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'Kavach' anti-collision system deployed across 1,465 Route Kms in SCR

Hyderabad: 'Kavach', the indigenous anti-collision system developed by the Indian Railway, has been deployed on 1,465 Route Kms (Rkms) and 144 locomotives across the South Central Railway (SCR) zone. The Indian Railway has developed 'Kavach', to prevent accidents due to human error resulting in signal failure and over speeding, and recently approved the new version Kavach 4.0 incorporating lessons learned from the previous implementations.

SCR officials said 'Kavach' 4.0 is a major milestone in the history of railway; the upgraded version will further enhance safety of train operations across the railway network, a press release said.

Gold prices likely to further come down with no near-term positive triggers

Mumbai: Gold prices are likely to further come down in the near future as sellers remain dominant with no near-term positive triggers, trade experts said on Friday, adding that the next lower target zone is looking more likely before this correction in prices of the precious metal is over. While the US Federal Reserve has been continuing with rate cuts as inflation approached its 2 per cent target, the higher-than-expected consumer price index (CPI) reading (2.6 per cent compared to the expected 2.4 per cent) raises concerns that further cuts may be paused. "This development added pressure on gold prices, which reacted negatively to the stronger dollar and the potential shift in Fed policy," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

From appeasement to 'New India' pitch: Nadda credits PM Modi for changing style of politics



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Thane: BJP President and Union Minister JP Nadda on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi linked politics with development and changed its definition as once politics meant appeasement, divide and rule, misleading people, and corruption. During his interactive meeting with intellectuals, Nadda said, "Today Prime Minister Modi has changed the definition of Indian politics. At one point in time, politics was synonymous with appeasement, divide and rule, misleading the public, and corruption. However, Prime Minister Modi has redefined politics by linking it to development and advocating for the nation's progress."

"We all are fortunate that we are moving forward for the development of a new India under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi," Nadda added. "In Uttar Pradesh, after 50 years, a government has come back to power consecutively... we won Uttar Pradesh for the second time... we won Assam and Tripura consecutively. That means BJP-NDA governments are repeated now, this is the result of pro-incumbency. The same is going to be repeated in Maharashtra on November 23rd," said Nadda hinting that the MahaYuti alliance will come back to power in the state.

"This government is pro-poor, pro-women, pro-farmers and pro-youths. This government is accountable and responsive. This is a cultural and political shift," said Nadda. The BJP chief targeted the Congress party saying that it never gave importance to the manifesto. "They used to present their old manifesto in every election. However, you can see the politics of the report card. On every platform, Prime Minister Modi gives an account of the work done by his government," he said. Nadda accused the Congress of mocking the digitalisation of the country. "Optical fibre cable (OFC) of 6.83 lakh kms has been laid. More than 2 lakh gram panchayats have been connected with OFC and satellite. In Maharashtra, 8975 Panchayats are connected with OFC," he said. The BJP leader said that Rs 12 lakh crore has been spent on the country's infrastructure in the last 10 years, adding that the Prime Minister has decided on Speed, Scale & Skill.

Supreme Court seeks reasons for denying maternity leave to woman if adopted child aged above three-months

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

The Supreme Court of India has asked the Centre to explain the rationale behind a provision which entitles only those women, who adopt a child below the age of three months, to seek maternity leave benefits. The apex court was hearing a plea challenging the Constitutional validity of a provision of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 which entitles only those women who are adopting a child below the age of three months to seek benefits of maternity leave for a period of 12 weeks. A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Pankaj Mithal said the case put up by the petitioner in public interest prima facie was that the provision was a social welfare legislation and there was no reasonable classification when it restricted the age of infant up to three months. "In other words, if a woman adopts a child above the age of three months, she will not be entitled to any such maternity leave benefit as provided under the Amendment Act," the Bench noted in its November 12 order. It said the Centre has filed its reply justifying the prescription of the age of three months but during the course of hearing, many issues have cropped up which require consideration. "In such circumstances, we expect the Union of India to file a further reply on the issue discussed today, more particularly, as to what is the rationale in saying that it is only those woman who adopts a child below the age of three months would be entitled to seek maternity leave benefits otherwise not," the Bench said. It said the reply be filed within three weeks. The Bench said a copy of the reply to be filed be served to the counsel for the petitioner well in advance and rejoinder, if any, be filed within a week thereafter. It posted the matter for final disposal on December 17. In October 2021, the apex court had sought response from the Centre on the plea which claimed Section 5(4) of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 was discriminatory and arbitrary. "Section 5(4) apart from being discriminatory and arbitrary towards the adoptive mothers, also arbitrarily discriminates against orphaned, abandoned or surrendered children above the age of three months, which is completely incompatible to the object of the Maternity Benefit Act as well as the Juvenile Justice Act," the plea said. The petition stated the purported 12 weeks of maternity benefit to adoptive mothers was not only a "mere lip service but when juxtaposed with the maternity benefit of 26 weeks provided to biological mothers.

PM Modi's aircraft develops technical snag at Deoghar airport

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was stranded at the Deoghar airport in Jharkhand for over an hour on Friday (November 15, 2024) after his special aircraft developed a snag, officials said. Mr. Modi was supposed to fly back to New Delhi on the Indian Air Force plane after addressing a rally in Bihar's Jamui, which is around 80 km from Deoghar, they said. He was visiting Jamui to attend a function organised on the 150th birth anniversary of



Birsa Munda, which is celebrated as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas'.

"The PM has been at the Deoghar airport for more than an hour now. What

space, officials said. Leader of the opposition Rahul Gandhi was stuck in Godda, where he addressed an election rally, as his helicopter could not take off following this, they said. However, the Congress alleged that Gandhi was targeted unfairly by the administration. "Our leader Rahul Gandhi's helicopter was not allowed to take off for about two hours, posing a grave threat to his life. This was a security lapse at the behest of the Centre," state minister Deepika Pandey Singh alleged.

would be the alternative arrangement for his return to Delhi is being discussed," an official said. As a result of this, a 'no flying zone' was declared in the region's air

Sunita Williams Addresses Health Concerns and Body Changes During Her ISS Mission



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams is currently aboard the International Space Station (ISS). She recently addressed health concerns after spending months in space. In an interview, she shared an update on her physical condition. She also cleared up rumors about weight loss and changes to her body. Williams has been on the ISS since June. She spoke about her health during an in-flight interview with the New England Sports Network (NESN) on November 12. Her mission is part of NASA's Artemis program. The program is preparing humans for future missions to the Moon and Mars. Rumors about Williams' health started after photos made her look "gaunt," leading people to question if she had lost weight. Williams directly addressed these

concerns. She explained that, despite bodily changes in space, her weight has remained the same. "My body has changed a little bit, but I weigh the same," she said. "There are rumors that I am losing weight, but that's not true. I am at the same weight I was when I got here." Living in space has caused changes in Williams' body. One noticeable change is the redistribution of bodily fluids, which can make astronauts' heads look bigger. Williams said that she and her team work out regularly in space.

"We have a bike, treadmill, and weight-lifting equipment here," she explained. She added that weightlifting has made her body more toned. "My thighs are a little bigger, and my body is slightly bigger," she said. This is due to the exercise routine, which is important for maintaining bone density in space. Williams also discussed the bone health challenges astronauts face in space. Without gravity, astronauts experience a loss in bone density, especially in weight-bearing bones like the spine, hips, and legs. On Earth, gravity helps maintain bone strength, but in space, astronauts can lose 1-2% of bone mass every month. To fight this, astronauts perform daily resistance exercises, including squats, weightlifting, and treadmill workouts. However, despite these efforts, some bone loss still occurs, increasing the risk of fractures and conditions like osteoporosis. Williams' health update provides reassurance as she continues her mission. Her work aboard the ISS is helping scientists learn more about how space travel affects the human body. This knowledge is key for future long-term missions to the Moon and Mars.

K.T. Rama Rao calls on farmers arrested for attack on Vikarabad officials

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Hyderabad : Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President, K.T. Rama Rao and some other leaders on Friday called on farmers who are in jail for attacking Vikarabad District Collector and other officials. A delegation of BRS leaders led by Rama Rao met the arrested farmers in Sangareddy Jail and expressed their solidarity with them. The BRS leaders assured them that the BRS would stand by them in their fight against the government's plans to forcibly acquire lands for 'Pharma Village'.

Vikarabad District Collector Prateek Jain and other officials were attacked by a group of villagers in Lagacharla on November 11 during a public hearing on the proposed pharma cluster. The incident in Kodangal, the constituency of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, had created a sensation and triggered a war of words between the ruling Congress and Opposition BRS. The ruling party has alleged that BRS leaders were involved in the conspiracy behind the attack on officials. They also accused the Opposition party of trying to stall the development works of the government. The police have booked more than 30 people and have already arrested 20 of them. They also arrested BRS leader and former Kodangal MLA Patnam Narendar Reddy in the case on November 13. He has been remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. According to police, Patnam Narendar Reddy instigated some people to attack the officials. The BRS leader, however, has denied the allegation and has filed a quash petition in the Telangana High Court. As the police mentioned the name of K.T. Rama Rao



in the remand report of Patnam Narendar Reddy, speculation is rife that the BRS Working President may be arrested in the case.

K.T. Rama Rao has alleged that CM Revanth Reddy was trying to falsely implicate him in the case. Stating that he is not afraid of the 'conspiracies', the BRS leader dared the Chief Minister to arrest him. "Arrest me! I will walk into the prison with my head held high for standing by the farmers of Telangana," he posted on social media platform X. He earlier alleged that the Chief Minister was trying to snatch the lands of farmers for a pharma company owned by his son-in-law. Another BRS leader and former minister T. Harish Rao had on Thursday called on Patnam Narendar Reddy in Cherlapally Jail. He had said after the meeting that people's revolt has begun against the Congress government.

PM Modi's return to New Delhi delay: Aircraft develops technical snag at Deoghar airport

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was stranded in Jharkhand's Deoghar airport for nearly two hours on Friday after his special IAF aircraft developed a snag, flew back to Delhi in another plane, officials said. Mr. Modi was supposed to fly back to New Delhi on the Indian Air Force plane after addressing a rally in Bihar's Jamui, which is around 80 km from Deoghar, they said. The PM visited Jamui to attend a function marking the 150th birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda, celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas. "PM Modi left for Delhi from Deoghar in another special aircraft after his IAF plane developed a technical snag. The aircraft could not be rectified on time. PM had to wait for more than two hours," Deoghar Deputy Commissioner Vishal Sagar told. While Modi waited for the issue to be resolved, the region's airspace was declared a "no-flying zone". Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was also caught in a similar situation in Godda, Jharkhand. Mr. Gandhi's helicopter,

CM Revanth Reddy Pays Tribute to Guru Nanak on His Birth Anniversary



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Hyderabad: On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and a proponent of equality, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, along with his advisor V. Narendar Reddy, paid floral tributes to the revered Guru's portrait at his residence in Jubilee Hills. Guru Nanak, known for his message of 'Ek Onkar' (One God), emphasised the importance of equality, love, and service to humanity. His teachings have inspired millions around the world to live with compassion, justice, and unity, irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. The leaders offered prayers and paid respects to the Guru's enduring legacy, highlighting his contributions to the spiritual and social upliftment of mankind. This observance at the Chief Minister's residence reflects the continued reverence for Guru Nanak's principles in promoting a harmonious and inclusive society.

Govt. gives top priority for law and order: Minister Ponnam Prabhakar



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Rajanna-Sircilla: Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said that the state government was giving top priority to maintain law and order in the state and revolutionary decisions have been taken. The minister inaugurated 46 CCTV cameras set up in Sircilla and Vemulawada areas through virtual mode from Integrated District Offices Complex, Sircilla on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Prabhakar said that police were discharging their duties with an aim to give protection to the public. If law and order was under control, the state would get new investments thus the local youth would get employment. As a result, the state would develop in all fields. The CCTV cameras would play a vital role in law and order maintenance as well as prevention of crime. Stating that a camera was equal to 100 police personnel, the minister asked public representatives, business persons and public to come forward to establish cameras in their locality voluntarily. Cameras established in different places of the district have been interlinked to the command control center established in the district police office. If the crime took place anywhere in the district, it was possible to find it by sitting in the command control center. The Minister appreciated district police for maintaining law and order by perfectly implementing visible and village police officer systems.

Sexual harassment case against Brij Bhushan: Court to record wrestler's statement on November 26

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

A Delhi court will resume on November 26 recording statement of one of the six female wrestlers who have accused former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vaibhav Chaurasiya posted the matter for further proceedings after recording statement of one of the complainants in the case on November 14. The court had on May 21 framed charges of sexual harassment and using force to outrage women's modesty against Singh in the case. Singh had pleaded not guilty and claimed trial. The judge had also framed the charge of criminal intimidation against Singh.

The court further framed charge of criminal intimidation against co-accused and former WFI assistant secretary Vinod Tomar in the case.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Food inflation

INDIA's retail inflation hit a 14-month high in October at 6.21 per cent, propelled by soaring food prices. With the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) target tolerance breached, hopes for a rate cut this December are all but dashed. This inflation surge, led primarily by vegetable prices, reveals deeper structural challenges in India's food supply chain that demand immediate government intervention. October's food inflation rate of 10.87 per cent — the highest in over a year — is a striking indicator of how volatile food prices can disrupt broader economic stability. The spike, particularly in items like tomatoes and oils, is a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities caused by India's reliance on certain key commodities and imported goods. Unseasonal rains further aggravated the supply of vegetables, highlighting the impact of climate unpredictability on agricultural output. In response, more robust supply-side measures, including better storage facilities and a reined import strategy, are crucial to stabilising food inflation. Industrial output, though rebounding with a modest 3.1 per cent growth in September, falls short of what's needed to buffer the pressure caused by high inflation. A narrow rise in the Index of Industrial Production reveals a sluggish recovery that, without an easing of inflation, may struggle to sustain momentum. As a result, RBI rate cuts are not likely for another couple of months, dampening immediate consumer demand and impacting investment. The way forward requires not only addressing immediate inflationary pressures but also improving resilience in agricultural production and industrial performance. The government must enhance domestic production capabilities, optimise supply chains and ensure food security amid rising global uncertainties. Long-term stability demands that India prioritise its agricultural reforms to prevent frequent inflationary spikes, giving consumers, particularly lower-income households, relief from the relentless pressure of rising prices.

'No ad hoc committee formed to run WFI despite order': Bajrang Punia, wrestlers move Delhi High Court



The WFI had elected a new executive committee after the ouster of its former chief Brij Bhushan Singh following multiple sexual harassment allegations by wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat.

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

The plea comes after the Delhi High Court had in August directed the reconstitution of the ad hoc committee of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). The plea comes after the Delhi High Court had in August directed the reconstitution of the ad hoc committee of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice in a fresh application moved by wrestlers Bajrang Punia and others seeking the court's directions to appoint an independent administrator to run the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), including overseeing the selection trials. The plea comes after the Delhi High Court had in August directed the reconstitution of the ad hoc committee of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) that was tasked with overseeing and supervising the WFI's operations, including selections and trials, after the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) had suspended the wrestling body's newly elected executive committee in 2023. According to the wrestlers, the IOA has now submitted that it has decided "not to make any ad hoc committee". The WFI had elected a new executive committee after the ouster of its former chief Brij Bhushan Singh following multiple sexual harassment allegations by wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat. The wrestlers' fresh application has submitted that despite the "unambiguous directives" of the high court, the respondents "in flagrant disobedience, have failed to comply with the orders" and have not reinstated the ad hoc committee to govern WFI till date, "thereby thwarting the proper administration of justice...and causing grave prejudice to the sport of wrestling in general and Indian wrestlers in particular." The court of Justice Prateek Jalan issued notice on the application and sought a response from the respondents. Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, appearing for the wrestlers, submitted before the court, "The proxy president (of WFI is) violating norms...selection trials are happening at the cost of wrestlers... There is an IOA ad hoc committee in place which is refusing to take over." The court has now posted the matter for further consideration on December 12. Referring to an affidavit filed by the IOA on October 3, the wrestlers' fresh application highlighted that as per the IOA's submission, the "ad-hoc committee will not be set up". The national olympic association's affidavit had said that "IOA has decided not to make any ad hoc committee in WFI and not to interfere in the autonomy of the WFI."

Furthermore, it has been pointed out by the wrestlers that the WFI, "in contravention" of court orders, "conducted an illegally held talent search event where certain players emerged as winners" and the winners were selected to represent India in the U-23 World Championship held in Albania from October 21-27. It is the wrestlers' case that the court has "clearly ordered that all the selections to the international competitions should be undertaken by the ad hoc committee - WFI through IOA..." The wrestlers are also seeking that the WFI and its office bearers be directed to refrain from taking any steps towards holding selection trials.

In a first for public sector, surgeons trained at Delhi's MAMC and Lok Nayak Hospital to perform endoscopy



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Over 300 upper and lower gastrointestinal endoscopies were conducted at Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC) and Lok Nayak Hospital in the past year, as surgeons trained in a first-of-its-kind initiative performed the procedures typically carried out only by gastroenterologists. "This is the first time in India that surgeons have been trained to conduct endoscopy. MAMC and Lok Nayak Hospital have become the first government institutes to train surgeons for endoscopy," said Dr Pawanindra Lal, head of the department of surgery at MAMC. Explaining its importance, Dr Lal said all such problems first come to surgeons and that a lot of time is wasted when the endoscopy facility is not available.

"In India most of the medical colleges do not have

gastroenterology departments, which are normally the place where currently upper GI and lower GI endoscopy is done. This is why we decided that the establishment of an endoscopy facility under the departments of surgery would go a long way in getting the medical college set-ups and other surgical teams to detect surgical diseases much early and treat them because they are treated by surgeons themselves," he added.

"In the department of general surgery in about 700 medical colleges across the country, we have become the first medical college to provide endoscopy in surgery," he said. Dr Lal said there was a nationwide shortage of gastroenterologists, especially in New Delhi, where Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, University College of Medical Sciences, Lady Hardinge Medical College and Vardhman Mahavir Medical College do not have endoscopy facilities. Dr Lal said that training surgeons in endoscopy would also help cut waiting lists and reduce the load on gastroenterologists. "For example if a doctor has to do bariatric surgery, he has to see the stomach from inside and see before cutting the stomach to perform the surgery. If a doctor does an oesophageal reflux disease, the doctor has to see what the oesophagus looks like before he lands up doing his hiatus hernia surgery," he said. So far, over 300 patients have benefited from the facility, which provides various endoscopic procedures, including upper endoscopy for GERD, peptic ulcer, anaemia, cancers and gastritis, as well as diagnostic lower GI endoscopy for cancer, ulcerative colitis, inflammatory bowel disease and amoebiasis.

Elder son and relative arrested for woman's murder in Bengaluru

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

The arrested accused have been identified as Umesh, 33, son of Jayamma, and her relative Suresh, 43. The arrested accused have been identified as Jayamma's relative Suresh, 43 and Umesh, 33, her son. Police investigating the murder of a 49-year-old woman in Bengaluru arrested her elder son and a relative on Tuesday. The woman was found dead when a friend of her younger son visited her to give her some groceries.

The arrested accused have been identified as Umesh, 33, son of Jayamma, and her relative Suresh, 43. On November 8, Umesh allegedly killed his mother over a financial dispute. Jayamma's head was smashed on a wall and she was smothered and strangled, according to the police. A police officer said Jayamma, a homemaker, had recently rented a house at Hongasandra near Bommanahalli. When the friend of her younger son visited Jayamma on November 9, no one answered the door despite him knocking on it for a long time. After he informed the landlord and the door was opened with a spare key, Jayamma was found lying in a pool of blood, said the police. Initially, the police interrogated her younger son, who is a driver with the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, but ruled out his involvement as he was at work when the crime took place. He is the complainant in the case.

"Our probe revealed that Jayamma had been stay-



ing away from Umesh, her elder son, as they had a financial tiff between them. We picked up Umesh from KR Market for questioning and found that he was the one behind the murder," said a police officer. According to the officer, Jayamma had recently sold her husband's property and lent the money to a few people. However, Umesh kept asking her for the money to buy a passenger vehicle. She was not keen on giving him the money because of his history of heavy spending on alcohol. "When Umesh didn't stop troubling her, Jayamma moved out of the house and found a place in Hongasandra. With the help of Suresh, Umesh traced her and picked up a fight, which resulted in Jayamma's murder. Suresh assisted him in the murder," said the officer.

'I'm from forest background but I have a long administrative experience', says new HPRCA chairman



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer Rajiv Kumar, a 1988-batch officer, took the oath as Chairman of the Himachal Pradesh Rajya Chayan Aayog (HPRCA) at the State Secretariat in Shimla on Tuesday. Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena administered the oath to the new chairman. After the ceremony, Kumar pledged to bring transparency through digitalisation and technology and to ensure a corruption-free recruitment process in the state.

Asked about his background in the forest department and the typical dominance of former IAS officers for the board's chair positions, Rajiv Kumar told The Indian Express, "I have the forest department background, but I have extensive administrative experience, too. I have served at the level of Joint Secretary with the central government during a six-year deputation with the Electronics and Information Technology (EIT) wing. I also played a role in forming the G20 digital economic forum platform. Why was I selected for this position only the government can answer this question." Kumar said, "My priority will be to incorporate technology in the recruitment process to minimise human interference. The concept of interviews has already been removed at certain recruitment levels in the state. The HPRCA will have two more members, who have been selected."

Replying to a question about the disbanded HPSSC and the recruitments it conducted, Kumar said, "There are at least six cases related to recruitments carried out by the previous HPSSC. These recruitments are under review, and all decisions will be made according to the established norms and rules." Kumar also said although his appointment was notified in September, health issues delayed his oath-taking by about two months. Formed in 1998, Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu-led government disbanded the HPSSC in January 2023 following allegations of corruption and malpractices. The State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau have registered several FIRs against HPSSC officials and seized "leaked exam papers". On September 30, 2023, the HPRCA was established to replace the HPSSC. The HPSSC was initially created to oversee Class III service recruitment for various government posts in Himachal Pradesh, except

those outside its jurisdiction. Rajiv Kumar, considered close to CM Sukhu, is also recognised for his role in the upcoming World-Class Zoological Park, Durgesh Aranya, at Bankhandi near Dehra in Kangra district. Notably, senior IFS officer of the Haryana cadre Alok Verma was appointed as the chairman of the Haryana Public Service Commission (HPSC) by former Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar in October 2020, triggering resentment among the Haryana Cadre IAS officers both serving and retired.

Elder son and relative arrested for woman's murder in Bengaluru

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The arrested accused have been identified as Umesh, 33, son of Jayamma, and her relative Suresh, 43. The arrested accused have been identified as Jayamma's relative Suresh, 43 and Umesh, 33, her son

Police investigating the murder of a 49-year-old woman in Bengaluru arrested her elder son and a relative on Tuesday. The woman was found dead when a friend of her younger son visited her to give her some groceries. The arrested accused have been identified as Umesh, 33, son of Jayamma, and her relative Suresh, 43. On November 8, Umesh allegedly killed his mother over a financial dispute. Jayamma's head was smashed on a wall and she was smothered and strangled, according to the police. A police officer said Jayamma, a homemaker, had recently rented a house at Hongasandra near Bommanahalli. When the friend of her younger son visited Jayamma on November 9, no one answered the door despite him knocking on it for a long time. After he informed the landlord and the door was opened with a spare key, Jayamma was found lying in a pool of blood, said the police. Initially, the police interrogated her younger son, who is a driver with the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation, but ruled out his involvement as he was at work when the crime took place. He is the complainant in the case. "Our probe revealed that Jayamma had been staying away from Umesh, her elder son, as they had a financial tiff between them. We picked up Umesh from KR Market for questioning and found that he was the one behind the murder," said a police officer. According to the officer, Jayamma had recently sold her husband's property and lent the money to a few people. However, Umesh kept asking her for the money to buy a passenger vehicle. She was not keen on giving him the money because of his history of heavy spending on alcohol. "When Umesh didn't stop troubling her, Jayamma moved out of the house and found a place in Hongasandra. With the help of Suresh, Umesh traced her and picked up a fight, which resulted in Jayamma's murder. Suresh assisted him in the murder," said the officer.

Mumbai feels a nip in the air as minimum temperature dips to 20 degree Celsius

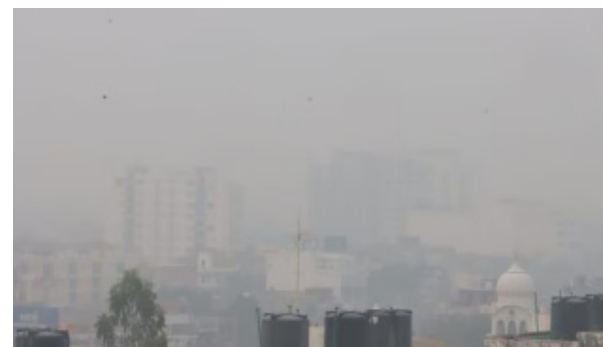


GNS News Agency, Nov 15

IMD Mumbai said the drop in minimum temperatures is a result of the influx of easterlies, which is associated with winter months. (Express file photo) IMD Mumbai said the drop in minimum temperatures is a result of the influx of easterlies, which is associated with winter months. Residents woke up to a chill in the air as the minimum temperature in the suburbs of Mumbai dipped to 20 degree Celsius Wednesday morning with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting cooler nights in the city in the coming days, with the minimum temperature in the range of 21 to 22 degree.

According to IMD data, while its Santacruz station registered 20.4 degree Celsius, marking a departure of 1.2 degrees below normal, the Colaba coastal observatory recorded 23.5 degree in the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. Meanwhile, the maximum temperature hovered between 33 to 35 degrees in the island city and its suburbs Tuesday morning. The weather bureau said the drop in minimum temperatures is a result of the influx of easterlies, which is associated with winter months. "With this being a winter month, the temperatures have started dipping during the night time as we are getting easterly winds throughout the night. However, the day temperatures have remained higher owing to the wind pattern," Sunil Kamble, Director, IMD Mumbai, "Currently, we are receiving the westerlies very late, after 1 pm, which spikes the maximum temperatures. But, we get the easterlies in the night, which has brought down the minimum temperatures," said Kamble. "While there may not be any further noticeable change now, the temperatures will dip further up to 19 degrees by the end of this month," he added. Weather experts have also indicated that daytime temperatures are slated to dip in the next 4 to 5 days owing to the change in wind directions.

Dense fog in isolated areas of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh; yellow alert issued



Dense to very dense fog was observed in isolated areas of Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh According to the weather forecast from the Department of Agricultural

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Isolated areas are expected to experience dense fog on both Wednesday and Thursday. (Express Photo by Jasbir Malhi) Isolated areas are expected to experience dense fog. Dense to very dense fog was observed in isolated areas of Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh on Tuesday. According to the weather forecast from the Department of Agricultural Meteorology, dense fog is expected to persist in isolated spots in Punjab on Wednesday, Thursday, and even Friday. The department has issued a yellow alert for dense fog which will be in effect until Friday for Punjab and until Thursday for Haryana and Chandigarh. The forecast indicates that the weather will likely remain dry in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh until November 18. Dense fog caused difficulties for vehicular traffic on highways Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

While the weather department has noted it as fog, doctors indicated that it is actually smoke combined with fog, resulting in smog in the region. Dr Divyanshu Gupta, honorary general secretary of the Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association (PHANA), said, "I am observing very poor visibility outside. It was hard to drive on the highway on Tuesday night. It is definitely smog and not fog alone, as poor air quality indicates the same. Farmers burn the fields in the evening, causing smog. Hence, I advise people to wear masks before moving out and take steam before bed. Use of air purifiers is also suggested." Temperatures are dropping in the region. On Wednesday morning, the lowest minimum temperature recorded in Punjab was 13.4 degrees Celsius in Hoshiarpur, while the highest minimum temperature reached 19.1 degrees Celsius in Fatehgarh Sahib. In Haryana, the lowest minimum temperature was 13.3 degrees Celsius in Mahendragarh, and the highest minimum temperatures were 19.1 degrees Celsius in both Ambala and Kurukshetra. In Punjab, the average minimum temperature fell by 0.9 degrees Celsius compared to Tuesday. However, according to the weather department, this temperature was still significantly above normal by 6.7 degrees Celsius. Similarly, in Haryana, the minimum temperature decreased by 0.2 degrees Celsius on Wednesday morning compared to Tuesday, but it remained above normal by 3.5 degrees Celsius. On Tuesday, the maximum temperature recorded in Punjab was 30.4 degrees Celsius in Bathinda, while the minimum temperature was 15.3 degrees Celsius at Thein Dam, located in Pathankot. In Haryana, the highest temperature reached 33.6 degrees Celsius in Mahendragarh, while the lowest was 13.6 degrees Celsius in Hisar. Dr Gupta said, "As it is not raining right now, we expect patients with dry cough and chest congestion in the coming days. Rain could bring some relief, however."

Haryana Bill providing job security to over 1 lakh contractual employees to be tabled today: Who will be eligible, how much will they get



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

The Haryana government is all set to introduce a Bill – The Haryana Contractual Employees (Security of Service) Bill, 2024 – which upon enactment will provide job security to over 1.2 lakh contractual employees engaged in various government departments. The Bill is likely to be tabled in the Haryana Assembly's winter session that commences on November 13. Upon enactment, the Haryana Contractual Employees (Security) Act, 2024, will be "deemed to have come into force with effect from August 14, 2024".

Who all will be eligible?

The eligible contractual staff will be an employee who — (i) (a) has been engaged on contract by the government organisation and is in the service of such government organization on the appointed date and receive remuneration up to Rs 50,000 per month; or (b) is deployed by the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam under the Deployment of Contractual Persons Policy, 2022, and is in the service of a government organisation on the appointed date; (ii) has completed at least five years service in the government organisation on full-time basis as on the appointed date". The draft explains that the period of service will be considered as the period for which remuneration was made, directly or indirectly, by the government organisation to the eligible contractual employee and will include the period of any leave approved by the competent authority. For the purposes of calculation of the number of years of engagement, a contractual employee who has received remuneration for at least 240 days in a calendar year will be deemed to have worked for the entire year, but will not include an employee who — (i) has been engaged under Centrally Sponsored Schemes paid in part or full by the central government; or (ii) has been engaged on honorarium basis; or (iii) has been paid remuneration for service rendered on a part time basis by the government organisation; or (iv) has attained the age of fifty-eight years on the appointed date; or (v) has been terminated or removed by the appropriate authority on or before the date of commencement of this Act. The eligible contractual employee shall continue to work in the government organisation till he attains the age of superannuation.

Which organisations are covered?

"Government organisation" means a department, board, corporation or authority under which the eligible contractual employee was working on the date of the commencement of this Act.

What will be the remuneration?

The eligible contractual employee shall receive a consolidated monthly remuneration "equal to the entry pay in the pay level of the corresponding post along with additional remuneration as specified in the First Schedule based on the year of service rendered in the government organisation. The consolidated monthly remuneration including the additional remuneration specified in the First Schedule shall not be less than the remuneration drawn by the eligible contractual employee on the appointed date. The consolidated monthly remuneration shall be increased with effect from the first day of January and the first day of July every year corresponding to the increase in DA. The government may notify an increment on the consolidated monthly remuneration on the completion of the first year from the date of commencement of this Act and every year thereafter.

What will be the government's powers to implement this Act?

The Bill's draft reads – "If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the government may, by an order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to it to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of removing the difficulty. However, no order shall be made under this Section after expiry of two years from the date of commencement of this Act. Every order made under this section shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before the State Legislature. No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Government or any officer or employee of the Government or any other person or authority authorized by the Government for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act or of any rules or orders made thereunder".

What will be the additional remuneration and how will it be calculated?

The additional remuneration given to these employees shall be calculated on the number of years for which they had been working with the state government. According to the Bill's draft – for over 10 years of service – 15 per cent of entry pay in the pay level shall be considered as additional remuneration. For 8-10 years, it shall be 10 per cent of entry pay; for 5-8 years, it shall be five per cent of the entry pay. The employees shall also receive healthcare benefits as notified under Pradhan Mantri-Jan Aarogya Yojna (PM-JAY) CHIRAYU Extension Scheme or as revised by the Government. They will also receive death-cum-retirement gratuity, maternity benefits and benefit of ex-gratia compassionate financial assistance or compassionate appointment in Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam in accordance with such policy as may be notified by the government.

3rd Gogi gang member arrested in Delhi over Nangloi, Alipur shootings

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

delhi news, indian expressThe accused, Ram Nivas aka Mogli, 30, received bullet injuries on his left leg as he allegedly opened fire at the team of Special Cell (Northern Range) who were waiting to nab him near Shahbad Dairy. The Delhi Police on Wednesday arrested the third Gogi gang member in connection with the November 4 shootings outside two shops at Nangloi and Alipur area of the capital after a brief exchange of fire, officials said.

The accused, Ram Nivas aka Mogli, 30, received bullet injuries on his left leg as he allegedly opened fire at the team of Special Cell (Northern Range) who were waiting to nab him near Shahbad Dairy. On November 4, three bike-borne men opened fire outside the shops of two property dealers at Nangloi and Alipur, allegedly under the instructions of gangsters Deepak Boxer, Yogesh Tunda and Ankesh Lakra who currently run the Gogi gang.

"Two pistols and a stolen bike have been recovered from Mogli. Further investigation is underway," said Amit Kaushik, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Cell (NR/TYR). "Personnel were deployed late last night waiting for Mogli. Around 7 am, a bike was spotted on the Sadab Dairy Road and was asked to stop. However, Mogli was not to surrender and instead opened fire at the personnel," the police official said. Mogli, a native of Khera Khurd village in Narela, has been associated with the



Jitender Mann Gogi gang for the past eight years and has 10 cases registered against him pertaining to robbery, attempt to murder and Arms Act, an officer said.

Earlier, the Crime Branch had arrested a sharpshooter and apprehended a minor who was his accomplice – both members of the infamous Gogi gang – in connection with the incident. A police officer said that they had recovered a note mentioning the name of the Jitender Gogi gang and its deceased member Kuldeep Fajja from outside the Nangloi shop. The other two accused – Akash Rathore, 18 and his accomplice, a 17-year-old, – were nabbed a day after the shooting incidents. Investigators said that Rathore revealed that they were acting on the orders of Tunda and his aide Monty Maan.

Store & decompose: How some farmers are ending stubble woes with traditional wisdom

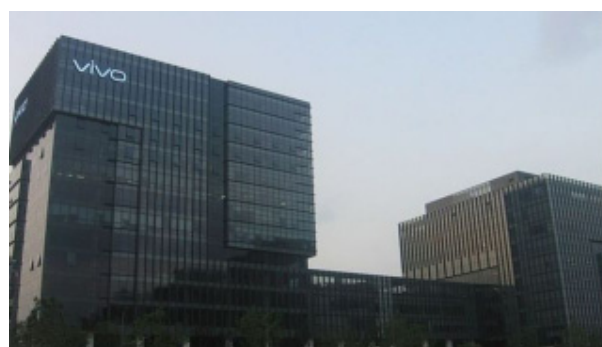
GNS News Agency, Nov 15

With mounting cost of paddy stubble management and concerns around environmental impacts, few farmers in Punjab have developed a low-cost, sustainable method to convert paddy stubble into organic manure. By collecting and composting stubble on their fields, these farmers have found a way to improve soil health while avoiding the air pollution caused by stubble burning. The farmers first use farm equipment to cut stubble into small pieces. With the help of a machine mounted on the tractor, they then move the stubble to one side of the farm. "It only takes up a small portion of the field to dump around 26-27 quintals of stubble per acre, and remains there for 6-7 months, gradually breaking down," farmer Mukesh Chander Sharma from Ranibhati village in Bhojpur block of Jalandhar said, adding that as winter arrives, the cold weather naturally aids the decomposition process due to heavy mist or smog.

To further speed up the process, farmers sometimes sprinkle a small amount of urea on the pile. "Adding urea helps in decomposing the stubble faster. It breaks down into a fine, powdery texture by the time we are ready to plant the next crop," Mukesh said, adding that after six months, they are left with a nutrient-rich organic material in small quantity (around 10 bags) that they can easily spread across the field. The benefits of this approach extend beyond cost. Farmers said that this method costs them less than Rs 1,000 per acre, compared to the sig-

nificantly higher expenses involved in using machinery for in-situ stubble incorporation. "Earlier, we had to spend a lot on machines to manage the stubble directly in the field, but now, we're able to avoid those costs almost completely," said Gurmukh Singh from Gurdaspur's Rangeelpur village, who is practising it on four acres. "Not only is this method affordable, but it also has an immediate positive impact on the field's fertility. I saw that once decomposed, the stubble becomes a natural fertilizer, adding nutrients back into the soil, which reduces the need for additional chemical fertilizers to a large extent. The soil quality improves after spreading this composted stubble. It's a win-win — it makes the field healthier and prepares the field for the next crop and we also save on fertilizer costs," Gurmukh said. Interestingly, Mukesh said that the method was discovered by accident. "A few years ago, due to heavy rains, our paddy harvest was delayed, and the stubble was left on the field wet. We piled it up on one side, and by the time we checked it a few months later, it had decomposed and we left it like that which finally turned into a powdery heap. It was a natural solution right there," he said, adding that from then on, some farmers in the area started doing it. The farmers realised they could repeat this process every season and save on stubble management costs. "This low-cost, eco-friendly method presents a promising solution for Punjab's ongoing stubble-burning problem, which contributes significantly to air pollution in the region."

Chinese national granted bail in Vivo China money laundering case; trial court's duty to protect fundamental rights, says judge



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Vivo ChinaAs per the central probe agency, Vivo China – which allegedly controlled Vivo India – siphoned off Rs 70,000 crore from India under the "garb of imports". Granting bail to a Chinese national allegedly involved in a Rs 20,000 crore money laundering case linked to Vivo China, a Delhi court on Monday held that it is the duty of trial courts to protect the fundamental rights of an individual. Guangwen Kuang, the Chinese national who had been in jail for 13 months, argued that no purpose would be served by keeping him in custody as he had joined the investigation as and when required by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which is investigating the case.

This was his second bail application which cited a change in circumstances, including delay in starting the trial. "The Trial Courts are the first interface / point of contact / line of defence with the litigant. Hence, it is the bounden duty of the Trial courts / Special Courts to protect the fundamental rights of an individual," said Additional Sessions Judge Kiran Gupta of Patiala House Court in her order on Monday. "Criminal law is best administered when the inconvenience it leaves on the personal life of an accused, even due to delay in trial is least, lest the faith on the Constitutional Principles emanating from the judicial interpretation of Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) will be rendered farcical," the judge added.

As per the central probe agency, Vivo China – which

allegedly controlled Vivo India – siphoned off Rs 70,000 crore from India under the "garb of imports". "Vivo China controlled and monopolised all the operations of Vivo Mobiles in India through Vivo India and its 23 SDCs (state distributor companies)," alleged the supplementary chargesheet filed by the agency. The ED alleged that the proceeds of crime in this case involved Rs 20,241 crore. Kuang argued that he did not hold a key managerial person and was not a beneficial owner or shareholder of any of the companies allegedly involved in the ED's investigation. He also cited Manish Sisodia versus Directorate of Enforcement, wherein Delhi's former deputy chief minister was granted bail in the Delhi Excise Policy case on August 9. Stating that Sisodia had spent roughly 17 months in jail without trial, the apex court held that he was deprived of the right to speedy trial under Article 21 of the Constitution of India (Right to protection of life and personal liberty). It further added that the rigorous bail conditions under Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, can be "relaxed" if the accused has undergone a long period of incarceration.

"...the decisions post Manish Sisodia have reiterated the reading of Principles of Liberty under Article 21 into Section 439 CrPC and Section 45 PMLA..." noted Judge Gupta. She added that the prosecution complaint was running into more than 1,000 pages and documents. "...the pace of proceedings, thus far reasonably indicate that the accused is likely to remain incarcerated for the immediate future and the trial is not likely to be concluded leave aside being commenced in the following months," the judge added. While granting him bail, the judge imposed certain conditions on Kuang such as surrendering his passport and not leaving the country without the permission of the court. The ED, on the other hand, argued that there were sufficient reasonable grounds to believe that the accused was guilty of money laundering. The agency further submitted that Kuang played a pivotal role in the incorporation of the "entire setup of the VIVO Group of Companies in India, willfully concealing the fact that these entities are beneficially owned by VIVO China." It was also the agency's case that there was no material change in circumstances since the dismissal of his first bail application.

Students protest registration number blocking by Pune's SPPU, varsity cites UGC's term limit rule

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Students protesting at SPPU in PuneThe students protesting at SPPU. A 2015 notification by the UGC laid out a maximum term validity of N+2+1 years for students to complete a degree in exceptional cases, where N stands for the minimum duration prescribed for the programme. Students whose permanent registration numbers (PRNs) were blocked by Savitribai Phule Pune University due to the University Grants Commission (UGC) term limit rule held a sit-in protest against the decision at the university campus on Monday. A group of six to eight students protested near the main building, holding a poster that read, "PRNs for final year students should be unblocked immediately." A 2015 notification by the UGC laid out a maximum term validity of N+2+1 years for students to complete a degree in exceptional cases, where N stands for the minimum duration prescribed for the programme. This means that students who began their four-year courses in 2017-2018 would have to complete the degree by 2024.

Rushikesh Badgujar, an engineering student at Pune Vidhyarthi Griha's College of Engineering and Technology, said, "I joined the course in 2017 and completed my first two years. Then I had to take a drop for a few years due to financial constraints. I joined back in 2023 to complete my last two years but we were never told that we would be ineligible in 2024. If we had been informed earlier we would not have joined and wasted a year here. We are a group of 25 students. A few of us protested for 12 hours and then our protest was stopped by the



police." Similarly, an engineering student at Navsahyadri Group Of Institute, Harshada Shelar, said, "I took admission in 2017. We have not received any information, and the college did not provide us with any documents about the term validity. Due to personal issues at home I had to take a few drop years and now I am disqualified." Mahesh Kakde, director of the Board of Examinations and Evaluation at SPPU, explained the university's decision. "The management council of the university accepted the UGC notification in 2016, and this was notified at that time. These are our students, and if there was any possibility that we could help them, we would. What can we do if they are not eligible under the UGC rules?" he asked. We have allowed over 17,000 students who have backlogs to appear, but UGC is not at all ready to give relief to students who want to appear for the final year beyond the prescribed time limit," Kakde added.

Former TMC ward president shot dead as bypoll gets underway in Bengal's North 24 Parganas



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

A TMC member was shot dead as sporadic violence was reported in parts of West Bengal during bypolls in six assembly constituencies in the state on Wednesday. Ashok Shaw, former president of Jagaddal Ward 12, died at BMRC Hospital, where he was taken after he was shot on East Ghosh Para Road at 9.30 am while voting was underway for the neighbouring Naihati bypolls in North 24 Parganas. The place where the inci-

dent occurred was a stone's throw away from the Jagaddal Police Station under the Barrackpore Commissionerate.

"We are investigating. Prima facie, we haven't found any political connection to the incident. In 2023, there was a similar attack. We're probing if this incident has any connection to that," said CP Barrackpore Alok Rajoria. According to TMC councillor Manoj Kumar Pandey, Shaw was having tea when he was attacked. "The TMC has been trying its best to restore peace in this area and to a large extent we have been successful, but some miscreants continue to create disturbance," he said. "They fired several rounds. At least four of them hit my son. He was rushed to the hospital. It is not even 50 metres away from the police station," Devi told The Indian Express. Once known for its jute mills, Barrackpore and its adjoining areas have been increasingly seeing such kinds of violence, with area residents claiming there are open gang-wars on the streets. Last month, some unidentified assailants fired multiple gunshots and threw stones and bombs at BJP MP Arjun Singh's house here in Jagaddal.

Air India's flash sale: Fly with fares starting Rs.1,599!

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Hyderabad: For those planning to fly domestic destinations in coming days and months, Air India Express has come up with an irresistible offer. Air India Express on Tuesday announced a "flash sale" offering fares starting at Rs.1599 across major booking channels on multiple routes. The flash sale is open for bookings on domestic flights until November 13, for travel between November 19 and April 30, 2025. Air India Express also announced exclusive Xpress Lite fares with further discounts

starting from Rs.1444 as well as 'Zero Convenience Fee' for logged-in members on its website airindiaexpress.com. Xpress Lite fares also include the option to pre-book an additional 3 kg cabin baggage for free and discounted check-in baggage of only Rs.1000 for 15 kg on domestic flights and Rs.1300 for 20 kg on international flights. As part of its proposition of deals for loyalty members on airindiaexpress.com, the airline offers 25% off on Xpress Biz fare. Xpress Biz is the business class equivalent of Air India Express, with an industry leading seat pitch of up to 58 inches.

What's cooking at this Pune firm? Lifestyle solutions to bring down household carbon footprint



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

pune firm Priyadarshini Karve (extreme left) who is the founder of Samuchit. Pournima Agarkar is on the extreme right. Visakha Chandhere, a renewable cooking expert, is in the centre. It looks like a lunchbox but Steam Cooker Stove is doing more than carrying a tiffin. Using charcoal or renewable char briquettes as fuel, it can cook three items at a time, such as rice, dal, potatoes, or other vegetables. "The food tastes good as it has been slow-cooked," says Pournima Agarkar of Samuchit Enviro Tech, a social enterprise working to make people, households, institutions, and small businesses adopt sustainability in their daily activities. Steam Cooker Stove is a success with fitness buffs as it retains nutrition while cooking. Another product is Trashflasher Kiln, a compact and lightweight device that can convert garden and agricultural waste into renewable char or biochar. "When we conduct workshops with urban people, we talk about climate-friendly lifestyles. Every so often, we hear even environmentally-conscious people saying, 'Kitna compost karey?' This is true. How much of a family's or society's waste can you compost? The kiln is easy to install and helps people manage their waste more conveniently," says Agarkar.

Carbon footprint of houses The carbon footprint of houses is rarely discussed. Yet, according to a May 2023 study by the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, the average household carbon footprint (HCF) in Indian households is estimated at around 6,505 kgCO₂e (kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent). In comparison, flying from London to New York and back generates about 986 kg of CO₂ per passenger, as calculated by the German nonprofit Atmosfair. An increase in a

household's expenditure in India also influences its carbon footprint, with a Rs 1,000 annual increase causing an 8.83 kgCO₂e increase in total HCF.

"Renewable energy is one of the biggest solutions to the climate crisis. The bigger problem that Samuchit is targeting is the climate challenge. Usually, when there is talk about solutions at an individual level, we think of solar. However, there are other opportunities as well, such as biogas. Samuchit is largely focusing on how biomass can be leveraged as energy," says Agarkar. Based out of Law College Road, Samuchit Enviro Tech was founded in 2005 and focuses on rural and urban areas of western India. However, it also has a pan-India presence and conducted projects in Asia and Africa. Samuchit has launched a carbon footprint calculator specifically for urban Indians. This tool highlights areas of energy usage that individuals need to improve. Additionally, Samuchit offers consulting services, workshops, and training programmes. The company also provides various products, including char briquettes made from coconut waste, organic deodoriser for eliminating odours in closets, toilets, or any enclosed spaces, and a smokeless stove fueled by coconut shells and bamboo waste, among others. "Our rural work is primarily focused on technology consultancy and training in decentralised renewable energy for household energy services and climate-aligned agriculture. Our urban work is primarily focused on organic waste management technologies and capacity building, policy advocacy on climate aligned and sustainable urbanisation," says an official statement of the company.

Challenges ahead for Samuchit Change is slow in the majority of households. Many waste management companies say that housing complexes are unwilling to invest extra in managing their waste, while the latter complain that their staff is unwilling to adopt new systems and technologies. Agarkar says that when members of Samuchit go to slums, they find that people aspire to use better and fancier consumerist products with higher carbon footprints. "But, people aligned to this cause are willing to pay an additional amount. For instance, the cookers and kilns are in demand, giving us hope," says Agarkar.

Facebook, Instagram users in Europe can opt for less personalised ads

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

London: Facebook and Instagram users in Europe will get the option to see less personalised ads if they don't want to pay for an ad-free subscription, social media company Meta said Tuesday, bowing to pressure from Brussels over digital competition concerns. Meta Platforms has been offering users in the European Union an ad-free subscription option for about a year to comply with the continent's strict data privacy rules, but regulators had accused the company of giving people a false choice.

The company said in a blog post that while people will still be able to choose between the subscription and free versions, it would also start giving users a third option over the coming weeks to see digital ads that are less personalised. This means ads will be targeted at users based only on what they see during their current session on Facebook or Instagram going back no more than two hours, plus minimal personal information such as age, location, gender as well as how they engage with ads.

Data from all of a user's previous time spent on Facebook and Instagram, which is typically combined to precisely target an individual with tailored ads, won't be used. "While this new choice is designed to give people an additional control over their data and ad experience, it may result in ads that are less relevant to a person's interests," Meta said in a blog post. "That means people will see ads that they don't find as interesting. This drop in relevance is inevitable given that drastically reduced



data is being used to show these less personalised ads to people." People who choose the new option will see ad breaks that can't be skipped for a few seconds, Meta said. European Union regulators had accused Meta of breaching the 27-nation bloc's digital rules when it gave user the option to pay a monthly fee to avoid being targeted by ads based on their personal data. The US tech giant had rolled out the option after the European Union's top court ruled Meta must first get consent before showing ads to users, in a decision that threatened its business model of tailoring ads based on individual users' online interests and digital activity. The company also said Tuesday it's slashing monthly subscription prices for the ad-free option. Web users will pay 5.99 euros (\$6.36), down from 9.99 euros previously, while iPhone and Android users will be charged 7.99 euros instead of 12.99 euros.

Rents in Delhi and 6 other cities shot up by 70% in 2 years: study

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

The research highlights that 52 per cent homebuyers in Delhi-NCR prefer to buy 3BHKs and 38 per cent prefer 2BHKs. The research highlights that 52 per cent homebuyers in Delhi-NCR prefer to buy 3BHKs and 38 per cent prefer 2BHKs. Rents in seven cities across India, including Delhi, have risen by as much as 70 per cent over the past two years, according to a recent research by property consultants ANAROCK group. The research covered 7,615 aged 24 to 78 respondents from across 14 cities. The research highlights that 52 per cent homebuyers in Delhi-NCR prefer to buy 3BHKs and 38 per cent prefer 2BHKs. It also showed that real estate was the most preferred asset class investment for over 59 per cent people, followed by the stock market which was preferred by 31 per cent respondents.

Here are other findings from the report

Southern home buyers prefer residential plots, while those in North India lean towards apartments: 70 per cent homebuyers in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai Metropolitan region (MMR) prefer to buy apartments, around one third homebuyers in Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad prefer buying residential plots. People prefer to buy property for use rather than investment: Two thirds of people surveyed purchased the property for end use, and just one thirds purchased it for investment. Gaining rental income is the biggest reason for investment: A majority (57%) of home buyers who buy for investment want to earn a rental income from their property and just 20 per cent want to sell it after appreciation. Expensive homes see a rise in demand: homes priced between Rs 90 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore gained traction in this time period - their preference grew by 10 per cent points - from 18 per cent pre-Covid to 28 per cent in 2024. Half of homebuyers dissatisfied: Over half (53%) of homebuyers were dissatisfied with the current options in affordable housing. The common reasons were - location accessibility, very small sizes and poor design and construction materials. Bigger homes dominate buyer preferences: Over 51 per cent of the people surveyed preferred 3BHK units while 39 per cent preferred 2BHK units. The interest in 3BHKs increased in this period by 10 per cent and rising prices did not deter consumers from having these preferences. High home loan interest rates are a major



deterrent in buying homes: Interest rates of over 9 per cent have a significant impact on the home-buying decisions of over 87 per cent buyers. Quality of construction and ventilation are major demands of homebuyers: Around 93 per cent of homebuyers said that construction quality is a top demand for them and 72 per cent said that well-ventilated homes were a top demand for them.

KLM Airlines to launch direct flights between Amsterdam and Hyderabad from September

Hyderabad: KLM Airlines to launch direct flights between Amsterdam and Hyderabad from September. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has announced the launch of new direct services between Amsterdam and Hyderabad starting September 2, 2025. The airline will operate three weekly flights between the two cities, marking the fourth direct connection between Amsterdam and India. The new service will be operated by KLM's Boeing 777-200ER aircraft, which offers a premium travel experience with 35 seats in World Business Class, 24 seats in Premium Comfort Class, and 229 seats in Economy Class. The direct flights will operate on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Flight KL873 will depart Amsterdam Schiphol Airport at 11:40 am (local time) and arrive at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at 00:30 am the following day.

Punjab starts process to rename 233 schools with PM SHRI prefix



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

punjab school The Samagra Shiksha, country's flagship programme for school education, is the lifeline scheme which covers basic expenses of government schools across the country from pre-school to class XII. Punjab has finally set the ball rolling to prefix Pradhan Mantri-Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) in the name of 233 government schools, more than two months after a political logjam over issue between the BJP-led Centre and AAP-led dispensation in state ended. Punjab's Education Secretary Kamal Kishore Yadav issued a letter in this regard Monday. A senior official from Punjab education department said that in the first phase, 233 schools have been selected by the Centre for upgradation under the PM-SHRI project, which aims to showcase and implement "National Education Policy (NEP), 2020". "We are now awaiting the first instalment of grants from the Centre to start the work. The selected schools will also be directed to change the names on the boards outside the school premises once funds are received," he said.

For instance, the Government Senior Secondary School (GSSS), Balluana in Abohar block of Fazilka district, would now be renamed as "PM SHRI GSSS, Balluana." According to the Centre's blueprint for the project, "The PM-SHRI, with an overall budget of over Rs 27,000 crore for the next five years (60:40 ratio of Centre/State), aims to upgrade at least 14,500 government ex-

isting schools across the country as "green schools", where the National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) would be followed in "true spirit", and students will be rooted to the heritage of India and values of Bharat, Indian languages, unity in diversity and 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat'."

A political slugfest between the Centre and the AAP-led Punjab government had ensued for months after the latter had refused to participate in the project, and consequently the Centre had blocked Punjab's Samagra Shiksha funds amounting to over Rs 500 crore. The funds were, however, resumed after the Punjab government "reconsidered" its decision and agreed to implement PM-SHRI in the state.

After the Punjab government's refusal to implement the PM-SHRI project, a series of letters were also exchanged between Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan. While Mann sent a reminder to Pradhan regarding the state's withheld Samagra Shiksha grants, the latter had written to Mann asserting that Punjab cannot back out from the project after signing the initial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The matter was finally resolved earlier in July after Punjab wrote to Centre that it had "reconsidered its earlier decision" and was ready to implement the project in the state. The Samagra Shiksha, country's flagship programme for school education, is the lifeline scheme which covers basic expenses of government schools across the country from pre-school to class XII, including salaries of teachers, construction of new classrooms, uniforms, books etc, in 60:40 ratio (60 per cent being the Centre share). In absence of a central share, it becomes nearly impossible for the state government to run the school education system smoothly and several works get stuck on the ground. During the political impasse over PM-SHRI, Punjab education minister Harjot Singh Bains had told The Indian Express that Punjab had opted out of PM SHRI as the state was already having its own "Schools of Eminence" and "Schools of Happiness" projects. He however had also admitted that Punjab won't be able to pay salaries to its teachers for long if the central share of Samagra Shiksha funds was blocked.

Pimpri-Chinchwad combats post-Diwali air quality dip with Air Bins and Mist Fountains

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

After Diwali, the Pimpri-Chinchwad area recorded some of the highest PM_{2.5} levels in Maharashtra. As part of mitigation efforts, the administration has set up air bins, dry mist fountains and used water treated by Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) to wash roads where the Air Quality Index (AQI) indicated high PM_{2.5} levels.

On the lines of Delhi-NCR region that takes on a set of emergency measures to combat air pollution known as Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), the PCMC administration embarked on a similar process. "Essentially, these are multi-layered strategies where stages under the GRAP are initiated in case the AQI reaches 'poor' level," Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Commissioner Shekhar Singh told The Indian Express. "However, we are also taking steps to prevent air pollution," he said. As per the post-Diwali air quality report prepared through the AtlasAQ platform by Respires Living Sciences Pvt Ltd, a climate-tech startup, Pimpri-Chinchwad area recorded some of the highest PM_{2.5} levels in the state after Diwali, with concentrations reaching 125.62 µg/m³ on November 1. This places Pimpri-Chinchwad among the top polluted areas in the state, reflecting an urgent need for air quality interventions.

According to the report, Maharashtra's post-Diwali air quality data reveals a significant shift in pollution levels, with Tier II cities such as Dhule, Nanded, and Pimpri-Chinchwad recording the highest PM_{2.5} concentrations in the state. The PCMC commissioner said the administration is focussing on a graded approach that encourage activities like cycling and walking as part of the Harit Setu project. Sanjay Kulkarni, chief engineer, Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, said it has been close to six months now that air bins under the National Clean



Air Programme (NCAP) have been installed at 13 chowks including Kaspate chowk, Khandoba chowk, Pimpri chowk, Bhosari chowk, Nashik Phata chowk, Chinchwad Station chowk, Bhumkar chowk and others.

Air Bins involve an air purification system and draws polluted air through a 9 stage filtration process. It controls the ambient air pollutants such as PM (particulate matter) 2.5, PM 10, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, poisonous gases and fumes among others to improve air quality. Stationary fog cannon dust suppression systems have also been installed. PCMC officials point out that there is rising vehicular pollution apart from Ready Mix Concrete (RMC) plants, quarries and construction work. "This is a multi-layered process to tackle air pollution and several strategies are being planned including introducing new concepts like low emission zones. Presently, an agency has also been instructed to levy spot fines from RMC plants who do not adhere to the rules like adequate fencing around the construction area, using green shed net and sprinklers among others," Singh said.

Who is Arsh Dala, the Khalistani separatist arrested by Canadian Police?

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

The Canada Police have arrested Arsh Dala, a designated terrorist by India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) and a close aide of slain Khalistan separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Dala will be produced before a local court tomorrow. According to Adrian Ghobrial of CTV News, Arshdeep Singh Gill, aka Arsh Dala, has been charged in a case related to the shooting in Ontario on October 28. The Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) had, on October 29, said that it had arrested two men on charges of "discharging firearm with intent" after the duo had come to a hospital and one of them was treated for a non-life-threatening gunshot and later discharged from a hospital in Guelph. HRPS did not disclose their identities, stating that the accused "were held in custody pending a bail hearing". The Indian Express had contacted the Milton police, which declined to reveal the names of the two individuals in custody. Dala is on the list of the most wanted terrorists in India and has been charged in various cases of targeted killings and extortion. The Indian authorities say they had informed their Canadian counterparts about his location in March this year.

Who is Arsh Dala?

The NIA had designated 27-year-old Arsh Dala as an individual terrorist in 2023. He started off as a small-time gangster in Moga, Punjab, before fleeing to Canada in 2018. There, he came in contact with Khalistan Tiger Force chief Hardeep Singh Nijjar and began collaborating with him. The Globe and Mail has described Dala as a plumber in Surrey who frequented the Guru Nanak Darbar gurdwara, where Nijjar was the president. The paper, unable to reach him, had reported: "He's [Dala] recently toned down his flashy lifestyle and gone into hiding, according to his family, but occasionally surfaces to give interviews to Indian media, often discussing his rivalry with other gangs." An NIA chargesheet filed in July 2023 alleges that Dala used his connections in Punjab to form a "terrorist gang". "He, along with Nijjar, raised funds through extortion and targeted killings of businessmen and leaders from specific communities in Punjab," states the chargesheet. Sources within the agency, which

has been issuing red corner notices against his gang members, had noted an ongoing conflict between Dala and the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. This rivalry reportedly escalated in December 2023, as numerous Indian-origin business owners in Canada began reporting extortion calls and threats. Originally from Dala village in Moga, he was declared a designated terrorist by the Government of India in 2023 for his involvement in targeted killings, extortion, and terror activities. He allegedly conspired with other gang members to fund the KTF's terror activities through killings and extortion. Wire-transfer records and WhatsApp messages filed in the NIA court reveal that Dala, along with his wife, transferred large sums of money via Western Union and other services to men allegedly involved in an extortion and weapons-smuggling network. The NIA's chargesheet details how Dala's "terrorist gang" created a network to evade detection, using the "dead drop" technique. It describes instances where executioners in India were recruited by a gang member in one country, managed by another person in a different country, and funded by an operative in yet another country. Additionally, they communicated through encrypted applications such as WhatsApp, Wire, Zangi, and Facebook Messenger. The chargesheet notes that these terrorist-gangsters used various social media profiles for recruitment, radicalisation, claiming responsibility for sensational killings, and propaganda. These profiles, managed by handlers abroad, were used to establish contact with old acquaintances, small-time criminals, potential recruits, and extortion targets. Punjab police also issued a look-out notice against Dala, with then-CM Amarinder Singh handing over a list of Khalistani terrorists to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2018. Punjab police had said that in June 2020, Dala visited India and recruited a man to kill gangster Sukha Lamma by injecting him with poison in an abandoned house in Moga. In January last year, Dala and his father Charanjit Singh were booked by Ludhiana rural police for the alleged murder of Paramjit Singh, an electrician from Bardeke village, who was shot dead inside his house. In a purported Facebook post,

Cold War-era H-6 bomber enhances China's ability to strike U.S. bases



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

In a series of war games in the seas and skies around Taiwan in October 2024, China deployed some of its newest strike aircraft, warships and missile forces. However, one of the most menacing weapons used in the drills is an updated version of a bomber that first flew in the early years of the Cold War. Like the U.S., which still relies on upgraded versions of the B-52, a bomber from the same era, China has successfully modernised its jet-powered H-6 to carry on flying deep into the 21st century. These bombers were shown on China's state-controlled media taking off for missions designed to intimidate Taiwan as part of the war-game drills. Dubbed Joint-Sword 2024B by China's military, the manoeuvres were a "stern warning" to people on Taiwan seeking independence, the Chinese military said. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense reported that 153 Chinese military aircraft, 14 naval vessels and 12 other ships were detected around the island over a 25-hour period after the start of the exercise on October 14. The ministry also reported that 111 of the aircraft had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered the island's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Taiwan's defence ministry told Reuters that "three groups of three H-6 aircraft" had been detected operating in the island's air space during China's military exercise. Two of the groups "conducted simulated attack drills," the ministry said.

Some modernised versions of China's H-6 bomber are now capable of launching ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads while others can carry multiple long-range anti-ship and land attack missiles, according to defence analysts and Pentagon reports on the Chinese military. Some versions can be refuelled in flight, allowing them to fly from bases on the Chinese mainland and strike at targets deep into the Western Pacific, where the U.S. has large bases on Guam and elsewhere. Asked about the military drills, Taiwan's defence ministry said the island was using "joint intelligence surveillance to keep track of the communist military's movements around Taiwan," while also dispatching "air, sea and missile forces to respond as appropriate to ensure national defence and security."

Major Pete Nguyen, a Pentagon spokesperson, said the U.S. was "prepared to respond to any threat and protect the homeland." U.S. Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin "has often said that he does not believe conflict with the PRC is imminent nor inevitable," Nguyen said in response to questions. A giant screen shows news footage of military drills conducted in the Taiwan Strait and areas to the north, south and east of Taiwan, by the Eastern Theatre Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), in Beijing, China October 14, 2024. Beijing says that Taiwan is part of China and has not ruled out the use of force to bring the island under its control. The leaders of democratically governed Taiwan reject these sovereignty claims. China's military capabilities are in the spotlight as tensions with the U.S. remain high with Donald Trump returning to office. In a display of its growing military prowess, China put its J-35A stealth fighter on display at the Zhuhai air show this week. Unlike America, which stopped

building the B-52 in 1962, China has continued to make the twin-engine H-6 at a plant in central China. However, H-6 production may have recently slowed or been halted, according to Thomas Shugart, a former U.S. Navy submarine officer and an expert on China's military. He estimates the Chinese air force now has about 230 of these bombers.

The H-6 is derived from the Tupolev Tu-16 bomber, which the Soviet Union introduced into service in the early 1950s and was given the NATO code name Badger. China began building these aircraft under license in the late 1950s, according to experts on the People's Liberation Army, China's military. The Taiwanese and Japanese militaries have reported that H-6 bombers have been frequently deployed on flights near their airspace in recent years. They are also sent on flights over the South China Sea where Beijing claims sovereignty over extensive areas of disputed territory. In a conflict, these bombers would pose a serious threat to ships and targets on land, according to U.S. and Taiwanese military experts. Mr. Shugart said that Chinese military doctrine for island landing campaigns, such as an invasion of Taiwan, calls for strikes against headquarters, communications facilities, logistics centres and other key targets, along with attacks on airfields, ports and ships at sea. "I would expect H-6s to be involved in all of these sorts of operations," he said. These attacks would likely be coordinated with missile strikes, possibly without warning, that would soften air defences and crater runways to trap aircraft on the ground, Mr. Shugart added. He said these aircraft could then be hit with cruise missiles launched from H-6 bombers. China's official media in mid-September provided some insight into the role the H-6 might play in a clash off the Chinese coast. State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of one of these bombers flying in an exercise with fighters and a long-range WZ-7 surveillance drone. The drone penetrated the air defences of a potential adversary, identified a target and relayed this information to the H-6, according to the footage. The bomber was shown launching an anti-ship missile. Experts say the U.S. should try to neutralise the H-6 bombers while they are still on the ground. "Any common sense war plan would target those aircraft before they could take off," said David Deptula, dean of the Washington-based Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies and a retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General. In March testimony to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Mr. Shugart said China's H-6 force has expanded and these aircraft now have improved airframes, technology, engines and long-range weapons. While regularly sending the H-6 on missions off the Chinese coast, Beijing is now deploying these aircraft in the same way the U.S. Air Force uses long-range patrols of the B-52 and its other bombers to signal America's ability to strike at distant targets. On July 24, American and Canadian fighter jets scrambled to intercept a joint patrol of two Chinese H-6 and two Russian Tu-95 bombers near Alaska, according to a statement from the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). While the Russians conduct regular patrols in this area, it was the first time Chinese bombers had flown close to the U.S. mainland in an operation that revealed the growing power and confidence of China's military, according to former U.S. air force officers. The flights were not seen "as a threat, and NORAD continues to monitor competitor activity near North America and meet presence with presence," Pentagon spokesperson Nguyen said. The Chinese and Russian defence ministries didn't respond to a request for comment. A spokesman for China's Ministry of National Defense, Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang, told a press conference at the time that the joint patrol was to test and improve coordination between the Chinese and Russian air forces. "This operation does not target any third party," Mr. Zhang said.

British writer Samantha Harvey wins for space-station novel 'Orbital'

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

British writer Samantha Harvey won the Booker Prize for fiction on Tuesday (November 12, 2024) with *Orbital*, a short, wonder-filled novel set aboard the International Space Station. Ms. Harvey was awarded the £50,000 (£53.7 lakh) prize for what she has called a "space pastoral" about six astronauts circling the Earth, which she began writing during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The confined characters loop through 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets over the course of a day, trapped in one another's company and transfixed by the globe's fragile beauty. Writer and artist Edmund de Waal, who chaired the five-member judging panel, called it a "miraculous novel" that "makes our world strange and new for us".

Gaby Wood, chief executive of the Booker Prize Foundation, noted that "in a year of geopolitical crisis, likely to be the warmest year in recorded history," the winning book was "hopeful, timely and timeless." Ms. Harvey, who has written four previous novels and a memoir about insomnia, is the first British writer since 2020 to win the Booker. The prize is open to English-language writers of any nationality and has a reputation for transforming writers' careers. Previous winners include Ian McEwan, Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie and Hilary Mantel. Mr. De Waal praised the "crystalline" writing and "capaciousness" of Harvey's succinct novel - at 136 pages in its U.K. paperback edition, one of the shortest-ever Booker winners. He said the judges spent a full day picking their winner and came to a unanimous conclusion. Ms. Harvey beat five other finalists from Canada, the United States, Australia and the Netherlands, chosen from among 156 novels submitted by publishers.

American writer Percival Everett had been the bookies' favorite to win with "James," which reimagines Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" from the point of view of its main Black character, the enslaved man Jim. The other finalists were American writer Rachel Kushner's spy story "Creation Lake"; Canadian Anne Michaels' poetic novel "Held"; Charlotte Wood's Australian saga "Stone Yard Devotional"; and "The Safekeep" by Yael van der Wouden, the first Dutch author to be shortlisted for the Booker. Ms. Harvey is the first female Booker winner since 2019, though one of five women on this year's shortlist, the largest number in the prize's 55-year history. Mr. De Waal said issues such as the gender or nationality of the authors were "background noise" that did not influence the judges. "There was absolutely no question of box ticking or of agendas or of anything else. It was simply about the novel," he said before the awards ceremony at Old Billingsgate, a grand former Victorian fish market in central London. Founded in 1969, the Booker Prize is open to novels originally written in English and published in



the U.K. or Ireland. Last year's winner was Irish writer Paul Lynch for post-democratic dystopia "Prophet Song".

Trump picks John Ratcliffe to be CIA director



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump said on Tuesday (November 12, 2024) that he had picked former Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe to serve as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Ratcliffe, a close ally of Mr. Trump, served as director of national intelligence at the end of his first term. Mr. Ratcliffe was confirmed as the nation's top spy in May 2020, eight months before Mr. Trump left office. A former member of the House of Representatives and U.S. attorney for Texas, he received no support from Senate Democrats during his confirmation. As DNI, Mr. Ratcliffe was accused by Democrats and former intelligence officials of declassifying intelligence for use by Mr. Trump and his Republican allies to attack political opponents, including Joe Biden, then Mr. Trump's rival for the presidency,

After hosting World Cup, Qatar praised by U.N. rights body for labour law reforms but urged to do more



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Qatar was praised at the United Nations' top human rights body on Tuesday (November 12, 2024) for improving labour laws before the 2022 World Cup, though it was urged to fully abolish its employment system for migrant workers. Qatar returned to the Human Rights Council in Geneva for its five-yearly review for the first time since the football tournament that needed hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to build stadiums and other essential projects. Football governing body FIFA is set to confirm Saudi Arabia in December as host of the 2034 World Cup - setting up another decade of scrutiny on how human rights are respected while preparing for more teams playing more games in more stadiums. In Qatar, better labour law protections have been passed in recent years relating to a minimum wage, freedom to change employers and combating forced labour and trafficking, according to the emirate's senior diplomat in Geneva. Qatar "highly appreciated" the contribution of migrant workers who are "true partners," said Hend Abdulrahman Al Mufthah, its permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, in translated comments.

Qatar was urged - or "recommended," in the formal diplomatic language of the UN rights body - by French delegate Claire Thuadet to "pursue the implementation of the labour laws" linked to the 2022 World Cup. Sierra Leone said Qatar should "consider abolishing all vestiges" of the labour law system known as kafala. "We commend Qatar for its notable reforms in labour migrant legislation," the Netherlands delegation said. "These are significant but more effective enforcement and implementations are needed." Qatar also was asked to abolish the death penalty by states including Brazil, Ireland, Italy and New Zealand, and decriminalise consenting same-sex relations by Brazil, Mexico and Spain. Anticipating criticism of Qatar's record on women's rights, Al Mufthah said Qatar now had 120 women in diplomatic roles after the number was just three several years ago.

Sweden later recommended Qatar review its laws relating to women's rights in divorce, custody of children and inheritance while Iceland called for abolition of the male guardianship system. Iceland also urged decriminalising abortion and ensure access to reproductive health services without needing the permission of a male guardian or showing a marriage certificate. Qatar's delegation pointed to the country rising from outside the top 100 to now rank No. 84 in the global index of press freedom. Top-ranked Norway said Qatar should ensure "civil society, human rights defenders and journalists can operate freely without fear of reprisals." Qatar is widely expected to be a strong contender in bidding to host the 2036 Olympics, and concluded its presentation Tuesday with sports ministry official Nasser Ali Al-Khater hailing sports as "an important platform to enhance cooperation between peoples." "This is what we achieved during the World Cup," he said. "Qatar shall continue its efforts in the field of sport and empowerment."

X rivals Bluesky and Threads get more users as some migrate from Elon Musk-owned platform

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

In the aftermath of Donald Trump's U.S. presidential election win, social media platform X's rival Bluesky has welcomed around one million users in the past week. The company posted the news on Wednesday (November 13, 2024) and hailed its new users. In late October, Bluesky posted that it had over 13 million users.

Meanwhile, Meta-owned Threads has also been seeing a surge in users, as Instagram head Adam Mosseri posted in early November - shortly before the U.S. election - that Threads crossed 275 million monthly active users. "There's a lot more to do, and plenty of things to fix, but there's something exciting about this place," said part of his statement on November 3. As X owner Musk threw the weight of his support behind Trump, many users said they were migrating to other platforms, citing an increase in political misinformation and hate speech. While both Bluesky and Threads are growing in popularity and presence, X remains a go-to platform for news, official statements, and hard politics related to ongoing world events. However, due to issues such as antisemitic rhetoric, pro-slavery accounts, rising complaints of hate speech, problematic placement of corporate content, and the op-



tion to monetise even illegal media, more advertisers have been pausing their spending on the platform. X's value has been steeply downgraded. Some high-level users have opted to maintain their X accounts in order to control their usernames, but said they will post more actively on other channels they believe are more suitable to their needs. Though Bluesky was the brainchild of former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, he no longer seems to be actively involved with the social media platform that aims to become decentralised.

Lara Trump reveals why 'very cool' Barron deserves 'serious credit' for dad Donald's win as fans await his 1st interview

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Lara Trump, who is now considered as President-elect Donald Trump's right-hand woman, discussed her half-brother-in-law, Barron Trump, in her latest interview. Lara Trump, who is now considered as President-elect Donald Trump's right-hand woman and the heir apparent to Ivanka Trump, discussed her half-brother-in-law, Barron Trump, in her latest interview. Her description of the 18-year-old son of future First Lady Melania was very fascinating.

During her appearance at the Autism Capital podcast, the wife of Eric Trump and co-chair of the Republican committee, gave some insights into Barron's demeanor and called him a "very cool" person. "He's like the sleeper. He's kind of stayed out of the spotlight intentionally." While Barron's decision to avoid the spotlight has baffled Trump supporters, he has been lauded for helping his father win the election by suggesting him about the latest trends and popular podcasts that draw attention of youngsters. Barron's height takes centre stage during Lara interview. As Barron's height is one of the most trendy subject for his admirers, host Patrick stated, "It's very hard to do when you're 6'10, by the way. You kind of stick out." She went on to recall Trump's victory night when all the members of her family gathered on the stage, along with Melania and Barron. "And then I saw like a clip of all of us walking on the stage that night. I was like God! Barron makes us all look so little, which is okay with me because I am 5'11". I don't mind taking a little bit off." Lara Trump reveals how Barron helped his dad

Revealing the campaign strategy and the time she spent with her father-in-law during the election campaigns, Barron's sister-in-law stated: "There have been many times I've been traveling during the campaign with my father-in-law in the car, going to places, and Barron would call, and he'll say, 'Dad, I have an idea as to how you can get more votes.' Hailing him as "very smart" and "very entertaining", she said he is after all the son of Donald Trump, suggesting that the 18-year-old "deserves some serious credit for Trump's election win." According to her, Barron will surely do some "really incredible things" in near future.

Fans await Barron's first interview with media. Meanwhile, several fans are expressing their enthusiasm on X as they wait for Barron to make his first public speaking debut in the wake of his dad's win. "When can we expect to hear Barron Trump speak?" one admirer asked. In direct response to the comment, Autism Capital stated: "We think we're not pure enough as a nation to hear Barron's voice yet. It would be like seeing sunlight after living in a cave. It's too pure." Barron is currently studying business at New York University and is expected to stay in the



White House occasionally. According to his father, the 18-year-old is the tallest member of the Trump family.

Cyprus mulls natgas licensing round as demands remains robust

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

NICOSIA, - Cyprus is considering a new licensing round for offshore natural gas exploration as demand remains strong despite global attempts to move away from fossil fuels, its energy minister said.

Tucked in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, Cyprus has reported several discoveries since 2011 containing an estimated 15-16 trillion cubic feet of untapped natural gas - the equivalent of nearly half the yearly output of the United States, the world's largest producer. That has spurred interest from international companies amid uncertainty about supplies from Russia since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and about the future of new liquefied natural gas projects. "We are in the process of evaluating potential interest," Energy Minister George Papanastasiou told Reuters when asked about the potential for a new licensing round. "Upon seeing some interest we may decide to go for another licensing round, yes."

The east Mediterranean has yielded major gas discoveries in the past decade, mostly off Israel and Egypt. Cyprus has 13 offshore blocks, 10 of which are under licence to energy majors including Eni, Exxon Mobil Chevron and TotalEnergies. Blocks on offer could be either those not under licence, or blocks where operators may wish to relinquish their licence, Papanastasiou said, without going into detail.

Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)

— Why are these banks “Too Big To Fail”?



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

All three banks continue to be under the same bucketting structure as in the 2023 list of D-SIBs, the regulator said. Systemically Important Banks (SIBs) are perceived as banks that are ‘Too Big To Fail (TBTF)’ and their continued functioning is crucial for the uninterrupted availability of essential banking services to the real economy.

Which banks have been classified as D-SIBs by the RBI?

The RBI has continued to identify SBI, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks under the same bucketting structure as in the 2023 list of D-SIBs. The regulator had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in July 2014. Since 2015, the RBI has been disclosing the names of the banks classified as D-SIBs every year. While the Reserve Bank had announced SBI and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016, HDFC Bank was classified as D-SIB in 2017 along with SBI and ICICI Bank. The current update is based on the data collected from banks as on March 31, 2024.

Why have D-SIBs been created?

Some banks, due to their size, cross-jurisdictional activities, complexity, lack of substitutability and interconnectedness, become systemically important. The disorderly failure of these banks has the potential to cause significant disruption to the essential services they provide to the banking system, and in turn, to the overall economic activity. Therefore, the continued functioning of Systemically Important Banks (SIBs) is critical for the uninterrupted availability of essential banking services to the real economy. SIBs are perceived as banks that are ‘Too Big To Fail (TBTF)’. This perception of TBTF creates an expectation of government support for these banks at the time of distress. Due to this perception, these banks enjoy certain advantages in the funding markets. However, the perceived expectation of government support amplifies risk-taking, reduces market discipline, creates competitive distortions, and increases the probability of distress in the future. These considerations require that SIBs should be subjected to additional policy measures to deal with the systemic risks and moral hazard issues posed by them, according to the RBI.

What are the different buckets under which D-SIBs are placed?

Banks are allocated different buckets based on their systemic importance score. The RBI has placed SBI in bucket 4, HDFC Bank in bucket 3 and ICICI Bank in bucket

1. What are the capital requirements for D-SIBs?

Based on the bucket in which a D-SIB is placed, an additional common equity requirement has to be applied to it. The additional capital requirement ranges from 0.20 per cent to 0.80 per cent of risk weighted assets, depending upon the bucket D-SIBs are plotted into. On Wednesday, the RBI said, the additional common equity tier 1 (CET1) requirement as a percentage of Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs) for SBI is 0.80 per cent. The additional fund requirement for HDFC Bank is 0.40 per cent, and that for ICICI Bank is 0.20 per cent. The higher D-SIB surcharge for SBI and HDFC Bank will be applicable from April 1, 2025. Hence, up to March 31, 2025, the D-SIB surcharge applicable to SBI and HDFC Bank will be 0.60 per cent and 0.20 per cent, respectively. In case a foreign bank having branch presence in India is a Global Systemically Important Bank (G-SIB), it has to maintain additional CET1 capital surcharge in India as applicable to it as a G-SIB, proportionate to its Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs) in India, i.e., additional CET1 buffer prescribed by the home regulator (amount) multiplied by India RWA as per consolidated global Group books divided by total consolidated global Group RWA.

How are D-SIBs selected?

The process of assessment of systemic importance of banks by the RBI is a two-step process. In the first step, a sample of banks to be assessed for their systemic importance are decided. The systemic importance of all the banks need not be computed as many smaller banks would be of lower systemic importance and burdening these banks with onerous data requirements on a regular basis may not be prudent, as per the RBI. Hence, the sample of banks for identification of D-SIBs excludes many smaller banks. Once the sample of banks is selected, detailed study to compute their systemic importance is initiated. Based on a range of indicators, a composite score of systemic importance for each bank in the sample is computed. The banks having systemic importance above a threshold are designated as D-SIBs. D-SIBs are segregated into different buckets based on their systemic importance scores, and subject to loss absorbency capital surcharge in a graded manner depending on the buckets, in which they are placed. A D-SIB in the lower bucket attracts lower capital charge and a D-SIB in higher bucket attracts a higher capital charge. Banks are selected for computation of systemic importance based on the analysis of their size (based on Basel III Leverage Ratio Exposure Measure) as a percentage of GDP. Banks having a size beyond 2 per cent of GDP are selected in the sample.

Which are global SIBs?

The Financial Stability Board (FSB), in consultation with Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) and national authorities, has identified the 2023 list of global systemically important banks (G-SIBs). The list is based on end-2022 data, based on a methodology agreed upon in July 2018 and implemented for the first time in the end-2021 G-SIB assessment. The list for 2023 includes 29 G-SIBs, one less than the 2022 list. The G-SIBs include JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, HSBC, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, Barclays and BNP Paribas.

Expecting very solid growth for next 3-5 years: Swiggy CEO Sriharsha Majety

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Swiggy CEO Sriharsha Majety speaks at the Swiggy bell ringing listing ceremony, at the National Stock Exchange, in Mumbai, Food delivery and quick-commerce major Swiggy on Wednesday said it is expecting “very solid” growth in the next 3-5 years and plans to expand its geographical footprint and stores network for Instamart business. The company which made a strong debut on the stock exchanges on Wednesday said it has doubled the categories for quick commerce in the last 12 months. “We are expecting very solid growth for the next 3-5 years. We are expanding our geographical footprint, stores network for Instamart business,” Swiggy Chief Executive Officer Sriharsha Majety said after the listing ceremony. Swiggy lists at a premium

Swiggy listed at Rs 412, reflecting a jump of 5.64 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. Later, it surged 15.12 per cent to Rs 449 apiece. The Rs 11,327-crore initial public offer of Swiggy got fully subscribed on the final day of the share sale on Friday, ending with 3.59 times subscription. The initial share sale had a price range of Rs 371-390 a share. The company’s IPO (Initial Public Offering) had a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 4,499 crore, along with an Offer-For-Sale (OFS) of Rs 6,828 crore. Going by the draft papers, the company plans to utilise proceeds from the fresh issue for investing in technology and cloud infrastructure; brand marketing and business promotion; and debt payment; and funds will



also be allocated for inorganic growth and general corporate purposes. Majety further noted that the company will continue to invest in various categories. He also said that Instamart’s average delivery time has reduced over time in big cities, adding, “our delivery time has reduced from 17 minutes to 12 minutes.”

Swiggy plans to open bigger dark stores in size as much as 8,000-10,000 sq ft, he said. On the reported CCI probe against food delivery platforms including Swiggy for anti-competition practices, Majety said, “We are following laws and practices with complete compliance.” A Competition Commission probe has found that food delivery platforms Zomato and Swiggy indulged in unfair business practices, including alleged preferential treatment to some restaurant partners, according to sources.

How bitcoin’s surge since Trump’s win could play out in India

The President-elect of the United States of America, Donald Trump has chosen tech billionaire Elon Musk to lead a newly-created Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) for his incoming administration. Republican Vivek Ramaswamy will work with Musk on the project — whose acronym refers to Musk’s favourite cryptocurrency Dogecoin. The acronym for the newly created position, which found place in an official Trump statement, is in many ways symbolic of some of the positive messaging the President-elect had throughout his campaign around cryptocurrencies, which included announcing bitcoin a strategic reserve, and favourable energy policies for crypto miners. Since Trump’s victory, bitcoin has reached an all-time high, and is close to breaching six figures. Investors had predicted that bitcoin could hit that mark if Trump were to be elected, since his entire campaign featured pro-crypto messaging, among other things. Having Musk — who has been a long time advocate for cryptocurrency — as a key adviser could further bolster investors’ belief in bitcoin, and other digital virtual assets, even if concerns around conflict of interest remain. This has put the spotlight on India’s crypto ecosystem, which has lost steam over taxation rates, general uncertainty about the future of such currency in the country, and recent cybersecurity concerns following a wipe out of a significant amount of crypto reserves of one of the

country’s biggest exchanges. The bitcoin surge late Tuesday night, bitcoin surged past \$90,000 for the first time, though the cryptocurrency has since seen some moderation in its spike, trading at around \$73,000 at the time of publishing. As such, between November 5 — the day the elections were held in the US — and Tuesday (November 12), the cryptocurrency surged more than 30 per cent. In fact, not just bitcoin, but on Tuesday, Dogecoin too saw a surge of over 20 per cent, and has grown by more than 150 per cent since Trump’s victory in early November, compared to bitcoin’s 30 per cent. Dogecoin, which is referred to as ‘meme coin’ in crypto parlance, is now the sixth biggest cryptocurrency by market cap. Memecoins are generally seen as indicators of retail investors’ interest in cryptocurrency. It is usually a marker of investors’ risk appetite at any given point in time. Surging memecoin values generally indicated that retail investors are participating in the market. In India, the crypto journey has been topsy-turvy, and investors might not share the same enthusiasm as their American counterparts owing to factors like a high taxation rate on incomes from cryptocurrencies, and the overall banking sectors’ less than kind outlook towards the asset. In 2018, the Central Board of Direct Taxes had submitted a draft scheme to the finance ministry for banning virtual currencies and a month later, the RBI restrained banks from dealing in cryptocurrencies,

Indian travellers more adventurous and sophisticated now, hope to set up resort by 2030: Club Med Asia CEO



French hospitality giant Club Med, owned by Chinese conglomerate Fosun International, hopes to set up its first resort in India by 2030, depending on land availability, adequate air connectivity, and ability to meet sustainability standards. Known for its all-inclusive experiences, Club Med’s India business, which relies on a network of travel agents and influencers to attract domestic travellers to its dozens of resorts across the world, has grown considerably in recent years. The Covid pandemic, too, has transformed the profile of the average Indian traveller, who is now more adventurous and sophisticated. In a conversation with Aggam Walla, Rachael Harding, Club Med’s CEO of East, South Asia and Pacific, talked about variation in global travel demand, evolving preferences, and the company’s India plans.

Almost four years have passed since Covid. How has demand shaped up globally and specifically in Asia?

The global travel market has been unwinding from Covid in different areas at different paces. Outside of Asia, 2020 was obviously a challenging year for everybody, but after that our markets like Europe and North America came back quite quickly. While here in Asia, it took us some time to really unravel ourselves. Today, we’re still seeing challenges in some markets. If I look at the Chinese mainland, for example, they’re still struggling with outbound air capacity, which we’re also seeing in some of our markets across Asia. Last year, Club Med saw record global sales surpassing 2 billion euro in business volume with operating margins up 50 per cent from pre-Covid levels. In Asia too, we doubled our business last year versus the year before, so definitely when we talk about revenge travel, that happened last year in most markets in Asia. In some markets like Hong Kong, Taiwan, to a lesser degree Malaysia, and certainly China, it’s only this year that we’re starting to see a lot of revenge travel from those markets. Here in Asia, we’re up 38 per cent in the first half of this year versus last year.

How has Club Med’s India market performed during this period?

In India, the trajectory is really promising when we think about rising disposable incomes. There’s economic growth that’s certainly been predicted, which fuels travel demand. India has been an important source market for us because we are a multicultural brand and it’ll continue to be a key focus. Pre-Covid, it grew considerably high. (Post-Covid) it hasn’t grown at a rate as fast as some other countries. Last year, we were about 30 per cent up (in India) versus 2022, whereas across Asia we saw a little bit more of an uptake than that. The landscape of travel has changed in India too. The rise of online travel agencies and mobile booking platforms has really revolutionised the way Indians can grasp content and book, which has boosted demand. The biggest thing in India is this continued improvement of airline connectivity. When you have a global hospitality portfolio, air connectivity is everything. I know Air India in particular has purchased many aircraft coming in now and in the future years, and that many more airports are slated to be built around India for both domestic and international travel. This growth in aviation is really going to fuel outbound travel demand.

What are some of the defining changes in travel preferences following Covid?

This is what happens to the body when you consume only low-glycemic-index foods for a month

With growing awareness about blood sugar levels and long-term health, many are exploring the benefits of eating low-glycemic-index foods. These foods, which cause slower and steadier increases in blood sugar, are believed to offer several health benefits. But what happens to your body when you commit to a low-GI diet for an entire month? While many claims surround the advantages of low-GI foods, the full impact of exclusively consuming these foods over a more extended period isn’t often discussed. To better understand the physical changes and potential health benefits of this approach, indianexpress.com spoke to Kanikka Malhotra, a certified diabetes educator by the International Diabetes Federation and a sports nutrition expert by the International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA), to weigh in on what to expect when adopting a month-long low-GI eating plan.

Noticeable physical and metabolic changes Consuming only low-glycemic-index (GI) foods for a month can lead to several noticeable physical and metabolic changes, says Malhotra. “Many individuals experience significant weight loss due to re-

duced insulin levels, which promotes fat burning and decreases hunger, leading to lower caloric intake.” She adds that a low-GI diet stabilises blood glucose levels, reducing spikes in insulin and lowering fasting glucose levels. Total cholesterol and triglycerides are often reduced, contributing to better cardiovascular health. “Individuals typically see reductions in body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference, indicating a decrease in visceral fat,” Malhotra says.

Malhotra informs, “Low-GI foods release glucose slowly, providing sustained energy and preventing the sharp spikes and

crashes associated with high-GI foods. This gradual release helps maintain stable blood sugar levels, reducing feelings of fatigue and enhancing overall vitality.” Low-GI diets are linked to lower depressive symptoms and improved mood stability, as they mitigate mood swings caused by fluctuating blood sugar levels, she continues. “The steady energy supply from low-GI foods supports better focus and concentration, enhancing cognitive performance over time. A low-GI diet fosters a more stable emotional state and mental clarity.” Malhotra cautions that relying exclusively on low-GI foods may

“limit the intake of certain nutrients, particularly if it excludes high-GI foods that are nutrient-dense, such as fruits and whole grains.”

This could lead to deficiencies in vitamins, minerals, and dietary fibre. Additionally, she highlights that some individuals may experience fatigue due to lower carbohydrate intake, as low-GI diets often emphasise fewer grains and starchy foods. “The restrictive nature of an exclusively low-GI diet can also lead to social isolation during meals and may contribute to disordered eating patterns. Thus, a balanced approach incorporating various foods is advisable for overall health.”

What are some of the key factors that would determine your India plans?

One is access. We need to be within two hours of an international airport that’s accessible to 2-3 markets. If it’s a greenfield project, where we build, how we build, the materials we use, the labour we use, how we bring in the local community, how we procure everything, and how we operate all has to fall under globally-recognized eco standards. And then, we need to have a certain piece of land. It’s difficult in India. In the areas that are desirable, somewhere like Goa, it’s already really packed in terms of space. These are a few things, but it’s certainly not out of reach and we wouldn’t even be looking at India if we didn’t think something could come up. At the moment, there is nothing that’s in the pipeline. But certainly by 2030, I would love to see something in India.



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Malhotra informs, “Low-GI foods release glucose slowly, providing sustained energy and preventing the sharp spikes and

Sachin Baby becomes Kerala's highest run-scorer in Ranji Trophy, tops charts in all three formats for state



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Kerala captain Sachin Baby became the highest-run scorer for the state in Ranji Trophy, achieving the feat during the fifth-round match against Haryana in Lathi. The 35-year-old Baby surpassed the record held by former Kerala opener Rohan Prem who had amassed 5396 runs in 99 matches. Baby reached the milestone when he crossed 15 runs against Haryana in a top-of-the-table Group C contest. Last week, left-handed Baby fell short of his 15th Ranji Trophy century for Kerala, falling on 83 against Uttar Pradesh in Thumba. No batter has scored

more Ranji Trophy tons than Baby.

Baby has been among the most consistent batters since the 2022-23 season, scoring 1660 runs in 25 innings at a stunning 77-plus average. Baby also scored seven centuries in this period. Baby has made 94 of his 95 first-class appearances for Kerala, with a solitary appearance representing South Zone in the Duleep Trophy final last year.

All format top-scorer Baby, who made his Kerala debut in the 2009-10 season, is interestingly now the top run-getter for the state across all three formats. Baby leads the charts in the List A 50-over format, aggregating 2826 runs in 85 matches with four centuries and a 41.55 average. The southpaw is also Kerala's leading T20 run-scorer, having compiled 1781 runs in 70 innings with 10 half-centuries. Leading up to the Ranji Trophy season, Baby also led the Aries Kollam Sailors to the title in the inaugural edition of Kerala Cricket League, the T20 franchise cricket tournament launched by the Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) in September 2024. Sachin clinched took the orange cap for the leading run-getter in the KCL, with 528 runs from 12 matches. He was also the architect of the Kollam team's win in the final, scoring an unbeaten 105 in a 214-run chase.

Sanjay Manjrekar on India's chances in Australia: 4-0 is a distant dream



GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar has suggested India to take one step at a time in the upcoming five-match Test series against Australia. Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar feels India mustn't think about beating Australia 4-0 in the upcoming Test series. Notably, India and Australia are all set to take on each other in a five-match Test series beginning from November 22. The Rohit Sharma-led side needs to beat Australia in four Test matches to qualify for the final of the World Test Championship (WTC) on their own.

Hence, the series as well as the scoreline holds tremendous importance for India to keep their WTC final hopes alive. However, Manjrekar feels India shouldn't

think too much about it and take one step at a time and mentioned how the first two Tests in Perth and Adelaide are going to challenge them massively. The former batter spoke about the importance Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are going to play.

"4-0, a distant dream, just take one step at a time and the first couple of steps, which is Perth and the next one in Adelaide are going to be India's toughest tests. We need Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, one of them, to have a great series. Problem for India is that the bowling which has been their great strength in the last couple of years, Shami missing," said Manjrekar on Star Sports.

Virat and Rohit's poor form in 2024. In the ongoing year, Kohli has scored 250 runs from six Tests at an average of 22.72 with just one half-century to his name. On the other hand, Rohit has scored 588 runs from 11 Tests (21 innings) at an average of 29.40 with two hundreds and as many fifties. Rohit had a miserable recent home season as the India skipper scored just 133 runs from five matches at an average of 13.30 with one fifty. The duo will be desperate to bounce back in Australia as India fight hard to keep their World Test Championship (WTC) hopes alive. Kohli in particular loves batting in Australia averaging a staggering 54.08 having scored 1352 runs from 13 matches. The former India captain will be eager to find his mojo back in his favourite conditions and help his team complete a hat-trick of series wins in Australia.

Lizelle Lee becomes first player to hit back-to-back hundreds in WBBL history

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Lizelle Lee became the first player in WBBL history to hit back-to-back centuries. After scoring the highest individual score of 150 in the last match, Lee hit 103 vs Adelaide Strikers on Wednesday. Lizelle Lee has carved her name in the history books of the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) by becoming the first player to score back-to-back centuries in the tournament. The South African cricketer's explosive form was on full display during the Hobart Hurricanes' clash against the Adelaide Strikers, where she struck a dazzling 57-ball hundred, leading her team to post an imposing 191 for 2 in their 20-over quota.

Just days after setting a WBBL record with a monumental 150 in her previous outing, Lee once again laid waste to the bowlers with 13 boundaries and four sixes. Her aggressive intent left the Adelaide Strikers scrambling as they struggled to contain her. Despite her innings being cut short by an unfortunate run-out, where the ball deflected off bowler Jemma Barsby's hand, Lee's impact was decisive. The highlight of Lee's innings was a no-look six shot from Orla Prendergast's delivery which went straight down the ground. Such was the power that her bat eventually broke after she hit the shot for a six.

Lizelle Lee scores another hundred. Following Lee's departure at 103 from 59 balls, Nicola Carey expertly guided the innings forward, remaining unbeaten on 64 from 46 balls. With Elyse Villani adding an unbeaten 23, the Hurricanes continued their assault, piling on 50 runs



in the last five overs. This robust team effort ensured a challenging target for the Strikers and underscored Lee's foundational role in setting a commanding score.

As Adelaide Strikers began their chase, India's star batter Smriti Mandhana stepped up, showcasing her abilities with a quick-fire 50 off just 30 balls, solidifying her position as a key player in the Strikers' response. Mandhana's innings hinted at an engaging chase, putting pressure back on the Hurricanes despite their strong total. Lizelle Lee's historic accomplishment in the WBBL emphasises not only her skill but also her ability to perform under pressure. Her consecutive centuries have set a benchmark in the tournament, showcasing the depth of talent in women's cricket. As the tournament progresses, Lee's outstanding performances will be the ones to look forward to.

Usman Khawaja's advice for new opening partner Nathan McSweeney for India Tests

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Usman Khawaja offered his piece of advice to his new opening partner Nathan McSweeney ahead of the Border Gavaskar Test series. McSweeney was included in Australia's 13-member squad for the 1st Test. Australian opener Usman Khawaja offered his piece of advice to Nathan McSweeney, who is all set to become his opening partner in the upcoming Border Gavaskar Trophy series. Khawaja opined that McSweeney does not have to do anything different and do what he has been doing so far in domestic cricket. He believes the 25-year-old newcomer has the goods to handle the scrutiny and the pressure of Test cricket. McSweeney was slotted into Australia's 13-member squad for the 1st Test vs India at Optus Stadium in Perth, starting November 22.

"There are no guarantees in cricket...but he doesn't have to do anything different," Khawaja told reporters. "Just repeat the process. He's been able to handle the pressure at Shield level. When you look at his demeanour, the way he plays, you do kind of feel over a longer period of time he'll be able to handle the scrutiny, the pressure of Test cricket," he added. McSweeney's record in domestic

With an impressive first-class batting average of 38.16, McSweeney has already notched up six centuries and 12 fifties, accumulating 2,252 runs in the format. His prowess extends to List A cricket, where he averages 42.25, having scored 845 runs, including a century and eight fifties in just 22 matches. Khawaja jokingly dismissed



concerns about McSweeney's strike rate (41.92), which is even lower than his own Test strike rate (48.3), and offered a glowing review of the newcomer. "I don't know where this myth started that you need someone to score really fast to do well. You've got five days to do it. I don't know why you need to score fast," the opener said. "Opening's as much about scoring runs as it is about being able to absorb. Davey was special, he could score runs while absorbing but he didn't do it (score fast) every time. He was consistent, out there and setting a platform, and Nathan does that very well," he added. Australia's squad for Perth Test: Pat Cummins (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitch Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc

Which players can SRH target with Rs 45 crore budget



will try to recreate their success mantra once again. SRH have majorly taken care of their batting by keeping hold of Heinrich Klaasen, Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, who scored the majority of their runs last season. They have, of course, retained their captain - Pat Cummins, who agreed to let go of the top retention spot for Klaasen by lowering his salary.

The final retention came in the form of Nitish Kumar Reddy, who impressed the fans and the selectors with his lower-order batting and fast bowling in the previous season. Essentially, what SRH have done is that they have taken care of nearly 15 overs of batting, and at least 6 overs of bowling in the next season. Which means that the team will need to find key components for important phases of the game - such as - death bowling, spin bowling, and middle order batting. SRH's LACK OF SPINNER in the 2024 season, SRH's biggest issue was the lack of an influential spinner. While Shahbaz Ahmed did well by picking up 7 wickets and conceding just below 10 RPO, SRH would ideally like to do better in that department. One of the main reasons for SRH's struggle was Wanindu Hasaranga pulling out of the competition at the last minute, which forced the team to make key changes to their combination. One of SRH's major focusses will be in this region and do not be surprised if they manage to splurge a decent amount of money, either on an Indian spinner or on an overseas spinner who can be handy with the bat. With Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Heinrich Klaasen, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Pat Cummins being retained, SRH need to fill 6 spots in their playing XI.

Considering that the budget is Rs 45 crore, needed to fill a minimum of 13 spots in the squad, here are the top players (6) that SRH can target in this IPL mega-auction. The No.3 and No.4 are key positions for any IPL team. Given the argument is that SRH will splurge money in the spin department, it is highly unlikely that SRH will be able to bag an Indian big name. In that case, SRH can look at players like Venkatesh Iyer and Nehal Wadhwa, who are not at the top tier in the Indian cricketing ecosystem, but are not far away from it either. If SRH can bag Wadhwa for a reasonable amount of money, they might be able to bag someone like Venkatesh Iyer, who won the IPL title for KKR last season. SRH have a fast-bowling all-rounder in Nitish Reddy. They might want to find a spin-bowling all-rounder of Indian origin. SRH had Shahbaz Ahmed, Abdul Samad and Washington Sundar with them last season, and it is possible that they buy back at least two of them.

OVERSEAS SPINNER The gap left by the exit of Rashid Khan is one of the biggest in world cricket. SRH tried to solve it by adding Hasaranga last season, but he opted out due to injury. SRH can likely target Hasaranga in the mega-auction once again, and maybe try their luck at finding Rachin Ravindra, who can be fairly handy with the ball as well. INDIAN BOWLING CORE The department that SRH will need to work the most is an Indian bowling core. SRH have released all of their specialist Indian bowlers and might want to either use an RTM card on straight-up buy back a few of them. SRH might try to hunt for Mohammed Siraj in the auction, given he has been released by Royal Challengers Bengaluru and might look for a new home. SRH can call-upon the hometown hero and give him the new ball alongside Pat Cummins... maybe?

Shaheen Afridi replaces Keshav Maharaj at top spot in ICC ODI bowling rankings

GNS News Agency, Nov 15

Star Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Afridi has replaced South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj at the top of the ICC ODI bowling rankings. Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Afridi has become the new number-one ranked bowler in the ODI series replacing South Africa's Keshav Maharaj at the top of the list. Afridi had a brilliant series against Australia as he finished as the second-highest wicket-taker with eight wickets to his name from three matches at an average of 12.62 and an economy of 3.76. Following his sensational show, Afridi climbed three spots in the rankings to take the top spot having 696 ratings to his name while Maharaj dropped down to third having 674 ratings to his name. Afridi has also held the number one spot previously as he held the spot midway of the ODI World Cup 2023.

Afridi's ascent to the number one rank also means that Pakistan players now hold the top spot in both bowling and batting rankings with Babar Azam already sitting comfortably on the top of batting rankings with 825 ratings to his name. Apart from him, his teammate Haris Rauf has also climbed 14 places after his Player of the Series performance against Australia. Rauf scalped ten wickets from three matches at an average of 12 and an economy of 5. During the series, the speedster also registered his maiden five-wicket haul in ODIs and played a key role in his team's first ODI series win in Australia since 2002.

Indians rise in T20I Players' rankings In the T20I



rankings, Phil Salt (second), Jos Buttler (sixth) and Nicholas Pooran (10th) all gained one place courtesy of their stellar performances in the ongoing T20I series between England and West Indies. India wicketkeeper batter Sanju Samson has also jumped a whopping 27 places to be at 39th spot after his century in the first T20I vs South Africa.

In terms of T20I bowlers, Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga has jumped four spots to occupy the second position with 696 ratings. Apart from him, West Indies' Akeal Hosein (third) and India's Ravi Bishnoi (seventh) have also gained one place each. India wrist spinner Varun Chakravarthy has also entered into the top 100 bowlers to be at 64th after his remarkable performance in the first two T20Is vs South Africa where he scalped eight wickets including a five-wicket haul in the 2nd T20I.

Above my pay grade: Josh Inglis on Australia naming 'B' side vs Pakistan in T20Is

Josh Inglis didn't find it fair to call Australia's T20I squad vs Pakistan as 'B side' as he realised the scheduling of other matches as well. Inglis will lead Australia in the 3-match T20Is vs Pakistan. Australia's stand-in T20I captain Josh Inglis opened up about the criticism over the management announcing a second string squad for the T20I series vs Pakistan. Inglis said that certain decisions are 'above his pay-grade' and highlighted that certain players were needed for the other format as well, looking at the scheduling. However, he did not find it fair to call the squad 'Australia-B' team. This comes after the first-choice players were not included in the T20I squad as they prepare for the upcoming Border Gavaskar Trophy series. "I don't think it's very fair to say that, but we know how challenging the schedule is. There's always series overlapping where players are used (in different) formats. There are decisions to be made. That's above my pay grade, thankfully," Inglis said ahead of the first T20I in Brisbane. Australian team face backlash

Inglis was handed over the captaincy duties in the absence of Mitchell Marsh, who is currently on paternity leave. He captained the ODI side in the 3rd match vs

Pakistan, which the hosts lost by 8 wickets. Pakistan won the series decider as they clinched an ODI series victory on Australian soil after 22 years. Inglis admitted that Australia's batting did not perform well in ODIs and aimed to correct the errors in the shortest format of the game. "There were big losses, and typically not something that we're very used to. You've got to be honest, that batting group didn't score enough runs and that's on us to rectify that this week," Inglis said in the same interview.

The Australian team faced backlash for resting key players in the final ODI vs Pakistan. However, Inglis said that Australia are not taking Pakistan lightly and realise that they are a good side. "Everyone's got their methods and how they go about it. It's just about bringing them up this week, and let's forget about what's happened before. Just attack it head on and keep backing yourself (but) we've seen how good a side this (Pakistan) team is and we don't take any team we come against lightly," he added. Sean Abbott, Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa

Rajpal Yadav was sure Ram Gopal Varma was going to fire him for crossing the line in front of Ajay Devgn, Manisha Koirala



Actor Rajpal Yadav gained recognition after appearing in a small part in the 1999 film Shool. But, it was only after his 2000 film Jungle that his career trajectory truly changed. Jungle continued his collaboration with filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma, who went on to cast him in Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya, and Company, among others. In a new interview, Rajpal Yadav recalled an interesting anecdote from the sets of Company, when he thought that he would be removed from the film for crossing a line. Speaking to Rajshri Unplugged, Rajpal Yadav said, "We were shooting for Company in Hong Kong. This was kind of my first professional tour. We were sitting on the terrace of InterContinental. Ram Gopal Varma has this habit of pulling people's leg. He randomly told me, 'Rajpal, now that you have become a star, you won't sign a film with us.' I was like, 'What?'. He repeated himself. I was like, 'Sir, you were the one who gave me Jungle, you are the one who gave me Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya and now you

have also cast me in Company. And I am very sure that if ever you will come across a script that will fit me as its lead, you will definitely offer it to me."

He added, "After this statement, everybody went quiet. Ajay Devgn, Manisha Koirala, Vivek Oberoi, Antara Mali, all of them were sitting there with us. Nobody spoke a word for a while. Sometime later, Manisha said, 'I like his confidence.'" "At this point, the cameraman came and said, 'Sir, shot is ready.' All this while, they were joking, and after my statement, they all became serious. I got scared. I thought I crossed the line. I was even wondering if I'd be removed from the film. I started overthinking, 'Why did I end up saying I want to be the main lead? I am a supporting actor,'" said Rajpal Yadav. Rajpal continued, "Nobody spoke of it that night. The next day, Ram Gopal Varma was shooting at the airport, he saw me and said, 'Rajpal, come, come', I thought this was it, he is firing me. I went to him. He told me, 'Rajpal, I couldn't sleep the whole night due to your confidence. Can you suggest some scripts to me?' This was the happiest day of my life and I went behind the airport near the smoking zone and silently screamed in happiness." After this, Rajpal went to Canada to shoot for The Hero for two months. After Company released, the actor called up Ram Gopal Varma. Recalling his call with the filmmaker, Rajpal Yadav said, "He simply asked, 'Where are you?' I said, 'I am in Canada'. He then asked when I would return, and I told him. Soon after I returned to India, I didn't care to rest, I went and met him at Filmistan, where they were shooting for Road. As soon as I met him, Ram Gopal Varma told me, 'We are making a film, Main Madhuri Dixit Banna Chahhti Hu, and Chandan Arora will direct. You and Antra Mali will star in the film."

Vikrant Massey opens up about inter-faith household, says he had a naamkaran ceremony for son Vardaan: 'No one particular religion is followed'

Actor Vikrant Massey, who will soon be seen in The Sabarmati Report, recently opened up about the many different religions that are practiced in his house. Vikrant shared that he grew up in a secular household because of his Christian father and Sikh mother, and his brother, who converted to Islam. He also spoke about his wife, who is a Hindu, and shared that he has a temple in his house.

Talking to Sushant Sinha on his YouTube channel, Vikrant said, "Our family celebrates everything very proudly. My parents live with me and my wife. My wife is a Rajput Thakur. If you look at it from the point of view of religion, we believe in everything. We go and celebrate Eid at our friends' houses, we celebrate Christmas with dad. Now Gurupurab is coming up so we will celebrate that as well because I believe this is real India." He then added that he has always been taught that "Hindu Muslim Sikh Isaaayi, sabhi bhai bhai and that value system exists in my house." He said that his extended family is also religiously diverse. "Even in my extended family, my maasi, who is a Sikh, is married to a Muslim man. My cousin is married to a Gujarati man. I have married a Rajput Thakur, so ours is a secular family," he said. Vikrant then mentioned that they conducted a naamkaran ceremony for their son Vardaan. "My son's name is Vardaan. We had a naamkaran ceremony for him. We go to a temple. Our house has a temple so there is no one particular religion that is followed," he said.

Vikrant had previously shared that his brother converted to Islam when he was 17. In a chat with Unfiltered by Samdish, he said, "My brother's name is Moeen, I am



called Vikrant. You'd wonder why the name Moeen? He converted to Islam, my family let him change his religion. They said, 'Beta, if you find satisfaction this, then go ahead.' He converted at the age of 17, it is a big step. My mother is Sikhni, my father is church-going Christian, he goes to church twice a week. From a young age, I have seen a lot of arguments related to religion and spirituality."

'It would be shocking if Govinda arrived on time, but he never gave me such shocks': Anees Bazmee opens up about dealing with actor's tardiness



Anees Bazmee has directed Salman Khan in several films such as No Entry, Ready, and more, and has worked as a screenwriter on iconic Govinda hits such as Shola Aur Shabnam, Deewana Mastana, and Raja Babu. In a recent conversation, Anees opened up about how he deals with the stars' habit of often arriving late

on set, and how he manages to work around it.

Speaking with Mashable India, Anees explained that, given his long experience working with both Salman and Govinda, he doesn't expect them to be punctual. Instead, he adjusts his schedule accordingly. He shared, "You should understand the working style of the people you are collaborating with.

If that suits you, then you work with them. If it doesn't, then don't work with them." He further elaborated on his approach with Govinda, "It isn't news or a shock to me that Govinda will come late. I will get a shock if he comes on time, and he doesn't give me those kinds of shocks. So, since I know that he will come at 12 pm for a 9 am shoot, I complete other

tasks by then so that I don't waste my time. Tuning with the actor is very important."

Many actors have spoken about Govinda's reputation for arriving hours late on set, sometimes even missing work for days. In an earlier chat with the YouTube channel Reviewron Ronak Kotecha, producer Vashu Bhagnani recalled an incident from Hero No. 1 where the entire crew, consisting of 75 people, had to sit idle in Switzerland for three days because Govinda had not even arrived in the country. The team had been waiting for him to show up, but after three days of delays, producer Vashu Bhagnani made a call to Govinda, expressing frustration. He said, "I called him and asked, 'If you are not going to come, then we will come back.' He got upset and said I am coming." Despite the delay, Vashu noted that when Govinda did arrive, he was incredibly efficient with his work, managing to complete 70 percent of the song in just one day.

Zero Se Restart teaser: Vidhu Vinod Chopra's 12th Fail documentary invites us to pause and reflect on life choices



Zero Se Restart teaser: The promo video opens with a black screen, counting down from 20 seconds, as a voiceover invites the audience to recall the day they first envisioned their dreams. Zero Se Restart teaser: The new film delves into the making of Vidhu Vinod Chopra's 12th Fail. Zero Se Restart teaser: A year after the massive success of his biographical drama 12th Fail, filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra has unveiled the teaser of Zero Se Restart, a film that delves into the making of the 2023 superhit. The 125-second teaser poses significant questions to viewers, urging them to pause and reflect on whether they are truly on the path they envisioned as children.

The promo video opens with a black screen, count-

ing down from 20 seconds, as a voiceover invites the audience to recall the day they first envisioned their dreams. He then asks if, when telling their mothers of dreams to become a movie star, doctor, engineer or IAS officer, if they also ever mentioned wanting to sell tobacco to the poor, rob patients and get rich by selling bogus medicines, mix sand into cement and make millions. "Such thoughts would have never crossed your minds," the voice remarks pointedly.

As images fill the screen, we see a crowd of young people anxiously waiting outside a gate to see their exam results on the notice boards. Among them, the faces of Manoj Kumar Sharma (played by Vikrant Massey) and Shradha Joshi (Medha Shankar) also appear. "Let's go back to zero again and meet our lost selves," the voiceover says, as Manoj and Shradha break down in relief and joy after passing the civil services exam. The teaser concludes with Vidhu joining a group of students in celebration. "Each one of us has a 'zero' moment – a point where we truly began, filled with innocence and pure ambition. Let's all head back and reconnect with our purest selves," reads the teaser description on YouTube. Produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra himself, Zero Se Restart has been directed by Jaskunwar Singh Kohli, with music and lyrics by Shantanu Moitra and Swanand Kirkire, respectively.

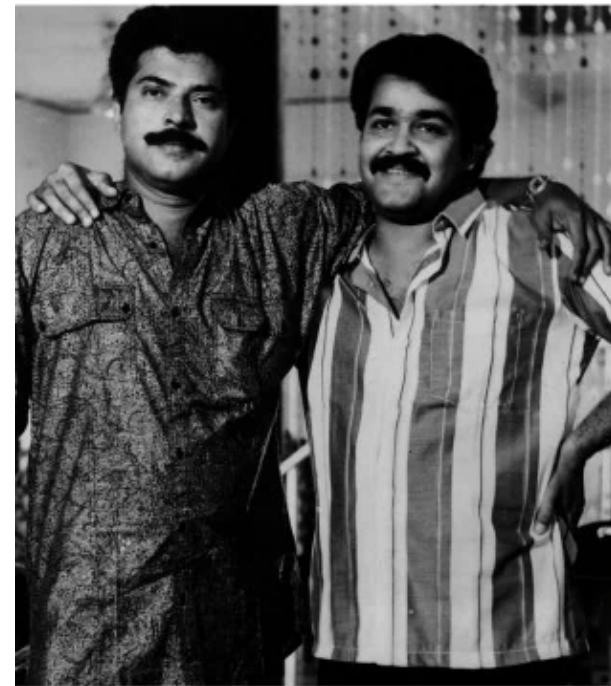
Also starring Anant V Joshi, Anshumaan Pushkar, Priyanshu Chatterjee and Geeta Aggarwal Sharma, 12th Fail was adapted from Anurag Pathak's 2019 non-fiction book of the same title about Manoj Kumar Sharma, who rose from extreme poverty to become an IPS officer. While Zero Se Restart will have its world premiere at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on November 21, the movie will have its theatrical release on December 13. In her review of 12th Fail last year, SCREEN's Shubhra Gupta wrote, "Vikrant Massey-starrer cleaves close to ground reality, with characters that makes you feel that they've wandered off the street, dishing out life-lessons laced with dollops of inspiration."

When Mammootty sensed that Mohanlal would become a threat to him; warned his friend Sreenivasan: 'We should be cautious'

Two of the most revered actors in Indian cinema, Mammootty and Mohanlal, have dominated the Malayalam film industry for nearly four decades. Both entered the industry as complete outsiders, relying solely on hard work to make their mark, and their powerful performances have left a lasting impact on audiences, earning them numerous accolades, including multiple National Film Awards for Best Actor. While Mammootty began his career with supporting roles, Mohanlal often played antagonist characters in his early days. Yet, both seized every opportunity to rise through the ranks. Mammootty's good looks soon helped him secure lead roles, but Mohanlal's journey to the top took a bit longer, during which he accepted every role that came his way.

But did you know that Mammootty was among the first to foresee Mohanlal's eventual stardom? In fact, he confided in his friend, actor-filmmaker Sreenivasan, predicting that Mohanlal would soon be a formidable presence in the industry, emerging as a threat to him. During an episode of Kairali TV's Cheriya Sreeniyum Valiya Lokavum, Sreenivasan recounted this anecdote, emphasising Mammootty's foresight.

"That was when Mammootty was shining in hero roles. One day, at the New Woodlands Hotel in Chennai, he told me, 'We should be cautious of him.' I asked who he meant, and he replied, 'That Mohanlal. Not only will he become a hero soon, but he's likely to become a threat to me.' This was when Mohanlal was still playing villains. That's when Mammootty made this insightful remark." "On another day, while at the same hotel, Mammootty told me he wanted to visit the Navodaya Studio office. Since I was penniless and jobless, I tagged along. The best part of going somewhere with him was that he'd not only take care of lunch and tea but also slip me Rs 100-200 at night. If he didn't, I'd ask, and he'd give it to me," Sreenivasan shared. Kishkindha Kandanam OTT release date | Asif Ali, Apama Balamurali's blockbuster mystery drama to start streaming from this date "When we arrived at Navodaya's office, a young man suddenly jumped up from his chair, exclaiming, 'Mammothikka!' (a term of re-



spect combining 'Mammootty' and 'ikka,' which means 'elder brother'). I was taken aback by this lean, tall guy wearing glasses. I feared he might outshine me by showering Mammootty with affection, especially as it was lunch-time and I was starving," Sreenivasan quipped. He noted that the man seemed oblivious to him, speaking only to Mammootty non-stop. "When we stepped out, I asked Mammootty who that skinny guy was. Mammootty replied, 'Oh, I forgot to introduce him. He's talented in writing and well-read. He's a small genius and if he gets the right opportunities in Malayalam cinema, he'll shine. His name is... Priyadarshan.' Mammootty's predictions about both Mohanlal and Priyadarshan came true — he has such foresight," he concluded.

Rajkumar Santoshi 'mocked and laughed' at Aamir Khan's Raja Hindustani after working with him in Andaz Apna Apna

The Aamir Khan and Karisma Kapoor-starrer Raja Hindustani, directed by Dharmesh Darshan, was one of the biggest hits of 1996. Even before its release, the film had built considerable anticipation, given its popular music and the presence of two of the biggest movie stars of the time. It was expected to be a big hit. But, director Rajkumar Santoshi, who worked with Aamir on the film Andaz Apna Apna, wasn't exactly being supportive. In fact, as per director Dharmesh Darshan, Santoshi "mocked and laughed" at the film when he first watched it.

In a chat with Bollywood Hungama, Dharmesh said that Santoshi walked into a preview of the film along with 10 of his assistants, and they heckled throughout the screening. When Aamir was told that this happened, he almost did not believe it. "He came with 10 assistants, and they laughed and mocked the film. I went to Aamir Khan's house at night (and told him about the reaction). He replied, 'I don't believe it,'" he recalled. Darshan said that Santoshi later apologised to him but at that time, he was quite demoralised by his statements.

He explained that Santoshi's behaviour was probably because of the clash between Raja Hindustani and



Ghatak. "Santoshi's Ghatak (1996) was released just three days before Raja Hindustani. And by his own words, Raja Hindustani killed Ghatak," Dharmesh said, and added, "Ghatak is also a successful film. However, the expectations were huge as it was the coming together of Sunny Deol in an action role and Rajkumar Santoshi after Ghayal (1990).