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## Hyderabad International Jazz Festival on December 7

Hyderabad: The US Consulate General in Hyderabad, in association with the Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad, will present the Hyderabad International Jazz Festival 2024 at Hyderabad Public School here on Saturday. The festival will include bands from the United States, India, Europe, and around the world. The festival is free, with open seating and no tickets are required, a press release said on Thursday. The US Consulate General Hyderabad is sponsoring The Native Jazz Quartet. The Quartet stands out as an example of the diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism that American society embodies, it said.

## Telangana Thalli Statue to be Unveiled on December 9

Hyderabad: The Telangana government has announced a grand unveiling ceremony for the Telangana Thalli statue at the main entrance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on December 9. The event is set to bring together leaders from across political parties, including Leader of the Opposition K. Chandrashekar Rao and Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay, who will be formally invited to attend. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, addressing the media alongside Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, shared details of the three-day celebrations scheduled from December 7 to 9. The festivities will span the Secretariat premises, Necklace Road, and the Buddha Purnima area, transforming these spaces into hubs of cultural and community activities.

## Devendra Fadnavis takes oath as Maharashtra CM for third time; allies Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar sworn in as deputies

## CM Revanth Reddy Attends Public Administration Victory Celebrations at HMDA



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis and NCP (Ajit faction) leader Ajit Pawar during the swearing-in ceremony, in Mumbai. Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis and NCP (Ajit faction) leader Ajit Pawar during the swearing-in ceremony, in Mumbai. Days after the Mahayuti alliance swept the Assembly elections in the state, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis took oath as the chief min-

ister of Maharashtra on Thursday along with two deputy chief ministers, Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde and Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP's) Ajit Pawar, at a grand event held at Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

The swearing-in ceremony took place in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and several chief ministers, deputy chief ministers and Union ministers representing the BJP and its alliance partners in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Despite the Mahayuti getting an absolute majority of 230 seats out of 288 in the Assembly polls, the oath of office was only administered to the chief minister and two deputy chief ministers. In a sign that discussions over portfolios were still on, no candidate from the three parties that constitute the coalition government – the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP – was sworn in on Thursday.

The Maharashtra Cabinet can have a maximum of 43 ministers, including the chief minister, as per rules. Fadnavis, who was elected as the state BJP legislative party leader at the meeting on Wednesday, took charge as the chief minister for the third time. In 2014, Fadnavis was handpicked by Prime Minister Modi for the post after he led the party to its highest victory of 122 seats and completed five years at the helm. Five years later, in 2019, Fadnavis took oath as chief minister along with Ajit Pawar as deputy chief minister. But the government lasted for barely 72 hours. Shinde's decision to take charge as the deputy chief minister came at the eleventh hour just minutes before Shah landed in Mumbai. Shinde, who was the chief minister from 2022 to 2024, had made his displeasure known after being denied the post last week.



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Hyderabad: The public administration victory celebrations were held today at the HMDA Grounds, with Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy participating in the event. The festivities highlighted the achievements of various government initiatives. The celebrations were organized under the guidance of the Transport Department, which also set up stalls showcasing its projects and services. CM Revanth Reddy took the opportunity to visit these stalls, interacting with officials and gaining insights into the department's efforts. Today's event aimed to celebrate the progress made in public administration and provide a platform for citizens to learn about government initiatives. Further activities are expected to follow, promoting community engagement and government transparency.

## BRS condemns arrest of leaders, to stage protest at Ambedkar statue on Friday

## ISRO PSLV-C59 successfully launched with European Space Agency's Proba-3 satellites

## President Droupadi Murmu emphasises on adoption of natural farming methods



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Hyderabad: Condemning the arrest of its leaders and the Congress government's constitutional violations, the BRS has decided to stage a massive demonstration at the iconic 125-foot statue of Dr BR Ambedkar near Necklace Road on Friday. Commemorating the death anniversary of Dr Ambedkar, the BRS leaders will pay tributes to the Constitution's architect and expose the 'murder of democracy' by the Congress government in Telangana. BRS MLAs, MLCs, MPs, elected representatives and activists will assemble at Telangana Bhavan by 9 am before proceeding to the protest site. The protest is being held opposing the arrest of BRS leaders including T Harish Rao, G Jagadish Reddy, Padi Kaushik Reddy and others for questioning the government's actions. Making an announcement in this regard, former Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy pointed out the neglect of the Ambedkar statue, a landmark project initiated by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. "The statue, a testament to Ambedkar's vision, has been neglected for a year. Tomorrow, we will stand by it as a witness to democracy's betrayal in Telangana," he stated. He condemned the arrests, calling them a gross violation of constitutional rights. "Even basic rights like obtaining an FIR copy are being denied. This is nothing short of an emergency rule," he said, urging intellectuals to rise against the dictatorship of Revanth Reddy. Before his arrest, Harish Rao slammed the State government's actions, stating that there was no democracy in Telangana which was under a demonic rule masquerading as people's governance. "Revanth Reddy is not only trampling the Constitution but also targeting our leaders with illegal arrests and cases," he said. BRS MLC K Kavitha also criticised the Congress government, demanding the immediate release of detained leaders and withdrawal of baseless cases. She said the government was orchestrating politically motivated arrests to suppress dissent. "A day will come when the people will turn against this oppressive regime," she warned.

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

After being rescheduled for a day due to an anomaly detected, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday successfully launched the European Space Agency's (ESA) Proba-3 mission aboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C59 rocket. The vehicle took off with a powerful roar, precisely at 4.04 p.m. from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, the home to several rocket launches in India. "The PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 mission is successfully accomplished. The spacecraft has been placed in the right orbit," ISRO Chairman S. Somanath said. ISRO said the mission had successfully achieved its launch objectives, deploying ESA's satellites into their designated orbit with



precision.

added. Artificial solar eclipses The ESA on its site mentioned: "A pair of spacecraft were launched together today from India with the potential to change the nature of future space missions. ESA's twin Proba-3 platforms will perform precise formation flying down to a single millimetre, as if they were one single giant spacecraft. To demonstrate their degree of control, the pair will produce artificial solar eclipses in orbit, giving prolonged views of the Sun's ghostly surrounding atmosphere, the corona." he

added. Artificial solar eclipses The ESA on its site mentioned: "A pair of spacecraft were launched together today from India with the potential to change the nature of future space missions. ESA's twin Proba-3 platforms will perform precise formation flying down to a single millimetre, as if they were one single giant spacecraft. To demonstrate their degree of control, the pair will produce artificial solar eclipses in orbit, giving prolonged views of the Sun's ghostly surrounding atmosphere, the corona." he

According to the ESA, stacked together, the two satellites separated from their upper stage about 18 minutes after launch. The pair will remain attached together while initial commissioning takes place, overseen from mission control at the European Space Security and Education Centre, in Redu Belgium. Proba-3 mission manager Damien Galano said, "Today's liftoff has been something all of us in ESA's Proba-3 team and our industrial and scientific partners have been looking forward to for a long time." Details shared by the ESA show that if Proba-3's initial commissioning phase goes to plan then the spacecraft pair will be separated early in the new year to begin their individual check-outs. The operational phase of the mission, including the first observations of the corona through active formation flying, should begin in about four months.



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday stressed on the adoption of natural farming methods to mitigate the negative impacts of excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides. Speaking at the 40th convocation ceremony of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), President Murmu said: "Excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides have posed a new challenge to our agriculture sector. Everyone is concerned over the negative impacts this has on the soil, water and environment. Keeping in view the present situation, we have to give emphasis on adoption of natural farming methods, promotion of indigenous technical knowledge, and appropriate use of locally available natural resources." The President also added that it is impossible to achieve all-round development of the country without development of the agriculture sector and farmers. Murmu said that she is of the firm belief that the economy of the country can be strengthened through the development of agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry sector. She said that culture and agriculture are among the several distinguishing features of India. Murmu further added that it is rightly said about India that 'Agriculture is Culture is our culture'. "For the last couple of decades, our country has achieved unprecedented success in the sector of agricultural production. Once, we were dependent on other countries for food items, but now we are exporting food items and other agricultural products to different countries. It became possible only because of the guidance of our agricultural scientists and the untiring labour by our farmers," President Murmu said.

## Congress demands BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's apology for remarks targeting Rahul Gandhi

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Hitting out at BJP MP Nishikant Dubey for drawing linkages between a foreign investor and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, the Congress on Thursday (December 5, 2024) said "agents of Adani" have been given only one task of defaming and abusing those who expose the conglomerate's "mega corruption". Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned twice on Thursday (December 5) following certain remarks made by Mr. Dubey, who drew some linkages between a foreign investor and a section of opposition leaders and claimed an international conspiracy was afoot to derail India's success story under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Congress MPs protested on the steps of the Makar Dwar in Parliament and raised slogans against the use of "derogatory language" against Rahul Gandhi. Congress general secretary, in-charge organisation K.C. Venugopal, said, "Most unfortunate incident happened in Lok Sabha when the entire Opposition was raising the issue of travel ban on the leader of Opposition to Sambhal, the Speaker allowed Dubey to speak in Zero Hour and he used the most defamatory words against the LoP, Wayanad MP and the entire Congress party. "This type of derogatory remarks have never been used. We are totally pained. Before that the Speaker was talking about customs and conventions of the Lok Sabha and was giving advice on how to deal with matters and how to come to the House. The speaker also allowed Dubey to speak," Mr. Venugopal said. "From the day Rahul Gandhi stood against the corruption of Adani, agents of Adani started to abuse Rahul Gandhi. Come what may, Rahul Gandhi would keep raising these allegations," the Congress leader said.

In a post on X, Mr. Venugopal said "agents of Adani" have been given only one task - to defame and abuse those who expose their "mega corruption". "We do not tolerate the objectionable words used against LoP Rahul Gandhi ji by adani agent Nishikant Dubey on the floor of the House," he said. Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said whenever Rahul Gandhi speaks against Adani, the "sleeper cells of Adani" in Parliament get activated. "We have spoken with the Speaker and it is our demand that the person should take back his words, apologise and the Speaker takes strong step on it," Mr. Gogoi said. Mr. Dubey's remarks targeting Rahul Gandhi and seeking to link him to a U.S.-based multi-billionaire, triggered an uproar in the Lok Sabha, leading to adjournment of proceedings. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Mr. Dubey claimed that the Congress-led Opposition had tried to derail Parliament proceedings based on reports in a French publication which had alleged links to the billionaire investor. He alleged the U.S.-based investor, investigative media platform Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and the Congress were trying to derail India's success story under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. Mr. Dubey said the Congress had sought to derail Parliament on various issues published by OCCRP, including the Pegasus spying row, questioning the efficacy of vaccines against COVID-19 developed in India and the Hindenburg reports. Mr. Dubey said several Opposition leaders raised the issues flagged in media reports, many of which were published on the eve of Parliament sessions in India. Congress members were up on their feet protesting against Dubey as he tried to put questions to Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadera. Earlier,

## Sri Lankan Navy arrests 14 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu; 2 trawlers impounded

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

The Sri Lankan Navy arrested 14 fishermen from Thangachimadam and Rameswaram in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu while they were fishing in the Palk Bay. According to reports, over 425 boats received tokens from the Fisheries Department on Tuesday (December 3, 2024), and several fishermen ventured into the sea from Rameswaram jetty. Fourteen fishermen in two boats, owned by Michael Raj and Nijo of Thangachimadam, were fishing somewhere near Neduntheevu islet at around 2 a.m. They were set to return to the shores by 6 a.m., but the Sri Lankan Navy personnel on surveillance arrested them claiming they crossed the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). Fisheries Department officials said the arrested fishermen and the two trawlers were taken to the Sri Lankan Navy Port at Mannar. As the news of the arrest reached the fisherfolk in Ramanathapuram, fishermen leader Sesa Raja told

## Relief for Harish Rao in Telangana High Court: Orders Against Arrest Issued

Hyderabad: Telangana MLA Harish Rao received relief from the Telangana High Court in connection with a case registered at the Punjagutta Police Station. The court directed the authorities not to arrest Harish Rao while hearing his quash petition regarding the case. During the proceedings, the High Court instructed the police to issue a notice to Harish Rao and conduct an inquiry in compliance with legal procedures. The court's directives come as a significant relief for the minister, ensuring no immediate arrest in the case.

# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

### Sewadar Sukhbir

A rap on the knuckles — that's what the Sikh clergy has given to Sukhbir Singh Badal and other Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders for the 'sins' committed by their government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017. The token punishment — washing dishes and cleaning shoes as well as washrooms at the Golden Temple — has been awarded nearly three months after the former Deputy CM was declared 'tankhaiya' (guilty of religious misconduct) by the Akal Takht. The five high priests have stopped short of taking drastic action, such as excommunication, despite the gravity of the misdeeds that Sukhbir and the others are accused of. Making them perform 'sewa' as atonement may not be enough to pacify the Panth, which continues to be angry with the Badals and the SAD over the tumultuous events of 2015. While Sukhbir has been granted an opportunity to revive his political fortunes, the withdrawal of the Panth Rattan Fakhr-e-Quam title — bestowed on then CM Parkash Singh Badal by the Akal Takht in 2011 — is a setback to the Badal family. With this extreme step, the clergy has done what it failed to do when the senior Badal was alive. The high priests have also asserted their authority by directing the SAD working committee to accept Sukhbir's resignation as party chief and form a panel to hold organisational elections. This indicates that the clergy won't desist from intervening in party affairs. Both Sukhbir and his party are desperate to shed their ignominious baggage — the failure to punish the perpetrators of the sacrilege incidents and the pardon granted (later revoked) to Sirsa dera chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim in a blasphemy case. The SAD wants the Panth, its traditional vote bank, to forgive and forget. All is not lost for the Akalis — people of Punjab have repeatedly voted the Congress to power despite its role in the horrors of 1984. The key question is whether the SAD is open to reforms in a bid to regain credibility.

### Admission to master's in architecture in Maharashtra will now be based on national level entrance test PGETA



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Architecture According to the circular issued last week on the Maharashtra Common Entrance Test (CET) Cell, the national-level entrance exam PGETA, conducted by the Council of Architecture in New Delhi, was started this academic year (2024-25). The Maharashtra Common Entrance Test (CET) Cell has announced that it will no longer conduct the state-level entrance exam for admission to the Master of Architecture (M Arch) course. Instead, M Arch admissions in the state will now be based on the Post Graduate Entrance Test in Architecture (PGETA), a national exam, starting from the academic year 2025-26. This is an important development for aspirants seeking admission to the M Arch course in Maharashtra starting next academic year. According to the circular issued last week on the Maharashtra Common Entrance Test (CET) Cell, the national-level entrance exam PGETA, conducted by the Council of Architecture in New Delhi, was started this academic year (2024-25).

The circular stated that the number of candidates appearing for the state-level M Arch entrance test is relatively low, so the CET Cell has decided to consider the PGETA score for M Arch admissions in Maharashtra instead of conducting a separate entrance test. Even as the PGETA was introduced this academic year, M Arch admissions in the state were conducted based on the traditional practice of a state-level entrance test for the academic year 2024-25. However, the new change will be applicable from the next academic year as the Maharashtra CET Cell has decided to discontinue the state-level M Arch entrance exam.

According to the website of Maharashtra CET Cell, close to 600 seats were available for admission to M Arch in Maharashtra last year. "Instead of conducting a separate entrance test for these candidates, it is convenient to consider their scores from PGETA, a national-level entrance exam, for admissions," said an official from the Maharashtra CET Cell while also emphasising that the move is expected to reduce the burden on aspiring architects. He said, "This also relieves students from appearing for two separate entrance exams. Furthermore, a national-level common entrance exam broadens their opportunities of seeking admissions to the colleges of their choice across the country."

### Bomb scare at Taj Mahal, turns out to be hoax

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

An email threatening to blow up the Taj Mahal was received by the regional office of Uttar Pradesh Tourism here Tuesday which later turned out to be hoax, a police official said.

Bomb disposal squad, dog squad and other teams were pressed into service but nothing suspicious was found, ACP Sayed Areeb Ahmad, entrusted with the security of the Taj, told. "An email was received by Uttar Pradesh Tourism office threatening to blow up the Taj Mahal. We have found nothing as per the email. Bomb disposal squad, dog squad and other teams reached the Taj Mahal for the safety check," he said. According to Deepti Vatsa, deputy director of Uttar Pradesh Tourism, The email regarding the bomb threat was immediately forwarded to Agra Police and ASI, Agra circle for action.

### BJP MLA accuses party's Karnataka chief Vijayendra of 'anti-party activities', threatening Dalit legislators



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Hitting out at Vijayendra, Jarkiholi alleged that he was threatening Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) leaders to back him. (File Photo) Hitting out at Vijayendra, Jarkiholi alleged that he was threatening Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) leaders to back him. BJP MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi on Tuesday accused party state president B Y Vijayendra of "anti-party activities" and alleged that he was threatening Dalit leaders to support him. Jarkiholi and other members of the faction under MLA Basangouda Patil are currently camping in Delhi and have sought time to meet the party's top brass. "As state president, he is the first to do anti-party activities. During the waqf land protest, they (Vijayendra faction) tried to scuttle it," Jarkiholi said. Vijayendra also had an internal understanding with Congress leaders, the former minister alleged. Karnataka BJP is split over the waqf land issue in the state as factions under Vijayendra and Yatnal have held separate

protests and campaigns.

Hitting out at Vijayendra, Jarkiholi alleged that he was threatening Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) leaders to back him. Dalit ex-MLAs are called to attend meetings chaired by Vijayendra. "But no sitting or former Lingayat or Vokkaliga MLAs are present as they are not bothered about him... They demand SC/ST MLAs to be present by threatening that they will be denied tickets in the next election or that they will not get benefits from the party," Jarkiholi said. On the notice issued by the BJP's Central Disciplinary Committee against Yatnal, Jarkiholi said that the party leader would respond to the notice, adding that it was "not that serious. We are working within the bounds of the party." Committee member secretary Om Pathak had issued a notice to Yatnal on December 1, seeking explanation over the legislators' "continuing tirade against the state-level party leadership." Yatnal is scheduled to meet Pathak on Wednesday, Jarkiholi said, pointing out that Yatnal and other leaders have sought to meet top BJP leaders to raise their concerns regarding the functioning of the state BJP under Vijayendra. The leaders in Delhi, including former MLAs Kumar Bangarappa and Arvind Limbavali, met during the day. The faction maintained that they were in the capital to brief the Joint Parliamentary Committee on The Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024 about the findings of their campaign against Waqf. Meanwhile, the core committee of the state BJP held a meeting in Bengaluru under national general secretary Tarun Chugh. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Vijayendra said its agenda was restricted to the membership campaign being carried out by the BJP.

### 'Nation's harmony not so fragile': Delhi HC grants interim protection to activist Nadeem Khan



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Underscoring that the nation's harmony was not so fragile, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted protection from arrest till December 6 to activist Nadeem Khan in an alleged case of promoting enmity. Justice Jasmeet Singh orally remarked that the nation's harmony was not "fragile" and "faith" should be reposed in the intelligence of the common man. "We are in a democratic country. The harmony of the nation is not so fragile. Common man isn't so fragile that merely one exhibition will shake his conviction," said Justice Singh.

The judge went on, "The country places great pride in our fundamental rights. Article 19(1)(a) is to be protected. If

you think the common man will get incited by this, the common man does not have the IQ to understand what is right for them.. please have some faith in the common man." Senior advocate Kapil Sibal appeared for Khan and argued that the FIR was mala fide. He said the FIR did not disclose any cognisable offence and was merely based on conjectures, without any foundation. The counsel for the police alleged that the petitioner was "trying to raise a war inside the country" and he should have filed an anticipatory bail plea if he wanted protection from arrest. The judge subsequently issued notice to the Delhi police on Khan's petition seeking to quash the FIR registered on November 30 and asked him to join the investigation and not leave the national capital without the permission of the investigating officer. "The FIR is based on the opinion of the complainant. The material which formed the basis of the opinion has not been placed before me and will be placed along with the reply proposed to be filed by the respondent along with the material collected till date. For the said reason and till the next date of hearing, the petitioner shall not be arrested," the court ordered, posting the hearing on December 6. The police registered the FIR against Khan over a "viral video" that was purportedly causing enmity and could have led to violence at any time. The court, however, said the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution had to be "protected" and directed the investigating agency not to arrest Khan till the next hearing.

### 'Be discreet, avoid tilak and saffron in public... lives are at risk': ISKCON Kolkata vice president's advice to devotees in Bangladesh



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

As ISKCON alleged that lawyers in Bangladesh representing Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das were assaulted, ISKCON Kolkata vice president and spokesperson Radharam Das on Tuesday urged devotees and monks in the neighbouring country to be discreet and not wear tilak or saffron garb in public. "We are getting so many phone calls from monks and devotees in Bangladesh regarding incidents of assaults on them on the streets after they are identified by their tilak and saffron. So, I have personally advised devotees and monks to be discreet. They should avoid saffron and tilak in public. They should hide their tulsis beads and cover their heads. This is so that they are not identified," Radharam Das told The Indian Express. "Their lives are at risk in Bangladesh. They should practice (religious activities) discreetly at home and inside centres. It is a question of their lives now," he said. Protests have broken out in West Bengal and other parts of India over the arrest last month of ISKCON monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in Dhaka. Das, who was accused of treason, had been leading protests in Bangladesh against alleged

atrocities on minorities in the country.

On Tuesday, he was brought to a court in Chattogram for bail hearing, but none of his lawyers were present, leading to the hearing being postponed to January 2. ISKCON alleged that lawyers representing Das had been assaulted, and that one of them is in ICU in critical condition. Houses and chambers of lawyers defending Das were also ransacked by miscreants, it has been alleged. Leader of the Opposition in West Bengal, Nandigram BJP MLA Suwendu Adhikari, has called on international human rights groups to intervene in Bangladesh. "Fundamentalists ransacked houses and assaulted lawyers defending the monk, Chinmoy Krishna Das... They are worse than Taliban and ISIS... On the other hand, police have slapped cases against Hindu lawyers who defended him in court," said Adhikari.

"None of the 51 lawyers who defended him (in court on November 26) could appear in court today. I appeal to all international human rights organisations to intervene in Bangladesh. The situation is only getting worse. There are no human rights for minorities in Bangladesh... I appeal to ISKCON for a strong reaction internationally," he said. ISKCON's Radharam Das appealed to the Bangladesh government to provide protection to the lawyers. "We had feared this would happen. Now, in an atmosphere of fear, how will advocates, who are assaulted and their homes ransacked, appear in court? Cases are slapped against them, too. We appeal to the Bangladesh government to provide protection to lawyers defending him. In a democratic country, it is shocking to see lawyers could not appear for their clients, fearing for their own lives," he said. Apart from Das, ISKCON has alleged that two more monks, including Das's assistant, were also arrested. Besides, 63 monks with valid visas were stopped by Bangladesh authorities at the border and not allowed to enter India, the organisation said.

### 12-year-old boy dies at school in Delhi's Vasant Vihar, probe launched

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

The Delhi Police have launched an investigation after a 12-year-old boy died at a Vasant Vihar school on Tuesday morning. A statement from the school indicated that the student collapsed after a "scuffle". Officials said the Class 6 student was rushed to Fortis Hospital where he was declared dead around 10.15 am. According to investigators, the doctors think the child may have suffered a seizure. Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West) Surendra Choudhary said the boy had no visible injury on his body. "Some foam-like material was oozing out of his mouth... Inquest proceedings are being done. School boys and teachers are being examined and necessary legal ac-

tion will be taken," he added. The statement from the school principal said they were "deeply saddened" over the "tragic incident that occurred on (the school) premises during a class transition" while extending "its heartfelt condolences and support to the bereaved family." It added, "A scuffle between two Class 6 students of similar age has resulted in the unfortunate collapse of one student. The school administration has taken prompt action, informed the authorities and is extending full cooperation to all concerned." The police said the post-mortem will likely be conducted on Wednesday to determine whether the child had any internal injury. Officials are also examining CCTV footage from the school to rule out the possibility of foul play.

### 26-year-old IPS officer dies in Karnataka road accident, probe finds police jeep's airbags didn't open



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

The investigation into the road accident where a 26-year-old probationary IPS officer, Harsh Bardhan, died in Karnataka's Hassan district has revealed that the police jeep he was travelling in did have airbags but they did not open when the vehicle overturned.

Harsh Bardhan, a Karnataka-cadre IPS officer from Madhya Pradesh, died after the police jeep toppled multiple times before crashing onto a coconut tree around 4 pm on Sunday on the Holarasipura-Hassan road. Constable Manjegowda was driving the jeep while Harsh Bardhan was sitting next to him in the front seat. Bardhan succumbed to the injuries four hours after the incident. On Monday, the body was handed over to his family members after a post-mortem.

A police officer said the vehicle bearing the registration number KA-13G 1386 is a 2020-model jeep and that it did have airbags for both front seats. However, when the jeep toppled they failed to open. Experts say the airbags open when a crash happens in a certain way. "A report will be submitted soon. On top of it, we have found that the jeep probably was speeding at 70-80 km/hr but we are ascertaining why the jeep drifted towards the left side of the road. Both occupants were wearing seatbelts. There was no tyre burst that could have led to the incident," the officer added. Hassan MP Shreyas Patel said he would take up the issue to ensure the quality and safety of police vehicles.

It can be recalled that former Tata Sons chairperson Cyrus Mistry died in a road accident in September 2022 when the Mercedes he was travelling in hit a concrete barricade. Though there were seven airbags, none of them opened. Investigations revealed that Mistry was not wearing a seatbelt when the incident took place. Dr Abdul Basheer V K, president of Janapriya Hospital, said that Harsh Bardhan was in a bad state when he was brought to the hospital. "We tried our best to save Harsh Bardhan but the injury was severe. A lot of doctors from other parts of the country reached out to me to suggest the treatment. He died because of diffuse axonal damage." Diffuse axonal damage is when the brain shifts or rotates inside the skull, causing the nerve fibres (axons) to tear. The police have booked a case after Rohith Kumar H, a villager who witnessed the incident, filed a complaint. They have booked the driver of the jeep, Manjegowda, under sections 281 (rash driving), 125 (a) (endangering life or personal safety of others by causing hurt) and 125 (b) (endangering life or personal safety of others by causing grievous hurt) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). He is undergoing treatment. It was like a movie scene: eyewitness

Local villagers who witnessed the accident said the jeep was speeding and hit a coconut tree, preventing it from falling into a house. Santosh, a youth from Kittanegadi village, said he was with his friends Puneeth and Rohith when the incident took place. "It all happened in a few seconds. The police jeep that was heading rightwards suddenly drifted towards left and hit cement pillars (barricades) and toppled for nearly three or four times for 40 metres before hitting the coconut tree," he said. Santosh said he, along with his friends and other villagers, rushed to the spot. "We dragged both occupants. We called an ambulance and also informed the police. At that point, we did not know that it was an IPS officer but he was severely injured on his head," he added. antosh also said the tragedy could have worsened if it was a working day. "The coconut tree that the jeep hit is near a bus stop and there would be some villagers and children usually at 4 pm. As it was a Sunday, there were none at the place," he said.

### State-run UP hospital ousts cardiologist after he 'failed to show up' following bail in corruption case

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

A detailed probe report submitted by the inquiry officer to the disciplinary authority reportedly found Dr Saraf "guilty" of corruption charges. (Representational Image) A detailed probe report submitted by the inquiry officer to the disciplinary authority reportedly found Dr Saraf "guilty" of corruption charges. The Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences (UPMS) in Safai (Etawah) has terminated the services of 43-year-old cardiologist Dr Sameer Saraf who was previously suspended over allegations of financial irregularities and corruption. Dr Saraf, who was recently released from jail, previously served as the Head of the Department of Cardiology. In 2023, the Etawah police arrested Saraf in the case. He got bail in January this year and had not joined office since then.

"The university's Executive Council decided to terminate his services as Dr Sameer Saraf failed to join the Department of Pharmacy, where he was attached following his suspension, despite repeated reminders," said registrar Dr. Chandraveer Singh.

Dr Sameer was put under suspension after he was arrested. As per Singh, in 2022, an FIR was registered against Saraf over allegations of financial irregularities and corruption, including unnecessary arbitrage, pacemaker fraud, and unauthorised foreign trips.

The case was filed by Dr Adesh Kumar — the then chief medical superintendent — based on a report by a five-member committee, which reportedly found that Dr. Saraf had approved unnecessary purchases worth nearly Rs 1 crore, despite "sufficient" stock for nearly a year being available at the university. A detailed probe report submitted by the inquiry officer to the disciplinary authority reportedly found Dr Saraf "guilty" of these charges. The report also alleged that Dr Saraf defrauded numerous patients under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana by charging inflated prices for incorrectly placed pacemakers. Additionally, it accused him and his family of undertaking unauthorised foreign trips funded by private companies whose consumables and pacemakers he allegedly favoured.

## In Maharashtra village, winning candidate and some residents plan repoll using ballot papers, backtrack after police step in



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

A plan to "hold re-election using ballot papers" in Markdwadi village of Maharashtra's Malshiras assembly constituency – to "verify" polling done through EVMs – was cancelled after the police warned of action citing orders of the administration. The "polling" was to start at 8 am, but the police issued prohibitory orders to prevent people from gathering. Elected NCP (SP) candidate Uttamrao Jankar, who

led the call for re-polling, claimed the plan was cancelled following police pressure. The village is considered Jankar's stronghold. In the November 20 state polls, the results of which were declared on November 2, Jankar defeated sitting BJP legislator Ram Satpute by 13,147 votes.

Jankar won the seat, but Markdwadi residents claimed he polled fewer votes in their village against Satpute, which was implausible. Jankar got 843 votes, while BJP candidate Satpute got 1,003 votes in the village. After the administration raised objections about the re-polling, heavy police deployment was arranged in the village. Some villagers printed ballot papers with the names of all candidates and party symbols in the same sequence as they appeared on EVMs. Five "booths" were prepared, and electoral rolls were kept ready. "The police were visiting every house in the village, warning them of action if they participated in repolling. A few people had come out, but many preferred to stay home fearing police action," he claimed, citing this as the reason re-polling was cancelled. The newly elected NCP (SP) legislator said they would continue their protest by other means. "We will take this issue up with the Election Commission and the judiciary," he said.

## Hours after announcing POSH committee, Karnataka film body puts it on hold

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

On Monday, the KFCC announced that a committee, with director and activist Kavitha Lankesh as its chairperson, would be formed to address sexual harassment complaints in the Karnataka film industry. On Monday, the KFCC announced that a committee, with director and activist Kavitha Lankesh as its chairperson, would be formed to address sexual harassment complaints in the Karnataka film industry. (Express file/Representational) Hours after the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) announced the setting up of an 11-member committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013, also known as the POSH Act, it withdrew the order saying a Model Code of Conduct was in place in light of the upcoming elections to the film body. The decision, however, sparked speculation that the KFCC had back-tracked due to opposition from its members.



Malayalam film industry, including sexual harassment, the film body Film Industry for Rights and Equality (FIRE) had approached the Karnataka chief minister to set up a similar panel in the state. The KFCC had also been under pressure from the Karnataka State Women's Commission to form a POSH committee. "Will wait till Dec 14" Lankesh said that they would wait till December 14 as KFCC had promised a committee would be formed. Meanwhile, following a media statement claiming that senior Kannada actor-producer Pramila Joshai was one of the panel members, her daughter and actress Meghana Raj denied the news.

"My Mother Pramila Joshai, Actress/ Producer Is NOT part of any committee which has been formed recently. She is currently the Vice president (producer sector) of Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce. Using her name without her consent in relation to committees which are still under discussion is not Fair and will not be taken lightly but us," she said in an Instagram post.

## Delhi teen shot dead in Mangolpuri over petty dispute, assailants yet to be arrested



delhi teen killed The deceased identified as Pankaj, 19, was fired multiple rounds by the assailants around 2.30 am the police said, adding that the teen's nephew had witnessed the incident. A 19-year-old teen in Delhi's Mangolpuri was shot dead early on Tuesday allegedly over a petty dispute between him and three other people, the police said. The deceased identified as Pankaj, 19, was fired multiple rounds by the assailants around 2.30 am the police said, adding that the teen's nephew had witnessed the incident. The po-

lice are yet to arrest the assailants who have been identified.

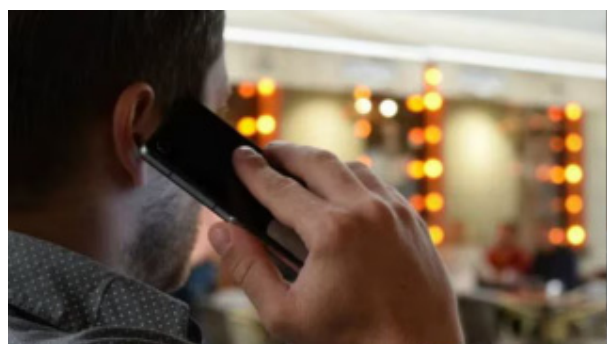
"I got to know my uncle was in a fight. So I went out to see what was happening and to help him. The three of them went towards his house, took out a pistol and began firing at us. They shot three to four times and the bullets hit Pankaj. I ran away from there and Pankaj died on the spot," said the nephew. Pankaj, who worked in a garment factory, was rushed to a nearby hospital and was declared dead by doctors around 4 am, said the police. "In the initial investigation the accused have been identified. A case was registered under relevant sections and investigation is going on. Suspicious persons are being rounded up to know about the whereabouts of the accused," said Sachin Sharma, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Outer district. The Mangolpuri murder has stirred a political furor with former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal demanding the public to unite against rising crimes in Delhi. "Last night, a man was shot dead in Mangolpuri. Day before yesterday three murders took place in Delhi. All Delhiites must unite and raise their voice against crime. The most important thing is the safety of yourself and your family," he wrote on X.

## 'CBI officer Ravi Kumar speaking': Elderly Pune doctor duped of Rs 28 lakh with threats of Supreme Court, ED notices

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

A 76-year-old doctor from Pimpri Chinchwad was allegedly duped of Rs 28 lakh by cyber criminals, one of them posing as a CBI officer, who threatened to arrest him in a credit card fraud case. The fraudsters told him that the Supreme Court and Enforcement Directorate (ED) had also issued notices against him. According to the septuagenarian, he received a WhatsApp call on November 28 while examining patients and the caller, a 'CBI officer' who identified himself as Ravi Kumar, warned the doctor that he was under surveillance and "digital arrest".

The caller said that the doctor's name was flagged in a credit card fraud as he had received a Rs 20 lakh commission on a transaction of Rs 1 crore. "The caller told him that if he did not pay Rs 20 lakh, an arrest warrant will be issued against him. Though the complainant denied any involvement in any such case, he was told that two notices — one from the Supreme Court and another from ED — had been issued against him. The fraudster posing as a CBI officer told him that since he was a senior citizen and a doctor, senior lawyers of the Supreme Court will help and he will have to take actions as instructed," said an officer. The 'CBI officer' then connected the call with a fraudster posing as 'Supreme court lawyer' who sought all financial and personal information from the complainant on the pretext of getting his case details, said the police. The complainant was later told that as he was being placed under surveillance and 'digital arrest' he was prohibited from discussing the case with anyone or even talking to anyone, the police said. The doctor was asked to answer a call every two hour and give updates.



According to the septuagenarian, he received a WhatsApp call on November 28 while examining patients and the caller, a 'CBI officer' who identified himself as Ravi Kumar, warned the doctor that he was under surveillance and "digital arrest".

"The next day he again received a call and was asked to deposit Rs 28 lakh to particular accounts saying it was for clearing his name from the case. The complainant was instructed to go to the bank keeping his phone on and then transfer Rs 28 lakh to two separate accounts. The complainant did so as instructed and told the caller he had made the transfer," the police said adding that the doctor realised that he was cheated after his son got to know about the developments.

## ED raids multiple private medical colleges in West Bengal



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

ed raids The central agency initiated simultaneous searches at these institutions and the residences of their owners on Tuesday morning. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has launched a nationwide crackdown on private medical colleges, including eight institutions in West Bengal.

The central agency initiated simultaneous searches

at these institutions and the residences of their owners on Tuesday morning. One of the primary targets of the investigation is the house of former Tamluk MP Lakshman Seth in Haldia. The ED is scrutinising his medical and dental college, which is run by his voluntary organisation. The ED's probe is focused on allegations of corruption related to the NRI quota in medical admissions. Apart from West Bengal, the agency is conducting searches in 28 private medical colleges across India. In this state, the raids are being carried out in Birbhum, West Bardwan, and Kolkata. The investigation centres around allegations of admitting ineligible students through the NRI quota in exchange of bribes while denying admission to eligible candidates. One of the medical colleges under scrutiny in Birbhum is owned by Malay Peet, who is accused in cow smuggling and recruitment corruption cases allegedly linked to TMC leader Anubrata Mandal. Quota corruption in MBBS admissions was reported in many places across the country. In September this year, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court expressed concern over the matter.

## Here are the 7 members of the new Shiromani Akali Dal interim committee

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Apart from imposing religious punishment on Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal and other senior party leaders, Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghubir Singh on Monday also announced the formation of a seven-member committee to initiate a membership drive and begin the process of electing a new leadership.

1. Harjinder Singh Dhami

Harjinder Singh Dhami, 68, is the 30th president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and has been at the helm since November 29, 2021. The SGPC is an organisation of Sikhs responsible for the management of gurdwaras in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh. Dhami has been an elected member of the SGPC from Sham Chaurasi in Punjab's Hoshiarpur district since 1996.

2. Iqbal Singh Jhundan

Iqbal Singh Jhundan, 62, is a two-time former SAD MLA who is a part of the party's core committee. In April 2022, it was a committee under Jhundan's leadership that had conducted a survey in 100 constituencies in Punjab and suggested a change in party leadership. Several rebel leaders have been demanding the implementation of the Jhundan committee report but to no avail. Jhundan was an MLA from Dhuri constituency in Sangrur district from 2007-2012. From 2012-2017, he served as an MLA from Amargarh constituency in Malerkotla district. In 2017 and 2022, he contested elections from Amargarh but lost. In 2024, he contested from the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat but lost his security deposit, finishing fifth.

3. Manpreet Singh Ayali

Manpreet Singh Ayali, 49, is the sitting SAD MLA from Dakha constituency in Ludhiana district. In 2022, he was the lone SAD MLA to win from Malwa Punjab despite a huge wave in the Aam Aadmi Party's favour. An agriculturist and a realtor, Ayali won his first election in 2012 from Dakha by defeating Congress's Jasbir Singh Khangura. In 2017, he lost to AAP's Harvinder Singh Phoolka from the same seat. However, Phoolka resigned in 2019, necessitating a bypoll that Ayali won, defeating Congress's Captain Sandeep Sandhu by over 15,000 votes. In 2022, he defeated Sandhu again. Known for speaking his mind, Ayali was a part of the Jhundan committee and has been advocating its implementation for a long time. In protest, he had been skipping party meetings. He had hit the headlines in July 2022 when he ignored the party decision to vote for the NDA-backed then president candidate Droupadi Murmu. He had abstained from voting saying that he had listened to his conscience and the Centre had ignored issues related to Sikhs. He has been at loggerheads with the party since.

4. Gurpartap Singh Wadala

Gurpartap Singh Wadala, 61, is a two-time SAD MLA from Nakodar constituency, a seat he won in 2012 and 2017. His father Kuldip Singh Wadala was also an Akali Dal MLA.

## 'No plans to shut down Shivshahi bus services': MSRTC; Maharashtra commuters post pictures of technical defects

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

mstrc buses MSRTC faced backlash as social media users posted pictures and videos highlighting the alleged technical issues in Shivshahi buses. The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) has clarified that there are no plans to shut down the air-conditioned Shivshahi bus service, dispelling criticism that the luxury buses are plagued by technical issues ever since their launch in 2017. However, soon after the clarification, MSRTC faced backlash as social media users posted pictures and videos highlighting the alleged technical issues in Shivshahi buses. Widespread rumours of closure of bus services arose amidst increasing reports of accidents and the deteriorating condition of Shivshahi luxury buses in various regions of Maharashtra.

A senior official with the Pune division of MSRTC told The Indian Express, "People are spreading false news that Shivshahi buses will be shut down due to technical issues. This is incorrect. We will continue operating the service, and there are no significant technical faults in our buses." The MSRTC that operates 792 Shivshahi bus services in the state posted on X that it has no intention of discontinuing the services and that the buses have no technical fault.

Commuters reacted on the X handle of MSRTC by



sharing pictures of Shivshahi running with technical issues. One user, Suraj Arya, shared a picture of a driver keeping a large stone in the cabin to prevent gear malfunctions. "What is this then? The driver is driving with a big stone in the cabin. I took this photo myself, showing the stone near the gear! The driver even drives with the cabin door open. What is the use of AC? Shivshahi buses are forced to turn off the AC," he wrote. Another user, Mohammad Afzal, posted a video allegedly showing a Shivshahi bus experiencing brake failure while carrying passengers.

## Tamil Nadu's Villupuram reels under unprecedented flooding

Chennai: Villupuram continues to reel under unprecedented flooding, while the depression, the remnant of cyclonic storm Fengal over north coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, weakened into a Well Marked Low Pressure Area on Monday, the India Meteorological Department said. Villupuram town, nearby towns and villages, have borne the brunt of the rain fury and raging flood water gushed to-

wards low-lying areas. With water rising above the danger level on an arterial bridge between Vikravandi and Mundiampakkam in Villupuram, Southern Railway on Monday morning announced suspension of operations in that key stretch, leading to cancellations, diversion and short termination of services, which includes express and superfast trains.

## 'Urgent action needed against open waste burning cases in Pune': Report submitted to PMC



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

pune open waste burning caseThe survey that was part of the report prepared by the Pune Air Action Hub and recently submitted to the Pune Municipal Corporation showed that there has also been a considerable delay in response to waste burning complaints. As winter has set in, waste burning has become rampant in most areas of Pune city, with a survey report suggesting lack of awareness among public on complaint mechanisms. The survey that was part of the report prepared by the Pune Air Action Hub and recently submitted to the Pune Municipal Corporation showed that there has also been a considerable delay in response to waste burning complaints. The report, that identified chronic burning spots, highlighted the increasing menace of open waste burning contributing to air pollution and subsequent health risks. "We need a dedicated force to address waste burning," said Shweta Vernekar of the Pune Air Action Hub. The findings and recommendations have also been shared with the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).

"Even so, citizens seem unaware of the complaint mechanisms, pointing to the need for awareness about the same. An independent analysis of complaints lodged showed delay in response to waste burning complaints and other gaps in the process," Hub members have also said in their letter to Prithviraj B P, Additional Municipal Commissioner (General), Pune Municipal Corporation. The report relied on two main sources of information: a ward-level citi-

zen survey to capture the incidence of waste burning (292 citizens were surveyed across 15 wards) and a recent analysis of complaints about waste burning.

In the citizen survey, 75 per cent said that they have observed chronic burning spots in their area, and 33 per cent said they experience waste burning everyday. Another 42 per cent said they observe waste burning 1-2 times a week. In the citizen survey, 55 citizens out of 292 said that they had lodged complaints for waste burning in their ward. In the complaints analysis, over 75 per cent of complaints were marked resolved after more than two days from the date of complaint being lodged. Surprisingly, no fine was imposed on any of the 59 complaints analysed. On checking the status of complaints from the token numbers, it was observed that often the complaints were forwarded multiple times before they reached the correct authority, wherein time was lost.

Hub member Pushkar Kulkarni said that a recent National Green Tribunal (NGT) judgment mandated PMC to put monthly reports of waste burning cases and measures taken on their website. "Even after 6 months, this has not been done. Information about mobile squads which are supposed to provide timely response to waste burning complaints, is also not readily available. It is often found that burning happens in the evenings and throughout the night at some chronic spots so there is a need for effective night time vigilance and response systems" Kulkarni said. Vernekar said that during the survey it was found that certain wards like Hadapsar Mundhwa, Aundh Baner and Wanowrie Ramtekdi showed more cases of burning. However, an important inference was that hardly 20 per cent of residents who observed waste burning have never complained about it. "There is definitely a need to let citizens know what action they can take when burning happens, which is a punishable criminal offence to do so," she said. Among key recommendations, include setting up a dedicated 24x7 complaint number for waste burning, dedicated response squads for immediate action after complaints are lodged, review of the line of action of complaints lodged, to find out where the gaps exist, to speed up response and enforcement/action on waste burning cases and others.

## Shiv Sena, NCP leaders join BJP's Bawankule to inspect swearing-in ceremony site: 'allies equally involved'

All three parties Shiv Sena, BJP, NCP leaders in a huddle together planning swearing-in event at Azad Maidan today. All three parties' leaders in a huddle discussion the swearing-in event at Azad Maidan today. Amid an ongoing tussle over the post of the chief minister and sharing portfolios in Maharashtra, there seemed to be a thaw as Shiv Sena leaders Tuesday joined a delegation led by state BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule to inspect the venue of the oath-taking ceremony at Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

The swearing-in ceremony of the chief minister is scheduled to be held Thursday, December 5. On Tuesday morning, Bawankule accompanied by leaders of Ekanth Shinde's Shiv Sena Gulabrao Patil, Sanjay Shirsat, and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP's Dhananjay Munde and Hassan Mushrif along with others visited Azad Maidan to discuss plans including logistics, seat capacity, crowd management among others. Bawankule said, "All three parties are working together for the government formation. The alliance partners Shiv Sena and NCP are equally involved and helping us in preparations."

Similar sentiments were echoed by Shiv Sena's Shirsat. "There are no disputes," he said. Later in the evening, a meeting between caretaker chief minister Ekanth Shinde, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis and NCP president Ajit Pawar will take place. The meeting is to formalise the cabinet composition and issues related to power structure in the Mahayuti government, a senior functionary said. A former Shiv Sena minister, requesting anonymity, said, "Shinde had pledged support to the Mahayuti on the day of result on November 23. All these talks of differences were just projections. At times, alliance partners have to show they are upset. Unless you assert, you cannot drive hard bargain".

The Shiv Sena reconciled to not getting the Maharashtra chief minister's post has been striving for the



state home ministry. If not the home ministry, the Shinde-led party is said to be looking at the equally crucial revenue ministry. On Monday night, BJP emissary Girish Mahajan was sent to meet Shinde at his residence in Thane — in an attempt to convey a message that the government formation process cannot wait with swearing-in to take place on December 5. And they would like Shiv Sena to come forward and participate.

The BJP also assured they valued their partnership in government. With a mandate of 230 out of the 288 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly, the BJP wants to make swearing-in a grand event. Apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP chief ministers and those of its allies will attend the ceremony. Invitations will also be sent to Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and Congress leaders in the state, senior leaders of the alliance have said. To acknowledge the overwhelming support of women, which gave the BJP-led Mahayuti a huge mandate, 2,000 women beneficiaries of the Ladki Bahin Yojana will also be invited to the swearing-in ceremony.

## Bunny chow misal or pizza misal for lunch? This restaurant fought pandemic and trolls to innovate with Maharashtra's much-loved dish

In South Africa, a unique dish called bunny chow holds a special place in the local cuisine. This dish consists of a loaf of hollowed-out white bread filled with curry, which can be made with either meat or vegetables. The origins of bunny chow, a topic of interest for passionate foodies, trace back to the migration of labourers from India to the sugarcane fields of South Africa. Craftspeople and other artisans also undertook the passage to South Africa. How would these workers carry their food or eat in jobs that left them with only time to grab a bite? The solution was to transport sabji in bread. The name bunny chow is said to be inspired by the word "bania", an entrepreneurial community in India.

This dish, made of scooped-out loaves stuffed with curry, has made its own journey up the culinary ladder to become a must-try in South African cities, especially Durban. One can eat it in Pune as well—in yet another innovative form called bunny chow misal at Bappa's Misal on Tilak Road.

Vivek Kulkarni, the founder of the eight-seater Bappa's Misal, is a serial restaurateur with a penchant for quirky ideas. One of his previous spaces was called Cafe Gossip in Vadgaon. Bappa's Misal started in Dattawadi and had a branch in Karve Nagar before the Covid lockdown forced Kulkarni to down shutters. In low spirits and suffering from Covid, he decided to fight on with the support of his family. "I was experimenting with misal, a traditional food in Pune, Kolhapur, Solapur and other parts of this region. South Africa's bunny chow turned out to be so delicious with sprouts that I made it the mainstay of my restaurant when I relaunched after the first lockdown. The misal made the dish healthier," says Kulkarni. "Many said I was ruining Maharashtra's food culture." Bappa's Misal is known for its unique experiments, offering items like pizza misal, which

has become a favourite among children and women. Then, there is a pahalwan vada, Kulkarni's answer to the traditional vada for health buffs. Pahalwan vada is not made of besan but different types of dal and has a crispy coating.

Vivek Kulkarni, the founder of the eight-seater Bappa's Misal, is a serial restaurateur with a penchant for quirky ideas. One of his previous spaces was called Cafe Gossip in Vadgaon. Vivek Kulkarni, the founder of the eight-seater Bappa's Misal, is a serial restaurateur with a penchant for quirky ideas. One of his previous spaces was called Cafe Gossip in Vadgaon. As a business model, Bappa's Misal was a bold step. As a struggling founder, Kulkarni could have stayed with the tried and tested instead of taking the risk of playing with familiar tastes. He says that everybody was opposed to my continuing with the restaurant business, especially since there were rumours of a second wave. "In the initial days, we did not know the market's response as there were a lot of restrictions on movement. I could barely afford to pay the cook. I survived because there was support from home," he says. People who were coming to the new restaurant enjoyed the dishes. "I felt that this idea would work out. I fought out the pandemic," he says. Kulkarni says that foreign dishes like burgers and pizzas are hot sellers at restaurants, while the traditional vada pav and misal do not seem cool enough. "When I innovated, many said that I was ruining Maharashtra's food culture by messing with tradition. I believe that food has never been static at any time in history. Food keeps changing in taste and cooking methods. Pizza is not even Indian but is very popular in the food business. On the other hand, south Indian restaurants have opened in other countries as well. I am trying to contribute to spreading misal to other shores," he says. Today, the counter of Bappa's Misal sees 12,000 to 15,000 customers every day and over weekends.

## Urged Bangladesh monks, devotees to practice faith discreetly: ISKCON Kolkata spokesperson



ISKCON Kolkata spokesperson Radharamn Das on Tuesday said he has urged its monks and followers from Bangladesh to avoid wearing saffron robes and 'tilak' in public, advising them to practice their faith discreetly amid safety concerns following targeted attacks against Hindu minorities in the neighbouring country. This suggestion comes in the wake of escalating violence against the Hindu community in Bangladesh after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government earlier this year, which has heightened anxieties among devotees and their families. "The situation in Bangladesh is alarming. The monks and devotees, who have been calling us, we have told them to hide their identity as ISKCON followers or monks publicly. We have asked

them to practice their faith discreetly inside homes or inside the temples. We have advised them to dress in a manner that does not draw attention," Das, who is also ISKCON Kolkata vice-president, told PTI. He emphasised that the measure was temporary and aimed solely at ensuring their safety.

"This is not any advisory or generic guideline but my personal suggestion to monks and devotees who have been calling us frantically over the last few days," he said. "Many of our devotees and their families are facing threats and intimidation," Das added, referring to incidents of vandalism of temples and attacks on religious gatherings. Chinmay Krishna, who served as a spokesperson for Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, was arrested at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Monday while en route to Chattogram to attend a rally. He was denied bail and sent to jail on Tuesday by a court in the neighbouring country. Historically, Hindus made up approximately 22 per cent of Bangladesh's population during the 1971 Liberation War. The Hindu population, once a substantial demographic in Bangladesh, has experienced a significant decline in recent decades, with the minority community now comprising only around 8 per cent of the country's total population. This drop is largely attributed to a combination of socio-political marginalisation, exodus and sporadic violence over the years.

## At EIMG vintage car rally, Kolkata's stunning automotive past comes to life

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

The event, a nostalgic journey through automotive history, captivated the city's residents and visitors alike. Starting from the iconic Town Hall, a procession of vintage cars, each a masterpiece of engineering and design, snaked its way through the bustling roads of Kolkata. As the convoy cruised past landmarks like the AJC Bose Flyover and the Maa Flyover, it drew curious glances and excited cheers from onlookers. "The EIMG (Eastern India Motoring Group) car rally proved to be a grand success," said Shrivardhan Kanoria, founding president of EIMG and a vintage car collector and restorer. Many onlookers to their phones to capture the moment, while others followed the convoy on bikes and cars. EIMG As the convoy cruised past landmarks like the AJC Bose Flyover and the Maa Flyover, it drew curious glances and excited cheers from onlookers. (Express Photo by Partha Paul)

Among the vehicles which participated were a rare 1934 SS1 Tourer, and a 1938 Rolls-Royce 25/30 limousine, both owned by Kanoria, a 1948 Bentley Mark 6 owned by Azam Monem, a 1938 Rolls-Royce 25/30 owned by Tamalika Naha, a 1913 Stoever of Ananda Choudhury, a 1948 Plymouth Special Deluxe of SK Lahiri, a 1947 Chevrolet Fleetmaster owned by Saikat Dutta, and 1963



Standard Herald owned by Shubhajt Kumar. At Club De Gold, a thanksgiving ceremony was performed to felicitate the car owners followed by a vintage motor quiz. Sreerupa Sarkar, a participant, said, "My father had nine vintage cars and two bikes. In 2020 my father passed away. I feel very honored that Mr Kanoria is doing a great job for vintage car enthusiasts. These are more of passion than possession." SK Lahiri, the owner of Plymouth which originally belonged to famous singer Hemant Kumar, said, "In our community, my car is addressed as Nilu. It runs with all original parts."

## Death of Unnao rape victim's father: Delhi HC seeks CBI reply on Kuldeep Sengar's plea

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the CBI to respond to expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar's plea seeking suspension on medical grounds of the 10-year jail term awarded to him for the custodial death of the Unnao rape victim's father. The high court also asked jail authorities to file a report on Sengar's medical condition and listed the plea for further hearing on January 13 next year. "Issue notice limited only to medical grounds," Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri said. The court was informed by the CBI's counsel that the high court had in June this year refused to suspend Sengar's sentence during the pendency of his appeal against conviction.

The counsel for Sengar submitted that he was seeking suspension of sentence on medical grounds as his health was deteriorating and it was a medical emergency. He added that Sengar's appeal challenging the trial court's conviction and sentencing order has not been heard for a long time and he has been in jail for the last eight years, while the maximum punishment awarded to him was 10 years in the case. Sengar has already been convicted of raping the minor daughter of the deceased man and sentenced to imprisonment for the remainder of his life in that case. Sengar's appeal challenging the trial court's verdict in the main Unnao rape case is already pending in the high court.

He has sought quashing of the December 16, 2019, judgment of the trial court, which convicted him in the rape case. Sengar has also sought to set aside the December 20, 2019, order sentencing him to imprisonment for the remainder of his life. The girl was kidnapped and raped by Sengar in 2017 when she was a minor.



On March 13, 2020, Sengar was sentenced by the trial court to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment, besides a fine of Rs 10 lakh, in the case of the death of the rape victim's father in custody. The trial court had said "no leniency" can be shown for killing a family's "sole bread earner". It had also awarded a 10-year jail term to Sengar's brother Atul Singh Sengar and five other people for their role in the custodial killing of the father of the rape victim. The girl's father was arrested at the behest of Sengar under the Arms Act and died in custody on April 9, 2018, owing to police brutality. The trial court, which did not hold the accused guilty of murder under the IPC, awarded the maximum sentence for the offence of culpable homicide not amounting to murder to the convicts under section 304 of the IPC after holding that there was no intention to kill. The case was transferred to Delhi from a trial court in Uttar Pradesh on the directions of the Supreme Court on August 1, 2019.

## After FIR against CISF personnel, central force launches probe into Kharghar road rage incident

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

A Non-Cognisable (NC) complaint was also registered against the doctor and two others for allegedly hurling abuses at the CISF personnel. A Non-Cognisable (NC) complaint was also registered against the doctor and two others for allegedly hurling abuses at the CISF personnel. Days after an FIR was registered against 10 to 15 CISF personnel for allegedly assaulting a doctor, his brother, and a friend in a road rage incident in Kharghar on November 29, the central force said it has ordered an inquiry into the incident.

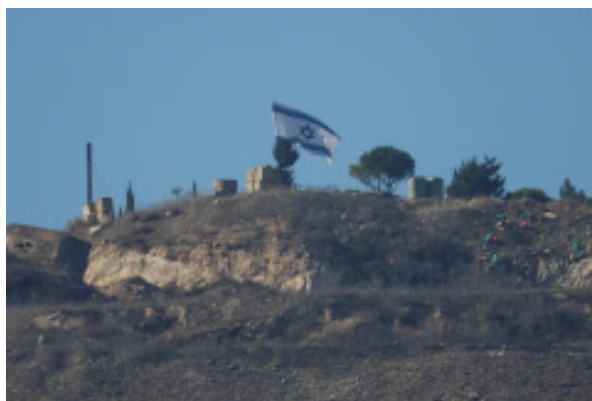
A Non-Cognisable (NC) complaint was also registered against the doctor and two others for allegedly hurling abuses at the CISF personnel and attempting to assault the driver of the bus in which they were being ferried to Navi Mumbai from the Mumbai airport. "An internal inquiry has been initiated to investigate the incident thoroughly. CISF remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of its personnel and the public and will take appropriate action based on the findings of the inquiry," CISF said in a statement Monday. The CISF said the driver of the car overtook the bus and abruptly stopped his vehicle ahead of the bus. It also alleged that the car driver was aggressive, abused the bus driver, and attempted to assault him.

As per the police FIR, the incident took place last Friday at around 10.15 pm when some buses were ferrying



CISF personnel to their quarters in the Kharghar area of Navi Mumbai. While moving towards Sector 36 in Kharghar, a speeding bus came dangerously close to a car between Utsav Chowk and Central Park, an officer said. The car owner, a doctor and also a local functionary of a political party, chased the bus and asked its driver to stop the vehicle, he said. The car owner objected to the bus driver's rash driving, following which an argument broke out. By that time, five to six CISF personnel stepped out of the bus, confronted the doctor and allegedly assaulted him, the doctor alleged in his complaint. He also alleged that some CISF personnel hit his brother and friend and broke the windshield of his car. Later, the doctor lodged a complaint against the CISF personnel at the Kharghar police station. The police also registered an NC complaint against the doctor.

## Lebanon asked U.S., France to press Israel to halt truce breaches, say sources



should adhere to the ceasefire. U.S. State Department spokesperson Matt Miller told reporters on Monday that the ceasefire "is holding" and that the U.S. had "anticipated that there might be violations". The truce came into effect on Nov. 27 and prohibits Israel from conducting offensive military operations in Lebanon while requiring Lebanon to prevent armed groups, including Hezbollah, from launching attacks on Israel. It gives Israeli troops 60 days to withdraw from south Lebanon. A monitoring mechanism chaired by the United States is tasked with monitoring, verifying and helping enforce the truce, but it has yet to begin work.

Berri on Monday urged it to "urgently" ensure Israel halts its breaches, saying Beirut had logged at least 54 Israeli violations of the ceasefire so far. Israel says its continued military activity in Lebanon is aimed at enforcing the ceasefire and does not violate its obligations under the truce. Mikati on Monday met in Beirut with U.S. General Jasper Jeffers, who will chair the monitoring committee, and stressed the need for Israeli troops to swiftly withdraw. Two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters that France's representative to the committee, General Guillaume Ponchin, will arrive in Beirut on Wednesday and that the committee would hold its first meeting on Thursday. "There is an urgency to finalise the mechanism, otherwise it will be too late," the source said, referring to Israel's gradual intensification of strikes despite the truce. Miller said the monitoring mechanism would begin its work "in the coming days." At least 12 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Lebanon on Monday, Lebanese authorities said, in the deadliest day since the ceasefire came into effect. They included six people in the southern town of Hariss and another four people in the southern town of Taloussa, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

BEIRUT, GNS News Agency, Dec 5, Top Lebanese officials have urged Washington and Paris to press Israel to uphold a ceasefire, after dozens of military operations on Lebanese soil that Beirut has deemed violations, two senior Lebanese political sources told Reuters on Tuesday. Deadly Israeli strikes on south Lebanon and Hezbollah rocket launches on an Israeli military post on Monday have put a U.S.-brokered ceasefire between the two in an increasingly fragile position less than a week after it came into effect.

Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, a close Hezbollah ally who negotiated the deal on behalf of Lebanon, spoke to officials at the White House and French presidency late Monday and expressed concern about the state of the ceasefire, the sources said. Neither the French presidency nor the foreign ministry were immediately available to comment. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot spoke to his Israeli counterpart Gideon Saar on Monday, saying both sides

## As sabotage allegations swirl, NATO struggles to secure the Baltic Sea

TURKU, GNS News Agency, Dec 5, On Nov. 18, hours after two communication cables were severed in the Baltic Sea, 30 NATO vessels and 4,000 military staff took to the same body of water for one of northern Europe's largest naval exercises. The 12-day 'Freezing Winds' drill was part of a push to step up the transatlantic defence alliance's protection of infrastructure in waters that carry 15% of global shipping traffic and are seen as increasingly vulnerable to attack. The Baltic Sea is bordered by eight NATO countries and Russia. There have been at least three incidents of possible sabotage to the 40-odd telecommunication cables and critical gas pipelines that run along its relatively shallow seabed since 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine. "NATO is stepping up patrols, ... allies are investing in innovative technologies that can help better secure these assets," said Commander Arlo Abrahamson, a spokesperson for NATO's Allied Maritime Command. Yet the ease with which a ship's anchor can slice through a cable, coupled with the often-treacherous sea conditions, makes actual prevention of such attacks almost impossible. On day three of the exercise, German Navy commander Beata Król tried to launch an underwater drone from her de-mining vessel, the Weilheim, to inspect the seabed as a winter storm raged. After a 30-minute delay in launching it, the drone had frozen and could not operate. "The batteries got cold," she said, shrugging, as she waited for the equipment to warm up. Having spent years detonating World War Two-era mines on the Baltic seabed, NATO is repurposing its six-vessel minehunting fleet to also monitor suspicious underwater activity, with its hull-mounted sonar scanning the seabed, drones able to take pictures and video under the water, and specialist divers on hand. But its powers are still limited. "We are a defensive alliance, so by conducting training and exercising, also in areas which are crucial with underwater infrastructure, we show presence and prevent rather than actively engage," Król said.

**CAUSES OF CABLE DAMAGE HARD TO PINPOINT** Security sources say the Chinese bulk carrier Yi Peng 3, which left the Russian port of Ust-Luga on Nov. 15, was responsible for severing the two undersea cables in Swedish economic waters between Nov. 17 and 18 by dragging its anchor on the seabed. As of Monday, it was stationary in Danish economic waters, being watched by NATO members' naval ships, having been urged by Sweden to return to be investigated. Some politicians had accused it of sabotage, but no authority had shown evidence that its actions were deliberate. China has said it is ready to assist in the investigation, while its ally Russia has denied involvement in any of the Baltic infrastructure incidents.

The case is similar to an incident last year when the Chinese ship NewNew Polar Bear damaged two cables linking Estonia to Finland and Sweden as well as an Estonia-Finland gas pipeline. China made similar promises to assist, but the ship was not stopped and, a year on, Finnish and Estonian investigators have yet to present conclusions. Damage to cables is not new. Globally, around



150 are damaged each year, according to the UK-based International Cable Protection Committee. The telecoms cables, power lines and gas pipes in the shallow Baltic are particularly vulnerable due to its very intense ship traffic, the U.S.-based telecom research firm TeleGeography said.

If any of the recent incidents are proven to be sabotage by another country, it would mark a return of a type of warfare not seen for decades. "You should go back to World War One or the American-Spanish war to find a state-sponsored sabotage of a submarine cable," said Paul Brodsky, a senior researcher at TeleGeography. To counter this potential threat, NATO in May opened its Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure (CUI) in London, which wants to map all critical infrastructure in NATO-controlled waters and identify weak spots. In Rostock, on Germany's Baltic coast, a multinational naval headquarters opened in October to protect NATO members' interests in the sea. "What I think we can achieve is to place the responsibility after an incident," CUI's Branch Head, Commander Pal Bratbak, said onboard the Weilheim, stressing the growing power of technology. NATO's Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation in Italy is launching software that will combine private and military data and imagery from hydrophones, radars, satellites, vessels' Automatic Identification System (AIS) and fibres with Distributed Acoustic Sensing (DAS), which private telecom companies use to localise cuts in their cables.

"If we have a good picture of what's going on, then we can deploy units to verify what the system tells us," Bratbak said. German Lieutenant-General Hans-Werner Wiermann, who led an undersea infrastructure coordination cell at NATO Headquarters until March, said no pipeline or cable can be guarded all the time. "The right response to such hybrid attacks is resilience," he said, adding that companies were already laying cables to add "redundancies" - spare routings that will allow critical pieces of infrastructure to keep working if one cable is cut. On board the Weilheim, Król's second drone is finally able to brave the storm to continue the inspection drill underwater.

to 10 per cent by 2030, compared with 22.3 per cent recorded this year.

The government has been unveiling a series of measures to address the country's chronic demographic challenges including the world's lowest birth rate. The committee said the government has already taken action for 143 out of 151 related tasks as of November. The total fertility rate, which refers to the average number of expected births per woman in her lifetime, came to 0.76 in the third quarter, far below the 2.1 births per woman needed to maintain a stable population without immigration. The government plans to raise the fertility rate to 1 by 2030. "We have prepared various policies, including offering short-term parental leave, raising the ceiling on monthly subsidies, and allowing men to take leave when their spouses are pregnant," a committee official said.

The government also plans to support fertility tests for 210,000 people in 2027, up from 80,000 in 2022. The committee announced detailed measures to support premature babies as well, aiming to establish two new emergency centers dedicated to treating critically ill mothers and newborns next year.

Premature babies refer to those born before 37 weeks of pregnancy or weighing less than 2.5 kilograms. Approximately 28,000 babies were born prematurely in 2023, accounting for over 10 per cent of newborns, according to government data. The country will launch a 24-hour transport support system to ensure timely care for mothers and babies in critical conditions, the committee added.

## Fuel oil smuggling network rakes in \$1 billion for Iran and its proxies



DUBAI, GNS News Agency, Dec 5, A sophisticated fuel oil smuggling network that some experts believe generates at least \$1 billion a year for Iran and its proxies has flourished in Iraq since Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani took office in 2022, five sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. The operation exploits a government policy under which Iraq allocates fuel oil to asphalt plants at heavily subsidised prices and involves a network of companies, groups and individuals in Iraq, Iran and Gulf states, according to the five people and three Western intelligence reports, two from August this year and one which was undated. Under the scheme, anywhere from 500,000 to 750,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil (HFO), including high sulphur fuel oil (HSFO) - equivalent to 3.4 million to 5 million barrels of oil - is diverted from the plants each month and exported, mostly to Asia, two of the sources said. The extent of the fuel oil smuggling since Sudani came to power and the involvement of multiple entities within Iraq in the illicit trade have not previously been reported.

Iranian and Iraqi officials did not respond to detailed requests for comment about the findings in the Reuters story. Iran views its neighbour and ally Iraq as an economic lung and wields considerable military, political and economic influence there through the powerful Shi'ite militias and political parties it backs. It also sources hard currency from Iraq through exports and avoids U.S. sanctions via its banking system, Iraqi and U.S. officials say.

While Baghdad has been delicately balancing its role as an ally of both Washington and Tehran for years, with President-elect Donald Trump expected to take a hard line on Iran's attempts to skirt U.S. sanctions, its activities in neighbouring Iraq are expected to come under increasing scrutiny. Of the two main routes the fuel oil takes out of Iraq, one involves blending it with similar product from Iran and passing it off as purely Iraqi, helping Tehran evade tough U.S. sanctions on energy exports, said the five sources, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter. The other involves exporting the fuel oil that was originally meant for the subsidy programme using forged documentation to mask its origins.

Iran benefits directly from the first route. Iranian fuel oil typically sells at a discount due to sanctions but it can sell it for a higher price if it is passed off as Iraqi. The second route, meanwhile, benefits the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq that control the smuggling scheme. Three sources estimated how much both routes were bringing in based on assumptions about the volumes traded and relative prices. Their estimates ranged from \$1 billion a year to over \$3 billion. The illicit trade potentially puts Iraqi institutions and officials at risk of U.S. sanctions for helping Iran and some Iraqi officials are concerned a Trump administration could target them, the three sources said. However, Iraqi leaders rely heavily on the support of influential Iranian-backed Shi'ite groups to stay in power, making it difficult for them to crack down on illicit activities, such as the fuel oil smuggling, the sources said. Sudani's office did not respond to requests for comment about the trade, the risk of sanctions or government attempts to curb the business.

**ON WASHINGTON'S RADAR** The lucrative smuggling and its links to Iran and individuals under U.S. sanctions are already on Washington's radar. The subject came up in discussions between U.S. officials and Sudani when the Iraqi prime minister visited the United States in September, one of the sources said. Asked by Reuters whether smuggling had been raised, a State Department official said: "While we do not comment on specific discussions, we can affirm the Department has emphasized with our Iraqi counterparts the harms of illicit trade and our support for bringing oil transparently to market."

The U.S. Treasury did not respond to questions about the fuel oil trade or whether Iraqi entities and officials were at risk of sanctions. U.S. sanctions on Iran are chiefly in response to its nuclear programme and its support for groups across the Middle East that the U.S. sees as terrorist organisations, including Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. While Washington has put pressure on Iraqi officials to clamp down on activities benefiting Iran, Tehran's influence runs deep. Central to the smuggling operation is Iraqi Shi'ite group Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), a paramilitary force and political party that was an early backer of Sudani and a key member of the bloc that nominated him to be prime minister, according to the five people with knowledge of the matter and the three reports. The findings in the reports seen by Reuters are based on a broad range of sources in Iraq and its government departments who were not identified. Sudani's office and AAH and its leader Qais al-Khazali did not respond to questions posed by

Backed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), AAH was folded into Iraq's security apparatus in 2018 and now also has 16 members of parliament. In 2019 for AAH's alleged role in serious human rights abuses, related to the killing of protesters in Iraq that year and other violence, including a 2007 attack that killed five U.S. soldiers. Khazali mocked the sanctions, saying in a video posted on X two days later that he was personally hurt it had taken Washington so long to sanction him.

**HOW IT WORKS** While fuel oil smuggling existed before Sudani came to power in October 2022, it has grown in complexity and become more formalised since he took office, the five sources said. Iraqi fuel oil exports are on track to hit an all-time high above 18 million tons this year, according to industry sources and ship-tracking data, more than double exports in 2021. To create surplus fuel oil for export, some of the asphalt plants involved in the network overstate their needs when requesting official fuel oil allocations. Others exist in name only, meaning their entire allocations can be diverted for export, according to the five sources and intelligence reports. Central to the scheme is the State Company for Mining Industry, which operates asphalt plants as a joint venture with private companies, the sources said. It was originally established to boost local industries, such as flancoat production, an asphalt waterproofing material used in construction. The state firm was singled out in one of the Western intelligence reports as coming under tight AAH control during Sudani's tenure and being used for the export of large quantities of HSFO. Al-Thager Asphalt Industries Factory, one of the state mining

company's ventures according to its website, is used by AAH as a site for storing fuel oil, the intelligence report said. Some of the plants allegedly involved are controlled by AAH or Kataib Hezbollah, another Iraqi militia backed by Iran's Revolutionary Guards and

designated as a terrorist organisation, opens new tabby Washington, the intelligence report said. The State Company for Mining, Al-Thager and Kataib Hezbollah did not respond to detailed requests for comment. In a previous attempt to clamp down on the trade, Sudani's predecessor Mustafa al-Kadhimi ordered a review of the actual operating capacity of asphalt plants, cut their allocations and raised the price of subsidised fuel to \$220 per ton from \$70, according to two of the sources and the intelligence reports.

In January 2023, a few months after Sudani took over, the price was lowered to \$100-\$150 a ton, far below the market price for exports, estimated at anywhere between \$300 and \$500. The lower price of the subsidised fuel, the higher the profit margin when exporting it on the international market. Sudani's government also expanded licensing for asphalt plants to include 37 new projects, a near-doubling of the industry almost overnight, one of the sources said. All of the sources said some of the projects were fictitious, suggesting they were just ploys to get fuel oil allocations for export. The allocation of fuel oil is determined by Sudani's office through its National Operations Command (PM-NOC). The Oil Products and Distribution Company (OPDC) is then tasked with processing fuel movement requests, which include vehicle numbers, cargo volumes and specifications, and identifying information for each driver and truck. The fuel oil movements are reviewed by the PM-NOC and approved with memos that let trucks pass through various checkpoints manned by Iraq's oil police, three sources said. PM-NOC, OPDC and Iraq's state oil marketing company SOMO, the body responsible for exporting Iraqi fuel oil, did not respond to requests for comment.

**BLENDED WITH IRANIAN FUEL** Once diverted from the plants, the fuel oil takes one of the two routes, both involving forged documentation, the five sources said. Some of the Iraqi fuel is exported directly through Iraq's southern ports with falsified documents listing it as other products, such as vacuum residue or flancoat, both byproducts of refining that can be shipped legitimately. The state mining company, which owns a network of heavy fuel oil blending facilities across Iraq, is authorised to transport fuel oil between them and export flancoat, one of the intelligence reports said.

The second route involves blending the illicit fuel oil with similar Iranian fuel and passing it off as purely Iraqi, again with falsified documents, to help Tehran skirt tough sanctions Western nations have imposed on its energy exports. The southern Iraqi city of Basra has emerged as the heart of the blending operations, with Khor Al Zubair and Umm Qasr ports key export points for the illicit fuel, the five sources said. Reuters was unable to determine whether the authorities in the ports were aware of the smuggling operation. The blending is done by Iraqi engineers, typically during ship-to-ship transfers, and the fuel oil is then shipped to clients mainly in Asia, two of the intelligence reports said. The operation is made easier by the similarity between Iraqi and Iranian fuel oil grades and it is difficult to determine scientifically that blending has occurred after the fact, one of the people said. Iraq's port authorities did not respond to requests for comment. In July, Sudani's government ramped up the price of subsidised fuel oil to \$369 per ton, recommended cutting asphalt plant allocations to about 60% of their capacity and also ordered a review of their actual capacity. Reuters was unable to determine why the government launched the review, or the outcome. Three of the sources said the move was an attempt by the government to distance itself from the smuggling operation. Sudani's representatives did not respond to requests for comment. Subsidised prices have been inching back down since August and are now \$228 to \$268 a ton. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Reporting by Maha El Dahan and Yousef Saba in Dubai; Additional reporting by Daphne Psalidakis in Washington and Jeslyn Leth in Singapore; Editing by David Clarke Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles, opens new tab Maha has been working as a Reuters journalist for over 15 years covering stories across the Middle East from Egypt, the Gulf, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. She is currently Gulf Bureau Chief based in Dubai and continues to cover energy and OPEC policy. In her previous roles, Maha has overseen Lebanon, Syria and Jordan coverage as Bureau Chief based in Beirut and managed the energy and commodities file across the Middle East. Maha began her career with Reuters in Cairo. Yousef covers Middle East energy out of Dubai, paying close attention to Gulf state oil giants, their roles in the ambitious region's transformational plans and the shift to green energy. He previously covered Gulf financial and economic news, with a focus on the fast-growing capital markets there. He joined Reuters in 2018 in Cairo, where he covered Egypt and Sudan, including its uprising. He previously had stints at a local paper in Cairo and in D.C. as an intern at Politico during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

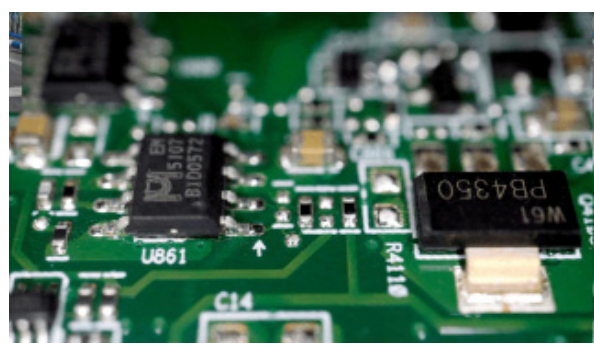
## India to get \$1.17 billion worth helicopter equipment from US

Washington: The Biden Administration on Monday notified the Congress of its decision to approve the sale of MH-60R Multi-Mission Helicopter Equipment and related ones at an estimated cost of \$1.17 billion.

The proposed sale will improve India's capability to deter current and future threats by upgrading its anti-submarine warfare capabilities, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a notification to the Congress. The Biden administration's approval of sale of major defense equipment to India comes weeks ahead of its completion of its four-year term. President-elect Donald Trump would be sworn in as 47th president of the United States of America on January 20, 2025. According to the notification, India has requested to buy 30 Multifunctional Information Distribution System-Joint Tactical Radio Systems (MIDS-JTRS).

It also included advanced data transfer systems; external fuel tanks; AN/AAS 44C(V) forward looking infrared (FLIR) systems; an operator machine interface assistant; spare containers; facilities study, design, construction and support; support and test equipment; munitions; and integration and test support. The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems. Implementation of this sale will require travel of up to 20 US Government or up to 25 contractor representatives to India on a temporary basis for program technical support and management oversight, it said.

# Japanese firms keen to set up semiconductor units in India: Deloitte



Japanese firms are keen to set up semiconductor units in India and they have all the expertise and specialisation to partner with domestic firms, Deloitte has said. It also said that skilled workforce, funds and continuation of support measures are key to push growth of the semiconductor sector in India. Japanese firms are "super enthusiastic" about India, Shingo Kamaya, Deloitte AP and SRT Leader, Deloitte Japan said. In July, Japan became the second Quad partner after the US to sign an agreement with India for the joint development of the semiconductor ecosystem and maintain the resilience of its global supply chain.

The two countries signed the memorandum for semiconductor design, manufacturing, equipment research, talent development and to bring resilience in the semiconductor supply chain. With around 100 semiconductor manufac-

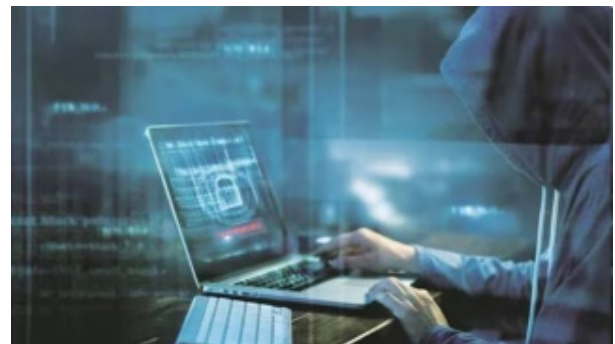
turing plants, Japan is among the top five countries to have a semiconductor ecosystem. Japan houses companies that are global leaders in raw form of semiconductor wafers, chemical and gases, lenses that are used in chip manufacturing equipment, and display technologies. India aspires to have 10 semiconductor manufacturing plants in 10 years. "Given the technology, given the specialization, there is no better partner to get on to developing such an ambitious and a critical ecosystem of semiconductor than Japan," Rohit Berry, President – Strategy, Risk and Transactions, Deloitte India, said. He said that the semiconductor story in the country is not just about setting up one factory, but it is about that entire ecosystem. "And that is where many Japanese companies who have set up such ecosystems in Japan or in any other places are going to be absolutely critical to set it up (in India). So this is the vision. This is a grand plan. This is the investment. This is the commitment," he added. Berry also said that developing the right kind of partnerships between Indian and Japanese firms are fundamental for the growth of the sector. "This is not a one year game, it's not a two year game. This will basically benefit us and Japan for generations," he noted. He also emphasised that the government incentive program on a sustained basis will also be a key factor for the sector's growth in India. When asked if Japanese firms are looking for any specific support measures from states, he said that a "centre-state partnership, together with the private and Japanese partnership, all four of them coming together will be a prerequisite to create a once in a lifetime setup".

# India tops global list for mobile malware attacks: Zscaler Report

In a startling revelation, India now tops the list for mobile malware attacks globally, surpassing the United States and Canada, with a disappointing step-up from its previous third-place ranking, according to a report. The Zscaler ThreatLabz 2024 Mobile, IoT, and OT Threat Report analysed a dataset comprising over 20 billion threat-related mobile transactions and associated cyber threats, between June 2023 to May 2024. "India has become the top global target for mobile malware attacks, accounting for 28 per cent of the total, surpassing the United States (27.3 per cent) and Canada (15.9 per cent). This significant jump from its 3rd place ranking last year underscores the critical need for Indian enterprises to adopt robust security measures, especially amid the rapid digital transformation and increasing cyber threats," the report said.

With nearly half of mobile attacks being trojans (malware that tricks users into downloading and running malicious software), the financial sector is particularly vulnerable. The report revealed a 29 per cent increase in banking malware attacks and a staggering 111 per cent rise in mobile spyware attacks. "Most financially motivated malware attacks are highly capable of bypassing Multifactor Authentication (MFA) and frequently leverage phishing vectors, such as fake login pages for different financial institutions, social media sites, and crypto wallets," it said.

Phishing attempts targeting mobile customers of major Indian banks, such as HDFC, ICICI, and Axis banks, have increased, according to ThreatLabz analysts. These clever attacks deceive mobile users into disclosing critical bank information by using phoney banking websites that closely mimic the real ones, it said. Previously, similar tactics were used to spread Android-based phishing malware through fake card update sites, leading to widespread financial fraud. The Indian postal service has also become a



target for attackers. Using SMS messages, they direct mobile users to phishing sites that prompt them to input credit card details. These fraudulent schemes often exploit common scenarios like missing packages and incomplete delivery addresses, capitalising on the urgency created by such messages, the report noted. "Legacy systems and unprotected IoT/ OT (Internet of Things/Operational Technology) environments are becoming prime targets for cybercriminals. We see a significant rise in hacking campaigns targeted at these environments.

"It is necessary for Indian enterprises to adopt a robust zero-trust security framework to secure their core operational environments. This will not only protect critical systems but also ensure business continuity in an increasingly connected world," said Subvratra Sinha, CISO-India, Zscaler. The report also indicated a concerning global trend, with over 200 malicious applications discovered on the Google Play Store and a 45 per cent year-over-year increase in IoT malware transactions, underscoring the pervasive nature of cyber threats today.

# Home price index rises by 4.3% amid high interest rates, inflation: RBI

Home prices are on the rise in India despite high interest rates in the banking system and inflation. The All-India Home Price Index (HPI) of the Reserve Bank of India rose by 4.34 per cent to 322 as of September 2024 as against 308.6 in September 2023, indicating that price rise is continuing across the metros, according to Reserve Bank of India data. HPI has gone up by nearly 67 per cent in the last ten years from 193.05 in 2014-15 amid the pandemic, high inflation and interest rates.

The annual HPI growth varied widely across the cities, ranging from a high growth of 8.76 per cent (Bengaluru) to a decline of (-)2.0 per cent (Kanpur). On sequential (quarter-on-quarter) basis, all-India HPI decreased by 0.1 per cent in September 2024-25. Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Kolkata and Chennai recorded a sequential rise in house prices during the latest quarter, RBI data shows. Home price index for Mumbai rose by 2.95 per cent to 303.62 in September 2024 as against 294.92 a year ago, Delhi increased by 3.31 per cent to 350.40 from 339.16 and Bengaluru by 8.76 per cent to 360.11 from 331.08. The RBI's home index is based on transaction-level data received from the registration authorities in top ten major cities.

Average housing prices across the top eight markets in India rose 11 per cent year-on-year at Rs 11,000 per sq ft during Q3 of 2024, led by sturdy demand and positive market sentiments, industry body CREDAI said. Interestingly, average housing prices have increased for the 15th consecutive quarter since 2021. All the eight major cities saw an annual increase in housing prices with Delhi NCR witnessing the highest rise at 32 per cent, followed by Bengaluru at 24 per cent rise during the quarter. After registering record high sales over the last two years, the demand momentum across the top cities is stabilizing. Nevertheless, with anticipation of healthy residential activity in the last quarter, 2024 is likely to end on a strong note, it said.

However, overall unsold inventory continued to witness a quarterly drop for the third consecutive quarter, led by healthy uptake in housing units. At the end of September 2024, unsold inventory stood at over 10 lakh housing units across the eight major cities, with Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) accounting for a majority at about 40 per cent share. Unsold units in Hyderabad saw a modest dip on a sequential basis despite a yearly increase of about 28 per cent.

"The ongoing rise in housing prices is another validation of positive homebuyer sentiments and the highly conducive nature of the real estate market. We are seeing more and more aspirational homebuyers come to the fore – resulting in bigger homes that are also being reflected in the rise in prices as homes continue to get more expensive, truly reflecting the current market dynamics and consumer preferences," said Boman Irani, President of CREDAI National. "While the housing market is gradually stabilizing,



the outlook for the residential segment remains positive supported by strong underlying market fundamentals. Developers are recalibrating their strategies, particularly in the price-sensitive segments, by offering compact size units," said Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer, Colliers India. "We expect this robust momentum to continue going into the new year and are hopeful of rate cuts in the impending future," Irani said.

"Although average housing prices have continued to increase steadily, witnessing a 11 per cent YoY growth during Q3 2024, the likely easing of monetary policy and anticipated repo rate cuts can potentially bring financial relief to homebuyers in the near term. Moreover, flexible payment plans and freebies to attract homebuyers will continue to aid in residential sales momentum," Yagnik said.

# 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.

# Cancer Survivor Rozlyn Khan reacts to her legal notice against Navjot Singh Sidhu



Mumbai: Cancer survivor and actress Rozlyn Khan has reacted strongly to the legal notice she recently issued to former cricketer and politician Navjot Singh Sidhu. A few days ago, Rozlyn shared a video expressing her views on Sidhu and his alleged false claims regarding his wife's cancer treatment. As a cancer survivor, Rozlyn criticized Sidhu for making what she perceived as casual and misleading remarks about curing cancer.

The controversy began when Sidhu mentioned using neem leaves and turmeric during his wife Navjot Kaur Sidhu's cancer treatment. Supporting Rozlyn's stance, one of the country's leading cancer hospitals had previously issued a public statement against such claims. Now, the Chhattisgarh Civil Society has also sent a legal notice to Sidhu, demanding that he submit medical documents related to his wife's treatment within seven days. Rozlyn, too, has taken legal action by sending her own notice to the former cricketer, accusing him of promoting misinformation. Following this, she took to social media to issue a pub-

lic statement. In an Instagram post, Rozlyn wrote, "This is to inform you that Mr Navjot Singh Sidhu is recommending a diet based on his own wife's journey, but he forgets that it is tried and tested that every cancer patient has a different journey, please don't follow the empty stomach haldi, apple cider, cinnamon, and intermittent fasting etc, as chemotherapy leads to nausea, diarrhoea, low platelets, low wbc, mucositis, bleeding gums, and internal bleeding in my case. His statement was a sensational line to grab eyeballs and he succeeded to get attention public figures who are dealing with cancer are roaming around just after chemotherapy, posting everything else but not a single awareness word comes out of their mouth is a trend now ...!"

She added, "No one is ready to openly share reports or discussing their own case on social media... the word cancer is used for getting media and public attention..! I request all the medical professionals to take strict legal action on the misinformations..! m doing what best | can do for my cancer survivor and warriors.! Let's boycott all attention seekers and create best environment for cancer to eradicate from our life and their minds."

Former Punjab Congress president Navjot recently shared the remarkable recovery story of his wife, Navjot Kaur Sidhu, who defied the odds to overcome Stage IV cancer, even after being given just a 3% chance of survival. Navjot's controversial statements about his wife's cancer recovery diet have sparked widespread debate, dividing public opinion. While some have applauded his alternative approach using natural remedies like neem leaves and turmeric, others, particularly medical professionals, have criticized his claims as misleading and unscientific. Adding another dimension to the controversy, Sidhu has alleged that his detractors include powerful entities within the healthcare system, whom he refers to as the "hospital mafia." According to him, these groups are unhappy with his narrative because it challenges their monopoly over cancer treatment and the associated high costs. Sidhu's statements have prompted many to question whether the healthcare system prioritizes patient welfare or financial profit.

# Some of the most commonly consumed Indian dals ranked based on their protein content

For many Indian households, dals are a dietary staple, offering a comforting bowl of nutrition and flavour. But not all dals are equal when it comes to protein content. With the growing focus on high-protein diets, knowing which dals pack the most nutritional punch can help you make informed choices for a healthier plate. Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietitian and certified diabetes educator, explains that first of all, "to meet daily protein requirements, adults may need to consume 1.5-2 cups of dals daily, supplemented with other protein sources for optimal nutrition. So, while dals contribute substantially to protein intake, they may not suffice alone." Methods like pressure cooking can preserve protein content better than prolonged boiling. Methods like pressure cooking can preserve protein content better than prolonged boiling. Factors that affect the protein quality and digestibility of dals: The protein quality and digestibility of dals are influenced by several factors, according to Malhotra: Type of Dal: Different dals have varying protein concentrations and amino acid profiles, which affect their overall quality. -Processing Methods: Soaking and sprouting can enhance protein bioavailability and digestibility by reducing antinutrients. -Cooking Techniques: Pressure cooking can better preserve protein content than prolonged boiling. -Complementary Proteins: Combining dals with grains or other legumes can create a complete amino acid profile, improving overall protein quality. -Storage Conditions: Proper storage prevents nutrient degradation, ensuring better protein



retention. How do dals compare to other plant-based protein sources?

Malhotra mentions, "Dals are significant plant-based protein sources, but their protein quality and digestibility vary compared to other options like soybeans or quinoa. For instance, while urad dal offers about 26g of protein per 100g, it lacks some essential amino acids found in animal proteins. Dals generally provide incomplete proteins, meaning they should be combined with grains or other legumes to achieve a complete amino acid profile."

# Masaba Gupta hits the gym for her first workout postpartum: 'Got ready like an excited kid'



Masaba Gupta is happy to return to the gym after completing 40 days postpartum. The fashion designer took to her Instagram Stories to share the significant update, in which she can be seen working out on the travelling rings, which are used to perform a variety of movements and exercises. "Got ready like an excited kid... with my bag and bottle like it's the first day of school for my first workout postpartum. Back with chief Apoorv Mathur – new body, new goals, same focus," Gupta wrote.

Experts note that these rings offer a full-body workout by engaging multiple muscle groups, which can help build strength and endurance in a fun way. Depending on the specific movement, these rings help target arms, shoulders, back, chest, core, and legs. Dr Deepthi Bawa, senior consultant-gynaecologist, IVF specialist, laparoscopic and cosmetic surgeon, SPARSH Hospital for Women and Children, said that postpartum workouts — like ring exercises — play a crucial role in a mother's recovery journey, both physical and emotional. "The controlled movements required in these exercises help rebuild core strength, which is often weakened due to pregnancy and childbirth. Strengthening the core improves posture and helps alleviate lower back pain, a common concern among new mothers," said Dr Bawa. Additionally, such functional strength training exercises enhance pelvic floor health, which is essential to prevent urinary incontinence and support recovery from vaginal or cesarean delivery. "Moreover, engaging in strength training postpartum aids in boosting overall energy levels

and combating fatigue, as it promotes better blood circulation and increases endorphin production," said Dr Bawa. However, Dr Bawa urged mothers to begin under professional supervision and customise their workouts based on their recovery stage. Gentle, progressive training can be transformative for new mothers aiming to reclaim their physical well-being.

# Vikrant Massey issues fresh statement on his 'break'

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Vikrant Massey, who earlier announced his sabbatical from films, has now issued a fresh statement with regards to his announcement. The actor clarified that he is not retiring from films, as a major section of the media reported, and said that he is just going for a long break to focus on his health and his family.

The actor said in his fresh statement, "Acting is all I can do. And it has given me everything I have. My physical and mental health have taken a hit. I just want to take some time off, I want to better my craft. I feel a sense of monotony at the moment". He added, "My post has been misinterpreted that I am quitting or retiring from acting. I want to take some time off to focus on my family and health. I would be back when the time feels right (sic)".

## Kundali Bhagya actress Shraddha Arya blessed with twins, shares first pic: 'Our hearts are doubly full!'



Actress Shraddha Arya, popularly known for her role as Preeta in Kundali Bhagya, has welcomed her 'two little bundles of joy'. The actress and her husband Rahul Nagal welcomed their twins – a boy and a girl – on November 29. Shraddha announced this on social media giving a glimpse of her holding her babies and further in the video, we see two bunches of balloons with 'It's a boy' and 'It's a girl' written on them. Shraddha wrote in the caption, "Two little bundles of joy have made our family complete. Our Hearts Are Doubly Full!" The new parents received lots of best wishes from their friends in the industry with Sriti Jha,

Krishna Mukherjee, Sanjay Gagnani, Pooja Banerjee, Ruhi Chaturvedi, and many more sharing congratulatory comments.

The Kundali Bhagya actress got married to Rahul Nagal who works in the Navy in 2021, the couple announced their pregnancy in September this year. Later, they even had a baby shower, and Shraddha looked quite excited to welcome her little bundle of joys. Some time back Shraddha also quit her show Kundali Bhagya after a journey of seven and a half years. She had penned an emotional note saying, "You won't believe that I wrote and deleted this caption at least 25 times 'cuz.. nothing.. no words could truly describe what I carry in my heart at this moment.. the moment I bid adieu to my most successful, nurturing, gratifying, lasting and loyal piece of work. Kundali Bhagya. This Show saw me Grow.. grow from a silly- goofy young girl to a married responsible (now) mother-to-be (who's still quite silly & goofy but that's beside the point). So you can imagine how close this journey has been to my heart, 7 AND A HALF YEARS of being PREETA were nothing short of a real-life fairy tale with Fancy Clothes, Fame, popularity, wonderful work team & co-actors, travel, glamour, challenging scenes, Dance, Drama, and everything that an Artist's Perfect life is build of. Thank You Ektaa Kapoor for choosing me to be the one to have and revel in this ELITE LIFE experience." She concluded the note by saying "KB you will always be my Baby!" Shraddha has not announced her next project yet. As per reports, she will be taking a break from the screen to enjoy motherhood and focus on her family life.

## Who Is Aliya Fakhri, Nargis Fakhri's younger sister accused for murdering ex-boyfriend; actor not in touch with her

Bollywood actor and model Nargis Fakhri's younger sister, Aliya Fakhri, has been arrested for allegedly murdering her ex-boyfriend and his friend in Queens, New York City. The incident occurred in Jamaica, a neighbourhood in Queens, where Aliya is accused of setting a two-story garage on fire while her ex-boyfriend, Edward Jacobs (35), and his friend, Anastasia Etienne (33), were asleep inside.

Who Is Aliya Fakhri?

Aliya Fakhri, 43, is the younger sister of Rockstar actor Nargis Fakhri. She was raised in Queens, New York, by their parents, Mohammed Fakhri, a Pakistani, and Marie Fakhri, a Czech national. The sisters experienced a turbulent childhood, with their parents divorcing when Nargis was six years old. Their father passed away a few years later. Unlike Nargis, who enjoys fame in Bollywood, Aliya has remained away from the limelight. Notably, she has rarely featured on Nargis' social media, fuelling speculation about their distant relationship. Sources revealed to India Today that the sisters have not been in contact for over 20 years. In fact, Nargis reportedly learned about her sister's arrest through the media. Aliya and Nargis Fakhri's mother responds Aliya and Nargis' mother, Marie Fakhri, has denied the allegations against her daughter. Speaking to the media, she expressed disbelief, stating, "I don't think she would be killing someone. She was a person who was caring for everybody. She tried to help everybody," multiple news outlets reported. According to reports, Marie also re-



vealed that Aliya struggled with opioid addiction following a dental mishap, which she believes could have influenced her behaviour. What Happened

According to reports, Aliya's ex-boyfriend, Edward Jacobs, was a plumber and a father of three. The couple had ended their relationship about a year ago, but Aliya allegedly continued pursuing him. Following repeated rejections, she resorted to arson. Aliya has been charged with first-degree murder and related offences. She has been denied bail and could face a life sentence if convicted. Her next court appearance is scheduled for December 9.

## Zero Se Restart trailer: Vidhu Vinod Chopra lauds Vikrant Massey for aging his slippers, loses his cool at crew member.

After the success of the critically acclaimed film 12th Fail, filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra has unveiled the trailer for Zero Se Restart, which documents the making of 12th Fail and showcases Chopra in action as a director. The makers unveiled the film's trailer on Tuesday. The trailer of Zero Se Restart offers a captivating glimpse into what Chopra calls the "Kahani Ke Pehle Ki Story." It begins with scenes of 12th Fail receiving accolades and praise from celebrities, including Alia Bhatt, Kamal Haasan, Karan Johar, and Amitabh Bachchan. A voiceover reveals that the film almost didn't happen, as it was rejected by five directors before Chopra took charge. The trailer then delves into behind-the-scenes footage, highlighting the dedication and hard work that went into bringing the film to life.

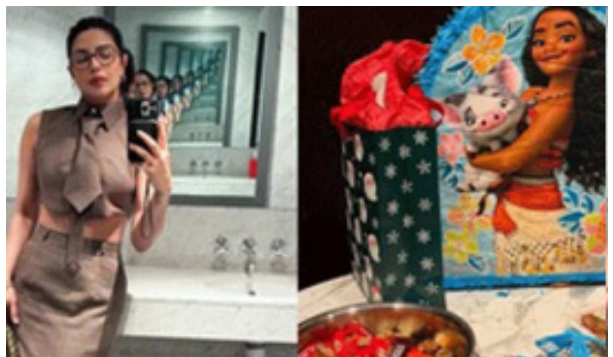
The documentary features Chopra directing on location at crowded railway stations and streets. In one memorable scene, he instructs an actor not to hold back and to throw a slipper at another actor. Another moment shows him scolding extras for looking directly into the camera. Chopra is also seen praising Vikrant Massey, the film's lead, for his commitment. Massey is shown rubbing mud on his slippers to make them appear aged, to which Chopra quips, "Send this video to all Hindi film actors and tell them to age their own slippers if they want to be good actors." The trailer doesn't shy away from showing Chopra's intense side. In one scene, he loses his temper at a man on the set, with his team stepping in to calm the situation. Zero Se Restart



had an impressive debut at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa, where it received a standing ovation from the audience. Meanwhile, 12th Fail was based on Anurag Pathak's book, chronicles the inspiring journey of Manoj Kumar Sharma, played by Vikrant Massey, who overcomes poverty to become an IPS officer, supported by his wife, IRS officer Shraddha Joshi, played by Medha Shankar. Post 12th Fail's success, Vikrant Massey recently announced that he plans to take a significant break from acting after completing two more films. While initial reports suggested he was retiring, Massey clarified that he was stepping away temporarily to focus on his family.

## On Priyanka, Nick's wedding anniversary, daughter Malti gets a 'special treat'

Mumbai: As Indian actress Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas celebrate six years of marital bliss, their daughter Malti Marie got a 'special treat' on the happy occasion. Priyanka took to Instagram on Tuesday and shared that they watched their daughter Malti's 'favourite' Moana 2 in New York. The actress also shared a slew of pictures. The photograph had Priyanka posing in a bathroom and clicking a selfie. The next was a table laden with chocolates next to a paper bag and a poster of Moana. Another image showed a stack of pizzas kept on the table. Without showing her daughter's face, Priyanka shared a photo, which she clicked from the back from the movie screening. For the caption, she wrote: 'What a special treat on our anniversary. Malti's favorite Moana with our friends and family. Moana 2 is so much fun!! Thank you @disney @disneyanimation for the amazing screening. All the kids had the best time. In theaters now @nickjonas.' It was in December 2018, when Priyanka and Nick got married in a



Christian and Hindu ceremony at the Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur. The couple in 2022 announced that they welcomed daughter Malti Marie via surrogacy. Talking about the film, the first installment of 'Moana' released in 2016, is an American animated musical fantasy adventure film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios.

## Making of Pushpa 2: BTS video reveals the true force behind this mass actioner isn't Allu Arjun or Fahadh Faasil



With just two days remaining until the worldwide release of director Sukumar's Pushpa 2: The Rule, starring Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna and Fahadh Faasil in the lead roles, the makers of this big-budget action drama are leaving no stone unturned to ensure its release becomes a historic event. While the film is already witnessing jaw-dropping advance bookings, the Pushpa 2 team is equally fo-

ocused on sustaining the momentum. In a new promotional move, the makers have released a behind-the-scenes (BTS) video, reinforcing that Pushpa has truly become wildfire this time.

The 134-second video offers a deep dive into the movie's outdoor shoots, showcasing how Sukumar brought his captivating vision to life. The clip highlights not only the grandeur of the director's vision but also the dedication of the cast and crew that has shaped Pushpa into a thrilling experience. While Allu Arjun and Fahadh Faasil are seen frolicking on set and effortlessly bringing their characters, Pushpa Raj and SP Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat IPS, to life, the BTS footage also makes it clear that Sukumar is the true driving force behind the project, with the clip reflecting the depth of his vision and conviction. Beyond Allu Arjun's unwavering dedication in embodying Pushpa Raj and Fahadh Faasil's brilliant portrayal of Shekhawat, the video also features Rashmika Mandanna effortlessly recreating her charm as Srivalli, the film's female lead. The BTS video also reinforces the reason why Pushpa Raj now calls himself 'wildfire' rather than just 'fire' as in the first film. Alongside Allu Arjun, Fahadh Faasil and Rashmika Mandanna, Jagadeesh Prathap Bandari and Sunil also return to their roles from Pushpa: The Rise (2021), with Jagapathi Babu and Prakash Raj joining the cast. As of 12 pm on Tuesday, Pushpa 2: The Rule had amassed Rs 37.59 crore in advance bookings across India, with 12,12,568 tickets sold for 22,215 shows, according to industry tracker Sacnilk. The film's cinematography is by Miroslaw Kuba Brozek, while it's been edited by Naveen Nooli and music composed by Devi Sri Prasad. With a reported budget of over Rs 400 crore, Pushpa 2 is set to hit the screens on December 5.

## Gaurav Khanna aka Anuj Kapadia quits show after Sudhanshu Pandey, addresses rumours of rift with Rupali Ganguly

Producer Rajan Shahi's show Anupamaa has been facing turbulence for quite some time now. The show is seeing a drop in its TRPs and many actors quitting the show in quick succession has put Anupamaa under the scanner. Now after Sudhanshu Pandey and Madalsa Sharma, actor Gaurav Khanna has also announced his exit from the show. Gaurav, who played Anuj Kapadia opposite Rupali Ganguly, said that he would be happy to return to Anupamaa at a future date, but as of now Anuj's chapter on the show is closed.

Talking to ETimes, Gaurav said that people have been constantly asking him about his return to Anupamaa. He said that while producer Rajan Shahi had earlier discussed the possibility of a grand re-entry for his character, it is yet to materialize after two months. However, as the storyline had to progress, waiting doesn't make sense and he has decided to explore new projects. "So, for now, Anuj's chapter is closed, but I see it as a comma, not a full stop. If the story demands and my schedule allows, I'd be happy to return," he said.

Gaurav also added, "Anuj was originally planned as a three-month cameo, but it became a defining part of my career, lasting over three years. That kind of love is rare, and I can't thank my fans for it." Anupamaa recently took a 15-years leap, which led to many characters getting dropped from the storyline. Due to this leap, Gaurav also had to be away from the sets for two months. However, change in the storyline is not the only reason behind Gaurav Khanna quitting the show. There are reports of possible issues be-



tween him and Rupali Ganguly. Commenting on these reports, Gaurav said, "I don't engage in retaliatory interviews or respond to rumours. What matters is the work we've created together. I've always focused on my craft, and what happens beyond the 'action' and 'cut' is secondary." Earlier, Sudhanshu Pandey, Paras Kalnawat, and Nidhi Shah from Anupamaa had pointed out that Rupali was quite insecure about her role on the show. The lead actress was also in the news of late when her stepdaughter Esha Verma made serious accusations against her. A crew member also lost his life after getting electrocuted on the sets of the show. As for Gaurav, after his exit from the show, he is yet to make an official announcement and also share what is his next project with his fans.

## Shahid Kapoor recalls living in 'rented houses' with single mom Neelima, was too 'proud' to ask dad Pankaj Kapur for help: 'She was struggling'

Actor Shahid Kapoor opened up about his middle-class upbringing, and said that he still feels like an 'outsider' in the film industry despite being the son of veteran actors Pankaj Kapur and Neelima Azeem. Shahid's parents separated when he was still a child, and he was raised by his mother. He said that while he had a 'great relationship' with his father, he felt too 'proud' to ask him for a leg-up in the film industry. In an interview, he was asked about taking the long road to success, and he said, "What option did I have? People don't understand..."

Opening up about his childhood in an interview with journalist Faye D'Souza, Shahid said, "I knew my dad and we had a good equation, but I was with my mother since I was three. When Ishaan was born, I was 14, and mom stopped working because she had to take care of him. She was 35-36 when Ishaan was born, and it isn't easy having a child at that age. Being a working woman with a 14-year-old son, being in Mumbai, it was her second marriage... There was a lot happening with her. It wasn't like she could make a call and get me work. She was trying to get back to work herself, and it wasn't easy. People just forget you. She was struggling to balance all those things, and we were living in rented houses."

He continued, "I didn't have a relationship with my father where I would allow myself to ask him... I had a great relationship with him, but I didn't want to ask... That's not how I wanted to do it. He was always there for advice and guidance, but I wanted to do it on my own. I was very proud. This was the only route for me."

Shahid said that it is his responsibility as an adult to identify the 'issues' he experienced as a child and to try and rectify them. "Whatever little I've understood of psychology or human behaviour, in my own journey, it goes back to your childhood. The adult version of you is able to logically resolve your issues. But it's the child who didn't have the analytical capability to fix yourself. That child still has issues, and you, as an adult, need to go back and fix his issues. And once those issues get fixed, things will change dramatically," he said. Describing himself as a 'unique specimen', Shahid continued, "I was always an outsider. I still don't feel like I'm completely on the inside. I'm a bit of a unique specimen... The first thing you want as an outsider is acceptance, and when you come from a middle-class background, I didn't have that kind of exposure to fashion, or makeup artists, to producers, directors, journalists. I knew



nothing about nothing. I just came in and my first film did really well." In his career, Shahid has appeared in major hits such as Jab We Met, Padmaavat, and Kabir Singh. He will next be seen in the film Deva. He has worked with his father on films such as Mausam, Jersey, and Shaandaar.

## Tollywood hero Varun Tej visits Kondagattu temple in Jagtial



Jagtial: Tollywood hero Varun Tej visited the Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy temple on Tuesday. He performed special pujas besides having darshan of the presiding deity. Temple priests blessed him besides giving prasadam and a portrait of Anjaneya Swamy. When he arrived at the shrine, priests welcomed him with a 'punakumbam'.

## Indian squash legend Raj Manchanda dies at 79 in New Delhi



national champion from 1977 to 1982 and won an unprecedented 11 titles for the Services. He also represented India in the Asian Championships and world-level tournaments during this period and made his presence felt through his patented use of the lob accompanied by a nagging accuracy of shots all around the court. He was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1983. He started to make his presence felt when he was captain with the Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Corps (EME) of the Indian Army, winning his first national title at the age of 33.

In 1981, at the Asian Championships, he faced the legendary Jahangir Khan who would go on to dominate the world stage in the 1980s. He captained the Indian team on several occasions, including when the country won silver at the 1981 Asian Team Championships in Karachi. His best individual performance was a fourth-place finish at the 1984 Asian Championships in Jordan where the team, led by him, won a bronze medal.

Legendary squash player Raj Manchanda, the Arjuna Award recipient and winner of six national titles, died at the age of 79 on Sunday, sources close to his family said. Manchanda, one of the most recognisable faces in the Indian squash fraternity, was the undisputed

## Sir Don Bradman's 'baggy green' cap gets auctioned for Rs 2.63 crore in Sydney

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Legendary Australia cricketer Sir Don Bradman's 'baggy green' cap was sold at an auction in Sydney at Bonhams auction house on Tuesday, December 3. The cap which was worn by Bradman during his last Test series in Australia played against India in 1947-48, was bought for a price of \$390,000 (Rs 2.14 crore). The fee was further increased to \$479,700 (Rs 2.63 crore) after buyer's premium was added. Bradman is considered as the greatest batter to have played the game having scored 6996 runs from 52 Test matches with 29 hundreds and 13 fifties. The legendary batter holds the record for most double hundreds in the longest format (12) and also the joint highest triple centuries (2). The auctioned cap was worn by the legendary batter during India's first tour to Australia after independence. Bradman was seen in imperious form during the series as he brought up his 100th first class hundred. The right-handed batter scored 715 runs from six innings at an average of 178.75 registering three centuries out of which one was converted into a double century. The cap is also the only known Baggy Green surviving from the series which was gifted by Bradman to the then Indian team manager who handed it to the wicket keeper on that tour. The cap was purchased by a collector decades later who loaned it to the Bradman museum. Legendary India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar also shared an incident when his club captain came to Australia and insisted on meeting Bradman and revealed how much is the legendary batter revered in India. Gavaskar shares how Bradman is revered in

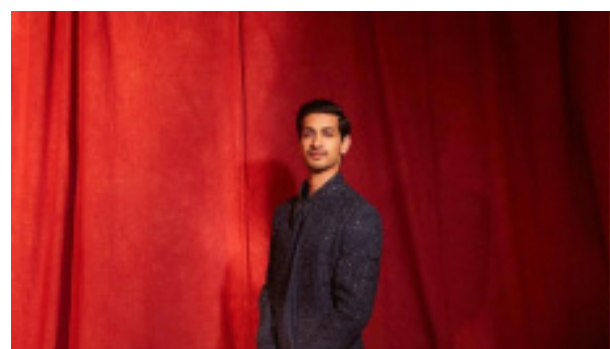


India. "Bradman has been an inspiration for everybody. And for those in India he was the ultimate cricketing god. (He) insisted on his host to take him to Adelaide because he said, 'How can I come to heaven and not meet god?' So he came here, met Sir Don, and I think that for him was the ultimate. That's how (Bradman) was revered in India, and continues to be revered in India. Honestly, getting the Australia cap from the greatest is something really special. He gave it to the wicket keeper, I believe, the wicket keeper on that tour, and it is a prized possession, it would be a prized possession for anybody," Gavaskar told 7NEWS. Bradman played his last Test against England in 1948 at the Oval and needed to score just four runs in his final Test innings to finish with a career average of 100. However, he was dismissed for a two-ball duck in his final outing and finished his career with an unprecedented average of 99.94.

## Who is Aryaman Birla? Ranji centurion who never played after 2019

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Aryaman Birla, son of industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla is in the news once again. The 27-year-old is being dubbed as the richest cricketer who retired at 22 years of age. Here's a look at the story of the Madhya Pradesh cricketer who took an indefinite break from the game in 2019 and took over a part of his father's business. Aryaman Birla, son of Kumar Mangalam Birla is in the news again. Aryaman is being dubbed as the richest cricketer who retired at the age of 22. Aryaman, who played for Madhya Pradesh in Ranji Trophy took an indefinite break from cricket citing mental health challenges. Here's a look at what his life has been like.



in good touch in 2019. In the first two outings, he has scored 51 against Tamil Nadu, and 12 and 103 not out against Bengal. Aryaman announced in December 2019, that he is taking an indefinite break from cricket, citing "severe anxiety related to the sport" as the primary reason. Aryaman released a statement on Instagram and said: "It has been a journey of hard work, dedication and immense courage to get to this point in my cricket career. I have been coping with severe anxiety related to the sport for a while now." "I have felt trapped. I have pushed myself through all the distress so far, but now I feel the need to put my mental health and wellbeing above else. So I have decided to take an undefined sabbatical from cricket," he added. "This phase has been difficult, but it has also helped me realise who my real friends and well-wishers are. I truly believe I will emerge from this phase even stronger than before," Aryaman wrote in his post. As of now, Aryaman currently posts regularly on Instagram. His posts include Birlas' business ventures and highlights of his personal life and family.

Aryaman made his debut in Ranji Trophy in 2017 for Madhya Pradesh. The batter shared a 72-run opening partnership in his very first innings Rajat Patidar while playing against Odisha. Aryaman's stokes rose when he was bought by Rajasthan Royals in 2018, for Rs 30 lakh. However, Aryaman, could not sustain his cricketing career. Since taking his indefinite break from cricket has been busy in his father's business. The Birlas are reportedly worth - Rs 2,35,200 crore and are one of the richest families in India.

**ARYAMAN'S MAIDEN RANJI HUNDRED** Aryaman Vikram Birla notched up his maiden first-class hundred in November 2018. Aryaman achieved the milestone on the fourth and final day on Thursday to help Madhya Pradesh earn one point after the Ranji Trophy match against Bengal ended in a draw at the Eden Gardens. Bengal got 3 points thanks to their 175-run first innings lead. Aryaman had made his debut in 2018 against Odisha in Indore scoring 16 and 6 in the two innings. Aryaman, then a 21-year-old, had looked

## Alastair Cook amazed by 'classy' Yashasvi Jaiswal sledging Starc in Perth Test

Yashasvi Jaiswal earned high praise from Alastair Cook for his remarkable 161-run knock in Perth, showcasing grit and audacity at just 22, even sledging Mitchell Starc during India's commanding Border-Gavaskar Trophy opener against Australia. Former England captain Alastair Cook lauded India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal for his stellar performance in the Perth Test against Australia and his audacious display of grit, both with the bat and in his verbal exchanges. At just 22, Jaiswal showcased remarkable poise and courage, even sledging veteran pacer Mitchell Starc by cheekily claiming he was bowling "too slow," a moment that became one of the highlights of India's commanding win in the first Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test.



Jaiswal's second-innings heroics came after a tough start, where he was dismissed for a duck by Starc in the first innings. In a stunning turnaround, Jaiswal delivered a sensational 161 off 297 balls, standing tall against Australia's formidable bowling attack on a challenging Perth surface. Speaking to TEN Sports, Cook highlighted the young batter's mental fortitude, describing his ability to shine under pressure and in hostile conditions as "classy", and that even seasoned players might shy away from. "And sledging Mitchell Starc, saying at a certain stage, I think he wasn't on 100, he wasn't on anything on a major score, but he's telling him you're bowling slow...and I've faced Mitchell Starc, and he certainly doesn't bowl slow. And if he was bowling slow, I'd keep my mouth shut and not wind him up,

but have the confidence to do that as a 22-year-old..." Cook said. "I think he scored the most runs has any Indian player up to after 15 Test matches at the top of the order, which I'll keep saying it, no one else believes me, it's the hardest place to bat. What a classy player he is," he added. India's victory in the Perth Test was a comprehensive team effort. After a disappointing first innings, where they were bowled out for just 150, India clawed back with stand-in captain Jasprit Bumrah leading the charge. Bumrah's scintillating 5/30 spell helped restrict Australia to 135, giving India a chance to set a commanding target. Jaiswal's brilliance was complemented by centuries from Virat Kohli and a gritty 77 from KL Rahul, which propelled India to a massive second-innings total and a target of 534 runs for the hosts.

## Marnus Labuschagne needs to be reminded he is a class act: Adam Gilchrist



GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Adam Gilchrist has expressed confidence in Marnus Labuschagne's ability to bounce back from his current batting slump. The Australian batter has struggled for runs in recent Tests, but Gilchrist believes he remains a class act. Adam Gilchrist has backed struggling Marnus Labuschagne to regain form amidst a poor run with the bat. Labuschagne, who has been a mainstay for Australia at No.3, has found runs hard to come by this year in Tests. In 6 matches so far, the Aussie batter has scored just 245 runs at an average of 24.5.

In the Perth Test, Labuschagne scored 2 off 52 balls and then 3 in the second innings to continue his barren run. This has raised questions about the batter's spot in the team, but he has received support from captain Pat Cummins

and others. Gilchrist, while talking to Nine's Wide World of Sports, said that Labuschagne needs to be reminded that he is a class act and the batter has got the game to tolerate and withstand everything that has been thrown at him. "I'm sure the people around him are already doing this but he needs to be reminded that he is a class act," Gilchrist said of Labuschagne. "He's got a game that has been able to tolerate and withstand everything that the cricketing world has presented, and he's dominated for a number of years." Gilchrist said that for Labuschagne it's all about not letting any self-doubt creep in and understanding that he has still got the skills. "Most players that have played long enough will have been in this situation at some point in time and it's about not letting any self-doubt creep in and understanding you don't lose that skill — you don't lose that edge — (and) certainly not in a short space of time." "Trust your training, get out there, see the ball and play it." Australia batters need to stay at the crease longer. Gilchrist also advised the Australian batters to stay at the crease for a long time to nullify the threat from the Indian bowlers. "Marnus had the onus to do that (stay at crease) and tried at good effect to nullify 50-odd deliveries. So, if you face an average of 50 deliveries every Test innings, you're probably going to be on the right side of the ledger more than you're on the wrong side of it," Gilchrist was quoted as saying by Nine's Wide World of Sports. "He just couldn't find a way to score and maybe that's what (the Australians) as a collective will look to try and do."

## Rohit Sharma trains under watchful eyes of Abhishek Nayar

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India captain Rohit Sharma trained under the watchful eyes of Abhishek Nayar in Adelaide. Sharma continued his struggle against balls pitched just outside off stump. India captain Rohit Sharma trained in Adelaide on Tuesday, 3 December. Sharma, who got out for just 3 runs in the pink ball warm-up game vs Australian PM XI, continued to struggle against ball pitched just outside the off stump. Abhishek Nayar kept a watch on the batter's foot movement and how he was playing throughout the session. Despite looking uncomfortable, Rohit asked pacers Arshdeep Singh and Yash Dayal to bowl at full tilt ahead of the pink ball Test. The last time India played a pink ball Test match in Australia, they were bundled out for just 36 runs. India however, come into the Test match with a resounding victory in the opening Test match at Perth Stadium. India hammered Australia by 295 runs in the opening Test match and are expected to be the favourites for this match as well, due to the presence of Jasprit Bumrah. However, it needs to be mentioned that Australia have won 11 out of their 12 pink ball Test matches, and have never lost a single Day-Night Test match at home.

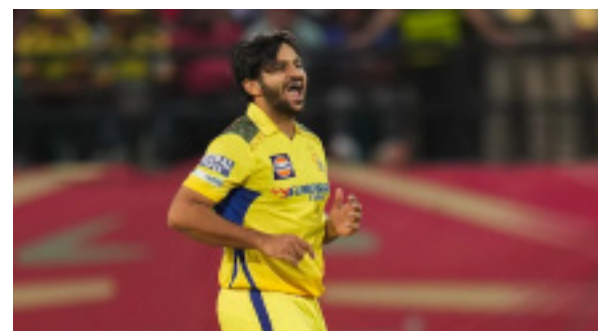


Rohit Bats at No.4 India captain Rohit Sharma sacrificed his opening spot for KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal in the pink ball warm-up game. Sharma came out to bat at No.4 for India but got out cheaply for just 3 runs off 11 balls. In that match, Sharma could resist the urge to drive a ball

## Shardul Thakur returns form with 4 wickets after most expensive T20 spell

GNS News Agency, Dec 5

Shardul Thakur roared back to form with a stunning four-wicket haul for Mumbai against Services, silencing critics after a tough week that saw him go unsold in the IPL auction and deliver a record-expensive spell in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. India pacer Shardul Thakur snapped straight back into form with a stunning four-wicket haul in Mumbai's clash against Services on December 3 in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, after having faced two big blows only days prior. The fiery spell marked a triumphant return to form for Thakur, who endured a challenging week that included going unsold in the IPL 2025 mega auction and bowling the most expensive spell in Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy history. Services, chasing 193 runs, were dealt a massive blow early in their innings as Thakur's searing pace and accuracy dismantled their top order. His spell of 4/25, along with a 3/40 spell from Shams Mulani were instrumental in tilting the match heavily in Mumbai's favor, and ultimately played one of the most pivotal roles in giving his side a 39-run win. The week began on a sour note for the 32-year-old all-rounder. Once a sought-after name in the IPL, having represented Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, and Delhi Capitals, Thakur was left without a bid during the IPL 2025 mega auction. Adding to his woes, he bowled a 1/69 spell against Kerala in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, setting the unwanted record for the most expensive spell in the tournament's history.



However, Thakur was determined to turn the tide. Facing Services, he was relentless with the ball, dismantling their top three batters within just two overs of his spell. His performance showcased his ability to rise above setbacks and deliver when it mattered the most. Mumbai's innings had already been bolstered by brilliant performances from Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube. Yadav smashed a fluent 70, while Dube remained unbeaten on 71, ensuring Mumbai set a daunting target of 193 runs. Thakur's devastating spell further cemented their dominance, leaving Services reeling and with little chance of recovery. While the IPL setback may have raised questions, his performance against Services answered them emphatically, reaffirming his value as a top-tier all-rounder in Indian cricket.

## MI's Suryakumar Yadav, CSK's Shivam Dube light up SMAT with blistering sixes

Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube shared a 130-run stand during Mumbai vs Services at the Sayed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. Their solid stand helped Mumbai post a challenging total of 192 runs on board. Star India batters Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube lit up the Sayed Mushtaq Ali Trophy tournament with their stunning batting display. In the match between Mumbai and Services at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad, Suryakumar and Dube shone for Mumbai. The T20 World Champion duo stitched a 130-run stand to help Mumbai post a challenging total of 192/4. Batting first, Mumbai lost Prithvi Shaw for a duck and skipper Shreyas Iyer and Ajinkya Rahane also managed to contribute only 20 and 22 runs respectively.

December 3, Tuesday. He returned to the field after taking a two-week break for a family wedding. Suryakumar is expected to play the remainder of the tournament for Mumbai and will also feature in the 50-over Vijay Hazare Trophy, starting December 21.

The par of Dube and Suryakumar came to Mumbai's rescue as they launched a barrage of boundaries and maximums. Suryakumar scored a 46-ball 70 and Dube struck 37-ball 71 at a staggering strike-rate of 191.89. Suryakumar was retained by Mumbai Indians for Rs 16.35 crore ahead of IPL 2025 mega auction. Meanwhile, Chennai Super Kings also retained Dube for Rs 12 crore. India's T20I captain Suryakumar was back in action for Mumbai in SMAT on

Shreyas Iyer, who was announced as Mumbai's captain for SMAT continued to lead the side despite Suryakumar, India's T20I captain's inclusion in the team. It was understood that Suryakumar was fine with Iyer leading the team and was comfortable to bat at any position for his team. Suryakumar recently led India to an emphatic 3-1 series win over South Africa at their home soil. Meanwhile, Dube, India's white-ball specialist, was not part of India's squad for the tour. Placed fourth in Group E, Mumbai have won two of their three games so far and have two league games left after Sunday, when they play against Nagaland. The ongoing SMAT has seen a number of high-profile names participate after the T20I tour of South Africa, such as Hardik Pandya, Iyer, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Yuzvendra Chahal, Varun Chakravarty, and others. Suryakumar had also played one round of the Ranji Trophy in October before leaving for South Africa.