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Night, holiday duties for TGSWREIS teachers until Sankranti vacation

Hyderabad: Following opposition by teachers, the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) decided to enforce the recent order mandating night duty for three teachers every day and holiday duty for four teachers in its institutions only until Sankranti vacation. In a statement on Thursday, Telangana Social Welfare Residential Teachers and Employees Association president Ch Bala Raju and general secretary N Dayakar said TGSWREIS Secretary S Krishna Aditya assured to relieve teachers from additional burden of night and holiday duties before Sankranti vacation.

Telangana Panchayat Elections: First phase concludes, results awaited

Hyderabad, Dec 11

The initial phase of the Panchayat elections in Telangana has successfully concluded. Polling, which commenced at 7 AM, continued until 1 PM, with all individuals in line before the closing time allowed to cast their votes.

Voters participated in the election of 3,834 Sarpanch and 27,628 ward member positions across 37,562 polling stations. The counting of votes is set to begin at 2 PM.

Once the results for the Sarpanch elections are announced, the tallying for ward members will follow.



Kharge, Priyanka Congratulate CM Reddy on Telangana Vision 2047



NEW DELHI, DEC 11

AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi congratulated Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy on the unveiling of the

Telangana Rising 2047 Vision Document.

The two AICC leaders praised the Chief Minister for drawing a roadmap for the development of the youngest state of Telangana in the vision document.

During the meeting with Kharge and Priyanka Gandhi at their residences in Delhi today, CM Revanth Reddy briefed them about the successful conduct of two day Telangana Rising Global Summit and the release of the Vision document in the presence of business honchos and global investors.

The two AICC leaders also expressed profound delight over attracting huge investments from local and international companies and entering agreements during the two day global summit.

Minister Vivek Venkataswamy, MPs - Suresh Shetkar, M Anil Kumar, P Balaram Naik, Dr. Mallu Ravi, K Raghavendra Reddy, and Gaddam Vamshi Krishna were also present.

HC questions land allotment in Banjara Hills to former MP's kin

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Wednesday heard a PIL challenging the regularisation of prime government land in Banjara Hills in favour of the son and daughter of former MP (Rajya Sabha) Dr K Keshava Rao. A division bench of Chief Justice Aparsh Kumar Singh and Justice Ghose Meera Mohiuddin heard PIL filed by



Gadeela Raghavendra Reddy of Kondapaka, Siddipet district.

The petitioner questioned the actions of the previous BRS government in issuing and subsequently amending GO 59 (dated December 31, 2014) through GO 22 (dated March 1, 2023) and GO 56 (dated May 23, 2023), allowing the regularisation of encroachments on objectionable government lands, surplus lands and ULC lands on a payment basis.

Petitioner's counsel S Reddy Yalagiri submitted that the amendments were misused to regularise 1,161 square yards in favour of K Venkateswar Rao, son of Kesava Rao, and 425 square yards in favour of Gadwal Vijayalakshmi, Mayor and daughter.

He contended that the land located in NBT Nagar, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills, a notified slum area with exceptionally high real estate value, was allotted at nominal rates of Rs 2,500 and Rs 350 per square yard, whereas the market value stood at approximately Rs 60,300 per square yard as of February 2024, translating to a value exceeding Rs 9 crore.

The petitioner alleged that the beneficiaries bypassed the mandatory procedure prescribed in GO 59, which requires applicants to submit requests through Mee Seva and pay 25% of the land's basic value via demand draft to the government. Instead, the counsel stated, both beneficiaries directly represented their cases to the then finance minister and chairman of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Land Regularisation, securing approval in violation of rules and causing substantial loss to the exchequer.

On 23 July 2024, the then Chief Justice's Bench had issued notices to the Principal Secretaries of Revenue (Land Administration) and MA&UD departments, the CCLA, the Hyderabad District Collector, the Tahsildar of Shaikpet mandal, Venkateswara Rao, Mayor Vijaya Laxmi, seeking their responses.

Appearing for state, Additional Advocate-General Md Imran Khan acknowledged that the land parcels had indeed been regularised in favour of the former MP's son and daughter. He submitted that the beneficiaries had already undergone extensive legal procedures owing to pending litigation over the properties and sought additional time to present a detailed argument.

During the hearing, CJ Singh queried Khan whether the government was uniformly extending the benefits under the regularisation scheme to all applicants or whether the concessions granted to the two beneficiaries were exceptions. The CJ observed that if the government intended to stand by its decision to regularise the land in favour of these individuals, it may need to consider rectifying the impugned GOs.

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Lionel Messi to play in Hyderabad on December 13 at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium

Hyderabad: Football great Lionel Messi, who helped Argentina win the 2022 World Cup, will showcase his skills to the delight of soccer-crazy fans of the twin cities at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on December 13.

Parvathi Reddy, Advisor to the GOAT Tour Hyderabad, informed the media on Thursday that there will be a 20-minute match featuring Singareni RR and Aparna Messi All Stars.

"The Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Messi will join the teams five minutes before the scheduled close of play of the match," she said.

"Then, Messi will conduct a football clinic for local underprivileged children (he is also a UNICEF Ambassador) and young talent, followed by a parade by the great footballer," Parvathi Reddy added.

"After that, the Chief Minister will felicitate Messi, and what is deemed as a magical event of the entire show can be the penalty shoot-out, given the famed skills of the great footballer," she said.

The court had directed the police to register a criminal case against Konda Surekha.

After reviewing preliminary evidence submitted by the complainant, the court observed that there is prima facie material to proceed under Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita (BNS) and corresponding procedural provisions under the BNS Sections 222, read with 223.

The minister had made the alleged defamatory statement on October 2 last year, K. T. Rama Rao (KTR), regarding the divorce between Nagarjuna's actor son, Naga Chaitanya and actress Samantha.

Nagarjuna had also filed a defamation case against the minister, saying her remarks harmed the dignity and reputation of his family.

Last month, Nagarjuna withdrew the defamation case

Govt doctors flag delays in salaries, administrative breakdown in TVVP

Hyderabad: The Telangana Government Doctors Association (TGGDA), representing government doctors in the State, on Thursday expressed serious concern over lack of timely release of salaries to doctors and staff and growing administrative breakdown in the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad (TVVP). For months, doctors and staff of TVVP have not been receiving their salaries on time. Even on Thursday, salaries were not released. Regular District Coordinators of Hospital Services (DCHS) are yet to be appointed in districts.

PM Modi reprimands Telangana BJP MPs, calls for stronger grassroots effort

Hyderabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is learnt to have pulled up BJP MPs from Telangana during a review meeting in New Delhi on Thursday, expressing displeasure over the State unit's performance and the lack of coordination among senior leaders.

Modi met MPs from Telangana and other southern States to assess the political situation and review the party's organisational preparedness. He reportedly told the Telangana MPs that despite considerable scope for growth, the party was failing to capitalise on opportunities due to poor coordination and ineffective outreach. He is said to have reminded the MPs that the party's action plan required cohesive efforts in approaching people and strengthening ground-level visibility, according to reports.

Modi also instructed the MPs to actively highlight the welfare schemes and development assistance being extended to Telangana. He directed that constituency-wise meetings with party workers be conducted regularly, with clear briefings on the financial support being



party leaders to take steps to ensure BJP flags were hoisted in future elections.

"Instructions were issued to expose the government's failures at mandal and village level. And, to fight on behalf of the people and get their issues addressed," she said.

PM, Trump discuss trade ties, days after Putin visit

NEW DELHI, DEC 11

In their first contact in two months, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump spoke over phone on Thursday, discussing expansion of cooperation in trade, critical technologies, energy, defence and security.

The call came less than a week after India hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin for the annual leaders' summit on December 4-5, an event that drew global attention.

"Had a very warm and engaging conversation with President Trump. We reviewed the progress in our bilateral relations, and discussed regional and international developments. India and the US will continue to work together for global peace, stability and prosperity," PM Modi posted on X.

The two leaders, who last spoke on October 9, reviewed the progress of the "India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership". They expressed satisfaction at the steady strengthening of bilateral cooperation across all domains and agreed to work closely to address shared challenges and advance common interests.

The conversation also came amid the US Congress' Senate Foreign Affairs committee hearing where lawmakers questioned Trump's policy of alienating India and imposing tariffs. A carpooling picture of Modi and Putin also figured during the Congress discussion. "This poster is worth a thousand words," said US representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove, pointing towards the image as she slammed the Trump administration's foreign policy towards India.

The India-US relationship has been strained since Trump slapped 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods in August 2025, followed by another 25 per cent punitive tariffs for the purchase of Russian crude oil.

The PM and President Trump today underlined the



importance of "sustaining momentum in shared efforts to enhance bilateral trade". The two leaders also discussed various regional and global developments, and agreed to work closely to address shared challenges and advance common interests.

Already, a US trade delegation is in New Delhi on a three-day visit (December 10-12) for talks to finalise a bilateral trade agreement (BTA). The agreement was first discussed during Modi's visit to Washington in February and both sides had then set September target to finalise the deal.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met US Deputy Trade Representative Rick Switzer in New Delhi on Wednesday. They discussed economic and technology partnership, ongoing trade negotiations, and opportunities to boost two-way trade and resilient supply chains.

Both sides have kept the dialogue open, continuing with several rounds of negotiations. India remained hopeful that the first tranche of the agreement would be finalised within the next few months, despite delays, said an official.

NBW issued against Minister Surekha in defamation case

Hyderabad: A city court on Thursday issued a non-bailable warrant against Telangana's Endowments and Forests Minister Konda Surekha in a defamation case filed by BRS working president K T Rama Rao for certain remarks made by the minister.

The Special Judicial First Class Magistrate (JFCM) for Excise cases issued the Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) against the minister after she failed to attend the hearing.

The court posted the matter for hearing on February 5, 2026.

Rama Rao filed the private complaint under Section 222, read with Section 223 of BNS, in October 2024 after Konda Surekha made certain remarks blaming him for the divorce of actors Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Naga Chaitanya.

The court in August this year took cognisance of the criminal defamation complaint filed by the Bharat Rashtriya Samithi (BRS)

The court had directed the police to register a criminal case against Konda Surekha.

After reviewing preliminary evidence submitted by the complainant, the court observed that there is prima facie material to proceed under Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita (BNS) and corresponding procedural provisions under the BNS Sections 222, read with 223.

The minister had made the alleged defamatory statement on October 2 last year, K. T. Rama Rao (KTR), regarding the divorce between Nagarjuna's actor son, Naga Chaitanya and actress Samantha.

Nagarjuna had also filed a defamation case against the minister, saying her remarks harmed the dignity and reputation of his family.

Nagarjuna withdrew the defamation case



after the minister expressed regret over her statement.

The court dismissed the case as withdrawn after Nagarjuna filed a petition under Section 280 of Bharatiya Nagarjuna Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and virtually informed that he was withdrawing the case.

This came after Surekha took to X to clarify that the statement she made was not intended to hurt Nagarjuna or his family member.

"I would wish to clarify that the statement I had made in relation to Nagarjuna Garu was not intended to hurt Nagarjuna Garu or his family members. I had no intention of hurting or defaming Akkineni Nagarjuna Garu or his family members," the Minister said.

"I regret any unintended impression given in my statements in relation to them and withdraw the same," she added.

Though KTR had issued a legal notice asking the minister to retract her statement and apologise, she said she was standing by her comments about the BRS leader.

Following this, KTR initiated defamation proceedings against the Minister.

BJP Holds Meeting in Nagaram Opposing GHMC Ward Delimitation

"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 11, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"A meeting on the proposed GHMC ward delimitation was organised under the leadership of Nagaram Municipality BJP President Kondaboina Nagaraj Yadav. Speaking on the occasion, ex-Municipal Chairman Kaukutla Chandra Reddy strongly criticised the draft delimitation, stating that the current division was completely irrational. He questioned how a single corporator could effectively manage a division with nearly 70,000 voters. Referring to the large geographical spread and revenue limitations, he stressed the need to divide Nagaram into two separate divisions. He further alleged that the Congress government was acting in favour of the AIMIM. He pointed out that while divisions in the Old City were formed with only about 20,000 voters each, divisions in surrounding municipalities were being created with 50,000 to 80,000 voters, calling it a clear injustice. Opposing this unfair delimitation, BJP leaders announced that the party would launch a large-scale public movement. They said that awareness would be created among citizens and that the party would not accept the current



proposal. Those who participated in the meeting included ex-ZPTC member Muniganti Suresh, district vice-president Ghanapuram Shyamsundar Sharma, district general secretary Buddavararam Lakshmi, district Kisan Morcha president Enugu Rajireddy, ex-MPTC Tarigopula Balaram, ex-councillor Bizza Srinivas Goud, senior leaders Ramaram Balesh Goud, ex-president Budhavarapu Venu, Nakka Kishore Goud, and municipal general secretaries Mamidi Jangareddy and Potamsetti Venkateswara Rao, among others.

Former MLA Koneru Konappa Participates in Election Campaign at Tatipelli Village in Koutala Mandal

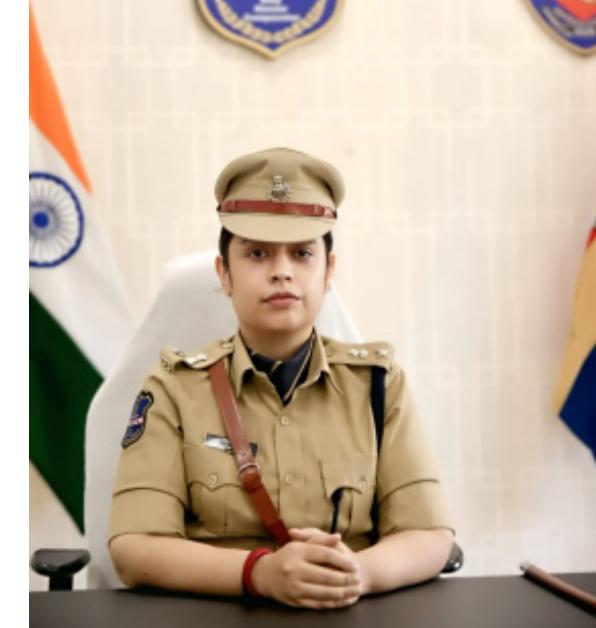


"Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 11, (Indian Chronicle)"Former MLA Koneru Konappa took part in an election campaign meeting at Tatipelli village in

Koutala mandal. He attended the gathering along with BRS-backed sarpanch candidate Rohinee Anand Rao, interacting with local villagers. Speaking on the occasion, Konappa recalled that during his tenure as MLA, around 400 electricity connections were sanctioned to Tatipelli village, and road facilities were also developed. As a result, the village witnessed significant improvement in the cultivation of chilli and soybean crops, he said. "He appealed to the villagers to extend their valuable support and ensure the victory of Rohinee Anand Rao, who is contesting on behalf of the BRS party. A large number of villagers, along with several mandal leaders and party activists, participated in the programme.

No Permission for Victory Rallies, Processions, or Firecrackers After Gram Panchayat Election Results

Komaram Bheem Asifabad District "Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 11, (Indian Chronicle)"No Permission for Victory Rallies, Processions, or Firecrackers After Gram Panchayat Election Results"Winning candidates must strictly adhere to the Model Code of Conduct"Strict legal action will be taken against those violating rules, warns District SP"Victory rallies or celebrations must be held only on dates prescribed by the authorities"District SP Nitika Pant announced that counting of votes for the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections is underway in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district and clarified that no victory rallies or celebratory processions will be permitted after the announcement of results."Speaking on the occasion, SP Nitika Pant said that around 750 police officers and personnel have been deployed across the district to ensure law and order at counting centres and to prevent any untoward incidents."Special security arrangements, including QRT teams and striking forces, have been stationed around counting centres to maintain safety and control. In view of the election results, the SP issued important guidelines for the public, candidates, and winners:"The Model Code of Conduct must be strictly followed."No permission is granted for victory rallies, bike rallies, DJs, firecrackers, or celebratory processions after results."Any actions that disturb public peace and order are strictly prohibited."The district police have set up special surveillance; those involved in disturbances, riots, or unauthorized victory rallies will be taken into custody and remanded."Any victory rally or procession may only be held on the dates speci-



fied by the concerned authorities."Anyone violating the rules or acting in a manner that disrupts public peace will face strict legal action."SP Nitika Pant further appealed to all citizens to maintain peace and harmony in the district and to accept the election results with mutual respect.

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, Jagada Lakshmi and Kantara, migrants from Sriakulam 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 offic-

ers would be suitably rewarded."Senior officials including Addl. DCP Narasiah and ACP Shashank Reddy attended the briefing.

Voters exercised their right to vote in a peaceful atmosphere at green polling stations: Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):"District Election Officer and Collector Hanumantha Rao stated that in the first phase of polling held as part of the Gram Panchayat elections, voters exercised their right to vote in a pleasant atmosphere at the environmentally friendly 'green model' polling stations."The District Collector inspected the polling process and arrangements at the model polling station in Fakir Gudem village of Bommalararama mandal, Rustapuram village of Turkapalli mandal, Narsapur village of Rajapet mandal, Sarvepalli of Atmakur mandal, and Sharajipet of Aleru

Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah exercised his right to vote along with his family in Saidapur



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):"Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah exercised his right to vote along with his family in his native village of Saidapur in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district."On the occasion of the Gram Panchayat elections in Saidapur village of Yadagirigutta mandal in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah cast his vote along with his family. He urged all the people to vote on time, stating that the vote is very valuable and that everyone should exercise their right to vote.

Vote for the Congress party's Sarpanch candidates: - Government Whip Beerla Ailayya



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):"On the occasion of the second phase of Gram Panchayat elections in Duppally and Narsapur villages of Valigonda mandal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailayya participated in the election campaign. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Ailayya said that if the Congress party's Sarpanch candidates are elected in the villages to work

alongside him as MLA, they will move forward like a pair of oxen pulling a cart, bringing funds and developing the villages. He stated that the sarees distributed by the previous KCR government were used at wells, for carrying fodder, and as scarecrows in the fields, but the sarees given now under the current people's government are being worn by everyone in the villages.



Photo caption only:"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):"District Election Officer and Collector Hanumantha Rao inspected the polling process on Thursday in Gandhamalla village of Turkapally mandal, where polling was being held in the first phase of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district Gram Panchayat elections. He examined all the facilities and arrangements at the polling station. He also checked the availability of wheelchair facilities for elderly and disabled voters.

For the development of the village, Congress candidates must be elected with a huge majority: Kumbham Keerthi Reddy, daughter of Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):"On Thursday, as part of the election campaign in various villages of Bhuvanagiri mandal, Kumbham Keerthi Reddy, daughter of Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, participated in the campaign. On this occasion, she appealed that for the development of the village, the Congress party's Sarpanch candidates must be elected with a huge majority. Library Chairman Avaisi Chisti, former Municipal Chairman Pothamshetty Venkateshwarlu, Barre Jahangir, Krishna Reddy, and various village Sarpanch candidates participated in this program.





“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):- District Election Officer and Collector Hanumanta Rao inspected the model polling station in Surveyapalli village of Atmakur mandal, where polling was underway in the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections. He inquired about the polling percentage recorded so far and examined the facilities provided at the polling station.

Victory Rallies Prohibited in Manthani: Authorities Issue Stern Warning.

“In the wake of the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections in Manthani, authorities have categorically instructed all winning candidates to refrain from conducting victory rallies.” Officials emphasized that during the afternoon counting process, the candidates who secured

victory—and their supporters—must strictly avoid organizing any celebratory processions. They cautioned that any rallies held in violation of the election code of conduct will result in legal action and the registration of criminal cases against the offender.



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):- District Election Officer and Collector Hanumanta Rao participated in observing the voting process in Narsapur village of Rajapet mandal, where polling was being held on Thursday as part of the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.

DGP Shivadhar Reddy Reviews Preparations for Messi Football Match at Uppal Stadium



“(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal | December 10 (Indian Chronicle)”: Director General of Police (DGP) B. Shivadhar Reddy conducted a high-level review meeting on Thursday at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Uppal, to assess the security and logistical arrangements being made for the football match featuring world-renowned player Lionel Messi, scheduled for December 13. Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu, senior officials from GHMC, the Electricity Department, Water Works, Sports Authority of Telangana, and event organizers participated in the meeting and briefed the DGP about the ongoing preparations in their respective departments. Speaking on the occasion, DGP Shivadhar Reddy instructed officials to ensure that spectators face no inconvenience and that a safe, comfortable environment is provided. Given Lionel Messi's global stature and the participation of Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in the event, he stressed the need for foolproof and top-level security arrangements. He also directed officials to widely publicize spectator guidelines and

First phase of election process completed in the district.. “92.88 percent polling recorded:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Election Officer, Collector Hanumantha Rao

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 11):- In the context of the 2nd general panchayat elections, the district election officer and collector Hanumantha Rao stated that the first phase of the election process in the district has been completed peacefully. He said that 92.88 percent polling was recorded during the first phase of elections held on Thursday in Aleru, Rajapet, Yadagirigutta, Atmakur (M), Bommalaramaram, and Turkapalli mandals of the district. He stated that comprehensive measures have been taken to ensure that the panchayat elections in the district are conducted effectively. He said that micro-observers, flying squads, Mandal Parishad Development Officers, Panchayat Secretaries, police personnel, and polling officers performed their duties efficiently and in coordination during the first phase of the election process. He stated that transparent elections were conducted without any difficulties. He advised the officials to work in coordination to ensure that the 2nd and 3rd phases of elections, to be held on the 14th and 17th of this month, are also conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. He stated that the candidates who won in the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections, or their representatives, should not hold victory rallies, and that the code of conduct will remain in effect even after all three phases of the Gram Panchayat elections are completed, until the code is officially declared to have ended. He warned that action will be taken against those who violate the rules and regulations.



Tributes Paid to Singireddy Srinivas Reddy



“(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 11, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)”: Several Congress leaders and local residents paid tributes to Singireddy Srinivas Reddy, a senior leader from Chapallu Division. A ten-day ceremony was held on Thursday at Sri Krishna Convention Hall in

Chakripura. Former MLA Subhash Reddy, corporators Swarna Raj and Sirisha, former corporator Pavani Reddy, along with family members including his brothers Singireddy Anji Reddy, Madhusudhan Reddy, Dhanpal Reddy, and sons Samithi, Vikas, Balwanth, Srikanth and Manish attended the programme.

Shahi Garments Workers’ Demand for Wage Hike Must Be Resolved Immediately: CITU State Secretary S. Rama



“(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 11, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)”: The ongoing agitation by women workers of Shahi Garments in Nacharam has entered its fourth day, drawing widespread support from trade unions. CITU State Secretary S. Rama, who visited the protesting workers on Thursday, said the struggle of Shahi’s women employees has become an inspiring example of courage and determination. She said that despite harsh cold, fear and pressure, the workers continue to fight boldly for their rights. Rama stated that at a time when families are already struggling with low incomes, it is the responsibility of the management to provide a minimum wage of Rs.16,000. She condemned the Shahi management for adopting an adamant attitude instead of addressing the legitimate demands of the workers. Rama urged the management to come forward for talks and resolve the issue immediately. She also called on the government to inter-

Ramaguntam Commissioner Extends Graceful Assistance to Elderly Voter During Polling Inspection



“(P.S.ASHOKAN”KARIMNGAR BUREAU)”: During the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections, Ramaguntam Police Commissioner Amber Kishore Jha conducted a thorough inspection of the polling stations at Gunjapadugu in Manthani mandal on Thursday. Amid his review, the Commissioner paused to engage warmly with an elderly woman who had arrived to exercise her democratic right. He courteously verified her voter identification details, confirmed her ward information, and guided her to the appropriate polling booth designated for casting her vote. Commissioner Jha assured her that, should she encounter any difficulty, the police personnel stationed at the venue were fully prepared to extend immediate assistance. He further emphasized that exclusive facilities for senior citizens and persons with disabilities had been arranged to ensure a smooth and dignified voting experience. He reiterated that comprehensive security and bandobast measures had been meticu-

lously implemented, enabling every voter to participate freely, confidently, and without intimidation.

Deputy Mayor Conducts Field Visit in Tarnaka – Assures Swift Resolution of Public Issues

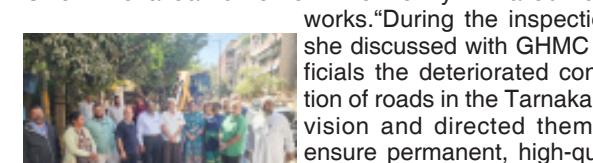


the Water Board to address drinking water issues. Reaffirming the government's commitment to improving civic amenities, Deputy Mayor Srilatha Shobhan Reddy assured that all issues raised by residents will be monitored closely and resolved in a timely manner.

Deputy Mayor Conducts Special Inspection for Road Development in Tarnaka

“(Indian Chronicle OU, December 11): In view of the growing concerns over road widening and repair issues in Tarnaka, Greater Hyderabad Deputy Mayor Mothe Srilatha Shobhan Reddy conducted a field inspection today along with GHMC officials at the Sweet Number One Line area to review the newly initiated road works. During the inspection, she discussed with GHMC officials the deteriorated condition of roads in the Tarnaka division and directed them to ensure permanent, high-quality road construction instead of temporary fixes. She emphasized that the works must be

executed keeping future requirements in mind and without causing inconvenience to the public. Interacting with local residents, the Deputy Mayor assured that necessary road development works would be sanctioned through the GHMC budget to accelerate overall development in Tarnaka. She reiterated her commitment to stand by the people and support their civic needs.



Deoria land fraud case: Ex-IPS officer Amitabh Thakur arrested for forging IDs to get industrial plot in 1999

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

The Lucknow Police Wednesday arrested former IPS officer Amitabh Thakur in connection with an alleged case of fraud and cheating to secure an industrial plot in Deoria in 1999. Officials said Thakur allegedly misused his authority as Superintendent of Police, Deoria, to secure the plot in his wife's name through forged IDs and fake documents, and later selling the property for profit. The case is currently being investigated by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Lucknow Police. "Based on the evidence collected during the probe, we arrested Amitabh Thakur from Sitapur. He will be produced before the Deoria court as the incident took place there," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Lucknow, Vishwajeet Srivastava. The FIR against Thakur and others was registered at Talkatora police station in September on charges of fraud, cheating, and related offences, following a complaint filed by Sanjay Sharma, a resident of Talkatora.

To ensure a fair and transparent investigation, DCP Srivastava constituted the SIT. Police said as part of the probe, the team gathered documentary evidence from Deoria, verified the alleged false identities and addresses in Bihar, examined official records, and questioned multiple witnesses. According to police, the complainant, Sharma, alleged that when Thakur was serving as Deoria SP in 1999, his wife, Nutan, secured the allotment of an industrial plot from the District Industries Centre, Deoria. For this allotment, she allegedly used false personal details — replacing her and her husband's real names and addresses with fabricated ones, and a fake residential address. Sharma further claimed that Nutan prepared forged documents — such as the application form, affidavit, treasury challan, and transfer deed — to mislead government departments. He also alleged that she benefited from her husband's official position, which provided protection and support for these actions. The complaint further alleged that the plot was later sold using the couple's real names and address, thereby keeping government agencies, banks, and other stakeholders in the dark for a long period. According to police, the SIT



found sufficient evidence to proceed against the accused after which Thakur was arrested. In July 2015, while serving as Inspector General, Civil Defence, he was suspended by the Samajwadi Party government days after he publicly accused then SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav of allegedly "threatening" him. The suspension order stated that Thakur had been found *prima facie* guilty of "indiscipline," holding an "anti-government point of view," "violating High Court directions," showing "indifference toward duties and responsibilities of his post," and "breach of service rules". In 2016, the UP government reinstated Thakur. The central government had held that his suspension was not valid after October 11, 2015, as it was extended only after the period of 90 days since the first suspension order. In March 2021, the Union Home Ministry gave premature retirement from service to Thakur, a 1992-batch IPS officer, in "public interest". The same year, in August, Lucknow Police had arrested him from outside his residence in Gomti Nagar on charges that included abetment of suicide of a rape survivor and her friend, who had set themselves on fire outside the Supreme Court and later died at a Delhi hospital. The 24-year-old survivor had accused then BSP Lok Sabha MP Atul Rai of allegedly raping her at his Varanasi residence in 2018. She had also alleged that Thakur assisted the MP in harassing and intimidating her to withdraw or weaken her case.

SIR form submission deadline ends tomorrow in Bengal: Here's your quickest last-day option

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Bihar Assembly elections, SIR of electoral roll, nationwide SIR, Special Intensive Revision (SIR), Assembly elections, Assembly polls, nationwide Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, nationwide SIR of electoral rolls, Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, SIR of electoral rolls, Election Commission, Election Commission of India, Indian express news, current affairs ECI has digitised data for nearly all of the state's 7.64 crore voters, but a substantial portion still remains unverified.

The pre-hearing phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of West Bengal's voter roll ends on December 11, 2025. With one day left, discrepancies have emerged — including roughly 55 lakh 'uncollected forms', representing voters who may be struck off the upcoming draft list. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has digitised data for nearly all of the state's 7.64 crore voters, but a substantial portion still remains unverified. If you have not submitted your SIR Enumeration Form, your name may not appear in the Draft Roll to be published next week. Read on to understand what to do if you missed the deadline and how to verify your form status before this phase closes.

What if you didn't receive the SIR form or missed filling it up?

The ECI earlier extended the deadline from December 4 to December 11. If you, as an elector, missed submitting the form, you can still file a claim once the Draft List is published. You will likely need to fill Form-6 (Application for Inclusion of Name in Electoral Roll) during the claims and objections period. Applicants may be required to appear for a hearing before the respective Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) before their names are included in the Final Roll. However, your fastest option right now is to use the



ECI's online portal. Unlike the offline process, the online SIR system is fully managed by the ECI. Electors do not need to download any form. A dedicated link on the ECI/CEO West Bengal website or the ECINET app allows citizens to fill in details directly. Users can visit the "Services" section and select "Fill Enumeration Form" to complete the process digitally.

As of Monday afternoon, the number of uncollected forms in the SIR has risen to 56,37,731. Of these, 23,98,345 have been recorded as deceased. "Uncollected forms" include entries that cannot be verified or included in the draft roll under any circumstances — voters who have died, gone missing, shifted permanently, have duplicate registrations, or are enrolled elsewhere. Such names will not appear in the draft electoral list. West Bengal currently has 19,64,629 transferred voters, 10,94,710 missing voters, 1,32,215 duplicate entries, and 47,832 voters categorised under 'others' (technical or miscellaneous issues). Electors can check their names, and those of relatives, in previous SIR Electoral Rolls at <https://voters.eci.gov.in/> and provide details in the online Enumeration Form as required.

Chandigarh Golf Association faces lawsuit over alleged illegal sub-letting and profit siphoning



high-fee services such as a gym and restaurant, while failing to share profits with the Administration or submit mandatory audits. Records cited in the petition show that only Rs 1.47 lakh was deposited with the government in 2003, with no subsequent profit-sharing.

The suit says the CGA has sub-let portions of the premises to private operators in violation of the 2021 licence deed, which expressly bars such arrangements. Entities named in the filing include a restaurant, a gym and multiple shops run by coaches and tenants. Singh has also alleged that a separate entity called "CGA Golf Range" was created to collect fees from nearly 2,500 members without any oversight from the main association, amounting to "misuse of public resources and opaque financial practices". Environmental violations form a significant part of the allegations.

The petition states that the range lies within 100 metres of the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, in a notified eco-sensitive zone, where the natural bank of the Sukhna Choe has allegedly been altered, obstructing water flow and posing ecological risks. It further questions how an excise licence for serving alcohol was granted in 2022 when the association's lease expired in September 2025, leaving it in what Singh terms "illegal occupation" of the land. The suit also flags governance concerns, noting that the CGA's April 2025 elections did not follow the National Sports Code requirement for post-wise voting. It alleges that self-styled president Pachnanda did not contest any post, and that Singh's warnings to office-bearers from July onwards went unanswered, prompting him to escalate the issue to senior officials and the Prime Minister's Office in September and October. Apart from the CGA and its office-bearers, the defendants include senior UT Administration officials and the private entities operating from the site. Singh has sought a judicial declaration that the association's activities violate the terms of allotment, a permanent restraint on further sub-letting or commercial alienation of the land, and recovery of the government's pending revenue share after scrutiny of the club's finances.

Singh's petition alleges that the seven-acre site, allotted in 1999 for a low-cost driving range to encourage new golfers, has gradually been converted into a commercial hub over 27 years. The Chandigarh Golf Association (CGA) is facing a civil suit in a local court over allegations of illegal commercial exploitation. (File) The petition alleges that the seven-acre site, allotted in 1999 for a low-cost driving range to encourage new golfers, has gradually been converted into a commercial hub over 27 years. The Chandigarh Golf Association (CGA) is facing a civil suit alleging illegal sub-letting, commercial exploitation of public land and violations of environmental norms near Sukhna Lake, with a local court issuing notices to the association as well as senior officers of the Chandigarh Administration. The notice was issued by the Court of the Civil Judge (Senior Division), Chandigarh, on a petition by Harinder Pal Singh, a Sector 44 resident and recently elected executive member of the CGA. Singh, represented by advocates Ashok Paul Jagga and Akshay Kumar, has challenged the lease and licensing arrangements of the CGA Golf Range in Sector 6. Notices have gone out to CGA president R K Pachnanda, the UT Finance Secretary, Secretary Estates, Secretary Sports, the Deputy Commissioner and other respondents, seeking their replies in the coming weeks.

Singh's petition alleges that the seven-acre site, allotted in 1999 for a low-cost driving range to encourage new golfers, has gradually been converted into a commercial hub over 27 years. He claims the association has earned close to Rs 150 crore through memberships, rentals and

Man arrested for 'raping minor with metal rod' in Gujarat's Rajkot

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

A farm labourer was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly allegedly raping and assaulting a minor girl in Gujarat's Rajkot district after the child identified him as her attacker, police said. According to the Rajkot Rural police, the 30-year-old man admitted to the crime that happened on December 4.

In a statement, Vijay Singh Gurjar, Superintendent of Police, Rajkot Rural, said that when the accused failed to rape the child at first, he "inserted a metal rod", causing internal bleeding and trauma to the minor survivor. "The child was admitted to a hospital in Rajkot city and the police began searching for the perpetrator. The police checked CCTV footage from nearby villages and drew up a list of around 100 suspects," said Gurjar. "From there, we zeroed in on 10 possible suspects. We showed the photographs of these 10 persons to the minor victim with the help of child counsellors. She identified one of the men as the perpetrator



and an interrogation was done, during which he admitted to the crime," Gurjar added. The police said the accused is a sharecropper who hails from Madhya Pradesh, is married and has three children. Further investigation is underway, police said.

3 more leopards captured in Pune's Shirur range amid rising human-wildlife conflict



GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Three more leopards were caught over Monday and Tuesday in trap cages installed by the Forest Department in the Shirur range in the Pune district of Maharashtra. Two of these were from the Pimparkhed village, where two children were killed in leopard attacks in October and November. These traps were set less than a week after three leopards were captured in the same range, including one on the premises of the Fiat Automobiles plant in Ranjangaon.

The Shirur range of the Junnar Forest Division has seen a sharp rise in human-leopard conflict in recent weeks, with three people, including two children, getting killed between October 12 and November 1. On Monday, a six-year-old female leopard was captured in a cage installed on the farm of one Rohidat Temkar in the Pimparkhed village during the day. On Monday night, a seven-year-old male leopard was captured in the cage installed on the farm of one Santosh Sonavane. On Tuesday, a nine-year-old male leopard was captured in a cage installed on the farm of one

Datta Wadane in the Chandoh village, located around 4 km from Pimparkhed. All three leopards have been sent to the leopard rehabilitation centre at Manikdoh. Last week, a leopard was reported on the premises of the Fiat Automobiles plant in Ranjangaon, Shirur, in the early hours of December 3. This leopard was captured the next day in a cage installed on the premises after the sighting. Two more leopards were captured in cages installed in Pimparkhed and Kawade village on December 3 and 4. 3 deaths in Shirur due to leopard attacks in the two villages, Pimparkhed and Jambut in the Shirur taluka, three deaths occurred due to leopard attacks between October 12 and November 1: Shivanya Bombe, 5, on October 12; Bhagubai Jadhav, 70, on October 22; and Rohan Bombe, 13, on November 1. These incidents triggered massive public outrage. In protest against the increasing leopard attacks in Junnar, Shirur, Ambegaon, and Khed talukas, villagers staged agitations blocking the Belhe-Jejuri Road on October 12 and 22 and the Pune-Nashik highway at Manchar on November 3. On November 2, following the death of Rohan, 13, an angry mob set fire to a Forest Department patrol vehicle and the local base camp building, resulting in significant damage. The Pune Forest Department subsequently obtained immediate permission from the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to capture or shoot dead the animal. Special teams from the Forest Department, including those from ResQ Charitable Trust in Pune, were deployed. A male leopard over five years old, suspected to be involved in the Pimparkhed attacks, was shot dead on November 5 after efforts to tranquilise it with a dart failed. The animal became aggressive and charged at the team, leaving officials with no option but to open fire.

Gujarat tribal arrested for 'endangering sovereignty' after he 'praised' Naxal commander Hidma on Instagram reel

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

The Gujarat police have arrested a man from Chhota Udepur district for "endangering the sovereignty of India" by allegedly praising senior Naxal commander Madvi Hidma as a "freedom fighter" in an Instagram reel. The alleged post came about a month after Hidma was killed in an operation by the Andhra Pradesh police. The tribal youth, identified as Paresh Rathwa (31) from Kawant taluka, had allegedly made the reel earlier this week, and was arrested on Wednesday.

Police said that Rathwa's social media account had been under the scanner of the Chhota Udepur Special Operations Group (SOG), which came across the alleged post. According to the FIR lodged at Kawant police station, Rathwa had posted the reel on November 25, which was noticed by the SOG on Tuesday while scanning through accounts of influencers on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp. On Wednesday, Chhota Udepur District Superintendent of Police, Imtiyaz Shaikh, said, "Paresh Rathwa had posted a reel on Instagram where he was praising Hidma as a freedom fighter and speaking of tribal people being Naxals. The post challenged the sovereignty of the country and posed a threat to internal unity and security. It was also aimed at creating discord among communities of the country. We have taken cognisance and the SOG Police Inspector has registered an FIR against the accused. He has been formally arrested and further process is on." Shaikh also warned tribal youth against the "glamour of social media", likes and followers. Shaikh said, "It is my message to the tribal youth to not fall for the glamour of social media and post unverified reels just to gain likes and followers. You can become an accused in the eyes of law by posting such reels... Before making posts or comments, always verify the facts, otherwise you may land up in grave legal trouble."



The FIR has been lodged under BNS sections 152 (endangering the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India, covering secession, armed rebellion, and separatist activities through speech, writing, electronic means, or finances), 192 (wanton giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 196(1)(a) (promotions or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities), 196(1)(b) (any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, and which disturbs or is likely to disturb the public tranquillity), and 197(1)(d) (making or publishing false or misleading information, jeopardising the sovereignty, unity and integrity or security of India).

Andhra Pradesh High Court orders CID, ACB action in Tirumala Parakamani theft case

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday directed CID and ACB to take legal action in the Parakamani theft case at Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, Tirumala. The court allowed Directors General of the Crime Investigation Department (CID) and Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to register the FIRs to take action as per law. Both the CID and ACB have been authorised to probe the compromise in the Lok Adalat and the assets of accused C V Ravi Kumar. Both agencies were directed to mutually exchange information during the investigation. They were also asked to share the information with the Income Tax and the Enforcement Directorate. The Special Investigation Team (SIT), which probed the Parakamani theft case, had submitted its report to the court on December 2. Additional Director General, CID, Ravi Shankar Ayyanar, who headed the SIT, submitted the report in a sealed cover. The CID had launched the probe after the High Court issued orders on a petition challenging the closure of the Parakamani theft case in the Lok Adalat. Ravi Kumar, an employee of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), was caught while stealing USD 920 from Parakamani (coins and currency notes counting centre) in April 2023. The theft case

registered at the Tirumala police station was transferred to the Lok Adalat, where a compromise settlement formula was reached in September 2023 after Ravi Kumar volunteered to donate seven properties worth Rs 40 crore, all of them located in Tirupati and Chennai, in the name of the TTD. A petition was filed in the Andhra Pradesh High Court alleging that there was no investigation into the theft case as the then-governing board of the TTD had closed the case after a compromise in the Lok Adalat. Petitioner Macherla Sreenivas sought an investigation into the closure of the case. The SIT, which launched the investigation in October, questioned former TTD Chairpersons B Karunakar Reddy and Y V Subba Reddy, former TTD executive officer Dharma Reddy, and several other TTD and police officials. In a related development, the High Court on Wednesday directed CID to submit a report of the post-mortem examination of Y Satish Kumar, the complainant in the theft case. A former Assistant Vigilance and Security Officer (AVSO) of the TTD and complainant in the theft case, Satish Kumar, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on the railway tracks at Komali village near Tadipatri in Anantapur district on November 14. Postmortem revealed that he had been hit on the back of his head with a sharp object.



UN Security Council endorses Trump's Gaza peace plan, authorises stabilisation force



GNS News Agency, Dec 11

United Nations: The UN Security Council has adopted a draft resolution endorsing US President Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan and authorising the establishment of an international stabilisation force in the enclave, with the American leader describing it as a "moment of true historic proportion". The US-drafted resolution was adopted in the 15-nation Council on Monday evening with 13 votes in favour, none against, and abstentions by China and Russia.

It endorsed Trump's 'Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict' announced on September 29, which envisions Gaza as a "deradicalised terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbours" and is redeveloped for the benefit of its population. The resolution also welcomed the establishment of a 'Board of Peace' (BoP), described as a "transitional administration" with international legal personality that will set the framework and coordinate funding for Gaza's reconstruction under the plan. Trump, in a social media post, welcomed the Council's adoption of the resolution, describing it as "a moment of true historic proportion". "It will go down as one of the biggest approvals in the History of the United Nations, will lead to further Peace all over the World," he wrote. Trump congratulated the "world" on the "incredible vote" in the Council that acknowledged and endorsed the Board of Peace. Trump said he will chair the Board, which will "include the most powerful and respected Leaders throughout the world". The vote comes a day before Trump is scheduled to host Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman at the White House. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, in a statement, said the adoption of the resolution on Gaza is an "important step" in the consolidation of the ceasefire, urging all parties to abide by it. Guterres commended the continued diplomatic efforts of Egypt, Qatar, Turkiye, the US, and regional states and underlined the importance of moving towards the second phase

of the US plan, leading to a political process aimed at achieving a two-state solution. "It is essential now to translate the diplomatic momentum into concrete and urgently needed steps on the ground," the UN statement said, adding that the organisation is committed to scaling up humanitarian aid and supporting efforts to advance the next phase of the ceasefire.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called the resolution a "historic milestone in building a peaceful and prosperous Gaza governed by the Palestinian people, not Hamas". With the vote, the region is "closer than ever" to achieving a "demilitarised, deradicalised, and stable Gaza", he said. US Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mike Waltz said the resolution represents another significant step towards a stable Gaza that will be able to prosper, and an environment that will allow Israel to live in security. "The Board of Peace, which will be led by President Trump, remains the cornerstone of our effort," he said, adding that the Board will coordinate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, facilitate Gaza's development, and support a technocratic committee of Palestinians responsible for day-to-day administration, while the Palestinian Authority implements its reform programmes. The resolution also provides a framework for troop-contributing countries for the International Stabilisation Force and mechanisms for global financial institutions to channel investment. Waltz said. Russia's Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia criticised the resolution as "yet another pig in a poke", saying the Council was effectively placing Gaza "at the mercy" of the Board of Peace and the stabilisation force "whose working methods are still unknown". He warned that the document must not become a "smokescreen for unbridled experiments by the US and Israel", nor "turn into a death sentence for the two-state solution".

According to Trump's comprehensive plan, if both sides agree to the proposal, the "war will immediately end". Israeli forces will withdraw to the agreed-upon line to prepare for a hostage release. During this time, all military operations, including aerial and artillery bombardment, will be suspended, and battle lines will remain frozen until conditions are met for the complete staged withdrawal. Further, within 72 hours of Israel publicly accepting this agreement, all hostages, alive and deceased, will be returned. The plan also proposes a "Trump economic development plan" to rebuild Gaza, drawing on experts who have developed modern cities in the Middle East. It envisions a special economic zone with "preferred tariff and access rates", and says "no one will be forced to leave Gaza, and those who wish to leave will be free to do so and free to return". "We will encourage people to stay and offer them the opportunity to build a better Gaza," the plan states.

Calm but tense Bangladesh under tight security as Awami League calls shutdown after Hasina verdict



is thin as the people preferred to stay indoors," a transport operator in Dhaka said. Many offices and educational institutions recorded low attendance as people chose to stay indoors amid uncertainty. Heavily armed police, Rapid Action Battalion personnel and paramilitary units continued round-the-clock patrols, especially around government buildings, party offices and key intersections.

Authorities kept security cordons in parts of the capital, while checkpoints and barricades remained in place. Hasina's Awami League party, in a statement posted on social media on Monday, called for a "nationwide total shutdown" on Tuesday in protest against Hasina's verdict. It has also called for "nationwide demonstrations, protests, and resistance" from Nov 19-21. "Our systematic democratic movement will continue until the fall of the illegal, unconstitutional government of killer-fascist (Muhammad) Yunus and the restoration of a democratic state system," the statement said. The party termed the verdict "politically motivated", "malicious, retaliatory, and vengeful".

Hasina, 78, was on Monday sentenced to death in absentia by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests last year. It also handed the death sentence to former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on similar charges. Hasina has been living in India since she fled Bangladesh on August 5 last year in the face of the massive protests. Commenting on the verdict, Hasina denied the charges as "biased and politically motivated" and said the judgment has been made by a "rigged tribunal" established and presided over by an "unelected government with no democratic mandate".

Bangladesh remained calm but tense as heavy security enforced a shutdown called by the Awami League after Sheikh Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia for alleged crimes against humanity. Public movement was limited, with authorities maintaining strict patrols and checkpoints across major cities

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

New Delhi/Dhaka: Bangladesh on Tuesday remained calm but tense as security forces kept a tight grip on the streets across major cities, following the Awami League's call for a "nationwide total shutdown" to protest the death sentence handed down to its chief and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. No incident of violence was reported, while traffic in Dhaka and other major cities stayed thin and public movement was limited amid fears of possible unrest following Monday's high-profile verdict. "The transport flow

Glittering royal jewels displayed while Paris is still uneasy over Louvre robbery



GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Paris: A glittering exhibition of royal jewels is opening on Wednesday in Paris even as the city still reels from the brazen crown-jewel heist at the nearby Louvre Museum. The four-minute operation in October emptied cases in the Louvre's Apollo Gallery, forced its closure and rattled public confidence in France's cultural security. With the plundered gallery still sealed off, another museum nearby is showcasing diamonds and tiaras that endured revolutions, exile and empire: treasures that have managed to escape the type of plunder now afflicting the Louvre's own jewels.

The "Dynamic Jewels" exhibition at the Hôtel de la Marine — itself the site of an infamous 1792 crown-jewel theft — opens at a moment of national sensitivity. Spread across four galleries, the exhibit unfurls more than a hundred pieces that dazzle in both sparkle and scale. Its objects are drawn from the Al Thani Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and major lenders including King Charles III, the Duke of Fife, Cartier, Chaumet and France's own national collections.

Some of the most striking loans include the giant 57-carat Star of Golconda diamond; a sapphire coronet and emerald tiara designed by Prince Albert for Queen Victoria, reunited here for the first time in more than 150 years; and Catherine the Great's diamond-encrusted dress ornaments. A Cartier necklace created for an Indian ruler blends European platinum-age design with centuries-old gems. Curators didn't comment on details of operational security. But the Hôtel de la Marine stresses that it was rebuilt with modern, high-grade security when it reopened in 2021, and that its galleries were conceived with robust protections in mind. The museum did not say whether any measures had been strengthened in response to the Louvre heist. Still, the latest exhibition unfolds at a moment when Paris is urgently tightening museum protections. Last month, Louvre director

Laurence des Cars announced that roughly 100 new surveillance cameras and upgraded anti-intrusion systems will be installed, with the first measures rolled out in weeks and the full network expected by the end of next year. The Louvre investigation remains active; meanwhile, none of the stolen pieces have been recovered. Arthur Brand, an Amsterdam-based art detective, said the Louvre heist will have sharpened vigilance at institutions like the Hotel de la Marine. "Authorities have learned from the Louvre's lacking security," he said. "The thieves know that the security people here aren't going to be sloppy."

They will have learned their lesson. It's a good thing this exhibit is going on. Life goes on. You should not give in to thieves. Show these precious items! With the Apollo Gallery closed, the Hôtel de la Marine is suddenly poised to become a prime stop for jewel-lovers — an unfortunate coincidence, or unexpected advantage — a place where visitors shut out of the Louvre's Crown Jewels displays may naturally gravitate. "We show how great gemstones, tiaras and objects of virtuosity reflected identity in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries,"

Trump says he will sell F-35s to Saudi Arabia on eve of crown prince's Washington visit



GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Washington: President Donald Trump said Monday he will sell F-35 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia despite some concern within the administration that such a sale could lead to China gaining access to the US technology behind the advanced weapon system. The announcement came on the eve of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's highly anticipated Washington visit, his first to the United States in more than seven years. "I will say that that we will be doing that," Trump said when asked if he would sell the jets to Saudi Arabia. "We'll be selling F-35s." The crown prince had been expected to arrive with a wish list that includes receiving formal assurances from Trump defining the scope of the US military protection for the kingdom and an agreement to buy US-made F-35 fighter jets, one of the world's most advanced aircraft.

The Republican administration, however, has been wary about upsetting Israel's qualitative military edge over its neighbours, especially at a time when Trump is depending on Israeli support for the success of his Gaza peace plan. Another long-standing concern, which also derailed a potential similar sale to the United Arab Emirates, is that the F-35 technology could be stolen by or somehow transferred to China, which has close ties to both the UAE and Saudi Arabia, according to three administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations on the matter. The Saudis and China last month held joint naval exercises hosted by the kingdom. And Beijing in 2023 helped mediate an agreement between the Saudi Arabia and Iran to reopen their embassies and exchange ambassadors amid ongoing tensions. China surpassed the US last year as Saudi Arabia's top trade partner, but the United States has remained Riyadh's favoured nation for arms sales. Bradley Bowman, senior director of the Center on Military and Political Power at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said Congress could press the administration to detail what assurances Riyadh has given the White House about its relationship with China. He added that the White House is likely to also face questions about plans to ensure Israel maintains its qualitative military edge. The announcement by Trump comes at a moment in which he's trying to persuade Saudi Arabia and Israel to

normalize relations.

He has talked up his push to extend his first-term Abraham Accords — the project that formalised commercial and diplomatic ties between Israel and a trio of Arab nations — as key to his plan for bringing long-term stability to the Middle East as the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza continues to hold. "I hope that Saudi Arabia will be going into the Abraham Accords very shortly," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Friday as he made his way to Florida for the weekend. Yet Trump's optimism that a US-brokered deal could come soon is tempered by more sober internal assessments. The Saudis have made clear that a guaranteed path to a Palestinian state remains a condition for the kingdom signing onto the accords — something Israel vehemently opposes. The UN Security Council on Monday approved a US plan for Gaza that authorizes an international stabilization force to provide security in the devastated territory and envisions a possible future path to an independent Palestinian state. Still, Saudi Arabia is unlikely to sign on to the accords anytime soon, but there is cautious optimism that an agreement can be sealed by the end of Trump's second term, the officials said. "Let's hope that President Trump makes clear that the first F-35 will not be delivered until Saudi Arabia normalizes relations with Israel," Bowman said. "Otherwise, the president will undercut his own leverage." The Trump administration formally notified Congress in November 2020 that it planned to sell 50 stealth F-35 fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates as part of a broader arms deal worth US \$23 billion aimed at deterring potential threats from Iran, despite concerns raised by Israel. The UAE announcement came shortly after Trump lost the 2020 election to Democratic Joe Biden and followed the signing of the Abraham Accords between and the UAE. But Biden, soon after taking office in January 2021, put a hold on that sale. Trump's move is likely to receive scrutiny from human rights activists as Prince Mohammed's trip marks his first visit to Washington since 2018. On that visit, the crown prince went on a three-week US tour aimed at improving the perception of his nation in the eyes of Americans concerned by the kingdom's conservative social mores, its unequal treatment of women and the ignominious fact that 15 of 19 hijackers that took part in the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States were Saudi citizens. The Saudis' reputation was further eroded months after Prince Mohammed's last Washington visit with the killing and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Turkey, an operation targeting a critic of the kingdom that US intelligence agencies later determined Prince Mohammed likely directed. The crown prince has denied he was involved. But seven years later, the dark clouds in the US-Saudi relationship have been cleared away by Trump, who has tightened his embrace of the 40-year-old crown prince he views as an indispensable player in shaping the Middle East in the decades to come.

UNSC approves resolution endorsing Trump's Gaza peace plan and international force



GNS News Agency, Dec 11

United Nations: The Security Council approved a historic resolution endorsing US President Donald Trump's peace plan for Gaza, opening the way for deploying an international force for the devastated territory. The resolution adopted on Monday is a diplomatic victory for Trump, recognising the Board of Peace (BoP) headed by him that will be the transitional authority for Gaza as it emerges from a two-year catastrophe. Trump, a vehement critic of the UN, posted on Truth Social, "This will go down as one of the biggest approvals in the History of the United Nations, will lead to further Peace all over the World, and is a moment of true Historic proportion."

Another path-breaking element in the resolution is opening a "credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood", which the Trump administration had opposed. The entire 20-point Trump plan for Gaza was attached to the resolution, in an unusual action by the Council. Opposition by veto-wielding Russia, which had drafted its own motion, was overcome by the backing of Arab and Muslim countries of the US plan. Moscow dropped its resolution and abstained, enabling the resolution to go through. Algeria's Permanent Representative Amar Bendjama said the Palestinian Authority, at the highest levels, as well as Muslim and Arab countries, backed the US resolution. But lasting peace hinged on Palestine gaining statehood. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the resolution and said, "It is essential now to translate the diplomatic momentum into concrete and urgently needed steps on the ground". The resolution calls for stepping up humanitarian aid by the UN and other organisations and for unhindered access for them to Gaza. China also abstained on the resolution, which had the support of the other 13 members, including Algeria, the only Arab nation on the Council. With the ceasefire already in force, the next phase of Trump's peace plan requires an International Stabilisation Force (ISF) to disarm Hamas and help bring law and order to the territory, while training a Palestinian force. Countries like Indonesia, that could provide the troops, wanted Council approval for it to give a sense of legitimacy. The ISF will not be a UN peace mission or report to the Council, which was one of the sticking points for Beijing and Moscow. The General Assembly has long called for an independent Palestine living side by side with Israel, and in September, France and Britain, along with several Western nations, announced they would recognise Palestine, leaving the US on the outside. Palestine's statehood was conditioned in the resolution on the Palestine Authority reforms and progress on redeveloping Gaza, most of which has been reduced to rubble by Israeli bombing. Russia's Permanent Representative Vassily Nebenzia said Moscow appreciated "the efforts by the United States and other mediators, which have made it possible to halt the 'hot' phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict". He said that because the Palestinian leadership and several Muslim and Arab countries favoured the US resolution, Moscow was dropping its resolution. He said that it was "a sorrowful day for the Security Council" because its powers were being "undermined" by the resolution that empowers the US. "Don't say we didn't warn you," he said. The resolution also provides a framework for international financial institutions like the World Bank to contribute to Gaza's rebuilding. The adoption of the US resolution was the result of intense negotiations with members of the Council and other Arab and Muslim nations, with the mention of an eventual statehood for Palestine one of the compromises. On Friday, the US corralled Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Jordan, and Turkiye to endorse its resolution in a joint statement aimed at undercutting Russia's

opposition. The Gaza conflict began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel, killing more than 1,200 people and taking 251 people hostage. Israel launched a war of retribution that continued till September 29, when the US arm-twisted Israel and Hamas to agree to a ceasefire. Hamas was made to release the hostages it still held, while Israel released some Palestinian prisoners. According to the UN, 80 per cent of buildings in Gaza have been destroyed by Israeli bombing, and the Hamas-controlled health ministry said about 69,000 Palestinians, about half of them women and children, were killed.

Trump backs H-1B visas despite Republican opposition

Washington: US President Donald Trump once again defended the H-1B visas, saying overseas workers are needed to train American workers.

"If you are going to be making chips, we don't make chips too much here anymore. We are going to be... in a period of a year, we are going to have a big portion of the chip market. But we have to train our people how to make chips. We used to do it, and foolishly we lost that business to Taiwan," Trump said while addressing reporters at the White House. Last week, Trump, in an interview with Fox News' Laura Ingraham, supported the H-1B visa programme. When asked if his administration planned to deplete H-1B visas, he replied, "You do have to bring in talent." When Ingraham countered, "We have plenty of talent," Trump responded, "No, you don't." "You don't have certain talents... And people have to learn, you can't take people off an unemployment line and say, I'm going to put you into a factory. We're going to make missiles," he added. Trump's comment sparked an intense debate with leading Republican and conservative leaders demanding the scrapping of the visa programme. The White House on Friday clarified its position on the visa policy, telling IANS that the \$100,000 application fee is a "significant first step to stop abuses of the system." In an exclusive response to IANS, a White House spokesperson said that President Donald Trump has "done more than any president in modern history to tighten our immigration laws and put American workers first." "The \$100,000 payment required to supplement new H-1B visa applications is a significant first step to stop abuses of the system and ensure American workers are no longer replaced by lower-paid foreign labor," White House Spokeswoman Taylor Rogers told IANS. She also highlighted the recently launched "Project Firewall" to investigate companies flouting the H-1B visa rules. The Department of Labor launched Project Firewall as a new enforcement initiative to investigate companies that have abused the H-1B visa system.

Crimes against children surge in Assam, Rajasthan, and Kerala: NCRB data



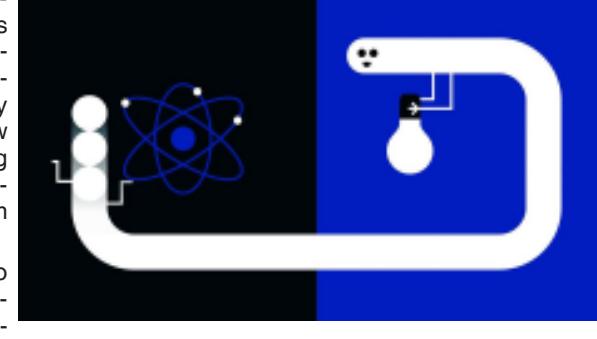
In 2023, cases of crimes against children recorded the sharpest rise in three States — Assam, Rajasthan and Kerala, according to the latest data from the National Crimes Records Bureau. In Assam, recorded cases of crimes against children surged by nearly 100% — from an average of around 5,100 cases between 2018 and 2022 to more than 10,000 in 2023. In Kerala, the number increased by 106% — from an average of more than 2,800 cases between 2018 and 2022 to more than 5,900 cases in 2023. In Rajasthan, the number increased by 70% — from an average of 6,200 cases between 2018 and 2022 to more than 10,500 cases in 2023. In comparison, overall recorded cases of crimes against children in India increased by 25% in that period. The below map shows the percentage change in cases of crimes against children in 2023 compared with the average number of cases recorded between 2018 and 2022. While these three States stand out, the reasons for the rise in each of them vary considerably.

In Assam, a record crackdown on child marriage led to a sharp rise in the number of cases filed under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. In fact, a close look at Assam's crime data against children shows that the spike was driven almost entirely by this State-led intervention. Between 2020 and 2022, about 150 cases were recorded annually in Assam under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act; this increased to 5,267 in 2023. That year, cases re-

lated to child marriage accounted for nearly 52% of all crimes against children in the State, a dramatic jump from 3-4% in the preceding years, as shown in the chart below. In Rajasthan, two key factors appear to have driven the rise. The first is the sudden shift in the way offences against children were categorised — from only non-POCSO sections to specific POCSO provisions. POCSO refers to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. In 2021 and 2022, over 2,700 cases were filed separately under the rape provision (Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code). However, in 2022 and 2023, no cases were filed independently under this section; instead, there was a corresponding rise in cases registered under the relevant POCSO provision. Cases filed under Sections 4 and 6 of the POCSO Act read with Section 376 of the IPC increased from just three in 2021 and 2022 to more than 3,500 in 2022 and 2023, as shown in the chart below. This shift — from filing cases solely under IPC provisions to invoking relevant sections of the POCSO Act — was seen across the country, but was most pronounced in Rajasthan.

It should be noted that the more accurate classification of child rape cases occurred alongside an actual increase in such offences in Rajasthan — from about 2,700 to 3,500 cases. However, whether this rise is primarily due to proper classification or an actual increase in offences is an open question. The second is that there was a sharp spike in cases related to the kidnapping and abduction of children. In Rajasthan, cases filed under various sections related to the kidnapping and abduction of children rose sharply, with their share in total crimes against children climbing to over 54% in 2023 — a steep increase, as shown in the chart below. There was a surge in POCSO cases in Kerala too. The increase appears partly linked to more accurate classification of offences under specific POCSO sections, accompanied by an increase in the reported cases, as shown in the chart below. It is important to note that the rise in cases, particularly those involving crimes against children, may indicate improved reporting, rather than a genuine increase in the incidence of such crimes. The data for the charts were sourced from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) from 2020 to 2023.

The curious history of how quantum mechanics came to be 'seen' in an electrical circuit



Quantum mechanics is usually described as the science of the very small — of electrons, atoms, and photons that behave in ways that defy the rules of everyday experience. Yet one of the most striking results of modern physics is that this quantum behaviour doesn't vanish abruptly when systems become large. Instead, it continues to show itself in the behaviour of groups of particles doing something together. Over the years, physicists have learnt how to engineer these groups, measure them, and even control them to perform specific tasks.

The 2025 physics Nobel Prize has been awarded to John Clarke, Michel Devoret, and John Martinis for showing in their experiments that quantum tunnelling — a phenomenon in which a particle passes through an energy barrier instead of having to climb over it — can occur not only in the subatomic realm but also in an electrical circuit big enough to see with the naked eye. Their achievement came at the end of one particular chain of ideas stretching back to Brian Josephson, a British physicist who first described how pairs of electrons could tunnel through an insulating barrier between two superconductors, and Anthony Leggett, who later proposed that an entire circuit's collective state could itself behave as a quantum object. Together, these ideas created a bridge from the quantum world of particles to the macroscopic world of devices. In 1962, when Josephson was a 22-year-old graduate student at the University of Cambridge, the Bardeen-Cooper-Schrieffer (BCS) theory had explained superconductivity. In a superconductor, electrons move in pairs known as Cooper pairs, forming a collective state that flows without resistance. Josephson wondered what would happen if two superconductors were separated by a very thin insulating barrier. Would the paired electrons simply stop at the wall or would they tunnel through (since that's something quantum physics allows)? Using the maths of quantum physics, he showed that it was possible for a supercurrent, i.e. a superconducted current, to pass through even if there was no voltage across the barrier. The result was revolutionary: a current could flow indefinitely across an insulator purely because of the particular relationship between the two superconductors. Josephson derived a simple formula linking the current to the phase difference.

In a superconductor, all the electrons that form Cooper pairs act together as a single quantum wave. And like any wave, this collective quantum state has a phase, which you can think of as a measure of how far along the wave's cycle (crest to trough) it is at a given point. When you place two superconductors next to each other with a thin insulating barrier between them, each one has its own quantum wave and its own phase. The phase difference is simply the difference between those two phases — i.e. how much one wave leads or lags behind the other. This difference isn't just mathematical; it's also physically real and it controls how electrons tunnel between the superconductors. In fact, the current that flows across the junction depends directly on the sine of that phase difference, which is what Josephson expressed in his formula: $I = I_0 \sin(\phi)$, where ϕ is the angle expressing the phase difference. Imagine two synchronised dancers performing the same steps. If they move perfectly in sync (no phase difference), they look like one. If one dancer is slightly ahead of the other, that offset (their phase difference) creates visible interference in their motion. Similarly, when the superconductors' phases differ, that offset drives a beat between them, producing a current even when no voltage is applied. Josephson also predicted that if a voltage were applied, the current would oscillate at a specific frequency proportional to that voltage. He also said that if the setup were illuminated with microwaves of that frequency, there should be a measurable voltage across the barrier. When other researchers quickly confirmed these predictions, this Josephson effect became a cornerstone of quantum electronics. In 1972, the BCS theory won the Nobel Prize for physics, and Josephson followed the next year with the prize for his work.

To visualise the Josephson effect, imagine two reservoirs of water separated by a thin glass wall. Classically, no water should cross it. But in the quantum world, waves associated with the molecules on either side can interfere and create a small but steady leak through the wall. The Josephson junction — which is a sandwich of two superconductors and an insulator — is the electrical version of this improbable leak. The supercurrent doesn't arise from a push, or voltage, but from the coherence of the quantum waves themselves. 'Coherence' here means the ability of the system to maintain its quantum character. And because of this coherence, a Josephson junction can behave like a single

quantum entity, even though it consists of trillions of electrons. In the quantum world, waves associated with the molecules on either side of this reservoir can interfere and create a small but steady leak through the wall. | Photo Credit: Image created with ChatGPT 5

The next great leap on this chain was that of the British-American physicist Anthony Leggett. By the late 1970s, physicists knew Josephson junctions behaved in ways consistent with quantum theory, but there also remained a deeper conceptual question: could an entire macroscopic variable, such as the current flowing in a circuit, obey the laws of quantum mechanics as if it were a microscopic particle?

Leggett, then a young theorist with a background in superfluid helium, recognised that the Josephson junction offered the ideal testing ground. He proposed treating the phase difference between the two superconductors (remember: a collective property involving trillions of electrons) as a single parameter moving in an energy landscape. In his model, the system resembled a marble trapped in a valley between two hills. The marble represented the phase difference; the hills represented energy barriers determined by the junction's current and capacitance. If the marble had enough energy, it could roll over the hill, corresponding to the junction switching from a zero-voltage state to one with a finite voltage. But even without enough energy, quantum mechanics allows the marble to tunnel through the hill, appearing on the other side without having to go over the top. Leggett predicted that at a sufficiently low temperature, when there wasn't enough heat in the system to push it over the energy barrier, a macroscopic variable of the system could tunnel through — and that this could be observed as a small current that's independent of the temperature. His work did more than propose a radical idea: it set down specific conditions in which macroscopic quantum effects could survive the destructive influence of the environment. He analysed how frictional losses and electromagnetic noise (together known as dissipation and decoherence) would discourage quantum tunnelling, and showed how to design circuits that would minimise effects. In other words, his theory showed a way to use the Josephson junction to test the limits of quantum mechanics. Among those who took up the challenge were Clarke, Devoret, and Martinis. They developed exquisitely clean Josephson junctions and cooled them to fractions of a degree above absolute zero. By biasing the junction with a steadily increasing current, they could watch for the point at which it switched into a finite voltage state. At high temperatures, the switch occurred at random currents determined by thermal fluctuations: i.e. the hotter the sample, the more easily it could jump over the barrier, instead of opting to tunnel through. But as they lowered the temperature, something remarkable happened. Below a certain point, the temperature no longer mattered: the junction continued to switch with a small but steady probability, exactly as Leggett's model predicted. This escape rate also stopped following the classical thermal pattern and instead settled into a pattern only quantum mechanics could explain. In effect, the trio had caught a macroscopic system tunnelling through an energy barrier. To strengthen their case, the three then turned to spectroscopy. If the phase variable truly behaved like a quantum particle, it would have to have discrete energy levels. They followed Josephson's prediction and shone microwaves of specific frequencies on the circuit, and found that it absorbed energy only when the frequency matched the gap between energy levels. This was clear evidence of energy quantisation in a macroscopic object. In two papers in 1981 and 1985, they described the observation of macroscopic quantum tunnelling and quantised energy levels, both in a single Josephson junction — a result that built directly on J

'H-1B move could be a win-win as more talent might return to India'



Amid evolving India-US relations, and growing concerns among students reconsidering plans for higher education in the US, Geoffrey Garrett, Dean of the USC Marshall School of Business and Jared Grusd, Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurship at the institute told The Indian Express that despite the uncertainties, USC has seen a record number of Indian students enrolling across various programmes. They said while recent announcements around the H-1B visa may seem worrying at first, but once the details were fully understood, it became far less intimidating. Edited excerpts:

In recent times, changes to the H-1B visa have become a crucial factor for Indian students considering higher education in the US. How do you view the current regulatory environment around the H-1B visa?

Geoffrey Garrett (GG): One important clarification for students is they do not need the H-1B visa right away. There is a different system called Optional Practical Training (OPT), which allows students to work after graduation. If it's a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) degree — as all degrees from the Marshall Business School are — students can get up to three years of work experience through OPT. What we're really concerned about, from a firm's perspective, is the increasing hassle of getting an Indian student into the US workforce. That challenge has been growing for a while. However, I suspect that the bigger American companies, where most students aim to work, will absorb the cost. For them, the \$100,000 or so is spread over six years, which makes it manageable.

I understand why Indian students are so concerned. But in practical terms, two things matter. First, the job pathways into big firms likely won't be affected much. Second, several of the major users of H-1B visas were Indian companies operating in the US, so this shift could be a win-win — as more talent might now return to India. The signal these new regulations send is powerful and concerning. At universities like USC, where international students are our lifeblood, we have to take this seriously. One-third of our entire student body consists of first-generation migrants to the US. But when you unpack the details, the reality is less intimidating than it first appears. We will need to break this down clearly for people — otherwise, it will be a very big change to our business model.

If you can elaborate on this and also did you see any impact on the number of admissions from India this year? GG: At the business school, we had a record number of Indian students coming in, and I believe that was true across USC, at the UG level as well. We were initially concerned — not just about students from India, but about international students in general — because of visa-related hassles. We feared we might lose a significant number. But that actually didn't happen. What I think is really happening is that at top-quality institutions, international students have a global outlook, understand the value of the education they are getting. It's probably the second-tier American universities that will suffer, at least in the short term. That said, the recent news about H-1B visas is a big deal. From a business model perspective, I am less concerned about the UG programmes, because they are longer — the experience stretches over four years, and you can amortize the uncertainty over time.

The part of our educational system that's a bit more transactional is the one-year master's programmes. For those students, this new environment makes the decision much harder: Do I pursue this degree with so much uncertainty around my employment prospects afterward? That's a real concern, and we'll need to think carefully about it. It's also another reason to seriously consider offering graduate education outside the US — not just as a strategic move, but because it might become a practical necessity.

There's a growing cultural fear among Indian students they may no longer be as welcomed in the US as before. In your view, what is the one real fear and the one imagined fear they should keep in mind about the American campus? GG: I have two reactions to that. First, California is demographically different. If you walk down Trousdale Parkway in the middle of the day at USC, you don't feel like you're in some mythical version of white America from the 1950s. Southern California is even more cosmopolitan than the Bay Area.

Second, Indian Americans are incredibly influential today — not just as corporate CEOs, but also through the growing power of the Indian caucus in Congress. That should

give people a sense of comfort. The success of Indian-Americans is remarkable... I think the real fear is not uniquely American — it's global. I never imagined we would see such de-globalisation, that the global economy would begin to fracture. I also never expected skilled migration to become such a politically charged issue in so many countries.

The imagined fear, I believe, is around physical safety. The LA riots over the summer were a global news story. People reached out to ask if we were okay. In reality, it was happening in just two blocks of downtown LA. It was the same with the fires in January — tragic, yes — but they were confined to small areas like the Palisades and Altadena. LA wasn't burning down. Jared Grusd (JG): At USC, on a day-to-day basis, these fears aren't what dominate conversations. What students are actually talking about is exactly what you would expect from any time in the past three to five years — learning, developing skills, pursuing interests, and shaping their career trajectories.

In the past decade, more Indian students have been choosing the US for UG education. However, in recent months, growing uncertainty has led many students to consider newer private Indian universities that offer high-quality, flexible education at much affordable rate. How real or significant is this shift, and what should students keep in mind when making their decision? GG: You are absolutely right about the growing trend of students pursuing UG education abroad — we've seen the same shift at USC. This year, international students made up 21% of USC's incoming UG class overall. At the business school, where I serve as dean, that number was 24%. In fact, the number of Indian undergraduates at USC has doubled over the past five years — and the number of graduate students has increased as well.

Now, however, we are entering a different phase. With India's New Education Policy (NEP), there is a lot of domestic momentum, particularly with the emergence of high-quality private universities. At the same time, there's a new opportunity for institutions like ours: foreign universities are now allowed to operate independently in India. That's a big deal when you start thinking about offshore operations. My view — especially for USC and our business school — is that we want to continue attracting a global student body, as much as possible. But we will also need to think globally in a broader sense. Not just about offshore operations, but also about creating career opportunities outside the US. It can't just be one-way traffic into American jobs. This marks a significant shift for US higher education at a time when both our reliance on international students and on government research funding is being challenged. And I don't believe we will return to the old status quo.

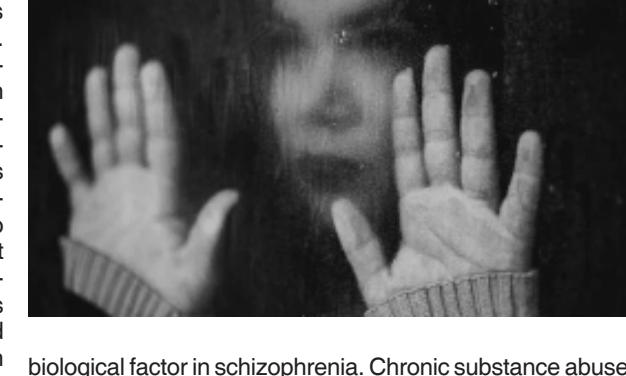
On the research side, this means building more partnerships with the private sector, rather than depending primarily on government support. On the education side, it means adopting a more expansive global outlook. We can't be expecting an endless supply of super-talented students from India coming to LA. You mentioned the NEP. Does it actually make it easier for foreign universities to set up operations in India? GG: Yes. And it's interesting, maybe not surprising, that the two countries that have taken first advantage of that are my home country, Australia, and the UK. I think the reason for that is the financial position of those universities is much weaker than the big, strong American institutions. I suspect the US will be next. It will likely be institutions like NYU and USC, which already have large international footprints and student numbers, including Indians. I do think we'll just be the leading edge of a change that has to happen, because the underlying model of higher education is being challenged today in unprecedented ways. There's a clear supply-demand mismatch in India, and I think that's something everyone recognises. That's also where the opportunity lies. It's why we're seeing the rise of so many impressive private universities, and why international institutions view India as a compelling market.

Several foreign universities are setting up campuses in India — five in Mumbai alone. But for many students, studying abroad is about gaining international exposure and cultural exchange. Can campuses in India provide that same experience? And will it be a challenge to attract international students to these campuses? GG: I think the implicit American model for a long time was that everyone in the world wanted, if they could, to get to the US and become as American as possible. That's clearly outmoded today. So, I think both culturally and economically, we need to go to the world more. Having more balance, rather than this one-way traffic, is the right way to go. There's a cultural dimension to that. At the business school at USC, we send a remarkable proportion of our degree students on international experiences. They all want to go to Western Europe because they are familiar with it — they vacation there, they know the culture and history, etc. What I would like to do is proactively get them into leading emerging markets. And India is the obvious place to focus on now. But the challenges are real. If you haven't been here, the first impression is often that it's different, it's halfway around the world — all of that can feel like a barrier. But I think the opportunity here is so great that if we can grease the wheels by having better access to more things here it will become more feasible.

Your depression isn't in your head; it is linked to immunity

Hyderabad: Management of mental health ailments is usually centered around addressing issues with our brains. However, in the last few years, there has been growing evidence linking the role of body immunity and its influence on various kinds of mental health ailments. Studies by psychiatrists and neuroscientists in the last few years have indicated that Regulatory T Cells (Tregs), which are body's peacekeeping immune cells, have a direct link to our mental health. The drop in Tregs in our body is directly linked to chronic neuroinflammation, an inflammatory response that occurs within the central nervous system (CNS), which includes the brain and spinal cord, driving conditions such as major depressive disorders, anxiety and schizophrenia. "Tregs prevent the immune system from overreacting. When these cells decrease or become dysfunctional, inflammation increases, thus affecting brain chemistry, mood regulation, and emotional stability," explains senior psychiatrist and national director council member of the Indian Psychiatric Society, Dr Vishal Akula.

Research shows that individuals with depression have reduced Regulatory T Cells (Treg) levels, leading to higher inflammatory markers like IL-6, TNF- α , and IL-1 β , which contribute to chronic stress and mood disturbances. The Regulatory T Cells have links to schizophrenia, Dr Vishal explains, "Imbalance in Treg cells increases neuroinflammation and worsens psychotic symptoms. This immune dysregulation is now being studied as a possible



biological factor in schizophrenia. Chronic substance abuse, such as alcohol, nicotine, and opioids, suppresses Treg activity, causing increased brain inflammation and higher relapse rates". The senior psychiatrist points out that improving or enhancing immunity has a lot of potential to address the treatment outcomes of various kinds of mental health ailments. "Recent cutting-edge studies have suggested that antidepressants (SSRIs) may enhance Treg function. Yoga, meditation, vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids, and a balanced diet can help regulate immune balance and improve mood stability," he added. People in general should not be under the impression that mental health is only related to the brain, as it also depends on our body's immunity."

What's the status of the rare earth hypothesis? | Explained



The rare earth hypothesis was proposed in a 2000 book by palaeontologist Peter Ward and astronomer Donald Brownlee. It argues that while simple, microbial life may be common in the universe, complex, multicellular life is likely uncommon. The idea is rooted in a particular place in the universe meeting a chain of successive conditions.

While we often talk about life as ranging from simple (e.g. bacteria and yeast) to complex (e.g. humans and octopuses), life itself is a complex phenomenon and the product of many factors falling in place. Studying these factors on the earth itself has been an arduous and even now an unfinished task; and looking for them on planets located several light years away remains extraordinarily fraught. Scientists studying the possibility of life on other planets have busied themselves with particular aspects over time. Some focus on planetary ingredients such as a rocky world with surface water in the habitable zone of the host star. Other scientists have been concerned with system-level architectures such as giant planets in particular places in the universe. Still others have been looking into long-term climate stabilisation. On the earth, the weathering of continental rocks and the recycling of carbon between the earth's interior and the atmosphere have buffered the climate over geologic time. Many researchers have linked this buffering to plate tectonics, which subduct a carbonated crust and build new surface rocks. This said, the interiors of planets behave in different ways. Rocky planets can have one stiff shell that barely moves, long quiet times broken by short bursts of crust movement or plate-like tectonics (as on the earth). A planet can even switch between these modes over time. Some models also show that without modern plate tectonics, a planet might still keep a habitable climate by balancing volcanism (which adds gases), weathering (removes gases), burial (traps materials), and crustal foundering (sinks the crust). Scientists don't have consensus either: while plate tectonics could help maintain a stable climate that in turn can support complex life, it may not be strictly required for life to begin. The role of giants

A third line of debate is the role of giant planets like Jupiter. The old intuition was that Jupiter 'shields' the earth by deflecting comets and asteroids. Subsequent studies have complicated this story, however. Depending on a giant planet's mass and orbit, scientists have found that it can reduce or increase the flux of impactors to the inner system and it can also deliver water-rich bodies early on. In other words, there seems to be no universal 'filter' on this front; it all depends on the system's architecture. This conclusion has weakened the claim that a Jupiter-like planet is a necessary precondition for complex life on a rocky planet in the same system. Thus, on the question of finding small, temperate planets, many scientists today argue that the occurrence rate of earth-sized planets in the habitable zones of sun-like stars is non-zero and may be a few tens of percent, per Kepler data, depending on the definitions and extrapolations. That undermines the notion that the earth's basic orbital and size configuration is vanishingly uncommon. On the other hand, on the question of planets' ability to retain atmospheres, have long climate cycles, be able to avoid catastrophic events, and so on, the data has become more sobering. The results keep open the possibility that truly earth-like surface environments supporting complex biospheres are less common than the count of earth-sized planets in the habitable zone would suggest. Not definitive. Two more threads bear on the rare versus common debate. First, a recent effort to place an upper limit on the number of earth-like planets emphasised that a lot hinges on atmospheric processes that scientists can't yet survey at scale. Second, searches for technosignatures — signs of technology made by extra-terrestrial life, especially things nature is unlikely to produce on its own — have sharpened the limits on the prevalence of civilisations whose activities emit radio waves (such 'radio-loud' activities on the earth include broadcasting for TV and radio and air traffic control). Multi-year surveys of thousands of stars by the Breakthrough Listen project haven't found any convincing signals so far. While not detecting something doesn't prove that it's absent, it sets upper limits on how common it could be in the cosmos. Taken together, the rare earth hypothesis remains plausible for complex life but it can't be said to be demonstrably true.

At this juncture, three developments could change the picture: (i) if scientists detect atmospheres on rocky, temperate planets, preferably around sun-like stars, showing gases consistent with active surface water cycles; (ii) if scientists place stronger constraints on tectonic regimes on exoplanets (even indirectly), indicating whether long-term climate stabilisers are widespread or rare; and (iii) if scientists detect biosignatures or technosignatures. The first steps are already underway. Extremely large ground telescopes currently under construction as well as future space missions are aimed squarely at planets with temperate atmospheres. Until their observations mature, however, a fair summary seems to be: while microbial life could be common, long-lived ecosystems straddling land and ocean and capable of producing complex life may still be scarce. This seems to be as far as the data can take us today.

These are all system-specific conditions that require a specific mix of star activity, magnetic fields, orbit, planet mass, rotation, and internal heat. When they line up well, a planet can retain its atmosphere for billions of years. However,

Tamil Nadu to introduce WhatsApp ticket booking for state-run buses under digital upgrade



Chennai: In a major digital upgrade for public transport, commuters across Tamil Nadu will soon be able to book state-run bus tickets through WhatsApp, making the ticketing process faster, easier, and entirely cashless. The Tamil Nadu Mobility and Logistics Corporation Limited (TNMLC), which functions under the State Transport Department, has invited tenders to select multiple payment gateway service providers to integrate with the Online Ticket Reservation System (OTRS). The move aims to bring the State Express Transport Corporation (SETC), all Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporations (TNSTCs), and the Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) under a single digital platform accessible via WhatsApp.

Currently, tickets for government bus services are booked through various channels such as the official website, mobile app, e-Seva and franchisee centres, kiosks, and API-based portals. Once the WhatsApp system becomes operational, passengers can book, pay, and receive e-tickets directly on their mobile phones. Payment options will include UPI, credit and debit cards, QR-based systems, and popular digital wallets such as Google Pay, PhonePe, and WhatsApp Pay. Officials said the new initiative will benefit thousands of passengers who rely on SETC and TNSTC services for long-distance and inter-district travel. Together, these corporations operate over 5,000 buses, including deluxe, sleeper, and air-conditioned coaches. TNMLC, which serves as the nodal agency for the OTRS, currently manages an average of 17,976 seat bookings daily and nearly 5.87 lakh bookings every month. Of this, about 85 per cent come through online and mobile platforms, with the rest handled by franchisee counters. Introduced in 2011, the OTRS has gradually evolved into a robust digital system that allows passengers to reserve seats from anywhere in

the state and even from outside Tamil Nadu. The addition of WhatsApp ticketing is expected to further improve accessibility for passengers in rural and semi-urban areas, particularly those less familiar with web-based booking portals. As part of the upcoming upgrade, TNMLC has also directed the establishment of a 24/7 helpdesk in Chennai, to be operated by the selected payment gateway partners. The helpdesk will handle payment and booking queries in both Tamil and English, ensuring round-the-clock support for

How New Zealand veteran coach Gary Stead is breaking life into Andhra cricket | Ranji Trophy 2025-36



An emphatic four-wicket win against Tamil Nadu where Andhra wrapped the game up in three days has the domestic ecosystem talking about one unit needing some long-pending introspection while another seems to be heralding a new dawn. Andhra's rise has been slow but steady. Putting the blocks together is newly-appointed head coach Gary Stead. Funny, if both he and the Andhra Cricket Association had their ways, this partnership wouldn't have happened at all. Stead initially wanted to continue as New Zealand's Test coach, which New Zealand Cricket was not keen on. It named Rob Walter as his successor across formats, pushing him to look for new opportunities. Tamil Nadu was stripped of every morsel of pleasure it had earned on the second day, first being bowled out for 195 after resuming at 101 for three, and then watching Andhra chase down a 201-run target with four wickets to spare on the third day of their Elite Group-A fourth-round Ranji Trophy match at the ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium.

Tamil Nadu was stripped of every morsel of pleasure it had earned on the second day, first being bowled out for 195 after resuming at 101 for three, and then watching Andhra chase down a 201-run target with four wickets to spare on the third day of their Elite Group-A fourth-round Ranji Trophy match at the ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium. | Photo Credit: K.R. Deepak| I had seven years with the Black Caps and made a decision that I wasn't going to continue in all formats of the game. New Zealand Cricket then decided that they wanted a coach to do it all. So it worked out that my time was up, but I was okay with that and understood that it might be that way," he told The Hindu. Stead stayed with coaching, helping Otago, a team based in the country's south. He stepped in to help the side while they hunted for a full-time head coach. It was then that the opportunity to coach Andhra was put before him. "I got approached around August. I had an online meeting with a few people from the Andhra Cricket Association. We talked about the opportunities and we agreed that coaching the Ranji Trophy was something that they were prepared to take me on and I'm very grateful for that," he added. Fortuitous partnership The ACA wanted an Australian coach who turned down the association, but pointed them in Stead's direction instead. "I wanted to bring someone serious from outside India. I was trying for a few people and one of them, who couldn't join us, suggested that Stead might be available. He gave us the lead and we immediately sent him a request," ACA secretary Sana Satish Babu told The Hindu. "We had two calls to figure out plans and align our goals. That involved Girish Dongre (ACA CEO), too. He was convinced, but his only concern was wanting to go back home for Christmas. We were flexible and he was pleased," Satish said. If the ACA ever had any doubts about how Stead would fit in, they would have been abated when Stead dove right into his meticulous homework done on the outfit and the setup, long before he was officially appointed. "Gary took us by surprise. He has some friends in Mumbai, at Kolkata Knight Riders and other places. He took all the Andhra players' analysis from them, not only Ranji players but also the under-19 and under-23 players. He took all the analysis and studied them during the negotiation time. That pleasantly surprised us and showed us that he was not speaking with us out of formality." For all the talk of Stead taking a 'step down' in his career, the excitement and eagerness in his voice about turning around Andhra's fortunes tell a different tale. "I love cricket in India. I love the way it's played and the difference in terms of pitches, compared to New Zealand. I thought this is a great way for me to get out of my comfort zone as well, because I've coached in New Zealand my whole life," Stead said. He is confident that he will not be the last foreign coach to try his hand on the Indian domestic circuit, just as he is not the first to do so — the likes of Dav Whatmore, Michael Bevan, Intikhab Alam, Darren Holder and Alvin Kallicharan having produced varied results over the years. Making adjustments The 53-year-old is also aware that he will have to adjust to his players as much as they are adjusting to his methods. "This is an opportunity for me to grow. I'm coming into a different environment now, so as much as there are things that I think will work, I also have to adapt to the culture of the Indian people and the Andhra

Over half of Indian firms expect AI workloads to grow over 50 pc in 5 years, Cisco report

Mumbai: Over half of Indian companies expect AI workloads to grow by more than 50 per cent in three to five years, with 51 per cent building new data-centre capacity within 12 months, a report said on Wednesday. The report by networking gear major Cisco noted that 91 per cent of Indian organisations are deploying autonomous AI agents, adding that only 37 per cent can properly secure them. AI across disciplines: How US universities are blending Artificial Intelligence into every field Globally, 13 per cent of organisations that have deployed artificial intelligence (AI) are outperforming peers by making fundamental infrastructure choices that create compounding advantages, the report added.

Calling such organisations "pacesetters", Cisco said that 97 per cent of global pacesetters have deployed AI at the scale and speed needed to unlock use cases and achieve ROI. "They build network-first foundations, prioritize power infrastructure, optimise continuously, and embed security from day one," the report said. "As much as 45 per cent of Indian companies without this level of architectural foresight risk accumulating 'AI Infrastructure Debt', said Simon Miceli, Managing Director, Cloud and AI infrastructure, Asia Pacific, Japan and Greater China, Cisco.

This technical debt can compound into operational risk, security exposure, compliance challenges, and competitive disadvantage, the report noted. Cisco identified four architectural choices that distinguished AI leaders as they prioritise continuous optimisation after deployment, treat the network as a foundation, estimate power early, and build security as infrastructure from day one. While most re-

ports focus on compute, pacesetters prioritise network infrastructure, with 81 per cent of global Pacesetters rating their network as 'optimal' for AI workloads, the report noted. "Pacesetters" are winning not because they spend more, but because they made architectural bets early—before workloads demanded them, before bottlenecks emerged, before security became urgent, the report said.



Over half of Indian companies expect AI workloads to grow more than 50% in the next three to five years, with 51% planning new data-centre capacity. Cisco highlights risks of AI infrastructure debt for firms lacking architectural foresight.

DGCA directs IndiGo CEO, other senior officials to appear Thursday to present data, updates on flight disruptions



Aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers to present comprehensive data and updates pertaining to the network-wide severe disruption in the flight operations of India's largest airline. Elbers has been instructed by the regulator to appear before the DGCA on Thursday (December 11) at 3 pm, and senior officials from all relevant departments have also been directed to attend the meeting. According to the DGCA, the airline will present information on key aspects of the disruption and the mitigation measures put in place, including restoration of flights, recruitment plan for pilots and cabin crew, cancellation refunds to passengers hit by the crisis, return of piled-up baggage at airports, timely information to passengers, and re-routing of passengers affected due to flight cancellations. The regulator and the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) have been holding frequent meetings with IndiGo in view of the crisis that has led to scores of flights getting cancelled on a daily basis since the middle of last week, throwing airline operations across India out of gear.

The IndiGo top management has been called in for Thursday's meeting a day after the government ordered a 10 per cent curtailment in IndiGo's schedule. The decision was communicated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) on Tuesday following a meeting with Elbers, who was "summoned" to the ministry to provide an update on the airline's stabilisation measures. Earlier, the DGCA had ordered the airline to curtail its schedule by 5 per cent, but MoCA doubled that to 10 per cent. IndiGo is India's largest airline with a domestic market share of nearly 65 per cent, and its schedule has over 2,300 daily flights, around 2,150 of which are domestic flights. A 10 per cent curtailment in domestic flights would mean that the airline's daily scheduled flights within the country would come down to less than 1,950. IndiGo is currently operating a lower number of flights than that. Sources close to the airline said that IndiGo was looking to gradually increase its flights to its regular levels over the next few days. But it will now have to abide by the schedule curtailment ordered by the government. The freed-up slots may be offered to other carriers if they have additional capacity that can be deployed.

In a statement on Tuesday, IndiGo announced that its operations have stabilised and normalised. IndiGo operated over 1,800 flights on Tuesday, operating to all destinations on its network, and its on-time performance (OTP) is back at over 80 per cent. The airline expects to operate around 1,900 flights on Wednesday. Friday was the worst day of the disruption with over 1,600 flight cancellations, but the situation has steadily improved since. The airline's weekly domestic flights had increased to 15,014 in the winter schedule, which took effect from October 26, from 14,158 weekly flights in this year's summer schedule. IndiGo, however,

faced crew shortages, primarily due to its inadequate preparation for the second phase of the new crew rest and duty norms that took effect on November 1. This led to widespread network-wide disruption in the airline's operations. In view of the disruption, which brought India's aviation ecosystem to its knees, pilot associations and aviation experts strongly criticised and questioned the DGCA's earlier decision to allow an increase in flights in the airline's winter schedule. According to the regulator, on Thursday the airline will provide it with details on the status of ongoing flight restoration across the IndiGo network, progress in re-accommodating affected passengers, priority handling of vulnerable passengers, and monitoring mechanism to ensure timely completion of flight restoration. The IndiGo management leadership will also present the updated position of pilot and cabin crew strength, recruitment and training pipeline for upcoming months, measures taken to prevent roster shortages and Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) related issues.

Updates on the number of flights cancelled, refunds processed, refund turnaround timelines for direct and online travel agency bookings, and compliance with other passenger services-related rules will also be shared. The carrier has also been directed to share updates on delayed or misrouted baggage cases, steps taken for tracing and returning baggage, average timelines and compensation provided as per regulations, performance of SMS and email alert systems for updating passengers, steps to improve timely communication about delays and cancellations, and strengthened coordination between the airline's Operation Control Centre (OCC), airports, and customer support. The new FDTL rules stipulate more rest for pilots and rationalisation of their flying duties—particularly late night operations—in a bid to better manage pilot fatigue, which is a key risk to aviation safety. These new norms, which were stipulated in January last year were delayed in their implementation, and took effect in two phases—from July 1 and November 1—with the second phase rollout hitting IndiGo considerably. The new norms meant that airlines either had to have more pilots to maintain their schedule, or curtail their schedules in line with the new requirements.

In review meetings, IndiGo accepted that that the disruptions "have arisen primarily from misjudgement and planning gaps in implementing" the second phase of new FDTL rules, with the airline saying that the actual crew requirement for the new rules exceeded what it had anticipated, as per the DGCA. Given the scale of the disruption, the DGCA on Friday granted IndiGo a temporary one-time exemption from some night operations-related changes in the new FDTL norms for its Airbus A320 pilots. The temporary rollback, which will be in place till February 10, is likely to help IndiGo to get its act together and stabilise operations from hereon. The DGCA has also granted a few other temporary relaxations to IndiGo. But the government and the regulator have turned up the heat on IndiGo with the initiation of an inquiry by a DGCA panel into the disruption. The regulator also issued show cause notices to the airline's chief executive officer Pieter Elbers and its chief operating officer Isidre Porqueras. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu has blamed lapses on IndiGo's part for the disruption and said that strict action will be taken on the basis of the inquiry report to "set an example". He said that sufficient notice was given by the DGCA to all airlines for the implementation of the new FDTL rules.

World Inequality Report 2026: Top 10% earners in India capture 58% of national income, bottom 50% get only 15%

Income inequality in India remains among the highest in the world, with top 10 per cent of earners capturing 58 per cent of national income, while bottom 50 per cent receive only 15 per cent, according to the latest World Inequality Report 2026, edited by economists Lucas Chancel, Ricardo Gómez-Carrera, Rowaida Moshrif, and Thomas Piketty. Wealth inequality is even greater in India, with the richest 10 per cent holding around 65 per cent of total wealth and the top 1 per cent holding about 40 per cent, the report released by the World Inequality Lab on Wednesday said.

As per the earlier World Inequality Report 2022, the top 10 per cent in India held 57 per cent of the total national income while the bottom 50 per cent's share was 13 per cent in 2021. "Average annual income per capita is around 6,200 euros (PPP), and average wealth stands at about 28,000 euros (PPP). Female labor participation remains very low at 15.7%, showing no improvement over the past decade. Overall, inequality in India remains deeply entrenched across income, wealth, and gender dimensions, highlighting persistent structural divides within the economy," the report, prefaced by economists Jayati Ghosh and Joseph Stiglitz, said.

Globally, wealth has reached historic highs but remains very unevenly distributed, with the top 0.001 per cent, comprising fewer than 60,000 multi-millionaires, owning three times more wealth than the entire bottom half of humanity. Their share has grown steadily from almost 4 per cent in 1995 to over 6 per cent today, and comes against the backdrop of the explosion of global inequalities and the weakening of multilateralism, the report said.

The global top 10 per cent owns three-quarters of all wealth, while the bottom 50 per cent holds just 2 per cent, the report said. "Zooming further in, the concentration becomes staggering. The top 1% alone, roughly the adult population of the United Kingdom, controls 37% of global wealth. This is more than eighteen times the wealth of the entire bottom half of the world population, a group as large as the combined adult populations of China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, and Russia," it said. The top one-in-a-million, collectively hold 3 per cent of global wealth, more than the bottom half of the world's adult population. Thomas Piketty, Co-Director of the World Inequality Lab, said: "The World Inequality Report 2026 comes at a challenging political time, but it is more essential than ever. Only by continuing the historic movement toward equality will we be able to address the social and climate challenges of the coming decades."

Providing a geographic breakdown of global income groups in 1980 and 2025, the report said in 1980, the global elite was concentrated in North America & Oceania, Europe. Latin America also had some presence near the top, but China and India were almost entirely confined to the bottom half of the distribution. "At that time, China had virtually no presence among the global elite, while India, Asia in general, and Sub-Saharan Africa were heavily concentrated



in the very lowest percentiles," it said. "upward with much of its population having moved into the middle 40 per cent, and a growing share having entered the upper-middle segments of the global distribution. India, the report said, has lost relative ground: in 1980, a larger part of its population was in the middle 40 per cent, but today almost all are in the bottom 50 per cent. Sub-Saharan Africa has also remained in the lower half of the global distribution. In gender terms, the pay gap persists across all regions, especially for unpaid labour. Excluding unpaid work, women earn only 61 per cent of what men earn per working hour; and when unpaid labor is included, this figure falls to just 32 per cent. "Globally, women capture just over a quarter of total labor income, a share that has barely shifted since 1990. When analyzed by regions, in the Middle East & North Africa, women's share is only 16%; in South & Southeast Asia it is 20%; in Sub-Saharan Africa, 28%; and in East Asia, 34%. Europe, North America & Oceania, as well as Russia & Central Asia, perform better, but women still capture only about 40% of labor income," it said.

The report also highlighted the climate crisis stating that the poorest half of the global population accounts for only 3 per cent of carbon emissions associated with private capital ownership, while the top 10 per cent account for 77 per cent of emissions. The wealthiest 1 per cent account for 41 per cent of private capital ownership emissions, almost double the amount of the entire bottom 90 per cent, the report stated. The World Inequality Report 2026, the third report in the series after earlier 2018 and 2022 editions, is based on the work of over 200 scholars across the world, affiliated with the World Inequality Lab. The report said the averages present a starker picture of the inequality. For instance, a person in the bottom 50 per cent owns about 6,500 euros, while someone in the top 10 per cent holds around 1 million euros. But the average wealth of a member of the top 0.001 per cent (about 56,000 adults) is nearly 1 billion euros, and those in the top one-in-100 million (just 56 adults worldwide) hold on average 53 billion euros each. "To put this into perspective, the wealth of a single individual at that level can surpass the individual annual GDP of several Sub-Saharan African countries. These figures underline that today's inequality is driven not only by the divide between the poor and the rich,"

Genelia Deshmukh on striking a work-home balance: 'I plan my shoot at 6 in the morning to be back by...'; why parental presence matters



Genelia D'Souza Deshmukh has always been vocal about her thoughts, from topics ranging from partnerships to taking equal responsibility when it comes to running a household. In a 2024 interaction with podcaster Shreya Ghodawat, Genelia mentioned that she always encourages women to work and be independent. "I highly encourage a woman to have their work as well. I cannot work like I worked before. I cannot be out every single day of the year, not because I don't want to, but because I can't. Another girl would probably want to do it and that's fine. That's their understanding at home," said Genelia, who is married to actor Riteish Deshmukh and has two sons with him.

She added that she makes it a priority to be available to her children and still work. "I don't want my kids entering into a home that's without anybody. So, I plan my shoot at 6 in the morning very often so that I am back home by 4.30 pm when they come home. I found my way around it," said Genelia, 37. She further emphasised that children also need to realise and respect this pertinent aspect. "I feel that my kids need to know me as someone who's worked as well. Not just always available, always accessible. They need to know that I am as disciplined in my work as I am to them as a mom. They need to respect people, especially women, and that would only happen if they see it," said Genelia.

Taking a cue from her candid admission, let's understand how parental presence makes all the difference. Having a work-life balance is important, especially when you have children, said Dr Santosh Bangar, senior consultant psychiatrist, Gleneagles Hospital Parel Mumbai. "Work-life balance is not just about managing time, but it is deeply connected to your child's mental and emotional development. When at least one parent is present at home, it provides a great sense of security to the child. They feel emotionally stable. Parental presence makes them feel heard, seen, and most importantly, valued. This helps build a healthy bond, self-esteem, and trust. Children often seek comfort from their parents. When parents are not available or absent, it can lead to feelings of loneliness, sadness, frustration, depression, anxiety, and even behavioral issues," said Dr Bangar.

Being around is more than just showing your mere presence. Even small moments of connection in day-to-day life, like sharing a meal, baking your favourite desserts, or reading a bedtime story, can help support your little one's emotional well-being. When both parents are frequently busy or emotionally unavailable, it can take a severe toll on your child's mental health. Riteish Deshmukh and their two sons (Photo: Genelia Deshmukh/Instagram) According to Dr Bangar, they may crave your attention, love, and care. "Over time, children learn to suppress their feelings, and their emotions can suffer. Giving time is not about just being home for a longer duration. It is also about the quality of interaction you have with your child," he said. Even working parents can work it out and maintain this much-needed balance. "This can be achieved by creating daily intentional routines, avoiding office work at home, being present in the moment instead of replying to emails or messages, and showing your child that they matter," said Dr Bangar. This emotionally available environment encourages the kids to grow up as confident, mentally healthy, and emotionally intelligent adults.

'How do doctors decide when a type 2 diabetic patient should stop oral medications and start insulin injections?'

"How do doctors decide when a type 2 diabetic patient should stop oral medications and start insulin injections?" This question on Quora made us reach out to Dr Pranav Ghodiy, consultant endocrinologist and diabetologist, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central, who told us that switching to insulin is not a failure, it's a medical choice based on how your body is handling diabetes. "We look at three things: blood sugar trends, symptoms, and how well the pancreas is working," said Dr Ghodiy. If a patient's blood sugar stays high despite maximising oral medicines, adjusting doses, and improving lifestyle habits, it suggests that the pancreatic beta cells are not producing enough insulin. At that point, injections become a safer and more effective option, said Dr Ghodiy.

Adding that there are clear indicators, Dr Ghodiy explained that when HbA1c remains high (usually above 8.5-9 per cent) even after adequate medication, or fasting sugars stay above 150-160 mg/dL, insulin comes into the picture. "Severe symptoms — frequent urination, excessive thirst, unexplained weight loss, fatigue — also indicate that oral medicines alone are no longer sufficient," said Dr Ghodiy. Doctors also consider specific situations, such as pregnancy, high infection rates, surgery, acute illnesses, kidney or liver problems, or when steroids are prescribed. "In these instances, insulin is started early because it provides better control and is easier to adjust," said Dr Ghodiy.

Once someone starts insulin, do they stay on it forever?

Not always, contended Dr Ghodiy. "Some people need insulin only temporarily — for example, during infections, after surgery, or when glucose levels are extremely high at diagnosis. Once the body stabilises, many can return to oral medicines. However, for others, especially those with long-term diabetes or declining pancreatic function, insulin



becomes a long-term necessity."

Why do young adults with type 2 diabetes sometimes need insulin earlier?

That is because the disease has evolved, said Dr Ghodiy. "Younger patients often face higher stress, irregular lifestyle patterns, sleep deprivation, and early insulin resistance. If the pancreas is overworked, it can burn out faster, making insulin necessary much sooner than expected," said Dr Ghodiy. Here's what you should consider (Photo: Quora) What should patients consider before resisting the idea of insulin? Insulin is not a punishment; it's a protective tool, said Dr Ghodiy. "Better sugar control lowers the risk of kidney damage, nerve issues, and heart disease." Modern insulin pens are simple, painless, and safe. "The goal is to improve both longevity and quality of life, not to avoid injections at all costs. And most importantly, decisions about switching to insulin should always be made in consultation with an endocrinologist, said Dr Ghodiy.

Never mix toilet cleaners, pulmonologist warns after witnessing 'emergency' case: 'One wrong combination can permanently injure your lungs'

A pulmonologist recently highlighted the case of a woman who was rushed into the emergency department following loss of consciousness after mixing two toilet cleaners. "A patient landed in our emergency simply because she mixed two toilet cleaners to clean her bathroom. Toxic fumes filled the room. Within minutes, she became breathless and collapsed and was brought to the emergency," recalled Dr Ankit Bhatia in a post on Instagram. He added, "When you mix toilet cleaners, acids, and bleaches, they release toxic gases. These gases burn your airways, especially if you have allergies or asthma. One wrong combination can permanently injure your lungs. Use only one cleaner at a time."

Is mixing two or more cleaners toxic to your body?

Dr Sulaiman Ladhan, consultant pulmonologist, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central, said most toilet cleaners have strong chemicals like hydrochloric acid, bleach, ammonia, and oxidisers. "When two different cleaners mix, they can react quickly and release toxic gases. The most common is chlorine gas, which irritates the nose, throat, and lungs. Even a few breaths can cause coughing, difficulty breathing, and a sudden tightening of the airways," said Dr Ladhan.

What happens inside the lungs when someone inhales these fumes? Chlorine and similar gases can chemically burn the airway lining. According to Dr Ladhan, this injury leads to severe inflammation and may result in a condition called Reactive Airways Dysfunction Syndrome (RADS). "The airways become swollen and overly sensitive, which can cause a sudden tightening, similar to an asthma attack but often worse. In serious cases, fluid might leak into the lung tissue, oxygen levels can drop, and hospital care may be needed," said Dr Ladhan. What symptoms should people watch for immediately after exposure? — Dizziness or a metallic taste while breathing if symptoms last more than 10 to 15 minutes or if difficulty breathing worsens, getting urgent medical help is essential, as these reactions can



escalate quickly, Dr Ladhan said. Here's what you should consider (Photo: Getty Images/Thinkstock) What should someone do right after accidental exposure? Dr Ladhan shared the following measures: "Move to fresh air right away. Open windows and turn on exhaust fans; avoid going back into the bathroom until the fumes clear. Sip water to soothe the throat. Steer clear of steam inhalation or home remedies, as they might worsen airway inflammation."

*If breathing becomes noisy or complex, or if it continues for a few minutes, seek emergency care, said Dr Ladhan.

What to keep in mind?

*Use one cleaning product at a time. *Never mix acid-based cleaners with bleach or ammonia. *Make sure the bathroom is well-ventilated; even a small window helps. *Store cleaners separately and always read labels. If you feel irritation while cleaning, stop immediately and step out. Can one episode cause long-term lung damage? Yes, asserted Dr Ladhan. "A single significant exposure can lead to a lingering cough, wheezing, and increased sensitivity in the airways lasting weeks to months. In rare but serious cases, it can result in permanent lung function reduction or chronic airway hyperactivity."

What has got Paul Pogba invested besides football? Camel racing

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Pogba France's Paul Pogba celebrates after scoring his side's third goal during the final match between France and Croatia at the 2018 soccer World Cup in the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, Russia, Sunday.

Monaco footballer Paul Pogba has always been known for his flamboyant style on and off the field. Recently, he made another left field choice that has got the world talking as the French footballer invested in Saudi Arabia-based Al Haboob, the world's first professional camel racing team becoming a shareholder and ambassador. "Proud to be part of a historic sporting moment, joining Al Haboob camel racing team as Shareholder and Ambassador. Let's make history together," Pogba announced on Instagram. The former Manchester United player also said that he wanted to buy the world's expensive camel. "I've always been someone who wants to try new things and do things differently – whether it's how I play, how I express myself, or how I approach life off the pitch. That mindset has followed me into my business world too," he told BBC as per the Guardian.

"Owning the world's most expensive camel one day would be a beautiful full-circle moment – something fun, something meaningful and something that excites me. Maybe one day we make it happen," he added. Pogba also stressed that he watched races on YouTube and was a fan of the sport. "I've watched my fair share of races on YouTube and spent time doing research in my spare time trying to



understand the techniques and strategies. And what stood out to me is how much dedication it takes from everyone involved. At the end of the day, sport is sport. It demands heart, sacrifice and teamwork," he said. Last month, after more than two years in footballing wilderness, Pogba returned to the pitch for Monaco. Pogba who joined the Ligue 1 side on a free transfer in June, had not played a competitive match since September 2023. The former Juventus player had received a four-year ban in February 2024 after testing positive for banned substance DHEA, which boosts testosterone levels. The suspension was cut to 18 months after an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. The 32-year-old had suffered another setback when he had a right ankle injury last month which delayed his on-field return.

Jitesh Sharma on dynamic with Sanju Samson: 'He is like an elder brother to me'

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Jitesh Sharma has been brought into the Indian side in place of Sanju Samson to play the role of the finisher, who was pushed down the order after Shubman Gill returned at the top of the order. However, Samson's returns in the middle order have been minimal, and Jitesh, who is a specialist finisher, has looked at home in the role. On Tuesday, after India's win against South Africa, when asked about the dynamic between him and Samson, Jitesh responded by saying Samson was like an "elder brother" to him. "I am very grateful that he is in the team and I am under him. He is like an elder brother to me," Jitesh said. "Because of healthy competition, your talent comes out. It's good for the team. Sanju bhai is out, and I am playing. He is a great player—one of the great players. If I have to compete with him and play shoulder to shoulder, I have to bring my A-game," he said. Samson and Abhishek Sharma had formed an incredibly potent opening combination for India in the immediate months after the 2024 T20 World Cup. However, the return of Shubman Gill to the squad has resulted in Samson being displaced from the opening slot and having to often adjust anywhere in the top order to the lower middle order, if he is picked. India captain Suryakumar Yadav acknowledged that Samson did extremely well at the top of the order but Gill was always first choice. "In terms of Sanju, yes, when he came into the circuit, he batted higher up the



order. Now, the thing is, other than the openers, I feel everyone has to be very flexible," Suryakumar told reporters on the eve of India's first T20I against South Africa. He reiterated the point made a number of times by head coach Gautam Gambhir about every batsman needing to be prepared to play anywhere, aside from the openers. "He (Sanju) did really well before when he played, when he opened the innings. But Shubman had played before him in the Sri Lanka series. So, he deserved to take that spot. But we gave Sanju opportunities. He was ready to bat at any number from 3 to 6. That is one thing which I have told all the batters — other than openers, everyone has to be very flexible."

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GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Jitesh Sharma has been brought into the Indian side in place of Sanju Samson to play the role of the finisher, who was pushed down the order after Shubman Gill returned at the top of the order. However, Samson's returns in the middle order have been minimal, and Jitesh, who is a specialist finisher, has looked at home in the role. On Tuesday, after India's win against South Africa, when asked about the dynamic between him and Samson, Jitesh responded by saying Samson was like an "elder brother" to him. "I am very grateful that he is in the team and I am under him. He is like an elder brother to me," Jitesh said. "Because of healthy competition, your talent comes out. It's good for the team. Sanju bhai is out, and I am playing. He is a great player—one of the great players. If I have to compete with him and play shoulder to shoulder, I have to bring my A-game," he said.

Samson and Abhishek Sharma had formed an incredibly potent opening combination for India in the immediate months after the 2024 T20 World Cup. However, the return of Shubman Gill to the squad has resulted in Samson being displaced from the opening slot and having to often adjust anywhere in the top order to the lower middle order, if he is picked. India captain Suryakumar Yadav acknowledged that Samson did extremely well at the top of the order but Gill was always first choice. "In terms of Sanju, yes, when he



came into the circuit, he batted higher up the order. Now, the thing is, other than the openers, I feel everyone has to be very flexible," Suryakumar told reporters on the eve of India's first T20I against South Africa. He reiterated the point made a number of times by head coach Gautam Gambhir about every batsman needing to be prepared to play anywhere, aside from the openers. "He (Sanju) did really well before when he played, when he opened the innings. But Shubman had played before him in the Sri Lanka series. So, he deserved to take that spot. But we gave Sanju opportunities. He was ready to bat at any number from 3 to 6. That is one thing which I have told all the batters — other than openers, everyone has to be very flexible."

Goalkeeper Nidhi steps up in shootout to save wasteful India, to play Spain for 9th place

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

India did have the better of the attacking stats in the opening quarter but it ended with neither side breaking the deadlock. (Photo Credit: Hockey India) India did have the better of the attacking stats in the opening quarter but it ended with neither side breaking the deadlock.

With 17.1 seconds to go in the match, the ball was deep in Uruguay's defence. India had a 1-lead to protect, but it should have much more significant for how much possession they enjoyed during the match. But in the blink of an eye, Uruguay broke forward and won a Penalty Stroke with two seconds left on the clock, to stun India and force a shootout. Eventually though, goalkeeper Nidhi stepped up in the tiebreaker to hand India a win that asked more questions than provided answers at the Estadio Nacional, Santiago. With the win, India entered the final classification match for the 9th-10th place, where they will take on Spain on Thursday. "It was a tough game, we will analyse our mistakes. There was pressure in the shootout but we managed to come through, we are happy for that," Ishika, player of the match, told the broadcasters.

India got a reprieve in the fifth minute after a stray ball from Jyoti Singh gave Uruguay a chance to drive forward and win a Penalty Corner. Lalthialuangi then made life harder for India's defence, carelessly earning a green card for not being ready on the post on time. Uruguay tried a variation and nearly created a clean opening at the far post, but somehow over-elaborated the move and wasted the

chance to take the lead. India did have the better of the attacking stats in the opening quarter but it ended with neither side breaking the deadlock. A flowing passing move from defence to offence helped India win their first Penalty Corner in the 3rd minute of Q2, they attempted a variation too, trying to set up the injector Sakshi Rana down the left byline, but the shot on goal was well saved. India eventually took the lead in the 19th minute when Manisha completed a patient passing move, with a powerful shot to the near post from the right channel at the edge of the circle. At this point, India had taken complete control of possession. But as has been the case in the tournament, the attacking gameplay lacked cohesion in the final third, as India's territorial advantage wasn't reflected on the scoreboard at halftime. India had 57% possession and 11 circle entries compared to Uruguay's 5%. Ishika made a bright start to the third quarter down both flanks, involved heavily in most of India's good attacking work. A couple of PCs came and went but India continued to struggle to create outright goalscoring chances while Uruguay limited the damage and kept themselves in the contest. With less than two minutes to go, India created a big chance by turning over possession in Uruguay's half but Purnima shot high and wide when she had better passing options. A fast start to the final quarter saw India win their fourth PC and once more they opted for an elaborate variation, ending up not even testing the goalkeeper. After absorbing long spells of pressure, Uruguay won a PC for themselves from a rare foray forward with 11 minutes to go.



BFI to host Men's, Women's Nationals together from December 31

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

HYDERABAD: The 9th Elite Men & Women National Boxing Championship, earlier scheduled from 31st December 2025 to 6th January 2026 at Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, has been rescheduled. In light of the pollution control measures mandated by the government and effective until 31st December 2025, the championship will now be held from 4th January to 10th January 2026, at the same venue.

Units from across the country will compete across ten weight categories each for men and women, in full compliance with World Boxing Technical & Competition Rules. Each unit is permitted to field one boxer per category, with no reserves allowed. Eligible boxers must be born between January 1, 1985 and December 31, 2006. All bouts will follow the global competition format of three rounds of three minutes, with one-minute rest intervals and the 10-point must scoring system. The Nationals return at a pivotal moment for Indian boxing. The previous cycle, launched in early 2025 with the Men's and Women's National Championships, produced a generation of breakout athletes who rose swiftly through the domestic system, earned places in the national camp, and excelled at international tournaments. That structure culminated in India's best-ever performance—a record 20 medals, including nine golds, at the World Boxing Cup Finals 2025 in Greater Noida. Speaking on the occasion, BFI president, Mr Ajay Singh, said, "Strong systems are the backbone of long-term success, and the National Championships are where that system truly begins. This stage creates opportunity, reveals talent, and gives every boxer



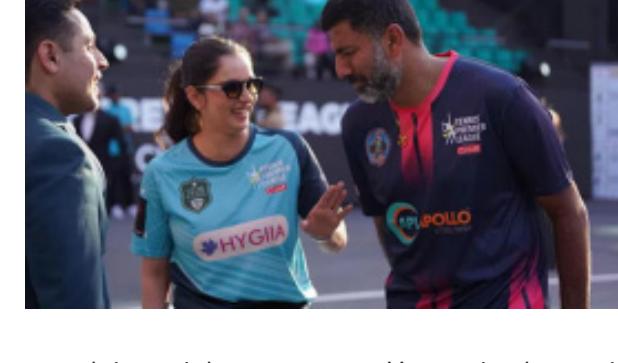
a fair pathway into the national camp. Our recent success at the World Boxing Cup Finals proved how powerful this can be. As we prepare for the challenges ahead, these championships will be crucial in identifying and preparing the athletes who can carry our hopes forward." Many of India's brightest World Boxing Cup Finals stars began their ascent at the previous Nationals. Sachin Siwach and Hitesh Gulia, who struck gold at the World Boxing Cup Finals, were National Champions first. Minakshi and Jaismine, now the reigning World Champions, also made their early statements at these very Championships. With the international calendar moving toward the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic cycle, the Nationals once again become the gateway to India's elite programme. Services enter as the defending Men's National Champions, while Railways will look to retain the Women's Team Championship title.

Tennis Premier League 7 begins with Sania Mirza and Rohan Bopanna on court

GNS News Agency, Dec 11

Ahmedabad: Tennis Premier League (TPL) Season 7 kicked off with a historic event as two of India's top tennis icons, Sania Mirza, brand ambassador of Gurgaon Grand Slammers, and Rohan Bopanna, marquee player for SG Pipers, came together on the court for a special exhibition match that thrilled a full house at Gujarat University Tennis Stadium. In a mixed doubles match, Sania teamed up with Dan Evans from Gurgaon Grand Slammers and beat Bopanna and Shravali Bhamidipaty of SG Pipers with a score of 10-6. Sania was warmly greeted by fans in Ahmedabad and shared her joy at witnessing the sport draw large crowds across India. This visit held particular significance for her, as she returned to Ahmedabad nearly 30 years after her last appearance here as an under-14 player.

She said, "Thank you, Ahmedabad, for the welcome. Rohan and I come from a time when there was hardly anybody watching tennis, so to have a stadium full of people is a real pleasure to see. Thank you for welcoming tennis and welcoming TPL here. That's exactly what TPL does, it grows the sport. It gives opportunities to younger athletes to test themselves against international players. We saw some great tennis today, and hopefully over the coming days you'll come out and cheer for the home athletes and the ones who have come from outside India." Bopanna reiterated these thoughts, emphasising that TPL continues to create important opportunities for new players. "There's tremendous experience all these players get by competing in an event like this. Sania and I have always wanted to give back and help young players grow. She has been a fantastic role model,



not only in tennis but across sport. It's amazing that tennis has come to a new city in Ahmedabad, and we're happy to be here," Bopanna said.

Sania joked about letting Rohan win the exhibition match during a light-hearted moment before the game. "I haven't touched a tennis racquet since the 2023 Australian Open final, so I'm just excited to be here. Rohan recently announced his retirement but as you can see from his level today, he can still play for a few more years!" she said with a smile. The exhibition match acted as a suitable kickoff for TPL Season 7, featuring eight franchises — Rajasthan Rangers, Gurgaon Grand Slammers, Gujarat Panthers, Hyderabad Strikers, GS Delhi Aces, Yash Mumbai Eagles, Chennai Smashers, and SG Pipers Bengaluru — competing for the coveted title.

Comeback man Hardik Pandya's heroics propel India to 101-run thrashing of South Africa in first T20I in Cuttack

The road to the 2026 T20 World Cup began on a resounding note for India. On what was not an easy pitch to bat on at the Barabati Stadium, when Hardik Pandya's unbeaten 59 carried India to 175/6, there was intrigue as to how the surface would play in the second innings. Pandya's knock, where he went at 210.71, seemed like an aberration. Yet with dew settling in, one couldn't be sure if batting was going to get easier on a strip that was two-paced from the word go due to the dampness. The answers arrived very soon as India's attack showed 175 was too big a total to overhaul, as South Africa were skittled out for 74 in reply — their lowest ever T20I score — thus giving the hosts an emphatic 101 run victory.

On the match eve, the re-laid square at the Barabati Stadium had caused interest in both camps. A venue where black soil pitches were the norm, after the ODI against England earlier this year, the square was re-laid with red soil pitches. When it was mentioned to India captain Suryakumar Yadav at the pre-match press conference, he seemed surprised, but he thought it would be a "good thing" in reflection. The reasons were simple. Apart from providing bounce, the ball tends to come fast at the batters, helping them with bat swing. Two-paced pitch. However, it was anything but that. From the first ball, when a short delivery from Lungi Ngidi climbed two-paced and caught Abhishek Sharma off-guard, it was evident that this track was to offer this Indian team a good challenge. All of their home wins under Suryakumar and coach Gautam Gambhir have come on batting-friendly pitches. But come the T20 World Cup, which is scheduled during the season end in February-March, the pitches may not completely favour the batters. So the track on Tuesday proved to be a good test to check how this batting line-up could cope when given such conditions.

And barring Pandya, and a couple of handy cameos from Shivaani Dube and Jitesh Sharma, the rest clearly struggled. The trick to excelling on such surfaces lies in how quickly you read the conditions. With regards to India's top five, each of them appeared surprised. The hard length, in particular, proved to be their biggest undoing, particularly when they tried to hit in front of square. Playing straight is also fraught with risk, especially if the ball stops off the surface. But between the two, it seemed the safest option, or if you intended to play the horizontal shots, you had to use it against the raw pace of Anrich Nortje or to deliveries that were absolutely short, which Pandya did to perfection.

It was Lungi Ngidi who exposed the Indian batters' chinks on this surface. In the first over, after being hit for a boundary to a wide delivery by Shubman Gill, he immediately pulled the length back. The surface did the rest as the opener was through the short early, and Gill lobbed an easy offering for the mid-on fielder. Suryakumar arrived and hit a boundary and a dismissive six — the pick-up flick, but like Gill was undone by the one that held off the surface. That the usually free-flowing Abhishek struggled for rhythm said as much about the surface as Ngidi and March Jansen



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ensured India had only 40 to show in the powerplay as the two seamers bowled three overs each to tighten the start. As Pandya showed during his unbeaten 59 off 28, it wasn't impossible to increase the tempo. The secret lay in picking the deliveries and shots and the pockets he picked — front in the V and behind square. It was something the rest failed at. An emphatic win in the #INDvSA T20I series opener ??#TeamIndia register a 1?0?1? run victory in Cuttack to go 1?0? up ??With the ball, India were not as generous as South Africa. With the dew not causing much of an impact on how it behaved, Arshdeep Singh struck early. His spells with the new-ball, especially if he finds movement, are hard to get past without damage, and here he removed Quinton de Kock off the second ball and Tristan Stubbs in his second over. Axar came in and had castled Aiden Markram with one that skidded on with the angle, and when Pandya struck off his first delivery, getting David Miller nicked to the wicketkeeper, India were all over the Proteas. Then it was the turn of Varun Chakaravarthy to leave a mark. Having come into the series on the back of some below-par performances in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20s, he started the night by conceding 12 runs in the first over he delivered in the powerplay, with Dewald Brevis taking him for a boundary and a six. But with a new set of batters in, he landed two successive blows, first removing Donovan Ferreira and then sending Jansen back with a googly. With two of their power-hitters gone, and Brevis too departed, becoming Jasprit Bumrah's 100th T20 victim, Dube then ended South Africa's suffering with 45 deliveries to spare.

On a night where batters from both teams struggled, Pandya's unbeaten 59 happened to be the difference.

