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Student Electrocutes to Death Amidst Hostel Management Negligence

WANAPARTHY: A heartbreaking incident has unfolded in Wanaparthy district, where a 15-year-old student lost his life due to negligence on the part of school management, raising serious questions about the accountability of educational institutions. The tragic event occurred on Saturday when Harish, a Class 9 student from the Radiant School hostel, was electrocuted by electric wires planted in a nearby groundnut field. Reports indicate that Harish and a fellow student, Gautam, were exploring the adjacent peanut field when Harish inadvertently came into contact with the live wires, leading to his untimely death at the scene. Although another student promptly informed the school management, it was too late; Harish had already succumbed to the shock.

Death toll in Jaipur LPG tanker crash rises to 14

Jaipur: The death toll in the LPG tanker accident on the Jaipur-Ajmer highway rose to 14 on Saturday, an official said here. He said more than 30 people who suffered burn injuries in the massive crash are undergoing treatment.

"Five charred bodies were received yesterday. Eight others have died. Total 14 deaths have been reported so far. Twenty-seven patients are admitted to SMS hospital and undergoing treatment. Seven are on ventilator support," Dr Sushil Bhati, Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital Superintendent, said.

Allu Arjun attended 'Pushpa-2' screening despite police denying permission: CM

Hyderabad: GNS News Agency, Dec 21: Despite police permission being denied, top Telugu actor Allu Arjun attended the theatre where 'Pushpa-2' was screened on December 4, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy charged on Saturday. Even after the death of a woman in a stampede, the actor did not leave the cinema hall, prompting the police to force him out, CM alleged. Responding to the issue after AIMIM MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi raised it in the Assembly, Reddy, referring to videos in circulation, found fault with Allu Arjun for holding a roadshow and waving to the crowds in spite of the heavy crowd. Reddy further said the theatre management gave a letter to the police on December 2 seeking security for the visit of top actors and others on December 4. However, the police rejected the application, citing difficulties in crowd management.

Before entering the theatre and exiting, the actor stood through the sunroof of his car and waved to the crowds leading to thousands of fans jostling to get a glimpse of him, he said. He slammed film personalities for making a beeline for Allu Arjun's residence to meet him after his arrest but not showing empathy to visit the boy who is undergoing treatment in hospital after suffering injuries in the incident. "I appeal to the top film personalities that they should not be inhuman," he said. He also said there won't be any special privileges when untoward incidents like death in a stampede happen and said the government would not spare those who troubled common people. A 35-year-old woman died and her eight-year-old son was hospitalised on De-



ember 4 during a stampede-like situation at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad when thousands of fans jostled to have a glimpse of the actor at the premiere of the blockbuster 'Pushpa 2.'

Following the incident, the city police registered a case against Allu Arjun, his security team, and the theatre management under different sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Chikadpally police station based on the complaint lodged by the deceased woman's family. Allu Arjun was arrested by the city police in connection with the death of the woman on December 13. The Telangana High Court granted him a four-week interim bail on the same day and he was released from the prison here on December 14 morning.

PM Modi arrives in Kuwait on a historic visit

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Kuwait City: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday afternoon arrived in Kuwait, becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to visit the Gulf nation in 43 years. The PM received a grand welcome upon his arrival as he began his historic two-day visit at the invitation of the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, that is expected to take India's close ties with the Gulf countries to another level.

PM Modi will be accorded a ceremonial guard of honour at the Bayan Palace, following which he will be holding separate meetings with the Amir of Kuwait and the Crown Prince of Kuwait. Delegation-level talks with the Prime Minister of Kuwait will be held thereafter during which the Prime Minister will review with the leadership of Kuwait the entire spectrum of bilateral relations including in areas such as the political, trade, investment, energy, culture and people-to-people ties, and the steps that both sides need to take to further enhance them.

The Crown Prince will be hosting a banquet in honour of the Indian PM who is also scheduled to interact with the Indian diaspora at a community event besides also visiting a labour camp. During his visit, PM Modi will also attend the opening ceremony of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup as a special guest of the Amir of Kuwait. "Today, I am embarking on a two-day visit to Kuwait at the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir



of the State of Kuwait. We deeply value the historical connection with Kuwait that has been nurtured over generations. We are not just strong trade and energy partners but also have shared interest in peace, security, stability and prosperity in the West Asia region," the Prime Minister said in his departure statement, earlier in the day. "It would be an opportunity to chalk out a road map for a futuristic partnership for the benefit of our people and the region. I eagerly look forward to meeting the Indian diaspora in Kuwait who have immensely contributed to the strengthening of bonds of friendship between the two nations," the statement added. PM Modi also said that he remains confident that his visit will further strengthen and reinforce the special ties and bonds of friendship between the people of India and Kuwait.

Telangana Assembly sees resignation challenges as BRS, Congress argue over 24x7 power supply



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Hyderabad: Amidst the short discussion on Rythu Bharosa in the Assembly on Saturday, members threw challenges of tendering resignations if their claims were proved wrong on different issues. It all began when BRS working president KT Rama Rao said the previous BRS government had supplied sufficient water and 24 hours free power supply to farmers.

Countering his statement, Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy alleged the BRS government had supplied power for only 11 to 14 hours a day. Even this supply was disrupted five to six times a day, he alleged, adding that he had personally checked the logs books at sub-stations. "Let us visit Nalgonda soon after the

House is adjourned and check with farmers. If I am proved wrong, I will tender my resignation in Speaker format," Komatireddy Venkat Reddy challenged. He also said irrespective of the opposition by BRS and BJP MLAs, the Congress government would take up River Musi rejuvenation project. As Congress MLAs continued to cheer the Minister, the BRS working president reminded that as per the White Paper submitted by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka in the House, it was clearly declared that the BRS government had on an average supplied free power for 19.2 hours in a day. Countering the Congress party claims that it had patent for 24 hours free power supply to farmers, Rama Rao challenged them to check the log books at sub stations in Nalgonda district alone. "If it is proven that 24 hours free power supply is being extended to farmers, all the BRS MLAs will tender their resignations," Rama Rao said. Pointing out that the barren lands in Palamuru were transformed into fertile lands by the BRS government by completing pending projects, he said availability of water and power had triggered reverse migration in the district.

In reply, Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao alleged that the BRS government had failed to complete the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation scheme. "If I am proved wrong, I will submit my resignation," Krishna Rao announced. Responding to him, the BRS working president said Rs.4000 crore was spent by the KCR government to complete pending projects, including Kalwakurthy, Bheema, Nettampadu and others and water was supplied to 6.5 lakh acres in the Palamuru district.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy Raises Concerns Over Dharani Portal's Data Breach, Promises New Land Records ...

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed deep concern over the breach of sensitive land records through the Dharani portal, a platform introduced by the previous government. He revealed that the highly confidential land-related information of Telangana's farmers, including Aadhaar cards, bank account details, and phone numbers, had been exposed to foreign entities, potentially reaching criminal organizations involved in financial crimes. Speaking in the legislative assembly during a discussion on the Telangana Bhoobharthi (Land Rights) Act, 2024, the Chief Minister detailed the problems created by the Dharani portal. He emphasized that despite the portal's intent to safeguard land records, it had inadvertently allowed critical data to cross national borders, potentially endangering the privacy of Telangana's farmers.

"The information collected from transactions since 2020, including Aadhaar numbers, bank accounts, and phone numbers, has been compromised. This breach has led to personal data falling into the hands of entities in foreign countries, including those involved in economic crimes," the Chief Minister said, highlighting the grave implications of the situation. The Telangana Bhoobharthi Act, passed in 2024, aims to provide secure and reliable land records, covering 1.52 million acres across the state. It aims to not only preserve land ownership details but also protect the rights of landowners. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy assured the assembly that the new law would strengthen the land records system and restore public trust.

The Chief Minister further criticized the previous government's handling of the Dharani portal, which saw critical data being outsourced to foreign companies, including those based in tax haven countries like the Cayman Islands and British Virgin Islands. He revealed that the portal's management shifted from one company to another, with foreign entities, such as Falcon SG (Philippines) and Falcon Investments, gaining access to Telangana's land data. The government also discovered that private companies had changed land ownership details, including government, temple, and private land records, without proper authorization. This unauthorized transfer of sensitive data, including the manipulation of records, has raised serious concerns about the integrity and safety of the information. After



taking office, the government scrutinized the issue and found that agreements between the previous government and foreign companies had violated regulations, allowing sensitive data to be accessed by foreign players. The Chief Minister emphasized that these breaches were severe, as companies like Falcon Investments, which had access to the Dharani portal, were not only uncooperative but also obstructed the transfer of records to the National Informatics Centre (NIC). "We decided to move the management of the Dharani portal to NIC to ensure secure and confidential handling of land records. However, we faced resistance from these private entities, which had illegally held on to the data," Revanth Reddy stated.

Despite the setbacks, the Telangana government has introduced the Bhoobharthi Act to rectify the problems caused by the Dharani portal and to ensure that land records are secure and protected under state supervision. The Chief Minister also noted that while the process was delayed due to careful consideration, the government's efforts to rectify these issues would ultimately benefit the people of Telangana. The Chief Minister concluded by stressing that the new legislation, Bhoobharthi Act 2024, would be a step toward transparency and trust, aiming to bring relief to the people who have suffered due to the mismanagement of land records. He assured the people that his government would continue to work towards safeguarding their rights and interests, taking all necessary steps to ensure that the trust placed in the government is never broken again.

ACB Case Filed Against KTR in Formula E-Race Controversy

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Hyderabad: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a case against former Telangana IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) in connection with alleged irregularities during the Formula E-race event. The case came to light during court proceedings, where the Advocate General (AG) highlighted suspicious payments made to Formula E Operations (FEO). According to the AG, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), which was not directly involved in the event, paid ₹55 crores to FEO. This sparked questions from the judiciary regarding the purpose and beneficiaries of these transactions. The court specifically inquired about any personal benefits that KTR might have gained from the payments. Responding to the court's queries, the AG clarified that the investigation would determine who benefited from the alleged misappropriations. The judiciary stated that the case did not qualify as an urgent



petition, allowing it to proceed under standard investigative protocols. This development has raised concerns about the transparency of financial dealings in high-profile events and the accountability of public funds in such initiatives. Further updates on the investigation are awaited.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor gives nod to ED to prosecute Arvind Kejriwal



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Ahead of the upcoming 2025 Delhi Assembly Polls, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena has given sanction to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to prosecute Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief and former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi excise policy case, according to sources at the LG's office. On December 5, the ED sought permission for sanction of prosecution against Mr. Kejriwal. "If LG sir has given permission to prosecute Arvind Kejriwal ji, then what is the problem for ED in making the copy of the approval public? This news is being spread only to mislead

people and distract them from the issues. BJP should stop these conspiracies. Tell the truth," senior AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi said in a post on social media platform X.

ED Requests Details from Telangana ACB Regarding KTR Case

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has sent a letter to the Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) seeking details related to the case filed against K. T. Rama Rao (KTR). The ED has requested a copy of the First Information Report (FIR) along with specific information concerning transactions from the HMDA (Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority) account. The ED is particularly interested in the amounts transferred and the specific dates on which these transactions took place.

Hyderabad High Court Denies Interim Relief to Mohan Babu in Journalist Assault Case



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

The Telangana High Court has refused to issue interim orders in the case concerning an assault on TV9 journalist Ranjith. The case is related to the alleged attack on the journalist by individuals associated with actor Mohan Babu.

Mohan Babu, who is seeking anticipatory bail, had requested the court to prevent his arrest until the case is heard further. His legal counsel had urged the court to grant an order restraining the police from taking any action against him until Monday.

Invest in Bengal's Silicon Valley, has Rs 27k cr potential



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Infosys Centre in New Town, New Town, Infosys Centre, Mamata Banerjee, Kolkata news, WEST Bengal news, Indian express, current affairs Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Infosys CFO Jayesh Sanghrajka and Principal Chief Advisor to CM Amit Mitra during the inauguration of a development centre of Infosys. Partha Paul Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday extended an invitation to industrialists to collaborate with West Bengal and said that Bengal Silicon Valley has a potential of Rs 27,000 crore in investments and ability to generate 75,000 job opportunities. Urging industrialists to invest in the state, she assured them of complete support from the government. Addressing a gathering during the inaugural programme of the 50-acre campus of a development center of Infosys in New Town, Kolkata on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said, "This is a historic day, not only for Infosys but also for us and also for the whole IT industry. During the economic crisis, we were growing. Come over here, invest more, our government will provide all sorts of help." The development centre — "Kolkata Development Centre", will employ more than 4,000 people.

Banerjee mentioned that Bengal is a leading destina-

tion for the IT industry. "Bengal is the land for each and everybody. Bengal is a leading IT state and you will get tremendous talent pool from here. We are number one in terms of talent pool in India. Today, I can say, we fulfilled our dream," the CM said. Additionally, Mamata Banerjee pointed out that the state has 22 IT parks and that the aim should be to set up "Bengal Silicon Valley like America." "We have set up Bengal Silicon Valley like America. There we have already 200 crore invested. This Silicon Valley has potential of Rs 27,000 crore investment and 75,000 people could be employed. We have set up 22 IT parks, where almost 85 per cent are already filled up," she said. The others present during the inauguration ceremony included Jayesh Sanghrajka, Chief Financial Officer of Infosys and other senior officers from the state government and Infosys.

"This important investment in West Bengal advances our commitment to fostering innovation and empowering our workforce across India. The development center will not only drive business growth but also contribute towards enhancing the IT landscape in the state. By leveraging our rich talent pool in West Bengal, we aim to deliver cutting-edge solutions to our clients globally," said Sanghrajka. Meanwhile, the CM directed local Trinamool Congress leader Saikat Mollah that Infosys should not face any sort of problems. "You (Saikat) should cooperate in all ways. This is a border of West Bengal police and Kolkata police and there should be good cooperation between them. They (Infosys) must work very smoothly and peacefully." Infosys, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, on Wednesday announced the inauguration of its new state-of-the-art facility in Kolkata with an investment of over Rs 426 crore, that is designed to accommodate over 4,000 employees in a hybrid working model. The center will enable employees to work on cutting-edge technologies such as cloud, AI, and digital, across a diverse range of industries, including manufacturing, logistics, financial services, energy and utilities.

'This is not Bangladesh that was born in 1971... This is new Pakistan'

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

ISKCON priest arrest, Chinmoy Krishna Das Arrest, ISKCON, MEA, Chinmoy Krishna Das, Hindus, Bangladesh, attack on hindus, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Chinmoy Krishna Das arrest In Bangladesh, ISKCON Priest Arrest In Bangladesh, MEA on Chinmoy Krishna Das arrest, ministry of external affairs, Hindu minorities, Hindu safety, Hindu Priest Arrested In Bangladesh, Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyer Rabindra Ghosh at son's residence in Barrackpore, near Kolkata on Tuesday. Partha Paul "I am not a coward. I have not fled Bangladesh. I will return to my country and continue fighting for justice and release of ISKCON monk Chinmoy Krishna Das," says 75-year-old Rabindra Ghosh seated in the terrace of his son's Barrackpore residence as a stream of visitors crowd the house.

Ghosh, a Supreme Court lawyer of Bangladesh, however, feels that he is no longer able to recognise his country. "The interim government of Mohd Yunus claims that they are the new government, but this is not Bangladesh born in 1971. It's another Bangladesh, born on August 8, 2024 (the day the government of Sheikh Hasina was overthrown by a students' movement). The intention is to destroy the country. They are trying to create a new Bangladesh, and a new Pakistan," Ghosh, who reached Kolkata two days ago for medical treatment at AIIMS, Kalyani, tells The Indian Express. Ghosh, who is also the chairman of Bangladesh Minority Watch, twice tried to appear at the Chittagong metropolitan sessions judge's court to file a bail application for the ISKCON monk Das, arrested on sedition charge, but could not. "Chinmoy Krishna Das is a monk, with a very dedicated personality. He was doing very good work in Bangladesh, for the society and the country. He has been arrested on flimsy and false cases. It is not a sedition case. It is a concocted and motivated case. The sedition case was filed against him as his popularity was increasing in Bangladesh and that was not liked by a section of people. This arrest is an instigation by other political parties," Ghosh says, adding he received death threats for representing the monk in the court.

"It is a difficult situation. Most of the lawyers trying to defend Chinmoy Krishna Das have been implicated in murder cases... I, being a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, have been debarred from going to Chittagong to represent the monk in the court there. I have been told to



employ another lawyer from Chittagong Bar Association. Why? Many lawyers cannot go as they are afraid that they could be arrested. Since I have been representing Chinmoy Krishna Das in the court, many lawyers, especially those of the prosecution, are annoyed with me," says Ghosh. "When I went to the court and tried to argue in my client's defence, most of the lawyers, belonging to the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party), threatened me, heckled me. On the second day, the police saved me. The lawyers chanted slogans, calling me 'dalal of India'. In trying to meet Chinmoy Krishna Das in jail, I was harassed at every step," he says. "It is unfortunate as I am a citizen of Bangladesh. We achieved Independence in 1971, and I am a freedom fighter. But in spite of it, this discrimination continues. We are fighting against discrimination," he adds.

According to Ghosh, following the fall of the Hasina government, atrocities on people, particularly on religious minorities, have increased. "There is no law and order in the country. Minorities are being tortured and displaced from their homes... During Sheikh Hasina's rule, there was security of life, but now there is no security... Bangladesh has forgotten its past.

The country was liberated with the help of India. So many soldiers were killed by the Pakistan Army. The contribution of India is enormous, but the people have forgotten it... Everyone has to unite and decide that a peaceful existence is required. Only then, Bangladesh can reestablish democracy and secularism," he adds. Though his family worries about his safety and wants him to stay back in Kolkata, Ghosh says he is determined to return. "I am not afraid of death. I will return to my country and continue fighting for justice," he adds.

ED gets custody of industrialist Sanjay Sureka in bank fraud case



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Sanjay Sureka, Sanjay Sureka bank fraud case, bank fraud case, Kolkata bank fraud case, Concast Steel and Power Limited, Kolkata news, WEST Bengal news, Indian express, current affairs The ED had been monitoring Sureka's role in the alleged fraud for over a year and conducted searches at 10 locations linked to him, including his residence at Mandivilla Garden, said sources. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday night arrested industrialist and owner of Concast Steel and Power Limited, Sanjay Sureka, in connection with a bank fraud case, an official said. Jewellery worth Rs 4.5 crore and several foreign-made luxury cars were seized during raids at properties linked to him, the official added. A court on Wednesday granted the ED 14 days of custody of Sureka. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the ED conducted raids at over 10 locations in West Bengal, including Sureka's residence in south Kolkata's Ballygunge area, under the provisions of the PMLA, 2002, an official said. According to ED sources, the arrest was part of an ongoing investigation into a Rs 6,000 crore bank fraud which involved at least 16 banks across the country, including Jharkhand and Odisha. It has been alleged that

Sanjay Sureka had allegedly secured loans worth Rs 6,000 crore through several accounts, but had failed to repay the loans.

The ED had been monitoring Sureka's role in the alleged fraud for over a year and conducted searches at 10 locations linked to him, including his residence at Mandivilla Garden, said sources. "We are trying to ascertain how many people are behind this or if there are some influential people involved," an official said. During questioning, Sureka was unable to provide satisfactory answers regarding the misuse of funds and the seized jewellery. Additionally, Sureka could not produce valid documents for the valuables found at his residence.

Veteran Journalist MVR Sastry dedicates his book to Chilkur Balaji

Hyderabad: Veteran Journalist MVR Sastry dedicated his latest book "Devudunnadu Jagratha" to the Chilkur Balaji at a simple ceremony on Wednesday. He presented a copy of the book to MV Soundarajan, the 89-year-old Arachaka Sastry, who led the archaka community in a fight against 1987 legislation. Speaking on the occasion, Sastry called upon the historians to ensure that the 'historical anomalies' pertaining to the Tirumala temple, which crept into the documents over a period of time, are removed promptly. He discussed the contents of his 25th publication. He also recollected the services of Dr M V Soundararajan since 1983 and his fight against elements trying to destroy Temple system.

ED gets custody of industrialist Sanjay Sureka in bank fraud case



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Sanjay Sureka, Sanjay Sureka bank fraud case, bank fraud case, Kolkata bank fraud case, Concast Steel and Power Limited, Kolkata news, WEST Bengal news, Indian express, current affairs The ED had been monitoring Sureka's role in the alleged fraud for over a year and conducted searches at 10 locations linked to him, including his residence at Mandivilla Garden, said sources. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday night arrested industrialist and owner of Concast Steel and Power Limited, Sanjay

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Police to undergo special training modules, evaluation to tackle 'variety of challenges'

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Maha Kumbh, Maha Kumbh Police evaluation, Kumbh area, Maha Kumbh 2025, Maha Kumbh 2025 security, Lucknow news, Uttar pradesh news, Indian express, Current affairs People walk along a newly constructed pontoon bridge over the Ganga in Prayagraj. THE STATE government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the safety of devotees and tourists during Maha Kumbh 2025, and is adopting a "multi-faceted approach," officials said on Wednesday. In a bid to ensure zero complaints, the police personnel deployed for duty in the Kumbh area are going through "targeted training and evaluation programmes," officials said. Specialised training sessions and examinations are being organised to assess and strengthen the readiness of the policemen to face any potential challenges, informed a spokesperson for the DGP's office. These sessions cover critical areas such as disaster management, traffic control, interactions with devotees, and the religious and spiritual significance of Kumbh. Following the training, written examinations are conducted to evaluate the preparedness of police personnel, ensuring they "meet the highest standards of security and service." The examinations include questions on topics covered during training, such as disaster prevention and response, behavioural protocols with devotees, and key religious and spiritual aspects of Kumbh. These efforts aim to equip officers with comprehensive knowledge and skills to handle every aspect of their duty effectively.



UP Director General of Police Prashant Kumar, emphasised the significance of preparedness, saying "Maha Kumbh will present a variety of challenges for police personnel. To address this, comprehensive training and

examinations are being conducted to ensure every officer understands their duties and can handle any situation confidently." SSP Kumbh Mela, Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi said, "Mandatory training classes are being conducted for all personnel deployed for Kumbh Mela duty. The sessions focus on diverse areas, including security, disaster management and practical on-ground challenges. Post-training, the personnel are tested on their knowledge, with questions covering topics such as disaster identification and resolution, route familiarity, Kumbh's spiritual and religious heritage, and geographical considerations." Deputy Superintendent of Police (Training) Sandeep Verma said that the examination follows a multiple-choice format, comprising 20 questions with a total of 100 marks. He said, "The exam duration is set at one hour. For those who fail, there is a provision for an additional three-day training programme, followed by a re-examination to ensure that all police personnel are fully equipped for Kumbh duty."

In Lucknow, Youth Congress worker dies; police say no external injury mark

In Lucknow, Youth Cong worker dies; police say no external injury mark Police detain Congress activists ahead of their planned siege of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly in Lucknow. The Congress on Wednesday said that a 28-year-old party worker from Gorakhpur died during a protest in Lucknow, claiming that "police brutality" caused his death. The Uttar Pradesh Police, in a statement, denied the charge, saying the youth was last seen at the Congress party office, where he was found unconscious and no external injury marks were found on his body. Meanwhile, the family of the deceased, Prabhath Pandey, got a murder FIR registered against "unidentified persons".



As part of its nationwide protest against the BJP government's policies at the Centre and the state, the Congress had planned to gherao the Vidhan Sabha. However, with most of its leaders allegedly detained a night ago, a group of party workers, led by UP Congress chief Ajay Rai, marched from the party office to the Assembly. Stopped by the police, the Congress workers tried to barge in, leading to a clash. The Congress alleged that Pandey, who was also taking part in the protest, died after he was injured in the

clash with police. "During the scuffle with police, Youth Congress worker Prabhath Pandey died... The responsibility for this lies with the Yogi Adityanath government and the state police," said Ajay Rai and demanded a financial aid of '1 crore to Pandey's family and a government job to the kin. The police said that the post-mortem will be conducted by a panel of doctors and it will be videographed.

Banaskantha's Masali becomes India's first border solar village

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Banaskantha, Banaskantha Masali, India's first border solar village, border solar village, solar village, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, current affairs Masali is home to a population of 800 people. Masali village of Suigam taluka in Banaskantha has become the first border solar village in the country, district authorities said. Home to a population of 800 people, the village is located nearly 40 kilometers from the international Pakistan border.



"Under the Border Development Project, the administration has taken the initiative to make 11 villages of border Vav taluka and six of Suigam taluka, a total of 17 villages, completely solar. As part of this, work has been completed in Masali village," Banaskantha District Collector Mihir Patel told

The project worth Rs 1.16 crore was started with the cooperation of the Revenue Department, UGVCL (Uttar Gujarat Vij Company Limited), banks, and solar companies. The project has been implemented with a subsidy of Rs 59.81 lakh under the PM Suryaghar Yojana, public contribution of Rs 20.52 lakh, and CSR (corporate social responsibility) of Rs 35.67 lakh. In all, 225.5 kilowatts of electricity is received in 119 houses here, which is more than the requirement of every home, district authorities stated. Sarpanch of Madhpura Masali Group Gram Panchayat Magniram Rawal and village leaders said that the problem of elec-

tricity in the village has permanently ended due to solar power. "Now, we have got permanent freedom from paying light bills," said Rawal. Patel said it is a matter of pride for Banaskantha that Masali has earned the title of the second solar village in the state, after Modhera, and the first in any border area in the country.

Israel hits Yemen's ports, tells Houthis 'will reach you'



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Israel said on Thursday (December 19, 2024) that it struck ports and energy infrastructure used by Houthi rebels in Yemen after intercepting a missile fired from the country, warning Houthi leaders it "will reach you too." Houthi media said the strikes hit power stations, oil facilities and the port of Hodeidah, causing deaths and injuries, without giving further details. The strikes came after the interception of a missile fired by Houthi rebels towards Israel. The group has regularly targeted Israel over its military operation in Gaza. Israel's military said it "conducted precise strikes on Houthi military targets in Yemen -- including ports and energy infrastructure in Sanaa, which the Houthis have been using in ways that effectively contributed to their military actions."

the port city of Hodeidah. It reported raids that "targeted two central power plants" in and around Yemen's capital Sanaa, while in Hodeidah it said "the enemy launched four aggressive raids targeting the port... and two raids targeting" an oil facility. It said there were casualties at the oil facility without giving further details. The strikes came after Israel's military intercepted a missile from Yemen for the second time this week. On Monday, the Houthis claimed a missile launch they said was aimed at "a military target of the Israeli enemy in the occupied area of Yaffa" -- a reference to Israel's Tel Aviv area.

Also Monday (December 16, 2024), an Israeli navy missile boat intercepted a drone in the Mediterranean after it was launched from Yemen, the military said. Will attack Israel till Gaza aggression stops: Houthis. The Houthi rebels have said they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians and pledged Monday to continue operations "until the aggression on Gaza stops and the siege is lifted". On December 9, a drone claimed by Houthis exploded on the top floor of a residential building in the central Israel city of Yavne, causing no casualties. In July, a Houthi drone attack in Tel Aviv killed an Israeli civilian, prompting retaliatory strikes on the Yemeni port of Hodeidah.

The Houthis have also regularly targeted shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, leading to retaliatory strikes on Houthi targets by United States and sometimes British forces. Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said the group had become a "global threat," pointing to Iran's support for the rebels. "We will continue to act against anyone, anyone in the Middle East, that threatens the state of Israel," he said.

Elon Musk's possible meddling in U.K. politics stirs concern

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Concerns are growing in the U.K. as tech billionaire Elon Musk takes an increasingly close interest in Britain's political scene, appearing to cosy up to hard-right firebrand lawmaker Nigel Farage. With Mr. Musk named to a new position in the incoming U.S. administration of Donald Trump, there are fears the world's richest man could seek to influence London's future ties with Washington. On Wednesday, Mr. Farage, who leads the upstart anti-immigration Reform U.K. party, said he was in talks with Mr. Musk about making a donation to his party. Writing in the Telegraph newspaper, Mr. Farage said "the issue of money was discussed" when he met the X owner at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida on Monday. "There will be ongoing negotiations on that score," the arch-Euro-sceptic wrote, in comments that will likely unnerve the ruling Labour party and main Conservative opposition. Newspaper reports have suggested that Mr. Musk is preparing to donate up to \$100 million to Reform but Mr. Farage told the BBC the pair did not discuss figures.



worst unrest in years — Mr. Musk wrote in X that "civil war is inevitable" and accused the government of dealing with the rioters too harshly. It won him support among UK social network users and influencers on the far-right. Mr. Musk also advised people in September not to visit the UK when "they're releasing convicted pedophiles in order to imprison people for social media posts". "He appears to believe that he is on some sort of a mission against the establishment," said Mr. Foster. Pragmatism. Some observers believe Mr. Musk is also up in arms about U.K. government plans to toughen legislation regulating social networks. Mr. Starmer said the riots had been fuelled by online content and later did not invite Mr. Musk to an investors' conference — something the SpaceX and Tesla CEO had taken as an insult, sources close to him said. Since the U.S. Presidential elections, Mr. Musk and Mr. Trump have become inseparable, and their "bromance" could complicate Labour's efforts to boost its ties with the Republicans.

Labour has historically been closer to the Democrats but Mr. Starmer, who met Mr. Trump in New York in September, has been seeking to open a new chapter in the party's relations with Republicans. "The Prime Minister looks forward to working with President Trump and his whole team, including Elon Musk," a Downing Street spokesman said last month. "Starmer is very aware that he can't alienate the incoming U.S. President," said Mr. Foster. "We think that we have to maintain that special relationship. So it doesn't matter who's in the White House, we're always going to be nice towards Washington." Labour politician and former cabinet minister Peter Mandelson said it would be "unwise" for the UK to ignore Musk, calling on the Labour party to "swallow your pride." He described Mr. Farage as a "bridgehead, both to President Trump and to Elon Musk and others. You've got to be pragmatic, practical about this".

Trump brings chaos back by attempting to kill bipartisan budget deal with Musk's help

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

President-elect Donald Trump criticised the bill in his statement with Vice President-elect Vance and advocated for extending the debt ceiling with President Joe Biden in office. File. President-elect Donald Trump delivered a likely death blow to bipartisan congressional budget negotiations on Wednesday (December 18, 2024), rejecting the measure as full of giveaways to Democrats as billionaire ally Elon Musk whipped up outrage toward the bill and cheered on Republican lawmakers who announced their opposition.



Mr. Trump's joint statement with Vice President-elect JD Vance, which stopped the bill in its tracks, punctuated a daylong torrent of social media posts by Mr. Musk attacking the budget legislation as full of excessive spending. "Kill the Bill!" Mr. Musk wrote on his social media platform X as he dangled primary challenges against anyone who voted for the budget deal, a threat Mr. Trump later echoed in a post of his own. The episode showcased the growing political influence of Mr. Musk, whom Mr. Trump has selected alongside entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy to spearhead the Department of Government Efficiency, a non-governmental task force formed to find ways to fire federal workers, cut programmes and slash federal regulations. Mr. Musk, the world's richest man, spent around \$200 million to support Mr. Trump's candidacy this year. In his statement with Vance, Mr. Trump criticised the bill and advocated for extending the debt ceiling with President Joe Biden in office. "Increasing the debt ceiling is not great but we'd rather do it on Mr. Biden's watch. If Democrats won't cooperate on a debt ceiling increase now, what makes anyone think they would do it in June during our administration? Let's have this debate over the debt ceiling now." Mr. Trump's opposition to what was considered must-pass legislation reinjected a sense of chaos and political brinkmanship that was reminiscent of his first term in office. It was a dramatic turn of events for House Speaker Mike Johnson, who negotiated the bill and has been undermined by Mr. Trump as he faces reelection for his post in

just a couple of weeks. Republicans have a slim majority, raising the possibility of a replay of leadership disputes that paralysed the House a year ago. President Joe Biden's administration criticised the possibility of a shutdown. "Republicans need to stop playing politics with this bipartisan agreement or they will hurt hardworking Americans and create instability across the country," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform and a veteran of Washington's budget battles, was concerned about the lack of a clear plan for how to resolve the dispute. "There's got to be a second part of the strategy," he said. But others were thrilled, particularly with Mr. Musk's involvement. "In five years in Congress, I've been awaiting a fundamental change in the dynamic," posted Rep. Dan Bishop, a Republican from North Carolina. "It has arrived." Mr. Musk began criticising the measure as soon as it was released on Tuesday (December 17, 2024) evening, and he continuously posted about it on Wednesday (December 18, 2024). "Stop the steal of your tax dollars!" he wrote. He also called it "one of the worst bills ever written". Sometimes he amplified false claims, such as the idea that the legislation included \$3 billion for a new football stadium in Washington. In reality, the legislation would transfer ownership of the land from the federal government to the city, paving the way for eventual development.

Chinese national cyber centre says U.S. hacks stole trade secrets from tech firms



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

China's national internet emergency response centre said on Wednesday it had found and dealt with two incidents of U.S. cyber attacks on Chinese tech firms to "steal trade secrets" since May 2023. The National Computer Network Emergency Response Technical Team/Coordination Centre of China (CNCERT/CC) said in a statement published on its website that an advanced materials design and research unit and a large-scale high-tech company focused on intelligent energy and digital information were "suspected of being attacked by a U.S. intelligence agency",

without naming the agency. The hacks led to the theft of "a large amount of trade secrets" in both cases, said CNCERT/CC, which says it is a non-governmental technical centre that serves as China's "national computer emergency response team", with the aim of preventing and detecting cybersecurity threats to the country. After years of being accused by Western governments of cyberattacks and industrial espionage, in the past two years several Chinese organisations and government organs have accused the United States and its allies of similar behaviour. The CNCERT/CC statement echoes accusations from the United States and its allies that China engages in state-led campaigns to steal trade secrets. It also comes at a time when China is dealing with a growing number of U.S. export controls targeting its domestic semiconductor and artificial intelligence industries. The U.S. Department of State did not immediately respond to a request for comment on CNCERT/CC's statement. In March 2022, CNCERT/CC said China had faced a wave of cyberattacks, mostly traced back to the United States but with a few from other countries such as Germany and the Netherlands. These attacks took control of computers in China and used them to carry out cyberattacks on Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, it said.

U.S. lawmaker seeks targeted sanctions against Bangladesh

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Expressing a sense of urgency on the escalating crisis of human rights violations in Bangladesh, an influential American Congressman called on the US Departments of Treasury and State on Wednesday to impose and enforce sanctions on those perpetrating these heinous acts against minorities in the South Asian country. "I call on the Departments of Treasury and State to impose and enforce sanctions on those perpetrating these heinous acts against minorities in Bangladesh," Indian American Congressman Shri Thanedar said in front of the US Capitol on Wednesday (December 18, 2024) in the presence of Hindu Americans who had come from various parts of the country. Since July, he said, Bangladesh has experienced a spike in political violence, leading to the resignation and departure of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. "Since then, we have seen Bangladesh plunge into political turmoil, with its Hindu, Buddhist and Christian minorities bearing the brunt of violent acts towards their people and places of worship by a majority Muslim population," Mr. Thanedar said. "The creation of a new government with Prime Minister Muhammad Yunus is yet another attempt in their history to obtain lasting peace and stability for the country. While I have my concerns regarding this new government, I am hopeful that with our assistance, Bangladesh will finally find a peaceful resolution to these conflicts," he said. The United States has a storied history of championing the oppressed and this issue should be no different, he noted. "When we receive a global call for help, we must respond appropriately as the world's bellwether of human rights. We must urge Prime Minister Muhammad Yunus to fulfil his promise of restoring peace and rebuilding the nation on the principles of equality and justice," Mr. Thanedar said.



Attack on Hindu temples "Hindu temples have been vandalised, burned and desecrated. Just this month, the

Iskon Namhatta centre was burnt to the ground in a coordinated attack upon the Hindu people in Dhaka district of Bangladesh. Prior to that, over 70 temples throughout Bangladesh suffered similar attacks from mobs seeking to persecute Hindu minorities. Hindu religious leaders are regularly arrested on dubious charges and vulnerable communities have been forced to flee their homes in fear," he said. Utsav Chakrabarti, executive director of Hindu ACTION, said what has happened in the last five-and-a-half months in Bangladesh clearly reflects that "Muhammad Yunus has failed to contain" his allies in the Jamaat-e-Islami who are now running around the country, burning temples, killing people, raping women and indulging in atrocities against priests and leaders from the Hindu community by incarcerating them. "It is incumbent upon our current administration as well as the upcoming administration to put sanctions on Bangladesh, as Congressman Thanedar has pointed out," Chakrabarti said. "It is important that we clearly chart out a path for safe autonomous zones for the Hindus, all 15 million (1.5 crore) of them, along with the Buddhists and Christians within the boundaries of Bangladesh," he said.

Mumbai terror attack case: U.S. govt urges Supreme Court to dismiss Rana's petition for writ of certiorari

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

The United States government has urged the Supreme Court to dismiss "the petition for a writ of certiorari" filed by Mumbai-attack convict Tahawwur Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, against his extradition to India. India is seeking the extradition of Rana as he is wanted in the Mumbai terror attack case. Having lost the legal battle in lower courts and several federal courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in San Francisco, Rana on November 13 filed a "petition for a writ of certiorari" before the U.S. Supreme Court. In a long battle, this is Rana's last legal chance to not be extradited to India. "The petition for a writ of certiorari should be denied," U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth B. Prelogar said in its filing before the Supreme Court on December 16, 2024. "Rana is not entitled to relief from extradition to India in this case," she argued in a 20-page submission.



In his "petition for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit", Rana has argued that he was tried and acquitted in the federal court in the Northern District of Illinois (Chicago) on charges relating to the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai. "India now seeks to extradite him for trial on charges based on the identical conduct at issue in the Chicago case," the plea has said. "The government does not concede that all of

the conduct on which India seeks extradition was covered by the government's prosecution in this case. For example, India's forgery charges are based in part on conduct that was not charged in the United States: petitioner's use of false information in an application to formally open a branch office of the Immigration Law Centre submitted to the Reserve Bank of India," the U.S. Solicitor General said. "It is not clear that the jury's verdict in this case — which involves conspiracy charges and was somewhat difficult to parse — means that he has been 'convicted or acquitted' on all of the specific conduct that India has charged," Ms. Prelogar said.

Pelicot trial: Verdicts are due in the historic French rape trial that turned Gisèle Pelicot into a feminist hero

French judges plan to deliver hugely anticipated verdicts on Thursday (December 19, 2024) in a historic druging-and-rape trial that has turned the victim, Gisèle Pelicot, into a feminist hero. Everything about the trial in the southern French city of Avignon has been exceptional, most of all Ms. Pelicot herself. She has been the epitome of steely dignity and resilience through the more than three months of appalling testimony, including extracts from her now ex-husband's sordid library of homemade abuse videos. Dominique Pelicot carefully catalogued how he habitually tranquilized his wife of 50 years during their last decade together, so he and dozens of strangers he met online could rape her while she was unconscious. Staggeringly, he found it easy to recruit his alleged accomplices. Many had jobs. Most are fathers. They came from all walks of life, with the youngest in his 20s and the oldest in their 70s. In all, 50 men, including Dominique Pelicot, stood trial for aggravated rape and attempted rape. Another man was tried for aggravated sexual assault. They regarded me like a rag doll, like a garbage bag," Gisèle Pelicot testified in court. Sifting through the charges, the evidence, the backgrounds of the accused and their defenses took so long that Dominique and Gisèle Pelicot had birthdays during the trial, with both turning 72. The five judges are ruling by secret ballot, with a majority required to convict and also on the sentences of those found guilty. Campaigners

against sexual violence are hoping for exemplary prison terms and view the trial as a possible turning point in the fight against rape culture and the use of drugs to subdue victims. At protests during the trial, demonstrators held up pop-art images of Gisèle Pelicot with her bob haircut and round sunglasses, along with slogans such as, "Shame is changing sides" and "Gisèle, we believe you!" They also booed defendants as they entered the courthouse yelling, "We recognize you" and "Shame." Dominique Pelicot's meticulous recording and cataloguing of the encounters — police found more than 20,000 photos and videos on his computer drives, in folders titled "abuse," "her rapists" or "night alone" — provided investigators with an abundance of evidence and helped lead them to the defendants. That also set the case apart from many others in which sexual violence is unreported or isn't prosecuted because the evidence isn't as strong. Gisèle Pelicot and her lawyers fought successfully for shocking video and other evidence to be heard and watched in open court, to show that she bore no shame and was clearly unconscious during the alleged rapes, undermining some defendants' claims that she might have been feigning sleep or even have been a willing participant. Her courage — one woman, alone, against dozens of men — proved inspirational. Supporters, mostly women, lined up early each day for a place in the courtroom or to cheer

Banks report spike in bad loans in personal loans, credit cards



Banks Bad Loans According to RBI data, credit card NPAs have shot up by 136 per cent from Rs 2,404 crore (1.82 per cent of advances) since March 2020 to Rs 5,679 crore (2.04 per cent) by June 2024.

Indian banks have touted their success in reducing non-performing assets (NPAs), or loans defaulted by borrowers, over the past two years. However, a closer look reveals an uneasy trend: a significant rise in NPAs within the personal loan and credit card segments. This spike coincides with a worrying increase in borrower indebtedness, casting a shadow over the sector's progress. NPAs in the personal loans segment have gone up by 51 per cent from Rs 7,422 crore, or 0.93 per cent of advances, in March 2023 to Rs 11,210 crore (1.16 per cent) in June 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its reply to a Right to Information (RTI) request filed by The Indian Express. The quantum of rise in NPAs in the three months up to June 2024 was even higher by Rs 1,522 crore from Rs 9,688 crore in March 2024, RBI data shows. This has happened at a time when banks managed to bring down overall gross NPAs from Rs 6.97 lakh crore (5.89 per cent of advances) in March 2022 to Rs 4.56 lakh crore (2.79 per cent) by March 2024.

According to RBI data, credit card NPAs have shot up by 136 per cent from Rs 2,404 crore (1.82 per cent of advances) since March 2020 to Rs 5,679 crore (2.04 per cent) by June 2024. NPAs in the credit card segment rose by 39.46 per cent from Rs 4,072 crore in March 2023 to Rs 5,679 crore in June 2024. Both personal loans and credit card outstanding are unsecured in nature and carry high interest rates. A loan account becomes an NPA when the interest or principal instalment is more than 90 days overdue.

Your Right to Know: Banks report spike in bad loans in personal loans, credit cards **Your Right to Know:** Banks report spike in bad loans in personal loans, credit

cards When a customer delays repayment of his credit card bill beyond the billing cycle, the bank charges a high interest rate of 42-46 per cent interest per annum on the outstanding dues and his credit score also plummets. In November 2023, the RBI had increased risk weight on the exposure of banks towards consumer credit, credit card receivables and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) by 25 per cent up to 150 per cent. The move was aimed to address build-up of any risks in these segments. "Even as inquiry volumes remain robust, the impact of increase in risk weights on certain segments of consumer credit pulled down the rate of growth in overall consumer credit, especially personal loans and credit cards," the RBI's FSR report said.

The unsecured business loans segment has started showing early signs of stress in asset quality, possibly due to the increasing competitive intensity among lenders, continuing pressure on cash flows in certain end-borrower segments, on-field attrition, lower-than-expected recoveries leading to higher write-offs and overleveraging of borrowers, India Ratings said in a report. Credit card use is rising rapidly in the country if the customer spends through this route, are any indication. The value of credit card transactions tripled in the last three years to Rs 18.31 lakh crore during the year ended March 2024 from Rs 6.30 lakh crore in March 2021 with the economy coming out of the problems created by the Covid pandemic and consumer confidence increasing steadily over the last several quarters.

The value of credit card transactions rose from Rs 6.30 lakh crore to Rs 9.71 lakh crore during the year ended March 2022 and Rs 14.32 lakh crore as of March 2023, according to Reserve Bank of India data. The monthly spends by card users are now above Rs 1.50 lakh crore and remained at Rs 176,202 crore in the month of September this year. It was Rs 72,319 crore in March 2021. The number of credit cards issued by banks also rose rapidly to 10.61 crore as of September 2024 from 9.3 crore in September 2023, 7.36 crore in March 2022 and 6.20 crore in March 2021, RBI data shows. However, credit card outstanding has gone up to Rs 281,392 crore as of October 2024 as against Rs 249,635 crore in 2022. Card outstanding is the amount due from customers after the interest-free period offered by banks. What have lured customers to the credit card segment are incentives like rewards on higher spending, loan offers and lounge benefits. "Customers should realise that if they keep card dues beyond the interest-free period, they end up paying an interest rate of up to 42 per cent in some cases. It will put them in a debt trap," said a bank official.

Adani, under bribery scrutiny, pressed by Bangladesh to reopen power deal

Bangladesh's interim government has accused energy supplier Adani Power of breaching a multi-billion-dollar agreement by withholding tax benefits that a power plant central to the deal received from New Delhi, according to documents seen by Reuters. In 2017, the Indian company controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani signed an agreement with Bangladesh to provide power from its coal-fired plant in eastern India. Dhaka has said it hopes to renegotiate the deal, which was awarded by then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina without a tender process and costs Bangladesh far more than its other coal power deals, according to Bangladesh power agency documents and letters between the two parties reviewed by Reuters, as well as interviews with six Bangladesh officials.



Dhaka has been behind on payments to Adani Power since supply started in July 2023. It owes several hundred million dollars for energy that has already been supplied, though the two sides dispute the exact size of the bill. Bangladesh's de facto power minister Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan told Reuters the country now had enough domestic capacity to cope without the Adani supply, though not all domestic power generators were operational. Nobel peace prize laureate Muhammad Yunus took power in August after a student-led revolution ousted Hasina, who critics accuse of stifling democracy and mismanaging the economy. She ran Bangladesh for most of the last two decades and was a close ally of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Reuters is reporting for the first time that the contract came with an additional implementation agreement that addressed the transfer of tax benefits. The news agency is also revealing details about Bangladesh's plan to reopen the 25-year deal, and that it hopes to use the fallout from U.S. prosecutors' November indictment of Adani and seven other executives for their alleged role in a \$265 million bribery scheme to press for a resolution. Adani Power has not been accused of wrongdoing in Bangladesh. A company spokesperson said in response to Reuters' questions that it had upheld all contractual obligations and had no indication Dhaka was reviewing the contract. The company did not answer questions about the tax benefits and other issues raised by Bangladesh.

The company said the Bangladesh deal helped further Indian foreign policy objectives and Delhi in 2019 declared the plant part of a special economic zone. It enjoys incentives such as exemptions on income tax and other levies. The power supplier was required to inform Bangladesh swiftly of changes in the plant's tax status and to pass on the "benefit of a tax exemption" from India's government, according to the contract and implementation agreement signed on Nov. 5, 2017 between Adani Power and the state-run Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). But Adani Power did not do so, according to letters sent by BPDB on Sept. 17, 2024 and Oct. 22, 2024 that urged it to remit the benefits. The agreements and letters are not public but were seen by Reuters. Two BPDB officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to the media, said they did not receive responses.

BPDB estimates savings of roughly 0.35 cents per unit of power if the benefit was passed on, the officials said. The Godda plant supplied 8.16 billion units in the year to June 30, 2024, according to an undated Bangladesh government summary of power purchases seen by Reuters, suggesting potential savings of about \$28.6 million. Power minister Khan said the savings would be a key part of future discussions with Adani Power. "Negotiated hastily Bangladesh in November scrapped a 2010 law that allowed Hasina to award some energy deals without a competitive bidding process. The absence of tenders is unusual, said Tim Buckley, director of Australia's Climate Energy Finance think-tank, adding that auctions ensure "the best price possible."

In September, Yunus's government appointed a panel of experts to examine major energy deals signed by Hasina. A Bangladesh court has separately ordered a probe of the Adani deal. Another panel asked to study the economy said in a white paper submitted to Yunus on Dec. 1 that the US

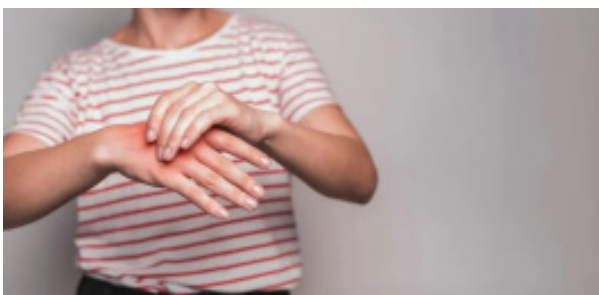
charges against Adani meant Bangladesh should "scrutinise" the power deal, which it described as "negotiated hastily." Hasina, who has not been seen in public since she fled to India, could not be reached. Her son and adviser Sajeed Wazed told Reuters he was not aware of the Adani Power deal but that he was "sure there was no corruption." "I can only assume the Indian government lobbied for this deal so it was made," he said in response to allegations of political interference. Modi's office and other Indian officials did not respond to requests for comment. **Hardball** On Oct. 31, Adani Power halved the power supply from Godda in response to the payment dispute with Bangladesh. The company in a July 1 letter seen by Reuters also rejected a request from BPDB to extend a discount it had offered until May - resulting in savings of about \$13 million for Bangladesh. It said it would not consider further discounts until payment was cleared. Adani Power contends it is owed \$900 million, while BPDB says arrears are about \$650 million. Bangladesh suffers from a dollar shortage and BPDB officials told Reuters they haven't been able to obtain sufficient foreign currency for payment. The halving of supply particularly angered Bangladesh, BPDB Chair Md. Rezaul Karim said, because it came after Dhaka in October remitted \$97 million to Adani Power - its highest monthly payment this year. The dispute revolves around how power tariffs are calculated, with the 2017 agreement pricing off an average of two indices. The unit cost of energy from Godda was 55% above the average of all Indian power sold to Dhaka, according to the summary of Bangladesh's power purchases. Bangladesh is pressing for Adani Power to use other benchmarks that would lower the tariff after one of the indices was revised last year, said three BPDB sources. Adani Power has rejected that, one of them said, adding the two sides were meeting soon. The agreements stipulate that arbitration be carried out in Singapore, but Khan said Bangladesh's next move depended on the outcome of the court-ordered investigation. "If it is proven that bribery or irregularities had happened, then we will have to follow the court order if any cancellation happens," he said.

Indian markets slump in early trade as US Fed indicates fewer rate cuts next year

Mumbai: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty slumped in early trade on Thursday following weak global market trends after the US Federal Reserve indicated fewer rate cuts next year. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 1,162.12 points to 79,020.08 in early trade. The NSE Nifty tumbled 328.55 points to 23,870.30.

All 30 blue-chip stocks were trading lower. Infosys, State Bank of India, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance and Mahindra & Mahindra were the biggest laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong were trading lower. Wall Street ended sharply lower.

Is the viral Parkinson's Challenge Finger Test accurate?



Can you really test your risk for developing Parkinson's disease? Well, if some social media posts are to go by, you can with the help of the Parkinson's Challenge Finger Test. "Please ask adults over 50 years to perform this test to check their 10-year risk of getting Parkinson's disease," said Dr Siva Sundar, general medicine, demonstrating the practice along with his mother. The finger test, first demonstrated by neurosurgeon Dr Arun L Naik, requires one to be able to lock the index and middle finger of each hand, then touch the ring finger and thumb together while flapping the little finger for at least 60 times in 30 seconds.

Does it work?

Dr Pawan Ojha, director, neurology, Fortis Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi contested that the finger test, which according to the video can predict the risk of Parkinson's disease over 10 years, is not accurate. "Parkinson's disease does not simply entail a slowdown of body movement, it has a host of other symptoms too, such as tremors in the limbs, difficulty in walking, postural instability resulting in sudden falls, speech, cognitive and sleep disturbances. Hence to diagnose this condition a comprehensive test is needed, and the finger test is not comprehensive at all, as it relies

solely on one symptom i.e slowdown of movements," said Dr Ojha. Dr Sudhir Kumar, consultant neurologist, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad too mentioned that this test can not predict the future risk of Parkinson's disease. "In fact, there is no clinical test that can predict the risk," added Dr Kumar.

The finger-tapping test is part of a more comprehensive tool (PREDICT PD, published in 2014) aimed at predicting Parkinson's disease in Western countries. "PREDICT PD is an online test (including family history, non-motor symptoms, and lifestyle factors), a keyboard-tapping task and a Smell Identification Test. One of the components of this test is the distal finger-tapping test," said Dr Ojha. However, it's important to note that the version of the distal finger-tapping test used in the Predict PD program differs from the one shown in the video. According to Dr Ojha, the Predict PD program deploys the keyboard tapping test, where individuals are asked to tap a keyboard for 30 seconds, those with Parkinson's will be less coordinated and slower than those without the condition. "Slowness is a common symptom associated with a lot of health conditions like arthritis, stroke, neuropathy, and muscle weakness," said Dr Ojha. Another test — PREDIGT — also incorporates genetic studies, such as identifying mutations in DNA. "Data is continuously being collected to improve these predictions over time. Therefore, one should avoid rushing to take the test shown in this video to assess one's risk of Parkinson's disease, as it could lead to confusion and unnecessary fear among the general public. Instead, one might consider taking the online survey PREDICT PD to understand the predisposition for Parkinson's disease. It should however be followed by a visit to a neurologist for verification of diagnosis and treatment if necessary," said Dr Ojha.

From heritage fabrics to red making a comeback, 5 trends we spotted at celebrity weddings this year

Bollywood weddings in 2024 were more than just grand celebrations; they became showcases for personal stories, cultural pride, and innovative bridal fashion. With every photograph and reel going viral, these weddings set the tone for bridal trends. Whether you're drawn to the opulence of maximalism or the simplicity of pared-down styles, 2024's celebrity weddings have shown us that the best trends are the ones that tell a story. From heritage fabrics to personalised details, these trends aren't just fashion statements—they're expressions of individuality and culture. Here are five standout wedding trends that emerged this year, each redefining how we think about the big day.

1. Maximalism with a Modern Twist

Sobhita Dhulipala embraced maximalism in her wedding attire, bringing back the grandeur of heavily embellished ensembles. Her outfits, layered with intricate embroidery and vibrant colours, made a case for brides to lean into opulence while maintaining a contemporary edge. This trend should inspire brides to embrace maximalist lehengas that feel regal yet fresh.

2. Cultural Mantras in Fashion

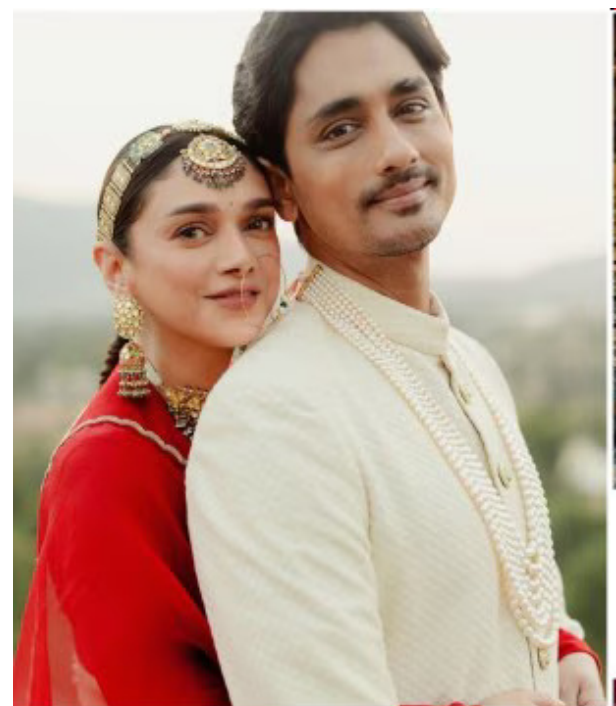
nita ambani raman divo Their outfits incorporated Sanskrit mantras, hand-embroidered into the fabric, making each piece a spiritual and cultural statement. (Source: Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla/Yogen Shah/Instagram) The Ambani weddings redefined how tradition can meet couture. Their outfits incorporated Sanskrit mantras, hand-embroidered into the fabric, making each piece a spiritual and cultural statement. This trend combines the spiritual significance of rituals with the aesthetics of high fashion, proving that culture is forever chic.

3. Minimalism in Red

Aditi Rao Hydari brought back the quintessential red bridal look by Sabyasachi but reimagined it for the minimalist bride. Her understated red lehenga, paired with delicate jewellery, showed how a classic hue could feel modern and effortless. This trend is perfect for brides who want to honour tradition without being weighed down by excess.

4. Reviving Heritage Fabrics

Keerthy Suresh dazzled in her handwoven



Kanjeevaram madisar sari from Anita Dongre, demonstrating that traditional textiles are far from outdated. With intricate gold zari work and a design deeply rooted in South Indian heritage, her look celebrated craftsmanship. Brides embracing heritage weaves can pair these timeless fabrics with contemporary styling for a fresh yet meaningful look.

5. Pared-Down Elegance for Gen Z Brides

Aaliyah Kashyap showed us that simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. With open, cascading hair and a pastel bridal ensemble by Tarun Tahilliani, her look resonated with younger brides who value comfort and a modern aesthetic. This trend reflects a shift towards effortless elegance, focusing on personal style over bridal conventions.

Diljit Dosanjh sips kahwa as he enjoys shikara ride on Kashmir's Dal lake; learn how the tea became a part of the valley's culture

As Diljit's Dil-Luminati Tour moves to its next destination, the warmth of kahwa and the charm of Dal Lake remain etched in the hearts of his admirers. As Diljit's Dil-Luminati Tour moves to its next destination, the warmth of kahwa and the charm of Dal Lake remain etched in the hearts of his admirers.

Diljit Dosanjh, beloved actor-singer and cultural icon, has been on an exciting journey across India for his Dil-Luminati Tour. Currently, in the scenic valleys of Kashmir, Diljit treated his fans to a charming snippet of his time on Instagram, showcasing his love for music and the region's rich culture and traditions. In the heartwarming video, Diljit can be seen enjoying a serene shikara ride on the iconic Dal Lake, surrounded by snow-draped mountains. Adding a quintessential Kashmiri touch to the experience, a vendor approaches his boat with a tray of steaming kahwa — the traditional Kashmiri tea. What unfolds is a delightful exchange between Diljit, the vendor, and his companions on the shikara.

The vendor, introducing himself as "Dal Lake Star Mustaq," passionately explains the ingredients of his special kahwa. Diljit, ever the warm and affable star, engages with Mustaq and purchases a cup, savouring the fragrant drink amidst the breathtaking lake views. Alongside the video, Diljit added the caption: "Dal Lake Star Mustaq Bhai Ka Kahwa & Adnan Bhai Ka Rabab". Legacy and significance of kahwa

Kahwa tea, deeply rooted in Kashmir's culinary history, boasts an intriguing origin story. It traces its heritage back to the Silk Road, which was introduced to Kashmir in the 14th century from Persia and Central Asia. The drink gained prominence during the Mughal era, with emperors embracing its luxurious ingredients like saffron, cinnamon,



Diljit Dosanjh, beloved actor-singer and cultural icon, has been on an exciting journey across India for his Dil-Luminati Tour. Currently, in the scenic valleys of Kashmir, Diljit treated his fans to a charming snippet of his time on Instagram, showcasing his love for music and the region's rich culture and traditions.

and almonds. Over centuries, kahwa became more than a beverage—it evolved into a cultural symbol of Kashmiri warmth and hospitality. According to chef and restaurant consultant Tarveen Kaur, kahwa symbolises everyday comfort and grand celebration. Often served during festivals, weddings, or to guests as a welcome gesture, the tea is cherished for its vibrant flavours and numerous health benefits. The aromatic blend of green tea leaves, saffron, cardamom, cinnamon, and crushed almonds not only warms the soul during chilly weather but also aids digestion, boosts immunity, and provides a sense of indulgence. As Diljit's Dil-Luminati Tour moves to its next destination, the warmth of kahwa and the charm of Dal Lake remain etched in the hearts of his admirers, capturing a slice of Kashmiri tradition that's as timeless as it is heartwarming.

'Real Oscar is love of audience': Sonu Sood on Laapataa Ladies not making the cut for the Oscars



said we have to make a song for Fateh, it reminded me of nearly sixteen years ago when I worked in a studio in Mohali. At the time, I wasn't a thing in Bollywood, but in Punjab, I was a successful music director who made really futuristic tunes." He added how Sonu recommended his name to other producers, "I showed him my Brown Rang, Angrezi Beat, and other songs, and he said, 'Brother, your time will come, and Bollywood will come to you.' I asked him, 'Does it really seem that way to you?' Then, he went to Mumbai and referred my name to all the big music directors, producers, film directors, and filmmakers in the industry, saying there's a guy in Mohali who's creating amazing sounds. But nobody claimed it; nobody came. However, when people finally started coming, and Bollywood started happening, I met Sonu again in Bombay and told him that his vision had come true." "Sonu is a visionary and a brother who always helps others in difficult situations.

He helps his own people, and the entire world knows he does a lot for people he doesn't even know. He risks all for others. So, rather than being a filmmaker or actor, a person who has dedicated his entire life to serving others has a heart that simply wants to serve people. I've seen it; he's always on the phone, helping someone. If people like him don't succeed, then who will?" he shared. Earlier, the makers shared the teaser of the film. Sonu took to his official social media handle 'X' and dropped the teaser clip. The teaser starts with the statement, "Never underestimate a nobody." It then cuts to a voiceover in which Sonu Sood is heard conversing with another individual, correcting that he killed 50 people on March 19, not 40. "You'll never find those ten bodies," he said and also added, "Bhagvaan unki atma ko shanti de." Sood, while sharing the teaser, wrote on X, "AA RAHA HOON... Action speaks louder than words. #Fateh! Brace yourselves for the biggest action-packed thriller!" Produced by Sonali Sood for Shakti Sagar Productions and Umesh KR Bansal for Zed Studios, Fateh is slated to release on January 10, 2025.

Director Kiran Rao's film Laapataa Ladies, India's official entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards, is no longer in the Oscars race. The film, which had garnered a lot of anticipation after being chosen as India's entry, did not make it to the Academy's official shortlist. However, actor Sonu Sood asserted that the real award for any film is the love and appreciation of the audience. While speaking to the media at a press conference in New Delhi, Sood said, "Real Oscar is the audience who shower their love on the film. What matters is to make a place in the hearts of people; awards just remain confined to the shelves. In September, the Film Federation of India, led by Jahnur Barua, selected Laapataa Ladies from a list of 29 films in several Indian languages, including Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light and the National Award-winning Aattam. Actor Sonu Sood, who is making his directorial debut with Fateh, has collaborated with Yo Yo Honey Singh for the track 'Hitman'.

While sharing his working experience with Sonu Sood, the ace singer said, "So, when Sonu paaji came to me and

Kareena Kapoor cheers for Jeh as he performs on stage; Saif Ali Khan and Taimur record his performance.

Kareena Kapoor couldn't contain her excitement as she watched her younger son, Jehangir Ali Khan (Jeh), perform on stage at his school's function. A video has surfaced showing Kareena ecstatically waving at Jeh, who looked adorable performing on stage. Kareena was joined by husband Saif Ali Khan and elder son Taimur Ali Khan at the event. In the now-viral video, Jeh is seen dressed in an elephant costume, dancing with his classmates. His wide smile and evident joy stole the spotlight as he confidently enjoyed his moment on stage. From the audience, Kareena can be seen waving and cheering for Jeh, while Saif and Taimur enthusiastically recorded the performance. Take a look:



like him (Saif), Jeh just looks like me, but he has Saif's naughtiness. Though Tim (Taimur's nickname) has Saif's sense of humour, he is a bit reserved and doesn't like being clicked, he is more like his father. Jeh is like me in terms of look and vibe, but his naughtiness comes from Saif." On the professional front, Kareena was last seen in Rohit Shetty's Singham Again. She will next be seen in Meghna Gulzar's upcoming film, tentatively titled, which also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead role.

Fans quickly drew parallels between Kareena and Kajol's character Anjali from the iconic film Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham. In the film, Anjali is a spirited mother who enthusiastically cheers for her son during a school event. Referencing the resemblance, a fan commented, "I read a comment where someone said Kareena has turned into real-life Anjali." Another fan wrote, "It's so cute! My dad has a video of my mom clapping for me. Mothers always feel proud of these small achievements." Earlier, in an interview with Filme Shilmy, Kareena shared how her sons, Taimur and Jeh have inherited traits from their father, Saif Ali Khan. She revealed, "They (Taimur and Jeh) are actually both quite

Sheeba Akashdeep, Salman Khan's 1992 Suryavanshi co-star, calls him 'sweetest': 'Koi unhe arrogant bolta hai toh...

Sheeba Akashdeep, known for her memorable roles in Suryavanshi, Pyar Ka Rog, and other classics in the 90s, recently made a big-screen comeback with Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani and Jigra. In an exclusive conversation with SCREEN, she opened up about her hiatus from the industry, the changes she has witnessed in cinema, and her journey back to the spotlight. Talking about her absence from films in the 2000s, Sheeba cites a combination of personal priorities and dwindling offers. "I had my kids and was enjoying watching them grow up. At the same time, I was working with my production company. There wasn't any tearing hurry to work, and frankly, there weren't people breaking my door with offers either," she said. "It just fizzled out. I didn't make a conscious decision to step away, nor did I actively seek out work." Sheeba told SCREEN. Sheeba admitted that re-establishing herself in the industry required stepping out of her comfort zone. "I had to put myself out there. You need to be a bit more aggressive in your marketing, which I never was, even at the peak of my career. Nobody is going to wake up one morning and say, 'Chalo Sheeba ko cast karte hain' (Let's cast Sheeba in the film)." Reminiscing about her experience working on Rakesh Kumar's 1992 horror-action drama Suryavanshi with Salman Khan, Sheeba recalled, "Salman and I were relatively new back then, while Amrita Singh was already established. Salman was incredibly sweet. Koi unhe arrogant bolta hai toh hairaani hoti hai (It surprises me when people call him arrogant.) I would say, he was one of the sweetest co-stars I have ever had. I worked with so many 90s stars like Akshay, Saif, Sunil—back then, we were all navigating our careers together." Discussing her comeback,



Sheeba said, "I had to be upfront about my intentions. I'd tell people I was looking to return to acting—not as a heroine, of course, but for any good part." She also said, "I don't live in a fool's paradise. I'd love to play lead roles, but I'm realistic about the competition today. It's not something I expect, nor am I waiting for it." On the transformation of the film industry, Sheeba said, "Today, characters are celebrated; the hero-heroine era is over. Another big change is how production scales have grown. There are rows of vanity vans now—one for the lead actor's gym, one for their staff, and another for the actor themselves. It has become much larger than life now. I come from a generation where we would change costumes right in the middle of the street."

Rashmika Mandanna celebrates her ultimate 'heroine moment'

Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna embraced her ultimate 'heroine moment' in a recent social media post. Taking to Instagram, the 'Pushpa' actress shared her stunning photos, accompanied by a note highlighting the effort and determination it takes to achieve perfection. In her caption, Rashmika wrote, "My heroine moment. Just going back in time, I'd always be fascinated seeing models and actors look so perfect and worked really, really hard to achieve it. I have—to some extent—achieved it (I think). But it's mostly about working super-duper hard and having the right people work with you to look a certain way. And of course, there's also the editing and really talented people working behind the lenses. Ok, I am done now."

stylish black saree paired with statement earrings. She enhanced her look with subtle makeup, including kohl-rimmed eyes, mascara, and nude lipstick, adding to her timeless charm. Just days earlier, Rashmika shared another series of photos in an orange saree, thanking fans for their love and support for "Pushpa 2: The Rule." In her caption, she expressed gratitude, writing, "You guys were asking me to post this lewk, and here it is! Thank you... THANK YOU for all your love for Pushpa and Srivalli, guys! If you've watched it, I hope you enjoyed it. And if you haven't, please go watch it! Mwah! Loads of love, my loves." On the work front, the 28-year-old actress is basking in the massive success of "Pushpa 2: The Rule," directed by Sukumar and co-starring Allu Arjun and Fahadh Faasil.

The photos feature Rashmika exuding elegance in a

'Raj Kapoor and wife Krishna fell in love at first sight, she was playing tanpura and he wanted to see her face,' recalls her nephew



Raj Kapoor was 21 when he got married to the 16-year-old Krishna Kapoor and for them, it was love at first sight. In a recent interview, Krishna's nephew Monty Premnath shared the origin of their love story and how they first met each other. He shared that Raj and veteran actor Prem Nath were friends who also worked with each other and Krishna, who was Prem Nath's sister, first ran into Raj when she was playing the tanpura. Talking to Vickey Lalwani on his YouTube channel, Monty said that Raj and Prem Nath were on a holiday in Madhya Pradesh when Raj first heard Krishna's music. She used to play with a veil on her face but Raj insisted on seeing her face. "Krishna, my bua, Krishna aunty was playing the tanpura there. Raj uncle wanted to see her face but she would stay under a veil," he recalled.

It was then that Prem Nath realised that she might

raise her veil for Ashok Kumar as she was a big fan of the actor. So, he lied and told her that Ashok was accompanying him. Hearing this, she lifted her veil and as soon as their eyes met, they fell in love. "She was a very big fan of Ashok Kumar so my father said 'Krishna, mere sath Ashok Kumar aaya hai (Ashok Kumar is with me) so she picked up the pallu and she saw Raj Uncle and it was love at first sight. And they got married," he recalled. Raj and Krishna's marriage went through many ups and downs but they stayed married until his passing in 1988. Raj and Krishna got married even before he found fame and in the subsequent years, when Raj's marriage went through rough patches amid rumours of his affairs, Krishna stuck by him. As per Rishi Kapoor's memoir, the only time she put her foot down was when he was apparently having an affair with his Sangam co-star Vyjayanthimala as she moved into a hotel with their kids. The couple patched up later.

Mukesh Khanna isn't sold on Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram in Ramayana: 'If you're a lampat chhichhora in real life...'

Despite being aware of his habit of stirring the pot, actor Mukesh Khanna seems to have initiated a new controversy, after commenting about the casting of Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram in an upcoming adaptation of the Ramayana. Khanna had previously voiced his complaints about the Prabhas-starrer Adipurush, which he repeated once again. In an interview, the actor wondered if Ranbir's real-life image would affect the audience's perception of him in the sacred role. Khanna also hinted that Ranbir's blockbuster film Animal, which was controversial itself, could also impact whether he is accepted in the role of Ram. In an interview with mid-day, the actor initially declined to comment about Ranbir. "I won't say anything about this, if I do, they'll accuse me of commenting about everyone and everything. They've ruined my reputation. I recently commented about Jackie Shroff's son... I'm not rude, but I speak my mind. If they're making a Ramayana, comparisons with Arun Govil will be inevitable," he said, making a reference to the actor who played Ram in the popular television adaptation of the epic.

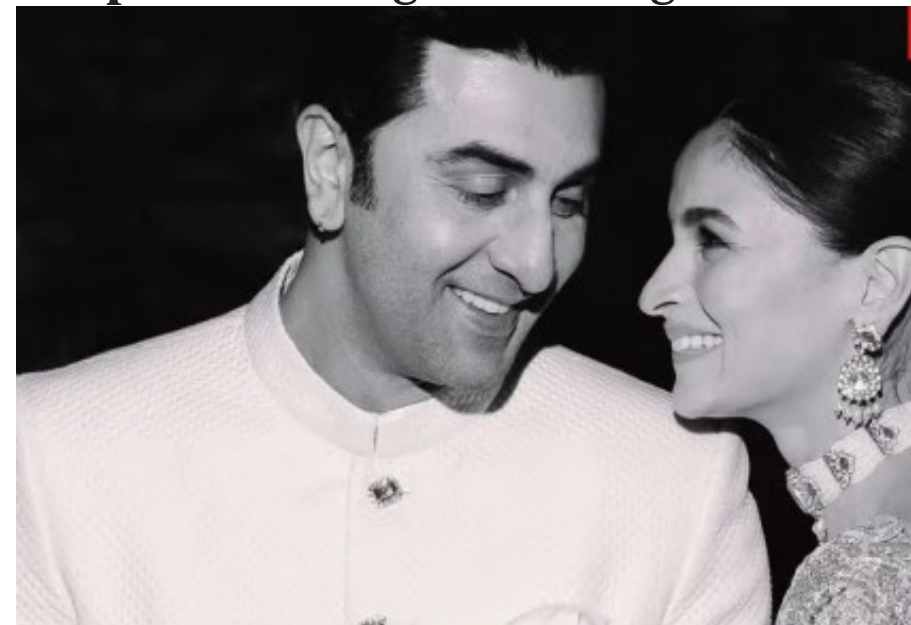


Asked if he feels there is any actor in the film industry right now who would be ideal for the role of Ram, Khanna said, "What Arun Govil did with the role has become the gold standard. All I can say is that whoever plays Ram must embody Ram; he shouldn't look like Raavan. In their real life, if they are a (lampat chhichhora) lewd hooligan, then it will show on screen. If you're playing Ram, you're not allowed to party and drink. But who am I to decide who plays Ram?" he said. Khanna warned filmmakers to 'be careful' about who they've cast to play Ram, and cited the example of Prabhas being rejected in the role. "He wasn't accepted by the public, despite being such a huge star. Not because he's a bad actor, but because he doesn't look like Ram..."

The actor playing Ram now is the beacon of the Kapoor family. He's a fine actor... But I will look at his face, and he should look like Ram. He's just done Animal, and his negative personality was highlighted in that movie. I hope that doesn't disturb this... "Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, Ramayana will be presented in two parts, with the first part set for a Diwali 2026 release. The film also stars Sai Pallavi as Sita, and Sunny Deol as Hanuman.

Alia Bhatt reacts amid trolls attacking Ranbir Kapoor for not giving her attention at Raj Kapoor event, likes post showing his caring side

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt enjoy a massive fan following, and it's always a treat for fans when Bollywood's 'it' couple appears together, showcasing their chemistry and admiration for each other. However, being a celebrity couple, they often find themselves the target of trolls, who criticise Ranbir for allegedly not giving enough attention to Alia, especially when he is around his family. Recently, Alia addressed these perceptions, emphasising that people don't give enough credit to Ranbir's caring and loving side. A fan page recently shared a video from Raj Kapoor's 100th birth anniversary celebration that highlighted Ranbir's affectionate gestures towards Alia during the event. The clip showed him consistently reaching out for Alia's hand and staying by her side, countering the trolls' narrative. While a section of social media continued to criticise him, the video provided a fresh perspective, showing his caring side. "The



side of Ranbir that social media doesn't show, they cut a 2 sec clip out of context and run a whole lot of negative PR with it. Meanwhile, this is the reality. It's crazy to me how easily people can be fooled ?????????? Thank you for this video you showed us all @vardaanvibe ????????"

ment led to intense scrutiny of their relationship. This isn't the first time Ranbir has been trolled for his relationship dynamics. Earlier, a Vogue video of Alia went viral in which she mentioned that Ranbir would ask her to "wipe off" her lipstick because he preferred her natural lip color. This state-

Pat Cummins responds to Darren Lehmann's comments on chairman of selectors George Bailey 'too close to the team'



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Apart from Travis Head and Steven Smith (until the Brisbane Test), the rest of the Australian batting order has struggled to contribute with a substantial score of sorts in recent times. While a few critics and former players have opined that the personnel in the batting order needs to be changed, there have been no such signs from the Australian management. Former Australian coach cum player Darren Lehmann said the chairman of selectors George Bailey is "too close to the team," to take the tough

calls. However, reacting to Lehmann's comments Pat Cummins responded by saying "I don't know how that could be true," after the draw at Gabba. "Of course, the most important thing is you do stay objective, and I think the selection panel is amazing at that. They've made some bold calls over the last couple of years in all formats, probably bolder than I'd seen other selectors make over the previous years, so they've never shied away from a tough decision." "What George brings to the role is amazing, and I think you'd hear that from the guys in the side, but you'd also hear it from state guys and everyone outside it as well," Cummins added. Bailey on a few occasions during the ongoing Border Gavaskar Trophy was seen in the dugout alongside the players. "Now, you can't do that sometimes if you're too close because you actually get too emotional and you care about the players. As a selector, I cared about the players, as a coach you do, but sometimes you actually get too close and you forget about what's out there." Lehmann would observe and say on ABC Sports. The likes of Usman Khawaja who is 38 years is averaging 12.60 in the ongoing series and has faced severe troubles against Jasprit Bumrah. "Are players playing too long? History shows in the last little bit, maybe they have been. Selectors have to be a little bit stronger. Or selectors aren't strong enough to stop players from playing," Lehmann said.

Mathew Hayden recalls conversations with R Ashwin: 'Transference of information, much like what I had with Bishan Bedi years ago'

) GNS News Agency, Dec 21

R Ashwin called it a day on his international career on Wednesday. The off-spinner has scalped 537 Test wickets and is regarded as one of the best among his generation. Recalling conversations with him in Ashwin's early days at Chennai Super Kings former Australian cricketer Mathew Hayden said the "transference of information" was similar to the one he had with the late Bishan Singh Bedi. "I've been very privileged to share many a bus-side seat on the way to the ground in Tamil Nadu, at the beautiful Chepauk Stadium, and with the Chennai Super Kings. As a young kid, as I was coming to the end of my career, he'd cuddle up, and we'd talk about the game—how he could counteract the sweeper and why I swept. So, in many ways, it was a transference of information, much like what I had with Bishan Bedi years ago. He's a lovely human being and a very enjoyable character to play with as well," Hayden said speaking on Star Sports.

In addition to the impeccable craft of bowling off-spin, Ashwin was also a thinking cricketer and always had a plan up his sleeve to get the better out of the batsman. "A very smart cricketer. And you know, he's a cricketer who just stays on task, always working out a cunning plan. He's got great belief in his own ability. He's quite



polarizing in many ways when it comes to the cricketing public, and even to his own team—he's a very strong-minded person. But I personally want to wish Ashwin a wonderful retirement," Hayden said. Ashwin made his debut in 2011 against West Indies on the back of impressive stints for CSK in IPL. In addition to 537 Test wickets Ashwin also has scalped 156 ODI wickets and 72 T20I wickets. The 38-year-old said that despite retiring from international cricket he would continue to be part of domestic cricket in India and was also brought by CSK in the recent auction after Rajasthan Royals decided to let him go.

'Thanks for not running me out this day:' Aaron Finch's cheeky retirement message to R Ashwin



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin announced his retirement on Wednesday. Former Australian cricketer Aaron Finch, in his farewell message, reminded the spinner of a moment during the Indian Premier League when Ashwin chose not to run out Finch even when the latter was out of his crease at the non-striker end and the former just warned him without dislodging the bats. "One of the all-time careers. Congratulations R Ashwin. It was a pleasure to play with and against you," Finch wrote on his Instagram story. PS: Thanks for not running me out this day!" he added

with the picture on his Instagram story. The incident occurred during the 2020 IPL when Finch was playing for Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Ashwin was representing Delhi Capitals. What made Ravichandran Ashwin retire in the middle of the Border-Gavaskar series? Beyond his troubling knee, events also seem to have prompted the decision over the last few months. When the Test season began with the home series against Bangladesh – in which he picked up the Man of the Series award – Ashwin still seemed to have at least a couple of years left in him. Although the series against New Zealand didn't go along the expected lines in terms of wickets, he still seemed to be in his element. That series defeat, as Ashwin admitted on his YouTube channel, was hard to overcome in the sense that a proud unbeaten home record had been dented. He would even search for answers with his two daughters. The Australia tour was supposed to be a means to get back on track, once he decided to join the tour. But once there, the writing seems to have been on the wall with the team management hinting that even if they played two spinners, Ashwin may not get a look-in. With the top order not putting up enough runs, India seems to be inclined towards Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar. Ashwin spent compiling 537 Test wickets, 37 five-fors, 11 Man of the Series performances, six Test centuries and 14 fifties.

be delivered at an Olympic level have been delivered at a world championships or global-competition level. That track record is important for any city that is wanting to present their credentials for delivering a very complicated and complex sporting event. There is nothing more complex than the Olympic and Paralympic Games. "Talking about the country's chances of hosting big international events, Coe said: "India has some very important assets, it has a young population, a vibrant commercial market for sport and you have political will and recognition from the prime minister down that sports plays an essential role in nation-building and creating healthy communities, mentally and physically." "India could host more international track and field events over the next few years with the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) in discussion with World Athletics about relay and road events. "AFI is ambitious, they have talked about relays and they have talked about world road championships. Their focus is more on the track than it is on the road. I never take lightly the ambition of a member federation that wants to stage our world championship events. I have received, on my recent visit to the Indian athletics federation, a letter of intent to stage the under-20 world championships which is good news and that now sits with our bidding team alongside other bids," Coe added.

Staging big athletics events can help boost India's credentials for Olympic bid: Sebastian Coe

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Hosting a Continental Tour athletics event next August in Bhubaneswar and bidding to stage the 2028 Under-20 World Championships are good signs even as India prepares to bid for the 2036 Olympics, World Athletics president Sebastian Coe has said. Successful staging of major events can help India 'demonstrate a track record of sporting delivery at the international level' which will be helpful for the country in its quest to become the 2036 Summer Games host, according to Coe, who has thrown his hat in the ring for the post of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) president.

The AFI's 2025 calendar includes a bronze-level Continental Tour event in the Odisha capital on August 10 next year. During Coe's recent visit to India, the AFI also submitted a letter of intent to host the Under-20 World Championships. "First of all, I am very grateful to Indian athletics that they are showing the ambition to stage more of our events. I think if any country has Olympic ambitions, I certainly know India does, being able to demonstrate a track record of sporting delivery at the international level can only be helpful," the two-time Olympic 1500m champion said during a select roundtable interaction. "Evaluation teams and the sport need the confidence that events that are going to

After R Ashwin's sudden retirement, Ravi Shastri opens up on MS Dhoni's shock retirement



GNS News Agency, Dec 21

When Ravichandran Ashwin chose to call time on his India career out of the blue on Wednesday after the third India vs Australia Test ended in a draw, former India coach Ravi Shastri could not help but draw parallels with the shock announcement from MS Dhoni in the dressing room that he was retiring from Tests. Just like Ashwin retired from Tests in the middle of the series, Dhoni too said goodbye with one Test remaining. Dhoni, in fact, was captaining the team and his retirement meant that Virat Kohli had to take over the reins for the final Test in Sydney for a series which was already lost by the Indian team.

Dhoni's retirement was a shock because India had managed to draw the Test at the MCG.

Narrating the scene on SEN Radio, Shastri said: "Dhoni didn't wait. I was the coach. He said, Ravi, I need to have a chat with the boys for five minutes. Since we drew the game at the MCG, I said, sure. I thought he would say, 'Boys, well done'. Instead, he just said, 'Thank you. I'm done with this.'" Shastri spoke of his shock at that announcement. "There's one Test match to go back. He just, you know, just walked up there. Five-minute speech. No tantrums, no shenanigans. 'I'm done. Thank you very much for your support. You know, I won't be there in Sydney, but my total support for you guys.' Because after that was the World Cup. And he was the captain of the World Cup side." Shastri then added: "I looked around the dressing room. I asked players if he had had a chat with them. No one had a clue. Even the guys who went out or spent time with him three days before that. No one had a clue he's going to come and say what he did. And he had played 94 or 95 Test matches. Normally, you know, in India, a player of his stature, if he plays his 100th Test match and they had given that Test match to say Ranchi, the whole town would have been there at the ground to celebrate that 100th Test... But none of that stuff for him. He just said, 'I want to pack my bags. I'm done with whites.'"

'The best player in the world is black and Brazilian': Ronaldo Nazario hails Vinicius Jr for winning The Best FIFA Men's Player award

GNS News Agency, Dec 21

Brazil legend Ronaldo congratulated Vinicius Jr on winning The Best FIFA Men's Player award and hailed him as a "symbol of resistance and resilience". This comes after a controversy during the recent Ballon d'Or awards where Manchester City's Rodri got the nod over the Brazilian leading to Vinicius's club Real Madrid boycotting the ceremony. "It has been 16 years since the last time the trophy for the best player in the world came to Brazil," he wrote on Instagram. "Now deservedly in Vini's hands, it means much more than his decisive role in the games and the extraordinary numbers in the 2023/24 season. His talent would be enough to win the award, but his power goes far beyond the field," Ronaldo wrote on Instagram.



"We are talking about one of the most valuable players today, a victim of televised racism with inconceivable frequency. How many anonymous Viniciuses does he represent? How many victims spread all over the place? A symbol of resistance and resilience, today Vini also leads the anti-racist struggle in world football, where impunity is as pernicious as the attacks. And those who remain silent are no less racist. The omission – especially by entities and authorities that have the legal power to confront and punish such practices – further reinforces the culture of erasure and disrespect towards black people. They tried to

erase you, my friend. And you rocked. THE BEST PLAYER IN THE WORLD IS BLACK AND BRAZILIAN!" he added in the post. On Tuesday, Real Madrid star Vinicius finally got his hands on a big global player award as he pipped Rodri by five points to win The Best award. "I don't even know where to begin," Vinicius said in Portuguese after receiving the award on stage. "It was so far away that it seemed impossible to get here. I was a kid who only played football barefoot on the streets of São Gonçalo, close to poverty and crime. "Getting here is something very important to me. I'm doing it for many children who think that everything is impossible and who think they can't get here."

The off-spinner who extricated his craft from the web of doosras and mystery deliveries



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Ravichandran Ashwin Legacy India retirement India's Ravichandran Ashwin shows the ball as he celebrates with teammates after taking 5 wickets on the fourth day of the first Test cricket match between India and Bangladesh at M. A. Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai. In the grand pantheon of India's spinners, Ravichandran Ashwin would inhabit a rarified space, all unto himself. There have been wizards and magicians, artists and artisans, but few explored the craft with the zeal of a scientist, the curiosity of a child, or the industry of a sculptor like Ashwin. He was the greatest off-spinner his country has seen – and among the finest the world has produced, rubbing shoulders with Muttiah Muralitharan and Jim Laker, Harbhajan Singh and Ashwin's own contemporary Nathan Lyon.

His biggest legacy — apart from the numerical peaks — was how he re-instilled the lost mystique to the art form. He did not glamorise the field like Shane Warne did leg-spin, or romanticise it like Muralitharan, or revolutionise it like Saqlain Mushtaq, but he instilled the soul back in off-spin bowling, made it a riveting spectacle again, liberating it from the dubious doosra and mystery fixation of the aughts, expanded its scope and range, tessellated more layers, embellished it with post-modern syntax and diction. So much so that he is off-spin's renaissance man. There would be a clear demarcation as to how off-spin was before and after Ashwin. He was a classicist in a neo-classical age; he was neo-classical among classicists too. He made connoisseurs purr with his enticing flight and devilish drop; off his marvellously dexterous digits, the ball side-spun and over-spun. He entrapped batsmen with both the simplest and complex set-ups. He evoked the envy of new-age spin tyros with his practised knack of flicking the ball with the index finger, in his expertise to use different grips. He bowled seam-up with as much dexterity as he deployed the square seam. No bowler possessed as many variations as Ashwin did since the departure of Shane Warne. On that scale, he was one of the game's originals, an irreproducible act. He was the perfect Indian spinner, assembled with a fearful symmetry. He blended the grace of Bishan Singh Bedi with the guile of Erapalli Prasanna, the brain and heart of Anil Kumble and the chutzpah of Harbhajan. That he batted better than all of them and could barge into a team as an all-rounder was a dimension that the colossal shadow of his feats with the ball would overshadow. Facing Ashwin was

akin to entering a labyrinth. There were variations within variations, snares within snares, subtleties within subtleties. Like Glenn McGrath, he often foxed the best batsmen of the visiting side. He consumed Joe Root seven times, Steve Smith eight and Kane Williamson on five instances. Left-handed virtuosos invoked the devil in him. Among his most prolific victims were Ben Stokes (12), David Warner (11), Alastair Cook (9) and Kumar Sangakkara four times in the space of 23 balls in the Sri Lankan's farewell series.

There was a ubiquity about the dismissals—bowling from around the stumps, drifting inwards, landing suddenly and deviously, a few metres behind the batsman's presumptions, the kiss of the edge, the snap of the stumps. A heavy dose of them would comprise any highlight reel tribute. But Ashwin's duels with right-handers were equally legendary. Two dismissals illustrate his command over his craft. One was Williamson in Kanpur in 2016, a ripping off-break from a good length area after a two-over-tease of lengths. Another was the straighter one that nailed Smith in Adelaide in 2020, one that was plotted months in advance with video analyst Prasanna Agoram and polished to perfection in the intervening months. Method before magic He rigorously studied batsmen and dissected their flaws and strengths. Minute observations like Sangakkara doesn't get LBW to off-spinners or that Smith is more vulnerable outside the off-stump than on his pads, despite the massive shuffle. He once explained his thought patterns to this paper: "My preparation is whether I can disturb the tempo of a batter. Whether Smith would go to off-stump after 10 balls or 12 balls. Or Joe Root, when you go round the stumps in the first eight balls, he would reverse you once. There are two ways of skinning it, do I want to stop Joe Root from reversing or do I want Root to reverse or get him out?" The deconstruction of a batsman doesn't end here. "That will depend on where Root is in his career, how confident he is. Has he got a hundred in the first two Tests? Is he in confident space, is he coming from Sri Lanka after making mountains of runs? So I will try and make a plan because I want that early blood," he explains. Some misconstrued this as overthinking. But Ashwin stuck to his essence. "I come from a school where even before a particular method is broken, I want to make sure I stitch it up and don't get to a point where it's broken. Why is it happening? That's the question that people fail to recognise. I am addressing something before they believe I should address it," he detailed. He constantly fiddled with his action, experimenting with release points, grips and seam position. He picked new tricks from spinners far younger, he kept his senses open to the game's ceaseless evolution. He was content with his body of work, but kept the windows of perception open to add new dimensions. It was as though bowling spin was a spiritual, timeless quest. When he ambled in off his four-step stroll of a run-up, the arms whirling, the face a portrait of calm focus, he did not seem so much his country's greatest ever match-winner with the red ball as a philosopher in a pursuit of the deepest meaning and purpose of his vocation.