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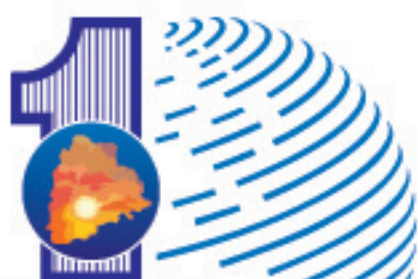


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Indian Chronicle

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On acid attack survivors

Shocked that an acid attack victim had not got closure 16 years after the crime was committed, the Supreme Court of India made a slew of oral observations early this week calling the slow pace a “mockery of the system”. The Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice Surya Kant, said acid attackers must not be shown any sympathy by courts, and called for the “entire system” to respond against them. Shaheen Malik was 26 and was studying for an MBA degree when she was attacked outside her office in Haryana in 2009. Till 2013, “nothing happened” in her case, she told the CJI. The case was finally transferred to Rohini court in Delhi from Haryana, where the trial is pending and final arguments are on. Ms. Malik has undergone reconstructive surgeries, and in 2021, she set up Brave Souls, an NGO which offers medical and legal support to acid attack survivors. In fact, she was knocking at the Court’s door with a PIL seeking formal recognition of survivors as persons with specified disabilities under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. She was bringing the Court’s notice to those acid attack victims who had been forcibly fed acid and were not marked for life like others who had acid thrown at them but nevertheless lived with terrible suffering.

The CJI asked the Centre to consider bringing an ordinance. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said no respondent could oppose the cause of the petitioners. Perpetrators of acid attacks who leave victims, mostly women and minors, scarred inside and outside for the rest of their lives “must meet with the same ruthlessness as they showed their victims”, he said. The CJI ordered the Registrar-General of the High Courts to provide the number and details of pending trials in acid attack cases; he also proposed setting up of special courts to exclusively conduct acid attack cases on a day-to-day basis.

IndiGo operations in Mumbai record 112 cancellations today, second-highest after Hyd

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Airport officials said baggage tracing teams are still working through large backlogs created over the past few days, and the unusually high volume of disrupted flights has slowed clearance. Airport officials said baggage tracing teams are still working through large backlogs created over the past few days, and the unusually high volume of disrupted flights has slowed clearance. IndiGo’s operations continued to face disruptions across its network Sunday, and Mumbai remained among the worst-affected airports. The city recorded 112 cancellations Sunday, 56 arrivals and 56 departures, the second-highest nationwide after Hyderabad.

According to the airline, it is progressively restoring schedules after days of severe disruption. IndiGo confirmed it is on track to operate more than 1,650 flights Sunday, up from around 1,500 a day earlier. On-time performance rose sharply to 75 per cent, up from nearly 30 per cent the previous day. In an official statement, the airline said, “We are establishing further significant and sustained improvements across our network. Our teams are working relentlessly to stabilise operations, and our primary focus remains on providing an enhanced travel experience for our customers.” IndiGo added that cancellations were issued earlier in the day to provide passengers greater notice, and that refund and luggage processes were “in full action” at all affected airports. Despite the improvement, the ground reality is not getting any better as many passengers in Mumbai continue to face long delays, repeated rescheduling, and persistent baggage issues.

Anand Parmar, who was set to fly from Mumbai to Chennai on Friday evening, said his flight was cancelled after he had already checked in. Since then, he has been trying to trace his luggage. “It is almost the third day today, but I still haven’t gotten my luggage,” he said. “I’ve been calling customer care and waiting in queues at the airport. There is still no clarity on where my bag is. I am exhausted.” Airport officials said baggage tracing teams are still working through large backlogs created over the past few days, and the unusually high volume of disrupted flights has slowed clearance. Mumbai has recorded a steady escalation in cancellations through the week. On Tuesday, the city saw 29 arrivals and 26 departures cancelled. This rose sharply to 85 cancellations on Wednesday. Thursday witnessed the heaviest impact, with estimates ranging from 100 to 118 cancellations across the day. Friday recorded another 104 cancellations. Saturday marked the highest impact of the week with 146 cancellations between midnight and 8 pm.

Vigilance officials inspect rice mills in Mancherial

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Adilabad: Officials from the Vigilance wing of the Civil Supplies department inspected records at several rice mills in Jaipur and Chennur mandals on Friday and Saturday.

A team led by a DSP-rank officer inspected mills permitted to take up custom rice milling and procure paddy from farmers at Tekumatla, Indaram, Kundaram and Maddulapalli in Jaipur mandal, and at various locations in Chennur mandal. They examined records of paddy procured and rice milled, while also checking stocks of fine and coarse varieties.



The inspections gained significance after irregularities surfaced at a procurement centre in Jaipur mandal recently. An amount of Rs. 1.39 crore from the Civil Supplies department was allegedly swindled by fabricating records of a paddy procurement centre catering to Narsingapur and Maddulapalli villages in November.

Maharashtra Opposition to boycott Govt’s tea party ahead of winter session, cites LoP post delay



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

From cotton farmer suicides to the Government’s refusal to even send a proposal to the Centre for aid to farmers affected by floods in Marathwada, the Opposition listed issues it plans to raise in the session. (File Photo) From cotton farmer suicides to the Government’s refusal to even send a proposal to the Centre for aid to farmers affected by floods in Marathwada, the Opposition listed issues it plans to raise in the session. Terming it “anti-constitutional”, Maharashtra’s Opposition parties criticised the Mahayuti Government on Sunday over the delay in appointing leaders of the Opposition in the legislature and announced a boycott of a customary tea party to be hosted on the eve of the legislature’s winter session. “We boycott the tea party called by the ruling Mahayuti Government as it refuses to recognise the constitutional position of the leader of the Opposition. In the 1980s, even though there were not more than 15 Opposition MLAs, the Congress Government allowed the leader of the Opposition post and respected the

constitutional process. This Government has no such intention and is hellbent on disrespecting the Constitution,” said Congress legislative party leader Vijay Wadettiwar. He was addressing a press conference along with leaders of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Nationalist Congress Party (SP). From cotton farmer suicides to the Government’s refusal to even send a proposal to the Centre for aid to farmers affected by floods in Marathwada, the Opposition listed issues it plans to raise in the session scheduled to start on Monday. Wadettiwar alleged that the majority of the funds were being spent on Mumbai, Pune, and Thane for 15-20 per cent commission, while Vidarbha was neglected. “The leaders who had demanded a separate Vidarbha state are now ruling the state. These leaders are neglecting Vidarbha for the rest of Maharashtra. Therefore, questions on Vidarbha’s development should be put to those in power,” said Wadettiwar. He added that he would also speak to the Congress high command on whether the demand for a separate Vidarbha state should be raised again. Sena (UBT) MLA Bhaskar Jadhav said his party stood by constitutional values and that the Opposition did not support the “kind of democracy” being practised by the ruling side. “LoP posts are lying vacant in both the state Assembly and Council. The Government, with a brutal majority, is scared of the Opposition despite its lower numbers,” he said. Jadhav alleged that the Government had provided crores of rupees to the legislators of the Mahayuti alliance but nothing to the Opposition MLAs. “During Congress rule, they had the decency to respect the Opposition and earmark funds for its MLAs. But the Mahayuti Government has no decency. The Government has not sanctioned funds for constituencies held by Opposition parties. Therefore, it is not proper to attend a customary tea meeting with the ruling alliance, which does not have faith in the Constitution and democracy,” he added.

‘My words were not shaped by comfort’: Bangalore Literature Festival starts with keynote address by International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

In a subsequent interaction with Prateeti Ballal, who moderated the first panel, Mushtaq recalled her early years and the multiple languages she was exposed to, starting out as a native Dakhni speaker and discovering a love for Kannada in school. In a subsequent interaction with Prateeti Ballal, who moderated the first panel, Mushtaq recalled her early years and the multiple languages she was exposed to, starting out as a native Dakhni speaker and discovering a love for Kannada in school. The 14th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival started strong on Saturday, with a keynote speech by International Booker Prize winner and veteran Kannada author Banu Mushtaq. Delivering her speech, titled Being Banu, Being Bandaya, Mushtaq gave a poetic account of her life and philosophy of writing. She said, “Being Bandaya feels like standing in front of a mirror that reflects not just one woman, but an entire lineage of writers who refused to be silent, and an entire geography of struggle and tenderness.... It is not a label, but an inheritance, a responsibility, a fire that refuses to go out.” Bandaya is a progressive literary movement in Kannada that began in the 1970s.

Mushtaq, who is also a practising lawyer, said, “My words were not shaped by comfort. They were shaped by courtrooms, cross-examinations, and contradictions. They were shaped by the people who walked into my chamber not just with cases, but with defeats, dreams, and dignity.” In a subsequent interaction with Prateeti Ballal, who moderated the first panel, Mushtaq recalled her early years and the multiple languages she was exposed to, starting out as a native Dakhni speaker and discovering a love for Kannada in school. Another crowd-puller at the event was comedian Vir Das, whose book, The Outsider: A Memoir for Misfits, was published recently. Speaking to journalist Anna M M



Vetticad. Das reminisced on the context of his memoirs, “For some reason, I have seen more of the world, and I have been let into more worlds than anyone I have met. I have gatecrashed Bollywood, Hollywood... I have been an Indian in Africa, an African in an Indian boarding school, a boarding school kid in Delhi Public School.... I never truly belonged.” Other major draws for the day at panels and book signings were Bangalore Literature Festival regulars such as Sudha Murthy and Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor, while Chetan Bhagat is set to make an appearance on Day 2. The schedule for both days also has plenty of offerings for lovers of Kannada literature, from a reading of Banu Mushtaq’s work to a tribute to the late doyen of Kannada literature, S L Bharyappa. The literature festival—held at Freedom Park instead of the previous venue, Lalit Ashok, in order to accommodate a larger number of people—drew around 15,000 visitors on its first day. One of the organisers of the festival, author Shiniie Antony said, “Our audiences are growing. A spacious venue will help there. And Freedom Park is full of historical significance, perhaps the best place to express oneself freely.”

Karnataka govt approves Rs 18 crore allocation for preparing plan to upgrade 800 govt schools with Rs 3,200 crore outlay

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

The Karnataka government has approved the identification of an agency to prepare detailed project reports for Rs 18 crore for the upgradation of 800 government schools in the state. The Cabinet, headed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, had been asked to grant “approval for identification of agency to prepare school-wise Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to upgrade 800 government (magnet) schools as Karnataka Public Schools as per KPS Book of Standards” with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other funding agencies.

The proposal for upgrading 800 government schools as Karnataka Public Schools was earlier approved by the Cabinet on September 4, 2025, and government orders were issued for the project between October 15 and November 29. The project involves the upgradation of 474 government schools with ADB assistance, 200 government schools under the Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board (KKRDB), and 100 schools with funds from the Karnataka Mining Environment Restoration Corporation (KMERC). “The main objective of the Karnataka Public Schools is to provide quality education from the pre-primary to the pre-university level under one roof, improving the enrolment in schools by providing all necessary facilities and quality education, and reducing the number of students dropping out of school,” the Cabinet was informed on December 4. “Particularly, the KPS aims to improve the quality of education and increase student learning outcomes through provision of physical infrastructure for a threshold of 1200 students from pre-primary to pre-university classes under one roof by upgrading government schools in rural and backward areas to KPS schools,” the cabinet note stated. “This will contribute to enhancing the educational environment in the schools and improving the learning outcomes and transformation rates of students,” it stated. “The aim is to create an optimal learning environment, providing modern physical infrastructure such as well-equipped school buildings, additional classrooms, laboratories, library, playground, toilets, computer education, STEAM, 21st-century skills, and required equipment. Additionally, the goal is to create a better learning environment through high-quality learning tools and training for teachers,” the Cabinet was informed. An estimated amount of Rs 2,500 crore is to be spent to convert 500 government schools into KPS schools with ADB assistance, while Rs 700 crore will be sourced



from KKRDB and KMERC funds. The total cost of the upgradation of 800 schools at the rate of Rs 2 to Rs 4 crore per school is estimated at Rs 3,200 crore.

India coach Gambhir hails Jaiswal, stresses toss and dew factor in ODI win

Visakhapatnam: India head coach Gautam Gambhir was all praise for opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who scored his maiden ODI century and played a key role in India clinching the three-match one-day series against South Africa 2-1 here on Saturday.

In the post-match briefing, Gambhir said the quality that Jaiswal has is such that if he bats 30 overs, there is no doubt he will be batting close to 100. “He just played his fourth game. The moment he figures out which tempo to bat in the 50-over format, the sky is the limit for him,” he said. Gambhir said he was glad that India had won the first toss in ODIs during his tenure and that he was not aware about the number 20 or 21. “So, it felt like I have won the very first match in my tenure,” he said.

Reflecting on the dew factor and how crucial it was winning the toss in such conditions, Gambhir said when India were bowling second in Ranchi to defend 350, when there was dew, it was an incredible effort.

Punjab's export engine faces strain amid shifting global trade winds

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Amid fresh tariff realignments, stricter sustainability norms and supply-chain reordering triggered by renewed geopolitical frictions, Punjab finds itself on the frontlines of global trade uncertainty. Exporters of basmati rice and auto components, two of the state’s leading sectors, report shrinking margins, shipment delays and contract renegotiations. With nearly 15 per cent of Punjab’s exports headed to the United States, the tariff changes have disrupted trade flows and exposed the risks of relying on a limited set of markets and products. The developments highlight a structural vulnerability: Punjab’s narrow export base leaves it highly exposed to global policy shocks.

Punjab’s merchandise exports rose from \$5.79 billion in 2017-18 to \$6.74 billion in 2023-24. However, the state’s share in India’s total exports declined from 1.9 per cent to 1.5 per cent. Ranked 14th nationwide in export value, Punjab continues to underperform relative to its production and industrial potential. The export composition shows both diversification and dependence. Engineering goods now anchor the state’s export basket, increasing from 29 per cent in 2017-18 to over 41 per cent in 2023-24. Yet Punjab’s share in India’s engineering exports has risen only marginally, from 2.1 per cent to 2.5 per cent, which reflects strong specialisation but limited national scale.

Textiles, once central to Punjab’s export identity, have declined from 31 per cent to 21 per cent because of higher production costs, intense competition and rising compliance requirements, even though the sector still supports small manufacturers and a large workforce. Agricultural exports have also fallen, from 26 per cent to 18 per cent, with climatic variability and non-tariff barriers restricting consistent growth. Electronics and IT-enabled services are gaining momentum, particularly in the Mohali-Derabassi corridor. Electronics shipments have grown steadily, and IT exports have increased from \$50 million in 2017-18 to more than \$300 million in 2023-24, strengthening Mohali’s position as a digital export hub (PANJ Foundation report). Despite this diversification, Punjab’s market base remains narrow. More than one-third of export value goes to the United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom, and half of all exports are confined to 10 countries. Punjab moved from rank 18 in 2020 to rank 10 in the NITI Aayog Export Preparedness Index in 2022. The next challenge is to translate into sustained performance. The India-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement, which was signed in July 2025, offers new opportunities for engineering, textiles and agro-processing through duty concessions and improved access to the UK market. With adequate institutional support and quality assurance systems, the agreement can help Punjab integrate more effectively with European value chains. Export activity continues to be concentrated in a few districts. Ludhiana remains the principal hub, followed by Mohali and Jalandhar, and together they account for nearly two-thirds of the state’s exports. Punjab has expanded its logistics ecosystem with Inland Container Depots in Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Bathinda, connecting industrial clusters to western seaports. Air connectivity has improved through the Amritsar and Chandigarh international airports, and the upcoming Halwara airport is expected to boost the movement of time-sensitive and perishable cargo. Even so, long overland distances to ports remain a structural disadvantage.

Overland trade through the Attari Integrated Check Post in Amritsar continues to be an important regional asset. Before recent border disruptions with Pakistan, the corridor had shown strong potential. Total trade through Attari grew from \$260 million in 2022-23 to more than \$440 million in 2023-24. Greater regional stability could reduce dependence on seaports and expand connectivity with Central Asian and Eurasian markets. To build resilience, Punjab must widen its export identity beyond traditional sectors. Expanding the portfolio of Geographical Indication (GI) products, beyond Basmati rice and Phulkari embroidery, through focused certification, branding and market development can strengthen the state’s global positioning. Under the District as Export Hub initiative, GI-linked processing and marketing centres can reinforce rural linkages and broaden the export base.

Sustained competitiveness will require an integrated strategy that combines diversification, technology adoption, logistics efficiency and sustainability. Design-linked incentives, digital innovation and research collaborations can raise value addition in engineering, electronics and agro-processing. At the same time, improved logistics, regulatory coherence and environmental compliance will be essential for aligning Punjab’s trade expansion with global standards. (Deeptratan Singh Khara is an Assistant Professor of Economics at SGGGS College, Chandigarh, and Anmol Rattan Singh is the Co-Founder of Punjab-based policy research think tank PANJ Foundation.)

Bengaluru airport gets country's first mobility aid machine for passengers using wheelchairs

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru recently launched a mobility aid facility to facilitate the seamless transfer of passengers using wheelchairs to and from aircraft during boarding and deboarding, using a machine called ‘Mobility Assist’.

The Mobility Assist machine, the first of its kind in the country, is available on request during flight ticket bookings. It lifts passengers arriving in wheelchairs and transfers them to and from their wheelchairs during boarding and deboarding. The machine also enables wheelchair passengers to board and deplane from their airline seats. The machine has been donated by Dr Ajai Kumar, founder and executive chairman of Healthcare Global Enterprises (HCG), to ease boarding and deboarding for passengers with reduced mobility, including children who need extra care. The initiative at Bengaluru airport is the result of the personal experience of healthcare entrepreneur Dr B S Ajai Kumar, whose late son, Adarsh, faced difficulties at airports as a wheelchair user. Adarsh suffered from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and often faced airport transfer challenges. The machine reduces physical effort for passengers and staff and reduces injury risk by mechanically supporting wheelchair transfers. “The contribution is deeply personal for us. During our travels, Adarsh endured great discomfort due to the lack of appropriate support equipment. Yet, he chose to turn that pain into purpose. The Mobility Assist represents his wish to help others like him travel with ease and comfort. We hope this becomes a model that airports across India can adopt,” Dr Ajai Kumar said regarding the donation of the machine to the airport.

Underground cable work causes heavy traffic disruption on key Yousufguda stretch

Hyderabad: The ongoing underground power cable works at Sri Ram Nagar on the Yousufguda-Borabanda stretch ended up causing significant traffic disruptions on Sunday.Incidentally, this is the only stretch where hundreds of commuters proceed from Yousufguda check-post to reach Mothi Nagar, Kalyan Nagar Venture II and III, Borabanda, and Rahamath Nagar, and vice versa.In view of the cable work, the traffic police barricaded the route at Kalyan Nagar Venture-III and diverted the city buses and policemen were deputed at the site to divert the traffic.

India emerging as global growth driver: PM Modi

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

New Delhi: Asserting that India is a model of high growth and low inflation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the country's 8.2 per cent growth in the second quarter of this fiscal shows that it is becoming the growth driver of the global economy.He also said India's self-confidence had been shaken by the "mentality of colonialism" but now we are moving ahead of it.The changes happening in India are not just about possibilities but are a saga of changing thinking and direction, he said addressing the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit."We are standing at a juncture where one fourth of the 21st century has passed. The world has seen many ups and downs: financial crisis, global pandemic, technological disruptions, world falling apart, we are seeing wars, these situations in one way or the other are challenging the world," Modi said. The world is full of uncertainties but India is being seen in a different league altogether, he said.

"India is full of self confidence. When there is talk of slowdown, India writes the story of growth. When there is trust deficit in the world, India is becoming a pillar of trust, when the world is moving towards fragmentation, India is becoming a bridge builder," Modi said.Pointing out Q2 GDP figures being more than 8 per cent, he said it is the symbol of our pace."This is not just a number but is a strong mac-



roeconomic signal. It is a message that India is becoming the growth driver of the global economy," Modi said.Global growth is around 3 per cent while G7 economies are growing at an average of about 1.5 per cent, he pointed out."At such a time, India is a model of high growth and low inflation," Modi said.There was a time when people, especially economists in our country, used to express concern over high inflation but the same people now talk of inflation being low, he said in his address.India's achievements are not ordinary, it is not about numbers but about fundamental change brought about in the last decade, Modi asserted.

Two years of Congress regime: Harish Rao points out violations in Assembly rules

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Hyderabad: Pointing out severe lapses in managing the State legislature during the past two years, senior BRS leader and MLA T. Harish Rao on Sunday stated that constitutional norms and assembly rules were being flagrantly violated in Telangana.In an open letter to Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, released on the occasion of his completion of two years in office, Harish Rao highlighted a range of issues from inaction on MLA defections to reduced session days and urged immediate corrective measures to uphold the Assembly's dignity.

Rao began by extending congratulations to the Speaker but in the same breath, he expressed deep concern over what he described as 'serious failures' in assembly operations over the past two years. He argued that these shortcomings had undermined the constitutional spirit and the prestige of the Telangana Legislative Assembly. One of the primary grievances outlined in the letter was the reduction in the number of working days for assembly sessions.

Rao pointed out that Rule 12 mandated conducting sessions for as many days as necessary for legislative business, yet this was not followed. He further criticized the frequent and abrupt adjournments without valid reasons, which he said contravened Rule 13 on session timings and Rule 16 on adjournment procedures.Rao also flayed the handling of Question Hour and Zero Hour, key mechanisms for MLAs to hold the government accountable on public issues. He alleged violations of Rules 38 to 52 and 53 to 62, noting that starred questions, intended for direct oral responses from ministers, are being sidelined, depriving members of their right under Rule 38. Supplementary questions, which allow for deeper probing under Rule 50, are being denied or curtailed, he added.

Similarly, Zero Hour for raising urgent matters is routinely shortened, infringing on members' privileges. Unstarred questions, which require written responses, have also been neglected, according to Rao. He cited Rule 39, which requires these answers to be tabled in the house, and Rule 41, which sets deadlines for providing them to members. The failure to comply has eroded the assembly's



accountability, he lamented.A major point of contention is the absence of House Committees for the past two years, which Rao called 'deeply regrettable'. Rules 196 and 198 require the mandatory formation of such committees, while Rule 227 emphasises that their work should continue even after sessions end. Without these bodies, oversight of government functioning has been completely absent, he argued. Rao specifically mentioned the Estimates Committee, which has not been reconstituted despite its chairman's resignation, violating Rules 199 and 201.The delayed appointment of a Deputy Speaker was highlighted as another critical breach. Rule 8 makes this position mandatory, and the Deputy Speaker chairs the Privilege Committee, responsible for protecting members' rights. With the post vacant, the committee has become ineffective, leading to unresolved complaints on privilege violations under Rules 256 and 257.The most alarming issue raised by Rao is the lack of action against MLAs who defected from their parties. He invoked the Telangana Legislative Assembly (Prevention of Defection) Rules, 1986, specifically Rules 3 to 7, which require inquiries, notices, and swift decisions. This inaction, he said, directly contradicts Article 191(2) of the Indian Constitution. To bolster his point, Rao referenced a Supreme Court judgment in the case of Keisham Meghachandra Singh from Manipur, where the court emphasised timely action on defection cases.Harish Rao also called for urgent reforms to restore the assembly's functionality and adherence to rules and warned that continued neglect could further damage democratic institutions in Telangana.

Faced criticism from my own community for advocating creamy layer principle: former CJI Gavai

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Former Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai has said he has been "widely criticised" by people from his own community for stating in a judgement that the creamy layer principle should be applied to reservation for the Scheduled Castes.In Dr B.R. Ambedkar's view, affirmative action was like providing a bicycle to someone who is lagging behind, Gavai said, asking whether Ambedkar thought that such a person should never give up the bicycle. Ambedkar did not think so, he claimed.The former CJI Gavai, who retired as CJI recently, was delivering a lecture on "Role of Affirmative Action in Promoting Equal Opportunity" at Mumbai University on Saturday.Paying tributes to Ambedkar on his death anniversary, Justice Gavai said the iconic leader was the architect not only of the Indian Constitution but also of the affirmative action enshrined in it."Babasaheb, in so far affirmative action is concerned, was of the view that it is like providing a cycle to those who are lagging behind...suppose somebody is at tenth km and somebody at zero, he (the latter) should be provided a cycle, so that he reaches faster till the tenth km. From there, he joins the person who is already there and walks along with him. Did he (Ambedkar) think that the person should not leave the cycle and carry forward and thereby ask the people who are at zero km to continue to be there?" he asked."In my view, that was not the vision of social and economic justice as contemplated by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He wanted to

bring social and economic justice in the real sense and not in a formal sense," the former CJI added.The Indra Sawhney and Others Vs Union of India case enunciated the creamy layer principle, and in another case, he himself held that the creamy layer should also be made applicable to the Scheduled Castes, said Gavai.The principle demands that those who are sufficiently advanced economically and socially should not get the benefit of affirmative action, even though they are members of the backward community for which it is meant.He was "widely criticised" by the people of his own community for this judgement, Gavai said, adding that he was accused of taking benefit of the reservation himself to become a Supreme Court judge and then advocating the exclusion of those who fell in the creamy layer.But these people did not even know that there is no reservation for the constitutional office of High Court or Supreme Court judge, former CJI Gavai said.Can applying the same yardstick to the son of a chief justice of India or chief secretary and the son of a labourer who has studied in a gram panchayat school satisfy the test of equality as enshrined in the Constitution, he asked.The former CJI Gavai, however, emphasised that in the last 75 years "no doubt affirmative action has played a positive role"."I have travelled across the country, travelled across the world, I have seen many people belonging to the Scheduled Caste becoming chief secretary or director general of police or ambassadors and high commissioners," he said.

T'gana man 'abducted' by rebels in Mali, family seeks govt help to trace him

Hyderabad: A 23-year-old man from Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana has been "abducted" by rebels in Mali, and his family has requested help from the central and state governments to secure his release.N Praveen from Banda Somaram village of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, working as a supervisor in a borewell drilling company, was kidnapped on November 23 in the West African nation, the company informed the family.The parents of the victim have appealed to the central and state governments to intervene.Praveen's family and relatives on Saturday approached the local police seeking to know his whereabouts."We also got to know about the incident yesterday from one of his relatives. There is no official report about the kidnapping.

Goa nightclub blaze death toll raises to 25; six injured, probe begins

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Panaji: At least 25 persons were killed and six others suffered injuries in a massive fire that erupted at a nightclub in North Goa after midnight on Sunday, police said. While the police earlier said 23 persons died in the fire, they later confirmed two more deaths.The fire at Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub at Arpora in North Goa has claimed 25 lives, a police spokesperson said. The deceased included four tourists and 14 staff members, while the identity of the remaining seven was yet to be established, he said.Six persons suffered injuries in the blaze and they are currently undergoing treatment at the Goa Medical College and Hospital, Bambolim, near here, the official said. The cause of the fire was yet to be ascertained, he said."The police and fire department are conducting the investigation and legal action is being taken," the official said.As per initial information, the nightclub had not abided by the fire safety norms, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said. The nightclub, a popular party venue at Arpora village, located around 25 km from the



state capital Panaji, opened last year."We will take action against the club management and also against the officials who allowed it to operate despite flouting safety norms," Sawant said. "This is an unfortunate incident during the peak tourist season in the coastal state," Sawant said. "We will conduct a detailed inquiry into the incident and stringent action will be taken against the guilty," he added.

BRS to celebrate December 9 as Vijay Diwas

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president KT Rama Rao urged party leaders and workers to celebrate December 9 as Vijay Diwas across Telangana, marking the historic day when the Centre announced the process for formation of a separate State of Telangana in 2009.

Addressing a teleconference on Saturday with senior leaders, MLAs, MLCs and district presidents, he gave detailed directions for the celebrations. He reminded the cadre that December 9 was the day the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre bowed to the 11-day fast-unto-death undertaken by party president K Chandrashekhara Rao and officially initiated the process for Telangana Statehood."Just as we successfully observed November 29 as Deeksha Diwas, we must celebrate December 9, the day K Chandrashekar Rao's hunger strike bore fruit, as Vijay Diwas with festive spirit," he said. He described the day as the moment when the 60-year-old aspiration of the people of Telangana finally took concrete shape due to the BRS president's supreme sacrifice.Considering the ongoing local body elections and the busy schedule of party workers, he directed that celebrations be confined to constituency headquarters



only and not in villages.Programmes such as Palabhishekam at Telangana Thalli statues in constituency centres, floral tributes and homage at statues of Dr BR Ambedkar, distribution of fruits to patients in government hospitals and release of pink balloons symbolising victory into the sky at party offices or major junctions would be the highlight of the celebrations.A special fruit distribution programme will be held at NIMS Hospital, where the BRS chief undertook his fast-unto-death and at Gandhi Hospital under the leadership of senior leader Talasani Srinivas Yadav.

Parliamentary panel to summon airline executives, regulator over flight disruptions



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

A parliamentary panel is likely to summon top executives of private airlines and the civil aviation regulator over the mass cancellation of IndiGo flights that has left thousands of travellers stranded across the country's airports.The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, chaired by JD(U) leader Sanjay Jha, is likely to seek an explanation from top executives of airlines and officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation about the cause of disruption in air services and possible solutions.A member said the panel has taken serious note

of the difficulties faced by thousands of passengers due to disruption in air services.

Even parliamentarians, who were in the national capital for the Winter Session, faced the brunt of flight cancellations by IndiGo and delays by other airlines, the panel member said.Several MPs also received complaints from people about air fares shooting up due to the scenario.Meanwhile, CPI(M) Rajya Sabha member John Brittas, who is not part of the standing committee on transport, has demanded setting up of a joint parliamentary committee or a judicial inquiry into the large-scale disruption of flights.IndiGo cancelled more than 220 flights at Delhi and Mumbai airports on Sunday (December 7, 2025), as the disruptions entered the sixth day even as efforts were on to normalise operations.The aviation regulator, DGCA, on Saturday (December 6, 2025) sent notices to IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers and COO and Accountable Manager Porqueras, seeking explanation.In a statement issued on Sunday (December 7, 2025), IndiGo said the Board of Interglobe Aviation, its parent company, has set up a Crisis Management Group, which is meeting regularly to monitor the situation. The company's Board of Directors is doing everything possible to take care of the challenges faced by its customers and ensure re-funds to passengers, it said.

Rajnath Singh dedicates 125 BRO projects to nation

Leh: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh dedicated 125 newly completed projects of Border Roads Organisation to the nation from Leh on Sunday, calling them a "vivid example" of government's commitment to bolstering India's border infrastructure.These strategically significant projects — built at a cost of Rs 5,000 crore and spread across the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, and seven states including Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Mizoram — consisted of 28 roads, 93 bridges and four miscellaneous others.The event marked the largest single-day and highest-value inauguration in the history of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta received the defence minister upon

his arrival in Leh and joined him in the inauguration event."The valour and bravery of our soldiers are in themselves an inspiration for us. These infrastructure projects are the nation's tribute to those heroes who laid down their lives in the service of the nation," the defence minister said.He said border roads are the "lifelines of national security" and improved connectivity has a direct impact on operational readiness."Enhanced road networks, real-time communication systems and satellite-based surveillance are now allowing Indian soldiers to operate with greater speed and precision in forward areas," he said.Singh praised the BRO for consistently finishing projects ahead of schedule and adopting new technologies aligned with the government's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India).

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



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

New Delhi: Indian Intelligence agencies have alerted the security forces to remain in a state of very high alert in the wake of the developments unfolding in Pakistan. Trouble is brewing in Pakistan in the wake of rumours relating to the death of former Prime Minister, Imran Khan.Huge crowds are mobilising outside the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where Khan is lodged. Thousands of PTI supporters have gathered outside the jail demanding that they meet with their leader.The Pakistan Army, however has refused permission for a meeting with Khan, while also dismissing rumours about his death.Intelligence Bureau officials say that rumours relating to the death of Khan began to circulate three days back. Since then there has been a massive build up of his supporters. If the Army does not provide proof that Khan’s supporters have been seeking, then violence is bound to engulf Pakistan.An official said that violence is imminent in Pakistan given the current situation. For India, the spillover is the concern and trouble in the neighbourhood is never a good sign for national security.An Intelligence Bureau official said that the ISI is already planning a series of major attacks in India, so that attention is diverted.Khan remains a very popular figure in Pakistan and if news about his death is true, then the country would witness violence of a very unprecedented nature. It would be beyond the control of the security forces in Pakistan to control the people and eventually the country could face a civil war like situation.The Army wants to keep Imran Khan down and all issues relating to him under wraps. However, it may not be able to

sustain this for long as the people are getting anxious and are seeking answers.The ratings of the establishment in Pakistan, especially with Field Marshal Asim Munir at the helm has hit an all time low.An official said that the people are being stopped by force and the Army does realise that a majority of the population wants the current dispensation out. Pakistan watchers say that the people are particularly upset that the Army engineered a coup to take Khan out of power and install a dummy government under Shehbaz Sharif.There is no respect for a democratically-elected process and the people have being voicing their disgruntlement against this, experts add.Indian officials say that the rumours relating to Khan’s death was something that the establishment did not expect. This has put the Army on the back foot. If one looks at the build up of supporters, it is massive and the Army would not be able to contain them by using force.Officials say that the Pakistan Army would look to buy time so that it would be able to handle the situation. In order to buy time, the Army and ISI would plot attacks in India so that this would act as a diversion for sometime.The chatter that has been picked up suggests a sense of urgency to carry out a spectacular strike in India.The ISI is not planning some small attack. It wants one on the scale of a Mumbai 26/11 or Pulwama so that the attention and focus of the Pakistan people is completely diverted, another official said.Intelligence agencies have alerted security officials to keep a watch particularly on the eastern border. There is a lot of ISI related activity that is on in Bangladesh.Several modules have come up in collaboration between the Lashkar-e-Tayiba and Harkat-ul-Jihadi-Islami (HuJI) with the sole intention of carrying out attacks in India. Pakistan is also planning to fly in Hafiz Saeed to Bangladesh so that he could give the members of this module a pep talks.Officials say that Saeed is always roped in to give the terrorists of his modules a pep talk just before a major attack is launched. This was found to be the case prior to the Mumbai 26/11 attacks.Officials say that given the current situation in Pakistan, the ISI is desperate to create a diversion. With the borders with Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab becoming harder to operate, the focus is on the modules of Bangladesh to carry out a major attack in India, officials add.Officials also add that such a diversion would give the Pakistan Army time to handle the situation relating to Imran Khan, which in turn would calm the people.

Trump orders review of immigrant visas after National Guard attack



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

The Trump administration on Thursday (November 27, 2025) said it was reviewing permanent residency status of immigrants from 19 countries, including Afghanistan, in its latest response to the shooting of two National Guard soldiers near the White House.The FBI meanwhile said it had launched an international terrorism investigation as new details emerged about the alleged gunman, a 29-year-old Afghan national who had served with U.S. troops in Afghanistan.The shooting, which officials described as an "ambush-style" attack, cast a grim shadow over the Thanksgiving holiday and triggered a hard-line, anti-immigrant response from President Donald Trump.In a brief video statement in which he called the shooting an "act of evil," Mr. Trump on Wednesday (November 26) painted immigrants as an existential threat to national security, while his administration ordered an immediate halt to the processing of immigration applications from Afghanistan."We must take all necessary measures to ensure the removal of any alien from any country who does not belong here, or add benefit to our country. If they can't love our country, we don't want them," the President said.Scrutiny on immigration status of every permanent resident or "Green Card" Joseph Edlow, Trump's director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), said on Thursday that he had ordered a "full scale, rigorous reexamination of every Green Card for every alien from every country of concern."

His agency later pointed to a list of 19 countries -- including Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Iran and Myanmar -- facing U.S. travel restrictions under a previous order from Mr. Trump in June.The incident brings together three politically explosive issues: Trump's controversial use of the military

at home, immigration, and the legacy of the U.S. war in Afghanistan.Sarah Beckstrom, one of the two National Guard members shot in Washington on Wednesday, has died, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday (November 27, 2025).The U.S. attorney for Washington DC, Jeanine Pirro, said the suspected assailant -- identified as Rahmanullah Lakanwal -- had been living in the western state of Washington and had driven across the country to the nation's capital.In what she called a "brazen and targeted" attack, Ms. Pirro said the gunman opened fire with a .357 Smith and Wesson revolver on a group of guardsmen on patrol on Wednesday just a few blocks shy of the White House.The suspect was charged with three counts of assault with intent to kill -- charges that Ms. Pirro said would immediately be upgraded to first-degree murder if any of the guardsmen died.Officials said they still had no clear understanding of the motive behind the shooting.

CIA director John Ratcliffe said the suspect had been part of a CIA-backed "partner force" fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, and had been brought to the United States as part of a program to evacuate Afghans who had worked with the agency.Mr. Trump has deployed troops to several cities, all run by Democrats, including Washington, Los Angeles and Memphis. The move has prompted multiple lawsuits and allegations of authoritarian overreach by the White House.In the wake of Wednesday's shooting, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced 500 more troops would deploy to Washington, bringing the total to 2,500. This despite a federal judge last week ordering a temporary suspension of the deployment on the grounds that it was likely illegal.Afghan legacyThe heads of the FBI, CIA and Homeland Security and other senior Trump appointees all insisted that Lakanwal had been granted unvetted access to the United

States because of lax asylum policies in the wake of the chaotic final U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan under former president Joe Biden.But AfghanEvac, a group that helped resettle Afghans in the United States after the military withdrawal, said they undergo "some of the most extensive security vetting" of any migrants.The group noted Lakanwal had been granted asylum in April 2025, under the Trump administration, and would be eligible to request permanent residency a year later."This individual's isolated and violent act should not be used as an excuse to define or diminish an entire community," said its president, Shawn VanDiver.

As lakhs throng Kolkata Bhagavad Gita event, BJP's Dilip Ghosh dares TMC to hold Gita recitation

Kolkata's iconic Brigade Parade Ground on Sunday witnessed lakhs of people, including BJP leaders as well as sadhus and sadhvis from across West Bengal, reciting the Bhagavad Gita at an event organised by the Sanatan Sanskriti Sansad to highlight the state's "spiritual heritage and build social harmony".Prominent among the BJP faces present at the event, titled Panch Lakkho Konthe Gita Path (Gita recitation by five lakh voices), were Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari; state president Shamik Bhattacharya, MPs Sukanta Majumdar and Locket Chatterjee, former MPs Dilip Ghosh and Rupa Ganguly, and veteran leader Rahul Sinha.

Religious figures in attendance included Swami Pradiptananda Maharaj, popularly known as Kartik Maharaj; Dharendra Shastri; and Sadhvi Ritambhara.Former MP Dilip Ghosh dared the ruling Trinamool Congress to hold a Gita recitation programme. "Five thousand years ago, God revealed the teachings of the Gita, and its study has continued since then. In Bengal, the Hindu community feels threatened, which is why collective Gita recitations have been organised over the past three years. Anyone can organise such recitations. If they (the TMC) have the courage, let them also host a recitation. There is nothing political in this," he said.

BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar told reporters that the event had brought together all Hindus. "West Bengal was created for Hindus only. Otherwise, what was the need for the division? It could have remained East Pakistan. Some are say-

ing that 90 seats are there and everyone can stay, but Bengal was made for the Hindus. If today Hindus have become outsiders, then it is something to worry about," he said.Sadhvi Ritambhara said, "When five lakh people come together, our collective strength is visible. Unity reinforces the power of dharma. The Gita teaches us to stand firm in any situation and to control our inner enemies like desires, anger, ego, and attachments, which weaken us. Socially, it helps break barriers and unite us all, making this collective recitation very auspicious."

The Bhagavad Gita was brought to the main stage on a chariot by sadhus before the recitations started. Many sadhus were seen spraying Ganga water on the participants before the recitation began. While many sadhus were seen reciting the Gita, others were seen blowing conches. Many of the participants were seen dancing to the beats of the drums. Participants also waved the national flag and saffron flags.Shamik Bhattacharya told the media that it was normal that Gita would be recited on the soil of Lord Krishna. "If that is being dragged into a controversy, that shows the current scenario of Bengal," he added.TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh hit out at the Opposition party. "This has been organised by the BJP. They are trying to polarise people on the basis of religion. They had done this by building the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, and they had lost the election there."Speaking to the media, TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee questioned the BJP's claims. "The BJP will never see 5 lakh people in Bengal.

In 10 years, this government hospital in Chennai has performed 31,157 interventional cardiac procedures



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

With an outpatient footfall of nearly 600 patients each day, the Department of Cardiology at the Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital (TNGMSSH), Omandurar Government Estate is among the State's busiest cardiac care centres in the government sector.In 10 years, the department has performed a total of 31,157 interventional procedures at its cardiac cath lab. This included coronary angiogram, coronary angioplasty, percutaneous transcatheter mitral valve commissurotomy, atrial septal defect (ASD) device closure, ventricular septal defect device closure, electrophysiological studies with arrhythmia ablation, permanent pacemaker implantation, balloon aortic valvotomy, balloon pulmonary valvotomy, RSOV (ruptured sinus of valsalva) aneurysm device closure, transcatheter aortic valve replacement and implantable cardioverter defibrillator implantation and cardiac resynchronisation therapy with defibrillator.

"We get patients from various parts of the State and neighbouring places such as Puducherry. Many of them are referred to our centre. There are two large wards for men and women. We have around 100 beds, and the unit consistently runs at full capacity. There are seven intensive care units with 60 beds," J. Cecily Mary Majella, pro-

fessor and head, Department of Cardiology, and senior interventional cardiologist, TNGMSSH, said.The department has performed among the highest volumes of ASD device closures in the government sector in Tamil Nadu. Significantly, young women made up 290 of the 340 patients who underwent percutaneous ASD device closure, she said, adding: "This is a congenital heart defect in which there is a hole between the two atria. The percutaneous approach is especially advantageous for young women, as it avoids open-heart surgery and leaves no scar on the chest."

She said that two other major highlights include the percutaneous device closure of a RSOV in a 73-year-old man, who was the world's oldest patient, and a double RSOV device closure in a 22-year-old man. The department has done 220 electrophysiological studies and ablation.While Dr. Majella received an award from the Asia Pacific Vascular Interventional Society for performing lifesaving interventions for "rarest of rare cases" earlier this year, the cardiology team has published two significant research articles in the European Heart Journal this month. The articles are "Comparative analysis of young acute coronary syndrome in pre and post COVID pandemic" and "Ectatic coronary arteries—increasing trends post COVID-19 infection". One article looks at myocardial infarctions in the young aged below 45 years. Both the articles involved a huge data of more than 10,000 patients documented from 2016 to 2023, Dr. Majella added.She said that heart attacks are on the rise in both men and women. "It is advisable to undergo early screening for blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels, modify diet and lifestyle, and avoid excessive stress. Heart attacks are largely preventable and regular check-ups can play a crucial role in prevention. There has been a surge in heart attacks among people under 45. There are many cases of sudden cardiac deaths. Therefore it is important to get basic investigations such as ECG, ECHO done, consult a cardiologist based on the results, and go for further health checks if necessary," she said.

National Guard shooting: Trump plans to ‘permanently pause migration from all Third World countries'

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday he planned to suspend migration from what he called "third world countries," a day after an Afghan national allegedly shot two National Guard soldiers in Washington.I will permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the U.S. system to fully recover," Mr. Trump wrote on social media. He also threatened to reverse "millions" of admissions granted under his predecessor Joe Biden, and to "remove anyone who is not a net asset to the United States".The Trump administration said it will conduct a "rigorous" re-examination of all Green Cards issued to immigrants from "every country of concern".Mr. Trump added that he would end all federal benefits and subsidies to non-U.S. citizens, as well as deport any foreign national who is a security risk or "non-compatible with Western Civilisation".His angry post, which ended by wishing Americans a happy Thanksgiving, marked an escalation in the anti-migrant policies of his second term dominated by a mass deportation campaign. "These goals will be pursued with the aim of achieving a major reduction in illegal and disruptive populations," Mr. Trump said. "Only REVERSE MIGRATION can fully cure this situation," he added.

Trump to intensify scrutiny on 19 'high-risk' countries

In a statement, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said the agency has issued new guid-



ance allowing for "negative, country-specific factors" to be considered when vetting aliens from 19 high-risk countries. These countries include Afghanistan, Myanmar, Burundi, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela and Yemen. These are the same countries that were subject to a travel ban announced by Trump in a proclamation issued in June this year.In another social media post, Mr. Trump said the official United States foreign population stands at "53 million people, most of which are on welfare, from failed nations, or from prisons, mental institutions, gangs, or drug cartels".

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

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

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

A Palestinian-American teenager held in Israeli detention for nine months was also released on Thursday night. The 16-year-old emerged visibly thin and was embraced by his crying family.The Israeli military and national police announced they were opening an investigation into the deaths on Thursday of the two men, who were shot by members of the border police, a special unit that often operates alongside the Israeli military.In a video shown on Palestine TV, which has no sound, the two men come out of a garage holding their hands up and lifting their shirts to show they are not carrying explosives. They are ordered to the ground and kicked by one of the policemen. They are then ordered back to the garage. In a video shown by Egyptian TV station Al-Ghad, the men are ordered back to the entrance of the garage. As they are on the ground and surrounded by troops, gunshots are heard and the men slump down, apparently lifeless. At least one soldier is seen firing his weapon.

In a statement, the Israeli military said the two men were wanted militants in the northern town of Jenin who had thrown explosives and opened fire at troops.It said that after the men surrendered and exited a building, "fire was directed toward the suspects." It said was the incident was "under review" and would be referred "to the relevant professional bodies."Palestinians and human rights groups say such investigations yield few results, and Israeli troops are rarely prosecuted.Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who oversees the national police, praised the Israeli forces, saying they had acted "exactly as they are expected to — terrorists must die!"In Ramallah, the Palestinian Prime Minister's office accused Israel of

executing the men "in cold blood." It called the shooting "an outright extrajudicial killing in blatant violation of international humanitarian law."

Palestinian authorities identified the men as Al-Muntasir Abdullah, 26, and Yousef Asasa, 37, and said Israel had taken away their bodies.

The incident was reminiscent of the case of Elor Azaria — a soldier convicted of manslaughter in 2017 for fatally shooting an already wounded Palestinian attacker. That case deeply divided the nation, with nationalistic politicians defending the soldier. Azaria was released early from prison after serving a nine-month sentence.The shooting is part of a larger operation in a northeastern region of the West Bank. Israel's military has detained more than 100 people since Tuesday (November 25, 2025) in the town of Tubas, according to Abdullah al-Zaghari, spokesman for the advocacy group Palestinian Prisoners' Club.The military has said the operation was a response to "attempts to establish terrorist strongholds and construction of terror infrastructures in the area." On Nov. 19, Palestinian attackers stabbed an Israeli to death and wounded three more at a West Bank intersection before being shot down by troops.Israel's military has scaled up military operations in the West Bank since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack, which triggered the war in Gaza.The latest operation comes amid a rising tide of Israeli settler violence in the West Bank. Israeli leaders have played down the settler attacks as the work of a small minority. But Palestinians say the attacks are frequent, often in close proximity to Israeli troops, and the settlers are rarely punished.Israel's air force carried out another series of strikes in parts of southern Lebanon on Thursday. Israel says its ongoing strikes are aimed at preventing Hezbollah from rebuilding after a devastating war last year.But the United Nations on Tuesday said Israel had killed at least 127 civilians, including children, in its strikes on Lebanon since the ceasefire came into effect one year ago. Things escalated earlier this week with a rare strike in Lebanon's capital of Beirut, killing Hezbollah's chief of staff.On Thursday, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam criticized Hezbollah for not disarming in a rare rebuke of the group, saying the Iran-backed militants have failed to deter Israeli airstrikes, protect the Lebanese people or even safeguard the lives of its own leaders.Pope Leo XIV is scheduled to visit the country on Sunday (November 30, 2025), when he will meet the crisis-hit nation's political and religious leaders.Mohammed Ibrahim, an American teenager held in Israeli custody for nine months, was released on Thursday evening and immediately checked into a hospital, his uncle told the AP.

Maharashtra Govt has declared ‘meagre’ compensation for rain-hit farmers: Sharad Pawar



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar said Friday that the financial assistance announced by the Maharashtra Government for farmers affected by the recent heavy rains in the state is inadequate, and will not help them recover their losses. Pawar also said the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) will not celebrate the first day of Diwali Friday in solidarity with the affected farmers in the state. “Disaster strikes... but those in power in the state and at the Centre have the responsibility to provide help to those in trouble and get them out of the situation. The state government has declared a meagre amount for a few people. But the extent and nature of the damage are huge, and the farmers don’t feel that the meagre amount will get them out of the crisis. The farmers are angry with the state government,” he said.

“The main reason is that many districts of Maharashtra witnessed very heavy rainfall in the last month. At a few places, it was flooding, and at others, it was heavy flooding. Not only were the farms destroyed, but the soil was washed away as well. Thus, the affected farmer is very disturbed. Farming is everything for a farmer, and if everything is lost, then how will he celebrate Diwali? So, our organisation has decided to join the farmers in their sorrow,” he said. “My

thinking on the issue is different. I don’t want to bring politics into this, but we should all come together and do everything possible to bring the suffering farmers out of the crisis. Those in power and a few others tried to provide help to farmers, but the help of the state government is without open hand,” he added. On the meeting with farmers of Purandar opposing the proposed international airport, the NCP(SP) chief said, “The main demand of farmers of Purandar is to change the site of proposed international airport but the decision cannot be taken by me or officers it has to be taken by the Union Government.” “Wherever the airport has to be developed, Pawar said the farmers will have to part with their land. “It is their likely rehabilitation as well as compensation that has created restlessness in them. So, the opposition is also there,” he said, adding he assured the farmers that no one can acquire land illegally for the proposed airport.

“If the airport has to be developed, then the farmers cannot be destroyed by snatching their land, but proper compensation, as well as alternative land, has to be provided to them. I have assured them of taking up the issue with the chief minister and guardian minister, urging them to call a meeting with farmers to resolve the concerns,” said Pawar. The veteran leader said he will meet Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis after Diwali to discuss the issue. On the Bihar Assembly elections, the NCP(SP) chief said that his party alliance partners are unhappy with what is happening in that state. “There is misuse of power and a lot of problems in the electoral roll. We will take up the issue with the Election Commission of India, and let’s hope they will take a proper decision,” he added. Meanwhile, the Pawar family has also cancelled this year’s annual Diwali festival celebration in Baramati, citing the death of a senior family member. “The function of visitors reaching Baramati to meet Sharad Pawar has also been cancelled,” NCP(SP) working president Supriya Sule, daughter of Sharad Pawar, said recently.

Twist in Hathras ‘encounter’: Police free arrested men due to ‘lack of evidence’, file closure report

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

A week after two men were arrested following an alleged shootout in Hathras, they were released from jail due to “lack of evidence” in the two cases lodged against them. The incident had sparked controversy after their families claimed the encounter was fake and that the men — Deva (22) and Sonu alias Omveer (30) — were picked up from their homes. Following the allegations, two police officers were suspended and separate inquiries were ordered by the district administration and police.

The names of the duo surfaced during the investigation of a robbery and house trespass case registered at Mursan police station. A separate case of attempt to murder was also registered against them in connection with the alleged firing incident. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), Hathras, Ashok Kumar Singh, said: “The closure report has been filed in both the robbery and attempt to murder cases due to lack of evidence. The two accused have now been released from jail.” Circle Officer, Hathras, Yogendra Krishna Narayan, who is supervising the probe, also said: “The closure report has been filed on the basis of insufficient evidence found during the investigation of the case.” He added that if any new evidence is found, then the case could be reopened. Incidentally, the UP government recently released a report stating that over the past eight-and-a-half years, since it came to power in 2017, over 250 criminals were killed and over 10,000 injured in encounters. The case dates back to October 9, when Amit Agarwal, a local trader who runs a fertiliser shop in Hathras, lodged a complaint alleging a break-in at his residence. In his complaint, he had claimed that two unidentified men, their faces covered with scarves, forcibly entered his house and misbehaved with his family, including women. When they raised an alarm, the intruders fled. Based on his complaint, a case was registered under sections related to robbery, house trespass, and attempt to murder against the unidentified assailants.

During their probe, police had said they examined CCTV footage installed near Agarwal’s residence and, with the help of local informers, identified the two suspects as



Deva and Omveer. A day later, the duo was shown arrested in an alleged shootout. The police had claimed that the two were apprehended during a cross-firing incident, during which Omveer sustained a bullet injury to his leg. The police claimed to have recovered the weapon from their possession. However, their families had contested the police version, claiming that Aligarh residents Deva and Omveer were picked up from their homes and later falsely shown as being arrested in an “encounter” on October 10. The families, joined by several local public representatives, had met senior police and administrative officials to register their protest and demand action. They also staged demonstrations outside the office of the District Magistrate and the Mursan police station, seeking a fair and transparent investigation. ASP Singh said inquiries ordered into the entire incident are still underway, and the next course of action will be decided based on the reports. Hathras District Magistrate Rahul Pandey had constituted a committee headed by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate to examine the allegations. In a parallel move, Deputy Inspector General (Aligarh Range) Prabhakar Chaudhary had instructed the Additional Superintendent of Police, Aligarh, to carry out an independent inquiry into the matter. Superintendent of Police, Hathras, Chiranjeev Nath Sinha, had earlier suspended Station House Officer (SHO) Arti Singh of Mursan police station and Inspector Mukesh Kumar, in-charge of the Anti-Theft Team, on charges of negligence during the arrest proceedings of the two accused.

Mumbai restaurants not prohibited from serving herbal hookah: Bombay High Court

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

The Bombay High Court earlier this week said restaurant owners in Mumbai are not prohibited from running a business or serving hookah, which does not contain nicotine or tobacco, and directed them to follow the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), and its subsequent amendment. The restaurant owners had moved the Bombay High Court against visits by police officers without notice, who they said threatened to shut down their businesses, asking them to stop serving herbal hookah. The petitioners include owners and operators of Ustaadi at Crawford Market, The Nest in Bandra, Rustico in Fort, and Faham restaurant in Kala Ghoda, among others.

A Division Bench of Justices Riyaz I Chagla and Farhan P Dubash on October 14 passed the order on a plea by restaurant owners filed in July this year, which claimed that such actions were being taken despite the HC verdict of August 2019, which permitted restaurants to serve herbal hookah and the same was complied with by the owners. The plea sought direction to the respondent authorities to forthwith stop their illegal and unlawful raids and threats on the petitioner’s restaurants.

Senior Advocate Zubin Bheramkamdin, along with advocates Rajendra Rathod and Dhruv Jain, argued that the actions of shutting down the service of herbal hookah at the petitioners’ restaurants were illegal and unlawful. They said such actions were being taken in accordance with the June 6, 2025, circular of the Maharashtra Home Department to police, which stipulated that if illegal hookah parlours are found at any location, the responsible police officers must be held accountable and strict action must be taken against them. “These acts of illegally and unlawfully shutting down the service of herbal hookah at the petitioners’ restaurants and threatening to shut down the petitioners’ restaurants completely, are not only causing huge monetary losses to the petitioners but also directly affecting the earning capacity and livelihood of their employees,” the plea stated. After perusing submissions, the bench found it ap-



propriate to dispose of the plea by directing the respondents to act in conformity with the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), and subsequent amendment of 2018, which provided that “hookah bar means an establishment where people gather to smoke tobacco from a community hookah or narghile which is provided individually.”

“The petitioners are not prohibited from running a business of a restaurant or serving hookah, which, according to the petitioners, does not contain tobacco or nicotine,” the bench noted. The bench said, in the event, if there is any infraction of provision of the COPTA, a police officer, not below the rank of the assistant police inspector, is empowered to take legal action for the infringement of the conditions under the Act. Moreover, the said officer can take action on the hookah parlours where drugs or narcotics are provided and consumed, which falls under the purview of the police department. “As long as the Petitioners comply with the provisions of COTPA and do not serve any prohibited substance in the hookah parlour, then no action can be taken against them,” the bench noted. Disposing of the plea, the bench said authorities “shall strictly act under the provisions of COTPA.” “If it is found that the Petitioners are selling/using any substance prohibited under the COTPA, then surely an action can be taken against them.”

Spotted ‘climbing a building’: Murder suspects from Rajasthan’s escape ends in Kolkata; three arrested



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Quick thinking by residents and prompt action by the Kolkata Police led to the arrest of three individuals allegedly involved in a high-profile murder case in Rajasthan. The arrests were made in the Phoolbagan area on Thursday evening. The incident unfolded when residents on Narkeldanga Main Road noticed three persons, seemingly “from outside the state”, moving around “suspiciously”. Concerns grew when one of them was allegedly seen attempting to climb down from the cornice of a residential building. Suspecting foul play, residents immediately alerted Phoolbagan Police Station.

A patrolling team soon reached the spot and began

questioning the trio. The suspects initially offered what police described as a “frivolous story” to explain their presence, which officials said was quickly found to be false. “As we approached, the accused attempted to flee, leading to a brief ‘cat-and-mouse’ chase before the police successfully detained all three,” said a police official. A detailed examination allegedly revealed that the detained men were wanted in connection with a recent murder in Rajasthan. “The detained persons are reportedly wanted in a murder case registered at Kuchaman Police Station, Didwana district, Rajasthan,” the official added. Phoolbagan Police then contacted the Station House Officer (SHO) of Kuchaman Police Station, who confirmed their alleged involvement in the case. The three arrested have been identified as Ganpat Gurjar, Mahesh Gurjar, and Dharmendra Gurjar. The murder in question occurred on Tuesday morning in Kuchaman, Rajasthan, where 40-year-old Ramesh Rulania, who owned a bike showroom and a hotel, was shot dead by an unidentified gunman while exercising at a gym on Station Road, sparking panic in the area. The Rajasthan government had announced a reward of Rs 25,000 for information leading to the identification and arrest of the culprits. The three detained men are currently in custody at Phoolbagan Police Station and will be handed over to the Rajasthan Police for further investigation. A team from Rajasthan is expected to arrive in Kolkata on October 17.

Bengaluru engineering student arrested for raping senior in college washroom

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

A 21-year-old student at a premier engineering college in Bengaluru was arrested by the police Thursday on charges of rape following a complaint by his senior that he sexually assaulted her in a men’s bathroom in the college premises. On The accused, identified as a sixth-semester student, was arrested after the woman, a seventh-semester student, filed a police complaint on October 15, a police officer said. “A case of rape has been registered. The suspect has been arrested, and sent to judicial custody. The matter is under investigation,” the officer added.

According to the police, the two students know each other, and were previously batch-mates before the accused dropped a semester. “The accused claims it was consensual, and the victim has said she was assaulted. It is a matter of investigation,” said another police officer. The vic-

tim said she did not report the sexual assault out of fear of being shamed, but later drew courage from her friends and reported the sexual assault. She later told her parents, and approached the police with their consent, said an officer.

According to the police complaint filed by the student, she arrived at the college on the morning of October 10, and received a call from the accused asking her to collect some materials he had. The victim told the accused she would meet him during the lunch break. In the afternoon, the accused is alleged to have asked the victim to accompany him to the college’s architecture block. After she went with him, the accused forced her to go to the men’s washroom, where he allegedly sexually assaulted her. The victim told her friends about the assault even as the accused reportedly called her, and asked if she “needed pills”, said the police. Later, the victim’s friends encouraged her to report the incident, and filed a complaint on October 15.

With first-ever public gymkhana in Fort, BMC to woo locals and tourists alike

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Mumbai is home to several gymkhanas like the Bombay Gymkhana, Hindu Gymkhana, and Parsi Gymkhana. However, memberships to these public recreation clubs are reserved and come with very high fees, making them inaccessible to the average citizen. Now, the city is set to get its first-ever public gymkhana in the Fort area. This will be the first-ever gymkhana in the city that will be accessible for common citizens, unlike existing gymkhanas and clubs that allow access on the basis of exclusive membership. The gymkhana is being constructed by redeveloping an existing recreation facility. The gymkhana is being constructed by redeveloping an existing recreation facility.

The gymkhana is being constructed by redeveloping an existing recreation facility that was known as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation’s (BMC’s) Krida Bhavan, an exclusive indoor recreation facility for civic employees. The building will have a five-storey structure with a glass dome on the top. There will also be a viewing deck, which will provide a 180-degree view of the Fort and Azad Maidan area. Alongside this, the facility will also have a cafeteria and a community hall, along with parking facilities. Recreational facilities, like an indoor gymnasium and swimming pools, will also be set up. It will have indoor recreation facilities for citizens, civic officials said. The BMC is also planning to set up a museum inside one of the floors that will provide information about Mumbai’s history as well as India’s freedom movement. The building will have a five-



storey structure with a glass dome on the top. The building will have a five-storey structure with a glass dome on the top. The BMC has floated a Rs 33 crore tender for constructing the project. The authorities said that the project will be initiated as per the engineering, procurement and construction model, which means that a single contractor responsible for planning, construction, as well as maintenance of the plot will be appointed. “The objective of this plan is to provide citizens with a space they can visit and enjoy recreational activities. This facility will not cater to a specific section of people and will be open to everyone. Another primary purpose behind this plan is to engage with tourists in the Fort area. The facility will be located in a prime plot, so it is quite evident that people from various walks of life, including tourists, will visit it,” a civic official privy to the development said.

As flood relief funds pour in, watchful Punjab farmers keep tabs

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

As the Punjab government begins disbursing flood relief funds, farmers in the state are closely monitoring compensation details, ensuring they align with the guidelines as per the Centre and state under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Meanwhile, the BJP has also started circulating messages in villages, publicising the Centre’s share in the relief allocations. “In the 2023 floods, we got only ₹6,800 per acre as flood relief compensation. This was the Centre’s share; the state provided nothing from its own pocket. However, this time, we know the allocations under different heads, so we are doing our homework to know who is giving what,” Iqbal Singh Mallah, the nambardar (headman) of Muthianwala village in Ferozepur, whose 65 acres of land were submerged, said. Parkash Singh, another farmer from Tendiwala village in Ferozepur, added, “We have studied the compensation under the Centre’s heads and will now get to know what all is coming to us, how much share the state is adding from its own side, and who is providing how much. For example, the state has announced ₹20,000 per acre compensation for crop loss, in which the Centre’s share will be ₹6,879 per acre. So in that case, the state will be contributing ₹13,121 per acre from its own pocket, but this is for 75-100 per cent crop loss.” Mallah said that the compensation details under SDRF norms are available and clearly mention the Centre’s contribution. “We are aware of all these compensation heads, and let us see how we get the relief so that we can ascertain what is the state government’s share and what is the Centre’s. The application seeking compensation needs to be signed by the sarpanch, nambardar, or other prominent persons of the village, and many such applications have already been sent to the deputy commissioner offices in different districts of Punjab,” he added. What the SDRF norms say According to the SDRF norms being circulated by local BJP leaders, the compensation structure includes: 4 lakh in case of death

due to floods or other calamities; 16,000 per person for injuries requiring hospitalisation for more than a week; and ₹5,400 per person for those admitted for less than a week. The SDRF also stipulates ₹74,000 for disability between 40-60 per cent and ₹2.5 lakh if disability exceeds 60 per cent; ₹2,500 per family for damage to clothes and utensils, each; ₹7,284 per acre for de-silting of fields and ₹6,879 per acre for crop loss. For loss of livestock, the SDRF specifies: ₹37,300 per cow/buffalo,

4,000 per sheep, pig, or goat, ₹32,000 per horse or bull, and ₹20,000 per calf, donkey, or mule. Confirming the BJP’s campaign, Anil Sarin, state general secretary of the party, said, “Yes, local BJP leaders are circulating messages among villagers, informing them about various relief funds under different heads as laid out in SDRF norms, so that villagers can avail themselves of the maximum benefit.” Abohar-based farmer Sukhinder Singh Rajan said, “We heard on Tuesday that farmers with orchards can get compensation under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture scheme, but we are yet to seek clarity on this from our deputy commissioner’s office, as so far orchards are not under the compensation scheme for flood relief.” Surinder Kumar’s house was damaged in the floods.

The Sabuana village resident in Fazilka district says people can get 1.2 lakh under the PM Awas Yojana if their houses are damaged in floods, and an additional ₹40,000 for toilets if they qualify under that category as well. “This information was provided by Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during his recent Punjab visit. He claimed that over 38,000 houses have been approved by the Centre, and villagers are waiting for the disbursement of funds under this head,” he added. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has already started disbursing flood relief from Ajnala, with other ministers handing over cheques in districts such as Patiala and Sangrur.

South Korea seeks arrest warrants for 59 online scam suspects repatriated from Cambodia



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Seoul: South Korea's Police said on Monday they have sought arrest warrants for 59 suspects repatriated from Cambodia over their alleged involvement in various online scams. Sixty-four such suspects were flown home from Cambodia on Saturday, and one was arrested immediately with a pre-issued warrant. Of the remaining 63, four were released soon after, while one was released after the prosecution denied the police's request for an arrest warrant,

the National Police Agency (NPA) said. By region, 45 suspects are being handled by the NPA's South Chungcheong Province office, while 15 are being handled by the North Gyeonggi Province office, including those that have already been released, reports Yonhap news agency.

The remaining four suspects are being investigated by the Daejeon, Gimpo, Wonju, and Seoul Seodaemun offices, respectively. The South Chungcheong office has been conducting investigations into romance and other scams that occurred between the end of last year and last July, while the North Gyeonggi office has been investigating romance scams that took place from March to April. Since the Cambodian authorities informed the South Korean police of their crackdown on local voice phishing call centres from July to September, and the detention of South Korean nationals suspected of involvement in the schemes, the NPA has designated the South Chungcheong and North Gyeonggi offices as the main investigation agencies for the crimes. Police said several repatriated suspects have told investigators they were detained and assaulted by members of scam rings in Cambodia. All 64 have undergone drug tests with their consent, and all have come back negative, the police said.

Iran's Khamenei rejects Trump's offer of talks, denies U.S. destroyed Iranian nuclear capabilities

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday rejected an offer of renewed talks from U.S. President Donald Trump and denied his assertion that the United States has destroyed Iran's nuclear capabilities. Tehran and Washington engaged in five rounds of indirect nuclear negotiations that ended with the 12-day air war in June in which Israel and the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear sites.

"Trump says he is a dealmaker, but if a deal is accompanied by coercion and its outcome is predetermined, it is not a deal but rather an imposition and bullying," Mr. Khamenei said according to state media. Last week, Mr. Trump told the Israeli Parliament that it would be great if Washington could negotiate a "peace deal" with Tehran, following the start of a ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas. "The U.S. President proudly says they bombed and destroyed Iran's nuclear industry. Very well, keep dreaming!" Mr. Khamenei added. "What does it have to do with America whether Iran has



nuclear facilities or not? These interventions are inappropriate, wrong and coercive." Western powers accuse Iran of covertly trying to develop a nuclear bomb through enrichment of uranium, and want it to cease such activity. Tehran denies seeking to weaponise enrichment, saying the programme has solely civilian energy purposes.

Kabul must rein in militants for ceasefire to hold, says Pakistan



ISLAMABAD,-GNS News Agency, Dec 7A ceasefire agreement between Islamabad and Kabul rests on the ruling Afghan Taliban's ability to rein in militants attacking Pakistan across their shared border, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told Reuters on Monday, underscoring the fragility of the accord. The South Asian neighbours agreed to a ceasefire in Doha at the weekend after days of border clashes that killed dozens, the worst such violence since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in 2021. Ground fighting between the one-time allies and Pakistani airstrikes across their contested 2,600-km (1,600-mile) frontier were triggered after Islamabad demanded that Kabul control militants, saying they operated from havens in Afghanistan. "Anything coming from Afghanistan will be (a) violation of this agreement," said Asif, who led the talks with his Afghan counterpart Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob. "Everything hinges on this one clause." The Taliban administration and Afghanistan's defence ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. WRITTEN AGREEMENT SAYS NO INCURSIONS FROM AFGHANISTAN

In the written agreement signed by Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and Qatar, it was clearly spelled out that there would not be any incursions, the minister said in an inter-

view in his office at Pakistan's parliament in Islamabad. "We have a ceasefire agreement as long as there is no violation of the agreement which is already in force." Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, commonly known as the Pakistani Taliban, an umbrella of several Islamist militant groups, operates out of Afghanistan to attack Pakistan "in connivance" with the ruling Taliban, the minister said. Kabul denies giving haven to militants to attack Pakistan and accuses the Pakistani military of spreading misinformation about Afghanistan and sheltering Islamic State-linked militants to undermine its stability and sovereignty.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban spokesperson, said on Sunday that at the Doha talks, "It was decided that neither country would take hostile actions against the other, and support will not be provided to groups operating against the government of Pakistan." In a follow-up post on X, he said it reflected the Taliban's longstanding position that Afghanistan's territory would not be used against any other country. The statements made about the agreement did not constitute a joint declaration, he said. The Pakistani Taliban, who have been waging a war for years against the Pakistani state in a bid to overthrow the government and replace it with their strict brand of Islamic governance, have accelerated attacks in recent months to target Pakistani military. Pakistan carried out airstrikes on the Afghan capital Kabul, including one on October 9 in an attempt to kill Pakistani Taliban leader Noor Wali Mehsud, Pakistan security officials have said, though he later appeared in a video showing he was alive. "We were being attacked. Our territory was being attacked. So we just did tit for tat. We were paying them in the same coin," Asif said. "They are in Kabul. They are everywhere. Wherever they are we will attack them. Kabul is not, you know, a no-go area." The next round of talks would be held in Istanbul on October 25 to evolve a mechanism on how to enforce the agreement, Asif said. Qatar's foreign ministry, which mediated Saturday's talks along with Turkey, said the follow-up meetings were meant "to ensure the sustainability of the ceasefire and verify its implementation in a reliable and sustainable manner".

Romanian court rejects plan to raise judges' retirement age

BUCHAREST, Romania's top court struck down on Monday a government plan to raise the retirement age for judges and prosecutors and cap their pensions, raising questions over the ruling coalition's stability as it tries to curb the EU's biggest budget deficit. The Constitutional Court rejected, by five votes to four, proposals to raise retirement in the judiciary to 65 from around 50 at present and cap pensions to 70% of final salary.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Judges and prosecutors have monthly pensions of up to 5,000 euros (\$5,831) versus the Romanian average of 600 euros.

Though it was unclear if the proposals were rejected on a technicality or in principle, the hard-right opposition Alliance for Uniting Romanians called for the resignation of liberal Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan who leads a months-old coalition. Government spokesperson Ioana Dogioiu said there would be no comment until the court had published its statement. Centrist President Nicusor Dan said the government will draft a new law that incorporates the court's arguments but which "corrects magistrates' pensions in a way that is equitable for society." Bolojan's government has raised some taxes from August to boost revenue and enforced minor cuts to state spending. Those measures were enough for Romania to cling to its rating on the last rung of investment grade, but they came at a steep cost, triggering public sector protests, fuelling inflation and bolstering the



hard right in opinion polls.

DEFICIT REDUCTION MEASURES In September, the government fast-tracked through parliament a second package of spending cuts aimed at eliminating what Bolojan called unjust privileges for a few in the public sector. The package included some tax hikes from 2026, raising the judiciary retirement age, job cuts and wage curbs for financial, energy, telecoms regulators and state-owned firms, and healthcare reform.

German coalition unruliness threatens Merz's reform agenda



BERLIN,- German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is struggling to push through two key policy proposals on pensions and military service, in a setback fuelling concerns that some of the political instability seen in France could soon echo in Europe's largest economy. Merz's conservatives and the centre-left Social Democrats had promised to provide more stability when they formed their "marriage of convenience" five months ago after the collapse of a fractious three-way coalition. A historic spending package agreed before they took office helped smooth the path for a coalition, giving a certain fiscal leeway for them to achieve their differing goals.

But the coalition, which only has a slim parliamentary majority, has been beset by tensions since day one, when Merz became the first ever chancellor to fail to be elected in the first round of voting. While the coalition leaders have a good working relationship, they are struggling to keep their lawmakers in line. Many within Merz's own conservatives are disappointed at the degree of compromise needed when their campaign promised radical change - making secret ballots, like the one to elect the chancellor, particularly risky, lawmakers told Reuters.

Merz, who had no government experience prior to taking office as chancellor, has taken a hands-off approach towards infighting both within the coalition and his own party. "If the coalition continues in this way, it will not be able to effect any meaningful change," Philipp Koeker, political scientist at the University of Hanover. Analysts say governance is being complicated by distrust between and within the parties, ideological misalignment, a lack of governing experience in Merz's cabinet, and the scale of the challenges facing Germany. Yet the coalition needs to move fast as the economy is facing its third year of contraction and the unreliability of its top security partner, the United States,

makes it all the more vulnerable to growing Russian security concerns. RISE OF THE FAR RIGHT The bill reintroducing voluntary military service and opening the door to a reintroduction of the draft is urgently needed, for example, to help boost Germany's long-neglected armed forces, say its proponents. Defence Minister Boris Pistorius has pledged that it would take effect in 2026 - a timeline that now looks at risk. The latest turbulence in Germany comes after multiple collapses of French governments in the past year, raising the prospect of political paralysis and a further rise in support for the far-right in both the EU's two top economies. Support for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has surged in tandem with a drop in support for the conservatives and SPD and the far-right party now frequently polls first place nationwide. Lawmakers from the conservatives' youth faction warned last week they would withhold support for the pension bill, one of the party's flagship compromises with the SPD that freezes pensions through 2031 while incentivising people to work for longer. They argue it cements benefits without fixing the financing as Germany ages, leaving young people to foot the bill.

BRINGING BACK MILITARY SERVICE?

Meanwhile, conservative and SPD lawmakers sought to rewrite the defence minister's bill on the introduction of military service even before he could introduce it to parliament. With the SPD seeking a voluntary scheme and the conservatives demanding some kind of draft, senior lawmakers agreed on a "lottery" to call up men in case not enough young people signed up. But Pistorius rejected the "lazy compromise", prompting the parties to cancel a joint news conference at the last minute. While the coalition is expected to eventually find new compromises on both bills, analysts fear they could be messy, slow to come and trust between parties has already been broken. Merz has been criticised for his reluctance to intervene - for example when his conservatives torpedoed the SPD's choice for a constitutional court judge already agreed by party leaders - a move that dented SPD trust in their coalition partner. Critics accuse him of focusing on foreign policy, earning him the moniker "Aussenkanzler" or "foreign chancellor" for his foreign policy successes - at the expense of domestic politics. Merz has built a rapport with Donald Trump despite the U.S. president's frustrations with Germany over its trade surplus and defence spending, and helped improve tense relations between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Merz's approval ratings have dropped by roughly 12-15 points since June to around 27%, far behind those of his two predecessors in the same period, making him one of the least popular chancellors in recent memory.

Zelenskiy paints meeting with Trump as a success, touts new Patriot systems



KYIV, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy painted his meeting last week with Donald Trump as a success that yielded progress on acquiring new air defence systems, a contrast from reports that Trump had berated him with obscenities in the White House. In comments made to media on Sunday initially off-the-record but authorised for publication on Monday, the Ukrainian leader described Trump's message at the meeting, which ended with Trump calling for a ceasefire with forces in place, as "positive". The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. As a result of Zelenskiy's visit to Washington, Ukraine was now preparing a contract to buy 25 Patriot air defence systems, a major boost to its defences against Russian missile attacks, Zelenskiy said. Zelenskiy was speaking before Reuters and other news organisations reported that Trump had pushed Zelenskiy to give up territory during their meeting, which sources described as more tense than initially disclosed. TRUMP'S 'MESSAGE IN MY VIEW IS POSITIVE', ZELENSKIY SAYS "After many rounds of discussion over more than two hours with (Trump) and his team, his message, in my view, is positive: that we stand where we stand on the front line,"

Zelenskiy said.

Ukraine and its allies have long called for an immediate ceasefire with troops in place, while Moscow has demanded Ukraine cede further territory before it would halt fighting. Zelenskiy did not specify how close Ukraine had come to signing the contract for the 25 Patriots, but he said that a great deal of time on his trip had been spent discussing the issue, including directly with Trump. Zelenskiy did not achieve his stated aim of persuading Washington to provide Ukraine with Tomahawk cruise missiles for long-range attacks inside Russia. Zelenskiy said he believed this was because Trump did not want to take steps that would anger Vladimir Putin shortly before a plan to meet the Russian president at a summit. Zelenskiy has spent half a year rebuilding his relationship with Trump since a disastrous meeting in February, in which Trump and Vice President JD Vance berated the Ukrainian leader in front of cameras in the White House Oval Office. Zelenskiy returned to the White House on Friday to meet Trump, a day after Trump spoke by telephone to Putin. Three sources described Trump's meeting with Zelenskiy as tense, with Trump repeatedly using profanity. "It was pretty bad," one of the sources said of the meeting. "The message was, 'Your country will freeze, and your country will be destroyed' if Ukraine doesn't make a deal with Russia. It was the latest apparent shift in positions for Trump, who had said for months that Ukraine must give up territory to make peace, only to describe Russia last month as a "paper tiger" and say Ukraine could potentially win back all its land. Trump and Putin are planning to meet in Budapest, capital of Hungary, a NATO and EU member that has maintained warm relations with Moscow throughout the Ukraine war. Zelenskiy criticised the choice of venue, suggesting that Hungary's domestic politics had played a role in the choice: "We are talking about peace in Ukraine, not elections in Hungary". However, he said that he would be willing to attend talks

Russia tightening law on sabotage, citing rising Ukraine, NATO threats

MOSCOW, GNS News Agency, Dec 7 Russian lawmakers said on Monday they had drafted a law mandating life imprisonment for anyone involving minors in sabotage and lowering the age threshold for criminal responsibility for such crimes to 14 years old. Since it sent military forces into Ukraine in 2022, Russia has crafted a series of laws which give state security agencies extensive powers to detain those accused of misrepresenting the war or opposing the state.

Vasily Piskaryov, chairman of the lower house of parliament's security committee, said a bill introduced into the lower house of parliament on Monday and backed by 419 out of 450 deputies would increase the security of the state.

"INEVITABILITY OF PUNISHMENT" The bill will "increase the inevitability of punishment for those who try to undermine the foundations of our state," Piskaryov said. "It will more toughly punish those who involve children in terrorism and sabotage, up to life imprisonment," he said, adding that the age threshold would be reduced to 14 years old. Piskaryov said the law was needed because sabotage posed a threat to the Russian state. He accused the secret services of Ukraine and NATO members of stepping up subversive attacks on Russia including by involving minors in sabotage.

He gave no specific examples but cited data from prosecutors which said that there were 204 subversive crimes registered in 2024, but 174 in just the first half of 2025 alone. NATO and Ukrainian authorities did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment. Kyiv has in the



past accused Russia of involving Ukrainian minors in attempts to destroy Ukrainian infrastructure during the war. RUSSIA SAYS WEST HELPING UKRAINE ATTACK ITS ENERGY SITES Ukraine in recent months has stepped up attacks on Russian oil refineries and other energy installations, and Moscow says the West including major NATO powers have been supplying Kyiv with intelligence. Moscow and Kyiv have accused each other of assassinating people. The Kremlin says a general tightening of the law is necessary to preserve order as Russia was facing an unprecedented hybrid attack from the West, which has backed Ukraine with hundreds of billions of dollars worth of arms and intelligence. Opponents of the Kremlin, such as Alexei Navalny, who died in an Arctic prison in 2024, said that President Vladimir Putin had crafted a brittle dictatorial system which would one day be swept aside by the torrents of history.

Relocation of forest dwellers from tiger reserves must be voluntary: Tribal Affairs Ministry



The Union Tribal Affairs Ministry has mandated that the relocation of forest-dwelling communities from tiger reserves must be an “exceptional, voluntary, and evidence-based measure”. The Ministry’s new policy framework also spells out the mechanisms that allow communities to continue living in the forests and the procedures to be followed for obtaining their consent for relocation. The policy calls for a National Framework for Community-Centred Conservation and Relocation (NFCCR), through which the Environment Ministry and Tribal Affairs Ministry can jointly set procedural standards, timelines, and accountability. It also suggests a National Database on Conservation-Community Interface (NDCCI) to record and track relocations, compensation, and status post-relocation. It recommends annual independent audits of relocation projects by empanelled agencies that assess compliance with the Forest Rights Act, the Wildlife Protection Act, and human rights standards.

Communities may choose to continue living in the “traditional forest habitats” while exercising their Individual Forest Rights or Community Forest Rights under the FRA, the policy says, emphasising that this must be an option for villages located within the reserves. In such cases, authorities must ensure the in-situ development of basic infrastructure, include Gram Sabha members in Tiger Conservation Foundations and Eco Development Committees, and “generate evidence on sustainable co-habitation models for wider replication”, the policy adds. Against NTCA relocation directive

This brief, titled, “Reconciling Conservation and Community Rights: A Policy Framework for Relocation and Co-existence in India’s Tiger Reserves”, was sent last week to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change from the office of the Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The Tribal Affairs Ministry noted that it has been receiving several representations from State governments and Gram Sabhas, flagging “serious concerns” about the non-

implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Last year, the National Tiger Conservation Authority’s directive to States asking them to prioritise relocation of villages in core areas of tiger reserves drew protests from several Gram Sabhas and forest rights activists. It also led to representations to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, the Tribal Affairs Ministry, and the Environment Ministry, seeking the rollback of the directive. There were 591 villages and 64,801 families within the core areas of tiger reserves, according to the NTCA.

In August this year, the Environment Ministry told Parliament that since January 2022, a total of 5,166 families from 56 villages have been relocated from tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, and Rajasthan. It claimed that all relocations from core/critical tiger habitats were voluntary in nature, as already required by the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 read with the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

Collaborative approach In his letter to the Environment Ministry, Tribal Affairs Secretary Vibhu Nayar said there was an “urgent need to examine the substantive issues” with relocations and that a “collaborative approach” was needed to ensure that “relocation, if undertaken, be voluntary, scientifically justified, rights-compliant, and grounded in equity and dignity”. This policy framework, he said, “strives to ensure that any relocation of forest-dwelling communities is grounded in constitutional, legal, ethical, and scientific principles”. He added that the issues discussed in the framework are of “critical importance”, calling for it to be circulated among State Forest and Tribal Welfare departments, to be passed on to the district levels as well. “The State bears an affirmative constitutional duty to safeguard these rights [of forest-dwellers] and may not curtail them except upon demonstrable ecological necessity,” the policy says, adding that the completion of the FRA rights recognition process must be “verifiable at the Household and Gram Sabha levels”. Free, informed, prior consent Consent for relocation must be obtained before any administrative notification, and should be free of any inducement or pressures, which can be ensured by an independent empanelled civil society organisation, the policy brief says, adding that information regarding all aspects must be provided to villagers in “the local language and culturally appropriate formats”. It also calls for a compliance and safeguards officer in every Tiger Reserve to oversee compliance with the provisions of both the Forest Rights Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. It suggests a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism (district - State - National), adding that the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act can be invoked in cases of unlawful dispossession or procedural lapses.

Shorter, simpler breast cancer treatment: where evidence meets practice

When Vrinda Thakker was diagnosed with metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer in December 2021, her doctors postponed surgery and began targeted therapy the next month — an intravenous combination of trastuzumab and pertuzumab, the standard regimen for this form of disease. The drugs were delivered through a chemoport, a small device implanted under the skin to allow repeated infusions directly into a central vein.

“Each session took a couple of hours, including the time to flush the line so it wouldn’t block,” she said. The routine was repetitive and time-consuming, and even a single cycle meant hours at the hospital. After several months, she discussed switching to a subcutaneous option with her oncologist, in which the same drugs are injected under the skin rather than through an intravenous line. “A subcutaneous injection can be painful at first because about 10 millilitres of the drug are given under the skin of the thigh,” said another patient, who also opted for the subcutaneous method, describing the difference between the two treatment modes. “But the whole process takes only two or three minutes. Once you’re used to it, you walk in, take the injection, and leave.” She added that the switch also eliminates risks linked to chemoports, such as infections or blood clots, and replaces a four-hour infusion with a five-minute injection. These experiences reflect a broader shift in oncology: replacing long intravenous infusions with shorter subcutaneous delivery that maintains the same therapeutic outcomes while reducing time in hospital.

Trastuzumab, a monoclonal antibody that targets the HER2 receptor, has been a mainstay of treatment for HER2-positive breast cancer for more than two decades. Traditionally, it is given intravenously every three weeks, often with pertuzumab — a schedule that is effective but time-intensive for patients and oncology units. A subcutaneous formulation of trastuzumab was developed using recombinant human hyaluronidase (rHuPH20), which temporarily breaks down hyaluronan in the tissue, allowing large molecules to be absorbed through the skin. Clinical studies such as the HannaH and FeDeriCa trials showed that fixed-dose subcutaneous trastuzumab, alone or combined with pertuzumab, matched intravenous infusion in safety, efficacy, and drug absorption. A time-and-motion substudy from the ADEPT trial found that subcutaneous dosing cut the time patients spent in the treatment chair by about an hour, and pharmacy preparation by a little over an hour. The fixed-dose combination of pertuzumab and trastuzumab, marketed as PHESGO, delivers both antibodies together in a single subcutaneous injection. In India, the first real-world report on PHESGO showed similar outcomes across early and metastatic disease. Most patients reported fewer hospital visits and preferred the subcutaneous route, citing comfort and convenience. While these data establish the clinical equivalence of the two delivery routes, the practical difference becomes clearer when seen in how much time patients actually spend in hospital.

Why shorter treatments The time needed for drug preparation and administration has long shaped the experience of breast cancer therapy. In the ADEPT study, the mean time in the treatment chair fell from about 85 minutes with intravenous administration to around 20 minutes with subcutaneous dosing. Total hospital time, including waiting and observation, was shorter by nearly 80 minutes. Meenu Walla, a senior oncologist at Max Super Specialty Hospital, Patparganj, said the time factor affects patients and families in direct ways. “Between travel, waiting, and the procedure itself, it’s almost a full-day commitment,” she said. “Long hours at the hospital can be especially hard for daily-wage earners or elderly caregivers. Any approach that shortens that time makes a tangible difference.” Shona Nag, a cancer specialist at Sahyadri Group of Hospitals, Pune who led the Indian PHESGO study, said the time saving is especially meaningful for women balancing work or caregiving responsibilities.

On the hospital side, shorter sessions are changing how oncology units schedule and staff treatment days. Niti



Raizada, principal director of medical oncology at Fortis Cancer Institute, Bengaluru, said that subcutaneous delivery had streamlined patient flow. “When procedures take less time, we can manage more cases efficiently without crowding our infusion units,” she said. “Subcutaneous fixed-dose therapies require less loading and preparation time, saving time not only for patients, but for hospital staff too. It’s one of the few innovations that improves efficiency without losing the human element of care.” Raja T., senior consultant at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, noted that this trend fits into a wider evolution of cancer treatment toward minimally invasive, less intrusive approaches. “When it comes to medicines, we are looking at how we can avoid too much intravenous medication — whether we can treat patients with under-the-skin subcutaneous medicines and tablets — making the whole journey easy and comfortable so that they can go back home or to work as soon as possible,” he said. While the benefits of subcutaneous therapy are well established in major hospitals, experts say that access remains uneven across India’s mixed healthcare system. Dr. Raja said that facilities and staff training vary widely. “In major cities, good hospitals and infrastructure are available. Then you move to Tier 2 towns and smaller areas where such high-tech care is not available.” He added that patients from smaller towns often have to travel repeatedly to larger centres for months of therapy. “They have to stay near the hospital — that’s a big challenge,” he said. “Insurance and employer support have helped many, but not everyone benefits equally.” Dr. Raja also noted that public hospitals face high patient volumes, which can make it difficult to introduce newer delivery modes that need specific handling and training. “Government hospitals are doing an excellent job,” he said, “but the sheer numbers they see make it difficult to provide that kind of care to everyone.” Experts said broader adoption in public hospitals would depend on drug availability, staff training, and inclusion in government oncology programmes. For oncologists, shorter and simpler treatment modes are not just about efficiency — they change how patients experience care. Dr. Nag said the traditional infusion process can be physically and emotionally draining. “The long time they spend in the hospital — the indignity of being pricked several times, the discomfort of hours of hospitalisation, and the long wait after the infusion for observation — all interfere with their daily routine, especially if they have young children or are working women,” she said. “When it is subcutaneous, they are in and out of hospital — no IV pricks — done very quickly.” She added that being able to continue treatment outside hospitals helped during the pandemic. “During COVID, we were able to continue these subcutaneous sessions at the home of the patient so they could complete their treatment,” she said. Ms. Thakker is continuing her treatment, and will need to remain on targeted therapy indefinitely. She encourages anyone who is starting or undergoing treatment to seek out the subcutaneous route, adding that it costs less than IV in her experience and she has found her own way to make the process easier. “The minute I enter the hospital and finish my admission, I ask for an ice pack,” she said. “For about an hour, I keep it on the area where the injection will go. It becomes numb, and you don’t feel the pain at all. With a chemo port, you can’t press down — it’s under the muscle, and it hurts.

Ladakh violence: Supreme Court allows Wangchuk’s wife Angmo to launch a keener challenge to Wangchuk's detention



The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed Gitanjali J. Angmo to amend her petition and launch a sharper, updated attack against the Centre for detaining her husband and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk under the national security law Mr. Wangchuk was detained under the National Security Act (NSA), 1980 following violent protests on September 24 in Leh. He was detained on September 26 and shifted to the Jodhpur Central Jail in Rajasthan.

A Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N.V. Anjaria allowed Ms. Angmo’s Application to file additional grounds highlighting “grave and incurable lapses” committed by the Centre during Mr. Wangchuk’s continued detention, including that the activist was given the complete grounds for his detention nearly a month after depriving him of his personal liberty. The court asked Ms. Angmo to file the amended petition with additional grounds in a week, and directed the Centre and the Union Territory of Ladakh to respond within 10 days after Ms. Angmo, represented by senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Vivek Tankha, and advocate Sarvam Ritam Khare, said the entire grounds behind his detention was shared with Mr. Wangchuk after a “flagrant delay” of 28 days despite his repeated representations to his detainers.

Ms. Angmo submitted that Section 8 of the NSA required the detaining authority to share the complete reasons for detention within 10 days in order to afford the detainee the “earliest opportunity to make an effective representation against the order to the appropriate government”. “The illegal and unreasonable delay in supply of the complete grounds of detention has prevented Mr. Wangchuk from preparing any effective representation against his detention. This is in clear violation of Section 8 of the NSA... It is settled law that the procedural safeguards under the NSA, being a stringent preventive detention leg-

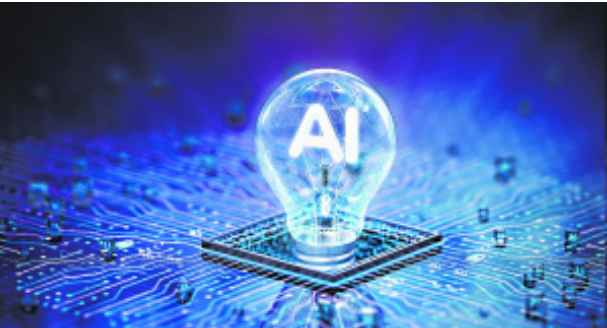
islation which curtails the most cherished right to personal liberty, must be strictly construed and scrupulously enforced,” Ms. Angmo submitted in her application. Besides, four crucial videos, which form the “core evidentiary foundation” for the detention, were not supplied to the activist.

In fact, Ms. Angmo said, the Advisory Board under the NSA had acknowledged the importance of the four videos, and asked the detaining authority to let Mr. Wangchuk access them to effectively prepare his defence. “It is submitted that these videos, which should have been supplied to Mr. Wangchuk as a matter of statutory and Constitutional right, were finally supplied to him 28 days after the date of his detention, in the evening of October 23, one day prior to his proceedings before the Advisory Board... Section 11(1) of the NSA necessarily contemplates that the detainee [Wangchuk] must not only be informed of his right of representation but must be placed in a fair position to exercise that right effectively, with access to all material relied upon by the detaining authority,” Ms. Angmo’s application noted. She noted that recommendations upon which the detention order was passed, and the endorsement/notification of September 26 authorising the District Magistrate, Leh, to issue the detention order, have also not been supplied to Mr. Wangchuk till date. The detention order itself does not reflect the ‘independent satisfaction’ arrived at by the District Magistrate as under Section 3 of NSA, 1980, Ms. Angmo contended. Despite being permitted by the Jodhpur Central Jail Superintendent to assist her husband as a ‘friend’ in the Advisory Board proceedings on October 24, she was prevented from exchanging notes and other documents with Mr. Wangchuk, thereby materially prejudicing her ability to assist him, she said. She argued that the detention order referred to “stale FIRs [First Information Reports]” over a year old in which there was no mention made of Mr. Wangchuk. Ms. Angmo submitted that the detention order was premised on the fear of “public panic” which may be caused if Mr. Wangchuk was not detained. However, the detaining authority had not furnished any evidence linking the statements made by Mr. Wangchuk to any incident of public unrest or media outrage. “On the contrary, the illegal, arbitrary, and unjustified detention of Mr. Wangchuk has caused widespread public disapproval and an uproar of dissenting views in mainstream media such as newspapers and television news reports,” the application said. Ms. Angmo asked what made Mr. Wangchuk’s case “exceptional” that he had to be transferred to a jail outside the jurisdiction of where he was taken into custody.

According to a survey of 25 countries, Indians are least aware of AI

According to a Pew survey covering 25 countries, Indians have the lowest awareness about Artificial Intelligence (AI). The survey found that about 14% of Indians have heard of or read a lot about AI; and another 32% have read a little about it. Together, this share (46%) is the lowest among the countries surveyed. The below chart shows the share of people who have heard of or read a lot or little about AI. At 46%, India’s share is well below the 25-country median of 81%.

Although AI is a new technology that young adults are generally expected to know more about, only 19% of Indians aged 18-34 said they have heard of or read a lot about AI. This is the second lowest share in that age group among the 25 countries surveyed as shown in the below chart. Consequently, Indians are also among the least concerned about the increasing use of AI in daily life. Close to 19% of them said the increasing use of AI in daily life makes them more concerned than excited. This share is one of the lowest among the countries surveyed as shown in the below chart. Nearly 90% of Indians also said they trust that their country will regulate the use of AI effectively. This share is the highest among all the countries surveyed, and by a significant margin as shown in the below chart. Wealthier countries tend to have a higher share of people who have heard a lot about AI. Around half the adults in Japan, Germany, France, and the U.S. said they have heard a lot about AI,



compared to the 14% in India and 12% in Kenya. The below chart plots the share of people who said they have heard of or read a lot about AI against the GDP per capita of the countries. The first four charts display data for only selected countries out of the 25 surveyed, while the last chart includes figures for all countries. The data for the charts are sourced from the Pew Research Center’s ‘How People Around the World View AI (October 2025)’. For non-U.S. data, this analysis draws on nationally representative surveys of 28,333 adults conducted from Jan. 8 to April 26, 2025. Countries are classified as either high or middle income based on categories from the World Bank that rely on per capita gross national income.

Amazon shares surge as AI boom drives cloud growth

Amazon’s share price skyrocketed by more than ten percent on Thursday after the online retail behemoth reported better than expected earnings, powered by surging demand for its cloud computing services. Quarterly sales rose 13 percent to \$180.2 billion across the company, it said. Net income climbed to \$21.2 billion from \$15.3 billion a year earlier. Stoking investor sentiment, the company forecast fourth-quarter sales of \$206-\$213 billion, representing growth of 10-13 percent.

The e-commerce giant’s Amazon Web Services division, which recently suffered a global outage, saw revenues jump 20 percent to \$33 billion in the third quarter, marking its fastest growth rate since 2022 as companies race to build AI capabilities. Amazon’s major rivals in the cloud computing space, Microsoft and Google, on Wednesday also reported sales increases in their cloud computing business, with all companies pointing to adoption of AI services as the main driver. The tech giants are all making huge investments to build up their AI computing capabilities, money that the companies insist will be justified by increasing adoption of AI tools and applications by customers across the globe. While the company did not break out its specific investment in AI capabilities, Amazon said it increased year-on-year purchases of property and equipment by \$50.9 billion, which is a massive jump in spending.

“The significant acceleration of AWS growth should help dispel some of the concerns that Amazon has been failing to keep up with (Microsoft) Azure and Google Cloud,” said Emarketer principal analyst Sky Canaves. “A key question will be whether Amazon plans to further increase its already massive (capital expenditure) spending on AI infrastructure in light of the recent announcements from its rivals.” Amazon also said it added 3.8 gigawatts of power capacity over the past year to support AI infrastructure, more than any other cloud provider, and launched a massive computing cluster with nearly 500,000 custom AI chips. AI computing demands enormous amounts of electricity, far more than traditional computing, and can put a strain on local resources, notably water supplies needed for cooling data center activity. “In our view, Amazon is right to make these investments as they will help provide the company with new



Stoking investor sentiment, Amazon forecast fourth-quarter sales of \$206-\$213 billion, representing growth of 10-13 percent

avenues for growth and ensure it remains competitively sharp,” said Neil Saunders, Managing Director of GlobalData.

Operating income, however, remained flat at \$17.4 billion after Amazon took two major charges: \$2.5 billion for a legal settlement with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and \$1.8 billion in severance costs tied to planned job cuts. Amazon said Tuesday it was reducing its workforce by 14,000 posts to streamline operations as it invests in artificial intelligence. The cuts are expected to target areas such as human resources, advertising, and management in a group that has 350,000 office positions, out of a total of more than 1.5 million employees. The settlement with the FTC was over long-running allegations from the US regulator that it used deceptive practices to enroll consumers in Amazon Prime and made it difficult to cancel subscriptions. The online retail giant, which admitted no wrongdoing in the settlement, paid \$1.5 billion into a consumer fund for refunds and \$1 billion in civil penalties. Shortly after the results landed, Amazon’s share price was up by 11 percent in after-hours trading.

How plastic whistles are becoming an anti-ICE resistance tool in Chicago



CHICAGO,GNS News Agency, Dec 7As the shrill sound of whistles echoed through a parking garage in Chicago's North Side on Tuesday, two people flung their car doors open, ducked inside and shrank down into their seats. Outside, a convoy of federal immigration enforcement vehicles that had arrived in the area just minutes prior sped off. "We just saw a bunch of guys with whistles that chased them out," said Luke, a landscaper who was working nearby and declined to share his full name.

Read about innovative ideas and the people working on solutions to global crises with the Reuters Beacon newsletter. Sign up here.The Trump administration in early September launched a targeting what it said were hardened criminals among immigrants in the U.S. without legal status, though many noncriminals have been swept up in raids.

Since then, the piercing blow of a whistle has become a Chicago-wide means of signaling that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents are present. It warns undocumented people to flee and invites U.S. citizens to come to the scene to record arrests, give detainees legal information and discourage agents from lingering.Anti-ICE signs hang in the window of a home, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., October 21, 2025. REUTERS/Jim Vondruska Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabThe aggressive immigration enforcement effort - which has no end date - has sparked widespread protests and resentment among residents. Hundreds of federal agents have fanned across the third-largest city in the U.S. and its suburbs, often carrying assault rifles and wearing military fatigues. Agents have teargassed crowds, rappelled from a Black Hawk helicopter to raid an apartment building, dragged immigrants from cars, held people at gunpoint and shot two people, including one fatally.Against this heavily militarized force, whistles have

become a modest but effective tool to fight back."It grew like wildfire," said Baltazar Enriquez, president of Little Village Community Council, a community group in one of Chicago's largest Latino enclaves. "If we have to patrol our neighborhood for the next three years, we're willing to do that just to keep our community safe."The group began handing out the whistles to neighborhood residents over the summer. Since then, relentless promotion turned the whistles into a defining symbol of Chicago's resistance against ICE.A woman holds a whistle she uses to alert others about the presence of federal agents during immigration raids, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., October 21, 2025. REUTERS/Jim Vondruska Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

and local activist groups have passed out the whistles at local festivals and parades and dropped them off at Little Free Libraries. Some residents have picked up whistles from community groups that advertised them on social media - others have simply bought them from dollar stores and Amazon."Our officers are highly trained," said Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Homeland Security, and "they are not afraid of loud noises and whistles."Their ease of use and low cost have contributed to their soaring popularity on the streets and on social media. But the impact of a whistle against squads of armed, fast-moving immigration officers is limited.On a quiet residential street in another North Side neighborhood, residents ran out of their apartments to confront ICE officers as they detained a group of landscapers. Their whistles and shouts managed to draw a crowd and elicit names of detainees to be passed on to immigration rights groups, but officers still drove away with two people."I'm sure I'll cry again later," said Joanne Willer, a resident of Albany Park who used her whistle to sound the alarm about the detention. "It's just really upsetting."Community members hold whistles used to alert others about the presence of federal agents during immigration raids, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.,/Jim Vondruska Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabAfterward, other residents of Albany Park, a Chicago neighborhood known for its diversity that was teargassed by federal immigration agents earlier this month, carried different kinds of noise-makers as they patrolled the streets.Jordan, who declined to share her last name out of fear of retribution, carried her son's toy train whistle."I'm Jewish, and I feel very personally tied to what's going on here because of our history as a Jewish people," Jordan said. "I feel like if we're not out here supporting our neighbors, nobody else is going to be doing it."

Vance says Trump's policy rejects Israeli annexation of West Bank

TEL AVIV, GNS News Agency, Dec 7- U.S. Vice President JD Vance said on Thursday President Donald Trump would oppose Israeli annexation of the occupied West Bank and it would not happen, suggesting a move by Israeli lawmakers to that end looked like a stupid "political stunt". A bill applying Israeli law to the West Bank, a move tantamount to annexation of the territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war, won preliminary approval from Israeli lawmakers on Wednesday.The Reuters Gulf Currents newsletter brings you the latest on geopolitics, energy and finance in the region. Sign up here.Asked by reporters about the move, Vance said: "If it was a political stunt, it is a very stupid one, and I personally take some insult to it."Vance spoke after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that moves toward annexing the territory that Palestinians seek for part of an independent state could endanger Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, which has yielded a shaky ceasefire so far."The West Bank is not going to be annexed by Israel. The policy of President Trump is that the West Bank will not be annexed. This will always be our policy," Vance said during a trip to Israel to help shore up the Gaza truce.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said after Vance's remarks that the government had not decided to bring the vote on annexation forward at this stage in order to ensure the success of Trump's multi-stage Gaza plan.The U.S. has long been Israel's most powerful and staunch major power ally and the Trump administration is particularly close to Israel with considerable sway over its leadership.Senior U.S. officials including Rubio have been visiting Israel seeking to keep alive the brittle ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas after two years of devastating war that has upended the Middle East.Vance told reporters in Tel Aviv that he "feels pretty good" about the Gaza ceasefire after having talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.Repeated bouts of gunfire and explosions have shaken the deal and the two sides have traded blame for violations of its first phase, which has seen the return of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, a handover of bodies of some deceased hostages, and a partial pullout of Israeli troops.

Item 1 of 4 A member of the Israeli force stands guard as the Israeli forces block the access of Palestinians and foreign activists to olive trees during the olive harvest, near Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.Both sides have reiterated their commitment to the U.S.-mediated ceasefire after two years of war triggered by the October 7, 2023 cross-border Hamas assault on Israel that killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.Israel's air and ground



war in response has killed over 68,000 people and reduced much of the tiny, heavily urbanised Gaza Strip to rubble, Gaza health authorities say.The U.S. State Department said Rubio was visiting Israel to support the implementation of Trump's 20-point Gaza plan and pave the way towards reconstruction, stable governance and possible steps towards Palestinian statehood.He was preceded by Vance, who was also due to meet Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer on Thursday before departing.

There are hundreds of thousands of people living in Jewish settlements across the West Bank. The United Nations and much of the international community consider the settlements illegal under international law.Israel's government cites biblical and historical connections to the West Bank, territory that it regards as disputed, and opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state.The settlements are a highly volatile issue that have for decades loomed as a major obstacle to Middle East peace, as they fragment territory Palestinians want for a viable state.Wednesday's vote was the first of four needed to pass the law and coincided with Vance's visit to Israel - a month after Trump said he would not allow Israel to annex the territory.Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party did not support the legislation, which was sponsored by lawmakers outside his ruling coalition and passed by a vote of 25-24 out of 120 lawmakers.Netanyahu's government had been pondering annexation as a response to a string of major Western allies recognising a Palestinian state to put pressure on Israel to stop its war in Gaza, but appeared to shelve the idea after Trump objected.Settlement building has been expanding rapidly since 2022 when Netanyahu's government - the most right-wing in Israeli history with ultra-nationalist coalition partners who seek annexation of both the West Bank and Gaza - came to power.

Zelenskiy appeals to EU leaders over long-range weapons

BRUSSELS -GNS News Agency, Dec 7 President Volodymyr Zelenskiy urged European allies on Thursday to supply Ukraine with long-range weapons after failing to secure a promise from U.S. President Donald Trump to provide Kyiv with powerful Tomahawk missiles.Zelenskiy, who addressed European Union leaders in Brussels, also called on them to agree as soon as possible on a plan to use frozen Russian assets and said Kyiv would use a "significant part" of any funds made available to buy European-made weapons."When we talk about long-range weapons for Ukraine, we mean that the Putin regime should feel real consequences from this war. I urge you to support everything that helps Ukraine get such capabilities — because it really makes a difference for Russia," he said."Just look at how nervous (Russian President Vladimir) Putin became when this topic came up. He understands that long-range weapons can truly change the course of the war."Zelenskiy has been seeking Tomahawk missiles from the United



States. Trump did not rule out providing Kyiv with such missiles during talks in Washington with Zelenskiy last week but appeared cool to the prospect."These long-range weapons are not only in the U.S. - some European countries also have them, including Tomahawks. We are already talking to the countries that can help,"

Northern Ireland court finds soldier not guilty of murder over 'Bloody Sunday' killings



BELFAST, GNS News Agency, Dec 7A Belfast court on Thursday found a British soldier not guilty of murder in the only trial of a member of the British armed forces over the 1972 "Bloody Sunday" killings of 13 unarmed Catholic civil rights marchers in Northern Ireland.The British government in 2010 apologised for the "unjustified and unjustifiable" killings, when members of the British army's elite Parachute Regiment opened fire in the mainly Irish nationalist city of Londonderry in one of the defining moments of Northern Ireland's recent history.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.But all efforts to prosecute soldiers have failed and many relatives of victims and their supporters now believe the chance of a successful prosecution of British armed forces is remote.Belfast Crown Court was silent when the verdict was read. The soldier, who cannot be identified legally and is known as Soldier F, was in court but hidden behind a blue curtain to protect his identity.He was found not guilty of killing two men and trying to kill five others.Judge Patrick Lynch said in his verdict that he was satisfied that soldiers had lost all sense of military discipline and opened fire with intent to kill and that "those responsible should hang their heads in shame".But he said the case fell short of the burden of proof.

"Delay has, in my view, seriously hampered the capacity of the defence to test the veracity and accuracy of

the hearsay statements," he said."The evidence presented by the Crown ... signally fails to reach the high standard of proof required in a criminal case; that of proof beyond a reasonable doubt."Mickey McKinney, brother of William McKinney, one of the two victims named in the case, said he put the blame for the failure to successfully prosecute any soldiers squarely with the British state."Soldier F has been discharged from the defendant's criminal dock, but it is one million miles away from being an honourable discharge," McKinney told journalists outside the court.A DEFINING MOMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S 'TROUBLES'Bloody Sunday became one of the defining events of the Troubles, three decades of sectarian violence involving nationalists seeking a united Ireland, unionists wanting Northern Ireland to remain a province of the United Kingdom, and British forces.The shootings fuelled suspicion of the authorities among the Catholic minority and prompted dozens to join the Irish Republican Army's violent campaign against British rule.Thirteen people, all unarmed Catholics, were killed when the soldiers opened fire in the staunchly nationalist Bogside area of Londonderry on January 30, 1972. A 14th victim later died from wounds sustained on the day. The troops said they shot at people armed with guns or nail bombs.

Defence lawyers did not call any witnesses and said that the core of the case, military statements taken over 50 years ago, were manifestly unreliable, with no independent supporting evidence offered to back the prosecution case.Earlier in the trial the court heard a short statement Soldier F gave to police in 2016, in which he said that while he was sure he properly discharged his duties as a soldier that day, he no longer had any reliable recollection of the events and therefore was unable to answer the officers' questions.The British government in 2010 apologised for the killings after a judicial inquiry found that the victims were innocent and had posed no threat to the military.That inquiry had been set up by British Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1998, after an original 1972 investigation absolved the paratroopers of blame.In a statement on the verdict the British government said it was "committed to finding a way forward that acknowledges the past, whilst supporting those who served their country during an incredibly difficult period in Northern Ireland's history."

What will happen to Louvre jewellery after heist? There are two likely scenarios

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

The spectacular heist of jewellery from the Louvre museum in Paris has many people wondering how a theft like this could occur in broad daylight and what might happen to the items that were stolen from the museum.In a matter of minutes, four thieves were able to enter through a first-floor window, break into secure glass displays, and take nine items of jewellery of immeasurable value.Although an alarm was set off and museum guards were nearby, the thieves were able to escape quickly, using motor bikes to get away. They dropped one stolen item, a diamond and emerald-encrusted royal crown that had belonged to Empress Eugenie, Napoleon III's wife.Their loot include jewellery from French imperial times – brooches, necklaces, earrings and a tiara. The French prosecutor's office said the jewels were worth some 88 million euros (A\$157 million), not including their historical value.The speed and professionalism of the heist shows this was a well-planned crime, carried out by highly skilled perpetrators. That suggests they are linked to organised criminal groups.Several media outlets reported a number of smaller thefts from French museums in recent weeks, including gold nuggets from the Paris Natural History Museum. There is no suggestion these thefts were linked to the Louvre heist.

What might happen to the loot?

The stolen jewellery includes well-known pieces that are easily recognisable. This will make it difficult, if not impossible, to sell them on the black market, even to well-heeled collectors and buyers.This problem is well-known from other museum heists – such as the theft of the Canadian "Big Maple Leaf" giant gold coin from Berlin's Bode Museum in 2017 or the famous heist of 13 masterpieces by Degas, Manet and Rembrandt from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in 1990. Those paintings have never been recovered.Instead, most experts believe one of two scenarios are more likely.In the first, the jewellery would be broken down into smaller pieces. Diamonds and other gemstones may be taken out, altered and then offered for sale. Silver and gold may be used to manufacture

other pieces or may be sold separately.

This scenario would make it easy to conceal the origin of the pieces and sell them openly or online. The combined value, however, would be significantly lower compared to leaving the pieces intact. It is thus doubtful the thieves targeted the specific jewellery for this purpose.Scenario two would involve the thieves, or more likely the masterminds behind them, trying to sell the pieces back to the Louvre or trying to extort money from the French government for their return.This may be done through brokers or other middlemen and may not happen for a while, until there is less public and media attention and the perpetrators feel sufficiently safe to contact – directly or indirectly – museum or state authorities.Given the historical significance of the pieces coupled with the embarrassment caused by the heist, the Louvre and the French government would be keen to have the pieces returned as swiftly as possible and might be willing to negotiate, albeit secretly.Much of this remains, however, speculation. Only a few days have passed since the heist occurred and many questions about the events, perpetrators and their motives remain unanswered. And just who may be behind this spectacular heist from France's largest museum has everyone guessing.The Louvre theft brings to mind the jewellery heist at the Green Vault at the Zwinger Palace in Dresden, Germany, in 2019.In this case, the perpetrators had closely examined the museum's security system for many days and were able to enter the building without being caught on camera. They entered through a window on the first floor and within minutes stole 21 pieces of jewellery from several displays.Unlike the Paris heist, the Dresden thieves entered at night and used brute force to damage the displays to take their loot.Some years after the robbery, German authorities were able to identify and arrest the thieves involved in the heist – all five were members of a notorious Berlin-based crime family. The perpetrators have since been tried and convicted and are serving long jail terms. Most of the jewellery was retrieved and returned – unaltered – to its famous home.

Saudi Arabia appoints Sheikh Saleh bin Fawzan al-Fawzan as kingdom's new grand mufti

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Dubai: Saudi Arabia appointed a prominent ultraconservative scholar late on Wednesday as the country's new grand mufti, the kingdom's top religious scholar.Sheikh Saleh bin Fawzan al-Fawzan, 90, took over the position, the state-run Saudi Press Agency reported. The decision came from King Salman, based on the recommendation of his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the report added.

Sheikh Saleh, reportedly born Sept 28, 1935, in Saudi Arabia's al-Qassim province, studied the Quran with a local imam after his father's death.He became a prominent scholar, speaking to the faithful via the "Noor ala al-Darb," or "Light the Way," radio show and via multiple books he's authored and his television appearances. His fatwas, or religious orders, have been shared via social media as well.

Sheikh Saleh has faced criticism in Western media in the past for some of his pronouncements. Human Rights Watch in 2017 reported Sheikh Saleh, when asked if Sunni Muslims should view Shiite as their "brothers," responded: "They are brothers of Satan." The Shiite "lie about God, his prophet, and the consensus of Muslims... There is no doubt about the unbelief of these" people, Human Rights Watch separately quoted Sheikh Saleh saying at another moment.Such comments about the Shiite from religious leaders in Saudi Arabia are common, particularly amid political tensions between the kingdom and Iran. Sheikh Saleh also criticised Yemen's Houthi rebels for firing missiles toward holy sites in the kingdom.In 2003, Sheikh Saleh was quoted as saying: "Slavery is a part of Islam. Slavery is part of jihad, and jihad will remain as long as there is Islam." The sheikh also had a fatwa attributed to him in 2016 banning the mobile game "Pokemon Go" as a form of gambling. Saudi Arabia under Crown Prince Mohammed now owns a sizable stake in Nintendo and the gaming division



of Niantic, the maker of "Pokemon Go".

Sheikh Saleh takes the post after the September death of Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, who held the position of grand mufti for a quarter century.The al-Sheikh family, descendants of Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdul-Wahhab, long had seen its members serve as the grand mufti.

Sheikh Mohammed's ultraconservative teachings of Islam in the 18th century, widely referred to as "Wahhabism" in his name, had guided the kingdom for decades, particularly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran saw the kingdom grow even more conservative.The grand mufti is one of the top Islamic clerics in the world of Sunni Muslims. Saudi Arabia, home to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, hosts the annual Hajj pilgrimage required of all able-bodied Muslims once in their lives, making the pronouncements of the grand mufti that much more closely followed.Saudi Arabia has socially liberalized under King Salman, allowing women to drive and opening movie theatres as the country tries to move its economy away from being dominated by its oil industry.

Why did metal-organic frameworks win the 2025 chemistry Nobel?

A photograph of a wall with a series of vertical light streaks, possibly from a window or a light fixture. The streaks are bright and elongated, creating a rhythmic pattern against the darker, textured background of the wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

Tamil Nadu's achievement in total fertility rate of 1.4 is a significant milestone in population stabilisation: Geetha Jeevan

Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* (2002) – based on Philip K. Dick's 1956 short story – powerfully dramatises the jurisprudential dilemmas of preventive detention, particularly in liberal democracies. In the film, a special police unit called PreCrime uses precognitive humans (Precogs) and advanced technology to prevent murders before they occur. The protagonist is apprehended for a murder he has not yet committed. He is presumed guilty, denied a fair trial, and offered no opportunity to be heard. This mirrors the legal logic of preventive detention, which bypasses fundamental principles such as *audi alteram partem*, the presumption of innocence and judicial scrutiny. Although science fiction, the film offers a striking metaphor for the ethical and legal perils that accompany the logic of preventive incarceration. In the film, alternative futures — or “minority reports” — reveal that the Precogs are not infallible. This echoes the inherent uncertainty in predicting human behaviour, which is the Achilles' heel of preventive detention regimes. In India, courts have repeatedly acknowledged that the “subjective satisfaction” of the detaining authority is susceptible to misuse, especially in cases that involve dissent, protest or political opposition. In this metaphorical ecosystem, the sponsoring authority, detaining authority, and even the advisory board function as India's equivalent of the Precogs — issuing decisions based on perceptions and probabilities rather than proof and procedure. With weak procedural safeguards and limited judicial review, preventive detention in India presents the very dangers that *Minority Report* sought to warn us against.

These initiatives have increased the savings among the women and students. In case of Kalaigarnar Women's Rights Grants, the support is provided to needy women, whose income is less than ₹2.5 lakh per annum. This has decreased the number of people below the poverty line and their livelihood has been improved. Similarly, the Pudumai Penn and Tamil Pudalvan scheme have increased college enrolment rates. Apart from this, the Chief Minister has also directed surveys to verify the funds provided through these schemes are utilised for intended purpose. These measures have shown significant, measurable results in improving

To seek comments via discussion papers before new CPI inflation series in Feb: MoSPI Secretary



Ahead of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) releasing the new inflation series in February next year based on an updated Consumer Price Index (CPI), it'll bring out discussion papers and hold conferences to outline the changes and the new methodology, Secretary Saurabh Garg said. In an interview with Siddharth Upasani and Aanchal Magazine, Garg said MoSPI will seek comments from stakeholders on the new CPI methodology, with transparency a key objective. The ministry has also spoken with e-commerce platforms to scrape their price data to compile the CPI.

The market survey for CPI was conducted in 2024. But with GST rates being cut in September this year, does the base become artificially high? Has there been an assessment of the impact of the GST cuts on CPI inflation?

The impact of the GST cut will have a one-time impact on the CPI (Consumer Price Index) and that will get reflected in the inflation numbers whenever they are released. In any case, the CPI is always compared to the previous year (to calculate inflation) — it's the incremental rise (that matters). When these kinds of changes happen, the impact is captured in CPI as per price changes in the markets. It's a one-time impact and then they (CPI) keep fluctuating up and down.

There are many estimates floating around regarding the impact on consumption from the GST cuts. Is there anything that MoSPI is doing to assess how consumption is rising?

So, we'll have the IIP (Index of Industrial Production) coming out — if consumption is rising, there should be some impact on production. Obviously, there could be (drawdown of) inventories so it may not be immediate. But, no, we are not doing any analysis of household consumption because it varies due to various reasons, apart from price, like festivals, etc.. And I think a lot of the retailers themselves are doing this.

But this should reflect in the GDP data for the July-September and October-December quarters?Yes.

We are only three months or so away from the release of the revised CPI inflation series. Have the weights for items been finalised?

They're working on it. We'll be releasing discussion papers. We want comments from stakeholders.

So, before the new inflation print under the revised CPI series is released for the first time in February 2026, will you disclose the weights beforehand in the discussion paper?

We have to take a call on what all we will give in the discussion paper before the release of the revised series. I don't want to preempt the work that is being done by the team. But there will be conferences — data-user conferences will be held in Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai during November-January because it's necessary that people understand (the changes and the methodology). Otherwise, unnecessarily, there will be doubts.

Has a final resolution been reached for the treatment of goods provided for free under the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the revamped inflation basket?

We put that out in the public domain and asked for comments. We've also given what our methodology is going to be. So, once we get the comments, then we'll take a final view on that.What is the discussion paper exactly for? Let's say you get some comments as feedback. But then you will have very little time left until the release of the new CPI series.

Of course, but these days everything is computerised. A lot of the work has already been done on things like how to weigh the PDS items. In fact, we've had discussions with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and other experts; we have had closed-door meetings. So we have a fair idea of what will happen. But we just wanted it to be transparently put out there for anyone to comment. So, if you have an issue, please tell us what the issue is. We have suggested that this is what we are going to do.

You had earlier mentioned that the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey will be done every three years. Has the year for the next round been decided?It will be done in 2027-28. It is going to be every three years.

The discussion papers that you will release for inflation will incorporate the changes to the CPI basket and the treatment of PDS items too?

Yes, it will have the final stance. We may not give the exact weights of each item in the paper, but we will say that this is the methodology, this is what is going to be done so that everyone understands what we are doing.

Indian coffee gaining popularity globally: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that more and more coffee varieties are gaining popularity globally and are also helping cultivators in several parts of the country — from Chikmagalur, Coorg and Hassan in Karnataka to the areas of Pulney, Shevaroy, Nilgiri and Annamalai in Tamil Nadu.“Indian coffee is becoming very popular all over the world. Be it Chikmagalur, Coorg and Hassan in Karnataka; the areas of Pulney, Shevaroy, Nilgiri and Annamalai in Tamil Nadu; the Biligiri region on the Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border; or the areas of Wayanad, Travancore and Malabar in Kerala — the diversity of Indian coffee is truly remarkable. I have been told that our North-East is also progressing in coffee cultivation,” Modi said in his ‘Mann Ki Baat’ address.“There are people in Koraput who are cultivating coffee through their sheer passion. They were doing handsome jobs in the corporate world... but they liked coffee so much that they entered this field and are now successfully working in it. There are also many women whose lives have been pleasantly transformed by coffee. They have gained both respect and prosperity through coffee,” Modi said. The Commerce and Industry Ministry said that Koraput coffee has helped restore degraded forest land,

In a data conference a few months ago, there was an entire session on scraping of websites for price data, especially e-commerce websites. Will data scraping be used in the new CPI series as part of the price collection process?

Whatever we do, we will do it legally. See, there is some amount of data scraping which can be done without keeping the owner of that website informed. But whatever we do, it will be done after informing that we are doing this because data scraping is very easy to block. If you do it once, they can just block it and that doesn't help us.

I don't want to comment on which data, but we are going to use e-commerce and online data. But which websites and methods — some people say that you scrape it from our website, we will allow you; some people say they prefer giving it to us rather than us scraping. Either way, we'll see what is to be done, but we will be keeping them in the loop. Whoever's website we use, we'll keep them in the loop that we are picking their data.In a column with the Chief Economic Advisor in September, you had mentioned that the revised GDP series might do away with single deflation for manufacturing. Is that happening?

The exact work is going on sector by sector where both on the input and the output side we have price availability and indices. So, it may not be 100 per cent, it may be 90 per cent or 95 percent. I don't want to commit on the exact percentage.The point I was trying to make was that when we say other countries are doing double deflation, we should understand how much double deflation they are doing. We have asked the IMF, we have asked the UN statistical system if they have any data, and none of them has been able to provide information. So it's not as if everyone is using the producer price index (PPI) completely or double deflation completely. What we are saying is that we will be at the same level as is being done internationally.In services, in any case, double deflation doesn't make sense. Agriculture, we anyway are doing it where we have input (prices). In industry, we will be completing more sectors and wherever required, as per the international practice.

Will there be use of the PPI then?

Let's see. That is another work in progress, whether the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade will be able to do it by December or they might be able to give us some tentative figures. We are hoping to be able to get something.The difference between the Wholesale Price Index and the PPI are the taxes and some amount of the logistics costs because PPI is at the factory gate and WPI is wholesale (prices). So what we were trying to say is that in many cases, the WPI may not be very different from the PPI, depending on the product, sector, type of industry, etc.

Do you see a resolution to the issues that have been pointed out, about real growth being higher than expected while nominal growth has been weaker than anticipated?

Economic forecasting is difficult, and it becomes even harder due to uncertainty prevailing in the international scenario. Our figures are based on the actual data. Also, methodology continues to remain the same in the current series of GDP. The assumption that people are making that we used only one figure to deflate nominal GDP is blatantly wrong. We look at sector-wise indices of CPI, WPI — in many cases we have the real prices. People saying that we use a 60:40 ratio of WPI and CPI to deflate nominal GDP to arrive at real GDP is wrong.

We've looked at it internationally also and they all follow a similar process. Somewhere they have slightly better data, somewhere they have less data. It's not that we do it blindly — what is the overall CPI and overall WPI — and then do it.

Has there been any assessment of whether the elimination of the third revised estimate of GDP data has been helpful?

There was no additional information being given by our indices. What data sources were there in the first or second (revised estimates of GDP), there was no additional value addition in the third. The differences will happen in case we have used some estimates for which the values were not available and then in the third estimate it comes. But we were anyway getting more than 99 per cent. In any case, things have changed now that the data collection methodologies have improved. The time gap between the end of the financial year and getting that has reduced. So, in any case, it required a change.

Will there be further streamlining?

The (advisory) group (on GDP) is working on seeing what additional changes (are possible). It might very well be that there is no scope for further reduction. But, I won't want to commit either way as of now.

Technology has been increasingly adopted in data collection. Are there any other significant changes in the pipeline with respect to technology given the ongoing expansion in the number of surveys?One is technology and the other are the questionnaires themselves — that we are giving a lot more focus because the questions impact the length of the survey and how much time is taken. So how to reduce the time taken to survey and how to ask questions so that we don't ask the same question twice because then you're wasting time. And also to look at what information or data is needed, so that that question is asked. This is not technology related, but it is perhaps equally important to look at.



reduced soil erosion, and provided tribal farmers with a steady cash income in place of subsistence farming.“Women play a central role in harvesting and processing, making the industry inclusive. With the Coffee Board's support and emerging market linkages, Koraput coffee is now being positioned as a specialty tribal coffee, comparable to Araku, with farmers reporting significant improvement in incomes and living standards.”

48-year-old CEO goes red, gets hot flashes at meeting: Three gynaecologists on why a breakthrough menopause pill in the US offers hope



A 48-year-old corporate CEO now dreads her presentations and meetings as she often gets a spontaneous bout of hot flashes — waves of intense heat and sweating that happen when a woman enters a menopausal stage and her hormone changes affect heat regulation of her body. “I get them eight to ten times a day, some days more, some days less and sometimes in gaps. The bouts are followed by rapid heartbeats and once they subside, I get the chills. My face looks flushed. But because these happen all of a sudden, it is embarrassing in social situations, disruptive and inconvenient. I wish I had a pill to ease me through,” she says, battling mood disorders, fatigue and sleeplessness alongside.When she saw Dr Preeti Rastogi, Director & HOD, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, at Medanta, Gurugram, the latter studied her hot flash patterns before prescribing her drugs.

What's a hot flash?

“The levels of the female hormone estrogen drop in the run-up to stoppage of periods or menopause. This directly impacts the body's thermostat located in the brain called hypothalamus. This misinterprets slight increases in body temperature as overheating and initiates a series of cooling mechanisms, including a hot flash, to lower the body's temperature,” she explains. Because a hot flash is an unusual response, it releases stress hormones like cortisol and elevates blood pressure too.“That's why my patient was complaining of heat around her neck and head. Since she was having hot flashes all too often, I gave her a blood pressure drug, called clonidine. This is prescribed for hot flashes, even in people who do not have high blood pressure, because it affects the brain's temperature-regulating centre. This helps to reduce the frequency and severity of hot flashes by 46 per cent,” says Dr Rastogi. But it would make the corporate woman dry-mouthed and drowsy, “Besides, she would need a sleep pill as she could hardly sleep beyond three hours and very mild antidepressants, the kind that lower the body's core body temperature by blocking certain receptors in the brain,” she says. Which is why a new oral, non-hormone pill, which takes care of all these symptoms rather than addressing them one by one, has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).“Although not available in India yet and having a price tag, the drug elinzanetant, which hits the US in November under the brand name of Lynkuet by Bayer, is a significant breakthrough. It is a once-a-day pill that works without hormones to treat moderate and severe hot flashes in menopausal women. A similar drug was greenlighted by the FDA in 2013 but this one reduces hot flashes by 73 per cent. The earlier oral drug is available in Japan and might be available in India soon,” says Dr Rastogi. However, gynaecologists like her are looking at the pill as enabling a clinical management of hot flashes and encouraging further research into a condition that 80 per cent of women suffer from.

How effective is the new menopause drug?

It works by blocking brain chemicals that get triggered by estrogen drops and lead to hot flashes and night sweats. According to a Phase 3 clinical trial of elinzanetant, which included 628 post-menopausal women, those taking the drug for 12 weeks reported more than a 77 per cent reduction in the frequency of hot flashes and sweating symptoms. Those taking a placebo reported a 47 per cent reduction. Researchers say the effects lasted for over a year.

Not just weight loss, semaglutide may be protecting your heart in other ways, says new study: Does it change the way it is prescribed?

The popular weight-loss medicine semaglutide might be protecting the heart in ways other than just weight loss, according to the results of a trial recently published in The Lancet. Last year, the medicine was approved for reducing the risk of cardiovascular deaths, heart attacks and brain strokes.With obesity being a major risk factor for heart diseases, the incredible weight-loss reported by obese individuals on the medicine was thought to be the reason behind fewer major adverse cardiovascular events seen in them. Yet, the new study shows that this protection for the heart was seen irrespective of a person's body weight at initiation and how much weight they lost with the medicine.

What did the study show?

The study is based on the data of over 17,600 patients with obesity, but without diabetes, from across 41 countries.First, the researchers observed a four per cent decline in the risk of heart disease for every 5 kg loss of weight or 5 cm smaller waist. This protection to the heart offered by semaglutide has already been established. What was interesting is that the researchers found that this risk reduction was not directly linked to the weight lost by the participants.This takes us to the second finding. The researchers found that this risk reduction for heart diseases was not linearly associated with the initial weight of the participants or with how much weight the participants lost.Third, the researchers noted that the reduction in waist circumference was somewhat linked to the protection offered by the drug. The changes in the waist circumference — considered to be an indicator of how much fat is stored in the organs — accounted for around 33 per cent of the reduction in cardiovascular events observed.

Why is this significant?

These findings are significant because it means that the protection to the heart offered by semaglutide is not just due to the dramatic weight loss experienced by those on the medicine. People on semaglutide can lose up to 15 per cent or 17 per cent of their body weight.Semaglutide, which mimics one sugar-regulating hormones, and other drugs such as tirzepatide, which mimics two such hormones, have either been approved or have been found to be effective for conditions other than diabetes or weight loss, such as heart diseases, obstructive sleep apnea, chronic kidney disease or fatty liver. But, most of the impact is thought to

They also slept better, thereby offering more benefits.Elinzanetant was preceded by the FDA nod to fezolinetant in 2023. But while the first suppresses two brain receptors that have an effect on body heat regulation, fezolinetant works on one. Both are, however, limited in cases of those suffering from liver ailments. Both can work in the run-up to and after menopause.“Usually in extreme cases, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is recommended but every woman does not qualify for it. HRT is safe only in a certain set of women. We do not recommend these to those with underlying health conditions or histories, including certain cancers, those with a history of or at risk of blood clotting, those with a history of stroke or heart attack, those who experience heavy bleeding and those over 60 or who are more than 10 years past their last menstrual period, as risks of cardiovascular issues and stroke may then outweigh the benefits. Avoid HRT if you have liver or gallbladder disease,” says Dr Rastogi.That's why a non-hormonal pill could work in most women, who currently have to individualise their treatment.The trouble with HRT

Dr Meenakshi Ahuja, senior director, obstetrics and gynaecology, Fortis La Femme, and president of the Delhi Menopausal Society, says HRT is safe when given in the proper context and among the right group of women. In fact, she believes, research in HRT should continue to see which women can benefit. “Early studies on HRT in 2000 were done on a group of women over 70, who had heart disease, obesity and co-morbidities. That group was not right for the test. Later analysis showed that starting HRT on women who are older or further from menopause increases cardiovascular risks because they are more likely to have underlying arterial disease. The lowest amount of HRT dose is safe, if it is judiciously used among women who do not have the risk of underlying conditions, heart disease or breast cancer history,” she says.Current medical consensus holds that the benefits of HRT typically outweigh the risks for healthy women (free of risk factors) under 60 experiencing wild menopausal symptoms. The fear and subsequent drop in HRT goes back to the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) studies, particularly the 2002 trial for combined estrogen and progestin therapy. Reportage focussed on relative risks rather than the small absolute risks. So a 29% relative risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) was misinterpreted as a 29% chance of developing the condition, when the actual increase was very small. The study used older, synthetic hormones that led to blood clots; the modern ones are more risk-proof.Dr Ahuja is particularly worried about women using unregulated herbal products in the non-hormone category. “Women use rhubarb root, ashwagandha or anything with phytoestrogens (plant-based compounds with estrogen-like properties). But as of now, there is no scientific evidence of their benefits or any attendant risks,” she says.In the absence of non-hormone pills, both Dr Rastogi and Dr Mannan Gupta, Chairman & HOD, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Elantiss Healthcare, Delhi, say at the moment there can only be symptomatic relief and customising medication on a case-specific basis. “While hot flashes are the most observed symptom, women also complain of short, patchy sleep, a dry and itchy vagina and weak bones. So we have to give sleep inducing drugs, mood relaxants, vitamin D and calcium supplements as well. Let me say that all these have to be backed up with changes in diet, lifestyle and exercise,” says Dr Gupta.

Dr Rastogi is happy that more women are at least approaching her in the peri-menopausal stage. Otherwise, women consulted a doctor only during heavy bleeding or vaginal dryness. “Considering that women may go through a good five to seven-year period of hormonal changes and resultant symptoms in the run-up to menopause, and then a couple of years after it, means that menopause research needs to give us a cost-effective pill to manage the condition,” she says.Worse are cases of surgical menopause, where ovaries are removed to treat or prevent ovarian cancer, severe endometriosis or recurrent cysts. “This leads to the worst hot flashes compared to natural menopause because the drop in estrogen is sudden and abrupt. A pill is effective here,” says Dr Rastogi.

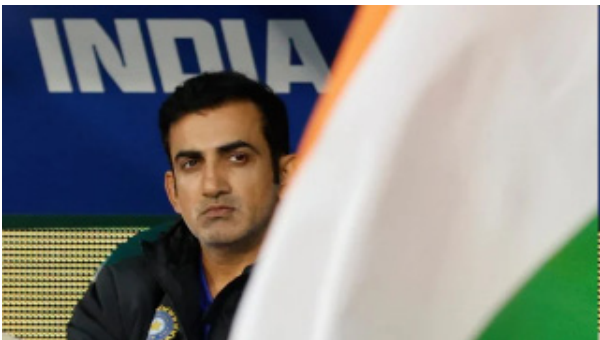


be because of underlying obesity, which is also one of the major risk factors for these conditions.The researchers say that the drug may be working by mechanism other than weight loss or control of blood glucose levels. So, they say that semaglutide and perhaps other GLP-1 medicines should be considered to be disease-modifying drugs — a therapy that changes the way a disease affects the body instead of just treating the symptoms.Dr Anoop Misra, chairman of Fortis C-Doc for Endocrinology, says, “It is important that this study suggests that semaglutide works through pathways other than weight loss — direct effects on blood vessels, inflammation reduction, blood pressure control and lipid improvements. If that is the case, prescribing restrictions based on BMI (body mass index) thresholds or weight-loss targets may not be appropriate.”

How will this change the prescription of the drug?

Dr Misra says that because the drug may protect the heart irrespective of the weight at which a person initiates treatment or how much weight loss they are experiencing, the drug may help even those with lower BMI. He adds, overweight or obese people might benefit regardless of whether they lose weight — some patients put on the medication do not end up losing weight.Dr Misra says, importantly, the researchers observed a 33 per cent benefit when it comes to reduction of adverse events of the heart when the waist circumference went down. “This may be beneficial for Indians where abdominal obesity (including fat under the skin, inside abdomen and in other areas) is widespread.” Indians are known to be at a higher risk of heart diseases because of fat accumulation in the abdomen.

‘Mentally one of the most insecure people’: Why Gautam Gambhir was among the ‘weakest’ cricketers for this World Cup-winning coach



Gautam Gambhir felt the heat after India's shambolic 0-2 surrender to South Africa during the Test series that ended on Wednesday. The two-time World Cup-winning batter was subject to jeers and boos from the Guwahati crowd during the post-match presentations. Despite the brickbats, Gambhir dodged several questions in the press conference with contradicting statements.

When asked how one quantifies accountability among the team members whom he did not want to single out, Gambhir said: "It comes from care. How much you care about the dressing room and the team? Accountability and the game situation can never be taught. You can talk about skills, you can work on skills, you can keep talking about the mental aspect of the game, but ultimately when you go in, if you keep putting the team ahead of your own self, not thinking, 'this is how I play, and this is how I will get the results, I don't have plan B,' so sometimes you will get these kind of collapses as well." While Gambhir can come across as a proud and patriotic man, it has occasionally hindered his progress during his playing days, at least. Or at least that is what former India mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton believed. It is unclear whether the same strand of striving for perfection continues to drive Gambhir, the coach. But Gambhir, the India opener, the hero of two World Cup finals, was certainly obsessed with his performances, even more so if they were great knocks. In his 2019 book, 'The Barefoot Coach', Upton discussed the myth of mental toughness of elite sportspersons and elaborated on why he found Gambhir among the weakest cricketers in the Indian set-up during his coaching tenure between 2008 and 2011, where India clinched the ICC Test mace and also clinched

the 2011 ODI World Cup. Even as Gambhir would have his best years in that period, even being crowned the ICC International Cricketer of the Year in 2009, Upton found the left-hander's processes to be somewhat muddled. "I did some of my best and least effective mental conditioning work with Gautam Gambhir, the International Test Cricketer of the Year in 2009. I worked with him up until that time but I had little to do with him being named world's best cricketer," Upton writes in his book. Upton would describe that he found Gambhir in "agony" after being unable to his 150s to double centuries. The South African would also rate Gambhir low on a 0-100 optimism spectrum. "Let's say his range was 20 to 40 with 30 being normal. When he scored 150, he would be disappointed not scoring 200." Using popular notion of mental toughness, he was one of the weakest and mentally the most insecure people I have worked with. "But at the same time, he was undoubtedly one of the best and most determined and successful Test batsmen in the world. Something he would prove yet again in 2011 World Cup final," Upton added.

How Gambhir responded to Upton's observations?

Responding to Upton's observations in his book, Gambhir said his insecurities were well documented and that he strived for the best for Indian cricket. "There is no sinful intention in Upton's views as he is a nice man, and in any case, my insecurities are well documented. I wanted myself and the Indian team to be the best in the world. That's why I was not satisfied even after scoring 100 as it has been mentioned in Paddy's book. I see nothing wrong there. As a driven individual, I have tried to raise the bar for myself all alone," Gambhir would say. South Africa legend AB de Villiers, who has shared the IPL dressing room with Gambhir, recently said an "emotional" individual like the former Delhi batter isn't an ideal choice for coaching international sides. "I don't know what GG is like when it comes to leadership. I've known him as an emotional player and if that is the case in the change room, generally an emotional coach is not a good thing to have. But it's not to say he's that kind of a coach and the kind of leader behind the scenes. There's no right and wrong. Some players will feel comfortable with a former player. Some players will be comfortable with a coach that's never played the game before but he's got a lot of years of experience of coaching the game," de Villiers said on R Ashwin's YouTube channel.

MI face RCB in season opener on January 9 – check full match fixture list, venues, time

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

WPL 2026 Schedule: Harmanpreet Kaur's Mumbai Indians will meet Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the season opener on January 9. (BCCI) WPL 2026 Schedule: Harmanpreet Kaur's Mumbai Indians will meet Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the season opener on January 9. (BCCI) Defending champions Mumbai Indians will take on Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026 opener in Navi Mumbai on January 9, with the final of the five-team tournament to be held at the Kotambi Stadium in Vadodara on February 5.

The 28-day tournament is split between two venues: Navi Mumbai and Vadodara. The DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai (site of India's ODI World Cup win over South Africa in early November) will host the first 11 matches, which include two double-headers. The remaining 11 matches, including the eliminator on February 3 and the final, will be played at Vadodara's Kotambi Stadium. This season marks two significant firsts for the WPL: it will feature a weekday final, and it will be played during the January-February window, unlike the previous three seasons, which took place



in February-March just before the IPL. Additionally, this schedule ensures the WPL avoids clashing with other major international fixtures for the first time. The defending WPL champions are the Mumbai Indians (MI), who have secured two titles in the three editions played so far. The only other team to win the title is Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). The Delhi Capitals (DC) hold the unique distinction of being runners-up in all three seasons, while the Gujarat Giants and UP Warriorz have yet to reach a final.

ner in this match. He would wake up daily at 4:15 am, catch the 5 am train from Virar, 46 kilometres from Mumbai downtown, to reach the famous Oval maidan for practice sessions. In January 2025, Mhatre broke the List A world record as the youngest-ever centurion in the format, aged 17 years and 168 days when he scored a whopping 181 against Nagaland. Mhatre will be leading India Under-19 at the ACC Men's Under-19 Asia Cup in Dubai from December 12. The BCCI announced a 15-member squad for the continental event, with the side also including aggressive opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi. Vihaan Malhotra will be Mhatre's deputy at the competition. India are in Group A with Pakistan and two qualifying teams while Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and another qualifier make Group B.

BCCI releases schedule for TATA WPL 2026; season to run from Jan 9 to Feb 5

Hyderabad: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the schedule for the TATA Women's Premier League 2026 to be held from January 9 to February 5 2026. The fourth edition of the tournament will be played across Navi Mumbai and Vadodara. The league will once again showcase the finest cricketers from India and around the world, continuing to reflect the growing depth and competitive strength of the women's game. The season begins with a blockbuster opener in Navi Mumbai, where defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) take on Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). The Navi Mumbai leg, running from 9 to 17 January, features 11 matches and will set the tone for a compelling edition. The league then moves to Vadodara, which will host the remaining 11 fixtures, including the Playoffs. The action resumes with Gujarat Giants (GG) facing RCB, followed by a rematch of the 2025 final-ists, Delhi Capitals (DC) against MI. League matches will continue until 1 February ahead of a scheduled break day. The Eliminator, featuring the teams placed second and third on the points table, will be held on Tuesday, 3 February. The winner will move one step closer to the title. The table topper will progress directly to the Final scheduled for Thursday, 5 February 2026, in Vadodara, a night that will culminate in the crowning of the next TATA WPL champion.

Rohit Sharma and his great childhood love – ODIs



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

The Indian one-day team's first full practice session started with the fielding coach rolling the ball to Rohit Sharma and the former captain hitting bulls' eye – the centre of the middle stump. Echoes of the cheers and claps from team-mates and coaches filled the air. Rohit – leaner, sharper and fitter – nodded his head and mockingly raised his hand. These days, Rohit – at 38 – has a frame that is a throw-back to the days when he hit the national headlines as a slender Borivali boy with incredible grace and perfect elbow position. This wasn't the case late last year, when he played his last Test during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The next 10 months would see a lifestyle change – all to keep playing his favourite format, the ODIs. Last month, before he was to return to Australia for the one-day series, Rohit got a call from a friend with plans to go out for a meal. He would turn down the invitation, saying he prefers to eat healthy home food. The friend thought it was a joke. It wasn't. Rohit has not been this serious ever. Those who had a face-to-face with him in Australia say he seemed to have lost 10 kg. At Ranchi, it seemed more. Such dramatic 'before and after' transformation hadn't taken place even when was the Test captain or during the phase when he became an IPL legend. It shows what ODIs mean to Rohit. That's the only format he plays for India now, and he isn't going to give up in a hurry. There have been speculations about his ODI future and bets were being placed on him lasting till the 2027 ODI World Cup. His 121 in the final game of the Australia series has changed the narrative and equations. Rohit seemed to have made peace with playing under a young captain, Shubman Gill. It was first seen in Australia and it was evident in Ranchi too. During the rain-delay in the Melbourne game, the cameras panned on Rohit having a hearty laugh with a giggling Gill next to him and even head coach Gautam Gambhir flashing a rare smile. From being the captain to his new status as the team's experienced elder, this was one transition he was dealing with effortlessly. On the field, he would mentor young bowlers with pacer Harshit Rana running to him after a dismissal to

acknowledge his vital wicket-taking input. At Ranchi, after his long batting stint, Rohit was seen having a long discussion with young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal. He was doing everything, his enthusiasm hadn't dimmed. Anything for his dear old pal – the ODIs. Rohit Sharma during India's first practice session in Ranchi ahead of the first South Africa ODI. Rohit Sharma during India's first practice session in Ranchi ahead of the first South Africa ODI. The retro show

Ask any kid from the 1980s or 90s, like Rohit, and they will tell you what the original white-ball format means to them. Those were the two decades when ODIs ruled. Those games would decide a nation's schedule and have a direct impact on the traffic on roads. A one-dayer was an all-day family affair. Cricket was on television when one returned from school, and there was no one to bother all afternoon and most of the evening since the entire household sat in a daze watching men in coloured clothing play under floodlights. The 1990s were easily the most forgettable decade for Indian cricket. From 1990 to 1999, India had a terrible Test record. Among the many former cricketers who moan about the fall of India's Test fortress at home were part of teams that won next to nothing away back then. It was the dreadful decade where India won just one Test abroad – that too in Sri Lanka. The ODIs were the elixir that kept cricket alive and kicking. India's record there wasn't too flattering either – the 1992 and 1996 World Cups were about Asia's domination but it was Pakistan and Sri Lanka who took home the Cup. But India had Sachin Tendulkar, who would play those magical white-ball innings that would have foreign commentators crying out loud – "Whattaplayer". The 90s was also the time Tendulkar was India's commissioned one-man army, the lone batting star whose dismissal would result in television sets being switched off around the country. While most of the population would get on with life after the heartbreak, there were a few kids who would get pensive and thoughtful. Virat Kohli has said how he would process an Indian defeat despite Tendulkar's efforts. He couldn't sleep, he would lay in bed dreaming how he would one day finish those tight India games. Before the 2023 ODI World Cup, Rohit had spoken to this newspaper about his initiation to cricket through ODIs. "I used to watch ODIs with my uncles and grandfather. Cricket was 24x7. ODIs was the main exciting thing then. I really loved it. They would discuss strategies and tactics, what worked, what didn't work, and I would absorb all that. As I grew up, I would also share my views. We used to watch only cricket. New match, old ones, highlights ... talk, discuss, watch, learn. Yehi chalta rehta tha," he would recall. It has been a while since those joint-family days in Borivali. Rohit is doing his best to not part ways with his first love. It's still "chalta rehta hai".

Syed Modi International: Tanvi Sharma continues top form, enters semis after defeating Lo Sin Yan Happy

GNS News Agency, Dec 7

Tanvi Sharma Tanvi Sharma continued her dream run by reaching the semi-finals of the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament. (BAI) India badminton player Tanvi Sharma continued her excellent form in the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament, following up from her upset win against Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in the earlier round, with a victory against Hong Kong's Lo Sin Yan Happy on Friday to enter the semifinals.

The 16-year-old packed her off in her opponent in straight games 21-13, 21-19 in 38 minutes to set up a last four clash against 5th seed Hina Akechi of Japan, who upset third seed Sung Shuo Yun 21-8, 21-15 in the other quarterfinal. On Thursday, Tanvi, who had reached the US Open Super 300 final earlier this year, fought back brilliantly to shock the second seed Okuhara 13-21 21-16 21-19 in a 59-minute thriller. "It has been a great year for me, World Juniors also I won silver. I was on a break due to an ankle injury. I never thought I will beat Okuhara, just wanted to give my best," Tanvi had told reporters. Meanwhile on Friday, Unnati Hooda was made to work hard by compatriot Rakshitree Sree Santosh R in the quarterfinal, before winning 21-15, 13-21, 21-16. Unnati will face off against fourth seed Neslihan Arin in the semifinals, after the Turkish player beat India's Isharani Baruah 21-19, 13-21, 21-15.

In the men's singles, Kidambi Srikanth made it to the



semis after his opponent Priyanshu Rajawat retired at the score of 21-14, 11-4. Srikanth will take on Mithun Manjunath, who defeated Manraj Singh 21-18, 21-13 in the last eight. Singapore's Jason Teh, the men's top seed, lost 19-21, 21-12, 20-22 in an hour and five minutes against Minoru Koga of Japan, who will take on Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan in the semifinals. In the women's doubles, top seeds Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly defeated fifth seeds Bengisu Erceetin and Nazlihan Inci 21-15, 21-16 to enter the semifinals. Treesa will also feature in the mixed doubles semifinal alongside Hariharan Amsakarunan after the pair defeated Australia's Andika Ramadiansyah and Nozomi Shimizu 21-18, 21-14 in the quarterfinals.

Arsenal have to make another statement against title rivals Chelsea, Mikel Arteta says



GNS News Agency, Dec 7

A six-point lead at the top of the Premier League table and a dominant midweek win over Bayern Munich are no cause for relief for Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta, who anticipates a big challenge when they visit second-placed Chelsea on Sunday. Chelsea are on a three-match winning streak and thrashed Barcelona 3-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday. But Arsenal, who beat local rivals Tottenham Hotspur last weekend, are determined to maintain their relentless pace as they chase their first Premier League title since 2004, Arteta told reporters on Friday. "After beating Spurs, we had to make a statement against Bayern Munich, we did that. Now we have to go to the next one," the manager said. "It's a big game, a big London derby. We're going to play a really good opponent, they are in really good form. We know the challenge and the opportunity we have. We are fully ready for it." Arteta said Chelsea, who have staged a strong comeback in the league after losses to Manchester United and Brighton & Hove Albion in September, deserve to be in the title race. "The squad they have assembled, the numbers they have, the amount of quality, the manager and the coaching staff they have, it makes sense what has happened which is very positive. They deserve to be there," the Spaniard added.

Arsenal, who had to settle for draws on their last two trips to Stamford Bridge, are hoping Leandro Trossard will

be fit for Sunday after the Belgian attacker picked up a knock against Bayern, Arteta said. "With Leo, there is another test today. We have to see how he is feeling. It doesn't look much. We still have a few hours and we have to wait and see. There is a potential chance," he added. Arteta stressed the need for his players, who are unbeaten in all competitions since August, to maintain their levels of consistency. "Not that they surprised me but you have to be able to perform in the manner they did individually throughout long periods of the game against our opponents. That's very difficult to do," he added.

Atiqa Mir records highest qualifying finish by a female racer in COTFA series

Al Ain (UAE): Indian racing sensation Atiqa Mir outpaced a battery of world-class male drivers to qualify fourth in the COTFA international karting series, the highest finish for a female in the championship's history. With the series supported by Formula 1 Academy, it was the perfect stage for Atiqa to showcase her rare talent. The 11-year-old did that with an unprecedented fourth place in qualifying of the mini category before finishing in the same position in the final on Day 1.

The Formula 1 Academy and Akcel GP-backed driver missed the podium spot by just 0.07 seconds, a testament to the highly competitive nature of the grid. In the final on Day 2, Atiqa came up with another impressive effort in qualifying, setting the fifth fastest time. She was in podium contention for the majority of the race. A daring overtake on the last lap put her in fourth place and with a podium at stake, Atiqa pushed herself to the limit, leading to a loss of three places. She still managed to finish a creditable seventh out of 28 drivers.

In Dhadak 2's opening, Shazia Iqbal rewrites the politics of love at first sight as she interrogates the mythology of Shah Rukh Khan



The notion of love at first sight, so often trivialized, finds its purest incarnation in a single glance, the way Shah Rukh Khan looks at his beloved. And never more arresting than in Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, where Karan Johar, maestro of excess and emotion, distills time into one charged moment. He does not ease into it. Instead, he strikes with his smash cuts. His camera knows no restraint. It circles the leads, capturing them from every impossible angle. An aerial hush, a creeping track-in, a mid-shot trembling at the edges, a close-up that forgets to breathe. Every composition is a scaffold, leading toward an apex of recognition. When comes the deceleration, the world holds its breath. Slow motion bleeds into the scene not as a gimmick, but as the only pace possible for a heart adjusting to the unbearable beauty of Kajol's presence. Khan sees her; he really sees her. His body, unbidden, begins to sway, a shoulder lifting as if the music has entered him before the soundtrack dares to. A smile surfaces. His eyes close at the end, in pure reverence.

I believed, for years, that nothing could match this, that no filmmaker would dare approach its myth. But then Shazia Iqbal, in her formidable debut Dhadak 2, does not attempt to replicate. Instead, she confronts, both by honouring the gaze and by seeking to reshape it. Perhaps that's why her frame is no longer about adoration from afar, but about encounter. Perhaps that's why, where Johar built fantasy, she forges truth, aiming to correct not just perspective, but also power. And perhaps that's why she does not outdo the magic but simply transcends its limitations. Dhadak 2 opens in a register uncannily familiar. A girl dances to drum beats. A boy watches, distant, transfixed. But there is a whole degree of subversion that takes place. Because this time, it is not his gaze that introduces her. It is hers that finds him. Vidhi (Tripti Dimri), an upper-caste girl, catches sight of Neelesh (Siddhant Chaturvedi), the Dalit boy in the back, steady hands on the drum, part of the Bhim Baja Dhol Boys. And when his eyes finally meet hers, she does not look away. This moment alters the entire grammar of the representation. It

tears through the tired fabric of mainstream Bollywood romance, where the gaze has always been a one-way current: the man looks, the woman glows. The man desires, the woman receives. The man moves, the woman is moved. Here, the politics shift completely. The gaze becomes dialogic. She sees him, and in doing so, permits him to be seen as a person. It is a small act, but radical in its implications, because in a mainstream cinematic tradition that always scrubs caste from love, Dhadak 2 insists on bringing it into frame. After all, in this version, Iqbal insists that love does not float above politics, it is shaped by it, bruised by it, and still insists on blooming. This, precisely this, is what Srishti Walia, a doctoral scholar of Cinema Studies at JNU, articulates with precision when she describes this very moment: "There is no singularity of gaze, it is non-linear, circular, moving between prospective lovers." What the opening of Dhadak 2 also accomplishes is a rewriting of the very politics of Pariyerum Perumal, the film it officially adapts. The original, though urgent and necessary, was shadowed by an evidently underwritten female protagonist, a figure too inert, too hollowed out, to hold narrative weight. Her silence, far from resonant, felt evacuated of agency. However, here, from its first beat, Iqbal hands Vidhi not just the right to look, but the audacity to choose where, and how, she will place that look. She is not a passive vessel moved by the tide of caste and love. She sees the structure and dares to gaze beyond it. Her vision becomes volition. Her desire, radical.

Shah Rukh Khan In Dhadak 2, Shazia Iqbal not only transcends the limitations of the source material but also disrupts mainstream cinema's tendency to depict love through a caste-blind lens.

And in that act, of seeing, of returning the gaze, of claiming visual authorship, she dismantles the hierarchy that has long shaped who gets to desire, and who merely gets desired. This is not just reimagining. It can very much be read as a reclamation. Another significant thing Shazia does with the opening is her decision to interrogate the myth of Khan; an imagery built by the likes of Johar and Aditya Chopra. So, when Neelesh appears, drum strapped to his body, you're immediately reminded of Raj Aryan from Mohabbatein. There too, the music was born out of rebellion, for the cause of love. Iqbal knows this mythology well, so perhaps that's why, we see a poster of Khan in Neelesh's cramped home, much later in the film. It's not just any poster, it's Yash Chopra's Veer Zaara, where Khan played another man who loved across boundaries drawn by nation, religion, and history. It opens up multiple readings: perhaps Neelesh, like many across the country, has grown up watching Khan and absorbed his promises. That love is enough, that sincerity dissolves barriers. Maybe he even believes that with the right amount of devotion, he too can escape the gravity of his identity. What he doesn't yet grasp is that in naya bharat, even Khan is endangered, for the name he carries.

Yuvraj Singh's dad Yograj Singh says his children don't talk to him, maintain distance: 'I have never missed them, but...'



Actor and former cricketer Yograj Singh, the father of Yuvraj Singh, spoke about his desire to see his entire family united. But, he said, it seems unlikely because members of his family don't seem to want to be around him. Yograj Singh is known for making incendiary statements in the press, and has slammed both Kapil Dev and MS Dhoni in the past. He doesn't restrict himself to views on cricket, and has also described SS Rajamouli's Baahubali films as 'bekaar'. But no interview with him is complete without a comment or two about Yuvraj, who is married to former actor Hazel Keech. In a new chat, on the Highbrow Studios YouTube channel, he said that he doesn't miss his children, who choose to maintain their distance with him.

He said, "It is a dream of mine to have my entire family together with me; two wives, all four children, my grandchildren... Driving around in 10 cars together..." Asked if he has ever expressed this desire to his family, he said, "I have, but they don't speak to me. They keep a distance from me." Addressing the interviewer, he said, "If I declare that you are my daughter, who can say otherwise?" Asked if he misses his children, as a father, Yograj said, "They know that their father is a decent person. But they also know that I like my own company. They know that I am closer to God than I am with them. They know that I have a separate family. They know this." When he was asked again if he misses them, he said, "I have never missed them, but I am grateful that I was able to give them a good upbringing." Yuvraj Singh lived with his mother after she separated from Yograj. He has spoken about the tough upbringing he had, and the distance this caused between him and his father. On Ranveer Allahbadia's podcast, Yuvraj was asked how his father felt after he won the World Cup for India. He said, "I think he was okay after 2011. He used to compare himself to Kapil Dev and say that, 'When Kapil had the 1983 trophy in his hand, I had you (Yuvraj) in my hand.' That almost felt like an insult. But I think he was okay once I had a World Cup of my own. I just hope that he doesn't get after Orion. He keeps saying that I should put him in cricket, but I tell him, 'Isko apni life jeene do (Let him live his life.)' It's because he was always a coach to me, and never a father. I don't want that to happen with my son, I want to be father to him." In a recent interview with Krishnank Atrey on his YouTube channel, Yograj said that he advised Yuvraj to 'change the breed' and marry an European woman. "People wanted me to marry Yuvraj off in his 20s. I said,

'Is he old already?' When he turned 38, I told him, 'Now you can think about it. I can't choose for you. It's your life, so find your partner.' But I did request him to change the breed. People hearing this might oppose it, but we wanted an Irish or English girl in the family. And then Hazel came into our lives. They have such beautiful kids, and they treat me like their friend. I don't call Hazel my daughter-in-law, she is my daughter," Yograj said. A former actor, Hazel and Yuvraj married in 2016; they have two children — son Orion and daughter Aura. Yograj Singh's filmography includes films of all languages. He has appeared in Sajjan Singh Rangroot, Singh is Bliing, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, and Indian 2.

Shreya Ghoshal and Vishal Dadlani pay tribute to late Zubeen Garg, call him 'Greatest of all time'



The auditions for Indian Idol 16 kicked off recently. And at the very beginning of this new season, the viewers will get to witness an emotional and iconic moment as judges Shreya Ghoshal and Vishal Dadlani pay a tribute to the late Zubeen Garg. One of the most influential musical artists from Assam, Zubeen died in a swimming-related accident in Singapore. During the auditions, when an Assam-based contestant came on stage, Vishal remembered Zubeen and said an artist like him can never be born in India again. In one of the recently released promos, Vishal said, "Assam is one of the most musical places... You come from the place where Zubeen Garg was born and brought up. He was one of the biggest stars born in India, as an Assamese, losing Zubeen is not a small thing. He was one of the greatest of all time." Later on, Shreya Ghoshal went on to sing an Assamese song as a tribute to Zubeen Garg. Vishal also sang 'Jaane kya chahe mann bawra', paying a tribute to the late Zubeen Garg. Zubeen Garg was considered one of the most influential musical artists from Assam. He even directed and acted in a few movies and music videos. On 19th September 2025, the singer was in Singapore on a yacht outing when he fell unconscious while swimming. Zubeen was declared dead when he was taken to the hospital.

Harsh Varrdhan Kapoor defends attending cousin Anshula Kapoor's engagement in track pants and t-shirt: 'Lost a lot of weight, formal Indian clothes didn't fit'



Harsh Varrdhan Kapoor doesn't really like to dress up, unlike his siblings Sonam Kapoor and Rhea Kapoor. While he has a style statement of his own, that's always been more casual than formal. However, when he showed up at his cousin Anshula Kapoor's engagement ceremony in a casual attire, the internet couldn't help but question his wardrobe choice. Harsh wore a white T-shirt, loose track pants, and a casual black jacket for the occasion. He also casually tied up his hair in a ponytail. "Yar shaumik yehi hain mai bol rahi hoon" (Guys, he's Shaumik, I'm telling you), commented a Reddit user, referring to the spoilt brat played by Divik Sharma in Aryan Khan's recent

directorial debut show The Ba***ds of Bollywood, streaming on Netflix India. "Why not actually ask one of your sister's stylists to find some clothes for your cousin's wedding? This man," wrote another user, referring to Sonam, who's renowned for her fashion prowess. Her personal stylist is their sister Rhea, who's also known for her sharp styling skills. She's styled not only Sonam, but also A-list actors like Alia Batt and Kareena Kapoor. Harsh responded to the criticism and clarified his stance in the comments. "Some formal attires were sent to me, but since I've lost a lot of weight for an upcoming art project, to be shot at the end of this year and the beginning of the next, the clothes didn't fit right. With very little time left for the function and not wanting to be late, I decided to grab something basic and comfortable," wrote Harsh. "He wanted attention, clearly he's got it now. It's that simple," said another user. "Does he not own a pair of basic pants and a button-down shirt, worst case? I can't believe traditional dress didn't fit so the ONLY option was this travesty," remarked a third one. "To ye kaun sa fit kapda hai bhai? Ye bhi to dheela dhaala hai. Dheeli shewaani hi pehen leta! (How is this of the right fit either? He'd have rather worn a loose sherwani!)," argued a user. Harsh, son of Anil Kapoor, was last seen alongside his father in Raj Singh Chaudhary's action thriller Thar, which dropped on Netflix India in 2022. He also served as the producer along with Anil. The details of the art project he'll star in next haven't been officially announced yet. Harsh's cousin Anshula and her fiancé Rohan Thakkar had their Gor Dhana ceremony on October 2 in the presence of close friends and family members. She's the daughter of Anil's elder brother and producer Boney Kapoor.

Supriya Pathak says stepson Shahid Kapoor's wife Mira Rajput 'brought family together', Pankaj Kapur shares rare details about their marriage



Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput are celebrating a decade of marriage this year. They tied the knot in 2015, and have since become parents to two children. Shahid is the third generation of his family to be a part of the Radha Soami religious order, based in Beas. In an interview, his father, Pankaj Kapur, shared rare details about the family's faith, and how Radha Soami arranged Shahid and Mira's marriage. The couple has a 14-year age-gap, which they have addressed in the past. In an interview with Punjab First Voice, Pankaj Kapur said that his father was the first one in the family to join the group, and that he was born into it. He said that he spends almost all his free time in Beas, and shared details about his son's marriage. Asked if Shahid also visits Beas with him, Pankaj said, "Yes, he's initiated too." Prodded further to reveal more about Shahid's marriage, and if it was suggested by Radha Soami's Guru, Pankaj said, "Yes, that's how it was

organised. I don't want to reveal too much about this topic... Yes, two families were introduced to each other, with the intention of getting Shahid and Mira to tie the knot."

Both Pankaj and his wife, Supriya Pathak, had nothing but glowing words to say about Mira. "She's a wonderful child; she is more like my daughter than a daughter-in-law," he said, and Supriya credited her for bringing the family together. "We are very blessed to have her; she's the one who brought the family together." Shahid is the son of Pankaj and his first wife, Neliima Azeem. He has two half-siblings through his father, and one through his mother. Actor Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput after their wedding ceremony in Gurgaon.. Express archive photo. 08.07.2015. Actor Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput after their wedding ceremony in Gurgaon.. Express archive photo. 08.07.2015. In an earlier interview with Quint Neon, Shahid spoke about finding direction via Radha Soami when he was at his lowest. "It is my spiritual path. I always had a spiritual leaning. I always was very curious about life, about the source of life, about why we are here, what's the point of it all, and I was very lost because I didn't have any answers so I couldn't make sense of anything," he said, adding, "I follow the Radha Soami path. I really connected with it, and I think that helped me set context to everything. I think that helped me understand things much better, understand myself better. And I think, amongst other things, like being an actor and being a parent, and being a child, I am actually on the quest of finding myself and my relationship with God." In another interview, with mid-day, Shahid spoke about meeting Mira through the religious group. "We do share a spiritual faith, but we met via family. We were aware of each other's spiritual faith," he said. Shahid and Mira are parents to two children, daughter Misha, and son Zain.

Irrfan Khan was 'not easy' to work with, didn't like to give many takes for fear of losing spontaneity, recalls Tanuja Chandra



Irrfan Khan, who passed away in 2020 after a long battle with cancer, was one of the most prolific actors that Indian cinema had ever seen. Irrfan had appeared in some of the most acclaimed films of the 21st century, but he also appeared in some of the most mainstream Hindi films and managed to bring both these worlds together. In a recent interview, Tanuja Chandra, who directed him in Qarib Qarib Single, recalled that he wasn't very easy to work with, but reminisced those days as a "beautiful" experience. The 2017 film also starred Parvathy. On The Pooja Bhatt Show, Tanuja recalled that Irrfan took one year to say yes to the film, after Tanuja approached him, and was in regular contact with his wife Sutapa Sikdar. In fact, when Tanuja actually said that perhaps they should collaborate on another project, and Sutapa suggested Farhan Akhtar's name for the film, Irrfan jumped in saying, "Farhan ke sath banaoge (You will make it with Farhan)?" Tanuja recalled. She shared that Sutapa would talk about Irrfan saying the dialogues out loud at 3 am while walking around his house when he was preparing for the film. Tanuja then spoke about working with Irrfan across multiple locations throughout the country and said, "Working with Irrfan was beautiful. Difficult, he was not easy. He didn't like to

do too many takes because he thought that the spontaneity would go away," she recalled. Tanuja also shared that her sound engineer would request Irrfan to speak loudly but Irrfan would just not oblige. "At the time of dubbing, I remember, my poor sound designer would say, 'Irrfan ji, thoda loud boliye na (please speak loudly)'. He would say, 'Kyu? Tumko sunayi nahi de raha kya? (Why? Can't you hear me?)'. "Tanuja shared that since a lot of Irrfan's dialogues were spoken under the breath, he could manage to change them at the time of dubbing. "The great thing was that because of his mumbling, he used to change the entire dialogue in dubbing and you couldn't make out the difference because his mouth is doing whatever it is doing, it's doing its own unique dance," she said, calling him a "great actor," who had an "inexplicable magic" in his performance.

Priyanka Chopra thanks Zakir Khan for 'kindness, humour and creativity'

Mumbai: Global head-turner Priyanka Chopra Jonas attended Zakir Khan's stand-up show in New York and thanked the star comedian for his "kindness, humour and creativity."

After attending Zakir's show, Priyanka shared a selfie and wrote: "Thank you for your kindness, humor and creativity. So happy to know you. @zakirkhan_208" Re-sharing the post, Zakir wrote: "You are grace in motion! Thank you for your kindness and for being such a guiding light – for me and for so many others. Much regards." The star stand-up comedian also shared a picture with Priyanka, where he mentioned the two met for lunch for his last show.