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## Sixth grader dies after roti roll gets stuck in throat

Hyderabad: In a shocking incident, a class six student Vikas Jain, studying at a private school in Secunderabad, tragically passed away of suffocation on Monday when a roti roll got stuck in his throat. The incident occurred while he was having lunch at school. A roti roll reportedly got stuck in his throat, causing him to suffocate. His classmates alerted the teachers, who immediately attempted to help him. The boy was immediately rushed to a local hospital, but unfortunately, he had already passed away by the time medical aid could be provided. The body has been shifted to Gandhi Hospital for a post-mortem examination. A case is being registered. Further details are awaited.

## PM Modi takes dig at Oppn, says those rejected by people disrupting House



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a dig at the Opposition on Monday for disrupting Parliament and denying meaningful discussions. Modi said that those "who have been rejected by the people multiple times are attempting to control the House through chaos." Speaking to the media ahead of the Winter Session of Parliament, PM Modi underscored the significance of the session, terming it a special occasion as it coincides with the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution. "This is the Winter Session, hopefully, the atmosphere will also be cool. This is the last session of 2024, and the country is enthusiastically awaiting 2025. This session is special in many ways. The most significant aspect is that our Constitution is entering its 75th year — a monumental moment for our democracy. Tomorrow, we will commence this extraordinary occasion together in the new Parliament building," he said.

The Prime Minister highlighted the rigorous deliberations undertaken by the framers of the Constitution, leading to the creation of a remarkable document. "One of the

Constitution's key elements is our Parliament and our parliamentarians," he added. Calling for productive and healthy debates, PM Modi took aim at the Opposition for obstructing proceedings. "The people who have been rejected repeatedly by the electorate, try to control Parliament through disruptions. While they fail, their actions are being closely observed by the people of the country. The most troubling aspect is that new MPs, who bring fresh ideas and perspectives, are being denied their rightful opportunity to speak in Parliament due to such disruptions," he said. Stressing the importance of intergenerational learning in a democracy, the Prime Minister said, "Every generation in a democracy has the responsibility to train future generations. However, those rejected by the people 80-90 times do not let discussions take place in Parliament." "They neither understand the aspirations of the people nor live up to their expectations, and that is why the public continues to reject them," he added. He urged all members to make up for lost time and engage in substantive debates on critical issues. "A message should go out that the dedication of voters to democracy, the Constitution, and the sanctity of parliamentary proceedings is being honoured by their elected representatives," he said. The Prime Minister concluded by expressing hope for a productive session, stressing that healthy discussions are essential to address the nation's pressing concerns. "The voters of India are committed to democracy, their loyalty to the Constitution, and their confidence in the parliamentary system. It is essential for everyone in Parliament to reflect the sentiments of the people. To achieve this, we must discuss various aspects of each topic in a constructive manner. This will inspire future generations as well. I hope this session proves to be productive, and I encourage all esteemed MPs to approach it with passion and enthusiasm," he said.

## Supreme Court cancels land allocations to cooperative housing societies in GHMC limits

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Hyderabad: In a significant judgment, the Supreme Court on Monday canceled the allocation of land to cooperative housing societies of various sections, including MPs, MLAs, All India Services officers, judges and journalists, within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits. A bench led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna delivered the ruling, citing violations of the Constitution's principle of equality under Article 14. The judgement was delivered in connection with an appeal filed by Keshav Rao Jadhav challenging government orders issued in 2005 and 2008 that allotted land at subsidised rates to various groups including MPs, MLAs, All India Services officers, judges and journalists by treating them as a separate class. The Supreme Court quashed these orders, ruling that such classifications were arbitrary and discriminatory. The bench also upheld a previous decision of the Andhra Pradesh High Court that had invalidated the allocations in cases filed in 2008.

Further, the Apex Court stated that the interim directions passed by it in some of these cases would now stand merged with the final direction where all parties involved would be accordingly bound by the same. While quashing the petitions filed by the defendants, the Court declared the orders issuing allotment of the land were "bad in law" and violating Article 14 of the Constitution. In its judgment, the Supreme Court directed the State government of Telangana to refund the amounts paid by the cooperative societies and



their members, including stamp duty and registration fees, along with interest based on Reserve Bank of India rates. Development charges and expenses, as certified by income tax returns, were also to be refunded. The lease deeds executed by the State in favour of these societies were declared void. The Court clarified that it was now up to the Telangana government to decide how to deal with the reclaimed land, provided its actions comply with the law, keeping in mind the observations and findings outlined in the judgment. This decision concludes a long legal battle over the allocation of land in Hyderabad. Pending applications and contempt petitions linked to the case have also been disposed of.

## Kavitha demands clarity on caste census, criticises BJP and Congress for failing BCs

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Hyderabad: BRS MLC K Kavitha trained her guns at the Congress and BJP over their failure to address the demands of the Backward Classes (BC) community through a caste census. She charged both national parties with betraying the BC community and demanded that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi explain why the Congress, despite ruling the country for over 55 years, failed to conduct a caste census. She also questioned why the caste census conducted in Karnataka under Congress rule was not made public. She lambasted the BJP, stating that the party's policies have historically been anti-BC, SC, and ST, alleging that this bias is deeply embedded in its ideology. She recalled the BJP-led Central government's affidavit in the Supreme Court, where it categorically stated it would not conduct a caste census.

Speaking to the media after submitting a detailed 35-page report to the BC Dedicated Commission Chairman B Venkateshwar Rao, Kavitha explained the significant role of regional parties in empowering BC communities, citing examples of leadership under Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu, NTR and Chandrababu Naidu in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, and K Chandrashekhara Rao in Telangana. She asserted that it was the regional parties that brought political and economic justice to BCs while national parties have ignored their constitutional rights.

Further, the BRS MLC emphasised the need for the commission to function independently. She highlighted the lapses in providing the necessary resources including personnel and material to the commission and criticised the procedural gaps in the ongoing door-to-door surveys. She demanded that the State government clear the apprehensions within BC communities and ensure that the commission has the infrastructure to carry out its responsibilities



effectively. She also criticised the Congress for failing to honour its promises in the Kamareddy Declaration, which included a commitment to provide 42 percent reservations for BCs in local bodies. MLC Kavitha demanded that the Congress clarify the legal validity of conducting a caste census and address the concerns of the BC community. Calling for comprehensive justice for BCs, Kavitha urged the commission to go beyond political reservations and tackle the pressing socio-economic issues faced by the BC community. She reiterated her demand for answers from the Congress on its delay in operationalizing the BC Commission over the past 11 months and criticized the BJP's opposition to the caste census. Kavitha concluded by urging the state government to demonstrate sincerity in conducting the caste census and ensuring justice for BCs, dispelling doubts and delays in the process. The BRS MLC also called out the Congress for failing to implement promises made in the Kamareddy Declaration, including a commitment to provide 42 per cent reservations for BCs in local bodies. "The Congress government must honour its word and clarify whether its guarantees will be fulfilled,"

## Telangana Tamil Sangam welcomes Dharmapuram Adheenam in Hyd

Hyderabad: Telangana Tamil Sangam welcomed the 27th Guru Maha Sannidhanam of Dharmapuram Adheenam, Srila Sri Kailaya Masilamani Desika Gnanasambandha Paramachariya Swamigal, during his visit to Hyderabad.

As a mark of respect, the senior officer bearers Telangana Tamil Sangam including its president M K Bose, vice president Dharamaseelan, General Secretary, Rajkumar, along with the Executive Committee members and Sangam members, met the Guru Maha Sannidhanam at Skandagiri Temple, Secunderabad. The Guru blessed the attendees and distributed prasadam to all devotees, a press release said.

## Telangana Govt writes to Adani to put Rs.100 cr donation to Young India Skill University on hold



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Hyderabad: Soon after Rahul Gandhi made it clear that the Congress wanted investigation into all deals by the Adani Group, the party's government in Telangana

has written to the Adani Foundation seeking to stop the transfer of a donation of Rs.100 crore that the group had committed to the Young India Skill University here. However, it denied any sort of pressure to cancel deals with Adani, and claimed that it only wanted to avoid controversies. In the letter, written by Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan to Adani Foundation chairperson Priti Adani, said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had given instructions not to seek transfer of funds "in view of the present circumstances and arising controversies". However, it was not made clear whether it was a complete rejection of the donation, or a temporary postponement of the fund transfer. The Chief Minister, addressing a press conference here on Monday, however claimed he was under no pressure to reject the donation and that he would not heed to 'any sort of pressure'. He instead tried to blame opposition parties accusing them of stirring a controversy over Adani Group's donation. The donation was to be accepted in the better interest of the State, especially to provide quality skills to the youth at the university, he claimed. "We don't want to get into any sort of controversies," he said.

## AP to get India's largest green hydrogen hub, PM Modi to lay stone on Nov 29

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Visakhapatnam: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for India's largest green hydrogen hub in Andhra Pradesh's Anakapalle district on Friday (November 29). He will virtually lay the foundation stone from Andhra University Engineering College Grounds in Visakhapatnam. He will also address a large public meeting. The green hydrogen hub of NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL) was coming up at Pudimadaka in Atchutapuram mandal of Anakapalle district.

The ambitious project, to come up on 1,600 acres, was expected to turn Andhra Pradesh into a green energy powerhouse and transform India into a global leader in green hydrogen production. Governor Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, several State Ministers, MPs, MLAs and other public representatives will attend the ceremony. This will be Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit to Andhra Pradesh after the formation of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the State, comprising the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Sena Party (JSP), and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP leaders from the region are also holding a roadshow to give a grand reception to the Prime Minister. Preparations were in full swing for the foundation-stone laying ceremony and public meeting. Visakhapatnam Collector MN Harendhira Prasad, Commissioner of Police Sankarbrata Bagchi, Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) Commissioner P Sampath Kumar, and Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) Commissioner KS Viswanathan were super-



vising the arrangements. Harendhira Prasad said the Prime Minister will arrive at INS Dega on November 29 evening and proceed to the AU Engineering College Grounds through road or aerial route. A final decision was yet to be taken on the roadshow. If the Prime Minister arrives at the venue by road, the roadshow may be organised from Tycoon Hotel Junction to SP Bungalow, a distance of 500 meters. According to BJP leaders, the event was originally proposed in the Anakapalle district. BJP MP from Anakapalle CM Ramesh was keen to have the event closer to the project site. However, logistic issues and likely adverse weather conditions in view of the forecast of low-pressure activity in the Bay of Bengal forced the authorities to shift the event to Visakhapatnam.

## Both Houses of Parliament adjourned till Wednesday amid ruckus over Adani issue

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

New Delhi: Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned without transacting any significant business on Monday amid uproar by opposition members on various issues, including the indictment of Adani Group founder chairman Gautam Adani and others in a US court on charges of paying bribes to secure solar power supply contracts. The Houses will meet again on Wednesday (November 27). There will be no sitting of Parliament on Tuesday to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Constituent Assembly's adoption of the Constitution in 1949.

Earlier, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar disallowed 13 notices served under rule 267, including seven that sought a discussion on the US indictment on the alleged payment of USD 265 million in bribes. But the Congress and Left parties insisted on a discussion, forcing a 15-minute adjournment of proceedings. Soon after listed papers were laid out on the table of the House and obituary references read out on the death of former MPs, Dhankhar said he had received 13 notices under rule 267 but was not convinced to accept them. Leader of the Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, who was among the seven that sought a discussion on the Adani bribery issue, said if the listed business is suspended, the opposition parties can explain how the "very important" issue was impacting the entire country.

The image of the country has been tarnished globally and yet Prime Minister Narendra Modi was supporting Adani, he alleged. At this point, Dhankhar ordered that nothing that Kharge says will go on record. But as the opposition parties persisted, he adjourned the proceedings for 15 minutes. When the House re-assembled at 11.45 am, the chairman said he has the highest respect for the members of the House and urged them to allow him to continue with the scheduled business. However, some opposition members were heard raising certain matters. The chairman then adjourned the proceedings of the House for the day. The other notices under rule 267, which calls for suspending the listed business of the House to take up discussion on the issue being sought to be raised, pertained to continued violence in Manipur,



violence clashes in UP's Sambhal district and special assistance to the flood-hit Wayanad district of Kerala. The Adani group has denied all charges in the US indictment, calling them baseless.

### LOSS OF PASSPORT

I, RAYARAKULA NARESH S/O RAYARAKULA SARANGAPANI aged 35 Years, R/O H.No. 1-1/B, Block No.1 Nadikuda, Parkala, Warangal 506391 Lost my original Passport No. M1320267 Issued on 20-08-2014 during travel on 12-10-2024 from patancheru to shankarpally bus stop. If anybody found my said passport, please contact me on 7032581151.

DECLARANT.  
RAYARAKULA NARESH  
S/O RAYARAKULA SARANGAPANI



# Indian Chronicle

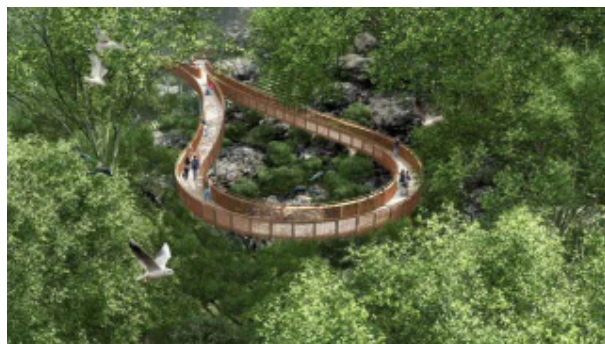
English Daily

## Maha triumph

THE pro-incumbency factor proved decisive as the BJP-led Mahayuti recorded a thumping victory in Maharashtra and the JMM-helmed alliance retained power in Jharkhand. INDIA, the Opposition bloc, managed to withstand the saffron onslaught in Jharkhand, but the stunning debacle in Maharashtra — a politically far more important state than the other one — must have hurt badly. For the BJP, which has developed a knack for winning elections against heavy odds, it was a dream outcome in one state and a disappointing one in the other.

Perhaps even die-hard supporters of the BJP did not have anticipated the magnitude of the triumph in Maharashtra. Less than six months ago, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — comprising the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar) and the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) — had outclassed the BJP and its allies in the Lok Sabha elections in the state. That impressive performance had raised the MVA's hopes that it could pull off a similar feat in the Assembly polls. The alliance was undone by overconfidence and disunity, with the Congress failing to learn any lesson from the Haryana shocker. In contrast, Mahayuti went all out to woo voters; welfare schemes such as the women-centric Ladki Bahin Yojana worked wonders. Moreover, the split in the Shiv Sena and the NCP paid the BJP rich dividends. It's now up to the victorious alliance to ensure that government formation takes place smoothly, unlike the chaos and uncertainty witnessed after the BJP-Shiv Sena combine won the 2019 elections. The Jharkhand verdict is an endorsement of CM Hemant Soren's tribal-friendly policies. The corruption charges levelled by the Enforcement Directorate against him cut no ice with voters, who resisted the lure of electing a 'double-engine' government. The Congress has done enough to stay in power as a junior ally of the JMM.

## Mumbai's first elevated forest walkway to be ready by year-end



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The entry and exit points of the trail will be at Siri Road, right behind Kamala Nehru Park from where it will extend up to 705 metres within the Malabar Hill forest, providing an unhindered view of the Arabian Sea. Taking inspiration from similar projects elsewhere around the world, Mumbai will soon have its own elevated forest walkway. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) hopes to open the walkway around New Year. The project in a bid to boost tourism and provide city residents with a unique walking experience, the BMC is constructing its first elevated forest walkway in Malabar Hill. Inspired by Singapore's elevated forest walkways, which are crowd-pullers, this project will traverse through the Malabar Hill forest area, extending from Kamala Nehru Park to the woods of Doongerwadi. In a bid to boost tourism and provide city residents with a unique walking experience, the BMC is constructing its first elevated forest walkway in Malabar Hill. The walkway deck is made of wood and the entire structure relies on minimal usage of concrete to ensure that the natural flow of water through the hill slopes as well as wildlife movement is interrupted. The entry and exit points of the trail will be at Siri Road, right behind Kamala Nehru Park from where it will extend up to 705 metres within the Malabar Hill forest, providing an unhindered view of the Arabian Sea. The walkway will also have a birdwatching zone and a glass-bottom viewing deck. Current status, cost and timeline The walkway is being built at a cost of Rs 25 crore. At present, 90 per cent of the civil works are complete and the BMC intends to open the project to the public around New Year. Ancillary works like electrification, painting, and building restrooms and ticket counters are underway. The tender for this project was awarded in 2021 for Rs 22 crore and civil works began in 2022. The amount went up to Rs 25 crore after taking into account various taxes, including GST. Considering that Malabar Hill is a silent zone, construction works could be taken up only during limited hours in the day, and hence the project took more than two years. "This walkway project will boost tourism and give Mumbaiers a new spot for their morning and evening walks. The path will be wheelchair friendly and will provide an unhindered view of Girgaon Chowpatty and the Arabian Sea. Not a single tree has been cut for constructing this project," said a senior civic official associated with the project.

## We will reconsider and review Adani deals, says TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud

Hyderabad: Putting the State government in a spot of bother, TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud said the State government's agreements with Adani Group would be reconsidered and reviewed, if the group's irregularities were unearthed. If the agreements signed by the State government with Adani Group were legal and as per rules, they would continue. If they were against the law, then they would be cancelled, he stressed. At Davos, the State government had signed about Rs.45,000 crore worth deals, including those with Adani Group. The State government has not allotted even a single inch of land to Adani Group, he said while addressing media persons at Gandhi Bhavan here on Friday. The TPCC president said it was a fact Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani had met Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and donated Rs.100 crore for Skills University. "Adani did not give donations to Revanth Reddy's own pocket. If BRS working president KT Rama Rao also donates Rs.50 crore or Rs.100 crore we will also accept," Mahesh Kumar Goud said, stressing that donations were given for public purpose.

## Days after it ordered closure of 18 HPTDC hotels, Himachal Pradesh HC allows 9 to stay open till March



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Days after it had ordered the closure of 18 Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) hotels describing them as "white elephants", the Himachal Pradesh High Court on Friday allowed nine of them to remain operational until March 31 next year. A single-judge bench of Justice Ajay Mohan Goel modified his earlier order after the HPTDC filed an application.

The nine hotels permitted to remain open are The Palace Hotel (Chail), Hotel Devdar (Khajjiar), The Castle (Naggar), Hotel Meghdoot (Kiarighat), Hotel Chandrabhaga (Keylong), Hotel Log Huts (Manali), Hotel Kunzum (Manali),

Hotel Bhagsu (McLeodganj) and Hotel Dhauladhar (Dharamshala). "On November 19, the high court had ordered the closing of 18 hotels out of 56 run by HPTDC on the basis of less occupancy. We informed the high court that occupancy is not the sole aspect to see if a hotel is making a profit or loss. We presented figures that besides the occupancy, income is being generated through other means, including organising private functions, government functions etc in these hotels, advocate Shilpa Goel, HPTDC counsel, told. On November 19, Justice Goel had described the 18 hotels as "white elephants" and directed their immediate closure, effective November 25, as part of a hearing on a petition regarding unpaid financial benefits to retired HPTDC employees. With the court directing the tourism corporation that they be closed by November 25, the fate of the remaining nine hotels, which include Hotel Geetanjali (Dalhousie), Hotel Baghal (Darlaghat), Hotel Kunal (Dharamshala), Hotel Kashmir House (Dharamshala), Hotel Apple Blossom (Fagu), Hotel Giriganga (Kharapathar), Hotel Sarvari (Kullu), and Hotel Shivalik (Parwanoo), will be decided on November 24. Meanwhile, the decision to close the 18 hotels coupled with the attachment of Himachal Bhawan in Delhi has put the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led government on the defensive. The Opposition BJP has strongly criticised the state government, accusing it of failing to protect Himachal Pradesh's interests and heritage.

## Tickets with names, QR codes, OTPs: Maharashtra Cyber Dept issues stringent norms for events to avoid black marketing

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Amid allegations of black marketing of tickets for the Coldplay concert in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra Cyber Department has come out with a slew of measures which online ticketing platforms will have to follow for future events from December 15. An officer said the police have granted a one-time exception for a Maroon 5 concert on December 3 to forgo name-based tickets since the ticketing platforms will not have enough time to prepare for the same. The officer added all concerts and events likely to sell out or experience high demand will be required to implement name-based ticketing as part of a new set of security protocols designed to curb ticket scalping and black marketing.

In a notice issued to BookMyShow, whose instructions are also applicable to other digital ticketing platforms like Paytm Insider and Zomato Live, the Maharashtra Cyber Department outlined a detailed framework aimed at ensuring fairness and transparency in ticket sales. The measures include a combination of advanced security systems, random verification of attendee identities, and efforts to identify and prevent fraudulent ticket resale. Another officer said they have issued a notice under Section 168 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which gives the police power to act to prevent cognisable offences, to these platforms. The steps that they have suggested include including names of the person on the ticket or band which has to be verified against a government ID at the venue. The name should also be engraved in the QR code which can be verified.

Apart from these, other measures that the platforms are expected to follow include deployment of artificial intel-



ligence-powered systems to filter out bot traffic from legitimate users during ticket sales, using of a waitlist system and monitoring repeated attempts to bypass the queue, tracking and reporting patterns of suspicious activity, such as the use of the same mobile number, email, or payment method for multiple ticket purchases, to law enforcement, surveillance of social media platforms and online forums for instances of ticket resales at inflated prices, with reports to authorities for appropriate action. Other measures include the deployment of undercover agents around the concert venue to identify and apprehend scalpers attempting to sell tickets at unauthorised prices, Random ID checks OTP Verification, Dynamic QR Codes, Tamper-Proof Bands and monitoring premium ticket sales. The new measures, aimed at protecting event organisers and genuine fans, are a response to the growing issue of online ticket scalping, where tickets are resold at significantly higher prices, often preventing real fans from attending popular events, an officer said.

## 6 Muscat-bound Andhra women caught at Mumbai airport for travelling with 'tampered' passports, land in jail

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Immigration officials Thursday caught six Andhra Pradesh-based women at the Mumbai International Airport for allegedly trying to fly to Muscat by concealing their details. The authorities have found that the details on their passport were erased so that the women could be sent abroad on tourist visas. Based on the complaint of immigration officials, the Sahar police arrested Venkata Laxmi Ullithula, 30, Khadeerunnisa Shaikh, 32, Munemma Sunkara, 37, Rubina Syed, 33, Kumari Tellakula, 33, and Kalyani Engiseti, 32. According to the police, the six women were planning to travel by Air India flight IX-235 to Muscat. Immigration officials raised suspicion as the passports of the women were found tampered with. They said that on certain pages of the passports, some stamps were forcefully erased. During the preliminary inquiry, it was revealed that all six women hail from different places in Andhra Pradesh and wanted to travel to Kuwait to get housemaid jobs. An agent is learnt to have helped them get an employment visa in Kuwait. However, as POE (Protector of Emigrants) clearance was compulsory to go to Kuwait as their passports were of ECR (Emigration Check Required) status, they sought help from the agent again. "The women said that the agent, using some chemicals, erased Kuwait's visa stamps from their passports and then helped them get tourist visas and flight tickets to Muscat. From Muscat, they



planned to go to Kuwait," the complainant immigration officer stated in the FIR. "Due to some reasons, the accused women wanted to bypass the POE clearance and, with the help of the agent, erased Kuwait's employment visa stamps from their passports and tried to travel using the same 'tampered passport'; hence, they have been booked under relevant sections of the Passport Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for cheating and forgery," said a police sub-inspector from Sahar police station. The women were subsequently produced before the court. They were sent to judicial custody, and are currently lodged in the Byculla women's prison.

## Govt notifies telecom cyber security rules; sets timelines for telcos to report security incidents

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The government has notified the telecom cyber security rules, that aim to safeguard India's communication networks and services, through a host of measures including specified timelines for telcos to report security incidents and make disclosures. The rules also empower the central government/its authorised agency to seek traffic data and any other data (other than the content of messages) from a telecom entity for the purpose of ensuring cyber security. Telecom entities would also be required to adopt telecom cyber security policy, that would include security safeguards, risk management approaches, actions, training, network testing, and risk assessment. "The central government, or any agency authorised by the central government, may, for the purposes of protecting and ensuring telecom cyber security, seek from a telecommunication entity, traffic data and any other data, other than the content of messages, in the form and manner as may be specified by the central government on the portal; and direct a telecommunication entity to establish necessary infrastructure and equipment for collection and provision of such data from designated points to enable its processing and storage," according to the rules framed under the new Telecom

Act. The government and any agency authorised by it to collect data under these rules, as well as persons with whom such data is shared, will place adequate safeguards to ensure that such data is stored and maintained in strict confidentiality and prevent any unauthorised access, it said. The rules clearly outline telecom cyber security obligations. "...no person shall endanger telecom cyber security by misuse of telecommunication equipment or telecommunication identifier or telecommunication network or telecommunication services or by fraud, cheating or personation; transmitting any message which is fraudulent; committing or intending to commit any security incident; engaging in any other use which is contrary to the provision, of any other law for the time being in force; or any other means which may have security risk on telecom cyber security," according to the rules," it said. Under the rules, every telecom entity will be required to implement specified measures to ensure cyber security, including adopting a telecom cyber security policy (security safeguards, risk management approaches, actions, training, best practices and technologies, to enhance telecom cyber security). The policy, it said, should also encompass telecom network testing including hardening, vulnerability assessment and risk assessment, identification and prevention of security incidents among other aspects.

## Teen stabs man to death at railway station in Mumbai after quarrel over local train seat



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Mumbai local train According to the police, the victim, Ankush Bhagwan Bhalerao, boarded a Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-bound fast train from Titwala on November 15, an official said. According to the police, the victim, Ankush Bhagwan Bhalerao, boarded a Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-bound fast train from Titwala on November 14. During the journey, a heated argument broke out between Ankush and the minor over a seat, and he slapped the boy. Ankush took the same train to Ghatkopar the next morning and was walking on platform no. 4 when the teen attacked him with a knife. He sustained severe injuries and was rushed to Rajawadi Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Based on the CCTV footage from the station, the police detained the minor and arrested his brother, who helped him conceal evidence, the official said. During interrogation, the minor confessed to the murder, revealing he hid the knife on the roof of his house and cut his hair to avoid being recognised, he said, adding that the teen has been sent to a juvenile detention centre.

## Special Mumbai court acquits Bacchu Kadu in 2011 assault case



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

A special court in Mumbai Friday acquitted Prahar Janshakti Party MLA Bacchu Kadu of all charges in connection with a case in which he was booked for assaulting a clerk of the public health department at Mantralaya 2011. The designated court in Mumbai for conducting trials of MPs and MLAs cleared Kadu of the charges. The detailed order is yet to be made available.

The First Information Report (FIR) was filed against Kadu on the complaint of the clerk, who said the Prahar Janshakti Party leader slapped him at Mantralaya on January 14, 2011. The clerk alleged that Kadu assaulted him for allegedly demanding money from a person who had been shortlisted to be appointed as a medical officer. The clerk said in his complaint that he was not connected to the appointment of doctors. The FIR was filed at the Marine Drive Police Station under Section 353 (use of criminal force on public servants performing his duty) and other sections of the Indian Penal Code. In 2023, Kadu was sentenced to one year in jail by a court in Nashik on charges, including using criminal force on a public servant. His sentence was suspended pending appeal. Kadu is contesting again in the Maharashtra Assembly elections 2024 from Achalpur in Amravati district.

## Mumbai terror accused Tahawwur Rana approaches US Supreme Court to challenge extradition to India

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Having lost his legal battle in all the lower courts, Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, has now knocked on the doors of the US Supreme Court against his extradition to India. India has sought Rana's extradition for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. Rana had last reached out to the US Court of Appeals for the North Circuit in San Francisco after losing the legal battle in lower courts and several federal courts.

On September 23, the circuit court threw out his petition to give a stay on the decisions of the other courts that approved the move of the Department of State to extradite him to India. On November 13, Rana filed a "petition for a writ of certiorari" before the US Supreme Court. In a long battle, this is Rana's last legal chance not to be extradited to India.

In his "petitions for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit" in this case, Rana makes the same argument that he was tried and acquitted in federal court in the Northern District of Illinois (Chicago) on charges relating to the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai. "India now seeks to extradite him for trial on charges based on the identical conduct at issue in the Chicago case," it says. The petition says that if the "elements" standard applies, he very likely will be sent to India to be put on trial a second time for the same conduct, with conviction and a death sentence ominously on the horizon for him. "In addition, resolution of this issue will have considerable and increasing impact, as the growing globalisation of criminal law enforcement and international cooperation, which in turn has led to a dramatic rise in extraditions, will affect more and more individuals and nations going forward," it said.



## Cash-for-votes allegations: BJP leader Vinod Tawde issues defamation notice to Congress' Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Supriya Shrinete



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Vinod Tawde's notice follows recent allegations concerning the "Nallasopara case", where Congress leaders claimed he was involved in distributing cash to voters. He insisted that the claims surrounding an alleged Rs 5 crore found with him were unfounded. BJP General Secretary Vinod Tawde on Friday sent a defamation notice to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, and party spokesperson Supriya Shrinete. This legal action comes in response to what Tawde describes as a campaign of misinformation aimed at damaging his reputation and that of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In a post on X, Tawde stated, "The only work of Congress is to spread lies! I have sent a defamation notice to Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, and party spokesperson Supriya Shrinete in the false Nallasopara case because they have tried to malign my image and that of the Bharatiya

Janata Party by spreading lies in this matter. The truth is before everyone that the alleged amount of Rs 5 crore was not recovered during the investigation conducted by the Election Commission and the police. This case is a complete proof of Congress's low-level politics." Tawde's notice follows recent allegations concerning the "Nallasopara case", where Congress leaders claimed he was involved in distributing cash to voters. He insisted that the claims surrounding an alleged Rs 5 crore found with him were unfounded.

What happened?

The day before Maharashtra went to the polls, a disturbance occurred at a hotel in Virar, near Mumbai, when Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) General Secretary Vinod Tawde was confronted by Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA) workers, who accused him of distributing cash to voters ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections. An Election Commission official reported the recovery of Rs 9.93 lakh from Tawde's hotel rooms, leading to a police FIR. After a prolonged dispute, a joint press conference was planned but was halted by EC officials due to its illegality before voting. Tawde and BVA leader Hitendra Thakur left together, with Tawde stating they were going for lunch and would hold a press conference later. The BVA claimed Tawde was caught with cash and found a diary in his bag related to cash distribution. Tawde denied these allegations, calling for an unbiased inquiry, while BJP officials labeled the claims as a conspiracy to damage his reputation, asserting that such accusations are unfounded and politically motivated.

## Punjab AAP names Cabinet Minister Aman Arora as party president, MLA Amansher Singh Shery Kalsi as V-P



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab Friday named Cabinet Minister Aman Arora as the state unit president replacing Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, and appointed Batala MLA Amansher Singh Shery Kalsi as the vice president. The appointment of Arora and Kalsi came a day after the by-elections to the four Punjab Assembly seats were held Thursday. Earlier in the day, a source privy to the discussions within the Aam Aadmi Party said, "The change is likely to be announced today in all probability. The AAP wanted to name a Hindu leader to hold the reins of the party in the state". This came after the Lok Sabha election results when it was believed that the Hindu voters shifted to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The AAP got 26.2 per cent

of vote share during the Lok Sabha elections 2024 and the BJP got 18 per cent votes. In the Punjab Assembly elections 2022, the AAP got 42 per cent votes, and the BJP got 6.6 per cent votes. Bhagwant Mann himself indicated this change in October while speaking to the media on the sidelines of an election rally at Chabbewal during a by-election campaign. "I have been the president of the AAP in Punjab for the last seven years. Working on two posts adds to the pressure on the CM. As the chief minister, I have huge responsibilities, overseeing 13-14 departments," Mann said at that time. "While I have been fulfilling my duties as the state president with full dedication, I believe the AAP needs a dedicated president to handle party responsibilities full-time. I will discuss the appointment of a full-time AAP state unit president with the party high command so that responsibilities can be distributed." Mann was first appointed the AAP Punjab convener in May 2017, after the debacle of the party in the Assembly elections that year. However, he resigned in March 2018 in protest a day after Arvind Kejriwal apologised to Bikram Singh Majithia in a defamation case for making false allegations about the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader's involvement in drugs trade. e was appointed the AAP Punjab convener again in January 2019. Even after taking over as the chief minister in March 2022, he continued to hold both posts. It was seen as a precedent set by Arvind Kejriwal, who remained the Delhi CM and the national convener of the AAP until he stepped down as the CM.

## Barabani police OC suspended day after Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee slams police for role in 'coal, sand smuggling'

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Mamata Banerjee had specifically pointed fingers at certain sections of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the grassroots police force, suggesting their complicity in illegal businesses. (File Photo) Mamata Banerjee had specifically pointed fingers at certain sections of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the grassroots police force, suggesting their complicity in illegal businesses. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday strongly criticised lower-level police officers, accusing them of involvement in corruption and facilitating illegal activities like coal and sand smuggling.

Following these allegations, the Asansol-Durgapur Police Commissionerate suspended sub-inspector Manoranjan Mondal who was the officer-in-charge of the Barabani police station in West Burdwan district. The suspension was based on charges of "unprofessional conduct and negligence of duty". Mondal is one of the several officers facing departmental inquiries from the state police and administrative departments. During their suspension period, each officer will receive half of their basic salary. Meanwhile, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has become more active in addressing issues related to alleged sand and coal smuggling, launching operations in various parts



of the state.

What Mamata Banerjee alleged Banerjee had specifically pointed fingers at certain sections of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the grassroots police force, suggesting their complicity in illegal businesses. She "vowed" to take strict action against any individual involved in such activities. Her allegations in a press conference came after senior Trinamool Congress leaders like MP Sougato Roy and Kolkata Municipal Corporation Mayor and MLA Firhad Hakim questioned the police following a murder attempt on TMC councillor Sushanta Ghosh.

## IndiGo launches direct flights from Pune to Dubai, Bangkok

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

An IndiGo spokesperson said Pune's links to both Dubai and Bangkok were crucial for the city's growing IT and automobile sectors. These direct flights will foster better trade and tourism between the cities, supporting economic growth, he added. The flight from Pune to Dubai will depart daily at 17:40, arriving in Dubai at 22:10. The return flight will depart for Pune at 00:15. The Pune-Bangkok flight will operate three times a week - on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays - departing at 23:10, with the return flight from Bangkok leaving at 01:15. According to Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo, with the introduction of these flights, IndiGo will now operate over 85 direct weekly flights to Thailand from eight cities in India.

Prior to Friday's additions, Pune airport operated only two direct international flights: a SpiceJet service to Dubai, active for several years, and an Air India (formerly Vistara



till merger with Air India) flight to Singapore, launched in December 2023. With the launch of these new flights, Pune now has four direct international flights connecting it to three global destinations: Dubai, Bangkok, and Singapore.

## 145 monkeys 'dead after entering FCI godown in Hathras, buried'; FIR registered



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

According to police, it is suspected that the monkeys entered the godown after the fumigation of grains kept there. According to police, it is suspected that the monkeys entered the godown after the fumigation of grains kept there. In a complaint, Bajrang Dal leader Harshit Gaur said that on November 19, he received information from his associate, an employee of

the FCI godown, that several monkeys were allegedly being buried at the godown. He then informed the Circle Officer and Sub-Divisional Magistrate about the incident, the complainant said. Kotwali Station House Officer Vijay Singh said an investigation has been initiated, and a team of veterinary doctors has been called to the site for further examination. Gaur, Bajrang

the FCI godown, that several monkeys were allegedly being buried at the godown. He then informed the Circle Officer and Sub-Divisional Magistrate about the incident, the complainant said. Kotwali Station House Officer Vijay Singh said an investigation has been initiated, and a team of veterinary doctors has been called to the site for further examination. Gaur, Bajrang

Dal's Sah Vibhag Sangyojak for Hathras and Mathura, said: "I spoke to an employee of the FCI godown who suggested that the 145 monkeys entered the godown after fumigation of the grains on November 9 and died. He claimed that the animals were buried inside with full Hindu rituals."

The complainant further alleged that the godown employees did not disclose the deaths of the monkeys at the time of the incident. The case was registered at Kotwali police station under BNS sections 286 (negligent conduct with respect to explosive substances) and 291 (continuance of nuisance after injunction to discontinue). Additionally, provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act have been invoked against the accused. In a statement, Additional District Magistrate of Hathras, Shiv Narayan Sharma, said an inquiry into the matter is ongoing.

## After Sanjay Raut says Mahayuti offering bribes to Independents, BJP hits back with 'Mungerilal Ke Haseen Sapne' jibe

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sanjay Raut alleged Friday that the BJP-led Mahayuti has been contacting Independent candidates and offering them bribes in the recently held Maharashtra Assembly elections. After Raut made the remarks, the BJP hit back, saying it didn't want to snatch his right to dream. While speaking to reporters in Mumbai, Raut said, "Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnis, and their leaders are not confident of winning the Assembly elections and, therefore, they are now offering bribes to Independents who they think are likely to win... This desperation in the Mahayuti clearly shows that we are winning". Raut said leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) met Thursday and did an analysis seat-by-seat. "We reached a conclusion that the MVA will win at least 160 seats if not more. This also includes the smaller parties which are part of our grand alliance," he said. Dismissing the predictions made by exit polls, Raut said, "We don't trust the exit polls. Several exit polls had given the BJP-led alliance more than 400 seats during the Lok Sabha elections but the numbers in reality were far less. Similarly, in Haryana, the exit polls gave Congress the victory. The result was quite different... The exit polls are all manufactured". The Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) said the decision regarding the chief ministerial post will be taken jointly by the leaders of the three key parties in the MVA. He also said they have contacted pos-



sible winners from the alliance and Independents. "We have told them to come to Mumbai," he said.

Raut said the Election Commission of India should explain the sudden rise in the voting percentage in Maharashtra "by 2-3 per cent". "How it helps BJP increase its seat tally. We are expecting clarification from EC." Reacting to Raut's allegations and claims, Maharashtra BJP chief spokesperson Keshav Upadhye said Raut was "day-dreaming". "We don't want to snatch his right of indulging in Mungerilal Ke Haseen Sapne. Let him keep dreaming for the next 24 hours. Tomorrow, at this time, it will be clear that the Mahayuti is forming the government. We will win more than 150 seats. The actual figure could be much more than," claimed Upadhye.

## Trio held for defrauding Ahmedabad senior citizen of over Rs 1 crore after 'digital arrest', sent to 9-day police custody

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The Ahmedabad Cyber Crime police on Thursday received a 9-day remand of three members of a gang from Rajasthan who had allegedly cheated a senior citizen in Ahmedabad of Rs 1.15 crore through the "digital arrest" con. The incident took place on November 16, when the complainant said he received a call from an unknown person on WhatsApp who told him that he was calling from Delhi Police. He was told by the caller that a parcel intercepted by them had links with his Aadhaar card. Further, the victim was told that the parcel contained 16 passports, 58 ATM cards and 140 gram MDMA narcotics. The cyber criminals further told the complainant that he had been booked and that an arrest warrant had been issued in his name. The caller went on to tell the complainant that if he did not cooperate with the "investigation", he would be placed under arrest.

The cyber criminals then placed the complainant in a "digital arrest" through a video call and asked him not to move from his place. Following this, the caller, impersonating a senior officer of Delhi Police, sought his bank balance and account details in the guise of "taking his statement". They then asked him to transfer all his money to them "for verification" and gained his trust by sending him a document that had the purported logo of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the name of the Delhi court, and the stamp and signature of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), officials said. The victim transferred Rs 1.15 crore to



the scamsters.

After lodging an FIR in the matter, the cyber crime police traced the bank accounts being used in the racket to a gang based in Rajasthan and arrested Shivraj Ramnivas Jat, Kamleshkumar Mohanlal Bishnoi, and Nathuram Nimbaram Jat. The cyber crime police froze over Rs 63 lakh in various bank accounts while recovering cash amounting to Rs 11 lakh, which the accused had withdrawn from the bank. The police received nine days' remand of the accused from a local court in Ahmedabad. The cyber crime police, in its statement on Thursday, made an appeal to the public not to fall for such digital arrest scams. Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently raised the issue in a Mann ki Baat episode.

## Bengaluru traffic police issue advisory against scams: 'verify identities before providing information'

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The Bengaluru traffic police asked the public to be wary of fake callers "demanding payment for fines or penalties" and "messages claiming to have footage of traffic violations and demanding payment". Following reports of people receiving calls and messages from the Bengaluru traffic police in the last couple of days about their vehicles being involved in accidents or traffic violations, the Bengaluru police said Thursday the calls were being made by fraudsters to "deceive citizens and extract personal information or money".

The Bengaluru traffic police asked the public to be wary of fake callers "demanding payment for fines or penalties" and "messages claiming to have footage of traffic violations and demanding payment". "Do not entertain or respond to such calls or messages. Do not click on suspicious links

or download attachments. Do not provide personal information or make payments. Verify the authenticity of calls or messages by contacting our department directly," the Bengaluru traffic police said in an official statement.

"Calls claiming to offer fake insurance or registration services. Messages asking citizens to click on malicious links or download attachments. Claiming to be from Traffic Police and informing that your vehicle is involved in hit & run case. Fake Police Transfer Calls: Calls where the scammer claims to transfer you to a fake police officer and asks you to press 1, 2, etc., to verify your identity or confirm payment," said the statement.

While advising citizens to avoid entertaining or responding to such calls or messages, the Bengaluru traffic police also asked people to verify the identity of the callers and to only use official payment channels for fines or services.



## AAP launches phase-1 campaign ahead of Delhi Assembly polls, targets BJP's 'muft ki revdi' accusation



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday launched the first phase of its campaign, which will run from November 25 to December 10, to consolidate its base ahead of the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said the 15-day campaign, dubbed 'Revdi Pe Charcha (discussion on freebies)', will feature over 65,000 meetings across the city aiming to promote six key welfare schemes implemented by the Delhi Government.

The AAP national convener defended the party's flagship initiatives including free electricity, water, education, healthcare, and public transport, which often draw heavy criticism from their political opponents. Kejriwal said the party's campaign will emphasise how these "six revdis" have benefitted Delhiites. Addressing party workers and the media, he alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), often accused the AAP of offering 'muft ki revdi'. "BJP members say that if you vote for us, we will do everything that Kejriwal did for Delhi... If they have to do the same thing that Kejriwal is doing then why should they be elected to power?" he asked, further adding, "Kejriwal ko vote denge, duplicate ko kyu layenge!"

"We have done a lot for Delhiites. We have given them 6 revdis. The PM has said that Kejriwal is giving 'muft ki revdi', which must be stopped. Now, the people of Delhi have to decide if they want these revdis or not," Kejriwal said, stressing that these benefits were funded by the taxes paid by Delhi residents and will be abolished if the BJP comes to power in the national capital. He went on to claim that the BJP, which governs 20 states, does not offer any of the six benefits in its own territories. "In BJP-ruled states, there is no free electricity, no free water, no free education, no free healthcare. If they come to power here, they will stop all these benefits too," Kejriwal warned. While elaborat-

ing about the six "revdis", Kejriwal highlighted that before the AAP's tenure, Delhi faced frequent power cuts of up to 10 hours a day. Under AAP, Delhiites now enjoy round-the-clock electricity. "None of the BJP-ruled states get 24-hour electricity," Kejriwal pointed out, adding that Gujarat, despite being ruled by the BJP for over 30 years, still experiences power cuts. He further said that the AAP government provides every family with 20,000 litres of free water per month. "None of the BJP-ruled states offer free water," Kejriwal asserted.

The AAP national convener spoke about the state-of-the-art schools built under the party's governance. "Eighteen lakh students study in Delhi's government schools. Children of rickshaw pullers and labourers are becoming doctors and engineers," he said, contrasting this with the dilapidated state of schools in BJP-run states. The AAP government's healthcare scheme includes free treatment in government hospitals and mohalla clinics. "If you vote for the BJP, you will have to go to private hospitals and spend thousands," Kejriwal claimed.

"Under the AAP's governance, women get free bus rides and senior citizens are provided free pilgrimage trips, a scheme that the BJP will end if it comes to power," he said, promising to start soon the scheme that provides Rs 1,000 per month to every woman in Delhi. Attacking the BJP, Kejriwal said Delhi is a half-state. "We control the state government, but the central government, led by the BJP, controls the Lieutenant Governor's office," he explained. "We have done everything for the people of Delhi - electricity, water, roads, hospitals, CCTV cameras, streetlights. What has the central government done?" he asked. Arvind Kejriwal further questioned the BJP's promises, pointing out that the party had failed to fulfill commitments from the last election, including registering unauthorised colonies in Delhi. "They lied to the Purvanchal community that they would register their colonies. Not a single registry happened in the last five years," Kejriwal claimed. "We, on the other hand, started development work in these areas. We have constructed over 10,000 km of roads and 6,800 km of sewer and water lines." Concluding his speech, Kejriwal appealed to Delhiites to continue supporting the AAP, claiming that the party was the only one that kept its promises. "Whatever I say, I do. I don't lie," he asserted. He expressed confidence that the AAP would "secure as many seats as it did in the last elections." The AAP on Thursday released its first list of 11 candidates for the Delhi Assembly polls scheduled to be held in February 2025.

## Why coalition politics is here to stay in Maharashtra



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

In the last 34 years, no political party in Maharashtra has been able to achieve the halfway mark of 145 seats required to form a government on its own. This means that the coalition politics trend that gained a foothold in the state in 1995 is likely to continue once the Assembly election results are declared on Saturday with either the Mahayuti or the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalitions forming the government. After a bitter battle for 288 Assembly seats, as the final countdown begins, both three-party alliances are leaving no stone unturned to confront the political challenges that are likely to emerge from the public mandate. While the BJP contested the highest number of seats, 148, it will have to heavily depend on its partners, the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, to cobble together the numbers. Similarly, the Congress, which has contested 101 seats, will also have to rely on the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (SP) to reach the magic mark if it gets a sizable vote.

The high voter turnout - the state recorded a polling percentage of 66.05 per cent, its highest since 1995 - has given confidence to both sides that the mandate will more or less be decisive. And both the ruling and Opposition alliance have maintained that the surge in voters will work in their favour. While Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said the voting trends were a sign that a "pro-incumbency factor" was at work, state Congress chief Nana Patole maintained that the party sees a "public mandate for the MVA". Meanwhile, ahead of D-Day, all major parties are holding a series of meetings and reaching out to their candidates, the rebels, smaller parties and Independents who put on a good fight.

While senior Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat met NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray, the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief also addressed his party office bearers and candidates cautioning them about the precautions that have to be taken during counting. Similar discussions were held within the BJP too. "If the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) wins a good number of seats, we will join the process of government formation. We will support the parties that will form the government," VBA president Prakash Ambedkar said. The VBA had contested the elections alone, maintaining a distance from the Congress-NCP as well as the Shiv Sena-BJP. "Maharashtra is a complex state with stronger regional parties which have the public mandate. So, politics no longer revolves around pan-Indian Congress and BJP. Regional parties are a force to reckon with and without their support, governments cannot be formed," Ambedkar said. From 1960 to 2024 after the formation of Maharashtra on May 1, 1960, the first Assembly elections were held in 1962. The Congress then got a mammoth

mandate of 215 seats. In the subsequent elections held in 1967, the Congress won 203 seats.

In 1978 polls, there was a split in the Congress, and the mandate was fractured with the Congress bagging 69 seats, the Indian National Congress (I) 62, and the Janata Party 99. Sharad Pawar had then walked out of the Congress government led by chief minister Vasantdada Patil to form the Indian National Congress (Socialist) with 40 rebels. They formed the Progressive Democratic Front government with the help of the Janata Party and the Peasant and Workers Party of India. At 38, Pawar became the youngest chief minister of the country. But the government was dismissed in 1980. The mid-term polls saw the Congress regaining a mandate of 186 seats and its faction INC (U) securing 47 seats. The INC (U) later merged with the main party. On April 6, 1980, the BJP emerged as a political wing of the Jana Sangh. Though in existence since January 19, 1966, the Shiv Sena had restricted itself to local bodies politics. After 1989, it allied with the BJP and started contesting both Lok Sabha as well as Assembly polls. The Congress's dominance in Maharashtra politics continued from 1962 to 1990. In the 1990 Assembly elections, the party won 141 seats, followed by the Shiv Sena with 52 and the BJP with 42 seats. The state's political matrix changed in 1995 with the Shiv Sena (73 seats) and BJP (65 seats), along with 40 rebels, coming to power for the first time. Shiv Sena leader Manohar Joshi became the chief minister and BJP's Gopinath Munde, the deputy chief minister. Reduced to 80 seats, the Congress was voted out of power. Five years later, after Pawar parted ways with the Congress to form the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on June 10, 1999, there were two active political fronts in the state: the Congress-NCP versus the Shiv Sena-BJP. From 1999 to 2019, Maharashtra saw uninterrupted coalition governments. The Congress-NCP ruled the state between 1999 to 2009 with the Shiv Sena-BJP in the Opposition. In the 2014 Assembly polls, BJP emerged as the single largest party by winning 122 seats. It formed a government with the help of the Shiv Sena which won 63 seats and the BJP got its first Maharashtra chief minister in Devendra Fadnis. The saffron coalition completed a full five-year term. After the 2019 Assembly polls, Thackeray broke away from the BJP to join the Congress-NCP alliance and form a three-party coalition which he headed as the chief minister. Operation Lotus, where the BJP brokered a split in the Shiv Sena, followed. In June 2022, the BJP and the Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde formed a government by dislodging the MVA. A year later, in July 2023, the NCP split into two factions after Ajit Pawar broke away from his uncle and joined the Mahayuti. With the Mahayuti and the Maha Vikas Aghadi entrenched in their respective roles, a single-party government seems a distant reality in Maharashtra.

## Following 'encounter' death of Naxal leader Vikram Gowda, Karnataka Police seek custody of ex-wife lodged in Kerala jail

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

The Karnataka Police Wednesday sought the custody of the former wife of Naxal leader Vikram Gowda, who was killed in an encounter by the Anti-Naxal Force in a village in the state's Udipi district earlier week, in connection with their probe into two cases pending for over 10 years. The state police moved the Karnataka High Court for the custody of Savithri, 35, in the two cases after a court in Dakshina Kannada's Belthangady rejected their request for a body warrant for the former Naxal from the Thrissur prison in Kerala. The local court rejected the police request, saying that the cases had already reached the trial stage. The Karnataka High Court disposed of the plea indicating that an order to consider the state's plea for a body warrant for Savithri would be issued. "Surrender is the best policy. The government has come up with a fair and equitable surrender policy (in May 2024). There are many ways to surrender and there are different categories of surrender," Pronab Mohanty, Director General of Police (Internal Security Division), said in a press briefing following the shooting of Vikram Gowda on November 18.

Two cases against Naxal leader Savithri Savithri alias Usha alias Rajitha, who hails from Karnataka's Chikamagaluru district, was the Kabini Dalam 1 commander and Area Committee member of the banned CPI (Maoist) before she surrendered to the police in Kerala in November 2021. She separated from Vikram Gowda over ideological differences as chose to enter the mainstream and Gowda - the commander of Kabini Dalam 2 - continued to hold on to a hardline Naxal stance. Savithri, who joined the Bhavani Dalam of the Maoists as a 23-year-old, is wanted in Karnataka in connection with an attack on the home of an NGO worker in the forests in the Veroor region of Belthangady on November 9, 2013, and a similar case from 2012. Ramachandra Bhat's house was allegedly attacked as he was involved in the rehabilitation of tribals outside the forest. The others accused in the 2013 case are Vikram Gowda, who was the leader of the group, and the still missing Sundari, Jayanna, and other Naxals.



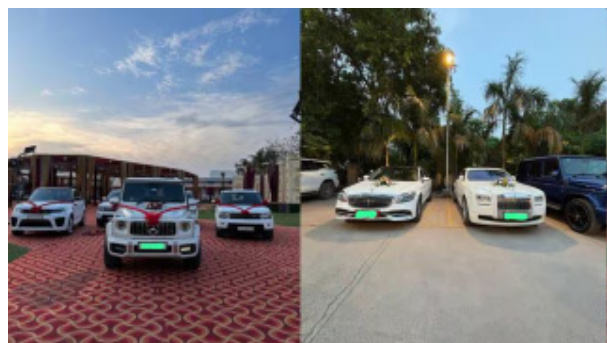
Though the police filed an initial C report in January 2017 indicating that the accused could not be traced, a subsequent charge sheet was filed the same year after the arrest of a suspect Ramesh alias Chennai Ramesh alias Madhava in Bengaluru in March 2017. Ramesh was, however, acquitted in October 2022 in connection with the case of the attack on Bhat's house. Savithri surrendered in 2021 amid mounting pressure from the police in Karnataka and Kerala on the Maoists in the forests. She surrendered along with B G Krishnamurthy alias Vijay, 50, who was the senior-most member of the Naxals in Kerala and Karnataka's Western Ghats. Angady Suresh alias Pradeep, a Naxal from Karnataka who was in the Vikram Gowda group, surrendered to the Kerala Police in Kannur in February this year after being injured in an elephant attack in the forest. Many of the Naxals lodged in prisons in Kerala have reportedly been trying to get their comrades who don't want to surrender to enter the mainstream after facing the legal consequences of past crimes as per the state government's surrender policy. From a group of nearly 19 Naxals from Karnataka, who moved to Kerala in 2019, only five - including three women named Mundgaru Latha, Sundari, and Vanajakshi; and two men Jayanna and Ravi - are still at large. Jisha from Kerala and Ramesh from Tamil Nadu are reported to be part of the Kerala group that returned to Karnataka in February this year.

## Not one luxury car, but an entire fleet now accompanies newlyweds in Punjab in latest fad

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Big, fat weddings are common among Punjabis because they believe in living life 'king size'. Now, car rental services are cashing in on a new trend that involves displaying a fleet of luxury cars at the baraat, which is the celebratory procession that takes the groom to the wedding venue. Rental services are posting reels of the same on Instagram to attract more customers this wedding season. Recently a Begowal-based car rental service posted a list of vehicles available for a rate of Rs 1.35 lakh for a day, including a G-Wagon, Maybach, BMW, Jaguar XJ, and a Range Rover.

"Earlier, people would hire one luxury car, like a limousine, for just the bride and groom, but now there is a fleet of luxury cars. Some prefer to have several cars of one model while others opt for a combo package," says Goldy Dhillon of Ludhiana-based Sahib Tours and Travels. "I get these cars arranged on rent for many customers. The rates are different if the wedding is within Ludhiana. It is more expensive if the vehicles are meant to go outside Ludhiana," Dhillon adds. Tejwant Singh of Dashmesh Luxury Wedding Cars says, "NRIs started this trend to show off but now even others follow it. Everything depends on one's pocket. These days people are even booking a fleet of Mercedes Benz G-Wagons for wedding purposes. Normally a fleet of 8-10 cars is booked for a day." "The rate for a fleet of five to six cars



"Earlier, people would hire one luxury car, like a limousine, for just the bride and groom, but now there is a fleet of luxury cars. Some prefer to have several cars of one model while others opt for a combo package," says Goldy Dhillon of Ludhiana-based Sahib Tours and Travels. "I get these cars arranged on rent for many customers. The rates are different if the wedding is within Ludhiana. It is more expensive if the vehicles are meant to go outside Ludhiana," Dhillon adds.

ranges from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2.5 lakh if the wedding is within the city. Some take these cars to other cities and villages as well," Dhillon explains.

## Sandakphu turns white as season's first snowfall hits West Bengal; no major change in Kolkata, South Bengal temperatures, says IMD



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

According to the IMD, the minimum temperature on Thursday was 8 degrees Celsius and on Friday morning, it was recorded at 7.6 degrees Celsius in Darjeeling. (Express Photo) According to the IMD, the minimum temperature on Thursday was 8 degrees Celsius and on Friday morning, it was recorded at 7.6 degrees Celsius in Darjeeling.

Sandakphu in Darjeeling, which is the highest point in West Bengal, saw the season's first snowfall in the state on Thursday. Last year, snow first fell on December 7. Around 2 pm on Thursday, the small hamlet and tourist resort, situated at the Indo-Nepal border at an altitude of 11,900 feet, began to see snow. Tourists, local people, and hoteliers in Sandakphu and other parts of Darjeeling hills were overjoyed. "It is good news. The first snowfall was earlier than it was last year. The area was covered in white snow. Over 200 tourists were there at that point. Now we expect more tourists to visit. Already, queries are pouring in," said a hotelier in Darjeeling.

Meanwhile, according to the IMD, the minimum temperature on Thursday was 8 degrees Celsius and on Friday morning, it was recorded at 7.6 degrees Celsius in Darjeeling. The mercury is expected to slightly fall on Friday night. According to the IMD, the minimum temperature on Thursday was 8 degrees Celsius and on Friday morning, it was recorded at 7.6 degrees Celsius in Darjeeling. (Express Photo) Around 2 pm on Thursday, the small hamlet and tourist resort, situated at the Indo-Nepal border at an altitude of 11,900 feet, began to see snow. (Express

Photo) IMD predictions for Kolkata However, Kolkata and parts of southern West Bengal are expected to have clear skies and no major changes in minimum temperature for the next few days. In Kolkata, maximum temperatures will hover around 28°C, while minimum temperatures will be near 19°C. Winter will gradually set in with a steady decrease in temperatures. However, no major changes are expected till the end of November. According to IMD, some districts in North and South Bengal may experience light to moderate fog in the morning, especially in Murshidabad, Nadia, Birbhum, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, East Burdwan, West Burdwan, Hooghly, Bankura, West Midnapore, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Cooch Behar and Malda. A cyclone forming in the Bay of Bengal is not expected to directly affect the state. Overall, Kolkata and its surrounding areas will enjoy a relatively pleasant weather with mild temperatures and occasional fog.

## US indicts Gautam Adani over \$250mn bribery in solar energy fraud in India

New York: An Indian businessman who is one of the world's richest people has been indicted in the US on charges he duped investors in a massive solar energy project in his home country by concealing that it was facilitated by alleged bribery.



Gautam Adani, 62, was charged in an indictment unsealed Wednesday with securities fraud and conspiring to commit securities and wire fraud. He is accused of defrauding investors who poured several billion dollars into the project by failing to tell them about more than USD 250 million in bribes paid to Indian officials to secure lucrative solar energy supply contracts.



## Ukraine, pummeled by Russia now, had world's third-biggest nuclear stockpile



sia. Ukraine is in fact heavily dependent on the US for its military needs to fight Russia off. "The gist is, 'We had the weapons, gave them up and now look what's happening,'" Mariana Budjeryn, an Ukraine specialist at Harvard University, told The New York Times. So, what was it that compelled Ukraine to hand over all its Soviet nuclear stockpile to Russia? One fact that needs to be understood is that the operational control of the Soviet stockpile was always with Russia. It was Moscow that had the 'nuclear briefcase', meaning the device for authorisation, transmission and codes to launch attacks.

However, Ukrainian scientists worked on the Soviet nuclear programme and Ukraine possessed scientific knowledge for operation and maintenance of the stockpile. In the early 1990s, Ukraine wasn't known in the international community and needed to build a reputation and identity as it sought recognition to become an independent nation. It used the nuclear stockpile of over 5,000 weapons as a bargaining chip. "It would have cost Ukraine quite a bit, both economically and in terms of international political repercussions, to hold on to these arms. So it would not have been an easy decision," Harvard's Mariana Budjeryn told NPR in a separate interview. The 1986 nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, a Ukrainian city, also made the word nuclear an anathema to the people. It was because of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in northern Ukraine that the nation "felt the need to eliminate nuclear weapons", according to William Miller, the US ambassador to Ukraine from 1993 to 1998. More than anything else, it was for independence that Ukraine gave up its nuclear deterrent. Nuclear disarmament became a cornerstone of Ukraine's bid for independence in 1991, according to Volodymyr Vasylenko, who was one of the authors of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine. "By being a nuclear power, [Ukraine] could not attain full independence," Vasylenko said, according to the Kyiv Independent. Several top officials, including Volodymyr Tolubko, a former nuclear-base commander and Ukrainian member of Parliament, insisted Ukraine should never give up the nuclear edge. In 1992, he called Ukraine's rush to declare itself a non-nuclear state "romantic and premature", according to The New York Times. He argued for a residual missile force to "deter any aggressor", according to the report. Ukraine declared independence in 1991 and became a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the 1968 flagship agreement against nuclear weapons, in 1994. That agreement guaranteed the protection of Ukraine's sovereignty, and is better known as the Budapest Memorandum. It is being hotly debated amid the Russian invasion. Russia, which inherited the Soviet Union's debt, also inherited the arsenal. Ukraine started transferring missiles and nuclear warheads to Russia in 1994 after the Budapest Memorandum. As the last nuclear warhead crossed into Russia on June 2, 1996, Ukraine lost its nuclear tag. So, Ukraine, which possessed the third-largest nuclear stockpile, became the non-nuclear poster boy in exchange for assurances from western powers, mainly the US, and Russia. But there is an overwhelming agreement that by giving away the Soviet weapons to Russia, Ukraine did the right thing at the right time.

Ukraine claimed Russia hit it with an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) as the Ukraine-Russia war is seeing a dangerous escalation. Ukraine once had the world's third-largest nuclear weapons stockpile and 179 ICBMs, which could have been a major deterrent, but it handed them over to Russia in a trade-off for identity and independence.

It wasn't the UK, France or China, but Ukraine that had the world's third-biggest stockpile of nuclear weapons. Now a non-nuclear nation, Ukraine also had over 170 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and thermonuclear warheads but traded-off the entire arsenal for independence. That history might be causing some heartache among Ukrainians as Ukraine claims to have been hit by Russia with an ICBM, the first-known case of its use. In a dangerous escalation to the Ukraine-Russia war, which has been going for over 1,000 days now, Ukraine claimed that Russian forces hit the Ukrainian city of Dnipro with an ICBM, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Moscow denied the allegations.

This comes after Ukraine fired six US-made long-range missiles into Russia after approval of their use from the Biden administration. This was believed by Russia to be the crossing of a red line drawn by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The world has seldom been so close to the outbreak of a nuclear conflict as it does today. But come to think of it, in a world where several countries have tried to get their hands on nuclear weapons and some are covertly trying to do so, Ukraine stands out as an exception. As an inheritance from the Soviet Union, Ukraine possessed the third-largest arsenal of nuclear weapons after Russia and the US.

"Ukraine had 1,900 Soviet strategic nuclear warheads and between 2,650 and 4,200 Soviet tactical nuclear weapons deployed on its territory at the time of independence in 1991," according to the Nuclear Threat Institute (NTI), a Washington DC-based global security organisation. Ukraine was one of four republics where the Soviet Union had expanded its nuclear programme to, other than Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Not just nuclear weapons, it even had 176 ICBMs, missiles with a minimum range of 5,500km, according to NTI. It also had 10 thermonuclear bombs, many times more powerful than the atomic bombs than the ones dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Today, Ukraine doesn't have any nuclear weapons, and a section of Ukrainians are ruing the decision as it faces invasion from Rus-

## Is European collective security under threat by Russia in the Baltic Sea?

Baltic sea is an active commercial shipping route, ringed by nine countries including Russia. Reminiscent of such incidents in the past in the Baltic sea, especially the destruction of the Nord Stream gas pipelines linking Russia to Germany in 2022 – seven months after Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine, the current event has put Europe on red alert. European nations are blaming Russia for recent twin incidents in the Baltic sea. Two undersea fibre-optic communications cables were severed this week. One is a 218-km internet link between Lithuania and Sweden's Gotland Island, which stopped working on Sunday, November 17th. The second is a 1,200-kilometre cable connecting Helsinki to the German port of Rostock, which went out of service the next day.

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The companies that own the two cables – Areion and Cinia – both said it was not yet clear what had caused the outages. But the damage is huge, and may take over a fortnight to fix. The Swedish Prosecution Authority has



started investigating the matter, and announced that ship movements corresponding with the interruption of the two lines have been picked up. A Chinese ship has been stopped on grounds of suspicion. Reports indicate that the ship was captioned by a Russian citizen.

Finland is also investigating the matter, with support from NATO's Maritime Centre for the Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure. Lithuania has responded with boosted surveillance of its waters. While foreign ministers of Germany, France, Poland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom have denounced Russia, European Commission Vice President Josep Borrell took a more cautious approach, and argued that it was too early to point fingers. Meanwhile, Russia has repeatedly denied any hand in the attack on infrastructure. However, European concerns may not be entirely unfounded. We'll have to wait for the investigation results for the final verdict. But if it really is sabotage, it is likely that like the Nord Stream incident investigation last year, this may also remain inconclusive.

## Elon Musk rips Australia's social media ban: Backdoor way to control access

Elon Musk, who views himself as a champion of free speech, said the Australian government is trying to "control access to the internet" by banning social media for children under 16. Kutniti described Starlink as "a wolf in sheep's clothing," asserting that the satellite network's technology is heavily influenced by American governmental interests. X owner Elon Musk has spoken out against Australia's proposed law to ban social media for children under 16.

US billionaire Elon Musk, owner of social media platform X, has criticised Australia's proposed law to ban social media for children under 16 and fine social media platforms of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars (USD 32 million) for companies for systemic breaches. Australia's centre-left government on Thursday introduced the bill in parliament. It plans to try an age-verification system to enforce a social media age cut-off, some of the toughest controls imposed by any country to date. "Seems like a backdoor way to control access to the Internet by all Australians," Musk, who views himself as a champion of free speech, said in a reply late on Thursday to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's post on X about the bill.

Several countries have already vowed to curb social media use by children through legislation, but Australia's policy could become one of the most stringent with no exemption for parental consent and pre-existing accounts. France last year proposed a ban on social media for those under 15 but allowed parental consent, while the



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US has for decades required technology companies to seek parental consent to access the data of children under 13. Musk has previously clashed with Australia's centre-left Labor government over its social media policies and had called it "fascists" over its misinformation law. In April, X went to an Australian court to challenge a cyber regulator's order for the removal of some posts about the stabbing of a bishop in Sydney, prompting Albanese to call Musk an "arrogant billionaire".

## Israel army says it 'eliminated' five Hamas militants in north Gaza raid



crossing.

April 2, 2024: An Israeli airstrike kills six international aid workers with the World Central Kitchen charity and their Palestinian driver, hours after it brought a new shipload of food into northern Gaza. Footage showed the bodies of the dead at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah. Several of them wore protective gear with the charity's logo. In this photo, a man displays the blood-stained British, Polish, and Australian passports. April 13, 2024: Iran launched multiple drones toward Israel, marking the first time Iran had ever launched a full-scale military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iran had been threatening to attack Israel since an airstrike last week killed two Iranian generals in Syria. Israel has not commented on that attack, but Iran accused it of being behind it. This photo shows an anti-missile system operates after Iran launched drones and missiles towards Israel, as seen from Ashkelon, Israel.

Men check the site on an Israeli strike at a house in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip on November 22, 2024, amid the ongoing war between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas militant group. The Israeli military said on Friday (November 22, 2024) it had "eliminated" five Hamas militants, including two commanders, in an overnight raid in northern Gaza's Beit Lahia. In a statement, the military and the Shin Bet security agency said they had "eliminated five Hamas terrorists, including a Nukhba (commando) company commander and an additional company commander who participated in the October 7 massacre" that sparked the Gaza war last year.

October 7, 2023: Hamas militants stormed across the border from Gaza into Israel in what would become the deadliest attack in the country's history. At the end of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, the militants launched their assault by land, air, and sea. Militants abducted 251 hostages on October 7, 97 of whom are still captive in Gaza, including 33 the Israeli military has said are dead. Soon after the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced "We are at war." He declared a mass army mobilization. "Not an 'operation,' not a 'raid,' but at war." Israel battered Gaza on October 8 after suffering its bloodiest attack in decades, when Hamas fighters rampaged through Israeli towns killing 600 and abducting dozens more, as the spiralling violence threatened a major new war in West Asia. Israeli air strikes hit housing blocks, tunnels, a mosque, and the homes of Hamas officials in Gaza, killing more than 370 people, including 20 children, as Mr. Netanyahu vowed "mighty vengeance for this black day".

October 27, 2023: Internet and phone services collapsed in the Gaza Strip under intensified bombardment, largely cutting off its 2.3 million people from the outside world and each other, as Israel's military "expanded" its ground operations in the besieged territory. The military's announcement signalled it was moving closer to an all-out invasion of Gaza, where it has vowed to crush the ruling Hamas group after its bloody incursion in southern Israel three weeks ago. This screen grab taken from handout footage released by the Israeli army on October 26, 2023, shows a "targeted raid" in northern Gaza with tanks and infantry. November 2023: Israeli forces struck near several hospitals in Gaza City as the military pushed deeper into dense urban neighborhoods in its battle with Hamas militants, prompting increasing numbers of civilians to flee toward the south of the besieged territory. Israel accused Hamas fighters of hiding in hospitals and using the Shifa Hospital complex as its main command center, which the militant group and hospital staff deny, saying Israel is creating a pretext to strike it. In this photo from November 6, 2023, a man walks between the bodies wrapped in shrouds of those killed in Israeli bombardment in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, at the Shuhada Al-Aqsa hospital in the same city. November 24, 2023: After 48 days of gunfire and bombardment that claimed thousands of lives, a four-day truce in the Israel-Hamas war began. Palestinian prisoners (wearing grey jumpers) cheer after being released from the Israeli Ofer military facility in Baytunia in the occupied West Bank in exchange for hostages freed by Hamas in Gaza, on November 24, 2023.

February 29, 2024: Israeli forces in war-torn Gaza opened fire on a crowd of Palestinians at an aid distribution point on February 29, killing at least 104 people and wounding over 700 according to Palestinian health officials. A witness told AFP that the violence unfolded when thousands of people desperate for food rushed towards aid trucks at the city's western Nabulsi roundabout. This image grab from a handout video released by the Israeli Army shows what the Army says are Gazans around aid trucks in Gaza City. March 2024: The U.N. warned that Israel's severe restrictions on aid into war-ravaged Gaza coupled with its military offensive could amount to using starvation as a "weapon of war", which would be a "war crime". The devastating war since Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel has left roughly half of Gazans — around 1.1 million people — experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, the assessment said. In this photo from October 2023, Palestinian children receive food at a UN-run school in Rafah, on the southern Gaza Strip. March 2, 2024: U.S. military C-130 cargo planes dropped food in pallets over Gaza. The airdrop was the first of many announced by President Joe Biden on. The aid was coordinated with Jordan, which has also conducted airdrops to deliver food to Gaza. Since the war began on Oct 7, Israel barred entry of food, water, medicine and other supplies, except for a trickle of aid entering the south from Egypt at the Rafah crossing and Israel's Kerem Shalom

## In U-turn, Canada withdraws extra screening for travellers to India

The Canadian government has rolled back the additional security screening measures for travellers flying to India, just days after implementing them, CBC News reported. The move comes amid heightened diplomatic tensions between Ottawa and New Delhi over the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Transport Minister Anita Anand had announced the enhanced screenings earlier this week. "Out of an abundance of caution, the government would temporarily implement additional security screening for travellers to India," Anand had said in a statement. The government did not specify the reasons for lifting the new protocols. The measures, carried out by the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA), involved screening passengers and baggage at airports before entering restricted areas. According to reports, the additional screening on India-bound flights resulted in delays and long queues at airports.

The announcement of increased screenings followed a bomb threat in October aboard an Air India flight travelling from New Delhi to Chicago. The flight was diverted to Iqaluit in Canada, where no explosives were found after an inspection. Adding to the security concerns, Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun recently issued a public threat against flying Air India from November 1 to 19. The warning coincided with what Pannun referred to as the "40th



anniversary of the Sikh genocide" in India. Pannun, who holds dual Canadian and US citizenship, has made similar threats in the past. Canada and India have been locked in a diplomatic standoff since Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations that the Indian government was involved in Nijjar's murder on Canadian soil. India has consistently denied the claims, calling them "absurd" and "motivated". Relations hit a new low when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) accused Indian agents of engaging in criminal activities in Canada, including murder and intimidation. Both countries have since expelled top envoys and frozen cooperation on several fronts.



## Yamuna Expressway is a catalyst for growth: Industry leaders say real estate investment is on the rise



The Yamuna Expressway, stretching over 165 kilometers between Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida and Agra, is rapidly emerging as one of the most dynamic and promising real estate corridors in northern India, reshaping the landscape with its seamless connectivity and vast development potential. Linking key cities, the sixth-longest expressway in the country has become a prime destination for both residential and commercial ventures. With a variety of amenities, rapid industrial and infrastructure development and real estate projects tailored to the needs and budgets of those looking for properties along the corridor in close proximity to the national capital, the Yamuna Expressway offers lucrative opportunities for developers and investors alike and the perfect destination for prospective homeowners. Whether for residential complexes, office spaces, or retail developments, the Yamuna Expressway stands as a beacon of future growth and a hotspot for high returns. Here is a closer look at why the Yamuna Expressway has gone beyond being a road improving connectivity significantly, by transforming the region and catapulting it into new heights of real estate development and investment. Ajay Chaudhary, Founder, Chairman and Managing Director, ACE Group Ajay Chaudhary, Founder, Chairman and Managing Director, ACE Group The Yamuna Expressway is a key driver of infrastructure growth in the NCR, marking a transformative shift in connectivity and development. It has reduced travel time between Delhi, Noida and Agra, sparking rapid industrial and residential growth along its corridor. The strategic location, new airport and improved road network have made it an attractive destination for businesses, real estate developers and investors. At ACE Group, we are witnessing its positive impacts with significant developments in residential and commercial sectors along the expressway. We are committed to contributing to the region's urbanisation with modern sustainable projects and look to furthering its role as a hub for growth and innovation." Yamuna Expressway is one of India's most coveted real estate destinations, distinguished by its strategic location, world-class connectivity, and the visionary support of state-driven plans for industrial, institutional, hospitality and commercial hubs. The new Noida In-

ternational Airport has provided a robust foundation for the region's growth and drawing investors and residents alike. The area's proximity to Mathura and Agra enhances its allure. Having recognised the potential of this region early on, we introduced Gaur Yamuna City. With world-class infrastructure, integrated townships and connectivity, Yamuna Expressway is set to surpass hubs like Gurugram, paving the way for a new era of urban living in India." The Yamuna Expressway is a game-changer for real estate in Northern India. With its seamless connectivity to major hubs like Noida, Greater Noida, and Agra, this region is swiftly becoming a thriving investment destination. From residential townships to commercial projects, the potential here is immense. The upcoming Jewar International Airport, Film City, and other significant developments have propelled the region's real estate development, attracting global attention. Further, the influx of tourists to major destinations across Mathura and Agra has fuelled demand for high-end properties and commercial ventures. Thus, we foresee exponential growth in property values, making it a prime choice for investors seeking long-term returns". The Yamuna Expressway region is undergoing remarkable transformation into a hub for infrastructural and economic growth. Key developments like the Noida International Airport, Bayview Bhutani Film City, and Urban Centre, are boosting job creation, tourism, and real estate demand. Property values along the Expressway have increased by 10-12% annually. The airport is enhancing global connectivity, attracting industries such as logistics and hospitality. These developments reflect India's commitment to a future-ready economy. For homebuyers, the Expressway offers modern housing, while businesses benefit from growing infrastructure. The corridor promises to drive investment and innovation through connectivity and trade.

The Yamuna Expressway stands as a testament to India's infrastructure advancement, connecting Delhi, Noida, Mathura, and Agra and unlocking immense potential for real estate growth. This strategic corridor is a transformative force, driving rapid urbanisation, attracting residential and commercial developments. With the highly anticipated International Airport in Jewar, POD taxi service, and Rapid X Metro, the expressway is set to propel regional connectivity and economic progress. These developments are set to catalyse urban expansion, creating a nucleus for real estate investment with opportunities for high returns. We foresee the expressway driving property value growth and setting new benchmarks in sustainable urban planning and living." This content is sponsored and does not reflect the views or opinions of IE Online Media Services Pvt Ltd. No journalist is involved in creating sponsored material and it does not imply any endorsement whatsoever by the editorial team. IE Online Media Services takes no responsibility for the content that appears in sponsored articles and the consequences thereof, directly, indirectly or in any manner. Viewer discretion is advised.

## Ola Electric cuts 500 jobs across verticals

Earlier this month, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) had ordered a detailed probe into complaints related to alleged "deficiencies" in services and electric two-wheelers manufactured by Ola Electric. (OlaElectric/X)Ola Electric Mobility is cutting 500 jobs across verticals and levels as part of a restructuring exercise, according to people aware of the development. The company, which has come under the scanner for its poor after-sales service recently, had started the job cut in the September quarter. "It has been going on for some time now, starting around July. It has been a gradual process of removing redundant roles across verticals and levels," said a source. The exercise is expected to be completed by the end of this month. Ola Electric is looking to optimise workforce with an aim to improving margins and enhance profitability, the person added.

Earlier this month, Central Consumer Protection Au-



thority (CCPA) had ordered a detailed probe into complaints related to alleged "deficiencies" in services and electric two-wheelers manufactured by Ola Electric. Last month, the company had said that out of 10,644 complaints received from CCPA, it has resolved 99.1 per cent of the complaints.

## Majority of Adani group stocks trade lower for 2nd day; Adani Green tumbles 11%



Shares of eight of the ten listed Adani group firms were trading lower during the morning trade on Friday after billionaire Gautam Adani was charged by US prosecutors for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay USD 265 million (about Rs 2,200 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms for solar power contracts. Adani Green Energy dropped 10.95 per cent and Adani Energy Solutions tumbled 8.57 per cent to hit the 52-week low of Rs 637.85 on the BSE.

The stock of the group's flagship firm, Adani Enterprises, slumped 6.98 per cent to hit its 52-week low of Rs 2,030. Shares of Adani Power tanked 6.38 per cent, Adani Total Gas went lower by 6.11 per cent, Adani Ports declined 5.31 per cent, Adani Wilmar plunged 5.17 per cent to hit the one-year low of Rs 279.20 and NDTV dipped 3.41 per cent. In contrast, ACC and Ambuja Cements were trading over 2 per cent higher even after falling in the opening deals. In the equity market, the BSE benchmark Sensex quoted 781.02 points higher at 77,936.81 and the NSE Nifty climbed 228.90 points to 23,578.80. Shares of Adani group firms fell sharply on Thursday. The stock of Adani Enterprises had plunged 22.61 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions tanked 20 per cent, Adani Green Energy plummeted 18.80 per cent, Adani Ports dived 13.53 per cent, Ambuja Cements cracked 11.98 per cent, and Adani Total Gas tumbled 10.40 per cent on the BSE. Shares of Adani Wilmar declined 9.98 per cent, Adani Power slumped 9.15 per cent, ACC fell 7.29 per cent, and NDTV dipped 0.06 per cent. Adani group on Thursday denied charges of paying bribes to secure favourable terms for solar power contracts, saying the allegations by US prosecutors are baseless and the conglomerate is compliant with all laws. It said all possible le-

gal recourse will be sought. "The allegations made by the US Department of Justice and the US Securities and Exchange Commission against directors of Adani Green are baseless and denied," the group spokesperson said in a statement.

## WhatsApp to introduce feature that transcribes voice messages to text

New Delhi: Meta-owned WhatsApp has introduced a new feature called voice message transcripts and voice messages can now be transcribed into text, 'to help you keep up with conversations no matter what you're doing.' Transcripts are rolling out globally over the coming weeks with a few select languages to start, and the company plans to add more languages over the coming months. In a blog post, WhatsApp said that sending a voice message makes connecting with friends and family even more personal. "There's something special about hearing your loved one's voice even when you're far away. Though sometimes, you're on the move, in a loud place, or you receive a long voice message that you just can't stop and listen," the social media company added. For those moments, "we're excited to introduce voice message transcripts." Transcripts are generated on your device so that no one else, not even WhatsApp, can hear or read your personal messages. To start using this feature, go to Settings, Chats and then Voice message transcripts to easily turn transcripts on or off and select your transcript language. "You can transcribe a voice message by long pressing on the message and tapping on 'transcribe.'" "We're excited to build on this experience and make it even better and more seamless," said WhatsApp. The Meta-owned company recently introduced the Message Drafts feature which addresses a common issue forgetting to send an unfinished message. When you start typing but don't hit send, WhatsApp now marks the chat with a clear Draft label and moves it to the top of your chat list. This ensures you can quickly locate and complete your messages without scrolling through multiple conversations, said the company."

## As Delhi struggles to breathe, air purifiers fly off the shelves; but do doctors really recommend them?



In the last few days, northern India has been battling the worst air quality of the season. With the air quality index breaching the 400 mark in Delhi and parts of the National Capital Region, the Delhi government has kicked in Stage 4 of its Graded Response Action Plan or GRAP. As Delhiites struggle to breathe, air purifiers have become the talk of the town. Once thought to be an unnecessary luxury accessory, these air-cleaning devices have now gained relevance — with market players like Phillips, Dyson, Xiaomi, Honeywell and Kent seeing an approximate 50 per cent increase in sales of air purifiers in the festive season. The air purifier is a mechanical device that improves indoor air quality by capturing pollutants, allergens, and harmful particles from the air in a room. It draws air that passes through filters like the High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter that can trap particles as small as 0.1 µm. The cleaned air is then circulated back into the space, as per the Eureka Forbes website. "I had not imagined they were this expensive," says Anjali Malik from Haryana's Rohtak, who looked for air purifiers online after constant throat irritation post the Diwali season. She says the starting price online was Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000, way beyond her budget. "I will probably overlook the money if my health is further affected," she said. Fancier air purifiers in the market range above Rs 60,000. As pollution spikes, kids and the elderly at risk

With a blanket of smog engulfing areas in and around Delhi, people have been facing persistent cough, breathlessness, and low oxygen levels. Patients with prior respiratory disorders and families with small children and senior citizens are most vulnerable to air pollution and are often the first ones to be prescribed an air purifier. Though using an air purifier only pacifies or prevents the triggers of lung, chest or heart disease in patients, Dr Ashok Rajput, a pulmonologist at the Centre for Chest Diseases, Dwarka, says, "There is no assurance of curing a respiratory disease with its use."

"If there are patients of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or respiratory failure, bad air can be detrimental and air purifiers can be advised," says Dr Rajput. "For healthy people who are exposed to the same air outside and inside, air purifiers do not make much difference. If one can afford it, one can use it...there are no disadvantages," he adds. Seasonal flu With a blanket of smog engulfing areas in and around Delhi, people have been facing persistent cough, breathlessness, and low oxygen levels. Dr Manoj Goel at Fortis Healthcare says air purifiers are only beneficial "if a person is constantly bound to their room". "If not maintained, air purifiers get contaminated and can instead infect the air," he adds. Do not recommend investing in an air purifier in Delhi-NCR if the budget allows it but people should make sure they are using the right size for their rooms. Large halls should have one that weighs more than 10 kg and can cover more than 500 sq ft," says Dr Ravi

Shekhar Jha at Fortis Healthcare. "It is also essential to use the device as per the manufacturer's instructions," Jha adds, explaining how one of his patients never removed the filter on the opening that was dispensing filtered air.

HEPA filters: Solution to respiratory woes?

HEPA H13 standard filters are highly effective at capturing 99.95 per cent of small and ultra-small particles. Dr Ken Armstrong, an air purification scientist at Dyson, explains that, unlike a basic air purifier, an advanced one would also have ultraviolet light filters that use electromagnetic radiation to destroy bacteria, viruses, and mould, instead of just capturing them. In contrast, regular filters, such as pre-filter and activated carbon filters, typically capture larger smoke particles and are less effective at trapping finer pollutants. HEPA filters are generally considered better for those with allergies or respiratory issues due to their superior filtration capabilities. However, they may need to be replaced more frequently and could be slightly pricier than standard air purifier filters. Air purifiers are most effective when they are running all day around, hence you are going to want one that makes the least sound and is effective, says Dr Armstrong. While some have respective apps, others display the indoor air quality on a small display.

A costly investment?

Noida resident Gaurav Gupta bought an air purifier in his office this year after feeling a significant improvement in his sleep quality. "I have been using an air purifier for four years now," says Gaurav. But unlike Gupta, many find an air purifier a luxury investment. The need to change filters frequently adds to the cost of this device. Generally, most air purifier filters should be replaced every nine to 12 months. If used in a high-pollution area or run continuously, more frequent filter replacements may be necessary, as per the Eureka Forbes website. The air purifier is a mechanical device that improves indoor air quality by capturing pollutants, allergens, and harmful particles from the air in a room.

Breathify, a Delhi-based startup, aims to solve the pricing problem by manufacturing low-cost air purifiers. "We have not just seen sales in metro cities, but also in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities," says Ratan Kohli, marketing head at Breathify. Even though cases of stubble burning have exacerbated the air pollution in Punjab and Haryana, Kohli says sales in these states are limited now. He says he understood the desperation for clean air after a labourer contacted him to buy an air purifier for his old parents who stayed in a slum. But does everyone require an air purifier? "I only recommend investing in an air purifier if someone is already battling a respiratory issue; otherwise, normal gargling, using a mask, and staying indoors can help common people prevent throat discomfort as pollution season peaks," says Dr Rajput. The effectiveness of an air purifier largely depends on the size of the room and the purifier's capacity. Most air purifiers are designed to clean the air in a single room, and placing one in a central location may not be sufficient to purify the entire house, the Eureka Forbes website states. Swagata Dey, Air Quality Policy Specialist at Bengaluru-based thinktank Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), explains how during the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, do-it-yourself air purifiers called Corsi-Rosenthal (C-R) boxes became quite popular, which cost merely one-tenth of branded air purifiers. A similar creative workaround and mass manufacturing for economies of scale could make cleaner air accessible to more people, she adds. Air purifiers are not a standalone solution for air quality issues, the expert highlighted.

## The link between polluted air and pet allergies: Symptoms, how to identify them and care tips for owners

For pet owners, air pollution can mean an uptick in vet visits or the need for specialised care to manage allergies. For pet owners, air pollution can mean an uptick in vet visits or the need for specialised care to manage allergies. Air pollution isn't just harmful to humans; it can also have a significant impact on our pets. Many aren't aware that there is a link between polluted air and an increase in pet allergies, with symptoms ranging from skin irritation to respiratory issues. Pets are exposed to pollutants both outdoors and indoors, where particulate matter and harmful chemicals can settle on their fur or be inhaled. For pet owners, this can mean an uptick in vet visits or the need for specialised care to manage allergies and irritations. Beyond medical interventions, certain grooming practices can help reduce irritation and keep pets comfortable despite poor air quality. To shed light on this growing concern, we sought expert advice. Dr Deepraj Prajapati, veterinarian at RD Pet Clinic, tells indianexpress.com, "Air pollution poses significant health risks to pets, particularly affecting their skin and respiratory systems. Early identification of symptoms, regular grooming, and adopting household measures can help mitigate these risks."

Common symptoms of pet allergies caused by polluted air

Polluted air can trigger allergies in pets, manifesting through symptoms that closely resemble human allergic reactions, says Dr Prajapati. Common signs, according to him, include:-Respiratory Issues: Sneezing, coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing may indicate airborne irritants affecting the lungs or airways. -Skin Irritation: Excessive scratching, redness, dry patches, or hair loss are often early indicators of contact with pollutants. -Eye and Nasal Discharge: Watery, red eyes and a runny nose can result from exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and chemical pollutants. -Behavioural Changes: Lethargy, reduced appetite, or increased anxiety may be signs of discomfort caused by poor air quality. Frequent brushing re-



moves dust and pollutants trapped in the fur. Frequent brushing removes dust and pollutants trapped in the fur. How to identify symptoms early Dr Prajapati suggests, "Regularly monitor your pet's behaviour, skin, and respiratory patterns, particularly during periods of high pollution." Seek veterinary advice promptly if symptoms persist or worsen. "A vet may recommend skin or blood tests to determine specific allergens affecting your pet," he adds. Grooming tips or practices can help reduce irritation and protect pets from pollutants. Dr Prajapati recommends the following: Frequent Brushing: Removes dust and pollutants trapped in the fur. Use a soft-bristle brush to avoid irritating the skin. Wiping Down: Use a damp, hypoallergenic cloth to wipe your pet's coat and paws after walks to prevent allergens from entering the home. Bathing: Regular baths with mild, moisturising pet shampoos help remove pollutant residues without stripping natural oils.

Avoid over-bathing, as it may dry out the skin. Hydration: Ensure pets have access to clean water, which supports healthy skin and fur from the inside out. Protective Clothing: For short-haired pets, consider lightweight coats to minimise pollutant contact during outdoor activities.

## US travel advisory exposes how Telangana govt underreported Chikungunya cases

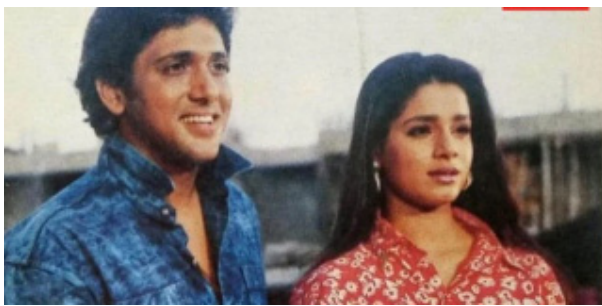
Hyderabad: The travel advisory on the large number of chikungunya cases in Telangana, released by the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on November 8, is not only an embarrassment for the State's public health department but is also a reflection of the widespread culture of underreporting of seasonal ailments.

Based on the feedback from private healthcare institutions and senior doctors in Hyderabad, it was clear that between July and October of this year, Hyderabad and the districts of Telangana were under the grip of dengue and chikungunya, the twin vector-borne ailments spread by the bite of the Aedes aegypti mosquito. Since dengue and chikungunya have common symptoms, all fever and joint

pain cases were being labelled as dengue infections in Hyderabad. The CDC advisory from the United States is a clear indication that the State's Public Health department was not even inclined to look to confirm chikungunya cases, which needs additional and appropriate care, when compared to dengue. In its briefly worded advisory, the CDC alerted people flying from and to the US about the large number of undiagnosed cases of chikungunya in Telangana. "CDC has identified a higher-than-expected number of chikungunya cases among US travellers returning from the State of Telangana, India," the advisory said. Senior doctors in Hyderabad have said the advisory is a clear indication that a lot of travellers had Chikungunya but many of them were not treated fully.



## Neelam says she was never in a relationship with Govinda: 'Link ups were part of the whole game, no one to clarify'



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Govinda and Neelam starred in many films during the early days of their career. Govinda and Neelam starred in many films during the early days of their career. Neelam Kothari appeared in some of the most popular films across the 1980s and 1990s and like many stars in that era, she was also quite used to hearing rumours about herself. In a recent interview, when Neelam was asked about her rumoured relationship with her frequent collaborator Govinda, the actor finally put an end to all those rumours. Neelam said that she was not in a relationship with the Coolie No 1 actor.

Talking to Hauterfly, Neelam said, "I think link ups were

part of the whole game. There was no one to clarify. They just printed whatever they felt like and to be honest I feel like in those days we were scared of the press. Because it was the power of the pen and it was just part of it. If you did more than 2-3 films, it was just understood that... (you were dating)." In a 1990 interview with Stardust, Govinda had said that he was in love with Neelam and at one point, even broke off his engagement with Sunita because he wanted to be with Neelam. He said, "I couldn't stop praising her. To my friends, to my family. Even to Sunita, to whom I was committed. I would tell Sunita to change herself and become like Neelam. I would tell her to learn from her. I was merciless." He claimed that after a fight, he was ready to call it quits with Sunita. "I asked Sunita to leave me. I broke off my engagement with her. And had Sunita not called me after five days and coaxed me into it again, I would probably have married Neelam," he said and added, "I wanted to marry her. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that." Soon after, Govinda married Sunita. Neelam is now married to actor Samir Soni. In the same chat, she spoke about Samir and said, "Samir is a very matured, grounded, practical person. He is someone who has a solution for everything. If I have a serious problem, Samir is my go-to person because his way of thinking is very sound and he is practical."

## Diljit Dosanjh Mumbai concert: Where to buy tickets for Dil-Luminati tour and their cost, how to get them online

Diljit Dosanjh Mumbai Concert tickets: Diljit Dosanjh's Dil-Luminati tour has become a global phenomenon. After making history at venues across the world, the Punjabi artiste is now taking on his home turf, one city at a time. After making the national capital dance to his tunes, followed by successful shows in Jaipur, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, Diljit will be performing at the Ekana Sports City arena in Lucknow on the 22 November. Diljit will also be performing in Pune, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Indore, Chandigarh, Mumbai and then finally Guwahati.

Diljit Dosanjh Dil-Luminati tour dates in India Fans are eagerly waiting for a chance to catch the electrifying performance with many of the venues already sold out. After repeated appeals from the fans, Diljit finally announced that he will be performing in Mumbai on 19 November. The venue for the same is yet to be decided. The tickets for the Mumbai concert started selling at 5 pm IST, 22 November. ZomatoLive is the official promoter of the event and the fans can get their tickets from its website or app. The audience structure has been bifurcated in 4 part — Silver, Gold, Lounge and a Fan Pit. The Fan Pit is sponsored by HSBC bank. The ticket prices for the Mumbai show have been revealed on ZomatoLive's Instagram and are as follows: Silver- Rs 4999; Gold- Rs 11,999; Lounge – Rs 60000 and



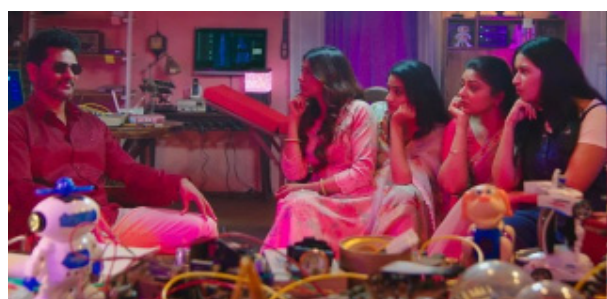
HSBC Fan Pit- Rs 21,999. The HSBC card holders will have a unique edge as they could pre-book the tickets during 2 to 5 pm on Friday. The Punjabi artist sold out shows all over the world including US, Canada, Italy, Amsterdam and London and his tour is now setting new standards of musical dominance in India.

## Jolly O Gymkhana movie review: Prabhudeva, Abhirami-lead ensemble shoulder this slightly funny but sloppy comedy

Jolly O Gymkhana movie review: There has been a legitimate paucity of quality comedy films this year in Tamil cinema. So, when Sakthi Chidambaram, a veteran of this genre, even if his recent films were just a shadow of his form in the mid 2000s, closes the year with Jolly O Gymkhana, a comedy, it is okay to have your hopes up. But the filmmaker starts off by introducing Yogi Babu as Father Martin Luther King, and makes him walk out of the toilet and say lines like "Unakku life problem, enakku piles problem." You think that is bad? It gets worse with him telling Madonna Sebastian's Bhavani that he can't help her sleeping problem because he is suffering from a sitting problem. You think that is worse? Bhavani, who narrates her backstory, says, "Kadhayoda moolathulerndhu kelunga (Listen to the story from the core)" and of course, Yogi Babu replies, "Already moolam dhaan ma prachana (My you-know-what is already sore)." And we are just five minutes into Jolly O Gymkhana.

Now, Jolly O Gymkhana starts with a voiceover that asks us to forget logic because the aim of the film is to make us laugh, and not think. Now, that is genuinely a fair thing to ask of an audience. It is important to prepare us for everything, especially since the film is about how four women carry around a dead body, and manage to escape from menacing loan sharks, murderous henchmen, casteist cops, and a strict bank manager. There are so many cooks in the film, and it is impressive that the broth isn't too spoiled. There are quite a few of these angles that manage to elicit a laugh and a half, but they are bookended by archaic plot points. In fact, Sakthi, who understands that Jolly O Gymkhana is built on a flimsy one-liner, packs the film with so many subplots that the numbers game actually works in favour of the film. Take, for instance, the characters played by Sai Dheena and John Vijay. One has to prove that he is a cold-blooded murderer, and the other has to prove that he is not a cold-blooded murderer. This is wonderfully milked in a particular scene in a hotel, which is packed with every principal cast member. But, such occurrences happen so sparingly that sometimes, the wait isn't just worth it.

While Sakthi Chidambaram rightfully warned us to not question the logic in Jolly O Gymkhana, it would have been better if he spent more time in structuring the narrative instead of throwing one randomness after another. Right from the time Poonkundan (Prabhudeva) enters the fray, we accept that in the next 90 minutes, we would just see him play a dead body with everyone around him doing everything to make the film breathe. However, the writing suffocates their comic timing, and as the film progresses, it is just one convenience after another. Do you need the dead Poonkundan to move his hands and legs? Bhavani's sister Shivani is a robotics enthusiast. Do you need the dead Poonkundan to sign an important document? Bhavani's sister Yazhini is a signature forging enthusiast. Do you need the dead Poonkundan to talk? Bhavani is a ventriloquist. The reason why it feels too convenient is because Bhavani's sisters don't do anything else in the film. At least Bhavani gets enough scenes to be more than just a ventriloquist, but the other two are present almost throughout the movie, and they almost do nothing. I don't even think they had more than two lines of dialogue throughout the film. Now, that is



lazy writing. But what truly is the laziest part of Jolly O Gymkhana is the scenes involving Prabhudev as the dead body. You don't really see him do much in the narrative, and it is a disappointment because Prabhudeva has brilliant comic timing, and is a very physical actor who could do a lot more. Take, for instance, the stunt sequences where he is brilliant. But there is very little else he does. Of course, everything happens around him, but it the scene duration almost always is stretched beyond its comic elasticity. Every member of the cast pulls more than their weight to mask the lack of ingenuity in Poonkundan's scenes. Madonna tries to do a lot, and she does... but there is so much happening around her that she gets lost in the melee. A random cameo by the filmmaker himself in the last act isn't half as funny as what it might have been on paper. However, the real surprise factor in the film is Abhirami, who exhibits impressive comic flair, and makes you wonder why she doesn't get more such roles. Of course, she too is burdened by mundane dialogues at times, but she also gets some of the better lines of the film.

Another highlight of the movie is undoubtedly Ashwin Vinayagamoorthy's music that keeps the proceedings light and cheery. But the songs are placed too close to each other and it acts as distractions. Jolly O Gymkhana, just like all Sakthi Chidambaram films, has a sentimental flashback that comes out of nowhere. There is very little impact, despite the stakes being seemingly high. This dichotomy doesn't work for Jolly O Gymkhana because the sudden tonal shift feels out of place without a serious adversary. Here, everybody is in on the fun even when murders happen at the drop of a hat. So, the sudden sentiment towards the end, and a throwaway line of "Manam vittu pesa madham edhuku (Why should religion be a hindrance for a heartfelt conversation)?" feels not just out of place, but a force-felt of sorts. But what really had to be forcibly left out of the film was the crass one-liners and lyrics that make you squirm in your seats. Now, it isn't like these are there throughout the film. But it makes you wonder why it was there in the first place when Sakthi Chidambaram could actually conjure up a half-decent film without it. Isn't it high time the 'avana nee' dialogue or 'aunty-hero' trope gets buried six feet deep into the ground? There is a distasteful gag about a man going to buy lingerie for his wife. And the dialogues are repetitive after a point because there are only so many 'death' and 'body' related jokes you can write. Honestly, some were funny, but after a point, it was just insipid. At one point in the film, Yogi Babu says, "Generally, in a story, you will have one fool, but here, you have a whole union of them."

## Yeh Kaali Kaali Aankhein 2 review: Tahir Raj Bhasin, Saurabh Shukla show never takes its eyes off the ball



The first season of 'Yeh Kaali Kaali Aankhein' became an addictive watch in the way it bent one of the oldest genres in the book: being an obsessive lover is not just a male prerogative; women can do it just as well, if not better. It made up for all its nods to hoary Hindi movie heavies who lived in palaces overrun by armed goons, governed by old-style off-with-their-heads villainy. Director Sidharth Sengupta and co-writers Anahata Menon and Varun Badola return with their cast and commitment intact for season 2. Purva's (Aanchal Singh) fixation with childhood crush Vikrant (Tahir Raj Bhasin), which set things into motion in the previous season, has multiplied manifold. Her loving daddy Akheraj Awasthi (Saurabh Shukla), a local power centre, has grown more powerful in the interim: whatever his princess wants, she will get.

The new season opens with Purva trussed up in the

back of a car, with the kidnapper (Arunoday Singh) caught between two men, one who wants her dead, the other, alive and well. UK-based security expert Guru ( Gurmeet Chowdhury), armed with a team comprising a couple of vaguely-Slavic types, comes charging in to rescue the woman he has feelings for. Which leaves Vikrant less and less wiggle room: will Shikha ( Shweta Tripathi) the love of his life, now another man's wife, survive the onslaught? Will Vikrant's family, father ( Brijendra Kala), younger sister, and faithful friend Golden ( Anantvijay Joshi) live to tell their tale?

It's wise to confine the telling to a brisk six episodes, the pace never slackening despite the occasional contrivance or two. A human body is chopped into pieces. The bloody remains are found. Shukla, vamping it up for all he's worth, declares war. Aanchal Singh exudes menace successfully, even as she is flung from one hiding spot to another. Joshi's hanging his tongue out at anything 'from foreign', is unfunny, and drags things down. Akheraj's old foe, played by Varun Badola and his armed outfit, are never as interesting as they think they are. But with the conflicted Bhasin never taking his eye off the ball (we continue to hear his point-of-view through the series, as an explainer), while sliding down an increasingly violent path, keeps us watching: how far can a good man fall in the pursuit of keeping himself and his loved ones safe? And can love that corrodes override a more moral, just affection? The show, with all its pulpy thriller sinews in place, leaves us on a cliffhanger, nicely primed for the next season. Cast: Tahir Raj Bhasin, Saurabh Shukla, Shweta Tripathi, Aanchal Singh, Brijendra Kala, Surya Sharma, Anantvijay Joshi, Gurmeet Chowdhury, Varun Badola, Arunoday Singh. Director: Sidharth Sengupta. Rating: 3 stars

## Khushbu Sundar recalls an actor misbehaving with her, asked, 'Chance mil jayega kya?': 'I immediately held my chappal...'

Khushbu Sundar recently recalled an incident when an actor openly made advances at her. The actress-turned-politician, who was part of masterclass on Women's Safety in Cinema at the ongoing International Film Festival of India, Goa, spoke at length about the issue. The panel also included filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, Bhumi Pednekar, Suhasini Maniratnam, and Vani Tripathi Tikoo. While addressing the safety issues, Khushbu Sundar urged women to speak up whenever anybody mistreats them. She said, "Women face challenges not just in the film industry but everywhere. You face them while travelling in a shared auto, local train, or even on a flight. It's everywhere, not just in the film industry. But I would like to ask women to speak up whenever they feel someone's mistreating them. Speak up then and there; don't think about your career and troubles."

Giving her own example from her initial days, the actress said, "A hero once asked me, mujhe kahi cycle gap mei chance mil jayega kya? (will you give me a chance without anyone noticing?) I immediately held up my chappal and said, 'I wear a size 41. Do you want to be slapped here or in front of the unit?' I didn't think then that I was a newcomer, what would happen to my career? I just knew my respect was more important to me than anything. You need to respect yourself, only then will someone else respect you."

Khushbu Sundar has been quiet vocal about women's safety and has often supported movements like MeToo as well as the recent Hema Committee report. Previously, the actress had opened up about being abused by her father and has often spoken about it in her interviews. Recently, during the Hema Committee wave, the actress had shared an X post, where in support of the actresses, Khushbu



wrote, "What happened to me, was not a compromise to build my career. I was abused at the hands of the person who was supposed to provide me the strongest arms to hold me if I fell." She added, "This moment of #MeToo prevailing in our industry breaks you. Kudos to the women who have stood their ground and emerged victorious. The #HemaCommittee was much needed to break the abuse. But will it? Abuse, asking for sexual favors, and expecting women to compromise to gain a foothold or accelerate their careers exist in every field. Why is a woman alone expected to go through the grind? Although men too face it, it's marginally women who bear the brunt."

## Hanumankind, Lady Gaga, Travis Scott, Post Malone to perform at Coachella 2025

The official list of the Coachella 2025 headliners has been released on Instagram, with over 14 acts set to perform during the two-weekend celebration of music. Musical phenoms like Lady Gaga, Travis Scott, Post Malone, Hanumankind and Green Day are all set to showcase their talent at the 24th edition of the music festival, which will be held from April 11 to April 20, 2025. Accompanying them will be artistes like Charlie XCX, Megan Thee Stallion, Zedd and Benson Boone.

On both Fridays, all eyes are going to be on singer-actor Lady Gaga. The last time she headlined the show was in 2017. The A Star is Born actress will be accompanied by a wide spectrum of artistes, like d4vd, HiTech, The Prodigy and hip-hop icon Missy Elliott. The festival is also throwing it back with groups like Three 6 Mafia in the lineup. The Saturday show will be headed by "I Don't Care" singer Charlie XCX, who is garnering attention with her latest album Brat. The audience will be taken on a trip down memory lane with The Original Misfits gracing the coveted stage. Yo Gabba Gabba!, ENYPHEN, Shoreline Mafia, T-pain and Darkside will also be performing on April 12 and 19.

For all desi rap fans in the audience, the one and only Hanumankind is expected to perform his viral song "Big Dawgs" and other popular tracks. It is certainly a huge deal for the Indian music space and the artiste himself. On April 13 and 20, the celebration will be led by multi-genre artiste



Post Malone. Malone, who was initially only releasing hip-hop records, has also ventured into the country genre. His latest album F-1 Trillion landed at the #2 spot on the Billboard 200 and received positive reviews from fans and critics. Lastly, Travis Scott has been tasked to design an immersive experience called CactusCon. He will reportedly be performing after Green Day. Starting just months after the legendary Woodstock '99, Coachella has cemented itself as one of the most high-octane musical celebrations in the world.

## Nayanthara, Dhanush's awkward wedding encounter goes viral

Mumbai: Amid brewing controversy, stars Nayanthara and Dhanush bumped into each other at a wedding, where they chose to ignore each other. The video has now gone viral. The two bumped into each other on November 21. According to reports, a security firm posted a video of Nayanthara, who was attending the wedding dressed in a pink saree, was accompanied by her husband Vignesh. The actor was seen sitting in the front row at the wedding and chatting with other guests. Soon the camera panned towards Dhanush, who was sitting in the front row too, on the other end of the aisle. The clip went viral on social media platforms. Nayanthara and Dhanush have been embroiled in a controversy over her Netflix documentary titled "Nayanthara: Beyond The Fairytale", which dropped on November 18. The actress had penned an open letter in which she revealed that Dhanush sent her a legal notice

demanding Rs. 10 crore for alleged copyright infringement as the documentary features BTS footage from his production "Naanam Rowdy Dhaan". She wrote the letter on November 16, when the actress called out Dhanush after he sent a legal notice to her seeking compensation over the use of certain clips in the documentary without authorisation. She wrote, "A well-established actor like you, with the support and blessings of your father and your brother, an ace director, needs to read and understand this. Cinema as we all know is a fight for survival for people like me, a self-made woman with no links in the industry and someone who had to struggle my way to the position I hold today. I'd owe this to my work ethic that is no secret to all who know me but more importantly, to the goodwill of the audience and my film fraternity".



## Carlsen trembled, Kasparov was humbled, Ding Liren almost crumbled: How 1st world chess championship battle tested the best



GNS News Agency, Nov 25

Magnus Carlsen was scared. His hand had started to visibly tremble betraying the inner nervousness he was feeling at that moment while his opponent Viswanathan Anand observed from close quarters. Even worse, Carlsen dropped a couple of pieces while trying to move them. These were not scenes that the world of chess had seen before. Definitely not when Carlsen is involved. But such is the nature of the world chess championship that it had struck fear even into the psyche of one of the most menacing players to play the sport. The world was seeing Carlsen sweat!

"I had a long time to prepare for that first world championship. I prepared a lot! But it scared me to go through all of Anand's games from the past," Carlsen recollected many years later. The world No. 1 had spent months preparing for this moment, his first royal rumble of the world chess championship. And in two games that nonchalant confidence that is Carlsen's persona was starting to crack. Why? Because he had tried his luck with an offbeat line in the first game with white pieces hoping it would give him an advantage by catching Anand off guard. The Indian brushed that line aside with a few lazy gestures of his hand. The game ended in a draw. But it was enough to make Carlsen question his months-long preparation.

It is this crucible of the unknown that the 18-year-old challenger Gukesh will find himself in when he takes on the world champion Ding Liren in Singapore. It is a battle that could last three weeks. Ding, of course, has already experienced the pressure of playing in the world chess championship for the first time a year back. And he survived to tell the tale. He admitted to being depressed before and during the game. Not just playing the world championship, winning it can also take a toll. Ding needed a complete break for many months after becoming the 17th world champion. His self-confidence is still recovering from the rigours of a grandmaster puts himself through to fight for the crown. As Carlsen remarked earlier this month while talking about Ding Liren: "The World Chess Championship is a very tough thing. It's one thing to prepare for the world championship. But I don't think you can quite prepare for the intensity of the championship without actually playing it. A lot of people find it tough, both to play but also to recover. What I think happened with him is that Ding Liren has not completely recovered from that World Championship yet."

Henrik Carlsen, who has been his son's manager and closest confidant, points at those moments when his son dropped pieces on the board to illustrate why players can spend months huddled with a team of seconds preparing to play 14 games against the same opponent, but the grand stage of the world chess championship still throws surprises at you that you haven't thought of. "The team around Magnus, even we didn't sleep as much as we used to. Magnus was quite nervous. That's, of course, a key element in a World Chess Championship match. When you play your first game in your first World Chess Championship match, you cannot be prepared, basically! There's no way to prepare properly for that. Magnus struggled in his first game. A couple of times, he lost his pieces. He was trembling, basically, in the second game," the senior Carlsen recollected in a video for Take Take Take recently. "But once he survived the third game, Magnus put his leg above the other, leaned back, and kind of said to Anand, 'okay, you got your chance. You didn't take it. Now it's my turn'." Viswanathan Anand's first brush with world chess championship Anand, meanwhile, too has some tales of his first time competing for the world chess championship against Anatoly Karpov in 1998.

"Almost everyday, you'll have moments of doubt. You'll have moments when you think things are going to go great. Then you'll ask yourself, are these scenarios of things going well, are they even remotely realistic? Then your opponent will morph into all sorts of things that he's not," chuckled Anand in an interview with The Indian Express recently. "You're constantly duelling with your thoughts. You will panic. There's something about the stakes that makes you want to get the world championship match over with. That itself is a dangerous attitude," said Anand. Anand added that moments of doubt accompanied him in every world championship battle, with each subsequent time he got into the ring, the thoughts and the pressure started to feel "normal". When Gukesh plays in his first world chess championship in a few days' time, it's likely that he might walk into battle with a slight air of invincibility. That's precisely what Garry Kasparov felt when he, as a 21-year-old, fought Karpov for the title in 1984. Karpov by that stage had been champion for a decade. Kasparov was a prodigy who was convinced of his own bullet-proof invincibility. Then, reality came knocking. In the span of a few days, Kasparov had lost four games and won none. His ego bruised, he and his team chose to opt for a conservative approach, which led to 17 consecutive draws. That world chess championship was eventually called off with no winner in sight after five months of Karpov and Kasparov duelling. Kasparov later remarked that he and his team had spent so much time trying to guess what Karpov was going to do, that Kasparov started to feel he was mutating into Karpov himself. So far in his career, Gukesh has been unflappable in the face of the biggest challenges. But in the heat of a world chess championship battle where Carlsen has trembled and Anand has questioned himself and Kasparov had his ego humbled, how will the 18-year-old first-timer manage? "Just have to get through game one. That's the challenge. Then you're fine," advised Henrik Carlsen.

## Captain Jasprit Bumrah's message from Perth: This is not a one-sided series

GNS News Agency, Nov 25

On a mind boggling opening day of the first Test of the series in Australia, where three quarters of the day was filled with chants from Australian fans before the Indian tricolour and voices filled the Perth air, the Indian bowlers answered the burning question that faced them ahead of the game: What would happen once Jasprit Bumrah's first spell ends? Who would keep up the pressure? A question that hung in the air even more ominously after India were shot out for 150 by tea, and Bumrah had done what Bumrah does, a triple strike that left Australia gasping. The answer came in the final session in an utterly stunning fashion, even as the shadows slowly crept across the arena, as India responded by an audacious counterpunch that left Australia reeling at 67 for 7 at stumps. It's a bowling performance that has cracked open the entire series and shredded the dread that it might turn out to be a one-sided affair. Harshit Rana was first to step up, before Mohammad Siraj too perked up after Bumrah's triple strike as Australia were left wobbling like intoxicated men by stumps. It of course needed Bumrah to strike first, but that he did wasn't a surprise. When he finished his opening spell with three wickets, that included the big scalps of Usman Khawaja and Steve Smith in successive deliveries, the fear was that that would be it for India. They would lose the venom, and Australia would bounce back to regain ascendancy. This is where Rana stood up in a rather dramatic fashion with a ball that not only he wouldn't forget but any debutant from anywhere in the cricketing world would dream of as their first Test wicket.

Picture this. Travis Head, India's nightmare in the recent years in Tests and white-ball cricket and Australia's counter-punching hero, was at the crease. He was throwing the punches, cutting Rana for balls that flew over backward point, a region India had packed with two fielders especially for exactly this trait. But Head doesn't fret about fielders, he just goes for it. It's then Rana who was considered ahead of Prasidh Krishna, and whose bowling has been particularly backed by the head coach Gautam Gambhir and the selectors, delivered the most crucial blow of the day. Delivered from round the stumps, it came in with the angle to land on off and middle stump line. So far so good, nothing alarming for Head, who has the tendency to at times stab from the crease. He isn't a batsman who covers the line of the ball always but is mostly successful in keeping such deliveries out with his hand-eye coordination. And so, his hands began to move toward what he expected to be the line of the incoming angler. But Rana had carefully curated this ball to be the one that shapes away from a length and late at that. Too late for last-instant adjustments. And the ball snaked away at pace to take out the off bail and Head quickly turned around and walked away from the crime scene where not just the young bowler, but Virat Kohli was screaming in joy.

The job wasn't done of course as Australia were 34 for 4, and Mitchell Marsh, their in-form batsman who has rescued from perilous situations often in the last year. This is where Siraj put up his hand. He came up with a lovely straightener that squared-up the tall Marsh, who poked it



off the outside edge. And he still might have escaped but KL Rahul dived across to his left from third slip to pouch the ball inches from the ground. It took an umpiring review and zoom-in-camera to spot that Rahul's palms had cupped the ball cleanly and it was his knuckles that grazed the ground and not the ball. India erupted in joy as Australia's back was broken. Now only Marnus Labuschagne remained. His had been a long dour vigil that had lasted 51 balls already for just two runs. He had poked, prodded, pushed around, often hit on the pad, once on his abdomen guard, and had seen the ball rush past the edge. But he was still out there, the last Aussie standing. It was again Siraj who did the damage by taking him with a full in dipper that tailed in late to trap him plumb lbw in front of the stumps. All this wouldn't have happened if it were not for their stand-in captain Bumrah, the world's best fast bowler who trusts his instincts to do the job. And was his gut-feeling spot on. He sussed out quickly that the debutant Nathan Sweeney was a batsman who is seemingly stuck in the crease, and sent a sharp nipbacker that moved past the defensive prod to take him out lbw. He then took out Usman Khawaja, who has rarely put a foot wrong in the last few years, with an angler that cut away late to take the outside edge. Then came the little big moment. Bumrah chose a real full ball that moved in as his first delivery to Steve Smith, who had chosen to go back. Did Bumrah's instincts tell him that? Whatever the case maybe, it proved to be the perfect ball to send Smith back to hutch, and Australia facing the heat. It still might not have been enough if not for India's supporting cast of Rana and Siraj.

## Hyderabad's Narayana Murthy, Hans Gorge Passow are ITF 50 doubles runners-up in Pattaya

Hyderabad: Hyderabad tennis player Kothiyala Venkata Narayana Murthy, alongside Germany's Hans Gorge Passow, finished as runners-up in the 50 doubles category at the International Tennis Federation (ITF) series in Pattaya, Thailand, on Thursday.

The Indo-German duo was defeated 0-6, 3-6 by Ireland's Stephan Bailey and England's Jeff Claridge, setting for the runners-up trophy.

## Hardik Pandya to play for Baroda in Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy



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Hardik Pandya No Look shot against Bangladesh 1st 20iNo-look shots have a mystical fondness in cricket, like the back-heel in football or the 'tweener' in tennis. A no-look ramp is even more electrifying. (X/Hardik Pandya) Team India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has been included in Baroda's 18-men squad for the upcoming Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, beginning across venues from

Saturday. Baroda's team is led by Krunal Pandya in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, and they will play their first game against Gujarat at the Holkar Stadium in Indore.

"Indian international star Hardik Pandya will join his brother and captain Krunal Pandya for Baroda," the Baroda Cricket Association said in a press release. "On behalf of the BCA President and Apex Committee Members, we warmly welcome your (Hardik Pandya) return to the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy." Hardik Pandya need not worry about impressing the IPL scouts after finding a place in Mumbai Indians' retention list ahead of the auction on November 23 and 24 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The all-rounder's appearance in Baroda's jersey is more in line with the BCCI's policy of leading cricketers mandatorily appearing in domestic tournaments. So, his aim will be to keep in touch with the game and possibly help Baroda to a rare title victory. Krunal Pandya (c), Vishnu Solanki (v-c), Hardik Pandya, Jyotsni Singh, Shashwat Singh, Shivaiik Sharma, Bhanu Pania, Mitesh Patel (wk), Bhargav Bhatt, Mahesh Pithiya, Raj Limbani, Soyed Sopariya, Lukman Meriwala, Akash Singh, Atit Seth, Abhimanyu Singh Rajput, Ninad Rathwa, Chintal Gandhi

## Rishabh Pant brings pure joy to Perth with that freakish flick of a six off Cummins, as radio commentators beam through mics

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If anyone could "own" The Fall on a cricket ground, it was Rishabh Pant. With a shot that had devastating ramifications and pure, unalloyed glee when watching in real-time, and countless times in hindsight, the Indian batting star, delighted those watching at the Optus Stadium. It was a charismatic sweep six, while India were falling apart at 108/6. And while Pant literally fell, toppled with the momentum, but not without having dented Pat Cummins' aura. Australia were 42/5 in response and suddenly the Pant Six wasn't a mere happy highlight amidst a tragedy for India. As it turned out, the counter-attack was pivotal in dragging India to 150. Cummins had the last laugh with Pant's dismissal, but all other laughs, giggles, guffaws and all manners of gushes and chuckling that resonated through the Perth ground, were punch pleased with Pant. The commentary boxes couldn't stop beaming – even the radio tale-narrators. On Sen Cricket, Gerard Whateley had Ravi Shastri for company, and almost fell off the seat himself, leaving sideways, describing while mimicking the shot. "Oh he got down on his knee, and flicked it Maaaaagggggggggg down to fine leg for six," he started, as Shastri urged him to "describe it." "He's lying on the pitch by the time he's hoicked it er his shoulder," Whateley continued, as Shastri dubbed it "as cheeky as it gets". Gerard was unstopable, "I love him, Rishabh Pant... That is remarkable." What Shastri described as "shot of the day" was off the last ball of the Pat Cummins over, as the captain kept it full on off from round the wicket. Pant turned it into a half volley of course, with his position that's best described as unorthodox, flicking it over deep backward square leg. Then he tumbled, a glorious fall, that the Aussies wouldn't forget soon. Such was the aftermath. For the record, in the leadup to the Test, Cummins had told the media, "Pant moves game quickly, can be dangerous – need special plans for him." India were in dire straits with 6 wickets down and a piddly 100, and the freakish fearless took everyone's breath away. David Warner, speaking in the comms on official broadcast said, "Trademark Rishabh Pant! he's seen him play that time and time again in IPL." While co-commentator Kerry O'Keefe remarked, "Have a look at him. So composed. Played it real late. That's a half volley. He could have pushed that



to mid-off." Harsha Bhogle led the chorus of wows. "Ladies and gentlemen stop what you are doing right now. Get your jaw together again because this is Rishabh Pant and this is why he is box office and just one of the "wow" players in the game." As if woken from a reverie, O'Keefe seemed to suddenly realise it was Cummins copping this. "And this is Pat Cummins! What's he done here? Oh heaven's above." Bhogle would highlight the sheer audacity, "I've seen him play this before, but this on a large boundary with a man on the boundary already." Warner was quoted by Fox Cricket as describing the shot as bold but not risky. "He is going with the angle, short boundary," Warner explained. "You just have to accept it. That's the way he plays and he has probably just thought, the angle in, I have seen enough. I am just going to go along with it and ride it." Bhogle chimed in, "I tell you what he has done well, he has avoided his stumps," while O'Keefe added, "And he didn't see the end result of his shot because he was facing the ground." One half of the series title legends, former Australian captain Allan Border couldn't find the right words. "I don't know how to describe that," Border was quoted as saying by Fox, while the always chatty Mpumelelo Mbangwa was stuck at tweeting "Oh wow!!!" Ben Jones, head Insights of Cricviz, had perhaps the finest poetic projections of where this insane genius trend could be headed. He tweeted, "One day Rishabh Pant is going to hit a six with no feet on the ground and no hands on the bat." Pant also dropped his bat at the non strikers clumsily and fist bumped with the laughing bowler, Mitch Marsh, bringing merriment to the game.

## 'Missed a Ferrari by 23 runs': Virender Sehwag's son Aaryavir smashes 297 in Cooch Behar Trophy

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Virender Sehwag has a special message for his son Aaryavir, who smashed 297 runs for Delhi against Meghalaya in the ongoing Cooch Behar Trophy. The 17-year-old smoked 51 boundaries and three sixes during his 309 balls stay at the crease. Lauding his son's performance, Sehwag wrote on X that he missed a Ferrari by 23 runs.

"Well played @aaryavirsehwag. Missed a Ferrari by 23 runs," wrote Sehwag. Well played @aaryavirsehwag. Missed a Ferrari by 23 runs. But well done, keep the fire alive and may you score many more daddy hundreds and doubles and triples. Khel jaao.. "But well done, keep the fire alive and may you score many more daddy hundreds and doubles and triples. Khel jaao.. "Last year during the IPL, Virender Sehwag had said how his son's long term plan is to get an IPL contract. "My son is already working hard to get a chance to play in the IPL," he had said on Star Sports. "The IPL has benefited young talent the most. Earlier, nobody got notices from Ranji Trophy performances and hence couldn't make it to the Indian team." But now, if you perform well in the IPL and you showcase your talent, then immediately, you get an opportunity to play for the Indian team. "Because of the IPL, so many children from



smaller states of the country have started taking cricket seriously and try their best to participate in the IPL and strive hard for it." Aaryavir and his opening partner Annav Bugga (114) put on 180-run stand for the first wicket. Sehwag then put on a 100-run partnership for the second wicket with Vansh Jetly (42). He was joined by another fellow centurion Dhanya Nakra (130) and the duo sent Meghalaya bowlers on a leather hunt. The duo were involved in a 228-run partnership for the third wicket. Aaryavir fail three runs short of his triple century as he was cleaned up by RS Rathor on 297.

## Pink-ball tour match: Scott Boland named in Australia's PM XI team

Scott Boland on Friday has been named in the Australia's Prime Minister XI for the two-day pink-ball match against India in Canberra, starting from November 30. The two-day, day-night match at Manuka Oval beginning November 30 has been flagged as Rohit Sharma's likely entry point into the series with the India captain set to miss the first Test due to the recent birth of his second child. The second Test will be played in Adelaide from December 6. The Prime Minister's XI team will be led by uncapped all-rounder Jack Edwards of New South Wales. India captain Rohit Sharma, who missed the ongoing first Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy which began here on Friday due to the birth of his second child, is likely to feature in the tour match at Manuka Oval. The game will serve as an important preparation for India as the second Test in Adelaide beginning on

December 6 will be their first pink-ball Test in nearly three years. Boland is in the Australia squad for the first Test here and will hope to push for his inclusion in the Australia playing XI for pink-ball second Test in Adelaide with a good show in Canberra. He is the most experienced of a 14-player PM's XI squad. "We are utilising the opportunity to maintain Scott Boland's match fitness in his preparations as part of the Test squad," said selection chief George Bailey. "We thank the Prime Minister for his input into the squad which sees some of the country's most exciting young cricketers mixed with some highly experienced players." The Prime Minister's XI will also have last year's Under-19 World Cup winners Sam Konsas, Mahli Beardman, Charlie Anderson and Aidan O'Connor.