

INDIAN CHRONICLE

7 December, 2024 | Saturday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:255

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Hyderabad girl Diya Loka wins The Diana Award for 2024

Hyderabad: Diya Loka, a passionate environmentalist and founder of E-Cycl, has been honoured with The Diana Award for 2024 which recognizes young people who demonstrate exceptional social action and humanitarian work, and is named in memory of Princess Diana. The award is supported by The Duke of Cambridge and The Duke of Sussex, and is considered one of the highest accolades a young person can receive. Diya (17) has dedicated herself to tackling e-waste, a significant environmental threat, by initiating local and global awareness drives. Starting at the age of 14, she founded E-Cycl, an initiative aimed at raising awareness and collecting electronic waste, particularly in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad hosts India's Premier Travel and Tourism Exhibition

Hyderabad: Hyderabad is hosting the India International Travel Mart (IITM) from December 6 to 8, bringing together key stakeholders from the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors.

Held at Hitec Exhibition Centre, this premier travel and tourism exhibition promises to showcase a diverse range of domestic and international destinations, services, and innovations. The event will be a platform for travel agents looking for partners from across different genres from religious travel, adventure, family holidays, Heritage and honeymoons or to even those.

Development of NE neglected by previous govt due to fewer votes, seats: PM Modi



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Asserting that previous governments weighed development to votes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday (December 6, 2024) said the progress of the northeast was not given much emphasis earlier due to fewer population and votes in the region. Inaugurating the Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav here to celebrate the vibrancy of the northeast, he said the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the first to create a dedicated ministry for the region and also earmarked 20% budget of every Ministry for its development. "In the last decade, we have seen a wonderful journey of the development of the northeast but it was not easy. We have taken every possible step to

connect the northeastern States with India's growth story.

"For a long time, we have seen how development was weighed against votes. Northeastern states had less votes and low seats so previous governments did not pay attention to the development of the region," he said. Mr. Modi said he strongly believes that the coming days are of eastern India and the northeast. Like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru, cities of the region such as Guwahati, Shillong, Imphal, Itanagar and Aizawl will be new beacons of growth, the Prime Minister said. With its vibrant culture and dynamic people, the northeast holds immense potential to propel India's growth, he said. The Prime Minister said during the last decade his government tried to reduce the feeling among people about the gap of Delhi and 'Dil' with the northeast. Union Ministers made 700 visits to the northeast in the last decade and his government was connecting the region with the trinity of emotion, economy and ecology, he said.

The first-ever Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav is being celebrated from December 6 to 8 at the Bharat Mandapam here. This festival aims to showcase the beauty, diversity, and promise of the eight States of northeastern States—Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim. Together they are known as the 'Ashtalakshmi'.

CM Revanth Reddy Proposes Transgenders as Traffic Assistants



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Hyderabad: Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced initiatives to address the growing challenges of pollution and traffic congestion in the city. Highlighting

the urgency of the situation, he revealed innovative measures, including the appointment of transgenders as traffic assistants, to ensure smoother traffic management and promote inclusivity in public services. "We have recommended utilizing transgenders as traffic assistants to tackle the city's traffic woes effectively. Today, appointments have been given to 50 transgenders for this role," said the Chief Minister. This step is expected to enhance workforce diversity while addressing critical urban challenges. CM Revanth Reddy stated that the government has decided to provide ₹2 crore compensation to the families of IPS officers who lose their lives in the line of duty. This move underscores the government's commitment to supporting the families of officers who make the ultimate sacrifice. The initiatives reflect the government's dual approach of addressing urban problems and ensuring the welfare of public servants, aiming to create a more inclusive and secure society.

Bhatti triggers doubts on Davos claims by Revanth Reddy with statement on MoUs

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Hyderabad: Bringing the State's pacts with the Adani Group signed at Davos under a shadow of doubt, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday said the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed by the State government with different companies at Davos were only Expression of Interests (EOIs). In the process, he has also triggered doubts over Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's claims of garnering investments worth over Rs.40,000 crore. Speaking at a press conference here, Bhatti Vikramarka said the MoUs were only about willingness of companies evincing interest to invest in the State. Once, the new Energy Policy of the State was declared, open tenders would be called, he said in reply to a question on whether the State government would reconsider the agreements signed with Adani Group for 1350 MW pumped storage with an investment of Rs.5,000 crore.

Irrespective of the MoUs signed, the companies would have to file their bids in the tenders. Just because MoUs were signed, nothing would be offered to a company. The MoU would give an idea that a company was keen on investing in the State and agreement was not a binding factor on the government, he said. "Open tenders will be called and whichever companies files bids as per the State benefits, will get the works," Bhatti Vikramarka said. The Deputy



Chief Minister said that a new Energy Policy would be announced shortly. This would help in transforming Telangana into a power surplus State. Apart from laying focus on generating 20,000 MW clean and green energy by 2030, the policy would also aid in selling surplus power to other States, he said. Skipping a query on farmers, who have crop loans of over Rs.2 lakh, the Deputy Chief Minister said the State government had completed loan waiver scheme by spending over Rs.20,000 crore. As promised, the government waived loans of upto Rs.2 lakh, he said, assuring that Rythu Bharosa would be extended to farmers after Sankranti.

Yadadri Thermal Power Station: KCR's another indelible signature on Telangana, says KTR



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Hyderabad: With the 4,000 MW Yadadri Thermal Power Station (YTPS) all set to begin operations on Saturday, marking a milestone in the State's journey toward energy independence, BRS working president KT Rama Rao termed the project a testament to party president and former

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's visionary leadership and determination. In a statement, Rama Rao credited Chandrashekhara Rao's foresight for transforming Telangana from a State plagued by power shortages into one capable of delivering uninterrupted electricity to all sectors. "YTPS is another indelible signature of Chandrashekhara Rao on the history of Telangana. Chandrashekhara Rao's vision and efforts behind this power plant will be remembered for a long time by the people of Telangana," he said. With a total capacity of 4,000 MW (5x800 MW), YTPS is the largest thermal power plant operated by a State government in independent India. The project construction was awarded to Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) at a cost of Rs.20,400 crore, the largest order ever given to a public sector undertaking in the history of the Indian power sector. The BRS working president said with the commissioning of YTPS, the installed power capacity of Telangana which was only 7,778 MW in 2014, grew to nearly 20,000 MW within a decade. "This success story is unparalleled in the country's history," he remarked.

Land sharks grab over 800 acres of temple lands in erstwhile Karimnagar

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Karimnagar: Landgrabbers have not left even temple lands alone in erstwhile Karimnagar district, with Endowment department statistics revealing that 818 acres owned by various temples were encroached here. Official sources said the actual figure could go well above 1500 acres. Protection of temple lands has become difficult following the change of officials as well as lack of clarity about the location of temple lands in villages. Taking advantage of this, owners of lands located adjacent to the temple lands are allegedly occupying endowment land by erasing boundaries. Later, they are approaching courts claiming ownership of the land. As a result, the Endowment department is losing little by little land every year. Recently, the court gave a judgment in favour of the Endowment department in connection with the Anantha Padmanabha Swamy temple land located besides the Rajiv Rahadri near Nustulapur of Thimmapur mandal. The temple had 10.10 acres of land in two survey numbers. Some persons tried to encroach the land, after which local youth foiled their attempt by approaching the court, which instructed the department to fix boundaries of the land.

Meanwhile, 1.14 acres of land belonging Hanuman temple in Huzurabad, Sircilla Venkateshwara Swamy



temple (1.15 acres), Peddapalli Goshala (1.13), Peddapalli Sitarama Swamy temple (8.32), Jagtial Rajarajeshwara Swamy temple (2.04), Korutla Venkateswara Swamy (20 guntas), Jagtial Rama Mandir land (19 guntas), Peddapalli Narasimha Swamy (13.20), and two acres of the Kondagattu temple among others have been encroached. It has become difficult for the Endowment department to reclaim the land with all the occupiers approaching courts. The department is now planning a survey of its lands with the help of the Revenue department.

Friday prayers held peacefully in Sambhal amid tight security

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Heavy security deployment was mounted in Sambhal on Friday (December 6, 2024) in light of Friday prayers and the Babri demolition anniversary, with clerics appealing to people to offer prayers in their local mosques and maintain peace in the area. District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya told reporters that the prayers went off peacefully at the Shahi Jama Masjid with 600 people in attendance. Sambhal witnessed violence on November 24 during a court-ordered survey of the Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid in the Kot Garvi area of the city. Four people were killed and several were injured in the confrontation. The area has remained tense since then. On Thursday (December 5, 2024), police in Sambhal took out a flag march led by DIG Muniraj G, District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya and Superintendent

of Police Krishan Kumar Bishnoi. "Precautionary steps include the deployment of additional civic forces across the division, extensive barricading at key locations and division of Sambhal into sectors for better monitoring," Muniraj told reporters Thursday (December 5, 2024) night. Mr. Pensiya said 30 magistrates have been deployed in Sambhal, a three-layer security system has been put in place and drones used for monitoring. "We have also formed a new peace committee and will establish similar committees in every ward. Last time, 700-800 people offered prayers at Shahi Jama Masjid and this time we have appealed to people to offer prayers only at their regular mosques," he had said. On Friday, the Samajwadi Party's Sambhal MP Zia ur Rehman's father Mamlukur Rehman Barq told reporters after offering namaz at Shahi Jama Masjid, that the Friday prayers were held peacefully. The local MP is one of the accused in the November 24 violence case.

DGCA tells Delhi High Court: New pilot duty and rest hours can be implemented from July 2025

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) informed Delhi High Court on Friday (December 6, 2024) that the new norms that provide enhanced weekly rest for pilots and reduced night time flying to help them combat rising fatigue levels could only be implemented from July 2025 in a phased manner. The implementation of the revised rules governing duty and rest hours for pilots has already been delayed by over six months.

The rules notified by the DGCA in January 2024 increased weekly rest for pilots from 36 hours to 48 hours as well as reduced their night-time flying. They were to be implemented from June 2024, but following opposition from airlines the regulator put these rules into abeyance on March 26. On Friday (December 6, 2024), while hearing a writ petition filed by the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP), the Indian Pilots' Guild, and the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association, Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju asked the DGCA to hold another round of meeting with Air India and pilot bodies on December 18 to reach a consensus on the timeline of implementation. Two such mediation meetings have already taken place where Air India is learnt to have pressed for wider industry consultation as well as indicated that the new norms could result in reduced salaries for narrow-body pilots because of a reduction in flying hours. The next date of hearing on the matter is on January 23. "It is the considered view of the regulator, along with the ministry, that to to make it



seamless and to address operational constraints, the readiness of the pilots, training and onboarding [of new pilots], software integration will require a phased implementation," the Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati appearing on behalf of the DGCA said. The counsel for the DGCA said interests on all sides needed to be balanced, including those of the passengers and the aviation sector. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), a grouping of domestic airlines, had opposed the six month time frame given to them for implementation of the new norms from June 2024 as "inadequate". It warned that the revised rest requirements would require airlines to recruit "10% to 20%" more pilots. Implementing the rules in a hurry would result in flight cancellations as well as result in a hike in airfares, the FIA had said. The pilot bodies, including the Federation of Indian Pilots, maintain that the health and safety of the pilots should not become a casualty of commercial benefit of the airlines.

Farmers suspend 'Delhi chalo' march as police fire tear gas shells near Shambhu border

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Protesting farmers on Friday (December 6, 2024) suspended for the day their foot march to Delhi to press for various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP, after some of them suffered injuries due to tear gas shells at the Punjab-Haryana border. Earlier in the day, a 'jatha' of 101 farmers began to march towards the national capital from their protest site at the Shambhu border but was stopped a few metres away by multilayered barricading erected by Haryana security personnel. As the group reached the barricades, security personnel lobbed multiple tear gas shells to disperse the protesting farmers and force them to retreat to their protest site. Covering their eyes and mouths, several protesting farmers rushed to cover the tear gas shells with wet jute bags to counter the smoke. Many

of them were seen uprooting iron nails and barbed wire installed on the road to deter their march. Chanting 'Satnam Waheguru' and holding their union flags, several farmers of the 'jatha' crossed the initial layer of barricades easily but could not proceed further. A few of them were seen pushing an iron mesh put up by security personnel down the bridge constructed over the Ghaggar River. One of the protesters climbed the roof of a tin shade where security forces had been stationed. He was forced to climb down. Water cannon vehicles have also been deployed at the Shambhu border point. The Haryana Police asked the farmers not to proceed further, citing a prohibitory order clamped by the Ambala district administration under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS) that prohibits the assembly of five or more people.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Civil society leads

THE Buddha Nullah in Ludhiana, once a lifeline for Punjab, has deteriorated into a toxic drain. Years of unchecked industrial effluents, untreated sewage and lax governance have turned this tributary of the Sutlej river into a health hazard. Despite numerous court orders and a commitment of Rs 840 crore for its rejuvenation, the government's efforts remain largely ineffective, leaving civil society no choice but to act. The Kale Pani Da Morcha, representing frustrated citizens, on Tuesday staged protests targeting dyeing units discharging pollutants. Their actions spotlight the blatant non-compliance by three Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs), which continue to release harmful waste despite orders for zero liquid discharge. The Punjab Pollution Control Board and civic authorities have been slow in enforcing penalties or upgrading infrastructure, further eroding public trust.

Adding to the chaos is the confrontation between activists and industrial workers, highlighting the socio-economic complexities of environmental regulation. Thousands of livelihoods depend on these industries, but public health cannot be the collateral damage. The authorities must ensure that economic growth aligns with sustainable practices.

The establishment of a joint task force by the Centre and the Punjab Government is a positive, though belated, step. Immediate priorities should include upgrading CETPs, expediting the Gaughat pumping station and sealing all 20 pollution points identified in recent surveys. A comprehensive action plan involving stringent monitoring and community participation is critical. Residents of Ludhiana and downstream regions continue to suffer from the polluted water as their health and farming are affected. The time for symbolic protests has passed; it is now imperative for all stakeholders — government, industries and civil society — to unite for tangible action.

Activists launch online campaign against Bengaluru's Tunnel Road, Sky-Deck projects

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Civic activists and urban planners, in a growing online petition campaign, have urged the Karnataka government to reconsider its decision on two high-cost infrastructure projects—the Bengaluru Tunnel Road and the proposed Sky-Deck tower. According to the activists and experts, the two ambitious projects of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar are misplaced priorities amidst pressing social and environmental concerns. The Tunnel Road, a six-lane underground corridor spanning 18 kilometres from Hebbal to the Central Silk Board junction, is estimated to cost Rs 16,500 crore, while the Sky-Deck, a 250-meter-high tower touted as South Asia's tallest, has a price tag of Rs 500 crore. Together, along with other proposed projects like double-decker flyovers and expressways, the initiatives are expected to cost over Rs 50,000 crore, sparking intense criticism from civic groups and environmental activists. The petitioners have made a direct appeal to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, urging him to prioritise projects that benefit all citizens rather than a select few. "Bengaluru and Karnataka deserve sustainable, inclusive development—not flashy but ineffective infrastructure that widens inequities," the petition reads. Kathyayini Chamaraj, executive trustee of CIVIC Bangalore who has spearheaded the online campaign, argues that the projects cater primarily to the city's 23 lakh private car owners, representing a mere 2.8 per cent of Karnataka's 7 crore population. "Spending Rs 16,500 crore to serve a minority when basic needs like healthcare, education, and water security remain underfunded is an injustice," reads the petition.

It highlights disparities in resource allocation, pointing out that the backward Kalyana Karnataka region receives only Rs 3,000 crore annually, much of which remains underutilised. The petition also raises concerns over bypassing statutory planning processes, including the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA). Constituted in December 2022 to oversee transport-related projects, BMLTA has reportedly been sidelined, with no public consultations or environmental and social impact assessments conducted for these projects. "This unilateral decision undermines the Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP), which prioritises sustainable public transport solutions," the campaign alleges. Geological and environmental concerns The campaign has also raised alarms over the feasibility of the tunnel road, citing Bengaluru's challenging geology of hard rocks, fissures, and fluctuating water tables. The project risks structural instability, groundwater disruptions, and increased sinkholes, according to geologists. Additionally, the petition also highlights that the projects appear to conflict with the recently launched Bengaluru Climate Action Plan (BCAP) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which advocate for reducing car dependency and environmental degradation. The petition suggests reallocating funds to address Bengaluru's pressing challenges and improve quality of life. The petition suggests to build tunnels to store rainwater, address water scarcity and urban flooding, to develop smaller cities to curb migration to Bengaluru, easing urban congestion, to double current allocations to improve free health care and education for all Kannadigas and to expand public transport usage to 75 per cent by investing in bus fleets, suburban rail, and walkable infrastructure. Call for sustainable mobility The petition emphasizes reducing private vehicle dependency through congestion taxes, graded parking fees, and restrictions on second and third car purchases without parking facilities. It calls for a shift to "faster, better, cheaper, safer, and tried-and-tested" solutions like reliable bus services, dedicated bus rapid transit systems (BRTS), and cycle roads. Vishwanath S, director of Biome Environmental Solutions and a civil engineer said, "The construction of the tunnel road would have far reaching environmental implications with the major one being groundwater depletion. Bengaluru is already grappling with a water supply crisis and if at all the tunnel roads are constructed, the groundwater depletion would be significant. The tunnel road construction will impact the aquifer, which recharges borewells and groundwater, thus disrupting the overall groundwater supply." According to Professor Ashish Verma, department of civil engineering at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, it is insane to even think about building a tunnel road for vehicles on a corridor where there is already an upcoming Metro project.

'Prejudicial, politically motivated': Siddaramaiah slams ED's letter to Lokayukta on Muda case



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar during an event to raise awareness about disability on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Kanteerava stadium, in Bengaluru, on Tuesday (PTI file) Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah (left) and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar during an event to raise awareness about disability on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Kanteerava stadium, in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday slammed the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) letter to the Lokayukta police probing the alleged Mysore Urban Development Authority (Muda) scam as "prejudicial" and "politically motivated".

"We have appealed the single-bench judgment (of the Karnataka High Court), which is coming up for hearing tomorrow. If they (ED) have sent the letter a day before that, what does it mean?" he asked. Siddaramaiah was referring

'You get used to jail' – after decades in prison, 104-year-old West Bengal man walks out



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Rashik Chandra Mondol, 104, doesn't remember why he went to jail 36 years ago. Having been released on parole Monday, this resident of Paschim Narayanpur village in Manikchowk block in Malda district, who was accused of murdering his brother over a property dispute, is now back home. By the time he walked out, he'd already spent nearly a third of his long life in prison. "I'm missing jail, but now I'm happy," he tells The Indian Express. "I had rotikari last night and slept well. Today, I had muri (rice crisps) for breakfast and macher jhol (fish curry and rice) for lunch." On November 29, a Supreme Court Division Bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjeev Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar ordered Rashik's release on parole. The order came 24 years after he was first convicted by a lower court for the 1988 murder of his brother Suresh Mondol over a property dispute.

By the time the order came, he had already spent 10

to the appeal filed against the Karnataka High Court judgment that had upheld the sanction for prosecution granted by the governor against him. Siddaramaiah contended that the ED had written the letter to "influence" the court. "The Lokayukta inquiry is under progress... who have to complete the enquiry and submit a report. They (ED) have done this to influence them also. This (letter) is to make (the court hearing) prejudicial, and is politically motivated," Siddaramaiah said.

The letter by ED, Bengaluru, to the Additional Director General of Police, Police Wing, Lokayukta, had alleged violation of guidelines, forgery and undue influence in the grant of alternative sites to Siddaramaiah's wife B M Parvathi. While the ED is probing alleged money laundering in connection with the case, the Lokayukta police were looking into the alleged irregularities in the allocation of the sites to Parvathi. "The ED, first of all, has no powers to probe this case. Yet, they are doing it. The governor has asked that the case be probed by the Lokayukta. The district court has sought an investigation report by December 24. When there is an investigation, what is the intention behind the letter? Is it not deliberate?" he said, urging the ED to file a separate report on their probe. "They may share information (with Lokayukta). But, does that mean that they should write a letter and release it to the media," he said. In the letter, the ED had alleged irregularities in the allocation of sites to Parvathi and said that there were a total of 1,095 sites which were allotted illegally. The central agency had said that it found evidence against one of Siddaramaiah's personal assistants, S G Dinesh Kumar, who allegedly wielded undue influence in the allocation of alternative sites to the chief minister's wife.

As IT sector thrives, Pune grapples with e-waste pile-up: rules remain on paper as 90% of recycling done through informal channels



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Pune, a vibrant city known for its thriving IT sector, has experienced remarkable growth and transformation over the past decade. However, this rapid development has brought to light a significant challenge: the management of e-waste. With rapid urbanisation and the increasing use of technology, Pune generates over 20,000 metric tonnes of e-waste each year. However, the city's collection rate for e-waste is only around 20 per cent, which is significantly below the national target of 70 per cent. Despite introducing policies such as the E-Waste (Management) Second Amendment Rules, 2023, there remains a considerable gap between the amount of e-waste generated and its proper management.

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has partnered with various NGOs and organisations to address the challenge of e-waste management. In 2024, the PMC launched the PEHEL 2024 initiative, which established approximately 400 collection centres across different areas of Pune, including Aundh, Baner, Kothrud, and Hadapsar. This campaign received support from organisations such as the Adar Poonawalla Foundation and Poornam Ecovision to promote sustainable practices in e-waste management. "We as an organisation are concerned with collecting e-waste and handing it over to the authorised recyclers. Currently, over 90 per cent of e-waste in Pune is being treated through informal channels, primarily due to a lack of awareness and inadequate infrastructure for proper disposal and treatment. The problem of infrastructure is so significant that the recyclers can only focus on the industrial sector, leaving the commercial and residential sectors underserved due to their limited capacity to accommodate all the waste," said Rajesh Manerikar, CEO of Poornam Ecovision.

Pune has only 35 government-authorized e-waste recyclers, a very low number, especially given the city's increasing volume of e-waste. "The infrastructure of e-waste

years in jail. Rashik is fuzzy on the details of the killing as well as the property dispute. His son Uttam Mandal, who accompanied his father back home Tuesday, claims Rashik's memory "falters sometimes". According to the family, Rashik was born in 1920 and owned a few bighas of land. Apart from Uttam, he has three more sons (elder son passed away few years back) The FIR registered in 1988 in the murder case names 18 people — including Rashik. In 1998, a court in Malda sentenced Rashid and one other person to life imprisonment. He was 68 then. In 2018, Rashik appealed the sentence in Calcutta High Court, which turned it down. He then approached the Supreme Court, where it met a similar fate. In 2020, Rashik, then 99, once again appealed to the Supreme Court for release, citing his age and health. In 2021, the court asked the West Bengal government to submit a report on the health status of Rashik. In its report, the state government said Rashik was "mentally fine and agile" but the Supreme Court eventually ordered his release. For Rashik's family, the parole order comes after years of court appeals and lakhs of rupees in lawyer fees. By the time he was released, his co-convict in the case, Jiten Tanti, who was also serving a life term, had already passed away while out on parole. "My father is 103 years now and in three months, he'll be 104," says Uttam, who is a daily-wage labourer. "He can barely walk. Whatever their crime, people who are so old shouldn't be kept behind bars. "The family, including Rashik's wife Meena (85), now plans to celebrate his birthday. And although all Rashik wants to do is tend to his garden, that must wait: first he must attend to the many village residents that are thronging their house to meet him. "I never expected to return but here I am," he says. "So many years inside jail, I got used to it. I will miss it."

AAP MLA Naresh Balyan will be arrested in MCOCA case: Delhi Police to court



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Delhi Police informed a court on Wednesday they would arrest Aam Aadmi Party MLA Naresh Balyan, who is already in police custody in an extortion case, in a case booked under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA). "We will be arresting Naresh Balyan in a different MCOCA FIR. We will be arresting him right now," Special Public Prosecutor Akhand Pratap Singh submitted before the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Paras Dalal. On Tuesday the court extended by a day Balyan's police custody in the extortion case registered against him last year. The Uttam Nagar MLA filed a bail petition in the extortion case on the same day. Balyan was arrested on November 30, hours after the BJP publicly played an audio clip of what it claimed was a conversation between Balyan and a gangster. The case is built on the complaint of Gurcharan, a resident of Mohan Garden, West Delhi, who alleged in July 2023 that he had received an extortion call from gangster Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu demanding Rs 1 crore. Gurcharan also said he had been threatened with "dire consequences" if he failed to pay the amount. After a Hindi news channel aired alleged recordings of a phone call between Balyan and the gangster, the police questioned him and arrested him shortly afterwards.

As IRCC emails spark concern among students in Canada, Punjab education consultants weigh in: 'Might feel like harassment...but they are not'

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Education consultants in Punjab are reporting getting calls from panicky Indian students who have received emails from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) highlighting issues related to their study permits or education records — such as marks and attendance — even if their visas are valid for up to two more years. The emails are part of a government initiative to enforce stricter compliance measures on designated learning institutions (DLIs) and students through an intensified audit system aimed at ensuring adherence to immigration laws and academic integrity.

"The emails serve as formal inquiries, requiring students to respond with evidence to justify their academic and immigration status. Failure to respond promptly or adequately is treated as non-compliance, which can result in the revocation of study permits and potential deportation," a student who received such a mail but did not wish to be named said. He claimed that several of his friends also received such emails. According to education consultants, the students receiving these emails typically include those who changed their institution or course without informing the IRCC. Changing DLIs is permitted in Canada but it must be reported to IRCC. Students with poor academic performance — students with low attendance, those who fail their exams, or those who have been rusticated by their colleges — and dropouts are also likely to get such emails, they added. "In the past, some Canadian education agents exploited the flexibility of changing DLIs. For instance, during the September 2023 intake, approximately 100 students linked to Pinnacle Education changed their DLIs after arriving in Canada. This practice allowed students to avoid daily classes and focus more on work, with some colleges reportedly facilitating such behaviour," Tirath Singh of Jalandhar-based Pinnacle Education, which facilitates study opportunities in Canada, told "However, Canada has now tightened its regulations. It is mandatory to obtain a fresh study permit when changing DLIs. This measure aims to curb the misuse of study permits and ensure that students genuinely prioritise their education," he added. "The Canadian government has started auditing DLIs twice a year, closely examining their operations and student records," said Tirath, adding that this move comes in response to growing concerns about certain colleges admitting international students despite their poor academic performance.

"DLIs are now required to submit detailed reports on their students, including attendance, academic progress, and compliance with study permit conditions. Institutions that fail to comply face serious consequences, including the potential cancellation of their licences," he added. Singh explained that students who change their DLIs must now inform IRCC about the change. If a student fails to do so, their previous DLI will notify the government that the student is no longer enrolled with them. While changing DLIs is permitted in Canada, students are now required to obtain a fresh study permit for the new institution. "We have been receiving a large number of calls and emails from students, including some who went through us but changed their DLIs after arriving in Canada. They are seeking guidance on how to proceed with applying for a new study permit," said Tirath. "I have already handled two cases where the students' situations were genuine, and I am hopeful they will receive their new study permits soon." Those who are not serious about their studies and have not changed their DLIs are also being asked to explain their education status, Tirath said. "We are worried as these stricter measures mean heightened pressure to comply with academic and immigration rules. Many of us are now realising that ignorance or deliberate evasion—such as skipping classes or failing to inform IRCC about DLI changes—could jeopardise our future in Canada," said another student. "However, we have been advised not to panic. Even if we changed the DLI without informing the government, we should not worry if we are genuinely pursuing our studies at a new institution and maintaining good academic records," said another student, who went to study in Canada through a Jalandhar-based education consultant. Some students mistakenly believe they can ignore the communications, unaware that failing to respond is treated as an admission of guilt, Gurpal Singh, a Jalandhar-based consultant, said.

NIA gets 7-day custody of accused extradited from Rwanda in Bengaluru prison radicalisation case



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

The NIA has been granted seven days' custody of Salman Rehman Khan, an accused in a Bengaluru prison radicalisation case who was deported from Rwanda. He was allegedly indoctrinated to take up unlawful activities while incarcerated in a Pocco case. A special court for terrorism cases, which initially sent Salman Khan, 29, to jail after he was presented in court following his extradition from Rwanda, subsequently handed his custody from December 3 to 9 to the NIA on a remand plea.

Salman Khan was extradited from Rwanda on November 28 through the efforts of the NIA, the CBI's Global Operations Centre, and Interpol's National Central Bureau. Salman Khan is accused number eight in a prison radicalisation case from July 2023, originally registered by the Bengaluru Central Crime Branch before it was taken over by the NIA in October 2023. The NIA filed a chargesheet in February, naming eight persons as accused, including Salman Khan and a key figure in the 2008 serial blasts case in Bengaluru, the LeT-linked Tadiyandave Nasir.

The LeT man, incarcerated since 2009 in the serial blasts case, is alleged to have radicalised several Muslim youths in the Bengaluru central prison to take up terrorism. Salman Khan was housed there from 2018 to 2022 in a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act case. Salman Khan was arrested in 2018 as a 23-year-old by the Bengaluru police in connection with a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, following a complaint by the father of a 16-year-old girl from his neighbourhood. He was acquitted on August 11, 2022, after the victim reportedly turned hostile. Salman Khan later moved to Rwanda but was allegedly in contact with other indoctrinated youths, including several arrested in 2017 for the murder of a businessman. "Part of a terror radicalisation and recruitment case of Bengaluru Central Prison, Salman was taken into custody by the NIA, with the assistance of the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), Interpol, and NCBS, on November 27, 2024, and brought to India this morning," the NIA said in an official statement on November 28 following the extradition. Salman Khan allegedly facilitated the collection of explosives for other terror accused after being radicalised and recruited during his incarceration by Nasir, a life convict, the NIA said.

"Nasir had orchestrated the radicalisation and subsequent criminal activities, including plans to facilitate his own escape en route to the court from the prison and a conspiracy to further the operations of the proscribed terrorist organisation LeT," the NIA stated. Salman Khan told the special court on November 28 that he was taken into cus-

tody by the NIA in Rwanda between 7 am and 8 am on November 27 and brought to Mumbai around 4 am on November 28. He was initially remanded to 14 days' judicial custody and his passport impounded. 2017 murder of Bengaluru businessman Salman Khan is the second of three missing former undertrial prisoners to be arrested in recent months in India in connection with the prison radicalisation plot allegedly involving the LeT and ISI-linked prisoners at the Bengaluru central jail.

The Special Cell of Delhi Police arrested a missing suspect, Vikram Kumar alias Mohammed Usman, 24, a resident of Bengaluru, on March 18 over an alleged ISI-inspired plot to carry out attacks during the Lok Sabha polls in April-May 2024. Usman has now been identified as an accused in the 2017 murder of a businessman in Bengaluru. He was also allegedly influenced by T Nasir during the 2018-19 period following his incarceration for the murder in R T Nagar in 2017. The person named by the Special Cell as the alleged handler of Usman is Junaid Ahmed, 29, a still missing suspect in the prison radicalisation case, who also came under the influence of Nasir while in the prison in the 2017 murder case along with Usman and others. Usman came in touch with several people jailed in terrorism cases, including Nasir, Munaf, Aasif Bhai and others, "who inspired him to join them and they all motivated him to convert his religion and he finally converted to the Muslim religion and he changed his name to Mohd Usman," according to court documents from Delhi. The investigation in Delhi has revealed that Junaid Ahmed, the missing link in the NIA's prison radicalisation case in Bengaluru and the second key accused in the case, after Nasir, sent Usman Rs 80,000 through contacts in Begu Sarai, Bihar, which Usman allegedly used on the directions of Ahmed to procure arms and ammunition from Munger in the eastern state. According to the NIA's investigations in Bengaluru, Salman Khan and Usman "arranged arms, ammunition, hand grenades, and walkie-talkies" at the behest of Nasir and the missing Junaid Ahmed, which were subsequently hidden away.

Vagamon terror camp case T Nasir, the alleged LeT man, has been incarcerated since 2009 in the Bengaluru central prison in connection with the 2008 Bengaluru serial blasts. He is also among 18 members of the banned Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) convicted for seven years in 2018 by an NIA court in Kerala for being part of a terror training camp at Vagamon in 2007. On July 18, 2023, shortly after receiving information from a central agency, the Bengaluru Central Crime Branch police arrested five people with a history of crime for the alleged possession of seven country-made pistols, 45 live bullets, and for allegedly planning some form of terror attack in the future after being influenced by Nasir. Investigations of the communication and electronic devices seized from the accused revealed the transfer of funds from abroad to members of the arrested group in Bengaluru. The initial Bengaluru investigation indicated that Nasir, who had been in prison for over 13 years, radicalised a few members of a group of 20 men who were lodged in the Bengaluru central prison between 2018 and 2019 over the murder of a businessman in October 2017. The police alleged that Nasir inspired Junaid Ahmed, 29, to take up the cause of his religion and facilitated the creation of a module. Ahmed left the country for Dubai around 2021 and is reported as being absconding by investigating agencies.

Delhi BJP leader and prominent Jatav face Pravesh Ratn joins AAP

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Bharatiya Janata Party leader Pravesh Ratn, who had contested the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections from Patel Nagar (Central) against AAP's former minister Raj Kumar Anand, officially joined the Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday. This marks the eighth major induction for AAP this year as it strengthens its roster ahead of the Assembly elections likely to be held early in 2025. Ratn, a prominent face of the Jatav community, has been associated with the BJP for 20 years and held leadership roles in its Yuva Morcha. During the 2020 elections, he secured the second-highest vote share in Patel Nagar with 35 per cent, while the seat was won by AAP's Anand. However, Anand later resigned and joined the Bahujan Samaj Party before the Lok Sabha polls, leaving the seat open for a reshuffle.

AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak introduced Ratn, emphasizing his influence within the Jatav community. "Today, we have a new person joining the Aam Aadmi Party government. Pravesh Ratn... is a big face of the Jatav community in Delhi," Pathak said. Former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia praised AAP's governance and its impact on marginalised communities. "Under the guidance of Arvind Kejriwal, our government has worked especially for the Jatav



and Dalit communities. Their way of living has improved, and their families have benefitted immensely," he said. Ratn credited Kejriwal's leadership and policies to his decision to switch sides. "Kejriwal ji has given Delhi everything it had never received before. My community loves him for a reason. The freebies that he provides have helped lower-income groups save their salaries," he said. Ratn further said that he would work for the welfare of marginalised groups, especially the Jatav community. "A person will go wherever he gets love," he added, claiming that he was being ignored by the BJP.

'Drop charges against Udhayanidhi's wife and ex-DMK leader': Mangaluru airport receives threat email



An email was sent to the Mangaluru International Airport recently threatening an explosion on the premises. According to officials, the mail was received on November 30 at around 10 am from an ID "Akram Vaikar" claiming a bomb had been planted at the airport. They said CISF personnel and airport staff conducted an extensive search across the premises, and that no explosives were found. A case was filed at the Bajpe Police Station, and an investigation was launched, they added. The email reportedly sought the withdrawal of charges against expelled DMK leader Jaffer Sadiq, who was arrested for his alleged involvement in an international drugs trafficking nexus, and Kiruthiga Udhayanidhi, film producer and the wife of Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Min-

ister Udhayanidhi Stalin. It also demanded the release of S Maran, the leader of the Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA), currently in Trichy Central Jail. In 2019, Maran was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment in connection with the Andimadam Police Station attack that took place in 1997. Authorities noted similarities with a prior bomb threat on October 25 targeting three Tirupati hotels, which also referred to Sadiq and Kiruthiga Udhayanidhi. The recurrence of Tamil Nadu-related demands has led investigators to suspect connections to residents of that state.

Azim Premji University opens admissions for Postgraduate Diploma in Education

Hyderabad: Azim Premji University is inviting applications for Postgraduate Diploma programmes in Education to be offered at its Bengaluru campus. The programmes offered are Postgraduate Diploma in Education - Early Childhood Education, Inclusive Education and Teaching children with Learning Disabilities. The one-year part-time programmes offer a balanced mix of theory and practice in the education domain and will be offered in a blended mode, with online and on-campus interaction. The programme aims to fulfil the need for good quality professional development programmes to help develop the capabilities of teachers and professionals working in the regular school system, a press release said.

'Cowardly attack': Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, Akal Takht, Congress condemn firing at Sukhbir Singh Badal outside Golden Temple



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

The shooter has been identified as Khalistani leader Narain Singh Chaura, who faces multiple cases under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and has been jailed numerous times for terrorism-related activities. Narain Singh was swiftly overpowered by bystanders and handed over to the police. The motive behind the attack remained unclear. Reacting to the shooting, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann posted on X, "Today, Punjab police prevented a big incident in the state. It was alertness of Punjab police that a conspiracy to defame Punjab and Punjabis has fallen flat. Police arrested the attacker from on the spot. I appreciate their presence of mind and I strongly condemn attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal. I have directed the Punjab police officials to inquire the entire incident and submit the report to me soon."

Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh also condemned the shooting and asked the government to initiate a probe. Akal Takht, the supreme temporal body of the Sikh community, had ordered Badal to undergo the religious sentence at the Golden Temple for mistakes committed during the SAD rule between 2007 and 2017 in Punjab. "This is not just an attack on Sukhbir Badal; it is an attack on the sevadar (volunteer) who was standing outside the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) performing duties assigned by Sri Akal Takht Sahib. We condemn this attack and call on the government to investigate who is behind this incident," said Giani Raghbir Singh.

Meanwhile, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhama said, "It is the attack on the Darbar Sahib's aura. It is place where we come for forgiveness of our sins and not to commit new sins. I condemn this incident and demand a probe into it. Sukhbir Singh Badal has to perform seva at other places also. So his security must be assured." Acting SAD (B) president Balwinder Singh Bhundar said the party leaders would continue to perform seva as per the orders of Akal Takht Sahib. "God is with us. The seva will continue," he said. When contacted, Gurpartap Singh Wadala, convener of Akali Dal Sudhar Lehar, said, "This is a very unfortunate and sad incident. While people may hold different ideologies and opinions about the actions taken during the previous SAD-BJP government from 2007 to 2017, it does not justify harming one another. Thankfully, Sukhbir Badal escaped unharmed. No member of the community should resort to such acts of violence. It is important to respect Akal Takht's directives. We strongly condemn these violent actions. Punjab has faced dark times in the past, and we do not want to see that era return. Ultimately, the investigation by intelligence agencies will uncover the truth."

Santa Singh Umaidpuri, one of the seven interim committee members of Akali Dal former by Akal Takht Sahib, said, "One must comply with the Takhtah (religious punishment) as directed by Akal Takht Sahib. On the other side of the gate, Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa ji, the patron of Akali Dal Sudhar Lehar, was also present. However, it is unclear what motivated the attacker to shoot in the direction where Sukhbir Badal was sitting. A police investigation could uncover the background of this incident and the mindset of the individual who committed this act in full view of the public. Until then, we cannot draw any conclusions. We must wait for the police inquiry to provide the facts." Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa of the Congress, in a statement, said, "The attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal outside Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, is deeply unfortunate and unequivocally condemnable. Such acts of violence have no place in our society. Such incidents undermine the very fabric of our democratic values and societal harmony. The incident is a stark reminder of the need for responsible discourse and vigilance in Punjab. It is imperative that we, as a society, reflect on the underlying causes and ensure that our responses are measured and constructive."

"For too long, I have emphasised the importance of

Bombay HC pulls up Mumbai police over its probe into woman's complaint on HDFC bank manager's fraud

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

The court said such acts 'cannot be tolerated' and asked the petitioner to make HDFC Bank's regional senior official and RBI as parties to the matter. The court said such acts 'cannot be tolerated' and asked the petitioner to make HDFC Bank's regional senior official and RBI as parties to the matter. The Bombay High Court on Tuesday pulled up the Mumbai Police over its probe in a complaint by a 53-year-old woman whose Rs 3 crore was siphoned off from her bank account. It also issued notices to HDFC Bank, hours after its relationship manager was arrested in connection with the case, and Reserve Bank of India seeking their response to the woman's plea in the next hearing.

The court also questioned if it was not the bank's responsibility to take note of the malpractice when the money was siphoned off "under their nose," as the people trust a particular bank and what faith they would have in a banking system when a relationship manager takes the person "for a ride." A bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Prithviraj K Chavan was hearing the plea by Meenakshi Kapuria, who argued through advocate Rizwan Siddiquee, that her HDFC bank relationship manager Payal Kothari broke her fixed deposits worth Rs 3 crore and transferred it to fictitious accounts and then to Kothari's own accounts, without the petitioner's knowledge. She had lodged a police complaint in October.

After the court was informed that the bank's relationship manager was arrested on Tuesday morning, the bench questioned why the police had to wait until the complainant approached the court and expressed doubt if the police were waiting for the parties to settle the matter. Siddiquee added that when Rs 3 crore was transferred by the accused into

addressing the developments in Punjab with a profound sense of responsibility and foresight. This incident should serve as a wake-up call for all stakeholders—political leaders, social organisations, and the public—to come together and foster an environment of dialogue and peace. We must collectively work towards ensuring that Punjab remains a land of mutual respect, understanding, and tranquillity, in keeping with its rich heritage," he added. He said he was urging the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation while calling for restraint and unity among all sections of society during this sensitive time. Where is accountability, asks BJP Questioning the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, BJP state spokesperson Pritpal Singh Baliawal said, "We strongly condemn the cowardly attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal within the sacred Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) complex. Gunfire and violence have become disturbingly common under this lawless regime. Is Punjab being turned into a banana republic? Where is the government? Where is the accountability?"

Anil Sarin, BJP state general secretary, said, "The BJP strongly condemns the attack on Sukhbir Singh Badal and demands a thorough investigation into the matter. "We can have ideological and political differences with each other, but such violent acts are strongly condemned. This once again highlights the poor law and order condition of the state. Firing a bullet has become so common in the state. People have no fear of the police now. It is high time that the Punjab government made adequate security arrangements, at least now," added Sarin. Senior BJP leader and former Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh also condemned the attack and expressed relief that Badal was safe. He praised the person who overpowered the assailant and deflected his arm, which helped prevent the bullet from hitting Badal.

Amarinder Singh noted that Badal had sought forgiveness from the Akal Takht and was serving the punishment that had been imposed on him inside the Golden Temple complex. He highlighted that those responsible for the attack on the Akali leader had violated Sikh values. Amarinder Singh stated that Punjab had already endured enough suffering in the 1980s and 1990s and could afford to enter another dark era. He urged the people to be vigilant against those forces attempting to disrupt peace in Punjab. Manpreet Singh Badal, BJP leader and paternal cousin of Sukhbir Badal said, "Dastardly. Violence has no place in politics. The protection of citizens is the government's foremost duty. Political differences should be resolved through dialogue and the ballot, not the bullet. Prayers for the safety of Sukhbir Singh Badal and all others affected. Punjab has already paid a heavy price in 1947, 1966, and 1984. We cannot, and will not, allow the hard-earned peace to be disrupted."

Besides Opposition leader Bajwa, several senior Punjab Congress leaders also decried the attack on Badal. Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring said the incident could not be condoned and should not have happened.

"I believe that the firing is a result of negligence on the part of the Punjab government. This incident reflects the state of law and order in Punjab. The person responsible for the incident should face the strictest punishment. I condemn this act in the strongest possible terms. The assistant commissioner of police (ACP) in Amritsar should be suspended, and immediate action must be taken against him. How did this situation occur? Who should be held accountable? It seems the government is waiting for a tragedy to happen before acknowledging a lapse. While there may be some anger towards Sukhbir Badal among certain Sikhs, that does not justify shooting him," said Warring while addressing the media. The Congress MP from Gurdaspur, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, also denounced the attack. "... Everyone has been hurt by such an incident within the sacred precincts of Darbar Sahib," said Randhawa in a post on X. Three personnel took charge of situation: Amritsar police commissioner. Meanwhile, Amritsar Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Bhullar explained how Badal was saved without harm. "Since Sukhbir Badal came to perform service, around 200 police personnel and senior officers had been deployed. Constable Rachhpal Singh noticed the accused approaching and followed him. As soon as the accused attempted to fire, three personnel collectively took charge of the situation. A thorough investigation will be conducted to ensure no angle is overlooked." He said, "We will recommend to the DGP that the three personnel who performed commendably be honoured. We also appeal to the public to share any information they may have with the police."

various accounts, no SMS alerts or emails were received by his client. The petitioner alleged that besides Kothari, other bank officials appeared to be involved in the said case. The plea also claimed that Kothari gained the petitioner's trust and took blank signed cheques from her by promising and assuring her that her money will be transferred to Mutual Funds, Gold Bonds, NFO etc, and that she would earn more returns on the said investments, as compared to fixed deposits. Siddiquee submitted that Kothari, instead of investing the amount, siphoned off the entire savings of the petitioner. Siddiquee had alleged that Versova Police were pressurising the petitioner to settle the matter with Kothari and had not probed the role of other bank officials. The bench had asked Dikshit Gedam, the zonal Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) concerned, to remain present in the court the next day.

On Tuesday, a state government lawyer informed the bench that Kothari was arrested the same morning, to which the court questioned why the arrest took so late. "Every day, we are receiving such complaints against police officers from various police stations," it orally remarked. The lawyer said the police froze Kothari's bank accounts, which had Rs 30,000 in all. Gedam informed the court that he would supervise the investigation which has been transferred from Police Inspector (PI) Amol Dhole, against whom departmental inquiry has been initiated, to senior PI Gajanan Pawar. After Gedam submitted that Kothari had changed the petitioner's contact details, the bench termed it "extremely serious" and raised concerns over the implication of such acts over senior citizens who put their life savings in banks as security for their old age. It asked if the police had conducted a probe with the bank and said "they cannot be allowed to go scot-free."

Trump's high tariff pledge will provide huge export opportunities for India: NITI Aayog's Subrahmanyam



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's pledge to impose high tariffs on three of its trading partners, including China will provide huge export opportunities for India and the domestic industry should prepare itself to tap into that, NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam said Mr. Trump last week vowed to introduce 25% tariffs (or customs duty) on imports from Mexico and Canada and an additional 10% on China.

"Whatever Trump has announced so far... I think there are opportunities for India. We are a man at first slip, the ball is coming in our direction. Are we going to hold it or drop the catch, it's for us to see... and I think, you will see some steps in next few months," Mr. Subrahmanyam told reporters here. He said there is going to be huge disruptions because of that in the U.S. trade and that would open up

"huge" opportunities for India. "The question is if we actually prepare ourselves, it can lead to a massive boom... because there is going to be trade diversion," he added. The U.S. is the largest trading partner of India. India's exports stood at \$77.51 billion, while imports aggregated at \$42.2 billion in the last fiscal. The U.S. also accounts for 70% of India's IT export revenue. "Our relationship with the U.S. is multi-dimensional. It is very deep. It's not standing only on one leg which is trade, there are many many other dimensions. The two nations have a much deeper relationship and all these things will be taken into account," he said.

These remarks assume significance as Mr. Trump during his election campaign, called India an "abuser" of import tariffs, a claim that echoed his October 2020 statement labelling India the "Tariff King". He has also warned BRICS countries against any move to replace the U.S. dollar and has sought a commitment from the nine-member group that includes India, Russia, China, and Brazil, among others. Niti Aayog also unveiled a report on India's trade. It will be released on a quarterly basis. Mr. Subrahmanyam said trade needs to be promoted actively to make India a developed nation. Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, Suman Bery said one should not be "obsessed with" trade deficits as an economy gains more from imports. "Because we have a floating exchange rate, we structurally will have a trade deficit and because we want to invest, we will structurally have a current account of deficit... these are goods not bads," Mr. Bery said adding "we have to walk a very careful line about not closing of imports to the point where we are cultivating local monopolies".

Uttar Pradesh govt forms panel to look into farmers' issues



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

As the farmers' agitation continues in Noida, the U.P. Government has set up a five-member committee to find solutions to the issues faced by the farmers. The State Government constituted a committee under the chairmanship of IAS officer Anil Kumar Sagar, Principal Secretary of Infrastructure and Industrial Development. The other members of the committee are Piyush Sharma, Secretary, In-

frastructure and Industrial Development Department; Sanjay Khatri, Additional Chief Executive Officer (ACEO), Noida; Saumya Srivastava, Additional Chief Executive Officer (ACEO), Greater Noida; Kapil Singh, Additional Chief Executive Officer (ACEO), YEIDA.

According to the official order, the committee must submit its report and recommendations to the government in a month. Earlier, a committee under the chairmanship of Revenue Board Chairman was formed to make recommendations on the matter. The newly formed committee will deliberate on those recommendations and is expected to submit its report in one month. Farmers from several districts of Uttar Pradesh began their agitation on December 2, seeking adequate compensation for land acquired and other demands. They were halted at the Uttar Pradesh-Delhi border by authorities. Over 160 farmers were later arrested on December 3. Farmers from U.P. will gather near Greater Noida's Zero Point at Pari Chowk for a mahapanchayat to ascertain the next steps for the ongoing agitation. Farmer leaders say they will demand that the arrested farmers be released.

Digital accessibility audit: Indian financial sector found wanting

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

A research report evaluating the digital accessibility landscape of the top 100 companies in the Indian financial sector including banks, insurance companies, payment gateway providers, investment firms and financial service aggregators, found the room wide open for improvement. Steered by BarrierBreak and National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), the study sought to assess the readiness of these organisations in providing accessible digital products and services to customers with disabilities.

The home pages of the selected companies were analysed using an automated accessibility tool that tests against WCAG 2.2 - Level AA, followed by manual validation by accessibility experts. The results revealed an average of 91.55 accessibility errors per home page, with the insurance sector having the highest average errors (120.73) and international banks, the lowest (33.4). The Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) is a globally recognised technical standard developed by World Wide Consortium to make web content more accessible. It defines how to make web content accessible to people with disabilities. WCAG 2.2 has 13 guidelines organised under four principles namely POUR — perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. The most common accessibility errors were related to ARIA or Accessible Rich Internet Application (100% of pages), headings (97% of pages), images (96% of pages), colour contrast (91% of pages), and links (90% of pages). The findings serve as a baseline for the adoption of digital accessibility in India's finance sector and emphasise the need for conscious efforts by organisations to promote financial inclusion and empower people with disabilities, says the report. In February 2024, the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance notified the Accessibility Standards and Guidelines for banking sector. In August, 2024, the Ministry of Finance issued a notification regarding the accessibility standards and guidelines for infrastructure and services in insurance sector. Later, on October 11, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India issued guidelines for facilitating accessibility to digital payment systems for persons with disabilities.

It was found that 97% of the homepages had headings that were not defined or were not as per the correct hierarchy. Zerodha's homepage stands out for its well-structured



content and appropriately defined headings. With respect to images it was observed that 77% of the websites have image links related issues and 51% of the websites have image buttons related issues. The Reserve Bank of India and Axis Bank's homepages are notable examples where all images have been provided accurate textual descriptions. National Payments Corporation of India, IDFC First Bank, Bank of Baroda and BillDesk are among those that demonstrate how to use image links effectively by providing meaningful textual descriptions. Image buttons have been provided precise textual descriptions by LIC, Yes Bank and Aditya Birla Capital Health Insurance. Poor colour contrast between text colour and background colour makes content illegible for all users. It was found that only 9% of the websites had good contrast. The homepages of American Express and MobiKwik illustrate the effective use of text contrast for readability and enhancing user experience. Links are important to help users navigate to different pages within the website. They also help customers navigate the web. PhonePe, CSC Cloud and Cred are strong examples of homepages with descriptive links that clearly convey their purpose. Keyboard operability is one of the important requirements of accessibility. It ensures users can access any of the interactive elements such as links, buttons, radio buttons, checkboxes and drop-downs. HSBC India, ICICI Direct and Barclays India were found to support keyboard with all interactive elements. Barclays has ensured buttons, links and accordions are accessible using a keyboard. HSBC has made certain that even elements such as the chat widget and search input field are keyboard operable.

Several lapses in implementation of One Stop Crisis Centres says study

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

A study on One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC), mandated to provide support and services to women and children who have experienced violence has pointed out several lapses including the absence of access to person disabled. The study was done by Sruti Disability Rights Centre on the basis of visits to ten OSCC across four states including West Bengal. "Not all OSCC are located within the Hospital. For example OSCC in Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh is near a prominent political party. Some centers work from 9 am to 5 pm though they are supported to give 24 hours service. Not a single centre has properly trained staff like psychologists or legal experts," a press statement by Sruti Disability Rights Centre said. Speaking at the release of the report Shampa Sengupta founder of Sruti Disability Rights Centre said that the activists visited two OSCC in West Bengal, one in South 24 Parganas and another in North 24 Parganas and both were non functional. "Since the OSCC does not exist, how can we ask them whether they are disabled friendly or not," Ms. Sengupta said. Observing that the OSCC do not function properly in the State, Ms. Sengupta said that this lack of awareness comes in having such centres comes at a time when the debate is raging over the rape and murder of a doctor at R G Kar College and Hospital. The study was done on the OSCC in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. While the OSCC in the three other states started in 2017 in West



Bengal the first OSCC came up in 2022. The report was released on December 3, which is observed as International Day of Persons with Disability. Ms. Sengupta also a disability rights activist said that the OSCC at Bijoigarh State General Hospital which is itself defunct and the centre had a data entry operator when the activists had approached the Centre. Jhuma Sen, a lawyer at Calcutta High Court said that OSCC was a successful model which was appreciated not only in the country but globally. Ms. Sengupta said that domestic violence is an issue of public health and the OSCC was added after the recommendation of the Usha Mehra Committee. She said that when the first OSCC came up at a Mumbai hospital it became a success.

Bangladesh AHC in Agartala suspends services after breach by mob, officials suspend 3 police officers

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

The Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala on Tuesday announced the suspension of visa and consular services for an indefinite period a day after an incident involving a breach of the consular premises by a mob during protests against the arrest of a Hindu monk in the neighbouring country. The Assistant High Commission (AHC) posted a notice on their board without specifying when the services would resume. This incident, which sparked a fresh diplomatic row between India and Bangladesh, resulted in the suspension of three Tripura police officers for their negligence in duty at the AHC. West Tripura Superintendent of Police K. Kiran Kumar issued the order for the suspension of the three sub-inspectors.

Seven protesters from the Hindu Sangharsh Samiti have been detained by the police in connection with the breach at the AHC. The police and security agencies are

currently reviewing CCTV footage and social media posts to identify those involved in the incident. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Tripura State Rifles (TSR) troops have been deployed at the AHC and two checkpoints have been set up outside as a security measure. Two additional checkpoints have also been created on Akhaura Road leading to the Agartala Integrated Check Post. These security measures have been put in place based on assessments made by senior police and intelligence officials, according to sources. In a statement released on Monday, Chief Minister Manik Saha, who holds the Home portfolio, condemned the incident at the Bangladesh AHC. On the other hand, protests against alleged atrocities committed on minority Hindus in Bangladesh continued in Agartala and other parts of the State on Tuesday. The Sanatani Yuba, a right-wing youth organisation, held a protest rally in Agartala city under heavy security presence.

'If men menstruated, they would understand': SC slams Madhya Pradesh HC for sacking women judges

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

The Supreme Court on Tuesday (December 3, 2024) took strong exception to the termination of women civil judges in Madhya Pradesh, criticizing the criteria used for their dismissal and remarking that men would understand the situation if they experienced menstruation. The remarks were made during a hearing related to the termination of six female civil judges in the state. A Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and N. Kotiswar Singh made this comment while hearing a case related to the termination of female civil judges in Madhya Pradesh.

Six female civil judges were terminated, with two of them yet to be reinstated. The top court's observation came when it noted the criteria adopted by the Madhya Pradesh High Court in dealing with the female judges. The state counsel said that the judges were terminated due to poor disposal rates of cases. In response, the top court said that they will have the same criteria for male judges. "I wish they had menstruation; then only they would understand," Justice Nagarathna said. The apex court also said that if the women are suffering physically and mentally then don't say they are slow and send them home. The top court listed the matter on December 12 for further hearing. The SC was hearing a suo motu petition on the issue of the termination



of six women judges by the Madhya Pradesh government. In June 2023, the Madhya Pradesh government terminated the services of the six judges following a recommendation by the Madhya Pradesh High Court. The judges were reportedly terminated on the grounds of unsatisfactory performance during their probation period. Following the administrative committee and a full court meeting finding their performance during the probation period unsatisfactory, the State Law Department issued orders for terminating the services of judges.

Attack on Sukhbir Badal attempt to finish moderate space in Punjab, says Naresh Gujral

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Former Rajya Sabha MP and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Naresh Gujral described the attack on the life of SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal as an "attempt to finish the moderate space in Punjab politics." Speaking to The Hindu immediately after the assassination attempt, captured on camera, came to light, Mr. Gujral said that the murderous attack was "an attempt to take Punjab and the country back to the dark days of the 1980s" when Sikh militancy in the State was at its height. "It is an attempt to destabilise the State of Punjab and the National Investigative Agency (NIA) should look into whether there is involvement of Pakistan or other forces, in terms of trying to revive the demand for Khalistan," he said.

Amity and peace between the Sikh and Hindu community was being sought to be broken, he added, with law and order in a precarious state under the Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. "We have been saying for months that law and order is in a bad way in the State, that gangs are roaming free. Punjab Police are demoralised, with officers being arbitrarily transferred here and there," he said. Mr. Gujral acknowledged that lack of employment and poor procurement of paddy this year had led to a general atmosphere of dissatisfaction in Punjab. The SAD was a former ally of the Punjab BJP, before the two parties parted ways on the issue of the three farm laws passed by the Union government in 2019. "When the old alliance was formed between Badal saab [former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal] and Vajpayeeji [former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee] it was to foster



bhaichara [brotherhood] between the Hindu and Sikh community after the violent 1980s, and it did result in a peaceful Punjab," Mr. Gujral said.

"The new NDA does not follow the same coalition dharma as the old one, and the BJP tried to get into the political space of its allies, which didn't work and created a vacuum-like situation. In fact, the vacuum is the reason that the two gentlemen who got elected to the Lok Sabha from Khadoor Sahab and Faridkot succeeded," he said. Mr. Gujral was referring to Sikh separatist Amritpal Singh Sandhu, in jail for separatist activities and Sarabjit Singh Khalsa, son of the assassin of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, being elected to the Lok Sabha in 2024. The political situation in the State is definitely going to be affected by the assassination attempt on Mr. Badal, and will have international ramifications, since Punjab, as a border State, has always been sensitive.

Digital arrest scam: Govt blocked 1,700

Skype IDs and 59,000 Whatsapp accounts used for the fraud, says Minister Bandi Sanjay

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar also stated that the 'Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System,' launched under I4C in 2021, enables immediate reporting of financial frauds to prevent the siphoning off of funds by fraudsters and so far, over ₹3,431 crore has been saved in more than 9.94 lakh complaints. "The I4C has pro-actively identified and blocked more than 1,700 Skype IDs and 59,000 WhatsApp accounts used for digital fraud," Mr. Kumar said in response to a written question. As of November 15, 2024, more than 6.69 lakh SIM cards and 1.32 lakh IMEIs, as reported by police authorities, have been blocked by the government. The Minister further explained that to strengthen the mechanism for addressing cyber crimes, including digital fraud, the Central Government and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have developed a system to identify and block incoming international spoofed calls that display Indian mobile num-

bers, making them appear as though they originate within India. Mr. Kumar noted that such spoofed calls have been used by cyber criminals in recent cases of fake digital arrests, FedEx scams, and impersonation as government or police officials. Directions have been issued to TSPs to block such incoming international spoofed calls. Additionally, a State-of-the-Art Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre (CFMC) has been established at I4C, where representatives from major banks, financial institutions, payment aggregators, TSPs, IT intermediaries, and law enforcement agencies from States and UTs collaborate to ensure immediate action and seamless cooperation in tackling cybercrime. The Minister said a suspect registry of identifiers of cyber criminals has been launched by I4C on September 10, 2024 in collaboration with banks and financial institutions and has introduced a new feature 'Report'

South Korean president faces impeachment after martial law debacle



SEOUL, GNS News Agency, Dec 6 South Korean lawmakers submitted a bill on Wednesday to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol after he declared martial law and reversed the move hours later, triggering a political crisis in Asia's fourth-largest economy. The surprise declaration of martial law in the major U.S. ally late on Tuesday caused a standoff with parliament, which rejected Yoon's attempt to ban political activity and censor the media, as armed troops forced their way into the National Assembly building in Seoul.

The main opposition Democratic Party (DP) called for Yoon, who has been in office since 2022, to resign or face impeachment. Six South Korean opposition parties later submitted a bill in parliament to impeach Yoon, with voting set for Friday or Saturday. "We couldn't ignore the illegal martial law," DP lawmaker Kim Yong-min told reporters. "We can no longer let democracy collapse." There were deep divisions in Yoon's ruling People Power Party as well, as its leader called for Defence Minister Kim Jong-hyun to be fired and the entire cabinet to resign. Kim has offered to resign, the defence ministry said. Yoon told the nation in a television speech late on Tuesday that martial law was needed to defend the country from pro-North Korean anti-state forces, and protect the free constitutional order, although he cited no specific threats.

Chaotic scenes ensued as troops tried to seize control of the parliament building, although they stood back when parliamentarians sprayed them with fire extinguishers while protesters scuffled with police outside. The military said activities by parliament and political parties would be banned, and that media and publishers would be under the control of the martial law command. But lawmakers defied the security cordon and within hours of the declaration, South Korea's parliament, with 190 of its 300 members present, unanimously passed a motion for martial law to be lifted, with 18 members of Yoon's party present. The president then rescinded the declaration of martial law, just about six hours after its proclamation.

Protesters outside the National Assembly shouted and clapped. "We won!" they chanted, and one demonstrator banged on a drum. "There are opinions that it was too much to go to emergency martial law, and that we did not follow the procedures for emergency martial law, but it was done strictly within the constitutional framework," a South Korean presidential official told Reuters by telephone. There has been no reaction yet from North Korea to the drama in the South. Despite the overnight drama, Seoul appeared normal on Wednesday, with the usual morning rush hour traffic in trains and on the streets. However, more protests were expected with South Korea's largest union coalition, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, planning to hold a rally in Seoul and vowing to strike until Yoon resigns. The U.S. embassy urged citizens in South Korea to avoid areas where protests were taking place, while some major employers, including Naver Corp

falling about 1.3% and the won stable but close to a

Trump's plan for Ukraine comes into focus: Territorial concessions but NATO off the table

WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency, Dec 6, Advisers to Donald Trump publicly and privately are floating proposals to end the Ukraine war that would cede large parts of the country to Russia for the foreseeable future, according to a Reuters analysis of their statements and interviews with several people close to the U.S. president-elect. The proposals by three key advisers, including Trump's incoming Russia-Ukraine envoy, retired Army Lieutenant-General Keith Kellogg, share some elements, including taking NATO membership for Ukraine off the table. Trump's advisers would try forcing Moscow and Kyiv into negotiations with carrots and sticks, including halting military aid to Kyiv unless it agrees to talk but boosting assistance if Russian President Vladimir Putin refuses. Trump repeatedly pledged during his election campaign to end the nearly three-year-old conflict within 24 hours of his Jan. 20 inauguration, if not before then, but has yet to say how. Analysts and former national security officials voice grave doubts Trump can fulfill such a pledge because of the conflict's complexity. Taken together, however, his advisers' statements suggest the potential contours of a Trump peace plan. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, facing manpower shortages and growing territorial losses, has indicated that he may be open to negotiations. While still intent on NATO membership, he said this week that Ukraine must find diplomatic solutions to regaining some of its occupied territories. But Trump may find Putin unwilling to engage, analysts and former U.S. officials said, as he has the Ukrainians on the back foot and may have more to gain by pursuing further land grabs. "Putin is in no hurry," said Eugene Rumer, a former top U.S. intelligence analyst on Russia now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank. The Russian leader, he said, shows no readiness to drop his conditions for a truce and talks, including Ukraine abandoning its NATO quest and surrendering the four provinces Putin claims as part of Russia but does not fully control, a demand rejected by Kyiv. Putin, Rumer said, likely will bide his time, take more ground and wait to see what, if any, concessions Trump may offer to lure him to the negotiating table. Reuters reported in May that Putin was ready to halt the war with a negotiated ceasefire that recognized current front lines but was ready to fight on if Kyiv and the West did not respond. Russia already controls all of Crimea, having unilaterally seized it from Ukraine in 2014 and has since taken about 80% of the Donbas - which is comprised of Donetsk and Luhansk - as well as more than 70% of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, and small parts of the Mykolaiv and Kharkiv regions. As of last week, Trump had yet to convene a central working group to flesh out a peace plan, according to four advisers who requested anonymity to describe private deliberations. Rather, several advisers have pitched ideas among themselves in public forums and - in some cases - to Trump, they said. Ultimately, a peace agreement will likely depend on direct personal engagement between Trump, Putin and Zelenskyy, the advisers said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was "not possible to comment on individual statements without having an idea of the plan as a

two-year low. Dealers reported suspected intervention by South Korean authorities to stem the won's slide. Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok and Bank of Korea Governor Rhee Chang-yong held emergency meetings overnight and the finance ministry promised to prop up markets if needed.

Item 1 of 13 Protesters hold up signs as people and lawmakers attend a rally to condemn South Korean President's surprise declarations of the martial law last night and to call for his resignation, at the national assembly in Seoul, South Korea, "We will inject unlimited liquidity into stocks, bonds, short-term money market as well as forex market for the time being until they are fully normalised," the government said in a statement. Sales of canned goods, instant noodles and bottled water had soared overnight, said a major South Korean convenience store chain, which sought anonymity. "I'm deeply disturbed by this kind of situation, and I'm very concerned about the future of the country," 39-year-old Seoul resident Kim Byeong-In told The National Assembly can impeach the president if more than two-thirds of lawmakers vote in favour. A trial by the constitutional court follows, which can confirm the motion with a vote by six of the nine justices. If Yoon resigned or was removed from office, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo would fill in as leader until a new election was held within 60 days.

"South Korea as a nation dodged a bullet, but President Yoon may have shot himself in the foot," Danny Russel, vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute think tank in the United States, said of the first martial law declaration in South Korea since 1980. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he welcomed Yoon's decision to rescind the martial law declaration.

"We continue to expect political disagreements to be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law," Blinken said in a statement. South Korea hosts about 28,500 American troops as a legacy of the 1950-1953 Korean War. Planned defence talks and a joint military exercise between the two allies were postponed amid the broader diplomatic fallout from the overnight turmoil. South Korea's political situation is an "internal matter" for the country, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters. Sweden's prime minister postponed a visit to South Korea, a spokesperson said, and Japan's lawmaker group on Korean affairs cancelled a trip to Seoul set for mid-December. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said the alliance was monitoring the current situation in South Korea, but added that its relationship with Seoul "was ironclad". Russia said it was following the "tragic" events in South Korea with concern. Yoon, a career prosecutor, squeezed out a victory in the tightest presidential election in South Korean history in 2022, riding a wave of discontent over economic policy, scandals and gender wars.

But he has been unpopular, with his support ratings hovering at around 20% for months. His People Power Party suffered a landslide defeat at a parliamentary election in April this year, failing to wrest control from opposition parties that captured nearly two-thirds of the seats. There have been more than a dozen instances of martial law being declared since South Korea was established as a republic in 1948. In 1980, a group of military officers forced then-President Choi Kyu-hah to proclaim martial law to crush calls for the restoration of democratic government. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Reporting by Jack Kim, Ju-min Park, Hyonhee Shin, Hyunsu Yim, Heekyong Yang, Joyce Lee and Josh Smith; Additional reporting by Michelle Nichols at the United Nations, David Brunnstrom in Washington and Trevor Hunnicutt in Luanda; Writing by Stephen Coates and Raju Gopalakrishnan; Editing by Lincoln Feast and Clarence Fernandez



whole. "Trump spokesperson Karoline Leavitt noted that Trump has said he "will do what is necessary to restore peace and rebuild American strength and deterrence on the world stage." A Trump representative did not immediately respond to a follow-up question about whether the president-elect still plans to resolve the conflict within a day of taking office. The Ukrainian government did not immediately respond to a request for comment. One former Trump national security official involved in the transition said there are three main proposals: the outline by Kellogg, one from Vice President-elect JD Vance and another advanced by Richard Grenell, Trump's former acting intelligence chief. Kellogg's plan, co-authored with former National Security Council official Fred Fleitz and presented to Trump earlier this year, calls for freezing the current battle lines.

Trump would supply more U.S. weapons to Kyiv only if it agreed to peace talks. At the same time, he would warn Moscow that he would increase U.S. aid to Ukraine if Russia rejected negotiations. NATO membership for Ukraine would be put on hold. Ukraine also would be offered U.S. security guarantees, which could include boosting weapons supplies after an accord is struck, according to that proposal. In a June interview with Times Radio, a British digital station, Sebastian Gorka, one of Trump's incoming deputy national security advisers, said Trump had told him he would force Putin into talks by threatening unprecedented weapons shipments to Ukraine if Putin refused. Gorka, reached by phone, called Reuters' "fake news garbage" and declined to elaborate. Vance, who as a U.S. senator has opposed aid to Ukraine, floated a separate idea in September. He told U.S. podcaster Shawn Ryan that a deal likely would include a demilitarized zone at the existing front lines that would be "heavily fortified" to prevent further Russian incursions. His proposal would deny NATO membership to Kyiv. Representatives for Vance did not make him available for comment, and he has yet to offer additional details. Grenell, Trump's former ambassador to Germany, advocated the creation of "autonomous zones" in eastern Ukraine during a Bloomberg roundtable in July but did not elaborate. He also suggested NATO membership for Ukraine was not in America's interest.

World Food Program's troubles in Sudan hurt hunger relief, alienated donors - internal report



NAIROBI, GNS News Agency, Dec 6. Serious problems in the United Nations World Food Program's response to the Sudan crisis are hampering the organization's ability to alleviate hunger in the war-torn country and damaging its reputation with donors, according to a recent internal report seen by The U.N.'s main food-aid distributor, the WFP is struggling to feed millions of people in the African country, which is suffering one of the world's worst hunger crises. The report identifies a range of problems in the WFP's Sudan response, including an inability to scale up its operations, missed funding opportunities and what it describes as "anti-fraud challenges."

The report is the result of an assessment in July and August by the WFP's Regional Emergency Coordination (REC) team, which was tasked with helping to expand the U.N. body's operations in Sudan and neighboring countries. The team's findings are detailed in a five-page "REC Diagnostic Report," marked confidential and dated August 30. The report calls Sudan the WFP's largest emergency. News of the report comes as the WFP is struggling to secure billions of dollars for hunger hot spots around the world and is battling a crisis of confidence among the United States and other top donors. In Sudan, roughly half the population of 50 million is estimated to be suffering from severe hunger amid the civil war that has ravaged the country since April 2023. Hundreds are believed to be dying from starvation and hunger-related disease each day. "WFP's reputation for rapid emergency response has been damaged," the report says of its Sudan operation. "Key stakeholders, including key donors, are now demanding concrete progress before committing additional funding." Asked about the report, WFP Deputy Executive Director Carl Skau didn't address its specifics but told Reuters that the WFP and other humanitarian agencies weren't prepared for the sudden crisis in Sudan. "It took us too long to actually get back on our feet and deliver in an effective and efficient and principled way," Skau said in an interview in Cairo on Monday. "I'm confident the WFP is there now and that we are doing everything possible."

Skau said that over the past few months, the WFP

Ukraine gives absconding soldiers second chance as forces dwindle

KYIV, GNS News Agency, Dec 6. As Ukraine's military struggles to find enough troops, particularly infantry, to hold off Russia's much larger army, some units are giving a second chance to those who have absconded from service. Data from the prosecutor's office shows nearly 95,000 criminal cases have been opened since 2022 against soldiers going "absent without leave" (AWOL) and for the more serious crime of battlefield desertion. The number of cases has risen steeply with each year of the war: almost two-thirds of the total are from 2024. With many tens of thousands of troops killed or wounded, it is a depletion that Ukraine can ill afford. A bar graph showing a more than six-fold increase in unauthorised absences and desertions by Ukrainian soldiers since 2022

Now, some units are replenishing their ranks by accepting soldiers previously declared AWOL. One of them is Ukraine's elite 47th Brigade, which published a social media post last month inviting soldiers who had absconded to join. "Our aim is to give every soldier the opportunity to come back into the fold and realise his potential," the post announced. In the first two days, the brigade said, over a hundred applications came in. "There was a tsunami of applications; so many that we still aren't able to process them all before new ones come in," Viacheslav Smirnov, the 47th's head of recruitment, said two weeks after the announcement. Two military units Reuters spoke to said they were only recruiting soldiers who had gone AWOL from their bases, rather than those who had deserted from combat. The former is seen within the Ukrainian military as a lesser offence. A bill recently signed into law has in effect decriminalised a soldier's first disappearance, allowing them to return to service.

THOUSANDS OF UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS REJOIN AFTER ABSCONDING Colonel Oleksandr Hrynychuk, deputy head of Ukraine's military police, told reporters on Tuesday that 6,000 AWOL soldiers had returned to service in the last month, including 3,000 in the 72 hours since the law was signed. Mykhailo Perets, an officer from the K-2 battalion of Ukraine's 54th Brigade, said his battalion had already hired over 30 men who had gone AWOL from other units. "The reasons [for absconding] are very different: for

has put in place the strongest leadership available for its Sudan response, bolstered teams in area offices and reviewed its strategy to reach people in need. The WFP has some 700 trucks on the roads in Sudan, he added. The WFP also said it had reached over 2 million people in the country with cash-based assistance this year. "We always want our colleagues to provide honest assessments," Skau said. "And the spirit is always that we then address that." A WFP spokesperson didn't respond to detailed questions about the report's findings. The WFP's internal report also criticizes overly optimistic targets for distributing aid. The Sudan office's initial target of reaching 8.4 million people in need was "deemed unrealistic and posed a reputational risk to the organization," the report says. "Current projections suggest that WFP may only be able to fulfill around 50 per cent of its current implementation plan by October 2024," the report concludes.

The report says that an analysis of agreements between the WFP and its food-distribution partners found "excessively high operational costs irrespective of the quantities distributed." High costs and "unrealistic planning" resulted in payments to non-government organizations that "achieved less than 5 per cent" of their distribution targets, the report says. In August, Reuters revealed that the WFP is investigating two of its top officials in Sudan over allegations including fraud and concealing information from donors about its ability to deliver aid. The emergency coordination team's report on Sudan has been shared with the WFP's inspector general's office, which is conducting the probe, because it covers problems related to the fraud investigation, according to people familiar with the matter. The team's report has not been shared with donors, the people said. The WFP had no comment on the Sudan fraud investigation's status. It previously told Reuters that it's investigating "allegations of individual misconduct related to irregularities in pockets of our operation in Sudan" but declined to describe the suspected wrongdoing.

Among the issues identified by the emergency coordination team in its report were delays in reporting and addressing what it termed "Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption" incidents. In August, there were nearly 200 cases either overdue or still pending, "posing reputational and operational risks," according to the report. It doesn't elaborate on the cases. The team's report is accompanied by a two-page "Action Plan," dated September 23. The measures outlined include revising aid targets, rebuilding relations with donors and the World Bank, and establishing a task force to clear the backlog of fraud and corruption probes. The WFP describes itself as the world's largest humanitarian organization. It won the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize for its role in combating hunger and promoting peace. In recent years, however, large quantities of its food aid have been diverted or stolen in some countries, including Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen. In October, Reuters detailed how the WFP was aware food aid was being stolen in Ethiopia for several years and repeatedly failed to act. The WFP later pinned much of the blame on needy aid recipients.



some people it was too tough a transition straight from civilian life, others served for a year or two as qualified [drone] pilots but were then sent to the front line because there wasn't enough infantry." Perets said those who had applied also included men who had become exhausted and run away after being at war for seven or eight years, having fought Russian-backed forces in eastern Ukraine before 2022. Gil Barddollar, a non-resident fellow at the U.S.-based Defense Priorities think tank, said the increase in unauthorised absences was most likely driven by exhaustion. Ukrainian service personnel have previously said how the lack of replacements for lost soldiers puts an unbearable strain on those remaining, exhausting them physically and mentally. Barddollar also highlighted their average age as an additional strain. "An army of men, often in poor health, in their 40s, all else being equal, is going to get exhausted sooner and is going to have morale problems faster than a reasonably fit army of 20- or 25-year-olds." Zelenskyy has responded to questions about the manpower problem by arguing that Ukraine lacks weapons rather than people, and pushed back against U.S. pressure to lower the minimum draft age to 18 from 25. He said in an interview with Sky News last week that Kyiv's allies had been able to provide the necessary equipment for only a quarter of the 10 new brigades Ukraine had formed over the past year.

Daily life in Seoul ticks on, but in shock, after six hour martial law drama

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

SEOUL, South Koreans went to offices, businesses and schools as usual on Wednesday with scarcely any visible signs in the capital Seoul that six hours of surprise martial law and high political drama overnight had spilled into everyday life. The city of 9 million started the day normally with the usual morning rush hour in trains and on the streets after President Yoon Suk Yeol lifted his abortive attempt at banning political activities and censoring news media just before dawn. But many were in shock at such a sudden turn of events, which pushed stocks down and South Korea's currency to multi-year lows during a time of already faltering economic growth. There have been more than a dozen instances of martial law being declared in South Korea since it became a republic in 1948, but the last time was more than four decades ago when Gen. Chun Doo-hwan staged a coup and ruled from 1980 to 1988. Seoul resident Gang He-Soo, 50, said she woke from sleep by chance and saw the news.

"At first, I was scared and very confused. I kept think-

ing, 'What is going on? Is this something that could actually happen in this era?' I couldn't sleep until the martial law was lifted because I was so frightened," Gang said, walking in Seoul's main commercial and tourist district Gwanghwamun. Yoon declared martial law in a live TV address at around 10:30 pm (1330 GMT) on Tuesday, only to reverse course after parliament defied police and special forces cordons around the National Assembly to vote, forcing him to lift the declaration. The president's office said the declaration of martial law was done at night to "minimize damage to the national economy and people's lives". South Korean soldiers, equipped with rifles, body armour and night-vision equipment, were seen entering the parliament building in Seoul through smashed windows. "It was an experience that I've only seen in movies, and I realised how much more serious it is than I had imagined," said 39-year-old Seoul resident Kim Byeong-In, who said he was concerned about the impact on the economy. "I'm deeply disturbed by this kind of situation, and I'm very concerned about the future of the country."

Sebi cancels SME IPO of Trafiksol ITS Technologies, orders to refund money

that the company was sold for a nominal sum of Rs. 20,000 reinforces the conclusion that the TPV lacked the technical expertise and operational capacity to execute a complex project such as ICCS software," Sebi said. Further, the client list and credentials of its directors, presented in its profile, were fabricated. Apart from the above, the ex-director's sworn statement that the company was sold for a nominal sum of Rs 20,000 reinforces the conclusion that the TPV lacked the technical expertise and operational capacity to execute a complex project such as ICCS software, Sebi order said.

"The question of whether the quotation from the TPV was part of a scheme to divert IPO proceeds will remain moot due to the events triggered by the complaint and subsequent regulatory intervention. This, however, does not take away the fact that the company relied on a sham entity and participated in a cover-up when the credentials of the TPV were being examined," Sebi said. "I cannot also lose sight of the fact that the funds of the investors who have been allotted shares in the IPO have remained locked-in for close to three months now. Therefore, the issue cannot be put on hold till the other findings of the Investigation are adjudicated," Sebi. Wholetime Director Ashwani Bhatia said in the order. Balancing these considerations, the most prudent course of action is to direct the company to refund the money raised through the IPO, Sebi said.

The company may approach the market afresh after the ongoing proceedings initiated by SEBI are concluded and subject to any directions issued therein, it said. Incorporated in March 2018, Noida-based Trafiksol says it offers comprehensive solutions for intelligent transportation systems and automation, including software development, consultancy and supply services. "Our offerings encompass ready-made and customized software solutions, operating systems, business applications, and computer games across all platforms," it said in the IPO prospectus. Jitendra Narayan Das is the chairman and MD of the company. The company made a revenue of Rs 65.81 crore and a net profit of Rs 12.01 crore for FY2024. The primary market had witnessed a flood of SME IPOs with oversubscription of up to 2,000 times in one instance and huge listing premium in the recent months. This had prompted many small entities to go for SME IPOs, forcing the Sebi and exchanges to tighten the SME IPO norms.

ported a consolidated loss of Rs 611 crore in the first quarter of FY25.

Total income rose sharply to Rs 3,686.26 crore in the September quarter as against Rs 2,850.52 crore a year ago. Swiggy, which was listed on November 13 this year, saw a robust growth in its food delivery as well as quick commerce verticals during the quarter under review. Zomato, which was listed three years ago, recently reported a sharp jump of five times in consolidated net profit to Rs 176 crore in Q2FY25. Sriharsha Majety, MD & Group CEO, Swiggy, said, "The remarkable performance of our food business operations comes on the back of strong innovation and execution. We are constantly trying to anticipate and improve the consumer's experience. The recent launch of Bolt-our 10-minute delivery service is an example of that." "Similarly in quick commerce, we are anticipating and responding to consumer behaviour to bring more and more convenience to urban households. Instamart today is present in 54 cities and delivers more than 32000 unique items, within an average delivery time of 13 minutes," he said.

neering point. You need to change the whole layout of the coach like windows, seats etc. We designed it according to the contract. The pantry is another issue. In some way, the whole train set will be redesigned. We have insisted on certain compensation for the redevelopment of the product because it takes time and finance. If you look into the tender, our offer was 14 per cent less than the second bidder. To my understanding, even if we increase the price by certain numbers, we will not exceed the next bidder. So in any way, we are not exceeding the ceiling.

Did you seek any assistance from the Russian government?

Yes, we raised this issue in the last intergovernmental meeting between India and Russia in New Delhi, in the presence of India's foreign minister S Jaishankar and First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Denis Manturov. We raised them in the right manner. We are not creating any pressure, but we need a very clear explanation on the matter. In some cases I do not understand the approach of Indian Railways. There are some bureaucratic hands behind this. Also we do not have any past experience in India. In my opinion, all that we are discussing right now can be resolved within two hours. But we are spending months just sending letters and waiting for an explanation.

Are the sanctions imposed by the West affecting you?

Whatever sanctions they are imposing on us, we can keep on moving ahead because we were never dependent on Western technology. We are also not closed to the international world; we have joint ventures across the country. Railway was the first sector where sanctions were imposed by European countries and the US. None of the projects stopped even for a week. We immediately switched to other suppliers, local suppliers etc.

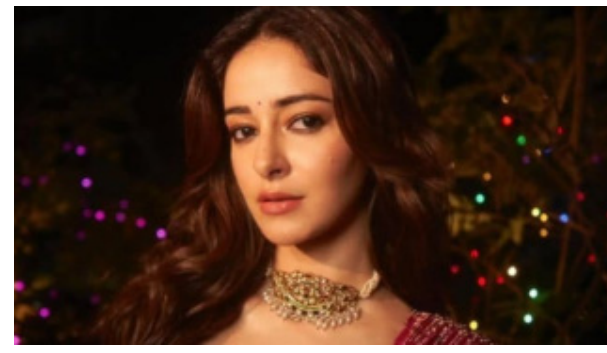
Then, who are the suppliers of Vande-Bharat coaches?

I don't want to name the supplier because once you put it in the newspaper, it will be a very risky situation for them. The development of the local Indian market is so high that we got the supply of certain components in India even before the sanctions. However the contract was with some European companies. So now we just have to remove the European companies and sign the contract directly with the Indian companies.

What is the actual reason to invest in India?

Today the trade between India and Russia is demanding the balancing of the trade. Right now, it is negative towards India, so today India is importing more from Russia than exporting to it. We are ready to invest in India because its economic growth and interest rates are very different. We want to develop in India so that some of them can be supplied to Russia as well. Geopolitically, we are friends, but we think that these friendships should be based on some practical considerations.

'You do things to impress...': Ananya Panday on changing herself for love; expert's take on compromise vs losing self-identity



Ananya Panday recently opened up about her experiences in relationships, sharing how she used to change herself completely to meet her partner's expectations. Appearing on Raj Shamani's podcast recently, the CTRL actor mentioned, "If I am in a relationship, I will do everything to figure it out and sort it out. I see the best in people, do my best and give it my all in a relationship, but I expect that from my partner also. For me, half-heartedness doesn't work. If you are in a relationship, you have to show loyalty and respect."

She continued to reflect on a past relationship where she realised that she changed herself for the person she was dating. "We all have a little bit. I have been in a relationship where I have changed myself a lot, but not to the point that it turned bad... You do things to impress in the beginning of a relationship and you don't realise how much you are changing for your partner," she admitted. While it's natural to compromise and adapt in a partnership, Panday's reflection raises an important question: When does compromising for a partner begin to affect your sense of identity and self-worth?

Gurleen Baruah, existential psychotherapist at That Culture Thing, tells indianexpress.com, "Compromising in a relationship is often misunderstood. While every healthy partnership requires compromises from both sides, issues arise when one partner consistently gives up more than the other." Baruah adds that this imbalance can affect their sense of identity and self-worth. One of the first signs is a loss of autonomy — when your decisions no longer feel like your own but are shaped by your partner's preferences. "Alongside this, you might start to feel taken for granted. When your efforts to compromise go unnoticed or unappreciated, it can foster feelings of being undervalued, especially if your partner doesn't show the same willingness to meet you halfway." Some people change themselves to please their partner because, deep down, they might be

seeking validation or approval. Some people change themselves to please their partner because, deep down, they might be seeking validation or approval. Another concerning sign is the gradual erosion of respect in the relationship. If your boundaries or needs are consistently dismissed, it can chip away at your confidence and leave you questioning your worth. This often creates a dynamic where you feel less like an equal partner and more like someone whose role is to accommodate, regardless of the personal cost. On a psychological level, repeated imbalances can lead to self-concept erosion, says Baruah, where you lose sight of who you are outside the relationship. You might also experience cognitive dissonance — the inner conflict that arises when your actions conflict with your values or desires.

Why do some people tend to change themselves to please their partner?

Some people change themselves to please their partner because, deep down, they might be seeking validation or approval, notes Baruah. "It often stems from low self-esteem or a belief that they need to be someone 'better' or more likable to deserve love. Sometimes, it's about wanting to impress their partner or trying to fit into their world, thinking that mirroring their interests or behaviours will create a stronger bond. This can also happen with anxious attachment styles, where there's a fear of rejection or abandonment. In such cases, people may cling or over-adapt, hoping to avoid conflict or loss." Another layer to this is not having a strong sense of self. Baruah explains that when someone hasn't fully explored who they are or what they stand for, it's easy to mold themselves to match a partner's expectations. "This isn't always conscious — it might feel like they're just being flexible or accommodating — but over time, it can lead to a loss of authenticity." What to do Baruah suggests that regaining one's authentic self "starts with self-awareness." Asking questions like, "Who am I outside this relationship? What makes me happy or fulfilled?" can help reconnect with their core identity. It's also about understanding the root of this pattern. Are they trying to avoid conflict? Do they fear being alone? Recognizing these drivers can make it easier to address them. Another step is setting small boundaries. Saying no to things that don't align with one's values or preferences is a way to rebuild one's sense of agency. "Open communication is also crucial — sharing thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment helps reinforce the idea that one is valued for who they are, not for who they try to be," stresses Baruah. Baruah concludes, "Reconnecting with hobbies, interests, and people who remind them of their true self can also provide a sense of grounding and independence."

Five things to do before 9 am to reset your body and boost natural detox

Starting the day right can set the tone for a productive and balanced life, especially when it comes to supporting the body's natural detox process. The morning is a critical time when your body is transitioning from rest and repair mode to active function, making it the ideal window for reset and rejuvenation. Incorporating simple yet effective habits into your morning routine can help boost your energy, promote digestion, and support overall well-being. But what specific things should you do before 9 am to reset your body and give your detox process a boost?

How does the body's natural detox process work?

Ashlesha Joshi, senior nutritionist at Tone30 Pilates, mentions, "The body's detoxification system is a complex network involving the liver, kidneys, lymphatic system, lungs, skin, and gut. These organs work together to eliminate toxins, waste products, and metabolic byproducts." The process primarily includes: **Liver Function:** The liver is the central organ for detoxification. It filters blood, metabolises toxins into water-soluble forms, and secretes them into bile or blood for elimination through urine or faeces. **Kidneys:** The kidneys filter blood to remove waste and excess fluid, excreting them as urine. Adequate hydration is crucial for optimal kidney function. **Gut and Microbiome:** The digestive tract eliminates waste via stool, and gut bacteria play a role in neutralising harmful substances. Fibre is essential for supporting gut motility and microbial balance. **Lymphatic System:** This system collects cellular waste and delivers it to the bloodstream for removal. Physical activity is key to maintaining its function. **Lungs and Skin:** The lungs expel carbon dioxide, a metabolic waste product, while the skin eliminates toxins through sweat. "Overnight, the liver actively metabolises toxins, making the morning crucial for flushing out these processed wastes through hydration and fibre. Cortisol and enzymatic activity peak in the morning, enhancing digestion and energy production needed for detox," notes Joshi. The liver is the central organ for detoxification. It filters blood, metabolises toxins into water-soluble forms, and secretes them into bile or blood for elimination through urine or faeces. The liver is the central organ for detoxification. It filters blood, metabolises toxins into water-soluble forms, and secretes them into bile or blood for elimination through urine or faeces. Five most important things to do before 9 am to reset your body and support its natural detox process

Joshi says, "The morning is a critical time for resetting the body and enhancing its natural detoxification pro-

For groom-to-be Naga Chaitanya, fitness is...

Groom-to-be Naga Chaitanya recently shared his thoughts on working out and what it means for him. "For me, fitness is... everyone thinks working out in the gym is all that you have to do, but no! It's 70 percent your diet and 30 percent your workout," the Laal Singh Chaddha actor said. In a conversation with CurlyTales, he also shared his morning ritual. "I drink 500 ml of water," he said, adding that his go-to breakfast is "eggs, peanut butter toast, and filter coffee." Dr Bhavana P, chief dietitian, Geneagles Hospitals, Lakdi Ka Pul, Hyderabad, said that a toned body and good fitness are a combination of disciplined lifestyle choices, consistent exercise, and proper nutrition. "The foundation of a ripped physique is a well-rounded approach that prioritises health and sustainability over quick fixes such that diet has the most important role to play," said Dr Bhavana.

What is a good diet?

A balanced diet is rich in lean proteins, whole grains,

healthy fats, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. "Protein is essential for muscle repair and growth, while complex carbohydrates provide the energy needed for intense workouts. Healthy fats, such as those found in avocados and nuts, support overall health and hormone production," said Dr Bhavana. Jaya Jyotsna, dietician at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Delhi, said that for optimum fitness levels, it's important to combine a well-balanced diet with an effective fitness routine. "High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT): This involves alternating between short bursts of intense activity and rest or low-intensity exercise. It boosts metabolism and burns a lot of calories in a short time." "Strength training: Builds muscle mass, which increases your resting metabolic rate, allowing you to burn more calories even when at rest." "Cardio workouts: Running, cycling, or swimming can help burn calories and improve cardiovascular health." "Consistency and progression: Ensure regular workouts and gradually increase the intensity to avoid plateaus."

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has cancelled the SME IPO of Trafiksol ITS Technologies and asked the company to refund the money to the investors for alleged questionable dealings with a 'shell entity'. The IPO which was open for subscription between September 10 and 12, 2024 oversubscribed 345.65 times. The issue was priced at the upper end of the price band (Rs 70 per share) and Rs 44.87 crore was raised through the issue.

After the closure of the issue and allotment of shares, a complaint was received by SEBI and BSE from the Small Investors' Welfare Association – SIREN which alleged that the objects of the issue by the company included purchase of software valued at Rs 17.70 crore from a vendor which had questionable financials and failed to file its annual financial statements with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The BSE then in consultation with the SEBI deferred the listing of the shares of the company. "Based on the findings, it is reasonable to conclude that the third-party vendor (TPV) in question is a 'shell entity'. The TPV's office was found locked during a site inspection, and its financial statements for FY22 to FY24, submitted in response to allegations, were obtained under questionable circumstances as it was signed by the auditor on same day it was submitted to the BSE by the MB (merchant banker)," Sebi said in its 16-page order.

This was one day after BSE in consultation with Sebi put on hold the listing of the shares of the company and initiated an examination. "Further, the client list and credentials of its directors, presented in its profile, were fabricated. Apart from the above, the ex-director's sworn statement

Swiggy cuts losses marginally in Q2



Swiggy cuts losses marginally in Q2. Swiggy, which was listed on November 13 this year, saw a robust growth in its food delivery as well as quick commerce verticals during the quarter under review. Food and grocery delivery platform Swiggy Ltd has marginally narrowed its consolidated net loss in the second quarter of financial year 2024-25 to Rs 625.53 crore from Rs 657 crore a year ago. However, sequentially, the loss increased as the firm had re-

'Railway was the first sector where sanctions were imposed... None of our projects stopped even for a week': Russia's TMH CEO Kirill Lipa

Transmashholding (TMH), the largest manufacturer of locomotives and rail equipment in Russia, said that the company investments in India would facilitate the supply of high-value engineering products from India to Russia and could go a long way in balancing the Indo-Russia trade deficit. The company also said that it is looking to manufacture other rolling stocks, besides the Vande Bharat coaches that it may start producing by 2025. Last year, the Indian Railways signed a contract with Kinet Railway Solutions Limited, an Indo-Russia joint venture that entails a major shareholding by TMH, for supply of 1,920 Vande Bharat Sleeper coaches. The production was expected to begin by the end of this year, but in May, Indian Railways sought to redesign coaches by adding more toilets and a pantry car in each carriage. This has been cited as a reason for delays in the delivery schedule. Kirill Lipa, CEO of TMH, spoke to The Indian Express at his Efremova Street office in Moscow. Edited excerpts:

What TMH can offer to India and Vande Bharat trains?

When I present TMH to anybody in the world, I say that in order to understand who we are, let's first look at the map of Russia. You have to fly around nine hours to go from one end to another. Russia, in terms of Railways, is the most advanced country in the world. Because usage of the network is intense. We are among the top five companies that are dedicated to the Railway sector. CRRC of China is the largest rolling-stock manufacturer. Then there are European companies Alstom, General Electric, Siemens, and us. We are 100 per cent privately owned. We produce everything related to Railway infrastructure. Underground metros, on-the-ground trams, EMUs, DMUs, passenger coaches, locomotives, freight wagons. Whatever we do is being developed locally by our TMH engineering team. History and historical traditions are very important for this.

What is the current status of Vande Bharat trains contract?

We have taken over the Latur factory in Maharashtra (the Marathwada Rail Coach Factory of the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd). The plan was to start it (production) this year, but due to the changes sought by Indian Railways, we need to redesign the coach. It will take several months. But anyhow, we will do it next year. I cannot say exactly which month we will be able to start the production. I was very positively surprised that the contract with Indian Railways was signed two weeks after the announcement of sanctions against our company in the United States. I had a discussion with the Indian officials and they said that they will act according to the interest of the country...

What are the challenges given the changes being sought?

The significant changes sought involve the design of coaches. From the outside, it seems that an additional lavatory is not an issue, the problem emanates from the engi-

Rana Daggubati reveals Naga Chaitanya's 'match made in heaven', it's not Sobhita Dhulipala; shares couple's photos from dating days



Naga Chaitanya, who will tie the knot with Sobhita Dhulipala in Hyderabad on Wednesday, recently appeared on his cousin Rana Daggubati's chat show. Naga Chaitanya, who will tie the knot with Sobhita Dhulipala in Hyderabad on Wednesday, recently appeared on his cousin Rana Daggubati's chat show.

"Love is lovelier the second time around," thus begins a track popularised by legendary singer-actor Frank Sinatra in the '60s. Perhaps it is this that inspired Naga Chaitanya to embrace a fresh start in life. Now, the Telugu actor is set to embark on a new chapter as he ties the knot with renowned movie star Sobhita Dhulipala in Hyderabad on

Wednesday. Chaitanya was previously married to actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu, with their four-year marriage ending in 2021. Reports suggest that he began dating Sobhita in 2022 and the couple got engaged in August this year. Their wedding will be a star-studded affair, with prominent celebrities such as Chiranjeevi, Ram Charan and his wife Upasana Konidela, Mahesh Babu and his wife Namrata Shirodkar, Jr NTR, SS Rajamouli, Nayanthara, Prabhas and Allu Arjun expected to attend. Ahead of the auspicious occasion, Chaitanya's cousin Rana Daggubati shared a heart-felt gift for the groom, highlighting their close bond. On Wednesday, the Baahubali actor posted a promo for an upcoming episode of The Rana Daggubati Show, featuring Chaitanya. In the clip, Rana playfully teases his cousin about the wedding while revealing some never-before-seen pictures of the soon-to-be-married couple, likely from their dating days. "What else, boss? What's happening in your personal life?" Rana quips, to which Chaitanya responds with a smile, "All neat and nice, all good." Sharing the video online, Rana humorously captioned it, "Chay and me.. aren't we a match made in heaven? ???" The episode will also feature Rana's wife Miheeka Daggubati, making it a delightful Akkineni-Daggubati family special. Packed with love and laughter, the promo shows heartwarming interactions, including Rana asking Miheeka, "You think I have become better after wedding?" to which she playfully replies, "Of course! You are married to me!" The much-awaited episode will premiere on Amazon Prime Video this Saturday.

Nargis Fakhri shares first post after sister Aliya's arrest for murder, mother says, 'She was a caring person'

Actor Nargis Fakhri's sister Aliya was arrested recently for allegedly murdering her ex-boyfriend and his friend. Nargis hasn't yet commented on the matter, and a recent report suggests that the sisters have been estranged for decades. Hours after news of Aliya's arrest broke, Nargis took to social media to share her first post, but it had nothing to do with the incident. Instead, she was promoting her upcoming film Housefull 5. The picture also featured her co-stars Jacqueline Fernandez and Sonam Bajwa, and carried the caption, "We are coming for you." An India Today report cited a source as saying that Aliya and Nargis hadn't been in touch for years. "She has not been in touch with her sister for over 20 years. The actor learned about the incident through the news, just like everyone else," the source stated.

Aliya is said to have set fire to the garage of her ex-partner and his friend, after he allegedly rejected her advances to rekindle their relationship. The deceased persons have been identified as Edward Jacobs (35), and Anastasia Etienne (33). The incident took place in the Queens neighbourhood of New York. Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz told the media that Aliya had been indicted on murder in the first degree and related charges. Aliya's mother expressed disbelief. "I don't think she would be killing someone," she told the New York Daily News. "She was a person caring for everybody." The alleged crime took place on



November 2. Katz said in a statement, "Soon after, a witness who was inside the property came downstairs and discovered that the building was on fire. Etienne was alerted to the fire and went downstairs briefly. The woman then returned upstairs in an attempt to save Jacobs, who was sleeping. The building became engulfed with flames and neither Jacobs nor Etienne could escape. Nargis made her Bollywood debut with Imtiaz Ali's Rockstar, starring Ranbir Kapoor. She has also appeared in films such as Madras Cafe, Main Tera Hero, Azhar, and more.

Tamil producers approach Madras HC seeking ban on online movie reviews during first three days of a film's release; notices issued

In the petition, TFAPA requested an interim order to strictly limit social media platforms from recording public reviews of new films within theatre premises. However, the HC declined to grant the same. TFAPA's opposition to online movie reviews intensified following the harsh criticism Siva's Suriya-starrer Kanguva received, which eventually affected its collection. A fortnight after issuing a statement calling for a ban on YouTube reviews conducted outside theatres — blaming them for the underperformance of many films — the Tamil Film Active Producers Association (TFAPA) has approached the Madras High Court (HC) seeking a prohibition on online movie reviews during the first three days of a film's release. Following this, the court reportedly issued notices to the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Tamil Nadu government and YouTube.

In the petition, filed by general secretary T Sivalingam, the association also requested an interim order to strictly limit social media platforms from recording public reviews of new films within theatre premises. However, Justice S Sounther declined to grant such interim relief, as reported by LiveLaw. Only in SCREEN | Vivek Oberoi says he became a businessman after facing Bollywood lobbies: 'They can't decide my future, my livelihood is...'

Acknowledging the evolution of film criticism alongside social media and cinema, the petitioner argued that while the process has been democratised, it has also brought "unimaginable challenges." The petitioner alleged that many a time, people are employed to spread negative reviews of specific films due to personal grudges or business rivalries. These actions, he claimed, create biased perceptions about movies before general audiences have the chance to watch them, leading to revenue losses. This phenomenon, described as "negative review bombing," was also said to undermine the credibility of movie review process. The association further claimed that fake social media profiles are often created solely to post negative reviews in exchange for monetary compensation. While acknowledging the existence of genuine reviewers offering fair criticism, TFAPA noted an increase in YouTube channels engaging in negative review bombing, using offensive language to apparently attract subscribers and views. This trend, the association argued, has become a significant threat to the film industry. It also claimed that such negative campaigns discourage OTT platforms and satellite channels from acquiring these films. Justice S Sounther, while issuing notices to the authorities concerned, remarked that reviews, even if critical of films, are "part of the freedom of speech and expression" and cannot be curtailed. Bar & Bench reported. The notices are returnable in four weeks. TFAPA's opposition to online movie reviews intensified following the harsh criticism director Siva's Suriya-starrer Kanguva received, which eventually affected its collection, leading to the movie bombing in the box office. Interestingly, several star-driven Tamil films released this year



— such as "Thalapathy" Vijay's The Greatest of All Time (GOAT), Rajinikanth's Vettaian and Kamal Haasan's Indian 2 — also faced significant backlash for their perceived lack of quality, impacting their box office performance. TFAPA, however, attributed these underwhelming results not to the films' quality but to negative YouTube reviews conducted outside theatres.

Tamil actor Mansoor Ali Khan's son arrested in drug trafficking case

Chennai: Ali Khan Tughlaq, the son of Tamil actor Mansoor Ali Khan, was arrested on Wednesday in connection with a drug trafficking case. His arrest followed an intensive investigation by the Thirumangalam Police, who interrogated him on Tuesday. The police initiated the probe after receiving intelligence linking Tughlaq to individuals involved in the drug trade, several of whom had been recently arrested. Authorities had earlier arrested 10 individuals, including college students, in connection with the drug trafficking network. Seyad Saki, Mohammed Riyas Ali and Faisal Ahmed were detained. Tughlaq was arrested along with three others, and all four were in police custody for further questioning. Tamil Nadu has recorded many cases of international drug syndicates, with banned narcotics such as methamphetamine (meth) and its precursor, pseudoephedrine, being smuggled to countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Australia, where demand is high.

Women in white sarees showed up at Amar Upadhyay's house the day Mihir Virani died; they pelted stones at Balaji office



Actor Amar Upadhyay, who rose to fame after playing Mihir Virani on the popular television show Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, spoke about the controversial decision to kill his character off, and the outrage that it inspired among fans. He said that women showed up at his house, thinking that he had actually died. Meanwhile, others pelted stones at the offices of Balaji Telefilms; the situation got so out of

hand that producer Ekta Kapoor summoned Amar for a conversation, and only 10 days later, it was decided to bring the character back. In an interview with Mirchi, Amar recalled what happened. He said, "People showed up at the office, people showed up at my house. They were everywhere. The day Mihir was killed off on the show, people thought that I had actually died. Women showed up at my house in white sarees to mourn my death, my mother had to kick them out."

He said that the date was February 8, 2001, and in the evening, Ekta Kapoor called him to the office. "The phone was ringing off the hook. People were calling up from all over the country. They kept asking, 'How could you kill him?' And I would tell them that I am alive. It was front page news the next day. I couldn't believe what was happening." Amar said that he was upset about his character being killed off on the show, but because of the outrage, the producers were forced to plan a comeback. "So many women showed up at Balaji, they pelted stones at the building and at the guards... The Star Plus servers crashed; they got more emails than Kaun Banega Crorepati would get. The outrage lasted for about a week or 10 days. And that's how they decided to get him back," he said. Amar said that he eventually quit the show again to focus on his film career, because the workload was getting too difficult to handle. He said that he didn't second-guess his decision, and was quite firm about it. He also revealed that the cast keeps in touch on WhatsApp, although Ronit Roy and Smriti Irani aren't a part of the group.

Priyanka Chopra hints at Bollywood comeback next year — could it be for Jee Le Zaraa? 'You will need to speak to...'

While Priyanka Chopra Jonas is currently juggling two major projects — the American action-comedy Heads of State, where she shares the screen with Idris Elba and John Cena, and the action drama The Bluff — it appears that the global star is finally set to return to her home turf after a six-year hiatus. In a significant update, Priyanka recently revealed that she is close to zeroing in on a new Hindi project. "Not joking, I meet many filmmakers here, read scripts. I have actively been looking for something I want to do in Hindi. This year was really busy for me. But I have something up my sleeve, I will leave it at that," Priyanka said during a chat with HT City. Naturally, the next question was whether she was referring to the Farhan Akhtar directorial Jee Le Zaraa. "You will need to speak to Excel (Entertainment, Farhan Akhtar's production house) about that," she said, offering no further details.

Touted as a road movie, Jee Le Zaraa has been generating significant buzz since its announcement in 2021, since it features Priyanka, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhat in the lead roles. Co-written by Zoya Akhtar, Farhan Akhtar and Reema Kagti, with Farhan himself at the helm, the film has faced delays due to difficulties in coordinating the schedules of the three lead actors and the director. Zoya, during an appearance on 'The Indian Express' Expresso show earlier this year, confirmed that the film remains in the works and that the delays were due to scheduling conflicts.

Though her home ground misses her, Priyanka remains at the top of her game globally. She recently wrapped up filming for the second season of her Amazon Prime Video spy series Citadel. Reflecting on her ability to navigate different cultures, she credited her teenage years in the United States with making the transition smoother. "The industry in itself... the process of filmmaking is same everywhere. It's the cultural differences which make them different industries, else the cameras, the shots, everything is the same. I can't be rigid in India, expecting it to be Hollywood-like in



Bollywood, or vice versa. Be like water, and not rigid. I have always been like that my whole life... Keep quiet, listen and find your place. I was thrown into it to figure it out," she told HT City. "I have been a public person more than half my life, for 25 years now. I am extremely private. So, the hard part is really to be able to manage expectations or public pressures. I have changed a lot. Being a professional, being able to deal with failure and change... that's the hardest part. I am not someone who talks about my vulnerabilities or hardships very much. There are some people who do, and I find it very... inspiring. I was raised to be tough and hold yourself together," she added. Her last Bollywood film was The Sky Is Pink (2019).

Comedian Sunil Pal found hours after going missing, wife Sarita confirms he is ok: 'Police se baat...'

Comedian-actor Sunil Pal, who had gone missing for several hours after travelling out of Mumbai for a show, has been located safe and sound. His wife, Sarita Pal, had filed a missing person complaint at the Santacruz police station on December 3, after repeated attempts to contact him failed. In a swift turn of events, Sunil Pal was located just a few hours later and established contact with his wife and the authorities. When Bollywood paparazzo Viral Bhayani reached out to Sarita, she provided an update on her husband's whereabouts. In a message, she confirmed, "Sunil ji se baat ho gayee (I have spoken to Sunil ji). He has spoken to the police."

According to reports, Pal was travelling out of Mumbai for a show and had informed his wife that he would return on December 3. However, when she tried to contact him, his phone was unreachable, and later, it was switched off, prompting her to seek police assistance.

A friend of the comedian revealed that Pal was facing a "problem", but declined to elaborate on the matter. Echoing similar sentiments, trade analyst Girish Wankhede shared with the Times of India, "He told me there was a problem, but he is out of it." Despite the confirmation of a problem, Wankhede refrained from disclosing any further details, leaving the exact nature of the issue unclear. Prior to going missing, Pal had shared a video on his social media handles, in which he was seen enjoying a speed boat ride with a few men. "Nadiya ke paar," he captioned the video, without revealing where it was shot. Pal shot to fame



and became a household name after his stint on The Great Indian Laughter Challenge in 2005. He was declared the winner of the show and went on to host The Great Indian Comedy Show, and participate in Comedy Champions, and Comedy Circus Ke SuperStars. Sunil Pal has appeared in several films, including Hum Tum (2004) and Phir Hera Pheri (2006). Sunil Pal is expected to return to Mumbai on December 4. His wife, Sarita, has declined to share further details about the incident. Pal was unavailable for comment when contacted by SCREEN.

Netflix reveals its upcoming docuseries tracing life of Bollywood's Roshan family

Mumbai: On Wednesday, Netflix revealed its upcoming documentary series, "The Roshans", which will explore the illustrious legacy of Bollywood's renowned Roshan family. The series will include candid interviews with industry peers, friends, and colleagues, sharing their insights on the family's remarkable influence. Directed by Shashi Ranjan, the documentary will trace the legacy of the Roshans, starting with the patriarch, the legendary music composer Roshan. It will also highlight the careers of his sons' filmmaker Rakesh Roshan, composer Rajesh Roshan, and Rakesh's son, Hrithik Roshan. Netflix took to

its Instagram handle to announce the first poster and wrote, "A profound journey through legacy and love with the family that brought music, magic, and unforgettable moments to Hindi cinema. Watch The Roshans, coming soon, only on Netflix."

The poster features Hrithik Roshan, Rakesh Roshan and Rajesh Roshan. In a statement, the Roshan family said, "We are incredibly excited to partner with Netflix and share previously untold stories that shaped our lives. The platform allows us to reach viewers from across the globe, and it's an honor to showcase our journey to the audience."

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Karan powers Bengal to a win over Bihar



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Opening batter Karan Lal continued his spectacular run in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy as his unbeaten 94 powered Bengal to a nine-wicket win over Bihar in a group-A encounter at the Niranjan Shah Stadium Ground C here on Tuesday. Chasing 148, Karan hit six sixes and nine fours but missed out on a well-deserved century after the ball flew off Sudip Gharami's edge and went for four to finish the chase in 14 overs. Karan's aggressive knock didn't allow Bihar bowlers to apply any pressure despite removing Abishek Porel in the third over. Porel hit four fours enroute his 19 off 10 but got caught at covers driving the ball off

Prashant Singh.

Captain Gharami played the second fiddle with Karan during their 122-run stand as Bihar bowlers ran out of ideas to control the scoring rate. Earlier, Sakibul Gani played a brilliant knock of 79, showcasing a clear gulf between him and the other batters. After negating Mohammed Shami and Kanishk Seth's new ball spell, Gani took the game forward on a slow and low surface where boundaries were a luxury. Gani ran hard and began to accelerate once he crossed his 40s with boundaries against Sayan Ghosh and Seth. The right-hander used the pace to target behind square leg region and looked set to take Bihar close to the 160-run mark. However, in an attempt to steal a double, Prayas Ray Barman's direct hit found him short of the crease despite a desperate dive. Gani remained on his knees knowing his fate, and got a pat on the back by Shami, before slowly walking back to the pavilion. After his wicket in the 18th over, Bihar could only add 13 runs more to finish on 147 for six. In the other game, Hyderabad suffered another middle-order collapse and fell seven runs short of Madhya Pradesh's 179-run target. From 125 for three to 143 for seven, Hyderabad lost four wickets within 16 balls including the big wicket of Tilak Varma, who scored 46 off 34 balls. MP's new opening pair of Subhansu Senapati and Harsh Gawali added 92 runs to lay a strong platform for the rest to take the team to 178 for eight.

Bangladesh beats West Indies by 101 runs in Jamaica to level two-match series 1-1

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Bangladesh won a test in the Caribbean for the first time in 15 years by beating the West Indies by 101 runs inside four days at Sabina Park. Bangladesh set West Indies 287 to win in five and a bit sessions and the West Indies managed to bat less than two sessions, all out for 185. The Bangladeshis had lost their last seven tests in the Caribbean, including the first one of this series in Antigua last week. They have tied the short series. "This was enjoyable," Bangladesh stand-in captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz said. "We were not thinking negatively. The boys bowled especially well. Nahid (Rana) in the first innings, Taskin (Ahmed) and Hasan Mahmud. Second-innings specialist Taijul (Islam) got five wickets. He was excellent. He has been very good for the last 10 years, more than 200 wickets for us." On a pitch offering some grip and the odd low bounce, spin came into play and left-arm Taijul took advantage with 5-50, his best overseas figures in 2 1/2 years and his best figures in the West Indies since his test debut on the same ground in 2014. As West Indies wickets began to tumble — the last six for 42 runs — Jaker Ali's innings for Bangladesh grew in importance. Jaker made a career-best 91 and was last man out in the visitors' second innings just before lunch. That gave West Indies a target of 287, which was gettable, but on a ground where the highest successful run chase was 212. That record remains.

"The batting group needs consistency," West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite said. "Consistency in hard work as well. I believe we have the talent." Hodge offers hope Brathwaite led a positive start to the chase but couldn't sustain a partnership. Mikyle Louis fell to Taijul on the stroke of lunch, and Keacy Carty nicked Taskin behind. Brathwaite, with just one half-century in 18 months, reached 43 off 63 balls when he was out defending against Taijul. The ball grazed his glove and Mahmudul Hasan Joy made a diving close-in catch. Taijul then bowled Alick Athanaze through the gate and West Indies hopes were resting on Kavem Hodge.

Hodge reached tea on 49 and West Indies was still in the chase at 133-4, needing 154 more. Hodge, who debuted



in January, achieved the West Indies' first half-century of the test, 50 off 64 balls, but just when the chase was half done he was out. Taijul struck again. Hodge played back to a ball coming in from outside off and was pinned for 55 off 75. Still needing 144 more runs, the West Indies fell over from there. Taskin, Hasan Mahmud and first-innings destroyer Nahid Rana got among the wickets, while Taijul got his 15th career five-for when he trapped Joshua Da Silva. Jaker dominates. The morning was all about Jaker. He scored 62 of Bangladesh's 75 runs. Bangladesh resumed on 193-5 with a competitive lead of 211 and Jaker on 29. He was hit flush on the helmet by pacer Alzarri Joseph. Jaker passed a head check but lost partner Taijul soon after to another Alzarri Joseph bouncer. Mominul Haque, the usual No. 3 batter who didn't play on Monday because of an illness, came in at No. 8 but lasted only four balls. With his side seven down, Jaker was prompted to lash out. His first six, a pull behind square leg off Alzarri Joseph, gave him a fifty off 80 balls, and a third half-century in three tests. A boundary over the slip cordon was followed by a hooked six over fine leg, and he passed his previous highest test score, 58 in October on debut against South Africa. As West Indies pacer Kemar Roach cleaned up the tail, Jaker hit Roach high over the long-on and long-off boundaries, pulled Shamar Joseph twice to the fence, and hit Alzarri Joseph over cow corner. Jaker went down swinging, pulling Alzarri Joseph to deep midwicket, on 91 off 106 balls, including five sixes and eight boundaries.

K.L. Rahul on Batting Order: Batting in any position no longer a challenge; just want to be in playing XI

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Australia is the land where it all began for K.L. Rahul. Back in the December of 2014, the Karnataka star made his Test debut at Melbourne and has had quite the ride over the last decade. Be it strong limbs and fractured bones or hundreds and noughts, Rahul has seen them all. With vital runs (26 and 77) at Perth, the batter is now set for the second Test in Adelaide from Friday (December 6, 2024). On Wednesday (December 4, 2024) afternoon, Rahul was all about the measured answer while addressing the media at the Adelaide Oval's basement hall.

However, the million-dollar question about whether he will open was dealt with a cryptic response: "I have been told (about where I will bat), but I have also been told not to share it. You will have to wait for day one (of the Test) or maybe when the captain (Rohit Sharma) comes tomorrow. Evolving batting positions, ranging from opening to the number six slot, have shadowed Rahul's decade-long international career. He has made his peace with it: "I just want to be in the playing XI and bat for the team. Early on, when I was asked to bat in different places, it was a challenge mentally. But now that I have played in ODIs and in Test cricket, and all over the place, it has given me an idea as to how I need to manage my innings, especially the start. The first 30-40 balls matter, if I can manage that, then everything else seems like regular batting." At Perth, Rahul played the calm mentor to centurion Yashasvi Jaiswal in the second innings. Their 201-run alliance was one of the reasons for India's triumph. There was also a trickle-down theory at work as Rahul passed on the tips he imbibed from Murali Vijay.

Rahul, right, says he sees a little bit of himself in Yashasvi Jaiswal, left, like when he debuted in Australia 10 years ago. "I shared whatever I have learnt from playing in Australia and facing the new ball. I saw a little bit of myself (in Jaiswal) like when I was here 10 years ago, opening the batting for the first time. A lot of doubts, a lot of nerves. A lot happens in your head. The only thing you can do is slow things, take a few deep breaths and focus on one thing. And that's what was passed on to me by my then-opening partner Murali Vijay. So I just passed that on to Jaiswal," Rahul said. The imminent fixture at Adelaide will also pit Rahul against the pink ball: "This will be my first pink-ball Test. It is a bit different to the red ball in terms of how well you see and pick the ball from the bowler's hand. That's been a challenge. Hopefully by the time the game starts, we will have had enough practice sessions." The batter hopes that his



latest sojourn in Australia would help him chart a fresh path. "Planning to get a tattoo after the Sydney Test," he said, and it is another ritual he indulges in while being Down Under.

After crowd chaos, no fans allowed at Team India's practice during remainder of BGT

Fans will no longer be allowed at India's practice sessions in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test series against Australia after fans passed "rude" comments during the team's training here ahead of the second Test starting on Friday. The practice session was thrown open to fans on Tuesday. While a handful of them gathered to watch Australia, thousands converged to catch the Indian team live in action from close quarters as the practice facility stands in Adelaide are very close to the nets. "It was complete chaos. During the Australian training session, not more than 70-odd people turned up but during India's session, 3000 came. No one expected so many fans to turn up," a senior BCCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "There was another fans' day in Sydney [ahead of the fifth Test] which stands cancelled as players were very disturbed by the rude and insensitive comments that were passed [here]," he added. An eye-witness said that fans badgered the likes of Rohit Sharma and Rishabh Pant to hit sixes and passed comments on the fitness of another player. "Virat [Kohli] and Shubman Gill could have been mobbed because of so many people.

KL Rahul has an opportunity to put Test career back on track, a decade after his debut in Australia



GNS News Agency, Dec 6

It's still not clear whether KL Rahul will open in the Adelaide Test. "I know but I have been told to not tell," he would tell the media. But it's certain that he is going to get a tattoo at the end of the tour. "I have already fixed it after Sydney". He knows what design he wants, doesn't want to share yet, and it is becoming a bit of tradition. "I had done a tattoo on my first tour, and again (my) second tour." That first Australian tattoo was 10 years ago. "Feels like 25, honestly," Rahul says with a smile. Sometimes years can flash by in a blur, especially in good times, but Rahul's career has seen so many ups-and-downs. It has been a journey where he has felt every stumble deeply. "With the amount of injuries I've had, time away from the sport, yeah, feels long."

And lots of trolling and criticism. For someone who has played over 100 Tests, hit 6 of his 8 hundreds outside Asia and is a captain in IPL, he hasn't received unequivocal love from the public or consistent trust from the different team managements over the years. He doesn't even have a regular spot in the team. A floater in the line-up, who has drifted here and there through his career. It couldn't have been easy. His most famous celebration has been him closing his eyes with his fingers to suggest he is cutting out "external noise". And the din has been pretty loud about nearly every facet of his game: his strike rate in white-ball cricket, his batting foibles in Test cricket, his wicketkeeping. Even when he is a near mute-witness with Hardik Pandya on Koffee with Karan, his name has been dragged through the mud.

"Grateful for everything" "I learned a lot in these 10 years and really grateful for everything that I've had to go through, the ups and downs, the good, the bad, everything. Australia is where it started for me 10 years ago and hopefully, this is a start for something great in the next half of my career." Rahul India's Yashasvi Jaiswal, left, and teammate KL Rahul leave the field at the end of play on the second day of the first cricket test between Australia and India in Perth, Australia. It does seem so, but it's difficult to confidently tell that with KL for such has been the stormy past. One can't think of many batsmen who have hundreds in

South Africa, England, Australia and still not get a befitting stature. Or adequate respect, if not love from the fans. But this series has certainly started promisingly with his knocks in Perth in both innings, and in particular how he mentored Yashasvi Jaiswal through a nervy phase in the second innings. Jaiswal had publicly spoken about the help he received from Rahul — how he was told to breathe deeply to calm himself down, and little suggestions through that phase. On Wednesday, Rahul would say all he did then was to pass on the same suggestions his opening partner M Vijay had given him all those years back.

"I could see a bit of myself in Jaiswal from when I was here 10 years ago, opening the batting for the first time. A lot of doubts, a lot of nerves. You keep doubting your own game and there's a lot that happens in your head. So the only thing that you can do is to slow things down, try and take a few deep breaths and focus on one thing. And that's what was passed on to me by my fellow opening partner back then, Murali Vijay. So I just passed that on to him. Once he got past those first 30-40 balls, he started to feel a little bit more confident and he was seeing the ball really well and he batted beautifully." Rahul admitted that he still faces those self-doubts and nerves. "I do still have all of these thoughts. But having been there, you know what you need to do to get past that or get over those doubts and get over those thoughts you have in your head. So whatever I told Jaiswal is what I practice."

Balance in stance in the knocks thus far, his bat has been held closer to the body, one of the faults in the past that had led to him being dropped from the team. He had had a problem against the incoming ball, as the bat would be held a touch away, and would leave a bat-and-pad gap. He worked a lot on it with his friend David Mathias, a former Ranji teammate and a close friend. "It comes from good hard work on balance in the stance. The alignment at the crease," Mathias said. "That balance is the key for Rahul. He doesn't commit to any one shot. He is in a very neutral but strong position. The flaws against incoming balls disappeared, his judgement of the off stump became good and since he loves batting so much and faced failure, his patience has improved. He now preys on the bowlers' patience. The whole game reversed, basically. He is tremendously strong mentally. Once the technique thing kicked in — as in felt comfortable with the head position and the bat flow, that was it. The rest he sorted out mentally." The way he guided Jaiswal said a lot about his confidence in his own game. That he could see beyond himself, despite being pressed as an opener only because Rohit Sharma couldn't make the tour in time, spoke volumes of the space he is in. If it continues for the rest of the Tests, Australia, the place where it started for him, might yet provide him not just his newest tattoo but the impetus to stop his old celebration. He can then take the fingers off his ears, and hear some love pouring in.

'Short of a gallop': Michael Vaughan believes Australian skipper Pat Cummins needs to add more pace

GNS News Agency, Dec 6

Michael Vaughan believes that Pat Cummins needs to add more pace to his bowling, which would make him a formidable force against India (Reuters). Michael Vaughan believes that Pat Cummins needs to add more pace to his bowling, which would make him a formidable force against India (Reuters). With Australian skipper Pat Cummins managing to take only three wickets for 153 runs in his 40 overs during Australia's 295-run loss to India in the opening Test match of the Border Gavaskar Trophy at Perth, the talk has been about the 31-year-old regrouping the Australian attack ahead of the second Pink Ball Test match at Adelaide starting December 6. Former England cricketer Michael Vaughan believes that the Australian pace spearhead looked short of a gallop in the opening Test and needs to add more pace.

"He's a world-class performer, a brilliant captain and a brilliant bowler. (But) the one thing I'll say is he did look short of a gallop in the First Test. He'd not been playing any cricket. He had not played any longer format cricket since March. So I would think this week in Adelaide, he will be up on his pace because of what he did last week. I think the First Test will be good for him. He's got some overs back into his body, into his mind, playing the longer format back into his system, and I think he'll be better for it." Vaughan told The Follow On.

As per Codesports and data by Cricviz, Cummins' speed has dipped from an average speed of 140.6km/hr in 2018 to 136km/hr over the past one year. The 31-year-old has a total of 272 wickets in 63 Test matches. Earlier this year, Cummins had a forgetful series in the West Indies where he picked five wickets in Two test matches at an average of 36.20. According to Codesports, his bowling



average has increased from 22.15 two years ago to 22.85 at present. Vaughan was of the view that pace counts a lot for Cummins. "Pace is a lot for Pat Cummins. If he is down to 135 (or so), I think he gives the batters that extra little bit of time to adjust to the movement and the accuracy that he produces. We saw it in the Ashes, actually, a couple of years ago, that when England got after him, and when England got after Australia, England looked like a team that were dominating. The field was spread and run scoring became that much easier," said Vaughan. With Australia starting the second Pink Ball Test trailing 0-1 in the series, Vaughan sees this week as a big one for the Australian cricket team. "It feels like a big week for Australia. They are one-nil down. And the last time India were there, they bowled them out for 36 and blew them away, but they lost that series. And if you actually look at this Australian Test match team, they haven't actually won any big series. They've got the Ashes. They managed to draw two-all, but anyone who was a real cricket student (would know that) if it was a boxing contest, England had Australia on the ropes," Vaughan said.

What happened to Virat Kohli's nameplate during 2011-12 series? At Adelaide Oval, century-old scoreboard tells glorious cricketing tales

"The old lady doesn't miss a beat!" Simon Crompton is referring to the 100-year-old Adelaide Oval scoreboard that still functions at the refurbished stadium. "That's what we call her: old lady." The only scoreboard in the world that has bulbs that light up to point out the fielder who has taken a blinder, dropped a catch or stopped a ball. Crompton and his five-man team's hard work is mind-boggling: from being able to identify the fielders based on their gait to shuffling up and down four flights of stairs to change the names in the board, cramped in a space that is barely three-foot wide and seven-foot tall. But before we detail his painstaking work, the glorious stories about the cricketers from Don Bradman, Keith Miller, Joel Garner or what happened to Virat Kohli's nameplate after the 2011-12 series in Australia is perhaps the best place to start. It begins with a 12-year-old Simon who had just walked from church into the Oval along with his parents to watch a game. As he sat and looked up, he saw Ian Chappell drop his pants and "moon" Bradman who was at the ground. It was the time when Chappell was the Australian captain and was warring with the establishment figure Bradman over player wages and such. "My father immediately covered my eyes!"

Simon became friends with the Test cricketer Rodney Hogg, a "mad fast bowler", and through him entered the world of cricketers. "I remember walking to a hotel and every Australian player from Allan Border to others sitting in rapt attention around a handsome man. It was the flamboyant all-rounder Keith Miller, telling stories about his friendship with the royal family in England, and other stories from his cricketing tours. Unfortunately, I can't share those colourful tales," Simon says with a laugh. Crompton Simon Crompton with his grand children. "You understand, don't you? Will tell you this one time though, decades after he retired and when he was in his 70s, Keith came to a Test match. Probably, against Pakistan. Keith loved his drinks, mingled socially with the club members, and thought it best to stay here overnight. So, right through that Test, there was actually a caravan inside the ground, not far from the scoreboard, where he would wear off long nights at the bar and sleep off. The next morning, a change of clothes, and he was at the cricket! For no other cricketer, I can imagine the authorities doing that at Adelaide Oval." Through Hogg, Simon became the designated driver of the West Indian pacer Joel Garner when he came to play for South Australia in the Sheffield Shield cricket.