

## Telangana to have State butterfly soon

Sangareddy: On the lines of the State bird, tree, flower and animal, Telangana will soon have a designated State butterfly as efforts towards this have begun recently. After much effort and deliberations by various organisations, a representation was recently submitted to Chief Wildlife Warden of Telangana Elusing Meru at Aranya Bhavan, requesting him to declare a State butterfly. The organisations have recommended to the Telangana government to declare one of three butterflies — the Indian Jezebel, Striped Tiger or Banded Peacock — as the State butterfly.

Singh assured the organisations' representatives that he would take it to the notice of the Ministry of Forests and Environment of Telangana to declare a State butterfly soon.

Representatives of the Butterfly Conservation Society (BCS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Moth Society, Wild Telangana and other organisations, with the support of some forest officials, have put in collective efforts to finalise these three butterflies. Though nothing has been decided so far, the officials were reportedly considering the Indian Jezebel as the State butterfly. India has 1,380 varieties of butterfly species, while the world has 17,000 butterfly species. Ten States have declared their State butterflies in India so far. However, efforts to declare a national butterfly have not yet reached the final stage. The Indian Jezebel, Krishna Peacock and Orange Oakleaf were in contention for the national butterfly status.



## Three sisters break barriers, become police constables in Telangana



Siddipet: Three sisters from one family in Balaji Nagar in Yaprul have become police constables. The younger two of the three sisters completed their 9-month training in Warangal on Wednesday. The parents Mittapalli Tulasiraam, who was into scrap business, and Madhavi, had three daughters Alekhya, Niharika and Nikhitha. The couple got their elder daughter Alekhya married to constable Malluri Sravan Kumar in 2014. Inspired by her husband, Alekhya wrote the constable recruitment test in 2020 and cracked it. While Sravan was working at Narayanguda police station, Alekhya was working as a constable at Tukaram Gate police station now. Inspired by their sister's

success, Niharika and Nikhitha also prepared for the constable examination and cracked it last year. While Niharika got a civil constable job, Nikhitha got a constable (AR) job. Their parents were on cloud nine after all the three of their daughters landed jobs in the police department.

While Alekhya and Nikhitha completed graduation in B.Com Computers, Niharika was pursuing an MBA. The three are now aiming to crack the SI recruitment examination. Speaking to Telangana Today, Tulasiram said he had struggled all his life to lead a decent life. However, he was very happy that his three daughters were in a respectable position.

## This building in Hyderabad is on the list of 'Weirdest Looking Buildings from Around the World'



Hyderabad: Adding another feather to the cap, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) building in Hyderabad, colloquially known as 'The Fish Building', has

made it to the list of 'The Weirdest Looking Buildings from Around the World'. Located in the heart of the city, the aquatic structure is the headquarters of the NFDB and is a unique example of mimetic or novelty architecture. The gigantic fish building is constructed with a metallic exterior along with fins and bright eyes that shine at night. The building is lit with blue spotlights at night, creating an impressive illusion that the fish is swimming through the city. Though the shape

of the building received mixed reactions from the public upon its construction, the unique architecture has become a landmark, standing out for its quirky design that aligns perfectly with its purpose. The other notable landmark buildings that have found its place on the list are the Longaberger basket building in Ohio, Crooked House in Poland, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood in Florida, and Half House in Canada, among others.

## FedEx courier scam: Hyderabad man loses Rs 10 Lakh

Hyderabad: A 44-year-old private employee from the city was duped of Rs 10 lakh by cyber fraudsters in the guise of FedEx courier services. As per available information, the victim received call from the scammer who claimed to be an executive from FedEx

courier services.

The caller had access to the victim's Aadhaar and phone number and claimed that a parcel containing 2 kg of clothes and 150 strips of LSD had been booked from Mumbai to Singapore.

# Hasina is continuing her political activities from India; Delhi must return her to face trial: Bangladesh Chief Advisor Yunus

Bangladesh will pursue the extradition of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from India, says Chief Advisor of its Interim Government Muhammad Yunus, admitting however that he had no objection to her party the Awami League contesting in elections. In an exclusive interview with The Hindu at his residence in Dhaka, Mr. Yunus spelt out his vision for ties with India and plans for reform. He defended his government's record in 100 days since it was formed and called reports over the rise of radicalism and safety of the nation's Hindus and other minorities "propaganda", which has led to sharp criticism from India and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump. You have finished 100 days as the chief advisor of the interim government in Bangladesh. How would you grade your government on two major issues- law and order and the economy? Well, we are still improving on law and order, but I wouldn't say we have got an 'A' yet. On the other issue- I'll say it's A-plus because we inherited a shattered economy. All financial institutions and banking systems nearly collapsed. It was a crazy banking system. Bad loans, 60% non-repayment. A large number of banks don't know how to deal with each other, how to deal with the customers, and so on. So we had an almost dysfunctional financial system. So from there, we built it up, making the banking system function again. It's not perfect yet, but they're moving forward. Our foreign exchange reserves went down as we took over responsibility, but now have been growing month on month for the past 100 days. We were able to make our debt payments and that has improved our international image. We are trying to tame inflation down to a level where it's tolerable. Best of all, we have gotten a tremendous amount of global support—the international community is doing business with us, assuring us of further collaboration opening the door for investments and so on. When I was in the United Nations, at the General Assembly meeting, I met so many heads of government, including President Biden and the head of the President of the European Union, and many more, who promised us financial support and also political support. We have officials who are ready to solve the problems for investors quickly so that they are not caught up in the bureaucratic process of Bangladesh, a one-stop service where you can get things done. So I would say the country is moving in a very positive way.

You've certainly drawn a very, positive picture. But are you worried about the future—the election of Donald Trump in the U.S., for example, who issued a very strong statement criticising Bangladesh? How confident are you that international support will continue with the new U.S. administration? I don't think President Trump has made any statement about Bangladesh. He has, on the state of minorities... Well, that is now about Bangladesh, and on minorities, he is probably not well informed. It's a propaganda that's going on around the world. But when he comes to the reality of dealing with Bangladesh, Mr. Trump will be surprised at how different Bangladesh is from the impression he has been given. I don't think just because there's a new president in the U.S. means that everything will change. Foreign policies and country-by-country relationships don't usually change because of a change in the President. Also, if there is a change in

Trump 2.0, let us remember there is also a Bangladesh 2.0 now, what we call new Bangladesh. So we will wait, and if U.S. representatives come and check with us, and if our economy is doing well, they'll be very much interested. They are the largest government buyers from Bangladesh, so from our side, it's a very good relationship that we've built over years. Our hope is that it will be strengthened. You referred to what Mr. Trump said as propaganda- but it's not just him. The Indian government has put out a number of statements expressing concern about how Hindus are being targeted, homes burnt, killings in certain cases, even suspected rape. How do you respond to that? In my first phone call with Prime Minister Modi [On August 16], that's precisely what he said, that minorities are being treated badly in Bangladesh and so on. I told him, very clearly, that it's propaganda. After many reporters came here, there were some reports about some tensions, but not in the way that's been built up in the media.

Who do you think is behind it then?

I don't know, but this propaganda doesn't fit into the reality. A very serious group of people have gone into all the cases, one by one... I have spoken to members of the minority community. They do feel scared. They do feel targeted. There are videos out on Facebook, on social media talking about the fact that Bangladesh will be a Muslim country. We do hear about people in positions of power now talking about changing the constitution to take secularism out of it. There is a sense that what is coming to Bangladesh next, and through your own government, is a much more radical form of Islam than we have seen in Bangladesh in the last 16 years. Is there something that your government can do to reassure these communities? Does this [image] fit me? Every single member of the cabinet either is a human rights activist who has suffered themselves, or an environmental activist, or a gender activist or other activist. So these are all activist people. If you say the words that you said in front of them, they will be shouting at you. Go through the lives of each one of the Cabinet members. So you're saying no one in your cabinet would push for an Islamist agenda. Look at the life stories of each one of them. These are very dedicated people. There are women activists. If you think they are the ones who will be championing the kind of rule that you're describing. There are other concerns— According to figures released by Human Rights Group Adhikar— 841 people were injured in political violence, and eight died in extra-judicial killings just in September. We hear many journalists have had their accreditations cancelled... some would say your government is continuing the behaviour of the past. Let people judge, and compare what this government has done, and what the other government has done. I'm not going to debate. We have ensured press freedom. There's no doubt about it. The accreditation law was not made by us. We just applied it, and you can debate about it, whether it is a correct application. I would like to change that law. That was a law which belonged to some other kind of regime.

Another worry is that people associated with the previous government will be targeted for political revenge. Are there mechanisms

you can put in place to ensure that doesn't happen? I would say let the rule of law prevail. That's it. You have set up so many commissions for reform— why not a commission on minority rights? We do have a commission on human rights— and why should minorities go separately? I said [to the minority groups], you are a citizen of the country. You have every right guaranteed by the Constitution. We all want human rights to be established and all the rights that the Constitution gives us. See who is on our Constitution commission, and who heads it (U.S.-based academic Ali Riaz) and then try to reconcile with what you are saying... otherwise this is all propaganda.

If it is believed in a country like India, that's right next door, or in the United States, has your government then failed to convince people it is propaganda? Maybe we don't have that kind of clout or money power to convince the world otherwise. You have not so far met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, although you have spoken on the telephone... Yes, that's something that hasn't happened yet. When I came to the UN General Assembly, Mr. Modi had left. I attended the CoP in Baku, but he wasn't there, BIMSTEC [in Thailand] was cancelled, and neither of us travelled for the Commonwealth CHOGM meet. But that doesn't mean that we are not going to meet. We are not only neighbours, history has brought us together. Geography has brought us together. Linguistic relationships have brought us together. Cultural links bring us together. From day one, I have proposed to PM Modi to revive the SAARC. Why should it be a dead body? I even suggested that all SAARC leaders could meet in New York, just for five minutes to send out the message that we are still there.

India and Bangladesh now cooperate on BIMSTEC, BBIN. So why SAARC? Why not SAARC? The more friends and relationships we can make, the better.

Because with SAARC, India and Pakistan have what seems to be irreconcilable differences... SAARC must go on... It shouldn't be that the whole group disappears only because of one relationship between two countries. We can pass a resolution, suspend any India-Pakistan issues from the agenda, but we can't end SAARC. Was it then a mistake for Bangladesh in 2016 to support India in suspending SAARC until terrorism ends? If we put such conditions, no relationship will ever exist. Why should all other South Asian countries suffer because of the relationship between two member countries? When it comes to the bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh, how was it affected by the events of August 5? Was it a blow? Why should it be? India should be celebrating as a friendly country that Bangladesh was liberated from a rule where people suffered, so many were killed, so many disappeared, and so many institutions were destroyed. It should join our young people and celebrate together, like many other nations do. You have said that Ms. Hasina's presence in India since August 5 poses difficulties for ties... [Former PM Hasina's] living in India, at least for the time being, is not a problem. Talking to Bangladesh is the problem. She is talking to Bangladeshi people, and it is political. She is continuing her political activities, which is the problem.



In what way? She is asking for them to come out and demonstrate on the streets of Dhaka and other cities, and her audio is being circulated, telling them to hold pictures of [U.S. President-elect] Donald Trump [as shields], so that if the police stop them, they will say the Bangladesh government is against the U.S. This is interfering with the internal and external matters of another country. Your government has approached Interpol with a request to bring her back- why not request India directly? There are bilateral mechanisms to invoke. We will use all legal means to get her back. And yet, your government has not actually asked for an extradition. There's an extradition treaty. I think there are legal steps which we are taking towards that, but we have not come to that stage yet. What if India does not accept the request, invoking clauses on political prosecutions? Are you saying India would violate the treaty? Yes, there are such clauses, but if the Indian government were to use them to keep [Ms. Hasina] there, that will not make a very happy relationship between us. Our interim government is very short-lived, so it may not be able to settle everything between Bangladesh and India. But this will not be forgiven by any government that comes after us. Do you foresee India-Bangladesh ties moving smoothly on other issues? Recently we have seen some initiatives on energy connectivity, trade connectivity etc. Our dream is imagining a relationship like the European Union [with freedom of movement and trade]. That's the direction we want to go. What you mentioned are good signs and the direction we would like to move in, but far away from what we want to achieve, which is union of very close ties. We are born to be together. We are twins. How "short lived" is your government? When do you foresee elections? When we were given the responsibility, it was made clear to us, that we wouldn't just be a caretaker government, that comes in, holds an election and hands over. We were told that our major responsibility is reform for Bangladesh, 2.0. We didn't want to stay for long, so we came up with this formulation. The election process began right from day one, as a separate process, and the other process of reforms will move in parallel. Now, first of all, we have created the Election Commission, which is a long, drawn process, and we expect to announce in the coming weeks, the chief election commissioners who will form an independent entity to hold elections. But they cannot hold an election until some other reforms happen- the Commission for constitutional reform will need to decide on whether we will have a bicameral parliament, whether will Bangladesh have proportional representation, terms and term limits and so on. I would say the train for elections has left the station, but along the way, we have to put the rail down in which direction it will go and that's why we have to go back to the reform commissions.

# OPPO Find X8 Series Launched in India: Redefines Flagship Excellence with Cutting-Edge Innovation

Hyderabad : OPPO India announces the launch of OPPO Find X8 Series in India today. A testament to OPPO's legacy of innovation, the Find X8 Series boasts the flagship MediaTek Dimensity 9400 SoC, a path-breaking quad-camera system with two telephoto snappers, a high-density quick-charging Silicon Carbide battery, and ColorOS 15 (based on Android 15) with a host of AI features for photography and productivity – all in an IP68 and IP69-rated durable yet light-weight build. The series comprises Find X8 Pro, priced at INR 99,999 for 16GB RAM + 512GB storage, and the standard Find X8 in two storage variants: 12GB + 256GB at INR 69,999 and 16GB + 512GB at INR 79,999. All devices will be available from 3rd December on the OPPO e-store, Flipkart, and across mainline retail outlets. "With the Find X8 Series, OPPO has redefined what smartphones can achieve. The Find X8 and Find X8 Pro blend elegance with cutting-edge engineering to deliver ultra-grade cameras for professional-level photography, ultra-long-lasting battery life for uninterrupted use, and ultra-powerful performance to handle the most demanding tasks with ease," said Pete Lau, SVP and Chief Product Officer, OPPO.

"All these breakthroughs are powered by the advanced ColorOS 15 with OPPO AI that transform everyday tasks into seamless and intuitive experiences. Our partnerships with industry leaders have ensured the Find X8 Series represents the pinnacle of technology and craftsmanship. Together, these innovations establish the Find X8 Series as the new global benchmark for smartphone excellence, setting a higher standard for what

users can expect from their devices." Camera Innovation: A Complete Flagship Experience

The Find X8 flagship series features a quad-camera system with dual telephoto cameras. The Pro model boasts an LYT808 primary sensor, a 50MP LYT600 3x Telephoto sensor with an innovative Triple Prism Lens architecture, a revolutionary 50MP IMX858 6x Periscope Telephoto sensor and a 50MP 120° JN5 Ultra-Wide Camera. The innovative Triple Prism Lens architecture on the 3X camera—also found on the standard Find X8—allows OPPO to fit dual telephoto camera in a slim form factor for DSLR-like optical zoom capabilities without compromising the sleek design.

OPPO Find X8 Pro's dual-telephoto cameras with Triple Prism Lens architecture (up) and Periscope Lens (down) Advanced 2-DOL HDR and OPPO's HyperTone Image Engine further elevate the camera's performance by adjusting highlights and mid-tones on RAW sensor data to preserve details across highlights and shadows—even in challenging lighting conditions—to ensure every image is razor sharp, looks natural, and vivid. The colours in photographs are fine-tuned to Hasselblad colour science, while video recording meets the high standards of Dolby Vision to make the Find X8 Series a dream for creators. The AI-backed Telescope Zoom feature offers seamless zoom up to 120x. Between 10x-20x, OPPO deploys AI-powered algorithms to enhance image resolution significantly. At the 20x-60x stage, the camera leverages a Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) model that fur-



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ther enhances detail by improving colour tones, textures, and clarity. At 60x-120x, a powerful AI-powered generative model can reconstruct images at the pixel level. This allows for exceptional clarity and makes

long-distance photography effortless and precise.

Whether capturing a close-up at a concert or a wildlife scene from afar, the Find X8 Series ensures stunning, realistic results.

## Visit to Telangana of Union minister of state smt.Nimuben Bambhaniya: Review of Central Schemes and Developmental Efforts



Telangana, November 20, 2024: Hon'ble Minister of State Smt. Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya visited various regions of Telangana today to review ongoing developmental schemes in the state. She was warmly welcomed at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad, by represen-

tatives of FCI, CWC, BIS, NCCF, and members of the Koli community. At the Government Circuit House in Jayashankar Bhupalpally, she was accorded a Guard of Honour, followed by discussions with officials regarding the progress and implementation of the Aspirational District

program. Subsequently, a crucial review meeting was conducted with district officials at IDOC, focusing on the effective implementation of central government schemes and policies. Smt. Bambhaniya visited a medical camp and stalls promoting nutrition campaigns, women entrepreneurship, agricultural products, and fisheries in Chelapur village. She interacted with beneficiaries, learn-

ing about their enthusiasm and experiences with the schemes. She then visited the millet processing unit in Chelapur village, engaging with workers about their processes and insights. Addressing the public under the Aspirational District Programme, the Hon'ble Minister emphasized the significance of millets, agricultural empowerment, and the welfare schemes of the central government.

## Yantra-24 project expo at SR University showcases innovation and talent

Hanmakonda: Yantra-24 project expo, an event aimed at bringing out student innovation was organised at SR University, Hasanaparthy mandal in the district on Thursday. The expo featured an impressive display of creativity and technological advancements by students from various engineering disciplines. Deputy General Manager of Ultratech Cements N. Srinivasa Rao inaugurated the event. Addressing the students he highlighted the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence in engineering technologies and underscored the importance of project expos in fostering creativity and exposing students to emerging technologies. The university Vice Chancellor,

Dr. Deepak Garg emphasised the value of feedback from industry experts in shaping innovative projects. He encouraged students to utilise such events to refine their ideas and align them with real-world requirements. The expo witnessed active participation from students and faculty across multiple departments. Projects were reviewed by a panel of experts, who offered valuable insights and guidance.

The top projects were presented with awards. The event organising secretary Dr. AVV Sudhakar, coordinator Dr. Ravichander, registrar Dr. R. Archana Reddy, dean (Faculty) Dr. V. Mahesh and others were present.

# Telangana High Court again raps cops for illegalities in Patnam Narender Reddy arrest



Hyderabad: Justice K. Lakshman of the Telangana High Court on Thursday came down heavily on the State police for relying on allegations that were “not part of the reasons and grounds mentioned in the remand report” for arresting former Kodangal MLA Patnam Narender Reddy of the BRS. The Judge faulted the investigation officer for irregularities in the arrest procedure and questioned how the petitioner’s release would affect the investigation process. “This court does not intend to interfere with the investigation, only the illegality in the arrest procedure is being looked into,” the judge said.

Public Prosecutor, Palle Nageshwar Rao, representing the Police Department produced before court the witness statements sought by the court. He said the con-

fession statements of the 21st and 22nd accused along with the call data records were the basis for implicating the MLA, the petitioner in the case, in the crime. The Public Prosecutor also handed over a pen drive to the court and stated that the video content would reveal the involvement of Reddy prior to and post the Lagacherla incident. Nageshwar Rao alleged that the videos would reveal Reddy provoking his associates to attack the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and district officials if they visited the village. He further stated that another FIR was registered prior to the incident on October 25. On enquiring about the said FIR with the public prosecutor, the Judge found that Reddy was not an accused in that FIR. The Judge wondered if a pen drive submitted in the court

hall without following procedure of filing a supporting affidavit could be relied. The Public Prosecutor then stood corrected and sought court permission to file the relevant affidavit for relying on the pen drive. The judge refused to play the content in the Court Hall and stated that he would consider the content in the pen drive after relevant procedure was followed. In sharp response to the allegation raised by the Public Prosecutor that Rs.10 crore was released by BRS working president KT Rama Rao for fighting legal cases in the incident, the Judge asked him to produce supporting material for such allegations. However, no such material was placed before the Court.

The Public Prosecutor informed the court that multiple applications were filed by Reddy and his wife, to which Justice Lakshman raised query as to what was the illegality in pursuing legal remedies including filing a bail application, seeking quash of remand, multiple FIRs and seeking suo moto contempt for violating Supreme Court guidelines on arrest. In support of his contention that procedure was followed, the Public Prosecutor referred to the arrest memo and pointed out two signatures at the same place and stated that they belonged to Reddy and his associate Saleem, who was informed about the arrest. The Judge remarked that this was sufficient enough to show that the arrest was illegal. Petitioner Counsel Gandra Mohan Rao also added that Reddy had already placed on record that his signatures were taken on empty papers before his arrest. Further the Public Prosecutor alleged that Accused No.2, a YouTube content creator was handpicked by Reddy to attack dis-

trict officials. He said the petitioner assured his associates that they were backed by BRS party leaders K. Chandrashekhara Rao and KT Rama Rao. The Judge quizzed the Public Prosecutor why such allegations raised before the court today were not part of the remand report which clearly assigns the reasons and grounds of arrest. As the Public Prosecutor requested the Court to consider the severity in the issue, the Judge commented: “The severity of the issue must be considered before the arrest, but not after the arrest.” The Judge conceded with the submissions made by Petitioner Counsel Mohan Rao that the arrest memo failed to properly document the time and place of the arrest. When the Public Prosecutor tried to convince the court that the investigating officer had followed the procedure and Reddy was arrested at his home, the Judge orally commented that “we were aware of the kind of investigation officers we have in the State”.

The Judge also referred to a murder case that occurred in Medak and how the investigating officer had tried to discard the dying declaration of the deceased. Even when this Court directed the Superintendent of Police to investigate the issue, the SP had questioned the doctor on issues unrelated to the doctor. “This shows the kind of IPS officers we have in the department,” he remarked. The court after hearing both sides at length reserved the case for orders. In a connected matter to the issue, a lunch motion was moved by Patnam Narendar Reddy challenging multiple FIRs. Justice B. Vijay Sen Reddy directed the High Court Registry to post the matter before the Judge dealing with MP and MLA cases.

## Oral contraceptives do not affect blood pressure during exercise in women



Chennai: Oral contraceptives do not increase the blood pressure response in women during large muscle exercise (like cycling or running), according to a study on Monday led by researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras. Oral contraceptives or birth control pills are taken by women to prevent pregnancy and reduce acne, menstrual cramps, and the risk of ova-

rian cysts. Although certain oral contraceptives are known to raise resting blood pressure, the exercise blood pressure response during intense exercises is not currently well understood. In addition, research has been ambiguous on whether hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle influence blood pressure. The researchers, including from the

University of Minnesota, US, found that both oral contraceptive use and general fluctuations in endogenous ovarian hormone (like estrogens) in young women (20-25 years of age), did not influence blood pressure.

The results were similar with lower body exercise and activation of skeletal muscle sensory neurons — known to contribute to exaggerated blood pressure responses in people with cardiovascular diseases. “The findings of this study have wide application and are important as it sheds light on the influence of oral contraceptives on blood pressure response to exercise in women,” said Dr. Ninitha A.J., Assistant Professor, Department of Biotechnology, IIT Madras. Exercise can acutely increase blood pressure due to increased sympathetic nerve activity (fight or flight) from skeletal muscle sensory neurons known as ‘Exercise Pressor Reflex’ (EPR).

The EPR results in an increase in blood flow from the heart to the skeletal muscle to meet the needs of the muscle. The EPR is known to be greater in males compared with premenopausal females and is also known to be exaggerated in people with cardiovas-

cular disease. Estrogens are cardioprotective, they reduce sympathetic activity and increase blood flow to the skeletal muscle via nitric oxide bioavailability. Thus, the researchers expected that during the ovulation phase of their menstrual cycle, when oestradiol peaks, women would have the lowest EPR compared with females during the early follicular phase (where oestradiol is the lowest) and with oral contraceptive use, which also results in low serum oestradiol levels. However, the researchers demonstrated that regardless of the phase of the menstrual cycle or oral contraceptive use, the EPR was similar in the women. This suggests that oral contraceptives do not increase the blood pressure response in women more so than in those who do not use oral contraceptives, revealed the findings, published in the reputed peer-reviewed journal American Journal of Physiology-Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology. “The next step of this work is to determine if the EPR is a contributing factor to the cardiovascular risk in menopausal females,” said Dr. Manda Keller Ross, Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota.

# Why Gautam Adani was indicted in the U.S. over alleged \$250mn bribery scheme?

Federal prosecutors in New York on Thursday (November 21, 2024) indicted Adani Group Chairman Gautam S. Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani, and six others on multiple counts of fraud. The charges stem from an alleged multibillion-dollar scheme to bribe Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms on solar power contracts, which were projected to generate over \$2 billion in profits. "This indictment alleges schemes to pay over \$250 million in bribes to Indian government officials, to lie to investors and banks to raise billions of dollars, and to obstruct justice," a press release issued by the US Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York, said quoting U.S. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Lisa Miller. The defendants named in the case, alongside Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani (executive director of Adani Green Energy), include – Vneet Jaain, former CEO of Adani Green Energy; Ranjit Gupta, who served as CEO of Azure Power Global from 2019 to 2022; Rupesh Agarwal, who headed Azure Power Global from 2022 to 2023; Cyril Cabanes, former managing director of Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) which is also a majority stockholder of Azure Power; Saurabh Agarwal, former managing director of CDPQ India; and Deepak Malhotra, former executive of CDPQ. Solar bid at the heart of the indictment

A novel tender floated by the state-owned Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in 2019 forms the heart of the indictment that has accused the Adani Group Chairman and his associates of paying over \$250 million in bribes to Indian government officials. The manufacturing-linked solar tender was eventually awarded to Adani Green Energy and Azure Power with the former claiming in a press statement at the time that it had won "the world's largest solar award". According to the indictment, the \$6 billion investment was projected to yield over \$2 billion in post-tax profits over 20 years. However, the project encountered an unexpected setback — SECI was unable to sign power supply agreements (PSAs) with state electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) due to the "high energy prices". At this point, Adani Green executives allegedly bribed government officials in several states, including Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, and Jammu and Kashmir, to pressure their power distribution companies into agreeing to purchase solar power at above-market rates. The U.S. case is based on the premise that this is where the corruption took place, and that Adani Green failed to disclose this information to its investors in the U.S., constituting fraud under federal securities law. The U.S. prosecutors have further alleged that Gautam Adani personally met with an unnamed "high-ranking government official of Andhra Pradesh" in August 2021 to expedite the execution of a PSA between SECI and the State's DISCOMs, during which approximately ₹1,750 crore (85% of the alleged bribe) was purportedly offered to the official. The indictment accuses Adani and his associates of conspiring to bribe Indian officials to secure energy contracts in a purported violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Although enacted in 1977, the law has been more stringently enforced in recent decades resulting in substantial

finances for major companies, including Germany's Siemens, Brazil's state-owned Petrobras, and a subsidiary of Halliburton, the oil services giant. President-elect Donald J. Trump reportedly wanted to strike down the legislation in his first term since he considered it "unfair" to American companies. Another prominent critic of the law, Jay Clayton, whom Trump appointed as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, contended in a 2011 paper that U.S. anti-bribery policies disproportionately burdened American companies in international transactions, thereby undermining U.S. competitiveness.

The prosecutors have alleged that the defendants meticulously tracked their bribes and offers to Indian officials using messaging apps, phones, and PowerPoint presentations, often employing "code names" in their communications. It was further claimed that two of the defendants even engaged in discussions to delete "incriminating electronic materials, including emails, electronic messages and a PowerPoint analysis." The federal prosecutors have also accused the defendants of committing securities fraud and wire fraud to finance the operations of Adani Green Energy and its subsidiaries by concealing FCPA violations to secure over \$3 billion in bank loans from international financial institutions and U.S.-based asset management firms. "Gautam and Sagar Adani were engaged in the bribery scheme during a September 2021 note offering by Adani Green that raised \$750 million, including approximately \$175 million from U.S. investors. The Adani Green offering materials included statements about its anti-corruption and anti-bribery efforts that were materially false or misleading," the indictment said. Additionally, Adani and his associates have been accused of withholding information from investors regarding ongoing U.S. investigations into their business practices in 2023 and 2024.

Obstruction of justice Former employees of CDPQ — Cyril Cabanes, Saurabh Agarwal, and Deepak Malhotra — have been accused of obstructing an investigation into the bribery scheme by deleting emails and agreeing to provide false information to the U.S. government. In response to the indictment, CDPQ issued a statement saying, "CDPQ is aware of charges filed in the US against certain former employees. Those employees were all terminated in 2023 and CDPQ is co-operating with US authorities. In light of the pending cases, we have no further comment at this time." Civil lawsuit The US Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) has filed a parallel civil lawsuit against Adani and his associates "for conduct arising out of a massive bribery scheme". The complaint alleges that they engaged in a scheme that involved "paying or promising to pay the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to Indian government officials to secure their commitment to purchase energy at above-market rates". This was reportedly done while simultaneously raising \$175 million from U.S. investors, based on "materially false and misleading" statements. If proven, the charges could invite hefty financial penalties and a ban on the defendants from holding directorial or executive positions in companies that fall under US exchange regulations.



What happens next? The U.S. prosecutors have sought the forfeiture of properties or proceeds derived directly or indirectly as a result of the offences. The case will now proceed to the "arraignment" stage where the concerned judge will formally communicate the charges to the defendants and decide whether to grant bail or not. The defendants will then be required to enter a plea — either guilty or not guilty. If they plead not guilty, the case will move forward to a jury trial. However, there is also a possibility of a deal being struck between the Indian tycoon and U.S. authorities following which the billionaire could seek a dismissal of the indictment. As soon as news of the indictment broke on November 21, 2024, Adani Green Energy Ltd, the company at the heart of the allegations, cancelled a \$600 million bond sale, the

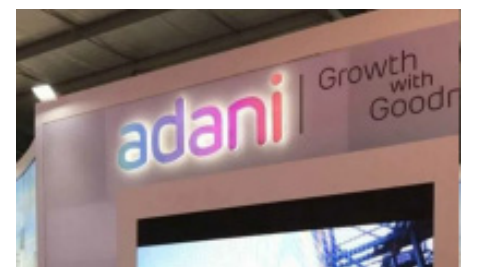
proceeds of which were intended to refinance a foreign-currency loan. Several Adani Group shares, including those of the flagship firm Adani Enterprises, also suffered massive losses and hit their lower circuits in early trade. An Adani Group spokesperson, however, dismissed the allegations as baseless, asserting that the conglomerate remains fully compliant with all applicable laws. In a notable fallout, Kenyan President William Ruto has announced the cancellation of a procurement process expected to hand control of the country's main airport to the Adani Group.

A 30-year, \$736-million public-private partnership deal the Kenyan energy ministry had signed with a unit of the Adani Group last month to construct power transmission lines has also been cancelled.

## After US indictment, Adani Group stocks shed Rs 2.45 lakh cr market value

New Delhi: After US prosecutors charged billionaire Gautam Adani over his role in an alleged years-long scheme to pay \$250 million bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms for solar power contracts, the Adani group stocks faced heavy drubbing during the morning trade on Thursday, with the combined market valuation of all the listed firms getting eroded by Rs 2.45 lakh crore. The stock of the group's flagship firm Adani Enterprises plunged 22.99 per cent, Adani Ports dived 20 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions tanked 20 per cent, Adani Green Energy plummeted 19.53 per cent and Adani Total Gas tumbled 18.14 per cent on the BSE. Shares of Adani Power slumped 17.79 per cent, Ambuja Cements cracked 17.59 per cent, ACC fell 14.54 per cent, NDTV dropped 14.37 per cent and Adani Wilmar declined 10 per cent. Some of the group firms also hit their lowest trading permissible limit for the day.

The combined market capitalisation (mcap) of all the ten listed group firms eroded by Rs 2,45,016.51 crore during the morning deals. In the equity market, the BSE benchmark Sensex traded 536.89 points lower at 77,041.49 and the NSE Nifty quoted 186.75 points down at 23,331.75. US prosecutors charged Adani, 62, his nephew Sagar and other defendants for paying over \$250 million in bribes between 2020 and 2024 to In-



dian government officials to win solar energy contracts on terms that could potentially bring in more than \$2 billion in profit.

This, they alleged, was concealed from the US banks and investors from whom the Adani Group raised billions of dollars for the project. US law allows pursuing foreign corruption allegations if they involve certain links to American investors or markets. The Adani group did not immediately respond to requests for comments. "The defendants orchestrated an elaborate scheme to bribe Indian government officials to secure contracts worth billions of dollars," Breon Peace, US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, which brought the case, said in a statement. Adani, chairman of the ports-to-energy Adani Group, his nephew Sagar R Adani, who is an executive director at the conglomerate's renewable energy arm Adani Green Energy Ltd, and its former CEO Vneet Jaain were charged with securities fraud.

# World Pickleball Championship: How a fledgling sport is scaling new heights

The World Pickleball Championship (WPC) concluded in Mumbai on Sunday. The five-day tournament, part of the global WPC Series that India hosted for the first time, had over 500 participants across various categories and levels (amateur and pro). There were picklers of all types — young, old, male, female — trying their chance at this event. However, for around 75 players, about one-fourth Indians and the rest flying down from 18 countries, this was far more serious business. They are professional pickleball players who make a living out of a sport that, not too long ago, was looked at simply as a game of leisure. In a sport that is growing at a rapid pace around the globe, these professional picklers are increasingly finding their space and tapping into its vogue. Pickleball might still be more a game for the masses; easy to pick up and cost effective, it could be played on any indoor or outdoor hard surface. But the professional touch to it is as much on the upswing as its popularity. And that's happening in India too.

Two years ago, the All India Pickleball Association (AIPA), the governing body for the sport in the country, had close to 8,000 player registrations across India. That figure now stands in the range of 30,000 to 40,000, according to AIPA president Arvind Prabhoo. The association conducts the national championships, four national ranking tournaments and several state, zonal and inter-zonal events throughout the year. "That is where we scout talented players. We ask them if they would like to go pro, and then coach them," Prabhoo said. "Some of them come from rural backgrounds, and they like to make a career out of this." Like Sonu Kumar Vishwakarma. A cricket-playing kid from Jharkhand's coal-rich city of Jharia, the 22-year-old began playing pickleball seven years ago. The reigning men's national champion in singles, he nearly quit the sport a couple of years ago due to lack of funding and increasing expenses of travelling for tournaments in India. Just around then as he won an AIPA ranking tournament, Prabhoo spotted him as a young talent and persuaded him to shift to Mumbai. Vishwakarma is now funded by AIPA, which takes care of everything around his pickleball needs as he competes professionally in international tournaments.

"The decision to shift to Mumbai and become a professional pickleball player changed my life," Vishwakarma said. "I earn enough money now to take care of myself. I earn from tournament prize money, I have a sponsor, and I coach too. Over the last six months, sponsors have really picked up in our sport." AIPA has a pool of around 20 such players who are fully funded while they compete at the top level. Pickleball has ever-increasing tournaments at the international and Asian level where the cream of India's picklers plies its trade. "It's like a proper circuit," said Isha Lakhani, India's former professional tennis player who was ranked in the world's top 25 in juniors a decade ago and took up pickleball in 2022. "I've been out for 7-8 tournaments at least so far this year. The association has been making us play as much as possible." Earlier this month, Indian players won five gold, four silver and five bronze medals across categories at the Asia Pickleball Games in Taiwan. "In the last six months alone, I've played 4-5 international

tournaments. There are domestic tournaments every month now," Vishwakarma said. "Next year, I aim to play 7-10 international, 15-20 domestic, and then other franchise-based tournaments."

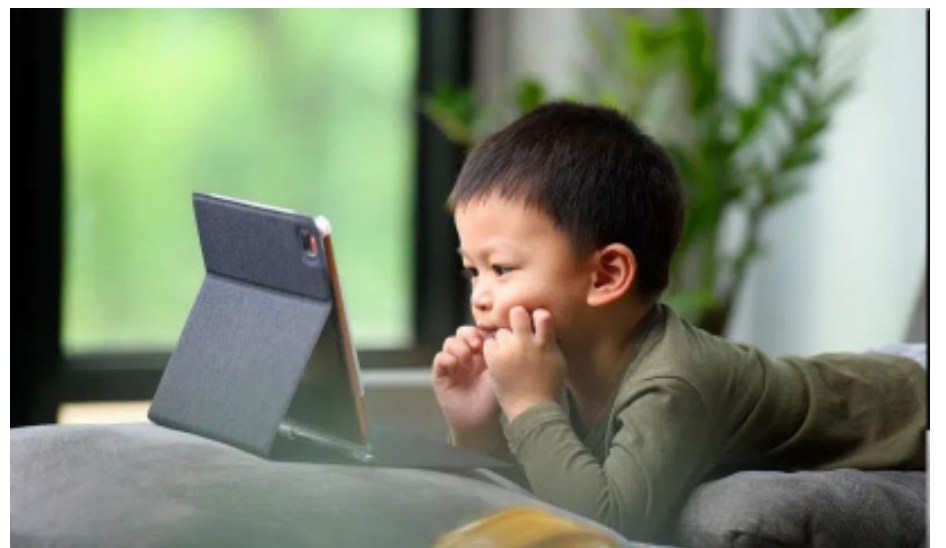
That's another avenue that could further spur the professional push in pickleball. Franchise-based leagues are sprouting around across sport, and pickleball potentially has a huge market to tap there. The World Pickleball League, the brainchild of former Indian tennis pros Gaurav Natekar and wife Arati, has already taken the plunge. The global franchise-based league, recognised by AIPA, is set to hold its inaugural season early next year. "The World Pickleball League is just the first step of what we want to do in this sport," Natekar, founder and CEO of the league, said. "We have a whole bunch of other plans for talent development, grassroots and infrastructure development, branding and sponsorship." The Arjuna awardee in tennis, whose father played and excelled at badminton, did a "deep dive" on the sport before dipping his fingers into it. He reckons the average age of pickleball players in India is on the downward curve. "Two years back, everybody felt it was an old man's sport, or maybe for people who can't play tennis or badminton after a certain age. But that average age is dropping fast," he said. "A lot of the young kids today are going to start playing pickleball. Why? Because they're hearing about it, reading about it and watching it. And, most importantly, their parents are also playing it. So this sport is only going to grow bigger." And open up a lot more avenues with it for professional picklers. Vishwakarma, for instance, also earns money through coaching other players when not competing himself. For a sport on the upsurge with ambitions of getting into the Olympics, demand for coaches is going to increase proportionally. "Since this is a new sport, it doesn't have a lot of top-level coaches," Vishwakarma said. "So all current crop of top players can fill that hole 5-10 years down the line. I'm 22, I can play at a high level till 35 and then move into full-time coaching." "A lot of us are playing this professionally now, and because it's a new sport there are going to be more openings — in terms of playing, coaching, marketing, etc," Lakhani said. "The community of pickleball is so much bigger compared to other sports, and that is what is going to help this sport grow faster. Pickleball being a concoction of all major racquet sports — tennis, table tennis, squash, badminton — will mean a large volume of players from these sports eventually shifting to this new thing, Lakhani said. "Seeing the game grow and the volume of players coming in, we can't even think what can happen in the next five years," Vishwakarma said. The growing numbers will also bring with it increased challenges, especially from an administrative viewpoint. AIPA has officially sought government recognition, and remains hopeful, said Prabhoo. For Indian pros to have a greater competitive presence at the world stage, the prerequisites are similar to other mainstream sports. "What is needed for a new sport is a lot of tournaments, and international exposure," Prabhoo said. "Only when you play with world-class competitors do you under-



stand the nuances of the game better." Natekar believes this is just the start for pickleball. The key, however, in how it shapes up going forward in India lies in how well it is managed by the people in its ecosystem. "In India, where, to be honest, a

lot of the sports are struggling, whether it's with the federation, player pool or sponsorships and all of that, this is the bigger question for how far this sport can go," he said. "Professionally, if the sport is handled right, sky is the limit."

## Children exposed to risk of early puberty due to excessive screen time: Study



New Delhi: Even as children are increasingly getting exposed to screens from a young age, a new study in rats showed that long-term exposure to blue light, emitting from smartphones or tablets, may lead to early puberty. The findings linked the early risk of puberty with accelerated bone growth and bone age caused because of exposure to blue light. The research, presented at the 62nd Annual European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology Meeting in Liverpool, is the first to explore the link between bone growth and pubertal development.

"This is the first study to show how blue light could potentially influence physical growth and development, prompting further research into the effects of modern screen exposure on children's growth," said lead researcher Dr Aylin Ugurlu, from Gazi University in Turkey. As the study was conducted in rats, "we cannot be sure that these findings would be replicated in children but

our data suggest that prolonged exposure to blue light accelerates both the physical growth and maturation of the growth plate, leading to early puberty," Ugurlu noted. When children grow they develop long bones such as the femur, which progressively elongates at each end. This eventually solidifies stopping growth in height. While girls reach their maximum height between ages 14 and 16, boys finish their growth between 16 and 18 years of age. However recent studies have pointed out a rise in early puberty in both girls and boys. The studies show that the children might grow quickly at first but often stop growing earlier than usual. One factor may be the increased use of blue light-emitting devices, Ugurlu said. The study was conducted on 18 male and 18 female rats aged 21 days old. These were divided into three groups of six and exposed to either a normal light cycle, six hours, or 12 hours of blue light until the first signs of puberty.

# The best podcasts of 2024, as picked by The Economist

“Broomgate” Subcultures often make for podcast gold. This show relives the greatest controversy in curling, a sport that marries ice hockey and shuffleboard. John Cullen, a comedian and former curler, narrates the scandal with authority.

“The Butterfly King” Most true-crime podcasts explore recent history. Here Becky Milligan, a former BBC journalist, examines a very cold case: the possible murder of King Boris III of Bulgaria in 1943. Read more of our guides to the cultural treats of 2024—and previous years “D-Day: The Tide Turns” The Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France 80 years ago changed the course of history. This beautifully produced series tells the story of D-Day by focusing on the people who made it possible. “Hysterical” In 2011 a Tourette’s-like syndrome affected a group of teenage girls in New York. Dan Taberski, an American podcaster, dives into the history and mystery of mass hysteria, speaking to victims and doctors. “Not All Propaganda is Art” A look at how culture became a player in cold-war politics. Benjamin Walker, a ra-

dio host, corrals unexpected examples. For example, to promote American interests, the CIA funded a film adaptation of George Orwell’s “1984” and a journal aimed at left-wing intellectuals. “The Rest is Entertainment” Goalhanger, a production company, has a winning formula: bring witty experts together for a chat. One of its latest shows focuses on film, journalism and television, offering up humorous analysis of the business of entertainment. “Shell Game” Evan Ratliff, a journalist, clones his voice and has his AI counterpart speak to scammers, spammers and even his wife. “What will it do to us,” he asks, “when more and more of the people we encounter in the world aren’t real?” “Strangers on a Bench” Ever wonder what those people sitting on a bench are thinking about? Tom Rosenthal, a singer-songwriter, joins them and finds out in this simple, and simply wonderful, show. “Thief at the British Museum” A curator at the British Museum stole objects and offered them for sale on eBay. Katie Razzall, the BBC’s culture editor, meets Ittai Gradel, an antiqui-



ties dealer who discovered the crime. “The Wonder of Stevie” In an age of fleeting fame, Stevie Wonder abides. Wesley Morris, a critic, interviews an eclectic cast of experts

and fans (including Barack Obama). The show focuses on 1972-77 when the artist evolved from Boy Wonder to, well, Mr Wonder. Read breaking news, latest...

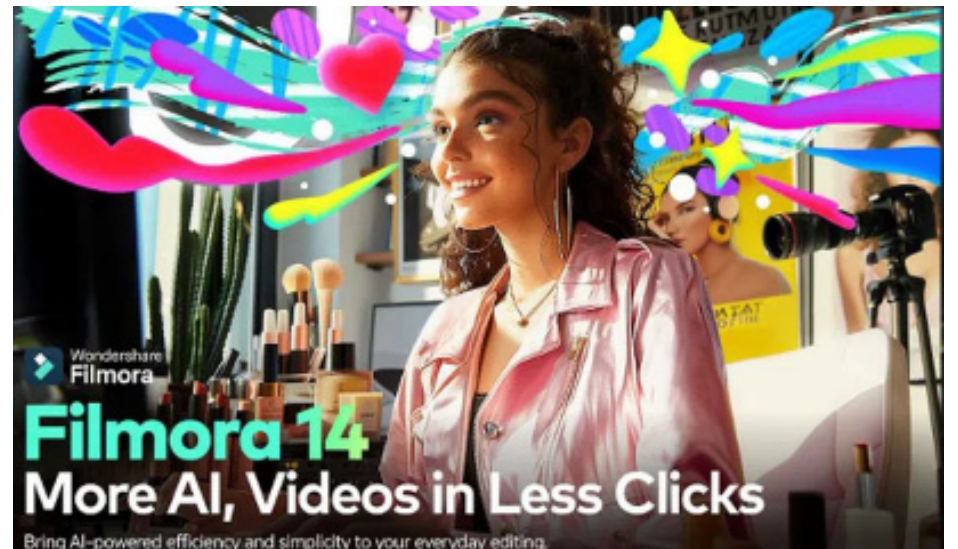
## Elevate your video interviews with Filmora 14

Regularly producing high-quality video interviews is as dynamic as it is demanding. Editing long conversations, managing multiple camera angles, and ensuring accessibility through captions are essential and require the right tools. New Delhi: Regularly producing high-quality video interviews is as dynamic as it is demanding. Editing long conversations, managing multiple camera angles, and ensuring accessibility through captions are essential and require the right tools. Enter the latest update with Wondershare Filmora 14, a versatile editing platform with features like Smart Short Clips, Multi-Camera Editing, and Auto Caption that simplify the interview editing process and allow creators to focus on what matters most, telling a fun or compelling story! Let’s explore how these advanced features can transform your workflow and enhance the quality of your interview videos. Smart Short Clips: Speed Up the Editing Process Video interviews often involve long hours of footage filled with pauses and dead air. Manually selecting footage to isolate the best parts can be exhausting.

Wondershare Filmora 14’s Smart Short Clips is designed to solve this by deploying AI to automatically pick out the most relevant segments from your raw footage. This tool analyzes the entire video and removes redundancies, leaving only the best parts for your final edit. You don’t have to waste time searching through all of the footage, Smart Short Clips does the heavy lifting, so you can focus on polishing the narrative and refining your message. Whether you’re editing YouTube, corporate, or podcast interviews, Smart Short Clips will

help you streamline the trimming process, allowing you to create a concise final product. Multi-Camera Editing: Smooth Angle Switching Multiple camera angles are often used in interviews to provide a more dynamic and enjoyable viewing experience. However, editing footage from different cameras can be a daunting task, especially when it comes to syncing and switching between angles. Filmora 14 brings in the Multi-Camera Editing feature, which takes the complexity out of this process by letting you edit footage from multiple camera sources. Filmora automatically syncs your clips using audio or timecode markers, allowing for easy switching between different angles. This gives editors the freedom to choose the best shot for every moment, enhancing the storytelling process without the hassle of manually syncing and cutting.

For interviews, panel discussions, and multi-angle shoots, Multi-Camera Editing is a powerful tool that delivers professional results while reducing time in post-production. Auto Caption: Make Your Content Accessible Accessibility is key in today’s content-driven world. Captions not only make your videos accessible to a wider audience, including those with hearing impairments, but they also increase engagement, especially on social media, where many users watch videos without sound. Wondershare Filmora 14’s Auto Caption feature uses advanced AI technology to automatically generate captions for your videos, making it easier than ever to make sure that your content is inclusive. With Auto Caption, you can create accurate, time-synced captions directly from your footage. The feature allows for full



customization, meaning you can adjust the font, size, color, and placement of the captions to align with your brand’s look and feel. Plus, automated captioning saves hours of manual work, giving you back more time to focus on other creative aspects of your project. Adding captions in your videos increases viewer retention. With Auto Caption, you can meet today’s expectations for captioned content without the hassle of third-party tools or time-intensive editing. Efficiency Meets Professionalism Wondershare Filmora 14’s powerful combination of Smart Short Clips, Multi-Camera Editing, and Auto Caption delivers a total interview editing solution that balances efficiency with professionalism. These tools are designed to speed up the editing process, making it easier for both novice and seasoned editors

to produce high-quality videos. Streamline Your Workflow With Smart Short Clips, editors can save hours of work by letting AI identify and select the most relevant sections of the interview. Whether you’re creating short-form content for social media or longer videos for corporate use, the feature cuts down on unnecessary steps, allowing for quicker edits without sacrificing quality. Multi-Camera Editing ensures a smooth and seamless final cut, no matter how many cameras are involved. The automatic syncing process takes the guesswork out of multi-angle editing, freeing up time to focus on the creative decisions that truly make a video stand out. Auto Caption adds accessibility, making your videos more inclusive and optimized for modern audience needs.

# A gangster's shadowy trail from Moga to Surrey

In 2020, two years after he left for Canada, gangster Arshdeep Singh Gill aka Arsh Dalla made a trip to India. Investigations later revealed that the visit was to kill his friend-turned-rival Sukha Lamme. Police say Dalla allegedly injected Lamme with poison, mutilated the body, and discarded it in a canal in Moga. For months afterwards, he allegedly operated Lamme's social media handle, using the dead gangster's identity to expand his extortion and smuggling rackets. The deception came to light in May 2021, when the Punjab Police arrested one of Dalla's gang members, who confessed to Lamme's murder. By then, Dalla had returned to Canada, orchestrating a sprawling crime syndicate from his base in Surrey. Over time, his ability to exploit legal loopholes and hide behind fake identities became his signature as he allegedly coordinated crimes across Moga and adjoining districts from the safety of his Canadian hideout. The 27-year-old Dalla, designated a terrorist by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in January 2023, has over 70 cases registered against him in India. With Dalla reportedly being detained in Canada on October 29, the Indian government is all set to seek his extradition. Police say his network, which allegedly included his father Charanjit Singh and brother Baldeep, thrived on extortion, arms smuggling, and targeted killings, with victims ranging from small traders to prominent figures, both in Punjab and Canada.

Dalla's reported arrest in Canada came a day after a grenade attack at a petrol pump in Punjab's Mansa district — a rare and alarming escalation in extortion tactics. It was the second FIR against the 27-year-old Dalla that week and the third in October. An FIR filed on October 23 accused him of making threatening calls to a rice sheller in Faridkot. On October 9, he was accused of carrying out the murder of a Sikh activist, Gurpreet Singh Hari Nau, in Faridkot district. Member of Parliament from Khadoor Sahib and Warris Punjab De head Amritpal Singh, who is in Dibrugarh jail, was also named in the case along with Dalla. But Dalla later released an audio clip in which he claimed responsibility for the murder while clarifying that Amritpal Singh was not involved. His "arrest" in Canada remains shrouded in mystery. Canadian authorities have yet to confirm his detention, but reports suggest his name has surfaced in a case involving a shooting in Ontario on October 28. Born in 1996 into a family of sarpanches — both his grandfather and father held the post in his ancestral Dalla village near Moga — Dalla and his younger brother Baldeep went to the tony Sacred Heart School in Moga, where they did their matriculation from the ICSE Board. Villagers say a financial crisis forced his father, who tilled land on lease, to move Dalla to the village government school, where he studied till Class 12. His descent into crime began soon after. He was 19 when the first FIR was filed against him for snatching a rifle from a security guard in Barnala in 2015.

Despite this case and another of attempted murder, he managed to obtain a passport from the Jalandhar Regional Passport Office in 2017 following a 'paper mar-

riage' with a woman from Rajasthan and, in 2018, left for Canada. Investigations revealed that Dalla allegedly operated his syndicate from his base in Surrey, Canada, where he lived with his wife and minor daughter. As Dalla's influence grew, so did his family's alleged involvement. Charanjit was accused of exploiting his son's notoriety for extortion in Moga and nearby areas. Baldeep Singh, meanwhile, operated as a key accomplice, reportedly handling extortion and crime logistics. "His father Charanjit and brother Baldeep funnelled the money they extorted in his name through wire transfers. This helped him sustain his network in India and Canada," said Assistant Sub Inspector with Moga Police, Kiker Singh, who has investigated many of the cases against Dalla. Police say Baldeep's cautious use of disposable phone numbers and encrypted communications allowed him to evade police scrutiny for years. In August 2021, Baldeep was arrested at Delhi airport while attempting to flee to Canada. However, he got out on bail and, embarrassingly for the Punjab Police, managed to secure a forged passport and flee to Australia in January 2023. An FIR revealed that Charanjit and four others allegedly assisted him in obtaining the passport. Police sources say Baldeep is believed to be in Australia. They say Baldeep, who lived lavishly while in Moga despite being unemployed, maintained communication with Dalla through untraceable WhatsApp calls, complicating police efforts to track him. Charanjit is at present lodged in the Faridkot jail. Dalla allegedly orchestrated his syndicate of over 300 operatives who executed crimes on his orders, including the murder of Moga businessman Jitendra alias Pinka in 2020. Police say Dalla got weapons, ranging from tiffin bombs to grenades, smuggled across the Indo-Pak border for use by his network in India. In January 2023, Punjab police seized pistols, grenades, and live cartridges linked to Dalla's network. Over 60 of his associates have been arrested, with most weapons traced to Pakistan.

On January 7, Punjab Police's Special Branch apprehended Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi and two others at a checkpoint near Mehna village in Tarn Taran. The three were allegedly found with two pistols, two grenades and 12 live cartridges. Investigations linked them to Dalla, with the weapons reportedly originating from Pakistan. This arrest shed light on Dalla's expansive cross-border arms supply network. Dalla's enmity with other designated terrorists underscores the infighting within Punjab's gangster networks. Dalla is at daggers drawn with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, which allegedly assassinated his close aide Sukhdul Singh, alias Sukha Dunike, in Winnipeg, Canada in December 2023. Dalla accused Landa of betrayal, claiming that Landa initially relied on him for weapons but later turned against him. Dalla also targeted the late Harvinder Rinda, alleging that Rinda sided with his enemies and facilitated the supply of weapons used in the Sidhu Moosewala murder. Dalla's criminal activities took on a communal angle in December 2020 when a post on Sukha Gill Lamme's Facebook account — then being



operated by Dalla — claimed responsibility for the murder of Manohar Lal, a Dera Sacha Sauda follower, as "revenge" for the 2015 sacrilege incidents. The killing was seen as an attempt to garner sympathy from the Sikh community. Investigative agencies linked this murder to pro-Khalistan groups, further deepening Dalla's ties to extremist networks. In July 2022, the NIA filed a chargesheet implicating Dalla and Hardeep Singh Nijjar in a conspiracy to kill Hindu priest Kamaldeep Sharma in Jalandhar. The attack

was allegedly part of a broader plan to disrupt communal harmony in Punjab. Dalla's name surfaced in another case in January 2023 when Delhi Police arrested two operatives linked to the Lashkar-e-Toiba for a murder intended to instill fear and communal discord. Later that year, the NIA declared Dalla a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and as a key operative of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). A Red Corner Notice was issued against him by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

## WhatsApp bans over 8.5 million accounts in India for policy violations

New Delhi: Meta-owned WhatsApp banned more than 85 lakh "bad" accounts in India in the month of September for violating its policies. Between September 1-September 30, the company banned 8,584,000 accounts and 1,658,000 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users, according to the social media platform's monthly compliance report under the new IT Rules 2021. The popular mobile messaging platform, which has more than 600 million users in India, received 8,161 grievances from the country, and the records "actioned" were 97. The account "Actioned" means complaints where WhatsApp took remedial action. WhatsApp also received two orders from the Grievance Appellate Committee in the country and complied with both, according to its monthly compliance

report. "We will continue with transparency to our work and include information about our efforts in future reports," said the company. It employs a team of engineers, data scientists, analysts, researchers, and experts in law enforcement, online safety, and technology developments to oversee these efforts.

"We enable users to block contacts and to report problematic content and contacts to us from inside the app. We pay close attention to user feedback and engage with specialists in stemming misinformation, promoting cybersecurity, and preserving election integrity," said WhatsApp. The abuse detection operates at three stages of an account's lifecycle: at registration, during messaging, and in response to negative feedback, which we receive in the form of user reports and blocks.