

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

19 December, 2025 | Friday | Volume No:13 | Issue No: 262

Pages: 12+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

## Bomb threat triggers alert at Nampally criminal court

Hyderabad: Security personnel went into a tizzy after a bomb threat was received at the Nampally criminal court complex on Thursday. An email was received by the Nampally court authorities stating that a bomb had been planted in the court premises and that it could explode at any time.

The information was passed on to the local police, who alerted the bomb disposal and detection units of the Hyderabad police. The teams conducted a thorough check of the court premises and later declared the threat to be a hoax.

## India signs FTA with Oman, receives zero duty access on 99% of its exports



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

India and Oman signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on Thursday (December 18, 2025), under which Oman will provide India duty-free access to 98.08% of its tariff lines, which covers 99.38% of what India exports to Oman. India, on the other hand, has offered liberalised tariffs on 77.79% of its total tariff lines, covering 94.81% of what India imports from Oman. Apart from the tariff removal on merchandise exports, the deal also includes several concessions that are expected to benefit India's service sector, including in terms of mobility of workers. The deal was signed in Muscat by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

India exported \$4.06 billion worth of merchandise to Oman in 2024-25, which made up 0.93% of India's total exports that year. It imported \$6.5 billion worth of goods from Oman, comprising 0.91% of India's total imports in 2024-25. "The CEPA will infuse the India-Oman partnership in the 21st century with renewed faith and energy," Mr. Modi said earlier in the day while speaking at the India-Oman Business Forum. "This is a blueprint for our future. It will give our trade new vigour and new trust for investments and will open the doors of new opportunities in every sector." This is the first bilateral agreement that Oman has signed with any country since it signed a deal with the U.S. in 2006. It is also the second deal India has signed with a country in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the first one being with the U.A.E. signed in February 2022. Mr. Goyal had also pointed out that a trade deal with Oman also serves as a gateway for India to the Gulf Cooperation Council region, eastern Europe, central Asia, and to Africa.

## Kerala HC extends arrest protection to Rahul Mamkootathil till January 7



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Kochi: Beleaguered first-time now ousted 'Congress' MLA Rahul Mamkootathil on Thursday received temporary relief from the Kerala High Court, which directed that he should not be arrested till January 7, when it will examine, in detail, the sexual assault case registered against him.

The order extends the interim protection earlier granted to the Palakkad legislator, who has been facing mounting legal and political pressure over two separate complaints. The High Court had first granted him protection from arrest on December 6, when Mamkootathil went underground following the registration of the cases. The interim relief was extended again on Thursday, providing him with breathing space as the court prepares to hear the matter at length early next year. In parallel, a lower court in Thiruvananthapuram last week also ordered that he should

## Qatar-returned NRI wins sarpanch post by 1 vote in Jagtial village

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Dubai: An NRI, who returned home after spending considerable time abroad, was elected by the people of his village to lead them as sarpanch in the final phase of gram panchayat elections that concluded on Wednesday. Dharmaraju Yadav Panchita, who spent 16 years working in Qatar, was one of the founders of Telangana Gulf Samiti, the first organisation formed by Telangana expatriates in the gas-rich Gulf nation. Dharmaraju was a familiar face in the Sanaya area of Doha among Telangana NRI workers, as he volunteered to address routine issues faced by them with the support of the Indian embassy and local authorities. After returning home,



## Another student dies after suspected food poisoning at Residential School

Hyderabad: A suspected food poisoning incident in the State government-run school has now claimed the life of another student on Thursday.

Sai Likhitha (14), a Class VIII student of the Telangana Social Welfare Residential School Pochampad in Nizamabad district, fell seriously ill due to suspected food poisoning in the school premises on December 5. She was already suffering from jaundice, which triggered the severity of the food poisoning and left her in a critical condition. Likhitha passed away while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Hyderabad.

## Deflation rings alarm bells in Telangana for third consecutive month



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Hyderabad: Telangana recorded deflation for the third consecutive month at a rate of 0.1 per cent in November, raising concerns over weak consumption and economic stability. Though the State was among those witnessing falling retail prices, its continued presence in the negative zone for five of the last six months pointed to a worrying trend rather than offering comfort.

According to the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme

Implementation (MoSPI) for November 2025, India's national retail inflation stood at 0.71 per cent, while the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) recorded a deflationary figure of minus 3.91 per cent. States such as Bihar (minus 1.67 per cent), Odisha (minus 1.29 per cent), Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh (minus 1.06 per cent each) also saw sharper deflation. More concerning is the broader trend. Union government data indicated that Telangana has entered deflation multiple times this fiscal year, making it an outlier at the national level. Inflation fell to minus 0.93 per cent in June and minus 0.44 per cent in July, briefly recovered to 0.94 per cent in August, before slipping again into deflation in September at minus 0.15 per cent. In October, the State reportedly recorded minus 1.16 per cent inflation, well below the national average.

Economists cautioned that recurring deflation is a double-edged situation. While it may ease household expenses for a short period, prolonged price decline often points to weak consumption, stressed incomes, lower purchasing power, poor demand and slowing economic activity. Sustained deflation could hurt investment, job creation and revenue mobilisation, affecting overall economic momentum.

## Harish Rao seeks clarity on Ghanpur ayacut water release, calls for crop holiday

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Medak: Former Minister T Harish Rao demanded that the government come out with a clear clarification on water release to the ayacut under the Ghanpur project. Speaking to reporters in Medak after felicitating newly elected sarpanches on Thursday, Harish Rao said the government had decided to take up repair works on the Singur project during the Yasangi season, leaving farmers of Medak, Sangareddy and Kamareddy districts in a state of confusion. Though there was a window to carry out the works during summer, he said the government had chosen to undertake them during Yasangi.

The former minister asserted that Manjeera water was the birthright of farmers from Medak and Nizamabad districts. Demanding that the government declare a crop holiday under the Singur, Ghanpur and Nizam Sagar projects, he also urged it to announce compensation to farmers for the ongoing Yasangi season. Due to the lack of clarity, Rao said many farmers in Medak were drilling borewells in their agricultural fields by spending huge amounts. He said the BRS government had supplied irrigation water for two crops and arrested the migration of farmers to Hyderabad. He added that Kaleshwaram water was supplied to save crops in Medak whenever there was a shortage of rainfall or lack of inflows into the Manjeera river during the BRS

rule. Accusing the government of completely ignoring farmers' interests, the former minister said the Congress government had failed to implement complete loan waiver, Rythu Bharosa, bonus and several other benefits. Rao said nearly Rs. 1,800 crore in bonus amount for the last two seasons was still pending with the government. The former minister accused Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of denying uninterrupted power supply, urea, green manure seeds and several other benefits to the farming community, thereby pushing farmers into crisis. He said there was no announcement from the government on Yasangi Rythu Bharosa even though paddy transplantation had already been completed.

(6.5), Adilabad (7.7), Vikarabad (8.1), Siddipet (8.1) and Medak (8.5).

## IMD-Hyderabad cold wave warning: Temperatures to plunge 4 degree C below normal



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Hyderabad: Cold wave conditions are set to intensify across Telangana, including parts of Hyderabad, over the next two days. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)-Hyderabad on Thursday, in its cold wave warning, said "Minimum temperatures are likely to be below normal by 3 degree C to 4 degree C, at isolated pockets during next 2-3 days over Telangana".

The IMD-Hyderabad has issued a cold wave alert for several districts, including Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Sangareddy, Medak, Mancherial, Warangal, Hanumakonda, Vikarabad, and Kamareddy districts. The minimum temperature in these districts is expected to range between 5 degree C and 10 degree C. Other regions in the State will see slightly higher ranges, fluctuating between 10 degree C and 15 degree C. The chill was already evident early on Thursday morning. According to data from the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDPS), city outskirts like Moinabad and Ibrahimpatnam in Rangareddy district recorded lows of 6.5°C and 7.5°C, respectively. Some of the other regions that recorded minimum temperatures (in degree Celsius), between Wednesday night and Thursday early morning, include HCU, Serilingampalli (8.1), Moula Ali (9.4), Rajendranagar (9.5), Gachibowli (11), Gajularamaram (11.4), Jeedimetla (11.6) and Alwal (12). The districts that recorded minimum temperatures include Komaram Bheem Asifabad (5.7), Sangareddy (6.4), Rangareddy

## TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH

H.No. 4-3-67/2/1 &amp; 4-3-67/2/2, Ward No.21, Dwaraka Nagar, Adilabad-504001 (T.S.)

### AUCTION NOTICE

Auction sale under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 of the movable property hypothecated/immovable property mortgaged to the TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK, ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH (Formerly known as Deccan Gramenea Bank) for recovery of the secured debts Rs. 20,66,942/- (+ interest other charges) of which the property brought to sale.

(a) Date and time of auction : 28/01/2026, Time 12.00 (noon) to 1.00 pm.

(b) Place of auction : M/s E-Procurement Technologies Limited (Auctiontiger),

<https://www.sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net>

(c) Reserve Price : Rs. 15,35,00/-

(d) Amount of Secured debt : Rs. 20,66,942/- (+ interest & other charges)

(e) Name of the Borrower : Kammawar Nanda Kumar

(f) Name of the mortgagor : Kammawar Nanda Kumar

Description of the property under boundaries \*\* (give full details)

House bearing Flat No. 202 Mani sai residency in second floor having built up area measuring 850.00 sq. feet + 94.4 sq. yards = 78.86 sq.meters divided share in land 33.33 sq. yards inclusive of common & parking area on plot No. 136 & 137 in sy no. 14 situated at Dasnupur, Mavala, Adilabad Dist.

East 6' wide passage West Open to sky

North Open to sky South Flat No. 201

Boundaries of Property:

East Plot No. 135 West Road,

North Road South Open Place

Terms and conditions of the auction:

i) The property shall be auctioned as is and where is" condition.

ii) For participation in the auction, the intending bidder have to deposit an amount equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price of the property being auctioned as a refundable Earnest Money Deposit by way of cash or money order or Banker's cheque or D.D. drawn in favour of TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK, Nallakunta Branch to the following Account No. CA: 79073063538; Name: E-Auctions - Earnest Money Deposit Account, IFSC code: TGRB000224.

iii) The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the amount on the same day of the sale in cash / D.D. drawn on any Nationalized Bank and the balance within 15 days from the date of sale.

iv) The successful bidder shall bear all expenses like stamp duty, registration fee etc., for getting the sale certificate registered in his favour.

v) In case of default in whatsoever manner by the successful bidder in adhering to the terms and conditions of the sale the earnest money and other amounts deposited by him as the case may be shall be forfeited.

vi) The Authorized Officer shall have powers to accept or reject bids or postpone/cancel the auction without assigning any reasons thereof.

vii) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending bidders may contact the Branch Manager, Adilabad Main Branch, Phone No. 9491041704, 9247543099 and they are at liberty to make their own assessment/enquiry about the property.

Place: Adilabad Date: 18.12.2025

Sd/- Authorised Officer,  
Telangana Gramenea Bank

# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

# JSW MG Motor India announces price hike of up to 2% starting January'2026

Hyderabad JSW MG Motor India today announced a marginal price hike of up to 2% across its product offerings.

The price increase shall be effective from 1st January 2026 and will vary as per the model and variant. The reasons behind the price increase are rising input costs and other macroeconomic factors.

SAIC Motor, a global Fortune 500 company with a presence in over 100 countries and JSW Group (India's leading conglomerate with interests across B2B and B2C sectors) formed a joint venture - JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. in 2023. The joint venture aims to build a smart and sustainable automotive ecosystem while staying focused on developing a diverse portfolio of vehicles to give car buyers better access to advanced technologies and futuristic products with attractive value propositions. JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. is committed to introducing world-class technology, strengthening the manufacturing landscape, bringing the best of innovation across its business operations, and generating significant employment

opportunities through extensive localisation.

Founded in the UK in 1924, Morris Garages vehicles were world-famous for their sports cars, roadsters, and cabriolet series. MG vehicles were much sought after by celebrities, including British Prime Ministers and even the British Royal Family, for their styling, elegance, and spirited performance. The MG Car Club, set up in 1930 at Abingdon in the UK, has thousands of loyal fans, making it one of the world's largest clubs for a car brand. MG has evolved into a modern, futuristic, and innovative brand over the last 100 years. Its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Halol, Gujarat, has an annual production capacity of 1,00,000 plus vehicles and 6,000 direct and indirect employees. Driven by its vision of CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared, and Electric) mobility, the innovative automaker has augmented across-the-board 'experiences' within the automobile segment today. It has introduced several 'firsts' in India, including India's first Internet SUV - MG Hector, India's first Pure Electric Internet



SUV - MG ZS EV, India's first Autonomous (Level 1) Premium SUV - MG Gloster, the Astor- India's first SUV with personal AI assistant and Autonomous (Level 2) technology, MG Comet - The Street-Smart Car and India's first Intelligent CUV, MG Windsor.

## Millions Served, Lakhs Empowered: Flipkart's Festive Supply Chain at the Heart of Bharat

Hyderabad Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace, today announced key milestones from its 2025 festive season - highlighting scale, speed, and social impact. The Big Billion Days were powered by its robust logistics network, which fulfilled record volumes, enabled near-instant deliveries, and significantly expanded its regional footprint. With over 4 lakh seasonal job opportunities created, a 44% growth in same-day/next-day deliveries, and heightened demand from Tier 2 / 3 cities, Flipkart's supply chain put both technology and people at the centre of India's festive momentum.

Powering Festive India, Minute by Minute

On peak days, Flipkart moved over 5,000 shipments per minute, enabled by a tech-led, demand-sensitive supply chain infrastructure. The company saw a 44% increase in same-day and next-day deliveries compared to last year, reflecting growing customer expectations and enhanced last-mile capabilities. With over 7.3 million shipments fulfilled in a single day - averaging more than 3 lakh an hour - Flipkart's network demonstrated precision at scale. In one standout example, an appliance was delivered in just 15 minutes at midnight, and a TV installation was completed within 36 minutes of delivery, setting new benchmarks for customer delight.

Technology at Scale, Festivities at Doorstep

Flipkart's festive operations were powered by an intelligent supply chain built to move billions of units with speed and consistency. AI-powered forecasting, ML-driven planning and real-time capacity orchestration kept the network agile during surges, while automated inventory placement and AI-led IWIT (Inter-Warehouse Inventory Transfer) boosted in-stock availability. Inside fulfilment centres, AGVs, robotic arms, cross-belt sorters, and sensor-led tracking reduced turnaround times significantly, supported by AI powered X-ray fraud detection and advanced geocoding that improved accuracy across India's complex addressing landscape. AI-driven packaging tools further optimise materials and reduce waste. With a diverse, well-trained workforce and a tech-enabled network reaching 21,000+ pincodes, these capabilities enabled Flipkart to manage millions of peak-hour orders seamlessly, delivering a dependable, positive experience to households across Bharat.

Bharat at the Centre

The festive momentum this year was led strongly by



Tier 2 and 3 cities, which accounted for over 60% of all BBD orders. Cities like Jhajjar and Bahraich recorded exponential order growth, as Flipkart deepened its regional infrastructure to meet this rising demand. Categories such as small furniture and household supplies saw the highest uptick in non-metro markets (90%), driven by growing aspirations and increasing digital confidence among customers. Behind this orchestration was a workforce scaled across 28 states, with over 4 lakh seasonal job opportunities created to meet the surge. Notably, 15% of these roles were filled by first-time entrants to the workforce.

## Admissions Open for NIFT Hyderabad for Academic Year 2026-27



KARIMNAGAR BUREAU, December 18, Indian chronicle "The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Hyderabad campus, functioning under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, has released the admission notification for the academic year 2026-27. Online registrations are currently open for courses commencing from July 2026. Established through an Act of Parliament on the lines of premier institutions such as IITs and IIMs, NIFT plays a pivotal role in developing skilled professionals in the fields of design, management, and technology, catering to the needs of the global fashion industry.

Through its campuses across the country, NIFT offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes with excellent placement opportunities, officials said. "The undergraduate programmes available include Fashion Design, Textile Design, Accessory Design, Knitwear Design, Leather Design, Fashion Communication, and Fashion Technology. Students who have completed 10+2 in any stream are eligible to apply for these courses. Candidates who have completed graduation in any discipline are eligible for postgraduate programmes." For NIFT Admissions 2026, the last date for online registration is January 6, 2026. Applications with a late fee will be accepted from January 7 to January 10, 2026. The entrance examination is scheduled to be held on February 8, 2026, and the final results will be announced online in the last week of April 2026, officials informed. "To create awareness about admissions, NIFT Hyderabad is organizing special Open House sessions. A physical Open House will be held at the NIFT Hyderabad campus on December 29, while an online Open House is scheduled for January 2. These sessions will provide detailed information about courses, the admission process, and career opportunities. Interested students can visit [www.nift.ac.in](http://www.nift.ac.in) for more details. They may also contact [academics.hyderabad@nift.ac.in](mailto:academics.hyderabad@nift.ac.in) or reach out via WhatsApp at 7097664388, officials added.

has made a complete recovery." Addressing the media at a press conference held on Thursday at Yashoda Hospitals, Karimnagar, Dr. Ashok Kumar stated that the hospital's Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplant Unit provides comprehensive treatment for both adults and children suffering from cancerous and non-cancerous blood disorders. These include leukemia, lymphomas, multiple myeloma, aplastic anemia, thalassemia, and sickle cell disease. Dr. Ashok Kumar, who specializes in bone marrow transplantation, revealed that he has successfully performed over 400 bone marrow transplants in both pediatric and adult patients to date. He highlighted that the center follows stringent international medical standards and is equipped with advanced diagnostic techniques, state-of-the-art transplant infrastructure, and an experienced multidisciplinary medical team. He further emphasized that with timely diagnosis and advanced treatments such as bone marrow transplantation, many blood cancers and inherited blood disorders can now be completely cured or effectively controlled. Representatives of Yashoda Hospitals stated that the institution remains committed to providing ethical, high-quality, and affordable transplant care, while delivering world-class hematology services across the country.

## Applications Invited for Admissions into SC, ST, BC, Minority & General Gurukula Schools

Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, December 18: "Admissions to Classes 5 to 9 in SC, ST, BC, Minority and General Gurukula Residential Schools for the academic year 2026-27 will be made through a Common Entrance Test, according to a notification issued by the Gurukula Educational Institutions Society. Eligible students can submit their online applications from January 11 to January 21 by paying an application fee of ₹100. The entrance examination will be conducted on February 22, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, at selected examination centers. After the announcement of results, admissions will be granted strictly based on merit and reservation norms as prescribed by the government.

Officials clarified that the selection of students and allotment of admissions will be carried out based on the old unified districts. Students applying for admission must submit the following documents along with their application - Caste Certificate, Income Certificate, Bonafide Certificate from the school currently studying, One passport-size photograph, Other relevant certificates, as applicable. For additional details and clarification, parents and students may contact the helpline numbers: 040-23391598, 040-23328266, 040-24734899, 8333800221, 9494500180. The Gurukula Progressive Parents Association has appealed to parents to utilize this valuable opportunity for their children's education. This appeal was made to the press by State President Machcha Narsanna (Marx Ambedkar) and State Secretary S. Venkatesh.



## BFSI H2FY26 Outlook - Poised for a Stronger Performance

Hyderabad

Banking credit is expected to grow at 11.5%–12.5% year-on-year in FY26, driven by retail and MSME segments, with corporate lending showing some momentum as borrowers shift from bond markets to banks, which remains concomitant with the yield differentials. Deposit growth continues to lag loan growth, keeping the Credit-to-Deposit ratio elevated at approximately 80%.

Meanwhile, Net Interest Margins (NIMs) are expected to stabilise in H2 as banks focus on core earnings and operational efficiency. At the same time, funding costs are expected to ease as systemic liquidity improves following the CRP cut and interest rates stabilise. Banks with a strong CASA base and liability management are likely to benefit from better spreads. Additionally, banking asset quality is expected to remain benign in FY26 on the back of lower slippages, higher recoveries and write-offs.

The Indian banking industry is poised for a stronger performance in the second half of FY26, supported by improving macroeconomic conditions, easing funding costs, benign asset quality and early signs of a consumption rebound. Banks anticipate a stable credit growth & margins, and sustained asset quality, reinforcing confidence in the sector's resilience.

NBFCs

The Assets under Management (AuM) of NBFCs has witnessed a more than 1.7x rise since FY21, and the share of retail within the AUM has been steadily inching up to 56% in FY25 from 49% in FY21. NBFCs' aggregate asset quality has been improving, driven by stronger infra-financing NBFCs, notwithstanding the moderation in the retail book, especially the unsecured segment.

Amongst asset classes, MFI has been affected the most and is expected to witness a mild growth of 4% in FY26 after contracting 14% in FY25. We expect credit cost for this segment at 6.1% in FY26, down from 9.0% in FY25, with improvement in overall earnings anticipated only post FY26.

MSME lending is another segment witnessing higher delinquencies in the recent past, especially for lower ticket sizes. Credit costs are likely to inch up to 1.7% in FY26 from 1.5% in FY25. Affordable HFCs would continue to benefit from low credit costs of 0.4% in FY26. Due to a larger base, AUM growth is expected to moderate slightly to 20%. After growing at a healthy 30% in FY25, gold loan financiers are likely to report even higher growth of 35% in FY26, supported by favourable gold prices and the recent relaxation of LTV norms for loans below Rs. 2.5 lakh. Growth in the overseas education loan segment is likely to moderate in FY26, driven by increased credit costs due to visa and job-related uncertainty in key markets such as the US.

## Is Class Warfare In Congress The Reason For The Sarpanch's Defeat?

"Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem, Asifabad, District Srinivas, December 18 "Komuram Bheem Asifabad, Rajampet Gram Panchayat of Asifabad District" The Congress party has suffered an unexpected

setback. Is the internal factional struggle within the party the main reason behind the defeat of the Congress-backed sarpanch candidate Nampally Shankar? Questions are being raised in political circles. There are allegations that while one faction of the party actively participated in the election campaign, another faction did not even look up. There have been whispers from the party ranks that there was a lack of coordination from the campaign to the polling. Despite being the party in power, the inability to make its own candidate win has become a serious political defeat for the Congress. There are criticisms that the Rajampet result clearly shows what the results will be if there is no unity at the village level. Clan struggle, Negligence, lack of coordination... Are these the reasons for the defeat of the Congress candidate? Or will this become a big warning for the party in the coming days? This has become a hot topic among political analysts.



campaign, another faction did not even look up. There have been whispers from the party ranks that there was a lack of coordination from the campaign to the polling. Despite being the party in power, the inability to make its own candidate win has become a serious political defeat for the Congress. There are criticisms that the Rajampet result clearly shows what the results will be if there is no unity at the village level. Clan struggle, Negligence, lack of coordination... Are these the reasons for the defeat of the Congress candidate? Or will this become a big warning for the party in the coming days? This has become a hot topic among political analysts.

## Bursa Pochayya Becomes Rajampet Sarpanch



in Rajampet, which was separated from the district headquarters and Asifabad Municipality, was conducted with enthusiasm. Bursa Pochayya won the first-ever panchayat elections held in Rajampet. Mango Lakshmi as Deputy Sarpanch BRS candidate Bursa Pochayya won the Rajampet panchayat in Komuram Bheem Asifabad district headquarters with a huge majority. In the first-ever election, Barasa won the majority of ward members in Rajampet panchayats, and Mangodi Lakshmi was elected as the deputy sarpanch. Barasa leaders, including MLA Kovalakshmi, and others congratulated him on the occasion.

## CMRF a Boon for the Poor and Middle Class: Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 18 (Indian Chronicle):”“MANDUMULA PARAMESHWAR REDDY Congress Party in-charge of the Uppal Assembly constituency, said that the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund (CMRF) has become a major support system for the poor and middle-class families. He stated that under the Congress government, Chief Minister is ensuring timely payment of medical bills through the CMRF for all eligible beneficiaries. Parameshwar Reddy distributed CMRF cheques to residents of the Uppal constituency. On this occasion, cheques were handed over to beneficiaries as follows: Lakshmi – ₹26,000, Sahina Sultana – ₹57,000, Narasimha – ₹25,000, Sakkubai Tarani – ₹41,000. Several senior leaders from the Uppal constituency attended the programme, including Chen Reddy Raghupathi Reddy, Agam Reddy, Eega Anjaneyulu Mudiraj, Ramantapur Division President M.D. Rafiq, H.R. Mohan, Bazar Naveen Goud, Bullet Ashok, Afzal, and Waheed.

## Deputy Mayor Mothe Srilatha Shobhan Reddy had a special darshan of Goddess Kanakadurga at Indrakiladri



“Indian Chronicle, OU 18: Greater Hyderabad City Deputy Mayor Mothe Srilatha Shobhan Reddy visited the Indrakiladri Sri Kanakadurga Ammavari Temple in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on Thursday. On this occasion, she had a special darshan of the Goddess and participated in special pujas. She said that she prayed to the Goddess for the peace, welfare and development of the people of the city. Temple officials and devotees participated in this program and gave her a traditional welcome.

## All Parks in Chilkanagar Division Set for Major Development: Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen



from the including Balakrishna Goud and Banti Goud, colony representatives, and local residents Omkar Singh Ramana, Shivareddy, Gaffoor, Sandeep, and others.

## Threaten Indefinite Strike Kagaznagar Municipal Workers, Unpaid for Four Months

“Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 18 (Indian Chronicle):”“A general body meeting of municipal workers was held in Kagaznagar town on Wednesday, during which CITU District Secretary Rajender addressed the gathering and strongly demanded the immediate payment of long-pending wages. Speaking at the meeting, Rajender stated that municipal workers employed in the Kagaznagar Municipality have not received their salaries for the past four months, causing severe financial distress to their families. He further alleged that despite submitting several representations to the District Collector and the Municipal Commissioner, the authorities have failed to respond. He also pointed out that nearly ₹1.50 crore in pending PF and ESI dues remains unpaid, adding to the hardships faced by the workers. Rajender emphasized that municipal workers are being forced to resort to protests merely to receive wages for the work they have already performed. The CITU leader urged the District Collector and the Kagaznagar Municipal Commissioner to intervene immediately and ensure the release of all pending wages without further delay. He warned that if the issue is not resolved at the earliest, municipal workers would be compelled to launch an indefinite strike. The meeting was attended by CITU District President R. Triveni, District Treasurer Shankar, Municipal Union Working President Sanjeev, along with leaders Shankaramma, Malesh, Ramesh, Lakshmi, L. Lakshmi, Eshwaramma, Ashok, Srinivas, M. Srinivas, Lingamurthy, Md. Rafiq, Praveen, and a large number of municipal workers.

## Electricity Department Conducts ‘Praja Bata’ Program in New Ramnagar Colony



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, December 18 (Indian Chronicle):”“As part of the Electricity Department’s Praja Bata (public outreach) program, officials conducted a field visit to New Ramnagar Colony on Thursday to interact directly with residents and address their concerns. The program was led by CE Medchal Kamesh, Habsiguda SE Venkanna, Habsiguda DE Subbarao, Uppal ADE Ravinder, and Chilkanagar AE Vinay Kumar Reddy. The officials toured the colony along with local residents, listened to their grievances, and reviewed electricity-related

issues on the ground. Several problems were resolved on the spot during the visit. TRS leader Ambati Jagadeesh brought various colony-related issues to the notice of the electricity department officials and requested prompt solutions. On the occasion, the officials who participated in the Praja Bata program were felicitated by the residents in appreciation of their efforts.

## Woman journalist felicitates Jagruthi president Kavitha.



“Yellandu, December 18 (Indian Chronicle):”“Former Chief Minister KCR’s daughter and Jagruthi president Kavitha was felicitated by Zaharabee, secretary of the Illandu Questioning People’s Voice Press Club and journalist of the Indian Chronicle daily newspaper, who presented her with a shawl. Telangana Jagruthi president Kalvakuntla Kavitha visited the Hazrat Nagul Meera Dargah in Satyanarayanaapuram, Ward No. 1, within the municipal limits. She was given a grand welcome with band music on Thursday under the auspices of the dargah’s caretaker (Malik), Lakshminarayana. On this occasion, she said that the role of journalists is crucial in society. Journalists participated in the felicitation program.

## Telangana Jagruthi President visits Nagul Meera Dargah



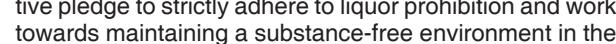
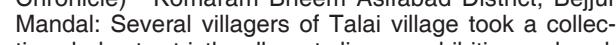
Nagul Meera Dargah, located in the forest area of Satyanarayanaapuram, Ward No. 1, within the municipal limits, on Thursday. She was given a grand welcome by the Dargah’s caretaker, Lakshminarayana. Following this, special prayers were offered. The caretaker explained



the significance of the dargah. Kavitha applied sandalwood paste to the devotees and greeted each of them warmly. Later, speaking to journalists, she said that some people are seizing power and positions for their own benefit. She stated that they are remaining in the party only for the sake of positions. She urged them to resign from the party and relinquish their positions, just as she had done.

## Koneru Konappa Felicitates Newly Elected Gram Panchayat Sarpanches in Kagaznagar Mandal

“Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 18 (Indian Chronicle):”“Former Sirpur MLA Koneru Konappa felicitated the newly elected Gram Panchayat Sarpanches, Deputy Sarpanches, and Ward Members in Kagaznagar Mandal following their victory in the recent Gram Panchayat elections. On the occasion, Koneru Konappa, who extended his support to the winning candidates, honoured them with shawls and conveyed his heartfelt congratulations. He praised their success and expressed confidence that they would work with dedication for the development of villages and the welfare of the people. The programme was also attended by former Zilla Parishad Chairman Koneru Krishna Rao, along with party leaders, public representatives, and supporters.



## Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Sri Ayyappa Swamy Mahapadi Puja

““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, , December 18 (Indian Chronicle):“Uppal Corporator RAJITHA PARAMESHWAR REDDY participated as the chief guest in the Sri Ayyappa Swamy Mahapadi Puja held on Thursday at Ganesh Nagar in Chilkanagar Division. The program was organised under the leadership of Sai Sucharitha. On this occasion, the corporator offered special prayers to and extended her wishes that the divine blessings of the Lord be upon everyone. She expressed her hope that the people of Uppal remain happy and prosperous with the grace of Ayyappa Swamy.“The event witnessed the participation of priests, devotees, and local residents in large numbers,



## 'Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign 3.0' Awareness Program at Uppal Government Degree College



““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, UPPAL, December 18 (Indian Chronicle):“An awareness program against the use of tobacco products was successfully conducted at Uppal Government Degree College, jointly organized by the

NSS and the Department of Chemistry.“Scientists from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) Extension and Training Division, including Dr. S. Shankar Naik, Dr. Pagidaju Srinu, Shashikumar, and Kumari Shreesha, educated the students about the health problems caused by tobacco use, its negative impact on society, and preventive measures.Chief Guest Dr. S. Shankar stated: “Smoking is the root cause of lifestyle diseases such as heart disease, infertility, PCOD, obesity, and premature aging. Young people, do not let smoke ruin your lives...” he warned.“Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar, Vice Principal Dr. Ch. Satyanarayana, NSS Program Officer Jalda Vishwanath Kumar, Academic Coordinator Smt. K. Geetha, and others participated, encouraging the students.Following the program, a poster and picture exhibition, a quiz competition, and an essay writing competition were held.T-shirts were presented as prizes to the winners, meritorious participants, and enthusiastic volunteers.Through this program, a clear message about a healthy lifestyle, prevention of tobacco product use, and social responsibility was conveyed to the volunteers and students.

## Panchayat Elections Peaceful: SP Congratulates Officials



““Indian Chronicle“ kumram bheem, Asifabad, District Report, December 18, 2025:“The three-phased Gram Panchayat elections in Komuram Bheem, Asifabad district ended peacefully.District SP Nitika Pant IPS Congratulated the people, police officers and other Departmental staff who cooperated in the conduct of the elections.Strict action was taken against violations of the election code of conduct and liquor, ganja, cash, PDS rice and sarees worth Rs. 6,49,346 were seized. 800 police officers and staff along with 200 other departmental staff have made strong arrangements for the smooth conduct of the elections. 959 people who were involved in clashes in the last elections were bound over as a precautionary measure.

## Paramita Heritage School student selected for SGF State Level Judo Championship



master Gopikrishna and Coordinator Rabindra Patro, congratulated the student participating in the state-level competitions and Judo coach Goli Sudhakar.

““Chittimalla Mahendar, Karimnagar Bureau, December 18, Indian Chronicle:“The headmaster of Paramita Heritage School, located in Padmanagar, stated that Kothapelli Rishith, a 9th-grade student of their school, has been selected for the state-level Judo Championship.“In the combined district SGF Under-14 boys' Judo Championship competitions, organized by the District SGF on December 18th at the Regional Sports School Indoor in Karimnagar town, Kothapelli Rishith, a 9th-grade student of Paramita Heritage School, won the gold medal in the 50+ kg category and was selected for the state-level Judo competitions.“He will participate in the 69th State Level Judo Boys' Championship competitions, organized by the State Schools Sports Federation, from the 20th to the 22nd of this month at the J.N. Stadium in Hanamkonda town.“On this occasion, the school chairman Dr. Inuganti Prasad Rao and school directors Prasuna, Rakesh, Rashmita, Anukar Rao, Vinoda Rao, V.U.M. Prasad, and Hanumatha Rao, along with Head-

## System Glitch Sparks Consumer Harassment: Hyderabad Customer Targeted Over Fully Paid Delivery

““P.S. ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE.““A Hyderabad-based customer has reported sustained harassment by delivery personnel of BigBasket following an internal system failure that erroneously recorded a successfully delivered and fully paid order as “undelivered.” Despite physical receipt of the goods and in-app confirmation of payment and delivery, the customer was repeatedly pressured to return the items and place a fresh order to compensate for the company's backend discrepancy.“The situation escalated with persistent early-morning phone calls from delivery staff, causing significant mental anguish and professional disruption.

The customer has expressed grave concerns regarding the misuse of personal contact information, coercive conduct, and the imposition of corporate operational failures upon an unsuspecting consumer.“Emphasizing that no legal or ethical framework permits a company's internal errors to be transferred to the end user, the customer has termed the incident an instance of unfair trade practice and a breach of consumer trust.“This episode underscores the urgent need for e-commerce platforms to enforce stringent adherence to consumer protection laws, data privacy standards, and professional conduct protocols, ensuring that customers are safeguarded from harassment arising out of organizational lapses.

## DSL Virtue Mall Lights Up Hyderabad with a 60-ft Christmas Tree and City's Biggest 70-ft Santa

tions this season.“With sparkling lights, joyful vibes, and exciting celebrations planned throughout the month, DSL Virtue Mall promises a magical Christmas experience for families and shoppers alike.



““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, UPPAL, DECEMBER (INDIAN CHRONICLE)““This Christmas, DSL Virtue Mall has become Hyderabad's most talked-about festive destination with the unveiling of a grand 60-ft Christmas Tree and the city's biggest 70-ft Santa Claus, seated majestically atop the mall facade.“The larger-than-life installations have already gone viral, drawing crowds from across the city and turning the mall into a festive landmark. Visitors are flocking in to capture the spectacular décor, making it one of Hyderabad's most trending Christmas attractions.

## GHR Infra Enters South Hyderabad with their Boutique Villa Community TRIVANA

Hyderabad, India – [December 18, 2025]: GHR Infra has announced the launch of its new villa community, GHR TRIVANA in South Hyderabad, placing its future residents at the intersection of connectivity and tranquility. With low density at just 52 villas, calibrated orientations for light and ventilation, targeting for IGBC Gold pre-certification and a comprehensive amenity set that spans work, wellness and family life, GHR TRIVANA presents a boutique alternative in South Hyderabad's villa segment.



The community is fully registered with the Telangana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (TG RERA Reg. No.: P02400009860).

Spread across 5.61 verdant acres, GHR TRIVANA will comprise villas designed to maximize cross-ventilation and daylight through thoughtful east and west-facing orientations. Four-bedroom homes measure 239 Sq yds, while five-bedroom variants extend to 304 sq yds, giving owners generous floorplates for multi-generational living or integrated work-from-home zones. At the heart of the gated estate, a 15,000-plus-square-foot clubhouse will include a gym, indoor games lounges, multipurpose halls, an aerobics/yoga hall, hobby and table-tennis rooms, billiards, co-working space, a sun deck and barbecue pavilions, alongside an adult pool and a dedicated kids' pool.

Thoughtfully-planned amenities and features that matter

The amenity programme is designed around balance and everyday ease. In addition to the clubhouse offerings, the outdoors features an Amphitheatre, lawns, pergola seating, landscaped common spaces and neighbourhood parks. Active recreation spans outdoor fitness stations, a half-basketball practice court, pickleball courts and a cricket pitch, while children's play areas in both EPDM and sand surfacing support safe, age-appropriate activity. A supermarket and a multi-utility/provisional space within the enclave add daily convenience, reinforcing the development's self-contained character.

Connectivity and standards that complement healthy lifestyle

Positioned in Almasguda, Tukkuguda—an emerg-

ing growth node just off Exit 14 of the Nehru Outer Ring Road—GHR TRIVANA enjoys rapid, signal-free access to Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in roughly twenty minutes and sits within a 30-kilometre radius of Hyderabad's primary technology and financial districts. The neighbourhood is also close to Hardware Park, Fab City and the upcoming Pharma City industrial zone, all of which are catalysing residential demand in South Hyderabad. Easy connectivity via the ORR further integrates the enclave with Hyderabad's wider arterial network.

Hyderabad's fourth city, also termed as the Bharat Future City, is being planned in southern part of Hyderabad, which is very close to TRIVANA. The fourth city's strategic location between the Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar highways offers excellent connectivity and positions it as a major investment hub near the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. This region is intended to decongest Hyderabad while driving future economic growth for Hyderabad and the Telangana state.

Underscoring its design ethos, GHR TRIVANA is targeting for IGBC Gold pre-certification. Sustainability is expressed through mindful, eco-conscious planning and landscape, with open, shaded seating areas and water features that turn everyday movement through the site into moments of pause. The master plan blends nature and architecture: “Where Nature, Luxury and Harmony Unite”—to create a calm, neighbourhood-scale setting.

GHR TRIVANA's catchment keeps residents “close to everything yet far from the ordinary.” Proximity landmarks include Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (8 km, ~13 min), Nehru ORR Exit 14 (2 km, ~5 min), World Trade Centre, Shamshabad (8 km, ~10 min), along with key healthcare options such as Kondeti Super Speciality Hospital (3.5 km, ~8 min) and Sri Chaitanya Hospital (3 km, ~7 min).

“Securing RERA registration validates our pledge to deliver a residence, where design sophistication and regulatory rigour move in tandem,” said Mr. Kartikeya Reddy M, CEO at GHR Infra. “GHR TRIVANA is aimed at families who seek the openness of villa living, yet still want one-turn connectivity to schools, healthcare and the airport. We have calibrated every square foot to nurture well-being—from ample natural light to spaces that encourage neighbourly interaction.”

“Market data underscores our project's timing. According to the latest NAREDCO-Knight Frank sentiment index, the South Hyderabad leads all Indian regions in residential confidence, buoyed by Hyderabad's appetite for premium, low-density housing. GHR TRIVANA's boutique scale, coupled with its proximity to large employment hubs, responds directly to this preference for spacious homes in transit-rich locations,” opines Mr. V. Shyam Sunder Reddy, Managing Director at GHR Infra.

## Request to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav Ji to provide halting for main trains at Bommaipalli Railway Station: - Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy



““Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. December 18) :- Bhuvanagiri Lok Sabha Member Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav Ji in Delhi and submitted a request to provide halting for main trains at Bommaipalli Railway Station near Bhuvanagiri in Telangana. Similarly, he mentioned the long-standing demand of the people to declare Bommaipalli as a halting station before the Union Railway Minister on this occasion. Bommaipalli, the second railway station near Bhuvanagiri, is an important junction for trains going from Secunderabad to Guntur via Nadikudi, but the lack of a halt for any main train there has become a major inconvenience to the people, said MP Chamala.“He said that the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, Swarnagiri, which is visited by about one lakh devotees every day, is located near Bommaipalli railway station, and AIIMS-Bibinagar is just 8 km away. Similarly, the Yadadri Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple, which is popularly known as the Tirupati of Telangana, is also located nearby, he noted. The MP said that providing a halt for main trains at Bommaipalli station would be very beneficial for passengers, devotees, daily commuters, students, employees, traders and farmers. He believed that this would further develop spiritual tourism, handloom-textile business, agricultural marketing and local businesses.“Similarly, he requested the Railway Minister to modernize and develop Bommaipalli Railway Station and pro-

Narendra Modi is murdering democracy in India...

We will teach the government a proper lesson: Beerla Ilaiah, President, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Congress Committee

““Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. December 15) :- Following a call from the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee, a protest was held on Thursday at Babu Jagjivan Ram Chowrasta in the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district center, under the leadership of District Congress Party President and Alair MLA, Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah. The protest was against the atrocities and illegal activities carried out by the BJP government at the center for the past ten years in connection with the National Herald case against Congress party president Sonia Gandhi and Lok Sabha opposition leader Rahul Gandhi. While the protesters were marching

towards the BJP office, the police made illegal arrests and shifted them to the Yadagirigutta police station. On this occasion, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Congress Party President and Alair MLA, Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah, speaking to the media, said that the Narendra Modi-led central government is murdering democracy in India and using the ED, CBI, and EC to portray the Gandhi family, which brought independence to India and made sacrifices for the country and is now protecting democracy, as culprits. He stated that filing a charge sheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, members of a family that sacrificed their lives for the country, in the National Herald case is very unfortunate. He added that in the coming days, the people of the country will teach Narendra Modi and the BJP central government a proper

lesson. He further stated that the BJP government is trying to defame the Gandhi family, which has made immense sacrifices for the country, by taking the constitution, the ED, EC, and CBI into their own hands and manipulating those who are supposed to implement laws in a democratic manner. He asserted that the people of the country will not believe these attempts. He said that while Sonia Gandhi and Lok Sabha Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi are fighting to uphold the constitution written by Babasaheb Ambedkar and protect democracy, the BJP government is taking these actions as part of a vendetta, using the National Herald case as a pretext for the past ten years, and that all citizens of India are opposing these actions. They stated that since Narendra Modi came to power, unemployment has been increasing and the prices of essential commodities for the common people have skyrocketed. They also alleged that Modi is destroying democracy by using religion and caste as tools. As part of the nationwide protest being conducted by Congress workers today, they announced that they would besiege the BJP office in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, as per the orders of Telangana State Congress Party President Mahesh Kumar Goud. The program was attended by PCC General Secretary Pothnati Pramod Kumar, former Bhongir Municipal Chairman Pothamsetti Venkateswarlu and Barre Jahangir, DCC Delegiate Tangellapalli Ravikumar, and leaders such as Koora Venkatesh, Padigela Pradeep, Eerapaka Narasimha, Dargayi Hariprasad, Pittala Balraj, Shivakumar, Rachamalla Ramesh, Manchikanti Krishnamurthy, Beesunkunta Satyanarayana, Chinnagari Balraj, and others.

## Gummuru Sarpanch Cherukuthota Suresh Patel Aligns with Congress in the Presence of Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu



"P. S. ASHOKAN" KARIMNGAR BUREAU. "Manthani, December 18: In a significant political development, Cherukuthota Suresh Patel, the democratically elected Sarpanch of Gummuru village in

Manthani Mandal, formally joined the Indian National Congress in the August presence of Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu. "Having earlier secured victory as an independent candidate, Suresh Patel took this decision in accordance with the collective will and aspirations of the villagers, with the primary objective of ensuring accelerated and inclusive village development. By donning the Congress party scarf, he reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening governance and advancing welfare-oriented initiatives at the grassroots level. "On the occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu warmly congratulated Suresh Patel on his induction into the party and expressed confidence that his leadership would play a constructive role in promoting sustainable development and public welfare in Gummuru village. "The event witnessed the presence of prominent leaders, including the Manthani Market Committee Chairman Kududala Venkanna, Congress Mandal President Aili Prasad, Congress Party Social Media In-charge Arelli Kiran Goud, along with several party functionaries and enthusiastic villagers, who extended their support and best wishes.

## Resolve Disputes the Amicable Way: Ramagundam Police Commissioner Calls for Active Public Participation in National Mega Lok Adalat



Principle that "compromise is the best path to justice," Commissioner Jha advised citizens against wasting time and money in repeated court visits for minor disputes. He encouraged litigants to utilise this valuable opportunity extended by the judiciary to achieve peaceful and lawful resolutions.

## Empowering Rural Telangana: Dr. Palvai Harish Babu Celebrates New Sarpanches with Grand Felicitations

"Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 18 (Indian Chronicle)" "In a gesture of encouragement and support, Sirpur Assembly MLA Dr. Palvai Harish Babu felicitated the newly elected Sarpanches and Up-Sarpanches from various gram panchayats in the region. "Pegadapalli Saritha Tirupati was elected as Sarpanch of Somini village in Bejir Mandal, Kota Venu Yadav as Sarpanch of Bareguda in Kagaznagar Mandal with Nerella Venkatesh as Up-Sarpanch, Aggi Sangeeta Srinivas as Sarpanch of Ejgaon, and Bikas Gharami as Sarpanch of Nazrul Nagar with Sameer Gupta as Up-Sarpanch. "Congratulating and honouring the winners, Dr. Palvai Harish Babu assured full cooperation in resolving village-level issues under the leadership of the



new Sarpanches. "The programme was attended by Sirpur Assembly Convenor Gollapalli Veerabhadra Chari, Town President Army Shiva, Mandal Presidents Pulla Ashok, ward members, BJP leaders, and party workers.

## Journalists' problems must be resolved Telangana Journalists Union District President Shanoor Baba

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 18): Telangana Journalists Union Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district president Mohammed Shanoor Baba said that the pending problems of journalists in Telangana state should be resolved. Speaking at a meeting held in the conference hall of SV Hotel in the district center, he expressed his anguish that journalists have faced grave injustice in the state that was achieved through struggle, and that even their minor problems are not being resolved. He demanded that the issues of house plots be resolved, that health cards be accepted in corporate hospitals, that attacks on journalists be stopped, that accreditation cards be provided to all eligible journalists, that pension facilities be provided to journalists above 50 years of age, and that health insurance be provided to every journalist. TJJU District General Secretary Goparaju Venkanna, State Executive Committee member MD. Fasiuddin, District Vice



Presidents Kadir, Rehman, and others participated in this program.

## Delhi Public School (Nacharam) Annual Day Celebrations Held Grandly

"Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, December 18: "The Annual Day celebrations of Delhi Public School, Nacharam were conducted with great grandeur and enthusiasm. The event was graced by distinguished guests including former CBI Joint Director Sri Lakshmi Narayana, Pro-Chairman of Delhi Public Schools and MLC Sri Malka Komarayya, and Ms. Balalatha, Founder of CSB IAS Academy. "Addressing the gathering, Sri Lakshmi Narayana emphasized that in the era of social media, parents must act responsibly toward their children. He cautioned that television programs, crime shows, reality shows, and social media platforms can negatively influence young minds and urged parents to keep children away from such content. He advised students to set clear goals at an early stage and work consistently to achieve them. "He further stressed that while schools impart education, it is the responsibility of parents to instill values and discipline in children. Drawing an analogy with the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati at Prayagraj, he described the DPS Nacharam Annual Day as a confluence of students, parents, and teachers on a single platform. He fondly referred to MLC Malka Komarayya as "DPS Komarayya," appreciating his discipline, dedication, and simplicity, and thanked the DPS management for organizing such a meaningful event. "Ms. Balalatha, in her address, praised the teachers of DPS Nacharam for their remarkable role in shaping students'

futures. She described DPS Nacharam as a strong brand with a legacy of producing outstanding achievers. She highlighted the school's balanced focus on academics, sports, and cultural activities. "She emotionally stated that while her father gave her birth, her teachers gave her life, and urged parents to recognize their children's interests and guide them accordingly. She encouraged students to focus on smart work rather than hard work and to adapt themselves to the changing times. "Speaking on the occasion, MLC and DPS Pro-Chairman Sri Malka Komarayya expressed happiness over the successful organization of the grand event. He explained that the Annual Day was celebrated with the theme "Ishani – Spirit of Motherhood," aimed at highlighting the vital role of parents in students' lives. "He stated that DPS Nacharam gives equal importance to education, sports, and cultural activities and provides training based on each student's interests and talents. He added that the school follows the National Education Policy to equip students to succeed in today's competitive world. He thanked the students, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff for making the event a grand success. "The event was attended by Pallavi Group Director Ms. Malka Pallavi, DPS Nacharam Principal Ms. Jyothi, along with teaching and non-teaching staff, students, and a large number of parents. "Cultural Performances Enthrall the Audience" "As part of the celebrations, DPS students presented captivating dances, songs, skits, and plays. From the role of mothers in ancient epics to the responsibilities of parents in modern society, the performances beautifully depicted parental influence on children's growth and development. The thought-provoking skits highlighting the impact of parents on society and children's futures deeply impressed the audience and dignitaries alike.

## Peaceful conduct of Gram Panchayat elections... Congratulations to the officers of all departments who participated in the conduct of the elections: - District Election Officer, Collector Hanumanth Rao

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 18): District Election Officer and Collector Hanumanth Rao stated in a statement on Thursday that the Gram Panchayat elections, conducted in three phases in the district, have concluded peacefully. The Collector congratulated the officers of various departments who worked responsibly in conducting the elections. He expressed his gratitude to the police, revenue, panchayat, education departments, master trainers, POs, OPOs, micro observers, zonal and route officers, health and Anganwadi teachers, electricity department, and the District Rural Development Department – ?? in short, all the officers of the departments who participated in the election duties – for their cooperation in conducting the election process meticulously in accordance with the instructions of the State Election Commission. He also thanked the representatives of the print and electronic media for providing extensive coverage on various aspects of the elections.

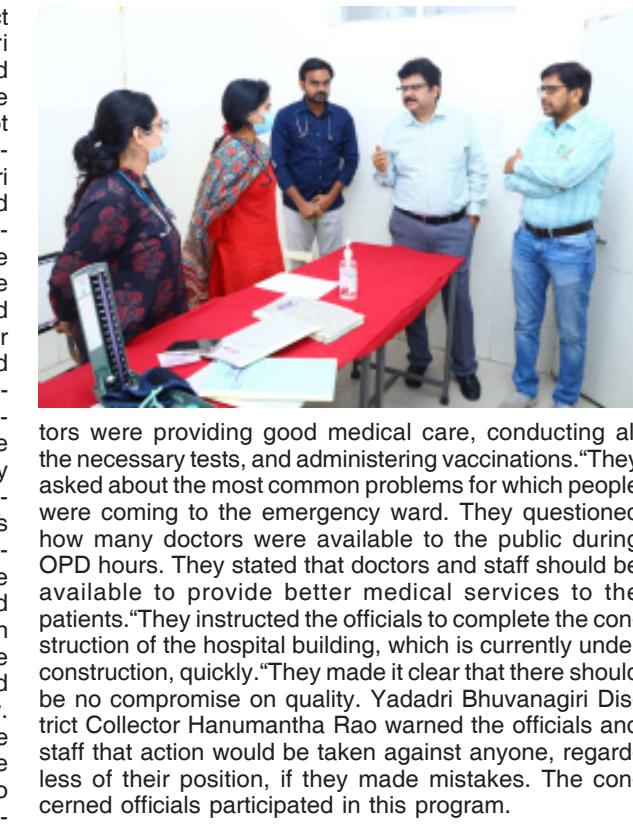


## As Sarpanch of Ganapuram village Sailu is a great success



"As an independent candidate "I am thankful to the people of the village who won me with 201 votes" "Ganapuram village will be further developed and all debts will be paid off" "K Sadanand, Nangunur, December 18 Nangunur mandal Ganapuram village" "Sarpanchigasai as an independent candidate" "He won with a majority of 201 votes. "Speaking on the occasion, he said, "Thank you to all the people of the village for winning me as the independent candidate of Ganapuram village sarpanch with all your blessings." "He assured me that I will always work for the development of Ganapuram village and complete the pending works in the village soon. "I have served you as a dealer for many years. "Now that he has won me as the Gram Panchayat Sarpanchi, he has assured that he will develop the village further and pay off the debt of all of you.

## Show cause notices issued to 82 government employees for not reporting to duty on time at the government hospital: Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumanta Rao



"(Mandava Srisailam, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau, Indian Chronicle, December 15): Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumanta Rao issued show cause notices to 82 government employees of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district government hospital for not attending to their duties properly and not working diligently. He conducted a surprise inspection of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district government hospital on Thursday and thoroughly examined it for three hours. The District Collector immediately took action against those who were absent from duty. As part of this, show cause notices were issued to 63 people for not adhering to punctuality, and show cause notices were also issued to 19 people for being absent from duty. The District Collector expressed anger at the concerned contractor for the incomplete various development works in the hospital. "He also expressed anger at the concerned sanitation staff for the lack of proper sanitation in the hospital. "He toured every ward in the hospital and examined them thoroughly. Collector Hanumanta Rao spoke to the people in the wards and inquired whether the doctors and staff were providing better medical services. He inspected the performance of the staff in the SNCU, Pediatrics, Post-Delivery, and Delivery departments. He also spoke to the patients in the male and female inpatient wards. They asked the doctors why the patients were admitted. "They inquired about the quality of the food provided to the patients daily. They spoke to four patients receiving treatment in the hospital's emergency ward and asked if the doctors were attending to them on time. While speaking to women who had recently given birth, they inquired whether the doc-

tors were providing good medical care, conducting all the necessary tests, and administering vaccinations. "They asked about the most common problems for which people were coming to the emergency ward. They questioned how many doctors were available to the public during OPD hours. They stated that doctors and staff should be available to provide better medical services to the patients. "They instructed the officials to complete the construction of the hospital building, which is currently under construction, quickly. "They made it clear that there should be no compromise on quality. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumanta Rao warned the officials and staff that action would be taken against anyone, regardless of their position, if they made mistakes. The concerned officials participated in this program.

## PMC to construct double-decker bridge over Mula-Mutha River connecting Hadapsar and Kharadi

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

BUILDING PUNE: PMC to construct double-decker bridge over Mula-Mutha River connecting Hadapsar and Kharadi. The project entails a four-lane two-way flyover from Hadapsar to Kharadi Bypass Road, along with the construction of slip roads and footpaths, the shifting of affected utilities, construction of retaining walls and an underground stormwater line for carrying stormwater from the grade separator to the river.

In an effort to provide easy connectivity between the upcoming Information Technology (IT) hubs of Hadapsar and Kharadi in the city, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has decided to construct a Rs 133 crore double-decker bridge across the Mula-Mutha River. The first level of the bridge will have a flyover catering to vehicular traffic, and the second level will have a metro rail. "The double-decker bridge will tackle the traffic problems on the existing river bridge from Mundhwa to Kharadi. The double-decker bridge will pass alongside the existing river bridge that starts from Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Chowk in Mundhwa. It is planned to cater to a vehicle speed of 80 km per hour," said a senior PMC officer.

The Kharadi area is emerging as an IT hub and witnessing rapid urbanisation, while the Hadapsar area already has a lot of IT and industrial zones with major townships. The project entails a four-lane two-way flyover from Hadapsar to Kharadi Bypass Road, along with the construction of slip roads and footpaths, the shifting of affected utilities, construction of retaining walls and an underground stormwater line for carrying stormwater from the grade separator to the river. The PMC officer said the double-decker bridge will have a single integrated pier for the proposed four-lane flyover and the Ramwadi to Swargate Metro line. "The PMC will construct the integrated pillars for the double-decker bridge and recover the expense of the metro-related work from Pune Metro," he added.



"The double-decker bridge will tackle the traffic problems on the existing river bridge from Mundhwa to Kharadi. The double-decker bridge will pass alongside the existing river bridge that starts from Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Chowk in Mundhwa. It is planned to cater to a vehicle speed of 80 km per hour," said a senior PMC officer.

The bridge will be 796 metres long with a 148-metre-long approach from the Hadapsar side and a 136-metre-long approach on the Kharadi side. The carriage width will be 1.5 metres for vehicles. "The design will be submitted to Pune Metro for final acceptance and approval to ensure it meets expectations for the elevated route of the Pune Metro," the officer said. The existing road beneath the bridge will then be developed in a manner that it gets connected to the road from Bund Garden to Mundhwa River Road near the Old Mundhwa River Bridge. The PMC officer said the existing bridge witnesses traffic congestion round the clock, as heavy traffic flows at night as well. The Union Government recently approved the development of the Metro rail route from Khadakwasla to Kharadi via Hadapsar.



## Grand Closing Ceremony of Cyberabad Police 8th Annual Sports, Games & Duty Meet - 2025



““Gachibowli (Dec 18 Indian Chronicle) The Cyberabad Police 8th Annual Sports, Games & Duty Meet - 2025 concluded in a grand and vibrant ceremony today, 18, December, 2025, at the Cyberabad Parade Grounds, Gachibowli.”“The Chief Guest, Telangana State DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy, IPS, graced the event, which was marked by enthusiastic participation from police personnel across all zones and wings.”“Prior to the closing ceremony, DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy, IPS, inaugurated the renovated Police Food Canteen “The Cop Cafe” at Cyberabad Office premises.”“Later, upon the Chief Guest’s arrival at the Parade Grounds for the Sports & Games and Duty Meet, a trained police dog presented a flower basket to him, delighting the audience and creating a memorable moment. The gesture was warmly appreciated by the dignitaries present.”“The 100-meter race for men & Women was officially started by the DGP. In the 100 meters men’s race, the first place was secured by Ramesh (PC, CSW), followed by Venkatesh (PC, CAR Headquarters) in second place, and Vishnu (PC, CAR Headquarters) in third place. In the 100 meters women’s race, the first place went to Gayathri (WPC, CAR Headquarters), with Yamuna, (WPC, CAR Headquarters) taking second place, and Renuka, (WPC, CSW) finishing in third place. The DGP received the general salute from Salami Shastr, presented by Parade Commander Nagaraju Reddy.”“Addressing the gathering, DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy, IPS said that despite the demanding nature of police duties in maintaining law and order, active participation in sports brings renewed enthusiasm among personnel. He noted that sports help relieve work-related stress while enhancing physical fitness, mental resilience, emotional control, and endurance. The DGP emphasized that sports foster discipline, leadership qualities, teamwork, unity, and sportsmanship—essential traits for effective policing. He appreciated the successful conduct of the three-day sports meet held at the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate, even amid bandobast duties and Panchayat elections, stating that it reflected the strong sense of discipline and unity within the force. He also lauded the Cyberabad Police for their outstanding performance in the meet.”“The DGP commended the Cyberabad CP, Jt. CP, officers, and personnel of all ranks for their continuous efforts in promoting fitness and overall well-being. He highlighted that the Cyberabad Police efficiently handled high-pressure responsibilities, including elections, and other critical law-and-order duties, while maintaining professionalism and a people-friendly approach. Emphasizing that both winning and losing should be accepted in the right spirit, he said that police personnel, whether they win medals or not, are all winners as they win the hearts and minds of the people. Drawing a parallel with Telangana Police’s consistent achievements since 2014, he encouraged personnel to carry the same spirit of excellence from sports into their professional duties and continue serving the public with dedication and commitment.”“Cyberabad CP Avinash Mohanty, IPS, congratulated all participants for their dedication and active involvement in the sports meet. Over the three-

## Rum-soaked fruits and slow-baked memories: Pune’s Christmas cakes tell stories of faith, family and tradition

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

As winter settles over Pune, the city’s old bakeries and home kitchens begin to smell of soaked fruits, warm spices, butter and slow-baked memories. Christmas cakes here are not just festive desserts, but a ritual, shaped by decades of tradition, faith, and family connections. From century-old Irani bakeries in Camp to home bakers who work in small batches, Pune’s Christmas cake culture tells a larger story—of bakeries that have not only stood the test of time but have also preserved and shaped the city’s festive traditions. On Taboot Street, Dr S M M Irani, 74, has spent more than five decades baking Christmas cakes at Hussey Bakery, established in 1932. For him, the season carries deep emotional meaning. “Baking Christmas cakes is not just seasonal work—it is an emotion for me,” he says. Located in a historic neighbourhood, the bakery has long been woven into the area’s celebrations. “When the first batch of Christmas cakes comes out of the oven, it fills my heart with happiness,” he adds. While the bakery itself is now about 93 years old, Irani has personally been involved in baking Christmas cakes for over 50 years. Earlier, customers were mostly families living around Taboot Street, many of whom came generation after generation. Today, the demand has grown far beyond the neighbourhood. “People come from across Pune and even institutions, because they trust our consistency and tradition,” he says. Christmas orders usually begin from the second week of December and continue steadily throughout the season. Despite changing tastes, the traditional fruit and plum cake remains the most popular. “Customers ask for rich, dark cakes filled with soaked dry fruits, nuts and balanced spices,” says Irani. The fruits are soaked and stored in large drums well in advance—a method that has been followed at Hussey Bakery for over generations. “Time, patience and experience are the real secrets behind our cakes,” he adds, adding that there is no compromise on ingredients. The bakery caters to a diverse clientele, with cake prices ranging from Rs 120 to Rs 160. Managing the festive rush is a careful operation. Preparations start months in advance, retired staff are called back to help when needed and baking schedules are planned meticulously. “Our main chef has been with us for 45 years. Such experienced hands



ensure quality is never compromised,” he says. While customers now ask for less-sugar and eggless options, Irani believes the soul of the Christmas cake remains unchanged. “The true spirit lies in simplicity, patience and authenticity,” Irani says. “Many customers say our cakes remind them of their childhood. Seeing familiar faces return every year with the next generation is the greatest joy for us,” he adds. While heritage bakeries safeguard Pune’s culinary history, home bakers are reshaping modern Christmas traditions. Like Shalini D’Souza, 44, the founder of ‘Bakeology by Shalini’, who has been baking Christmas cakes since 2017. For her, too, the season is deeply emotional. “It’s not just work, but it’s warmth and togetherness. The aroma of soaked fruits and spices instantly brings Christmas alive in my kitchen,” she says. Over the past six years, she has seen steady growth in demand, especially among customers seeking homemade, preservative-free cakes. Traditional plum cake remains the favourite for all, along with rum-soaked and non-alcoholic versions as well. “I follow a slow-soaked fruit method using freshly ground spices and pure butter with no artificial essence,” she says. Planning is key for a home baker, says Shalini, who works only on pre-bookings and limits orders to maintain quality. She has also noticed a shift in preferences. “Customers are more health-conscious now. Eggless cakes, less sugar and smaller loaf sizes for gifting are in demand,” she says. Still, the emotional connection remains strong. “When someone tells me the cake reminds them of their childhood Christmases, that means everything to me,” she adds.

## Punjab local body polls: AAP sweeps 3 districts in Doaba region, Congress holds ground in Nawanshahr

12, and Independent candidates won 36 seats across Doaba.

In the Hoshiarpur district, the zila parishad elections were held for 25 zones. The AAP recorded a sweeping victory by winning 22 zones, while the Congress won the remaining three. For the block samiti, results were declared for 191 out of 208 seats. Notably, 17 block samiti members were elected unanimously, with no contest. Among the declared results, the AAP secured 127 seats (while 16 won unopposed), the Congress won 39 (one won unopposed), the BJP got 12, the SAD won nine, Independents claimed three, and the BSP one.

The AAP emerged as the leading party in Jalandhar district as well. In the zila parishad elections, results for all 21 seats were declared. The AAP won 10 seats, the Congress secured seven, the BSP won three, and the SAD claimed one seat. In the Jalandhar block samiti elections, results from all 188 zones were announced. The AAP topped the tally with 78 seats, followed by the Congress with 61 seats. The BSP secured 19 seats, the SAD won 18, and Independent candidates won 12. In the Kapurthala district, zila parishad elections were held for 10 zones. AAP emerged victorious in five zones, Congress won three, while SAD and an Independent candidate won one seat each. The district has 88 block samiti zones. Elections were held in 85 zones, and three seats were decided unanimously. Here, the AAP won 138, including three unopposed; the Congress won 24, 17 went to Independents; the SAD won eight, and the BSP won one. The Congress performed strongly in the Nawanshahr district. In the block samiti elections, the results of all 82 zones were declared. The Congress won 33 seats, the AAP secured 29, the SAD won 9, the BSP won 7, and Independent candidates won 4. In the zila parishad elections in Nawanshahr, the Congress won six of the 10 zones, while the AAP secured four. The Opposition made several allegations about the cancellation of votes in several zones, which they claimed led to the defeat of several candidates.



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Thursday emerged as the dominant political force in the Doaba region of Punjab in the recently concluded zila parishad and block samiti elections. The AAP secured a majority of seats in three districts: Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, and Kapurthala, while Nawanshahr continued to be dominated by the Congress. Polls were held on December 14 to elect members of 347 zones of 22 zila parishads and 2,838 zones of 153 panchayat samitis in Punjab and the counting began Thursday morning.

Across the four districts in the Doaba region, there are 66 zila parishad zones and 566 block samiti zones. In the zila parishad elections, the AAP won 41 zones, the Congress 19, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) three, and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) two, while an Independent candidate won one. In the block samiti elections, the polling was held for 546 out of 566 seats, as elections to 20 seats—17 in Hoshiarpur and three in Kapurthala—were held unanimously without voting. Of these 20 unopposed seats, 19 went to the AAP and one to the Congress. Overall, the AAP won 288 block samiti seats, including 19 unopposed victories, while the Congress secured 158 seats, including one unopposed. The SAD won 44 seats, the BSP 28, the BJP

## Ammakai replaces Bastian Bandra, here’s what to expect at Shilpa Shetty-Ranjit Bindra’s new restaurant

Do you remember how news of Bastian Bandra shutting down spread like wildfire some time ago? The space has now reopened as Bastian Ammakai, and the spotlight is on offering comforting, soulful Mangalorean cuisine. Parked at the same spot where Bastian Bandra stood till August, the space has been entirely transformed. Drenched in earthy terracotta and rust tones, it instantly evokes the warmth of South Indian homes. Arched doorways break the restaurant into intimate pockets rather than one large dining room. Every surface tells a story, from hand-painted motifs and textured walls and pillars to patterned floors inspired by kolams, weaves and temple art.

Located at the same spot where CEO and founder Ranjit Bindra and his partner Shilpa Shetty’s Bastian Bandra stood till August, the restaurant has been entirely transformed. Drenched in earthy terracotta and rust tones, the 125-seater evokes the warmth of South Indian homes—from hand-painted motifs and textured walls and pillars to patterned floors inspired by kolams, weaves and temple art. Arched doorways break the space into intimate pockets rather than one large dining room, while quirky, stereotypical Amma lines—“When are you getting married?”, “No s泣tuation anniversary celebrations allowed”, among others—add a note of lightness. The seating, dressed in handcrafted textiles and geometric prints, is plush and inviting. Even the bar follows the same design language, glowing softly with layered textures and shelves that feel more home-bar than cocktail counter.

‘Ammakai’ translates to ‘Amma’s hand’, and that is exactly how the food feels. Led by chefs from southern India who travelled to villages in Mangalore to learn recipes directly from home kitchens, Ammakai presents Mangalorean cuisine in a way that feels refined while staying true to its roots. Rather than reinventing the food, the menu reveals its depth through spotlighting coastal flavours defined by coconut, tamarind and spice. The result is food that is comforting and flavour-forward without feeling heavy. We began with a beautifully balanced methi–carrot puliyogare, a salad that opens with heat before fruits and berries soften the edges. (Also, how often do you see methi in a salad?) This was followed by soft paneer coated in a red chilli paste (kempu chilli wings), spicy butter green prawns scented with curry leaves, a punchy raw mango



red snapper, and a fiery koli pulimunchi (caution: it’s not for the faint-hearted) where chicken is cooked with Karnataka’s famous Byadgi chili. Mains feel like a meal at a Mangalorean friend’s home, and guests are encouraged to eat with their hands. There was a thick toor dal cooked with methi leaves (menthi soppina pappu), a runny, comforting coastal vegetable stew in coconut milk, baby brinjals simmered in a coarse, earthy gravy of coconut, peanut, tamarind and curry leaves (yennegai badanekayi), and a tangy, homely Mangalorean fish curry.

We wiped the gravies clean with soft, paper-thin neer dosas and rice tempered with mustard seeds, roasted cashews and chana dal in ghee. Truth be told, the rice didn’t even need a gravy. For those who loved the earlier Bastian menu, a few favourites remain, including the gloriously messy burrata sourdough topped with spicy roasted tomato jam, generous amount of burrata, heirloom tomatoes, almond shaves and basil oil. The bar deserves a special mention. Led by Krishna, the cocktail menu borrows ingredients from a South Indian pantry and plays with them thoughtfully. Kokum, green chili, coriander, fresh lime and tequila blanco come together delightfully in Amma’s Ghat Road, while the Mysuru Royale Paan Negroni, made with paan-infused gin, genuinely feels like sipping paan post-meal. Bold, but never too loud. Desserts lean into nostalgia as chana dal payasam with ghee and coconut milk sits comfortably alongside Filter Kaapi soft serve. Ammakai is also relatively easy on the pocket. While appetisers start at Rs 250 and curries at Rs 440 onwards, cocktails are priced between Rs 595 and Rs 725.

## ‘Harsh and oppressive’: Himachal HC quashes withdrawal of staff nurse’s contractual service

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Gangster Lagarpuria, aide convicted under MCOCAThe petitioner was appointed on a contract basis under the OBC-BPL category pursuant to counselling conducted in March 2022 for 89 staff nurse posts, of which three were reserved for OBC-BPL candidates. The Himachal Pradesh High Court has quashed an order withdrawing the contractual appointment of a staff nurse, noting that it would be “harsh and oppressive to terminate her services” after more than three years, particularly when no fraud or misrepresentation was attributed to her. Allowing a writ petition by Kajal Mehra, a staff nurse with the Department of Medical Education, a single bench of Justice Sandeep Sharma on December 12 set aside the Himachal Pradesh Director of Health Services’s August 31, 2024, order to withdraw her contractual appointment on the ground that she was ineligible for selection against the 2011 batch.

The petitioner was appointed on a contract basis under the OBC-BPL category pursuant to counselling conducted in March 2022 for 89 staff nurse posts, of which three were reserved for OBC-BPL candidates. She joined service at Dr Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College, Tanda, on March 16, 2022. After nearly two years, her appointment was withdrawn on the grounds that she had “acquired the requisite qualification in December 2014”, and thus could not have been considered for the 2011 batch. Earlier, the high court had quashed a similar withdrawal order dated March 28, 2024, on the ground of “violation of principles of natural justice” and granted liberty to the state to issue a show-cause notice and proceed afresh.



Following this, the fresh withdrawal order was challenged in the present petition. The court observed that “no loss was caused to the public exchequer as the post was vacant and there was no competing candidate who could claim to have been wronged. Also, the petitioner discharged her duties against a sanctioned post and served the public, drawing salary for work actually rendered”.

Acknowledging that the petitioner “technically ought not to have been considered for a post earmarked for the 2011 batch,” the court said, “Once she was appointed and served for over three years, and was otherwise eligible, terminating her services at this stage would be unjust.”

The court also rejected the state’s contention about an ongoing inquiry against the selection committee, holding that “it has no bearing on the petitioner’s continuation”. Relying on the Supreme Court judgments, i

## Australia's Bondi beach shooting: Alleged shooters holed up in hotel during Philippines visit



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

The father-and-son duo alleged to have gunned down 15 people on Australia's Bondi Beach holed themselves up in a Philippines hotel for weeks and left a tip on their way out," the staff told AFP on Thursday (December 18, 2025). Australian authorities are investigating whether Sajid Akram and his son Naveed trained with extremists last month during a trip to the southern Mindanao region where there is a long history of Islamist insurgencies. The Philippines says there is no evidence to suggest that the country was being used to coach terrorists. "The men entered the Philippines on November 1, 2025 with Davao listed as their final destination," immigration officials confirmed this week. They checked into room 315 of the GV Hotel on the same day, paying about \$16 per night for the small room with two

single beds.

"The men typically only left their room for an hour or so each day and largely kept to themselves," night desk manager Angelica Ytang, 20, told AFP. "They weren't approachable like other foreigners. Other foreigners usually chat with me, but they didn't," Ms. Ytang said, adding her only interactions were with Naveed, while the father "always looked down" and avoided eye contact. The pair never discussed the purpose of their stay and would typically leave the hotel in the morning but "didn't stay out long... the longest we observed was about one hour", Ms. Ytang said. One outing included a hunt for durian, a spiky, pungent fruit that is a Southeast Asian delicacy. "They asked me, 'Where can we buy durian?'" Ms. Ytang said, adding the search had been unsuccessful. Ms. Ytang said she had never seen the men meet with anyone or take a vehicle. "They just walked around. That's all they did." "Staff recognised their faces instantly in news reports about the Sydney massacre," Ms. Ytang said. Two other hotel employees confirmed their stay. Ram Ligod, the janitor who cleaned their room, told AFP that Naveed had worn his hair long while he was at the hotel. A regional police spokeswoman said Davao police would release a statement on Thursday (December 18, 2025), without providing further details. Ms. Ytang said the Akramas had left a tip on their departure. "I said, 'Sir, you forgot your deposit.' The son took it, then the father said to give it to me," she said. "Naveed said, 'That's yours.' They were kind. I still can't believe they were like that."

## The Trump NSS, Europe's existential crisis



Hope is not a strategy. For most of this year, European leaders have hoped that the Trump Administration has not actually meant its President's oscillating support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), its Vice-President's berating his European hosts in Munich over their liberal values and immigration policies, President Donald Trump's tirade against migration at the United Nations, and of course his mercurial support for Ukraine. The hope was that, all things considered, America would ultimately stand with Europe. The Trump Administration's National Security Strategy — a 33 page document that spends much time congratulating the President for saving America from apparently terminal decline as it charts an unapologetically MAGA-esque America-first mercantilist position — appears not to notice Africa, Australia and New Zealand. It sweeps by Asia as it focuses strongly on perceived trade imbalances with China and lands squarely on a defence of the 'Western Hemisphere' according to American interests while lamenting the decline of Europe. Europe is a problem, not an ally.

The stand on Europe in 'Promoting European Greatness', the NSS warns of Europe's 'civilizational erasure', precipitated by the European Union (EU)'s policies on migration and freedom of speech, 'the suppression of political opposition', and the 'loss of national identities and self-confidence'. In case there was any doubt about which migrants were unwelcome, the NSS declares that if Europe continues on its present trajectory, 'within a few decades ... certain NATO members will become majority non-European.' The U.S. will help Europe regain its 'former greatness' by choosing 'patriotic European parties' to promote what this administration views as 'genuine democracy' and 'unapologetic celebrations of European nations' individual character and history'. To most Europeans, at best this reads as a meddling in the internal politics of sovereign nations, and at worst as regime change.

Europe, the NSS states, needs to stand on its own feet, assume 'primary responsibility for its own defense' and re-establish 'strategic stability with Russia'. NATO 'cannot be a perpetually expanding alliance', a warning of course to Ukraine, but also an interesting glossing over of Sweden and Finland's accession to the alliance after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. In this document, the threat is not Russia and its invasion of a sovereign nation, but Europe's cultural decay. The tramp of the jackboots of 1930s Europe echos with every mention of civilisational decline. Of course, an administration's national security strategy is not policy, but a guide to its thinking. They can and have been over-ridden by events, most notably George H.W. Bush's 1990 NSS, which was overtaken by the fall of the Berlin Wall, German reunification and the first Gulf War. Observers could chart the evolution of the administration's thinking in the two subsequent iterations of 1991 and 1993. As a high-level document, the NSS often provides the lens through which to interpret an administration's foreign policy goals and is assumed to set the tone for the administration's national de-

fence strategy, its Quadrennial Defense Review and national military strategy. Mr. Trump's famously mercurial nature might caution against viewing it as declared policy. However, given that this is a Congress-mandated document, it is more than just a rhetorical exercise: while it should not be taken literally, it should be taken seriously.

What Europe's response could be as the dust settles, Europe now faces three options in responding: it can ignore the NSS and hope that it will go away; its leaders can dial up their flattery of Mr. Trump in the hope that he will change his mind on Europe; or Europe can face up to the prospect that Mr. Trump's America is not a reliable ally and that they will need to fend for themselves.

Europe tried a mixture of the first two strategies after J.D. Vance's outburst at the Munich Security Conference. After some tepid talk of needing to pull together to see off Russian President Vladimir Putin's 'imperialist' ambitions in trying to 'rewrite history' or the need for Europe to wean itself off U.S. dependence, Europe doubled down on doing whatever it would take to keep America in NATO and Europe. Britain flattered Mr. Trump with an invitation for an unprecedented second state visit. Germany's Friedrich Merz forgot about his observations of February this year as Chancellor-in-waiting that his 'absolute priority will be to strengthen Europe ... so that ... we can really achieve independence from the USA'. Germany has since abandoned half-explored plans of developing European capabilities and ordered more American military kit, which is dependent on American intelligence to work. NATO's Hague Summit of June this year will be remembered as much for European states agreeing to raise their military spending to 5% of GDP as for Secretary-General Mark Rutte's calling Mr. Trump 'Daddy'. The third option will not be easy. Europe has never defended itself as an entity and there is no concept of integrated European defence. Even limited projects of joint development of military kit tend not to get very far, as the stalled Franco-German project on sixth generation fighter jets demonstrates. If the U.S. pulls American troops out of Europe — as this administration has periodically hinted it might do — then Europe will have a serious manpower problem that experiments in 'voluntary' conscription will not even begin to address. Then there is the question of nuclear deterrence and Britain's uneasy post-Brexit relationship with the EU and Europe.

The state of the world order How Europe responds will have implications beyond the continent. Mr. Trump's NSS, with its attack on transnational institutions (that he insists 'undermine political liberty and sovereignty'), its dismantling of the post-war trading order in favour of a mercantilist America-first policy; and the signalling of a U.S. retreat into its own 'Hemisphere' (however that might be defined, and with the implication that China and Russia are free to carve up the rest of the world as long as they do not impinge on America's trading footprint) have profound implications for the rest of the world. The post-war world order that America helped shape and uphold is imperfect and crumbling. The power imbalances at the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions that help anchor expectations of peace, security, development and trade reflect an outdated world order. But, however imperfect this rules-based system might be, it is still a bulwark against a descent into a Hobbesian free-for-all, where might makes right. The debate about this National Security Strategy is, therefore, not about a document that might shed light on an administration's thinking. It is about whether Europe chooses to defend a rules-based liberal order or defers to a President whose transactional and racist view of the world will have consequences that stretch far beyond his borders.

## How board exams create stress — and the reforms to ease it

Every year, as board exams approach, a familiar scene unfolds across India. Teenagers are buried under the textbooks and tuition notes, parents talk anxiously about marks, and schools extend classes late into the evening. What should be a milestone in learning often turns into a season of stress for students, families, and teachers as well.

Parents are also anxious about board exams; cut-offs are discussed in WhatsApp groups, and comparison is often indirect. Families also spend a great deal of money on coaching and tuition and reorganise schedules to make time for study and practice. When parents observe changes in their children's mood, appetite, and sleep patterns, they become concerned about their mental health. Board examinations hamper student participation in sports, arts and hobbies. Students sacrifice extracurricular activities and focus on exams, which restricts their ability to experiment, fail safely, and follow interests outside the classroom. This pressure to perform, instilled in students from such a young age, makes it difficult for them to separate learning from

being tested. What's been done? This year, in order to give enough time for board exam preparation, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) released the date sheet for the examinations 110 days before the start of the examinations. In a bid to reduce the stress of critical board exams, Class 10 students will also be given the option of taking their exams twice, the CBSE said on Wednesday (June 25, 2025). This option to improve performance in up to three academic subjects will only be provided to students who pass the first examination. The Rajasthan School Education and Panchayati Raj Minister, Madan Dilawar, also made a similar announcement. From the academic session 2026-27, the Rajasthan board will conduct examinations twice a year for class 10 and 12 board students. The CBSE had also introduced two levels in the Class 10 Mathematics exam in 2020, aiming to reduce exam pressure and provide students with options aligned with their interests and career plans. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced open-book examinations for students of Class 9 as part of internal assessment from 2026-27.

## Rain creates crimson spectacle on Iran's Hormuz Island for the first time this year



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Tehran: Rainfall on Iran's Hormuz Island briefly transformed the coastline of its famed Red Beach into a striking natural scene this week, as runoff flowing over the shore

turned the water shades of deep red, intensifying the island's iron-rich soil washing into the sea. The beach is known for its vivid red sand and cliffs, created by high concentrations of iron oxide. When rain falls, as it did starting on Tuesday, streams of red soil flow toward the shoreline, colouring both the beach and the surrounding water and creating a sharp contrast with the blue waters of the Persian Gulf.

The phenomenon regularly attracts tourists, photographers and social media attention. Beyond its visual appeal, the red soil — locally known as gelak — is exported in limited quantities and used in the production of cosmetics, pigments and some traditional products. Hormuz Island lies in the Strait of Hormuz, where the Persian Gulf meets the Gulf of Oman, about 1,080 kilometres south of Iran's capital, Tehran. Rainfall is relatively rare on the arid island, and happens mainly during the winter and early spring. The island has become a popular destination with visitors drawn to its unusual landscapes.

## Deposed Nepal PM Oli gets re-elected as CPN-UML chair for third term

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Kathmandu: Ousted Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was on Thursday elected as the CPN-UML's chairman for the third consecutive term with a two-thirds majority. Oli was elected the Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman in a contest held three months after his government was forced to resign following a student-led protest.

During the 11th general convention of the party that concluded on Thursday, Oli secured 1,663 votes against his opponent Ishwor Pokharel, who received 584 votes, according to party sources. Pokharel, 71, had received the backing of former President Bidya Devi Bhandari, his rival in the presidential election. The convention started with a public meeting in the Bhaktapur district and concluded with the election of Oli and other office bearers and central committee members of the party. Shankar Pokharel, from Oli's panel, was elected to the post of General Secretary of the party for the second term. He defeated Surendra Pandey, former finance minister, who contested the election from Pokharel's panel. Among 19 office bearers of the party, 17 were elected from Oli's panel, while two were from Pokharel's panel. Prithvi Subba Gurung, Bishnu Paudel, Raghujit Panta, Ram Bahadur Thapa and Gokarna Bisht have been elected to the post of Vice President. Among



them, only Gokarna Bisht is from Oli's rival team. Similarly, among three deputy general secretaries, Lekh Raj Bhatta, Yogesh Bhattarai and Raghbir Mahaseth, Bhattarai is from Pokharel's team. All nine secretaries were elected from Oli's team. Hundreds of cadres belonging to Oli took out a victory procession in Kathmandu's Bhrikutimandap, where the general convention was held, soon after the election results were out. Oli has been in the top post of the party for more than a decade. He was elected to the party's chair during the ninth and the tenth conventions as well with a comfortable majority.

## Israel launches intense airstrikes in Lebanon as deadline looms to disarm Hezbollah



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Israel carried out a series of airstrikes on southern and northeastern Lebanon on Thursday (December 18, 2025), as a deadline looms to disarm the militant Hezbollah group along the tense frontier. The strikes came a day before a meeting of the committee monitoring the enforcement of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that halted the latest war between Israel and Hezbollah a year ago. It will be the second meeting of the mechanism after Israel and Lebanon appointed civilian members to a previously military-only committee. The group also includes the US, France and the UN peace-keeping force deployed along the border. In Paris, Lebanon's army commander Gen Rodolph Haikal is scheduled to meet on Thursday with U.S., French and Saudi officials to discuss ways of assisting the army in its mission to boost its presence in the border area. The Lebanese government has

said that the army should have cleared all the border area south of the Litani river from Hezbollah's armed presence by the end of the year.

The Israeli military said the strikes hit Hezbollah infrastructure sites and launching sites in a military compound used by the group to conduct training and courses for its fighters. The Israeli military added that it struck several Hezbollah military structures in which weapons were stored, and from which Hezbollah members operated recently. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the intense airstrikes stretched from areas in Mount Rihan in the south to the northeastern Hermel region that borders Syria. Shortly afterward, a drone strike on a car near the southern town of Taybeh inflicted casualties, NNA said. "This is an Israeli message to the Paris meeting aiming to support the Lebanese army," Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said about the strikes. "The fire belt of Israeli airstrikes is to honour the mechanism's meeting tomorrow," Mr. Berri added during a parliament meeting in Beirut. The latest Israel-Hezbollah war began October 8, 2023, a day after Hamas attacked southern Israel, after Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel in solidarity with Hamas. Israel launched a widespread bombardment of Lebanon in September last year that severely weakened Hezbollah, followed by a ground invasion. Israel has carried out almost daily airstrikes since then, mainly targeting Hezbollah members but also killing 127 civilians, according to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Over the past weeks, the U.S. has increased pressure on Lebanon to work harder on disarming Hezbollah.

## U.S. approves \$11 billion in arms sales to Taiwan: Taipei

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

The United States approved \$11 billion-worth of arms to Taiwan, Taipei said Thursday (December 18, 2025), announcing one of the largest weapons packages for the island and prompting an angry backlash from China. While Washington is traditionally Taiwan's biggest arms supplier, remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump raised doubts about his willingness to defend the democratic island.



Taiwan has ramped up its defence spending in the past decade as China has intensified military pressure, but Mr. Trump's administration has pushed the island to do more to protect itself. The arms sale announced on Thursday (December 18, 2025), which still needs U.S. Congressional approval, would be the second since Mr. Trump returned to office in January, after a \$330 million sale of parts in November. The latest, much bigger cache features HIMARS rocket systems, howitzers, anti-tank missiles, drones and other equipment, according to Taipei's Foreign Ministry.

"This is the second arms sale to Taiwan announced during the Trump administration's second term, once again demonstrating the U.S.'s firm commitment to Taiwan's security," Taipei's Foreign Ministry said. Beijing reacted angrily on Thursday (December 18, 2025), strongly condemning the sale announcement. "China urges the United States to abide by the one-China principle... and immediately stop the dangerous actions of arming Taiwan," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told a press conference, adding that Beijing would take "resolute and forceful measures" to safeguard its territorial integrity. Beijing claims Taiwan as part of its territory under the one-China principle, and has threatened to use force to bring the self-ruled island under its control.

The potential size of the sale rivals the \$18 billion authorised under former U.S. president George W. Bush in 2001, although that was ultimately downsized after com-

mercial negotiations. Mr. Bush ended up selling \$15.6 billion-worth of weapons to Taiwan over his eight years in office. During Mr. Trump's first term, the United States approved \$10 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, including \$8 billion for fighter jets. The latest package is expected to soon receive a Congressional rubber stamp, given the cross-party consensus on Taiwan's defence. Taiwan maintains its own defence industry but the island would be massively outgunned in a conflict with China, and so remains heavily reliant on U.S. arms.

The latest arms sale shows Washington has continued to assist Taipei in "rapidly building robust deterrence capabilities", Taiwan's Defence Ministry said in a statement. Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's government has vowed to ramp up defence spending to more than 3% of the GDP next year and 5% by 2030, following U.S. pressure. It is also plans to seek up to NT\$1 trillion in special funding to upgrade the island's air defence systems and increase capacity to produce and store ammunition. The defence spending proposals need backing from the island's opposition-controlled parliament before they can take effect. China deploys military aircraft and warships around Taiwan on a near-daily basis,

# The three revolutions reshaping American power



When United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio proposed restructuring the G-20 into an elite "inner caucus" of powerful states, it should have dominated the week's geopolitical news. It signalled a major reordering of global economic governance, shifting rule-making to a narrower group and weakening emerging economies. Yet, the proposal barely registered. It was immediately eclipsed by the release of the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), that embodied the same underlying ideological shift. Days later, the Heritage Foundation, the intellectual core of U.S. President Donald Trump's MAGA project, issued its own blueprint, Restoring America's Promise: 2025-26. The alignment between the G-20 restructuring, the NSS, and Heritage 2026 reveals three simultaneous revolutions in American statecraft: a transformation of political morality, a recasting of foreign policy, and a restructuring of global economic governance. The common thread is the institutionalisation of exclusion and the acceptance of unequal burdens as policy design rather than error. In this sense, cruelty functions as an analytical term, capturing a system in which harm is anticipated, normalised, and strategically deployed.

Shrinking of civic space The first revolution is internal. Mr. Trump's political project dismantled the traditional moral architecture of American public life. Norms of restraint, institutional deference and civic responsibility gave way to an ethos where transgression signalled authenticity and the erosion of shame became a political asset. The NSS integrates this shift into formal doctrine by treating internal cultural cohesion, ideological alignment and demographic stability as national security requirements. The Heritage document demands bureaucratic remaking, ideological vetting, and mass personnel turnover. The NSS echoes this through sovereign autonomy, institutional suspicion and domestic culture as security treating independent institutions not as correctives but as obstacles to political will. Cruelty here takes the form of permissive indifference: hardship from administrative purges, narrowing civic space, or punitive regulatory change is not acknowledged as collateral damage but folded seamlessly into the architecture of governance.

The second revolution is external. The U.S. traditionally relied on predictable commitments and institutional stability. Even Mr. Trump's first-term disruptions occurred within recognisable boundaries. The 2025 NSS departs sharply from this tradition. Alliances are reframed as condi-

tional transactional contracts with obligations justified continuously. The Western Hemisphere displaces Europe and the Indo-Pacific as the primary theatre, reviving the Monroe Doctrine. Migration, a domestic concern, is elevated into the central security threat, while institutions once amplifying American power are described as constraints on sovereignty. The Heritage document provides the ideological framework. It frames multilateral bodies as infringements of sovereignty, border control as geopolitics, and allied compliance as contingent on ideological alignment, not shared interest. The result is neither isolationism nor traditional realism. It is selective dominance: assertion where leverage is high, retreat where obligations are costly, and judging partnerships by conformity not capability. The structural effect is fragile alliances, revisionist adversaries and a fragmentation of global order. The third revolution is economic. Mr. Rubio's G-20 proposal is not an administrative adjustment but the formalisation of a tiered global economy, an architecture of privileged rule-makers and peripheral rule-takers. Decision-making on debt relief, trade standards and climate finance will consolidate within a narrower circle of states with the capacity to shape outcomes.

The NSS fits precisely within this trajectory. Its emphasis on reshoring, tariff leverage and industrial sovereignty promoted toward a hemispheric economic model centred on North America. Heritage 2026 expands on the logic: globalisation is treated as a strategic vulnerability and multilateral economic systems as threats to national autonomy. The consequences will be felt disproportionately by countries with limited negotiation power. Debt restructuring will become more conditional, supply chain diversification more politically selective, and access to global capital more closely tied to geopolitical alignment. The predictable hardship that follows, from inflationary pressures to disrupted export markets, will fall on global and domestic workers. Cruelty here is systemic: unequal distribution of economic pain is treated as a mechanism for stabilising a more hierarchical global order. A return of imperial logic

Across these three revolutions runs a common thread: the restoration of a colonial-imperial mindset. Not territorial colonialism but a structural world-view built on hierarchy, entitlement, and the presumption that the strong may impose costs while the weak absorb them. The NSS provides bureaucratic vocabulary; the Heritage supplies the ideological foundations. The analytical utility of cruelty lies in naming this organising logic. It captures a system where the suffering generated by policy is neither incidental nor unfortunate but integrated into the functioning of the political and economic order. The G-20 restructuring and the 2025 NSS are manifestations of the same deeper shift. The world is entering an era where the U.S. seeks to protect its sovereignty through contraction, assert influence through hierarchy, and reshape global governance through exclusion. The final irony is that the victims of this reordering are not confined to distant shores. They live in Maputo and Dhaka, yes, but also in Harlan, Kentucky. The architecture of cruelty is global, but its consequences are intimate. It reaches the world, but it also circles back home.

## Women more willing to donate organs posthumously in India



of the organ-wise breakdown of recipients in 2023. The share of male recipients was distinctly higher than that of women across every category. In the case of liver transplants, men accounted for a staggering 70% of recipients in 2023. Does this reflect a higher medical need? An earlier analysis by us revealed that in 2022, 4.5 times more men than women died of liver disease — a gap that has widened over the last decade. Crucially, these deaths were concentrated among middle-aged men, pointing to alcohol-related complications as a primary driver. The data for the charts were sourced from NOTTO's annual reports, the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation, and MCCD reports

## Trump's expanded travel ban hits Africa hardest but reactions muted

Harare: Africa has been the hardest hit by the Trump administration's decision to add 20 countries to a list of travel restrictions but reactions on the continent of some 1.5 billion people were largely muted on Wednesday as affected nations mulled the implications of the measure and their next moves. The new restrictions expand on the list from June and are broader and more punitive than those during Trump's first presidency, which largely targeted Muslim-majority countries and which were reversed in 2021. The African Union urged the United States to protect its borders in a "manner that is balanced, evidence-based, and reflective of the long-standing ties and partnership" between the U.S. and Africa, the bloc's spokesman Nuru Mohamud said. The stance was a repeat of the statement by the bloc in June, when US President Donald Trump revived the travel restrictions from his first term in office. Of the five countries whose citizens joined the list on Tuesday of those banned from entering the United States, four are in Africa — Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and South Sudan, which was already facing significant travel restrictions. Also on the list are Syria and people with travel documents issued by the Palestinian Authority, which runs the West Bank. Some other countries — including Sierra Leone in Africa and Laos in Asia — were subject to partial restrictions during Trump's first presidency and also in June, and were now moved to the full restrictions list. Twelve of the 15 countries that face partial restrictions are also in Africa. They include Angola, Benin, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The rest are two Caribbean nations — Antigua and Barbuda, and Dominica — and Tonga in the South Pacific. Trump's expanded measures also link entry limits to security, documentation and visa-overstay concerns. The 55-nation African Union warned of the "potential negative impact of such measures on people-to-people ties, educational exchanges, commercial engagement, and the broader diplomatic relations" built over decades. Sierra Leone, now moved to the full ban list, said in a statement Wednesday that it hoped to engage Washington and get it to review the decision. The impoverished West African country said it would "remain committed to strengthening international cooperation and addressing immigration concerns raised by the US government," adding that officials are "actively engaged in ongoing, constructive dialogue with US authorities."

The chart below, which plots the 2024 data across 77 countries, lays bare this disparity. While India ranks a respectable 20th globally for living donors (10.8 living donors per million), it plummets to 67th for deceased donors (0.8 deceased donors per million). When read together, the charts above raise a pertinent question. We know that public willingness is high, and the robust figures for living transplants prove that the medical infrastructure is capable. This suggests that the failure lies somewhere in the middle, in the systemic disconnect between a citizen's intent and the hospital's ability to execute it.

The gender skew in the above chart is noticeable. Of the 21 major States for which data were considered, more women were willing to donate organs in 17. So, a higher willingness could also explain why women donate more organs than men. In 2023, over 60% of donors were women. In sharp contrast, when we look at organ recipients, in 2023, nearly 65% were men. This is a lopsided ratio that reflects a long-standing and persistent skew in India's transplant ecosystem. The chart above shows the details

## The story of 'We, the moving people'



labour class without political rights — as with H-1B workers in the U.S., though they have a distant pathway to citizenship. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Singapore have created a category of workers without any political identity, and developed countries are now looking at temporary workers on similar lines.

There are about 35.4 million Overseas Indians (people of Indian origin); 15.8 million of them are Indian citizens, and 19.6 million are persons of Indian origin. Under the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2010, Indian citizens living abroad can enrol and exercise their franchise in their place of residence in India as mentioned in their passport. A petition before the Supreme Court argues that they should be able to vote remotely. The petitioner contends that the 2010 amendment shortchanges non-resident Indians by granting them the right to vote on the one hand, while requiring them to be physically present in India to actually exercise that right.

Policies and migration Indian government policies have also encouraged migration from rural to urban areas and to specific regions such as Kashmir. In 2020, the rules for domicile in Jammu and Kashmir were relaxed, allowing non-locals — such as government officials posted for 10 years, residents for 15 years, and students for seven years — to obtain domicile status, with access to jobs and property. While critics argue that these changes are intended to alter the region's demographic composition, the government maintains that they are meant to facilitate development and integration. Within national boundaries, there are other borders, and migrations across them have political and governance consequences. Domicile laws restrict access to many streams of education and jobs to natives of a particular State or region. The most significant implication of movement within the country's borders concerns voting rights. The right to vote is tied to a particular polling booth where a citizen is ordinarily resident. The SIR exercise is a determination of whether one can vote, but also, perhaps more importantly, where one can vote. The same person voting in Maharashtra or Kerala — net migrant-receiving States — as opposed to Bihar, which is a net migrant-sending State, has different political implications for national politics.

Changes in population composition affect politics, and an example is Mumbai, where Marathi speakers now constitute less than 40%, while Hindi speakers are around 30%. The nativist politics of the Shiv Sena has been decimated; parties now routinely field Hindi-speaking candidates in elections. In 2001, 31% of India's population were migrants and by 2011, this proportion had increased to 38%. Two-thirds of these migrants are women, due to marriage. Men, who make up the remaining third, tend to move farther and largely for economic reasons. Census 2027 will capture the enormity of this movement of people after nearly two decades. Migrating people carry attitudes, values, stories and belief systems.

The White House now celebrates Deepavali — a practice that began in 2003. It was through migration that Vedic practices spread from the Aryavarta region of the epics to its eastern and peninsular frontiers, mixing with pre-existing lore and expanding the cultural universe that would later be called Hinduism. Languages move with migrating people. Historically, it has been a case of more men than women who migrated, and migrating men met native women; the languages we speak today reflect this. Peggy Mohan argues in *Father Tongue*, Motherland/Birthright citizenshipMoving people is now challenging even the idea of birthright citizenship in countries where it once existed unquestioned. The Trump administration is trying to overturn a long-held interpretation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that all those born in the U.S. are eligible for citizenship. Until recently, an estimated 30,000 people were travelling to the U.S. annually to give birth, and there were tour companies that made this a business model. A 2015 law made it legal for people to seek visas for giving birth in the U.S., but in 2020, with the rise of Trump-era nativism, this was withdrawn. India, through a change in its citizenship law, has barred children born to an illegal immigrant from acquiring citizenship by birth. Moving people moves the history of humankind. Moving people is remaking the politics of India. These changes will become visible through the Census, the SIR, and then delimitation, which will redistribute Lok Sabha representation across State borders for the first time in half a century.

## The two faces of Chennai's Moore Market



Had it stood, it would have completed 125 years in November this year. Moore Market, however, still remains, 40 years after a disastrous fire engulfed it, as an evergreen memory. It is just that I find with some digging, that there were clearly two views about it: the roseate nostalgic one, and the other, more based on reality — of an urban facility that was a byword for chaos and many malpractices.

Planned as the central market for the city after Popham's in Broadway was condemned as unsanitary, work on it began in 1898 and was completed in November 1900, when Governor Sir Arthur Havelock threw it open. The earlier market, named after the man who planned out Broadway, was demolished and a park, the acme of Victorian ideals in planning, was laid out in its place. It was named Loane's Square, after S.J. Loane, the then Corporation engineer. It is now Sriramulu Park, after a former mayor.

The new facility, built alongside Central Station, was named after Lt. Col. Sir George Moore, President of the Madras Corporation in 1898 when the market was planned. Built at a cost of 26,000 pounds, Moore Market had 291 stalls, and spanned a massive site, 350 ft. by 240 ft. It was designed as a rectangle around an open, central, courtyard, so as to allow free circulation of air and light. The Indo-Saracenic structure had a verandah on the outer periphery with a series of arches allowing entry. Planned as it was as a general market, Moore Market had sections for vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, general provisions and other goods as well. That may have well been the plan, but what emerged was a haven for second-hand, spurious, and very often stolen goods. Poor administrationA benign/negligent administration watched but never took steps to correct the situation. Thus, while officialdom in its reports merely trotted out statistics of number of stalls occupied, rent collected and funds spent on upkeep, we need to turn to popular writing to get an idea on how badly the place was run. An article by Sa. Viswanathan in Ananda Vikatan of 1962 gives us a clear idea of the chaos that prevailed in Moore Market. While there may have been officially a certain number of stall holders, in reality, there were plenty of itinerant vendors who were a grey population as it were, out of sight of the authorities but very much a presence as far as shoppers were concerned. And they could make a visit for the unwary a most harrowing experience. If you touched something, it was considered sold. And if you tried to argue, a group would suddenly form around you and force the sale. The place was also known for stuff that did not work or was

branded only in name but not by way of the product. A brilliant passage about Moore Market at its worst emerges in Kothamangalam Subbu's *Thillana Mohanambal* the novel. The scene, however, was not featured in the film. As the story is set in the 1920s/1930s, we can imagine that Moore Market had degenerated even by then. And it was visitors from the countryside who were apparently cheated the most. By 1962, when the film *Anubhavi Raja Anubhavi* was made, Moore Market, in Kavignar Kannadasan's eyes, symbolised all that was bad with the city. In the song 'Madras, Nalla Madras', he included a line — Ooru Kettu Ponadukku Mooru Market Adaiyalam — which meant just that. The vendors of Moore Market rose up in protest and demanded an apology from Kannadasan. He did not budge from his position. Thus, a deadly combination of administrative negligence, the general lawlessness in any vending zone in the city, and public apathy sounded the death knell for Moore Market. With the railways needing land to expand and the hawkers refusing to move, the great fire, the first of many in heritage buildings of Madras, proved very convenient. The vendors were provided alternative accommodation of a very poor kind in the Lily Pond Complex, which as the name indicates, was built on a filled-up lake. The sad aspect is that the building was made to pay the price. Surviving photos show that it could have been repurposed beautifully for the suburban railway terminus, with may be a multi-storey structure to its rear. But years of maladministration of Moore Market had brought it to a point where only a catastrophe could bring about change. And that is how it came to be. There was one silver lining. Moore Market, and other heritage buildings of the city that no longer exist, paved the way for a more caring administration. Heritage buildings are not demolished with impunity any more.

## How much of the Internet actually runs on Cloudflare



able lists of companies and domains relying on Cloudflare include names like LinkedIn, X (former Twitter), Vimeo, PayPal, Shopify, ChatGPT, and Discord. This demonstrates that its user base spans high-traffic enterprise platforms as well as smaller web properties. In India, names like Titan, Air India and HDFC rely on the infrastructure provider

Cloudflare's own analytics and reporting materials indicate that approximately 25 million distinct Internet properties rely on its network. The company notes that its service reaches more than 200 cities globally, facilitating coverage near users' locations rather than relying on centralised routing. The dominance of Cloudflare in this space carries both power and risk. The scale of its adoption means that when service disruption occurs, the impact can be broad, affecting not just niche sites, but widely used applications and services. The outage this week illustrates how much the platforms dependent on Cloudflare's network. The usage statistics suggest that "running on Cloudflare" is not an exclusive characteristic reserved for giant, high-traffic firms. The large subset of web properties using Cloudflare spans many tiers of traffic volume, meaning that the company's engineering decisions and failure modes have ripple effects across the entire spectrum of the web, from niche blogs to global enterprises. Research in internet infrastructure and dependency further underscores the fragility inherent in centralisation. Academic studies have documented that a relatively small number of third-party CDNs, DNS, and hosting services provide critical infrastructure for a large share of popular domains globally. These trends create a dynamic where a failure or misconfiguration at a key provider like Cloudflare may propagate widely. While "running on Cloudflare" does not literally mean every web request anywhere relies on its systems, the coverage is significant enough to make the company a backbone for large swathes of online services. The sheer number of websites under its reverse proxy, the global scale of its data centres, and the presence of major enterprise platforms among its customers all contribute to a scenario where the company's stability and engineering robustness are crucial to the functioning of the modern internet.

When major online services suddenly went dark earlier this week due to an outage at Cloudflare, it exposed how deeply intertwined so much of the web is with a single infrastructure provider. The outage itself stemmed from a largely technical but crucial aspect of the company's infrastructure, its bot management feature. Cloudflare's systems support a wide swath of internet traffic, and a breakdown on its network reverberated globally. But just how big is Cloudflare's footprint on the internet, and what does "running on Cloudflare" really mean for websites, enterprises, and users? Cloudflare's own public data shows that its global network comprises hundreds of data centres across more than 100 countries, allowing it to process traffic at the "edge" — that means close to users rather than routing all requests back to origin servers. The company serves on average 81 million HTTP requests per second across its network. An HTTP request is a query by a client, like a web browser, to a server, like in this case Cloudflare.

Independent usage-tracking sites report that Cloudflare is used by roughly 20.4% of all websites worldwide as a reverse proxy. A reverse proxy is like a middleman between a client and a server that triages client requests. With a fifth of all websites using Cloudflare, the infrastructure provider is at the top of the reverse proxy category. And among websites that employ some reverse proxy service or content-delivery network (CDN), Cloudflare's penetration is even more pronounced with over 81% of those sites. Publicly avail-

## Salil Chowdhury: the singular man of multitudes



his duty to deliver letters and money orders. The varying moods and tonal changes give the feeling of having many little songs within one song akin to a Russian doll. In the haunting and atmospheric 'Aaja re Pardesi' from Madhumati, Salil-da has used the seventh chord in the basic melody which is inherently considered incomplete making it a metaphor of the sense of insufficiency the girl [Vyajantimala's character in the film] feels.

The revolutionary songwriter This apart, Salil-da's rich use of harmony and chorus especially in what he called "Jana chetanar gaan" (songs of social consciousness) created in the choir mode add a completely different and rich dimension to his repertoire. Many of the Bangla choir songs from the 1940s which were lost in time were revived in Hindi such as 'Chalo Bhor Ke Raah' or 'Tumhein Watan Pukarta', translated by the inimitable Yogesh, in the 1980s which have since become really popular. Salil-da's music was nothing short of a melting pot of contrasts — where the West met the East, the classical fused with the folk, an outward simplicity masked the inner complexity, the massy equalised itself with the elite and the conventional co-existed with the disruptive. These contrasts in his works were reflective of the disparities prevalent in those times, in his own life. His social privilege by birth gave him access to education, western music, intellectual capital but his formative years also brought him in close contact with the working classes, exposed him to the brutality of engineered famines, imperialist exploitation and ruthless censorship. And as communists believed (Salil-da himself was a card-carrying communist in the initial years), these dialectics, these mutually irreconcilable elements would clash and result in revolution and change. Salil-da's works of music and poetry initially inspired this change in others and eventually became the very embodiment of it through its varying, contrary elements that gave birth to new sounds and harmonies. As a result, the classicists often rejected him for not being conservative enough and the radicals cancelled him for his moderation. No one could call his work their own, his music didn't give in to tribalism and remained exclusive in its inclusivity. In one of his iconic Bangla compositions, an acutely self-aware Salil-da writes, 'No written piece on Salil-da is complete without referring to his flourish and effulgence as a man of words. He has written over 400 songs and poems in Bangla. He also wrote stories which were made into films such as Do Bigha Zamin, Parak, and Naukri (1978) and he also directed a film Pintre Ke Panchhi. He was truly a Renaissance man.

While every work of Salil-da's is one for the ages, his works, especially his music, have never been more relevant than today.

The world today is more divisive than diverse, any form of pluralism is feared, we are willing to go a mile long, but only an inch deep in pursuit of anything. It's hard to say mediocrities from excellence, there is profusion of information and abuse of knowledge. In all this, Salil-da's notes and words stand out as the epitome of syncretism, adding meaning and depth to their narrative, standing out in their musical and poetic magnificence while holding the promise of being ageless and enduring.

"No one has quite used the obbligato like Salil-da," Pintuda had said once. A short walk across the National Library lawns to the Encyclopaedia Section of the majestic old Reading Hall revealed its meaning. An obbligato was an essential, mandatory part of a musical piece or a song usually played with flutes or violins or oboes that ran obliquely or as a counterpoint to the main melody thus embellishing the melody itself. The opposite marking of obbligato in musical notations is the Latin *ad libitum* more commonly known as *ad lib*. There are many instances of obbligatos in Salil-da's music. In the soulful "Zindagi kaisi hai paheli" from Anand there is an understated string section acting as the obbligato; in "Kai Baar yun bhi dekha hai" from Rajnigandha a soft flute and violin obbligato accompany Mukesh's voice sensitively reflecting the inner turmoil of the characters. It's been years since Pintuda was last seen. He must be nearing retirement age now, if he did any work at all. In this day and age, all one can wish for is that the likes of Pintuda have the will, energy and the safe confines of a library canteen to proselytise rigid,

unbending people and get them to see the love, dignity and beauty in things around them. Over time, the maturity to appreciate many other composers has come, and the ardent fandom of Pancham remains as strong as ever. Regardless of whose music one seeks to be the soundtrack of life in good and bad times, Salil-da's will be the singular and eternal obbligato to it. Exquisite and indispensable, as it ought to be.

## Why are stone quarries expanding in Kerala? | Explained



The story so far: A much-needed ban on river sand mining in Kerala has instead spurred more stone quarrying, and many of these quarries are located near protected areas, according to a new report from scientists in the State.

### Why did Kerala ban river sand mining?

Kerala banned river sand mining in January 2016 to protect its rivers and their ecosystems from the degradation caused by excessive extraction. After the ban, M-sand, an artificial alternative produced by crushing hard rock such as granite into fine particles, quickly became a popular alternative, leading to the rise in stone quarrying. To assess the impact of the mining ban, scientists from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Calicut analysed the expansion of 72 quarries they'd identified within 10 km of protected areas. Using GIS and Google Earth Pro, they compared the quarries' average annual expansion three years before the ban to their expansion in 2016, immediately after the ban kicked in. They also analysed expansion in the three following years. In a paper in The Extractive Industries and Society, the team reported that in 2016 alone, the quarries expanded by 174% in area, with some more than doubling in size. After comparing their data with that from other parts of the world, the researchers concluded that more quarrying may spell trouble for the region's biodiversity.

### Where are the quarries located?

"Unfortunately, a good number of these quarries are near protected areas," George Varghese of NIT Calicut and one of the study's authors, said. "Thus, although done with good intentions, the river sand-mining ban resulted in an unanticipated impact on biodiversity." The team also identified three quarries of particular concern, all within 10 km of the Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kozhikode and Wayanad

districts. These quarries grew 232% in size in 2016 alone. Three more quarries, within the buffer zone of the Silent Valley National Park across the Palakkad, Malappuram, and Nigiris districts, doubled in size as well.

### Why is sand-mining a problem?

The team's paper sheds light on the complexity of micro-level sand mining and extractive activities on natural resource trade flows, livelihood welfare conundrums, and socioecological systems, Matovu Baker, a research associate at the National Taiwan Ocean University in Keelung said. Dr. Baker, who studied the effects of river sand mining at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, said the paper demonstrates "emerging socioecological system trade-offs that are less documented and could lead to blue injustices," a counter-movement focusing on injustices to "small-scale fishing communities in coastal areas". "The huge demand for the M-sand has drastically increased the quarrying area within a very short period," Aznarul Islam, associate professor at Aliah University in Kolkata, said. Dr. Islam and his colleagues have studied the consequences of riverbed sand mining on the Mayurakshi river in the 50 years spanning 1970 to 2020, using topographical maps, satellite images, and field-based measurements. While sand mining had a "mild impact" on the shape of the river channel between 1970 and 2010, a phase of accelerated mining phase 2010-2020 "vehemently altered the channel morphology," he said. "The problem of river sand mining was a worrying factor for the river and its ecology," Dr. Islam said. "The strict ban on river sand mining [in Kerala] increased the manufactured sand mining at a rapid pace, which actually reduced the quality of the ecosystem and biota.

### How is demand for sand changing?

India has been recording an ever-increasing demand for river and marine sand, especially at its major urban centres, according to the India Rivers Forum. The States whose rivers have been suffering the most as a result include Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka; Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala have also been reporting considerable marine damage. The scope and severity of consequences vary depending on several on- and off-site mining activities and interactions between demand and supply, Dr. Baker said. He highlighted the example of Chavara village in Kerala's Kollam district, where the removal of sediments had affected the migratory routes of fish. "The worst-case externalities exist in less-protected or remote zones, for example in Tamil Nadu," he added.

## Nudging children to swap screens for sports



The classroom falls into a tense hush as Vaishnavi hovers over a rook, her mind flickering through numerous possibilities before her fingers finally move. Until weeks ago, the Class 8 student at the Zilla Parishad High School (ZPHS) in Wazeedu of Telangana's Mulugu district had long feared even touching a chess board. But today, she spends at least an hour every day returning to the 64 squares, plotting strategies she once thought she could never grasp. Her confidence grew as she realised she was no outlier; around 70 of the 150 students in Classes 7 and 8 at this government school, located nearly 300 km from Hyderabad near the Chhattisgarh border in a region known for Maoist activity, have been now gathering around the chequered boards daily, turning chess into an unlikely routine on campus.

Using digital boards available on campus, the school's physical director, Tellam Rajyalaxmi, has been coaching the children consistently. Several players come from the predominantly Koya tribal community, and for many of them, this is the first structured game they have ever learned. What is unfolding in Wazeedu reflects a small but telling slice of a much broader shift across Telangana, where government schools, colleges and public institutions are steadily embracing chess. This growing interest is largely driven by the Chess Network, a non-profit supported by committed NRIs who view the game as a powerful educational tool that strengthens cognitive skills while steering children away from digital distractions. "I participated in a chess tournament organised by Chess Network during the Bathukamma festivities in Hanamkonda. At my request, it has provided 10 boards and promised to help with more," says Rajyalaxmi. Explaining the motivation behind this initiative, Chess Network founder Sudhir Kodati says the goal is to curb growing cellphone addiction and other ill habits among the youth. "With many students developing unhealthy distractions due to lack of proper guidance, we NRIs with local support are trying to engage them in sports and games," he explains. Kodati, hailing from a farmer's family in Dandepalle village of Hanamkonda district, has been residing in Ottawa, Canada, since nearly two decades. Before launching the chess movement, he set up a Rural Library Foundation to promote reading in villages. With support from fellow NRIs — including Ravi Prakash Mayreddy of the Palamuru NRI Forum and Sierra Atlantic founder Raju Reddy from Nizamabad — Chess Network has taken the game to classrooms and community spaces across Telangana. Calling the game an integral part of India's cultural fabric, Sujeev Reddy Punnam, a California-based cardiologist who is also associated with Chess Network, describes the initiative as a "deeply constructive effort to help youth reconnect with its enduring appeal". The organisation plans to distribute 15,000 chessboards to villages across Telangana by the end of this academic year, says Kodati. To deepen interest, it hosted a civic reception for Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi of Warangal last December. It also trains teachers and conducts tournaments at the university level, with support of government authorities and NGOs. In the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district, the Palamuru NRI Forum has distributed another 12,000 boards. "The Forum was formed 15 years ago, and remained inactive for some time. We revived it three years ago and have since been actively promoting chess in the combined Mahabubnagar region," says Mayreddy, who lives in Philadelphia. Originally from a non-descript village in Wanaparthy district, he holds a PhD in Chemistry and has long been involved in service activities, especially in the education sector. Vimala K., a former teacher at University of Chicago and member of the forum, recounts their work at the Rani Indira Devi Government School in Kollapur, Nagarkurnool district. "Over 500 children attended the special coaching sessions. I have seen a noticeable improvement in their attitudes and learning," she says. The initiative has also gained support from district education authorities. In Kamareddy district, chessboards have been supplied to all schools in Kamareddy mandal. "The goal is to nurture a chess culture that keeps students away from harmful habits," District Education Officer S. Raju says. Among those contributing to the initiative is Rama Lingampally from Wisconsin Telangana Association in the U.S. During her recent visit to India, she distributed about 100 chessboards to three village schools in the Jammikunta area (Karimnagar). "We also met Peddapalli Collector Sree Harsha Koya, who assured full support to Chess Network's work in the district," she says.

As interest grows, the organisation is drawing wider recognition. "The Chicago Telangana Association has come forward to join us. Six American children, all professional chess players, have also expressed interest in participating, both in terms of coaching students and training the trainers," Kodati shares. Chess Network is also expanding its presence in junior and degree colleges, including Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), Basar. Reflecting this momentum, second-year pre-university course student Bharat Parsa says many youth are taking to the game. A chess club was recently launched at the university with support from the network and encouragement of Vice-Chancellor A. Govardhan. "Besides playing every day, I encourage my siblings in Tooran to learn the game," says Parsa, who spends at least an hour daily at the Student Activity Centre on campus. According to Kodati, the idea is to train students at institutions such as RGUKT so they can, in turn, coach children in their villages/ native places during holidays. Chess Network recently conducted tournaments on the Basar campus as part of this effort. As concerns rise over screen addiction and digital distractions, chess is finding new relevance as a tool for cognitive, emotional and social development. Hyderabad-based consultant psychiatrist Siva Anoop Yella observes that chess can significantly reduce children's dependence on social media and online gaming. "Chess improves attention, self-control and resilience. In an age when children are vulnerable to screen addiction, it offers a healthy and intellectually enriching alternative," he says. In Hyderabad, the movement is finding resonance in the city's inner pockets as well. The Hyderabad Inner City Basti Sports Academy, in association with Chess Network, recently organised its second sports tournament in Uppal, hoping to steer children in slum communities away from ill habits and towards constructive play. With kabaddi, chess, running and shot-put on the schedule, the event drew more than 600 participants. The academy today operates 30 centres across the city. The initiative is led by Narendra Cheguri, a Physical Education teacher at a private school, who says the larger aim is to spot talent early and ensure that promising youngsters are not held back by lack of access. The academy now plans to formally register itself and begin supplying sports equipment, jerseys and transportation to children who show potential. The Basti Sports movement has been drawing appreciation from academics and child-rights advocates. Noted child rights activist Shanta Sinha attended the tournament's concluding ceremony as chief guest and lauded organisations such as Extra Mile Foundation, Jana Pragathi Seva Charitable Trust and Sriyvamuram Foundation for enabling sports access in vulnerable communities. Encouraging tribal youth Beyond Hyderabad's bastis, similar efforts are strengthening possibilities in tribal belts. Hi5 Youth Foundation and BookASmile are offering basketball coaching through new, modern courts at the Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGTWREIS) Girls' Sports School in Cheguntla, Medak, and at Jinnaram in Sangareddy.

## Airline's focus now on resilience, root cause analysis, rebuilding: IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers



IndiGo disruptions, DGCA issues show cause notice to Pieter Elbers, IndiGo hit with flight disruptions, Airline's on-time performance (OTP) data, Ministry of Civil Aviation, new flight time duty limitation (FTDL) norms, Delhi High Court, IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers. IndiGo Chief Executive Officer Pieter Elbers on Thursday said the airline's focus now is on three things — resilience, root-cause analysis, and rebuilding, after the domestic carrier inconvenienced and caused hardship to lakhs of passengers across airports by cancelling thousands of flights earlier this month.

In a video message to employees on Thursday, Elbers said the focus of IndiGo is now on rebuilding the airline post-

## Ola Electric share price continues fall, hits fresh 52-week low after sliding nearly 4%



Ola Electric Mobility Share Price today: Ola Electric Mobility shares extended their losing streak on Thursday, sliding nearly 4% and hitting a fresh 52-week low, as back-to-back promoter stake sales continued to weigh on investor sentiment. The stock fell as much as 4.29% to around Rs 31.42 on the NSE, marking its weakest level since listing. The decline followed additional open-market sale by founder and promoter Bhavish Aggarwal, who offloaded shares worth about Rs 142 crore on Wednesday. This came a day after a separate transaction in which more shares were sold for nearly Rs 92 crore, taking the total value of stake sales over two days to more than Rs 230 crore.

In all, close to 6.8 crore shares were sold in quick succession, a move that unsettled the market and triggered fresh selling pressure. Despite a clarification from the company that the transactions were a one-time and limited monetisation of a small portion of the promoter's personal holding, investor confidence remained fragile.

"Ola Electric founder-promoter has undertaken a one-time, limited monetisation of a small portion of his personal stake to fully repay a promoter level loan amounting to INR 260 crore. With this, all of the previously pledged 3.93% shares will be released, removing a critical overhang," the statement by Ola Electric read. However, the reassurance did little to arrest the slide. The stock had already declined

nearly 5% in the previous session and has now fallen about 12% over the past five trading days. Over the last month, Ola Electric shares are down more than 24%, and the stock is trading nearly 59% below its IPO price of Rs 76. "Post the transaction, the promoter group would continue to hold approximately 34% in Ola Electric, among the highest across new-age listed companies. There is no dilution of promoter control or change in the long-term conviction," the statement added. Following the latest transactions, the promoter group is expected to hold around 34% stake in the company, a level Ola Electric has said remains among the higher promoter holdings for newly listed technology firms. Even so, the sharp fall underscores continued caution among investors, as the market absorbs the impact of the rapid promoter sell-down.

## Govt introduces N-power bill in Parliament, permits private participation, limits supplier liability



The government on Monday introduced a new Bill in the Lok Sabha called the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025, which will allow private participation in India's highly restricted nuclear power sector. The new Bill will replace the existing Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010. The government said the new Bill is a key step towards achieving India's target of 100 gigawatts of nuclear power capacity by 2047, as it seeks to "harness the full potential of India's nuclear energy and indigenous resources through active involvement of both the public and private sectors." ... accelerated growth of Artificial Intelligence, high-performance computing, quantum technologies, indigenous semiconductor fabrication and large-scale data-driven research requires stable, reliable, abundant, clean and round-the-clock power supply, which can be ensured through expanded deployment of nuclear energy and necessitating a new legal framework promoting research and innovation in private-sector," the short title of the Bill read.

A key change in the new Bill is removal of an earlier provision under 'right of recourse' which had allowed nuclear plant operators to seek compensation from suppliers in the event of a nuclear accident caused by defective equipment, sub-standard services or acts of suppliers or their employees. This provision was repeatedly flagged by foreign nuclear equipment vendors as a deterrent to investing in India's nuclear sector as it exposes them to long-term and uncertain liability risks in the event of a nuclear accident. Under the new Bill, both public and private companies, as well as their joint ventures, will be allowed to set up nuclear power plants, transportation or storage of nuclear fuel, and import or export nuclear fuel, technology, equipment and minerals required for nuclear power generation. However, all entities involved in nuclear energy production will be required to obtain safety authorisation from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. The Bill makes "safety authorisation" mandatory for the manufacture, possession, use, transport, import, export or disposal of radioactive substances and radiation-generating equipment, as well as for establishing, operating or decommissioning radiation facilities. Meanwhile, the Bill retains certain exclusive Central government control over critical and sensitive activities. These include enrichment and isotopic separation of radioactive substances, management and reprocessing of

spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste, production and upgradation of heavy water, among others. The Bill also provides for the creation of new institutional arrangements, including an Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council, designation of Claims Commissioners, and a Nuclear Damage Claims Commission for cases involving severe nuclear damage, with the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity acting as the appellate authority. Further, it empowers the Central government to establish a Nuclear Liability Fund for the purpose of meeting its liability in case of a nuclear incident.

On the liability front, the Bill specifies graded liability caps for nuclear power operators based on their size of installation. Operators of reactors with thermal power above 3,600 MWe will have a liability limit of Rs 3,000 crore.

Reactors with thermal power above 1,500 MWe and up to 3,600 MWe will carry a cap of Rs 1,500 crore, while those above 750 MWe and up to 1,500 MWe will be liable up to Rs 750 crore. For reactors above 150 MWe and up to 750 MWe range, the liability limit is set at Rs 300 crore. Smaller reactors with thermal power up to 150 MWe, fuel cycle facilities other than spent fuel reprocessing plants, and transportation of nuclear materials will have a liability cap of Rs 100 crore.

India enacted The Atomic Energy Act, 1962 after repealing the Atomic Energy Act, 1948. Since then, the Act has been amended four times, with the latest amendment being in 2015. However, the sector was confined to the Central government. In 2010, the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 was enacted to provide for civil liability for nuclear damage and prompt compensation to the victims of a nuclear incident through a no-fault liability regime.

## L Catterton partners with Haldiram, acquires stake in snacks major

New Delhi: L Catterton, a leading global consumer-focused investment firm, on Thursday said it has entered into a strategic partnership with Haldiram and acquired a stake in the country's leading snacks and food brand. L Catterton, which manages approximately USD 39 billion in equity capital, has not mentioned any details about investment or valuation at which it has acquired the stake. The firm only said, "It has entered into a strategic partnership with, and invested in, Haldiram". "The collaboration aims to fortify Haldiram's market leadership in the country and accelerate its international expansion on the back of its robust fundamentals, brand equity, and growth potential," said L Catterton's statement. Earlier this year, India's largest packed snacks and sweets company and restaurant opera-

tor had sold stakes to three strategic investors — Singapore-headquartered global investment firm Temasek, Alpha Wave Global, and International Holding Company (IHC). At that time also, details of the deal were not disclosed but industry insiders said it was done at the valuation of USD 10 billion (around Rs 85,000 crore), which is considered to be the largest for the Indian packaged food industry. L Catterton in India is led by former HUL CEO and Managing Director Sanjiv Mehta, who is currently its Executive Chairman. According to the statement, Mehta's experience will help Haldiram to "endeavour to foster a global 'India for the World' brand". "This will involve unlocking further value via a comprehensive range of initiatives in areas such as brand building,

## Rhea Chakraborty, 33, contemplates egg freezing; tells Huma Qureshi she recently visited a gynaecologist: 'It's such a weird place to be'



freezing is most effective as a preventive measure rather than a last-minute choice," said Dr Deorukhkar.

What should a woman evaluate before deciding to freeze her eggs?

According to Dr Deorukhkar, the first step is to understand your ovarian reserve through blood tests and ultrasound. "After that, it's important to reflect on your reasons. Egg freezing is not an insurance policy or a guarantee for pregnancy. It's a supportive option that offers more possibilities for the future, but keep your expectations realistic," said Dr Deorukhkar.

What does the process involve, and how disruptive is it to daily life?

The procedure typically takes about 10 to 12 days. It includes hormone injections, monitoring visits, and a short day-care procedure for egg retrieval. "Most women can continue working during this time. Some may experience temporary bloating or mood changes, but serious complications are rare when done under expert care," said Dr Deorukhkar. Costs vary based on the number of cycles needed and the medications used. "On average, one cycle can range from Rs 1.2 to Rs 2.5 lakh, not including annual storage fees. Some women may require more than one cycle to collect enough eggs, said Dr Deorukhkar. Many people think that freezing eggs guarantees motherhood later on. "This isn't true," asserted Dr Deorukhkar. "While it improves options, it does not replace natural fertility. The decision should be well-informed, calm, and personal, not driven by fear or social pressure."

Are lifestyle changes needed before or after egg freezing?

Yes. Smoking, excessive alcohol, poor sleep, and unmanaged stress can negatively affect egg quality, said Dr Deorukhkar. "A balanced diet, regular exercise, and good mental health can support fertility outcomes, regardless of whether the frozen eggs are ever used," said Dr Deorukhkar.

## 'Ladkiyaan pata nahi kya...': Malaika Arora reveals the one thing women don't need to rush into; psychologist explains why



Many people, especially women, look back on their early twenties and realise how quickly they were expected to make life-altering decisions, with marriage often the biggest one. This reflection surfaced recently in a conversation where actor Malaika Arora spoke about love, second chances, and the importance of timing. When asked about finding love again after her separation from Arbaaz Khan, Arora told Pinkvilla, "Never say never. Like I said, I'm a hardcore romantic. I believe in love. I believe in all things about love. So, never say never." Her comment echoes the experience of many who, after major relationship changes, still hold space for hope and connection.

She also opened up about what she would tell her younger self if she could go back in time. "I would have said, 'Take your time to get married.' I would have told my younger self that, definitely," she said, adding that marriage is "a huge commitment" and that "ladkiyaan pata nahi kya... itni jaldi shaadi karne ki zaroorat nahi hai (Women don't need to get married so soon)." Her advice reflected a shift in perspective, one that many adults only gain much later. She explained further: "Thoda bohot kaam karlo, thoda understand karlo life ki journey (Work a little, and understand life's journey) and then take that plunge — which I was... very young when I got married."

But how does marrying young impact emotional development, identity formation, and later relationship satisfaction?

Dr Anitha B, clinical psychologist, Cadabams Hospitals, tells [indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com), "From a psychological perspective, marrying very young can sometimes interrupt the natural process of identity formation. Early adulthood is a phase where individuals explore personal values, career direction, emotional boundaries, and self-understanding. When marriage happens too early, the individual may begin to define themselves primarily through the relationship rather than as an independent person." Over time, she adds that this can affect emotional maturity, decision-making, and long-term relationship satisfaction. Couples who marry later often report greater stability because they have had time to

understand their own needs, communication styles, and emotional triggers before committing.

Key indicators that someone is genuinely ready for a long-term commitment like marriage

Emotional readiness for marriage is reflected in self-awareness, emotional regulation, and the ability to handle conflict without fear or avoidance. "Practically, readiness shows up as financial stability, clarity about life goals, and the capacity to take responsibility for both personal and shared decisions. A person who is ready for marriage usually does not view it as an escape from loneliness, pressure, or social timelines. Instead, they see it as a conscious partnership based on respect, shared values, and emotional safety," notes Dr Anitha. Differentiating between genuine readiness and simply wanting to fill an emotional void

Dr Anitha says, "After a separation or divorce, openness to love again is influenced by emotional healing, self-reflection, and the ability to process grief without bitterness. People who are genuinely ready for a new relationship tend to feel emotionally complete on their own and are not urgently seeking validation." In contrast, those who are trying to fill an emotional void often seek immediate relief, constant reassurance, or distractions from loneliness. "A useful marker of readiness is whether the individual feels curious and hopeful about connection rather than anxious or dependent on attention to feel stable," concludes the psychologist.

## Doctor 'stuck in Delhi' lists ways to help your lungs amid rising levels of air pollution, poor AQI: 'This is horrible'



Medical doctor Ritu Singh recently took to Instagram to share the "horrible" situation in Delhi, highlighting the city's plummeting air quality. "If you are also stuck in Delhi like me and breathing the toxic, polluted air...immediately either leave Delhi. If you cannot leave, wear an N95 mask every time you are not near a HEPA filter, a good quality one in your home and office. Yes, spend all your hard-earned money on HEPA filters because your lungs are not replaceable," said Singh, also a professor and HOD Deptt of Biochemistry, Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital Labs. She listed a few ways that can "help a bit". "Do try to have a lot of green plants inside your house, like spider plants, snake plants, and aloe vera. It does help a bit."

"Try to have a lot of antioxidants like amla, oranges. It does help a bit." But our main target is not to take in any unfiltered air in these polluting times. This is horrible for our respiratory system, for our lungs, and our heart. Stay safe, guys, until we can think of long-term solutions. For now, just save your lungs," said Dr Singh. When pollution increases, the air fills with fine particulates that can reach deep into the lungs. "Particles irritate the airways, decrease lung capacity, cause coughing, and worsen breathing problems. Continuous exposure causes changes in the heart and blood vessels, too. For someone living through this daily, the constant inhalation of toxic particles can feel like the body is working overtime just to breathe normally," described Dr Manas Mengar, consultant, pulmonology, KIMS Hospitals, Thane.

How effective is the use of an N95 mask to reduce exposure?

An N95 mask filters out most fine particulates, includ-

ing the smallest ones that cause harm. "Wearing it every time one goes outdoors—or even indoors in poorly ventilated places—dramatically cuts down the amount of polluted air reaching the lungs. It does not solve pollution, but it protects the body in those high-risk periods. Consistency is the key here, not just casual use," asserted Dr Mengar.

Are HEPA air purifiers really worth investing in?

HEPA purifiers can noticeably improve indoor air, especially in bedrooms and workspaces where people spend long hours, said Dr Mengar. "They trap harmful particles, smoke residue, and allergens. For someone living in a city with persistent pollution, clean indoor air is a basic form of defence. It won't fix the outdoors, but at least it gives your lungs a break," said Dr Mengar.

Do indoor plants and antioxidants such as haldi, amla, and oranges help?

Plants may help a little with air freshness, but that is rather minor compared to a purifier, said Dr Mengar.



## Why CSK and MS Dhoni wanted uncapped players like Prashant Veer, Kartik Sharma in the squad



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

An unfamiliar scene unfolded at the Chennai Super Kings auction table in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. For the first time in ages, none of the officials or the coach consulted the team's icon MS Dhoni, the 44-year-old veteran, during the minibreaks nor were on a call with him during the auction as the team went in with changed strategy of breaking the bank for young blood — uncapped Indian players. Dhoni wasn't micro-managing the auction from afar but had given the go-ahead for bleeding youngsters after watching pre-season auction trials of players in Chennai. CSK had ended up with the wooden spoon last season, it was time for a change in personnel. Having walked in with a purse of Rs 43.40 crore to strengthen the squad, CSK bagged 21-year-old allrounder Prashant Veer, a like-for-like replacement for Ravindra Jadeja, and wicket-keeper Kartik Sharma, a 19-year-old. Both going for Rs 14.20 crore each, the most ever paid for uncapped players.

In an era where franchises were unearthing explosive batsmen, by buying experienced players who seemed like safe bets CSK seemed stuck in a different era. While most teams have been lauded for developing young talents, CSK head coach Stephen Fleming had once famously said in 2018: "Here to win trophies, not develop young players." That philosophy has changed. In Tuesday's auction, CSK had targeted Australian allrounder Cameron Green but Kolkata Knight Riders acquired his services. "We couldn't go beyond Rs 25 crore for Green because we feared we could miss out on getting the young talents. We were able to get the youngsters whom we wanted. There has been a sea change in how IPL is played. We have to adapt," CSK's managing director Kasi Viswanathan said. Rewind to what coach Stephen Fleming said last year and it is clear that CSK have pressed the reset button.

March 28, 2025: After questions were raised about their timid approach and lack of firepower, this is what Fleming had to say. "I don't understand this question. Just because we don't swing from ball one and have a little bit of luck go away, we'll see at the end." April 25, 2025: After seven defeats in nine matches, Fleming had this to say about the

make-up of the team: "I will watch with interest to see towards the end what the highest run-scorers and what teams are doing well, because that's part of the reflection as you move forward." May 19, 2025: Now at the bottom of the table, CSK gave debuts to Ayush Mhatre, Dewald Brevis and Urvil Patel, who all provided firepower at the top. When asked if their strategy is shifting, Fleming said, "No, I don't care how old players are. I do like experience though, experience has served us really well over the proud years that we've had." Cut to December 16, Abu Dhabi. CSK successfully bid for Mhatre (18 years), Kartik (19 years), Prashant (20 years), Noor Ahmad (20 years), Brevis (22 years), who will all be part of the playing XI come next season. For a franchise that made play-offs every season between 2008-2019 the last six seasons have been a roller coaster ride. While they did win two titles in 2021 and 2023, the last season definitely seems to have shaken their core. "As the game has evolved, we might have been a little bit slow to evolve with it," Fleming admitted.

CSK successfully bid for Mhatre (18 years), Kartik (19 years), Prashant (20 years), Noor Ahmad (20 years), Brevis (22 years), who will all be part of the playing XI come next season. (BCCI Photo) CSK successfully bid for Mhatre (18 years), Kartik (19 years), Prashant (20 years), Noor Ahmad (20 years), Brevis (22 years), who will all be part of the playing XI come next season. So much so that, CSK had a five-day trial programme at their high performance centre in September where around 40-50 uncapped players were called up. Kartik, a swashbuckling batsman whose hitting capabilities even got former England captain Kevin Pietersen curious. CSK fast bowler Deepak Chahar had tipped off the team about Kartik's potential. While Fleming flew in from New Zealand to oversee the camp personally, performance analyst AR Srikanth played a key role.

Srikanth, who was prized away from Kolkata Knight Riders a couple of seasons ago, has a reputation of being a top talent scout — from Sunil Narine, Suryakumar Yadav, Kuldeep Yadav, Shubman Gill and Rashid Khan. Last season when CSK was struggling it was Srikanth who made the franchise bring in Brevis while fending off interest from Delhi Capitals. "We witnessed at the start of last year, and certainly the year before that my view used to be that experience was going to win, but now you have this fearless athlete that's been brought up on T20 cricket and has a skillset that's mouthwatering, and they just have no fear about what environment they need to exhibit these skills," Fleming conceded. More importantly, Fleming has noticed a sea of change in the difference in attitude among the new-age batsmen. "It's just that mental aspect. Sometimes an experienced player can get caught up in himself, trying to work out where the game's going and what's going on. But these T20 babies, they're just very free and they only know one way. So there's real appeal," he said.

## 'Managing his workload is crucial': Robin Uthappa on 'match-winner' Jasprit Bumrah



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Former India players Robin Uthappa said that due to ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah's demanding action and high pace, it was necessary to manage the 32-year-old's workload. Bumrah was rested in the ODI series against South Africa after playing the 2-match Test series and returned to play the T20Is. He had also played the T20I series against Australia a couple of months ago while also sitting out the ODI series.

"He is an absolute match-winner, and managing his workload is crucial. Fast bowling is probably the toughest skill in the sport, and Bumrah does it at high pace with a demanding action. You want to protect that, but at the same time, you want him to play enough cricket. We've seen glimpses of his brilliance, and hopefully he can build consistency over the next few games heading into the World Cup," Uthappa said on JioStar's 'Cricket Live'. Bumrah played a leading role in the 1st T20I against South Africa, taking 2 wickets, helping India to a massive 101-run win. He would struggle in the 2nd T20I and miss the 3rd T20I while the 4th T20I was abandoned due to excessive fog in Lucknow.

The series is currently at 2-1 in India's favour with South Africa needing a win in Ahmedabad in the 5th match on Friday to level the series at 2-2. "South Africa have played very competitively, but they've been a bit hot and cold in the T20I series. That said, it has still been very entertaining. I thought they bowled really well, while their batting has been a little inconsistent. It's going to be an interesting contest (in Ahmedabad) because they will want to level the series.

## 'They are going to be fine in four years': Michael Vaughan advises England on what to do next if they lose Adelaide Test and Ashes



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has urged that the Ben Stokes-led side should not look at a full reset to the current structure if they lose the Ashes at Adelaide. The visitors find themselves 213-8 after Day 2 of the Test match, still trailing by 158 runs. The 51-year-old said that even if England did lose the Adelaide Test, they must aim to win the Melbourne and Sydney Tests and take lessons out of them.

"English cricket often works in four-year cycles, home and away Ashes series. One or two players need to go because they aren't good enough at this level, but a number of them have enough talent. If they are coached and managed correctly and given the right kind of preparation, they are going to be fine in four years." "It's the only way I can see that English cricket can possibly be competitive in Australia, if they stick with some of the players that have the experience. Bad experience is better than no experience," Vaughan told the BBC.

The former right-hander felt that some of the players in the current setup could come in 2030-31 when England come to Australia for the Ashes, adding that a few of the players needed to be hardened by the current circumstances. "There are a lot of players in this England side that should still be coming in four years' time. There will be one or two that will fall by the wayside, and a couple of the senior pros might disappear." "What I don't want English cricket to do is think 'all these players have failed, we'll put them in the bin and start again'. You want more players to be hardened by playing in these conditions," he

said. Vaughan said that victory in the Sydney Test of 2002-03 was beneficial in the long run. "I look back to 2002-03, we were 4-0 down and won in Sydney. I learnt a lot about the next few years from winning that one game. England can't think there is nothing to gain from the next two games. If this goes wrong, and it looks like it may do, Melbourne and Sydney are still opportunities to learn for the next time they come or the next time they play Australia," he said.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has urged that the Ben Stokes-led side should not look at a full reset to the current structure if they lose the Ashes at Adelaide. The visitors find themselves 213-8 after Day 2 of the Test match, still trailing by 158 runs.

Michael Vaughan said that victory in the Sydney Test of 2002-03 was beneficial in the long run. "I look back to 2002-03, we were 4-0 down and won in Sydney. I learnt a lot about the next few years from winning that one game. England can't think there is nothing to gain from the next two games. If this goes wrong, and it looks like it may do, Melbourne and Sydney are still opportunities to learn for the next time they come or the next time they play Australia," he said.

## 'Need to review scheduling of matches between 15 Dec to 15 Jan in North India': BCCI's Rajeev Shukla after IND vs SA 4th T20I gets called off due to fog in Lucknow



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

After intense fog in Lucknow led to the cancellation of the 4th T20I match between India and South Africa, Rajeev Shukla, VP- BCCI Executive Board, said that in the future the cricket body will take on a decision on if the matches which are scheduled from December 15 to January 15 in North India can be shifted to the south or the west of the country. "The match had to be cancelled due to fog. The people were upset about it. We will need to review the sched-

uling of matches between 15 December to 15 January in North India to determine whether we need to shift them to south India or west India. Domestic matches are also being affected due to fog," Shukla said on Thursday to ANI. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor also urged Shukla to shift winter schedule matches to South India, after Wednesday's India vs South Africa T20I match in Lucknow was cancelled due to fog.

"Rajiv ji, I was saying that apart from scheduling matches in North India in January, Kerala aaiye (come to Kerala)," Tharoor said. To which Shukla reiterated what he had said earlier that there should be a close inspection on the schedule. "The scheduling of the December 15 to January 15 matches in North India will have to be looked into. Kerala already gets them; there is a rotation policy in place," he said. The fixture being abandoned raises questions over the BCCI's winter scheduling for this crucial leg of matches before the T20 World Cup in February-March. It was the first time a night T20I was scheduled at the 50,000-seater venue in December. It will now have the dubious distinction of hosting the first major international match in India called off due to fog.

## Nasser Hussain on Snicko controversy at Ashes: 'Everyone has lost faith with the system'

GNS News Agency, Dec 18

In just two days of the third Test of the Ashes at Adelaide, a common antagonist emerged between the two warring sides of England and Australia: the Snicko system. The Snicko was already under the scanner on day 1 of the third Test for a reprieve it gave to Australia's Alex Carey, who went on to plunder a century for the team that's 2-0 in the five-Test Ashes after two Tests. But on Thursday, two incidents, both involving England's Jamie Smith, further raised the heat on the system, after the technology apparently failed to catch the ball kissing Smith's glove on the first incident and then detected an edge on a ball two overs later when the ball seemed to have missed the bat by some distance.

After the two incidents former England captain Nasser Hussain slammed the system and said everyone in Adelaide, from fans to players to pundits, had lost faith in the system. Before he started criticising the Snicko, he did point out that England's situation in the Ashes series is not primarily due to the Snicko system.

England's Jamie Smith leaves the field after being given out by a Snicko decision on day two of the third Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Adelaide, Australia, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025. (AP Photo) England's Jamie Smith leaves the field after losing his wicket during play on day two of the third Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Adelaide, Australia, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025. (AP Photo) "England aren't 2-0 down and had another bad day because of Snicko. England are not losing the Ashes because of Snicko," Hussain told Sky Sports before continuing. "But I will say everyone out here has lost faith in Snicko. You could hear on the stump mic, some of the Australian players saying 'it's a joke' or that 'it's a terrible system'. The crowd in the stands or the people watching at home, have completely lost faith with the system. Then you

get into dangerous territory. You have the third umpire guessing. They're trying to work out when the noise came, when did the ball go past the bat." "It was farcical today. Jamie Smith clearly gloved one, to the slip cordon. All they were checking was whether Usman Khawaja took the catch cleanly or not. I'm not sure if Khawaja did take the catch cleanly. It looked like it could well have been a bumb ball. That's a 50-50 call. But it was overruled on the fact that the third umpire decided that the ball did not hit the glove because the Snicko was not quite aligned with it. It clearly hit the glove. You can imagine Australia's frustration. Forget the Carey thing yesterday. Two wrongs don't make a right! So that (Smith) decision was just wrong. And then Jamie Smith goes for a pull shot and he was given out. And you can imagine the frustration from Smith and Ben Stokes, they just could not believe it. So everyone out here has lost faith with the technology. That's a dangerous place to be in. Cricket has set the tone in how technology is used in sport. It's not like VAR (in football) where there's been huge controversies. Cricket and technology and the DRS system has worked. But it's not working in this series. And that is not me being a whingeing Pom by the way. It's been the same for both sides," Hussain added.

## FIFA overturns three Malaysia matches amid player eligibility scandal



GNS News Agency, Dec 18

In its latest decision, FIFA's disciplinary committee also changed the results of three friendlies the players had appeared in. In its latest decision, FIFA's disciplinary committee also changed the results of three friendlies the players had appeared in. FIFA overturned the results of three Malaysia matches after finding they had fielded ineligible players, the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) said on Wednesday, in the latest setback for the team amid a widening document forgery scandal. FIFA had suspended seven naturalised players for 12 months and fined FAM 350,000 Swiss francs (\$439,257) in September after finding false documentation had been used to allow them to

play in an Asian Cup qualifier against Vietnam in June. World soccer's governing body dismissed an appeal by FAM last month, saying it would launch a formal probe into the association's internal operations and notify authorities in five countries of potential criminal proceedings.

In its latest decision, FIFA's disciplinary committee also changed the results of three friendlies the players had appeared in — against Cape Verde on May 29, Singapore on September 4 and Palestine on September 8, FAM said. "All three matches were declared lost by forfeit (score of 3-0) and FAM was sanctioned with a fine of 10,000 Swiss Francs. The decision remains subject to appeal," a FIFA spokesperson said. Malaysia had drawn 1-1 with Cape Verde and earned 2-1 and 1-0 wins over Singapore and Palestine. "FAM will make a written application to obtain the reasons for the decision from the FIFA disciplinary committee before considering the next steps to be taken in this matter," the association said. The scandal has sparked uproar in Malaysia, with fans and some lawmakers calling for action against FAM as well as government agencies responsible for granting the players' citizenship. Last month, the association suspended its secretary-general and formed an independent committee to investigate what it called a "technical error". Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has vowed full transparency in domestic probes, but stressed that FAM should be allowed to defend itself.

## No willingness to invest in Indian football but crores spent on Messi tour: Sandesh Jhingan

Indian men's football team captain Sandesh Jhingan on Wednesday questioned the logic of spending crores on Lionel Messi's high-profile 'GOAT Tour', saying the extravagance has forced him to think if anyone is really concerned about investing in Indian football, which has effectively come to a standstill. Messi's three-day tour saw unprecedented public frenzy and massive crowds in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi.

"It feels as though we are close to shutting everything down because there is no willingness to invest in football within India, yet crores were spent on this tour," Jhingan wrote in a candid Instagram post, voicing concern over the direction of the sport in the country. The India skipper said the unprecedented public response to the tour headlined by Lionel Messi alongside Rodrigo de Paul and Luis Suarez, revealed nation's priorities.

"What troubles me, however, and leaves me deeply reflective, is that at a time when our own football ecosystem is in jeopardy, arguably facing one of its most difficult

phases, we stand on the brink of having no active domestic football ahead of us," he wrote. The 30-year-old stopper said the disparity highlighted a harsh reality for those playing the game at home. "What this tells me is that we do love the sport, but perhaps not enough to support our own players," Jhingan said. The tour drew packed stadiums and premium-ticket crowds in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and New Delhi, but for many it turned out to be little more than a glorified, selfie-driven exhibition for the country's rich and famous. The Kolkata leg descended into chaos at the Salt Lake Stadium, with spectators, many of whom had paid high prices for tickets, alleging that they were unable to get a proper glimpse of Messi, who was on the field for about 20 minutes but remained surrounded by a crowd that included state minister Aroop Biswas. The event eventually spiraled into complete mayhem, leading to the arrest of organiser Shatadru Datta. "Now that the euphoria of the past few days of the entire country suddenly embracing football has settled somewhat, I felt compelled to share my thoughts," Jhingan wrote.

## CBFC to stay away from streaming content; what the government is doing to prevent another India's Got Latent misfire



Earlier this year, FIRs were lodged against YouTubers Ranveer Allahbdia and Samay Raina among others for their "obscene" jokes on the YouTube show India's Got Latent. When the matter reached the Supreme Court, the apex court stated that there should be a regulatory body for content that's available online for streaming. That brought back the murmurs that started during the Tandav-Prime Video India controversy back in 2021 that the OTT platforms would soon be censored/certified by the Central Board of Film Certification. Now, the government has clarified that it won't be the case. On Wednesday, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Dr L Murugan clarified in Lok Sabha that the CBFC is a statutory body established under the Cinematograph Act, 1952. As a result, its jurisdiction is limited to films released only in cinemas. The OTT platforms, on the other hand, fall under the mandate of Part III of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

So, will OTT content go unchecked? However, that doesn't mean that the content on OTT platforms like Netflix, Prime Video, JioHotstar and YouTube, among others, will go unchecked. As the Supreme Court noted in India's Got Latent case last month, "So I create my own channel, I am not accountable to anyone... somebody has to be accountable," said the SC.

Murugan on Wednesday clarified that under the IT Rules 2021, the OTT platforms have to follow a Code of Conduct, which requires them to not publish content prohibited by the government, and all shows and films must come with age-based classification in accordance with prescribed guidelines. The CBFC's primary role is also age-based certification of theatrical releases. But as we've seen over the years, it's also dictated cuts in films in order to

allow them certification. Films like Honey Trehan's Punjab '95 and Sandhya Suri's Santosh are still stuck with the CBFC. However, in case of OTT platforms, there would be no body that would predetermine its fate.

What's the redressal procedure for OTT platforms?

As per the IT Rules 2021, a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism is in place to address any complaints. Level I involves self-regulation, where OTT platforms respond to the complaints at their own level. Level II entails involvement of self-regulating bodies set up by the OTT platforms themselves in the case they can't resolve the complaints at their own level. If the complaint can't meet a resolution at both these self-regulating levels, it'll be escalated to the third and final level, involving the intervention of the Central Government. Murugan also revealed in the Parliament that access to as many as 43 OTT platforms have been disabled for exhibiting obscene content since that's prohibited by law.

Level III seems to address a concern raised by the Supreme Court in the India's Got Latent row, where it asked, "Where the content is perceived as anti-national or disruptive of society's norms, will the creator take responsibility for it? Will self-regulation be sufficient? The difficulty we are facing is the response time. Once the scurrilous material is uploaded, by the time the authorities react, it has gone viral, to millions of viewers, so how do you control that?"

Aadhar-based age-gating?

The SC had also noted stricter compliance with age-based classification. It remarked that the disclaimers and warnings accompanying the films and shows aren't sufficient. It asked whether the viewer's age can be verified via their Aadhar Card before they can access a particular content. "The warning can be for a few seconds. Then perhaps ask for your Aadhaar card, etc., so that your age can be verified and then the programme starts," it stated. However, the government hasn't institutionalised that measure yet. The government's clarification that OTT platforms are exempt from the CBFC also comes at a time when the FICCI-EY Media & Entertainment Industry Report 2025 has hailed the OTT platforms as "a key driver of India's soft power and global cultural outreach." With the number of subscribers to OTT content estimated between 9.5 crore and 11.8 crore, the revenue has increased by 11% in 2024 to Rs 9,200 crore.

## Eagle-eyed netizens find video of a smitten Akshaye Khanna dancing with Aishwarya Rai after saying 'can't take my eyes off her'

Akshaye Khanna has unexpectedly become the internet's newest national crush following his striking appearance in Dhurandhar. His dance to FA9LA has taken social media by storm, inspiring countless reels and edits recreating his moves. With this sudden resurgence in popularity, curiosity around the actor's personal life has also intensified, leading to several of his old interviews resurfacing online.

Most recently, a video of Akshaye Khanna speaking fondly about Aishwarya Rai resurfaced on Reddit. In the clip, the actor can be heard admitting that he "can't take his eyes off her." Shortly after, another Reddit user shared an old video showing Akshaye and Aishwarya dancing together at an event in Miami, with many viewers pointing out how visibly smitten he appears throughout the performance. In the video, the two actors are seen dancing on stage to "Taal Se Taal Mila". Sharing the clip, a Reddit user wrote, "Aishwarya and Akshaye dancing on stage in Miami – Taal Se Taal Mila (1999)."

The video sparked a flurry of reactions online. One user commented, "He was not lying when he said, 'I just can't take my eyes off her.'" Another added, "He was absolutely smitten by Aishwarya during the making of their first film together." This isn't the first time Akshaye Khanna's admiration for Aishwarya Rai has resurfaced online. An old clip from Koffee With Karan has also been circulating, in which Akshaye candidly spoke about his fascination with the former Miss World. "I can never take my eyes off her whenever I meet her," he said on the show, adding with disarming honesty, "It's embarrassing for men. She must be used to it, but I'm not used to not being able to take my eyes off somebody. You just keep staring at her like a lunatic."

The video sparked a flurry of reactions online. One user commented, "He was not lying when he said, 'I just can't take my eyes off her.'" Another added, "He was absolutely smitten by Aishwarya during the making of their first film together." This isn't the first time Akshaye Khanna's admiration for Aishwarya Rai has resurfaced online. An old clip from Koffee With Karan has also been circulating, in which Akshaye candidly spoke about his fascination with the former Miss World. "I can never take my eyes off her whenever I meet her," he said on the show, adding with disarming honesty, "It's embarrassing for men. She must be used to it, but I'm not used to not being able to take my eyes off somebody. You just keep staring at her like a lunatic."



tic."

Akshaye Khanna and Aishwarya Rai collaborated twice during their careers. Both actors made their debuts in 1997, and in 1999, they appeared together in two films—Taal and Aa Ab Laut Chalen. While Taal, directed by Subhash Ghai, emerged as a blockbuster, Aa Ab Laut Chalen, directed by Rishi Kapoor in his first and only directorial venture, failed to make an impact at the box office. That film also marked the end of their on-screen collaboration. For a brief period during the filming of these projects, the two were reportedly close. Rumours at the time suggested that they dated for nearly a year, until Aishwarya signed Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. However, these claims remain unverified, with neither actor ever addressing the speculation publicly.

## Aamir Khan forces Vir Das to use his version of Happy Patel Khatarnaak Jasoos trailer: 'I am a marketing genius, perfectionist'

After taking a cheeky dig at filmmakers who promise innovation but eventually resort to an item song to "save" their films, Aamir Khan and Vir Das are back with yet another satirical video—this time poking fun at how producers often dominate directors and interfere in even the smallest creative decisions. The duo shared a new video announcing that the trailer of their upcoming film Happy Patel: Khatarnak Jasoos will be released tomorrow. The clip features a hilarious banter between Aamir and Vir over whose version of the trailer will ultimately be unveiled. The video opens with Aamir Khan meditating peacefully when Vir Das knocks and enters the room. Referring to their previous announcement video—where Aamir's producer avatar turned aggressive towards first-time director Vir—Aamir declares, "I am a changed man now. I have found peace. I have even started meditating."

He then reveals that he has a surprise for Vir and pulls out a pen drive, announcing confidently, "Happy Patel's trailer. I have already made it." A visibly shocked Vir responds, "You made the trailer?" before adding, "Sir, even I have made a trailer for our film."

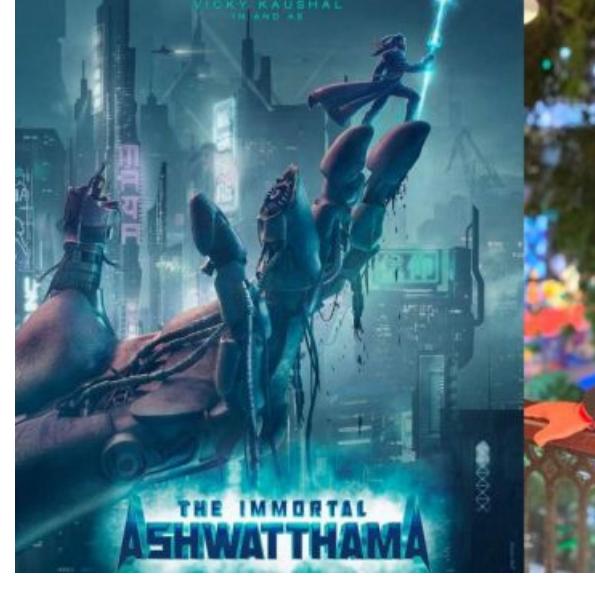
Vir Das insists that the trailer should reflect the director's vision. To this, Aamir Khan sarcastically agrees, saying, "You're right! Director! Captain of the ship!"—before quickly adding, "But whose ship is it? Who's the producer? Who's the marketing genius?" Taking a stand for young filmmakers, Vir Das argues, "This is a young, crazy film. It needs a young, crazy trailer." Aamir Khan, clearly offended, responds, "So you're saying I'm not young?" A



flustered Vir quickly backtracks: "Of course you are, sir. I mean... you're 62, but young. Young 62. Strong 62." Aamir then launches into an exaggerated monologue, declaring, "Do you know I'm a perfectionist? The entire world calls me that. Why?" He jokingly claims credit for editing Delhi Belly, designing all the costumes of Lagaan, singing every song in Secret Superstar, and even playing both Geeta and Babita Phogat in Dangal—before firmly stating that his version of the Happy Patel trailer will be released.

Much like the previous video, the banter ends with Aamir Khan once again turning aggressive. In the background, the song "Main Hoon Alpha Male" plays, hinting that the film may also take a sly dig at the recent "Animal culture" trend in cinema. The trailer for Happy Patel: Khatarnak Jasoos will be unveiled tomorrow, with the film set for a worldwide release on January 16. In their earlier announcement video,

## Not Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar, Aditya Dhar's dream project was a Vicky Kaushal mytho drama, was shelved due to budget constraints



Aditya Dhar is riding high on the success of his gangster saga Dhurandhar, and rightfully so. In an otherwise underwhelming year for Bollywood's tentpole releases, the film has emerged as a blockbuster, grossing Rs 437.25 crore nett in India so far and poised to enter the coveted Rs 500 crore club soon. The success is particularly significant for its lead star Ranveer Singh, who had been written off by many after a string of underperforming films. Dhurandhar has firmly re-established his position as a bankable star. For Aditya Dhar, too, the film's triumph comes as a major relief, especially after his ambitious dream project, The Immortal Ashwathama, was put on the backburner a few years ago due to budgetary constraints.

Dhar made his Bollywood debut with Vicky Kaushal-starrer Uri: The Surgical Strike, which went on to collect a thunderous Rs 244.14 crore at the box office and proved to be a game-changer for everyone involved. Buoyed by the success, the filmmaker began dreaming bigger, setting his sights on a mythological superhero actioner that would blend epic storytelling with never-before-seen world-building and visual effects. The Immortal Ashwathama was conceived as a retelling of Ashwathama's journey from the Mahabharata, chronicling his quest for redemption and immortality.

Backed by Ronnie Screwvala's RSVP, the same production house behind Uri, the film was set to be headlined by Vicky Kaushal. The actor reportedly began intensive physical training for the role, and on 11 January 2021, Dhar

took to Instagram to officially announce the project by unveiling two posters featuring the actor. He wrote in the caption, "Raising the bar higher for the superhero genre not only in India but across the world, this film is a high-concept visual spectacle in the making. From the team that brought to you Uri: The Surgical Strike, presenting @vickykaushal09 in and as #TheImmortalAshwathama." However, following the announcement, the project went quiet, triggering widespread speculation. Reports suggested that Ronnie Screwvala had stepped away from the film, with Dhar exploring a collaboration with Jio Studios due to funding issues. There were also rumours that Vicky Kaushal had been asked to exit the project amid concerns about his bankability for such an expensive film. Additionally, there were reports of Sara Ali Khan initially being cast, before being replaced by Samantha Ruth Prabhu. Eventually, Aditya Dhar put all speculation to rest, announcing that The Immortal Ashwathama had been shelved.

Speaking at the trailer launch of Article 370, he said, "We have put that on the backburner right now. I'll be honest, the kind of vision we all had for that, it was too big to work for Indian cinema. The kind of VFX quality we were looking at, nobody has even strived for it here." He further explained that until technology becomes more affordable and cinema infrastructure expands, the project would have to wait. "For example, James Cameron thought of Avatar 27 years ago, but he waited for the market to grow. The tech to come to that level where he could actually present it. I'm, of course, not him, but if we have to achieve excellence, there can't be any mediocrity. I can't make it for the heck of it. Even if it takes five years of my prime time, the film has to be brilliant."

Emphasising his creative philosophy, Dhar added, "Once a film is made, then it remains for posterity. It can't be something mediocre. It can't have that intent that I just want to make money. It should strive for excellence. I truly believe that as makers we have a huge responsibility of representing our country in the right way." In today's landscape, however, where several high-budget and technologically ambitious mythological projects are already in production, such as Nitesh Tiwari's two-part Ramayan and SS Rajamouli's globe-trotting Varanasi, it appears to be only a matter of time before Dhar's dream project finally sees the light of day, especially now that he has delivered yet another major hit. Meanwhile, the filmmaker is gearing up for Dhurandhar: Part 2, which is slated for an Eid 2026 release. The first installment was set against the backdrop of the Pakistan underworld and featured a formidable ensemble cast including Akshaye Khanna, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, Rakesh Bedi, and Sara Arjun.

## Homebound makes the Oscars shortlist: Here are the films it's up against

India's entry for the Oscars, Neeraj Ghaywan's Homebound, has secured a place among the 15 shortlisted titles in the International Feature Film category for the 98th Academy Awards. The movie, written and directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, is inspired by the true story of two young migrant workers trying to reach home during the 2020 COVID-induced lockdown. The moving account of their friendship, which was originally reported by journalist Basharat Peer, became the foundation for Ghaywan to examine, on a cinematic canvas, the fault lines in our society; the aspirations of underprivileged youths; and how hope drives sustains them even during their darkest hours.

When the Academy Award nominations will be announced on January 22, 2026, only five of the shortlisted movies will advance to the next stage. Since the shortlist features several festival favourites and auteur-driven movies, Homebound's journey to nomination stage will be challenging. The list features some of this year's most significant cinematic triumphs from across the world, many of which I have had access to as a voter for the 83rd Annual Golden Globe Awards, scheduled to be held on January 11. Belén, Argentina: A gripping legal procedural based on a true story, directed and starred by Dolores Fonzi, the movie chronicles the experience of Julieta as she is falsely accused of infanticide. It shows how Julieta's case becomes a 'flashpoint in the ongoing fight for women's reproductive rights' and how it snowballed into a movement.

The Secret Agent, Brazil: Directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho, this is an engaging political drama set in 1977 when the country was under dictatorship. Its lead actor Wagner Moura essays the role of a widower who returns to Recife during a carnival to be reunited with his son but encounters corruption and threat to his life. The film created waves at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year when Filho won the Best Director Award, Moura received the Best Actor Award, and the movie was awarded FIPRESCI Prize for Best Film. It Was Just an Accident, France: Written and directed by Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi, the film, shot discreetly in Tehran, is a revenge drama that questions authoritarianism and explores moral dilemmas. The winner of Palme d'Or and multiple Golden Globes nominations, it has already established itself as one of 2025's top films.

Sound of Falling, Germany: The Cannes jury prize winner, co-written and directed by Mascha Schilzinski, follows the story of four girls — Alma (1910s), Erika (1940s), Angelika (1980s), and Lenka (2020s) — who spend their youth on the same farm in north Germany. Though separated by time, their lives mirror each other in this ambitious ensemble drama. The President's Cake, Iran: A socio-political drama set in the '90s, the story revolves around Lamia, a nine-year-old schoolgirl, who is assigned to prepare a cake to celebrate Saddam Hussein's birthday. In 'a landscape of fear and scarcity', the assignment turns harrowing for Lamia and her ailing grandmother. Directed by Hasan Hadi, 'The President's Cake' became the first Iraqi production to be shortlisted for an Academy Award. It was also winner of the audience award as well as Camera d'Or for Best Debut Feature.

Kokuho, Japan: One of the visually-stunning movies of this year, Japan's Oscar entry is also its highest-grossing live action movie ever. The epic drama, directed by Sang-il Lee, opens in the 60s' Nagasaki when the son of a slain yakuzza boss is taken in by a Kabuki master and raised alongside his son. Over five tumultuous decades, Kokuho follows the friendship and rivalry of the two Kabuki theatre actors, played by Ryo Yoshizawa and Ryusei Yokohama, in this aesthetically-rich tale. All That's Left of You, Jordan: Premiered at Sundance Film Festival, this is the story of a Palestinian teenager who is swept into the protests in the Occupied West Bank of the 1980s, which changes the course of his family's life. His mother recounts

what led them to that fateful moment in this story of intergenerational trauma, spanning seven decades. The epic drama, written and directed by Cherien Dabis, traces the 'hopes and heartaches of one uprooted family'. Sentimental Value, Norway: Acclaimed filmmaker Joachim Trier reunites with Renate Reinsve after the much talked-about The Worst Person in the World (2021). The movie, which won the Grand Prix at Cannes, is a nuanced exploration of the father-daughter relationship haunted by the past. It also features powerful performances by Reinsve, Stellan Skarsgård, Elle Fanning and Inga Ibsdatter Lilleas. Palestine 36, Palestine: Using rare archival footage, this historical film charts the lives and ambitions of those living under British rule. As Palestinian villages revolt against British colonial rule, the movie focuses on Yusuf who navigates between Jerusalem and his rural home. Directed by Annemarie Jacir, Palestine 36 is set in the 1930s.

No Other Choice, South Korea: Prominent director Park Chan-wook's latest movie is a dark comedy about a man whose happy family life is disrupted when he loses his job abruptly after working in the same company for 25 years dedicatedly. The film, which features compelling performances by Lee Byung Hun Son Yejin, is considered to be one of the top contenders. Sirat, Spain: Directed by Oliver Laxe, this is a moving story of a father who arrives with his young son in the Moroccan desert looking for his missing daughter, who is entangled in the local rave culture. What makes this genre-defying movie engrossing is the use of sound, cinematography and a refreshing vision.

Late Shift, Switzerland: Powered by actor Leonie Benesch, director Petra Volpe's tense drama is how Floria, a dedicated nurse, 'navigates the relentless pace of her hospital's understaffed surgical ward with humanity and warmth'. Left-Handed Girl, Taiwan: A story of women and resilience, it shows a single mother and her two daughters who relocate to Taipei to open a night market stall. Directed by Shih-Ching Tsou, the film is co-written and produced by Oscar-winner Sean Baker. Shot on an iPhone, it has a palpable raw, realistic indie vibe. The Voice of Hind Rajab, Tunisia: On January 29, 2024, Red Crescent volunteers received a call from a six-year-old girl, who was trapped in a car under Israeli military fire. Even as the volunteers work on procuring military and governmental approvals to get an ambulance to rescue her, they try to keep Hind, who is alone and scared, on the line. Director Kaouthar Ben Hania reconstructs the entire incident in Gaza with actual recordings and scripted performances.

Printed and Published by V. Srinivas Reddy, on behalf of M/s Sai Krishna Publications, Owned by M/s Sai Krishna Publications, Printed at Sree Seshasai Enterprises, Plot No.98/1, Co-operative Industrial Estate, IDA, Gandhinagar, Guntur Dist, Andhra Pradesh. Published at Plot No. 3, Flat No.13, Surya Saroj Apartments, Huda Complex, Saroor Nagar, Ranga Reddy Dist. T.S. 500 035.

Editor: V Srinivas Reddy RNI No. APENG/2013/49469, Cell No. 9440231967.