

## IMT Hyderabad holds convocation for 2023–25 batch, leaders urge graduates to drive national growth

Hyderabad: IMT Hyderabad hosted its convocation ceremony for the batch of 2023-2025 on its campus here on Saturday.Addressing the graduating students, Volvo Group India president & managing director, Kamal Bali, highlighted the complex global challenges ahead, including climate change, digital transformation, growing nationalism, and geopolitical tensions.Despite such challenges, Bali noted India's promising growth, with robust economic prospects, a digitally empowered youth, and a thriving startup ecosystem.

## Thirty seven Maoists surrender before Telangana DGP in Hyd

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: In a major development, 37 CPI (Maoist) members from Telangana and Chhattisgarh surrendered before the Telangana DGP B Shivadhar Reddy in Hyderabad on Saturday.Among them are Koyyada Sambaiah alias Azad (49), a native of Mulugu district, and Appasi Narayana alias Ramesh (70), a native of Peddapalli district. Both carried rewards of Rs 20 lakh each. Among the important Maoist leaders who surrendered are Muchaki Somada alias Erra (42), State Committee Member in DKSZC and a native of Chhattisgarh, who also carried a reward of Rs 20 lakh.

Telangana DGP B Shivadhar Reddy said the decision of the 37 underground cadres reflects a positive and constructive response to the appeal to surrender. "It also signifies a conscious and pragmatic step to move away from the path of extremism and reintegrate into civil society. They have chosen to prioritise health and family and have resolved to lead a peaceful, dignified and law-abiding life," he said.Seven of the 37 cadres who surrendered before the DGP handed over eight firearms including an AK 47, two SLRs, four .303 rifles and a G3 rifle along with 346 live ammunition of various calibres. A total amount of Rs 1.41 crore was handed over to the surrendered Maoists.

Telangana DGP said that a total of 59 cadres from Telangana are active and working with the CPI (Maoist) party. "Of the eight Central Committee Members, five are natives of Telangana State," he said.He said the Maoists



are facing a significant decline in organisational strength and operational capabilities resulting in large surrenders. "Over recent years, the outfit sustained pressure from security forces, resulting in disruption of key networks, reduced mobility and shrinking support base. Ideological differences have emerged within the organisation, creating dissatisfaction among cadres regarding the relevance and direction of the movement," said Shivadhar Reddy.He added that so far 465 Maoists of different ranks have surrendered in Telangana in 2025.The Telangana DGP appealed to the Maoists to surrender and added, "You can surrender with the help of revenue officials, local politicians, press persons or your relatives. We assure to take care of your rehabilitation as per the guidelines of the Telangana government.

## Sajjanar launches Cybercrime awareness rally, urges public vigilance



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: Fear and greed of the public is becoming the investment for cyber criminals, pointed out Hyderabad Police Commissioner, V C Sajjanar, while stressing the need for everyone to be more vigilant regarding cybercrimes.Participating in 'Jagrut Hyderabad – Surakshit Hyderabad' Cybercrime Awareness Programme on Saturday at Charminar, he distributed

pamphlets on cybercrime prevention and flagged off the Cybercrime awareness rally from Charminar to Madina.

Sajjanar said 'Jagrut Hyderabad – Surakshit Hyderabad' cybercrime awareness programmes are being conducted every Tuesday and Saturday, as part of which, police officials are going to every house to create awareness.He said the public is being involved in cybercrime prevention, and volunteers who come forward willingly were asked to register their names as Cyber Simbas. Sajjanar cautioned against uploading private photos and personal details on social media, as doing so creates the possibility of being trapped and defrauded.Children were getting addicted to social media, especially girls who were becoming victims by chatting with unknown individuals and providing personal details. He advised parents to be careful with their daughters and to explain precautions before giving them mobile phones. He also stressed the need to be extremely vigilant about 'Digital Arrest' frauds that target the elderly.In case of falling victim to a cyber fraud, the victims should immediately call the Helpline Number 1930 to report the incident and also file a complaint at www.cybercrime.gov.in.

## KTR calls for grand celebration of ‘Deeksha Diwas’ on November 29



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: The Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) will observe Deeksha Diwas across Telangana on a grand scale on November 29. Party working president KT Rama Rao directed party ranks to make it a grand event commemorating the historic fast unto death undertaken by party president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao 15 years ago as part of the fight for Statehood.Addressing party MLAs, MLCs, MPs, district presidents and general body members through a teleconference on Saturday, Rama Rao called the occasion the most significant chapter in the history of the State. The BRS president had embarked on the fast with the slogan "Telangana vachudo – KCR Sachchudo" (Either Telangana or KCR's death) demonstrating his firm resolve to achieve Statehood.

The indefinite hunger strike forced the Centre to announce the formation of Telangana and remains a symbol of supreme sacrifice in the Statehood movement."Deeksha Diwas is a glorious milestone in Telangana's history. We must celebrate it with pride and enthusiasm across every district," Rama Rao told party leaders.Rama Rao instructed district units to conduct preparatory meetings at all party headquarters on November 26. MLAs, former MLAs, MPs, MLCs, former ministers, ex corporation chairpersons and other key leaders must be invited to these meetings to finalise a detailed action plan for the successful conduct of Deeksha Diwas programmes. The main Deeksha Diwas

events will be organised at party offices in every district headquarters.The programme will commence by paying tributes to Telangana Thalli and the martyrs' memorial followed by milk abhishekam to a large cut-out of Chandrashekhara Rao.Photo exhibitions will be organised featuring historic moments, news clippings and developments related to the 2009 fast unto death. Social welfare activities such as fruit distribution and annadanam will also be conducted, while a special fruit distribution programme will be held at NIMS Hospital in Hyderabad on the occasion.BRS youth and student wings will organise Deeksha Diwas programmes in every university campus, wearing special T-shirts bearing Chandrashekhara Rao's portrait and the Deeksha Diwas logo.

## South Telangana braces for light to moderate showers

Hyderabad: Telangana residents, particularly those residing in the southern districts, might have to switch over from heavy winter jackets to raincoats as the State is expected to see light to moderate rain or thundershowers during the next two days.This is due to formation of a low pressure over Strait of Malacca. It is expected to intensify into a depression over the southeast Bay of Bengal around November 24, and further intensify during the subsequent 48 hours.As per Saturday's preliminary forecast, districts including Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Nagarkurnool, and Wanaparthy are expected to witness light to moderate rains due to depression. However, there are no major changes in the weather conditions in Hyderabad in the next two days.In its forecast, the IMD said light to moderate rain or thundershowers are very likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana on Sunday and Monday and dry weather is likely to prevail from November 25 to 28.

## ED searches 40 locations in West Bengal, Jharkhand over coal theft

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday (November 21, 2025) conducted coordinated searches at more than 40 locations in West Bengal and Jharkhand in connection with coal theft and mining cases in the two States.The agency has so far seized over ?10 crore in cash or precious metals as well as copies of 120 land deeds.While cash and gold or jewellery totalling over ?8 crore have been impounded from different locations in West Bengal, over ?2.20 crore in cash and land deeds have been found in Jharkhand.In Jharkhand, 18 locations linked to major cases of coal theft and smuggling, allegedly involving "Anil Goyal, Sanjay Udhog, LB Singh and Amar Mandal" were covered by the agency, an official said.

## PM Modi, Giorgia Meloni meet briefly ahead of G20 Summit in South Africa

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Johannesburg: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday briefly met Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni just ahead of the opening session of the G20 Leaders' Summit at Nasrec in South Africa.Both leaders shook hands and exchanged warm greetings, displaying the strong rapport that has deeply strengthened India-Italy friendship over the past few years. PM Modi is among several prominent world leaders attending the November 22-23 summit.PM Modi had last met Meloni on the sidelines of the 51st G7 Summit in Canada's Kananaskis in June, where both leaders had committed to making the friendship between India and Italy stronger.In September, PM Modi called the Italian PM an "extraordinary political leader who combines ideas and heart", described her autobiography as a "Mann Ki Baat", or ideas from the heart.In the preface to the book titled 'I Am Giorgia', PM Modi emphasised the closeness between India and Italy, founded on what he writes as "shared civilising instincts, such as the defence of heritage, the strength of community, and the celebration of femininity as a guiding force".Reciprocating the feelings, Meloni had mentioned that the bond between both nations remains quite strong."The words of Prime Minister Narendra



Modi, for whom I have profound respect, in his preface to the Indian edition of the book 'I Am Giorgia', deeply touch and honour me. These are sentiments that I sincerely reciprocate, with all my heart, and which testify to the strong bond between our nations," Meloni was quoted as saying by Italian news agency Adnkronos.PM Modi's preface to the book, which Adnkronos said it was able to read, stands out for its personal and symbolic tone as the Indian leader links this message to his personal friendship with Meloni and their shared ability to combine tradition and modernity.

## New Nitish Kumar cabinet full of corrupts, criminals, alleges Prashant Kishor



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Jan Suraaj Party leader Prashant Kishor, on Friday (November 21, 2025), alleged that the new cabinet of the Nitish Kumar government in Bihar was full of corrupt and criminal leaders.Speaking to reporters after a day-long silent fast at Gandhi Ashram in West Champaran, Mr. Kishor also said his party will launch the 'Bihar Navnirman Sankalp Yatra' on January 15, during which Jan Suraaj Party workers will visit all houses in the State."The new cabinet of Nitish Kumar, which took oath on Thursday, is full of corrupt and criminals. I must say that this council of ministers is a slap in the face of the people of Bihar. It's like rubbing salt on the wound as several corrupt leaders were inducted," he

alleged, days after drubbing in the recently held Assembly elections in the State.Mr. Kishor claimed the leaders inducted into the cabinet indicate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and CM Kumar are least concerned about Bihar."They have purchased votes by transferring ?10,000 into the bank account of more than 1 crore women. Now, they have no concern for the State or the people," he alleged."If I am saying anything wrong, the State government can put me behind bars," he added.Mr. Kishor claimed the government diverted funds from the State's contingency fund and a grant from the World Bank for the cash transfer scheme."Now, we will ensure that women get Rs 2 lakh as promised by the NDA ahead of the polls," he said.Mr. Kishore said as part of the 'Bihar Navnirman Sankalp Yatra', Jan Suraaj Party workers, including him, will visit every house in the state."We will visit all houses in the state over 15-18 months and create awareness among the people about the misdeeds of this government. The organisation of the Jan Suraaj Party will be strengthened before the campaign starts," he said.The former poll strategist said he will donate 90% of his income over the next five years for the party's campaign."Besides, whatever assets I have acquired in the last 20 years, except my Delhi house, I will donate those for the party," he said."Now, I request the people of Bihar to donate just ?1,000 to the party on a yearly basis. I will not meet anyone who doesn't donate this amount to the party," he said.

## HC halts Telangana’s 85% local quota in PG medical management seats



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice GM Mohiuddin of the Telangana High Court on Friday put on hold the State's recent amendments introducing an 85 per cent local quota within the management seats for postgraduate medical courses in private unaided institutions.The Court was hearing a batch of writ petitions filed by non-local students seeking admission to PG courses under the management category in private, unaided, minority and non-minority colleges. They argued that until this year, management quota seats were open without any reservation, and the sudden introduction of an 85:15 local-to-all India division after the admission process had already begun was illegal and fundamentally unfair.

Senior counsel Gandra Mohan Rao, appearing for the petitioners, contended that the government's amendments through GO Ms Nos 200 and 201 dated November 3, 2025, effectively rewrote the admission framework mid-process. He submitted that the move ran contrary to the Supreme Court's ruling in PA Inamdar vs State of Maharashtra, which bars reservation within management quota seats, and violated Article 14.He also relied on the Supreme Court's recent judgment in Dr Tanvi Behl vs Shrey Goel, which held that residence-based reservations are permissible for MBBS but not for postgraduate medical courses that require higher merit and competitiveness.

The counsel argued that dividing management quota seats into 85 per cent for locals and only 15 per cent for all-

India candidates would drastically reduce the petitioners' chances, amounting to changing the rules midway.The State and the Standing Counsel for Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences sought time to obtain instructions and file counter affidavits.After hearing all sides, the bench held that the amendments prima facie amounted to "changing the rules of the game after it has begun" and decided to keep the new quota formula in abeyance for the current academic year. It clarified that the impugned rule introducing 85 per cent local reservation shall not apply to PG medical admissions for 2025-26 under Management Quota Sub-Category-1 in private, unaided minority and non-minority colleges.The State and the University were granted four weeks to file their counters, and petitioners were given two weeks thereafter to file replies. The matter was posted to January 19, 2026 for further hearing.

## BRS demands Assembly session to debate controversial industrial land policy

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Hyderabad: Demanding an immediate Assembly session to enable full debate on the controversial Hyderabad Industrial Land Conversion policy of the Congress government, Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) senior leader T Harish Rao on Saturday sought an immediate probe into what he called collusion with real estate interests and pre-arranged deals.Addressing a news conference at Telangana Bhavan, Harish Rao and other party leaders also demanded complete suspension of the policy until all allegations were clarified and questions answered.Harish Rao posed eight pointed questions to the Congress government led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, seeking immediate answers on the controversial new industrial land conversion policy that allows payment of just 30 percent of the land value instead of the higher rates followed during the previous BRS regime.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Right-sizing Indian banks needs more than mergers

In a large, diverse economy with various income groups and businesses, the banking system's capacity must be properly aligned in terms of outreach and business volume to realise its growth potential fully. The strength of banks is measured worldwide by asset size or market capitalisation. The ranking of the top 100 global banks is based on these metrics. S&P Global Market Intelligence data ranked SBI at 43rd and HDFC at 73rd among the top 100 global banks in 2025, based on SBI 2024 data. It places HDFC at 10th, ICICI at 20th, and SBI at 25th in the worldwide ranking by market capitalisation.

It is continually debated that India, as the fourth-largest economy and on its way to becoming the third-largest economy, should have more banks on the global list to fund its burgeoning growth opportunities. The current size and scale of banks may not bode well for achieving the aspirational growth envisioned under the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. An aggressive and collaborative financial sector ecosystem is needed to ramp up the capacity.

The well-diversified banking system has developed, with bank reforms leading to the entry of new private and differentiated banks, thereby strengthening the number of commercial banks to 128. It includes 12 public sector banks, 21 private sector banks, 28 regional rural banks, 44 foreign banks, 11 small finance banks, five private banks, and two local area banks. The four non-scheduled banks are local cooperative banks. Additionally, there are 1,470 urban cooperative banks. The evolving banking sector serves its customers through a network of 165,000 bank branches and 2,15,000 ATMs. The financial sector in March 2025 had an asset base of Rs 730 lakh crore, with 55 per cent, or Rs 415 lakh crore, held by banks.

## Liquor Mafia on the Rise Again



“Syndicate Reorganising With Manuguru as Its Hub” “Popular Brands Diverted to Belt Shops... Low Sales in Licensed Wine Shops” Indian Chronicle, Manuguru – November 22: “The liquor mafia appears to be active again in Manuguru, a key region in the agency areas. Illegal liquor sales through belt shops are increasing rapidly, and allegations of unlawful protection being extended to these outlets are causing public concern. Reports suggest that a special syndicate, operating with Manuguru as its centre, is currently reorganising and expanding its network deep into the surrounding villages.” “Several popular liquor brands that are supposed to be sold only in licensed wine shops are mysteriously ending up in belt shops. While wine shop sales are dipping, the same brands are registering high demand in belt shops, raising serious doubts among consumers, traders and local authorities.” “Residents are expressing anger over the growing social problems caused by these illegal activities. They say

## Sand Smuggling Out of Control



Illegal Sand Mafia Dominates Along the Godavari River” “Massive Revenue Loss to the Government” “TGMDC’s Silence Gives Wings to Benami Contractors” Manuguru, November 22 (Indian Chronicle): “The sand mafia has tightened its grip on the Godavari riverbed, looting natural resources with impunity. Despite strict regulations, the authorities responsible for enforcement have shown little to no response, resulting in the illegal sand trade escalating day by day. Heavy machinery is being used to excavate deep into the riverbed, causing severe environmental damage and triggering concern among the public.” “Villages surrounding Manuguru—Vijayanagar, Padmapuram, Annaram, Gundla Singam, Rayagudem, and Rampur—have allegedly become hubs for large-scale illegal sand transportation. Locals report that several trucks operate during late-night hours without any permits, transporting sand fearlessly. Trucks without proper documents or permissions are said to be freely moving in the region.”

## SCB sends two major road proposals for defence approval

Hyderabad: The Defence Estates Office, Telangana, will have to clear two key infrastructure projects in the Secunderabad Cantonment aimed at improving road connectivity and ensuring free traffic movement around the AoC Circle and Rasoolpura.

At the Secunderabad Cantonment Board meeting on Saturday, SCB Chief Executive Officer Arvind Kumar Dwivedi tabled the proposals after the GHMC sought clearance under the Road Development Plan.

## Kakatiya High School SLC Exhibition Captivates Visitors with Exceptional Student Innovations.



“P.S.ASHOKAN”KARIMNGAR BUREAU” “The School Leadership Conference (SLC), held on Saturday at Kakatiya High School, Manthani in Peddapalli District, emerged as a remarkable platform showcasing the creative brilliance of young learners. Students from LKG to Class V

presented an impressive array of projects, reflecting their imagination, curiosity, and academic growth.” “Speaking on the occasion, Principal Pradeep Reddy noted that the objective of the conference was to identify and nurture the innate talents of children. He emphasized that the students had independently conceptualized and prepared a wide range of projects, demonstrating commendable initiative and skill.” “During the exhibition, the young presenters eloquently explained their models and experiments to parents, teachers, and fellow students, offering detailed insights into their concepts and learning processes.” “The event witnessed the active participation of School Directors Ravikiran Reddy, Shruvan Reddy, Sravanthi Reddy, and Pavani Reddy, along with Lead Academic Advisor Arun, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, and students. Their involvement added further value and encouragement to the budding innovators.

## Ramanthapur Division BRS Leaders Meet Uppal MLA Bhandari Laxma Reddy Seeking Due Priority in Party Positions



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 22 (Indian Chronicle): “BRS leaders from the Ramanthapur Division called on Uppal MLA Bhandari Laxma Reddy on Saturday and felicitated him. During the meeting, they urged the MLA to ensure that deserving leaders from the division are given due priority in party positions.” “Responding positively, the MLA assured them that party workers who work with dedication and commitment will certainly be accorded appropriate importance. He added that decisions would be taken after carefully considering all aspects.” “Those who met the MLA include BRS leaders Palakuri Sreekanth Goud, Sambeti Naresh, Sooram Shankar, Chand Pasha, Apple Srinu, Maruthi Jadhav, Tufan, Ramakrishna, Sharath (Chittibabu), Painter Srinu, Sudhakar, Shiva, Mukesh and others.

## Grand Celebration of 150 Years of Vande Mataram in Ramanthapur



Former MLA Dr. N.V.S.S. Prabhakar Attends as Chief Guest” KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 22 (Indian Chronicle): “A grand celebration marking 150 years of the historic national song Vande Mataram was held in the Ramanthapur Division on Saturday. As part of the nationwide programs organized by the Bharatiya Janata Party to commemorate the occasion, the event was conducted under the leadership of Vande Mataram @ 150 Ramanthapur Division Convener Sheelam Somashekar Goud, and Co-Conveners Thalla Balakrishna Goud and Darshanala Sudhakar. Former Uppal MLA Dr. N.V.S.S. Prabhakar attended the program as the chief guest and led the gathering in singing the Vande Mataram song. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Prabhakar said that this historic milestone is being celebrated grandly across the nation. He stated that



Vande Mataram is not just a song but a powerful anthem that ignited the spirit of India's freedom struggle. He added that it stands as a symbol of patriotism, unity, sacrifice, and courage.” “The event witnessed the participation of Ramanthapur Division Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkat Rao, Division President Vangala Santosh Gupta, senior BJP leaders Muttineni Jagadish, Shakha Ravi, Vempati Srinivas, V. Suresh, Kaparathi Mohan Krishna, Konda Satish, Sankuri Kumaraswamy, Palugula Anjiah Patel, Boddipalli Muthyram, Maheshwar Reddy, Vanam Yadagiri, Danayya, Konda Krishnamurthy, Srinivas Goud, Dayakar Reddy, Krishnamurthy, Tammali Ravi, Upender Yadav, Niranjan Goud, Boddipalli Srinivas, Boddipalli Anand, Jakka Parvathalu, Vempati Ram Raj, Suresh, and several women leaders and activists

## Malkajgiri MP Etela Rajender Launches Development Works in Ramanthapur Along with Corporator and MLA



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 22 (Indian Chronicle): “Malkajgiri Member of Parliament Etela Rajender on Saturday launched several development works in the Ramanthapur division, along with Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao and Uppal MLA Bhandari Laxma Reddy. With the support and initiative of MP Etela Rajender, multiple development projects were inaugurated in Ramanthapur division. These include: “ ₹35 lakh for the construction of the first floor and repairs of the Indranagar Committee Hall, “ ₹12.50 lakh for the CC road construction at Indranagar VHM School lane, “ 35 lakh for CC road works in RTC Colony, “ 55 lakh for the underground drainage line works in Balakrishna Nagar.” “Speaking on the occasion, MP Etela Rajender said that he has been continu-

ously holding discussions with the Central Government to secure additional funds for the Malkajgiri constituency.” “MLA Bhandari Laxma Reddy stated that development works are progressing rapidly for public welfare, cutting across political lines. He added that each project is being completed in a planned manner with the cooperation of local corporators.” “Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao expressed her gratitude to the MP and MLA for their support in the development of the division. Water Board GM Santosh Kumar, GHMC DE Nagamani, AE Mounika, local residents, and leaders of BJP and BRS participated in the programme.

## WASMO accountant defrauds department of Rs 1.41 crore, booked

Chhota Udepur district police, WASMO, Assistant Accountant, Timir Hasmukh Patel, According to the FIR lodged by the district police, the financial transactions made by Timir Hasmukh Patel involved misappropriation of funds. The Chhota Udepur district police have booked an Assistant Accountant of the Water and Sanitation management Organisation (WASMO) of Chhota Udepur district for allegedly defrauding the department of Rs 1.41 crores through 56 transactions into his personal account between November 2024 and October this year. WASMO Assistant Accountant Timir Hasmukh Patel has been booked for forgery, using forged documents and criminal breach of trust after it came into light that Patel had siphoned off money from the Water and Sanitation department grants meant for various programmes in the rural areas. An FIR lodged at Chhota Udepur police station, based on the complaint of WASMO Unit manager states the fraud came to light during Diwali last month when the cheques meant for paying staff salary were not deposited into the bank account of the department. The FIR states that when Patel, who was entrusted with the task of depositing the cheques for payment of staff salary, was asked about the delay, he had stated that the bank concerned had not updated the amount due to a “delay” in the process.

## Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Inaugurates New Transformer in Sai Baba Colony



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 22 (Indian Chronicle): “A newly installed 100 KVA transformer in Sai Baba Colony of Uppal Division was inaugurated on Saturday by Uppal Division Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy. “Speaking on the occasion, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy said that the installation of this new transformer will help reduce voltage fluctuation issues and ensure a continuous and stable power supply to households. She expressed special thanks to the electricity department officials and staff for setting up the new transformer promptly.” “Those who participated in the programme included SE Pratibha Soni, DE Subba Rao, ADE Ravinder, AE Kiran Kumar Reddy, and colony residents Anjireddy, Suresh, Telakala Mohan Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Subbareddy, Narasimhareddy, Ganesh, Ratnam, Ramachandriaiah, Ramanareddy, Mallesh, Venkatreddy, Narasimha, Sattireddy, Venkatesh, Tummala Rajender Reddy, Anwar, Budige Mallesh, Srinu, Nagoor Basha, Pirambi, Veerappa, Veeresh, and others.

## BPS Student to Represent at National-Level Painting Competition



“Kranthi Kumar Dasari | Pinapaka Constituency | November 22 | Indian Chronicle : K. Pradeepthi, a Grade 7 student of Bhadrachalam Public School and Junior College, has secured the State Second Rank in the NTPC State-Level Painting Competition, showcasing exceptional artistic skill. College Principal Prashanth Kitukule announced the achievement on Saturday. Pradeepthi received a cash award of ₹30,000 along with the second prize and has been shortlisted to participate at the national level — a remarkable accomplishment that has brought immense pride to the institution. According to the principal, a total of 768 students from 560 schools across Telangana took part in the highly competitive event. Pradeepthi excelled among them, earning her position through dedication and creativity. He also appreciated Art Teacher Ramaraju for his valuable guidance in nurturing the student's talent.” “Principal Prashanth Kitukule, Academic Coordinator Suma Bindu, and senior teachers Ilahi Baksh, KN Durga Prasad, Raja Reddy, Sireesh Raja, Padmanaabha Rao, Sriram Sai, and Suchi Smitha congratulated Pradeepthi on her outstanding achievement.

## Seshadrini Reddy, IPS, Assumes Charge as Additional Superintendent of Police, Jagtial District.



“P.S.ASHOKAN”KARIMNGAR BUREAU” “Mr. Seshadrini Reddy, IPS, formally assumed his duties as the Additional Superintendent of Police of Jagtial District at the District Police Headquarters. Following the assumption of charge, he paid a courtesy call on the District Superintendent of Police, Mr. Ashok Kumar, IPS, and presented him with a sapling as a gesture symbolizing respect and goodwill.



# Paramita Heritage student shines at National Level



“Chittimalla Mahendar, Karimnagar Bureau,”Karimnagar, November 22, INDIAN

CHRONICLE:“In the national-level “Science Challenge–2025” competition organized by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), more than 1.50 lakh students from over 23,000 schools across the country participated. In these prestigious competitions, Annadi Ashrith, a Class 8 student of Paramita Heritage School, showcased remarkable performance and secured the 4th rank at the national level, said Principal Gopikrishna.”“Dr. E. Prasada Rao, Chairman of Paramita Educational Institutions, congratulated Ashrith for exhibiting exceptional talent in the CBSE Science Challenge–2025 and bringing national recognition to the school. He also appreciated the dedicated efforts of the teachers who guided him towards this achievement.”“Directors Prasuna, Rashmita, Anukar Rao, Vinoda Rao, V.U.M. Prasad, Hanumantha Rao, Principal Gopikrishna, Coordinators Nagaraju, Ramu, and the teaching staff expressed their happiness over this remarkable success.

## Ayyappa’s blessings should be upon everyone: Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 22 (Indian Chronicle):““Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy said that Lord Ayyappa’s blessings should be upon all. On Saturday, he participated in the Ayyappa Maha Padi Puja organised under the leadership of Chilukanagar Division BRS leader Jelli Mohan, and performed special prayers.Under the guidance of Rahul Guru Swami and Lakshman Guru Swami, the Maha Padi Puja was conducted



with devotion. Kathi Swami, Jelli Prashanth Swami and several other Ayyappa devotees took part in the rituals which included Ashtadasa Kalashabishekam, Ganapathi Homam at 5 a.m., Deeparadhana at 9 a.m., and Parihara Harathi at 12 noon. Later, a devotional bhajan programme was held in a grand and spiritual manner.”BRS party leaders, activists, prominent residents of Uppal and Chilkanaagar, Ayyappa devotees and several others participated in the event.

## Meter Readers Working in Water Board Should Be Added to IFMIS Portal: Prof. Kodandaram Meets Water Board MD Ashok Reddy



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Hyderabad, November 22 (Indian Chronicle):““Jana Samithi president Prof. Kodandaram submitted a representation to Hyderabad Water Board MD Ashok Reddy on Saturday, urging the resolution of issues faced by outsourcing employees working in the Water Board. He met the MD along with outsourcing meter readers and appealed for immediate action.”Prof. Kodandaram explained that 673 outsourcing meter readers should be included in the IFMIS portal, as they fall under Category–2 as per GO 60. He discussed in detail the problems faced by these workers and stressed the need for job security.”He also conveyed congratulations to MD Ashok Reddy on receiving a recent award.”Prof. Kodandaram stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is giving highest priority to safeguarding the interests of



outsourcing employees. He said the government introduced the IFMIS portal to curb the corruption that took place under the previous regime through various outsourcing agencies in every department.”He appealed to the Water Board to cooperate with the government by immediately registering the outsourcing meter readers on the IFMIS portal and recognising them under Category–2 without further delay.”Responding positively, MD Ashok Reddy issued directions to the concerned officials to collect and compile the data of all meter readers immediately.”Among those who participated in the meeting were Akula Srinu, Mandala Balakrishna Reddy, Telangana State Outsourcing Employees JAC Working President Zahiroddin, JAC members Ramesh, Suresh, Manoj, Somi Reddy, Ravi, Srikanth Reddy, Shekhar, Vikram, Venkatesh, Srikanth, Giri, and others.

## Criminal cases will be filed against contractors if farmers are inconvenienced by not sending lorries to purchase centers:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao ““(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 22) :- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao has warned that criminal cases will be filed against contractors if farmers are inconvenienced by not sending lorries to purchase centers. On Saturday, the District Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the FPO and PACS grain purchase centers located in the Valigonda Market Yard of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. Speaking on this occasion, the District Collector said ... adequate lorries should be sent to the purchase centers every day.”The District Collector warned that if there is negligence in sending lorries, cases will be registered against the relevant contractors. They asked how much grain was purchased at the two centers and how much grain was left in the market. They inquired whether the Agriculture AEOs come every day and checked the grain grade or not. They said that the grain with moisture content should be immediately bagged and sent to the mills. They said that it was not possible to stay in the market. When the managers informed that not enough lorries were coming to the center, the District Collector expressed his anger by calling the relevant contractor. He warned that if the managers called that the lorries were not coming to the center, they would file cases and take action against the lower-level staff for not paying attention and not responding properly. Later, the District Collector made a surprise inspection of the I.K.P. grain purchase center in Sangem, Valigonda mandal. On this occasion, the District Collector spoke to the center managers and asked how much grain was in the center, how much grain was purchased, and whether the tab entry was completed until the purchase was made. The tab entry should be completed as soon as the lorries are loaded, “If the truck sheets are delayed, the tab entry will be late, so it should be completed early. He said



that the money is being deposited to the farmers within 48 hours of the purchase.”When the center in-charges said that the purchase would be late due to the lack of lorries, they called the concerned contractor and asked him to send 6 lorries a day to the two centers of the Sangem IKP purchase center. He said that the lorries would be delayed without the lorries. The district collector warned that action would be taken against the contractors if they inconvenience the farmers.”Later, the district collector made a surprise inspection of the PACS paddy purchase center in Sunkishala, Valigonda mandal. On this occasion, the district collector spoke to the farmers... How many days did it take to reach the center, how many acres of crop was planted, and whether the staff came and checked the moisture content and planted the konta every day.”He asked the center administrators whether the center was receiving enough lorries every day and asked them to complete the tab entry for the piles of paddy that had been purchased so far. If the tab entry is pending, the bills will be delayed, so entries should be completed on time. The concerned officials, center administrators, and farmers participated in this program.

## Tab entries of purchased grain details should be completed regularly



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao ““(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 22) :-“Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that tab entries of purchased grain details should be completed regularly. The District Collector, who made a surprise visit to the IKP grain purchase center in Katepalli village of Motakondur mandal on Saturday, spoke to the center administrators on this occasion... He asked how much grain has been purchased so far and how much grain is still in the center. He said that the moisture content should be checked frequently before purchasing grain. He asked whether the tab entry of the grain details purchased so far has been completed and should be completed regularly. He asked whether the money has been deposited in the accounts of the farmers who purchased it. He asked whether enough lorries are coming every day. The purchased grain should be transported to the mills immedi-



ately by lorries. Farmers should not be troubled at all. Farmers should not be deceived by middlemen. They said that the grain will be purchased till the last grain.”Later, the District Collector made a surprise inspection of the CCI Cotton Purchase Center in Katepalli village of Motakondur mandal. Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector asked how many slots are booked daily and how many farmers are bringing cotton to the centers.

He asked what the moisture content of the cotton is. Since a new app has been launched to book slots to bring cotton to the purchase centers, farmers should be aware and book slots as soon as moisture is available and get support price. The registers were checked to see how much cotton has been purchased so far. Farmers should not be put in any trouble. The organizers should take the initiative to ensure that the money is deposited in the farmers’ accounts immediately. The concerned officials participated in the program.

## Government Whip MLA Beerla Ayilayya visited Bommalararamaram Mandal



“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 22) :-Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bommalararamaram Mandal Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilayya visited various development works. He performed the ground breaking ceremony for CC road works in the villages of Mailaram, Pakir Gudem in the mandal. He performed the housewarming ceremony for Indiramma’s house in Medipalli, Mailaram Teruthanda, Naginenipalli, Cheekati Mangodi, Kanchal Thanda, and Thimmapur villages. He performed the ground breaking ceremony for the construction of a new electricity substation in Naginenipalli village to specifically solve the low voltage problem. After that, he laid the foundation stone for the construction work of the



boundary wall of the government school. As promised to the beneficiaries who moved into Indiramma’s house, they were traditionally given milk, silk clothes and a ram. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Ayilayya said that this public administration government is working towards the development of villages. Telangana State will be prosperous under the rule of Revanth Reddy. 3500 Indiramma houses have already been given in Aleru constituency. With the provision of houses in another phase, the word ‘no house’ has been given to the poor. The problem of low voltage will be eliminated due to the newly established substation in Naginenipalli village. The farmers of the surrounding villages should not face any electricity problem, and Revanth Reddy has given the substations.

## Government Whip MLA Beerla Ayilayya visited Atmakur Mandal

(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 22) :-Telangana State Government Whip MLA Beerla Ayilayya visited Atmakur Mandal of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District on Friday. He participated in the housewarming of a model Indiramma house at the Tahsildar’s office in Atmakur Mandal Center, and in the same way.. he participated in the housewarming of the Indiramma house of the beneficiaries of Kandadi Indiramma Lakshma Reddy in the Mandal Center. He conducted the housewarming of Indiramma houses in Narsapuram, Raghavpuram, Kurella, Rahimkhan Peta, T Repaka, Pothireddypalli, Koritical, and Palle villages in the Mandal, started water plants in several villages, and laid the foundation stone for the construction of boundary walls. On this occasion As promised, eight housewarmings were held in eight villages and all the beneficiaries were given mutton and silk clothes. He said that in the previous BRS govern-



ment, they did not give double bedrooms by making deceitful promises. But in this public administration government, with the cooperation of Revanth Reddy and Birla Ailaiah, he said that he is very happy that Indiramma’s house has come.

## BMS Welcomes the Implementation of Four New Labour Codes by the Central Government: BMS State Vice-President Pappula Suresh



“CHITTIMALLA MAHENDAR, KARIMNAGAR BUREAU, NOVEMBER 22, INDIAN CHRONICLE:“Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) State Vice-President Pappula Suresh stated that the BMS welcomes the Central Government’s implementation of the four new Labour Codes. Speaking as the chief guest at a meeting held on Saturday at the BMS district office in Karimnagar, he said that this is a historic day for the labour sector, marking the first time such a major labour reform has been introduced in India.”He said that the BMS wholeheartedly welcomes the Wage Code 2019 and the Social Security Code 2020. With regard to the Industrial Relations Code 2020 and the

Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020, the BMS national leadership has sought certain amendments. In response, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya positively assured that necessary amendments would be made before the upcoming Parliament sessions.”Suresh stated that the implementation of these labour codes will ensure social security and justice for workers across the country. Every worker will now receive an appointment letter, minimum wages, PF, ESI and other essential benefits. He added that workers crossing the prescribed working hours must be paid overtime as per the law. From today onwards, workers will start receiving the rights they are entitled to, through these new labour codes, he said.”He also highlighted that due to the efforts of BMS, gig and platform workers have now been included under social security benefits such as PF and ESI.”Commenting on the situation in Telangana, he stated that the poor economic conditions of workers in the state are due to the negligence of successive state governments. Despite repeated appeals for amendments to the minimum wage laws, the governments ignored the demands and failed to address the concerns of the labour community, he said.”District President Pasula Sravan, leaders Nakka Arun, and others participated in this programme.



# Grand Consecration Ceremony of Sri Ayyappa Swamy Temple Held with Devotion and Grandeur



“““Chittimalla Mahendar, Karimnagar Bureau, NOVEMBER 22, INDIAN CHRONICLE:“The Sri Ayyappa Swamy Temple is all set to host the grand consecration ceremony on Sunday. The temple premises have been beautifully decorated with flowers and vibrant lighting arrangements to mark the auspicious occasion.“On Sunday at 10:26 AM, the Prana Pratishtha, Yantra Pratishtha, and consecration of Sri Ayyappa Swamy, Sri Ganapathi, Subrahmanya Swamy, Nagendra Swamy, Goddess Parvati, Navagrahas, and Shikharadhwa will be performed

under the divine guidance of His Holiness Sri Sri Vidyaranya Bharati Swami, Peethadhipathi of Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Hampi Virupaksha Vidyaranya Peetham.“As part of the consecration festivities, rituals began on Saturday at 8:30 AM with Swasti Vachanam, Sthapita Devatha Poojas, and various Homas dedicated to Navagraha, Matrika, Yogini, Vastu, Kshetrapalaka, and Brahmadi Mandala Devathas. This was followed by Ksheeradhivasa, Moola Mantra Homas, and from 4:30 PM, Pancha Sookta Homas, Rudra Homam, Pradhana Devatha Mantra Homas, Mahasnapanam, Dhyanadhivasa, Shayyadhivasa, Pushpadivasa, Phaladhivasa, Shodasha Kalyanyasam, Harati, Mantrapushpam, and Teertha Prasada distribution.“Special arrangements were made for serving breakfast and annaprasadam to devotees, who participated in large numbers.

The rituals were conducted under the supervision and guidance of Veda Murthy Brahmasri Jakkri Krishnavadhani and Guruswamy Kavati Parameshwara Swamy.“Temple organizers appealed to all Hindu devotees and Ayyappa bhaktas to attend the consecration ceremony along with their families, receive the divine blessings of Lord Ayyappa, and make the event a grand success.

# Talent Fest 2025–2026 Concludes at Ave Maria School



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 22 (Indian Chronicle):““The HAES XIV Talent Fest 2025–2026, organized under the aegis of the Hyderabad Archdiocese Educational Society (HAES), concluded successfully at Ave Maria School, Ramanthapur. Students who emerged victorious in various competitions were presented with prizes by the Chairman of HAES, Cardinal Poola Anthony. Students excelled in events such as essay writing, elocution, drawing, painting, solo singing, group singing, solo dance, and fancy dress. Their outstanding performances not only earned them individual recognition but also brought special honour to their school.“Speaking on the occasion, Cardinal Poola Anthony, Chairman of HAES, said that along with academics, organizing such cultural and creative competitions helps in developing confidence and leadership quali-



ties among students. He congratulated all the winners and advised students to use their talents for the betterment of society.“Later, HAES Vice Chairman Eruva Balashow Reddy stated that HAES institutions are always at the forefront in encouraging creativity and skill development among students.“Ave Maria School Principal Koorapati Jayapratap expressed his appreciation and extended congratulations to everyone who participated and contributed to the success of the event.

# ‘Large-scale hill cutting and illegal tree felling’ case: NGT directs HP pollution panel to file compliance report on recovery of environmental compensation



GNS News Agency, Nov 22  
National Green Tribunal, NGT, Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board, The NGT had held that Indu Walia was liable to pay environmental compensation and instructed the HPSPCB to determine the amount and recover it within three months. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board (HPSPCB) to file a fresh compliance report on the recovery of environmental compensation in a case involving alleged large-scale hill cutting and illegal tree felling in Una district. The directive came on Friday.

The matter stems from a petition filed by Bhavak Parasher, who had blamed one Indu Walia of removing a

mountain top using heavy machinery and dumping its remains down the slopes in village Mahalat of Una district, causing extensive damage to the local topography. The case was originally disposed of by the tribunal on August 27, 2024, with directions to the HPSPCB to compute environmental compensation and take punitive action. The NGT had held that Walia was liable to pay environmental compensation and instructed the HPSPCB to determine the amount and recover it within three months. It also asked the Board to initiate punitive and remedial measures to restore the environment damaged due to the illegal felling of trees. The HPSPCB was further directed to file a compliance report by December 15, 2024. In response, the HPSPCB submitted a report dated December 13, 2024, stating that it had calculated an environmental compensation of Rs 3,83,870 in consultation with the Forest Department. The assessment was based on a methodology framed by the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board for evaluating damage caused by illegal tree cutting. The compensation was imposed on Walia, wife of Ram Parkash Singh, Director, Group Colonizer Private limited, a resident of Basant Vihar, Rakar Colony, Una, through an order issued on December 12, 2024. However, the NGT observed that further directions were required and has now listed the matter again for appropriate orders. The Registry has been directed to issue notice to the HPSPCB, asking it to furnish an updated compliance report.



Garg and Alok Shekhar – along with Basant Garg, who serves simultaneously as power secretary and chief managing director (CMD) of both PSPCL and PSTCL, continue to occupy their positions. The shortage of full-time directors worsened after PSPCL terminated the services of the Director (Generation) Harjit Singh on November 4. An office order issued by CMD Basant Garg on November 8 redistributed charges among the remaining directors, stating: “Director Distribution will look after the charge of Director Generation and Director Commercial, while Director/Finance will look after the charge of Director HR and Director Administration, till further orders.”

# BJP flags ‘disproportionate’ increase of Muslim voters in Bengal; TMC calls claim ‘baseless’



GNS News Agency, Nov 22  
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) recently submitted a document to the Election Commission of India (ECI) claiming that the share of Muslim voters in West Bengal increased by 127.7 per cent while the percentage of Hindu electors rose by 72.3 in the last 23 years. The document submitted by the BJP reads, “From 2002 to 2025, total electors in West Bengal rose from 3.93 crore to 7.24 crore, an 84.1 per cent increase. Hindu electors grew from 3.1 crore to 5.3 crore, up 72.3%, while Muslim electors rose from 83.9 lakh to 1.9 crore, a whopping 127.7%. Hindu voter % (percentage) fell from 78.68% to 73.62%, and Muslim % rose from 21.32% to 26.38%.” The saffron party also claimed that the number of Hindu voters more than doubled in 37 Lok Sabha seats, but Hindu electors doubled in only three Lok Sabha seats.

“At the Assembly level, the broadening is sharper because ACs (assembly constituencies) are smaller and more sensitive to local shifts. The number of Muslim-dominated ACs has increased from 45 to 60 between 2002 and 2025. ... On multiplicative change, Muslim numbers have more than doubled in 231 ACs compared with 28 ACs for Hindus;

Muslim numbers have more than tripled in 7 ACs,” the document further reads. The BJP also alleged that Kolkata and its adjoining districts of North and South 24 Parganas have seen huge illegal migration from Bangladesh.

Jagannath Chattopadhyay, General Secretary, Bengal BJP unit, said, “The challenge of meaningful SIR (Special Intensive Revision) in West Bengal has to be gauged in the context of the demographic pattern of the state. ECI should focus on demographic change, and the cleansing process should be done accordingly. If illegal migrants manage to keep their names in the voter list, then SIR is of no use.” The ruling TMC countered the BJP’s claims. TMC spokesperson Jayprakash Majumder said, “The data that the BJP is producing is baseless. There was no census organised after 2011. The Muslim population increase can only be gauged through the census report. In general, the fertility rate of West Bengal is lower than the national rate. The fertility rate of West Bengal is less than 2.1 per cent. Then, how can such an increase be possible? So, it is basically baseless and another example of the BJP’s divisive politics.” Atri Mitra Atri Mitra is a Special Correspondent of The Indian Express with more than 20 years of experience in reporting from West Bengal, Bihar and the North-East. He has been covering administration and political news for more than ten years and has a keen interest in political development in West Bengal. Atri holds a Master degree in Economics from Rabindrabharati University and Bachelor’s degree from Calcutta University. He is also an alumnus of St. Xavier’s, Kolkata and Ramakrishna Mission Asrama, Narendrapur. He started his career with leading vernacular daily the Anandabazar Patrika, and worked there for more than fifteen years. He worked as Bihar correspondent for more than three years for Anandabazar Patrika. He covered the 2009 Lok Sabha election and 2010 assembly elections. He also worked with News18-Bangla and covered the Bihar Lok Sabha election in 2019.

# Scammers use Union FM Nirmala Sitharaman’s photo to gain trust, defraud retired Mahim doctor of Rs 1.47 crore

GNS News Agency, Nov 22  
Cyber fraudsters defrauded a retired doctor in Mahim of Rs 1.47 crore in an online share-trading scam after gaining his trust by using the photo of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. According to the police, on October 1, the complainant came across an advertisement on social media that claimed an investment of Rs 21,000 would give guaranteed profits of at least Rs 60,000. The advertisement displayed a picture of Sitharaman, which made the elderly man trust the advertisement.

After the victim entered the basic details, he received a phone call from an unknown WhatsApp number, and the caller introduced herself as ‘Meenakshi’, promising to assist him in share trading. The woman claimed she was representing share trading firm UPSTOX SECURITIES, and asked the victim to create a trading account and follow her instructions. Later, he was added to two WhatsApp groups: ‘C23-Upstox Securities Online Customer Service’ and ‘188 SBI Wealth Mindset Exchange Group’. The complainant said he saw members of the groups posting screenshots of their profits, and so got enthused to invest. He made his first deposit on October 5, and the next day, he saw a ‘profit’ of Rs 108 in his trading account. “On October 18, the woman allegedly convinced the victim to invest in an IPO. As per her advice, the victim invested Rs 5 lakh in the Rubicon



Research Ltd IPO. The victim made further investments in the share market following the woman’s instructions, and after a month, his balance rose to Rs 6 crore (inclusive of Rs 1.47 crore principal amount). But when he tried to withdraw even a portion of the money, he was asked to pay Rs 90 lakh, claiming that it was mandatory before releasing the funds,” said a police officer. The victim had invested all his savings and tried to contact the woman, but the latter disconnected the call, and suddenly, the trading account also disappeared. The retired doctor then approached the central cyber police station, and a case was registered against unknown persons.

# Fishermen fear losses as fishlings release delayed again in Telangana

GNS News Agency, Nov 22  
Hyderabad: The Congress government marked World Fisheries Day on a grand scale, yet the fishermen community in the State remains anxious due to the delay in the distribution of free fishlings and the likely impact on their earnings. Usually, the distribution of free fishlings begins in the July–August season. However, this year, the delay in floating tenders and finalising bidders for the supply of fishlings affected the timely release. Tenders are normally floated in April, but the exercise was pushed back this year for reasons known only to the Fisheries Department. The department had planned to procure 90 crore fishlings at an estimated cost of Rs 123 crore.

About five lakh fishermen families across the State depend on the free fishlings scheme for their livelihood. Every year, the government releases fishlings into 26,326 water bodies, including major, medium and minor reservoirs and tanks. Against the targeted release of 90 crore fishlings this year, only 11.31 crore have been released in 26 districts so far. Separately, there was also a delay in finalising tenders for the distribution of freshwater prawn seedlings. Although tenders were floated on August 28 with September 8 as the last date, the response from bidders was poor. The department issued fresh tenders on October 11, and they were opened on October 22. Seven bidders submitted propos-



als, and officials are currently inspecting their hatcheries and water bodies, according to department sources. The delay has left the fishermen community worried. The timely release of fishlings in the July–August season helps ensure good growth and harvesting in December and January. Any delay pushes the harvesting cycle further, while declining water levels in small water bodies and tanks from March may affect the growth and survival of fishlings. Last year too, the State government proposed releasing 90 crore fishlings, but the tendering process was delayed until July and only 29.25 crore were released, which affected fish production across the State.

# Delhi Police bust arms trafficking racket with links to Pakistan’s ISI

The Delhi Crime Branch busted an international weapons trafficking module allegedly linked to ISI-backed handlers in Pakistan and the network of Punjab-USA-based gangster Sonu Khatri, the police said on Saturday. Ten foreign-made semi-automatic pistols, including high-end Turkish-manufactured PX-5.7 models used exclusively by special forces, and 92 live cartridges were seized. Four key operatives of the interstate arms supply chain were arrested during the operation. “This module was involved in the smuggling of weapons from across the international border using drones. Investigation revealed that traffickers based in Pakistan deploy customised commercial drones to drop arms, ammunition, and other contraband items near vulnerable stretches of the border, primarily during late-night hours to avoid detection,” said Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime).

The arrests were made after the police received intelligence on November 19 that arms traffickers supplying sophisticated weapons to gangs in Delhi-NCR would arrive in Rohini for a delivery. A trap was laid near the Khatu Shyam

temple stretch leading to Bawana, where a white Swift Dzire matching the tip-off was intercepted. Inside a concealed cavity in a speaker box, officers recovered a duffel bag containing eight foreign-made pistols and 84 live cartridges of 0.30 bore, said the police. The occupants of the car, Mandeep Singh, 38, and Dalvinder Kumar, 34, both residents of Jalandhar district of Punjab, were arrested. Their questioning led the police to two more intermediaries, Rohan Tomar, 30, and Ajay, 37, both from Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh. Two additional pistols and eight cartridges were recovered at their instance, the police said. The drones used for arms trafficking typically fly at low altitude to evade radar and carry small but high-value payloads, the officer said. The consignments are dropped at pre-selected GPS locations close to the border fence, where receivers on the Indian side, usually local criminals or drug/arms traffickers, retrieved the material, Yadav said. “Network relies on local collaborators who monitor police movement” The handlers coordinate the drop through encrypted communication platforms and frequently change locations.



## 2 from Shivamogga IS module, whose handler is suspected to be linked to Red Fort blast, awarded 6 years' jail for 2022 terror plot



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

A special court in Bengaluru sentenced two persons belonging to the Shivamogga module of a nascent terror group to six years' imprisonment on Friday after they pleaded guilty to terrorism charges. The handler of this module is suspected to be linked to the Kashmir doctors' module behind the November 10 blast near the Red Fort in Delhi. The two accused, Zabiulla alias Jabiulla alias Mohammed Zabiulla alias Charbi, 34, and Nadeem Faizal, 29, both residents of Shivamogga, were sentenced in the case probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). They were arrested in 2022. A group of 10 others who were part of the module – including the accused in last year's March 1 Bengaluru Rameshwaram Cafe blast case Abdul Matheen Taha, 32, Mussavir Hussain Shazib, 32, and the accused in the 2022 Mangaluru cooker blast case Mohammed Shariq, 27 – have not pleaded guilty and have chosen to face trial in the case. The special court for NIA and terrorism cases in Bengaluru convicted Zabiulla and Nadeem Faizal to six years of rigorous imprisonment on charges of criminal conspiracy under the Indian Penal Code and multiple charges of terrorism under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) – under sections 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 38, 39, and 40 of the UAPA for unlawful activities, terrorist conspiracy, terrorist act, and being part of a terrorist organisation.

“The substantial sentences imposed on the offenders / Accused Nos.8 and 9 shall run concurrently. The period of detention undergone by the offenders / Accused Nos.8 and 9 in judicial custody shall be set off against the term of imprisonment imposed, as provided under Section 428 of the CrPC,” the special court said in its order on Friday. Suspected link to other modules The Shivamogga module is alleged to have been handled by a missing accused in a 2012 Bengaluru Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terror conspiracy case, Mohammed Shahid Faizal, 42. Faisal, who is currently based abroad, is suspected to be also linked to the Kashmir doctors accused in the Red Fort blast, and a 2022 Coimbatore suicide bomb case on account of the modus operandi employed by the separate modules in the blasts. The NIA alleged that Zabiulla was radicalised and recruited by Mohamed Shariq, the accused in the Mangaluru cooker bomb blast, which occurred accidentally while he was transporting the device in an autorickshaw “for furthering the activities of Islamic State (IS)”. Zabiullah is alleged to have “radicalised and recruited his friend Nadeem Faizal.” Zabiulla and Nadeem Faizal were paid by Shariq for participation in the terror conspiracy by conducting reconnaissance for targets of attack on behalf of Shariq who, in turn, was being directed by a handler based abroad who identified himself in online chats only as the “Colonel” but was later identified after the Bengaluru Rameshwaram Blast probe as Shahid Faizal. Zabiulla is alleged to have procured match boxes and supplied them to Shariq while the latter was trying to create an IED with everyday materials as directed by the handler. “Scrutiny of mobile phone of accused Zabiulla (A-8) revealed a lot of images and speeches/ videos by leaders of PFI, SDPI and ISIS radicalisation videos/audios of Maulana Masood Azhar,” the NIA told the court. A video

of a wanted terrorist Farhatullah Ghauri, 58, who is originally from Hyderabad and suspected to be in Pakistan, was also found with the two men. Ghauri is reported by security agencies to be the father-in-law of the alleged handler of the Shivamogga module Shahid Faizal alias ‘Ustad’ alias ‘Colonel’. How the Shivamogga module was unearthed The module was incidentally uncovered by the police and security agencies in 2022 after a stabbing incident that occurred in the city of Shivamogga on Independence Day, where Zabiullah was arrested for attempting to kill an innocent bystander in a communal incident.

Zabiullah, who had a criminal record in the region, was arrested, along with a group of local residents, after a 20-year-old worker at a local silk clothing store, Prem Singh, was stabbed. The subsequent questioning and the analysis of his mobile phone alerted the police to the fact that he had been receiving content on the Islamic State and on topics like making Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) using easily available materials. “In the course of the statement of the accused in the stabbing case, we learned that one person identified as Mohammed Shariq was radicalising the youths. Based on this statement, Shariq was considered an accused in the stabbing case and a separate case of terror under UAPA was also filed,” police sources said in 2022. Zabiullah's mobile phone revealed a video sent by Shariq, a dropout from a commerce graduation course, about efforts to build an IED. The findings led to the arrest of two associates of Shariq – Maaz Ahmed and Syed Yasin, 21-year-old engineering students. “They believe that just how IS operates and declares war against the non-believers/kafirs through jihad to uplift Islam, they too should carry out jihad against the kafirs and have stored material required to make explosives for the purpose,” the Shivamogga police said in a statement on September 22, 2022. After learning how to make IEDs from the material shared by Shariq, the group allegedly purchased timer relay circuits required for the bomb from Amazon, two batteries of nine volts each, switches, wires, match boxes and other explosive materials in Shivamogga, the police said in September 2022. “The accused had experimentally exploded the bomb made by them at a place locally known as Kemmangundi on the banks of Tunga river in Shivamogga district, and the experimental blast was successful,” said a statement by the Shivamogga SP at the time. Funding in cryptocurrency from foreign handler

The probe in Shivamogga revealed that Shariq and an associate, Syed Yasin, received funding in the form of cryptocurrency for conversion into regular cash for the group's activities from abroad. The NIA probe found that Yasin got cryptocurrency deposited into the crypto wallet of his friend Mohammed Noorin Sharief and collected the cash. Yasin also allegedly received cryptocurrency in his crypto wallet and “transferred more than Rs 1 lakh into the account of accused No.1 (Mohammed Shariq)”. The module is suspected to have received over Rs 5 lakh in cryptocurrency from handlers suspected to be based abroad. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) launched a probe into the funding of the module after it executed the Rameshwaram Cafe blast on March 1, 2024. According to the NIA's probe, the online handler identified as ‘Colonel’ transferred the funds to the members of the module “in cryptocurrency to crypto wallets of the accused and their friends to further the activities of Islamic State”. “The bank statements and other documents collected by the investigating officer clearly go to show that accused No.2 (Maaz Muneer) received cryptocurrencies through crypto wallets of accused No.4 (Reeshan Shaikh), witnesses Shadab, Mohamed Riyaz, Tabish Tabarak Sheikh and others,” the NIA has reported to the special court for terrorism. Reeshan Shaikh received cryptocurrencies from the online handler ‘Colonel’ and in the crypto account of his college friend Shadab, the NIA has alleged.

## New Aravalli definition may open low hills to mining: Activists

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Environmentalists and water conservationists have criticised the Supreme Court's November 20 order that accepted a uniform, elevation-based definition of the Aravalli Hills given by a Centre-appointed expert committee. Activists have warned that hills below 100 metres from local relief will lose protection and could be opened for mining, threatening the ecological continuity of India's oldest mountain range. A three-judge bench headed by CJI B R Gavai, and comprising Justices K Vinod Chandran and N V Anjaria, had asked the Centre to prepare a Management Plan for Sustainable Mining (MPSM) “for the entire Aravalis” and barred the grant of new mining licences in the region before it is finalised.

“In the result, we pass the following order: (i) We accept the recommendations made by the Committee with regard to the definition of Aravali Hills and Ranges given by MoEF&CC...,” it had said. As per the definition, the Aravali Hills is defined as any landform located in the Aravali districts, having an elevation of 100 metres or more from the local relief. While two or more Aravali Hills (as defined above) located within the proximity of 500 m from each other, measured from the outermost point on the boundary of the lowest contour line on either side, forms the Aravali Range. ‘Deeply problematic’ Neelam Ahluwalia, founder-member of People for Aravalis, called the judgment a “mixed bag”. “We welcome the complete freeze on new mining leases and the mandate for a comprehensive management plan. But accepting the uniform definition is deeply problematic. It excludes all hills below 100 metres from local relief, breaking the continuity of the range and creating more gaps for Thar desert dust to advance towards Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Western UP and Eastern Rajasthan,” she said. The group argued that even low, scrub-covered Aravalli hills play critical roles in biodiversity conservation, ground-water recharge, micro-climate regulation and checking dust storms. Retired Conservator of Forests Dr R P Balwan said Haryana's natural forest cover, just 3.6%, could decline further. “Most notified forests in the state lie on low-elevation ridges that do not meet the 100-metre criterion. These areas will lose Aravalli protection and become vulnerable again,” he warned. Ecologist Pia Sethi warned that loss of vegetation on these smaller hills could disrupt local rainfall patterns and increase heat stress. Environmentalist Tanuja Chauhan said the move would further choke Delhi-NCR's “green lungs” at a time when cities in the region already rank among the world's most polluted. Water conservationist Dr Rajendra Singh, known as the “Water Man of Rajasthan”, said the Aravalis are a vital recharge zone, with fractured rock systems capable of recharging up to 2 million litres of groundwater per hectare. “Disturbing smaller



hills through mining will lower water tables and contaminate aquifers across Gujarat, Rajasthan, South Haryana and Delhi-NCR,” he cautioned. Ecologist Dr Ghazala Shahabuddin noted that the range supports over 400 native plant species, 200 bird species and mammals such as leopards and hyenas. “Shrinking habitat will intensify human-wildlife conflict,” she said. People for Aravalis also noted that more than 12 breaches already exist in the range from Ajmer-Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan to Mahendergarh in Haryana, allowing desert dust to blow into the National Capital Region. “A height-based definition will create many more such breaches,” the group said.

## Hyderabad groundwater dips despite heavy monsoon, raising summer shortage concerns

Hyderabad: Despite the city experiencing bountiful rains this monsoon, the Ground Water Department's recent data report indicate a scenario of the groundwater reserves not replenishing as they should have. Based on the comparison of September and October's groundwater report, the groundwater table across the city saw a significant dip in certain areas such as Asif Nagar, Charminar, Saidabad, Marredpally, Khairatabad, Musheerabad, and Himayat Nagar. In these areas, the groundwater table dip is found to range between a metre to 3 metre. Failure of incessant heavy rains this monsoon to replenish the groundwater resource in the city highlight the need to find solutions of tapping the rain runoff and ensuring it percolates to water table. At the present trend, where the groundwater table doesn't replenish adequately.

## 1 police constable, 2 others held in Bengaluru ATM cash van heist; no mobile phone used during robbery



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The arrested have been identified as Annappa Naik, a police constable with Govindapura police station in Bengaluru East, Xavier, a former employee of CMS Info Systems that was handling the ATM cash-loading van, and Gopi, an employee at CMS. The Bengaluru police on Saturday announced the arrests of a police constable and two others, and recovered Rs 5.76 crore in connection with the biggest broad-day heist where Rs 7.11 crore was robbed from an ATM cash-carrying vehicle on November 19. Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said that a gang of six to eight members is involved in the crime, and they have launched a manhunt in many South Indian states. Throughout the entire operation, no mobile phones were used, eliminating the possibility of electronic tracking, and there was a delay in reporting the crime by the CMS staff, he added. Singh said that the gang had planned the heist for more than three months and had done reconnaissance for 15 days before executing their plan. On November 19, a gang, posing as Income Tax and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officers, allegedly intercepted an ATM cash-loading vehicle near Ashoka Pillar at 12.48 pm and made off with Rs 7.11 crore on the Dairy Circle Flyover. The criminals took control of the cash boxes and abandoned the van by 1.16 pm before fleeing the scene. Following verification of the incident, a case of dacoity by showing firearms was registered at Siddapura Police Station.

## Court imposes fine of Rs 90,000 on kiosk outside PU for selling shakes, sandwiches without licence

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

The case was initiated by the Chandigarh Administration through the Health Department against Gian Singh and Associates, which runs Kiosk No. 2 at Food Street, Sector 14, along with its partners Giano Devi and Harish Kumar. Pankaj Kumar, who was present as manager at the time of inspection, was also named in the complaint. According to the prosecution, Food Safety Officer Bharat Kanojia carried out an inspection of the kiosk, which sells shakes, cold drinks, sandwiches, noodles, on September 5, 2023. During the check, he found Pankaj operating the food outlet and selling various ready-to-eat items without any valid food licence. The FSO stated that the business was being conducted for public sale and human consumption, thereby requiring a licence under Sections 26(2)(iii) and 31(1) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Based on this violation, a challan was issued to the firm and its partners for contravention of the law punishable under Section 63 of the Act. During the trial, the defence counsel argued that the inspection lacked credibility as no independent witness from the scene was examined. They also argued that no food samples or raw materials were seized, and further claimed that Pankaj had no connection with the ownership or partnership of Gian Singh and Associates, suggesting false implication. However, Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Sachin Yadav dismissed these arguments, noting that the testimony of the FSO was consistent and reliable. The court observed that there was no evidence of any enmity between the FSO and the accused, leaving no basis for claims of false implication. The absence of independent witnesses or food sample seizure did not, in



the court's view, undermine the fact that the kiosk was operating without a mandatory licence. The court held that Pankaj was present as a manager and not a partner of the firm, and since the prosecution did not produce evidence to establish his legal responsibility for licensing compliance, he was acquitted of all charges. In contrast, the court found partners Giano Devi and Harish Kumar, along with the firm Gian Singh and Associates, guilty of conducting food business without the required licence.

The court ruled that the prosecution had clearly established the offence under Section 31(1) read with Section 26(2)(iii), punishable under Section 63 of the Food Safety and Standards Act. Taking into account the age and antecedents of the convicts, the court awarded a lenient sentence: imprisonment till rising of the court and a fine of Rs 30,000 each, amounting to a total fine of Rs 90,000.

## 4 dead, 3 injured as Shiv Sena candidate's campaign car crashes into bikers on Thane flyover



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

A senior police officer said the accident took place while Chaubey was heading to Buvapada for an election campaign in Ambernath West. A senior police officer said the accident took place while Chaubey was heading to Buvapada for an election campaign in Ambernath West. A routine campaign drive turned fatal on Friday evening when the driver of Shiv Sena candidate Kiran Chaubey's car lost control on the Ambernath flyover in Thane district, crashing into bikers coming from the opposite direction. Four people died in the accident, and three received grievous injuries.

A senior police officer said the accident took place while Chaubey was heading to Buvapada for an election campaign in Ambernath West. The officer said eyewitnesses told them that Chaubey's driver, Laxman Shinde, 30, became motionless while driving as he suffered a heart attack and lost control of the Tata Nexon car. CCTV footage captured the high-impact crash, showing the Nexon car heading from Ambernath East to West suddenly swerving right before colliding with at least four to five vehicles. Sachin Gore, Deputy Commissioner of Police, said, “The post mortem (of Shinde) would clear the exact reason... We cannot say at this stage what happened to the driver. But he lost control of the vehicle, and that was captured by the CCTV camera.” The deceased have been identified as Laxman Shinde, driver of Chaubey's car, bikers Chandrakant Anarse, Shailesh Jadhav, and Sumit Chelani. Due to the impact of the crash, Anarse was flung into the air along with his motorcycle and later died during treatment. Anarse and Jadhav were employees of the municipal council. Among

the injured, Chaubey is currently admitted to Fortis Hospital. Other injured persons, Amit Chavan and an unidentified biker, are recuperating in Dombivli hospital, said a police officer. Senior Inspector Shabbir Sayyed of Ambernath police station said passersby rushed to the spot after the accident.

The injured bikers were taken to the hospital while people broke open the car's windows to pull Chaubey out of the mangled vehicle. The Ambernath police have registered a case against driver Shinde. The police are analysing CCTV footage as well as eyewitness accounts to reconstruct the sequence of events. The police said they would also carry out a mechanical inspection of the car to determine the cause of the accident.

## IMD forecasts heavy rain, squally weather for Andaman and Nicobar

The Met office said that a low-pressure area had developed over south Andaman Sea near the Strait of Malacca. “It is very likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify into a depression by November 22 and lay over southeast Bay of Bengal. The system will continue to move west-northwestwards and further intensify and prevail over southwest Bay of Bengal till about November 26,” the IMD said. As the IMD has also indicated further intensification of the system, weather experts are not ruling out the development of a cyclone around November 26. As the system approaches, moderate intensity rainfall will prevail along the islands till Sunday. Thereafter, the Nicobar islands will experience an increase in rainfall activity with the IMD warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall (105 to 204 mm in 24 hours) on November 24 and 25. Fishermen have been warned against venturing into Andaman Sea and southwest Bay of Bengal till November 25 and along the southeast Bay of Bengal till November 28. Squally weather with winds with speeds reaching 35 to 45 km/hr, gusting to 55 km/hr, is likely to prevail till Sunday.







# G20 host South Africa sees consensus for summit declaration despite U.S. boycott



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

G20 envoys drew up a draft leaders' declaration on Friday (November 21, 2025) without U.S. input, four sources familiar with the matter said, in a surprise move that a senior White House official described as "shameful". One of those sources confirmed that the draft made references to climate change, despite objections from the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, who doubts the scientific consensus that warming is caused by human activities. In opening remarks to the Johannesburg summit, Mr. Ramaphosa said: "There's been overwhelming consensus and agreement that one of the other tasks we should undertake right at the beginning is to ... adopt our declaration." He thanked all delegations who had worked together with South Africa "in good faith to produce a wor-

thy G20 outcome document". "We should not allow anything to diminish the value, the stature and the impact of the first African G20 presidency," he continued. Trump rejects South Africa's G20 agenda

Mr. Trump said U.S. officials would not attend the summit because of allegations, widely discredited, that the host country's Black majority government persecutes its white minority. The U.S. President has also rejected the host nation's agenda of promoting solidarity and helping developing nations adapt to weather disasters, transition to clean energy and cut their excessive debt costs. The boycott had put a dampener on Mr. Ramaphosa's plans to trumpet South Africa's role in promoting multilateral diplomacy, but some analysts suggested it might be a benefit, if other members embrace the summit's agenda and make headway on a substantive declaration. It was not clear what concessions had to be made on the language to reach agreement on a draft declaration. The United States had objected to any mention of climate or renewable energy in the discussion, and some other members are often reticent about it. Three out of four of South Africa's planned top agenda items — preparing for climate-induced weather disasters, financing the transition to green energy, and ensuring the rush for critical minerals benefits producers — are closely linked to climate change. The fourth is about a more equitable system of borrowing for poor countries. The United States will host the G20 in 2026 and Mr. Ramaphosa said he would have to hand over the rotating presidency to an "empty chair". The South African presidency has rejected a U.S. offer to send the U.S. charge d'affaires for the G20 handover.

# Commission for Air Quality Management makes GRAP more stringent in Delhi-NCR amid worsening air quality

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has tightened the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for Delhi-NCR, advancing several pollution-control measures to earlier stages to prevent further deterioration of air quality in the region. The revised schedule, finalised on November 21 after consultations with stakeholders, shifts multiple actions from higher alert stages to lower ones meaning restrictions will now be triggered sooner as the Air Quality Index (AQI) worsens. Under the new framework, several curbs that previously fell under Stage II ('Poor' AQI 201-300) will now be enforced at Stage I. The city's overall AQI stood at 360 in the 'very poor' category at 9 am on Saturday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). These include ensuring uninterrupted power supply to discourage the use of diesel generator sets, deploying additional personnel to streamline traffic at congestion-prone points, issuing pollution alerts through newspapers, TV and radio, and augmenting CNG and electric public transport fleets with higher service frequency and differential fares to promote off-peak travel. Measures earlier listed under Stage III ('very poor' AQI 301-400) have been moved to Stage II, such as staggering working hours for government offices in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddh Nagar. The Centre may also decide on staggered timings for its offices in the region. Similarly, restric-



tions previously applicable only in Stage IV ('severe+') will now apply at Stage III ('severe' AQI 401-450). These include allowing public, municipal and private offices to operate with 50% staff while the remainder work from home. The Centre may also implement work-from-home provisions for its employees. CAQM said the changes were based on scientific assessments, expert recommendations and past experience. All implementing agencies across NCR have been directed to enforce the revised schedule immediately.

# EU leaders meet in South Africa to counter US Ukraine peace plan



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Kyiv: European leaders were set to meet in South Africa on Saturday to hash out alternatives to a US plan to halt Russia's war in Ukraine, seen as favouring Moscow, nearly four years after it invaded its neighbour. The 28-point blueprint to end the Kremlin's aggression sparked alarm in Kyiv and European capitals, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying on Friday that his country could face a stark choice between standing up for its sovereign rights and preserving the American support it needs.

European countries see their own future at stake in Ukraine's fight to beat back Russia, and have insisted on being consulted in peace efforts. On Saturday, they prepared to meet on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in

Johannesburg, South Africa, in a show of support to Kyiv. The planned talks were announced by top European Union officials, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU Council President António Costa, after their call with Zelenskyy on Friday. Earlier that day, von der Leyen said a key principle for Kyiv's European allies was "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine".

The US plan foresees Ukraine handing over territory to Russia — something Kyiv has repeatedly ruled out — while reducing the size of its army and blocking its coveted path to NATO membership. It contains many of Moscow's long-standing demands, while offering limited security guarantees to Kyiv. Elsewhere, a nighttime Ukrainian drone strike hit a fuel refinery in southern Russia, killing two people and injuring two more, a local official said. The attack on the Samara region in the latest of Kyiv's long-range strikes against Russian oil infrastructure that it says fuels the Kremlin's war in Ukraine. Regional Gov Vyacheslav Fedorishchev did not immediately name the site that was targeted or detail any damage. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine. Russian air defences overnight shot down 69 Ukrainian drones over Russia and occupied Crimea, including 15 flying over Samara province, according to the Defence Ministry in Moscow. The nighttime strikes forced at least five Russian airports to temporarily halt or restrict operations, and cut off power to some 3,000 households in the southern city of Rylsk, according to Russian officials.

# Hasina mourns Bangladesh quake victims, blames interim govt for negligence

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Dhaka: Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and widespread destruction caused by the devastating earthquake that struck the country. Her remarks came after a 5.7-magnitude earthquake reportedly killed at least 10 people and injured more than 200 across Bangladesh, causing widespread panic and structural damage. "Many lives were lost, hundreds were injured, and the country has suffered immense damage due to the terrible earthquake that struck Bangladesh," read a statement issued by the former PM, which was posted on the Awami League's social media platform. Expressing condolences for the victims and extending sympathy to the bereaved families, Hasina wished a swift recovery for those injured. Slamming the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government, she said, "This illegal occupying government has no accountability to the people, and that is why they are not actively working to ease the suffering of citizens. Instead, they are handing over the country and its national resources to foreigners." Highlighting the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, Hasina added, "Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country. Keeping this in mind, the Awami League government has governed the

state with policies of inclusive and sustainable development." The quake, which struck at 10:38 am on Friday, measured 5.7 on the Richter scale according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, which identified its epicentre in Madhabdi, Narsingdi and described it as a moderate earthquake. Following the earthquake, four people died in Dhaka, five in Narsingdi, and one in Narayanganj. In Dhaka, the fatalities occurred in Armanitola after the railing of a building's roof collapsed, killing three people and injuring several others, reports the leading Bangladeshi newspaper, The Dhaka Tribune. More than 200 people sustained injuries in Dhaka, Narsingdi and Gazipur. The Directorate General of Health Services confirmed that 10 injured people were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and 10 others to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital. Several Dhaka University students were seriously hurt after leaping from buildings in panic, with at least 10 students injured, some requiring hospitalisation. Reports from Dhaka indicated that minor cracks appeared in buildings across the capital, according to the local media. Residents described the experience as unlike any tremor they had felt before, with many taking to social media to share photos and videos showing cracked walls, damaged floors and furniture scattered throughout their homes.

# Bangladesh earthquake kills 10, over 200 Injured



Dhaka: At least 10 people have died and more than 200 others were injured across Bangladesh after the 5.7-magnitude earthquake struck the South Asian nation, causing widespread panic and structural damage, local media reported on Saturday. Four of the victims died in Dhaka, five in Narsingdi, and one in Narayanganj. In Dhaka, the fatalities occurred in Armanitola after the railing of a building's roof collapsed, killing three people and injuring several others, reports leading Bangladeshi newspaper, The Dhaka Tribune.

In Narsingdi, five deaths were reported as the impact of the tremor rippled through the district. The quake, which struck at 10:38 a.m. on Friday, measured 5.7 on the Richter scale according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, which identified its epicentre in Madhabdi, Narsingdi and described it as a moderate earthquake. More than 200 people sustained injuries in Dhaka, Narsingdi and Gazipur. The Directorate General of Health Services confirmed that 10 injured people were admitted to DMCH and 10 others to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital. Several Dhaka University students were seriously hurt after leaping from buildings in panic, with at least 10 students injured, some requiring hospitalisation. In Narsingdi, 45 people received treatment at the district hospital, with three transferred to DMCH in critical condition, while another 10 were treated at the Narsingdi 100-bed Hospital. In Gazipur's Sreepur area, more than 150 workers were injured in a stampede as they rushed out of the multi-storey Denimex garment factory when the quake struck. Reports from Dhaka indicated that minor cracks appeared in buildings across the capital, according to the local media. Residents described the experience as unlike any tremor they had felt before, with many taking to social media to share photos and videos showing cracked walls, damaged floors and furniture scattered throughout their homes.

# China takes spat with Japan over Taiwan to UN, cites right of 'self-defence' against armed intervention

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

China has taken its widening spat with Japan to the United Nations, accusing Tokyo of threatening "an armed intervention" over Taiwan and vowing to defend itself in its strongest language yet in the two-week-old dispute.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi committed "a grave violation of international law" and diplomatic norms when she said a Chinese attack on Taiwan could trigger a military response from Tokyo, China's U.N. Ambassador Fu Cong wrote in a letter on Friday to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "If Japan dares to attempt an armed intervention in the cross-Strait situation, it would be an act of aggression," Mr. Fu wrote, according to a statement from China's U.N. mission. "China will resolutely exercise its right of self-defence under the U.N. Charter and international law and firmly defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity." Beijing views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out the use of force to take control of the island. Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's claims and says only the island's people can decide their future.



Japan's Foreign Ministry and Prime Minister's Office could not immediately be reached on Saturday (November 22, 2025) for comment on Mr. Fu's letter, the strongest criticism of PM Takaichi yet from a senior Chinese official in the biggest bilateral crisis in years. PM Takaichi, a conservative nationalist who took office last month, ditched the ambiguity that Japan and the U.S. have long used regarding Taiwan when she told a questioner in parliament on November 7 that a hypothetical Chinese attack on Taiwan - which lies just over 100 km (60 miles) from Japanese territory - could be deemed "a situation threatening Japan's survival". That is a legal designation that allows a Japanese prime minister to deploy the nation's military.

PM Takaichi's remarks sparked the tit-for-tat dispute with China that has spilled beyond diplomacy in recent days,

with China saying it has "severely damaged" trade cooperation, while concerts of Japanese musicians in China have been abruptly cancelled. Mr. Fu demanded that Japan "stop making provocations and crossing the line, and retract its erroneous remarks", which he said were "openly challenging China's core interests". Ahead of this year's 80th anniversary of Japan's World War Two defeat, Beijing has increasingly invoked Tokyo's wartime atrocities and China's postwar role in setting up the U.N. as it criticises its Asian neighbour and seeks to reshape the international governance system. China, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, has repeatedly emphasised two postwar declarations envisioning that Taiwan and other territories that had been occupied by Japan would be "restored" to Chinese rule. The Potsdam and Cairo declarations form the basis for China's legal claims of sovereignty over Taiwan, though many governments view them as statements of intent, not legally binding accords. Moreover, the declarations were signed by the Republic of China government, which fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists. Taiwan held China's U.N. seat until 1971, when it was transferred to the Beijing government of the People's Republic of China.

# Centre notifies four new Labour Codes



The government on Friday (November 21, 2025) notified all four Labour Codes ushering in major reforms including extending universal social security coverage for gig workers, promising gender pay parity, expanded rights and safety for women workers, providing statutory backing for minimum wages, and introducing fixed term employment.

Today, our Government has given effect to the Four Labour Codes. It is one of the most comprehensive and progressive labour-oriented reforms since Independence. It greatly empowers our workers. It also significantly simplifies compliance and promotes 'Ease of... — Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) November 21, 2025

The four Labour Codes — Code on Wages (2019), Industrial Relations Code (2020), Code on Social Security (2020) and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code (2020) — have been held back due to protests from trade unions, which continue. In a joint statement, 10 Central Trade Unions (CTUs) called the Codes an "anti-worker and pro-employer" reform. The laws came into effect from Friday. These replaced 29 fragmented laws, many of which date back to pre-Independence and early post-Independence eras (1930s-1950s). Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the new laws as "one of the most comprehensive and progressive labour-oriented reforms since Independence" which, he said, will serve as a strong foundation for universal social security, minimum and timely payment of wages, safe workplaces, and remunerative opportunities.

"It greatly empowers our workers. It also significantly simplifies compliance and promotes 'Ease of Doing Business'," he said in a post on X. Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the Codes will formalise employment, strengthen worker protections, and make the labour ecosystem simpler, safer and globally aligned. He had been in regular touch with State governments, trade unions and employer bodies for the past three years. The Ministry had informed that almost all States had published draft rules for the Codes, and the Centre is hand-holding those States and Union Territories that were yet to frame the rules.

The reforms include expanded rights and safety for women, including night-shift work, free annual health check-ups for workers aged over 40 years, pan-India ESIC coverage including hazardous process units, and a single registration, licence and return system. Additional systemic

reforms include a national floor wage, gender-neutral work policy, inspector-cum-facilitator model for supportive compliance, faster dispute resolution through two-member tribunals, and a National Occupational Safety, Health (OSH) Board to harmonise safety standards. The reforms are aimed at streamlining contractual workers with the provision of "fixed term employees" which entails all benefits equal to those of permanent workers, including leave, medical, and social security. The Codes have defined gig work, platform work, and aggregators for the first time. Aadhaar-linked Universal Account Number will make welfare benefits easy to access, fully portable, and available across States, regardless of migration. Plantation workers will be brought under the OSHWC Code and the Social Security Code. The government will now initiate consultations to frame detailed rules and schemes.

On Thursday (November 20), the CTUs met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and urged her not to implement the Codes. On Friday, 10 unions sent a message that the notification of these codes, amidst deepening unemployment crisis and rising inflation is nothing short of "declaration of war" on the working masses. "The Union government in cahoots with its capitalist cronies is attempting to take the country back to the exploitative era of master-servant relationship," they said, adding that a series of protests will be launched on November 26 against the Codes. The CTUs had observed a one-day general strike on July 9.

# Reliance halts Russian crude at Jamnagar SEZ to meet EU sanctions

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Ltd on Thursday said it has halted the use of Russian crude at its export-only refinery in Jamnagar, Gujarat, as the company moves to comply with European Union sanctions. Reliance is India's largest buyer of Russian oil, which it processes and turns into fuel, such as petrol and diesel, at its giant oil refining complex at Jamnagar. The complex is made up of two refineries — one SEZ unit from which fuels are exported to the European Union, the US and other markets, and an older unit that caters to the domestic market. The European Union — a big market for Reliance — has imposed wide-ranging sanctions targeting Russia's energy revenues, including measures that restrict the import and sale of fuels produced from Russian crude oil. To comply with these, Reliance has stopped processing Russian crude oil at its only-for-exports (SEZ) refinery. "We have stopped importing Russian crude oil into our SEZ refinery with effect from November 20," a company spokesperson said in a statement. As is the case with any large industrial factory, the refinery must have past raw material (crude oil) inventories, which it is currently processing and turning into fuels.



# The evolution of India’s liver transplant programme



The first successful liver transplant was performed on a 20-month-old child from Kancheepuram at Apollo Hospital in Delhi on November 15, 1998. This success laid the foundation for the reestablishment of liver transplantation in India. The journey in the early years, only a select group of institutions took on the challenge of establishing liver transplant programmes. They invested heavily in infrastructure, built multidisciplinary teams, and trained specialists capable of managing every aspect of the transplant. Back then, the surgery involved large open incisions, prolonged hospital stays, and reliance on imported immunosuppressant (anti-rejection) medicines that made the treatment prohibitively expensive for most families. Over the years, however, steady progress has been made. From barely 100 procedures in 2005, the annual number of liver transplants in India exceeded 1,000 by 2012. By 2024, the country was performing roughly 4,500 transplants each year, one of the highest volumes in Asia.

Innovation and expertiseBehind this transformation lies a convergence of medical innovation, policy support, and growing clinical expertise. Outcomes have improved sharply as surgical techniques, post-operative care, and infection control practices have evolved. Indigenous production of essential immunosuppressive drugs has reduced dependence on imports, significantly lowering long-term costs. The introduction of minimally invasive and robotic procedures has shortened hospital stays and enhanced recovery. Greater experience has allowed expansion to a range of liver transplants — ABO incompatible transplants (where the blood group of the donor and recipient does not match), combined liver-kidney transplants, multiorgan transplants, domino transplants, and auxiliary transplants. Training programmes have produced a new generation of skilled professionals — adult hepatologists, paediatric hepatologists, surgeons, anaesthesiologists, and transplant nurses — who are taking transplant services beyond major metros to smaller cities. This decentralisation has made access to advanced care more equitable and strengthened the national transplant network. Despite this

growth, liver transplantation remains complex and costly, calling for sustained policy attention. Greater coordination between State and Central authorities under the Transplantation of Human Organs Act (THOA) can help address key barriers such as donor availability and public awareness. India’s organ donation rate remains low compared to global averages, leaving a vast unmet need. The majority of liver transplants in India remain live donors, despite there being many potential deceased organ donors. The country needs to shift away from live donors to deceased donor transplants. Southern and western regions in India have led in deceased organ donations, and the rest of the country must follow.

Teaching and tertiary care centres are ideally positioned to become major contributors to deceased organ donation programmes. Efforts to integrate donor registration with existing national identity platforms — such as Aadhaar, voter IDs, or driving licenses — could simplify organ pledging and promote wider participation. Public awareness must go beyond one-time campaigns. Regular community education, coordinated hospital programmes, and the inclusion of organ donation topics in medical and nursing curricula can help change long-term attitudes toward donation. While India’s transplant outcomes now compare favourably with global standards, we need to improve access. Expanding health insurance coverage — both public and private — to include the entire continuum of care, from evaluation to recovery, will ease the financial burden. Equally important is improving early referral systems. Many patients with end-stage liver disease are referred to transplant centres only after irreversible complications arise. Earlier referrals, guided by clear protocols and greater primary care awareness, can improve outcomes and reduce costs by avoiding late-stage interventions.

India’s liver transplant story is one of adaptation, collaboration, and resilience. In less than three decades, the country has moved from a handful of experimental attempts to a thriving ecosystem with global standard outcomes. What began as a rare, high-risk procedure is now a successful treatment option for thousands of patients each year. The next phase of this journey must focus on scaling capacity, enhancing deceased donation, and ensuring greater financial inclusivity. As we celebrate 27 years of successful liver transplantation in India, we can draw inspiration from the first recipient. He is now pursuing a post-graduation in microbiology after completing his MBBS and recently became a father. Today, a baby weighing as little as 3 kg can receive a successful liver transplant and that speaks volumes about the capability and skills of our transplant teams. (Dr. Anupam Sibal is group medical director and senior consultant paediatric gastroenterologist and hepatologist at Apollo Hospitals Group. anupamsibal@apollohospitals.com)

# ‘123456’ tops India’s password list again, highlighting weak digital security habits



New Delhi: ‘123456’ has once again emerged as India’s most common password, topping the list for the second consecutive year, a new report said on Wednesday. The data compiled by password manager NordPass analysed passwords used globally and in 44 countries, with a special focus this year on how different generations choose their passwords. The report shows that Indians continue to rely heavily on extremely weak and predictable passwords.

After ‘123456,’ the next most used passwords in India include ‘Pass@123’ and ‘admin,’ followed by simple numeric sequences such as ‘12345678,’ ‘12345,’ and ‘123456789.’ Despite adding symbols like ‘@’ or capital letters, combinations like ‘Admin@123,’ ‘Password@123,’ and ‘Abcd@1234’ remain easy to guess. The research notes that many Indians try to make their passwords appear strong

by inserting special characters, but the overall patterns are still very easy for hackers to crack. Personal elements also influence password choices. Names and patriotic references appear frequently, with passwords such as ‘Kumar@123,’ ‘Global123@,’ and ‘India@123’ making the country’s top list. Experts warn that while such combinations may feel more personal or unique, they follow predictable formats that can be easily targeted by automated attacks. Globally, the findings are similarly worrying. “123456” is again the world’s most common password, followed by “admin” and “12345678.”

Simple numeric patterns like “12345,” “1234567890,” and easy combinations such as “qwerty123” dominate lists across countries. Researchers also observed a significant rise in the use of special characters this year — with 32 passwords on the global list containing them, compared to just six last year. However, most of these remain predictable variations of common words or number patterns. Karolis Arbaciauskas, head of product at NordPass, said that overall improvements in password hygiene remain slow despite years of awareness campaigns. Arbaciauskas added that until passwordless authentication methods like passkeys become widespread, strong, unique passwords are essential. “Around 80 per cent of data breaches are caused by weak, reused, or compromised passwords,” he noted. The report also found that generational differences are minimal. In fact, the most popular passwords among 18-year-olds look very similar to those used by 80-year-olds. Numeric sequences like “12345” and “123456” dominate every age bracket.

# How do airbags work?

Testing. Testing. The auto mechanics are hard at work making sure the air-filled balloon-looking pillow-like bags work and deploy properly in this sleek and brand new car. Look at the dashboard and see how firmly the system is incorporated. But wait a minute, how does it know when to pop out and how can we make sure it doesn’t harm us? Turn on your thought wheels.

Safely, safetyAirbags have one aim - to protect those inside the car. It is a restraint system which acts to intercept. When a vehicle is met with a sudden impact, the people inside the car tend to move in a direction opposite to that of the forces of collision. This means there is high risk of critical injuries to occur. With airbags, the movement opposite to the forces is restricted and thus, the people inside the car remain relatively safe with lesser injuries. A seatbelt, also a restraint system, works with airbags to protect those inside the car.

Crash protector chemistryCar companies want to offer better protection with the airbags they provide in their cars. To ensure this, the airbag mechanism goes through a series of simulations and tests for different types of impact conditions. After all, crashes aren’t all a single type. For this the bag is prepped thoroughly. Airbags have one aim - to protect those inside the car. Airbags are made of strong nylon fabric which does not allow the gas with which it is filled to leak out. It is not normal air around us that’s inside the bag. There is a special chemistry for it. The key chemical involved is Sodium Azide (NaN<sub>3</sub>). Once the bag is made, they are kept folded at places in the car’s dash.

As crashes happen suddenly, airbags cannot waste even a millisecond. Once the sensors in the bag detect a crash, the airbag has to be inflated quickly before damage is done. Once the crash is sensed, electric signals are sent to the igniter which triggers an exothermic reaction where sodium azide decomposes to produce nitrogen gas. This gas fills up the airbag. Since the sensors need a bit of time to do the detecting, the inflation has to be even quicker.



As crashes happen suddenly, airbags cannot waste even a millisecond. Once the sensors in the bag detect a crash, the airbag has to be inflated quickly before damage is done

Typically the full process takes about 25 to 30 milliseconds (0.025 to 0.03 seconds!) Then, in about 50 milliseconds, the person inside the car comes into contact with the airbag. The airbag intervenes and absorbs the sudden forward movement reducing injuries and damage. Airbags are fantastic when there is space between the bag and the person. If the person is too close to where the airbag is, the immediate inflation can cause grave harm. This is why it’s advised that airbags should be used in conjunction with seatbelts. Make sure your seat is a good distance away. For children, care must be taken to ensure that they are properly buckled up for the ride. It is advised that children should be placed in the back seat. Ensure that the airbags aren’t defective.

# Space startup Agnikul Cosmos raises 150 crore in fresh funding round at \$500 million valuation



Chennai-based space tech startup Agnikul Cosmos has raised ₹150 crore (\$17 million) in a fresh funding round at a \$500 million valuation. The round saw participation from family offices and marquee institutional investors such as Advenza Global Limited, Atharva Green Ecotech LLP, HDFC Bank, Artha Select Fund, Prathithi Ventures, and 100X.VC. The company, which is building the world’s first single-piece 3D-printed rocket engines and end-to-end space transportation solutions, said that it will deploy this

capital in scaling production units of aerospace and rocket components and advance its stage-recovery programme.

A portion of the funds is earmarked for the development of Agnikul’s upcoming integrated space campus on the 350 acres allocated by the Tamil Nadu government, which will be used for building end-to-end facilities for manufacturing and testing of launch vehicle systems. “Given our previous successful controlled ascent launch that allowed us to demonstrate all our patented technologies with ISRO and IN-SPACe support, we have now been able to scale our strategy to include lower stage recovery and upper stage extension — features that will make the unit economics of launch services much better. This fund raise allows us to work on such missions while also focusing on scaling launch frequency and building for the world, from India,” said Srinath Ravichandran, CEO and co-founder, AgniKul Cosmos.

Agnikul will also use the fresh funds to strengthen their reusable launch architecture, building on its recently granted patent that extends the operational life of upper stages. This innovation opens new pathways for reusability and cost-efficient orbital access, marking a pivotal step towards becoming world’s first recoverable small satellite launch vehicle. Moin SPM, co-founder and COO of Agnikul, explained: “With growing demand and more than a dozen customers eager to launch with us, scaling our operational depth was the natural next step. The indigenous facility, which is planned near the new upcoming launchpad, will equip us to serve these missions on schedule and with the responsiveness the market expects.” With customers spanning India, West Asia, and Australia, Agnikul is equipped to meet a globally distributed launch demand, cementing India’s emerging leadership in the space tech sector. Agnikul also recently announced its new Large Format Metal Additive Manufacturing Unit, which will allow it to use 3D printing for multiple sub systems beyond just its engines.

# What changes are planned for the plant variety Act? | Explained

The story so far: Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the Centre will amend the Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers’ Rights Act (PPV&FRA Act), incorporating suggestions from stakeholders. While promoting new and high-yielding varieties is essential, preserving traditional seeds is equally important, he said. The Minister said there is a need for reforms, and new suggestions received from various stakeholders would be considered and incorporated into future amendments of the PPV&FRA Act, wherever necessary.

Have consultations started?

A committee headed by eminent agriculture scientist R.S. Paroda, appointed by the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers’ Rights Authority (PPVFRA), has started stakeholder consultations on the amendments. PPVFRA Chairman Trilochan Mohapatra told The Hindu that the committee will examine in detail the premises for amending the law and hold wide consultations with all stakeholders about the amendments. After consultations, the committee will submit its report to the PPVFRA, and the PPVFRA subsequently will present it with its views to the Union Agriculture Ministry. Prof. Mohapatra said the process of consultations has just begun and it will take time for preparing a report. The committee met farmers’ organisations, civil society organisations, industry representatives and researchers in the last week of October. The committee consisting of scientists and policymakers will review various provisions of the Act in light of inherent deficiencies, present day challenges, and to further bolster farmers’ interests. Prof. Mohapatra said the present Act has completed two decades, and in that time the sector has witnessed various technological and scientific advancements as well as changes in trade aspects and farmers’ requirements. The panel’s terms of reference include that it shall make wider consultations with various stakeholders and identify the issues and needs to cater to their requirements. It will propose the amendments in relevant sections of the PPV&FRA Act of 2001.

What are major topics of discussion?

Though officials maintain that consultations are at the preliminary stage, discussions with farmers include amendments to the definition of ‘variety needs’ that could be modified to include ‘combination of genotypes’ so that it could be at par with the draft Seeds Bill of 2019. It was also proposed to include seedlings, tubers, bulbs, rhizomes, roots, tissue culture plantlets, synthetic seeds and other vegetatively propagated material in the definition of seed. There is a proposal to define the term “institution” occurring in the definition of ‘breeder’ to include both public and private establishments in the seeds sector. The committee also has questions for stakeholders on the Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) test. Stakeholders are being told about the importance of trait and the necessity to include it in DUS guidelines. Further, there are discussions to define “abusive act” so that acts such as producing, selling, market-



ing, exporting and importing a variety which has the same or an identical denomination of another variety can be made punishable.

What are the concerns?

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (non-political) founding leader K.V. Biju, who attended the meeting, said the Act should have provisions to register all community-developed seeds. He said that seeds which went through DUS tests should not be allowed to register under a farmers’ or an individual’s name. “This is to prevent the misuse of the ownership of the seeds in future by private companies and to avoid monopolisation of seeds. The government should make it a priority that seeds developed by the farmers should remain under community control,” he said. Mr. Biju added that there are suspicions of the misuse of the DUS test. He said farmers’ groups suspect that in the case of njavara, a paddy seed from South India, proper DUS testing was not followed before registration. Policy analyst Shalini Bhutani, who attended the meeting, said small peasantry is still largely outside of the system and many of them are not aware of techno-legal issues. She said that as per their biocultural practices, they have been approaching seeds as a shared material. “This does not fit into the Intellectual Property Rights framework of granting exclusive economic rights over seeds,” she said adding that many countries are operationalising open-source ideas to keep their local plant varieties outside of the IPR system so that no body can claim private rights on them. She said there have been attempts to arm twist developing nations so that domestic laws such as the PPV&FR Act are compliant with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. On another matter of seed quality, “despite provisions for accountability for non-performance of IP-protected propagating materials in the original Act, the criteria for compensating farmers are not yet detailed out in its Rules,” she said. Ms. Bhutani said the committee may watch how the plant treaty negotiations scheduled in Peru towards the last week of November, particularly on the multilateral system (MLS) pan out. “Both are connected in a way. Expansion of MLS is a big issue,” she said and added that other concerns are in situ conservation and benefit sharing with local seed keepers.

# US sanctions Indian entities, individuals involved in Iranian petroleum & petroleum products sales

New York/Washington: The Trump administration has sanctioned entities and individuals from India involved in sales of Iran’s petroleum and petroleum products, saying the funds from this trade support Tehran’s regional terrorist proxies and procure weapons systems that are “a direct threat” to the US. The Departments of State and Treasury sanctioned shipping networks responsible for funding the Iranian regime’s “malign activities” through illicit oil sales, as well as an airline and its affiliates that arm and supply Iran-backed terrorist groups. Among those added to the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control Specially Designated Nationals List are Indian nationals Zair Husain Iqbal Husain Sayed, Zulfikar Hussain Rizvi Sayed, Maharashtra-based RN Ship Management Private Limited and Pune-based TR6 Petro India LLP. The State Department is designating 17 entities, individuals, and vessels in several countries, including, but not limited to India, Panama, and the Seychelles, involved in Iran’s petroleum and petroleum products sales, the administration said.

Concurrently, the Department of the Treasury is designating 41 entities, individuals, vessels, and aircraft, intensifying its efforts against Iran’s petroleum and petrochemical exports and disrupting financial streams and commercial operatives that support Iran’s malign activities. The funds generated by this oil trade are used to support Iran’s regional terrorist proxies and procure weapons systems that

pose a direct threat to US forces and American allies, the State Department said Thursday. The administration said TR6 Petro is an India-based petroleum products trader, which between October 2024 and June 2025, imported over USD 8 million worth of Iranian-origin bitumen from multiple companies. It is being designated for knowingly engaging in a significant transaction for the purchase, acquisition, sale, transport, or marketing of petroleum or petroleum products from Iran, the State Department said. The Iranian regime continues to fuel conflict in the Middle East to fund its destabilising activities, the State Department said. This behaviour enables Iran to fund its nuclear escalations, support terrorist groups, and disrupt the flow of trade and freedom of navigation in waterways that are crucial to global prosperity and economic growth. The United States will continue to act against the network of maritime service providers, dark fleet operators, and petroleum products traders involved in the transport of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products, it said. The State Department said the US will continue to act in support of National Security Presidential Memorandum 2 (NSPM-2), which directs the imposition of maximum pressure on the Iranian regime to deny it access to resources needed to sustain its destabilising activities. “The United States remains committed to disrupting the illicit funding streams that finance all aspects of Iran’s malign activities.”







Benchmark indices Nifty and Sensex edged higher 0.68 and 0.50 per cent during the week to close at 26,068 and 85,231, respectively. Analysts said that a moderation in FII selling due to expectations of earnings upgrades in H2 FY26 also supported the rally. However, markets turned volatile on Friday amid weak global cues. The Nifty fell after failing to cross its previous all-time highs of 26,277, ending its two-day advance. Broader indices underperformed, with the Nifty Midcap100 and Smallcap100 ending the week down 0.76 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively.



## Kuldeep Yadav and Jasprit Bumrah’s jugalbandi restricts South Africa on opening day in Guwahati Test



Between three deliveries on either side of Saturday morning’s chai-break and the fleeting five-over period that followed, the expectant Guwahati crowd witnessed a slice of what Test cricket’s creative peaks looked like, conjured up by two contrasting bowling superstars. When Jasprit Bumrah customarily bore the brunt of the bowling load, Kuldeep Yadav (3/48) did the easier things to reel in wickets on India’s grinding Guwahati initiation. The masterful duo comfortably led the early resurgence, leaving South Africa six down for 247 before stumps.

While he can turn up trumps practically any time – as he did in a short four-ball notice before the first break – Bumrah’s attacking postures had begun to recede when Kuldeep grew into his and nabbed wickets with a simpler but enticing plan against the South African top order. But it was a largely even morning that put the storylines in place for India’s progressive bowling success.

The muggy weather had eased up, the softer rays of the sun beamed perfectly through before the coin toss soared at 8:30 am. The skies were not moist enough to debilitate the captains. The propensity of heightened suspense around the ACA Stadium’s varied conditions on its maiden Test match morning had quietly vanished. For the first hour of the day, when they were consigned to Temba Bavuma’s choice to bat first again, Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj had built up ample pressure on the South African openers. India’s Kuldeep Yadav congratulates Jasprit Bumrah after the pacer took a South African wicket on Day 1 of the Kolkata Test at Eden Gardens. (Express Photo by Partha Paul) India’s Kuldeep Yadav congratulates Jasprit Bumrah after the pacer took a South African wicket on Day 1 of the Kolkata Test at Eden Gardens. The sting was partially alleviated by a touch of moisture beneath the red soil surface. Bowling from the northern end, Bumrah’s deliveries appeared heavier on the fuller lengths, exuding firm bounce only on the greener tinges outside the channel. Markram and Rickelton observed no hurry either. Rarely did they chase anything away from the body. The controlled skid off the surface initially meant the only two scoring shots in Bumrah’s first three overs were carefully curated tap and runs to cover by Rickelton. Siraj too backed up the senior talisman, employing an uncharacteristic upright seam first up to test both edges of the left-handed Rickelton.

For the first time in four overs, Bumrah slipped to the

shorter length with room, and an assured Markram finally opened his account with a solid punch to the cover boundary. He proceeded to design the near-perfect delivery next ball, the one Markram dreads most on harder wickets. He looks unflappable until that moment arrives perfectly, shaping away late on the full outside the off-stump, the same position from where he thumped the previous delivery for four. To the collective dismay of Bumrah and the soaring Guwahati crowd, KL Rahul grassed the thickish outside edge that flew from Markram’s careless front-footed stroll at second slip. Regaining cautiousness, the openers built another stable 50-plus stand thereafter, adding to their impressive first-innings association from Kolkata. The energies had dipped by then, India had ceded their first striking opportunity on a harder wicket. With the returning Nitish Kumar Reddy untroubling their defences and Siraj’s switch to the wobble deliveries incurring inaccuracy, Rickelton too moved off the blocks.

The compactness in strokeplay was briefly tested by Washington Sundar, who magically resumed his bowling duties after having sent down only six balls in Kolkata. With Sai Sudharsan returning to No. 3, Sundar had slid back to No. 8 on the team sheet. He still remains a superior bowler, and it is his subtle array of tricks that first planted doubts in Markram and Rickelton. As the sun moved overhead mid-way through the morning session, Sundar began to extract something from a drier strip, turn with the off-break and bounce with the flight.

Unlike the Eden Gardens minefield that encouraged the tweakers to leverage flatter trajectories, the loopy deliveries had a vital role in the narratives here. It was something Kuldeep adjusted to as the afternoon progressed, especially after Rickelton employed a more open stance in the crease to counter him early on. After Bumrah added the masala to India’s 11 am Tea, casting Markram two balls before the break, Kuldeep returned to spin Rickelton out with a snappy leg-break. Swerving the ball into the south-paw, it didn’t take a prodigious turn to stir the faulty drive to the lively captain, Rishabh Pant, behind the stumps.

With the pitch still retaining hardness, the visitors promoted Tristan Stubbs back up to the volatile No. 3 slot. It had its merit on the wicket with Stubbs’ firm punches and liking to walk down the track, keeping the spinners away from total control in the second session. Stubbs and Bavuma extended an unhurried response to fend off the spinners over the next 30 overs with a diet of sweeps and smites between square leg and wide long on. Their attacking lines unyielding, Ravindra Jadeja was the first to return to flighted deliveries outside the off-stump, inviting Bavuma to commit the mistake in his offense, ending with a tame chip to the mid-on fielder. Ushering in a similar play away from the batters, Kuldeep claimed Stubbs (49) and Wiaan Mulder in his first spell in the final session. Seizing 82.5 overs with an hour’s play under the floodlights, India eventually ensured no easy runaways for the visitors. As Siraj’s outswinger claimed the jittery Tony de Zorzi caught-behind a minute before stumps, Northeast’s dipping skies too stood kinder to the hosts, holding up a little longer than usual before breaking for the night.

## Who is Lakshya Sen’s next opponent – Yushi Tanaka?

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Yushi Tanaka or Yuji, if you go by the Japanese phonetics, had once told Japanese media that he loves to talk, and once he starts talking, he can’t stop. Now that he’s started winning, the World No 27 will hope he doesn’t stop. At that point, while battling domestic competition and completing a college degree, also winning the inter collegiate, he was still finding his feet on the international circuit. On Saturday, he made the Australian Open Super 500 finals, beating Lin Chun-Yi 21-18, 21-15. Earlier at the Paris World Championships, the Japanese, a late bloomer at 25, had defeated Chinese World No 4 Li Shifeng, to create quite the stir on Day 1 of the Worlds. He is coached by the very popular former World champion Kento Momota, from whom he has learnt defensive rigour.

Very unlike the Japanese conservative style in singles, Tanaka is quite an amalgamation of very many players. His original intent is fiercely attacking, with speed bursting abd bustling in him, which explains the presence of his other coach, the former restless maverick Sho Sasaki. But Momota has brought in the poised shuttle control. Speaking to Nikkan Sports earlier in the year, Tanaka had said, “Learning from the world’s best player has really helped me improve.” Tanaka took his time, but gained immense confidence by consistently beating Kodai Naraoka, the top Japanese at No 8 currently. Back at home, Tanaka was gaining miles on Kodai in domestic ranking events, though he was criticised for being a ‘domestic lord’ and not managing results abroad. But brought into the national setup, he has taken the opportunity to prove himself. While he continued to struggle in international tournaments, he was determined to change his fortunes. “I’ll do my best so that people won’t say that Tanaka can only win in Japan. First of all, I want to



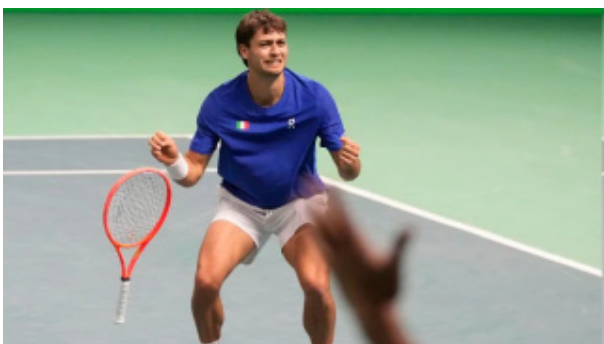
be in the top 10 in the world,” he had declared to Nikkan. Soon after he started working with Momota, Tanaka won Orleans Masters, beating Sathish Karunakaran, Mark Caljouw and Alex Lanier on the way. After getting his second All Japan title, he had explained Momota’s contribution. “The most important things are his demeanor and mindset as champion. It is not just about learning about his sense of the game but learning from someone who has become World champion even though there can be only one. I am learning a lot from his teaching and observing him. And members of Nippon national team are lucky to have him,” Tanaka said. Momota after tragically missing out on an Olympic medal, and facing eye issues post his accident in Malaysia, had vowed to help Japan in his second innings as coach. Momota had said in December 2024, “I’ve always wanted to leave something for the Badminton World. I thought about continuing on the national team until I no longer could, but I also felt it was important to train the next generation while I still could. I chose the latter. I want to contribute till I still can.”

## Italy’s Flavio Cobolli wins marathon tie-break to take his side into final

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

In an intense game, Italian tennis player Flavio Cobolli came on the winning side to take his team to the final of the Davis Cup as he has defeated Belgium’s Zizou Bergs in Bologna. Cobolli tore off his shirt in joy as he defeated the Belgian, and the crowd erupted. The 23-year-old in a more than three-hour marathon contest has taken the game to a seventh match [6-3 6-7 (5-7) 7-6 (17-15)] and ended on the winning side. The tie-break is the sixth-longest in the history of the 125-year old competition. “It’s really tough to say something about this match. We played for our countries and fought a lot for this win. In the end, I realised my dream and we are now in the final. I played an amazing match against a great opponent. I played for all of [the supporters], for all of my team, my family, for me. It is one of the best days of my life,” Cobolli said.

Italy team captain Filippo Volandri said: “In my five years as captain I have never seen something like that. It was an unbelievable match. At the end I just said [it was] 5% tactics and 95% heart. This guy gave everything he had – I am really proud. We have an unbelievable bench, Matteo [Berrettini, Cobolli’s team-mate] lost his voice. But it is not the last match. We celebrate tonight and then we fo-



cus on the final.” Cobolli gave Italy an unassailable 2-0 lead without needing the doubles contest. Italy is riding a 13-tie winning streak and meets the winner of Saturday’s semifinal between Germany and Spain, which is without injured No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz. Earlier, Matteo Berrettini beat Raphael Collignon 6-3, 6-4 to help Italy on its way. Neither Belgian has won a singles title on the men’s tour. But the No. 43-ranked Bergs played like it was the biggest match of his life against No. 22 Cobolli, who had the crowd behind him in Bologna.

## Lakshya Sen wins 85 minute thriller against Chou Tien Chen with dazzling defensive retrieves to make Aus final



GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Their Olympic dreams didn’t culminate into a medal. But there’s a whole four years in between two Games when badminton stays terrifically interesting. When the likes of Lakshya Sen and Chou Tien Chen, each more tenacious than the other, turn an ordinary Super 500 Sydney spring semifinal, into something that’s better than absolute cinema. Lakshya Sen turned Live Sport into silverscreen stuff that’s better than once-in-4-years silverware, as he defeated Chou in a 85 minute thriller. He reached the second final of 2025 after Hong Kong, but is still searching for the first title of a very difficult season, where at No 12, he failed to qualify for the World Tour Finals. But that’s where Sen and Chou light up badminton – they make it irresistible to watch, never mind that it’s an end-season competition with little at stake.

They even made the mid-set, badminton’s unofficial snack-break for watchers, the crescendo of the match, as the first set and decider were reduced to footnotes. You could talk about the slap-drives in Sen’s 17-21, 24-22, 21-16 win, a very Bangalore-coded shot that those from the Padukone academy are casually rattling off. The outstretched racquet smothering skimmingly over the shuttle to send it cross and very flat. But Sen and Chou made the diving retrieves far more interesting.

Defense alone can’t win you badminton matches, as Sen has painfully learnt. But it sure can buy you time to tire out a very accurate, powerful opponent and take matters into a decider, where Sen had shredded Chou’s resolve by denying him a win in the second set. The Taiwanese, 35 years old, but elegantly foxy and unfailingly accurate, has mastered the control game. Chou dictates in-rally pace, controls placement to front or back, straight or cross, and works angles like set squares of a geometry compass box. His first set win came despite Sen not erring, not fading out, not giving up, only because Chou stood at the front court and comandeered a symphony of criss-crossing shuttles with his patented shuttle control. But the tone of the match was set at Chou leading 19-15 in the opener. A 44 shot rally, offered a glimpse into just how determined Sen was to play very high quality strokes at a very fast clip, with very bull-headed intent. As the comms said, Sen needed to tell himself to ‘never give up’ while Chou had a ‘living tattoo,

## Australia cricket chief clarifies speculation of Usman Khawaja’s back stiffness due to playing golf

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Australian veteran opener Usman Khawaja could not open yesterday in the first Ashes Test. He left the field for eight minutes due to back stiffness, which meant that the 38-year-old could only open after eight minutes have elapsed in the second innings as a result, Australia had to send Marnus Labuschagne as the opener instead of Usman Khawaja. As debutant Jake Weatherald was dismissed for a duck in the first over, skipper Steve Smith had to come in at number four.

It was later come to known that Khawaja had played golf ahead of the Test match during an optional training session. However, CA clarified that the back spasms are a type of injury that Khawaja did have before, and it had nothing to do with golf. “Did that correlate to any of the issues? I personally don’t think so. Usman’s a very seasoned campaigner, he knows his body well, and he knows how to get himself prepared for cricket. So I think that is drawing a long bow. A lot of people talk about cricket being played between the ears.”

“So getting some time away from being in your hotel or at training I think is really important. I noticed Mitch Starc played golf with him, so it certainly didn’t impact his performance,” said Cricket Australia Chief Todd Greenberg on

a living cheer meme’ in his coach-trainer Victoria Lao, his animated courtside one-woman team. In that scarcely believable rally over 22 shots Sen played, he told Chou that his low pick-up defensive retrieves and clear headed anticipation meant he could cover the court, in all dimensions, and the shuttle wouldn’t stop coming back. Chou is perhaps the most cerebral and skilled player on the Tour, and had a counter to Sen’s defiance. He would not only make the Indian dive across his body on the backhand corners, he would ensure the next shuttle was far on the opposite flank. This was one of those matches when accuracy from both players was guaranteed – errors not blighting the tempo. The number of backline corner lobs and floating clears that Sen nailed pinpoint, was outrageous. Chou’s precision on the short cross smashes was equally impressive. His superpower is deceptively simple — he can hit more overhead strokes with variety and control, back to back, and the arms don’t tire. Sen’s superpower is he can defend one shot more than Chou flings at him, retrieving real low. Sen trailed 4-7, then made ground at 9-9. Because these two are so talented, they can literally mimic each other and it was Sen in the mid set, as he used Chou’s tactic of making opponent twist and turn, by going for the flanks. Without mistakes. Sen took the mid-interval lead at 11-9. Chou wasn’t built to make life easy for his opponents. At 12-10, while beginning to tire, Chou dug from his reserves the patience to let go two opportunities for a kill, before smashing the third. Snapping at Sen’s heels, Chou went 15-13, 17-14, before he levelled at 17-all. One incredible Sen point for 15-13, saw Sen put in three diving retrieves at three separate corners, then scurry to the net and track back next second for a back court straight smash kill. The mileage in Sen’s feet, and palms (given he is on all fours often and bouncing back on feet with catapult elasticity) can be a researcher’s dissertation, given he is shorter than most of the top opponents, even at 5’10. But he neutralizes that advantage with his read on the game, and Chou had to stitch together clever ways and work hard, crank up power, to get his points. Still, he reached 20-18, when Sen floated one long. Sen aced a back corner toss-drop to go 19-20, and drew out a smash error to stay afloat — when 2 points from exiting. A tight dribble gave Chou another match point, but the Sen defense put such massive pressure on the Taiwanese that he forced Chou to again go long. 21-all. Catching him on the forehand corner once more, Sen went ahead 22-21. At 23-22, Sen played that slap-drive once more, and the shot always travels awkward for opponents, coming into their torso flat. Snatching at the shuttle and exhausted because Sen could just not be stubbed out, Chou finally succumbed to a decider. That second set with his back to the corner, took the wind out of the Chou sails, and a 21-16 was inevitable, even if the Taiwanese stayed defiant in defeat, after being down 12-20. Separated by 10 years in age, there’s a barmy brilliance to how both Sen and Chou approach badminton — they seem to play better for pride than for the prize, to win a point, than to make one.



SEN Radio on Saturday. Starc has picked up seven wickets in the first game of the Test. Greenberg also stressed the fact that players are judged on the basis of their performances from the five games, and each individual in that team has the freedom to prepare themselves. “That’s exactly how Andrew McDonald and the team have functioned over a long period of time and they’ve been very successful on that. The individual performance inside a team environment, and then ultimately you’re held accountable for your performance. That’s mature and that’s the current approach,” he added.

## Sanju Samson shares how he heard ‘CSK is one of the finest dressing rooms’ from players who have been part of franchise

GNS News Agency, Nov 22

Sanju Samson going to the Chennai Super Kings might end up being one of the pivotal moments in the Chennai Super Kings’ history. With the speculation of how long MS Dhoni will continue to play the Samson’s arrival does seem like give a fresh breath of air to the franchise, needed after last season’s poor performance. Samson recalled how he was just 19 years old when he first met Dhoni and how he interacted with former Indian skipper for 10-20 days and said in his chats with other players who have been part of CSK, Samson learnt it is “one of the finest dressing rooms.”

“I have a lot of friends there. But there is a person there. Everyone knows him. There is a person called MS Dhoni. I met him when I was 19. When I was 19, I got selected in the Indian team for



the very first time. I went for a UK tour. Mahi bhai was the captain. I saw Mahi bhai there for the first time. I interacted with him for 10-20 days. After that, I used to see him during IPL. There will always be a crowd in front of him. Five people here, 10 people there. Ok, I cannot meet here. I will have to meet him separately. I had such a desire,” Samson said on a video shared by CSK. “Destiny has got to me and play with him in one dressing room. That couple

of months. I’m very, very excited. Definitely, very genuinely excited to meet him and interact with him. Sit, have breakfast with him, practice with him, play matches with him, WOW! Just thinking about it makes me very happy. After that, I have a lot of friends,” he said. “I have heard lots and lots of things, being a part of IPL from last 10 to 14 years, I think you have a lot of friends in other franchises. You are a part of the Indian

dressing room. I’m not saying it because I have actually come to the CSK franchise. One thing I have heard from each and every Indian, domestic and international player is CSK is one of the finest dressing rooms. I have heard lots and lots of great things. I think I have not heard anything bad yet about CSK. I have heard lots and lots of great things. But I’m looking forward to experiencing it. Listening to stories definitely excite me as a person and cricketer.



## Unwell Saroj Khan choreographed Devdas’ Dola Re while lying on the floor, won 17 awards for Aishwarya Rai-Madhuri Dixit song



India is one of the largest film producers in the world, and while it may not always churn out top quality, the Indian film industry certainly makes up for it by offering the world something that no one else seems to have – choreographed dance numbers in the middle of the movie. Something that might appear alien to European or American audiences, is an intrinsic part of Indian films. Every era of Hindi films has a distinct song and dance style and for those who grew up in the 1990s, this era was defined by the choreographed songs of Saroj Khan. With popular songs like “Ek Do Teen”, “Choli Ke Peeche”, “Nimbooda Nimbooda” among many others, Saroj Khan’s dance steps were a part of the pop culture, but it was Devdas’ song “Dola re Dola” that won her her first National Film Award. Composed by Ismail Darbar, with lyrics by Nursat Badr, the vocals here were done by Shreya Ghoshal and Kavita Krishnamurthy. Such was the impact of the song that the sarees and jewellery worn by the actors, Madhuri Dixit and Aishwarya Rai, became a part of mainstream fashion, and 21 years later, Karan Johar paid tribute to the song in his film Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani.

Devdas was an ambitious project for director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and he left no stone unturned in getting every element of the film just right. Reportedly made on a budget of Rs 50 crore, the making of Devdas was an arduous process, and so was the making of the song “Dola Re Dola”. Calling it the “toughest” song of her career, Saroj Khan once said that she saw it as a “feather in my cap.” This was also the song that had to deliver on the biggest promise of the

film – the dance-off between Madhuri and Aishwarya. Both top actresses, and the best dancers of their generation, this music video had people comparing them throughout to see who would come out on top. Saroj was well aware of this and on top of that, she also had to make sure that both actresses had enough to perform, so it wouldn’t look like one was given preference over the other.

Aishwarya or Madhuri, who got the better steps?

“Madhuri Dixit and Aishwarya Rai are both brilliant dancers and I couldn’t let either of them feel that they did not have good steps. I was scared that one of them may feel left out, but luckily nothing untoward happened,” she recalled in a 2012 chat with Mumbai Mirror. Saroj shared that while both actresses were brilliant on screen, they had a different approach to prepare for the song. Madhuri would come prepared on set after days of rehearsal, vs Aishwarya, who would rehearse on set. However, Saroj was extremely unwell when she shot the song. Bhansali told Quint that Saroj was in a lot of pain when she shot the song and would be lying down on the floor. “At the time we were shooting, Sarojji was extremely unwell. She was in a lot of pain, but she would lie down on the floor and give instructions. She shot for 15 days”, Bhansali said. None of this pain was visible on screen, and after the song came out, Saroj won 17 awards for it. Saroj’s health deteriorated as Devdas released. On the day of the release, Bhansali and Aiswarya visited her in the hospital, and even then, she wondered how her song was being received. “On the day Devdas released, Sarojji was in hospital. Aishwarya and I went to meet her. In her semi-conscious state she asked, ‘Dola Re Dola pe paise miley ya nahin? (Did the audience shower coins on Dola Re Dola?)’. Imagine her passion for her work! Even in that state, she wanted to know if her work was being appreciated,” he told Subhash K Jha after the choreographer’s death in 2020. Bhansali believed that Saroj was to choreography, what Salim-Javed were to screenwriting. He shared in the same chat, “She brought stardom to choreography just like Salim-Javed brought stardom to scriptwriting. There were great choreographers before her, but Sarojji brought an aura to choreography.” While Bhansali said some very kind things about her after her passing, their working relationship went south after a few collaborations. Saroj, in a chat with Talking Cinema’s YouTube channel, explicitly accused Bhansali and his team of using her choreography in “Ram Chahe Leela” without paying her for it, and crediting someone else for her work. The song was exquisitely styled but over the years, costume designers Neeta Lulla and Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla have both claimed credit for it. While Neeta largely focused on Aishwarya’s character, there was some overlap in their work, and the intersection for the same came at “Dola Re”. In a recent chat with Namrata Zakaria, Abu and Sandeep shared that Abu “created that sketch” for the song, but, in a chat with Rediff in 2002, Neeta had claimed, “I did design for both of them in the song ‘Dola re dola’ because the whole concept of sari was mine.”

## Farah Khan, whose four films made over Rs 700 cr, says she has earned more in one year from YouTube

Farah Khan, who has amassed around 2.5 million subscribers on YouTube, has become a digital sensation thanks to her wildly hilarious cooking vlogs featuring her ‘world famous’ chef, Dilip. His popularity has soared so much that he has begun headlining advertisements, including one alongside Shah Rukh Khan. Farah’s journey has been one of a kind — coming from a broken home where her father — a filmmaker — died penniless, she started as a choreographer, graduated to a filmmaker, judged reality shows and is now a content creator with her YouTube channel. Given her early years, Farah has earlier said that she remains determined to seize every opportunity and remains insecure about money. In a recent conversation with Soha Ali Khan on her podcast, Soha spoke to Farah about how she has earned more in the last one year than from making blockbusters, choreographing some of the most memorable Bollywood songs and judging India’s top reality shows.

Soha brought up the huge financial success Farah has achieved with her YouTube vlog, even surpassing earnings from her blockbuster directorials such as Main Hoon Na (box office earning Rs 89 crore), Om Shanti Om (box office earning Rs 152 crore), and her biggest hit, Happy New Year (box office earning Rs 383 crore). The total box office earning of her three Shah Rukh Khan starrers came to Rs 624 crore. She also directed Tees Maar Khan with Akshay Kumar in the lead. While the film didn’t attain the sort of success like the Shah Rukh Khan films, it made Rs 101.8 crores. When asked how much she earns from YouTube, Farah responded modestly: “I don’t know what to say. Massive is a relative term. But I think I said it somewhere that in my entire career, maybe in a year, I’ve not made so much money, even though I’ve directed so many films and all.” She further explained how YouTube has given her creative independence: “There’s no ownership over the money. But it’s my channel, so I can do what I want. There’s no one telling me. There’s no OTT channel or no production house saying, ‘yeh toh kaatna padega, yeh toh daal le.’ And there’s no TV channel saying, ‘You can only bring this guest on,’ which I used to hate. I used to hate that so hard. You know, that is something from my inner core. I used to hate this demarcation, that this one is an A-list, and this one is tacky. I used to genuinely just hate that. I now have the freedom to invite whoever I want.”

Farah said authenticity is the biggest currency on YouTube, which is why she avoids relying on makeup artists or stylists. “That’s why I don’t keep a makeup person or a hair person or anything. I buy my clothes online, and I try to wear a new outfit for every vlog, only because it helps me keep track of with whom I shot that day,” she said. Consistency, she added, matters just as much. “Only two weeks that we didn’t post anything was when my mom passed away. I was like, please don’t post anything. But literally when she was in hospital for 40 days, luckily, I don’t know why, I had banked like 8–9 episodes and kept. So that was consistent. But when she passed away, I was like let’s not post. So that was the only two weeks that we have missed posting on our channel. See, I think this discipline comes from filmmaking, and like, I’m on the job. And we finish shooting in one and a half hour.” Farah laughed and replied: “Dilip can’t say anything unless I’m giving him the lines. So I have to be then the voice of Big Boss saying, ‘Dilip, now say this, now that...’” Speaking about Dilip, Farah also



opened up about how she began her YouTube journey a year and a half ago. She recalled: “So I had finished writing my script for my movie, and I knew it’s a long wait now, waiting for it to go on floors. And people kept telling me, ‘Ma’am, it’s very lucrative,’ and, you know, ‘this one is making that much.’ I was like, abhi mere teen bachche university jaaenge, movie may not happen for a year or two. So okay, now I have time. I told them, ‘Achha, let’s try it.’ I said, I want to do something with food, because I’m comfortable. And you know, all my food reels used to go very, very viral.” After filming her first video, Farah realised she would have to prep all the food while also holding the audience with a monologue. That’s when she decided to bring Dilip on camera. “I used to just tell him, ‘Tu yeh bol de’. I would give him the punchline and it just kind of exploded. By the second vlog, we had our silver button,” she said. When asked how her three children react to her online fame, Farah admitted: “I think now I feel they are a little more embarrassed. I used to be a cool mom before. Because now their friends are watching me. So their friends are like, ‘Oh, you’re all poor because your mother said she started YouTube to pay for your university fees.’” Farah also spoke about how her cook Dilip has become “world famous,” and how much of their earnings initially went into making him debt-free. She shared: “He had a lot of debt. I don’t know how. One year has just gone in paying off that debt and telling him, ‘You can’t take loans on interest anymore because whatever I am giving you is going down a well’.”

## Biopic on Padma Shri Vanajeevi Ramaiah begins filming in Khammam

Khammam: The life of renowned green crusader, Padma Shri late Vanajeevi Ramaiah, is set to be immortalised in a biographical film. Followers of Ramaiah and those inspired by his work have come together to make the biopic. Nandi Award winner Vemuganti is directing the film, which is being produced by Lingampalli Chandrashekar, while noted Khammam-based musician Ballepalli Mohan is composing the music. Popular Telugu

## ‘We grew marijuana for the British’: Kunal Ganjawala reveals how he got his surname, says ‘lagaan maaf tha’ as they were ‘licensed druggists’



When you listen to songs like “Salaame” from Dhoom, “O Humdum Soniyo Re” from Saathiya, “Tauba Tauba” from Kaal, “Dil Na Diya” from Krishi, or most memorably “Bheege Honth Tere” from Murder, one thread connects them all. Each track, a chartbuster in its own right, was sung by Kunal Ganjawala. Over the years, audiences have admired his powerful voice, but many have been just as curious about his unusual surname, “Ganjawala.” On social media today, it has become both a subject of jokes and genuine intrigue. Now, Kunal has finally revealed the true story behind his surname. Speaking to the Hindi Rush podcast, he explained

in detail how it originated. He said, “During the British Raj, our family used to grow marijuana for medical purposes. It was a profession before 1942, before the Quit India Movement.” He then added, “Hum ganje ki kheti karte the, aur uska produce hum government ko dete the. Mere father ne mujhe bataya ki humein lagaan maaf tha, humare ancestors ko lagaan nahi dena padta tha. Kyunki humse British ye cheez lete the aur humein ‘Rao Saheb’ ki takhti de rakhi thi. Hum medical purposes ke liye iski kheti kiya karte the, aur uss mein se woh afeem ke injections banaakar cancer patients ko diya karte the, jahan-jahan British Kingdom tha.” (We cultivated cannabis and gave the produce to the government. My father told me that our family was exempted from paying land tax, because the British took this crop from us and had given us the title of ‘Rao Saheb.’ They used the crop to make opium-based injections that were given to cancer patients across the British Empire). He further said that his ancestors continued this work in this business until the Quit India Movement. But when Mahatma Gandhi urged people to become self-sufficient, the family decided to abandon the trade. Kunal recalled, “After that, we started working in construction and making steel furniture.” Speaking more about the baggage and curiosity attached to his surname, he said, “We were licensed druggists during the British Raj until 1942. Sometimes on social media people are intrigued by my surname, and sometimes they make fun of it. But this is the real history. And this surname actually helped me a lot in the jingle industry. People would joke, ‘Oh, ganjewala, do you have maal?’ And I would tell them that I neither smoke nor consume such things.”

## Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri teaser: Ananya Panday wants a ‘90s-style love story’ with ‘mama’s boy’ Kartik Aaryan



After a long spell of controversies and a shelved film behind him, Kartik Aaryan is finally making his first film with Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions. The film, titled Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, also stars Ananya Panday. The film’s teaser has just been unveiled, and from the looks of it, the film promises to be a breezy, sun-soaked romantic comedy. The teaser opens with a super that reads: “If you are going to live another week, live the best week of your life.” This sets the tone as we are introduced to the protagonist, Ray, played by Kartik Aaryan. He appears by the beach, flaunting his abs and delivering a typically cheeky monologue: “Malika se lekar Malala tak, Urfi se lekar Kamla tak, koi bhi iss mama’s boy ko haath se nahi jaane dega.” (From Malika to Malala, from Urfi to Kamla, no one will ever let this mama’s boy slip away).

## Kannada star Dr Rajkumar sang ‘Bheege Honth Tere’ at 75 despite not knowing Hindi, recalls Kunal Ganjawala; passed away a few months later



Each film industry in India has its own stalwarts and superstars, and for the Kannada film industry there is no one bigger than Dr Rajkumar. The actor-singer was considered one of the most versatile performers of all time, and that is what singer Kunal Ganjawala learnt on his very first meeting with him. In a recent interview Kunal talked about his experience of meeting the superstar and how he was completely taken aback by what followed. The singer famous for his songs like ‘Bheege Honth Tere’, ‘Jaadugari’ and ‘Dil Na Diya’ met Dr Rajkumar while recording a song for his son Puneeth, and soon discovered that the veteran star was his fan.

Kunal shared with Hindi Rush, “I was called to sing a song for Dr Rajkumar’s son, Puneeth. They said that it is his third film, and they wanted me to sing for it. So for the first time ever, I flew to record a song for the Kannada industry. It was just after ‘Bheege Honth Tere’ had become a huge success. I had to go because it was Rajkumar ji; he was like the first family of the Kannada industry.” He recalled that after the recording, he spoke to the veteran star but as both of them didn’t share a common language, a translator helped them in communicating. “After recording the song, I met Puneeth for dinner. With some hesitation he asked me to talk to Rajkumar ji. Our mutual friend translated the whole conversation for me, and it turns out that he wanted me to sing another song for him,” he said and added that they decided to record the next morning. Now even though Kunal was confident that he’d be able to finish the song and make it to his flight at 10 am, Puneeth told him that there was no way he could leave without meeting Dr Rajkumar. The singer admitted that he was very nervous about missing his flight, but something Puneeth said helped him calm down just a little bit. He said, “Now this is the time when he (Dr Rajkumar) had just been released by Veerappan, and he couldn’t come to the studio because of knee surgery. I finished the song by 8 am, but Puneeth told me that I had to meet his father before leaving. Now I was very worried about missing my flight because I had to record for Anu Malik in the afternoon, but Puneeth calmed me down and said, ‘Sir, aap chinta mar karo (Don’t get tense). Papa won’t let the flight leave until you board it.”

ences. The film also aims to inspire future generations and highlight the work done by Ramaiah, who planted nearly one and a half crore saplings during his lifetime, earning him national recognition in the form of a Padma Shri award. The biopic is multilingual and will be released in six languages — Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Hindi and English. The English version is being made with the intent to submit it for the Oscars, as environmental protection, the cause championed by Ramaiah