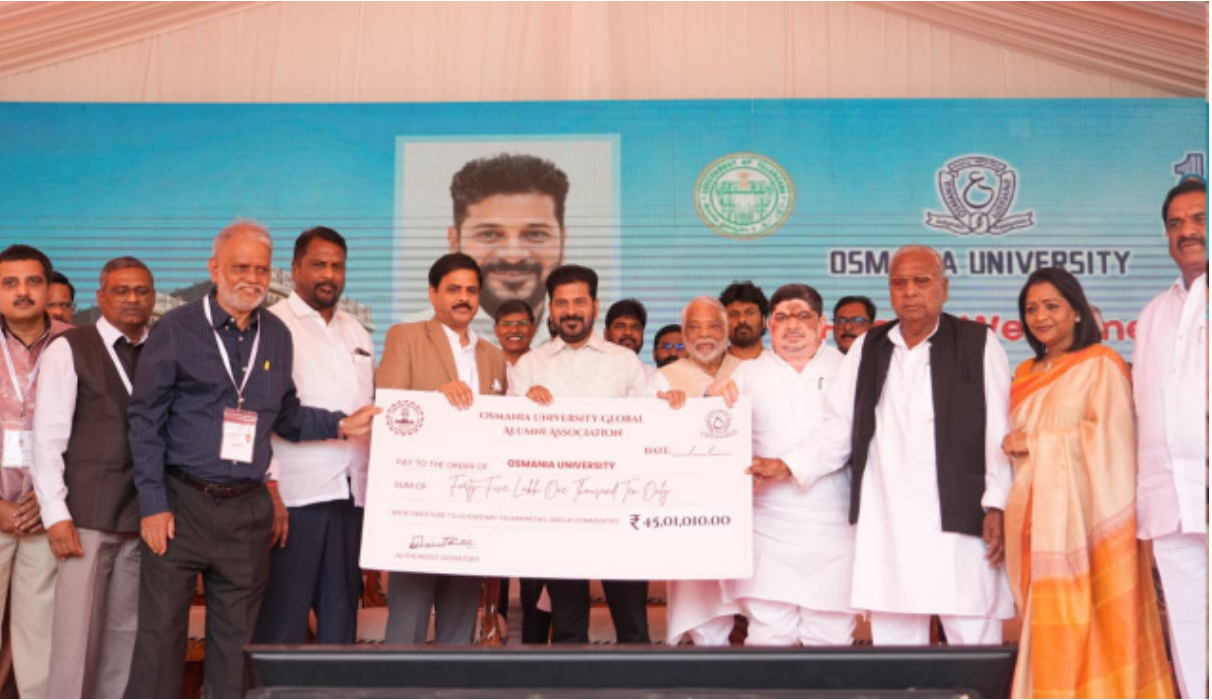


Telangana Home Department permits hike in ‘Akhand-2’ ticket rates

Hyderabad: Telangana Home Department on Wednesday permitted a hike in ticket rates for ‘Akhand-2’ movie, which is set to be released on December 12 in theatres across Telangana.

Home Department Special Chief Secretary CV Anand stated in an official memo issued on Wednesday that all theatre managements are permitted to collect Rs 600 (including GST) for a special benefit show (one show) of ‘Akhand-2’, which will be screened at 8 pm on December 11.

‘T’ Stands for Trust: CM Revanth Kickstarts OU’s Rs 1000 Crore Transformation



“Indian Chronicle, OU, December 10:Osmania University witnessed a landmark moment as Telangana Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy addressed more than 9,000 students at the Arts College, marking the beginning of OU’s major transformation. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kumar Molugaram thanked the Chief Minister for fulfilling his promise of sanctioning ₹1000 crores for the university’s complete infrastructure upgrade. He said the ‘T’ in Telangana stands for Trust and added that it also stands for Education, highlighting OU’s steady rise in

Electric Mobility Boost: New RTC Buses Roll Out in Hyderabad

Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, December 10:“The Ranigunji RTC Depot witnessed a major boost to eco-friendly public transport as Transport Minister Ponnampallabharathi launched a new fleet of electric buses. As part of Hyderabad’s pollution-control and transport-expansion efforts, the Telangana RTC is gradually increasing the number of EV buses, with a long-term plan to deploy 2,800 electric buses in the city.“Currently, 810 electric buses operate across the state, including 300 in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. With today’s induction

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **LAVANYA SAIYIREE W/O JAKKULA SRINIVAS (old name)** born on 02-12-1984 at Adilabad hereby changing my Name and henceforth in future I would be known as **JAKKULA LAVANYA W/O JAKKULA SRINIVAS (new name)** H.No. 4-40, Kuchalapoor Talamadugu, Adilabad-504312, Telangana State.

DECLARANT.
JAKKULA LAVANYA W/O JAKKULA SRINIVAS

Place: **Adilabad**
Date: **08-12-2025**



national and international rankings. Arts College Principal Prof. C. Kaseem called the visit historic and praised the Chief Minister’s belief that education is the solution to many of the state’s challenges.“In his address, CM Revanth Reddy reaffirmed the government’s commitment to uplifting poor and first-generation learners by providing world-class facilities within Telangana. He reminded students that English is only a tool of translation and not the source of knowledge, citing China, Japan, and Germany as examples. He paid tributes to OU’s eminent alumni including former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, S. Jaipal Reddy, and George Reddy, and urged students to direct their efforts toward issues that truly benefit society. He linked Telangana’s three-trillion-rupee economic vision to the need for quality education and employability skills, and highlighted that initiatives under Telangana Rising will create 12 lakh job opportunities.“Consultants then presented OU’s new master plan featuring a modern Academic Block, R&D Block, new hostels, a multi-purpose sports centre, an integrated library, a health centre, a biodiversity park, a convention centre, and improved roads with cycle tracks and pedestrian pathways. On this occasion, the Osmania University Global Alumni Association (OUAA-NA) donated ₹45 lakhs towards educational development. The event was attended by several dignitaries including ministers, MLCs, senior officials, and OU leadership.



and another set of buses arriving by the end of January, the city’s EV fleet will expand to 540.“They are equipped with modern facilities including real-time tracking, digital display boards, USB charging, fire-detection systems, and accessibility features for senior citizens and differently-abled passengers.“The Minister also announced the launch of RTC services on 373 new colony routes starting today, providing additional public transport access to nearly seven lakh people living around the Outer Ring Road. He stated that RTC is prepared to introduce more buses in the IT corridor to help reduce traffic congestion and will expand services from the capital to rural regions as well. Recruitment, employee welfare, and road-safety inspections are being taken up actively.“Speaking about the Mahalakshmi scheme, the Minister noted that women have so far availed 251 crore free journeys worth 8,500 crore rupees. In the past two years, 40 percent of RTC’s current fleet has been newly purchased.“RTC MD Nagireddy highlighted that 2,400 new buses have been added within two years and each electric bus cuts one tonne of carbon dioxide emissions per day. The event was attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, local representatives, and senior RTC officials.

OU Arts College principal goes overboard praising Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad: Osmania University College of Arts and Social Sciences principal Prof C Kasim’s excitement to compliment Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy during his visit to OU campus on Wednesday went overboard.

In his speech that went viral on social media platforms, Prof Kasim said, “Long back 25 to 30 years ago, Revanth Reddy fell in love with Geetha and married her. But now, the Chief Minister is in love with another girl named Vidya.”

Girl Killed for Rejecting Marriage Proposal; Accused Arrested in Musheerabad Murder Case



Warasiguda Police Crack Case Within Hours Using CCTV evidence

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, December 10:“The Warasiguda Police have swiftly solved the shocking murder of an 18-year-old girl at Bapuji Nagar, Musheerabad, arresting the accused relative who killed her after she rejected his marriage proposal.“According to Eastern Zone DCP B. Balaswamy, Jadaga Lakshmi and Kantarao, migrants from Srikakulam district, were living in Bapuji Nagar with their two daughters. Their close relative Uma Shankar had been repeatedly pressuring the family to marry their elder daughter to him, but the

parents refused due to his objectionable behaviour.“Enraged by the rejection, on December 8, the accused entered their home and stabbed the girl in the throat, killing her instantly. Following a complaint from the victim’s parents, Warasiguda Police registered a case and launched a detailed investigation.“Analysis of CCTV footage helped trace and arrest the accused. He confessed during interrogation that he murdered her after she and her family refused his marriage proposal. Police seized a mobile phone and ₹1.10 lakh from his possession.“DCP Balaswamy appreciated the prompt investigation by Warasiguda CI A. Madhusudhan Reddy, DI A. Purender Reddy, Lalaguda DI Ramakrishna, SI Sudhakar, and their team. He announced that the officers would be suitably rewarded.“Senior officials including Addl. DCP Narasiah and ACP Shashank Reddy attended the briefing.

Cantonment Vaani to solve public problems



““Secunderabad Cantonment. December 10 (Indian Chronicle):“Cantonment MLA Mr. Ganesh said that the Cantonment Vani is organized for the solution of the problems of the people in the Cantonment Constituency. Cantonment Vani program was organized in coordination between the State Government and the Cantonment Board officials at Rasul Pura Gan Bazar Community Hall on Wednesday. He said that there is no possibility, the Cantonment Constituency is different from the other constituencies, he said that there is a Cantonment Board under the control of the Central Government and the officials who coordinate all of them or the problems of the people have accumulated. He said that they are working to solve the problems of the people by bringing the Cantonment Board and the State Government officials to one place instead of going around different offices. He said



that the state government officials will also be able to solve the problems that come to their attention quickly. He said that this program will continue every month and if the people of the constituency use this opportunity to bring their problems to the attention of the authorities, he will organize coordination meetings with the officials to solve them and ensure that the problems are solved quickly. Cantonment Board CEO Arvind Kumar Dwivedi, Cantonment Board Electricity, Health, Sanitation, Engineering Officers, Begumpet ACP Gopalakrishna Murthy, Leaders Muppidi Madhukar, Venu Gopal Reddy, Sadanand, Nagineni Sarita, Murali Mudiraj, Revenue, Electricity, Civil participated in the program. Officials of Supply, Health, Forest Department and others participated.

Temperatures to drop up to 4 degrees Celsius below normal across Telangana

Hyderabad: Mercury is expected to drop further from Wednesday across Hyderabad and other regions of Telangana, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD)-Hyderabad and independent weather trackers forecasting severe cold wave conditions for the coming week.

On Wednesday, IMD-Hyderabad extended its cold wave warning for multiple districts of Telangana for two more days.

The IMD-Hyderabad forecast indicates minimum temperatures are expected to drop 3 degrees Celsius to 4 degrees Celsius below normal in several regions, including Adilabad, Kumram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherla, Nirmal, Sangareddy, Medak and Kamareddy.

The severe cold wave alert issued by IMD-Hyderabad is valid till Friday, December 12, 2025. Minimum temperatures in Hyderabad and surrounding districts including Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy, Medak and Bhongir are expected to hover between 11 degrees Celsius and 15 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, independent weather trackers from Hyderabad in their forecast said the cold wave conditions will be even more severe from Wednesday night across Telangana.

While parts of Hyderabad and surrounding districts are expected to record minimum temperatures around 8

degrees Celsius, temperatures in Western and Northern districts of the State could drop to as low as 5 degrees Celsius, according to independent weather trackers. The ongoing severe cold wave conditions are expected to last for the next 4 to 5 days, they added.

In the last 24 hours, between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, multiple locations in and around Hyderabad, in addition to districts, recorded single digit minimum temperatures.

The coldest temperatures (in degree Celsius) recorded on the outskirts were in Moinabad (6.6), Ibrahimpatnam (7.7), UoH Serilingampally (8.4) Rajendranagar (9.2), Moula Ali (9.4), including BHEL (10.5), Gachibowli (11.4) and Qutbullapur (11.9). Minimum temperatures in the remaining parts of the city hovered between 12 degrees Celsius and 13 degrees Celsius.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MOHAMMED MASOOD ALI**, S/o MOHAMMED SALEEMALI, residing at H.No. 6-28, Shah Bazar Colony, Kodangal, Vikarabad District, Telangana – 509338, hereby state that my surname was wrongly entered as **ABDUL MASOOD ALI** instead of **MOHAMMED MASOOD ALI** in my **Passport (No. J9372730) and Aadhaar (No. 7913 7071 9510)**. My correct name is **MOHAMMED MASOOD ALI**, S/o MOHAMMED SALEEMALI.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Trump at it again

United States President Donald Trump's shenanigans have stopped surprising the world. His maverick and impulsive ways have pretty much become the new normal in international diplomacy. Trump's latest salvo at India, threatening to impose new tariffs on rice imports, should not come as a surprise, as it fits into a familiar template. Arm-twisting and bullying have been his preferred modes of conducting diplomacy. Accusing India of dumping rice into the American market, he has declared that imposing additional tariffs will easily solve this problem. The threat comes at a time when the two countries are engaged in intense negotiations to finalise a trade deal. In fact, a high-level US delegation is currently in New Delhi for the talks. The Trump Administration appears to be in denial mode regarding the dynamics of international agricultural markets. Trump is caught in the mistaken notion that by threatening to hike import tariffs, he can extract concessions from India. The fact remains that it is the American consumer who will eventually be burdened by a higher tariff on rice imports from India. The Republican Administration continues to believe that tariffs are a magic bullet to solve domestic economic troubles, even though lower courts in the US have ruled against the use of emergency powers to impose them on nations around the world. The US Supreme Court is expected to decide the case. Trump's remarks against India came on a day when he unveiled a USD 12 billion bailout package for American farmers, who have been hit hard by rising costs and market challenges stemming from disruptive tariff policies and the trade dispute with China. In the past, Indian rice was subject to a 10 per cent duty in the US market. With a 50 per cent tariff now in place, the duty has risen by 40 percentage points. Despite the steep hike, exports have continued, underscoring rice's position as an essential item in the consumer basket.

Grand Arrangements for the 3rd Annual Brahmotsavams at Sri Swayambhu Kalabhairava Swamy Temple from December 11

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 10 (Indian Chronicle):““The 3rd Annual Brahmotsavams are set to be celebrated grandly at the Sri Swayambhu Kalabhairava Swamy Temple located in the Bhagayat HMDA Layout, Uppal, where Lord Kalabhairava manifested as a Swayambhu deity. The festivities will be held as part of the Swastishri Vishvavasu Nama Samvatsara Margashira Bahula Saptami and Ashtami on December 11 and 12.“The celebrations will begin on December 11 with Suprabhata Seva and Abhishekam at 5:35 AM, fol-



lowed by Gopuja, Yagashala Pravesam, Deeparadhana, and special worship to Sri Lakshmi Ganapathi, Navagrahas, Vastu Devata, Kshetrapalaka, Yogini and Ashtakalabhairava Mandapam at 8:15 AM.“From 5:00 PM, Ashta Bhairava Homam, Harati, and Teertha Prasada Vitarana will be conducted.“On December 12, the day will begin with Suprabhata Seva and Abhishekam at 5:35 AM, followed by Kalabhairava Havanam, Bali Pradhanam, Poornahuti, Pradhana Kalasha Samprokshanam, and Shiva-Parvati Kalyanam at 11:15 AM, along with Brahmana Ashirvachanam and distribution of Anna Prasadam.“From 5:00 PM, Ganapati Aradhana, Swami Vari Pallaki Seva, Jwala Toranam, Harati and Ashirvachanam will be offered with great pomp.“Temple chief priests stated that a large number of devotees are expected to participate and urged devotees to attend in traditional attire to receive the divine blessings of Sri Kalabhairava Swamy. Temple priests and committee members were present at the meeting.

Draft Delimitation of GHMC Ward Boundaries Released at Boduppall Circle Office



Pinkathon partners with Zydus to drive breast cancer awareness; Returns to Hyderabad for the 6th edition introducing first-ever Invincible Women

Hyderabad: Pinkathon, India's biggest women's run, today announced the 6th edition of Pinkathon Hyderabad, joining hands with global innovation-led healthcare company Zydus Lifesciences Ltd. to strengthen breast cancer awareness in India. The press conference was graciously hosted by Park Hyatt, the Hospitality Partner for the event, adding prestige and warmth to the occasion. The run, scheduled for February 15, 2026, at People's Plaza in Hyderabad, marks another milestone in Pinkathon's mission of inspiring women to embrace fitness, community, and preventive health. Launched in 2012 in Mumbai by actor, entrepreneur and fitness advocate Milind Soman, Pinkathon has grown into a nationwide movement empowering women through sport. Over the years, it has reached more than half a million women, facilitated free breast screenings for thousands, raised over ₹1 crore for underprivileged cancer patients, and built a strong community of ambassadors across India. With Zydus' preventive-first approach powering its mission, the Pinkathon 2025-26 season continues across Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chennai, and Delhi. This year in Hyderabad, the run proudly celebrates a diverse and inspiring group of mascots who embody strength, resilience, and the spirit of community running. Leading the lineup is Poonam Metta, representing the

Swatantrata Center Welcomes Telangana Government's Vision 2047 and 24x7 Market Reform



Hyderabad Swatantrata Center, a public policy think tank work-

ETV Win Brings Telugu Entertainment to Life with Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos

Hyderabad ETV Win, one of the fastest-growing Telugu OTT platforms, has announced a major leap in its streaming experience by bringing the Dolby Vision® and Dolby Atmos® experience to a growing slate of content for audiences across screens, including TVs, tablets and smartphones. Over 20 titles are now available in Dolby on ETV Win, including key marquee titles like Little Hearts and Constable Kanakam in Dolby Atmos and the flagship title KA in both Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos. With Dolby Atmos, ETV Win is redefining how Telugu stories are seen and heard—delivering powerful cinematic moments directly to the home and on the go, making ETV Win one of the first regional OTT platforms to offer a truly immersive streaming experience. As the digital home for blockbuster hits such as #90s – A Middle-Class Biopic, Committee Kurrolu, Veeranjaneyulu Vihara Yatra, Ka, Anaganaga, AIR and Little hearts, ETV Win continues to captivate Telugu audiences with stories that blend strong narratives, nostalgia, and new-age storytelling. KA, the first Telugu title in Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos, has received positive responses from the audiences. Whether it's action, romance, thrillers, family drama, or comedy—ETV Win's catalogue now delivers more than just stories. Viewers can feel the intensity of a thriller's chase or hear the hush of an emotional moment with immersive sound in Dolby Atmos. With stunning visuals in Dolby Vision, the rich textures and tones of Telugu storytelling are more lifelike than ever.

Only Ticket and Pass Holders Allowed Entry to Messi-GOAT Football Match: Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 10 (Indian Chronicle):““Ahead of the much-awaited Messi-GOAT Football Match scheduled to be held on Saturday, December 13, featuring Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and global football icon Lionel Messi, Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu has issued an important advisory to fans. “To prevent congestion around the Uppal Stadium, the Commissioner urged spectators not to come to the venue without valid tickets or entry passes. He made it clear that only those with tickets or authorized passes will be permitted inside, and no one without them will be allowed entry under any circumstances.“The Commissioner further stated that elaborate and stringent security arrangements have been put in place for the high-profile event. He appealed to all football fans to cooperate with the police and follow the guidelines to ensure the smooth conduct of the match.

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):““Under the directions of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner, the draft publication for the Delimitation of Ward Boundaries was released at the Boduppall Circle Office through Form-1 by Deputy Commissioner A. Shailaja. The draft has been published to invite opinions, objections, and suggestions from the public. Copies of the proposed



100K category, followed by Devyani Haldar for the 75K and Leena Roy for the 50K distance. The event also honours Mardaku Anitha, a visually impaired runner symbolizing the 10K category, and Sarita Sarkar, a cancer survivor representing the Lifelong 5K run. Preety Khanna, a dedicated babywearing mother, stands as the mascot for the 3K category. Together, these remarkable women reflect the run's ethos of inclusivity and courage. With categories ranging from 3 km, Lifelong 5 km, 10 km, all the way up to ultradistances, the event encourages participation from both first-time runners and seasoned athletes, making it a true celebration of endurance, empowerment, and community spirit.

ing on economic freedom, welcomed the Telangana Government's announcement of 24x7 markets and night-time economy initiatives in the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2025 and the Vision 2047 document.

The organization expressed happiness that a proposal they have been advocating for many years—making Hyderabad a 24x7 economic hub—has now been formally included in the State's long-term plan. Speaking about this development, Ranjith Kumar Duguntla, Co-founder & Director of Swatantrata Center, said:

“This announcement is a major milestone for us. We have been proposing a 24x7 market and night-time economy model for years, and it is encouraging to see these ideas reflected in the Vision 2047 document. Round-the-clock business is not only about extended hours—it is about creating more opportunities, improving quality of life, and building an inclusive and vibrant economy.”



Audiences can find titles in Dolby right on the homepage—ETV Win has created a dedicated rail that spotlights content in Dolby Vision and/or Dolby Atmos, making discovery easy for users.

The Dolby Vision and/or Dolby Atmos experience is available to Premium Plus subscribers (₹699 annual pack) through diverse types of devices that feature Dolby Vision and/or Dolby Atmos, including Android phones, Android TVs, iOS devices, and connected streaming devices (DMAs).

With an unparalleled brand presence in the regional OTT space, ETV Win is actively producing 15 original films and series this year—the highest by any OTT platform. In addition to originals, ETV Win is also acquiring major theatrical releases and has built a rich vault of 500+ Telugu classic golden movies, creating a powerful mix of fresh, nostalgic, and blockbuster content.



delimitation for the newly planned 300 wards have been made available at the Boduppall Circle Office for public reference. Citizens can submit their written suggestions and objections to the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Boduppall Circle, on or before 16 December 2025. The Deputy Commissioner urged residents to actively participate in the process by submitting their valuable feedback on the draft proposals.

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour Drives Fashion into the Fast Lane

The Tour accelerated into Jaipur with a dynamic showcase of motorcore, signalling Fashion's Next Move.

Hyderabad: Blenders Pride Fashion Tour shifted gears in Jaipur, transforming into an intersection of high-fashion and motorsport. Pushing boundaries, the Jaipur edition explored motorsports-inspired design, glamourous performance wear, and high-octane fashion showcase, thatmarked 'Fashion's Next Move' – racing forward with speed and precision.

In collaboration with Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), the showcase reimaged the runway into a high-speed circuit of style and power. Leading designers Namrata Joshipura and Abhishek Paatni reinterpreted high-octane motorcore aesthetics, transforming racing culture into statement-making fashion. Bollywood star Harnaaz Sandhu commanded the runway as the finale showstopper, embodying the fusion of glamour and speed, while rap sensation Raftaar closed the night with an electrifying performance that matched the show's pul-



sating energy. The show unfolded with a three-lap runway experience that transformed the stage into an immersive motorsport arena. From The Start Line's racing silhouettes to The Pit Lane's chrome-driven sleek and tactical looks, to The Glam Night's high-octane glamour, ending with a thrilling sport cars stunt that uplifted that shot up the whole vibe of the show.

The experience amplified the cultural and creative pulse of India – fast, sharp and unstoppable, and positioned Blenders Pride Fashion Tour as the engine driving fashion forward with unprecedented pace.

Debasree Dasgupta, CMO, Pernod Ricard India said “Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has always been at the forefront of shaping fashion and cultural conversations. The Tour's Jaipur edition takes that vision further, by fusing worlds of high-octane motorsport and glamorous high-fashion, creating an immersive experience that celebrates boldness, style, and innovation”

Designer Abhishek Patni said, “Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has always championed breaking through boundaries of creativity. With this collaboration, together we shifted fashion into new gears, and fused speed with style to present a bold glimpse of where fashion is headed next.”

Designer Namrata Joshipura said, “Blenders Pride Fashion Tour has inspired me to bring high-octane couture into a distinctive, fashion-forward space. Together we defined fashion's next evolution bringing precision of motorsports into the glamorous world of haute-couture.”

Ayyappa Maha Padi Puja Held Grandly at Charlapally

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):““The Ayyappa Maha Padi Puja was conducted in a vibrant and devotional atmosphere on Wednesday at Sri Ram Foods in the Charlapally indus-



trial area. The event was organized under the supervision of Sri Ram Bakery and Sweets proprietor Katkuri Sudha Vijayakumar Reddy and his family. The Sri Dharmashastra Bhajana Mandal, led by M.L. Prasad, rendered Ayyappa devotional songs, filling the premises with spiritual fervour. Devotees chanted “Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa,” creating a deeply devotional ambience throughout the Sri Ram Foods campus. Vedic scholar Veeresham Sharma performed the puja rituals. Participants included Bande Goud, Nadam, Vijay Kumar, K. Yadireddy, Katkuri Bucchireddy, Mukunda Reddy, Baddam Praveen Reddy, Neela Kishore, Srinivas Reddy, Sambashivudu, Aravind, Kondal Reddy, Nallolla Kanakaiah, Paniraju, Venkatesh, Veera Reddy and others.“

Journalists Maha Sabha Poster Released by MLA Rajasekhara Reddy

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“The Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) Medchal-Malkajgiri district will hold its 3rd Maha Sabha on December 14 at Neredmet in the Malkajgiri Assembly constituency. Ahead of the event, MLA Marri Rajasekhara Reddy released the official poster on Wednesday in Malkajgiri. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said he hopes the Maha Sabha will be conducted successfully and contribute to strengthening journalistic initiatives in the district. TWJF district convener G. Hari Prasad, co-convener P. Mallesh Goud, senior district leader Raja Rani, Durga Prasad and others participated in the programme.



UGD Works Worth Rs.1.38 Crore Launched in Meerpet HB Colony Division



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“UGD (Underground Drainage) works worth Rs.1.38 crore were launched across various colonies in the Meerpet HB Colony Division by MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy, along with Corporator Jeripothula Prabhudas and ex-Corporator Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said he would remain accessible to residents and continue supporting the overall development of the Uppal constituency, after interacting with locals and reviewing their civic issues. Corporator Jeripothula Prabhudas stated that efforts are underway to address public grievances and expressed

gratitude to the MLA for his support in the division's development. Officials and leaders including DE Rupa, Work Inspector Chari, Vanjari Praveen Karipe, Ullem Balaraju, Mallareddy, Iqbal, Arifuddin, Veerabhadra Rao, Mallesh Goud, Bodasu Ravi, Venkat, Murali, Narasimha Goud, Krishna, Chandrasekhar, Ramakrishna, Chakravarthi, Dasu, Kiran, Shekhar Goud, Shiva, Dandem Narendar, and Nisar Ahmed Gori participated along with colony residents. The works include drainage pipelines sanctioned across Lakshmi Nagar, Indra Nagar Phase-1, Rajiv Nagar, Navodaya Nagar, Mangapuram, Annapuram Centre, Vasantha Reddy Sweet House lane, Venkateswara Nagar, Tirumala Nagar, Krishna Nagar, NTR Nagar and Narasimha Nagar.

I Will Resolve the Division Public's Requests Step by Step: Chiluka Nagar Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 10 (Indian Chronicle):“Chilukanagar Division Corporator and former GHMC Standing Committee Member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj stated that the requests coming from various colonies and bastis in the Chilukanagar division will be resolved in a phased manner.“At the Chilukanagar Division Corporator's office, several colony and basti association members, along with local residents, met Corporator Geetha Praveen and submitted representation letters regarding their issues.“Speaking on the occasion, Corporator Geetha Praveen said that based on the requests made by the division residents, works such as CC roads, open drains, sewerage lines, and drinking water pipelines—as mentioned in the submitted petitions—will be completed step by step, and she assured them that all the pending works would be taken up and resolved.



Memorandum Submitted to MLA for Renaming Chakripura Division



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Representatives of the Kushaiguda Welfare Association and the Charlapally Colonies Federation (CCF) submitted a memorandum on Wednesday requesting that the proposed Chakripura Division be renamed as Kushaiguda Division. The delegation met Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy and explained that the name Kushaiguda better reflects the region's identity, long-standing public usage and administrative convenience. They stated that the existing name is well established among residents, business establishments and government departments, and changing it would help avoid confusion. The associations urged the MLA to take up the issue with the concerned authorities and ensure that the division is officially notified as Kushaiguda Division in the final delimitation order. They expressed hope that the government would consider the residents' long-pending demand.

Collector Manu Choudhary Directs Officials to Expedite National Highway Works in Medchal-Malkajgiri



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Medchal-Malkajgiri, Wednesday“District Collector Manu Choudhary instructed officials to speed up the ongoing National Highway construction projects across the district and resolve all pending issues without delay. The Collector, along with Additional Collector Vijayender Reddy, reviewed the progress of National Highway works at a meeting held in the V.C. Hall of the Collectorate. During the session, the NH Authority (NHA) Project Director presented a detailed PowerPoint briefing on the current status of works and the challenges affecting project timelines.

The Collector examined issues related to road expansion, land acquisition hurdles, and court cases that are slowing down progress. She sought detailed information on each case and advised officials to thoroughly study the background and take appropriate action to clear bottlenecks. She emphasised the need for coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure uninterrupted execution of the projects. RDO Upender Reddy (Keesara) and other concerned officials were present at the review meeting.

Chiluka Nagar Division Bifurcated into Two; Leaders from Various Parties Express Happiness and Hold Preliminary Meetings



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 10 (Indian Chronicle):“As part of the reorganization of GHMC divisions, the Chiluka Nagar division has been officially bifurcated into two separate divisions. One has been named Chiluka Nagar Division, and the newly carved-out second division has been named Beerappa Gadda Division.“Residents of Chiluka Nagar and leaders from various political parties have welcomed the creation of two divisions. For the first time, locals from Chiluka Nagar now have an opportunity to contest as corporators, which has generated significant enthusiasm. The formation of Beerappa Gadda Division, covering parts of Uppal, has also been widely appreciated.“With the bifurcation, leaders from several political parties have begun conducting special meetings and consultations to plan their strategies. Since the inception of Chiluka Nagar—from its days as a gram panchayat, later a municipality, and then under GHMC—local leaders across parties have been active in public service. The division split has rekindled hopes among many leaders who have been working in the region for decades.“Aspirants are reportedly preparing to contest from the newly formed divisions, discussing

strategies to secure nominations. On Wednesday, BRS leaders held a meeting to deliberate on the division's bifurcation. It is learned that they resolved to ensure the party ticket goes to a candidate from Chiluka Nagar this time. Similar discussions are said to be taking place within other political parties as well.“Observers note that political parties are gearing up to draft their strategies in advance. For the first time, party leaders from Chiluka Nagar have a real chance of obtaining tickets, which has sparked widespread excitement



across party lines.“On Wednesday, BRS leaders Ambati Jagadish Mudiraj, Palle Nursing Rao, Jalli Mohan, Pittala Naresh Mudiraj, Gudi Madhusudhan Reddy, Kompalli Ravinder, Eerelli Ravinder Reddy, and others met and held discussions on the division's reorganization.“Residents too have expressed happiness over the bifurcation, believing that the creation of two divisions will lead to better administration and further development in the region.



(Mandava Srisailem.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- Seeing the development taking place in Bhuvanagiri constituency.. Kumbham Keerthy Reddy, daughter of Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, who is campaigning to ensure that Congress party sarpanch candidates win with a huge majority in Bhuvanagiri constituency, along with former Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman Pothamsetty Venkateswarlu, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Library Chairman Avaiz Chisthi and other leaders.

Vande Mataram song composed by Bankinchandra Chatterjee has been celebrated for 150 years.

but it should be made known to the coming generations. In a discussion in the Lok Sabha..

Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy

“(Mandava Srisailem.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said that there is no discussion in the Lok Sabha on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the composition of Vande Mataram song by Bankinchandra Chatterjee to be made known to the coming generations.“Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy spoke clearly in Telugu in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday during the discussion on the national anthem Vande Mataram. He said that the discussion was being held to criticize the Congress party and the opposition parties, and that the Vande Mataram song was sung by Rabindra Nath Tagore in the Indian National Congress sessions in 1896. In 1907, Bikachi Kama wrote Vande Mataram on the national flag in Germany and hoisted it in Berlin, and that the Congress took the inspiration of Vande Mataram to the people. He said that the Congress party sang the Vande Mataram song through Rabindra Nath Tagore, and that the BJP was speaking in a way that misled the people of the country by taking the year 1937 and misleading Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress party.“He said that the BJP has no intention of taking Vande Mataram to the coming generations,“and that the BJP is spreading misinformation as if some words were removed from Vande Mataram because of Jawaharlal Nehru.“Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Acharya Narendra Dev Committee recommended that Rabindranath Tagore change some words keeping in mind the democracy of India,“He said that during the debate on Tuesday, the people of the country should know the facts on Vande Mataram. Otherwise, the BJP will spread lies to the people. There are many problems in the country, the value of the dollar has fallen. He said that passengers are stranded at airports due to IndiGo airline. Air pollution in Delhi is at its worst. The elderly are suffering. There is a situation where young children cannot go to school. He said that they are talking about issues that happened before 1947, about Vikasit Bharat 2047, but they are not talking about public problems and the situation in the country in Parliament.“He said that the Aviation Minister should answer the people of the country, tell them why the value of the dollar has increased,



and the Center should explain to the people about Delhi air pollution.“ He said that there is no discussion on public issues in the 15-day winter session of Parliament, and they are trying to include Nehru's history. It is not your generation to include Nehru's history, he said that Nehru was the first Prime Minister of the country, he brought five-year plans, established IITs, IIMs, steel plants, BHEL, ICRISAT, LIC, etc. Can Nehru, who built projects like Bhakranagall and Nagarjuna Sagar for farmers, erase the history, said MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, and that all states should be given a chance in Vikasit Bharat. He said that CM Revanth Reddy has organized a global summit as part of 2047 Rising in Telangana, and that they are moving forward with the goal of a three trillion economy. Funds should not be given only to the double engine government in the country. Similarly, in the 18th Lok Sabha, the government was formed through the parties you depend on, so instead of giving funds to those states, funds and projects should be given to all states. Telangana CM Revanth Reddy came to Delhi and met Prime Minister Modi and Union ministers to discuss Triple R, Metro second page, and MUS revival with the Center. Along with Vikasit Bharat, Telangana Rising should be taken forward together, and Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy explained that creating divisions between politics, castes, and religions will cause damage.

Election Officer Hanumantha Rao inspects distribution center for staff for conducting polling in first phase of Gram Panchayat elections

“(Mandava Srisailem.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- District Election Officer and Collector Hanumantha Rao visited the distribution center set up for distribution of election materials to staff for conducting polling in first phase of Gram Panchayat elections. The District Election Officer and Collector visited the polling material distribution center at Turkapalli mandal center, where the first phase of elections will be held as part of the Gram Panchayat elections on Wednesday, and inspected the distribution of material. “The Collector inspected the distribution of election materials at the distribution center. They wanted to ensure that polling materials were provided to the staff without any shortages and to check whether the necessary equipment for conducting the elections was received based on the checklist. The Collector himself served lunch to the polling staff.“The concerned officials participated in this program.



The second phase of postal ballot voting process as part of the Gram Panchayat elections should be conducted transparently:-
Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10): District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the second phase of postal ballot voting process as part of the Gram Panchayat elections should be conducted transparently.”The District Collector inspected the postal ballot polling process at the Bhuvanagiri Mandal Praja Parishad office, where the second phase of the Gram Panchayat elections in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district is being held on Wednesday. On this occasion, the District Collector spoke to the



concerned officials... He inquired about how many people in Bhuvanagiri Mandal have postal ballot votes and how many voters used postal ballot votes yesterday and today. As the second phase of postal ballot voting process has been completed today, the concerned officials are requested to identify the voters who have come to the polling station and give them the ballot paper and observe them until the said voter casts his/her vote in the ballot box. The concerned officials participated in this program.

MLA Sri Bandari Laxma Reddy along with local Corporator Jeripothula Prabhudas and former Corporator Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy inaugurated the Underground Drainage (UGD) construction works worth an estimated cost of Rs 1,38,60,000/- across several colonies

“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, December 10: “MLA Sri Bandari Laxma Reddy, local Corporator Jeripothula Prabhudas, and former Corporator Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy officially launched the Underground Drainage construction works in various colonies of Mirpet HB Colony Division, taken up with an estimated budget of Rs.1,38,60,000“Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that he will always remain accessible to the public and extend full support for development activities, ensuring overall progress of the Uppal Constituency. Later, he interacted with residents and enquired about local issues.“Corporator Jeripothula Prabhudas, in his speech, stated that he would continuously work towards addressing people's problems and thanked the MLA for his constant support in the development of the division.“In this programme Water Works Manager Venu Gopal, leaders Vanjari Praveen Karipe, Ullem Balaraju, Gummadi Jampal Reddy, Shivarama Prasad, Rammohan Rao, Vasantha Rao, Prasad, Sai Kumar, Harinath Reddy, Veerabhadra Rao, Mallesh Goud, Bodasu Ravi, Subba Reddy, Ashok Reddy, Kishore, Kanakayya, Lingam, Chandrashekhar, Iqbal, Balareddy, Ramakrishna,



Chakravarthi, Ashok, Jaipal, Parveen, Samson, Ajay, Kisthopher, Dasu, Kiran, Gotte Pochayya, Jyothi, Swaroopa, Shekhar Goud, Nisar Ahmed Gori, along with colony residents participated.

Show cause notices issued to those
 absent from polling duty
 Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- Show cause notices issued to those absent from polling duty by the District Collector. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that every officer and staff performing election duties should strictly follow the rules and regulations of the Election Commission and conduct elections in a peaceful atmosphere. In the context of the first phase of elections being held on Wednesday, the

District Collector inspected the distribution center set up at the Polytechnic College in the Yadagirigutta mandal center. Speaking on the occasion, the District Election Officer and District Collector... inquired whether all the officers assigned to duty for the elections had come or not. He said that disciplinary action would be taken against those who were absent. Show cause notices should be issued immediately to the absent staff. All polling staff should first check whether the ballot boxes, which are polling equipment, are opening easily or not. The necessary materials should be kept ready by the polling center separately in each polling center. They should reach the polling center from the distribution center and check the voting arrangements once again. They should check everything according to Form-9. They should check whether all the stamps related to the gram panchayat have arrived according to the checklist. They should check again whether the swastika mark is present. The sarpanch and ward members should give two ballot papers to each voter and carefully check whether the voter is putting two ballot papers in the ballot box or not. The District Collector advised the election officers and staff to follow the election rules and regulations and conduct the elections in a peaceful atmosphere. The concerned officials participated in this program.

Campaigning activities banned during second phase of polling:- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector..
Election Officer Hanumantha Rao

“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- In view of the second phase of polling for the Gram Panchayat elections, following the rules and regulations of the State Election Commission, a ban on campaigning activities will come into effect from 5.00 pm on the 12th of this month in the Bhuvanagiri, Bibinagar, Pochampally, Valigonda and Ramannapet mandals, where elections will be held on the 14th of this month, and the restrictions will remain in force until the elections are over, said District Election Officer and Collector Hanumantha Rao. He said that no one should conduct open election campaigning in the above mandals during the 44-hour silence period. The Collector advised all FST, SST, MCC teams and police officers to remain alert and maintain strict vigil. Meanwhile, the Collector ordered that liquor shops and toddy shops in the above mandals be closed from 5.00 pm on Friday, the 12th of this month, until the end of the elections.

According to the orders issued by the State Election Commission, holidays have been declared for government institutions, government schools, and commercial institutions on the 11th, 14th, and 17th of this month, when polling will be held: Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector.. Election Officer Hanumantha Rao

“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- On the occasion of the Gram Panchayat General Elections for the year 2025 in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, as per the orders issued by the Telangana State Election Commission, public holidays have been declared for government offices, local bodies, and government institutions in the respective polling areas on the 11th (Thursday), 14th (Sunday), and 17th (Wednesday), which are the dates of polling, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said in a statement.”“ Yadadri Bhuvanagiri local holiday..”“Also, the management of private industries, commercial establishments, factories and other private institutions has been directed to give paid holiday to the employees working in their respective areas on the polling day or if that is not possible, to provide appropriate time-off (Time-Off / Permission) to exercise their right to vote during the polling time. He informed that the main objective of this action is to provide an opportunity for every voter to exercise his right to vote. District Collector Hanumantha Rao has asked the management and owners of all government and private institutions in the district to strictly follow the orders and provide the opportunity for the employees to exercise their right to vote without any obstacles. He warned that action will be taken as per the relevant laws in case of violation of the orders.



The Dasanjaneya Swamy temple
donated 10 lakhs of rupees.

“S Naga Manoj Kumar, Aswarapet constituency, December 10, Indian Chronicle: “Every rupee spent on God, He gives us in some form. We have seen many people who do not donate even a rupee that is worth 10 lakhs of rupees. Kethepalli Manikyavani, daughter of Seemakurthi Ramalingam, the trustee of Dasanjaneya Swamy temple in Ashwarapet town, and her husband, Kethepalli Ram Kumar, have settled in America with the intention of ensuring that there is no shortage in the activities of God. As part of a program, those who came to India deposited Rs. 10 lakhs in SBI bank with Dasanjaneya Swamy and expressed their devotion. They requested that the interest earned on this amount be used for the service and worship of the Swamy.



Voters should exercise their right to vote in a pleasant atmosphere with green plants and flowers at polling stations:- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, District Election Officer, Collector Hanumantha Rao

Eco-friendly polling stations ready



“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..December 10):- District Election Officer, Collector Hanumantha Rao urged voters to exercise their right to vote in a pleasant atmosphere with green plants and flowers at polling stations. Green model polling stations have been set up in Aleru, Atmakur, Bommalararamam, Rajapet, Turkapalli, and Yadagirigutta mandals, where the first phase of polling will be held as part of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district gram panchayat elections. Green model polling stations have been prepared in Sarajipeta, Aleru Mandal. Sarvepalli, Atmakur Mandal, Pakkiringudem, Bommala Ramaram Mandal Narsapur, Rajapeta Mandal, Saidapuram village, Yadagirigutta Mandal. As part of this, plastic-free items have been used in the polling station, the entrance of the polling station has been decorated



with flowers, green plants from outside to the booth, and coconut palms have been arranged. Wheelchair facilities have been provided to the elderly and the disabled. Special chairs have been arranged for mothers of small children, and banana leaves or dry leaves have been used instead of plastic plates during lunch, said the District Election Officer and Collector. The District Collector, who inspected the polling station in Sarajipeta village, Aleru Mandal as part of the Green Model Polling Station, said that all arrangements should be made ready. He suggested that the polling process should start at 7 a.m. It was suggested that voters who come to exercise their right to vote in the morning should be welcomed with flowers and plants. All kinds of facilities have been provided to the voters at the polling stations so that they do not face any difficulties.

Kushaiguda PSJ Court Delivers Sensational Verdict



Sheikh Babawali (A2)

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“In Crime No. 450/2012 registered at Kushaiguda Police Station, the Principal Senior Civil Judge Ravinder sentenced the accused Pandith Sampath Kumar (A1) and Sheikh Babawali (A2) to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs.11,000 in an attempt-to-murder case. According to police, A1 Pandith Sampath Kumar is



Pandith Sampath Kumar (A1)

a known rowdy-sheeter. The investigation and trial saw coordinated efforts from Investigating Officer K. Suresh Kumar, Additional Public Prosecutor Ravikumar, Court Duty Officers P. Narasimha and L. Ramesh, and Summons Constable G. Srinivas. After the judgment was pro-

nounced, both convicts were shifted to Cherlapally Prison.

Citizens Must Cultivate Strong Awareness of Human Rights: Additional Junior Civil Judge Sudha Rani.



“P.S. ASHOKAN“KARIMNGAR BUREAU.”“People must develop a profound awareness of human rights, and the Indian Constitution entrusts citizens not only with rights but also corresponding responsibilities, stated Manthani Additional Junior Civil Judge A. Sudha Rani. She was addressing students as the chief guest at the

Human Rights Day programme held on Thursday at the Tribal Welfare Junior College." "In her address, Judge Sudha Rani emphasized that citizens have been able to scale remarkable heights by exercising the rights granted to them under the Constitution with diligence and responsibility. She expressed hope that the younger generation would uphold constitutional principles and contribute to a more just society." "Manthani Bar Association Vice President Ragotham Reddy noted that December 10 is observed globally as Human Rights Day, commemorating the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He further advised that individuals should nurture a spirit of inquiry and develop the courage to question injustice wherever it occurs." "The programme was attended by College Vice-Principal A. Aruna Sri, Sports Secretary Katakam Srinivas, Library Secretary D. Vijay Kumar, and advocates Shashibhooshan Kache and Shabana, along with the teaching faculty and a large number of students.

Panchayat election campaign gaining momentum in Cantonment



“Secunderabad Cantonment. December 10 (Indian Chronicle):” The polling date of gram panchayat is approaching, the candidates who have left the villages are coming to this area for the village people living in the cantonment area. But the local people are wondering what the elections are going on in the cantonment, they are coming from the villages to the city for labor work and living in the cantonment area, in this context to attract the people of the respective villages, the candidates of Grama Panchayats from different areas are going door to door

for their voters in Bowenpally Bapujinagar, Mahatma Nagar, New Bowenpally in the cantonment area. Vanaparthi pedha thaanda D Sarpanch candidate Jayamma Bapujinagar campaign on Wednesday. who is being supported by Tanda D Panchayat Congress, wants to vote for her. But the local Congress leaders Karan Singh, Srikanth, also extended their support and wished them well

Civil Aviation Director visits Kolkata airport, interacts with passengers, holds review meet with officers



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

She met passengers, inspected facilities and assured full support to restore normal operations.The Civil Aviation Ministry deployed Director Tanvi Sundriyal to Kolkata Airport for an on-ground review as IndiGo’s nationwide disruptions entered their eighth day. (Express Photo by Amit Chakravarty)Following the recent operational issues with IndiGo, the Ministry of Civil Aviation on Tuesday dispatched a senior director to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata, to ensure that passenger services remain smooth and uninterrupted.Civil Aviation Director Tanvi Sundriyal conducted a comprehensive, on-the-ground review, inspecting passengers’ touchpoints and interacted directly with affected travellers to understand their concerns firsthand. She assured them of MoCA’s continuous efforts to stabilise operations and improve the overall travel experience.

She visited key areas, including IndiGo’s helpdesk,

airline ticket booking counters, check-in counters, security hold area (SHA), departure gates, and queue management zones.Commercial flight operations in the country have faced significant disruptions since December 2, following mass cancellations of Indigo flights. The primary reason for this disruption was attributed to crew shortages in the wake of the new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules, which stipulate more rest for pilots and rationalisation of their flying duties — particularly late-night operations.Sundriyal held a review meeting with senior officers of Airport Authority of India (AAI), Kolkata Airport, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), and airline representatives. They engaged in detailed discussions regarding ongoing actions and additional steps required to streamline flight operations, enhance manpower deployment, and strengthen passenger facilitation measures.Sundriyal commended the proactive measures already implemented by AAI, CISF, and airlines to assist passengers, such as increased staff deployment, special facilitation counters, real-time passenger updates, and improved coordination among all stakeholders.She reiterated that the Ministry is actively monitoring the situation and has extended its full support for the swift normalisation of services.“AAI Kolkata Airport assures all passengers that every possible effort is being taken, in coordination with MoCA and airlines, to restore normal operations at the earliest and provide efficient assistance across all touchpoints,” said an officer at Kolkata airport.On Tuesday, flight services at Kolkata airport, where there were 91 scheduled arrivals and 90 scheduled departures, were not affected. Out of 181 flight services, only one flight experienced a delay in departure, according to reports. However, IndiGo cancelled around 180 flights from Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports.

As cold spell sets in, IMD forecasts temperature dip to 13 degrees Celsius in Mumbai

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Minimum temperatures have dipped nearly seven degrees Celsius over three days, and Mumbai woke up to its coldest December day so far on Tuesday morning, at 16.5 degrees. The city is in for a cool spell in the coming days with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting a significant dip in temperatures to nearly 13 degrees Celsius by Friday.After sweltering at 34 degrees Celsius during the day on Monday, Mumbai woke up to below-normal temperatures on Tuesday morning when the suburban observatory in Santacruz recorded a minimum temperature of 16.5 degrees Celsius, which is nearly 2.3 degrees below normal.

Meanwhile, the Colaba coastal observatory logged a temperature of 21.7 degrees Celsius during the same period.This marked a significant dip from the weekend, when minimum temperatures hovered around 23 degrees Celsius on Saturday morning and around 21 degrees Celsius on Sunday.Meteorologists attributed the current cold spell to a western disturbance that passed through the north.“There was a weak western disturbance that passed by Sunday. With this, cool northerly winds started moving in, reaching up to Mumbai from Monday. Since the northerly winds are very dry, it leads to a drop in humidity levels. Furthermore, as the nights are clearer, it allows the land to



cool down much faster. Owing to these factors, Mumbai is expected to see a further drop in temperatures over the next couple of days,” said Athreya Shetty, an independent weather observer.According to the IMD, Mumbai is expected to experience a consistent dip in day as well as night temperatures over the week. While the maximum temperatures are forecast to fall up to 32 degrees Celsius, the minimum temperatures are slated to dip gradually, with a peak of 13 degrees between Thursday and Friday. Over the weekend, however, temperatures are slated to experience a spike with a change in wind directions.

Why farmers bristle at Centre’s draft Seed Bill 2025 as feedback deadline nears

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The draft Seed Bill 2025 was introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on November 13, and feedback is invited until December 11. Farmer organisations are up in arms against the draft, and many have already submitted detailed objections via email.With just two days left for public submissions, here is a quick explainer on what the bill proposes and why it has angered farmers.

What is the Seed Bill?

The Seed Bill is a proposed law meant to regulate the quality, production, sale and distribution of all seeds sold to farmers. It seeks to ensure that only registered and tested seeds enter the market, requires seed companies to disclose germination rates and other details on labels, and makes companies liable to compensate farmers if seeds fail to perform despite proper sowing.The bill also gives the government powers to regulate seed prices in specific cases and imposes penalties on those selling fake or substandard seeds.

Why do farmers find it controversial?

Farmers find the Seed Bill controversial because they fear it increases the control of private and multinational seed companies over the seed market. Many feel the registration requirements could restrict farmers’ traditional practice of saving and exchanging seeds. Some farmers even have indigenous varieties that were restored decades ago.They believe compensation provisions are difficult to enforce and still favour companies. There is also concern that regulation may indirectly increase seed prices, making farmers more dependent on commercial seed suppliers rather than their own seed systems.

Reaction from SKM and other farmer bodiesThe Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has strongly condemned the draft, calling it a move that would hand over control of India’s seed sector to corporate and multinational companies. Other farmer bodies, such as the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) and SKM (non-political), have also been protesting. They say the bill poses a serious threat to “seed sovereignty,” undermines food security and weakens farmers’ rights.SKM leader Jagmohan Singh Patiala said, “By enabling corporate dominance and predatory pricing of seeds, the bill will squeeze small and marginal farmers, increasing their cost of cultivation and making them more vulnerable.”“The proposed regulatory architecture would centralise control, reduce the states’ power in agriculture, and sideline traditional seed systems and community seed keepers — thereby harming agricultural biodiversity and farmers’ autonomy,” added Sarwan Singh Pandher, coordinator of KMM.On December 8, SKM burnt copies of the Seeds Bill 2025 and the Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2025 across villages in Punjab and in other states as a symbolic protest, demanding the immediate withdrawal of both drafts.With the BJP seeking to expand and strengthen its presence in rural Punjab, growing resentment over the draft Seed Bill and the draft Electricity Amendment Bill 2025 is creating fresh hurdles for its outreach efforts.Interestingly,



rival political parties such as the Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal and even the ruling Aam Aadmi Party have not taken strong positions on the issue. “No one has raised the issue strongly except for a passing reference by Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal,” said environmental activist Samita Kaur from Punjab.

Russian An-22 military aircraft with seven onboard crashes in Ivanovo region



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Moscow: An Antonov An-22 military transport aircraft with seven people on board crashed in Russia’s central Ivanovo Region on Tuesday during its first flight after repairs, the defence ministry said.

“The aircraft crashed in an unpopulated area. A search and rescue crew has left for the accident site to determine the fate of the aircraft’s crew,” the ministry said. TASS reported that fragments of the An-22 were found on the shore and in the water.The An-22 is a heavy transport aircraft used by the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKs) to transport heavy weapons. The aircraft has a maximum takeoff weight of 225 tonnes and a payload capacity of 60 tonnes.

Deloitte launches search platform Tax Pragma



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

New Delhi: Deloitte India on Tuesday launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered platform, Tax Pragma, which will help tax professionals with faster research inputs and insights.The Tax Pragma platform functions as a mobile-friendly tax AI agent, enabling smarter search, faster learning and seamless cross-skilling across Income Tax, GST/ Indirect Tax and Transfer Pricing, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP said in a statement.

It will work as a search and summarisation platform and can also handle and solve high-volume, high-risk prob-

lems across Tax Deducted at Source (TDS), tax audit reporting, litigation management, GST compliance, Transfer Pricing and capital gains computation, while delivering real-time dashboards, predictive insights and stronger audit trails.Unlike conventional research tools that merely retrieve documents, Tax Pragma handles complex tax queries, performs in-depth background searches and delivers crisp, substantiated answers.Its interactive chatbot allows users to explore tax documents or case laws in detail, Deloitte said.Deloitte India, President, Tax, Gokul Chaudhri, said, “Tax Pragma represents a pivotal shift in how tax teams of businesses, large or small, can use responsible AI to access technical insights at speed.” Deloitte India Partner Sumit Singhania said, “Following a successful in-house pilot involving more than 2,000 Deloitte professionals actively using this platform, we are seeing new age technologies fundamentally reshape the pace and precision of tax knowledge and insights. Built on a deeply trained, enterprise-grade model.” Tax Pragma is trained on more than 1.2 million tax cases and on over 5,000 Deloitte-authored technical papers, solutions and expert insights.Offered through flexible subscription models, Tax Pragma is accessible at multiple price points, with a brief trial period to help organisations identify the right fit. Customisation is also available for client-specific in-house data, the statement added.

CBI registers 2 criminal cases against ADA group, names Anil Ambani’s son Jai in Rs 228 crore fraud case filed by Union Bank

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered two criminal cases against companies of the ADA group and Jai Anmol Ambani, son of industrialist Anil Dhirubhai Ambani, along with several others, including the company’s directors, promoters and unknown bank officials. The agency has been conducting searches at various official and residential premises in this connection on Tuesday and several incriminating documents have been found.As per a CBI release issued on Tuesday, the first case was against Jai Ambani and Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL, a company of Reliance ADA Group) along with the company’s promoters, directors and unknown bank officials. The case was registered based on the complaint of Union Bank of India over allegations of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal misconduct for causing wrongful loss of Rs 228.06 crore to the bank (e-Andhra Bank merged with the Union Bank of India).

After registering the case, the agency obtained search warrants from the special CBI court in Mumbai on Tuesday and conducted searches at two official premises under RHFL and at the residential premises of Jai Ambani and Ravindra Sudhalkar, who was the ex-CEO and whole-time director of RHFL. All the searches were conducted in Mumbai city, and the agency found several incriminating documents which were seized for further probe.As per the CBI release, the bank alleged in its complaint that RHFL had availed loans to the tune of Rs 5,572.35 crore from 18 banks and corporate bodies, including the Union Bank of India, for business purposes. As part of the loan conditions, the company was expected to maintain financial discipline and needed to repay instalments, pay interest, and adhere to all security and compliance requirements.The account of RHFL was declared a Non-Performing Asset (NPA) on September 30, 2019 and as fraud on October 10, 2024, by the Union Bank of India for causing wrongful loss of Rs



228.06 crore to the bank (e-Andhra Bank), said CBI, adding that a thorough investigation will be conducted into the allegations of defrauding all the banks and financial institutes.The second case was registered against Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL, a company of Reliance ADA Group), along with its promoters, directors and unknown bank officials. The FIR was filed based on the complaint given by the Bank of Maharashtra based on allegations of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal misconduct for causing a loss of Rs 57.47 crore to the bank.RCFL had reportedly availed loans to the tune of Rs 9,280 crore from 31 banks, non-banking financial corporations (NBFCs) and corporate bodies, including the Bank of Maharashtra. The loan account RCFL was declared NPA by the bank on March 25, 2020, and as fraudulent on October 4, 2025, for causing a loss of Rs 57.47 crore to the Bank of Maharashtra.The agency also obtained search warrants from the special CBI court in Mumbai, and conducted searches at the official premises of RCFL in Mumbai and the residential premises of Devang Pravin Mody, director of RCFL, in Pune on Tuesday. Several incriminating documents have reportedly been found and are being taken into possession for investigation.

90k stray dogs in Mumbai; goats worth Rs 1 crore for leopards: Maharashtra MLAs debate human-animal conflict

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday agreed to hold meetings with MLAs to address the growing menace of stray dogs in urban areas and leopard attacks on humans in rural areas, after legislators demanded strict measures during discussions on two separate calling-attention motions on the opening day of the legislature’s Winter Session in Nagpur.Urban Development Minister Madhuri Misal, in her reply on the calling attention motion over the issue of stray dogs, informed the state Legislative Assembly in a written reply that the number of stray dogs in Mumbai is around 90,757, and the number of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) shelters is limited to eight.

“In municipal corporation areas, the total number of dogs is around 11.88 lakh. While the total number of shelters in all 29 municipal corporation areas is 105,” the reply stated.BJP MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar raised the need to have more shelters and asked if vacant plots would be used to set up shelters immediately. Misal provided details of how the government machinery is following the Supreme Court order.Legislators from all parties demanded to know the concrete measures that would be taken up. Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Sunil Prabhu said that even the legislators are not safe from stray dogs when they visit the constituency.As the MLAs continued with their demands, Misal announced that a meeting with concerned legislators would be held to discuss the issue in detail.‘Release goats worth Rs 1 crore into forest’Discussing the calling attention motion on leopard attacks on humans, state Forest Minister Ganesh Naik on Tuesday said he had asked that goats be released in large numbers in forests to stop leopards from entering human settlements in search of prey.“If four people are killed in leopard attacks, the state must pay Rs 1 crore as compensation. So I told officials, instead of paying compensation after deaths, release goats worth Rs 1 crore into the forest so leopards do not venture into human habitats,” Naik said, while replying to the calling attention motion raised by NCP(SP) MLA Jitendra Awhad on the issue of leopards attacking humans, as majority of cases are concentrated in Pune, Nashik and Ahilyanagar districts.

“Earlier, they were described as forest animals, but now their habitat has shifted to sugarcane fields. The behaviour and living patterns of leopards have changed. There are no fruit-bearing trees left in the forest areas, due to which...leopard and other carnivores are venturing out of the forest areas. I have asked the forest officials to plant fruit-bearing trees which will keep the prey in the forest itself,” Naik said while responding to a query.Naik also informed the House that the state government has sent a proposal to the Union government to omit the leopard from



Schedule I to Schedule-II.Objecting to Naik’s response, Nana Patole said, “As a member of Lok Sabha in the past, I had served in a committee related to wildlife issues. I can assure you that Union government will not approve state’s proposal to change the leopards from Schedule I to Schedule II.”Independent MLA Sharad Sonawane from Junnar in Pune district said, “Leopards menace is maximum in my constituency where 55 people have died in leopard attacks. There is a rescue centre in my constituency; its capacity should be increased.”Naik said, “The state has decided to increase the intake capacity of the leopard rescue centre in Junnar. A new rescue centre is also proposed in Ahilyanagar to curb the leopard problem.”As all party MLAs continued to raise the issue, Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule announced to hold division-wise meetings with MLAs and forest and revenue officials to find out solutions to the issue.

Village in Kothagudem vanishes, voters displaced, but elections to be held

Kothagudem: Voters and contestants in Venkatesh Khani gram panchayat, reserved for ST (Women) in Chunchupalli mandal of Kothagudem Assembly constituency, are facing an unusual predicament.Though around 183 voters are registered under the gram panchayat with four wards, there is no village in existence. It effectively disappeared due to the expansion of the Venkatesh Khani opencast mine, forcing residents to move into areas under the Kothagudem Municipal Corporation.

‘Why was he not shot in leg?’: Opposition slams Maharashtra govt for ‘police encounter’ of Rohit Arya during Powai hostage crisis

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The government defended the police, saying Arya acted violently and an inquiry is already in progress.The Opposition accused the Maharashtra government of withholding payments owed to consultant Rohit Arya, alleging it triggered the Powai hostage crisis before his police encounter.The Opposition in Maharashtra Tuesday questioned the ‘police encounter’ of government consultant Rohit Arya, stating that the Powai hostage crisis involving him was a result of the government failing to pay him for a cleanliness project he had led.

Arya died after the police stormed his studio in Powai, where he had held children and two adults captive, and shot him on October 30.Congress Legislative Party leader Vijay Wadettiwar, in a calling attention motion in the Legislative Assembly, said, “Arya had worked on the ‘Swachhata Monitor’ (Cleanliness Monitor) and ‘Mukhyamantri Mazi Shala Sundar Shala’ (Chief Minister My Beautiful School) projects during the Mahayuti government’s tenure. The government withheld his payments.”“He made a video stating, ‘Give me my money, I am not a terrorist’. Despite this, why was Rohit Arya encountered? Why was he not shot in the leg? How was an encounter specialist police officer available right at that time?” asked Wadettiwar.He claimed that the incident occurred because the then minister withheld his payments.“Was an inquiry conducted into the former ministers in this matter? Is the money pending with the government?” he asked.Minister of State for Home (Rural) Pankaj Bhoyar clarified that an inquiry is underway into the case.

“The police acted in self-defence because Rohit Arya held small children hostage. There is nothing wrong with police action. The Human Rights Commission has directed



the appointment of a committee and an inquiry, and the inquiry is currently ongoing as per that directive,” said Bhoyar. The minister assured that action will be taken against those responsible for this matter.Govt facing financial problems, says Nana PatoleMLAs Nana Patole and Jayant Patil alleged that the government has depleted the state treasury so severely that it has failed to pay consultants like Arya.“What he did cannot be supported at any cost, but isn’t it the government who is responsible for this? If it can’t pay the consultants, that means the government is facing financial problems,” said Congress MLA Patole.NCP (SP) MLA Jayant Patil questioned whether the government had filed police complaints against Arya for illegally collecting money from schools, rather than sending him reminders.Bhoyar maintained that Arya had run the Swachhata Monitor project twice under CSR and was paid Rs 9.90 lakh. “He wrongly interpreted that he would get the third project and started collecting money from schools without consent from the government. The government had asked him to return the money,” said the minister.

Bengal polls will be announced soon after publication of voters’ list to block legal challenge: Mamata Banerjee

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday claimed that assembly elections in the state would be announced immediately after the publication of the final electoral rolls following the SIR exercise in February to prevent legal challenges.Addressing a public meeting in Cooch Behar district, Banerjee alleged that the SIR exercise was being used to instil fear among voters.“They will declare elections just after the final rolls of SIR are out in February, so that nobody gets the chance to challenge the rolls legally. It will be done so that elections are held based on that list,” she said.

Banerjee alleged that the EC’s November 4 rollout of the SIR has created “widespread fear” among the people, making them apprehensive that their names would be arbitrarily dropped from the voters’ list.“Now we have to prove our citizenship? What greater shame can there be than this? People who have lived here for generations are being asked to prove who they are,” she said.Stepping up her attack on the Centre, the CM accused the BJP-led government of running an “anarchic and autocratic” regime.She alleged that



the BJP would destroy the culture, language and heritage of Bengal if it came to power in the state.Banerjee also claimed that had her government blocked the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the BJP-led dispensation at the Centre would have imposed President’s Rule in West Bengal.“They were waiting for a chance. If we had stopped the SIR, President’s Rule would have been imposed here,” she alleged.

18-year-old lures minor girl on pretext of dropping her at Pune school, rapes her at secluded location; arrested



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

An 18-year-old Class 12 student was arrested on Monday for allegedly raping a 14-year-old schoolgirl in Pune last week, the police said, adding that they had met two months ago.Officers said the accused picked up the girl on Thursday on the pretext of dropping her at school before committing the sexual assault at a secluded location. He

has been charged for raping a person under 16 years of age and criminal intimidation under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act.

The inspector in charge of the police station where the case was registered said the girl is a student of Class 9 at a school in Pune. “The incident came to light after the girl opened up to her mother about it on Sunday, after which the girl’s mother approached the police station,” the officer said.Somay Munde, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), said, “The First Information Report (FIR) was registered early on Monday and the accused was immediately placed under arrest. Further probe is underway.”“The accused has been remanded in police custody. The investigation suggests that the girl and the accused first met at a bus stop. On Thursday, he picked up the girl when she was at the bus stop and said he would drop her off at the school on his bike. However, while on the way to the school, the accused suddenly took a different route and raped the girl at a secluded location,” the inspector said, adding that he also threatened her not to reveal the matter to anyone.

‘He would’ve been alive if safety protocol had been maintained,’ Goa nightclub fire victim Subhash Chhetri’s sister says as family in Bengal waits for his body

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

His father had died years ago. To support his mother, Subhash Chhetri went to Goa last year and was working there as a cook. Like many other 24-year-olds, Subhash also dreamed of building a house and starting a family. He was scheduled to return home next March. But his dreams were reduced to ashes in a fire at a nightclub in North Goa last week. His mother Tanka Maya Chhetri has not been keeping well since then.

Subhash Chhetri died in the devastating nightclub fire that also claimed 24 other lives on the night of December 6. The tragic incident has cast a shadow of grief over his family. The Siliguri police commissionerate has contacted the Goa Police to bring back his body.Subhash’s house is located at Banuchhat in Chopukuria, adjacent to Bagdogra, near Siliguri. After his father Manbahadur Chhetri’s death, the burden of the family fell on Subhash’s shoulders. His elder sister is married and lives in Kalimpong.As the news of the nightclub fire spread in the village on Monday, neighbours gathered at his house. They were trying to console Subhash’s mother. His sister, Urmila Chhetri, said, “My brother was supposed to come last year during Dashami, but couldn’t get leave.He informed his brother-in-law four

days ago that he would come in March next year. That will not happen now. All of my brother’s and the family’s dreams are over. Fire safety was compromised. If they had maintained proper safety protocols, my brother would have been alive.”“He was on duty at the time of the explosion. His phone was ringing till the evening. We thought he was alive, but later the police informed us that his phone was with them and that he had died. The police also conducted a postmortem on his body,” his sister added.

Bijay Mangar, the deputy head of the Hetmuri-Singhijhora panchayat in Phansidewa in Darjeeling district, told reporters, “Subhash was my neighbour. He went to work in Goa with dreams of paying off land debt and building a house. He was the family’s sole earner.”The police have taken steps to bring Subhash’s body back to the village. According to local sources, the body was taken from Goa to Mumbai by flight on Monday night. From there, the body will be brought to Bagdogra Airport.“We have heard about the incident. Contact has been made with the Goa Police to bring the body here,” said Rakesh Singh, Deputy Police Commissioner, Siliguri.Subhash’s sister said that the family was initially informed that he had been critically injured in the nightclub fire. Later, it was confirmed that he had lost his life in the incident.

How a Mumbai man tracked his 79-year-old grandmother using GPS after a hit-and-run accident

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The police in Mumbai said Tuesday they have launched a manhunt for an unknown motorcycle rider after he allegedly hit a 79-year-old woman in the city’s Sewri area, severely injuring her last Wednesday.The RAK Marg police registered a case on Monday under sections 281 (rash or negligent driving that endangers human life) and 125 (b) (rash or negligent acts endangering human life or safety) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the unknown biker. The woman’s grandson filed the complaint.According to the police, the victim, Saira B Tazzuddin Mulla, lives in the Sewri area along with her family members. They said the accident occurred on December 3 at around 4.30 pm, when Saira was on her way to her old home, which is a few hundred meters from her current address. Her family lives in both places.

At around 5 pm, an unknown biker hit her in front of the Arya Honda showroom near Dnyaneshwar Nagar. She suffered serious injuries to her head, legs, chest, and waist. Passersby rushed her to KEM Hospital, a police officer said.When Saira did not return home, her family began searching for her. Her grandson, Mohammad Wasim Ayub



Mulla, who had installed a GPS device on her body, tracked her, and found her location at KEM Hospital. He rushed to the hospital and found his grandmother had been admitted there.He took her to the JJ Hospital for better treatment, where doctors found a fracture in her back and several internal injuries, said a police officer.A police officer said Wasim visited the RAK Police Station Monday, and registered a case. The officer added that the investigation is underway.

Gadchiroli NCP leader Geeta Hinge killed in accident on Nagpur-Umred Highway

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The accused driver, Dev Ghadge, a resident of Nagpur, also suffered serious injuries in the collision and is currently undergoing treatment.The accused driver, Dev Ghadge, a resident of Nagpur, also suffered serious injuries in the collision and is currently undergoing treatment.Geeta Sushil Hinge, a women’s wing leader of the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in Gadchiroli, was killed in an accident on the Nagpur-Umred Highway near Pachgaon, over 30 km from Nagpur, early on Monday, the police said. She was 54.

The accident occurred when a speeding car jumped the road divider and rammed into the vehicle in which Hinge and her husband were travelling.According to the complaint filed by Shiv Sangidwar, 22, Hinge’s nephew, the family had travelled to Nagpur for a function and was returning to Gadchiroli. Hinge’s husband was driving the car, according to a press note issued, while she was seated in the passenger seat. The nephew alleged that the car travelling from Umred towards Nagpur was being driven in a reckless and negligent manner. The driver, identified as Dev Ghadge, allegedly lost control of his vehicle, crossed the central road divider, and collided head-on with the Hinge family’s car on



the opposite side of the highway.While Hinge sustained fatal injuries, Ghadge, a resident of Nagpur, suffered serious injuries and is currently undergoing treatment.The Kuhi Police have registered a case against Ghadge under sections 281 and 106(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for rash driving and causing death by negligence.Hinge, who also headed the Aadhar Vishva Foundation through which she actively engaged in social work, was regarded as a prominent figure in Gadchiroli.

farmer’s son, who struggled to pay fees, now helps farmers generate Rs 450 crore revenue

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

At 10 am every day, small vans and pick-up trucks leave villages of Khed, Junnar, Ahmednagar, among others, carrying farmers and their produce, and reach Pune by late afternoon. At 4 pm, farmers’ markets with fresh vegetables straight from the fields open on specific days of the week in Magarpatta, Wagholi, and Karve Nagar, among other locations in Pune and Mumbai.The buyers have been waiting for them and the bustle continues till 9 pm, after which the empty vans wind their way back. This weekly farmers’ market in Pune operates under the banner Wingrow Agritech Producer Company Limited.

This year, Wingrow’s farmers are collectively expected to achieve a business turnover of Rs 450 crore. Last year, they sold Rs 240 crore worth of farm products. In November, Wingrow emerged as a winner in the rural category of the 13th National Conference on Social Innovation. The Pune International Centre organised the competition.It has been a long journey for Mayur Pawar, the son of a farmer from Mhase village in Shirur, who had once struggled to pay his fees. “My father used to grow good-quality rice, but we did not have market linkages. The middlemen would reap the benefits and we used to get very little money. They would buy the products from us and set their prices,” says Pawar. There was only one way out of the tunnel. Still in college in 2017, Pawar set up the company with 20 farmers. He visualised a platform that would provide direct market linkages for marginal and small landholding farmers, women self-help groups, farmer producer organisations, and farmer producer companies.Today, there are 6,500 farmers and Wingrow operates 46 physical farmers’ markets in Pune and Mumbai. “It was a challenge to convince the farmers. Over generations, farmers had become accustomed to selling their products from home. It was outside their imagination to come to the market in Pune and sell to customers,” says Pawar.Once farmers began coming to the city, Pawar realised they couldn’t interact with buyers. “We needed to train them. Yeh sab choti-choti jo cheezein hain, unpe dhyani diya (we paid attention to the small details).”

Then, he turned the focus to the main marketing. “We worked on branding and social media engagement. We



asked ourselves, ‘What do customers need and what are we supplying?’ This is how we carried out the mapping of our market and prepared ourselves,” says Pawar.Earlier this year, he started Wingrow Sakhi Market in Pune to help women cultivators by providing them with a source of livelihood.“We have also developed India’s first stall booking platform for Women self-help groups, marginal, and small landholding farmers, encouraging them to plan sales efficiently, access real-time demand-supply insights, and reduce food waste,” he says.Soon, there will also be an IoT-based weighing machine, which will do more than weigh vegetables.“The weighing machine will allow all the data to hit our servers. Not only will the buyers get an accurate measurement, but they will also get a digital bill. The farmers will be able to study the data to understand the demand trends in individual markets. This will help us predict market unit trends and farmers can carry out production accordingly,” says Pawar.He adds that the enterprise is committed to Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG13), the United Nations’ call for action to combat climate change, and is promoting sustainable agriculture and building climate resilience in multiple ways.“We have started a processed food unit to use up excess produce and reduce wastage. We are processing moringa, beetroot and broccoli chips, among others, which are doing very well in the market,” he says. And this, he says, is just the start.

Only 27% of allocation for urban development schemes spent with less than 4 months remaining in FY 2025-26

Key ministry schemes, including the Swachh Bharat Mission and PMAY, have seen less than a quarter of their budgets spent so far. For Swachh Bharat Mission, the ministry has so far spent Rs 829 crore of the Rs 5,000 crore allocated, or 16.58 per cent.Key ministry schemes, including the Swachh Bharat Mission and PMAY, have seen less than a quarter of their budgets spent so far. For Swachh Bharat Mission, the ministry has so far spent Rs 829 crore of the Rs 5,000 crore allocated, or 16.58 per cent.

With under four months left to the end of the financial year, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has spent just 27.90 per cent of its budget on Central sector schemes for urban areas, including the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), has learnt.The ministry was allocated Rs 92,743 crore for Central sector schemes in the Budget Estimates (BE) for 2025-2026. As discussed at a recent review meeting held by the Ministry of Finance, MoHUA’s expenditure as of December 2 stood at Rs 25,878 crore, or 27.90 per cent of the allocated amount for Central sector schemes.Apart from spending on PM-SVANidhi, the scheme for small working capital loans for street vendors, and construction of general pool accommodation, which includes the Central Vista

redevelopment project, all other schemes had less than 50 per cent expenditure, it is learnt.The highest amount spent so far has been on the mass rapid transit system and Metro projects (Rs 14,811 crore), accounting for 42.55 per cent of the budget allocated to the scheme.Key ministry schemes, including the Swachh Bharat Mission and PMAY, have seen less than a quarter of their budgets spent so far. For Swachh Bharat Mission, the ministry has so far spent Rs 829 crore of the Rs 5,000 crore allocated, or 16.58 per cent.Under PMAY, only 14.75 per cent (or Rs 3,435 crore) of the allocated budget of Rs 23,294 crore has been spent so far. Also, three schemes — the National Urban Digital Mission, the Urban Challenge Fund, and the Scheme for Industrial Housing — included in the budget have not yet been implemented, with no expenditures recorded as of December 2.Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the setting up of the Urban Challenge Fund in her Budget 2025-26 speech this year.“This fund will finance up to 25 per cent of the cost of bankable projects with a stipulation that at least 50 per cent of the cost is funded from bonds, bank loans, and PPPs (public-private partnerships). An allocation of Rs 10,000 crore is proposed for 2025-26,” she said.It has been learnt that the Revised Estimates (RW) could be 46 per cent lower than the BF

Trump threatens tariffs on Indian rice, but trade metrics show pain will be felt by the U.S.



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Days before a U.S. team of negotiators is to visit India to discuss tariffs, U.S. President Donald Trump has hinted that he might hit India with further tariffs, this time on rice, to prevent it from "dumping" rice in the U.S. However, an analysis of trade data between the two countries shows that such tariffs would hurt the U.S. far more than India, since the U.S. makes up about 3% of India's total rice exports, whereas Indian rice comprises more than one-fourth of the rice imported into the U.S.

In other words, the U.S. is not a major export destination for India, but India is a major import source for the U.S. when it comes to rice. The Hindu had recently reported that a U.S. team of negotiators led by Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Rick Switzer would be in New Delhi on December 10-12 to discuss tariffs with the Indian side. The U.S. is

currently imposing a total of 50% tariffs on imports from India. Mr. Trump made his rice tariff comments during a White House meeting during which he also unveiled a \$12 billion package to support American farmers. In response to a complaint made by a farmers' representative about India, Thailand and other countries allegedly dumping rice in the U.S., Mr. Trump asked the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent: "Why is India allowed to do that? They have to pay tariffs. Do they have an exemption on rice?" Later, he said that the issue of dumping can be solved "so quickly with tariffs" on these countries that are "illegally shipping" into the U.S. 'Driven by domestic politics than trade logic' According to data with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India exported \$391.74 million worth of rice to the U.S. in 2023-24, which makes up about 3.1% of India's total rice shipments. India exports rice to 179 other countries.

On the other hand, according to data from the World Integrated Trade Solutions website, India accounted for about 26% of the \$1.6 billion worth of rice the U.S. imported in 2024. "President Trump's threat on December 8 to impose new tariffs on Indian rice, announced alongside a U.S. farm relief package, looks driven more by domestic politics than by trade logic," Ajay Srivastava, founder of think tank Global Trade Research Initiative, and former Director General of Foreign Trade said. "New duties would scarcely dent Indian exporters, who have strong markets elsewhere, but would make rice costlier for American households," he added. Mr. Srivastava further said that India should read this latest statement by Mr. Trump as election-season messaging to U.S. farmers, not a serious policy shift.

1.30 crore in donations collected for proposed Babri Masjid-style mosque in Bengal's Murshidabad



Donations amounting to more than ₹1.30 crore have been collected so far for the proposed Babri Masjid-style mosque announced by suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, leaders close to the legislator claimed on Monday (December 8, 2025). According to them, ₹37.33 lakh in cash has been counted from four donation boxes and one sack, while online contributions via QR codes have reached ₹93 lakh. They said seven more sealed donation boxes are yet to be opened.

Mr. Kabir laid the foundation stone of the mosque at Rejinagar in Murshidabad on Saturday (December 6, 2025) amid unprecedented security, deliberately choosing December 6, the anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, a move that injected fresh political heat into an already polarised poll-bound Bengal. A former Congress MLA who later joined the Trinamool Congress in 2012, briefly crossed over to the BJP, and then returned to the ruling party in 2020, Mr. Kabir has built a reputation for political turbulence and theatrics, with his suspension following re-

peated run-ins with the party leadership. The event drew tens of thousands of people and was marked by elaborate arrangements, including the serving of shahi biryani to around 40,000 attendees. That day, 11 large stainless steel donation boxes were placed at the venue, with Mr. Kabir appealing for public contributions for the mosque's construction. Since then, supporters have continued to arrive with cash and even bricks for the structure, locals said. Cash-counting began at 7 p.m. on Sunday (December 7, 2025) and continued till midnight, carried out by a team of 30 people using special machines. The remaining seven boxes are scheduled to be opened from 5 p.m. on Monday (December 8), with the same team overseeing the process. To ensure transparency, the counting was live-streamed, Mr. Kabir said.

Mr. Kabir claimed the response had "exceeded all expectations", with donations allegedly also coming in from outside India. Arrangements are being made to shift the collected money to a secured room with CCTV surveillance, and discussions are underway with banks regarding its safe handling, they added. Mr. Kabir was suspended by the Trinamool Congress days before the foundation ceremony as the party distanced itself from his December 6 announcement. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's visit to Murshidabad for a rally against the voter list revision exercise had coincided with the decision, following which Mr. Kabir walked out of the venue in protest. He has since announced that he would launch a new political party on December 22 and field candidates in 135 Assembly constituencies in the upcoming West Bengal elections, while reiterating that the Rejinagar mosque would be constructed at any cost. Even as political temperatures remain high, locals said people are still turning up at the site with construction materials, underlining the emotive pull of a project that has evolved into a major political and religious flashpoint in pre-election Bengal.

We're also deeply committed to the Quad, says Secretary of State Rubio

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The U.S. is "deeply committed" to the Quad — the grouping with India, Japan and Australia — and will continue to build on that in the year to come, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said. "...we're also deeply committed to the Quad, the concept of in conjunction with Japan and India, the building out of this Quad, which is something you'll see," Mr. Rubio said on Monday (December 8, 2025). He delivered remarks along with Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong at the Department of State before the Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations.

Mr. Rubio said that the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting was his first meeting soon after he was sworn in as Secretary of State in January this year. "I had been confirmed, sworn in downstairs, and came right up on that elevator and into this room. And it was in this very room that I did my first event as Secretary of State with the Quad," Mr. Rubio said. "...I think we've had at least three meetings this year, if I'm — I recall correctly, and we'll continue to build on that in the year to come. We look to do more of those," Mr. Rubio said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Takeshi Iwaya, Mr. Rubio and Ms. Wong had met on January 21 for the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the first meeting of the grouping as the second term of U.S. President Donald Trump in the White House commenced this year. The Quad Foreign Ministers had met



again in Washington, DC in July. The 2025 Quad Leaders' Summit was due to be held in India after the 2024 summit was hosted in Wilmington, Delaware. However, the dates for the summit in India are yet to be announced. The third Quad Counterterrorism Working Group (CTWG) meeting between India, Japan, Australia and the United States was held in New Delhi on December 4-5 as a part of India's rotation hosting the next Quad Summit. The Quad CTWG was established during the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in New Delhi in March 2023. The U.S. hosted the fourth annual Quad Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) Tabletop Exercise and Strategic Meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, from December 2-5. This annual event brought together government officials from the United States, Australia, India, and Japan to strengthen disaster-response capabilities across the Indo-Pacific.

Japan assesses damage from 7.5 magnitude quake that injured 33



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Japan was assessing damages on Tuesday (December 9, 2025) and cautioning people of potential aftershocks after a late-night 7.5 magnitude earthquake caused injuries, light damage and a tsunami in Pacific coastal communities. At least 33 people were injured, one seriously, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said. Most of them were hit by falling objects, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told reporters an emergency task force was formed to urgently assess damage. "We are putting people's lives first and doing everything we can," she said. At a parliamentary session on Tuesday (December 9, 2025), Ms. Takaichi pledged the government would continue its utmost effort and reminded people they have to protect their own lives. The 7.5 magnitude quake struck around 11:15 p.m. in the Pacific Ocean, around 80 kilometers off the coast of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan's main Honshu island. The U.S. Geological Survey measured the quake at 7.6 magnitude and said it occurred 44 kilometers below the surface. A tsunami of up to 70 centimeters (2 feet, 4 inches) was measured in Kuji port in Iwate Prefecture, just south of Aomori, and waves up to 50 centimeters struck other communities in the region, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. NHK reported the waves damaged some oyster rafts. The agency lifted all tsunami advisories by 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday (December 9, 2025). Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said about 800 homes were without electricity and Shinkansen bullet trains and some local lines were suspended in parts of the region in the early hours of Tuesday (December 9, 2025). East Japan Railway said it is aiming to resume bullet trains in the region later on Tuesday (December 9, 2025). Power was mostly restored by Tuesday (December 9, 2025) morning, according to the Tohoku Electric Power Co. About 480 residents sheltered at Hachinohe Air Base and 18 defence helicopters were mobilised for a damage assessment, Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said. About 200 passengers were stranded for the night at New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido, NHK reported. Part of a domestic ter-

minal building was unusable on Tuesday (December 9, 2025) after parts of its ceiling cracked and fell to the floor, according to the airport operator.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority said about 450 litres (118 gallons) of water were spilt from a spent fuel cooling area at the Rokkasho fuel reprocessing plant in Aomori, but that its water level remained within the normal range and there was no safety concern. No abnormalities were found at other nuclear power plants and spent fuel storage facilities, the NRA said. JMA cautioned about possible aftershocks in the coming days. It said there is a slight increase in risk of a magnitude 8-level quake and possible tsunami occurring along Japan's northeastern coast from Chiba, east east of Tokyo, to Hokkaido. The agency urged residents in 182 municipalities in the area to monitor their emergency preparedness in the coming week, reminding them that the caution is not a prediction of a big one. Monday's (December 8, 2025) quake occurred just north of the coastal region where the magnitude 9.0 quake and tsunami in 2011 killed nearly 20,000 people and destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. "You need to prepare, assuming that a disaster like that could happen again," JMA official Satoshi Harada said. Smaller aftershocks were continuing Tuesday. The U.S. Geological Survey reported a magnitude 6.6 and later a 5.1 quake in the hours after the initial tremor.

Elon Musk refutes reports that SpaceX is raising \$800 billion

New Delhi: Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk on Sunday refuted reports that SpaceX is raising money worth \$800 billion or NASA gives subsidies to his space company. The Wall Street Journal reported that SpaceX is kicking off a secondary share sale that would value the rocket maker at \$800 billion, surpassing OpenAI to make it the most valuable US private company.

"There has been a lot of press claiming @SpaceX is raising money at \$800B, which is not accurate. SpaceX has been cash flow positive for many years and does periodic stock buybacks twice a year to provide liquidity for employees and investors," said the billionaire in a series of X posts.

He further stated that valuation increments are a function of progress with Starship and Starlink and securing global direct-to-cell spectrum that greatly increases our addressable market. "And one other thing that is arguably most significant by far," he added.

Democracy's paradox, the chosen people of the state

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The Indian passport is meant to be issued only to Indian citizens. Only citizens are supposed to be on the electoral rolls of the country. But holding an Indian passport or having one's name on the electoral rolls is no proof of citizenship, because people can, and have, forged their way to these documents. This is a conflict between evidence of status and status of evidence. This vexed question of citizenship governance has resurfaced in the context of Election Commission of India's countrywide Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The legal challenge against the SIR is based on the following grounds. First, the ECI has no power to determine citizenship, and only the Home Ministry has. Second, there is no provision in the law for an en masse SIR and it can only be done selectively. Third, whether one is a foreigner can be determined only by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under the Citizenship Act and by quasi-judicial bodies such as Foreigners Tribunals constituted under the Foreigners Act, 1946. The ECI has argued that its constitutional mandate to determine the eligibility of individuals to be included in the electoral rolls necessarily entails verifying their citizenship status. Its central contention is that the process of assessing eligibility for enrolment cannot be equated with a formal determination of citizenship. While these arguments may or may not be accepted by the Supreme Court of India (which is hearing the case), the issues at hand are more fundamental, political and even philosophical in nature. What is being questioned in the SIR is the presumption that all residents are citizens unless proven otherwise.

For the individual to prove Countrywide, there is no single piece of evidence that proves Indian citizenship — a document that has the status of being evidence of citizenship status. A legal regime for a countrywide adjudication of everyone's citizenship passed by Parliament is awaiting rollout. In Parliament in August, the Centre was asked what proof there is of Indian citizenship. The Centre — the Minister of Home to be precise — said: "The Citizenship Act, 1955, as amended in 2004, provides the Central Government to compulsorily register every citizen of India and issue a National Identity Card to him.

The procedure for the same has been laid down in the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003." The rules state that national identity cards are to be issued to citizens whose particulars are entered in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a subset of the National Population Register (NPR), which lists all residents. The NRC is mandated in the Act; the NPR is authorised by rules framed under the Act. The NRC is to include only citizens who have proved that they indeed are. The law is clear that when challenged, the onus of proving citizenship lies is on the individual, and not the state. Alongside the 2010 Census during the United Progressive Alliance government, data for the NPR was collected, which was updated in 2015, with details of 119 crore residents. Whether the NPR will be updated along with Census 2027 remains unclear. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dropped its promise of an NRC from the 2024 election manifesto. Any resident can be on the NPR, but to graduate to the NRC, one has to prove that they meet the requirements under the Citizenship Act.

The founders of the Republic favoured a territorial conception of citizenship, Jus Soli or 'Right of the Soil', though elements of blood lineage and ethnicity were also included in the original citizenship Act. Jus Sanguinis or 'Right of Blood/lineage' gained more prominence over the decades. Consequently, citizenship by birth in India has multiple caveats. As the law stands today, to be eligible for citizenship by birth in India, regardless of who the parents are, one has to be born before July 1, 1987. Persons born in India between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004 are citizens of India only if either of the parents is a citizen of the country at the time of his/her birth; and for persons born in India on or after December 3, 2004 to be eligible for citizenship, apart from at least one parent being a citizen, the other parent must not be an 'illegal migrant' at the time of birth. The Citizenship Act of 1955 has been amended multiple times, and it was in 2003 that legislation determined that a section of the residents are 'illegal immigrants' who were to be identified and deported; they and their progeny would not be eligible for Indian citizenship by birth. For a person to be eligible for Indian citizenship by birth now, either both their parents must be determined as citizens, or one of them should be a citizen and the other should not be an illegal immigrant. A section of the identified illegal immigrants qualify for Indian citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, which turned controversial for the explicit religious test that it mandates. In 2008, in a pilot project, a few lakh Indians were issued the Multipurpose National Identity Card (MNIC) by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The card, with an embedded electronic chip with 10 fingerprints, an iris scan, and photograph, along with name, date of birth, parents' names, place of birth, and place



of issue had 10-year validity. The NRC for the whole country was a promise made in the BJP's 2019 manifesto. In 2024, the party went silent on it and we do not hear much about it. The SIR by the ECI comes as a proxy of this exercise. A persisting conflict Regardless of which Ministry or Department oversees the exercise, questions of citizenship, treason and sedition with regard to an individual are decided at the lowest level of bureaucracy and the police. The state's authority is created by the will of the people. People are sovereign; the state is their creation and it is not supposed to be the other way around. Therefore, the modern state apparatus which has been invested with the authority to determine who constitute the people has contradiction built in it. Whether an individual is a citizen, and whether they are not treasonous or seditious are all determined on a daily basis by the border agent, the constable, the village clerk and whoever is enlisting the voter. This conflict persists whether or not the ECI is stopped from carrying out the SIR. The same primary schoolteacher who works for the SIR under ECI supervision would make the same determination for NPR, and then the NRC under the MHA's oversight, if things come to that. The definition, design and application of citizenship laws are such that the state decides who the people are.

The only State that has a draft NRC — Assam — is proof of this concept. To implement the Assam Accord, Parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 1985, which, inserted Section 6A into the Citizenship Act, 1955, effectively creating a separate citizenship regime for Assam that was different from the rest of India, and creating three different cut-offs for residents, and placing them under various citizenship status. A draft NRC was published in 2019, and it marked 19 lakh residents out of 3.29 crore as D, for Doubtful citizenship. A person whose status as a citizen could not be "ascertained beyond reasonable doubt ... to the satisfaction of the registering authority", as per the rules as applied in Assam, ends up as a doubtful citizen. The BJP government in Assam rejected the draft because a large number of people marked D were Hindus. Once a person is marked D in the NRC and/or the electoral rolls, their voting rights can be suspended, their citizenship can be determined by a foreigner's tribunal, and they could be deported. The process relied heavily on legacy records, of possessing documents regarding parentage and residency that go back several decades, to prove the varying cut-off dates of their residency and lineage. There can be no argument that nobody should determine the citizenship of a resident of India or voting right is delinked from citizenship status. There can be a debate on who should be making that determination, and about the fairness and transparency of the process. Discomforting as it is, the burden is on the individual to establish the eligibility for citizenship. And it is the administrative state that makes the determination of who constitutes people. That is a fundamental paradox of democracy and in the relationship between the people and the state.

Study warns excessive social media use affects children's concentration

New Delhi: Children who spend more than 30 minutes on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are likely to experience a gradual decline in their ability to concentrate, according to a study of more than 8,000 children from around age 10 through age 14. Researchers at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden and Oregon Health & Science University in the US investigated a possible link between screen habits and symptoms related to Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). They followed 8,324 children aged 9-14 in the US for four years, with the average time children spent on social media, watching TV/videos, and playing video games — from approximately 30 minutes a day for 9-year-olds to 2.5 hours for 13-year-olds. Children who spent a significant amount of time on social media platforms, such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), or Messenger, gradually developed inattention symptoms,

Agricultural drones are taking off globally, saving farmers time, money



East Lansing: Drones have become integrated into everyday life over the past decade – in sectors as diverse as entertainment, health care and construction. They have also begun to transform the way people grow food. In a new study published in the journal Science, showed that the use of agricultural drones has spread extremely rapidly around the world. Social scientists studying agriculture and rural development set out to document where agricultural drones have taken off around the world, what they are doing, and why they have travelled so far so fast. It also explored what these changes mean for farmers, the environment, the public and governments. Just a few years ago, agricultural drones were expensive, small and difficult to use, limiting their appeal to farmers. In contrast, today’s models can be flown immediately after purchase and carry loads weighing up to 220 pounds (100 kg) – the weight of two sacks of fertiliser.

Their prices vary from country to country due to taxes, tariffs and shipping costs. In the US, a drone owner can expect to spend US\$ 20,000 to US\$ 30,000 for the same equipment that a farmer in China could buy for less than US\$ 10,000. However, most farmers hire service providers, small businesses that supply drones and pilots for a fee, making them easy and relatively affordable to use. Agricultural drones are now akin to flying tractors – multifunctional machines that can perform numerous tasks using different hardware attachments. Common uses for drones on farms include spraying crops, spreading fertiliser, sowing seeds, transporting produce, dispensing fish feeds, painting greenhouses, monitoring livestock locations and well-being, mapping field topography and drainage, and measuring crop health. This versatility makes drones valuable for growing numerous crops on farms of all sizes. We estimated the number of agricultural drones operating in some of the world’s leading agricultural countries by scouring online news and trade publications in many different languages. This effort revealed where agricultural drones have already taken off around the world. Historically, most agricultural technology – tractors, for example – has spread from high-income countries to middle- and then lower-income ones over the course of many decades. Drones partially reversed and dramatically accelerated this pattern, diffusing first from East Asia to Southeast Asia, then to Latin America, and finally to North America and Europe. Their use in higher-income regions is more limited, but is accelerating rapidly in the US.

China leads the world in agricultural drone manufacturing and adoption. In 2016, a Chinese company introduced the first agriculture-specific quadcopter model. There are

now more than 250,000 agricultural drones reported to be in use there. Other middle-income countries have also been enthusiastic adopters. For instance, drones were used on 30 per cent of Thailand’s farmland in 2023, up from almost none in 2019, mainly by spraying pesticides and spreading fertilisers. In the US, the number of agricultural drones registered with the Federal Aviation Administration leapt from about 1,000 in January 2024 to around 5,500 in mid-2025. Industry reports suggest those numbers substantially underreport US drone use because some owners seek to avoid the complex registration process.

Agricultural drones in the US are used mainly for spraying crops such as corn and soy, especially in areas that are difficult to reach with tractors or crop-dusting aircraft. In countries such as China, Thailand and Vietnam, millions of smallholder farmers have upgraded from the dangerous and tiring job of applying agrochemicals by hand with backpack sprayers to using some of the most cutting-edge technology in the world, often using the same models that are popular in the US. Shifting from applying chemicals with backpack sprayers to drones substantially reduces the risk of direct exposure to toxins for farmers and farmworkers. However, because drones usually spray from a height of at least 6 feet (2 meters), if used improperly, they can spread droplets containing pesticides or herbicides to neighbouring farms, waterways or bystanders. That can damage crops and endanger people and nature. Saving labour or displacing it? Drones save farmers time and money. They reduce the need for smallholders – people who farm less than 5 acres (2 hectares), which account for 85 per cent of farms globally – to do dangerous and tiring manual spraying and spreading work on their own farms. They also remove the need to hire workers to do the same. By eliminating some of the last remaining physically demanding work in farming, drones may also help make agriculture more attractive to rural youth, who are often disillusioned with the drudgery of traditional farming. In addition, drones create new skilled employment opportunities in rural areas for pilots, many of whom are young people. On the downside, using drones could displace workers who currently earn a living from crop spraying. For instance, according to one estimate from China, drones can cover between 10 and 25 acres (4 to 10 hectares) of farmland per hour when spraying pesticides. That is equivalent to the effort of between 30 and 100 workers spraying manually. Governments may need to find ways to help displaced workers find new jobs. Drones spray and spread fertilisers and seeds evenly and efficiently, so that less is wasted. They may also reduce damage to crops in the field and consume less energy than large farm machines such as tractors. In combination, these factors may increase the amount of food that can be produced on each acre of land while reducing the amount of resources needed to do so. This outcome is a holy grail for agricultural scientists, who refer to it as “sustainable intensification.” However, much of the evidence so far on yield gains from drone-assisted farming is anecdotal, or based on small studies or industry reports. The drone revolution is reshaping farming faster than almost any technology before it. In just five years, millions of farmers around the world have embraced drones. Early signs point to big benefits: greater efficiency, safer working conditions and improved rural livelihoods. But the full picture isn’t clear yet.

When Jayalalithaa proposed chemical castration for rapists



It was New Year, a day when political leaders would extend greetings wishing people prosperity and happiness. But 2013 was different. Just a fortnight earlier, the country was shaken by the ‘Nirbhaya’ case in which a 23-year-old paramedical student was brutally gang-raped on a bus in the national capital, New Delhi. The young woman was airlifted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore for treatment after which she died on December 29, 2012. Amid a surcharged atmosphere and widespread outrage, the political climate was not ideal to usher in the New Year with greetings. So, on that day, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa chose to respond appropriately to the political situation. She unveiled a 13-point action plan for curbing sexual offences against women. She called for amending central criminal laws to provide stringent provisions to deal with sexual offenders. One proposal stood out. “The Centre would be requested to bring in amendments to introduce death penalty and chemical castration for sexual offenders and prevent them from getting bail till the trial is completed,” Jayalalithaa declared.

This had immediately become a subject matter of discussion nationwide. The National Commission for Women (NCW) welcomed her views seeking amendment of laws dealing with crime against women. “It is a very good decision. She has asked for harsher punishment for the accused and has also said that steps will be taken to amend the Goondas Act,” NCW Chairperson Mamta Sharma had told the news agency, PTI, the same day. Nonetheless, Ms. Sharma acknowledged, law cannot be changed overnight. “There are demands for chemical castration. People have also been asking for capital punishment. But, that is for the Parliament to decide. My only concern is that a serious law should be enacted which would act as a deterrent so that such crimes are not repeated,” she said. Among Jayalalithaa’s other announcements was an assurance that the Tamil Nadu government would bear the entire medical expenses of victims of sexual violence and assist them in their rehabilitation. She added, her government would set up fast track Mahila courts in each district in the State to deal with sexual crimes against women. It would appoint women investigating officers and prosecutors to make the police probe and trial more gender-sensitive. Efforts would be made to expedite the trial by holding daily hearings. She said an integrated women’s helpline on the lines of Childline would be set up with the help of service-minded individuals, activists working for the welfare of women and involving trained professionals capable of handling women in distress. Besides, police personnel in civil clothes would be deployed at places such as malls and women’s colleges to monitor the movement of those who harass women.

Jayalalithaa said sexual offences against women would be treated as “grave crimes” and the investigation in such cases would be supervised by an officer in the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police. Women Inspectors would assist the investigation. While Superintendents of Police and Deputy Inspectors General would conduct a monthly review of such cases; the Inspector General of Police would submit a report in 15 days on the number of cases of sexual crime under investigation and pending in courts to the Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order).

While commending many of her measures, members of the civil society had also disapproved of certain views of Jayalalithaa on the subject. An editorial in The Hindu said: “While coming up with these thoughtful measures, it is unfortunate that Ms. Jayalalithaa could not resist yielding to the calls for the death penalty and chemical castration of offenders. Rape is sexual violence of the most brutal kind, and those who advocate chemical castration are obviously seeing it as an act of sex rather than as an act of violence. If a criminal is deemed so potentially violent that chemical castration is needed to prevent repeat offences, what is the guarantee that he would not resort to other forms of physical violence against women? As a deterrent too, there is no reason why it should work any better than death penalty, and there is enough evidence that death penalty hardly works as a deterrent.” DMK then president M. Karunanidhi also had his reservations on the advocacy of death penalty. Instead, he urged the Central Government to consider a proposal to introduce solitary life imprisonment as maximum punishment for rape convicts. Karunanidhi said though leaders of various political parties had favoured death sentence for rapists, he alone favoured solitary confinement for life as appropriate punishment. “I wanted the State government and the Centre to take firm steps to implement my suggestion. Like many social activists and thinkers, I am not in favour of capital punishment,” he said.

Apple Watch to notify 1 million users about hypertension with new AI-powered feature

New Delhi: Tech giant Apple is planning to notify one million people about hypertension — a high blood pressure condition impacting about 1.3 billion adults globally — using the alert feature on Apple Watch, said CEO Tim Cook. The groundbreaking hypertension notifications feature — available on Apple Watch Series 9, Series 11, and Apple Watch Ultra 2 and Ultra 3 — alerts users if signs of chronic high blood pressure are detected. “With our latest Apple Watch lineup, we were proud to introduce hypertension notifications, developed using large-scale machine learning models. Hypertension is one of the leading risk factors for heart attack and stroke, affecting more than one billion adults worldwide, and we expect to notify more than 1 million users of this life-threatening condition,” said Cook, during the company’s Q4 2025 earnings call on Thursday (US time).

After visit to Vantara, global wildlife committee recommends India pause animal import



A committee of CITES, the globe’s most influential agreement on wildlife conservation, whose strictures on the cross-border movement of protected animal species inform national wildlife laws, has recommended that India’s wildlife authorities pause the issue of permits that allow endangered animals to be imported by zoos, and wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centres. This, CITES says, should be in place until India comprehensively reviews its practices and ensures that “due diligence is exercised systematically and consistently”, and animal trade is not carried out in “violation of the Convention”. India became a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) in 1976. Currently, 185 countries are signatories.

The recommendations are part of a report prepared by a CITES-designated committee after a visit to the Greens Zoological Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre (GZRR) in Jammagar, a part of the Vantara animal rescue and rehabilitation centre affiliated to the Reliance Foundation. The Radha Krishna Temple Elephant Welfare Trust (RKTEWT) is also a part of Vantara, and while primarily focussed on elephant welfare, also has permissions to manage other imported species of fauna. In September, a Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team, constituted to conduct an “independent factual appraisal” of complaints against Vantara, said it found no statutory irregularities in the acquisition of animals. The CITES committee found that the facilities in Vantara kept “exceptionally high standards”, and had “advanced facilities” with appropriate “veterinary care standards”. It also noted that it “could not find evidence” that the facility brought in animals for commercial purposes nor evidence that animals being imported to India lacked import, export, and re-export CITES permits. However, the committee’s report, uploaded on October 31 on the CITES website, noted that “...several imports [by GZRR and RKTEWT] still raise questions regarding the origin of the specimens... the use of source and purpose-of-transaction codes, and the exercise of due diligence by India”. The committee visited Vantara from September 15-20, after it was asked by the CITES Secretariat to look into India’s processes for verifying whether the manner in which live animals were procured reflected the conditions under which they were sourced (for example, ‘W’ — from the wild, or ‘C’ — bred in captivity) and purpose-of-transaction (‘Z’ — to be placed in a zoo, or ‘B’ — breeding in captivity). The visit was following a 2023 recommendation by the Secretariat to look into “trade in live animals with purpose code Z” by the GZRR.

In the last two years, there have been several journalistic investigations into procurement practices at Vantara, as well as reports by environmental groups that alleged animals were being procured in large numbers, both within India and from abroad, in ways that contravened the CITES stipulation. The GZRR is registered as a zoo, rescue centre, a conservation breeding centre, and a centre for studying animals. Under Indian laws, a “zoo” cannot function as a licensed dealer in captive animals. Moreover, rescued or

confiscated animals shall not be displayed to the public. Under CITES conventions, it is legal to trade animals commercially, provided relevant conditions are met, and permits state so explicitly. It is also permissible to buy animals for the purposes of breeding in captivity for conservation purposes, provided paperwork attests to it, and it is registered under appropriate rules of the Convention. The CITES committee’s reservations stemmed from observations where permit codes did not appropriately reflect the arrangement between the exporting country and India. The GZRR, for instance, imported several animals from the Republic of Czechia. That country, according to the committee, “had no doubts” that the animals were being “sold” to the GZRR and were not exported for the “purpose of rescue”. The Czech authorities provided invoices showing lists of animals acquired, price per unit, and taxes. The GZRR’s interpretation, however, was that the animals weren’t “sold”, and the expense involved was the “cost of insurance, freight and customs duties”. India’s wildlife authorities, in explaining this, cited a Supreme Court order of September 15 that said these were indeed costs as the GZRR said so, and another order said that if an animal was procured under a “valid” export permit, it couldn’t be a contravention of Indian law or the CITES.

In a case involving the import by the GZRR of two captive-bred snow leopards from Germany, the latter issued permits under the codes ‘C’ (origin as captive bred) and ‘T’ (for commercial purposes). When the animals reached India, the Indian authorities raised a query on the purpose of import (because of the ‘T’ label). The GZRR said the animals were ‘donated’ by a facility in Germany. Following this, the Indian authorities changed the ‘T’ label to a ‘Z’ (zoological). The committee said that India ideally ought to have checked with German authorities, their reason for labelling it a commercial transaction instead of “only relying on the information by the importer (GZRR)”. The committee highlighted an instance where Indian authorities issued permission allowing the import of chimpanzees from Cameroon by the GZRR. It later turned out that the export permits by Cameroon were forged. The GZRR did not proceed with the import as it couldn’t verify the antecedents of the chimpanzees at the Cameroonian facility. The committee noted that, ideally, Indian authorities should have known that, based on the CITES database, which they can access, Cameroon has not traded any chimpanzees since 2000, and there was no captive breeding of chimpanzees ongoing in that country. “The fake permits brought to the attention of the Secretariat may suggest that the large number of acquisitions of live animals by the GZRR... has attracted attention, and that certain individuals or entities could attempt to exploit this as a way to traffic animals. This shows that there is a need for caution to ensure that imports of large numbers of animals by these facilities are not inadvertently creating a demand for illegally sourced animals. Reinforced due diligence in this regard is crucial,” the committee noted. There were a litany of similar other examples raised by the committee on imports that were permitted by the Indian authorities of hundreds of animals. Indian authorities seemed to be acknowledging these lapses. “...Representatives from India... expressed appreciation for the guidance provided on these issues and confirmed that they would work on improving their processes and procedures. The Indian Management Authority has reiterated this commitment in writing in its submission to the Secretariat for the preparation of the present document. The management of the GZRR also indicated their willingness to be in full compliance with CITES and to develop their own due diligence approach,” the committee report noted. The Hindu reached out with detailed questionnaires to Vantara, and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for comment but had not heard back till the time of going to press.

The paradox of artificial intelligence: Automation is elevating the value of human skills

As artificial intelligence automates ‘average’ competence, the most valuable professional skills are paradoxically the most human ones: judgment, creativity, and empathy. A prevailing anxiety has shadowed the global workforce since the advent of generative artificial intelligence (AI): the fear of human obsolescence. The debate is often framed as a simple contest between human and machine. This narrative, however, misses the true nature of the disruption. The primary target of AI is not the human worker, but the ‘average’ or ‘mediocre’ standard of work. The new generation of AI, trained on the entirety of recorded human output, excels at one thing above all: automating competence. It can produce a “good” memo, a “functional” piece of code, or a “competent” market analysis in seconds. This act of automation effectively raises the floor for performance in every white-collar profession. The new baseline for “acceptable” work is no longer what an average human can do, but what a machine can produce almost instantly. This creates a new professional imperative. To be valuable, a human worker must now provide a contribution that is demonstrably above this new, high baseline. The comfortable middle ground of “average” competence is vanishing. The great skill compression

Recent studies provide clear, empirical evidence for this “skill compression.” A 2023 working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) studied the staggered introduction of an AI assistant to over 5,000 customer service agents. The results were striking. On average, productivity rose by 14%. However, this gain was not evenly distributed. The firm’s top-performing, most-experienced agents saw almost no benefit. The AI’s impact was concentrated almost entirely on the newest and lowest-skilled workers, who saw their performance surge by up to 34%. The implication is profound: the gap between an “average” performer and an “expert” performer is shrinking. AI is elevating the “average,” forcing the entire workforce to re-justify its value on new terms. The paradox: A new demand for ‘humane’ skills. What, then, is the new standard for human value? The answer lies in a fascinating paradox: the more our tools are driven by artificial intelligence, the greater the economic premium on authentic human intelligence.

The World Economic Forum’s 2025 ‘Future of Jobs’ Report, compiled in the wake of the generative AI boom, identified the skills that companies believe are of growing importance. The top five are not purely technical. They are: Analytical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Resilience, Flexibility and Agility, Motivation and Self-Awareness, and Curiosity and Lifelong Learning. These are cognitive and “humane” skills. As AI automates the routine technical tasks, it elevates the importance of the human who can apply judgment, strategy, creativity, and empathy. An AI can run the numbers, but it cannot decide the strategy. It can draft a report, but it cannot build the trust needed to lead a team. The “illusion of thinking”



Before we can understand the path forward, we must understand the machine’s core limitation. Research from leading AI labs, including a notable paper from Apple, has highlighted that an AI’s output is a sophisticated form of mimicry, not genuine reasoning. These Large Language Models are “stochastic parrots”—they are statistically predicting the next most plausible word in a sequence based on their training data. They do not understand the “why” behind their words, nor do they possess common sense or a true model of the world. This is what creates the “jagged frontier”—the phenomenon where an AI can perform a superhumanly complex task (like explaining a niche legal precedent) one moment and then fail a simple logic puzzle the next. The “average” user is easily fooled by this “illusion of thinking.” They are a liability because they will trust a confident-sounding, yet fundamentally incorrect, AI “hallucination.” This is the most durable path: mastering the “humane” skills of leadership, empathy, and strategic judgment. As Sal Khan, founder of Khan Academy, has noted, AI tools like Khanmigo do not make teachers redundant; they make their human skills invaluable. The AI automates the “average” work of content delivery, freeing the teacher to become a facilitator and mentor—a role that is 100% human and cannot be automated. This path is about seeing through the “illusion of thinking” we just discussed. Because AI lacks true understanding, its output is riddled with subtle flaws. Here, the exceptional master—the expert with deep, nuanced domain knowledge—becomes indispensable. Their new job is to be the human validator. The senior doctor must use their deep, earned clinical wisdom to overrule the AI’s plausible-but-flawed diagnosis. The expert software architect must spot the subtle security flaw in the AI’s “functional” code. This deep, nuanced mastery—the ability to see through the AI’s illusion of thought—is the most critical technical skill of the new era. The new call to action

The age of AI is an uncomfortable invitation to excellence. It is a call to abandon the “average” work we have long found tedious. The greatest danger is not the machine, but a passive “cognitive offload”—a human reliance on the tool that allows our own critical faculties to atrophy into mediocrity. A crucial caveat, however, must be noted.

North Korea says its longtime ceremonial head of state Kim Yong Nam has died



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Kim Yong Nam, a quintessential North Korean bureaucrat whose lifelong loyalty to the ruling Kim dynasty allowed him to serve as the country's ceremonial head of state for two decades, has died, state media reported. The Korean Central News Agency said Kim Yong Nam, former president of the Presidium of North Korea's rubber-stamp Supreme People's Assembly, died on Monday of multiple organ failure at the age of 97. KCNA said that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited the bier of Kim Yong Nam to express deep condolences over his death. It said Kim Yong Nam's funeral was set for Thursday. Kim Yong Nam was not related to Kim Jong Un, the third generation of his family to rule North Korea. Kim Jong Un, grandson of state founder Kim Il Sung, took power upon his father Kim Jong Il's death in 2011 in the country's second hereditary power transfer.

Kim Yong Nam served as head of the Supreme People's Assembly from 1998 to April 2019. That post is North Korea's nominal head of state, though the true power was held by the Kim family that has ruled the North since its formal foundation in 1948. Kim Yong Nam, who was known for propaganda-filled speeches with a deep, booming voice at key state events, often appeared in state media greeting visiting foreign dignitaries on behalf of Kim Jong Un and his late father Kim Jong Il. In February 2018, he travelled to South Korea with Kim Jong Un's influential sister,

Kim Yo Jong, to attend the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Olympics as Pyongyang sought better ties with Seoul and Washington after years of heightened animosities on the Korean Peninsula. The trip made Kim Yong Nam the highest-level North Korean official to visit South Korea since Kim Jong Un sent a top military officer to attend the closing ceremony of the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon.

At the Pyeongchang opening ceremony, Kim Yong Nam and Kim Yo Jong sat within feet of then-US vice-president Mike Pence, though the two sides made no apparent contact. North Korea's temporary diplomatic openness peaked with the summits between Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump in 2018 and 2019, but Kim Yong Nam did not attend them and his influence was seen as waning due to his age. In April 2019, he was replaced by Choe Ryong Hae, one of Kim Jong Un's close confidants who previously served as the top political officer of the North's 1.2 million-member military. Kim Yong Nam's career epitomised that of a successful North Korean bureaucrat. He joined the ruling Workers' Party shortly after the 1950-53 Korean War and survived major political purges through the 1970s. He was appointed to the powerful Politburo in 1978 and served 15 years as foreign minister, starting in 1983. During his tenure, the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union disintegrated, leaving North Korea isolated. North Korea watchers also say Kim Yong Nam had an expertise in third-world diplomacy. He was a frequent participant in gatherings of nations that consider themselves independent from major power blocs, including the 2012 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Iran. "I found Kim Yong Nam a puzzling figure. In greetings before business began, he was cordial and relaxed, but once at work, he relentlessly followed his script in a way that reminded of former Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko," former Washington Post reporter Don Oberdofer wrote in his book, "The Two Koreas". In a testament to his loyalty to the ruling dynasty, Kim Yong Nam read an elegy to Kim Il Sung when he died in 1994. He also undertook the job of formally nominating Kim Jong Il to be chairman of the National Defence Commission after the son observed a three-year mourning period.

after a single flying into the clouds". Writing an editorial, The Hindu, on August 13, 1975, stated that "in his (Rao's) view, such instant evaluation is not possible and scientific tests must be carried out over a fairly long period before any verdict on the experiment can be pronounced. Yet the issue involved in the Madras [now Chennai] experiment relates primarily to giving relief to a water-starved place by some means or the other." A fortnight before the dismissal of his government in January 1976, the then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, explained to journalists about the failure of northeast monsoon in the composite districts of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, and Tirunelveli. The State government was contemplating approaching the American company for cloud seeding operations over the districts.

Again, in the early 1980s, the spell of drought hit the State, especially Madras and surrounding areas. This time, the regime was headed by M.G. Ramachandran with Chockalingam as the Chief Secretary. In July 1983, the operation was carried out by a four-member American team, led by Thomas Henderson. A "moderate rainfall" was recorded by Poondi. The experiments went on till October, at the completion of which the State government said the exercise had cost ₹26 lakh, according to a report of this newspaper on November 18, 1983. Eight months later, the government sanctioned ₹62 lakh for cloud-seeding operations [which began in July 1984] over the city's reservoirs. As the situation was grim, the authorities went to the extent of enlisting the services of the violin exponent Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan, who filled the air on the shores of Red Hills tank with the strains of Amritavarshini [a raga said to have been composed by Muthuswami Dikshithar], imploring the rain gods to respond. The State government's purchase of an aircraft in 1983 for the purpose came in for criticism of the Comptroller and Auditor General, whose report was tabled on the floor of the Assembly in November 1987. "The State Government not only did not adopt the usual tender procedure but also paid a price far in excess of the one suggested by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) which inspected the second-hand aircraft," reported this newspaper on November 10, 1987. Six years later, another report stated that "the aircraft remained idle for want of spares for sometime and had to be sent for mandatory overhauling at HAL at a cost of nearly ₹13 lakh and finally had to be disposed of." In 1993, when Chennai was in the grip of yet another spell of water shortage, the trials were done. But, by then, a consensus had emerged among the scientific community that no area got any more than 20% of rainfall over and above the normal. Ten years later, the then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa made an announcement but the authorities did not translate her decision into action in view of the absence of "conducive conditions." The addition of Krishna water and Veeranam tank as sources to Chennai water supply coupled with many seawater desalination plants has made the city's water supply position far better than what it was in the past, rendering cloud-seeding operations out of anyone's thought even as an option to tackle the shortage of drinking water.

Hyderabad: Hyderabad Police on Monday revealed explosive details about the scale of digital piracy run by Ravi, the mastermind behind the illegal movie website iBomma, who allegedly uploaded nearly 21,000 films ranging from Hollywood's 1972 classic 'The Godfather' to the latest Tollywood release 'OG'.

Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar said Ravi not only operated the massive piracy network but simultaneously promoted online betting platforms, creating a dual criminal ecosystem.

"He set up 65 mirror websites. Our teams recovered nearly 21,000 movies from his hard disk. He earned close to Rs 20 crore through piracy, and we've seized Rs 3 crore from his accounts so far," he said. Given the multi-layered fraud and the huge flow of illegal funds, the Commissioner said the case will be escalated to CBI and Enforcement Directorate, as Ravi's operations include international links and a subscriber base of nearly 50 lakh users.

Abigail Spanberger elected Virginia Governor in historic first that boosts Democrats ahead of 2026



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Democrat Abigail Spanberger won the Virginia governor's race on Tuesday, defeating Republican Lt Gov Winsome Earle-Sears to give Democrats a key victory heading into the 2026 midterm elections and make history as the first-ever woman to lead the commonwealth. Ms. Spanberger's victory will flip partisan control of the Governor's office when the former Congresswoman and CIA case officer succeeds outgoing Republican governor Glenn Youngkin. She won with a campaign emphasising economic issues, a strategy that may serve as a model for other Democrats in next year's elections as they try to break President Donald Trump's and Republicans' hold on power in Washington and gain ground in statehouses. Throughout the campaign, Ms. Spanberger made carefully crafted economic arguments against Mr. Trump's policies, while she spent considerable sums on ads tying Earle-Sears to the president. She campaigned across the state, including in Republican-leaning areas. Yet she also emphasised her support for abortion rights in the last Southern state that has not enacted new restrictions or bans on the procedure, and she railed against Trump's Department of Government Efficiency, the U.S. government shutdown and their negative impact on a state with several hundred thousand federal employees. That approach helped corral Democrats' core supporters while attracting the kinds of swing voters who elected Youngkin four years ago. It also continued a historical trend for Virginia: Since Jimmy Carter won the White House in 1976, Virginia has backed a governor from the opposite party of every first-term president in the following year. This year is a special case, given the gap between Trump's terms. Republicans, meanwhile, must grapple again with a battleground loss by an arch-conservative from the president's party. Mr. Trump never campaigned for Earle-Sears, though he did give her his tepid support. Their uneasy alliance raises questions about the ideal Republican nominee for contested general elections and how the president's volatile standing with voters might affect GOP candidates next November. The midterm elections will settle Statehouse control in dozens of States and determine whether Republicans maintain majorities in Washington for the final years of Trump's presidency. Earle-Sears, 61, would

As India navigates the twin imperatives of economic growth and sustainable development, forests are once again finding their rightful place in the national climate conversation. The recent release of the revised blueprint for the Green India Mission (GIM) puts restoration at the forefront. The ambition is bold: restore 25 million hectares of degraded forest and non-forest land by 2030. This isn't just about greening land for its own sake. It directly ties to India's climate pledge to create an additional carbon sink of up to 3.39 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent by the end of this decade. The big question is not just how much land India restores, but how it restores it. Quality question

A 2025 study by IIT Kharagpur, in collaboration with IIT Bombay and BITS Pilani, reported a 12% decline in photosynthetic efficiency of dense forests across India. The main cause? Rising temperatures and drying soil. Put simply, while India may be growing its forest cover, these forests are becoming less effective at absorbing carbon. This discovery challenges the old assumption that "more trees equal more carbon sinks" and instead highlights the need for restoration that enhances ecological resilience, not just canopy cover. The revised GIM is not starting from scratch. Between 2015 and 2021, the Mission supported afforestation across 11.22 million hectares, with ₹575 crore disbursed to 18 states. During this period, forest and tree cover increased from 24.16% in 2015 to 25.17% in 2023.

The new blueprint expands the lens, focusing on biodiversity-rich landscapes like the Aravalli Hills, Western Ghats, mangroves, and Himalayan catchments. It also aims to link efforts with other government programmes such as the National Agroforestry Policy, watershed initiatives, and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA). But as with most ambitious missions, the challenge lies in turning policy into practice. India's afforestation story has long wrestled with three stubborn gaps: community participation, ecological design, and financing. Nearly 200 million Indians depend on forests for daily survival. The Forest Rights Act (2006) legally empowers them to manage and protect their landscapes. Yet in practice, many plantation drives bypass these communities, ignoring their claims and consent. This erodes trust and undermines both legality and social legitimacy. However, there are bright spots. In Odisha, Joint Forest Management Committees are integrated into planning and revenue-sharing. In Chhattisgarh, forest departments are experimenting with biodiversity-sensitive plantations and reviving barren cattle shelters by planting mahua trees, aligning ecology with tribal livelihoods.

Going native For decades, afforestation has leaned heavily on monocultures of eucalyptus or acacia, which are fast-growing, yes, but ecologically damaging. They deplete groundwater, crowd out native biodiversity, and leave forests vulnerable to climate stress. The revised GIM promises a shift toward native, site-specific species, which is encouraging. However, the real test is whether local forest departments possess the necessary expertise and capacity to deliver. India already has training institutes in Uttarakhand, Coimbatore, and Byrnhat that could be har-

have become the first Black woman to be elected as a governor in the US. Spanberger balanced policy and biography. Ms. Spanberger, 46, ran on a pledge to protect Virginia's economy from the aggressive tactics of Trump's second administration, which has culled the civil service, levied tariffs and shepherded a reconciliation bill curtailing the state's already fragile health care system.

Accountant Sherry Kohan, 56, who cast her ballot at the Aurora Hills Library in Arlington, said she used to think of herself as a Republican but hasn't felt aligned with either party since Trump's first term. She said her vote for Spanberger was a vote against Trump. Stephanie Uhl, 38, who also said she voted for Spanberger, had the federal government shutdown on her mind when casting her ballot at the library in Arlington, just across the river from Washington. Ms. Uhl was working without pay for the Defense Department and though she said, "I can afford (it) just fine," she was bothered "that it affects so many other people." Spanberger's background also figured heavily into her victory. As a former CIA case officer, she noted her public service and national security credentials. And she pitched herself as the mother of daughters educated in Virginia's public schools and a Capitol Hill veteran who represented a swing district and worked across the aisle. The pitch helped the Democratic nominee withstand Earle-Sears' attacks on cultural issues, notably the Republican's assertion that Spanberger is an extremist on civil rights and health care for transgender people. Ms. Spanberger, who consistently argued that local school districts should decide whether transgender students can participate in competitive sports, cast her opponent as the candidate more out of step with the middle of the Virginia electorate. Her strategy echoed the approach Democrats used to flip U.S. House control in the 2018 midterms, halfway through Mr. Trump's first presidency. Ms. Spanberger was among several high-profile women who brought national security or military credentials to campaigns in battleground districts. Another of those women, Rep. Mikie Sherrill, was vying Tuesday to become New Jersey's Democratic governor. Together, they were held up as examples of successful mainstream Democrats at a time when the party's left flank has been ascendant, most notably Zohran Mamdani, a democratic socialist and the party's nominee in Tuesday's New York mayoral contest. In Congress, Spanberger was a quiet workhorse. When she first got to Washington, Ms. Spanberger concentrated on lower-profile issues: bringing broadband to rural areas, fighting drug trafficking and veterans' services. And she quickly established a reputation for working with colleagues across the political spectrum. In her new role, she will face tightening economic projections, rising utility costs and growing unemployment — in part because of the Trump administration's federal contraction. But she could have the advantage of a friendly Legislature if Democrats are able to maintain their majority in the House of Delegates. All 100 seats in that chamber were on the ballot Tuesday, as were other statewide offices, including lieutenant governor and attorney general.

nessed to equip frontline staff with ecological know-how. Some States are leading the way. Tamil Nadu, for instance, has nearly doubled its mangrove cover in just three years, offering both carbon storage and coastal protection. Perhaps the biggest bottleneck is financing. The CAMPA fund now holds a staggering ₹95,000 crore, yet utilisation is inconsistent. Delhi, for example, spent only 23% of its approved funds between 2019 and 2024. GIM itself has had to make do with modest allocations, relying heavily on CAMPA. The way forward isn't just about more money, but about smarter use of it. The good news is that some States are experimenting with new financing tools. Himachal Pradesh has launched a biochar programme to generate carbon credits while reducing fire risks. Uttar Pradesh has planted over 39 crore saplings this year and is exploring how to connect village councils to carbon markets. Building blocks Despite the hurdles, India has the building blocks: strong legal frameworks, sizeable financing pools, institutional capacity, and promising local models. What's needed is alignment. Communities must be empowered to lead. Forest departments need the skills and incentives to prioritise ecological restoration over plantation targets. The central government can enhance accountability by implementing public dashboards that track survival rates, species mix, fund utilisation, and community participation. CAMPA could broaden its scope to cover participatory planning and adaptive management, rather than sticking narrowly to planting. Civil society and research institutions also have a role, from providing technical expertise to designing participatory monitoring tools. This shared effort is what can transform GIM from a government programme into a national movement. As India looks toward Viksit Bharat 2047, forests are not merely an environmental concern; they are the future capital. The path to restoring 25 million hectares is not easy, but if pursued with rigour, inclusion, and foresight, it could reshape how the world thinks about restoration. C.K. Mishra is a former secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Suryaprabha Sadasivan is Senior Vice President at Chase Advisors. Views expressed are personal.

ChatGPT Go 1-year free access rolls out in India

New Delhi: OpenAI's ChatGPT Go subscription service went live in India on Tuesday, offering one-year free access to users in India who sign up during the limited-time promotional period. The promotion is available now for redemption from the ChatGPT web or the Google Play store, and will be available to redeem next week from the Apple App store. ChatGPT Go is OpenAI's recently launched subscription tier that offers increased message limits, image generation, and file uploads for users in India, a market ChatGPT counts as its second-largest and among the fastest-growing. The year-long free promotion coincides with OpenAI's first DevDay Exchange event in Bengaluru on Tuesday. "Since initially launching ChatGPT Go in India a few months ago, the adoption and creativity we've seen from our users has been inspiring," said Nick Turley, Vice President and Head of ChatGPT at OpenAI. "Ahead of our first DevDay Exchange event in India, we're making ChatGPT Go freely available for a year to help more people across India easily access and benefit from advanced AI," Turley said. Existing ChatGPT Go subscribers in India are also eligible for the free 12-month access extension. "This promotion is a continuation of OpenAI's 'Indiafirst' commitment and supports the IndiaAI Mission, reinforcing the growing momentum around AI in India as the country prepares to host the AI Impact Summit next year,"

India recommends AI firms to pay creator royalties at rates set by govt panel

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In a working paper on balancing AI innovation with copyright, released by a DPIIT-led committee, the Centre has invited feedback on recommendations for a sweeping new framework for AI training that recommends a mandatory blanket licence requiring all AI companies to pay royalties for using copyrighted work to creators. The recommendations suggest that a committee constituted by the government would decide the royalty fee. If implemented, India would become the only country to prescribe a statutory licensing regime for AI developers, with royalty rates prescribed by a government-appointed committee. Among several recommendations, the paper suggests retroactive payment of royalties in cases where copyrighted data has already been ingested into AI systems and also lays a framework for establishing burden of proof in related lawsuits.

In the working paper titled ‘One Nation, One License, One Payment: Balancing AI Innovation and Copyright’, the committee led by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade rejects voluntary licensing — deals between AI developers and individual companies, such as OpenAI’s content licensing agreement with the Associated Press — saying it would lead to high transaction costs, long negotiations and unequal bargaining power that disadvantage small creators and startups, and would fail to offer broad, dependable access to training data. A committee member, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that they rejected the idea of voluntary licensing as it “only favours big players on both the AI side, and the copyright holders’ side.” “The report recommends AI companies have non-discriminatory access to copyrighted work, and takes care of rate fixation with an assurance that all copyright holders are compensated in an equitable way. We have made sure that not a few big companies corner royalties,” the committee member said.

It comes amid growing scepticism of news publishers in several jurisdictions, including in the United States and India, over concerns of copyrighted material, such as news reports, being used by companies like OpenAI for training their foundational models, without permission or payment. Here, creators include musicians, news publishers, and authors. This has led to court cases, including in India, where publishers — members of the DNPA, including The Indian Express, among others — have mounted a legal challenge against OpenAI over the “unlawful utilisation of copyrighted material”. However, some in the industry are raising red flags over the royalty rates fixed by a government-appointed panel. “This simply does not happen anywhere else in the world, so why should India be an exception? Companies should be allowed to discuss mutually beneficial licensing rates among themselves,” a senior executive who represents a key creative group said, requesting anonymity.

While rejecting direct, voluntary content licensing models, the committee has recommended a “hybrid model,” under which a mandatory blanket license with a statutory remuneration right for the creators and copyright holders would be established for the use of all lawfully accessed copyright-protected works in the training of AI systems. The report states that lawful access by AI companies of copyrighted works will be a prerequisite, meaning that AI developers would not be allowed to rely on the mandatory license to bypass existing or future technological protection measures or to gain unauthorised access to works behind paywalls without making the necessary payment. A new umbrella industry body, called the Copyright Royalties Collective for AI Training (CRCAT), will have to be set up by rights holders and be designated by the Central government under the Copyright Act, 1957. The CRCAT would serve as a centralised facilitator that streamlines collection of royalties for use of copyrighted content for training of AI systems, under a mandatory blanket license. Only organisations can be its members, and only one member per class of work would be allowed. The report notes that since some unorganised sectors have no registered copyright societies or Collective Management Organisations (CMOs), CRCAT may not have membership from such sectors, but its base can be expanded over time to cover unorganised sectors.

The Centre will constitute a committee to determine



the royalty rate, according to the report. It will consist of senior government officers, senior legal experts, financial or economic experts, and technical experts with expertise in emerging technologies. A CRCAT member from and AI developers’ representative will also be part of the committee, according to the recommendations of the report. Based on inputs from stakeholders, market data, and economic analyses, the panel will set royalty rates, while ensuring that they are fair, predictable, and transparent. It will also review and adjust rates every 3 years, to reflect technological and market developments. Notably, the rates set by the rate setting committee may be challenged before the court and would be subject to judicial review. At this point “flat rates” seem to be the most appropriate model, according to the report. The committee can set a certain percentage of the gross global revenue (excluding taxes) earned by an AI developer from the commercialisation of the AI system trained on copyrighted content. The report noted that government departments have established mechanisms to manage pricing and tariff matters in key sectors. For instance, it said, the Ministry of Railways reviews and proposes revisions to passenger fares and freight charges. The Department of Food & Public Distribution determines the Central Issue Prices (CIP) for essential food grains like rice, wheat etc. under the Public Distribution System (PDS). The Department of Fertilisers sets the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for phosphatic and potassic fertilisers.

All companies have already ingested copyright protected works from several creators in their training systems. Due to this, the committee has recommended that the obligation to pay royalties on the basis of revenue percentage-based rates set by the government shall apply retroactively. In other words, AI developers who have already trained their AI systems on copyright protected content and are earning revenues by commercialising such AI Systems would be obliged to pay the prescribed royalties. “Many AI Developers have built AI Systems which are commercially successful and generating huge revenues. In order to ensure fairness and accountability, such AI Developers must be required to pay royalties to copyright owners for past usage of their works. This is not a punitive measure, but a corrective mechanism to help create a balance in the creative ecosystem,” it said.

How will royalties be divided among copyright holders?

All companies will be required to submit a declaration to the CRCAT containing a ‘Sufficiently Detailed Summary’ of the datasets they have used to train their models, as part of their transparency obligations. This declaration would include information including the category of data (text, images, music, etc.) used, source of data (social media platforms, hard copy/electronic publications, online libraries, public datasets, proprietary datasets etc.), and the nature of data. The total royalty amount would then be apportioned proportionally by the CRCAT among different classes of works, based on the proportion of their usage in AI training. This would ensure that categories of works more heavily utilised (for example, audiovisual content or music or literary publications) receive a correspondingly appropriate share of the royalty pool. In the event of a lawsuit against an AI developer for failing to offer the fixed royalties for the utilisation of copyrighted content, the law would work on the presumption that the claim of the content owner is valid (subject to the usual requirement to demonstrate a prima facie case) until proved otherwise by the AI developer.

survive. Many have gone under over the past couple of decades — Go First and Jet Airways being the biggest examples over the past few years. To that extent, it can be argued that the presence of a dominant airline means that many routes, which would otherwise shut down, are in operation. And until this crisis broke, IndiGo had established benchmarks for operational efficiency and an unblemished safety record in India’s otherwise chequered aviation scene.

While the airline is now limping back to stable and normal operations in a step-by-step manner, largely due to temporary exemptions that the sector regulator seemed forced to grant given the scale of the disruption, the past one week has underscored the risks of high market concentration in the sector. The import of the situation is not lost on the country’s civil aviation establishment. Speaking in Parliament on Monday, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said that given the high growth in air travel demand in India, the country needs five big airlines. Even beyond aviation, for India, where a growing number of sectors — like telecom, cement, steel, private ports, private sector airports, and specific segments within the larger e-commerce space — have seen an increase in market concentration over the past few years, the IndiGo crisis is a wake-up call on the perils of monopolies and duopolies. Experts point out that while large, strong and stable companies are desirable in every sector for efficiency, stability and competitiveness, it gets problematic if their share of the market expands to such an extent that it smothers other players and creates a high entry barrier.

“Monopolies may be bad at a country level, but they do wonders at route level in the case of aviation. Had it not been for IndiGo, so many routes would not have been operationalised in India, forcing passengers to take one-stop flights. IndiGo’s presence against multiple other (airline) failures has given the airline its monopoly status and is not by design. In such a monopoly and duopoly situation, there should be greater penalties in place so that such industries know the responsibility that comes along with a large duopoly,” Joshi said. A senior government official said market dominance is not the real problem, it is abuse of dominance. And that some sectors are natural monopolies, given the nature of those sectors. That may ring true, but increasing concentration does end up deterring other potential competitors from entering the sector since they perceive policies to be favouring some players over others. And when this dominance is reinforced by the inorganic route such as acquisitions,

Japanese monks use this philosophy to stay Zen — you can do, too

At first glance, the Ensou might look like a simple black circle painted with ink. But behind its elegant simplicity lies a deep philosophy rooted in Zen Buddhism. The word Ensou (also spelt Enso) means “circle” in Japanese, but this is far more than just a shape—it’s a symbol that reflects the beauty of imperfection, the essence of the present moment, and the never-ending flow of life. Traditionally, Zen monks would draw Enso as a meditative practice. It’s done with one continuous brushstroke, in a single breath, without any edits or corrections. That means what shows up on the paper is raw and honest—just like life. Some Ensou circles are closed, suggesting completeness or unity. Others are left open, showing that things don’t always need to be finished to be meaningful.

What makes Ensou so powerful is that it invites us to let go of perfection. In a world that constantly pressures us to achieve, to polish, to fix—Ensou reminds us that there’s value in simply being. It teaches acceptance: of ourselves, of the moment, of the beautiful messiness that comes with being human. It’s also a reminder to be present. Because the Ensou is created in a single breath, it’s all about capturing now—not yesterday’s worries or tomorrow’s to-do list. That kind of mindfulness is something many of us crave more in our daily lives.

You don’t need a sumi brush or formal training to apply the spirit of Ensou to your life. Here are a few simple ways:

Practice Imperfection: Try something creative—draw, paint, write—and resist the urge to make it perfect. Let it be a reflection of your current state, not some ideal



version

Pause and Breathe: Even one deep, conscious breath can be your Ensou moment. Let that breath draw a mental circle around your awareness. Simplify: In your space, your schedule, your habits—choose less over more. The simplicity of Ensou is a quiet kind of freedom. ccept the Moment: Whether things feel unfinished, messy, or unclear, remember that open circles are just as meaningful as closed ones. You don’t have to have it all figured out. The beauty of Ensou is that it doesn’t demand anything of you. It simply asks you to show up as you are. In that way, it becomes not just an artwork, but a gentle philosophy for living.

Neurologists dismiss claims suggesting in-flight entertainment screens emit EMF, need to wear cap on planes: ‘These exploit fear, not science’

tigue, or neurological damage. The intensity is much lower than what you encounter daily from your phone, home Wi-Fi router, or even walking near a power line,” added Dr Prashant Makhija, consultant neurologist, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central.

Stressing that the power output is far below international safety limits (FCC, ICNIRP), Dr Kumar said, “There is no evidence these screens cause brain inflammation, fatigue, or cognitive problems. The main cause of post-flight fatigue is not EMF”. “Well-established causes include low cabin humidity (which causes dehydration), Mild hypoxia (lower oxygen pressure), sleep disruption, long sitting (that causes muscle stiffness), time-zone shift (resulting in true jet lag), and noise + vibration (which increase stress hormones),” said Dr Kumar, adding that none of these have anything to do with EMF. In simple words, reduced movement affects circulation, which can lead to fatigue and mild headaches. It’s jet lag, dehydration, and poor sleep quality, not EMF, said Dr Makhija.

EMF-blocking hats have no proven medical benefit. “Zero peer-reviewed studies show that wearing EMF-blocking hats reduces inflammation, prevents fatigue, improves brain function, or protects against radiation. If anything, these exploit fear, not science,” described Dr Kumar. If someone feels better using such hats or caps, Dr Makhija said it’s often because they feel more in control. This is known as the placebo effect, not because the hat is shielding the brain from harmful radiation, said Dr Makhija. If aeroplane EMF were dangerous, crew would be the first affected, reasoned Dr Kumar, considering pilots and cabin crew spend thousands of hours per year in the aircraft environment. “Large studies show no increase in neurological or cognitive diseases due to EMF exposure,” said Dr Kumar.

Nancy Tyagi styles Tyla in sari-inspired ensemble and bindi for her India visit: ‘Twin stayed up all night designing and hand-making this’

to put on a sparkly silver bindi on her forehead, which she continued to wear till the end of her performance.

Who is Tyla?

The act was a symbol of solidarity and a spotlight on elements of our culture, which, surprisingly, the singer shares as well. Tyla’s ancestry has roots in India. While her mother is half Zulu, half Irish, her father is Indian, with roots in Mauritius. Tyla’s popularity first stemmed from a viral dance challenge to her song “Water” on TikTok and Instagram, which reached the top 10 in countries like the US, UK, and South Africa.

Single-strength drugs are the need of the hour to avert pediatric drug overdose: Experts

Hyderabad: Coming across a medicine with multiple strengths and formulations is a common sight these days. What if ill-informed parents unwittingly administer the right medicine but of wrong strength, leading to overdose in their toddler? With little awareness about medicines and formulations, there is every possibility that a common medicine like paracetamol, available in multiple variations and strengths, can cause major health complications, especially among children. “In our country where the understanding about giving the right dose of medicine is very poor, there is a need for regulatory authorities to stick to one strength of medicine in the entire country. At least, for medicines that are most commonly in use,” says vocal public health advocate from Hyderabad, Dr Sivaranjani Santosh. A few days ago, Dr Sivaranjani Santosh, a senior pediatrician from Hyderabad reached out to the Indian drug regulatory authority Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), urging it to ensure there is one strength of paracetamol in India. We as pediatricians see many children landing up in ICUs because of overdosing with paracetamol, because of the confusion that exists due to multiple strengths being available



India bowlers rip South Africa apart, skittle them out for 74 runs in 1st T20I



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Indian bowlers made up for an ordinary day for the batters as they ripped through the South African batting lineup, helping the Men in Blue win the 1st T20I match by 101 runs. Arshdeep Singh snapped up 2 while Hardik Pandya followed up his impressive batting performance by taking a wicket with his first delivery. Varun Chakravarthy (2), Jasprit Bumrah (2) and Axar Patel (2) also chipped in with important scalps at regular intervals.

The South African batters couldn't survive long with the combined might of Quinton de Kock, Aiden Markram, Tristan Stubbs, David Miller and Dewald Brevis failed to drag the Proteas over the line as they skittled out for 74 runs, their lowest in T20Is. The lower order also failed to fire with Marco Jansen showing some fire but was sent back for 12. Meanwhile, Donovan Ferreira, Keshav Maharaj, Anrich Nortje and Lutho Sipamla could only get to single

digits. Earlier, Hardik marked his return to competitive cricket with a blistering half-century that helped India recover from some early blows to post a healthy 175/6 in the opening T20I against South Africa. Coming back after 74 days following a left quadricep injury that forced him out of the Asia Cup, Pandya walked in at No. 6 and immediately changed the tempo of the match.

India had slipped in both the power play and middle overs losing six wickets, but Pandya, who had proved his fitness at the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy for Baroda with a 42-ball 77 not out, counter-attacked with clean, fearless hitting to finish on 59 not out off 28 balls, laced with six fours and four sixes. It was his sixth T20I fifty. He began with two towering sixes against Keshav Maharaj just after Tilak Varma (26) fell, and then ripped into Anrich Nortje with a 17-run over, even stepping out to a 149kph thunderbolt to punch it for four, summing up the raw pace versus brute power duel that lifted the mood in the packed Barabati Stadium. He struck a six and four off Lutho Sipamla (2/38) in the 19th over, and reached his half-century in 25 balls with a ramped six over third man off Nortje in the final over, celebrating it with a muted raise of the bat. Pandya's late fireworks helped India add 53 runs in the last five overs, while Nortje, returning from injury, conceded 41 in four, including 12 in the final over. On a fresh red-soil surface offering two-paced bounce, India struggled early after being sent in. Abhishek Sharma (17), Shubman Gill (4) and Suryakumar Yadav (12) all fell inside seven overs as Lungi Ngidi (3/31) exploited the conditions superbly with clever variations.

Hardik Pandya shows why he is India's most valuable T20 player

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

It was a night where Hardik Pandya showed what his presence could do to this team. When he is fit and firing, in a team that has X-factor players in Abhishek Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy and Kuldeep Yadav, he can still be the Most Valuable Player. On a cold, wintery night at Cuttack, where his teammates struggled to adjust to a two-paced surface, he went at a strike-rate of 210.71 with his unbeaten 59 off 28 ultimately proving to be the one that lifted India to 175/6, a total that the bowlers successfully defended to take a head start in the series.

Returning to the side after picking up an injury mid-way through the Asia Cup campaign in September, Pandya's intent from the beginning stood out. Having missed the practice session on the match eve, when he entered the field on Tuesday, he immediately went to have a look at the pitch before moving to one corner of the Barabati Stadium where he did a few drills with trainer Adrian Le Roux, with most of the focus on freeing his arms. In a team that has flexible batting order, he is one they bank on to finish games, courtesy his brutal power.

On Tuesday, Pandya had to do a lot more than the finishing duty. When he arrived in the 12th over, India's innings was going nowhere at 78/4. The top-four had all perished without getting a hang of the surface. Axar Patel, who walked in at No 5 in the seventh over, was not finding it easy either. But Pandya walked in as a batsman who knew exactly what to do on the surface. Perhaps the dismissals had given him enough clue. With Shivam Dube and Jitesh Sharma to follow before the long tail, India needed Pandya to provide them with the missing impetus. Of the first four deliveries he faced, three of them against Keshav Maharaj, he brought out two sixes with the left-arm erring by delivering two lighted ones in the slot that Pandya doesn't need second invitation. With 16 momentum-inducing runs coming in that over of Maharaj, he would plead Axar not to play



cross-batted swipes in front of square and gesture him to play straight, which the left-hander did next ball, hitting Lutho Sipamla for a six over sightscreen. Off the next delivery, Axar would fall though, playing the same shot that Pandya didn't want to him play. 104/5 at the end of 14 overs with just Dube for company. With Lungi Ngidi and Marco Jansen, who were miserly at the start, having just an over each, Pandya knew the pace of Anrich Nortje was there to make use. Of the next over delivered by Nortje, he brought out his signature fierce cut that went behind square for a boundary before ending the over with a flat-batted shot that beat the mid-off fielder. When Jansen came on, he failed to connect an expansive shot, before bringing out a dismissive pull for a four.

With Jansen mixing the pace, Pandya respected the seamer without any risks. The run-rate which was at 6.66 when he walked in was now at 8.05. Then came the shot of the match in the final over – a slashed-ramp off Nortje that disappeared over thirdman when there seemed no room for such an incredible shot – his 100th six in the format and one that brought up his fifty as well. There was time for another boundary as India racked up 105 in the last 10 overs with Pandya alone making 59 priceless runs. India's MVP signed off in some style.

England Ashes squad 'lacks accountability', loss in 3rd Test would be 'embarrassing': Glenn McGrath

GNS News Agency, Dec 10

Former Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath believes that a third straight defeat in Adelaide, and an early defeat in the Ashes, would be an embarrassing outcome for England after months of speculation about their chances to end a 15-year-long drought for a series win down under. After losing the first Test in Perth, from a very favourable position, thanks to a fourth-innings ton from Travis Head and a batting collapse of their own, England were roundly beaten in the day-night pink-ball Test in Brisbane this week. McGrath said "not in Australia's wildest dreams could they have believed they would be 2-0 up in this Ashes series after playing only six days of cricket."

"This series is not dead, but it's not far from it. If England don't win the third Test in Adelaide, it will get embarrassing," the former great wrote in his column for BBC. "Right now, all of the Australians who were sceptical about England are being proved right." Unlike some other commentators, McGrath was not as harsh on the visitors. "There is a lot I like about England's attitude. I love it when sportspeople play without fear, because that helps them push the boundaries of what is possible," he wrote.

But he insists there have been hints of a problematic culture. "My concern for England was the message of "this



is the way we play" yielded a culture that lacks accountability," McGrath added. He is expecting some changes after both captain Ben Stokes, and coach Brendon McCullum, publicly accepted there are issues. "I have no problems with what the England leaders said in public at the Gabba. If Stokes and McCullum have been strong in the media, you can guarantee they have been even stronger behind closed doors," the 55-year-old wrote. "Will we now see a new version of Bazball? Like I said, I like the element of playing without fear. If England can add the ingredients of pressure and accountability, then they might still be on to something,"

Hyderabad to host Chandra Sekhar memorial tennis tournament from December 20

Hyderabad: The fourth annual D Chandra Sekhar Memorial Open tennis tournament, organised by DRC Sports Foundation, will be held at Advantage Tennis Academy (St Thomas High School, Safilguda) here from December 20 to 21. The event is being held in honour of Dasiga Chandra Sekhar, a well-known NIS and ITF tennis coach with over 40 years of service to Indian tennis. His immense contributions as a player, coach, mentor, tournament official and founder of Advantage Tennis Academy continue to inspire generations. Competitions will be held for men and women in singles and doubles, and also for veterans in the age groups of 30 years to 60 years. Doubles events will be conducted for players aged 70 years and above. Entries close on December 19. For details, contact DRC Kiron at 9246168429 or Ravinder Singh at 9885592994.



Puducherry cricket body's coach assaulted, FIR names local players



GNS News Agency, Dec 10

The Under-19 head coach of the Cricket Association of Pondicherry (CAP), S Venkataraman, was allegedly assaulted by three local cricketers on Monday over their non-inclusion in the team for the ongoing national T20 tournament (Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy). Venkataraman suffered a head injury and a shoulder fracture. Confirming the incident, Sub-Inspector S Rajesh of the Sedarapet police station, where an FIR has been filed, said: "Venkataraman received 20 stitches on his forehead, but he is stable. The said players are absconding, and we are trying to track them. Further details will be revealed in due course."

An investigation by The Indian Express, published on Tuesday, had revealed how the CAP administration was systematically denying adequate representation for Puducherry-born cricketers in the domestic games. The report exposed how "outstation cricketers" were made to pass-off as "locals" by using fake educational certificates and Aadhaar addresses. In fact, only five local players have represented Puducherry in the Ranji Trophy since 2021. Responding to the report, BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia said: "The news items raise some serious allegations, and therefore the BCCI will look into the matter soon." In his complaint to the police on Monday's attack, Venkataraman, a former CAP Secretary, has named three local cricketers

— Karthikeyan Jayasundaram, a senior player who has appeared in six matches across formats; A Aravinddharaj and S Santhosh Kumaran, both of whom have represented Puducherry in Ranji Trophy matches. He has also accused the Bharathidasan Pondicherry Cricketers' Forum Secretary, G Chandran, of instigating the attack. "Around 11 am on December 8, 2025, I was in the indoor nets inside the CAP complex before Pondicherry senior cricketers Karthikeyan, Aravinddharaj and Santhosh Kumaran came and began to abuse me, insisting that I was the reason for their non-selection in the SMAT (Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy) squad. While Aravinddharaj held me, Karthikeyan took the bat that Santhosh Kumaran had and attacked me with the intention of killing me. They hit me, saying Chandran had told them that they would get a chance only if they killed me," Venkataraman said in his complaint. The Bharathidasan Pondicherry Cricketers' Forum denied the allegations against Chandran. "Venkataraman has a documented history of several cases against him. He has often been known to behave rudely with local cricketers, using obscene language. His grudge against Chandran is also well-known, considering that we have repeatedly raised several issues within the CAP to the BCCI over the last seven years," said Senthil Kumaran, president of the local cricketers' forum.

Meanwhile, responding to The Indian Express report, CAP CEO Raju Metha said that "every player who represented CAP has strictly complied with BCCI eligibility norms" and "there is zero tolerance for corruption and no credible evidence has ever established wrongdoing." Metha, in a press release, also said that "at no point did he (The Indian Express reporter) approach CAP for any clarification, verification or response before publishing his report". The Indian Express had sent a detailed questionnaire about CAP's functioning to the cricket body's founder, P Damodaren. His response was carried in its entirety online, and a shorter version appeared in print. Attempts to contact Metha earlier went unanswered.

Can Pune roads host international cycling event? Rs 500 crore budget, speed breakers to disappear and cushioned barriers to come on mountain stretches

Pune is ambitiously aiming to achieve the goal of 'Road is King', over a 437 km course route identified for an international cycling competition by 'treating' road surfaces, ahead of the January 20-24 Pune Grand Tour of 2026, a Level 2.2 event. As the city revives its cycling past after the Bombay-Poona race last happened in 2018, this time welcoming international riders, there is curiosity over the state of roads.

A December 15 deadline looms over contractors building these 4-stage routes with pinpoint specifications, and the District Collector had announced early in October that a 1 lakh/day penalty would be imposed in case of failure of completion. But it is the qualitative road surface standards that will eventually decide the success of the event. Tournament director Pinaki Bysack, who has worked with UCI for large events like Asian Games and World Championships for over four decades, says road surfaces for competitions are delicate affairs. With almost skincare-like specifications. A particular pimple-like peeve were speedbumps (speed breakers) that Indians slap on haphazardly onto the roads, and are dreaded by competitive cyclists.

"They ride on delicate wheels and need absolutely smooth delicate surfaces because roads are the main factor. In my first survey I realised, roads are not rideable at all because of scratches, and I couldn't bring international riders here," Bysack recalls. But Pune's rural mountainous outskirts, for Stage 2 and 3 left him smitten. "It's as pretty as Europe. I sent photographs of some sections to pro teams there, and they absolutely wanted to come to India," he says. While the state government and cycling authorities signed off on permissions and funding, the reality of Indian roads was hard to forget. "But it is my moral responsibility to deliver a safe race, so it was a relief when the authorities said 'You are the expert, we are not.' PWD engineers have been thorough and willing to learn," he says. The speed-breakers had to absolutely go. "They will be removed on the route, and after the race they will fabricate floaters, wider bumps over 3-5 metres," he says, joking that the X-Games adventure can be done away with.

Roads can be eyesores in other ways. "I need footpaths on city roads to be clean and we will remove the unwanted sudden plantations and broken wastebins and cracked tiles," Bysack said, adding that the aesthetic mattered as much as quality of road material. District Collector Jitendra Dudi who thought up the idea back in June, had instructed contractors to follow UCI quality-protocols. While an extended monsoon meant work got underway only in October, Bysack stressed he was aware that a near Rs 500 cr budget for road surface treatment was a humongous budget for just 437 kms of a city. Unwittingly, the cycling event is extracting a commitment out of civic authorities to maintain these stretches. "It's big money and we can't keep constructing this every year. We had to do it in such a way that it lasted for 5 years, or 2 minimum, given next year we



will apply for a 2.1 Level event," he says.

The Cycling Federation of India was happy the Maharashtra government took responsibility because of the road race requirements. "We hardly do international races because let's be absolutely clear, India is not a vehicle friendly nation," says CFI secretary Maninder Pal Singh. "With our civic sense, roads needing sanitizing, we were more than happy Maharashtra volunteered," he recalls. While India didn't have even a continental team registered in the country, success in the inaugural edition can help push for a 2.1 event. "And eventually a pro event like Tour de France and Giro d'Italia," he says. "Once the government invests so much, makes roads as good as can be, it won't be a one-off," he adds. Bysack was a rider himself in the UK 1979 through 84, and after 4 national titles, joined UCI in 2004. He has managed to draw the interest of the UCI director who's likely to visit, and said he had to decline applications to fill 30 teams (24 pro and 6 national), after word spread.

The mountain stretches needed more detailed work, given riders go at 80-85 kph on the downward descent. "There were hairpin bends right after 180° and very acute angles on corners when the tendency is to go all out, and the centrifugal force pulls the rider. We will put in place iron barriers, nettings and 100m long thick cushions, so there's no toppling off the cliff," he says. "Europe thinks only they can do these pretty races. I see no difference, in fact working with Indians was better than countries abroad," says the father of a daughter who studied 8 years in Pune. Singh has been sharing pictures of the hilly landscape and gloating about it, saying, "It's going to look fabulous. The mountains, waterfall and rural scenic beauty will surprise everyone. Though I get goosebumps thinking Indian riders will be out there with top names," he says. For its 52 completed editions while peaking in the 1980s, the 'Bombay Poona Cycle race', would crown a prestigious 'Bhor ghaat cha Raja'. It was the local equivalent of a polka dot jersey for best mountain climber, at the Tour de France. "I don't want to promise the moon, but..." Singh trails off. Just as well, because Pinaki Bysack might not clear the lunar surface with craters, for his riders. By December 15, he will know if Pune is good enough.

India's Women's World Cup champions back in action for Sri Lanka T20Is; G Kamalini, Vaishnavi Sharma earn maiden call-ups

Harmanpreet Kaur will continue to lead the side in the shortest format, with Smriti Mandhana as her deputy, as India return to T20I action for the first time after their historic ODI World Cup win at the start of November. In a five-match T20I series against Sri Lanka that starts in Visakhapatnam for a couple of matches and ends in Thiruvananthapuram later this month, India have largely retained the core group that won the series earlier this year during the English summer. But there were indeed a couple of fresh call-ups handed out to young wicketkeeper from Tamil Nadu, G Kamalini, and promising left-arm spinner from Madhya Pradesh, Vaishnavi Sharma,

From the squad that won the five-match series in England 3-2, World Cup winner Radha Yadav misses out, as does Sayali Satghare. Yastika Bhatia is another notable absentee, after being named in the ODI World Cup squad originally but then replaced before the tournament due to injury. Another wicketkeeper batter, Uma Chetry, who replaced Yastika in the World Cup final 15, is also not part of this squad, where presumably young Kamalini has been

preferred.

Vaishnavi is another Madhya Pradesh talent to keep an eye on, with Kranti Gaud making her mark recently. She grabbed the headlines at the start of India's victorious U19 World Cup campaign earlier this year, with figures of 5/5 against Sri Lanka U19 that included a hat-trick. She finished as the tournament's leading wicket-taker. She had carried that form onto the domestic circuit, finishing the Senior Women's T20 Trophy at the top of the charts too with 21 wickets from 9 innings at an economy rate of 4.50. But surprisingly, she went unsold at the recent Women's Premier League mega auction, where she was widely expected to find a franchise. Kamalini, on the other hand, has impressed in brief cameos during the WPL with defending champions Mumbai Indians. She played nine matches for MI during their second title-winning campaign, and scored 32 runs in five innings, but her match-winning four off the penultimate match of a thrilling run-chase against RCB showed her temperament under pressure.

JioHotstar to invest Rs 4,000 crore in South Indian content; Kamal Haasan cites Kantara, Pushpa to state ‘ethnic is the new international’



In a significant move aimed at making bigger inroads into the regional market, streaming giant JioHotstar has announced that it will invest Rs 4,000 crore over the next five years in the South Indian market. This decision not only demonstrates that the OTT platform's ventures in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam languages have been successful, but also that it is set to go all in, locking horns with its major competitors.

During a star-studded event in Chennai on Tuesday, which was attended by superstars Kamal Haasan, Nagarjuna and Mohanlal, and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, among others, Sushant Sreeram, Head – SVOD Business & Chief Marketing Officer at JioStar, stated, “Earlier today, JioHotstar formalised a Letter of Intent with the Government of Tamil Nadu in the presence of the Chief Minister MK Stalin. This outlines a shared commitment to invest in talent, expand infrastructure and build a future-ready creative economy from the

South,” news agency PTI reported. “As part of this vision, JioHotstar will invest Rs 4,000 crore to nurture creators, strengthen the production ecosystem and build a pipeline of stories that are ready for India and ready for the world,” he added. On the occasion, the OTT giant also unveiled the lineup of South Indian Hotstar specials it's readying for 2026. While addressing the gathering, Kamal remarked, as reported by Variety, “Today, stories are truly screen-agnostic. They travel with the viewer. Today, regional is becoming the new national, and ethnic is the new international. Stories born in Madurai, Malappuram, Mandya or Machilipatnam are no longer ‘regional cinema’ — they are national cultural events.” “A film rooted in coastal Karnataka's folklore like Kantara can electrify the whole country. A Malayalam mystery like Drishyam, where an ordinary man outwits extraordinary power, crosses borders effortlessly. A Telugu saga like Baahubali or Pushpa becomes everyday vocabulary. From Mumbai to even Malaysia. And for Tamil Nadu, the relentless manhood of Vikram or the tender courage of Amaranth show that what truly travels is not budget but sincerity,” he added, according to Money Control.

“The contribution of South India has created a new benchmark for Indian cinema. Today, everyone has a voice — a filmmaker in Madurai or Salem can upload a story and reach an audience across the world,” Udhayanidhi Stalin said. On the occasion, JioHotstar announced that its hit originals like Kerala Crime Files, Save The Tigers, Heart Beat, and Good Wife will get new seasons, while it will also unveil fresh ones such as Cousins and Kalyanams, Moodu Lantharlu, LBW – Love Beyond Wicket, Resort, Secret Stories: Roslin, Lingam and Vikram On Duty. Revealing that Heart Beat generated over 100 million hours of watch time this year, JioHotstar's executives also mentioned that Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra and Mirai became their most-watched movies in 2025.

Priyanka Chopra recalls when she had six flops in one year, had to make pivots to survive: ‘Didn’t have the privilege to say no’

Priyanka Chopra has been in the entertainment industry for over two decades, making a mark in many film industries around the world. However, the actor had her own share of ups and downs during this period. While speaking at the Bridge Summit 2025 in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday, she opened up about going through a tough phase in her early days, and shared that she had to fight for years before she could get her first real break in Hollywood. During the candid conversation, she revisited each change in her professional life and said, “I’ve had to pivot so many times. There were phases where one year I did six movies and all six tanked. And then suddenly someone else was doing the films I wanted to do. My pivots were never about choice. They were about survival. At the time, I was just trying to figure out what to do next.” The actor further added, “When I started, I didn’t have the privilege to say no. It’s tough to just get the work. I accepted every opportunity, was travelling constantly, and missed key family milestones because refusing work didn’t feel like an option.” However, she feels happy being on the other side of her early sacrifices. “Now I get to choose. Now I can decide what feels right for me.” Priyanka continued, “There’s a time for everything. When I first started working, I said yes to everything because every opportunity was a privilege. I didn’t know where my strengths lay, and I wanted to try everything. But now, I say yes with intention. I weigh the pros and cons, I think about the impact on my family, my sanity, and my long-term goals. That’s how you protect your crystal balls.” Talking about her journey in the Hollywood industry, Priyanka recalled the challenges of breaking into a system that has its own stereotypes. “When I first moved to America and started working in pop music and acting,



many roles were written with stereotypes. I had to fight for years before I got my first real break — a role where I could just be an American character, not defined by my ethnicity,” she shared. On the professional front, Priyanka Chopra was last seen in the action comedy Heads of State, with Idris Elba and John Cena. She will next star in The Bluff and Judgment Day. She also has SS Rajamouli's Varanasi in the pipeline.

‘Sleep deprived’ new parents Katrina Kaif-Vicky Kaushal celebrate fourth wedding anniversary: ‘Blissful, grateful’



Actor Neha Dupia commented with two heart emojis, while Indian choreographer Vijay Ganguly and director Zoya Akhtar both commented with hearts and lucky charms. One fan congratulated the couple and wrote, “Happy Wedding Anniversary to one of my favourite couples. Wish you continue to inspire others with your love and companionship. Cheers to many more stronger years ahead. Enjoy your day and keep rocking.”

It's celebration time at the Kaushal-Kaif household, as actors Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal are celebrating their wedding anniversary on Tuesday. Four years ago, the two actors celebrated their wedding in a grand fashion. The stars had stayed mum about their relationship throughout their courtship and only started talking about each other after they were married. Their anniversary celebration is coming just weeks after they were blessed with the birth of their son. Vicky took to his Instagram and posted a picture with Katrina. The caption of the picture read, “Celebrating today. Blissful, grateful and sleep-deprived. Happy 4 to us.” The comments section of the post was filled with blessings and wishes from fans and co-stars. Actor Neha Dupia commented with two heart emojis, while Indian choreographer Vijay Ganguly and director Zoya Akhtar both commented with hearts and lucky charms. One fan congratulated the couple and wrote, “Happy Wedding Anniversary to one of my favourite couples. Wish you continue to inspire others with your love and companionship. Cheers to many more stronger years ahead. Enjoy your day and keep rocking.” Another fan wrote that this anniversary is extra special for the couple, as they recently became new parents. They wrote, “Happy Anniversary to Vicky and Katrina. This year is even more special as you celebrate your love as new parents. May your beautiful family always be surrounded with warmth, blessings, and endless joy.” The couple have always been vocal about their marriage, and they always post to celebrate the special days in each other's lives. Kaushal has often talked about the first meeting with Kaif and how he accidentally proposed marriage to her. While appearing on Kajol and Twinkle Khanna's show Two Much, Kaushal recalled his proposal and said, “During the second award show, I had asked Katrina, ‘Why don't you get married to a nice guy like Vicky?’ We weren't dating at that time. The truth is that that was a gag on stage in that show and that no matter which heroine shows up, I have to ask this question to them.”

Raat Akeli Hai 2 trailer: Nawazuddin Siddiqui sets out to solve a family massacre, but ‘who cares about the truth?’



Raat Akeli Hai The Bansal Murders trailer and release date: Starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Chitrangada Singh and Radhika Apte in the lead roles, the latest chapter in the crime thriller franchise promises a darker, more thrilling ride. Raat Akeli Hai 2 trailer: Nawazuddin Siddiqui returns as Inspector Jatil Yadav in the second chapter in the crime thriller franchise. (Screenshot: YouTube/NetflixIndiaOfficial) Raat Akeli Hai The Bansal Murders trailer and release date: The night is once again lonely, and Inspector Jatil Yadav (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) is forced to clutch at straws once more. However, this time, the scenario is far more challenging, and the investigation feels like an even tougher uphill battle. Unlike last time, it's not just one murder that he must investigate, but that of an entire family that wields significant wealth and power in society. “The entire Bansal family has been wiped out in one night,” a reporter tells us as the trailer for Raat Akeli Hai 2 begins. What makes the case even more complicated is that all the family members who were in their ancestral home that fateful night were brutally murdered, except one: Meera Bansal (Chitrangada Singh). But how and why was she the only one who escaped? Adding to

the complexity, Jatil tells his superior officer, “We were shown the scene of this entire murder a day prior,” making it clear that there are many pieces to the puzzle and that completing it isn't going to be easy. The scene shifts when the “ruthless” Rajesh Chand Bansal (Sanjay Kapoor) makes his entrance. Meanwhile, although Meera Bansal points her finger at one Aarav and another character reveals that godwoman Geeta Vora is “behind everything,” there are too many loose ends in the case. And Jatil Yadav wonders, “What happened in the Bansal family that karma wreaked havoc on them?” As suspicions of black magic begin to circulate, we also see the investigating officer's plight, with everyone around him claiming that he is unnecessarily complicating matters rather than closing the case with the evidence in plain sight. Desperately, he tells his wife, Radha (Radhika Apte), “I don't know what I am searching for. Even if I find it, who really cares about the truth?” Nonetheless, he isn't ready to give up and is determined to get to the bottom of everything. Also starring Rajat Kapoor, Revathi, and Deepti Naval, Raat Akeli Hai 2 is helmed by Honey Trehan and penned by Smita Singh, who previously collaborated on the first instalment in the franchise. Opening up about the latest chapter and his character's evolution, Nawazuddin Siddiqui said in a statement, “Jatil may have evolved in every way, but his resolve is exactly the same. His objectivity, his razor-sharp eye for detail, and his ability to cut through noise remain his greatest weapons. Even when power, influence, and intimidation close in on him, he refuses to let anything derail his search for the truth.” Discussing her role in the movie, Radhika Apte stated, “This time around, Radha's role has evolved from a woman once scrutinised and doubted to someone rooted in love, stability, and self-assurance. The character brings emotional continuity to the story, while her quiet strength reveals new layers in Jatil, reminding him of who he was and who he is becoming.” Sharing her experience being part of the franchise, Chitrangada noted, “Meera's character is one of the most interesting and challenging ones I have played. There is a sense of fragility and toughness all at once. This character lives in shadows — emotional, moral, and psychological. There are many layers to Meera. She has a lot to say. There are things she's at the cusp of revealing but cannot for fear.” Raat Akeli Hai: The Bansal Murders will debut on Netflix on December 19.

Kartik Aaryan poses with Johnny Depp at Red Sea Film Festival; fans say, ‘Captain Jack Sparrow and Rooh Baba together’

Celebrities from around the world have arrived at the star-studded affair of the Red Sea International Film Festival, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Actor Kartik Aaryan was also one of the attendees at the prestigious event, as he was also a special guest for an ‘In Conversation’ session. Kartik had a memorable time at the film festival, with Hollywood star Johnny Depp. When he shared a selfie with the American actor, fans expressed their excitement on social media.

Taking to his Instagram handle, the Chandu Champion actor dropped a super cool selfie with Johnny in a post. The caption read, “Pirates of the Red Sea. Jack Sparrow x Rooh Baba.” The moment was widely circulated on the internet and fans flooded the comments section.

“We needed a Captain Jack Sparrow and Rooh Baba in a movie,” a fan wrote. Another fan commented, “From Saudi to UAE to India to the UK... Kartik's charm is officially worldwide.” “Wait What!!!! Captain Jack Sparrow and Rooh Baba together!!!” a third comment read. A social media user even called the actor duo “Legends!” Several videos of a sea of fans surrounding Kartik at the festival, also emerged on social media. For his appearance at the Red Sea Film festival, Kartik wore a sleek beige blazer with a white shirt with blue stripes, paired with blue pants and a printed mahroon tie. A pair of brown shoes completed his formal look. The



actor shared the stage with many other global icons, including, Idris Elba, Anthony Hopkins, Nicholas Hoult, Riz Ahmed, Darren Aronofsky, and Edgar Ramirez. Meanwhile, on the professional front, Kartik Aaryan is gearing up for his upcoming release, Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, alongside Ananya Panday. Directed by Sameer Vidwans, the film also stars Jackie Shroff and Neena Gupta. It is set to hit the big screens on Christmas Eve. He also has the Anurag Basu directorial and Naagzilla in the pipeline.

Bigg Boss 19 winner Gaurav Khanna reveals why he supports wife Akanksha's decision not to have kids: ‘We are men...’



Although Gaurav initially faced the question without losing his cool, he soon broke down. “It's a very touchy topic. I love my wife; there are very few husbands who don't listen to what their heart says and agree to what their wives want. I love her a lot, so I will listen to everything my wife says,” he said with a tearful smile.

A few days before he was crowned the winner of Bigg Boss Season 19, television actor Gaurav Khanna was seen getting emotional inside the house when discussing his desire to have kids, in contrast to his wife Akanksha Chawla's stance that she doesn't want to embrace parenthood. During the last week of the recently concluded season of the Salman Khan-hosted show, the

contestants faced the media and answered some burning questions. As the session progressed, one reporter asked whether he was trying to gain sympathy by frequently bringing up the topic of kids, which brought the actor to tears. Although Gaurav initially faced the question without losing his cool, he soon broke down. “It's a very touchy topic. I love my wife; there are very few husbands who don't listen to what their heart says and agree to what their wives want. I love her a lot, so I will listen to everything my wife says,” he said with a tearful smile. After winning Bigg Boss Season 19, the actor, best known for his performance in Anupamaa, revealed that he had no issue supporting his wife's decision not to have children. Gaurav also stated that he will stand by her no matter what. “Why do we always think that only our wives should support us? We are men. We should support women more. And I am very happy that this question has been raised. Because if my wife is not ready for something, then I am not ready either. So we don't want kids. It's not that she doesn't want it. She doesn't want it, and I agree with that. I am very happy. My love for my wife is much more than any other choice. So I feel, if 10-15 more people start thinking like this, then the world can be a little better,” he shared during an interview with News18. Gaurav Khanna, who also won Celebrity MasterChef earlier this year, tied the knot with Akanksha Chawla in 2016. However, they have never pursued parenthood and have been vocal about their decision. During a past conversation with Siddharth Kannan, he stated, “I want to respect that decision. It's been nine years since our marriage. She doesn't want kids. I have to respect that decision. If a woman is not ready, then you should not force her. But yes, I love kids. She loves kids, but she has her reasons for not...because absolutely, a mother's frame of mind is absolutely essential for the child. Ma, ma hoti hai yaar (A mother is a mother after all).”