

### Man killed, wife injured in Sangareddy road accident ahead of panchayat polls

Sangareddy: A man was killed and his wife sustained serious injuries after their bike met with an accident on NH-161 at Bachepally in Kalher mandal on Saturday night.

The couple, natives of Yellareddy in Kamareddy district, were travelling from Hyderabad to their native place to exercise their franchise in the second phase of gram panchayat elections scheduled on Sunday.

## Messi's Kolkata event messed up; organiser held, Didi apologises



Kolkata, Dec 13

What was meant to be a celebratory event around football icon Lionel Messi descended into chaos at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Saturday after spectators resorted to vandalism on failing to catch a glimpse of their hero, alleging gross mismanagement by the organisers and obstruction of views by VIPs.

The unrest broke out soon after Messi left the venue much earlier than scheduled, triggering scenes of spectators uprooting plastic chairs, hurling bottles onto the pitch and attempting to breach barricades.

Some people, including police personnel, were reported injured, though no fatalities occurred.

The police arrested the event's prime organiser, Satadru Datta, while West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee apologised to Messi and sports lovers and announced a high-level inquiry into the gross mismanagement.

The incident exposed the under-preparedness of the city's police and administration to host an event that aimed to showcase the world's most popular footballer, his long-time strike partner Luis Suarez and Argentine teammate Rodrigo De Paul, as spectators were left frustrated by a rush of VIPs onto the field that obstructed their view.

The incident also triggered a political slugfest, with almost all parties slamming the organisers for their "ill-conceived event".

The unfortunate turn of events brought back memories of the stampede incident outside Bengaluru's Chinnaswamy Stadium in June where a crowd crush during celebrations of Royal Challengers Bengaluru's maiden Indian Premier League title win resulted in the death of 11 persons.

The World Cup-winning captain and his entourage arrived at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan around 11.30 am and, as he stepped onto the field, he was encircled by VIPs, organisers, celebrities and security personnel

Messi walked a short distance on the pitch and waved briefly towards the stands amid chants of "Messi, Messi".

Fans, however, soon realised that he remained tightly cordoned off and barely visible from large sections of the stadium as even the giant screens failed to provide a clear view. Frustration mounted when Messi turned back midway and was escorted out well before the scheduled end of his appearance.

As word spread that the star had left prematurely, anger spilt over and the fans went on a rampage.

Protesters raised slogans demanding the arrest of Sports Minister Aroop Biswas, who was seen in close proximity to Messi all through his on-field appearance and clicked pictures with the star, and the event's chief organiser Satadru Datta, accusing them of gross mismanagement.

Spectators said they shelled out between Rs 4,000 and Rs 15,000 per ticket to witness the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner up close.

"This was complete mismanagement.... I paid Rs 5,000 for a ticket. We came to watch Messi, not politicians," said Ajay Shah, a football enthusiast who had come with his son.

The chaos forced an abrupt curtailment of the programme, with several invited dignitaries, including Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, former India cricket captain Sourav Ganguly and the CM, unable to participate as planned.

Meanwhile, taking suo motu cognisance of the stadium unrest, the police arrested the event's prime organiser for alleged "mismanagement". The organiser has given in writing that he will refund the prices of tickets he sold to the disappointed spectators, DGP Rajeev Kumar said.

Stating that it was a dark day for the sports-loving people of Kolkata, Governor CV Ananda Bose said that while the organisers of the event are to be blamed squarely for the situation, it is also the police that has failed the government, the people and CM Banerjee, who is also the Home Minister.

TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said he empathised with the crowd anger. BJP state president and Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya alleged that "some fraudsters, in their greed to mint money, created this situation".

## Akhilesh Yadav, KTR have lunch at Rameshwaram Cafe

Hyderabad, Dec 13

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had lunch with Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president KT Rama Rao at the popular Rameshwaram Café in Madhapur here on Saturday.

The two leaders spent time together informally, engaging in conversation over traditional South Indian dishes featuring dosas, idlis and vadas. The meeting reflected a warm and cordial bond between the two leaders, who share a long-standing personal rapport, according to party leaders who accompanied them.

The Rameshwaram Café, known for its South Indian cuisine, provided a relaxed setting away from formal political discussions.

### Congress govt faces criticism over huge expenditure for Lionel Messi show

Hyderabad: There is no doubt that Lionel Messi is an all time great when it comes to football, but did the Congress government in Telangana have to spend a rumoured Rs 100 crore, that too for an event that had nothing to do with actual football?

The entire event was more about photo-ops for Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and his close circle and those who could afford Rs 10 lakh per photograph, and little with football.

## Sumadhura Group inks Rs 600-crore pact with Telangana Govt to develop 100-acre industrial & warehousing park

Hyderabad : Sumadhura Group, one of South India's leading real estate developers, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Telangana at the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2025, held at Bharat Future City. This strategic commitment aligns with the State's bold vision to transform Telangana into a \$3 trillion economy by 2047, through large-scale investments in manufacturing, infrastructure, logistics and advanced industries.

\*Under the MoU, the Sumadhura Group will invest ₹600 crore over a two-year period to develop a 100-acre Grade A+ Industrial Park, aimed at attracting global manufacturing companies and accelerating industrial growth in the region. Envisioned as a next-generation industrial ecosystem, the park will offer plug-and-play facilities for Aerospace, Automobile, Pharmaceutical, and E-commerce sectors. The project is expected to create approximately 8,000 direct jobs over the next two years as operations scale up.\*

The upcoming industrial park is designed to meet global standards in infrastructure quality, utility readiness, environmental sustainability, and operational efficiency. Featuring modular plug-and-play facilities, scalable manufacturing blocks, dedicated logistics zones, green development standards, and robust internal infrastructure, it aims to offer enterprises seamless onboarding and rapid commencement of operations.

Speaking about the milestone, \*Mr. Ramarao Kalakuntla, Vice-Chairman, Sumadhura Group,\* said, "At Sumadhura, we believe world-class infrastructure is the foundation of sustainable industrial transformation. Our upcoming Industrial Park is being envisioned to meet global benchmarks in design, technology, and operational efficiency, enabling enterprises to scale with greater speed and certainty. Supported by

Telangana's progressive and pro-growth policy environment, this investment will attract high-value industries, generate thousands of jobs, and catalyse meaningful economic impact. We are proud that this project directly aligns with the State's vision of becoming a \$3 trillion economy by 2047, driving growth through advanced manufacturing, innovation, and next-generation industrial development."

## 'Hindustan First - Hindustani Best'

Prof. Shahid Akhtar, officiating chairman of the Government of India, NCMEI, who spoke on the key role of minority institutions in the fields of education, skill development and social empowerment in nation building. Karnataka State President, All India Sufi Sajjad Nashin Council, Mr. Syed Ali Jackie Hussaini, and renowned oncology surgeon Dr. Madeez Ahmed Talikoti. Jamia Hamar Registrar Colonel Tahir Mustafa and Abdul Haq Urdu University Prof. PF Rahman participated and spoke. The conference renewed the collective resolve for national unity, peace and inclusive development. Many representatives from different states of the country attended the event.

""Indian Chronicle OU December 13: Distance Education Center at OU under the auspices of Muslim Rashtriya Manch""A national symposium on the topic of Ek Kaum Ek Watan-Hindustan was held in the auditorium on Saturday. The program began with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Osmania University Professor Akhtar Ali. Dr. Indresh Kumar, the leader of the Muslim Rashtriya Manch, attended and spoke as the chief guest. He gave the message that unity, national identity and inclusive development are necessary to build a strong and peaceful India. He asked the Muslim community to actively contribute to national development. The guests of honor at the program were

## Rachakonda CP Sudheer Babu Issues Directions Through Drone Surveillance

""KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle):""Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda, personally supervised the security arrangements at the by monitoring live drone feeds and issuing real-time directions to police officers deployed on bandobast duty."From the Command & Control Centre, the CP provided continuous guidance to field officers using live aerial surveillance. Drones are being deployed to scan vulnerable locations and high-density congregation points, enabling round-the-clock monitoring of security arrangements."Based on live aerial inputs, immediate instructions are being issued to on-ground officers to ensure effective crowd management and facilitate the smooth movement of people towards their destinations."The CP stated that an advanced technological Fusion Centre set up at the Uppal Stadium is functioning 24/7 to monitor crowd movement, entry and exit points, and other sensitive areas. A total of 375 surveillance cameras, including drone feeds, have been integrated into the system."Using advanced monitoring tools, live feeds are being continuously analysed, and actionable intelligence is being transmitted directly to sector and field officers to ensure efficient and effective bandobast management.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## On the four Labour Codes, the path ahead

The Centre's announcement to implement the four Labour Codes — they concern wages, industrial relations, social security and occupational safety, health and working conditions — has been heralded by the business and investment community as the biggest reform in a long time. Passed by Parliament between 2019 and 2020, the implementation of these Codes was delayed for multiple reasons. The Codes replace 29 laws that regulated employer-employee relations, and significantly reduce the compliance requirements for a company every year.

The Centre has maintained that it will hand-hold the States to draft and adopt the Rules in accordance with the Codes — most States and Union Territories have published the draft Rules for the Codes. Free market advocates have always considered India's labour laws to be a hindrance to its growth potential. Under the Codes, worker-employer relations, social security mechanism and wage and aspects of emoluments will witness huge changes. India needs to generate employment for its growing youth population as it is estimated that 12 million people attain working age every year.

## Residents Demand Separate Division Status for Jammigadda

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Residents of Jammigadda, located under the Kapra Circle limits, launched a relay hunger strike



demanding that the area be declared a separate municipal division. The protesters stated that Jammigadda currently has over 20,000 voters and a population of nearly 40,000 people. Despite such a large population, they alleged that basic civic amenities and administrative services are not being provided adequately. The residents pointed out that with rapid population growth and expansion of residential colonies, infrastructure development has failed to keep pace. Facilities such as roads, drainage, drinking water supply, sanitation, and street lighting remain insufficient. They complained that even for minor civic issues, residents are forced to approach officials of other divisions, and despite repeated complaints, solutions are often delayed. Due to administrative dependence on another division, people are facing continuous inconvenience, they alleged. The protesters said that granting separate division status to Jammigadda would bring administration closer to the people and ensure faster resolution of civic problems. They explained that a separate division would mean an exclusive corporator and dedicated administrative staff, which would help in implementing development works more efficiently. This, they said, would pave the way for the overall development of the area. The relay hunger strike witnessed participation from colony elders, youth, and women in large numbers, all raising their voices in unison for the same demand. Slogans such as Separate Division for Jammigadda were raised to pressurise the government. The residents strongly urged the authorities to take immediate note of public sentiment and declare Jammigadda as a separate division without further delay.

## UPPAL CORPORATOR RAJITHA PARAMESHWAR REDDY supervises Rs 60 lakh CC road works in Old Village



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle):“Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameswar Reddy on Friday inspected the ongoing cement concrete (CC) road construction works being taken up at a cost of ₹60 lakh in Old Village (Bharat Nagar), Uppal. During her recent visits to the localities, the Corporator had assured residents that CC roads and drainage works would be undertaken. As part of this assurance, she, along with Uppal Constituency Congress Party in-charge Parameswar Reddy and Assistant Engineer Raj Kumar, inspected the works in progress in the Mall Maisamma Temple area of Old Village, Bharat Nagar, and directed



officials to complete them within the stipulated timeframe. The Corporator also instructed officials to take up the pending open drainage and CC road works in Uppal Old Village, Bharat Nagar, at the earliest. Officials assured her that the remaining pending open drain and CC road construction works would be commenced soon. Several local leaders and residents, including Pogula Narsimha Reddy, Pogula Satti Reddy, Mahankali Raju, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Eega Sridhar, Rangula Shekhar Mudiraj, Kayala Sudhakar, Kayala Yadaiah, Thaseen, Batcha Ram, Thota Ramchander, Ganesh, Srikanth, Sridhar Reddy, Ravi, and others, were present during the inspection.

## Big Shock to BRS in Uppal; Uppal Noor Basha Doodekula Association Leaders Join Congress



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle):“In a significant political development in the Uppal constituency, leaders of the Uppal Noor Basha Doodekula Association have joined the Congress party, dealing a major setback to the BRS. Uppal Assembly Congress in-charge Parameswar Reddy formally welcomed them into the party by draping the Congress scarf. Those who joined the Congress include Alla Basha, Janayya, Nayappa Rasool, Ram Reddy, Nadipi Roshayya, Kasim Valli, Nagoor Basha, Peerambhi, Shirayya, Siddayya, Nadipi Siddayya, Ussani, Chinna Moulayya, Roshayya, Nayab Rasool, Pedda Siddayya, Chintalayya, Kasim, Siddayya, Pedda Peerayya,



Mallikarjun, Chinna Peerayya, Pakeerayya, Bhavani, Raju, Srinivasulu, among others. Speaking on the occasion, Parameswar Reddy said that the leaders were attracted by the development works being carried out in the Uppal constituency under the proactive leadership of Chief Minister. He noted that funds have been sanctioned and construction works are underway for community halls for all caste associations under the Chief Minister's guidance, leading people to join the Congress beyond party lines. He further stated that the leaders joined the Congress with the confidence that the Congress government ensures equitable representation and opportunities for all communities.

## Congress Division President Mohammed Rafiq Participates in Ayyappa Swamis' Irumudi Programme



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle):“An Irumudi programme of Ayyappa Swamis was held with devotion at Indiranagar Colony, Ramanthapur. Devotees including Srinuswamy, Saieswamy, Sudarshanswamy, Hariswamy, Dharmarao Swamy, Rambabuswamy and others took part in the ritual as part of their pilgrimage to Ramanthapur Division Congress Party President participated in the programme, symbolising communal harmony. Other participants included Gangaputra Bhaskar, Paila

Adinarayana Goud, Soori, Swamy, Madhu and several local leaders and devotees. Speaking on the occasion, Mohammed Rafiq said that such religious events strengthen social unity and mutual respect among communities. He personally made necessary arrangements for the Ayyappa Swamis proceeding to Sabarimala. It may be recalled that about fifteen days ago, Mohammed Rafiq had also organised Bhiksha for nearly 500 Ayyappa Swamis at the Gandhinagar Community Hall, setting an example of service and harmony in.

## ‘Samprithi Telugu Kitchen’ Brings Authentic Telugu Flavours Fusion of Andhra, Telangana and Rayalaseema cuisines under one roof



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Hyderabad: Samprithi Telugu Kitchen, a family restaurant celebrating traditional Telugu cuisine, was inaugurated on Saturday at AS Rao Nagar, Kapra Circle. The restaurant is located on the second floor of Anupuram SS Heights, near Radhika Bus Stop. The restaurant was inaugurated by MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy in the presence of corporator Singireddy Sirisha Somashekar Reddy and other guests. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said the launch of Samprithi Telugu Kitchen with the objective of providing quality food in a comfortable family-friendly environment was commendable. He noted that such initiatives help bring traditional Telugu

food culture closer to the public. Entrepreneur Mounika Singam said the restaurant was started with the aim of preserving and promoting the richness of Telugu culinary traditions. With the tagline Celebration of Traditional Telugu Flavours, the restaurant offers a wide range of special dishes from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Rayalaseema. The management stated that the restaurant uniquely blends the spiciness of Rayalaseema cuisine, the tangy flavours of Andhra dishes and the rustic tastes of Telangana village-style cooking. All dishes are prepared using traditional cooking methods, locally sourced ingredients and specially prepared masalas to maintain authenticity. Among those

## Mathematics Lecturer Swapna Tanguturi Awarded PhD

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (In-



dian Chronicle):“Swapna Tanguturi, a Mathematics lecturer at Little Flower Degree College, Uppal, has been awarded a PhD in Mathematics by Chaitanya (Deemed to be) University. She submitted her doctoral thesis titled “Combined Effects of Thermal and Solutal on Micropolar Fluid along a Stretched Surface” under the supervision of Dr. M. Sunder Ram. The conferment of the PhD reflects her dedication and significant academic achievement in the fields of research and teaching. Colleagues, friends, and the faculty of Little Flower Degree College extended their congratulations to Dr. Swapna Tanguturi on her accomplishment. Speaking on the occasion, she expressed happiness that her research efforts had yielded the desired results and emphasized that with hard work, anything can be achieved.

## Kathak Dance Performances Enthrall Audience at Uppal Mini Shilparamam

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle):“As part of the weekend cultural programmes, came alive on Sunday evening with captivating Kathak dance performances. The recital was pre-



sented by the disciples' troupe of renowned Kathak exponent. The programme featured a rich repertoire including Saraswati Vandana, Shiva Vandana, and rhythmic explorations in Dhamar Taal, Dadra Taal, Rupak Taal, Jhaptal, and Teentaal, along with thematic presentations such as Ganga Avataram. The performances by students Aaraadhya, Aruna, Charush, KSV, Raina, Kaashvi, Brahmini, Mehek, Harshika, Navya, Sarayu, Vishnupriya, Parisha and others drew warm applause, showcasing grace, precision, and expressive storytelling. The evening left the audience thoroughly enthralled, reaffirming Uppal Mini Shilparamam's role as a vibrant hub for classical arts.

present at the inauguration were Singam Sathayya, Singam Sai Charan, former MLAs NVSS Prabhakar and Bethi Subhash Reddy, former Mayor Bonthu Rammohan Rao, former corporators Pajuri Pavani Manipal Reddy and Kotha Ramarao, along with leaders from various political parties including Marri Mohan Reddy, Kanukula Rajinikanth Reddy and Sandhya Reddy. Family members and well-wishers also attended the event. Guests congratulated the management and wished Samprithi Telugu Kitchen success in its future endeavours.



## National Conference on Empowerment of Blind Women's Rights



Indian Chronicle OU December 13: Telangana State MLC Professor Kodanda Ram said that the empowerment of deaf women can be achieved only through constitutional rights. The first National Conference of Deaf Women 2025 was held on Saturday under the chairmanship of Ujjani Janaki Sabha, President of the Women's Section of the All India Federation of the Deaf (AIFD). The event was organized under the auspices of the People with Hearing Impaired Network (PHIN). More than 150 deaf women from 18 states of India participated in the conference. The national conference was held under the theme "Empowerment of Deaf Women's Rights", with extensive discussions on issues such as the rights of women with hearing impairments, leadership, education, employment, safety, and accessibility. Inaugurating the conference, Telangana Jana Samithi President Professor Kodandaram said that it is the responsibility of the

government as well as society to provide equal opportunities to deaf women. He suggested increasing the availability of sign language. AIFD President Sunil Sahasrabudhe said that setting up a separate platform for deaf women is a historic step and their leadership is commendable. The goal is to strengthen it across the country. AIFD General Secretary Roshan Kumar said that the continuous struggle for the rights of deaf women will continue at the national level. MPDO President M. Srinivasulu said that the role of women is crucial in achieving the rights of the disabled. NAD Vice President Geeta Sharma explained the need for deaf women to become self-reliant. The speakers focused on the social and economic challenges faced by deaf women. Babu, Director of Ashraya Aakruthi, P. Balakrishna Reddy, Shobha and others participated in the program.

## Funds Sought for Development of Chilkanagar Division: Bannala Praveen Mudiraj

KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle): "state leader , along with Uppal MLA , met GHMC Zonal Commissioner at the headquarters and requested allocation of funds for the development of the . During the meeting, they sought funds for storm water drains and CC roads in Imam Galli behind the Shiva Temple in Chilkanagar. They also requested CC roads in Subhadra and Satyavathi gullies near the Maisamma Temple, CC roads opposite the Nagadevatha area, CC roads on Prashanth Nagar Road Nos. 1 and 2, CC road from the banyan tree junction at Kalyanapuri to Kalyanapuri Park, and CC roads in the Ramalayam area of Beerappa Gadda, including the lane opposite the library and the Annapurna Colony behind the library. Additionally, funds were sought for the construction of community halls in several localities, including Azmath Nagar Colony, behind the Beerappa Gadda Library, Ambedkar Nagar Basti, Indira Nagar Basti, Navodaya Colony on Chilkanagar hilltop, and Malikarjun Nagar. Responding positively, Zonal Commissioner Hemanth Keshav Patil assured that funds for the proposed development works would be sanctioned at the earliest.



## Telangana Registers Victory at the 63rd National Roller Skating Championship

Junior Boys Inline Hockey Team Scores Impressive Win Against Karnataka



Visakhapatnam, December 14 "The Telangana Junior Boys Inline Hockey team delivered an outstanding performance at the 63rd National Roller Skating Championship being held in Visakhapatnam. In a match played on Friday, the Telangana junior boys defeated the Karnataka junior boys team by a convincing margin of 4-1. For Telangana, Sushant Desai scored two goals,

while Pranay and Sharath added one goal each, playing a key role in the team's victory. Players Rohith, Yanala Harshith Reddy, Harish, Neeraj, Adhipath, Chandrahans and others also displayed excellent coordination and contributed significantly to the win. With this victory, the Telangana team once again proved its strength in the championship.

## BJP Leaders Detained Ahead of Messi–Revanth Reddy Football Match



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle): "Ahead of the much-publicised football match between Telangana Chief Minister and Argentine football icon , scheduled to be held on Saturday at the ,

police carried out preventive detentions of several BJP and ABVP leaders in the Uppal Circle. Those detained include BJP leaders Reddigari Devender Reddy and Gaddam Sai, along with ABVP leader Burra Akhil. Uppal police reportedly took them into custody in the early hours of the morning as a precautionary measure in view of the event. Reacting strongly, leaders alleged that the arrests were politically motivated and described them as an "undemocratic and shameful act" by the government. They claimed the arrests were made around 6:30 am and that the leaders were kept in police custody until the evening. The BJP leaders further stated that such actions amount to suppressing democratic rights and warned that the people would give a fitting response to the Congress government in the days to come.

## Disciplinary action being prepared against those who failed to report for duty in the first phase of Gram Panchayat elections: Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 13): Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao stated in a press release that preparations are underway for disciplinary action against those who failed to report for duty in the first phase of the Gram Panchayat elections. He further stated that disciplinary action is inevitable against those who fail to report for duty in the second phase as well. Speaking on this occasion, the District Collector said that those who do not report for election duty in the second phase, even if they have not received the order copy, will face action as per the rules and regulations of the Election Commission.

## Semi-Christmas Celebrations Held with Grandeur at Indira Memorial High School



Nacharam, Indain Chronicle, December 13: Semi-Christmas celebrations were conducted in a festive atmosphere at Indira Memorial High School, located in Ashok Nagar under the Mallapur Division. On this occasion, a cake-cutting ceremony was held and sweets were distributed to mark the celebration. Addressing the gathering, the school Correspondent K. Victor Raja Gopal said that the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ continue to be an inspiration and a guiding ideal for today's generation. Principal and Founder K. A. L. Raja Kumari and PRO K. Josh Victor attended the event and extended their Christmas greetings to the students. They stated

that Christmas is a festival that promotes love, peace, and humanity. Teachers and a large number of students participated enthusiastically in the celebrations. Captivating Cultural Programs As part of the Semi-Christmas celebrations, students organized special cultural programs highlighting the significance of Christmas. The enactment depicting the life and teachings of Jesus Christ was especially impressive. Students also presented songs and dances, entertaining and delighting the audience.

## Exercise Caution Amid Winter Fog to Prevent Accidents: District SP Nitika Pant

Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 13 (Indian Chronicle): With the onset of intense winter, dense fog is forming particularly during early morning hours and at night. In light of the increased risk of road accidents under these conditions, District Superintendent of Police (SP) Nitika Pant has issued several advisory guidelines for motorists and the public. Ms. Pant highlighted that individuals walking along roadsides in both urban and rural areas during morning hours are at heightened risk of accidents. Due to reduced visibility caused by fog, drivers may not spot pedestrians ahead, thereby increasing the likelihood of mishaps. Guidelines Motorists Must Strictly Follow During Foggy Conditions: Keep headlights and fog lights switched on at all times; use low beam only in dense fog. Control vehicle speed strictly; overspeeding is completely prohibited. Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead. Do not cross the white marking lines on the road. Use the dipper or horn only when absolutely necessary. Check in advance that indicators, brake lights, and wipers are functioning properly. Avoid using high beam, as it can blind oncoming drivers. Inspect tyres, brakes, and overall vehicle condition beforehand. Do not park vehicles on the roadside unnecessarily; if parking is required, switch on parking lights. Do not drive under the influence of alcohol. Special Advisories for Pedestrians Walking on Roads: Walking on highways or major roads during early morning hours when fog is dense is highly dangerous. Reduced visibility for drivers significantly raises the risk of accidents involving pedestrians who may not be seen in time. Those who wish to walk should restrict themselves to safe areas such as grounds, residential colonies, or parks. If walking along the roadside



is unavoidable, wear reflective or light-coloured clothing for better visibility. Children, senior citizens, and women should take extra precautions and avoid walking along roadsides. The SP advised against undertaking unnecessary travel between 5 a.m. and 8 a.m., as well as after 8 p.m., when fog is typically thickest. She urged the public to avoid travel except in emergencies and emphasised that family members, particularly children and the elderly, must remain extremely vigilant. The safety of every citizen is our top priority. Reduced visibility during fog can lead to serious accidents. Only strict adherence to these guidelines by drivers and pedestrians can help safeguard lives, Ms. Pant stated. She added that in case of emergencies, the public may immediately contact the police by dialling 100 or 112.

## Work with the Goal of Hoisting the Pink Flag in Greater Elections: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy



KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle): Uppal MLA called upon BRS leaders and cadres to work with the clear objective of hoisting the party's pink flag in the upcoming Greater elections. Speaking at a key workers' meeting held on Saturday in , organized under the leadership of senior party leader Puduri Jitender Reddy, the MLA attended as the chief guest. Addressing the gathering, he urged leaders to further strengthen the (BRS) in the Uppal division

and to remain continuously engaged with the people. He described Uppal as a strong bastion of the BRS and emphasized that all leaders and workers should function in unity. He assured that leaders who work sincerely for the party would be given due recognition and appropriate positions within the organization. Calling for collective effort, he appealed to leaders and activists to stand united and demonstrate the strength of the BRS in Uppal. Senior BRS leaders and key party workers from the Uppal division participated in the meeting.

## Congress ward member Vanaganti Lakshmi passed away due to a heart attack

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Library Chairman Avez Chisti paid his respects and provided financial assistance of Rs. 20,000. Chairman Avez Chisti assured that he would always stand by L a k s h m i ' s family. (Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 13): Vanaganti Lakshmi, the candidate supported by the Congress party in the 9th ward of Baswapuram village in Bhuvanagiri mandal, passed away on Saturday morning due to a heart attack. Upon learning of this, the District Library Corporation Chairman, Avez Chisti, immediately went there, paid his respects to her mortal remains, expressed his deepest con-



dolences to her family, and provided financial assistance of Rs. 20,000. Congress party-supported

Sarpanch candidate Chikkula Venkatesham, former MPP Venkata Swamy, former Sarpanch Udutha Satyanarayana,

Udutha Naresh, Sai Kiran, Congress party leaders, and others participated in this program.



The third phase of the postal ballot voting process must be conducted transparently by the concerned officials:  
Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 13):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the third phase of the postal ballot voting process must be conducted transparently by the concerned officials. On Saturday, the District Election Officer and Collector inspected the postal ballot voting process at the Motakondur Mandal Praja Parishad office, where the third phase of the Gram Panchayat elections is scheduled to be held.”On this occasion, the District Collector inquired about the number of people who had applied for ballot votes in Motakondur Mandal and how many had already cast their postal ballot votes. He instructed the concerned officials to supervise the postal ballot voting process to ensure it runs smoothly. He also inquired whether all the polling materials for the third phase of polling had arrived



and whether they had been checked. He advised that the ballot papers for the Sarpanch and Ward Member candidates in the Gram Panchayat polling booths should be checked in advance to ensure that there are sufficient quantities and that the symbols are correct. He emphasized the importance of checking for the Swastika symbol and the stamps related to the Gram Panchayat. He instructed that the polling materials be distributed smoothly to the staff without any room for even the slightest error. He inquired about the location of the distribution center for the polling materials and directed that basic amenities be provided at the distribution center. He also instructed that good meals be arranged for the polling staff on the day of material distribution.”The concerned officials participated in this program.

### Green Peace Environment & Water Harvesting Foundation Founder President Meets Former Telangana Minister Harish Rao

“(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):-“Green Peace Environment & Water Harvesting Foundation Founder President Bairi Srinivas Goud met former Telangana Minister and senior BRS leader Tanneeru Harish Rao in a courtesy meeting. During the interaction, Srinivas Goud discussed issues related to environmental protection, water conservation, and the need for sustainable water harvesting initiatives in the state. He also briefed Harish Rao on the activities and future plans of the foundation aimed at promoting ecological balance and groundwater recharge across Telangana.

The second phase of the polling process must be conducted efficiently by the concerned officials:  
- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 13):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the second phase of the polling process should be conducted efficiently and in a coordinated manner by the concerned officials. On Saturday, the District Election Officer and Collector inspected the polling material distribution centers at Divyabala School in Anajipuram village of Bhuvanagiri mandal and in the Valigonda mandal center, where the second phase of elections are to be held as part of the Gram Panchayat elections.”On this occasion, the District Collector inquired whether all the officers assigned to election duty had arrived. He stated that disciplinary action would be taken against those who were absent. He instructed all polling staff to check whether the ballot boxes, which are part of the polling material, were opening easily. He also asked them to check if the ballot papers, the symbol stamp, and Form-9 related to their Gram Panchayat had arrived. He advised them to thoroughly examine the voter list here itself before taking it to the polling centers. He said that everything should be

prepared as soon as they reach the polling center. He instructed that Form-9, which contains the symbols, should be affixed outside the polling station. He emphasized that they should carefully observe whether all voters are casting both ballot papers into the ballot box. He stated that the polling material must be handed over to the reception center after the completion of polling. He instructed that every single paper from the polling stations should be collected and brought back. He directed the police personnel to ensure that voters do not bring mobile phones into the polling stations. He also instructed that police security should be arranged to prevent crowds from gathering within 100 meters of the polling stations. He said that all officers on election duty should perform their duties responsibly and ensure that the process runs smoothly. The Collector inspected the food arranged at the distribution center and personally served it to the staff. He instructed the officials to supervise and ensure that the staff reaches their designated polling stations on time. He emphasized that when transporting polling materials, especially ballot papers, it is mandatory to travel with police security.”The concerned officials participated in this program.

### Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in election campaigning in Mothakondur mandal.



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 13):- On the occasion of the third phase of Gram Panchayat elections in Mothakondur mandal of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in the campaign, urging voters to elect



the Congress party's sarpanch candidates in the respective villages. Beerla Ailaiah's campaign continued in the villages of Aregudem, Dilavapur, Matooru, Ammanabolu, Teryala, Chamapur, Chandepalli, Chad Mutthireddy Gudem, Kondapur, and Nancharipet in Mothakondur mandal.

## Mandal Samakhya President Contests as Sarpanch Candidate!

Files Nomination by Misleading Officials; Contests Elections Without Resigning  
District Authorities in Komaram Bheem Turn a Blind Eye

“(Taj Khan, Kagaznagar:;December 13 (Indian Chronicle)““The gram panchayat elections in Kukuda village under Beijur mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district have now become a subject of intense debate. Notably, a sarpanch candidate contesting the elections is reportedly continuing in a government-affiliated institution while violating rules and misleading officials.”In the Kukuda gram panchayat elections, a woman named Purteti Sridevi has filed her nomination for the sarpanch position. However, it has been revealed that she is currently serving as the women's president in the IKP (Indira Kranthi Patham, or Women's Collective Office).“As per regulations, government employees or those working in government-affiliated institutions must compulsorily resign from their posts to contest elections. Yet, sources indicate that Ms. Sridevi filed her nomination without submitting any written resignation related to her position as mandal samakhya president to the authorities.”Despite explicit rules barring government employees from election campaigning or contesting polls, her entry into the electoral contest while retaining her government-affiliated role—allegedly supported by the ruling party's strength—has emerged as a major point of contention.”Officials' Clarification: No Written Resignation Received“When the Assistant Project Manager (APM) of the IKP office was contacted over telephone for clarification on the matter, he clearly stated that no written resignation letter has been received from Purteti Sridevi.”Information indicates that Ms. Sridevi is currently discharging duties as both village-level president and



mandal-level president in the IKP. Local allegations are mounting that she is overstepping regulations by holding a government-affiliated post, filing nomination for the sarpanch position, and leading officials astray.”Amid a highly competitive scenario in the Kukuda gram panchayat elections—featuring two factions within the same party and a third candidate backed by the ruling Congress party—the spotlight is now on the actions authorities will take against Ms. Sridevi for allegedly violating nomination rules. Observers will have to wait and watch for further developments.

## District Election Officer and Collector Hanumanta Rao inspected the arrangements at the eco-friendly polling stations prepared for the second phase of

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 13):- District Election Officer and Collector Hanumanta Rao inspected the arrangements at the eco-friendly polling stations prepared for the second phase of polling. The District Election Officer stated that elaborate arrangements have been made for the second phase of polling in Bhongir, Valigonda, Bibinagar, Pochampally, and Ramannapet mandals as part of the Gram Panchayat elections on Saturday.”He inspected the arrangements at the model polling station in Tekula Somaram village of Valigonda mandal. He instructed that Form-9 with the symbols should be affixed outside the polling booth immediately, and that a voting compartment should also be set up. He said that the polling process should begin at 7 AM tomorrow.”Regarding the inspection of the eco-friendly polling station arrangements, he said that these green model polling stations have been set up to create awareness among the people about their right to vote as well as environmental protection and the prevention of plastic use.”He expressed hope that all villages would transform into green villages in the coming days. He said that the newly formed governing bodies should focus on environmental protection and build a plastic-free society in the villages. Accordingly, awareness is being created at these polling stations by providing water in earthen pots, decorating the polling



centers with rangoli designs, creating a festive atmosphere with green plants, coconut fronds, and flowers, setting up selfie points with banana leaves, and laying green mats. He urged everyone to take advantage of this pleasant environment.”He mentioned that model polling stations have been set up in Anantharam village of Bhuvanagiri mandal, the Gram Panchayat center in BB Nagar mandal, Jalalpur village of Pochampally mandal, Tekula Somaram village of Valigonda mandal, and Nernemula village of Ramannapet mandal.

## 100-km Awareness Run Raises Funds for Prostate Cancer Patients



“(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):-“As part of November 2025, globally observed as Men's Health Awareness Month, Team Ray of Sunshine Foundation, in association with Team Klerv,

organised a 100-kilometre awareness run from Hyderabad to Suryapet to highlight key men's health issues. The initiative focused on creating awareness about prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and overall men's wellness. Through the endurance run, the teams raised Rs.2.64 lakh in donations from fellow athletes and supporters. The collected amount was donated to prostate cancer patients currently undergoing treatment at MNJ Cancer Hospital, Red Hills, Hyderabad. On Tuesday, cheques of Rs.50,000 each were handed over to five patients at the hospital premises. The event was conducted with administrative support from Sandhya and her team at MNJ Cancer Hospital. Team Ray of Sunshine Foundation works across three core areas — cancer awareness, CPR education and awareness, and an athlete support programme. The foundation stated that such initiatives aim to combine physical fitness with social responsibility while drawing attention to critical health concerns affecting men. The organisers expressed appreciation to donors, volunteers, and medical staff for their support in making the initiative successful.

## Messi vs Revanth: Football Match Witnessed by Gaddam Ravikumar

“(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 13 (Indian Chronicle):-“A football match between world-renowned footballer and Telangana Chief Minister was held on Saturday evening at Hyderabad's . The match generated tremendous excitement, with fans cheering enthusiastically throughout.”The encounter between the Singareni RR team and the Argentina team was thrilling. Former State Youth Congress General Secretary Gaddam Ravikumar watched the match along with fans.”During the event, Revanth Reddy scored the opening goal, winning the hearts of the spectators. Later, the Chief Minister converted a goal in the penalty shootout, which Messi applauded in appreciation. Subsequently, Messi and Revanth Reddy walked around the stadium together, greeting and acknowledging the cheering fans.





# Parties make last-minute push as campaigning ends



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

With campaigning for the zila parishad and block samiti elections ending on Friday, political parties in Punjab intensified their last-minute efforts to woo voters ahead of Sunday’s polling. A total of 1.36 crore rural voters – about 63.5 per cent of Punjab’s total electorate (2.14 crore) as per the 2024 Lok Sabha rolls – are eligible to cast their votes. AAP ministers and MLAs remained focused on comparing the party’s performance since 2022 with previous governments, while SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal continued to emphasise the development works undertaken during former CM Parkash Singh Badal’s tenure. BJP’s state leadership, including working president Ashwani Sharma, highlighted central schemes, asserting that key funding for Punjab’s rural works has come from the Union government. AAP’s final-day outreach

On Friday, cabinet ministers Aman Arora and Harbhajan Singh ETO campaigned in the Jandiala Guru area of Amritsar, while Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema addressed meetings in his constituency, Dirba. Cheema told voters, “Opponents mocked us when we promised 300 units of free power, but today more than 90 per cent households are getting zero bills. We have given thousands of jobs, and we continue to deliver on our promises.”

However, the campaign saw controversy on Thursday after Sangrur MLA Narinder Kaur Bharaj alleged during a rally in Jhaneri village (Bhawanigarh) that an independent candidate — allegedly involved in selling poppy husk and liquor — had earlier sought help from AAP functionaries to evade cases and was now contesting against the party’s candidate. “Such people will only engage in hooliganism if elected,” she said in her speech. The BJP reacted sharply, sharing her video on its Facebook page with the caption: “MLA admits her people are selling drugs. If the govern-

ment is saving culprits, how can drugs end?” Development grants resurface Villagers in Thui (Nabha block, Patiala) posted a video thanking the Punjab government for releasing Rs 50 lakh each to 149 villages where Guru Tegh Bahadur had visited, and gurdwaras have come up in those places. Though the scheme was announced earlier to mark the 350th martyrdom year of the Guru, the thanksgiving video has been shared by AAP Punjab on its social media handle while the rural poll campaign is going on. Apart from these, sources indicated that many villages are being promised development grants if AAP candidates win by large margins. SAD focuses on Parkash Singh Badal’s legacy Sukhbir Singh Badal, campaigning in Gidderbaha on Thursday and in Bathinda and Ferozepur on Friday, reiterated that the “maximum development in Punjab happened under Parkash Singh Badal.” He told voters that Badal ended waterlogging in Gidderbaha and launched welfare schemes such as free atta-dal and free power for tubewells. Calling for support to SAD candidates, he said, “Voting en masse for SAD will be a true tribute to Parkash Singh Badal.” He also attacked the Congress governments of the past six decades, challenging them to name “one major work” they did for Punjab. BJP highlights illegal mining, central schemes BJP working president and Pathankot MLA Ashwani Sharma campaigned across rural areas of his constituency on Thursday and Friday. He said the BJP was receiving “immense support”, adding that illegal mining remained a core issue. Sharma cited posters in parts of Anandpur Sahib – represented by AAP minister Harjot Singh Bains – where locals have demanded action against rampant mining. “The government must answer on real issues,” he said. Throughout the campaign, Opposition parties accused the ruling AAP of misusing official machinery. A viral audio clip allegedly involving Patiala SSP Varun Sharma on rural polls also became contentious. Poll details Punjab has 23 zila parishads with 357 constituencies, of which elections will be held in 342. Fifteen candidates – 12 in Tarn Taran and three in Amritsar, all from AAP – have already been elected unopposed. A total of 1,265 candidates are contesting the remaining seats. In the 2,863 constituencies across 154 block samitis, 181 candidates have been elected unopposed: 98 (Tarn Taran), 63 (Amritsar), 17 (Hoshiarpur), 2 (Malerkotla) and 1 (SBS Nagar). Except for one independent in SBS Nagar, all are from AAP. Polling will be held for the remaining 2,682 seats, where 8,314 candidates are in the fray. In total, 196 candidates across both tiers have been elected unopposed, while 9,579 remain in contention.

# Hyderabad readies for Messi mania, rolls out welcome for football legend

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

A meet and greet with fans, an exhibition match with the chief minister and training children – that’s what football star Lionel Messi is scheduled to do in Hyderabad, where he lands Saturday. At 4.30 pm Saturday, Messi will touch down at Hyderabad’s Rajiv Gandhi International Airport.

From then on till he leaves the city, football fans will be able to meet and greet the 2022 FIFA World Cup winner, watch him work his magic on the pitch, see him coach underprivileged children in the game, take a penalty shootout, and also greet them as he sprints around the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Uppal. On the city for the three-day GOAT tour, the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner is set to travel to four cities — Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and New Delhi. Messi is travelling to India for a three-day extravaganza called the GOAT Tour.

Hyderabad readies for Messi mania, rolls out welcome for football legend On the city for the three-day GOAT tour, the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner is set to travel to four cities — Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and New Delhi. (Source: Express photo) Hyderabad is the second leg of the tour. The Argentinian star will glide through the city via routes manned by CRPF personnel and the Hyderabad Police to reach Falaknuma Palace, where he will meet his fans for greetings and photoshoots. The star will then travel to Uppal Stadium, where his team of 11 will face off with a team of 11 led by Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. “Messi will play the last five minutes of the 15-minute game. In these five minutes he will face off with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy who is a football player himself,” an organiser of his Greatest of All Times (GOAT) tour told The Indian Express. Reddy has been training for 45 minutes each day ever since the GOAT tour was confirmed by Messi’s team, the CM’s confidants told The Indian Express. Hyderabad readies for Messi mania, rolls out welcome for football legend The Argentinian star will glide through the city via routes manned by CRPF personnel and the Hyderabad Police to reach Falaknuma Palace, where



he will meet his fans for greetings and photoshoots. This is an exhibition match,” the organisers confirmed.

Messi will then, for five minutes, train four teams of underprivileged children. He will later take a penalty shootout of five balls. Hyderabad readies for Messi mania, rolls out welcome for football legend At 4.30 pm Saturday, Messi will touch down at Hyderabad’s Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. (Source: “The CM’s team will also take the penalty shootout,” said an organiser. Revanth Reddy will play donning jersey number RR-9, while Messi will play in his usual No. 10 position. “Messi will sprint around the Uppal stadium to greet the fans,” the organisers said. Messi’s tour to Hyderabad was organised at the last moment, with his tour to Kerala falling through. Hyderabad readies for Messi mania, rolls out welcome for football legend Argentina fans are, meanwhile, gearing up to greet the captain of the blue and white team who won them the country’s third World Cup in 2022. (Source: Express Photo) Hyderabad city’s FC Barcelona fans and Argentina fans are, meanwhile, gearing up to greet him at the stadium. “We will turn up in thousands,” a poster issued by the FCB said. Messi used to play for Barcelona for the most part of his league football career, till he moved on to French club PSG and now the US club Inter Miami.

# Kolkata Metro expansion: Why Railways couldn’t take forward the Barrackpore–Kalyani metro corridor

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Kolkata Metro Barrackpore Kalyani Metro Corridor Update: In recent years, Kolkata Metro has expanded at a remarkable pace. While the network grew only from 28 km between 1972 and 2014 – a span of 42 years – it added another 17 km from 2014 to 2025, reaching a total of 45 km. However, several metro projects in the ‘City of Joy’ continue to face delays, largely due to land acquisition challenges. Amid this progress, an interesting question arises: why did the Ministry of Railways – under which Kolkata Metro operates – decide not to move forward with the Barrackpore–Kalyani metro corridor even after completing the survey? Barrackpore–Kalyani metro route

During the ongoing session of Parliament, Lok Sabha MP Partha Bhowmick asked Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw whether there are any plans to extend the Kolkata Metro up to Kalyani, AIIMS to improve connectivity for the people of Barrackpore. In his response, Vaishnaw stated that a survey for a new metro corridor from Barrackpore to Kalyani had indeed been conducted, but the project could not be taken forward due to low traffic projection. “Survey for new metro corridor from Barrackpore to Kalyani was carried out but the project could not be taken forward due to low traffic projection,” he said. He further added that Kalyani is an existing station of Indian Railway Network on Sealdah-Ranaghat section. Presently, four metro corridors covering a total of 52 km are under construction in and around Kolkata. Of this, nearly 20 km is stalled due to land acquisition and utility-shifting issues pertaining to the state government, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed in a



During the ongoing session of Parliament, Lok Sabha MP Partha Bhowmick asked Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw whether there are any plans to extend the Kolkata Metro up to Kalyani, AIIMS to improve connectivity for the people of Barrackpore. In his response, Vaishnaw stated that a survey for a new metro corridor from Barrackpore to Kalyani had indeed been conducted, but the project could not be taken forward due to low traffic projection.

written statement in the Lok Sabha on December 10.

Anish Mondal is a business journalist with over nine years of experience. He writes on diverse subjects such as Infrastructure, Railways, Roadways, Aviation, Politics, Market, Parliamentary affairs, Corporate earnings, General and International news etc. ...

# Haryana rights panel orders stringent action, joint raids on mining and pollution in Bhiwani



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) has taken significant action in response to complaints alleging illegal mining, air pollution, and unauthorised operation of industrial units in Khanak village of Bhiwani district. The Commission has directed multiple departments to intensify monitoring and initiate strict enforcement against the deteriorating air quality in the region. The Full Commission — comprising chairperson Justice Lalit Batra and members Kuldeep Jain and Deep Bhatia — has directed the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) and the Bhiwani Mining Department to conduct regular, random inspections across Khanak and surrounding villages.

“The inspections will include mining sites, stone crushers, hot mix plants, and tyre pyrolysis units. The Commission also ordered that the Sarpanch of Khanak and local villagers be made part of these inspection teams to ensure transparency and community involvement. The Commission highlighted the significance of tyre pyrolysis units, which operate by heating old tyres at 350–600°C in the absence of oxygen to extract useful by-products,” Commission’s spokesperson Dr Puneet Arora said. In compliance with an earlier order dated August 19, HSPCB and the Mining Department submitted detailed reports on November 17. According to these reports, mining activities being carried out by Haryana State Industrial & Infrastructure Development

Corporation (HSIIDC) in Khanak since December 2016 are operating within legal parameters, with no evidence of illegal mining. Joint inspections and continuous monitoring have confirmed adherence to environmental safety measures.

Air quality data recorded between November 5 and 12 shows that although the Khanak region experiences dust-related pollution, Bhiwani city reported even higher AQI levels on most days, often falling into the ‘very poor’ category. The findings suggest that the pollution issue extends beyond the mining belt and affects the wider district. “The Commission reviewed additional environmental initiatives reported by authorities. Under the GRAP Stage-III guidelines, several units have been temporarily shut down, and their three-phase electricity connections have been disconnected for violations. Two major projects — planting 2,080 saplings along the Tosham–Hisar Road and deploying three truck-mounted anti-smog guns — have been approved at the district level and forwarded for final sanction. Both initiatives will be funded through the Environment Compensation (EC) Fund,” Dr Arora added. Officers stated that most stone crushers and all tyre pyrolysis units are either closed or complying with the regulations, he said. Despite official closure directives, the Commission has noted that complaints alleging clandestine operation of tyre pyrolysis plants, stone crushers, and hot mix plants persisted. In response, the HHRC has instructed the deputy commissioner, superintendent of police, regional officer of HSPCB, and sub-divisional magistrate and deputy superintendent of police of Tosham to ensure rigorous enforcement. “Authorities must deploy adequate police force and form joint enforcement teams to conduct surprise raids. Any machinery, vehicles, or materials found operating in violation of closure orders are to be seized immediately,” the Commission ordered. “Due to the seriousness of allegations and the findings so far, senior officers from the HSPCB, Mines and Geology Department, district administration, and local monitoring authorities have been directed to submit a comprehensive compliance report. The next hearing is scheduled for February 17, 2026,” Dr Arora said.

# BJP to fight 140-150 seats, Sena on 80-90 seats; to contest as Mahayuti

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

The BJP and the Shiv Sena will contest the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections together as alliance partners and have reached an agreement on seat-sharing, state BJP president Ravindra Chavan said on Friday. Highly placed sources in both parties hinted that the BJP is likely to contest 140-150 seats, while the Shiv Sena may field candidates in 80-90 seats. The BMC has a total of 227 seats. Other parties, including the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Republican Party of India (Athawale), will be part of the Mahayuti alliance.

“The upcoming local body elections will be contested under the Mahayuti banner,” Chavan said, addressing the media in Nagpur. He said the decision was taken at a meeting convened by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, minister Chandrashekar Bawankule and himself. An identical decision was taken at the BJP’s core committee meeting held separately, he added. The Mahayuti will contest as one for all other major municipal corporation polls, including Thane. “The details regarding the seat-sharing formula will be mutually decided by top state leaders with alliance partners,” Chavan said. The development comes after more than a month of acrimonious clashes between the BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. “Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Fadnavis, development remains an integral aspect of governance in Maharashtra. We believe that to push development, we have to collectively contest the polls,” Chavan said. The municipal corporation elections, including those



for the BMC, are likely to be held in January 2026, according to Chavan. However, this will depend on how the Other Backward Classes (OBC) reservation matter plays out before the Supreme Court. Unofficially, sources indicated that the BJP and Shiv Sena would show flexibility and strike a consensus through give-and-take. Initially, the BJP had signalled its intent to contest at least 150 seats, while the Shiv Sena was seeking not fewer than 100. It is now believed that the BJP would settle for 140 to 150 seats and the Shiv Sena for 80 to 90 seats. In the 2017 BMC polls, the undivided Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray and the BJP contested the BMC polls separately. The Shiv Sena won 84 seats, and the BJP 82. Post elections, they formed an alliance in the BMC. For the upcoming BMC polls, the BJP has resolved to wrest control from the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT).

# Why is Mumbai experiencing so many water cuts even as lake levels are at 3-year high

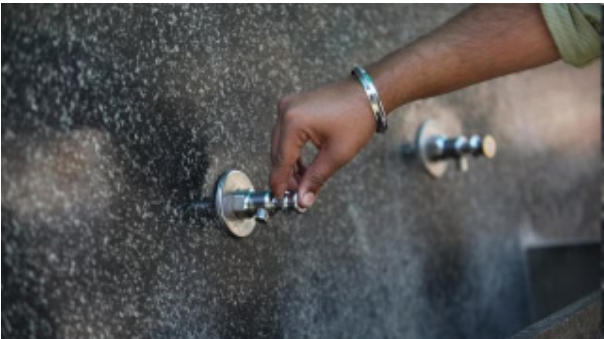
GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Over the past 10 days, at least three major water cuts have been implemented across Mumbai, starting with an 18-hour disruption affecting Kandivali and Borivali pockets between December 4 and 5. This was followed by a 15 per cent water suspension, which impacted more than half of Mumbai, including 17 wards, from December 8 to December 9. These ongoing water cuts have occurred despite the water stock in the seven lakes supplying water to Mumbai being at a three-year high. As of Friday, December 12, the total stock in these lakes reached 11.99 lakh million litres, or nearly 83 per cent of their total capacity. In comparison, last year, the stock on the same day was 78 per cent, and in 2021, it dropped to 75.11 per cent. Despite the above-average rainfall leading to increased lake levels, Mumbai is experiencing these water cuts, which senior civic officers attribute to ongoing augmentation works. What has caused recent water cuts? According to senior officers from the BMC’s hydraulic department, the isolated water cuts have been planned to commission new water channels across several parts of the city.

“Several new water tunnels have been laid to replace the century-old water mains supplying water to the city. However, the tunnels cannot be commissioned without the connections. Consequently, several isolated cuts have been planned to make connections to these new channels. For instance, the first water cut was implemented between December 1 and 2 around Chembur area to facilitate connections to the new Amar Mahal tunnel. Later, between December 8 and 9, the removal of an old 100-year-old main from the Tansa channel was carried out,” an officer from the civic hydraulic department explained. Regarding the current water suspension in three wards of Mumbai, officials stated that cross-connection work for transferring the water supply from Upper Vaitarna to Vaitarna is underway. “Since we were observing the festive season in the previous months, we had to plan all our water connections in this month to prevent any disruptions. As a result, several water cuts are being implemented in parts of Mumbai,” said a BMC officer. “These essential development projects aim to improve and augment the water supply in Mumbai. However, emergency works may also be initiated in response to sudden issues, such as pipe bursts,” the officer added.

How will the new connections aid water supply?

Mumbai’s water demands are met by seven lakes — Tulsi, Vihar, Bhatsa, Tansa, Upper Vaitarna, Middle Vaitarna, and Modak Sagar. Water from these lakes situated in the



suburbs of Mumbai or neighbouring districts of Thane and Nashik is supplied to the city through a labyrinth network of water conveyance systems. However, most of the water channels were laid decades ago with many laid in the British era. To replace the aging infrastructure, the civic body is undertaking projects to construct new water conveyance tunnels. Unlike the older tunnels, the new ones have larger diameters and can transport greater volumes of water at maximum efficiency.

“Considering the rising water demands of the city, all the new water tunnels are significantly wider than their predecessors to enhance carrying capacity. The primary goal of these projects is to augment and improve the water supply in Mumbai,” an officer told The Indian Express. In addition to the ongoing connection works, the BMC is also enhancing several existing water channels. Among the tunnel projects nearing completion are the Amar Mahal to Parel water tunnel in Trombay and a water tunnel linking Ghatkopar to Powai, officers said. The BMC has also planned a new project involving an 8.7 km-long conveyance tunnel that will connect the upcoming sewage treatment plant (STP) at Dharavi with the BMC’s water filtration plant at Bhandup.

The need to increase water supply Surrounded by seas, Mumbai relies solely on the monsoon to cater to its potable water demands. During the four months of the monsoon, the catchment areas of the seven lakes, which have a collective capacity of 14.47 lakh million litres, get replenished. Currently, the city’s water resources are able to supply only 3,950 MLD daily, as against the actual demand of 4,505 MLD. As the region experiences an increase in heatwave days during the summer, leading to faster evaporation, coupled with population growth and delayed monsoons, the municipal body is struggling to meet Mumbai’s water needs.



# Civil society group raises 6 issues over Karnataka Hate Speech Bill: definition of ‘hate speech’ is vague and emotion-based



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

JD(S) youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy said Friday that the Bill amounted to "murder of democracy", and the regional party would also mount a legal battle over the issue.JD(S) youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy said Friday that the Bill amounted to "murder of democracy", and the regional party would also mount a legal battle over the issue.The Campaign Against Hate Speech (CAHS) has raised concerns about the various aspects of The Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill 2025, calling for wider public consultations before the proposed legislation is passed by the Assembly and the Council.

In a letter to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Home Minister G Parameshwara, IT/BT minister Priyank Kharge, and Law and Parliamentary Affairs minister H K Patil, CAHS has flagged six key issues pertaining to the Bill. It has also sought amendments to the proposed legislation to "squarely address the concerns and strengthen the law to curb hate speech."The Bill falsely equates hate speech and hate crime, the letter said, noting that the definition of "hate crime" excludes a range of hate crimes which lead to bodily and psychological harm apart from the harm to democracy. "This

legislation does not see a hate speech that 'calls for a mob lynching' any different from committing the actual crime of 'mob lynching'. It also does not recognise hate crimes of punitive demolitions, social and economic boycotts," the letter said.The definition of "hate speech" is vague and emotion-based, and there was no separate punishment for the act, it said, adding that there was no clarity on the one-to-seven-year imprisonment range for the offences committed. Highlighting Section 4 of the Bill, which provides for "preventive action to be taken by the law-and-order machinery", CAHS said the section delegated excessive power to the executive, which was likely to allow for arbitrary state action.

On the power to censor on the "mere accusation of Hate Crime material", the civil society group argued that this would empower the executive "to censor without the accused being afforded the opportunity to explain his intention and statement."While the Bill has the potential to address the endemic of hate, "it also has the potential for restricting the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1)(a). Considering that the proposed law is in the domain of regulating speech and has criminal consequences, we urge the State to engage with the public in the broadest possible manner before passing such a law," the group urged the government.JD(S) youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy said Friday that the Bill amounted to "murder of democracy", and the regional party would also mount a legal battle over the issue.The Congress government, he said, was out to rob the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by the Constitution. "With the proposed Bill, the government wants to suppress opposition parties and journalists," he alleged.The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also opposed the Bill, and said Thursday that it would mount a legal battle against it, as it curtails freedom of speech and liberty. The party is expected to express its reservation when the proposed legislation is taken up for discussion next week.

# 15 schools in Amritsar get bomb threat emails; police launch probe to trace sender

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Fifteen prominent private schools in Amritsar received bomb threats via email on Friday, prompting the deputy commission to announce a holiday for all affected institutions. The incident sparked panic in the city, even as police teams, bomb disposal squads, and fire brigade units conducted extensive searches to rule out any danger.Authorities confirmed that a single email had been copied to all the targeted schools.

The sudden announcement of school closures triggered chaos among parents, who received urgent messages to collect their children. Scenes of anxiety were witnessed outside school gates as parents rushed to retrieve students, while school vans were quickly summoned to facilitate the evacuation.The Amritsar police have launched an investigation into the source of the threats. According to Alam Vijay Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, an officer has been stationed at each school to oversee security measures, and rigorous anti-sabotage checks are currently underway."There is no need to panic. The police are alert and fully vigilant," Singh stated, noting that previous incidents of this nature often turned out to be pranks by mischievous students.The investigation has been handed over to the cyber cell, which is currently tracing the IP address and origin of the threat email to identify the culprits. The incident triggered political responses. Amritsar MP Gurjeet



Singh Aujla urged Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to coordinate with central agencies to apprehend the accused quickly, while appealing to parents not to panic.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Manoranjan Kalia criticised the state's security preparedness, alleging that while "100 police personnel have been given to Arvind Kejriwal," the state's safety is being neglected.In response, AAP spokesperson and MLA Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal termed the threats "satanic acts" and assured the public that the Punjab government is closely monitoring the situation. He affirmed that the police are tracking the email source and that those attempting to disrupt the state's law and order will be arrested soon.

# Karnataka forms team for rapid implementation of Mekedatu project



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Following a reprieve from the Supreme Court on the implementation of the Mekedatu project, the Karnataka Government has issued a directive to form a team under the director of the Karnataka Engineering Research Station (KERS) for the rapid implementation of the balancing reservoir project at Mekedatu. The team will include a deputy chief engineer and supporting staff, and will operate from Ramanagara in Bengaluru Rural district. The order dated December 11 states that a dedicated project office for the

Mekedatu project will be established in Ramanagara.

On November 18, Deputy Chief Minister and Irrigation Minister D K Shivakumar chaired a meeting on the project's implementation. This came days after the SC rejected Tamil Nadu's plea, which opposed the Mekedatu project.During the meeting, it was decided to establish an office headed by a chief engineer and another by a superintending engineer for the swift execution of the Mekedatu Project. However, approval from the Finance Department is required for the establishment of new offices and creation of posts, which would take considerable time.Therefore, the government has entrusted the responsibility of implementing this project to the KERS director, said a release from Shivakumar's office.KERS has been instructed to form a team consisting of its existing officers and staff to execute the Mekedatu project. The team includes one executive engineer, three technical assistants, six assistant engineers, and one assistant administrative officer, among others.The Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Limited (CNNL) will make the necessary arrangements for the project office building. This team will function under the managing director of KNNL, and the maintenance of the office, basic infrastructure, and other expenses will be borne from KNNL funds, the order said.

# Pune Municipal Corporation launches ‘Footpath Repair Campaign’

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) launched 'Footpath Repair Campaign' to mark the Pedestrian Day on Thursday.Aniruddha Pawaskar, Chief Engineer, PMC, said, "The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has been organising Walking Plaza on Laxmi Road on Pedestrian Day on December 11 for the last few years. However, it was not organised this year as the civic body has undertaken a drive to repair all the city roads, including designing streets for the upcoming international cycle event."

Pawaskar also informed that a badly damaged footpath near Shri Lalji Mhatre Hospital under the Nanapeth ward has been constructed afresh as per the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) and opened for public use.According to a Road Asset Management System (RAMS) study of Pune city, about 42 km of footpaths were identified as needing repairs, the PMC chief engineer said, adding that the Road Department of the civic body has un-

dertaken the phased repair of these footpaths.Due to various utility works being carried out by the Pune Police and other departments, extensive digging has also been done in several parts of the city, especially in the old city areas, affecting roads and footpaths and causing inconvenience to citizens.

"The main objective of the (Footpath Repair) Campaign is to repair damaged, broken and encroached footpaths and provide citizens with safe, clean and obstruction-free walking spaces. Under this initiative, repair work on faulty footpaths in various parts of the city will be undertaken," said Pawaskar.Meanwhile, Pune-based Parisar and a host of other organisations have started mobilising citizens to ensure that the government takes action to fix footpaths.

When contacted, Ranjit Gadgil, Programme Director, Parisar, told The Indian Express that PMC has largely turned the Pedestrian Day into a one-day event without making any substantive improvements for pedestrians

# UP businessman who filed complaint against village head killed in hit-and-run; pradhan arrested for murder



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

The pradhan of a village in Bhadohi has been arrested in connection with the death of a 67-year-old businessman, who was killed in a hit-and-run.Police said the victim had lodged a complaint against the pradhan and others alleging corruption. Acting on the businessman's complaint, police said the District Magistrate of Bhadohi had recently ordered an inquiry and subsequently suspended the pradhan's financial powers.

Besides the pradhan, Manish Yadav (35), his uncle, Mehilal Yadav (35) has also been nabbed, said Bhadohi

Circle Officer Ashok Kumar Mishra. He added that two other wanted accused — Manish's nephew, Sujit Yadav (son of Mehilal) and another uncle, Munnalal Yadav — are still absconding, and raids are being carried out to trace them.The FIR has been lodged under sections of murder and criminal conspiracy.The victim, Kamal Kant, a resident of Dhaskari village, is survived by his wife and children. The incident took place on the evening of December 10.According to police, they received information that an elderly man had been struck from behind by a speeding car while returning home after closing his shop. The driver fled the scene with the vehicle. The victim was rushed to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.Police personnel reached the spot and examined footage from CCTV cameras at the spot besides recording statements of local residents on the relationship between the deceased and the village pradhan.Based on their inquiry, police said they found the vehicle belonged to Sujit.Police also learned that the victim had submitted an application to the District Magistrate and other senior officials requesting an investigation into the pradhan's actions. Acting on this complaint, the District Magistrate had ordered a probe into the pradhan's financial authority and suspended those powers, said a police officer.Police added that earlier in October, the victim had filed another complaint accusing the pradhan and his relatives of allegedly assaulting him.

# Pune Zilla Parishad partners with Serum Institute of India, Jivika Foundation for roll out in Jan 2026

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Jivika Foundation has already supported the administration of over 45,000 HPV vaccine doses through support of corporates across the country.Jivika Foundation has already supported the administration of over 45,000 HPV vaccine doses through support of corporates across the country. The Pune Zilla Parishad, in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India (SII) and the Jivika Foundation, will start an HPV vaccination program among rural girl children in the district beginning January 2026.Gajanan Patil, Chief Executive Officer, Pune Zilla Parishad, told The Indian Express that HPV vaccination to prevent cervical cancer will commence in all schools in Pune district. "This is a process, and the parents will be counselled about the importance of vaccination against cervical cancer. This is an ambitious exercise, and the magnitude of this crisis requires coordinated efforts from corporates and community-based organisations. Hence, we have collaborated with key partners for this campaign," Patil added.

Jivika Foundation has already supported the administration of over 45,000 HPV vaccine doses through support of corporates across the country."We have been recognised as an implementation partner by the Government of Maharashtra and have been entrusted with working across 11 districts to drive awareness, reach adolescent girls and administer vaccination," Jignesh Patel, Chairman, Jivika Foundation, said.He added that in Pune district, Jivika Foundation has signed an MoU with the Pune Zilla Parishad to collectively work towards making the district cervical cancer-free."Alongside vaccination, the program is also focused on creating strong awareness around screening for adult women and ensuring patient hand-holding for those



who test positive, supporting them through diagnosis and continuity of care. These efforts are aligned with the WHO's 90-70-90 strategy for cervical cancer elimination," Patel further said."We began our journey in Pune with a strong belief that equitable and quality healthcare must reach the most underserved communities. To be able to contribute to making Pune a cervical cancer-free district is a deep responsibility to strengthen awareness, vaccination and screening efforts."We are looking at a target population of 50,000 school girls (age 9-14) at Baramati, Indapur and Daund initially. Two doses will be given each six months apart – Serum has committed one lakh doses which will be sent to ZP, and we will be taking up the implementation program," Patel said.According to World Health Organization data, one in every five women globally suffering from cervical cancer is from India. With 25 per cent of global cervical cancer deaths occurring in India, often due to late diagnosis, experts have also called for stepping up preventive screening strategies.

# Nursing shortages hit Chandigarh’s PGIMER, top govt hospitals; vacancies cross 550

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

A Central Government reply presented in the Parliament reveals significant vacancies in nursing and paramedical posts across three major Chandigarh Institutions, the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) Sector 16, and Government Multi-Speciality Hospital (GMSH) Sector 32 — even as the administration remains firm on the services being managed with the available staff. (Express Photo)Despite the shortages, PGIMER told the Centre that it is "working beyond its optimal capacity in all the patient care areas so that the services are not adversely affected."

A Central Government reply tabled in Parliament has revealed significant vacancies in nursing and paramedical posts across three major Chandigarh institutions — the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) Sector 16, and Government Multi-Speciality Hospital (GMSH) Sector 32 — even as the administration maintains that services are being managed with available staff.The reply, furnished by Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav, shows that PGIMER has 247 vacant nursing posts against a sanctioned strength of 2,597, and 120 paramedical vacancies against 856 sanctioned posts.

GMCH-16 has 281 nursing vacancies out of 1,264 sanctioned posts and 86 paramedical vacancies out of 330. GMSH-32 has 30 nursing vacancies out of 154 and 70 paramedical vacancies out of 233.While GMCH and GMSH have reported "no delay in promotions", PGIMER attributed its stagnation in nursing promotions to an ongoing restructuring exercise and a judicial restraint. The minister stated that PGIMER's "3rd Cadre Review" for various non-faculty posts, including nursing, had been carried out. However, the Central Administrative Tribunal, Chandigarh, in OA 751



of 2022 (Hemant Kumar and others vs PGI), had on July 17, 2025, restrained PGIMER from conducting its Departmental Promotion Committee for the post of Assistant Nursing Superintendent until certain compliances are met, which must be completed within six months.Despite the shortages, PGIMER told the Centre that it is "working beyond its optimal capacity in all the patient care areas so that the services are not adversely affected." GMCH and GMSH said OPD, emergency, and trauma care continue to be managed with the available workforce.The reply also confirms that all three hospitals routinely engage nursing and paramedical staff through outsourcing based on "functional requirement," and that filling newly created and vacant posts is an "ongoing administrative process."Reacting to the data, Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari, who raised the query, said staffing optimisation was essential for the smooth functioning of tertiary-care institutions."All pending vacancies must be immediately filled, and the arbitrariness intrinsic to outsourcing processes needs to be proscribed by the administrations of all these hospitals immediately," Tewari said.He added that adequate staffing in public hospitals was not only a governance imperative but a prerequisite for patient safety and service quality.

# Ozempic launched in India with prices starting at Rs 8,800 per month

New Delhi: Novo Nordisk on Friday launched its blockbuster weight-loss drug Ozempic in India, beginning at Rs 8,800 a month or four weeks.Ozempic — a once-weekly injectable formulation of semaglutide — is approved in India for adults with uncontrolled type 2 diabetes, along with diet and exercise.The drug is available in three dosage forms — 0.25mg, 0.5 mg, and 1mg — in a single-use pre-filled pen called Novofine Needles designed for painless subcutaneous injection, the drug maker said.

The 0.25 mg, which is the initial dose, is priced at Rs 8,800, followed by Rs 10,170 for 0.5 mg and Rs 11,175 for 1 mg. Each pen contains four weekly doses."Bringing Ozempic to India is a major milestone. Backed by global trust, proven clinical excellence, and world-class quality,

reinforced by a robust supply chain, Ozempic offers Indian doctors an effective treatment choice," said Vikrant Shrotriya, Managing Director, Novo Nordisk India."Our goal is to provide patients with an innovative and accessible therapy that offers improved glycaemic control, meaningful weight management, and long-term heart and kidney protection — all delivered through a simple, easy-to-use pen device. This once-weekly treatment demonstrates Novo Nordisk's ongoing commitment to better health outcomes and chronic disease care," Shrotriya added.Ozempic was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2017 for type 2 diabetes. Since then, it has been widely used off-label for weight loss due to its appetite-suppressing effects.



# Washington state faces historic floods that have washed away homes, stranded families



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Days of torrential rain in Washington State has caused historic floods that have stranded families on rooftops, washed over bridges and ripped at least two homes from their foundations, and experts warned that even more flooding expected on Friday Washington is under a state of emergency, and evacuation orders are in place for tens of thousands of residents. Gov. Bob Ferguson on Thursday (December 11, 2025) urged everyone to follow evacuation instructions as yet another river neared record levels."I understand that many in our State have experienced significant floods in the past," he said on the social platform X. "However, we're looking at a historic situation."

About 78,000 residents of a major agricultural region north of Seattle were ordered to evacuate the floodplain of the Skagit River, which was expected to crest Friday (December 12, 2025) morning. The floods were impacting large parts of the State, with several bridges flooded and some major roads inundated or washed out. Some roads had no alternate routes and no estimated reopening time, including a large part of State Route 410.

A landslide blocked part of Interstate 90 east of Seattle, with photos showing vehicles trapped by tree trunks, branches, mud and standing water. In the north near the U.S.-Canada border, the cities of Sumas, Nooksack and Everson were evacuated after being inundated. The border crossing at Sumas was closed, and Amtrak suspended trains between Seattle and Vancouver, BC. Some residential streets in downtown Snoqualmie, Washington, have standing water, Thursday morning, December 11, 2025, as the downtown braces for a third crest of the Snoqualmie River later. Photo credits: The Seattle Times via APSome residential streets in downtown Snoqualmie, Washington,

# Should we relocate everyone to moon, Supreme Court asks while dismissing plea on earthquakes

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

"So we should relocate everyone to the moon or where?" the Supreme Court asked on Friday (December 12, 2025) while dismissing a petition which said 75% of India's population is in a high seismic zone and sought directions to the authorities to minimise damage from earthquakes. The petitioner, who was appearing in person, told a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta that earlier it was considered that only Delhi was in the high seismic zone, but recently it was concluded that 75% of the Indian population falls under it. "So we should relocate everyone to the moon or where?" the Bench asked.

The petitioner said that recently there was a big earthquake in Japan. "First we have to bring volcanoes into this country then we can compare it with Japan," the Bench said. The petitioner said the authorities should make arrangements to minimise damage in case an earthquake strikes. "That is for the government to take care (of); this court cannot do it. Dismissed," the Bench said. At the outset, the petitioner said recently, there was a lot of information which was relevant to his petition. The Bench said these are all policy matters for the government to take care (of). When the petitioner referred to some media reports, the Bench observed, "These are newspaper reports. We are not bothered about them."

# Existing labour courts, industrial tribunals to continue till new ones formed: Govt to Delhi HC



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

The Delhi High Court on Thursday (December 11, 2025) was informed by the central government that the existing labour courts and industrial tribunals will continue to adjudicate all the pending and new cases until the new tribunals are constituted. The Centre's counsel referred to a December 8 notification of the Ministry of Labour and Employment stating that the existing labour courts, industrial tribunals and national industrial tribunals will continue to adjudicate the existing and new cases for the removal of difficulties, continuity of adjudication and avoidance of any legal or administrative vacuum till the constitution of new tribunals.

A Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela recorded the submissions and asked the government to take steps to ensure a smooth transition from the old to the new labour law regime, Industrial Relations Code 2020. The court listed the matter for further hearing on January 12. "We appreciate the efforts made by ASG (Additional Solicitor General) Chetan Sharma and further repose our trust that at the government's end everything required to provide a smooth transition from the old to the new labour law regime shall be done," it said. The High court was hearing a petition challenging the November 21 notification on the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, without framing relevant rules for implementation or constituting any tribunals.

It had earlier asked the ASG, representing the Centre, to get instructions from the authorities and take remedial steps according to law. The Bench had said it appeared that prima facie, the provisions permitting smooth transition for the new labour code have not been thought of by the central government. As a result, the labour disputes remain unattended, which might have arisen on or before November 21. The petition said that the central government published a gazette notification on November 21, notifying the Industrial Relations Code, 2020. However, neither the rules

have standing water, Thursday morning, December 11, 2025, as the downtown braces for a third crest of the Snoqualmie River later. Photo credits: The Seattle Times via APSumas Mayor Bruce Bosch said much of the city has been "devastated" by the high waters just four years after a similar flood. The Snohomish River surged nearly a foot (30 centimetres) higher than its record on Thursday (December 11, 2025) in the picturesque city that shares its name, while the Skagit River rose just above its record on Thursday (December 11, 2025) night in Mount Vernon, according to the National Water Prediction Service. Earlier on Thursday (December 11, 2025), the Skagit just missed its previous record as flooding surged through the mountain town of Concrete. The waters stopped just short of getting inside Mariah Brosa's raised riverfront home in Concrete, but the raging river still slapped debris against her home and totalled her fiancé's work car, she said. Flooding from the Skagit has long plagued Mount Vernon, the largest city in Skagit County, with some 35,000 residents. Flooding in 2003 displaced hundreds of people. A floodwall that protects downtown passed a major test in 2021, when the river crested near record levels. Water was at the foot of the floodwall as of late Thursday (December 11, 2025) morning, Mayor Peter Donovan said. In nearby Burlington, officials hoped dikes and other systems would protect their community from catastrophe, said Michael Lumpkin, with the police department. Officials respond to flooding Authorities across Washington State in recent days have rescued people from cars and homes after an atmospheric river soaked the region. Helicopters rescued two families on Thursday (December 11, 2025) from the roofs of homes in Sumas that had been flooded by about 15 feet (4.6 metres) of water, while the city's fire station had 3 feet (91 centimetres) of water, according to Frank Cain JR., battalion chief for Whatcom County Fire District 14.

In nearby Welcome, erosion from the floodwaters caused at least two houses to collapse into the Nooksack River, he said. No one was inside at the time. In a football field in Snoqualmie, a herd of elk swam and waded through neck-high water. East of Seattle, residents along Issaquah Creek used water pumps as rushing floodwaters filled yards Thursday (December 11, 2025) morning. Yellow tape blocked off a hazardous area along the creek. Climate change has been linked to some intense rainfall. Scientists say that without specific study they cannot directly link a single weather event to climate change, but in general it's responsible for more intense and more frequent extreme storms, droughts, floods and wildfires.



tioner said recently, there was a lot of information which was relevant to his petition. The Bench said these are all policy matters for the government to take care (of). When the petitioner referred to some media reports, the Bench observed, "These are newspaper reports. We are not bothered about them."

have been framed to date for the implementation of the code nor has any tribunal been constituted.

Petitioners N A Sebastian and Sunil Kumar said the code provides for transfer of all pending cases to such tribunals which are non-existent and the entire functioning of the industrial tribunals and labour courts in Delhi has come to a halt and is mired in utter confusion. The code provides for two forums -- National Industrial Tribunal and Industrial Tribunal. "In the circumstances unless the necessary rules, mechanisms and tribunals are constituted, it is necessary to protect the interest of workmen that the gazette notification dated November 21, 2025, providing that the 21st day of November, 2025 as the date on which the provisions of the said Code, shall come into force be quashed being clearly unreasonable being in violation of Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution," the petition, filed by advocate Ravindra S Garia, said. It said the notification has a paralysing effect on the whole adjudicatory machinery under the Industrial Disputes Act by providing for the transfer of all pending cases to the tribunals under the Industrial Relations Code.

# Trump is 'sick of meetings' for sake of meeting on Ukraine, White House says

U.S. President Donald Trump will send a representative to talks in Europe on Ukraine this weekend if there is a real chance of signing a peace agreement, the White House said on Thursday

However, Mr. Trump has grown weary of multiple meetings that never seem to yield an agreement on ending the war in Ukraine, according to Mr. Trump's press secretary Karoline Leavitt, who told reporters.

"The President is extremely frustrated with both sides of this war, and he is sick of meetings just for the sake of meeting," she said.

Kyiv is under pressure from the White House to secure a quick peace, but is pushing back on a U.S.-backed plan proposed last month that many see as favourable to Moscow.

Mr. Trump spoke by phone on Wednesday (December 10, 2025) with the leaders of France, Germany and Britain and said later he had a spirited exchange with them, including the prospects for talks in Europe this weekend.

# Why is Telangana's cold wave going on? When will it stop? | Explained



Unlike the stormy remnant of Cyclone Ditwah near Chennai earlier this month, cold waves can't linger. Instead, if they're happening over and over, it must be because the ingredients required for an unusually low nighttime temperature are also staying in place. And over Telangana right now, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has pointed to a combination familiar in winter: dry air, clear skies, and continental winds.

The air mass over Telangana State has been unusually dry of late. When humidity is low, the atmosphere holds less water vapour, which is one of the main greenhouse gases near the surface. With less water vapour to trap heat, the ground loses energy more efficiently after sunset. Clear skies strengthen this effect because clouds that might otherwise absorb and re-radiate some of the outgoing heat are absent. Meteorologists have already said the ongoing cold

wave is partly linked to dry winds blowing north and north-east and clear skies at night. Second, the northerly and north-easterly surface winds bring cooler, drier air from inland parts of India rather than air from the Bay of Bengal, which is more moist. This steady cooling keeps the daily minimum temperature down even when the daytime temperature is 'ordinary' since each night begins with a cooler starting point. Telangana had a cold wave warning in mid-November but it has seemed to go on because these low-level winds haven't shifted, thus the local air mass has remained cool and dry.

Third, in a press release issued on December 11, the IMD said cold-wave conditions had occurred at isolated places over Telangana and warned that such conditions were "very likely" over the State, as well as in north interior Karnataka, during December 12-14. The bulletin also said there would be "no significant change" in minimum temperatures over "remaining parts of the country" during the next week. That is, the cold patterns won't break in a sudden way. In the plains, The IMD considers cold-wave conditions when the minimum temperature falls to 10°C or below in the plains and is substantially below normal, i.e. a negative departure of 4.5°C to 6.4°C. Any temperatures below that lead to a "severe" cold wave. Thus, parts of Telangana are currently in the grip of a cold wave. A weak western disturbance is expected to influence the western Himalaya from December 13 and the IMD has said there could be a 2-4°C rise in the minimum temperature between December 13 and 15 as the larger pattern evolves with the lower level easterlies.

# Pakistan may ban 'uncooperative' social media platforms: Minister

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

The social media platform X, which around 4.5 million people in Pakistan use, was blocked in February 2024, around 10 days after the general elections. Speaking on Dawn News programme, Barrister Malik, responding to a question about a possible ban on incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan's X account, said "investigations are ongoing." He added that while the government has contacted X, the platform has shown the least cooperation compared to other social media networks. Criticising X, the Minister said the platform should not operate with double standards. "Posts related to Palestine are removed, and accounts blocked, within 24 hours. Here, we are talking about a matter of terrorism," he said.

He further noted that the government has issued reminders to social media platforms and warned that those who fail to cooperate or coordinate could face a ban, similar to actions taken by Brazil. "Brazil's courts had issued orders, which were then accepted, and a fine of \$5.2 million was paid. All content taken out of context was removed," Barrister Malik said. X had 22 million users in Brazil before it was blocked on August 30 by Brazilian Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes for failing to comply with a series of court orders aimed at combatting disinformation. Barrister Malik said that today the government again issued a reminder, emphasising that it had already warned that these platforms are being used for terrorism, misinformation, and disinformation. "We have asked them to open offices here in Pakistan, but there has been no response. Some social media platforms are cooperating well, but X is cooperating the least," he added. Earlier, on October 4, the Minister said that investigations regarding Khan's X account were ongoing and that contact with



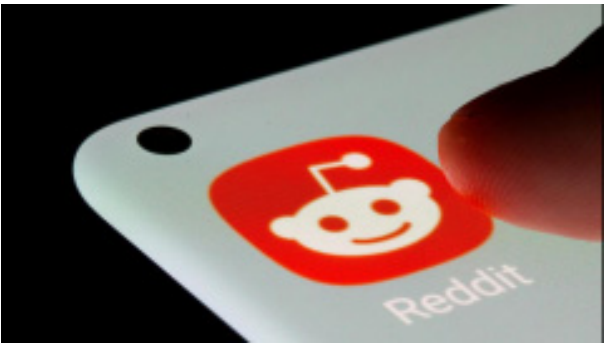
the platform was underway. He had said that any measures regarding a potential block of Khan's account would be disclosed once further evidence comes to light. According to an October post on his official X account, Khan was also quizzed in prison by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials about his "anti-state" tweets, critical remarks on foreign policy and other topics. A month before that, in September, a petition was filed in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) challenging the alleged inflammatory posts made from the official X account of the PTI founder during his imprisonment. The petitioner requested the court to direct the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to conduct a thorough investigation to determine who has been operating the PTI founder's account while he remains incarcerated. Khan, imprisoned since August 2023, is serving a sentence at the Adiala Jail in a £190 million corruption case and also faces pending trials under the Anti-Terrorism Act related to the protests of May 9, 2023, reported Dawn.

# Reddit files legal challenge to Australia social media ban

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Online discussion site Reddit launched a legal challenge Friday to Australia's social media ban on under-16s, just days after the landmark laws came into effect. This week, the country became the first to ban under-age users from a raft of popular apps and websites: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and X among them. Tech companies that fail to comply face Aus\$49.5 million (US\$33 million) fines if they do not purge Australia-based users younger than 16.

The court filings by U.S.-based Reddit, a discussion forum site made up of thousands of sprawling niche communities, challenge the general validity of the law, arguing that it should be exempt from the government's list of banned platforms because it is "not an age-restricted" app. It added that the law "infringes the implied freedom of political communication", and called for it to be reviewed by Australia's High Court. A Reddit spokesperson said the government had not been consistent in selecting which platforms should be banned, with some apps with large under-16 user groups exempt. Platforms currently exempt from the law include Roblox, Pinterest and WhatsApp, but the government has stressed that the list remains under review. The spokesperson also said that Reddit was an online discussion forum aimed at adults, rather than driven by algorithms and social engagement. There were serious privacy concerns associated with how platforms needed to verify users' ages and the collection of personal data which increased the risk of leaks or hacks, the spokesperson added. Before the ban was enacted December 10, Reddit previously said it would comply with the Australian government's legislation, but



warned it was "legally erroneous". An Australian government spokesperson said authorities were "on the side of Australian parents and kids, not platforms". We will stand firm to protect young Australians from experiencing harm on social media. "Reddit's case is separate from one filed by an internet rights group last month, which is also seeking to overturn the laws on the grounds they are an "unfair" assault on freedom of speech. Australia's social media ban is being closely watched by all those worried about the dangers of social media, with New Zealand and Malaysia mulling similar restrictions. The Australian government concedes the ban will be far from perfect at the outset and canny teenagers will find ways to slip through the cracks. But authorities say unprecedented measures are needed to protect children from "predatory algorithms" filling phone screens with bullying, sex and violence.

# ChatGPT blamed for US murder-suicide in lawsuit

The estate of an 83-year-old Connecticut woman filed a wrongful death lawsuit Thursday against OpenAI and Microsoft, alleging the ChatGPT chatbot fueled her son's paranoid delusions and contributed to her murder. Suzanne Adams was beaten and strangled to death by her 56-year-old son Stein-Erik Soelberg on August 3, in their Old Greenwich home, according to the complaint filed in California Superior Court in San Francisco. Soelberg then fatally injured himself. The case joins a growing number of wrongful death lawsuits filed against OpenAI in recent months, with several alleging ChatGPT contributed to users' suicides. In August, the parents of 16-year-old Adam Raine of Southern California sued OpenAI, claiming ChatGPT advised their son on suicide methods. Several U.S. lawsuits filed in November alleged ChatGPT manipulated users into depen-

dency and self-harm, with four also involving suicide deaths. Among them, the family of 26-year-old Joshua Enneking alleged the chatbot provided detailed answers about acquiring a weapon after he expressed suicidal thoughts. The family of 17-year-old Amaurie Lacey claimed ChatGPT instructed him on suicide and self-harm methods. The latest lawsuit alleges that months of conversations with ChatGPT validated and amplified Soelberg's delusional thinking, ultimately singling out his mother as a threat. "ChatGPT told him he had 'awakened' the AI chatbot into consciousness," the complaint states, citing videos Soelberg posted to social media. The conversations revealed that "ChatGPT eagerly accepted every seed of Stein-Erik's delusional thinking and built it out into a universe that became Stein-Erik's entire life,"



# Cloudflare Outage: How a ‘latent bug’ triggered a global disruption of X, ChatGPT services | Explained



Several of the world’s largest online services, including X, ChatGPT, and numerous websites that depend on Cloudflare for security and traffic routing, were disrupted on November 18, 2025, when a significant outage rippled across the internet. Users reported slow loading, broken pages, and complete downtime for platforms that typically handle billions of daily requests. As confusion mounted, Cloudflare’s Chief Technology Officer, Dane Knecht, posted a detailed explanation on Twitter, outlining the internal failure that cascaded into a global disruption. In his message, Mr. Knecht acknowledged that Cloudflare had “failed” its customers and the broader internet. He emphasised that organisations across the world rely on Cloudflare to keep their websites and applications accessible, and on this particular day, the company did not uphold that responsibility. What looked from the outside like a sudden, widespread network collapse stemmed from a highly technical but critical component inside Cloudflare’s infrastructure: its bot-mitigation system.

I won’t mince words: earlier today we failed our customers and the broader Internet when a problem in @Cloudflare network impacted large amounts of traffic that rely on us. The sites, businesses, and organizations that rely on Cloudflare depend on us being available and I...To understand why the failure caused such extensive disruption, it’s essential to understand what a bot-mitigation system actually is. The modern internet is flooded with automated traffic. Not all bots behave maliciously. For instance, search engines, uptime monitors, and legitimate APIs rely on automated processes. But a significant portion of bots exist to cause harm or unfairly exploit online systems. These harmful bots attempt credential-stuffing attacks using leaked passwords, scrape websites to steal content or competitive information, test servers for potential security vulnerabilities, overwhelm sites with junk traffic, or otherwise distort normal usage. Bot-mitigation systems exist to keep this type of abusive automated traffic away from websites and applications. Cloudflare’s system analyses vast amounts of web traffic in real time, using a combination of behavioural analysis, machine-learning models, network fingerprinting, challenge-response mechanisms, and IP-reputation tracking. It scrutinises how quickly a user, or a bot, moves between pages, whether headers match known browser patterns, whether traffic resembles human interactions, and how the request compares to global patterns across millions of clients. Many of these checks are invisible to normal users, but they play an essential role in preventing everything from data theft to full-blown outages caused by bot overload. Does only Cloudflare use bot-mitigation systems?

Cloudflare is not unique in running such systems. Virtually every major infrastructure provider that handles web traffic at scale has its own bot-mitigation architecture. Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud, and other content-delivery providers maintain similar systems that separate harmful and legitimate traffic before it reaches the websites using their services. Without these layers of automated protec-

tion, the modern internet would be much more fragile, susceptible to constant low-grade attacks, and significantly slower for everyday users.

What is a latent bug?

What made the incident particularly notable was that the flaw was what Mr. Knecht described as a “latent bug.” A latent bug is an error that sits hidden in the system, often for months or years, without causing any visible issues. These are among the most difficult flaws to detect because they remain dormant under everyday conditions. They often require a rare or unusual combination of inputs or environmental conditions to activate. Only when that specific combination occurs does the underlying flaw suddenly emerge and cause unpredictable, sometimes severe, effects. In this case, the latent bug existed inside a service responsible for supporting Cloudflare’s bot-mitigation capabilities, per what the CTO posted on X. Under normal operations, the bug probably didn’t interfere with the system’s functioning. It remained silent until a specific configuration update created exactly the sequence of events needed to trigger the crash. Once the service started failing repeatedly, the problem cascaded to other interconnected systems, leading to a broad degradation across Cloudflare’s network. Although the issue originated in a subsystem dedicated to handling automated traffic, the ripple effect reached far beyond that, affecting practically every service that depends on Cloudflare’s infrastructure. Mr. Knecht emphasised that the disruption was not the result of an external attack. Instead, it was an internal systems failure exacerbated by the scale and interdependence of Cloudflare’s services. Many modern internet outages have similar root causes: an unexpected failure born from the complexity of distributed systems rather than malicious activity. When companies operate thousands of servers across hundreds of regions and handle an enormous share of global traffic, even small internal faults can create disproportionately large external consequences. What is a routine configuration change?

The incident stemmed from what the CTO described as a “routine configuration change,” which is another key concept in understanding why outages like this occur. Large internet infrastructure providers regularly make configuration updates to keep systems running smoothly. These updates are not the same as rewriting software or deploying new code. Instead, they involve adjusting the internal parameters that define system behaviour. A typical routine update could involve modifying traffic-routing rules, updating threat-detection models, adjusting timeout or capacity settings, switching on new features, or updating lists of known malicious IP ranges. Such updates occur constantly. They are considered safe because they usually pass through extensive automated testing, and companies roll them out in stages to reduce the risk of widespread disruption. However, even with these safeguards, the sheer complexity of global infrastructure means that unexpected interactions sometimes slip through. When a latent bug meets an ordinary update, the result can be a cascading failure, exactly the situation Cloudflare found itself managing. In his message, the CTO noted that Cloudflare had already fixed the issue and the company is now working on long-term fixes to prevent the same flaw from reemerging. He also noted that more detailed information about the cause of this issue will be shared by the company. This outage, which follows less than a month after the AWS outage, serves as a reminder of how interconnected the internet is and how much of it passes through infrastructure providers. It also illustrates the fragile balance between complexity and reliability that underpins the online world. A single bug, dormant and undetected, combined with an ordinary configuration change, can ripple across continents and disrupt services used by hundreds of millions of people.

We will always engage constructively with all stakeholders to that end,” it added, signalling that it is not going to pick one side over the other as Bangladesh’s faultlines are deepening.

Power grab in Pakistan1f Sheikh Hasina, an India-friendly former Prime Minister, was sentenced to death in Bangladesh, in Pakistan, a headline general with strong anti-India sentiments has grabbed more power through a constitutional amendment. The 27 amendment, passed on November 13, rewrites Article 243 of Pakistan’s Constitution, introducing a post — Chief of Defence Forces, who will exercise authority over the Army, Navy and Air Force; the army chief will also serve as the Chief of Defence Forces. It also creates the post of Commander of the National Strategic Command, to oversee nuclear and strategic assets. The commander will be appointed by the Prime Minister on the Army chief’s recommendation. Most strikingly, the amendment offers life-long immunity from criminal proceedings to any officer elevated to a five-star rank — currently, Gen. Asim Munir — as well as the President. Five-star officers will remain in uniform for life and can be removed only through an impeachment-like process under Article 47. In effect, Gen. Munir will be the new centralised power centre in the establishment. The amendment also strips the Supreme Court of its authority to interpret the Constitution, establishing a new constitutional court whose judges will be appointed by the government. What does the amendment mean for Pakistan and how did the country reach here? Read this profile of the amendment by Stanly Johny. In this editorial, The Hindu writes, “the story of the rise of Pakistan’s military strongmen typically ends with their eventual downfall. His power grab comes at a time when the country is fighting an insurgency in the tribal areas. Relations with India and Afghanistan are at a low. Imran Khan’s PTI continues to challenge the ‘hybrid’ civil-military rule from the streets. And the economy is in chronic distress. Gen. Munir’s response to these challenges was to stage an indirect coup using supine politicians. It could backfire sooner rather than later.” We have been very responsive to governance, we have allowed people to process what we are trying to do, and if there is resistance, we have adjusted,” says Sri Lanka PM Harini Amarasuriya in this interview with Meera Srinivasan.

2. New consensus and sharpening battle lines over Israel in the U.S. During the 2024 presidential campaign, Donald Trump quipped, “Earlier, one word against Israel and your politics is over... Now, one word for Israel, and your politics could be over,” writes Varghese K. George. 3. Trump’s ‘Spear of the South’ sparks regional alarm as Venezuela braces for U.S. moves Washington declares operation ‘Spear of the South’ against ‘narco-terrorists’ and ‘cartel head’ Nicolas Maduro. As it moves heavy firepower into the Caribbean, observers say the move could be aimed at regime change in Caracas and reasserting the U.S.’s power over the region amid rising influence of China and Russia, reports Shobhan Saxena from Sao Paulo. 4. India needs to ‘connect, build and revive’ with Africa Ten years after India hosted the last India-Africa Forum Summit, the next chapter needs to be written, writes Syed Akbaruddin. 5. Donald Trump shakes up the global nuclear order

# The row over Karunanidhi’s ‘Anna way-Periyar way’ remark during 1991 election campaign



Unaware of Tamil Nadu going to be the site of the gruesome assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi along with 15 others at Sriperumbudur on May 21 in 1991, the State, till then, witnessed the run-up to the elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assembly in a manner no different from the previous occasions. Originally, May 26, 1991 was fixed as the date of polling in the State. But, it was postponed to June 15 in the wake of the assassination. In tune with the State’s characteristic, the poll campaign then too reached feverish pitch with leaders from various parts of the country descending and local leaders launching an all-out effort to sway the voters. Public and street corner meetings were all going on, as usual, with major political parties keeping the cadres in good humour - which meant providing them food, funds, and liquor in many cases.

According to an estimate put out by The Hindu in a report on May 12, 1991, a candidate for the Assembly seat would have to cough up between ₹6 lakh and ₹10 lakh, depending on the composition and spread of the constituency, while a Lok Sabha candidate may have to find anything from ₹25 lakh to ₹30 lakh. “Perhaps the parties may be in a position to offer 20 per cent of this, the rest depends on the influence and resourcefulness of the contestants,” it stated.

Both the Lok Sabha and the Assembly had faced snap polls. The ninth Lok Sabha, which was formed on December 2, 1989, was to last till December 1994 but was dissolved on March 13, 1991. Likewise, the ninth Legislative Assembly, which was constituted on February 6, 1989, was dissolved on January 30, 1991. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)’s council of Ministers, led by M. Karunanidhi, was removed by the Union government, which was then headed by Chandra Shekhar, who, in turn, depended on the Congress and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) for support in the Lok Sabha. Tamil Nadu came under the President’s rule for the fourth time in its history which remains the last such instance. Then President of India R. Venkataraman (right) with the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M. Karunanidhi (left) at Madras in December 1990. As the then President R. Venkataraman had approved the Union Cabinet’s proposal for the proclamation of the President’s rule, the DMK still holds a grudge against him. Venkataraman died in January 2009. On his decision, Venkataraman, in his memoir, My Presidential Years, justified it by saying the office of President was not an “appellate or supervisory” authority over that of Prime Minister. “It was my duty to act on the advice of the Cabinet so long as the proposed action was not violative of provisions of the Constitution,” Venkataraman pointed out.

The dismissal of the DMK regime was more controversial than any other similar operation because the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, S.S. Barnala, had refused to send a report to the Centre recommending imposition of President’s rule in the State under Article 356, as dictated by the Centre. For this, Venkataraman’s explanation was that it was “beyond dispute” that the Union government could act on the basis of a report of Governor or otherwise. So, the absence of the Governor’s report was “not an infirmity,”

# Amazon Creator Programs drive discovery for 2 crore shoppers, empower 1.25 lakh creators in India



Hyderabad: Amazon India announced that its Creator Programs have driven creator-based discovery for over 2 crore shoppers this year. The number of creators grew from 1 lakh before the festive season to over 1.25 lakh today, marking a 25% increase in just a few months and highlighting the growing role of creator-led entrepreneurship. Nearly 70% of all creator-led purchases now come from non-metro cities such as Karnal, Bhubaneswar, Vijayawada, and Dehradun. More than two-thirds of Amazon’s creators are from over 500 non-metro pin codes, underscoring the expanding influence of regional creators across India. This festive season, over 40 lakh customers discovered products through creators, with lifestyle, electronics, beauty, and home categories seeing the strongest traction as creators bridged the gap between entertainment and commerce. The Amazon Influencer Program now has over 1.25 lakh creators across technology, fashion, lifestyle, parenting, fitness, and other verticals. The program allows creators to pursue their creative vision by producing tailored affiliate content with editorial freedom, fostering authentic engagement with their audiences. Specialized verticals, such as the Fashion Influencer Program and the recently introduced Tech Influencer Program, empower creators to curate personalized storefronts and deliver interactive shopping experiences to customers nationwide.

Interactive formats like Amazon Live, a unique live shopping program on Amazon.in, allow customers to interact directly with content creators who showcase products, answer questions, offer limited-duration deals, and help customers make informed purchasing decisions. In just 30 days, customers spent a record 43 million minutes watching creator-led content on Amazon.in. “Creators are redefining how India shops and are at the heart of how customers discover, research, and purchase products today. Through Amazon’s Creator Programs like the Amazon Influencer Program and Amazon Live & Shopping Videos, we’re empowering storytellers from every corner of the country to turn their passion into entrepreneurship. This year’s growth proves that creator-led discovery is trans-

the former President stated, recalling that in 1977, the Janata government at the Centre dismissed the councils of Ministers in nine States without reports of the Governors concerned. As was the norm since the 1977 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, the formations led by the DMK and the AIADMK were the principal players. The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) contested on its own in 1991. While the DMK-led coalition included the Janata Dal and two Left parties; the AIADMK had the Congress, the United Communist Party of India (UCPI), the Republican Party of India, Forward Bloc, Farmers Toilers party and the Human Rights Party as its allies. The DMK contested in 171 Assembly seats and the AIADMK in 164. Right from the word go, the AIADMK-led alliance was tipped to win the Assembly polls. This was no surprise, as even in the November 1989 Lok Sabha elections, the coalition won in all but 39 constituencies, the exception being Nagapattinam. It was ahead of its principal adversary and others in 227 Assembly segments and the DMK-headed front, six seats, with the PMK surging to the front position in one segment - Taramangalam of Salem district.

Opinion polls too favoured the AIADMK-Congress combine, which was headed by J. Jayalalithaa then. An early public opinion survey commissioned by Frontline, a sister publication of The Hindu, in three Assembly constituencies in Madras (now Chennai) revealed a 7 percentage point lead for the AIADMK-Congress (I) front over the DMK-led front. Carried out by the Apt Research Group during April 5-7, 1991, the “early days” survey revealed that the AIADMK-Congress alliance’s vote share was 45.9% against the DMK-led front’s 38.72%. A month later, The Hindu-MARG conducted an opinion poll in Tamil Nadu which showed the alliance was more or less in the same commanding position as in November 1989 when it won a massive victory. It was against this backdrop that the DMK president and former Chief Minister Karunanidhi stunned political observers by his statement, during his campaign in Coimbatore district on May 15, that “if we win, we will follow the path of Anna [DMK founder and former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai] and if defeated, we will go the Periyar [Dravida Kazhagam founder E.V. Ramasamy] way.” A news report published by this newspaper on May 16, 1991, stated the remark had created “some confusion.” He was quick to clarify later in the day that by the term ‘Anna way,’ he meant that the DMK would form the government, and “not to contest in elections” was what he meant by the term ‘Periyar way.” Even this clarification did not satisfy many and a spokesman of the Dravidian major had to say later that the stand of the DMK would be known after the results were announced. R. Kannan, the biographer of Annadurai and M.G. Ramachandran and the author of The DMK Years, explains the DMK was founded for the express purpose of fighting elections. “This was the only reason Anna and others left Periyar,” he adds. Elaborating, he says Periyar’s way is to go back to the basics, “an impossibility in electoral politics. Electoral politics entails endless compromise and accommodation.” He also recalls how Karunanidhi, in August 1983, immediately after the anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka, made an offer that his party would not make an attempt at power and the Congress could rule the State for 10 years, if the Centre — which was led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi — sent troops to the neighbouring country. Karunanidhi himself laid to rest the row that surrounded his observation on “Anna way-Periyar way” at a public meeting in Madurai in June 1991. “He always wanted to work like Periyar and would always follow the path shown by Anna, Periyar and the Justice Party,” The Hindu on reported on June 9, 1991. Unsurprisingly, the 1991 Assembly election’s results were one-sided with the AIADMK-Congress combine bagging 225 Assembly seats. Karunanidhi was the lone DMK candidate to win from Harbour. He later resigned and in the bye-elections to Harbour and Egmore constituencies (which were earlier countermanded), the DMK candidates emerged victorious.

forming ecommerce—making shopping more authentic, interactive, and accessible across India. Through our creator programs, we will continue to empower India’s rapidly growing creator economy,” said Zahid Khan, Director, Shopping Experience, Amazon India. Amazon.in continues to scale discovery through AI-driven personalization, immersive video commerce, and creator-led livestreams, integrating short-form and live content formats to enhance customer journeys. The company plans to launch immersive short shopping creator videos, served contextually across customers’ shopping experience, soon. Amazon.in also invests in its creator network through programs such as Amazon Live & Shopping Videos, Amazon Influencer Program, Special Category Programs, Creator Central, Creator University, Elevate, and Creator Connect, providing influencers with learning, engagement, and growth opportunities. Amazon Creator Programs equip influencers with advanced analytics, performance insights, and monetization tools to help them grow sustainably and catalyze their success in India’s thriving digital economy.

# Infosys to kick off largest-ever share buyback of Rs 18,000 crore on Nov 20

New Delhi: IT services giant Infosys’ largest-ever share buyback programme worth Rs 18,000 crore is set to open for subscription on Thursday, and will close on November 26, according to a regulatory filing. The company aims to buy back 10 crore fully paid-up equity shares of a face value of Rs 5 each, representing up to 2.41 per cent of the total paid-up equity share capital, at Rs 1,800 per share. “The eligible shareholders can tender their equity shares during the tendering period, ie from November 20, 2025, to November 26, 2025. The buyback is being undertaken by the company after taking into account the strategic and operational cash needs of the company in the medium term and for returning surplus funds to the shareholders in an effective and efficient manner in line with its capital allocation policy,” Infosys said. The buyback is divided into two categories: reserved (small shareholders) and the general category. The reservation for small shareholders will be 15 per cent of the number of equity shares that the company proposes to buy back, or their entitlement, whichever is higher. A small shareholder is someone who holds equity shares having a market value of not more than Rs 2,00,000, as on the record date.



# Time to sort out India’s cereal mess



The recent controversy in Tamil Nadu over paddy procurement during the short-term kuruvai season has only strengthened the need for a relook at the procurement system of foodgrains as a whole. In this case — as in many States — the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCS), which procures paddy on behalf of the Food Corporation of India (FCI), found itself in a spot because of time overruns and charges of corruption. One of the reasons cited is the rise in the coverage of the crop during the season, by about two lakh acres, which was known as early as mid-August. This is because farmers feel it is a safe bet to grow paddy rather than other crops due to minimum assured returns.

Paddy procurement dataThe glut is not restricted to Tamil Nadu. Going by the data of the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, the procurement of paddy (in terms of rice) all over the country was nearly 119.86 lakh tonnes as on October 31, 2025 compared to 82.08 lakh tonnes on the corresponding day last year. In the last three years, with regard to rice and wheat, the quarterly opening stock position, as on October 1, was consistently higher than what is prescribed under the norms for the central pool. In the case of rice, the quantity is at least two times more than the requirement. In October this year, the stock was 356.1 lakh tonnes against the norm of 102.5 lakh tonnes. Compared to wheat, rice is still abundant, if one goes by the Union government’s data for the last three years on procurement and offtake under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other schemes. Between April 2022 and March 2025, the procurement of rice at the all-India level hovered around 525 lakh tonnes-547 lakh tonnes every year, whereas annual offtake under the Public Distribution System (PDS) was in the range of 392 lakh tonnes- 427 lakh tonnes. Significantly, in the case of wheat, the utilisation under the PDS exceeded the quantity of procurement in two of the last three years (barring 2024-25). At the same time, it must be noted that the Union government spends around 2 lakh crore every year in food subsidy. While, on the one hand, the country is grappling with surplus stocks of rice, on the other it is incurring a huge expenditure in the import of pulses and oilseeds, which are two essential commodities that are central in every Indian household. Ironically, in the case of pulses, India is the largest producer in the world — 252.4 lakh tonnes in 2024-25. The two years, from 2023-24, saw a substantial fall in the procurement of notified pulses at minimum support prices (MSP) through agencies which included the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India.

Edible oil importsAccording to the annual report of the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for 2024-25, the country imported edible oil (1.2 lakh crore) and pulses (30,000 crore) during 2023-24. In the case of ed-

ible oil, about 55% of the demand is met only through imports. Needless to say, the Russia-Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, is a factor that contributed to the steep rise in the cost of edible oil imports which was around 82,000 crore in 2020-21, though the quantity imported remained between 135 lakh tonnes-157 lakh tonnes a year in the last six years. Ironically, the country’s production of oilseeds, since 2014, crossed the 400-lakh-tonne mark only once, despite there being no large change in the area covered, which was around 25 million hectares. For about 25 years, experts and the media have been holding the government’s decision in the 1990s to allow the import of cheaper edible oil responsible for the adverse effect on domestic production. Yet, the response to counter the impact has not been adequate. The situation raises a fundamental question: whether the country, in the name of ensuring food security, is following a sustainable policy of procurement at least with regard to rice. It also raises other pertinent questions. Is paddy cultivation being encouraged at the cost of crop rotation? Also, why is it that the country’s efforts to improve pulse and oilseed production have not been spectacular unlike in the case of paddy and wheat about 55 years ago? And, should India continue to have the existing arrangement of one or the other central agency in the procurement, storage, transportation and allocation of foodgrains in bulk to the States? The authorities may protest, if any study is conducted with regard to leakage in the PDS (which was originally meant for managing food supplies during scarcity), as they did about a year ago when an Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) report had stated that there was about a 28% loss of rice and wheat during distribution. It is also well known that the system is far from perfect.

Incentivise crop diversificationTo wean paddy-growing farmers from the cereal, crop diversification can be tried out after carrying out area-specific market studies of demand and supply with the involvement of every stakeholder. One reason why farmers have not taken to diversification in a big way is uncertainty about success if there is a crop switch. Their apprehension can be allayed only by offering financial support and proper guidance. As it is clear that the country is producing more rice than required, the government should allow farmers to freely export rice and not resort to restrictions in a knee-jerk manner. Many a time, primary procurers of agricultural products are in the dark about the suppliers. For instance, papad manufacturers getting to tie-up directly with farmers who raise blackgram or have the means to do so, will result in a win-win situation for both. If such farmers are able to organise themselves as farmers producers’ organisations (FPOs), the results will be more durable. The Centre and the States can facilitate such an arrangement. As an institution, FPOs are still in a nascent stage. Their services can be tapped by the authorities for a range of purposes — educating farmers about soil health; sensitising them to go in for crop diversification; preparing the groundwork for market studies, and establishing the supply chain. As in West Bengal, FPOs can be utilised for paddy procurement to reduce the load on existing players. Self-help groups and cooperative societies should also be encouraged more in this respect. Wherever required, all such new entrants should be covered under capacity building programmes. Changes in such a complex system cannot happen overnight but a beginning can be made. It is time that agriculture experts, farmers, food security specialists, policy makers and planners collectively deliberated on ways to plug the loopholes in the system, if not reform it.

# The NDA’s unified strategy and disciplined coordination in Bihar



The National Democratic Alliance (NDA)’s victory in Bihar represents a well curated strategy for success. Two elements of this strategy merit attention and deeper analysis. The first is the near-perfect chemistry within the winning alliance and its visible absence in the Mahagatbandhan (MGB). All the partners in the NDA contributed to its success, while in the case of the MGB, much of the shoring up of the alliance was left to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). There was inter-dependence among the partners in terms of seat allocation within the NDA. However, in the MGB, there was again an overwhelming dependence on the RJD. Second, key leaders in the NDA directed both the campaign of the alliance and that of individual partners. This was a recipe for victory. The fact that the NDA is the ruling alliance at the Centre also helped. On the other hand, the leaders among the MGB went their own individual ways and whenever visible, sang their individual political tunes, with little visible cohesion or a common focus.

The five parties within the NDA resolved seat-sharing issues much before the closing of nominations. Within the NDA, the two major partners — the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal (United) or JD(U) — contested an equal number of seats and between them, accounted for more than eight of every 10 of the NDA candidates. The BJP ensured that its seat share was on a par with the JD(U) while the other partners — the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) or HAM, and Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) — were allotted the remaining seats. The LJP, which had fought the 2020 Assembly polls on its own, was allotted a large chunk of seats. While this was a much-debated issue during the campaign, in retrospect, this strategy helped in keeping the alliance votes together. The smaller parties, though unhappy with the seat allotment, fell in line, given the unique dynamics among the constituents of the NDA. On the other hand, whenever the MGB was unable to settle seat-sharing issues, it permitted ‘friendly fights’ in several seats between coalition partners.

The results indicate that all the five alliance partners of the NDA contributed through a high individual score. Data based on a post-election survey done by PollsMap indicates that the NDA’s constituents, if contesting independently, would have more or less secured the same share of votes. The only exception would have been the BJP. In its case, the vote share, if the party had contested independently, would have been much higher. If the NDA got 81 seats more than last time, 24 of these seats (30%) came from the three smaller partners. The JD(U) recovered from the setback it faced in 2020 and won an additional 42 seats and the BJP increased its tally by 15 seats. Thus, all the parties in the alliance pulled together. The vote share of the

NDA increased by over 9%, the bulk of which came from parties other than the BJP. This indicates a smooth vote transfer across alliance partners. In the MGB, all the eight key parties saw a marginal decline in their vote share as compared to 2020. The decline in each case was less than 1%, with the highest being in the case of the Congress (0.77%). The RJD’s seat tally was down to one-third of what it won last time, though its vote share declined by merely 0.11%. This is indicative of the inability of the alliance partners to combine effectively and ensure a meaningful vote transfer. A decline of vote share across the board is also a reflection of their individual inability to enhance their respective vote shares. Within the MGB, while the RJD saw a decline in seats won, the performance of its alliance partners saw a sharper decline.

Leadership questionThe leadership sweepstakes also assume relevance. The NDA did not consciously declare a chief ministerial candidate even though Nitish Kumar had been Chief Minister for most of the last two decades. This worked to its advantage. A review of the campaign indicates that the BJP went into the election under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. No State-level leader of the BJP was projected during the campaign. The party highlighted what it felt represented its success in other States of north India and also showcased what it considered its record at the national level over the last decade. The JD(U) focused on its achievements as part of ruling coalitions under the leadership of Mr. Kumar. Its campaign centred around welfare schemes and what it termed as good governance and a good law-and-order situation. The three other parties in the NDA focused on their individual leaders and their specific core agendas, even as they highlighted the leadership of the Central government of which they are a part. Survey data indicate that there was a clear 5% point lead that Mr. Kumar enjoyed over Tejashwi Yadav in the preference for Chief Minister. Past surveys have also indicated that most respondents focus more on the party than the candidate. More often than not, parties, especially in Bihar, are linked to the face of the leader. While the party as represented by its leadership is a key element, leaders on their own also contributed to bolstering the party vote. Thus, among those who voted for the BJP, JD(U), and the RJD, Mr. Modi, Mr. Kumar, and Mr. Yadav respectively accounted exclusively for one of every five votes — meaning that people voted for these parties primarily because of the leadership factor and they may have voted differently in the absence of the respective leader. A focus on the party in general and the leadership in particular was the principal approach adopted by all the NDA’s constituents. While the MGB declared Mr. Yadav as its chief ministerial face, that did little to contribute to a unified campaign. It was also a decision which came a little late in the day. The Congress appeared a reluctant supporter of this move and this was evident in its campaign style. Declaring Mukesh Sahani of the Vikasheel Insan Party as the candidate for the post of Deputy Chief Minister did not help either. The Deputy Chief Ministerial candidate was himself not a contestant and all the 12 candidates of his party lost the elections. While other factors may surely have contributed to the outcome, the fact that a significant chunk of the NDA’s votes came on the basis of the leadership factor suggests that the Modi-Nitish combination paid dividends for the winning coalition. The absence of such an arrangement in the MGB worked clearly to its disadvantage.

# A lost garden and a forgotten square in Chennai



Walking (or rather stumbling) about in George Town the other day, I saw the signboard shown alongside Badrian Garden Street. And that set me off on a trip to the past when this name cropped up several times in my research. But the first of these concerned historian S. Muthiah, and not me. It was sometime in the late 1980s when he was informed that an obelisk had been discovered at the intersection of this street and N.S.C. Bose Road. A private house was being demolished, and a 15-foot obelisk had appeared among the ruins. All excited, the chief, as I always referred to him, rushed there only to find the obelisk demolished as well. The owner was unapologetic. He feared that if the government got to know of the existence of the pillar, his property would be taken over. The obelisk was one of six erected in the 1770s, to mark the southern boundary of George Town. Their location is given precisely in a census survey of Madras dating to 1961, which says they were at China Bazaar, Parry’s Corner, Kondi Chetty Street, Stringer Street, Broadway, and Badriah Street (the name has changed considerably over time; it was Budreeah, Badraiya, Badriah, and Badrian). The census says four were still standing in 1961, though as to which they were, it does not detail. Today, as we know, only one survives, in the shadow of Dare House, protected by the Murugappa Group.

The Badriah Street I refer to above is, however, not Badrian’s Garden. From Love’s Vestiges of Old Madras, we know that as early as 1718, there were six guardhouses meant for the protection of Madras, of which four were on the northern side, facing Royapuram. The fifth, facing the sea, was unnamed. The sixth alone was on the west, by the river, by which meant the Elambore that is now part of Buckingham Canal. In later years, these guardhouses came to be known as block houses and still later, batteries. Barring the one facing the sea, the others were named after dubashes — Sunkurama, Gangarama, Balu, Kalasti, and Badriah. With peace, his battery probably became a garden named after him.

Who was he?

In 1717, he became recognised as the leader of Left Hand Castes in the city, along with Gangarama. Their predecessors, namely Kalavai and Kalasti Chettis, had been fomenting caste riots, which seems to have been the favourite dubashi occupation when not making money, and had been dismissed. Not much is known of Badriah otherwise.

In the 1830s, Badriah Garden became a residential locality, and a prominent house owner there was Vambakkam Raghavachariar, the first Indian to be appointed Piche Magistrate in Madras. He was also a graduate of Pachaiyappa’s school and so became one of the first man-

aging trustees. Badrian’s Garden came to be known informally as Police Raghavachariar (PR) Square. The family lived in a massive house known as Vani Vilas and the upper storey was a curiosity, being shaped like a ship. This was because someone in the family made a fortune as a ship dubash. Raghavachariar’s grandson was V.V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, a prominent advocate of the High Court of Madras, and a member of Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar’s Suguna Vilasa Sabha, where he played lead roles in theatrical productions. Walking down Badrian’s Garden is something of an adventure today, putting life and limbs at risk. But from what little I managed, I could find no trace of Vani Vilas, or its neighbour Terrace Mahal, once a hostel for Pachaiyappa’s College students. Like the obelisk, they have gone. History fades fast in George Town.

# Samsung TV Plus launches Mark Rober’s first dedicated FAST channel in India, partners with top global Creators

Hyderabad: Samsung TV Plus, India’s leading free ad-supported streaming television (FAST) service, has partnered with a slate of top global Creators to stream their exclusive FAST channels on the biggest screen at home. Six curated channels have launched in India, including the worldwide premiere of Mark Rober’s first-ever dedicated FAST channel. Samsung TV Plus now offers over 160 channels, available on more than 14 million Samsung Smart TVs across India. With more than 71 million subscribers, Mark Rober — former NASA engineer, inventor, educator, and one of the world’s most influential Creators — brings his signature mix of science, creativity, and joy to television audiences globally. “I’ve always believed science and engineering are just fancy words for curiosity and creativity,” said Mark Rober. “This channel is a way to spread that spirit to even more people around the world. It’s a way to make learning fun — something you want to do, not something you have to do.” The latest slate of Creator channels brings a new wave of genre-defying voices to the streaming service, including Michelle Khare’s Challenge Accepted, Epic Gardening TV, The Try Guys, Brave Wilderness, and The SorryGirlsTV. This first-of-its-kind content deal is part of Samsung TV Plus’s broader global content expansion to shape the next era of television as a premium destination for world-class Creators, redefining what entertainment looks like on the biggest screen at home. “Mark Rober’s blend of science, creativity, and curiosity has inspired millions around the world,” said Salek Brodsky, Senior Vice President and Global Head of Samsung TV Plus. “As part of our growing Creator roster, Mark Rober TV captures a shared sense of wonder that brings generations together. We’re thrilled to welcome Mark and our expansive slate of Creators to even more audiences around the world through Samsung TV Plus.”

# What boosts calcium absorption better: morning sunshine or afternoon sunlight?



It’s one of the most frequent health premises — that a quick walk early in the morning, when the sun is out, is sufficient to strengthen your bones and elevate your vitamin D levels. However, experts raise the point that this widely held belief might be false. The timing of your sun exposure is absolutely crucial for calcium absorption and bone health — and according to research, it is actually afternoon sunlight that has the most beneficial effects.

Sunlight and calcium absorptionCalcium and vitamin D are the two main elements that build and keep bones strong. While calcium is obtained through the diet, vitamin D is a must for its absorption in the intestine. If vitamin D is lacking, bone loss cannot be prevented even with a calcium-rich diet. The skin produces vitamin D when it is exposed to ultraviolet B (UVB) rays from the sun. The vitamin D produced then serves to help with calcium absorption. And these UVB rays needed for the production of vitamin D are at their strongest between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m., when the sun is at its hottest. Morning sunlight, between 6 a.m. and 7.30 a.m. is mostly made up of UVA rays, which do not stimulate vitamin D production in the skin. Early morning sunlight being enough, therefore, is a myth. To produce vitamin D, the body requires UVB rays, which come from the

sun at and after noon. Therefore, if your intention is to get some sun in the morning to boost vitamin D production, you may not be benefitting.

The recommendation is, in moderate weather, to expose the arms, face and legs, for 20 to 30 minutes, without sunscreen/SPF lotion, two or three times a week. This is usually enough for the body to get healthy levels of vitamin D. However, long and unprotected exposure to a very hot sun increases the risk of sunburn and, in some cases, skin cancer or other skin damage, so caution is required. Balance is essential: being in the right type of sunlight for a few minutes is good for the body, but overexposure is not recommended. Osteoporosis, a condition where the bones become weak and prone to fractures, is often seen in elderly people. In women, it is common after menopause. Of late, however, vitamin D insufficiency and early bone loss has been detected in young women as well. A lack of physical activity, an indoor lifestyle, an unhealthy diet, and barely any exposure to sunlight are mainly responsible for this phenomenon. In the case of younger adults, lack of vitamin D leads to osteomalacia — a condition that softens and makes the bones fragile. The trend being seen now is of IT workers and urban women who spend most of their times indoors, being affected the most.

What about supplements?

Although vitamin D and calcium supplements are quite easy to obtain, self-medicating is not recommended. Vitamin D alone may not be enough; calcium may also be required. It is best to get tested and then taken supplements, if prescribed, under a doctor’s supervision. If you have been aiming to get your body its daily dose of sunshine in the morning, it is perhaps time to change plans. One of the easiest and most reliable methods to prevent your bones from giving in to premature wear and tear is to expose yourself briefly and safely to afternoon sunlight, while being on a well-balanced diet and ensuring regular physical exercise.

# C-DOT to establish quantum communication Centre of Excellence at Amaravati Quantum Valley

New Delhi: The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the premier R&D centre of the telecom department, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Andhra Pradesh government to participate in the Amaravati Quantum Valley (AQV) initiative. C-DOT plans to set up a centre of excellence (CoE) in quantum communication and security solutions, along with allied areas like privacy enhancement technologies (PETs), in Amaravati Quantum Valley, Andhra Pradesh. At the proposed Centre at AQV, C-DOT will focus on quantum communication solutions. The Amaravati Quantum Valley aims to create an integrated quantum ecosystem bringing together hardware manufacturing, software development, talent pool, and research excellence.

The project is located in Amaravati and involves state-level partnerships, infrastructure, and training programmes. “Andhra Pradesh government has taken a giant step in

shaping India’s quantum future with the initiative of setting up Amaravati Quantum Valley (AQV),” the Communications Ministry said in a release. C-DOT’s edge in the quantum communication field will help in providing the necessary resources and skill development to emerging players in India. “It will support research and testing in the NQM (National Quantum Mission) aligned areas of quantum security solutions, along with the development of PETs to ensure compliance with MeitY’s Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) framework,” the release said. It will also focus on cost-effective sub-component development for quantum communication systems and establish an integrated testbed for quantum security, for a quantum-safe ecosystem, and enhance digital privacy and data protection across the nation. The MoU was exchanged in the presence of Nara Lokesh, Minister of IT, Government of Andhra Pradesh, during the CII Partnership Summit at Vizag.



# Why RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra’s 1st year in office was just a warm up



As the 26th Reserve Bank of India Governor, Sanjay Malhotra stepped in when sentiment was sagging, growth stalling, and monetary policy having entered an extended phase of status quo. His first year has been defined by an aggressive 125-basis-point (bps) reduction in the repo rate after a long delay — the policy rate was at 6.5 per cent since February 2023 before it was cut by 25 bps in February 2025. Growth, inflation projections, and the stance of monetary policy have been changed very quickly in a clear departure from the more sedate alterations under previous central bank chiefs.

To be sure, every RBI governor invariably walks into a storm. However, the issues confronting Malhotra, who completed one year as the central bank governor on Thursday, are more worrisome going forward than those he tackled in his first year. He will not only face bigger tests, but will also have to weather challenges to the Indian economy and the RBI’s credibility. Malhotra took charge when the economy was already limping, with GDP growth at a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in Q2 FY25 and inflation at 5.48 per cent in November 2024 — well above the RBI’s medium-term target of 4 per cent. The challenges on the horizon are even harsher as the rupee remains under siege, vulnerable to swift swings in global capital and financial markets. Foreign investors are fickle. Pulling money out at the first sign of weakness, they have already withdrawn Rs 1.58 lakh crore so far in 2025 from the equity market. The trade deficit is widening, exports have begun to fall, the rupee has breached the 90-mark against the US dollar, and India’s dependence on volatile global capital flows continues to test policy flexibility. “The surge in H1 FY26 (April-September) headline growth on account of technical factors is set to fade next year. A competitive rupee will remain a priority,” said Radhika Rao, executive director and senior economist, DBS Bank. Domestically, the RBI will be forced to conduct a delicate balancing act: keeping growth alive without letting inflation flare up again. A single supply shock, a spike in global oil prices, or another geopolitical conflict could quickly undo the carefully-delivered stability. The banking system, though healthier than before, continues to grapple with patchy credit demand, high corporate leverage in pockets, and liquidity conditions that can turn hostile overnight. Things won’t be easy on the regulatory front either — long-pending reforms need to be pushed through without triggering a system-wide disruption. A financial sector still vulnerable to shocks requires constant vigilance. Payment systems, non-bank financial companies (NBFCs), fintech firms, digital lending platforms, and the world of cryptocurrencies and stablecoins can pose risks that the RBI cannot afford to underestimate. On the inflation front, the RBI has revised its forecast for FY26 from 4.2 per cent in February, to 4 per cent in April, 3.7 per cent in June, 3.1 per cent in August, 2.6 per cent in October, and to 2 per cent last week. The growth projection for FY26 has also been hiked in response to unexpectedly high outcomes, from 6.5 per cent in August to 6.8 per cent in October and 7.3 per cent earlier this month. To be sure, economists have said in unison that the RBI is overestimating inflation. The central bank has remained cautious even as it trimmed its forecast every two months.

While Malhotra had promised to be agile when he took charge as the Governor in December 2024, improving the central bank’s forecasting models will probably take more time. The result is, in Malhotra’s own words, that India has entered a “rare Goldilocks period” of low inflation and strong growth. In his very first monetary policy review in February 2025, the Malhotra-led Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kicked off by delivering the first interest rate cut in nearly five years. Another 25 bps cut was delivered in April, followed by an unexpectedly large 50 bps reduction in June, and the year’s final rate cut on December 5 dragging the repo rate down to 5.25 per cent.

While monetary policy actions impact growth with a lag, the interest rate reductions in conjunction with key government measures such as the personal income tax cut announced in the 2025-26 Budget and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms of September have given an impetus to growth that should continue for some time even if the headline GDP growth numbers moderate from 8 per cent in the first half of FY26. The message is clear: Malhotra, aided by the government’s move to rationalise GST rates and boost festive demand, wanted to get the economy back on its feet. “The domestic environment is congenial for fur-

ther easing as CPI inflation is falling to unprecedented levels and the central bank expects it to remain low or manageable till the Q2 of the next year. At present, domestic consumption is strong and demand outlook is promising — rural demand is robust and urban demand is recovering,” said Umesh Mohanan, ED & CEO of Indel Money. Cooling inflation If revising growth was one part of the strategy, bringing down inflation was the other. From 5.48 per cent in November 2024, inflation has fallen to a record low of 0.25 per cent in October this year. Accompanied by plenty of good fortune in the form of favourable base effects and softening commodity prices, downward pressure on inflation has also been exerted by the GST rate cuts and co-ordination between New Delhi and Mumbai in keeping prices, especially those of food items, in check. The result has been an unusually direct admission from Malhotra that the RBI finally had control over both sides of the equation. “The growth-inflation balance, especially the benign inflation outlook, provides the policy space to support growth momentum,” he said last week.

With inflation expected to remain soft and even under-shoot the 2 per cent projection for FY26, Malhotra enters his second year with the kind of freedom most governors only dream of. The worry now is about the potential reversal of the favourable base effect, the uncertainty around the Monsoon, and rising imported inflation due to the falling rupee. There are two structural factors at play. First, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation series will be overhauled in February. Not only will the inflation number have a new base year of 2024, but it will be based on an expanded basket of items that will see a reduction in the weight of food. Second, the flexible inflation targeting framework is currently under review and the RBI’s mandate for the five years starting FY27 is to be decided by March. Most experts favour retaining the target at 4 per cent in a band of 2-6 per cent.

Transmission issue Cutting interest rates amounts to nothing if banks don’t pass them on. Within weeks of taking charge, Malhotra continued the work started by his predecessor Shaktikanta Das and rolled out aggressive measures to boost liquidity in the banking system — or the grease which runs the financial machinery. Then came the big move: a 100 bps cut in banks’ Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) in June, which would release about Rs 2.5 lakh crore in the second half of 2025. This was a clear message: banks must lend, and for cheaper.

As per data available for the period before the MPC’s December repo rate cut, India’s banks had lowered interest rates on new loans by around 69 bps as against a 100 bps cut in the policy rate. Even loans made in the past have seen a noteworthy 63 bps fall in their interest rates. Malhotra’s work continues. In a meeting with heads of banks earlier this week, Malhotra told the lenders that given the 125 bps of repo rate cuts and greater use of technology, efficiency should rise and the cost involved in the process of lending should be lower.

Delayed reforms Instead of relying on consultation committees or endless reviews, Malhotra pushed through reforms that had been pending for two to three years. Reforms related to expected credit loss (ECL) norms, project finance rules, liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) norms, business forms, prudential investment regulations, all suddenly moved. Banks have even been allowed to finance corporate takeovers. But some of these measures can boomerang if banks don’t tread cautiously. “If executed prudently, this could become the single biggest enabler of India’s next M&A cycle,” said Kunal Gala, partner (deal value creation), BDO India. The RBI introduced a flurry of banking reforms after consulting lenders. Feedback was taken and reforms delivered with minimum disruption.

The most striking difference between Malhotra and his predecessor, undoubtedly, is the exchange rate management strategy. Unlike the heavy-handed intervention under Das, Malhotra has let the rupee find its level more freely than market participants had anticipated. Under Das, the RBI’s large and frequent interventions in the foreign exchange market attracted criticism for various reasons: dollar sales to keep the rupee stable drained forex reserves. The rupees bought in return soaked up liquidity from the domestic banking system, which could be replenished through other tools. Finally, keeping the rupee as stable as it was under Das distorted incentives — market participants should hedge their risks, but if the exchange rate is excessively stable thanks to the central bank, then there is no risk. Malhotra changed the game instantly and the numbers clearly show it: after selling close to \$400 billion of foreign currency in FY25, the RBI has sold just \$44 billion in the first half of FY26. While this has led to the rupee breaching the 90-per-dollar mark, economists are in agreement that this depreciation is much-needed.

On the whole, Malhotra has had a good ‘Year One’. But the real battle begins now as uncertainty over India’s trade deal with the US continues. The positive impact of frontloaded imports has faded and interest rate and tax cuts have been delivered. Now, the economy must continue to perform.

# Equity mutual fund inflows rise 21% to Rs 29,911 crore in November; marginal slip in SIP inflows: AMFI data

Inflows into equity mutual funds surged 21 per cent month-on-month to Rs 29,911.05 crore in November, compared with Rs 24,690.33 crore in October, according to the latest data from the Association of Mutual Funds (AMFI). Inflows through systematic investment plans (SIPs) declined marginally to Rs 29,445 crore in November, from Rs 29,529 crore in the previous month.

Total assets under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry inched up to Rs 80.8 lakh crore in the reporting month, from Rs 79.88 lakh crore in October. “Investors have continued to show faith in equity despite the volatility in the markets,” said Ovas Bakshi, Head-Retail Sales, Kotak Mahindra AMC. Small-cap funds witnessed November inflows worth Rs 4,406.9 crore compared with Rs 3,476.04 crore in the previous month. Mid-cap funds saw inflows of Rs 4,486.91 crore, up 18 per cent month-on-month from Rs 3,807.11 crore in October. Large-cap inflows were up by 69 per cent to Rs 1,639.8 crore from Rs 971.97 crore in October. Net inflows into sectoral/thematic funds increased to Rs 1,864.99 crore from Rs 1,366.16 crore in October. Flexi-cap category mutual funds received the highest flows at Rs 8,135.01 crore, according to AMFI data. The ability of flexi-cap funds to invest across market caps and their present large-cap bias attracted funds to the category, said Bakshi.

Debt mutual funds saw outflows of Rs 25,692.63 crore in November, as against inflows of Rs 1,59,957.96 crore in



October. This was due to significant outflow worth Rs 37,624.53 crore from overnight funds, and Rs 14,050.72 crore from liquid funds. Money market funds saw inflows of Rs 11,104.37 crore in November. Hybrid schemes garnered inflows of Rs 13,299.2 crore as against Rs 14,156.4 crore in October. Inflows into gold and silver exchange traded funds (ETF) fell to Rs 3,741.79 crore and Rs 2,154 crore, respectively, in November from Rs 7,743.19 crore and Rs 3,412 crore in October. The number of contributing SIP accounts declined to 9.43 crore from 9.45 crore.

# 3 budget-friendly European countries to visit from India



If you have always dreamed of visiting Europe but found the costs too high, there’s good news. Some beautiful European destinations offer the same charm, culture, and beauty for much less. Countries like Hungary, Romania, and Georgia have become popular destinations for Indian travellers seeking affordable adventures.

Hungary With Budapest as its highlight, Hungary offers an economical European holiday that feels luxurious while remaining accessible for Indian travellers. The capital is known for its architecture — from the Parliament building and Fisherman’s Bastion to the historic Buda Castle — all set against the beautiful Danube River. Travellers can unwind in Budapest’s world-famous thermal baths, enjoy river cruises, and have Hungarian meals without straining their budget. The city’s efficient public transport and reasonably priced attractions make it easy to discover both the grand and the quirky sides of Hungarian culture. Beyond Budapest, the countryside also offers charming towns and landscapes that add depth to the journey without adding high costs. budapest Screengrab of airfare for Budapest (Photo:

# ‘I don’t watch the news’: Barack Obama explains how he stays informed



Ever wondered how Barack Obama maintains his cool despite living under public scrutiny, peppered with hectic campaigns and election rallies? The secret to his regulated nervous system lies in ditching cable news. In a recent interview at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, the former US President revealed that he hasn’t watched cable news in over a decade. When asked what his news diet is like, Obama shared: “I don’t have a news feed. In fact, the entire time people used to ask, ‘You seem so calm, Mr President. Why is that?’ No drama Obama. I said, ‘That’s because I don’t watch the news.’ It is genuinely true. I have not watched cable news in 15 years. I don’t scroll.”

So, where does he get his information from? “I am old school, and I read a pretty wide mix of publications. I’ll read the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, The Atlantic, or science magazines. That’s where I get my information,” he further shared.

Watching vs reading news: what’s the difference for mental health?

Clinical psychologist and founder of Sentier Wellness, Dr Rimpia Sarkar, explained that from a psychological point of view, watching the news is usually more emotionally intense than reading it. “Visuals, sound, dramatic music, red ‘breaking news’ tickers and urgent tone of voice all stimulate the nervous system more strongly than text,” she said, adding that studies show even brief exposure (around 14–

Website/Skyscanner.com) Cheapest month to fly: According to Skyscanner.com, the cheapest month to fly is December, with the cheapest connecting flight costing approximately Rs 16,097 (one-way). Compared to Western Europe, Hungary is generally considered a budget-friendly destination for Indian travellers. Romania offers a unique side of Europe, combining medieval towns and mountain landscapes at some of the lowest travel costs in the region. The charm of Bucharest’s architecture, the ambience of Transylvania’s cities like Brasov and Sibiu, and the mystery surrounding Bran Castle create a mix of history and legend. Travellers can explore the Carpathian Mountains, wander through colourful old towns, or take scenic drives such as the Transfagarasan Highway. Food, stays, and tours remain affordable, making Romania an excellent choice for budget travellers, families, and backpackers. Cheapest month to fly: According to Skyscanner.com, the cheapest month to fly to here is March, with the cheapest connecting flight costing approximately Rs 19,963 (one-way). Georgia has quickly become a favourite among Indian travellers seeking an affordable European holiday. The capital city, Tbilisi, charms visitors with its winding old-town lanes, colourful balconies, and a mix of ancient and modern architecture. Travellers can enjoy hearty Georgian cuisine — known for dishes like khachapuri and khinkali — at very reasonable prices, while local guesthouses and boutique hotels offer excellent value. Mountains in Kazbegi, the vineyards of Kakheti, and the Black Sea coastline in Batumi each offer distinct experiences without the premium price tag typically associated with Western Europe. Cheapest month to fly: According to Skyscanner.com, the cheapest month to fly to here is April, with the cheapest connecting flight (from Tbilisi) costing approximately Rs 26,454 (one-way).

15 minutes) to negative TV news can increase anxiety and worsen mood. Quoting research on media exposure, Dr Sarkar mentioned that visual coverage (especially TV and social media) is more strongly linked to emotional distress than print or text-based news. Negative visual images, in particular, are known to trigger stronger emotional responses than neutral or positive ones. So people often feel more anger, fear, helplessness, and urgency after watching the news, and the same feelings in a milder form when they read it.

Over time, constant exposure to distressing news in any format can increase stress, anxiety, low mood and even symptoms like sleep disturbance and fatigue, because it repeatedly activates the body’s stress response. “Visual news, especially rolling TV coverage or short video clips, tends to trigger faster emotional reactions, while reading usually offers a bit more distance and control because it is self-paced and allows more cognitive processing and reflection,” she told indianexpress.com. How does Obama stay informed about current news? Obama loves reading newspapers and publications. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

That said, reading can turn into doomscrolling, where endless negative headlines and feeds keep the brain in a constant state of alert, which research has linked to higher levels of anxiety, depression and reduced well-being over time. So, according to Dr Sarkar, it is less about one format being “good” and the other “bad,” and more about how frequently, how intensely, and from whom we consume the news. According to Dr Sarkar, here are some vital signs you need to look out for: If your mood drops noticeably after watching/reading the news, you feel anxious, on edge, irritable or angry for hours afterwards, you need to put a cap on your news consumption. Dr Sarkar added that sometimes people find it hard to switch off, sleep, or stop thinking about what they saw, or keep refreshing apps or channels even when they feel worse. “Loved ones point out that you seem more withdrawn, tense or preoccupied with news, or if you feel more hopeless, cynical or fearful about the future, it’s time to take necessary action,” she pointed out.

# ‘Choices that go against what you’ve heard’: Priyanka Chopra on unlearning ‘good girl’ rules; expert breaks down the psychology

Many people grow up being told to be ‘good,’ to be agreeable, obedient, and cautious. But as adulthood unfolds, these expectations often collide with the reality of meaningful progress in life. During a 2023 appearance on The Ranveer Show, Priyanka Chopra addressed this conflict head-on. She emphasised the value of stepping beyond conditioned behaviour, saying, “Good girls don’t make history. Bold girls make history. Bold people make history.” Her point wasn’t about rebellion for the sake of it, but about taking ownership of one’s direction despite societal expectations. She added, “So if you want to be the lead actor of your movie, which is your life, you’ve got to make choices that might be contrary to what you’ve heard.”

These reflections echo the pressures many people face when choosing careers, relationships, or lifestyles that don’t neatly fit into what they were taught growing up. The deeper question becomes: What actually happens to a person’s confidence, autonomy, and long-term fulfilment when they choose boldness over conformity? This is where insights from a psychologist can help unpack what real-life ‘boldness’ looks like, and why it matters. Healthy boldness vs. impulsiveness Psychologist Rasshi Gurnani tells indianexpress.com, “Priyanka Chopra’s idea that ‘bold girls make history’ aligns closely with what psychology defines as healthy boldness — a blend of agency, self-trust, and measured risk-taking. Unlike impulsiveness, which is driven by poor inhibition and emotional reactivity, healthy boldness is deliberate. It comes from self-efficacy, a belief in one’s ability to influence outcomes, and ego strength, the psychological capacity to tolerate uncertainty without collapsing under anxiety.” When people make bold choices consciously rather than reactively, Gurnani adds, they expand their sense of identity through what psychologists call experiential growth — each action reinforces a more authentic and autonomous self-concept. Kinds of internal or external barriers that typically prevent people from making unconventional choices What often gets in the way of unconventional choices “are internalised schemas and external pressures,” says Gurnani, adding that internally, people battle



cognitive distortions like catastrophising or overgeneralisation, which exaggerate the perceived risk of stepping out of line. Many also carry core beliefs rooted in childhood conditioning that prioritise compliance over agency. “Externally, there are cultural norms, gendered expectations, and the fear of social sanctions. Humans are wired for belonging, so the threat of rejection activates the brain’s social pain networks, making conformity feel safer even when it contradicts personal goals. These forces create a psychological friction that keeps people from choosing what they intuitively know is right for their future,” notes the expert. Navigating guilt or fear while still honouring their desire to make bold, self-directed decisions When choices clash with family or societal expectations, Gurnani admits that guilt and fear become natural emotional responses because they signal potential loss of approval. Navigating these emotions requires emotional regulation, where individuals learn to hold discomfort without abandoning their autonomy. “Techniques like self-compassion, boundary-setting, and reframing guilt as evidence of growth rather than wrongdoing help create inner stability.



# Messi's G.O.A.T. India Tour set to dazzle, but without the football magic of 2011



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Kolkata: Argentine superstar Lionel Messi's long-awaited return to India, after a magical maiden visit back in 2011, will be high on glitz but low on actual football, promising a spectacle that may not recapture the raw sporting frenzy that once shook the Salt Lake Stadium here.

His artistry in a competitive match will be missing this time. It would be quite unlike 2011 when more than 85,000 fans packed the stadium, some even perched on terrace edges, to watch Argentina edge Venezuela 1-0 in a FIFA friendly. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner is not scheduled to play serious football on the 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025'. It is a fully promotional, and commercially-curated event which will begin on Saturday here and wind up on Monday in New Delhi. Yet, for a city that once worshipped Maradona, Pele, dazzled Dunga and embraced Ronaldinho, the arrival of Messi even without football is unmissable because Kolkata cannot ignore him.

The organisers have opened 78,000 seats at the Salt Lake Stadium with ticket prices going up to Rs 7,000 for his 45-minute appearance on Saturday morning, raising questions on whether the city will respond with the same unrestrained passion. Messi will spend less than 72 hours in India but will traverse four metropolises — Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi — in what has increasingly begun to resemble a high-profile roadshow involving chief ministers, corporate heavyweights, Bollywood celebrities and even a scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill, a self-confessed Messi admirer, is also expected to meet him after the Dharamshala T20I on December 14.

Messi's last appearance in India remains etched in memory when on September 3, 2011, he danced past defenders, mesmerised with his left-footed grace and triggered waves of ecstasy in a packed stadium. Though he didn't score, fans left believing they had witnessed greatness.

The highlight of the tour will be a 45-minute philanthropic fashion event in Mumbai on Sunday, featuring Messi, his long-time strike partner Luis Suarez and Argentina midfielder Rodrigo De Paul. "There will be celebrity models, cricketers, Bollywood celebrities, millionaires, founders, Tiger and Jackie Shroff, John Abraham among others," said Satadru Dutta, sole promoter of the tour. Suarez will also feature in a Spanish music show. The organisers have requested Messi to bring "some memorabilia" of his trophy-winning 2022 World Cup campaign which will be auctioned during the Mumbai leg. The Mumbai event at Wankhede Stadium will

be preceded by a Padel Cup at the CCI.

He will stay at a five-star hotel on EM Bypass and attend a sponsor-exclusive meet-and-greet in the morning. Kolkata will also have a new 'Messi landmark' near the Sreebhumi Clock Tower (the Big Ben replica) on the VIP Road with a giant 70-feet statue of the Argentine World Cup winner holding aloft the Trophy. The inauguration will be a virtual ceremony from his hotel room after police denied permission for a public event.

A 25ft x 20ft Messi mural, planned for next year's Durga Puja season, will also be unveiled and later presented to Messi at the Salt Lake Stadium. After the event, Messi fly to Hyderabad at 2 pm. The Hyderabad leg was added to the itinerary after Messi's proposed friendly in Kochi was cancelled. Once there, he will attend the GOAT Cup — a festival backed by Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy — featuring a 7v7 celebrity match, penalty shootouts, a masterclass for young talents and a musical tribute. Messi will conclude his tour in Delhi, where he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Minerva Academy's prodigies, who swept the Gothia Cup, Dana Cup and Norway Cup earlier this year, will be felicitated in his presence. A nine-a-side celebrity match will also be held. Messi's visit adds a fresh chapter to Kolkata's unmatched love affair with the beautiful game.

It began in 1977, when Pele and the New York Cosmos played a 2-2 exhibition against Mohun Bagan at Eden Gardens, a night that is part of the city's folklore now. Pele, following his hip surgery returned in 2015 reuniting with Mohun Bagan's class of '77 and thanking the crowd with the iconic line: "You can never have another Pele." Brazil's Dunga, Bebeto, Mauro Silva, and Colombia's flamboyant Rene Higuita have all made visits over the years.

Higuita thrilled crowds with his trademark 'scorpion kick' saves in 2012, while Dunga inspired youngsters with talk of discipline and youth development. Germany's connection runs deep too as Oliver Kahn's farewell match in 2008 drew more than one lakh to Salt Lake Stadium. But perhaps no one stirred Kolkata quite like Diego Maradona, whose 2008 and 2017 visits saw nearly a lakh people throng the stadium to catch a glimpse of him. And then there was Diego Forlan, who arrived to roaring crowds in 2010 fresh off his Golden Ball-winning World Cup campaign.

'Handshake visit'; ex-footballers snubbed Not everyone is swept by the frenzy though and former footballers feel "hurt and insulted" for not being invited. Former India and Mohun Bagan mid-fielder Gautam Sarkar, who famously man-marked Pele during the 1977 exhibition match, minced no words. "These are nothing but gimmicks. Messi is coming only to do a handshake... Pele had come here and actually played with us," the 75-year-old told PTI. Ironically, Messi arrives at a time when Indian football is grappling with serious uncertainty. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has failed to secure a commercial partner for the Indian Super League (ISL), and with the season already deep into December, its resumption remains unclear. "Instead of bringing Messi, our focus should be on how to improve football in the country. We must give utmost priority to Indian football and bring back the glory of the past," Sarkar said. Former India defender Subrata Bhattacharya too felt "insulted".

He came out with 60 runs to go and pulled the handbrake off which, from everyone's point of view, was so disappointing. But what we also have to think about is this bloke hasn't played any red-ball cricket, Test cricket, back-to-back cricket for a number of years," Harris was quoted as saying by Sydney Moring Herald on SEN Radio.

"Any cricket he has played has been four-over stuff, or the odd one-dayer. His body is wrecked, we know that. He's got a bad elbow. It's bloody hard to bowl fast, and you have got to practice it, and do a lot of it," Harris added. Harris also slammed Archer's decision to bring along a pillow to the Brisbane dressing room for the pink-ball Test, insisting that it was something he would not have ever done. "And if I ever did, [coach] Darren Lehmann would have told me where to go, so would have [captain] Michael Clarke and the rest of the team," the former South Australia seamer said. Australia's legendary Ricky Ponting had recently lambasted Archer after he had "just embarrassed himself, and he embarrassed his team the other night". "To bowl his fastest spell ever in Test cricket, when Australia's chasing 60 ... it [his bowling at high speed] has been there the whole time, it's been up his sleeve, and England have needed him to do it, and he hasn't been willing to do it," Ponting had said on Thursday on SEN. "Day three, when they needed him to do it, he rocks up with his pillow under his arm, and that was always going to be a bad day for England from that moment." "As soon as anyone saw that, it was going to be, 'OK, there's their mindset for the day. They're just going to rock up and Australia's going to fall over, and we'll bowl them out'," remarked Ponting.

## Hyderabad shuttlers Arjun and Achutaditya shine with 4 international badminton medals

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based shuttlers P Arjun Reddy and D Achutaditya Rao put up a fine show, winning four international medals — gold in Mexico, silver in Trinidad & Tobago and Zambia, and bronze in South Africa — in the last two months. For the 43-year-old Arjun Reddy, it was a triumphant return to professional badminton after a 10-year break, in the company of his young 23-year-old partner Achutaditya Rao.

Arjun, who previously partnered and played alongside top Indian stars such as Chetan Anand, Arvind Bhatt, Anoop Sridhar, Diyu, Sanave Thomas and Roopesh, had famously won the Morocco Open in 2013, merely three months before retiring. He quit the sport at his peak to manage his family's construction enterprise (Silpa Homes Pvt Ltd) and later co-founded an education mentoring venture (Gradvine Advisors). Driven by his passion to nurture new talent, Arjun now runs A Zone Sports, one of Hyderabad's biggest badminton academies, where he trains under Indonesian coach Namrih to prepare for his international comeback. "I am happy to become the first Indian to win four consecutive international medals after returning to the sport. This journey has reinforced my belief that passion and devotion can help us achieve bigger things. I will continue to work harder and make India proud," Arjun Reddy said.



Hyderabad shuttlers Arjun Reddy and Achutaditya Rao won four international medals — gold in Mexico, silver in Trinidad & Tobago and Zambia, and bronze in South Africa. For Arjun, it marked a triumphant return to professional badminton after a decade-long break

# Lionel Messi India Tour 2025: Date, Time, Event, Ticket Price in Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyd



Lionel Messi India Tour: Argentina football great Lionel Messi is all set to embark on a nation-wide tour in India starting on December 13. This will be Messi's second visit to India, with the previous one being for a friendly match in which he captained Argentina for the first time in his career against Venezuela in Kolkata in September 2011. He won't be playing any official games this time but will be visiting four cities in four parts of the country over the course of a whirlwind three days in an event that has been named 'GOAT Tour of India 2025'. It is learnt that the schedule for the tour remains flexible but this is how things stand thus far. All tickets are available on District, the official ticketing partner for the tour. Kolkata – December 13 The tour starts in Kolkata, where Messi will land at 1.30am on December 13, accompanied by Inter Miami teammates Luis Suarez and Rodrigo de Paul. Between 9.30am and 10.30am the Argentine superstar will take part in a meet and greet event where people will have a chance to meet him up close, shake his hand and have a special group photo taken with him. For this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, fans will have to fork out Rs 10 lakhs.

The event at the Salt Lake Stadium is set to start at 10am and end by 1.05pm. There will be a musical concert celebrating the Argentine superstar and a 7 vs 7 football match taking place where Mohun Bagan 'Messi' All Stars will take on Diamond Harbour 'Messi' All Stars. Messi and

Co will also be attending a masterclass with scouted children and is expected to meet Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, among others. The meet and greet opportunity in Hyderabad will be at the Falaknuma Palace and, as is the case in Kolkata and in every city that comes later, fans will have to cough up an entry fee of Rs 10,00,000.

The Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium at Uppal is the venue for the stadium event in Hyderabad. It starts at 7pm and will go on for three hours. The stadium event will feature a 20-minute exhibition match between Singareni RR-9 and Aparna Messi All Stars. Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is also expected to join the match towards the end. Local police has put out advisories going into the event. The second day of the tour is will be in Mumbai where Messi's meet and greet event will be at the Cricket Club of India's (CCI) Brabourne Stadium. There will be a fashion show for charity and a padel match with cricket stars which has been dubbed as the Padel Cup. There will be a coaching clinic for 60 young players under Project Mahadeva at the at the GOAT Football Clinic. This will be followed by the stadium event at the Wankhede Stadium. Indian football icon Sunil Chhetri is expected to meet Messi. Among other star names set to feature in the Mumbai leg are cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, John Abraham, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Jackie Shroff. The final leg of Messi's tour will be at the national capital on December 15. Messi is scheduled to first attend a meet and greet at the Leela Palace around 12pm, for which the entry fee is listed at an eye watering Rs 10 lakh on District, the official ticketing platform for the tour. He then moves to the Arun Jaitley Stadium around 1.30pm where there is scheduled to be a 7v7 celebrity match. Players from the Minerva Academy, who had won three trophies in a tour of Europe this year, will also be felicitated. Messi is also scheduled to do a basic coaching clinic at the stadium and there will also be a musical concert celebrating the Argentine great. Ticket prices start at Rs 4720.

# 'Bahut mushkil hogi': Gujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra says Shubman Gill's form must not be judged by 2-3 T20Is

GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Despite his prolonged lull since a return to the T20I fold as India's vice captain and opening partner to Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill has found backing from his IPL head coach, Ashish Nehra. The Gujarat Titans head coach has reacted to Gill's poor start to the South Africa series, where he was dismissed twice in three deliveries. Gill fell for 4 off two deliveries in the series opener in Cuttack and was dismissed for a golden duck by Lungi Ngidi in Mullanpur on Thursday. Nehra said backed his Gujarat skipper, insisting that the 26-year-old could not be evaluated on the back of a few poor outings.

"Look, the player you are talking about. If IPL was 3 weeks away, I wouldn't be worried. Because you are talking about T20 format. And there are only 2 matches played with South Africa. If I am not wrong. And this is our problem. In such a fast-paced format, whether it is international cricket or IPL, if we start evaluating players like Gill after two-three matches, then it will be difficult," Nehra was quoted as saying by PTI. "You have many options, if you want to see. You can remove Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill. You can open with Sai Sudharsan and Ruturaj Gaikwad. If you want to remove them, you can do it with Washington Sundar and Ishan Kishan. So options are always there if there are talks about changing players after not good stats, but aise karege to bahut mushkil hogi (If we do this like this,



then it would be difficult)," he added. Despite his patchy form, Gill also found support from Team India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate after India's 51-run defeat in Mullanpur on Thursday. "I saw some good signs of a change in mentality on the back end of that Australian tour (in Shubman). Even with these two dismissals in this series, in the first game we asked the guys to go out and attack on the power play, and the wicket was not very great at Cuttack," Doeschate told reporters. "So I will let him go off with that one. Today, he got out to a great ball. This can happen when you are short on form. But we also believe in his class. If you look at his IPL records, he has stacked 600-700-800 runs, and he will come good," he added.

# 'Is communication alive with Sanju?': Robin Uthappa questions India team management over Samson T20I snub for Shubman Gill



GNS News Agency, Dec 13

Former India batter Robin Uthappa questioned the need to have disturbed the Sanju Samson-Abhishek Sharma T20I opening association after Shubman Gill fell for a golden duck in the second T20I against South Africa at his home ground in Mullanpur on Thursday.

Gill's patchy form since his return to the T20I fold after a year, starting with 2025 Asia Cup in September, has raised questions given that the Punjab batter hasn't turned up with big knocks after displacing Samson. In 2024, Samson emerged as India's top batting performer post the T20 World Cup, smashing three hundreds in five innings against Bangladesh and South Africa. The Kerala batter became the first man to record three centuries in a calendar year before losing out his spot to Gill, who returned to the side after over 14 months as vice captain. Gill has failed to score a half-century since his return in 17 consecutive innings as a T20I opener, the worst such stretch for an India opener in the format. Uthappa questioned as to why did the team management helmed by Gautam Gambhir need to disrupt the combustible Samson-Abhishek combination. "Suryakumar [Yadav] said Gill opened the batting before Sanju Samson got the opportunity to open. But once you have him the opportunity, he has got three hundreds in that and has done really well. He's averaging the second or third highest after Abhishek Sharma. He must be thinking what wrong have I done to not find a spot? Is that communication alive with Sanju Samson, where they've said, 'We are going to try Shubman out for a few games, if it doesn't work out, you jump straight back in,'" Uthappa said on his YouTube channel. "Gill batting opposite to his strengths" Uthappa also observed that Gill is not attempting

to stick to his strengths in the format since his comeback. "He's batting completely opposite to what actually works for him and what actually gives him success. He's the kind of T20 batter who gets in a little bit. He's not a Sanju Samson or Abhishek Sharma type of opening batter. He's the kind of guy who gets in, and once he gets in, you can't get him out," said Uthappa. "But he has to go through that passage of batting those first ten balls and scoring a run-a-ball or striking at 120 and up the ante after that. Because once he bats those first 15-18 balls, it's almost impossible to get Shubman Gill out. So he's doing something that's counterintuitive to his batting right now," he added. With less than two months to go for India's opening game of the 2026 T20 World Cup in Mumbai, Uthappa said that it is imperative that India slot in their second opener immediately. "You want to figure out what works best leading into a World Cup because the Sanju-Ahishhek pair was working. It was a pair that complemented each other and brought the middle order into the game, whether it worked or not. For example, it was on the back of Sanju's hundreds that Tilak came in and scored his hundreds in South Africa. So that was a working piece that was changed, albeit to accommodate Shubman Gill," the 2007 World Cup winner added.

## 2,500 police personnel to man Messi GOAT Tour Hyderabad match

Hyderabad: A massive force of 2,500 police personnel will oversee security for the Messi GOAT Tour – Live Event football match on December 13 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal.

The deployment includes law and order units, traffic police, TSSP/AR platoons, Octopus teams, Mounted Police and specialised wings. The stadium and surrounding areas have been brought under tight surveillance with 450 CCTV cameras, a joint command and control room, and round-the-clock anti-sabotage checks by bomb disposal squads and sniffer dogs. Spectators will be allowed entry only through QR-coded digital tickets, with strict checks at all gates. Bags, cameras, water bottles, electronic devices and outside food are among the banned items.



# 25 years of Malayalam cinema: How the industry transformed from churning out stinkers to becoming the face of the new era



While admitting and acknowledging that condensing Malayalam cinema’s journey over the past 25 years, from 2000 to 2025, is not just a herculean task but could also come across as reductionist to some, let me embark on this uphill battle. Although the regional film industry is widely known today for its exquisite and diverse content and for being a fertile ground that facilitates all kinds of cinematic experimentation — where even its biggest superstars prioritise the actors within them — Malayalam cinema did not reach this point overnight.

It’s not just the cumulative result of many contributing factors, but also the outcome of numerous experiences the industry has endured over the decades, all of which have in/directly shaped it. Not just the victories, but the failures too have played a key role in its current success streak that began from rock bottom. Hence, it’s unwise to believe that this hot run will continue forever. After all, Malayalam cinema went from one of the most promising industries in the mid-1970s and ’80s to mediocrity in the ’90s, and reached its nadir in the early 2000s, when softcore adult films generated more profit for stakeholders than many mainstream movies did, before bouncing back.

In a way, the 2000s were a period of quiescence. It is, I feel, by far the only decade after Malayalam cinema found its footing when it witnessed an intellectual and creative stagnation. Although the industry delivered quite a few blockbusters and memorable movies during this period, many of them carried the ghosts of old films. Not only were filmmakers hesitant to experiment, but the overall technical and creative quality of movies was considerably low. However, this wasn’t the case only in Malayalam; its major counterparts across the country faced a similar ordeal during this era. As senior directors were busy creating inconsequential movies that reshaped their old hit formulas, the repercussions of a dearth of fresh minds at work became palpably evident. Even as Joshiy dropped bombs like *Praja* and *Dubai*, Fazil outdid him with the atrocious *Kaiyethum Doorath*. IV Sasi’s contribution to the disappointment spree was *Sradha*. Amid all this, light-hearted family dramas helmed by directors like Sathyan Anthikkad, Kamal, and Lal Jose, hard-hitting dramas by Blessy, and comedies by Rafi–Mecartin, Johnny Antony, and Shafi offered respite to the audience. However, none of them broke the mould; they all adhered to conventional stylistics and simply focused on storytelling.

Having reached the zenith of superstardom by then, both Mohanlal and Mammootty were clueless about what to do next. Their movie choices were so poor that it seemed like they were giving out dates based on their friendships with directors and producers, without even reading the scripts or listening to story narrations. Although they delivered blockbusters like *Narasimham*, *Ravanaprabhu*, *Balettan*, *Valliettian*, *Chronic Bachelor* and *Sethurama Iyer CBI*, this era also marked a time when they appeared engaged in an unofficial battle to see who could produce the most stinkers. While Mohanlal delivered duds like *Onnaman*, *Chathurangam*, *Hariharan Pilla Happy Aanu*, *Kilukkam Kilukilukkam*, *Mahasudram* and *Vamanapuram Bus Route*, Mammootty also did not hold back, and did abysmal movies like *Dubai*, *Phantom*, *Pattalam*, *Vajram*, *Balram* vs *Tharadas*, *Prajapathy* and *Thaskara Veeran*. With both Jayaram and Suresh Gopi also going through challenging phases in their careers, Dileep (later accused of masterminding the 2017 Kerala actress abduction and assault case) began to soar with blockbusters like *CID Moosa* and *Meesa Madhavan*. Despite being a mediocre actor, the audience flocked to his comedies because the industry had little else to offer. Meanwhile, younger actors like Kunchacko Boban, Prithviraj Sukumaran, Jayasurya,

Meera Jasmine, Bhavana, Navya Nair, and Kavya Madhavan also began making strides. While 2005 proved to be a far better year with director Anwar Rasheed’s Mammootty-starrer *Rajamanikyam* revolutionising commercial masala cinema, Urvashi making a comeback through *Achuvinte Amma*, and films like *Udayananu Tharam* and *Anandabhadram* offering fresh stories and even fresher aesthetics, this did not mark the beginning of a resurrection. The industry was both weak and scared to try out new things. One of the major reasons behind the fiasco was that the industry had largely forgotten its roots. It was no longer making movies anchored in its surroundings and familiar emotional grounds. Even while expressing pride in the classics created by yesteryear master directors like KG George, P Padmarajan, G Aravindan, Bharathan, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and John Abraham, which exuded an unmistakable Malayalamness, the filmmakers of the 2000s were merely shooting in the dark, while also making futile attempts at cracking the formula for making bona fide hit movies.

Although the industry kept making strides in the independent cinema stream, with movies like *Shantham*, *Puliyanmam*, *Neythukaran*, *Naalu Pennungal*, *Kutty Srank*, and *Paadam Onnu*: *Oru Vilapam* receiving national recognition, the quality visible there never overflowed into the mainstream. As a result, audiences began turning to Malayalam-dubbed other-language movies, which they could enjoy with their brains turned off, and actors like Allu Arjun, as well as films like *Arya*, *Happy*, and *Happy Days*, found immense success in the state.

However, a few movies that arrived in 2007 heralded the impending reformation. Breaking the pattern popularised in the ’90s and early 2000s — where the localities in which stories were set, as well as their regional dialects, were given the least importance, stripping the films of nuance and authenticity while presenting savarna-ness as the norm — a new style began to evolve during this time.

Anwar Rasheed, who gave the Thiruvananthapuram accent — which had until then been the butt of many jokes — a mass appeal with *Rajamanikyam*, changed Malayalam cinema’s perception of Kochi as well with the Mohanlal-starrer *Chotta Mumbai*. This made industry professionals and audiences realise that many places in Kerala were yet to be explored. Amal Neerad’s Mammootty-led *Big B* gave this a bigger push. However, barring a few blockbusters like *Twenty:20*, *Madambi*, and *Annan Thambi*, as well as commendable works like *Thirakkatha* and *Thalappavu*, 2008 was also largely disappointing. Even as Subramaniapuram (2008) ushered in a new wave in Tamil cinema, the Malayalam industry was facing uncertainty. The success of the disgustingly misogynistic *Veruthe Oru Bharya* also raised concerns that the industry might once again be embracing the sickening trends that had worked well for it in the ’90s. *Ritu*, *Traffic* and the New Generation film movement While that trend did continue for some time with movies like *Bhagyadevatha* and *Ivar Vivahitharalay*, 2009 marked the arrival of a fresh era that commenced with films such as *Shyamaprasad*’s *Ritu*, *Ranjith Sankar*’s *Passenger*, and the anthological *Kerala Café*, which featured narrative and aesthetic palettes that significantly deviated from anything the industry had witnessed until then. Subsequently, Lijo Jose Pellissery’s debut *Nayakan*, and movies like *Cocktail* and *Anwar*, further cemented this fresh wave of cinema. Intriguingly, young actors like *Prithviraj*, *Indrajith*, and *Jayasurya*, among others, were readily on board with this trend, helping it gain acclaim quickly.

2011 marked the proper entrenchment of this wave, later known as the “New Generation film movement,” with the arrival of *Rajesh Pillai*’s *Traffic*, penned by *Bobby Sanjay*. Without even a single star and mostly featuring young or senior character actors, *Traffic* became a massive hit, reminding everyone that content was king. Without following any conventional formulas, either technically or narratively, the makers crafted *Traffic* from scratch, and its success paved the way for the entry of fresh talent into the industry, instilling in them the courage to think outside the box. The movie also effectively made the audience realise that they needn’t settle for less. Films like *Chaappa Kurishu*, *Salt N’ Pepper*, *City of God* and *Melvilasom* further propelled the wave. Yet, let’s not forget that 2011 was also the year of the widely panned blockbuster *Krishnanum Radhayum*, helmed by *Santhosh Pandit*. The arrival of fresh actors like *Fahadh Faasil*, *Dulquer Salmaan*, *Rima Kallingal*, *Nivin Pauly*, and *Parvathy Thiruvothu*, among others — who weren’t the least bit conscious about their “image” and simply wanted to be part of good films — also helped the trend persist. Although the New Generation movement offered some liberation to women, as evidenced in movies like *22 Female Kottayam*, *Ee Aadutha Kaalathu*, *Arike*, *Ozhimuri*, and *Trivandrum Lodge*, *Bahujans* and other marginalised communities remained largely outside the frame, except for movies by directors like *Dr Biju*.

# Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt’s daughter Raha runs holding her mom’s hand at airport, fans call her ‘Mini Diva’

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt are set for another family vacation, as they do every December. The actor couple was spotted at the Mumbai airport on Friday with their adorable daughter Raha Kapoor. Their latest paparazzi appearance has once again left fans in awe of Raha. In clips going viral, the little one is seen running while holding her mother Alia’s hand.

While Ranbir donned an olive green co-ord set paired with a white t-shirt and shoes for the outing, Alia, on the other hand, wore a casual outfit — a white top, light blue jeans, sliders, and she completed her look with a brown bag. In the video, Raha is spotted in a cute beige co-ord set with a pair of super cool white sunglasses. Several fans reacted to the heartwarming family moment and dropped lovely comments on social media, with most of them in awe of Raha. A fan wrote, “Omg Raha mini Diva.” Another person commented, “Raha with sunglasses on!” “Raha running inside haha,” a third comment read. A user wrote, “This family is so adorable.” At the Red Sea International Film Festival recently, Alia Bhatt opened up about how her little daughter Raha Kapoor has now turned three. Reflecting on her life before and after having a child and how things change, she shared, “Now Raha has her own relationship with the paparazzi, and is old enough to ask me where I am



going, and when I will be back.” The actor was honoured with the Golden Globes Horizon Award at the fifth edition of the film festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, on the work front, both Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor didn’t have any releases this year.

# Actor’s superstar dad left him when he was 5; Aamir Khan took Taare Zameen Par from him, now he is Bollywood’s most admired



In the film industry, not everyone arrives with the same kind of luck or destiny. Some, like *Shah Rukh Khan*, seem to be propelled from the very beginning by a circle of people rooting for their success. Others—*Manoj Bajpayee*, *Pankaj Tripathi*, *Rajpal Yadav*—grind through decades before receiving the recognition they deserve. Then there are star kids like *Hrithik Roshan* and *Ahaan Panday*, who become overnight sensations, and star kids like *Khushi Kapoor*, who keep delivering film after film yet still wait for that resounding nod of audience acceptance.

And in the middle of these extremes came an actor in 1997: *Akshaye Khanna*. A star kid himself, the son of the legendary *Vinod Khanna*—once considered *Amitabh Bachchan*’s only real competition—Akshaye didn’t burst onto the scene with instant success. But he quietly carved his own space, and nearly three decades later, he’s finally receiving the respect and admiration that always seemed destined for him. 2025 has been a watershed year for Akshaye Khanna. His performance in *Dhurandhar* is being celebrated but it is his dance to the *Fa9la* song that has enamoured fans, taken over social media and turned him into ‘national crush’. Akshaye Khanna dances to *Fa9la* in *Dhurandhar*. Akshaye Khanna’s viral moment to *Fa9la* song in *Dhurandhar*. How Akshaye became a viral sensation

First, his chilling turn as *Aurangzeb* in *Chhava* caught the industry’s eye. Then came *Dhurandhar*’s *Rehman Dakait*, where his performance outshone even *Ranveer Singh*. At 50, he has become the unexpected star of his generation—by sheer craft, not noise. Despite nearly 30 years in cinema, Akshaye’s filmography is surprisingly

# Netizens thank Akshay Kumar for ‘giving the nation an amazing Akshaye Khanna’; actor says ‘Kabhi ghamand nahi kiya’



When *Tees Maar Khan* released in theatres, it opened to poor reviews but still managed to succeed at the box office, thanks largely to Akshay Kumar’s humour, and Akshaye Khanna’s standout performance as *Aatish Kapoor*, and the chartbuster “*Sheila Ki Jawani*”. The film has returned to the headlines after several netizens pointed out that Akshay Kumar had recognised Akshaye Khanna’s exceptional acting talent long before *Dhurandhar*.

Fans referenced their dynamic in *Tees Maar Khan*,

# Dhurandhar actor Madhavan says he makes note of critics who prematurely write off films: ‘They use words like disaster...’

People knew that *Dhurandhar* was releasing, but no one anticipated it would become such a blockbuster. Many trade experts predicted that despite its long runtime and soaring ticket prices, the film would open big because of its strong content. But even before these predictions surfaced, actor *R Madhavan* was convinced that *Aditya Dhar* was headed for massive success.

The movie released on December 5 to mixed reactions, yet Madhavan had “been there, done that” and felt certain about how things would play out. He had witnessed a similar scenario during the release of *Rang De Basanti*—a film that initially faced skepticism but went on to dominate the box office and is now considered one of the most impactful films of its era. It won a National Award and was India’s official entry to the Golden Globes and the Oscars that year. Madhavan, who has played the role of *Ajay Sanyal* in *Dhurandhar*, revealed that he makes note of critics who prematurely write off films. “I note down people who call it ‘the end.’ Some critics genuinely review a film—they’re either very new or very seasoned and understand what reviewing means. But there are others who, on the day of release or even before it, use words like ‘disaster’ in their headline. That reduces their relevance for us. As actors, we dream of moments like this—when people dismiss a film at first and are then shocked by its success,” the actor-filmmaker told *Pooja Talwar*.

“I remember when *Rang De Basanti* was about to re-

lease, several distributors backed out. After the first show, they said, ‘This film is too long, not our kind of movie, we can’t carry this.’ *Rakeysh Om Prakash Mehra* was sitting near the TV, his head between his knees, in Delhi. He said, ‘After this, I’ll have to go back to my village. I don’t understand anything beyond this—I can’t make a better film.’ He was distraught. *Aamir*, *Ronnie Screwvala*—we were all in the same room.”

Akshaye chose acting as a childBorn into film royalty, Akshaye always knew he wanted to become an actor. “I just knew it,” he once told *Simi Garewal*. His journey began in his teens. After school, he joined *HR College*—where he promptly flunked out. His parents sent him to a boarding school in *Ooty* for classes 11 and 12, after which he began working. “I’m not well-educated,” he admitted candidly. Though *Vinod Khanna* left the family to join *Osho* when Akshaye was just five, the acting spark in him came from observing his father. “I spent a lot of time on his sets. That influenced me a lot. I have stage fear,” he said. Akshaye debuted in 1997 with *Himalaya Putra*, produced by his father. The film didn’t succeed, but it gave *Vinod Khanna* hope that his son had talent worth betting on.

*Dil Chahta Hai* Akshaye Khanna, *Aamir Khan* and *Saif Ali Khan* in a still from *Dil Chahta Hai*. To his credit, Akshaye followed it up with powerful performances in *Border* (1997), *Taal* (1999), *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001), *Hungama* (2003), *LOC Kargil* (2003), *Hulchul* (2004), and *Race* (2008). These roles cemented his reputation, even as several of his promising films were abruptly shelved. He was signed by *Feroz Khan* for a film that later went to *Fardeen Khan*. *Farhan Akhtar* shelved *Voice From the Sky* to make *Don 2*. Akshaye was also supposed to do *Taare Zameen Par*, which *Aamir Khan* eventually took over.

Narrating the incident, he told *Mid-Day*: “*Amole Gupte* told *Aamir*, ‘I want to narrate this script to Akshaye.’ *Aamir* said, ‘I won’t recommend it unless I hear it.’ He ended up liking it so much that he took it up. He told me at *Mehboob Studio*. “*Vinod Khanna* left family, career for *Osho* when Akshaye was 5Akshaye’s childhood was unconventional. His father, then at the peak of his stardom, left everything behind to join *Osho* in the United States. “When dad went to the *Ashram*, I was five. I didn’t understand what was happening,” he told *Simi Garewal*. “But I had a happy, secure childhood.” He elaborated: “I believe in being self-centred for your own life. Unless you’re happy, you can’t make others happy. I terribly missed my father, but I had a secure childhood.” Despite the distance, he maintained strong relationships with both parents. “Something in him moved very deeply to take that decision,” he said of his father joining *Osho*. “He stayed with it. He only returned because of the situation around *Osho* in the US.” On *Osho* himself, Akshaye admitted, “I love *Osho*. I’ve watched multiple videos and read a lot about him. I have deep respect for him.”

where Akshay’s character—a thief posing as a world-class director—flatters ‘superstar’ *Aatish Kapoor* (played by Akshaye Khanna) by convincing him he is “Oscar-level” material. Now, with Akshaye Khanna’s resurgence in Hindi cinema through powerful roles such as *Aurangzeb* in *Chhava* and *Rehman Dakait* in *Dhurandhar*, he has once again become a favourite among moviegoers.

During this wave of appreciation, a fan resurfaced a meme from *Tees Maar Khan* in which Akshay Kumar praises Akshaye Khanna’s acting calibre. The fan wrote on X, “Thank you director saab, for giving the nation such an amazing actor.” Akshay picked up the post and quote-tweeted it, writing: “Kabhi ghamand nahi kiya bhai... kabhi ghamand nahi kiya.” Akshay Kumar had also recently praised *Dhurandhar*, which stars *Ranveer Singh*. Sharing his thoughts on X, he wrote: “Watched *Dhurandhar* and I am blown away. What a gripping tale, and you have simply nailed it, *Aditya Dhar*. We need our stories to be told in a hard-hitting way and I am so glad that audiences are giving the film all the love it deserves.” Released on December 5, *Dhurandhar* has had an impact on Akshaye Khanna’s career similar to how *Animal* transformed *Bobby Deol*’s trajectory with his role as *Abrar*. Despite criticism for their gore and violence, both films resonated strongly with audiences.



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