatments cause skin sagging over time?

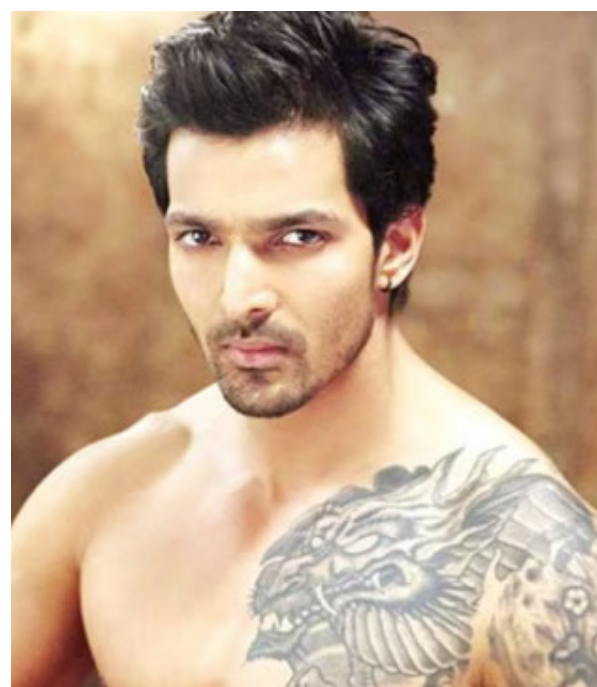
Dr Gunasekar Vuppapalapati, senior reconstructive, aesthetic plastic surgeon at GVG Invivo Hospitals, tells indianexpress.com, "The idea that repeated Botox injections cause skin sagging is a common misconception. Botox works by temporarily relaxing the muscles that cause wrinkles, preventing excessive facial movement that leads to fine lines and creases. It does not weaken the skin itself but rather limits muscle contraction." Botox does not lead to sagging if administered correctly and appropriately. However, improper use — such as excessive dosing or incorrect injection placement — can cause temporary muscle weakening, which might contribute to a 'heavy' or droopy appearance. This effect is not permanent and typically resolves as the Botox wears off. In some cases, prolonged muscle inactivity can cause mild atrophy (muscle thinning), which may contribute to subtle changes in facial structure over time. However, this is not the same as skin sagging, primarily caused by natural aging, collagen loss, and gravity. How can individuals decide whether Botox is right for them, and what precautions should they take before undergoing the procedure?

Sai Pallavi, Naga Chaitanya shoulder a layered romance but get bogged down by superficial drama



doesn't really get fleshed out enough for it to register even a semblance of an impact. The same with Divya Pillai's character, who plays the template 'hero's friend' albeit, this time as the 'heroine's friend.' There is a gender reversal but the beats are the same. Despite her story being the first domino that falls, there is very little focus on her, and even at a very important moment in the last act, her feelings are completely discarded to focus on the lead pairing. Such issues become really glaring mainly because there is so much happening around the central love story that it gets very distracting. Even back in the Pakistan jail, there is a largely one-note representation of what was happening, and it becomes too jingoistic, and less patriotic. In many ways, the film may remind us of Mani Ratnam's Roja, which was also about a woman running from pillar to post to secure the release of her husband kidnapped in Kashmir. It was also based on a true story, and a play on the story of Sathyavan-Savithri. The touches of both the film and the story are seen in Thandel, however, it fails to ask the bigger questions that come from such a daunting task. Why should a single woman go through all this when it is something that the bureaucracy should have taken on suo moto. Why didn't the State and Union governments do the necessary thing without making a woman go through various ways to bring it to their notice? But those are questions that can wait, because Thandel doesn't really explore the psyche of the fisherfolk caught in the neighbouring country's prison. We don't really know what goes through their minds despite letters being written and tears being shed. There is absolutely no sense of human drama in these portions, and instead, we are left to see Raju play the thandel for them in a fight against a ruthless group of Pakistani prisoners whose only aim is to humiliate India and Indians.

While using real-life incidents to explain the red-tape involved in the release of the fisherfolk is interesting, the timeline is never clear, and we are told it's been months since it happened, but we never actually feel it. Even when there is an almost anti-climactic showdown in the Pakistan prison, which is once again, inspired from what actually happened, the focus shifts towards the romance and not the plight of the prisoners. This takes away from the agonising wait of the 22 innocent men, and we feel it doesn't do justice to their stories. What we actually feel is the love that binds Sathya and Raju together despite their own decisions holding them apart. This dichotomy is wonderfully accentuated by the music of Devi Sri Prasad, which is undoubtedly the soul of the film. He becomes a different beast altogether in such romantic films, and throughout Thandel, we understand why he is one of the best at what he does. Of course, he uses the Bujji Thalli song throughout the film in various forms, but every single time, the strings used in the background score always manages to tug at our own heartstrings. Another wonderful aspect of Thandel is the rich visual quality, courtesy Shamdat's work, that ensures that the vast expanses of the sea feel as familiar as the stormy waters of Gujarat and the dusty cells of Pakistan. Love comes in different forms. Despite generations of various arts trying to define what love is all about, we have always found ways to find a new and personal dimension of love. In Thandel, as the credits roll, we understand that the weight of love and the burden of life intertwine with each other in the hope that the former might just win any battle with the latter. But the fact that there was space for just one love story to bloom rather than 22 life stories to come to life is why Thandel is a lovely romance that doesn't go all the way because it falls short of becoming an effective drama.



In an interview with SCREEN, actor Harshvardhan Rane opened up about the re-release of Sanam Teri Kasam, its original box office collection, and much more.

and pain that I went through. I will pray that for any actor on the planet because it's a strange place to be in," he says.

The sequel of Sanam Teri Kasam has already been announced, with Harshvardhan returning to reprise his role. However, he reveals that everything will come in motion only if the re-release receives a good response. "Every ticket is a step towards Sanam Teri Kasam 2. Motivation is always through commerce. When you make money, you want to make more products which make more money," adding that the female lead actor hasn't been locked yet. "Step by step challenge, nothing on the female lead yet. After seeing the final collections now, everyone will be intrinsically motivated to make part two. There's something called a trial reel on Instagram, agar reel banaane ke lie confirmation chahie, toh film banaane ke lie toh chahiye na baba. In the real world, one needs that validation," he shares. In other news, Sanam Teri Kasam's female lead and Pakistani actor Mawra Hocane recently tied the knot with actor Ameer Gilani. Ask him if they have spoken after her wedding or re-release announcement. "To be honest, I am not in touch with her. The directors, producers, actors, we all felt so much pain in the beginning, that we all lost touch. It was very painful for all of us. When you see a void in your dreams, you want to just stay quiet and be with yourself," concludes Harshvardhan.

Himesh Reshammiya delivers latest cringe watch; fans say, 'Gunda walked so this film can run'



Himesh Reshammiya's mass actioner Badass Ravi Kumar hit the theatres today and the social media users are already in love with the Keith Gomes directorial, albeit ironically. Many called it a tribute to 1980s masala entertainers and people are already sharing 'completely uninged' dialogues from the film as memes. The film's box office collections have surpassed expectations, earning more than Khushi Kapoor-Junaid Khan starrer Loveyapa which also released today. Several audience reviews flooded Twitter, with most of them talking about Badass Ravi Kumar's 'paisa-

vasool content'. A user wrote, "Badass Ravi Kumar is a Low Budget Monstrous Film with Strong Content. People in the Theatre are Whistling. This film has the potential to Emerge as a Blockbuster on the Box-Office. Himesh Reshammiya did better acting than Salman and Akshay." "#HimeshReshammiya's #BadassRaviKumar films don't need a review Coz this is real cinema," another viewer tweeted. A film enthusiast even compared Badass Ravi Kumar to the 1998 cringe watch Gunda, featuring Mithun Chakraborty, Mukesh Rishi and Shakti Kapoor. "Gunda walked so that #BadassRaviKumar can run," he tweeted, along with both the film's posters. Another viewer wrote, "Ravi Kumar is a character you won't forget anytime soon! So much swag!" Starring Himesh Reshammiya as the protagonist and superstar Prabhu Deva as the antagonist gangster, the film also stars Kirti Kulhari, Johnny Lever, and Sanjay Mishra. The film is a typical combination of huge heists, slow-motion scenes and illogical stunts. The music has been composed by Himesh Reshammiya, with Ganesh Acharya's choreography. Badass Ravi Kumar is a spin-off to the film The Xposé (2014). Talking about the opening day box office numbers, according to the industry tracker Sacnisk, the movie earned around Rs 90 lakh from its morning shows on Friday. On the other hand, Khushi and Junaid's Loveyapa managed to make just Rs 44 lakh. In addition, the rom-com had a 5.6% occupancy rate in the theatres, while the action drama delivered a 13% occupancy rate.

Struggling Dharmendra broke into Dilip Kumar's house, watched the actor sleep: 'Began to fancy that Dilip and I were siblings'

Dharmendra was still a college student in Punjab when he was convinced that he and Dilip Kumar, the movie star who dominated Bollywood, were siblings. Dharmendra and Dilip Kumar did not know each other, and were not related in any way, yet, as fans often tend to believe, he thought that Dilip Kumar was his brother. Such was his passion for the star that Dharmendra went to Dilip's house during his first visit to Bombay, on the second day itself, and found himself standing at the star's bedroom door. When the Mughal-e-Azam star screamed in terror, Dharmendra ran out of his house. Dharmendra recalled this anecdote in Dilip Kumar's autobiography, Dilip Kumar: The Substance and the Shadow, where he shared that in 1952, when he was still studying in Ludhiana, he came to Mumbai for a short visit during which, he was determined to meet Dilip Kumar. "For some inexplicable reason I began to fancy that Dilip Kumar and I were siblings," he wrote. The next day, he went up to the star's bungalow in Bandra and it just so happened that the gate of his house did not have a security guard. So, Dharmendra just let himself in.

He recalled that after finding his way from one door to another, he found himself at his bedroom door. "I wasn't stopped at the gate by anybody, and so I walked right into the house through the main door. There was a wooden staircase leading to a bedroom upstairs. Again, nobody stopped me, so I climbed up the stairs and stood at the entrance to one of the rooms," he shared. Dharmendra recalled that he saw a "fair, slim, handsome" man sleeping on the couch and as the man sensed someone's eyes on him, he "woke up somewhat startled." This man was Dilip Kumar. "He sat up and stared at me, quite taken aback to see a total stranger standing gingerly at his bedroom door gazing admiringly at him. As for me, I couldn't believe my eyes: It was Dilip Kumar, my idol, in front of me. He called out to a servant loudly. Now scared, I ran down the staircase and bolted out of the house looking behind to see if I



was being followed," he shared. Dharmendra shared that he ran for a while and after he reached a safe place, he looked back at his actions, and questioned himself. "I realised how reckless I had been by intruding into the privacy of a star. So what if there was no watchman at the gate and no family member in the house to stop me?" he wrote. Six years after this incident, when Dharmendra won a talent competition and actually got a chance to meet some celebrities from the industry, he ran into Dilip Kumar's sister. "I saw her leaving and I ran after her requesting her to [arrange to] meet Dilip Sahab. I told her I firmly believed that he was my brother too," he said. When he finally landed at Dilip Kumar's door, this time with an invitation, Dharmendra couldn't believe his luck. "When I was leaving, he took me upstairs to his room and gave me a sweater from his cupboard because it was a bit chilly and he had noticed I was wearing just a thin cotton shirt. He hugged me and saw me off at the gate. I can still feel the warmth of that hug because it was genuine," he wrote.

Namita Thapar refuses to be seen with gift presented by Shark Tank India pitchers, tells them to learn from Zerodha: 'I will never wear this'

Two founders named Harshit and Manali pitched their lifestyle accessories brand, Hexafun, on the latest episode of Shark Tank India. But they received a unanimous no from the panel of 'sharks'. Anupam Mittal was especially dismissive during the pitch, as he found fault with the founders' products and their pricing. Hexafun produces handkerchiefs, socks, and other such accessories for prices that are higher than those of Jockey and other competitors. They asked for Rs 1 crore for 4% equity, valuing their company at Rs 25 crore.

Before their pitch, they presented the 'sharks' with customised hankies. Namita Thapar immediately spotted a typo on hers, and said that it is unacceptable on a platform like Shark Tank to present something that isn't up to the mark. "I appreciate the love with which you've given the hanky to me, but I'm not going to wear something with a spelling mistake. You're spread too thin, you're trying to do too much at once," she said.

She also criticised the name Hexafun, and cited the example of Zerodha to explain what a brand name should accomplish. "I always cite the example of Zerodha - zero means zero, and 'rodha' in Sanskrit means 'hurdle'. Zerodha is such a beautiful word, and you can instantly connect it to the business. But your name is so difficult to understand," she said. Manali tried to explain what the name means, but Aman Gupta cut her off. "Puri zindagi explain hi karte reh jaoge," he said. Aman was also unconvinced about the point of hankies. "You're trying to revive a dying category; what's the point?" he said. "I will be shocked if you tell us you're making money." And Aman was right. In the five years that they've been operational, Hexafun has been burning crores. The founders said that they've spent Rs 4 crore of their



own money, plus more than Rs 2 crore of friends and family on the business. Kunal Bahl said that they need to go back to the drawing board and re-evaluate their entire business. He said that every start-up hits a 'point of reckoning' after which they have to regroup, and said that he, too, experienced something similar a decade ago. Anupam, however, was more harsh in his feedback. Like Namita, he found fault with both the products and the business. "It's low quality," he said, looking at an accessory bag with threads coming out of it. He was also unimpressed by a suitcase cover, which he described as impractical. "Why would anyone buy Rs 3000 ke kapde for 5000 ka suitcase?" he asked. All five 'sharks' backed out of the deal, leaving Harshit and Manali empty-handed.

Armaan Malik talks about his 'Pehla Nasha' moment with wife Aashna Shroff

Mumbai: Singer Armaan Malik recently shared a beautiful memory with his wife, Aashna Shroff, recalling his own "Pehla Nasha" moment. When asked about a real-life moment that captured the thrill of first love, Armaan reminisced about his first date with Aashna. In an exclusive interview with IANS, Malik shared, "I'm a romantic at heart, so I've had many such moments. But if I had to pick one, I'd say my Pehla Nasha moment was with my wife, Aashna. The first time we went on a date back in 2017, I definitely felt

that heart-fluttering excitement. That feeling of being with someone you truly love and want to know more about—it's a special experience." Armaan and Aashna were reportedly dating since 2019. The couple tied the knot in a private ceremony on December 28, 2024. Sharing their wedding photos, they wrote on Instagram, "Tu hi mera Ghar." Armaan also spoke about his latest single, "Pehla Nasha 2.0," and said, "We created this version with immense love and dedication. There's always a huge responsibility when recreating such an iconic and legendary song."

Harshvardhan Rane reflects on film's 'painful' BO failure, hopes 'it does what it didn't do earlier'

Harshvardhan Rane and Mawra Hocane starrer Sanam Teri Kasam has been making headlines since the announcement of its re-release in theatres. Directed by Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru, the 2016 film was a box office failure, but gained a cult following after its OTT re-release. Sanam Teri Kasam got significant appreciation eventually from the audience over time. In an interview with SCREEN recently, lead actor Harshvardhan got candid about the movie's re-release, original lifetime numbers, and much more.

During the conversation, the actor was asked about how he feels that his passion project Sanam Teri Kasam is re-releasing at the theatres and he says, "I hope it does what it didn't do earlier, that's it. Kya feel karoon main? Everyone was asking me everywhere to bring this film back. The only anecdote I remember is that we all were expecting this film to do much better than what it did. That void has pushed me today to request everyone to release this. Nau saal hogaye hain (It has been nine years), every year they keep losing faith, but my faith keeps increasing," continuing, "When it didn't perform well, we all (the producers, director, actors) felt that pain, a tug in the heart."

Thanking the trend of re-releases with his own special metaphor, Harshvardhan says with a smile, "Even after parents get divorced, they get married again sometimes. As a child, I am very happy with this marriage. I am up for remarriages and re-releases." He hopes that the film earns more with the re-release than the original box office numbers just like Tumbbad and Laila Majnu did, "If I was good at prediction, I would have done it nine years ago. I hope so that happens." The actor further adds, "I was standing below my producer's office screaming my lungs out to bring this film back. Mujhse zyada toh kaun hi hope karega? I had such an uninhibited approach to this. Many people said that you can't be really going below a producer's office and ask him for a re-release, that's unheard of. But, maine kaun mujhe yahi aata hai (I only know this). This is how I am, if I am into something, I put my skin in the game."

Ask Harshvardhan if the previous box office run felt unfair, and he says, "No, it is absolutely fair. It's fair because I myself don't watch newcomer film, so how can I complain about that? I will be so fake and such a hypocrite if I blame them for not watching my film." He adds, "It's all connected, a cycle. If you are a newcomer, there's less awareness, which means less eyeballs, leading to less ticket sales, and less ticket sales means less shows and the movie goes out. It will be foolish of me to not look at the logical parts of it and complain how people do on podcasts. That's why I don't do podcasts." Meanwhile, Khushi Kapoor and Junaid Khan (daughter and son of late actor Sridevi and actor Aamir Khan, respectively) are newcomers, whose film Loveyapa released today. However, Harshvardhan knows and hopes that they don't meet with the same fate as him. "Awareness hai na unka. Awareness is the key. I am very happy they don't have to go through what I had to. They are also human beings, they might also have expectations. I hope they don't have to go through the same void

