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## India's labour reforms with caveats

The objective behind the long-awaited labour codes is no doubt laudable, as they promise minimum wages, enhanced social security and safety net for employees and easing regulations and compliance norms for employers, but several areas of concern need to be addressed with fairness and sensitivity. Among the issues flagged by the labour unions is the freedom given to the employers to fire employees at will and convert permanent jobs into fixed-term contract work. The working hours in factories have been increased from 9 to 12 hours, and in shops and establishments from 9 to 10 hours. Trade unions will lose their relevance, as their membership base will be depleted due to workers being employed on contract. There is a strong justification for labour reforms in the country to reflect the new realities of the industry. As India aspires to become a global economic powerhouse, it needs to shed the baggage of archaic laws originally meant to protect the interests of the colonial masters. A new beginning has been made with the replacement of 29 central laws with four labour codes, covering wages, industrial relations, social security and occupational safety and working conditions. The move is being projected by the government as a historic reform that will simplify compliance, extend social security and strengthen worker protections. The rollout promises timely wages, formal appointment letters, minimum-wage guarantees and annual health check-ups for employees. Recognition of gig and platform workers within the social-security architecture is perhaps the single biggest structural change, acknowledging a segment long left outside the statutory net. While the reforms would help in improving competitiveness and productivity, the government must make efforts to bring labour unions on board by addressing their concerns in full.

## Habsiguda Congress leaders meet newly appointed Medchal-



Malkajgiri District Congress President KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 28 (Indian Chronicle): "Habsiguda Division Congress Party leaders paid a courtesy visit and felicitated the newly appointed Medchal-Malkajgiri District Congress Party President, Thotakura Vajresh Yadav, and conveyed their congratulations. Those who extended greetings included senior Congress leaders Kandi Agireddy, Sudhakar Reddy, former Medchal-Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shravan Kumar Reddy, Habsiguda Division President Gannaram Vijay Kumar, Division General Secretary and Director of the Endowments Department Dharmendra Naik (Dharma), Sagar Reddy, Shekhar Reddy, Habsiguda Division Indiramma Committee member Gundurajanna, Youth Congress leaders Sai Kiran and Sai Ravi, among others. Speaking on the occasion, the leaders expressed confidence that under the leadership of Vajresh Yadav, the Congress party would hoist its victory flag in the GHMC. They assured him of their full support and commitment to work tirelessly until the Congress flag is unfurled on the Greater Hyderabad stage.

## Make the KCR Deeksha Divas program in Bhuvanagiri today a success:- Bhuvanagiri former MLA Pailla Shekhar Reddy

(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- The KCR Deeksha Divas Program of 29 November 2009, which turned the Telangana state movement around, will be held today at 10 am at Prince Chowrastha opposite Rythu Bazaar in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district headquarters. On Friday, a site inspection will be conducted at Prince Chowrastha and all BRS party leaders and activists should attend, said Bhuvanagiri former MLA & BRS party constituency in-charge Pailla Shekhar Reddy Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district BRS party president Kancharla Ramakrishna Reddy.

## More Retail Initiates Stringent Action on Fraud and Stock Manipulation in Andhra Pradesh Stores



Hyderabad:More Retail Pvt. Ltd., the food and grocery chain has initiated stringent action against few of its store employees in Guntakal, Nellore and Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh following the discovery of serious violations including stock manipulation, fraud and theft of store goods.

The violations were identified during internal stock au-

dit and verification by the More Retail audit team. Employees Puttamreddy Venkata Narasa Reddy, Narra Sekhar, Ravi Kumar Meenuga, and Padam Jyothiswara Rao were found to be involved in these violations. Police complaints have been filed against these individuals under the relevant provisions of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (2003) in relating to theft, fraud and criminal breach of trust. The incidents relate to stores located at Kasapuram Road at Guntakal, Vedayapalem at Nellore and Kurnool. More Retail team has lodged formal complaints at the respective police stations, and the police authorities are doing a thorough investigation into the matter. More Retail Pvt. Ltd. reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to the highest standards of integrity and corporate governance and reiterated its zero-tolerance policy toward any form of misconduct. The company has emphasized that it will continue taking strong corrective action to protect customer trust and safeguard company assets.

## Discipline and Responsibility Are the Cornerstones of Civic Order," Says DCP J. Ranjan Ratan Kumar at SANGAM 2025



Hyderabad:The Creek Planet School – Orbit Campus celebrated its prestigious Annual Day, SANGAM 2025, with great fervour and grandeur, beautifully showcasing the profound theme "Bharatiya Gyan Parampara – Tapestry of Triumph." The event reflected the school's rich cultural spirit and academic excellence, leaving the audience inspired and mesmerised. The celebration was graced by distinguished guests, including Mr. J. Ranjan Ratan Kumar, DCP, Medchal (Traffic), Hyderabad) as the Chief Guest, along with the Governing Board Members, Senior Management Team of Futuristic Edu Initiatives, and the Principals and Vice Principals from various campuses of The Creek Planet School.

The evening commenced on a patriotic note with Vande

Mataram, followed by traditional Invocation Songs and the ceremonial Lighting of the Lamp. The cultural festivities began with a powerful and soulful invocation dance, portraying divine expressions that set an energetic tone for the evening. Principal Ms. Sravani Karra welcomed the gathering and presented the Annual Report, highlighting key achievements of the students and the institution during the academic year. She emphasised the school's unwavering commitment to holistic excellence. Addressing the audience, Chief Guest Mr. J. Ranjan Ratan Kumar, DCP, Medchal (Traffic), spoke about the vital role of discipline and responsibility, qualities essential for civic order and traffic safety. Governing Board Member Mr. Panduranga Chary also addressed the gathering, emphasising the importance of discipline and applauding the commendable performance of the students. Dr. Jayashree Nair, Academic Head of FEI, motivated students to embrace critical thinking and future-ready skills while staying rooted in Indian culture, preparing them for the demands of the 21st century. The grand celebration concluded with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks delivered by Ms. Vidya Murali, Vice Principal. SANGAM 2025 was not merely an event, but an immersive educational and cultural experience reinforcing the institution's mission of nurturing students with strong Indian values and global competence.

## The National Industries Research and Development Council (NIRDC) Launches InDApp: A Unified Digital Platform to Accelerate Growth, Approvals, and Opportunities for Indian MSMEs

Hyderabad The National Industries Research and Development Council (NIRDC), an autonomous, not-for-profit institution, and functions as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, announced the launch of InDApp, India's indigenously developed digital platform designed to enhance the ease of doing business for MSMEs. The application was officially unveiled by B. L. Verma, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

Developed as part of NIRDC's multi-sector facilitation strategy, InDApp serves as an integrated single-window platform that strengthens the speed, transparency, and efficiency of MSME engagement. By simplifying access to government approvals, real-time market information, and nationwide business opportunities, the platform aims to empower entrepreneurs and enable smoother, more informed decision-making. The launch event was attended by senior NIRDC dignitaries including Sh. Shambhu Singh, IAS (Retd), National Chairman; Dr. Lalit Varma, IAS (Retd), National Vice-Chairman; Sh. Subish P. Vasudev, National Administrator; Dr. K.V. Pradeep Kumar, National Director, Administration & Establishment; Sh. Manoj, Director, Southern Region, along with other officials.

InDApp integrates physical outreach with digital enablement, creating a seamless engagement model for entrepreneurs across the country. The platform ensures that micro, small, and medium enterprises, irrespective of scale, sector, or geographical location, can quickly access critical information related to industrial opportunities, market trends, export promotion schemes, financial subsidies, and technology upgrades. Designed to function as a holistic business support system, the app helps entrepreneurs



navigate each stage of their journey, from inception to implementation, while expanding their ability to connect with peers, collaborators, and potential partners nationwide. By improving access to both national and global opportunities, InDApp reinforces inclusivity and strengthens the competitiveness of India's MSME ecosystem.

Speaking at the launch, B. L. Verma, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, emphasized the significance of the platform, stating, "The MSME sector plays a crucial role in India's economy through its contribution to GDP, exports, and large-scale employment generation. InDApp is a forward-looking initiative that supports the sector's growth by enabling easier access to business opportunities, enhancing transparency, and simplifying processes and approvals. This platform will strengthen the ecosystem by supporting entrepreneurs in driving innovation, accelerating growth, and improving competitiveness."

## Uppal Congress leaders extend greetings to Vajresh Yadav



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 28 (Indian Chronicle): "Uppal Congress leaders on Friday felicitated and extended warm greetings to Thotakura Vajresh Yadav, who has been elected as the new President of the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Congress Committee (DCC). The felicitation programme was organised under the leadership of Survi Murali Goud, General Secretary of Uppal 'A' Block Congress Committee. Senior Congress leaders met Vajresh Yadav and congratulated him on assuming the prestigious responsibility. Those present on the occasion included former Uppal Municipal Chairman Mekala Siva Reddy, former AS Rao Nagar Corporator Pawani Mani Phal Reddy, senior Congress leaders Janupalli Venkateshwar Reddy, Gaddam Ravikumar, Ramanthapur Congress In-

## TechnoSport Marks Major Retail Milestone with the Launch of Its Biggest Exclusive Store in Hyderabad



Hyderabad:TechnoSport India's fastest-growing activewear brand, has announced the opening of its largest Exclusive Brand Outlet (EBO) at Sarath City Capital Mall, Hyderabad. Spread across 4,200 sq. ft. on the first floor, the new flagship marks a significant milestone in the brand's retail journey and strengthens its growing presence across South India. The flagship store was inaugurated by popular Telugu actor Teja Sajja, who joined TechnoSport CEO, Puspun Maity for the unveiling. The event drew strong participation from consumers and fitness enthusiasts, heightened by the brand's recent high-impact activation in the city focused on sun protection and performance wear, an initiative that helped build anticipation in the days leading up to the launch.

With this opening, TechnoSport's national EBO network expands to 28 stores, reinforcing the brand's rapid offline growth as it continues to record strong performance across channels. The Hyderabad store plays a central role in TechnoSport's long-term strategy of building a network of 300 exclusive outlets across the country, serving as a metro landmark that enhances visibility, improves accessibility, and sets a new benchmark for its upcoming large-format stores. The new Hyderabad outlet brings together TechnoSport's complete range of performance-driven apparel tailored for Indian weather and lifestyle needs. The store showcases the brand's latest fabric innovations, including Cotflex with 4-way stretch and memory function, Techno Dry for rapid moisture-wicking, and Matpiq known for its premium soft-matte texture. These are complemented by technologies such as TECHNOOCOOL+ for temperature regulation, Technowarm for the winter, TechnoGuard for antimicrobial protection, and UPF 50+ for sun protection, offering consumers apparel designed for both high-intensity workouts and everyday active living.

Speaking at the event, CEO, TechnoSport, Puspun Maity, said, "The launch represents an important step in deepening the brand's connection with fitness-conscious consumers in the region. Hyderabad has emerged as one of India's most dynamic, youth-driven markets, making it the ideal location for TechnoSport's biggest store. The brand's offline channel has been growing strongly, with our Exclusive Brand Outlet format maintaining a 100% year-on-year growth trajectory and delivering consistently strong store-level performance. With Hyderabad's high footfalls and active lifestyle culture, we are confident that the new flagship will quickly become one of the brand's top-performing stores." The store also reflects TechnoSport's focus on elevating the in-store experience through technology and design. This store also sees the brand has introduced India's first-ever Holoflex transparent LED screen, an advanced digital façade that brings dynamic visual merchandising to life through high-impact, hyper-immersive displays. This innovation, combined with an upgraded POS system designed to support high billing frequency, ensures a faster and more seamless shopper journey. The store layout, visual storytelling, and enhanced digital touchpoints further improve navigation and product discovery, creating a premium and intuitive retail experience.

## Government whip from Manthapuri, massive joining of Congress party in the presence of Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah



(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- "People belonging to the BRS party from Manthapuri village in Aleru mandal of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. Massive joining of Congress party took place in the presence of Aleru MLA and DCC president Beerla Ayilaiah, the whip of the Telangana state government. Pasula Satish Reddy from Manthapuri village joined Congress from BRS party. Along with Satish Reddy, about 50 people joined Congress. On this occasion, Beerla Ayilaiah invited them to the party by covering them with the Congress party scarf.

## Gurralla Lakshma Reddy, who joined the Congress with 100 people from the BRS party, was invited by the government

..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District DCC President Beerla Ailaiah (Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle.. November 29):- There were a lot of joinings from the BRS party to the Congress party from the Bommalamaram mandal center of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. On Friday, in Yadagirigutta, in the presence of the Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA, and the new DCC President of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District, Beerla Ailaiah.







Make the KCR Deeksha Divas program in Bhuvanagiri today a success:- Bhuvanagiri former MLA Pailla Shekhar Reddy ""(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- The KCR Deeksha Divas program of 29 November 2009, which turned the Telangana state movement around, will be held today at 10 am at Prince Chowrastha opposite Rythu Bazaar in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district headquarters. On Friday, a site inspection will be conducted at Prince Chowrastha and all BRS party leaders and activists should attend, said Bhuvanagiri former MLA & BRS party constituency in-charge Pailla Shekhar Reddy Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district BRS party president Kancharla Ramakrishna Reddy.

Presiding officers and other polling officers should act responsibly towards the duties of Gram Panchayat elections



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao ""(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the presiding officers and other polling officers should act responsibly towards the duties of Gram Panchayat elections. The District Collector participated in the training classes of PO and OPO at the Bibinagar Mandal Praja Parishad office on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector said...the role of the presiding officers in the Gram Panchayat elections is very crucial. He said that the presiding officers are responsible for ensuring that the elections are conducted smoothly at the polling stations. He said that everyone assigned to the election duties should join the duties and there should be no exception to anyone. He advised that each piece of polling equipment should be thoroughly inspected and the ballot papers and polling boxes should be checked once or twice. He said that opening and sealing the polling box is a very important issue, so be careful. He said that the entire election process should be impartial. Presiding officers, OPOs, and others participated in this training program.

Chilkanagar Corporator BANNALA GEETHA PRAVEEN keeps her promise to Raghavendra Nagar residents



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 28 (Indian Chronicle):""Chilkanagar Division Corporator and former member of the GHMC Standing Committee, Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj, along with GHMC officials and members of the Raghavendra Nagar Colony Association, on Friday inspected the ongoing CC road works in Raghavendra Nagar Colony, being taken up at an estimated cost of Rs. 36 lakh."Speaking on the occasion, Corporator Geetha Praveen directed officials of the GHMC Engineering Department to closely monitor the works and ensure that the contractor strictly adheres to prescribed quality standards. She instructed that all necessary steps be taken so that residents do not face any inconvenience during the construction period and warned that strict action would be initiated in case of any compromise or delay in maintaining quality standards."GHMC Assistant Engineer Radhika, Work Inspector Kedar, BRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, senior leaders Eddula Kondal Kokonda,

## The role of election officials performing election duties is very crucial in the conduct of elections:-

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao ""(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the role of election officials performing election duties is very crucial in the conduct of elections. The District Collector participated in the training classes of presiding officers at the Pochampally Mandal Praja Parishad office on Friday. Speaking on this occasion, Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the reason for appointing teachers as presiding and OPO officers is that



you all work with great commitment and discipline, and therefore the teachers have successfully completed many elections so far. Even if you attend these training classes, everyone should practice opening and sealing

the polling box well. He said that the election equipment should also be checked once or twice at the polling equipment distribution center. He advised the staff who went for election duties to stay at the polling stations

and not to go to the houses of the people around them. All the officials should be alert during the polling, because many voters here will have to cast two votes for the Sarpanch and ward member, and those who come should ensure that they cast two votes. "He also wanted to ensure that the polling process is done on time. Especially in these elections, the counting process will start again from two in the afternoon, so he said that one should be very careful. He said that the entire election process will be done under the scope of webcasting. Presiding officers and O. P. O. participated in this training program.

## Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the grain purchase process should be completed more quickly

"(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the grain purchase process should be completed more quickly. "The District Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the Juluru PACS grain purchase center in Pochampally mandal on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector asked how much grain has been purchased so far and inquired whether the tab entry has been completed



until the purchase. The tab entries should be completed immediately after loading the lorries. The staff told the

Collector that the entire grain purchase at the center will be completed in two days. When the center administra-

tors informed that there were not enough lorries in Kapraipalli and Pedda Gudem under the Juluru PACS limits and there was a shortage of purchased grain, the District Collector immediately called the concerned

Civil Supply officials and ordered them to immediately send 4 lorries to Kapraipalli and 3 lorries to the Pedda Gudem center. The grain loaded in the lorries should be immediately transported to the mills. "The concerned officials participated in this program.

## Mahathma Jyotirao Phule Death Anniversary Observed in Ramanthapur



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 28 (Indian Chronicle):""The death anniversary of Mahathma Jyotirao Phule was observed solemnly in Ramanthapur Division under the leadership of BJP OBC Morcha President Vemula Tirupathiah."On this occasion, BJP leaders

offered floral tributes at the statue of Mahathma Jyotirao Phule located on the main road in Ramanthapur Division and paid rich respects to the great social reformer."Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao and Ramanthapur Division President Vangala Santosh Gupta attended the programme as chief guests. They garlanded the statue and spoke about the invaluable services rendered by Mahathma Jyotirao Phule to the backward classes and highlighted his ideals. They urged everyone to follow in his footsteps and work towards social equality and justice."Senior BJP leaders including Muttineni Jagadish, Thalla Balakrishna Goud, Vempati Srinivas, Sankuri Kumaraswamy, Darshanala Sudhakar, Kalmakala Lingam, Palugula Anjaiah Patel, Thammali Ravi, Jakka Parvathalu, Dayakar Reddy, Vempati Ramaraju, Mahender Mudiraj, Erra Suresh, Mallesh Yadav, Suresh, Satish, woman leader Veena, party activists and others participated in the programme.

## Mahatma Jyothirao Phule, a warrior who worked for the upliftment of the weaker sections of Badugu

TPCC member, former joint Nalgonda District Planning Committee member, Tangallapalli Ravikumar ""(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- Mahatma Jyothirao Phule, a brother of the downtrodden, who worked for the upliftment of the weaker sections of Badugu, is a constant inspiration for future generations in establishing an equal society, said TPCC member, former joint Nalgonda District Planning Committee member, Tangallapalli Ravikumar. On the occasion of Mahatma Jyothirao Phule's death anniversary, Tangallapalli Ravikumar paid tributes by garlanding his statue on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, "TPCC member and former Joint Nalgonda Planning Committee member"Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was a prominent social reformer, educationist, and philosophical activist of the 19th century in India, who along with his wife Savitribai Phule, worked towards the abolition of untouchability and women's education. Some important things about him"Caste, Equality Phule fought against the caste system and the inequalities prevailing in society. He spoke out for the rights of the oppressed classes. Women's Education: He gave top priority to women's education. He



started one of India's first schools for girls in Pune in 1848. Bhattu Ramachandraiah. OBC Cell President Benda Srikanth. Councilor Nazimasaluddin. Raghu Babu, Vastupula Taher, Balayya Vastupula Sai Kiran. Ganesh. Shekhar. Kamma Venkatesh and other leaders participated.

## Chiluveri Harshit Secures Spot in SGFI State-Level Rugby Championships.

" In a significant accomplishment, Chiluveri Harshit, an outstanding student of Kerala Model High School, Sultanabad, has been selected to represent his school in the esteemed SGFI state-level rugby championships for the Under-17 category. ""On this noteworthy occasion, the school's Principal, Mr. Siju S. Nair, along with Vice-Principal Mrs. Smitha S. Nair and the dedicated faculty, gathered to commend Harshit for his exceptional dedication, tenacity, and sportsmanship. Their accolades highlighted the hard work and perseverance that led to this prestigious selection. ""The entire school community, including staff and fellow students, united in extending their warmest wishes to Harshit.



"(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- At the local Divya Bal School in Anajipur village of Bhuvanagiri mandal, Divya Bal students showed their talent at the district level in the district level essay writing, picture writing, Gagana, Asmit athletics competition. They were felicitated by the school management, the school founder, Kata Rajulu, correspondent Chinnappa, and the principal. On this occasion, he said that they should come forward not only in the field of education but also in the field of sports.

## Strong surveillance has been established at check posts in the district in the wake of the Gram Panchayat elections:-



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao ""(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle.. November 28) :- Strong surveillance has been established at check posts in the district in the wake of the Gram Panchayat elections, said Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao. On Friday, the Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the SST team check post set up at the Bibinagar toll gate on the occasion of the Gram Panchayat elections. He asked the concerned officials how many staff are on duty at the check post. He said that they should be on duty at the check post for 24 hours. He said that the police and revenue personnel should be alert and stop every vehicle, record the video and check it thoroughly. He said that negligence in duty is not allowed under any circumstances. The concerned officials participated in this program.

## Four-Day Annual Sports Festival Begins at Kerala High School



Jammikunta. ""P.S. ASHOKAN"KARIMNGAR BUREAU. ""The Annual Sports and Games Meet commenced yesterday at Kerala High School, Jammikunta, marking the beginning of a vibrant four-day celebration of athletic spirit and student talent. ""The event was formally inaugurated in the presence of Correspondent Mr. Benny K.S. and Principal Ms. Jolly K.S., who encouraged students to participate with enthusiasm, discipline, and sportsmanship. ""A variety of track and field events, team games, and skill-based competitions are scheduled to take place over the coming days. The school management stated that the sports festival aims to promote physical fitness, teamwork, and holistic development among students. ""The programme will continue for four days, featuring spirited participation and competitive excitement from students across all classes.

## Maoist MMCSZC advances timeline for giving up arms, sets January 1, 2026 as zero hour

Kothagudem: CPI (Maoist) Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh Special Zonal Committee (MMCSZC) Spokesperson Ananth has announced the Maoist under the zone would lay down arms and join mainstream life on January 1, 2026. It might be recalled that in a letter dated November 22, addressed to Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh-Devendra Fadnavis, Vishnu Deo Sai and Mohan Yadav- as well as Chhattisgarh Home Minister Vijay Sharma he asked the respective governments to give them a breathing space time till February 15, 2026 to reach a consensus.



## Did a Property Dispute Claim Her Life?



P. S. ASHOKAN, "KARIMNAGAR BUREAU." "Intensifying Suspicions Envelop the Tragic Demise of Veera Lakshmi." "Was the investigation into her death executed with the requisite rigor?"— The sacred maternal bond she cherished now laments in silence.— "A multitude of suspicious narratives continues to emerge locally.— Did her own progeny exhibit cruelty towards their mother?"— Was the case deliberately undermined in exchange for pecuniary inducements?" "Profound suspicions are burgeoning among residents within the Manthani Municipal limits regarding whether a protracted property dispute ultimately precipitated the untimely demise of Siripuram Veera Lakshmi. Her passing has left the community in a state of disquietude. Inquiries are being posed about how an elderly, bedridden woman, beleaguered by chronic illness, could have procured petrol. Who facilitated this acquisition? Or, more disturbingly, were familial members

complicit in orchestrating her murder, subsequently masquerading it as a suicide to secure property? Such conjectures are gaining considerable traction in public discourse." "In contemporary society, we increasingly observe individuals descending to unspeakable depths in their avarice for wealth and assets. The once-sacrosanct bond between parents and children is rapidly eroding, with incidents of parental harm or even filicide over property becoming alarmingly prevalent. This backdrop only exacerbates the grief surrounding Veera Lakshmi's demise." "From a humanitarian perspective, numerous civil society organizations and local denizens are articulating profound concerns regarding the circumstances surrounding the elderly woman's death. Although law enforcement officials assert that a case has been registered based on the family's allegations, the public is left questioning whether a thorough investigation was genuinely undertaken. How did the authorities fail to recognize the suspicious nature of the incident? Why were critical facets overlooked?" "Several locals contend that despite providing lucid and credible testimony, the police disregarded significant evidence. In today's milieu, financial resources, influence, and political power frequently skew the scales of justice. In numerous locales, injustice parades as justice, while authentic justice is conveniently suppressed." "As some mourn the tragic loss of Veera Lakshmi, others respond with apathy or even derision. The grim reality persists that cases of offspring harming their parents over property continue to manifest with disturbing regularity. Yet, it must be emphasized that no malefactor can ever elude the inexorable repercussions of karma." "A pressing question dominating public discourse is why the post-mortem report has yet to be disclosed. Why was the body not subjected to forensic laboratory analysis? Locals are unequivocally demanding a transparent, impartial, and exhaustive investigation into every facet of this case.

## Biksha (Community Feast) organised for Ayyappa devotees under leadership of Congress leader Mohammed Rafiq



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 28 (Indian Chronicle):" "A Biksha (community feast) programme for 500 Ayyappa devotees was organised under the leadership of Ramantapur Division Congress Party President Mohammed Rafiq at Gandhi Nagar Function Hall, Ramantapur, on Friday." "Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Paramesh Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the feast for the devotees." "Several party leaders and local representatives participated in the event, including TPCC member Mohammed Taufiq, Raji Reddy, Sarva Sattaiah Yadav,



Muthyala Narasimha Swamy, Gym Sandeep, Adinarayana Goud, Basta Bhaskar, Upender Reddy, Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Mohammed Nahim, Garaka Sudhakar, Mogali Lingam, Srinivas Goud, Siddhi Ramulu, Ramesh, Thota Shankar, Gupta Prasad, Suri Shankar, Sandeep, Shabbik, Sai, Balu, Swamy, Narasimha, Pogaku Venkatesh, Sandhya Rani, Gayatri, Pusa Sattaiah, Prem, Kumar Swamy, Vijay, Shaala Sridhar, Kashmala Shankar, Goutham, Kiran and others." "Around 500 Ayyappa devotees took part in the programme and received the Biksha in a devotional atmosphere.

## Officials Must Act Immediately to Demolish Illegal Construction in Nacharam Division: Pothagani Gopal Goud



Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, November 28: "Bip District Ex Spoke person Pothagani Gopal Goud has urged the authorities to finally wake up and take immediate action to demolish the illegal construction taking place in Nacharam Division." "He stated that from the very beginning, he, along with the residents of Annapurna Colony in Survey No. 106, have been appealing to stop the illegal construction being carried out on land allotted for a colony park and on the pathway that serves as the main access road to the local Wesley Government School. They repeatedly met the concerned officials, submitted multiple representations, and continuously monitored the daily progress from the authorities." "As a district-level representative, Gopal Goud also submitted the original documents related to this illegal construction before the District Court, working tirelessly to protect public land. He expressed happiness over today's judgment delivered by the State High Court, calling it a commendable and much-awaited verdict." "He demanded that the

High Court order be implemented immediately by stopping the construction at once, disconnecting electricity, and sealing the building as per the court's directions. He also urged authorities to take strict action against those who misled officials and obtained permissions using fake documents." "Gopal Goud warned that if the authorities continue to delay or fail to respond, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will launch a large-scale protest and dharna demanding justice.

OU officials and government ignore OU faculty protests that have reached 60 days"



"Indian Chronicle OU November 28: The protest activities of Osmania University teachers, alleging injustice in promotions, have entered their 60th day. They staged a protest in front of the OU Science College principal's office on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the teachers said that they want justice and that it is a shame that the OU Vice Chancellor has not responded despite protesting for almost two months. They said that they will continue the agitation until justice is done. If necessary, they will intensify the movement. They said that the university authorities will have to be responsible for it. In the past, during the OU visit, CM Revanth Reddy had said that he would visit in December and asked for the problems of the teachers to be resolved. The protest program was attended by OU President Prof. Manohar, Professors Kamalakar, Ramchander, Venkata Das, Venkateswara Rao, Lokande, Madhuri, Aravind, Sujatha, Sisikala, Ramakrishna Goud, Rakesh and others.

## TRSMA Leaders Meet Education and RTI Officials Over School Capacity and Safety Issues



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, UPPAL, NOVEMBER 28 (INDIAN CHRONICAL)" "A delegation of the Telangana Recognised School Managements Association (TRSMA), led by Honorary President Shekar Rao, State President Yadagiri, and Uppal Mandal President Vijender Reddy, along with executive members Srinivas, Shaik Madar, Sagar, and Raju, held a series of crucial meetings with senior officials on Tuesday regarding student capacity and safety concerns

of private schools." "The delegation first met the Director of Government Examinations Hari and Education Commissioner Naveen Nicholas, and submitted a formal representation seeking permission to increase the sanctioned student strength to 55 students per section for Class 10. The leaders stated that this move is necessary to accommodate the rising number of students and to ensure uninterrupted academic operations, especially in budget private schools."

Later, the team met RTI Commissioner Bhoopal and held detailed discussions on the protection of private schools and the challenges faced by low-budget institutions. The leaders urged the authorities to create a structured mechanism to address frequent disturbances, external pressures, and operational difficulties faced by school managements. Speaking after the meetings, TRSMA leaders reiterated that the association remains committed to safeguarding the interests of private schools and vowed to continue working towards strengthening the education system through continuous dialogue, coordination, and engagement with government departments.

## Services of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Are Unforgettable: Burra Mahender Mudiraj

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, November 28 (Indian Chronicle):" "Burra Mahender Mudiraj, President of the Ramantapur Jyotirao Phule Seva Sangham, said that the services rendered by social reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule in eradicating illiteracy and bringing social awakening in the country even before India attained Independence are unforgettable. Speaking after paying floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on the occasion of his death anniversary, which was organized by the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Seva Sangham at Ramantapur on Friday, he stated that Phule dedicated his life to fighting for equality, education, women empowerment and the rights of the oppressed sections of society. He recalled that even before Independence, Jyotirao Phule had established schools in various localities to spread education and awaken society. He appealed to the people to move forward by following the ideals and inspiration given by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule." "The programme was attended by Muttineni Jagadish, Vempati Srinivas, Mallesh Yadav, Suresh and others.



## \*Grand Observance of Phule Vardhanti in Mallapur under the aegis of BSP\* Mahatma Phule, who worked tirelessly for the spread of education in the country\*

"Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, November 28:" "BSP district president Banoth Ravinder Naik, district in-charge Gowda Sudarshan, and district in-charge Ragiri Gnaneshwar lauded the remarkable services of Jyotirao Phule, who dedicated his life to the spread of education among Dalits, the poor, the weaker sections, and the oppressed communities in the country. recalled Phule's remarkable services in promoting education, social equality, and women's empowerment. They stated that Phule's ideals continue to inspire movements for justice and equality across the country." "Under the leadership of Uppal constituency president Mindrala Nursing Rao, the Phule Vardhanti program was organized in Mallapur, where floral tributes were offered to the statue of Jyotiba Phule." "Participants in the program included district vice-president Erravalli Malesh, district general secretary Sukka Dayanath, district treasurer Kasukurthi Srihari, Uppal in-charge Konda Apparao, Medchal constituency in-charge Mallepogu Vijay Raj, general secretary Yaka Swamy, Malkajgiri constituency in-charge Gowtham Raj, president Ramakrishna, district leaders Koppu Rajayya, Jawaharnagar president Prabhakar, PMC president Srinivas, Ravikanth Praveen, and several BSP leaders.



## Kerala High School Sports Fest Enters Dynamic Third Day with Exceptional Student Performances.



"P.S. ASHOKAN" "Karimnagar Bureau" "The Four-Day Annual Sports and Games Festival at Kerala High School, Jammikunta, advanced into its vibrant third day today, witnessing a remarkable display of athletic excellence, competitive zeal, and enthusiastic student participation." "Correspondent Mr. Benny K.S. and Principal Ms. Jolly K.S. expressed immense satisfaction over the spirited involvement of students across all classes, noting that the event has thus far showcased outstanding discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanlike conduct." "A series of high-intensity track events, field competitions, team tournaments, and precision-based skill contests dominated the day's schedule. Students demonstrated exceptional prowess, setting new performance benchmarks and elevating the competitive atmosphere on campus." "School management stated that the ongoing sports festival is not merely a competition but an endeavour to nurture physical endurance, leadership qualities, camaraderie, and holistic character formation among students." "With only one day left for the grand finale, anticipation continues to build as participants gear up for the concluding events and the much-awaited victory ceremony tomorrow.

## BC Reservations Should Be Included in the 9th Schedule: Ganesh Chari

BC Caste Associations JAC Chairman Kundaram Ganesh Chari" "Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, November 28" "To protect the rapidly disappearing traditional occupations of BC communities and to ensure their overall development, the Central Government must immediately include BC reservations in the 9th Schedule, demanded BC Caste Associations JAC Chairman Kundaram Ganesh Chari." "Marking the 135th death anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Ganesh Chari paid floral tributes to Phule's portrait at Sainikpuri and Domalguda on Friday." "Speaking on the occasion, he said that although BCs constitute 60% of the population, they still remain backward. He urged the Congress government to fulfil its promise by implementing



42% BC reservations and conducting elections to local bodies accordingly.



# Sourav Ganguly’s wife Dona lodges complaint with Kolkata Police: ‘Obscene, body-shaming remarks on social media’

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Former India cricket captain Sourav Ganguly's wife and noted Odissi dancer Dona Ganguly has lodged a complaint with Kolkata Police, alleging that she has been subjected to obscene and body-shaming comments on social media.Dona approached the Thakurpukur police station on Wednesday night to file the complaint. The police have registered a formal case against unknown persons. She has alleged that a Facebook account has been repeatedly posting objectionable comments targeting her.

According to the complaint, a Facebook page has been continuously uploading obscene remarks about her following her performance at the Kolkata International Film Festival. Dona and her troupe had performed at the KIFF inauguration on a song composed and written by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.Kolkata Police said they have received the complaint and that the Cyber Cell is investigating the matter.Earlier in 2021, Dona had also alleged that a fake



Facebook profile was being operated in her name, where several photographs of Sourav Ganguly, her daughter Sana, and herself had been posted without her knowledge. She was informed about the profile by one of her students, after which she decided to take the matter seriously.

# Why has the BMC tightened the rules for erection of hoardings in city after a gap of 17 years?



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Thursday, November 27, announced a new set of rules pertaining to the erection and installation of advertising billboards and hoardings following the hoarding collapse incident in Ghatkopar last year. This is the first time since 2008 that the civic authorities have come up with fresh regulations in this regard.The BMC’s move was prompted by an incident in May last year when 17 people were killed and 75 others sustained injuries after a hoarding collapsed in Ghatkopar. According to the findings of a structural investigation in the wake of the incident, the billboard collapsed due to heavy winds.After the incident, the BMC mooted the formation of a new hoarding policy. A draft was prepared last year and the civic authorities invited suggestions and objections from citizens and stakeholders. Following this, hearings were held and the final draft of the rules was published on Thursday.

What do the new rules state?

The new rules propose stricter measures for the setting up as well as long-term maintenance of new hoardings and billboards – a provision that has been introduced for the first time. Besides this, the new rules also encourage private parties to set up more digital signage boards instead of the existing conventional billboards. The new hoarding rules proposed by the BMC prohibit the setting of billboards on footpaths as well as on rooftops. These spaces are now very commonly used for setting up hoardings.The new rules have also made it mandatory that the size of hoardings should not exceed 40 feet by 40 feet. The policy mandates regular structural audits of all hoardings in Mumbai. Besides, the BMC has also reduced the grace period of six months to three months now. Earlier, after a license expired, a private stakeholder would get a grace period of up to six months to bring down the billboard.

Furthermore, the BMC has also drafted stricter norms for digital billboards. According to the new rules, LED signages should have a maximum luminance ratio of 3:1, which means that the billboards can only be three times brighter than their existing environment. Authorities said this limitation will ensure that the reflecting light from the hoardings does not distract motorists. The officials said earlier

# ‘Does not deserve any sympathy’: Chandigarh court sentences taxi driver to life for 2010 MBA student rape-murder

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

A Chandigarh court on Friday sentenced a taxi driver, who was found guilty of the sexual assault and murder of a 21-year-old MBA student in 2010, to life imprisonment, saying that he “does not deserve any sympathy of the court”.The Special Women and Child Court had held Monu Kumar, 38, guilty under sections 302 (murder) and 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code on Thursday. The court of Dr Yashika, Additional District and Sessions Judge, had also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on Kumar.

On Friday, Kumar was produced before the court, where his counsel, advocate Sunil Pandey, sought leniency in punishment. “He is the only support of his mother. He has been serving her, and there is no one to look after her. Also, he stated that he remained in custody since his date of arrest and facing trial of the present case without any fault, and been falsely implicated in other matters,” the counsel submitted.Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Maninder Kaur argued that the victim was brutally raped and murdered by the convict, and her parents had waited for justice for almost 15 years as the deceased was their only child. Submitting that the convict was involved in other crimes, the SPP sought that the death penalty be awarded.

The defence counsel contended that the present case does not fall in the category of the rarest of the rare, saying that it was based on circumstantial evidence and there was no direct evidence against the convict, and that he must be given a chance to reform.The court noted that there were multiple cases pending for trial against Kumar at different courts and held that a requisite sentence has to be imposed upon the convict to protect society as a legitimate response to the collective conscience. “It is an obligation on the court to the society which has reposed faith in the court of law to curtail evil,” the court said.Stating that it was not the rarest of rare cases that called for capital punishment, the court added, “It is a case of its own kind where a convict was

there was no cap on the luminance ratio, while the average ratio maintained was between 4:1-6:1.For the first time, the civic body has also permitted a wider range of hoarding shapes, including V- and L-shaped structures and triangular, square, pentagonal and hexagonal billboards. However, these formats will require a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the Mumbai traffic police. Advertisements may also be displayed on barricades and outer surfaces of buildings that are under construction or undergoing repair work.

How will stakeholders be required to obtain permissions for setting up billboards under the new rule?

According to the policy, stakeholders will have to oblige and adhere to all the guidelines mentioned in the policy document. Following this, they will have to apply to BMC as well as the Mumbai police’s traffic department for permission. Meanwhile, the latter will inspect the shape and dimensions of the hoarding or billboard following which it will issue an NOC to the stakeholder.In the meantime, the stakeholder is also supposed to submit a structural audit of the billboard structure to the BMC. After getting the permission, the stakeholders are also supposed to carry out routine audits of the structure as a precautionary measure and submit it to the authorities.For digital billboards, the stakeholders will also have to acquire a separate NOC from the traffic police so that safe luminance levels are maintained. Alongside this, for billboards erected near places with high-tension wires, a specific NOC from the electrical board will be required. The authorities have also maintained that to ensure transparency, the BMC will lease out its spaces for advertisement through a tendering process.

How will violators be held accountable?

Under its new policy, the BMC has also introduced a new blacklisting policy, which would temporarily or permanently revoke the licence of stakeholders for violating or flouting the norms. The BMC has also stated that under the new policy, the stakeholders will have to pull down advertisements within three months after the license expires. The civic body has also stated that the stakeholders will have to ensure an accidental insurance cover amount ranging between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 1 crore, depending on the damage.

What is the current status of hoardings in the city today? What did the old rules state?

Presently, the city boasts 1,025 licensed hoardings, contributing a revenue of Rs 100 crore to the BMC. These hoardings operate under guidelines outlined in the BMC’s 2008 document titled ‘Guidelines for permitting display of advertisements and similar signs’. The guidelines, initially intended for periodic reassessment due to the city’s dynamic demographic changes, were neglected by the authorities, failing to undergo any evaluation over the past decade.The BMC’s earlier hoarding guidelines mandated a review every 10 years. According to this rule, the 2008 guidelines were due for revision in 2018. However, while a revised draft was prepared, its implementation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

arrested after 14 years of the incident with the efforts of police party and scientist who had examined the samples of deceased and samples of the convict.”The court held that the present case is not only based on circumstantial evidence, but scientific evidence too. The blood and bodily fluid samples taken from the clothes and body of the deceased were linked to the accused through a DNA profile match, it added.Praising the police and Central Forensic Science Laboratory officials for their efforts, the court said that it “really appreciates the efforts of police party, specially Investigating Officer DSP Harditt Singh and SI Mohan Kashyap and Dr. Sunita, Assistant Director/Scientist, who have sincerely performed their duties and contributed to the society at large by collecting evidence against a person, who had remained absconded almost for 14 years after the incident”.“Judge does not preside over a criminal trial merely to see that no innocent man is punished. A judge also presides to see that a guilty man does not escape. Both are public duties,” the court said.“The law does not enjoin a duty on the prosecution to lead evidence of such character which is almost impossible to be led or at any rate extremely difficult to be led. The duty of the prosecution is to lead such evidence which it is capable of leading,” the court added.The 21-year-old MBA student was found murdered in Chandigarh in 2010. On July 30, 2010, she had left her house to attend English-speaking classes but never returned. Her body was found later, following which she was rushed to PGI, where doctors declared her ‘brought dead’.Kumar, a drug addict, was arrested in 2024 in connection with the rape and murder of another woman in Maloya in 2022. During interrogation, the police claimed, he confessed that he had committed the rape and murder of a woman in 2010 in Chandigarh.After he was sentenced to life imprisonment, Monu Kumar alleged outside the courtroom that he was falsely implicated in the case because he had an argument with the local police. “

# ‘Aadhaar can’t be accepted as proof of date of birth’: UP issues directions to all departments

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Aadhaar DOB proof: The Uttar Pradesh Planning Department on November 24 directed heads of all the departments against the use of Aadhaar cards as birth proof. It has asked the departments to refer to the letter by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) dated October 31, 2025, which had clarified that “Aadhaar card is not the proof of birth”.Sources said the development comes amid reports of some departments still considering “Aadhaar cards” as the proof of birth.The Planning Department is the nodal department for implementing directions related to Aadhaar.

“Deputy Director, UIDAI, Lucknow regional office, in the letter dated October 31, 2025, had informed that Aadhaar Card is not the proof of Birth. Irrespective of this, some of the departments are still using Aadhaar as proof of birth. Thus, you are requested to direct all concerned that they should not accept Aadhaar Card as the proof of Birth,” read the order issued by Amit Singh Singhal, special Secretary Planning, to all the additional chief secretaries, principal secretaries and secretaries across the state.“This direction had come from UIDAI in the past as well. But now this request has been made again after it came to our notice that some of the departments were still accepting Aadhaar card as birth proof,” a senior officer of the Planning Departmen told The Indian Express.Officials said that birth certificate, high-school marksheets and other prescribed documents can be used as proof for date of birth for official purposes, instead.The letter from UIDAI was issued from its Lucknow regional Office by Deputy Director Aditya Prakash Bajpai on October 31.



in which sources informed that he had pointed out that despite earlier information given in this regard on June 5 this year, it had come to their knowledge that various Departments of Uttar Pradesh Government were still accepting Aadhaar card as proof for Date of Birth.“This becomes strictly necessary to implement in the places like recruitments, admissions in educational institutions, where age is a very important cut-off criteria. Thus, Departments should take proper supportive documents for Proof of date of birth,” informed an official.Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has hailed the direction as it would help prevent the cases of fraud. “There have been instances, when people like Azam Khan got the PAN cards of his son changed to make him an MLA. So this direction gives a good message to all and should be welcomed by all,” said Maurya.

# TMC workers hacked to death during kangaroo court meeting in West Bengal’s Malda English Bazar



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

A TMC worker was hacked to death and five others were injured after a meeting of a ‘salishi sabha’, a kangaroo court, turned violent in West Bengal’s Malda district on Thursday, police said. The incident took place at Rajnagar in the Kaliachak police station area when the meeting was underway to settle a dispute over driving a tractor across farmland, they said.The deceased was identified as Ekramul Sheikh, 45, they added.A dispute had been brewing between Ekramul and TMC booth president Samsul Sheikh for days. The two had earlier approached the police, but their families claimed no formal complaint was registered.On Tues-

# Kejriwal demands Centre to remove 18% GST on air purifiers

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday demanded that the central government immediately remove 18 per cent GST imposed on air and water purifiers, in view of the worsening air quality in Delhi-NCR.In a post on X in Hindi, he stressed that clean air and clean water are the basic rights of every citizen.“In Delhi and across North India, the air has become deadly. Instead of providing solutions, the government is collecting more taxes from the public,” he said in the post.He further pointed that when people go to buy air purifiers to protect their families from pollution, they find that the government is charging 18 per cent GST on them, which is outright injustice.

The AAP supreme demanded that the Centre immediately remove the GST imposed on air and water purifiers. “If you cannot provide solutions, at least stop burdening the pockets of the people,” he added.The air quality is likely to remain ‘very poor’ over the coming week, according to the forecast by the Air Quality Early Warning System for



Delhi.With Delhi’s air quality slipping into the ‘very poor’ and ‘severe’ categories this winter, doctors have stressed the need for regular diagnostic screening to detect early signs of pollution-linked health deterioration, especially among smokers, asthma patients, children and people with pre-existing cardiac or respiratory conditions.

# With 12-day Durga Puja break, Bengal govt employees will have more than 150 days off in 2026



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

State government employees in West Bengal will have more than 150 non-working days in 2026, with an extended 12-day holiday during Durga Puja and several long festival breaks throughout the year.

According to the holiday list published by the state Finance Department, Durga Puja and Kojagari Lakshmi Puja together account for a 12-day stretch of holidays next year. Government employees have been granted leave on October 15, 16 and 17 for Chaturthi, Panchami and Sasthi. October 18, a Sunday, coincides with Maha Saptami. October 19, 20 and 21 will be holidays for Ashtami, Nabami and Dashami.October 22, 23 and 24 have been declared as additional Puja holidays. Lakshmi Puja falls on October 25, also a Sunday, while October 26 has been marked as an additional holiday for Lakshmi Puja. In effect, government employees will have nearly half of October off.In November too, employees will get more than 10 days of leave due to Kali Puja and Chhath.However, in 2026, government staff will lose six festival holidays that fall on a Sunday. These include Shivaratri (February 15), Durga Puja Saptami (October 18), Lakshmi Puja (October 25), Kali Puja (No-

vember 8), Chhath Puja and Birsa Munda’s birth anniversary (November 15).

In 2026, employees will receive 27 holidays under the Negotiable Instruments Act and 26 holidays under state government orders — a total of 53 days. With 52 Saturdays and 52 Sundays in the year, the total number of non-working days crosses 150.

# Internal bickering to the fore in Bhadrachalam Congress in the wake of GP polls

Kothagudem: Internal bickering has come to the fore in Bhadrachalam Congress once again in the wake of gram panchayat polls.Telangana Forest Development Corporation Limited chairman, former Bhadrachalam MLA Podem Veeraiah was said to be upset with the unilateral decision taken by the local MLA Dr. Tellam Venkat Rao’s faction in fielding the sarpanch candidate for Bhadrachalam gram panchayat.It might be noted that Congress leader Punem Ramakrishna, a follower of Dr. Venkat Rao filed his nomination papers on Thursday for the sarpanch seat. This happened even as Veeraiah told the party leaders to sit together on Friday to finalise the party candidate as he was not available locally on Thursday.Veeraiah’s followers complained that the MLA faction took the final decision to choose the candidate on behalf of the party without consensus among the leaders and activists. They were saying that it was not right to take a unilateral decision, declare it as a party decision.



# Uddhav Thackeray slams BJP over advisory curbing use of ‘Vande Mataram’ in Rajya Sabha: ‘Must oppose hypocrisy’



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Union government after the Rajya Sabha’s new bulletin advised MPs not to end their speeches with words like “thanks”, “Jai Hind”, or “Vande Mataram”. Calling the move “hypocritical” and “a betrayal of the BJP’s own sloganeering politics,” Thackeray said the same party that once demanded citizens chant Vande Mataram was now objecting to it inside Parliament. “What happened to their old slogan, ‘Desh me rehna hoga to Vande Mataram kehna hoga’? Now they themselves are restricting it. Their Hindutva and patriotism stand exposed as fake,” he said. “My MPs Priyanka Chaturvedi and Sanjay Raut will raise the Vande Mataram slogan in the Rajya Sabha. Let me see what they do after that,” Thackeray said. Moving beyond the Parliament row, he targeted the Maharashtra government over the civic polls and the alleged rampant misuse of money. He said the ongoing municipal and nagar parishad elections in the state had seen “money flowing like never before,” echoing concerns carried in the party mouthpiece Saamana. “The arrogance of power is visible everywhere in their speeches and in their behaviour. Ministers are not meeting farmers, they only open bags of money where votes are needed,” he alleged. ‘Chaotic development’ worsening pollution

On Mumbai’s worsening air quality, Thackeray, in the press conference at Matoshree, accused the state government of “chaotic development” and linked the spike in pollution to decisions such as reviving the Aarey car shed project which he had scrapped during his tenure. “When I was the chief minister, I stayed the car shed at Aarey immediately. My opposition was never to the Metro but to the destruction of green cover. The trees cut in Aarey, and the zero-planning development since, have pushed pollution to dangerous levels,” he said. Drawing a sharp metaphor, he added, “This is not the cloud from an Ethiopian volcano. It is the smoke of corruption erupting here,” referring to the volcano that recently erupted in the East African nation,

sending plumes of volcanic ash and dust that travelled across the Red Sea and disrupted flights in India. Thackeray also raised concerns about the 2027 Nashik Kumbh Mela, alleging administrative neglect and hinting at political motives behind the delay in appointing a Guardian Minister for the district. “Next year, lakhs of devotees and sadhus will come to Nashik. Their convenience and safety is the government’s responsibility. Yet, even today, Nashik has no Guardian Minister. Why?” he asked. Citing the deadly stampede during the Prayagraj Mela, he warned that any lapse could prove disastrous. “Is the reason for this delay hidden somewhere in the Kumbh Mela budget? That is the real riddle,” he said. Thackeray further launched a sharp attack on the Maharashtra government over the felling of trees in Nashik’s Tapovan area for the proposed Sadhugram ahead of the 2027 Kumbh Mela, calling the move “a mas-sacre of nature wrapped in the rhetoric of Hindutva” and warning of agitation. He said that the citizens of Nashik are opposing the tree-felling and the Sena (UBT) supports their demand and would agitate if needed. He accused the state of destroying a site deeply woven into the mythological memory of Lord Ram’s sojourn.

“Tapovan has been sanctified by the touch of Lord Ram and it holds dozens of tree species, medicinal plants and cultural traditions. Yet, in the name of preparing for Kumbh, they plan to axe all of it,” he said, adding that the land has “witnessed more Kumbhs than all of us combined.” He questioned the government’s logic behind the large-scale tree felling. “Girish Mahajan says if one tree is cut, 10 will be planted. If they already have a vacant place where 10 new trees can fit, then why not build the Sadhugram there? Why destroy what already exists?” Thackeray asked. He termed the exercise “corruption carried out under the banner of Hindutva.” Targeting the BJP directly, he said the party’s version of Hindutva was a “sham.” “They chant ‘Ram Ram’ in Ayodhya and do ‘Muh mein Ram, bagal mein Adani’ in Nashik. We cannot accept such hypocrisy and it must be opposed,” Thackeray said. “Who are you destroying Tapovan for?”

Thackeray reiterated that he was not opposed to the Sadhugram itself but to the environmental destruction it could lead to. “This is not about faith, this is about contracts. First, you kill nature, then you promise to plant new trees. That’s not devotion, it is actually deception,” he alleged, asking why the space used for the last Kumbh Mela was not being retained this time. Claiming access to tender documents, he said the plans included a future conference hall and convention centre in the Tapovan area, suggesting that the Kumbh Mela was only a pretext. “This is a contractor-driven development agenda. The land is being cleared today to be handed over to someone tomorrow,” Thackeray said, adding that the party will not let it happen.

# Small battery retrieved from five-month-old infant’s food pipe at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Doctors at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital retrieved a battery from the oesophagus of a five-month-old baby. They found that chemical leaching from the battery had also caused ulcers in the upper part of the child’s food pipe. The child had swallowed a button cell while playing a few days ago. His parents took him to a private hospital after he continued coughing for several days. An X-ray showed that a round foreign body was stuck in his esophagus. That is when the parents recalled that the child was playing with a small button cell, and he was taken to Ahmedabad Civil Hospital. Dr Rakesh Joshi, Medical Superintendent and HOD of Pediatric Surgery, said, “If the cell had not been removed on time, there was a possibility of perforation in the esophagus due to the battery chemical, and the child’s condition would have become extremely critical. The child was immediately brought to Civil from a private hospital and the team of doctors succeeded in averting this risk through



complex management and surgical procedures.”

After a successful operation, the child was discharged with necessary medicines to heal the ulcers. After 15 days, the follow-up endoscopy showed that the esophageal wall had healed completely.

# Air pollution: Bombay HC appoints team for inspection of construction sites in Mumbai

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

The Bombay High Court has ordered the formation of a five-member team to inspect construction sites in one or two areas of Mumbai to check if compliance with earlier guidelines issued to curb air pollution is being followed. The team is expected to submit a report in a week, following which the court will hear the case on December 15. The court’s directions came while hearing petitions on deteriorating air quality levels in the city. The court was told that despite past orders on effective steps recommended to improve air quality, there were violations. The division bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekar and Justice Gautam Ankhad said that instead of giving many directions that may create confusion, small steps can be taken to suggest how air pollution can be brought within permissible limits. The court agreed that there is a need for a long-term plan which will take time, noting that Delhi has been struggling for 15 to 20 years. “... a team of five members, constituting one official of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), two members of civil society and one public health official. The team shall be provided with all logistics, transport and security personnel for entry into construction sites,” the bench said. The members of the team and the areas to visit will be decided and submitted later in the day to the court. Earlier during the hearing, amicus curiae Senior Advocate Darius Khambata told the court that one of the major reasons for pollution was identified to be dust from construction sites, and the court had passed detailed orders in 2023-24 on 27 guidelines that the BMC had to ensure compliance with. These included sensors at construction sites and monitoring whether steps are being taken to reduce the dust, including sprinkling water, and covering the vehicles during transportation of material. He said that, as per a newspaper report, of the 1,000 construction sites in the city, only 400 have sensor monitors, and 117 of those are not working. The court was also told by the BMC counsel that the sensors are yet to be connected to a central monitoring system. “There has to be a concerted plan and not a knee-jerk reaction whenever the air quality is bad. The long-term plan will take time, but if even putting monitors mandated by the court order in 2023 is taking this long to implement, it is concerning,” Khambata submitted to the court. It was discussed that while vehicular traffic is also a cause for pollution, which can be dealt with easily, the court said that it



would want to avoid causing harassment to citizens. The court was informed that committees were already in place, appointed during previous hearings, to which the bench said that it would want an independent survey on the steps being taken. It said that it would first deal with the specific area of pollution caused at construction sites. Senior Counsel Milind Sathe, who is representing the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), informed the court that there are special squads in place in each ward that visit construction sites and stop-work notices have also been given in cases of violations. Senior Counsel Janak Dwarkadas, representing NGO Vanashakti, said that many of these steps are only on paper, seeking stricter compliance. He also informed the court that a committee appointed by the high court was to submit weekly reports on compliance with the guidelines, but they had not received the reports since March.

“We are thinking how to verify the facts... they are saying that they are monitoring... let us get some records, maybe ward-wise... instead of asking the BMC to file another report... we want a report from some independent source,” the court said, appointing the team. The court also directed that the BMC and the public health department, in the meantime, issue a public health advisory as ‘awareness for citizens to protect themselves from air pollution’ and suggested distribution of masks in major public spots like railway stations and bus stops. An intervener on behalf of a consortium of developers also told the court that while the BMC has mandated installing the sensors, they are provided only 13 approved vendors, who are unable to provide the sensors for 15,000 sites across the city.

# HC rejects Haryana BJP MLA Gautam’s plea to dismiss poll challenge



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday dismissed a plea by BJP MLA Gautam to reject an election petition challenging his victory in the Haryana Assembly polls, ruling that the allegations of corrupt practices using religion were detailed enough to proceed to trial. In a 21-page order, Justice Archana Puri said the petition by runner-up Karan Singh Dalal, who secured 75,513 votes against Gautam’s 1,09,118 in the Palwal constituency, disclosed a “substantial cause of action”. The court noted that while simply mentioning words like “Sanatan” or “Hindutva” may not amount to wrongdoing, the full context, including speeches at religious events just before the October 5, 2024, polling, needed evidence to be tested. Dalal, an Independent candidate who came second with a margin of 33,605 votes, filed the petition under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, accusing Gautam of indulging in corrupt practices by appealing to voters on religious grounds during events like a Bhagwat Geeta Katha on September 12 and a Khatu Shyam Baba gathering on September 19. He sought to set aside Gautam’s win and disqualify him for six years under Section 8A of the Act. The petition, supported by videos downloaded from Gautam’s official Facebook, Instagram and YouTube pages, described how he attended these gatherings and “appealed for votes from the devotees present there, who were the voters of the Palwal Assembly constituency.” In one instance at the Geeta Katha

# Mamkoottathil sexual assault case: BJP’s Sreelekha questions complaint delay

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

BJP leader R Sreelekha on Friday questioned the delay in filing the sexual harassment complaint against Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkoottathil, while expressing her support for the survivor. Sreelekha, who is contesting the local body elections in Thiruvananthapuram on a BJP ticket, made the remarks in a Facebook post. The former Director General of Police said she has always stood with survivors and will continue to do so. “The only regret is why she could not file a complaint until now. Why was a case not registered all this time?” she wrote. She also sought to know why the complainant had to approach the Chief Minister directly. “Was it to give the accused time to switch off his phone and go into hiding or secure anticipatory bail? Or to prevent more influential people involved in the Sabarimala gold theft from being arrested?” she asked. Sreelekha said there should be no delay or lapse in protecting victims. “I hope other young women who allegedly harassed will also file complaints soon,” she said. Later, she clarified to reporters that she raised concerns about the delay in registering the case. “The allegations were raised several months back. Police should have taken action then,” she said. Meanwhile, the LDF and BJP continued to allege that the Congress and UDF had protected Mamkoottathil.

“Shafi Parambil and former KPCC president K Sudhakaran publicly supported him without hesitation. It was like challenging the people of Kerala and women here,” Education Minister V Sivankutty said. He added that the government would proceed legally and no compromise would be made. “Apart from political issues, the morality of Congress will also be discussed in the upcoming local body election,” he said. Sivankutty said Mamkoottathil should re-



sign from the Assembly for moral reasons. Asked about actor and MLA Mukesh, who also faced a sexual harassment case, he said he was unaware of the details. CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan also said Mamkoottathil no longer deserved to continue as MLA and must resign. “The Congress must demand his resignation. There will be a thorough probe,” he said. Former BJP state president K Surendran said people would not believe that Mamkoottathil is absconding. “He might have received help to go into hiding. It cannot be considered a normal case,” he said. Surendran alleged that the Kerala Police have details of other women who were targeted by Mamkoottathil. “But the police are not taking any action. There is a deliberate attempt to delay his arrest,” he said. BJP leader C Krishnakumar said the party would launch strong protests until Mamkoottathil resigns and is arrested. “After the complaint was filed, the MLA fled. Earlier, when allegations were raised, he stayed away instead of answering them,” Krishnakumar said.

# TMC panchayat chief shot on open road in Howrah, hospitalised along with associate

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

The head of Howrah’s Sampuipara Basukathi gram panchayat and Trinamool Congress leader Debobrata Mondal, alias Babu Mondal, was shot on Thursday night. His associate, Anupam Rana, was also hit by a bullet. Both were rushed to a private hospital in North Howrah in critical condition, and Mondal has since been shifted to SSKM Hospital. The incident took place around 11 pm in the Sampuipara area under Liluah police station while the two were returning home on a motorbike, police said. “Babu Mondal was returning home after a small party when he was hit from very close range. They both were on a bike,” said officials.

Mondal was shot in the waist and shoulder. When Anupam tried to intervene, he was also hit before the suspect fled. Residents rushed the two to the hospital after they collapsed on the road. “They have been hospitalised. A case has been registered and all efforts are being made to arrest the accused,” said Howrah Police Commissioner Praveen Tripathy. Several party leaders and workers, including Howrah District (Sadar) Trinamool President and MLA Goutam Chowdhury, MLA Kalyan Ghosh, and Domjur Youth Trinamool President Noorji Molla, visited the



hospital. MLA Kalyan Ghosh said, “It is unclear why such an incident occurred. We have asked the police to arrest the culprits immediately.” Police have launched an investigation and are searching for the assailant. The shooting has triggered panic in the area, further heightening tensions in Howrah ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. A name that has surfaced during the probe is that of Suman Choudhury, a history-sheeter previously jailed in extortion and attempted murder cases. Police sources said CCTV footage is being examined to identify and arrest the accused.

# Delhi Police arrest conspirator behind shooting at Kapil Sharma’s café in Canada

The Delhi Police Crime Branch on Friday claimed to have arrested one of the conspirators behind the firing incident at Kapil Sharma’s KAP’s Cafe in Canada. The accused has been identified as Bandhu Man Singh Shekhon, a close confidant of Goldy Dhillon, who had taken the responsibility for the shootings at Sharma’s cafe. He was reportedly arrested from Ludhiana, and the police also recovered a China-made PX-3 high-end pistol and eight live cartridges from him. Dhillon alias Gurpreet Singh hails from Rajpura in Punjab and is a close member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang in India. According to the police, Shekhon, a native of Ludhiana, had provided logistical support, including vehicle and weapons, to Dhillon’s shooters who fired at the cafe. They said Shekhon was in Canada at the time of the shoot-

ing but later came back to India. “After returning to India, he was trying to rebuild the network of Goldy Dhillon’s gang in Punjab to extort businessmen and carry out shootings against other rival gangs,” a police officer said. Sanjeev Yadav, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime), told The Indian Express that the accused had bought the recovered China-made pistol for Rs 8 lakh from a Punjab-based gangster Sonu Khatri, who is currently in the United States. Yadav said Sonu is part of an international weapons trafficking module allegedly linked to ISI-backed handlers in Pakistan. Last week, 10 foreign-made semi-automatic pistols, including high-end Turkiye-manufactured PX-5.7 mm models used exclusively by special forces, and 92 live cartridges were seized by the Crime Branch and four key operatives of this syndicate were arrested.”



# Israeli forces kill Palestinian men in West Bank after they appear to surrender



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Israeli forces on Thursday (November 27, 2025) killed a pair of Palestinian men in the occupied West Bank after they appeared to surrender to troops, drawing Palestinian accusations that the men were executed “in cold blood.” The Israeli military said it was investigating. The killings, captured in videos shown on two Arab TV stations, came as Israel pressed ahead with its latest offensive in the West Bank, where the army has stepped up its activities over the past two years. Israel says it is cracking down on militants, but Palestinians and rights groups accuse Israel of using excessive force and say dozens of unarmed civilians have been killed. Israel has been fighting on a number of fronts as a shaky ceasefire in Gaza moves forward. On Thursday, Israel carried out another round of airstrikes on suspected Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon. Ongoing conflicts in the region have fueled concerns that unrest could spill over and undermine the fragile truce in Gaza.

A Palestinian-American teenager held in Israeli detention for nine months was also released on Thursday night. The 16-year-old emerged visibly thin and was embraced by his crying family. The Israeli military and national police announced they were opening an investigation into the deaths on Thursday of the two men, who were shot by members of the border police, a special unit that often operates alongside the Israeli military. In a video shown on Palestine TV, which has no sound, the two men come out of a garage holding their hands up and lifting their shirts to show they are not carrying explosives. They are ordered to the ground and kicked by one of the policemen. They are then ordered back to the garage. In a video shown by Egyptian TV station Al-Ghad, the men are ordered back to the entrance of the garage. As they are on the ground and surrounded by troops, gunshots are heard and the men slump down, apparently lifeless. At least one soldier is seen firing his weapon. In a statement, the Israeli military said the two men were wanted militants in the northern town of Jenin who had thrown explosives and opened fire at troops. It said that after the men surrendered and exited a building, “fire was directed toward the suspects.” It said was the incident was “under review” and would be referred “to the relevant professional bodies.” Palestinians and human rights groups say such investigations yield few results, and Israeli troops are rarely prosecuted.

Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who oversees the national police, praised the Israeli forces, saying they had acted “exactly as they are expected to — terrorists must die!” In Ramallah, the Palestinian Prime Minister's office accused Israel of executing the men “in

cold blood.” It called the shooting “an outright extrajudicial killing in blatant violation of international humanitarian law.” Palestinian authorities identified the men as Al-Muntasir Abdullah, 26, and Yousef Asasa, 37, and said Israel had taken away their bodies. The incident was reminiscent of the case of Elor Azaria — a soldier convicted of manslaughter in 2017 for fatally shooting an already wounded Palestinian attacker. That case deeply divided the nation, with nationalistic politicians defending the soldier. Azaria was released early from prison after serving a nine-month sentence.

The shooting is part of a larger operation in a north-eastern region of the West Bank. Israel's military has detained more than 100 people since Tuesday (November 25, 2025) in the town of Tubas, according to Abdullah al-Zaghari, spokesman for the advocacy group Palestinian Prisoners' Club. The military has said the operation was a response to “attempts to establish terrorist strongholds and construction of terror infrastructures in the area.” On Nov. 19, Palestinian attackers stabbed an Israeli to death and wounded three more at a West Bank intersection before being shot down by troops. Israel's military has scaled up military operations in the West Bank since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack, which triggered the war in Gaza. The latest operation comes amid a rising tide of Israeli settler violence in the West Bank. Israeli leaders have played down the settler attacks as the work of a small minority. But Palestinians say the attacks are frequent, often in close proximity to Israeli troops, and the settlers are rarely punished.

Israel's air force carried out another series of strikes in parts of southern Lebanon on Thursday. Israel says its ongoing strikes are aimed at preventing Hezbollah from rebuilding after a devastating war last year. But the United Nations on Tuesday said Israel had killed at least 127 civilians, including children, in its strikes on Lebanon since the ceasefire came into effect one year ago. Things escalated earlier this week with a rare strike in Lebanon's capital of Beirut, killing Hezbollah's chief of staff. On Thursday, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam criticized Hezbollah for not disarming in a rare rebuke of the group, saying the Iran-backed militants have failed to deter Israeli airstrikes, protect the Lebanese people or even safeguard the lives of its own leaders. Pope Leo XIV is scheduled to visit the country on Sunday (November 30, 2025), when he will meet the crisis-hit nation's political and religious leaders. Mohammed Ibrahim, an American teenager held in Israeli custody for nine months, was released on Thursday evening and immediately checked into a hospital, his uncle told the AP. Visibly thin, head shaven and still in a grey jumpsuit, Ibrahim wiped tears away as he was embraced by family members shortly after his release in videos taken by the family.

His father, Zaher Ibrahim, kissed his son and began to cry. “He's skinny and pale, his eyes are sunken in and he still has signs of scabies,” said Zeyad Kadur, the uncle. The teen was visiting family in the West Bank with his parents when he was arrested at his family's home at night for allegedly throwing rocks at Israeli settlers in the West Bank, according to the Council on American-Islamic Relations and several members of Congress. In an affidavit, Mohammed said he only confessed to stone-throwing after he was threatened by interrogators with a beating.

# Sons of Virginia Giuffre, who accused Andrew and Epstein of abuse, seek control of her estate

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Melbourne: Lawyers for two sons of Virginia Giuffre, her housekeeper and her former attorney appeared in an Australian court Friday in a case deciding who controls her estate. Giuffre was the highest-profile accuser of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and she settled a lawsuit for an undisclosed sum in 2022 against then- Prince Andrew, now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor after he was stripped of his royal titles over his association with Epstein. She died by suicide in April at the age of 41 at her farm in Western Australia state without leaving a will.

The only adults of her three children — Christian Giuffre, 19, and Noah Giuffre, 18, — filed a case in the state Supreme Court in June to gain control of their mother's estate including property in Western Australia, where she had lived for years, and potential revenue from her memoir “Nobody's Girl.” The memoir, released last month, expands on her claims that she was sexually trafficked as a teen by the late financier to billionaires, politicians and King Charles III's brother. Mountbatten-Windsor categorically rejected the allegations and said he didn't recall having met her. The brothers want the court to appoint them administrators of their mother's estate. The brother's application is opposed by Virginia Giuffre's former housekeeper and caregiver Cheryl Myers and her former Perth-based attorney, Karrie Loudon. The women want to be made administrators.

A temporary administrator was appointed this week



to manage the estate. The first court hearing in the case was held Friday and another will be scheduled next year. Lawyers on Friday discussed a range of issues, including whether Virginia Giuffre's daughter, who cannot be named for legal reasons, and her estranged husband Robert Giuffre should become parties in the case. Virginia Giuffre separated from her husband and children this year. She had been charged with breaching a family violence restraining order over an incident in February, and died before she was to appear in court over the matter.

# WHO issues unprecedented global guidelines to combat infertility

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Friday published for the first time directives to improve the prevention, detection and treatment of infertility, which affects millions across the globe. “One in six people worldwide experience infertility during their lifetime,” said Pascale Allotey, the global health body's head of sexual and reproductive health.

“The condition affects individuals and couples across all regions yet access to safe and affordable care remains highly inequitable,” said Ms. Allotey. The new guide would provide a “unified, evidence-based foundation” to ensure care is safe, effective and accessible for all, she added.

According to the WHO, infertility is a condition of the male and female reproductive system, defined as the inability to achieve pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual relations. The situation can lead to major distress, stigmatisation and financial difficulties. In several countries, most of the cost of infertility tests and treatment is borne by patients, which often leads to “catastrophic financial expenditures”. “In some settings, even a single round of In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) can cost double the average annual household income,” the WHO noted.

The guide sets out 40 recommendations and calls for the integration of fertility in national health funding, services and strategies. It also wants to see steps for effective clinical



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management, in both diagnosis and treatment. For example, the WHO calls for male diagnoses, which are often under-investigated, suggesting a range of approaches, starting with advice before moving to active treatment. It also advises increased investment in prevention. Health professionals need to address the main risk factors for infertility, which include untreated sexually transmitted infections and smoking, the global health body noted.

# Hong Kong apartment tower blaze kills 128



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Hong Kong: Hong Kong firefighters searched through a high-rise tower complex apartment-by-apartment Friday for more victims after a massive fire engulfed seven of its eight buildings, killing at least 128 people in one of the city's deadliest blazes. Crews were prioritising apartments from which they received more than two dozen calls for assistance during the blaze, but were unable to reach, Derek Armstrong Chan, a deputy director of Hong Kong Fire Services, told reporters. The toll rose Friday afternoon to 128 after more bodies were found in the blackened towers, and Secretary for Security Chris Tang told reporters at the scene that the search for victims was continuing and the numbers could still rise.

The fire started midafternoon Wednesday in one of the Wang Fuk Court complex's eight towers, jumping rapidly from one to the next as bamboo scaffolding covered in netting in place for renovations caught ablaze until seven buildings were engulfed. It took more than 1,000 firefighters, some 24 hours to bring the blaze under control, and even nearly two days later, smoke continued to drift out of the charred skeletons of the buildings from the occasional flare-up. The final search of the buildings was expected to be completed later Friday, at which point officials have said they will officially end the rescue phase of their operation at the complex in Tai Po district, a northern suburb near Hong Kong's border with mainland China. It was unclear how many people

# India on high alert as Imran Khan rumours push Pakistan towards chaos



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

New Delhi: Indian Intelligence agencies have alerted the security forces to remain in a state of very high alert in the wake of the developments unfolding in Pakistan. Trouble is brewing in Pakistan in the wake of rumours relating to the death of former Prime Minister, Imran Khan. Huge crowds are mobilising outside the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where Khan is lodged. Thousands of PTI supporters have gathered outside the jail demanding that they meet with their leader. The Pakistan Army, however has refused permission for a meeting with Khan, while also dismissing rumours about his death.

Intelligence Bureau officials say that rumours relating to the death of Khan began to circulate three days back. Since then there has been a massive build up of his supporters. If the Army does not provide proof that Khan's supporters have been seeking, then violence is bound to engulf Pakistan. An official said that violence is imminent in Pakistan given the current situation. For India, the spillover is the concern and trouble in the neighbourhood is never a good sign for national security. An Intelligence Bureau official said that the ISI is already planning a series of major attacks in India, so that attention is diverted.

Khan remains a very popular figure in Pakistan and if news about his death is true, then the country would witness violence of a very unprecedented nature. It would be beyond the control of the security forces in Pakistan to control the people and eventually the country could face a civil war like situation. The Army wants to keep Imran Khan down and all issues relating to him under wraps. However, it may

# Cyclone Ditwah: Tamil Nadu government seeks additional NDRF teams, support from armed forces

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, on Friday (November 28, 2025), said that the State is prepared to face cyclonic storm Ditwah, as south Tamil Nadu and the Cauvery delta region brace for heavy rains. The State government has sought additional NDRF teams and contingency support from the armed forces. A total of 12 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and 16 teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been positioned in 16 districts — Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, Chennai, Vellore, Ranipet, Tiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Pudukottai, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi. Tamil Nadu's requests. The Tamil Nadu government has requested for deploying additional NDRF teams from neighbouring States for efficient handling of the natural disaster and has further requested for contingency support from the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Coast Guard, an official release said. Speaking to reporters after a review meeting in the State Emergency Operations Centre in Chennai, Mr. Stalin said: “There is a warning for heavy rains in southern parts and in delta region on November 29 (Saturday) and November 30 (Sunday). They have issued a red alert. We held a review with Collectors of the districts for which red alert has been issued.” Owing to strong winds, a tree fell on Rameswaram road near Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district on November 28, 2025. “We have instructed to ensure that power lines do not snap and to prevent any accidents,” Mr. Stalin said. To a query on if there would be any impact in Chennai, the Chief Minister said: “Chennai would have an impact. They say there will be heavy rains in Chennai too.” Asked about precautionary measures, he said: “Arrangements have been

made to set up relief camps wherever necessary and for distributing food. Steps have been made to shift people living in low-lying areas when water is released,” Mr. Stalin said. Replying to a query of deputing of Ministers, if any, he said: “There are Ministers in-charge for districts and they are monitoring.” “Real-time monitoring of rain-related developments by officials is underway at the Integrated Command Centre in the Ripon Building, the seat of Greater Chennai Corporation on November 28, 2025. When referred to criticism made by AIADMK leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami that people in Cauvery delta region were being deceived, Mr. Stalin said: “Let him not deceive them. He will keep claiming so all the time. It is not so. No need to reply to his claim.” Asked if the government was prepared to face the cyclone, Mr. Stalin replied in the affirmative. Stalin's call for DMK functionaries

The apartments from which a total of 25 unanswered rescue calls were received, which are being prioritised, were primarily on higher floors, where the fire was last to be extinguished, he said. More than 70 people were injured in the blaze, including 11 firefighters, and about 900 people were housed in temporary shelters. Most of the casualties were in the first two buildings to catch fire, Chan said. The apartment complex housed many older people. It was built in the 1980s and had been undergoing a major renovation. Hong Kong's anti-corruption agency said on Thursday it was investigating possible corruption relating to the renovation project. Three men, the directors and an engineering consultant of a construction company, have been arrested on suspicion of manslaughter, and police said company leaders were suspected of gross negligence. Police have not identified the company where the suspects worked, but The Associated Press confirmed Prestige Construction & Engineering Company was in charge of renovations in the tower complex. Police have seized boxes of documents from the company, where phones rang unanswered Thursday. Authorities suspected that some materials on the exterior walls of the high-rise buildings did not meet fire resistance standards, allowing the unusually fast spread of the fire. Police also said they found plastic foam panels — which are highly flammable — attached to the windows on each floor near the elevator lobby of the one unaffected tower. The panels were believed to have been installed by the construction company, but the purpose was not clear. Authorities planned immediate inspections of housing estates undergoing major renovations to ensure scaffolding and construction materials meet safety standards. The fire was the deadliest in Hong Kong in decades. A 1996 fire in a commercial building in Kowloon killed 41 people. A warehouse fire in 1948 killed 176 people, according to the South China Morning Post.

not be able to sustain this for long as the people are getting anxious and are seeking answers. The ratings of the establishment in Pakistan, especially with Field Marshal Asim Munir at the helm has hit an all time low.

An official said that the people are being stopped by force and the Army does realise that a majority of the population wants the current dispensation out. Pakistan watchers say that the people are particularly upset that the Army engineered a coup to take Khan out of power and install a dummy government under Shehbaz Sharif. There is no respect for a democratically-elected process and the people have been voicing their disgruntlement against this, experts add. Indian officials say that the rumours relating to Khan's death was something that the establishment did not expect. This has put the Army on the back foot. If one looks at the build up of supporters, it is massive and the Army would not be able to contain them by using force. Officials say that the Pakistan Army would look to buy time so that it would be able to handle the situation. In order to buy time, the Army and ISI would plot attacks in India so that this would act as a diversion for sometime. The chatter that has been picked up suggests a sense of urgency to carry out a spectacular strike in India.

The ISI is not planning some small attack. It wants one on the scale of a Mumbai 26/11 or Pulwama so that the attention and focus of the Pakistan people is completely diverted, another official said. Intelligence agencies have alerted security officials to keep a watch particularly on the eastern border. There is a lot of ISI related activity that is on in Bangladesh. Several modules have come up in collaboration between the Lashkar-e-Tayiba and Harkat-ul-Jihadi-Islami (HuJI) with the sole intention of carrying out attacks in India. Pakistan is also planning to fly in Hafiz Saeed to Bangladesh so that he could give the members of this module a pep talk. Officials say that Saeed is always roped in to give the terrorists of his modules a pep talk just before a major attack is launched. This was found to be the case prior to the Mumbai 26/11 attacks. Officials say that given the current situation in Pakistan, the ISI is desperate to create a diversion. With the borders with Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab becoming harder to operate, the focus is on the modules of Bangladesh to carry out a major attack in India, officials add. Officials also add that such a diversion would give the Pakistan Army time to handle the situation relating to Imran Khan, which in turn would calm the people.

made to set up relief camps wherever necessary and for distributing food. Steps have been made to shift people living in low-lying areas when water is released,” Mr. Stalin said. Replying to a query of deputing of Ministers, if any, he said: “There are Ministers in-charge for districts and they are monitoring.” “Real-time monitoring of rain-related developments by officials is underway at the Integrated Command Centre in the Ripon Building, the seat of Greater Chennai Corporation on November 28, 2025. When referred to criticism made by AIADMK leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami that people in Cauvery delta region were being deceived, Mr. Stalin said: “Let him not deceive them. He will keep claiming so all the time. It is not so. No need to reply to his claim.” Asked if the government was prepared to face the cyclone, Mr. Stalin replied in the affirmative. Stalin's call for DMK functionaries

Mr. Stalin, who is also the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president, urged his party office-bearers and functionaries at various levels to remain active and extend support to the people in view of Cyclone Ditwah. In a statement, Mr. Stalin said as part of the preparatory measures for Cyclone Ditwah, the Tamil Nadu government had held several review meetings over the past two days. All precautionary measures had been put in place, and the entire administrative machinery had been placed on high alert. Instructions had been issued to Ministers, District Collectors, and Superintendents of Police to stay vigilant. Rough sea is seen due to heavy winds at Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district on November 28, 2025. I urge DMK cadres to extend all possible support to the people. The district secretaries of the party in Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Chennai, Vellore, Ranipet, Tiruvannamalai, Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Pudukkottai, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, Villupuram,



# Automation in Ahmedabad construction sector has reduced women’s participation by nearly 80%: Study



“As a woman, you should not touch machines,” Deepthiben (name changed), a 30-year-old worker from Dahod, described how she was denied opportunities to learn at a large construction site. Sugunaben (name changed), another 35-year-old migrant worker with over 15 years of experience in masonry assistance, said she has been told repeatedly how they (women) are only meant to be a helper. Other women workers shared: “While we work, we have to take a ghunghat (veil), otherwise people will say we do not have sharam (shame). ...our husbands say that we won’t be able to learn so it is better to work together”.

Such rebukes echoed across construction sites reflecting the gender bias that bars women from skill development and upward mobility, according to the Aajeevika Bureau-Work Fair and Free (WFF) research report titled ‘Building Futures: Women Workers at the Margins of Construction Automation, The Case of Ahmedabad, Gujarat’ released on Tuesday. Aajeevika Bureau is a public service organisation working on the rights and well being of migrant workers and Work Fair and Free (WFF) is the knowledge institution conceived and incubated by the bureau. Authored by Geeta Thatra and Saloni Mundra, the report said that automation has reduced women’s participation by nearly 80 per cent in tasks such as material handling and concrete production. Highlighting how automation and industrialisation of construction are reshaping the labour processes and deepening the exclusion of women workers in the city’s booming industry, the report states that in high-rise buildings and precast projects, contractors increasingly recruit migrant men workers, marginalising Bhil Adivasis and women workers who have historically sustained Ahmedabad’s construction industry. “Automation and industrialisation are leading to greater outsourcing of construction activities, with contractors bringing their trained men workers. Bhil Adivasis and women workers are the worst affected with the shift to long-distance male migrants,” said Saloni Mundra, executive at Aajeevika Bureau.

The study, conducted between December 2023 and February 2025 in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar, adopted a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) methodology to foreground the experiences of migrant women workers. Four projects – two residential, one commercial, and one government-funded infrastructure project ranging from Rs 100–500 crore – were studied to analyse automa-

tion across project types and stages alongside off-site construction – two autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) block factories, a precast concrete factory, and a precast yard. The sites were selected based on accessibility and to capture variations in project type and scale. Research participants, including workers, contractors and professionals were approached through existing networks and snowball referrals, ensuring voluntary participation. “There is a general perception that women cannot work and only raise kids, but it is not true. We can operate machines and work more than men, but we need opportunities. Since big machines have come, Adivasi women like us don’t get much work. But if we are given the chance to learn new skills, we too can advance in construction,” said Savitaben Bilvad, a 48-year-old construction worker, a native of Dahod, who has been working in Ahmedabad for the last 30 years. The report pointed out that despite years of experience, women earn 10–20 per cent less than male “helpers” and 40-50 per cent less than “skilled” male workers from the same regions. Wages are often paid to male family members, rendering women’s contribution invisible. “We don’t want to spend energy on matters like harassment and women’s safety,” a supervisor at a precast yard told researchers, underscoring persistent gender bias in hiring and workplace practices. “I work as a mazdoor (helper) because the contractor does not see me as a karigar (mason). I go to the site as a jodi (pair) with my husband and don’t find work alone. Even though I know plastering and can operate a breaker machine, I earn only half of what my husband gets,” said Surekhaben Maida, a 38-year-old migrant construction worker from Dahod. Another migrant construction worker Sharmaben Bhuria from Dahod said contractors deny work to women with children. “We are told what these women with kids do. Where should we keep our toddlers then. If we are denied work, how will we support our family? There should be facilities for our children at the work site. We have come for work in Ahmedabad, but due to our children we don’t get work,” she told The Indian Express. The research urges the state’s labour department and construction industry to ensure that technological progress does not deepen gender inequality. “Automation need not always mean displacement. Now is the time for the construction industry to reimagine women’s inclusion. With access to training, recognition, and support systems, women’s participation can be sustained, and they can move to technical and better-paying roles,” said Geeta Thatra, associate director at Work Fair and Free. Rise of automation in Ahmedabad since the 2010s when automation and industrialised construction have expanded added with growth of precast and prefabricated construction, especially after COVID-19-Modular construction, BIM, drones, and IoT devices are gaining traction, while emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, 3D printing, and digital twins remain experimental-Technological adoption is uneven across building and infrastructure projects. However, even incremental changes reduce on-site labour demand

# Leaked PAT papers on 5 YouTube channels have lakhs of views, Pune police launch probe



PAT is an exam conducted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Maharashtra. It is a standardised assessment in government-run and aided schools with the objective of testing and improving learning outcomes. PAT is an exam conducted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Maharashtra. It is a standardised assessment in government-run and aided schools with the objective of testing and improving learning outcomes. Pune City police have launched an investigation into the alleged leak of the Periodic Assessment Test (PAT) question papers after at least three papers of the exam — held between October 10 and 13 — were found uploaded on five different YouTube channels along with their answers.

According to police, the probe will not only focus on the YouTube channels where the papers were leaked but will also examine leaks, if any, within the state government entity responsible for the exam, as well as private contractors engaged in the exam’s administration. A Pune-based company was responsible for the printing of the papers while a Mumbai-based cargo company was responsible for the transport of the papers. PAT is an exam conducted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Maharashtra. It is a standardised assessment in government-run and aided schools with the objective of testing and improving learning outcomes. The test is conducted for three subjects: primary language (Marathi), Mathematics and third language (English). Many videos mentioned in the FIR are still available online on YouTube. Two videos uploaded on October 10 on different channels mentioned in the FIR have amassed over 1.2 lakh views and 90,000 views respectively in the last four days.

A senior officer from the Pune City police said, “The SCERT officials had given us a complaint application two days ago. On Monday, we called the officer concerned of assistant director rank and based on the statement given by the officer, an FIR was registered late on Monday. The FIR primarily names five YouTube channels on which the three question papers were uploaded along with the answers. The officer has stated that these question papers on the Youtube channels matched the actual papers, prima facie confirming the leak.” Tanaji Mane, head of the Maharashtra Principals’ Association and principal at Sharadchandra Pawar Prashala and Junior College in Solapur, said, “The PAT papers first arrive in the district, then at the taluka, then at the central school. It is in this distribution chain the papers are getting leaked.” “In addition to this, the schools are not being given enough papers and are being asked to xerox as required. The rules are that one should not xerox, but on the ground we have to xerox as it is not possible to conduct the exams for some kids and not for the others. This gives another opportunity for the paper to leak at the xerox centre,” he added. A L

Deshmukh, retired principal of Apte Prashala, said he was against the idea of conducting PAT exams as it is not possible to prevent leaks in an exam of this scale. “It is difficult to control such a huge system. We have the experience with our HSC and SSC board exams and we all know what happens there. But because those exams are conducted on a war-footing with all district collectors and police commissioners involved, we are able to somehow manage those exams. So it is natural that the PAT papers get leaked.” He also said the government should not show a lack of trust in teachers and let them conduct learning outcome assessment exams at their levels.

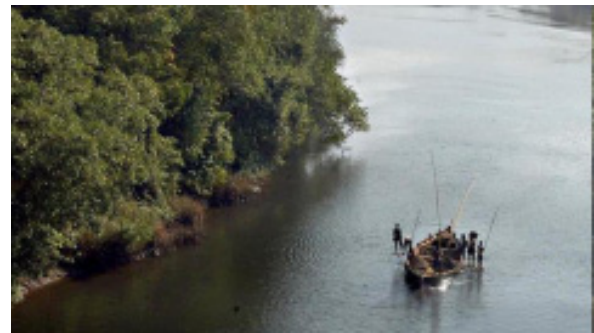
Another officer, who is part of the probe, added, “When we checked the views that these videos of leaked papers have obtained, some of them have got more than one lakh views, suggesting that the links of these videos were circulated on phone messenger or social media platforms.” “We have invoked the Information Technology Act along with the Maharashtra Prevention of Malpractices at University, Board and other specified Examinations Act. Also, the BNS section pertaining to disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servants. Our probe will focus on the persons or entities running these YouTube channels as well as the source of the exam paper leak. We now know that the subject division of SCERT sets the papers with the help of expert teachers. It is then printed by a particular entity and transported to regional centres by another private entity. Both these private entities have been selected via tender process. We will probe the possible leak in not just the government entity but also the private contractors involved in the exam administration. We may take help of cyber experts if required,” the officer added.

# How we sharpened James Webb telescope’s vision from million kilometres away

Sydney: After Christmas dinner in 2021, our family was glued to the television, watching the nail-biting launch of NASA’s US\$ 10 billion James Webb Space Telescope. There had not been such a leap forward in telescope technology since Hubble was launched in 1990.

En route to its deployment, Webb had to successfully navigate 344 potential points of failure. Thankfully, the launch went better than expected, and we could finally breathe again. Six months later, Webb’s first images were revealed, of the most distant galaxies yet seen. However, for our team in Australia, the work was only beginning. We would be using Webb’s highest-resolution mode, called the aperture masking interferometer or AMI for short. It’s a tiny piece of precisely machined metal that slots into one of the telescope’s cameras, enhancing its resolution. Our results on painstakingly testing and enhancing AMI are now released on the open-access archive arXiv in a pair of papers. We can finally present its first successful observations of stars, planets, moons and even black hole jets. Working with an instrument a million kilometres away Hubble started its life seeing out of focus – its mirror had been ground precisely, but incorrectly. By looking at known stars and comparing the ideal and measured images (exactly like what optometrists do).

# Microplastics threaten Goa’s estuarine fisheries, human consumers



Microplastics in water bodies can be ingested by very small organisms, which in turn are consumed by larger ones. As a result, the bodies of animals higher up in the food chain accumulate more microplastics and can suffer from amplified toxicity. This phenomenon is called bioaccumulation. To understand microplastic bioaccumulation along the Goan coast, scientists from the CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography in Goa and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research in Ghaziabad recently examined the habitats and feeding behaviour of 251 fishes belonging to nine species of finfish and shellfish. These included mackerel, anchovy, oyster, clam, catfish, sardine, and other commercial varieties, which the team captured from various depths in the ocean’s water column. In a study published in Environmental Research in August, the team identified 4,871 polluting particles in these fish, of which 3,369 particles were plastic polymers of 19 types. The scientists also found more contamination on the sea floor and in sediments at the bottom of the water column (in benthic realm) than in the open water column (pelagic realm).

These particles were mainly from degraded fishing material left at sea and wastewater discharged from human settlements. Based on the findings, the scientists have indicated that the fish are suffering from disrupted gene expression, oxidative stress, reproductive damage, and lower growth. When people eat these fish, according to the team, effects on the human body could include immune dysfunction, higher risk of cancer, and toxicity to the brain. Five key questions Fisheries around Goa focus on the estuaries — ecologically critical zones that nourish young fish and which serve as feeding grounds for the older ones. Finfish and shellfish are commonly fished at estuaries. These fish kinds also feature frequently in Indian cuisine because they are accessible, affordable, and are rich in proteins.

Anchovies, sardines, and mackerel are small pelagic fish that play an important role in estuarine ecosystems, feeding on plankton and drawing in larger predatory fish. They are also filter feeders: they trap floating particles in the water and ingest them, and are thus more liable to imbibe microplastics. These small fish are consumed by other larger ones, which in turn are prey for the elasmobranchs, or cartilaginous fish, including the sharks that dwell in shallow shelf waters. Microplastics thus move all the way up the food chain in a process called trophic transfer, eventually affecting the apex predators and human consumers. The scientists analysed fish samples only from the Mandovi estua-

rine system, part of the Mandovi-Zuari system that contributes to 97% of Goa’s fish output. They treated the bamboo shark, an apex predator, as the focal species to identify the effects of microplastic accumulation. The study fills a knowledge gap for five key questions for the region: microplastic contamination quantities in commercial fish, factors that increase the uptake of microplastics in fish, parts of the body that are the primary ingestion pathways, evidence of microplastics through ingestion in the bamboo shark, and risks of microplastic ingestion for fish and human health along the Goan coast.

The scientists analysed 30 members each of mackerels, sardines, anchovies, bamboo sharks, sole fish, catfish, clams, and oysters, plus 11 of the rarer green mussels. These fish were grouped by their feeding levels: filter feeders and planktivores, secondary consumers, and carnivorous consumers. The scientists determined the microplastic concentration in their bodies by assessing the soft tissue. Their analysis revealed that anchovies had the highest concentration among the pelagic species, at 8.8 microplastic particles per individual (MP/in). The catfish led the benthic realm at over 10 MP/in. The bamboo shark had the least: 3.5 MP/in. The water column itself contained 120 MP/litre. The team found that the longer bodies the fish had, the fewer microplastic particles they accumulated. They also concluded that fish with habitats closer to contaminated sediments on the sea bed ingested more microplastics when they fed. Among the finfish, the scientists found more microplastics in the digestive tract than in the gills, indicating accumulation through the consumption of contaminated water or prey. (As water moves through the fish, the particles are trapped in the gills and could lead to respiratory issues.) They also identified four major shape-types of microplastics: fibres (53%), fragments (29.9%), films (13.1%), and beads (4%). Marine animals use colours to detect prey, and the particles came in nine hues: blue (37.6%), black (24.3%), red (12%), discoloured (8.7%), transparent (6.8%), green (4.4%), pink/purple (2.5%), yellow (1.9%), and orange (1.7%). The types and colours of microplastics revealed their sources to be fishing gear, tire residue from roads, e-waste, packaging, and textiles. In all, the study categorised the region and ecosystem as low-risk but placed benthic life at more risk than pelagic. The paper also said 11 of the 19 types of polymers identified were highly toxic. The study showed 66 of the 71 shellfish to have poor nutritional statuses. Previous studies have found the direct effects of microplastics on fish include lower fitness, protein, and fatty acids and lower nutritional quality. Indirectly, as the demand for such fish drops in the market, coastal populations could be at risk of losing their livelihoods. “This is a good study that further supports several other independent findings,” Ravidas K. Naik, who also studies microplastics in marine environments at the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research in Vasco da Gama and wasn’t affiliated with the study, said. “There are microplastics in every place on earth, and such findings only underscore the urgent need for us to take action as a society to remove plastic from various environments, with better waste disposal and new research for biodegradable alternatives.”

# Tamil Nadu’s last Congress Chief Minister Bhaktavatsalam’s virus remark that went viral



One remark that Bhaktavatsalam, the last Congress Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, made after the declaration of results of the 1967 Assembly election was, “I see a virus has spread all over Tamil Nad[u]. I pray God may save the people.”

However, Bhaktavatsalam continues to be viewed adversely by sections of historians and political leaders for the way he handled the acute shortage of rice and anti-Hindi imposition agitation in the State. He is still blamed for the debacle of the Congress in the 1967 Assembly election. Yet, one remark that he made after the declaration of results of the 1967 Assembly election, remains a subject of intense debate among the political class and students of contemporary history. The observation was this, “I see a virus has spread all over Tamil Nad[u]. I pray God may save the people.” Actually, this formed a part of his statement made exclusively to The Hindu, according to a report published on February 24, 1967. Needless to say, the outgoing CM, who graciously congratulated the DMK, stated he accepted the defeat as “the verdict of the people against the Congress.” That the poll results stunned the Congress party was an understatement as not only the incumbent Chief Minister and most of his Cabinet colleagues were defeated but also the then all-India president of the organisation and former Chief Minister K. Kamaraj had to bite the dust. In Virudhunagar, a young student-leader P. Srinivasan of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) had outsmarted Kamaraj by a margin of a little less than 1,300 votes while another DMK nominee, D. Rajarathnam, beat Bhaktavatsalam nearly by 9,000 votes in Sriperumpudur.

In an hour-long interaction with reporters at his Nungambakkam residence, the DMK chief C. N. Annadurai, who became Chief Minister on March 6, 1967, described his predecessor’s statement as “unfortunate” and sounded somewhat bitter by saying that “it is thoroughly unbecoming of him,” reported this newspaper on February 25. M. Karunanidhi, who succeeded Annadurai two years later following the latter’s death, in his memoir, Nenjukku Neethi (Volume 1) [which he originally wrote in 1975], likened Bhaktavatsalam’s observation to “one of spewing venom.”

Two days later, the outgoing CM clarified his controversial remark, which, he said, had been “misunderstood.” There was no “insinuation” in his remark against any indi-

vidual or party. “What was uppermost in his mind was that there should be some introspection and that the Congress should look into its shortcomings and rectify them. All that he was concerned about was the obsession with which the body politic was seized. He did not mean any reference to the D.M.K. and that was why he used the expression ‘a virus’ and not ‘the virus’ or ‘cancer’. He said that ‘God may save the people,’ because he found that his partymen had not been able to deal with that obsession. He had in mind the shortcomings in ‘our own organisation and organisational approach.’ In fact, he had been mentioning it to his friends even before the elections.” The Hindu reported on February 28. Three years later, in an interview to popular Tamil periodical, Kumudam, the former Chief Minister gave another clarification about what he meant by the term “virus.” This interview was published in December 1970, the contents of which were carried in Bhaktavatsalam’s memoir, Enadhu Ninaivugal, which was published in 1971. When the memoir was launched, he was on the side of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had fallen out with senior leaders including Kamaraj. Spearheaded by Indira Gandhi, the Congress had become an ally of the DMK.

In the interview, he explained that the fact that the people had rejected the Congress, which had got freedom [from the British] for the people and strove for the welfare of the public by formulating several developmental schemes, had made him to ponder over confusion, which had engulfed the people. “I used the term – virus – only to refer to this state of confusion,” he explained. He did not describe the DMK MLAs or the DMK as “virus.” Had it been otherwise, this would have been “contrary to my nature,” Bhaktavatsalam pointed out, recalling he had made clear his position to Annadurai, V.R. Nedunchezhian and Karunanidhi who called on him at his residence before assuming charge. Karunanidhi, who was Public Works Minister in the Annadurai’s Cabinet, told him that he and his colleagues too were initially under the wrong impression. Now, they had got clarity after the explanation. In February 1987, Bhaktavatsalam died at the age of 89. At that time, the AIADMK’s founder M.G. Ramachandran, as Chief Minister, ensured that the former CM was given a state funeral at an exclusive spot on the premises of the Gandhi Mandapam, Guindy. Eleven years later, the DMK government had constructed a proper memorial for him at a cost of ₹25 lakh and in 1998, declaring open the memorial, the then Chief Minister Karunanidhi lauded Bhakthavatsalam for his administrative abilities. He told the audience that he learnt the basics of government administration from his predecessor, this newspaper mentioned in a report published on March 14, 1998. He also recalled how Bhakthavatsalam, [as Finance Minister] inaugurated a mother-child care centre set up by him (Karunanidhi, who was in the Opposition then) in his native Thirukuvalai near Thiruvavur in 1962 despite stiff opposition from the local Congressmen, [an incident of which was recounted in Enadhu Ninaivugal too]. Similarly, on his release from prison in Palayamkottai, Bhakthavatsalam had called him to his residence and explained to him why he was incarcerated. When he (Karunanidhi) gave him a list of persons who were still in prison, the latter, as the Chief Minister, immediately ordered their release. These instances revealed Bhakthavatsalam’s “humane side,” the daily mentioned as Karunanidhi having said. Bhakthavatsalam’s daughter and social activist, Sarojini Varadappan, and granddaughter Jayanthi Natarajan, who was the then Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, attended the inauguration of the memorial.



# How does Gaganyaan’s vital crew escape system work? | Explained



The story so far: The Gaganyaan mission aims to safely transport Indian astronauts to a low-earth orbit of around 400 km altitude using the human-rated LVM3 (HLVM3) rocket as the launch vehicle, and to return them safely. In human space missions, crew safety is more important than mission success. It is imperative that safety is addressed during all phases: launch pad, ascent, orbit, and descent.

What is the CES?A dedicated Crew Escape System (CES) will be used during the initial part of the atmospheric phase of the Gaganyaan mission to ensure crew safety in the event of a contingency that jeopardises the mission. The CES is designed to rapidly separate the crew module, along with the crew, from a malfunctioning launch vehicle, and move it to a safe distance in the least possible time. The atmospheric phase of flight is one of the most critical stages of the ascent, during which the rocket accelerates to hypersonic speeds — more than five times the speed of sound — and will be experiencing very high structural loads. The HLVM3 rocket is equipped with two powerful S200 solid-fuel boosters to lift off, and unlike liquid or cryogenic engines, solid motors cannot be shut down once they are ignited. Thus, the CES must extract the crew module with greater acceleration than the launch vehicle itself, and in minimal time. The CES is a quick-acting system positioned at the forward end of the launch vehicle and is equipped with multiple special-purpose solid motors. These motors use high burn-rate propellants that consume fuel faster than conventional solid motors, generating higher acceleration.

In the Gaganyaan mission, the CES could impart acceleration up to 10-times that of gravity. For a healthy human body, such high acceleration is tolerable for a few seconds if the crew is positioned correctly, with the acceleration acting perpendicular to the chest and the body pressed against the seat in a “child in cradle” orientation. Rocket systems are more intricate than those of aircraft, with rocket reliability much lower than that of passenger aircraft. Nevertheless, the CES significantly improves crew survival

probability through its heritage-based design, redundant systems, and robust mission planning.

What are different types?

The CES is classified into two types based on the way it extracts the crew module: (i) puller type — used in Gaganyaan, where the CES pulls the crew module away from the launch vehicle; (ii) pusher type — used in vehicles like SpaceX’s Falcon 9, where the crew module is pushed away using compact, high-thrust liquid-fuel engines. Both systems have advantages and disadvantages, with the choice depending on propulsion technology and system integration aspects. The U.S.’s Saturn V, Russia’s Soyuz, and China’s Long March vehicles also use puller-type CES designs.In September, 1983, two Soviet cosmonauts escaped a massive explosion on the launchpad when their Soyuz rocket caught fire just before lift-off. Their lives were saved by the launch vehicle’s automatic crew escape system. This remains the first and only time a crewed launch escape system was activated before lift-off.Once the CES has moved the crew module a safe distance away from the falling vehicle, the module will be released and decelerated by a multistage parachute system. This will reduce the module’s velocity in steps, ensuring it splashes down safely in the sea without exceeding the crew’s physiological limits upon impact. Typically, the crew will remain inside the module until splashdown. But during the Soviet Union’s first human spaceflight, Yuri Gagarin ejected from the Vostok module at approximately 7 km altitude and parachuted safely to the ground.The Integrated Vehicle Health Management system (IVHM), which is a network of sensors, electronics, and software, will aid in taking a decision to activate the CES when a contingency arises. It will monitor all vital parameters of vehicle systems and crew health in real time. Based on the synthesised information and the flight regime, it will ensure prompt anomaly detection, minimise false alarms, and activate the CES early enough to protect the crew.

Has it been tested?

The ISRO has developed a cost-effective, single-stage Test vehicle powered by the Vikas engine to validate the CES. The first successful test occurred in October 2023, during which the CES was activated when the Test vehicle reached transonic conditions — a critical phase in atmospheric flight when the velocity transitions from subsonic to supersonic. ISRO plans additional Test vehicle flights to simulate other critical ascent trajectory conditions. The CES is a cornerstone of the Gaganyaan programme and reflects ISRO’s commitment to astronaut safety. By integrating advanced engineering, rigorous testing, and reliable systems like the IVHM, the CES ensures India’s first human spaceflight mission will prioritise the safe return of its crew, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.

# The evolving political dynamics in volatile Bangladesh



Bangladesh’s political landscape is undergoing a rapid transformation ahead of the general election which is to take place in February 2026. Student advisers and the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI), Bangladesh’s largest Islamist party, which extended support to the interim government from the beginning, are positioning themselves to make the most out of the current set-up and are effectively challenging the older two-party system featuring the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Signs of this new political configuration were evident when Mohammed Yunus, Chief Adviser to the interim government, was seen at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in the company of Naib Ameer of the JEI, politician Syed Abdullah Mohammed Taher and Tasneem Zara, a young leader from the student-backed and newly formed National Citizen Party (NCP). The delegation also included Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir of the BNP. But the presence of at least two Jamaat leaders and the elderly Alamgir showed that the NCP and the Jamaat have covered a great political distance within the last year. There is considerable frustration among the supporters of the Awami League and the BNP as the leadership in both parties is not responding to the changes that are sweeping across Bangladesh’s politics. With the flight of Awami League leaders from the country, Khaleida Zia’s BNP was the immediate beneficiary as it was expected to take charge in case an election was held by December 2024 or January 2025. As the interim government delayed the election, the BNP chose to wait and became restive only when it became clear that the students would form their own party. In the process it lost valuable time and suffered reputational damage as Bangladesh was rocked by a series of violent incidents which included the brutal killing of Lal Chand Sohag, a trader in Dhaka on July 9, 2025. The BNP’s cadre had to bear the blame. The former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, who is based in New Delhi, has been in touch with her party cadre (the Awami League) on the ground but has not held a single press interaction, virtual or in person. She has not designated anyone on the ground in Dhaka as the party has been banned since May 2025 (In October 2024 Awami League’s student wing was banned). Neither has she or her colleagues expressed remorse over the loss of lives in the protests of July-August 2024. At the same time, the BNP’s pitch for political power is weak as its top leadership is still in exile. When senior BNP leaders organised a rally as a show of the BNP’s strength in May 2025 and accused Mr. Yunus of delaying elections — the party had demanded elections by December 2025 — the BNP’s Acting Chairman, Tarique Rahman, addressed the gathering from his London home (he has been based here for nearly two decades because of his disputes with Ms. Hasina and the military). Sources in the BNP have indicated that he may return in November but there has been no announcement of a definite date for his return. That the BNP has still not been able to bring back Mr. Rahman from London in what is now a Hasina-free Bangladesh is a sign that its relations with the interim government are not as normal as they may appear. The BNP has not given a clear explanation for Mr.

Rahman’s absence in Dhaka, with the elections just months away. The Awami League’s inability to delegate responsibility to some of its over ground leaders such as Saber Hossain Chowdhury has also not gone down well with the party’s traditional supporters. The party’s leaders who are in exile have countered this with the line that delegating responsibilities would make local leaders vulnerable to severe actions by the interim government. But the common man in Dhaka is of the opinion that a lack of delegation by Ms. Hasina only reveals the political insecurity of the Sheikh Hasina family. The new players

The NCP and the Jamaat are increasing pressure on Mr. Yunus to ban more political parties and introduce a proportional representation (PR) system for the election. Their argument is that the PR system would ensure a “level playing field for all political parties”. In fact, the PR system would increase pressure on the BNP which remains the sole inheritor of the older political system on the ground. The BNP has also been humiliated in campuses after facing defeat in the student union elections at Jahangirnagar University and Dhaka University where Jamaat-backed student panels won. Jamaat-student coordination on campuses is supported by the fact that some of the student activists were trained under the Jamaat’s student wing, Shibir. There are several takeaways from the emerging plot. First, the BNP’s long-held argument that an interim government would be apolitical has been proved wrong. During the rule of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League, the BNP was the strongest proponent of an interim government to conduct credible elections. Yet, the 2024 interim government, which the BNP had welcomed initially, has in turn thrown up new challenges for the BNP. If the BNP wins the election in 2026 or manages to emerge as the single largest party, it would be because the history of the two-party-led system still has significant appeal in Bangladesh. The Army’s muted stand

Second, the pause in two-party politics under the interim government has been a reality check for the Bangladesh military. Unlike his predecessors such as General Ershad, the current Bangladesh Army chief, Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman, has refrained from direct interference in the political domain even though the army took over magisterial powers following the serious deterioration in the law and order situation. On occasions, Gen. Zaman has said that the military could step in if the interim government makes compromises in areas that the army considers vital for Bangladesh’s security. The Bangladesh army’s real test is expected in winter 2025 when politics will heat up in Dhaka as the International Crimes Tribunal is to deliberate on the future of Ms. Hasina and her colleagues. At the moment, the army appears to be under pressure. In December 2024, Gen. Zaman was successful in scuttling the launch of the so-called July Proclamation that aimed to replace the 1972 constitution. But he could not do this on August 5, 2025 when Mr. Yunus announced it as a guiding document for Bangladesh.

Third, within the nationalism-centric party system of Bangladesh, the Jamaat-e-Islami, with its pro-Pakistan history of 1971, is yet to make a convincing nationalist pitch for the elections as it continues to be an organisation with a transnational ideological network across multiple countries including the United States, the United Kingdom and Pakistan. If the student leaders of the NCP and the Jamaat leadership can continue to keep the BNP under pressure during the interim administration (it has already banned the Awami League), a new political bloc featuring the Jamaat and popular student activists could well emerge as a determining force in the election. The Jamaat has a history of aligning with the BNP as a junior partner during 2001-06 (during 1991-96, it gave outside support to the BNP), but with the students, it could emerge as a senior partner.

# Powering up the Australia-India clean energy partnership



At a time when both India and Australia are pushing ambitious clean energy targets, it is timely that Australia’s Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen is arriving in Delhi today (October 15) to meet his Indian counterpart, New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi. His visit comes amidst confronting vulnerabilities in the global supply chains of businesses and the government grappling with how to meet ambitious targets in the clean energy transition. The central challenge is clear: how to scale up renewable energy while avoiding an ongoing overdependence on China, which dominates the processing and manufacturing of critical materials. This is where the India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP), launched last year by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Anthony Albanese, must move from vision to implementation. If it is to succeed, both countries need to focus on joint projects, critical mineral cooperation and capacity building, turning climate ambition into practical, resilient outcomes. Mr. Bowen will have the chance to highlight the significance of this partnership when he delivers the Australia India Institute’s Annual Oration in New Delhi this week. A climate change vulnerable region

The Indo-Pacific is already experiencing the harshest effects of climate change. Between 1970 and 2022, the region averaged nearly 10 climate-related disasters a month, causing thousands of fatalities and billions in losses. By 2050, projections suggest as many as 89 million people could be displaced, with 80% of the region’s population directly impacted. To mitigate the challenges, India has pledged to reach 500 GW of non-fossil electricity capacity by 2030, with about 280 GW to come from solar. And it is already five years ahead of schedule to reach it. In July 2025, half of India’s installed electricity capacity is now from non-fossil sources. Meanwhile, Australia has recently set a 62%-70% reduction in emissions below 2005 levels, by 2035, raising its climate ambition in line with net-zero goals. Mr. Bowen said recently on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly that the emission reduction target is ‘ambitious and achievable, but also investable’. Yet, targets alone do not insulate against structural risks. The global clean energy transition depends on critical minerals, solar components, batteries and hydrogen technologies. The risks of single country dependence Today, much of this value chain is concentrated in one country. China refines over 90% of rare earth elements and produces nearly 80% of global solar modules, giving it a pivotal role in the world’s renewable energy supply. For India, this dependence is acutely felt in

# Balancing empowerment with economics



The Stree Shakti scheme, which offers free bus travel to girls, women, and transgender people across Andhra Pradesh, has been in effect for two months. So far, it has increased ridership, enhanced mobility for women, and generated positive public sentiment. However, beneath this encouraging start lie operational and financial concerns. Questions about sustainability, the strain on transport infrastructure, and equitable access challenge the long-term viability of Stree Shakti. The scheme was launched on August 15, Independence Day, to highlight the government’s resolve to advance women’s independence and empowerment. Within the first 30 hours of its introduction, more than 12 lakh women passengers travelled for free by bus. The number has been steadily growing since then. According to data by the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), around 19.6 lakh women used the free bus service on August 31. By October 6, this number had increased to 28.3 lakh. The daily government subsidy also grew from ₹7.76 crore to ₹10.86 crore during this period and the number of Stree Shakti buses increased from 85 to 121.

This data reflects early success but also points to cost implications and the logistical adjustments needed to sustain such high usage over time. With an estimated annual cost of ₹1,942 crore and a monthly expense of ₹162 crore, the APSRTC will be reimbursed by the State government for the scheme’s costs through the submission of zero-fare tickets. However, the continuous allocation of such substantial funds could strain the State’s finances, especially if economic conditions fluctuate. Another challenge is overcrowding due to the shortage of vehicles in the APSRTC fleet. The waiting period has become long, particularly during peak hours. With the sudden surge in the number of women travelling by RTC buses, men are on the verge of becoming a minority onboard. Officials have also reported a slight decline in the number of fare-paying passengers.

While trying to manage the existing fleet, they are awaiting the arrival of more than 700 electric buses, which may help ease the situation. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who is keen on steering the State towards greener public transportation, has announced that all diesel vehicles in the RTC fleet will be replaced with electric buses. The State Transport Corporation will need to build and maintain a comprehensive electrical ecosystem comprising high tension supply lines with dedicated feeders and substations, scalable charging stations, backup systems, and renewable energy integration. This is imperative not only to support electric mobility, but also to ensure safety, efficiency and resilience, say officials. While the scheme has given women reason to celebrate, it has not been received well by auto-rickshaw and maxi cab drivers, who have been protesting across the State, citing revenue losses. They have demanded compensation for the income shortfall

sectors such as electric mobility and wind power, where the import of rare earth magnets and battery materials is unavoidable. For Australia, the story is different but connected: while it is one of the world’s largest producers of lithium and has rich reserves of cobalt and rare earths, it lacks large-scale refining and downstream manufacturing.

This vulnerability has already been tested. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed supply chain fragilities when component shortages disrupted production across sectors. More recently, China restricted rare earth exports, which sent a warning signal to industries worldwide. For India, such disruptions slowed the electric vehicle production. A leading Electric Vehicle (EV) scooter company, for instance, produced just 10,824 units of its EV scooters in July, nearly halving output from a year earlier. For Australia, they underlined the risks of being a raw-material supplier alone. These examples make clear why downstream processing, diversification and supply chain resilience are not optional but strategic imperatives. The REP presents a framework to respond to this challenge. It lays out cooperation across eight areas: solar photovoltaic technology, green hydrogen, energy storage, solar supply chains, circular economy in renewables, two-way investment, capacity building, and other shared priorities. Importantly, it also proposes a Track 1.5 Dialogue, bringing together policymakers, industry and research institutions to build practical collaboration.

A strong basis for collaboration So, what does each side bring to the table? Australia’s strengths lie in its resource base and regulatory stability. It can supply India with critical minerals such as lithium and rare earths, but the real value lies in co-investing in refining and processing infrastructure that strengthens the control both countries can have over the clean energy value chain. Australia’s recent Net Zero Jobs Plan also reflects its focus on creating the skilled workforce needed for this transition, an area where collaboration with India makes sense.

India’s own advantage lies in its scale and youth. With nearly two-thirds of its population under the age of 35, India’s demographic dividend can be directed towards clean energy manufacturing, installation and maintenance through programmes such as Skill India. Its growing market demand for solar, storage and hydrogen, combined with production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes, offers Australian firms an avenue to expand investment while helping diversify supply chains. Together, Australia’s resources and India’s workforce can form the backbone of a more resilient and regionally anchored clean energy ecosystem. Mr. Bowen’s Delhi visit could not have come at a more crucial moment. Cooperation to deliver clean energy together could show the world how two democracies can respond to a region under constant threat of climate-related disasters and deliver resilient clean-energy supply chains to address it. Lisa Singh is a former Australian senator and the first woman of Indian heritage to be elected to federal Parliament. She is currently the Chief Executive Officer at the University of Melbourne’s Australia India Institute. Tushar Joshi is a Research Associate at the Australia India Institute and a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. He is a visiting fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, Delhi

# Scientists edge closer to cutting HIV out of human DNA

caused by the scheme. In response, the government announced the Auto Mitra programme, offering financial assistance of ₹15,000 annually to drivers. The drivers want this amount to be increased to ₹30,000 and also want some of their other demands to be fulfilled. Meanwhile, the APSRTC employees’ union has been urging the RTC management to procure more buses in view of the rising occupancy rate. Warning against the continued use of outdated buses, union leaders are demanding that the authorities buy at least 2,500 new buses — both electric and diesel — and also recruit 9,000 employees to reduce dependence on outsourcing. The workers are also worried about the government’s plan to operate electric vehicles under the Gross Cost Contract Model. Under this system, State Transport Units hire private bus operators to run electric buses. The government owns the buses, and private operators manage operations and maintenance under a contract, earning a fixed amount per kilometre. The proposed model has sparked fears of privatisation among workers of the State-run transport corporation. The Stree Shakti is a significant step towards empowering women and has already delivered promising results. However, it also faces challenges related to implementation and financial sustainability. Addressing these concerns is essential to ensuring the scheme’s long-term success.

# Scientists edge closer to cutting HIV out of human DNA

Hyderabad: The day is not far away when scientists can literally cut the HIV/AIDS virus out of a patient’s cell genome. Geneticists are now very close to developing a CRISPR-based therapy that can be safely delivered throughout the body of a patient to target and edit the latent HIV reservoir, setting the stage to cure HIV. A few months ago, a US-based company Excision BioTherapeutics presented proof-of-concept data from their CRISPR therapy, EBIT-101, and its promise to target and destroy the HIV reservoir in the human body. CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats), which is a gene-editing tool that acts like molecular scissors, allows scientists to precisely cut and modify DNA. In this study, phase I and II clinical trials (EBT-101) tested a novel CRISPR-Cas9 gene therapy as a potential functional cure for HIV infection. At present, there are Antiretroviral Therapies (ART), a combination of proven drugs that keep the HIV virus dormant in the human body. The primary challenge to curing HIV is the existence of the latent reservoir of infected human cells (T-Cells) where the virus’ genetic material is kept dormant by administering patients with ART therapy. Once the patient stops the ART therapy, the dormant virus reactivates and causes rebound. The core gene editing technology, which became the basis of the EBT 101 therapy, was developed by two US-based researchers Dr Kamel Khalili (Temple University) and Nobel laureate Dr Jennifer Doudna (UC Berkeley). The CRISPR-Cas9 system was designed to be directly delivered to the T-Cells and other tissue reservoirs that harbour dormant HIV DNA. Once inside the infected cell, CRISPR makes multiple cuts across the integrated HIV genome, thus permanently removing large segments of the virus DNA from the body. The phase I and II trials, which involved a small group of participants, demonstrated that one-time IV infusion of CRISPR therapy was safe and well tolerated, with no serious side effects.



# India Q2 GDP Growth Data 2025: India’s Q2 GDP growth beats expectations again, rises 8.2% on manufacturing, financial services uptick



The Indian economy continued to expand at a faster-than-anticipated rate in the July-September quarter, with GDP growth rising to a one-and-a-half-year high of 8.2 per cent on the back of double-digit growth in financial services and the real estate sectors. The manufacturing sector too expanded at the fastest pace in six quarters.

Economists had broadly expected the GDP growth to moderate to 7.3 per cent from 7.8 per cent in April-June, with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) having forecast a growth rate of 7 per cent. However, the growth rate unexpectedly rose for the fourth quarter in a row in July-September. "The Secondary (8.1 per cent) and Tertiary Sector (9.2 per cent) has boosted the Real GDP growth rate in Q2 of FY 2025-26 to rise above 8.0 per cent," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) said in a statement.

Within the secondary sector, the Gross Value Added (GVA) of manufacturing rose by 9.1 per cent, up from 7.7 per cent in April-June, while construction sector growth edged down to 7.2 per cent from 7.6 per cent in the previous quarter. The big jump in manufacturing sector growth was also aided by a favourable base. In the second quarter of 2024-25, manufacturing growth was a mere 2.2 per cent. However, the construction sector had grown by 8.4 per cent in that quarter. Meanwhile, in the tertiary – or services – sector, GVA of Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services rose by 10.2 per cent, up from 9.5 per cent in April-June and 7.2 per cent in the second quarter of last year. The GVA of 'Public Administration, Defence & Other Services' continued to grow at a high pace of 9.7 per cent, broadly similar to the 9.8 per cent growth recorded in April-June. Agriculture, meanwhile, saw a GVA growth of 3.5 per cent. The overall GVA growth rate rose to 8.1 per cent from 7.6 per cent the previous quarter and 5.8 per cent in July-September 2024. The GDP is calculated by adding net indirect taxes — indirect taxes such as Goods and Services Tax (GST) minus subsidies — to GVA. In addition to the GDP growth rate rising to 8.2 per cent, the GVA growth rate of 8.1 per cent being below the GDP growth rate was another surprise. Economists had widely expected the GDP growth rate to be lower than the GVA growth rate in the second quarter. GDP growth without adjusting for inflation, or nominal GDP growth, declined to a four-quarter low of 8.7 per cent in July-September from 8.8 per cent in April-June. Growth surprises again

The high GDP growth number comes days before the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) begins its three-

## Economists see India’s Q2 GDP growth at 7.3%, RBI could cut interest rates on Dec 5

The Indian economy is likely to have performed better than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) expectations in the second quarter of FY26, according to the median of estimates of 10 economists, with data scheduled to be released on Friday by the Statistics Ministry likely to show that GDP growth in the three months ended September stood at 7.3 per cent. The Indian central bank's latest forecast pegged growth in July-September at 7 per cent.

While possibly lower than the five-quarter high growth rate of 7.8 per cent in the April-June quarter, another 7 per cent-plus expansion in the July-September quarter — despite the 50 per cent US tariffs that came into effect in late August — would burnish India's growth story. "Growth is tracking better than expected with Q2FY26 GDP growth at 7.3 per cent and Q3FY26 GDP getting support from GST cuts. Even before the GST cuts, rural recovery has become more broad-based in Q2, supported by stronger labour market conditions and good crop output. Urban demand has clearly responded to the GST cut with rise in consumer durable consumption expenditure," Gaura Sen Gupta, IDFC First Bank's Chief Economist, said in a note on Monday.

Rate cut to follow?

Days after the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) releases the GDP data on Friday at 4pm, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee will begin its three-day meeting on December 3 and announce its interest rate decision on December 5. And despite the economy chugging along at a good pace, economists think the central bank may cut the policy repo rate for the first time in six months.

"While such strong growth outcome would otherwise be seen as a deterrent to a rate cut, it is important to note that growth has peaked and H2FY26 (October 2025-March 2026) growth is estimated to be lower than H1 (April-September 2025)," Barclays' economists Aastha Gudwani and Amruta Ghare said in a note earlier this month. "For a forward-looking, inflation-targeting central bank, we believe the stage is set for the RBI MPC to deliver a 25 basis points (bps) repo rate cut in the upcoming December meeting." So far in 2025, the MPC has lowered the repo rate by 100 bps to 5.5 per cent. But with headline retail inflation at record lows — it stood at just 0.25 per cent in October and is seen averaging below 2 per cent in FY26 by a few economists, well below the RBI's target of 4 per cent — space may have emerged for the committee to cut interest rates further. Nominal growth slowdown The fall in inflation could also make it difficult to read the GDP data for the second quarter in a row. In April-June, low inflation meant nominal GDP growth — or growth without adjusting for price changes — was at a three-quarter low of 8.8 per cent even though the real growth number of 7.8 per cent painted a positive picture of the economy. The nominal GDP growth rate needs to be monitored for two reasons. Firstly, it is not only tracking below the Finance Ministry's Budget assumption of 10.1 per cent, but economists are predicting it could be lower than 8 per cent growth — in both the July-September quarter and FY26 — that is required to meet the Budget estimate as per the latest GDP estimate for FY25. A lower than

day meeting on December 3, with Governor Sanjay Malhotra scheduled to announce the interest rate decision at 10am on December 5. With headline retail inflation at a record low of 0.25 per cent in October, the MPC was widely expected to cut interest rates for the first time since June. However, the robust growth figure may have thrown a spanner in the works. "The MPC faces a challenging act at the December rate review, with the mix of a strong growth print and record low inflation. We expect an emphasis on forward looking growth guidance and high real rate buffer due to weak inflation, to justify a move to lower rates further," Radhika Rao, Senior Economist at DBS Bank, said. So far in 2025, the MPC has lowered the repo rate by 100 basis points (bps) to 5.5 per cent. As per the GDP data released on Friday, GDP growth in April-September — the first half of 2025-26 — stood at 8 per cent, up from 6.1 per cent in the first half of 2024-25. Similarly, GVA growth in April-September this year was 7.9 per cent, compared to 6.2 per cent last year. The statistics ministry was also scheduled to release industrial growth data as per the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for October on Friday. However, the ministry said in a statement that the IIP data will now be released on Monday.

Private consumption on the rise

As expected, private consumption growth rose for the second quarter in a row in July-September due to the combination of low inflation and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) cuts that came into effect from September 22. Private Final Consumption Expenditure rose 7.9 per cent in July-September after having expanded by 7 per cent in April-June and 6 per cent in January-March. Gross Fixed Capital Formation, a proxy for investments, rose by 7.3 per cent, down from a growth of 7.8 per cent in April-June but higher than the increase of 6.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2024-25. However, Government Final Consumption Expenditure was down 2.7 per cent after a 7.4 per cent rise in April-June and 4.3 per cent in July-September 2025. "On the whole the economy has done well with exports growing by 11 per cent in Q2. Going forward the headwind will be the tariff impact which will get starker in October-November. The tailwind is the GST push which can negate and go beyond. This needs to be monitored going ahead," Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist at Bank of Baroda, said. Real GDP has been estimated to grow by 8.2% in Q2 of FY 2025-26 against the growth rate of 5.6% during Q2 of FY 2024-25. Nominal GDP has witnessed a growth rate of 8.7% in Q2 of FY 2025-26. The Secondary (8.1%) and Tertiary Sector (9.2%) has boosted the Real GDP growth rate in Q2 of FY 2025-26 to rise above 8.0%. Manufacturing (9.1%) and Construction (7.2%) in the Secondary Sector, has registered above 7.0% growth rate at Constant Prices in this quarter. Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services (10.2%) in the Tertiary Sector has sustained a substantial growth rate at Constant Prices in Q2 of FY 2025-26.

Agriculture and Allied (3.5%) and Electricity, Gas, Water Supply and Other Utility Services Sector (4.4%) has seen moderate Real growth rate during Q2 of FY 2025-26. Real Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) has reported 7.9% growth rate during Q2 of FY 2025-26 as compared to the 6.4% growth rate in the corresponding period of previous financial year. Real GDP has registered 8.0% growth rate in H1 (April-September) of FY 2025-26, as compared to the growth rate of 6.1% in H1 of FY 2024-25.



anticipated nominal GDP affects the Budget math, with tax collections not growing as hoped and fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP ratios being higher than estimated.

GDP growth below GVASecondly, a slowdown in tax collections will also likely result in GDP growth being lower than the growth in overall Gross Value Added, or GVA. In April-June, GVA growth was 7.6 per cent, 20 basis points lower than the GDP growth rate. The GDP is calculated by adding net indirect taxes — indirect taxes such as Goods and Services Tax (GST) minus subsidies — to GVA. So, if net indirect taxes fall or their growth slows down, GDP growth would be lower than the rise in GVA. Back-of-the-envelope calculations show the government's net indirect taxes fell on a year-on-year basis in Q2 compared to a 10 per cent rise in Q1. According to State Bank of India Research, GDP growth in the second quarter may be 7.5-8 per cent, while GVA growth is seen at 8 per cent. The consumption quarter? The reduced GST rates may have only come into effect towards the end of Q2 on September 22, but the surge in demand in the final few days of that month — in conjunction with other factors such as low inflation — may have lifted private consumption by 8 per cent, according to Paras Jasrai, Economist and India Ratings & Research. This would be the highest since the 8.1 per cent increase in Q3FY25. In addition to retail inflation averaging a mere 1.7 per cent in Q2FY26 and rural agricultural wages growing by almost 6 per cent, Jasrai sees a potential boost in demand from the impact of the personal income tax cuts announced in the Union Budget for FY26 and a healthy 7.8 per cent rise in employee costs of over 500 listed companies. Private demand would have risen more than 8 per cent if not for households delaying purchases ahead of the GST cuts' rollout. In Q1FY26, private consumption growth had risen to 7 per cent from 6 per cent in Q4FY25, although it was lower than 8.3 per cent in Q1 that fiscal. Corporate over-performance Household households had a good three months in terms of their budgeting, so did companies, with Q2FY26 proving to be the best quarter in two years: HSBC analysts found that although sales of listed Indian companies were only 6 per cent higher year-on-year, their profits were up 13 per cent. Here, inflation again played a big role. Even though retail prices rose 1.7 per cent year-on-year in Q2, wholesale inflation — which is indicative of the increase in inputs costs for producers — averaged zero over the same period."

# ‘Sab soch rahe the I am carrying a coffin’: Sushma Seth recalls taking tanpura to America; psychologist on awkwardness people feel while carrying noticeable luggage



Legendary actor Sushma Seth once shared a funny and heartfelt memory from her early days when she travelled to the United States carrying a tanpura, a traditional Indian musical instrument. "Everyone thought I was carrying a coffin," she said with a smile on Soul Safar aur Ehsas, remembering the curious and puzzled looks from fellow travellers as she carried the big, oddly shaped case. Tanpura is an essential instrument for classical Indian music, and for Sushma, it was not just an instrument but a part of her identity and art. However, travelling with such a large and unusual item brought its own share of awkward moments. The awkwardness of carrying noticeable luggage

Carrying large or distinctive luggage can make people feel uneasy or self-conscious, said Dr Anjali Mehta, a clinical psychologist who studies social anxiety, as she explains why this happens. "When you have something that draws attention, like a musical instrument, it naturally makes you stand out. This unwanted attention can make people feel awkward or worried about being judged," she says. Dr Mehta added that the physical effort involved in carrying or managing such items also plays a role in the discomfort. "It's

## White water rafting in Western Ghats to skiing in Auli: 5 places in India perfect for winter sports

India is home to a plethora of adventure sports. As winter approaches, the range of fun activities expands and improves. It's more than just a season. While the northern mountains are dotted with snow and the southern coasts enjoy mild weather, adventure lovers have plenty of options. From the Himalayas to desert dunes and tropical forests, winter brings experiences you can't find at other times of the year. If you're looking for excitement, here are five of the best places in India to visit this winter. Located in the Garhwal Himalayas, Auli transforms into a white wonderland during winter. Known as India's premier skiing destination, it offers well-groomed slopes suitable for beginners as well as seasoned skiers. With panoramic views of Nanda Devi, Kamet, and Dunagiri, the landscape elevates every skiing run into a scenic experience. Adventure activities include skiing, snowboarding, snow trekking to Gurson Bugyal, and cable-car rides that offer sweeping views of snow-laden forests. The cold, crisp air, coupled with excellent snowfall, makes January–February the best time to visit.

When it comes to winter adventure, Gulmarg is one of the favourite picks among thrill seekers. Renowned for some of the finest powder snow in Asia, Gulmarg attracts international skiers and snowboarders year after year. The Gulmarg Gondola—one of the highest cable cars in the world—takes you close to the Apharwat Peak. Winter activities include skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and heli-skiing for those who dare to take on untouched slopes. Freezing temperatures aside, the region's beauty—the snow-covered meadows and pine forests—makes every adventure feel memorable. While winter in the Himalayas means snow, winter in Kutch means endless white salt desert under starlit skies. The weather becomes perfect for adventure, especially during the Rann Utsav when the desert comes alive. Adventure enthusiasts can indulge in

## Dr Madhu Chopra is not a fan of applying sunscreen indoors, encourages all to embrace ‘gentle rays of the early morning and late evening’

A solid expert-approved skincare routine, stripped down to the basics, includes cleansing, moisturising, and SPF. Together, these three work to maintain the skin barrier's health. Dermatologists worldwide encourage people to apply sunscreen every day, even when not stepping outside the confines of their homes. However, Dr Madhu Chopra disagrees. In a recent Instagram post, she said that the "gentle rays of the early morning and late evening can actually nourish your skin, boost your mood, and support overall wellness".

But what's the truth — is it ever ok to skip sunscreen?

Dr Aparna Santhanam, Dermatologist and Head Medical Operations at Kaya Limited, emphasised the importance of sunscreen in daily skincare routines, including when indoors. While she acknowledged the skin's need for natural vitamin D from sunlight, she also mentioned that unprotected exposure to UV rays and blue light can harm delicate skin, especially on the face, hands, neck, and other exposed areas.

"The sun's UVA and UVB rays trigger a cascade of free radical damage and inflammation that is the major cause of wrinkles, sagging skin, discolourations, as well as many other issues that rob skin of its youthful qualities. By protecting skin from this damage, daily use of sunscreen delivers anti-ageing and skin health benefits above and beyond any other product," she said. Dr Santhanam pointed out that if an individual's exposure to sunlight and screens is truly minimal, such as in low-light indoor environments, a break from sunscreen might be acceptable. "Limited, gentle sun exposure in the early morning or late evening is indeed beneficial for vitamin D synthesis," she said, agreeing with Dr Chopra's claims. But there's a catch. Madhu Chopra on applying sunscreen indoors Apply sunscreen after every 2-3 hours after the first application (Source: Freepik) She pointed out that relying solely on incidental indoor sunlight through windows or on blue light from screens will not provide the same benefits as the required amount of Vitamin D and, more importantly, will still leave skin vulnerable to

not just about others watching you. Carrying something big or heavy is tiring and sometimes embarrassing because you worry about bumping into others or inconveniencing people," she notes. This heightened self-awareness can make the situation even more uncomfortable.

Mr. S Giriprasad, Psychologist, Aster Whitefield, further adds that this embarrassment is a result of our social wiring which makes us concerned about our status within a group. "If you happen to have more physical space than others it may lead to the idea that you are thinking of marring the appearance of being clumsy, selfish, careless, or socially awkward. This apprehension uses the same mechanism as that behind impression management and the spotlight effect, which is the case when people always overestimate the extent to which others notice or judge their appearance and actions." For Sushma Seth, despite her fame and confidence, the experience was relatable for anyone who has ever felt the eyes of strangers on them because of what they are carrying. "Even though I was proud of my tanpura, I couldn't help but notice how weird I must have looked to others," she shared. When passion meets public spaces

Sushma's story highlights the small but real social challenges faced by people carrying items connected to their passion or profession. It also shows how personal belongings can sometimes create invisible barriers and feelings of awkwardness in public places. Dr Giriprasad explains that people may adopt avoidance or low-profile strategies such as tucking a bag close, shuffling along to reduce feared scrutiny. As Dr Mehta sums it up, "Feeling awkward when carrying noticeable luggage is completely normal. But embracing what makes you different—whether it's a musical instrument or something else—can also be empowering and confidence-building."



ATV rides across the salt flats, paramotoring over surreal landscapes, camel safaris, and cycling tours across barren yet magnificent terrain. The Rann is also ideal for photography enthusiasts, making it one of the most picturesque winter adventure destinations in India. Few places capture the spirit of winter adventure like Manali and the nearby Solang Valley. As temperatures dip, Solang transforms into a hub for snow sports. Skiing, snow tubing, snow biking, and ziplining are major attractions. For trekkers, winter routes such as the Hampta Pass and Lamadugh Trek offer snowy trails and breathtaking Himalayan vistas.

More daring travellers can try paragliding in Solang. Manali also becomes the launch point for adventures into the Spiti Valley—one of India's coldest and most dramatic regions. For those who prefer green forests to white snow, Dandeli offers a tropical winter adventure at its finest. Located in the Western Ghats, Dandeli enjoys cool, pleasant weather in winter, making it ideal for white-water rafting on the Kali River. The rapids range from moderate to challenging. Apart from rafting, winter activities in the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary include kayaking, ziplining, mountain biking, canyoning, and wildlife safaris.



damage. According to her, the sun does not degrade the effectiveness of the sunscreen, but it is our own sweat and oil that break down its components. "Oil secretion is a continuous process, and your sweat glands are functional even when you are not sweating profusely," she added. Thus, when the oil glands disrupt your sunscreen, you do not want to leave it unprotected from the light that is seeping in.

How often should you apply sunscreen indoors?

For sunscreen to be effective, it needs to form a layer on the skin. "So even if you don't venture outside, most of us are still exposed to the sun's rays through windows, light reflected on roofs, floors, walls and even furniture — even on overcast days," said the expert. That is why the right thing to do is to apply sunscreen every 2-3 hours after the first application. To maintain the sunscreen's protective effect, reapplication is necessary. For most modern lifestyles with increased screen time and indoor ambient light, daily application of a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against UVA, UVB, and blue light is recommended. Dr Santhanam encouraged maintaining a healthy balance by enjoying safe sun exposure for overall wellness while consistently protecting visible skin to avoid long-term damage. Consistency and diligence are key when it comes to sunscreen. Applying SPF 30 or higher every day, even on cloudy days or when you're just sitting inside by a window, helps the skin benefit from natural vitamins without compromising its health from harmful rays and environmental factors



## Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli can for sure play the 2027 World Cup: Morne Morkel



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli “can for sure play the 2027 World Cup if they mentally and physically feel that their bodies can do that”, according to India’s bowling coach Morne Morkel. “They’ve won trophies, they know how to play big tournaments.” Couple of days ahead of the first ODI against South Africa, where both Rohit and Virat will play, Morkel was asked if he would like to see both play the next World Cup. “It’s still a long way away.. They’re quality players. As long as they’re happy to put the hard work in and the fitness, sure,” Morkel said. The South African pacer who became India’s bowling coach last August said he believed in the experience of the two players.

“I’ve always believed in experience and to have that experience, you don’t find that anywhere. They’ve won trophies, they know how to play big tournaments. So for sure, the World Cup, by all means. I’ve played many games against them. I’ve had sleepless nights bowling to them.” So I know as a bowler what goes through your preparation playing against them. So for me, definitely on board with that (with Kohli and Rohit playing the World Cup). India will be playing this ODI series without regular skipper Shubman Gill who got injured in the 1st Test in Kolkata where he left the field clutching his neck. He was hospitalized later in the day and while he improved, it wasn’t enough for him to make a comeback in this series. The skipper was subsequently ruled out of 2nd Test in Guwahati as well as the ODI series with KL Rahul set to lead the Men in Blue. Regular vice-captain Shreyas Iyer also misses the series after he was injured taking a catch in the Australia series last month. He was admitted to a hospital in Sydney to due a laceration of the spleen with internal bleeding and was discharged after a few days. “I think the best is for the medical to give that. I spoke to Shubman two days ago just to check in with him and he’s recovering well. So that’s pleasing to hear. Shreyas has also started his rehab, which is great. So yeah, we’re looking forward to welcoming them back into the squad. And the good thing is that they’re healthy and they’re starting their preparation on their way back into the team,” Morkel said on Gill and Iyer.

## Ashes: Usman Khawaja calls Perth pitch ‘piece of s\*\*t’, compares it to India experience

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Usman Khawaja, under fire after his antics during the Ashes 1st Test at Perth, has now come out and said that the pitch used to play was a ‘piece of shit’ and that a similar incident had happened in India. Khawaja, suffered from back spasms at the start of the first Test and could not bat as an opener. He came in at four, and made two runs before losing his wicket to Bryson Carse. Khawaja didn’t bat in the second innings after Australia asked Head to open for them in the chase. “Nineteen wickets on the first day and about 20 people got hit, that’s a great wicket – that seems real fair,” Khawaja said tongue in cheek at a lunch for the Usman Khawaja Foundation.

“The same thing happened last year in the Indian Test, it’s just that day one wicket, the ball just does not react. Steve Smith’s by far the best cricketer I’ve ever played with, and he’s missing the middle of his bat by a long way – he does not miss the middle of his bat. He’s getting hit in the elbow, he’s getting hit,” he added. Khawaja also said that while sideways movement was something easier, it was



the unpredictability of a ball moving up or down that causes batsman real problems, and according to him, Perth has had that problem not just this year, but previously as well. “You can’t really predict up and down. Up and down is the hardest – sideways is a little bit easier, but up and down, your hands can’t catch up. So day one wicket at (Perth) is a piece of s\*\*\*, I’m happy to say that. It has been last year, it was this year,” Khawaja said.

## MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli meet ahead of South Africa ODIs in Ranchi: A lookback to 2013 where both stayed unbeaten in win vs ENG in city’s first-ever 50-over match

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Virat Kohli and Mahendra Singh Dhoni reunited on Thursday for their customary meeting in Ranchi when they shared dinner together at MSD’s residence. After dinner, the two former India captains were seen leaving Dhoni’s residence with the 44-year-old host driving Kohli. With India set to take on South Africa in the 1st ODI in Ranchi, Kohli had reached the city on November 26 to join the ODI squad. The two megastars have had plenty of memorable partnerships on the field with Ranchi’s JSCA International Stadium playing host to one of them. Back in January 2013, Dhoni and Kohli both lined up for India in JSCA, hosting its first-ever ODI encounter, against England in the 3rd match of the 50-over series. Chasing 155 runs set by England after they batted first, Kohli scored 77 runs and stayed unbeaten with home town hero Dhoni at his side, who scored 10, as India trounced the visitors by 7 wickets in just 28.1 overs.

Both teams came into this match tied at 1-1 in the series with England winning the first match in Rajkot, followed by India’s win in the second match in Kochi. The third match in Ranchi as well as the 4th match in Mohali was won by India before England notched up a win in the last and final ODI in Dharamsala. India ultimately won the series 3-2. What next for Dhoni and Kohli? With the 2027 World Cup firmly in his focus, Kohli will look to make an impact in the upcoming South Africa ODI series. The Indian icon has already hung up his boots from T20Is after helping India win the T20 World



Cup in 2024 before retiring from Tests earlier this year.

He won the Champions Trophy in the ODI format earlier this year and then played for the country after almost 7 and a half months when he returned for the Australia series Down Under in October. He didn’t have an ideal start to the series, getting out for back to back ducks in the first 2 ODI matches before roaring back to form with 74 runs in the 3rd ODI. Dhoni, meanwhile, will be lining up for the Chennai Super Kings for the next IPL set to take place in 2026. In the last couple of editions, Dhoni’s future has been the talk of the town whenever the new IPL seasons begin. It was speculated that Dhoni would hang up the boots after helping Chennai to their 5th IPL title in 2023 but the Ranchi superstar has still continued to represent the franchise, remaining tight-lipped on any questions regarding his future.

## India to host Sri Lanka Women for five-match T20I series next month

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

WPL auction India World Cup stars India’s Deepti Sharma, second right, celebrates with teammate the wicket of England’s Tammy Beaumont during the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup match between India and England in Indore, India. After winning their first ever 50-over ICC World Cup at home, the Indian women’s cricket team will be back in action on home soil, albeit in the T20I format as they host Sri Lanka for a five-match T20I series. The T20I series will be held from December 21 to December 30 and will be held in the cities of Visakhapatnam and Thiruvananthapuram. The first two games will be played in Visakhapatnam before the remaining three will be played in Thiruvananthapuram according to the schedule released by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday. The Indian women’s team was initially supposed to play a home series against Bangladesh during the period, but it was later deferred due to political tensions between the two countries. The Sri Lankans will be playing a T20I bilateral series in India for the first time since 2016, which the host had wrapped up by a 3-0 margin. The T20I series will be a precursor to the Women’s Premier League in India which will be held from January 9 to February 5 in Navi Mumbai’s DY Patil Stadium and Vadodara’s Kotambi Stadium. This means that the WPL will not clash with any major international cricket series for the first time since it is not being held in the regular window of Navi Mumbai’s DY Patil Stadium — the venue of Women’s ODI World Cup final tri-



After winning their first ever 50-over ICC World Cup at home, the Indian women’s cricket team will be back in action on home soil, albeit in the T20I format as they host Sri Lanka for a five-match T20I series.

umph last month — will start the WPL tournament and host the first leg of the WPL 2026. Just 10 days after the WPL final, the women’s team will travel to Australia for an all-format tour Down Under encompassing three T20Is, three ODIs and a Test from February 15 to March 9.

## Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Ayush Mhatre to lead India U19’s charge for ACC Men’s U19 Asia Cup



GNS News Agency, Nov 28

A week after he experienced heartbreak in the Rising Stars Asia Cup semi-final against Bangladesh, Vaibhav Suryavanshi will be part of the India U19 side that will play in another Asia Cup: the ACC Men’s U19 Asia Cup. The event will be held from December 12 in Dubai. India are in Group A along with Pakistan. They will be joined by two more teams who will qualify.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India’s Junior Cricket Committee announced the India U19 squad for the upcoming ACC Men’s U19 Asia. Besides Suryavanshi, the

team will have players like Ayush Mhatre, who has been named the captain of the side, and Vihaan Malhotra, who will be the vice captain. At the Rising Stars Asia Cup semi-final, there was plenty of debate over the use of Suryavanshi after he was not sent out to bat in the Super Over. This move backfired as both India batters sent to bat departed without adding a single run to the tally. First, team captain Jitesh Sharma got out on the first ball while attempting an audacious ramp shot and then Ashutosh Sharma was dismissed while trying to hit the ball over the fielder but giving an easy catch at extra-cover to Zawad Abrar.

Later, India A captain Jitesh Sharma, had tried to explain their thinking was in withholding Suryavanshi from the Super Over. “They are masters of powerplay (Vaibhav and Priyansh Arya, who was also not given the chance to bat in the Super Over). But in the death overs Ashu (Ashutosh Sharma), Raman (Ramandeep Singh) and me are players who can hit at will. So it was team decision and my decision,” India A captain Jitesh Sharma said while explaining the lineup for the Super Over. Ayush Mhatre (C), Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Vihaan Malhotra (vc), Vedant Trivedi, Abhigyan Kundu (wk), Harvansh Singh (wk), Yuvraj Gohil, Kanishk Chouhan, Khilan A. Patel, Naman Pushpak, D. Deepesh, Henil Patel, Kishan Kumar Singh (Subject to fitness clearance), Udhav Mohan, Aaron George.

## No Pat Cummins again as Australia name unchanged side for 2nd Ashes Test

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Australia’s Pat Cummins bowls in the nets during a training session in Perth, Australia, Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, ahead of the the first Ashes test against England. (AAP Image via AP) Australia’s Pat Cummins bowls in the nets during a training session in Perth, Australia, Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, ahead of the the first Ashes test against England.

There will be no Pat Cummins in the second Ashes Test as well after the Australia captain was not named in the squad for the day-night second match at the Gabba in Brisbane starting December 4. Australia won the first Test in just two days at Perth to surge to a 1-0 lead in the five-Test series and have named an unchanged squad for the second game. There were reports coming from Australia that pacer Cummins bowled well in the nets in Sydney earlier on Friday. However, his comeback will have to wait at least one more Test, the one at Adelaide beginning December 17. The 32-year-old Cummins is in the final stages of his recovery from lumbar back stress and will again travel with the squad to Brisbane. Local media reported that Cummins was bowling at what appeared to be full speed to stand-in captain Steve Smith for more than an hour with a pink ball at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. Cummins has not played in a match since Australia completed a clean sweep of the West Indies in the Caribbean in July, where he first experienced soreness in his back. Meanwhile, veteran opener Usman Khawaja has been included in the Australia squad after back spasms prevented him from batting



in the second innings of Perth’s series opener.

Cummins’s absence in the squad means native Queenslander Brendan Doggett looks set to retain his place in the XI for Brisbane after collecting five wickets in the first Test. England arrived in Brisbane on Thursday, with its entire first test XI opting against pink-ball match practice with only unused squad members Jacob Bethell, Matthew Potts and Josh Tongue to feature against a Prime Minister’s XI team this weekend. Ben Stokes’ side will hold its first training session at the Gabba on Sunday followed by a session under lights on Monday. Steve Smith (captain), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Brendan Doggett, Cameron Green, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Michael Neser, Mitchell Starc, Jake Weatherald, Beau Webster.

## Santiago Nieva returns as head coach of Indian women’s national boxing team

GNS News Agency, Nov 28

Santiago Nieva, who used to be Indian boxing team’s High Performance Director from 2017 to 2021, is back at the helm of the Indian women’s national boxing team after the Boxing Federation of India appointed him as the head coach for the Indian women’s national boxing team. The Swedish coach thus returns to India after four years. It was in Santiago’s time as High Performance Director of Indian boxing that Lovlina Borgohain had claimed a historic Tokyo Olympics bronze medal while Amit Panghal had won a historic silver at the 2019 World Championships besides becoming the world number one in his category. Indian women’s team had a good season with two gold medals, one silver and one bronze at the World Championships in Liverpool. With the likes of Nikhat Zareen, Jaismine Lamboria, Lovlina Borgohain, and Parveen Hooda into the ranks, Santiago has a solid team to work with.

Speaking on his appointment, Santiago said, “Super excited to come back to India. I had five wonderful years here in my previous stint. I am very much looking forward to this next chapter, and hopefully, we can create something big together. I have had great success working with women boxers in the past. There is a huge potential within the Indian women’s team, and in LA (Olympics 2028), we’ll be aiming for something big and create history.”

Following his earlier stint with India, he most recently



served as National Head Coach and Technical Lead of Boxing Australia’s High Performance Unit. However, Santiago will only be responsible for the women’s team this time around and will take the reins from former head coach D Chandralal who oversaw a notable campaign from the Indian women’s team this season. BFI president Ajay Singh confirmed that he will be an important part of the coaching setup. The 2026 season is a packed season with Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan and Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland. The Indian boxers will start their international season with Asian Championships in March and they will play in the national championships before that.

## Ab de Villiers on Gautam Gambhir: ‘I’ve known him as an emotional player...generally an emotional coach is not a good thing to have’

On Wednesday, India was whitewashed by South Africa 2-0 at Guwahati. It has happened for the second time under Gautam Gambhir’s tenure as Head Coach after the New Zealand debacle last year. The result on Wednesday has raised a few questions about Gambhir’s role as head coach. Plenty of former players and pundits have been quite critical of Gambhir’s coaching style and tactics. Former South African cricketer Ab de Villiers gave his view on the same as well.

“Speaking on behalf of the Indian side, it’s really difficult. I don’t know what GG is like when it comes to leadership. I’ve known him as an emotional player and if that is the case in the change room, generally an emotional coach is not a good thing to have. But it’s not to say he’s that kind of a coach and the kind of leader behind the scenes. There’s no right and wrong. Some players will feel comfortable with a former player. Some players will be comfortable with a coach that’s never played the game before but he’s got a lot of years of experience of coaching the game,” De Villiers said on R Ashwin’s YouTube channel.

“It’s a tough question because I’ve never played under Shukri and I’ve never been in the Indian dressing room with GG, Morne Morkel and Ryan ten Doeschate. It looks great on paper but I don’t know what the dynamic is like



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behind the scenes. What I can say is it is different for every player,” De Villiers added. I absolutely love playing under Gary Kirsten; he’s a former player and similar to Gautam Gambhir. Some players might find confidence and feel comfortable with a former player being there, a great of the game and find some extra inspiration to put extra yards for the team and for the coach,” he said.



# Tere Ishk Mein movie review: Dhanush, Kriti Sanon’s outdated, heavy-on-melodrama film takes us back to dark ages



Tere Ishk Mein movie reviewTere Ishk Mein movie review: Dhanush is a terrific actor, and the way he goes all in with the bashing and slapping and thrashing does take you in when he is at it.Tere Ishk Mein movie review: In the 2013 film Raanjhana, Dhanush played a Hindu lad from Varanasi who falls in love with a Muslim girl. That was a time when filmmakers could still — just about — carry off an inter-religious love story without the moral police threatening to burn theatres down.In 2025, Aanand L Rai and writers Himanshu Yadav and Neeraj Yadav return with Raanjhana’s spiritual sequel, and this time around it isn’t religion but class—rich girl, poor boy—which becomes the point of conflict. And just in case that isn’t enough, the writers throw the entire kitchen sink at us — college love story, parental opposition, patriotic flag waving, even a war — in a film which ends up being a totally outdated, confused, heavy-on-melodrama-and-glycerine mish-mash of genres.But the one thing Tere Ishk Mein never loses sight of is its leading man, played by Dhanush, as the epitome of a lover who has no business being the centre of any narrative in this day and age: an ultra-violent college student whose only job is to break bones while chasing political rivals down the corridors of Delhi University, forcing his attentions on a girl whose interest in him is strictly academic, at least to begin with, while shouting: agar main pyaar mein pad gaya, toh poori Dilli jala doonga.

Even in 2013, Dhanush’s character’s slitting-his-wrists in his pyaar-ka-paagalpan being papered over by belated

calming was a problem. In 2025, so many elements in the film are problematic at so many levels, starting with a ‘hero’ whose uncontrollable temper can’t be in all honesty explained away by his mother-less childhood, with a perfectly supportive father (Prakash Raj) at his back. Dousing PhD scholar Mukti’s (Kriti Sanon) potential boy-friends with petrol, and fire-bombing her IAS father’s (Tota Roy Chowdhury) house isn’t intensity, it’s just toxicity, and what can one say of Mukti’s slipping down the path of alcoholic misery? It’s damaging to the whole idea of a female lead being able to stick to her point of view: refusing to be cowed by a guy who ‘can’t handle rejection’ looked as if it was an initial choice, and then the plot gives up on her. Improbable much? And what is Mohammad Zeeshan Ayyub doing here, in a walk- on part which adds nothing to the film?Dhanush is a terrific actor, and the way he goes all in with the bashing and slapping and thrashing — throwing in a ghastly crass comment at Mukti’s professors about sexual availability for good measure — does take you in when he is at it. But his character is nothing but the reddest of all red flags I’ve seen in a while: it’s unbelievable that a contemporary film will try and shove down our throats that most toxic of male tropes — what the male lover wants, the male lover will get — whether he is the nikamma, roaming around with best friend Ved (Priyanshu Painyuli) in the first half, or the bravest pilot that the Indian air force has, ignoring his commanding officer’s (Vineet Kumar Singh) orders to show his bravery.Wait. Shankar is not just merely brave: he is ‘outrageous, outstanding, out-of-hand’ in the words of an admiring flight-mate; he is ‘aggressive, angry, alpha’ in the words of a woman who once had a problem with him being all these things, and tried to turn him into a ‘kanya rashi ka ladka’, in Shankar’s laced-with-contempt description.So being soft and gentle is not manly? Tell me again, why are we glorifying this ‘aggressive, angry, alpha’ man? Can this be our hero in 2025? Or we now, post Animal and Saiyyara, are decisively back in the dark ages?Tere Ishk Mein movie cast: Dhanush, Kriti Sanon, Prakash Raj, Priyanshu Painyuli, Tota Roy Chowdhury, Mohammad Zeeshan AyyubTere Ishk Mein movie director: Aanand L RaiTere Ishk Mein movie rating: 1 star

# An Oscar campaign can cost Rs 100 cr and above. Can Homebound, with Martin Scorsese in its corner, bring it home?



If Martin Scorsese handpicks an Indian film and hails it as ‘cinema,’ would The Academy not stand up and take notice? But even the Hollywood legend has won the Oscar only once, for The Departed in 2007 (He’s been nominated 16 times though). Neeraj Ghaywan’s Homebound has not only gotten Scorsese’s blessing with his attachment as an Executive Producer on the film, but has also been selected as India’s official Oscars entry.The consensus across the board is that for once, the Film Federation of India jury has put their money on the correct pick, which strikes the balance between craft and logistics, storytelling and marketing muscle, and substance and optics. Throughout the past 23 years, ever since Ashutosh Gowariker’s Lagaan made it to the Best International Feature nominations at the Academy Awards in 2003, the house has often been divided on India’s chosen contender.

Aamir Khan’s Lagaan was the last film to be nominated in the Best International Feature category at the Academy Awards. Aamir Khan’s Lagaan was the last film to be nominated in the Best International Feature category at the Academy Awards.Whether it’s Jallikattu vs Gully Boy in 2020 or All We Imagine As Light vs Laapataa Ladies just last year, the FFI has often gotten flak for choosing the film which has the logistical wherewithal to pull off the gargantuan task that is an Oscar campaign over picking a smaller critically acclaimed indie with a rewarding global film festival run. But that strategy hasn’t yielded the desired results as neither of those picks even made it to the shortlist.

But Homebound seems different — it’s had a six month-long monumental run at major film festivals like Cannes, Toronto, Melbourne, and Marrakech, winning several awards in the process. In fact, it’s backed by Marrakech Film Festival Director Melita Toscan, who was instrumental in getting Scorsese on board. At the same time, it’s bankrolled by Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions, which has recently gained more commercial heft by selling majority stakes to Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla.

“Oscars is like a full-blown political campaign. It doesn’t matter much how much goodwill your film enjoys already. You’ve to start from the scratch again in order to get the attention of The Academy voters,” says Shaunak Sen, whose documentary All That Breathes secured a nomination in the Best Documentary Feature Film category at the Oscars a couple of years ago. He describes the incessant cycle of hosting screenings like running on a hamster wheel. “You’ve to hit an airport, organize a screening, then hit another airport, do another screening. It’s exhausting, and not to mention, very expensive. Because along with organizing a screening, you’re also organizing dinner for the voters,” adds Shaunak. A screening in Los Angeles hence can cost upto \$50,000.“In our experience with Writing with Fire, we realized it’s exciting when you do a curveball from outside the system, be ingenious with limited resources, and use this juggernaut to build some solid visibility around the film. Using every dime and dollar to ensure the film is watched,” says Rintu Thomas, whose 2021 film was the first-ever Indian documentary feature to be nominated in the Oscars category. “When Rintu and Sushmit’s (Ghosh) Writing with Fire was in contention, I remember sending the film to Ava Duvernay and requesting for her support. She was so kind. She really talked up the film. Endorsement from prominent

creators with credibility, heft, and clout in the international ecosystem helps shift the narrative for your film,” says Smriti Kiran, producer and creative impact strategist.

Shaunak Sen’s All That Breathes, and Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh’s Writing with Fire were nominated in the Best Documentary Feature category at the Academy Awards. Shaunak Sen’s All That Breathes, and Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh’s Writing with Fire were nominated in the Best Documentary Feature category at the Academy Awards.Homebound features in Oscar’s toughest category

But the International Feature category is an altogether different beast. While it’s mostly the documentary filmmakers who are eligible to vote in the documentary categories (just like it’s only the actors for the acting categories), that’s not the case with the international feature category. Academy voters have to now opt in and watch all other contenders to vote for their pick, making this category one of the toughest to crack at the ceremony. How does one then locate the voter?

Archana Misra, CEO of Product of Culture, which does marketing and strategy for global breakout films with focus on Oscar campaigning, believes Homebound has already secured sustained interest through its festival run. An average white voter would be aware of the film, given they’re the audience that’s present at prestigious global film festivals like Cannes. “The Academy has diversified and increased its voter bank over the past few years. But majority of the voters are still white,” says Archana, adding, “From the feedback we’ve received from Academy voters about Homebound, they feel it’s a universally resonant tale yet very locally rooted. The filmmaker, Neeraj Ghaywan, is also a distinct voice and very well-respected in the international film circles.Martin Scorsese in conversation with Neeraj Ghaywan in New York. Martin Scorsese in conversation with Neeraj Ghaywan in New York.Shruti Ganguly, New York City-based filmmaker, also hails Neeraj as one of the primary draws for Homebound. “I was present at the recent New York screening of the film, which was followed by a Q&A session that Martin Scorsese did with Neeraj. I was surprised to find out how invested Scorsese was in the film. Usually, we see these EPs get attached to a film after it breaks out. That feels a bit of a slap-on. But in Scorsese’s case, he’s been involved in the making since its scripting stage and even gave feedback for the drafts, and the cuts during the edit stage. He also said he’s been a fan of Neeraj since his first film Masaan (2014). That speaks a lot about Neeraj and his appeal,” says Shruti.

Homebound’s Oscar competition

Homebound is pitted against the best of the best from across the world, including the likes of Sentimental Value (Norway), The Secret Agent (Brazil), and No Other Choice (South Korea). “We’re doing as many screenings as we can. Right now, the situation is that all screening rooms of Los Angeles are completely booked out. Because every film is at the peak of its campaigning right now,” says a source close to Dharma Productions who’s in the US leading Homebound’s Academy campaign. “So far, the response we’ve got is fairly positive. So, we’re feeling very optimistic,” he adds. Aranya Sahay’s indie Humans in the Loop, streaming on Netflix, has also entered the Oscars race. It’s contending for the Best Adapted Screenplay category, and is funding its Oscar campaign through a grant by Film Independent (they refused to disclose the amount).Humans in the Loop is contending for the Best Adapted Screenplay category at the Oscars. Humans in the Loop is contending for the Best Adapted Screenplay category at the Oscars.It helps Homebound’s chances that it has been selected as India’s official entry despite its dismal box office performance back home. The film got a very limited, strategic release in Indian cinemas last month, and could barely earn Rs 3 crore throughout its brief lifetime. But the chances of that coming in the way of its consideration by Academy voters are quite distant. “

# Abused by mother, Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi actress was forced to dance for money, was beaten with hunters, shoes



Coming from a humble background, she was fondly called Bulbul by those who knew her. While she acted on screen from a very young age, not many knew that her performance began when she was a child. Actress Jaya Bhattacharya, popularly known for her role as Payal in Kyunki Saas Bhi Bahu Thi, might have been a celebrated vamp on Indian television. But in real life, she was a victim of a bad marriage, which only affected her as she grew up.Born in 1978 in Lucknow, into a Bengali family, Jaya Bhattacharya doesn’t have many happy memories. In fact, she carries trauma due to all that her mother went through. Life wasn’t typically easy for Jaya, as being a girl child turned out to be her biggest mistake. Talking about her traumatic childhood, the actress once said in an interview with Siddharth Kannan that, “Both my parents never wanted to marry each other, they didn’t get along, and that trickled down to the child. My mother wasn’t happy; her dreams never got fulfilled, so whatever she could give me was incomplete... I have been beaten with a hunter, rolling pin, tong, shoes, and what not. I have been beaten a lot, and that made me stubborn. In the bargain, I have damaged myself a lot.”

Recalling her humble background, the actress shared, “I was an only child, we didn’t come from a wealthy background. We lived in a small room right from the time I was in the third standard till the time I came to Mumbai.” While Jaya loved her father, she held a grudge against her mother until a few years ago. Even though she has healed from the scars of her childhood, she says, “I was not upset with my father, but with my mother. I learned everything that I shouldn’t do in life from my mother, like making relationships for her benefit and then discarding them, not to value people, not to judge people, and not to support your child in front of others. My mother never stood by me.”She further added, “When they started to make me act, one of them would accompany me. I hardly had any friends because I wasn’t allowed to go to anyone’s house. So I didn’t speak much. Out of jealousy, people started saying wrong things about me, and my mother supported them, saying her daughter was bad. This hurt me the most; she doubted her own upbringing. Your child can go wrong, but you should trust your upbringing. If you degrade them in front of outsiders, what will the child do?”Jaya recalled an incident where, due to her mother’s stress about having a girl child, she ran away from home to Haridwar. She recalled, “When I was in class 9, my father retired, my mother had made a big issue about how she would accumulated my dowry. How will I get married? So the day my father retired, I ran away from

home with my classmate. We ran away to Haridwar, but we were so scared that we didn’t leave the aashram for a week.” Sharing how things never got better with her mom, Jaya added, “Even when my mother was hospitalized, she went through a very bad phase. Our last conversation was when she blamed me for spoiling her body by hospitalizing her. I used all my savings for her treatment, even though I actually hated her, and I told her this on her face. My mother would not eat food from my hands; she wanted a son.”

Talking about her father, Jaya said, “My father was stubborn, but he was a very correct and proud human being. He had a lot of self-respect. He faced a lot of abuse from people, even though he did the right things. That really hurt me, but I was proud of him.” Facing a great deal of abuse not only made Jaya stubborn but also angry. “I was an angry person from within due to various reasons. I had lost my femininity and would abuse normally. Once a co-star told me that directors were scared to work with me because of my abusive nature.”

Parents pushed Jaya into actingEven though she never wanted to act, Jaya Bhattacharya was pushed in front of the camera by her parents. Recalling this, the actress said in an interview, “I was pushed towards acting. I used to dance, and was training in music. Once I got a chance to do a telefilm, the director spoke to my father and first made me dance as a woman, and then also asked me to enact the male part. The shoot was supposed to happen after three days, but my father woke me up the next day at 5 am and took me. I didn’t want to do it, but he took me there. That’s how it started...”Jaya said that she also faced exploitation and casting couch. She shared, “After the telefilm, the director came with one of his friends, saying he wanted to take me out, but my mother kept dodging him. But he was adamant, so they gave in. He took me to a restaurant, and I was 17-18 at that time. Later, we came home, and the director disappeared after that, but his friend started coming home every day. He taught me how to drive. Later, we got to know he was involved with the mafia. One day, that guy offered to take me to Mumbai, but I said no.”Navigating through her life, Jaya Bhattacharya came to Mumbai after she was offered a show. That time, she only had Rs 2000 on her, and she got on a train without any reservation. “I had gotten my father discharged from the hospital, and dropped him at a cousin’s house, then I came to Mumbai,” Jaya said. She recalled how people in the industry trusted her.In 2000, life changed for Jaya when she bagged the role of Payal in Ekta Kapoor’s Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi. What was supposed to be a month-long cameo went on to become a 7-year association. Sadly, Jaya never felt respected on the show; in fact, she only faced abuse from fans. Recalling her time on Kyunki, the actress said, “I faced a lot of abuse for Kyunki; that was my success. I never got an award for that iconic character; no acceptance or acknowledgement was given, even though I deserved it. I enjoyed the abuses. It was supposed to be a month-long cameo, and I worked on the show for 7 and a half years without signing a contract. I was the most underpaid actor, never got a raise until I asked for it. I was given a 50 percent lesser raise than others, and that hurt my ego. I was not respected.”Jaya even recalled an incident where she was eating on the streets with a pregnant Smriti Irani when a fan came and pushed her away, calling her a ‘gandi aurat’. “She told Smriti to stay away from me, else it would harm her unborn child.”After Kyunki, Jaya went on to star in some great shows like Banoo Mein Teri Dulhan, Kasam Se, Karam Apnaa Apnaa, and more. To date, Jaya has managed to stay relevant on the acting front, her very recent performance was in Delhi Crime Season 3.

# Anupam Kher says Vidhu Vinod Chopra refused him leave despite high fever during 1942: A Love Story: ‘Shoot karenge, theek hojayega’

Anupam Kher says Vidhu Vinod Chopra refused him leave despite high fever during 1942: A Love StoryAnupam Kher says Vidhu Vinod Chopra refused him leave despite high fever during 1942: A Love StoryAnupam Kher has starred in several cult classics, including playing the role of Raghuvir Pathak in the 1994 film 1942: A Love Story. The actor was recently present at the International film festival of India, Goa, for the screening of his four films – the restored version of 1942 – A Love Story, Tanvi: The Great, The Bengal Files, and International film Calorie. He also took a masterclass titled ‘Giving up is NOT a choice’.

Anupam sat down for a conversation with SCREEN to talk about shooting the Vidhu Vinod Chopra directorial during sickness, doing several films at one time, and the 8-hour work shift debate.During the candid chat, he recalled shooting for 1942 Love Story and shared, “I was not well, I had typhoid when I reached Dharamshala. I told Mr. Chopra, so he said, ‘Koi baat nahi, shooting karenge theek hojaayenge, no chutti (It’s fine, you will be fine while shooting, no holiday)’. I still remember that. Otherwise, it was a joy working with him. He is a really great director.”

Anupam further added that he might have fallen sick because he used to shoot for several films simultaneously. “I was doing 5-7 films at the same time, even more than that. There was a time when I was doing 23 films at the same time. I don’t want to sound politically correct, because when you say you are politically correct, you aren’t correct. I love my work and I love working. I wanted to become an actor all my life and God has put me in a position when I am one,” he reflected.When asked to elaborate on Deepika Padukone’s ongoing 8-hour work shift debate, the actor replied, “Even if a director says there’s a 12-hour shift, even if I have 2 scenes in the film, I will be committed for those twelve hours to that person. I can’t be contradictory and tell another director that the hours should be this much. I don’t think that luxury is available to camera man, light boys, workers or lesser popular actors. It’s not a luxury, it’s a job.”He continued, “Women and men in worse conditions work in banks and corporates. This luxury is only available to people who can dictate terms. I am a worker and stardom is a by product of that working in films. I have been on the streets of Mumbai looking for work so I promised myself that I would never complain about the hours of work.”

Anupam Kher was then questioned if the younger generation is lazy and less disciplined as compared to veteran artists. “Today’s generation is also very hardworking. They are very disciplined and aware of their physical look and everything. They have to be good in each and every project. Everybody is ready to write them off. The faster they under



Anupam Kher has starred in several cult classics, including playing the role of Raghuvir Pathak in the 1994 film 1942: A Love Story. The actor was recently present at the International film festival of India, Goa, for the screening of his four films – the restored version of 1942 – A Love Story, Tanvi: The Great, The Bengal Files, and International film Calorie. He also took a masterclass titled ‘Giving up is NOT a choice’.

that only work will speak, they should keep working till then,” he said.Citing the example of Shah Rukh Khan’s stardom, he added, “Gone are those days when you could be a superstar for 40-50 years. Now you have to be world superstar, as Shah Rukh Khan very correctly said, ‘I am the last superstar’. Maybe he was predicting the future, maybe he was right. Not because today’s generation doesn’t deserve, but because the audience has millions of sources of entertainment.”Anupam Kher last featured in Anurag Basu’s Metro..In Dino and Tanvi The Great, alongside Shubhangi Dutt. The actor has also joined Prabhas and Hanu Raghavapudi’s upcoming untitled film, announcing it as his 544th project.