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## TGSRTC ready to handle rush during Sankranti festival

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has taken a slew of measures to meet the heavy demand for transport facilities during Sankranti festival. In addition to running 6,432 special buses for the festival, the RTC has made arrangements for passengers to have access to additional travel options between January 10 and 12, when the rush will be at its peak. Arrangements are also in place to ensure that the travellers have access to buses in the return journey from January 19 and 20. The special buses will be operated from MGBS, JBS, Uppal, Aramgarh, LB Nagar, KPHB, Bowenpally, Gachibowli, etc.

## Gold price rises by Rs 300 to touch Rs 80,300 per 10 gms, Silver touches Rs 93,000 per kg

New Delhi: Gold price climbed Rs 300 for a third consecutive day to touch the high of Rs 80,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid strong global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Traders said the precious metal surged, following news that People's Bank of China (PBOC) increased its reserves for the second consecutive month. In the previous session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity ended at Rs 80,000 per 10 grams. The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose Rs 300 to Rs 79,900 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver rose by Rs 500 to Rs 93,000 per kg from the previous close of Rs 92,500 per kg on Wednesday.

## CM Revanth Reddy Extends Greetings on Pravasi Bharatiya Divas



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy extended warm wishes to Indians across the globe on the occasion of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. In his message, the Chief Minister emphasized the significant role of the overseas Indian community in national development and underscored their essential participation in the Telangana Rising initiative. Highlighting the historical significance of the day, he recalled that January 9 marks the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India in 1915, after earning acclaim as a lawyer in South Africa. Gandhi's decision to dedicate himself to the service of his countrymen and the struggle for independence is a source of pride for all Indians, he noted.

The Chief Minister stated that Telangana offers an excellent platform for investments and innovative ideas from Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). He also mentioned the state government's commitment to the welfare of Gulf-based workers and others through initiatives like the "Pravasi Prajavani" program, which addresses their concerns effectively. Revanth Reddy reiterated that the Telangana government values the contributions of NRIs and aims to strengthen ties with the diaspora to drive progress and prosperity.

## AP Govt Announces Ex-Gratia for Victims of Tirupati Stampede



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

The Andhra Pradesh government has responded to the tragic stampede that occurred during the Vaikuntha Ekadashi celebrations, announcing an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 25 lakh for each family affected by the incident. Revenue Minister Anagani Satyaprasad made the announcement, emphasizing the government's commitment to providing better medical services for the injured. In a show of solidarity, Ministers Anagani Satyaprasad, Anita, Parthasarathy, and Anam Ramanayana Reddy visited the family members of the deceased at Ruia Hospital, followed by a visit to injured individuals receiving care at SWIMS Hospital. The ministers reassured the victims that the government is dedicated to their welfare.

Home Minister Anita announced that authorities are investigating the possibility of a conspiracy relating to the stampede, promising strict action against those found responsible for the tragedy. She also warned of potential consequences for individuals whose negligence may have contributed to the chaos. Minister Anam Rama Narayana Reddy confirmed that the bodies of the deceased would be transported to their native places following the completion of post-mortems. He also stated that efforts are underway to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured.

The stampede, which resulted in the deaths of six people and caused numerous injuries, occurred at the token centers set up for devotees wishing to participate in the darshan at Vaikuntha Dwara.

## Game Changer Ticket Rates Under Scrutiny in Telangana High Court

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Game Changer Ticket Rates Under Scrutiny in Telangana High Court The Telangana High Court on Wednesday took up the issue of ticket pricing, additional shows, show timings, and audience turnout for Ram Charan's much-anticipated film Game Changer. The court is set to issue directives on the matter tomorrow.

The case, which highlights concerns over the hike in ticket prices, was brought before the court amid growing public attention. The High Court has decided to club the hearing of this case with the ongoing Pushpa-2 proceedings, which also deal with similar concerns regarding ticket rates and cinema regulations.

## PM Modi flags off Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special tourist train for NRIs

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday remotely flagged off the inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special tourist train for the Indian diaspora. The train will travel to various tourism and religious destinations across India over three weeks. This initiative is part of the Pravasi Teertha Darshan Yojana of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Pravasi Bharatiya Express is a special state-of-the-art tourist train, exclusively designed and built for the Indian diaspora, and that too for the age group between 45 and 65 years. Starting from its launch day, January 9, the train will travel to multiple destinations across the na-



tion, including prominent tourist and religious places, for three weeks. The date for flagging off the special train has also been deliberately chosen by the Modi-led government. The date January 9, 2025, commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India on this date in the year 1915. The departure of the train is from Safdarjung Rail-

way Station in New Delhi and the route is - New Delhi - Ayodhya - Patna - Gaya - Varanasi - Mahabalipuram - Rameswaram - Madurai - Kochi - Goa - Ekta Nagar (Kevadia) - Ajmer - Pushkar - Agra. The train can accommodate 156 passengers. To connect the Indian diaspora to their roots, this tour is being

organised under the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).

Indian Embassies across the world had invited applications from participants, giving a preference to Persons of Indian Origins (PIOs) belonging to the low-income category who would otherwise not be able to afford to visit India on their own. A statement of the ministry said that it will bear all expenses for the aforesaid conducted train tour besides also bearing 90 per cent of the return airfares for the eligible people from their countries of origin to India. The participants need to bear only 10 per cent of their return airfares. The travellers will be accommodated at 4-star or similar category hotels as per the tour itinerary.

## Democracy ingrained in our lives: PM Modi at PBD convention



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention on Thursday in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, and commended the Indian diaspora for serving as the nation's "ambassadors to the world." Highlighting the significance of India's democratic ethos, he remarked, "India is not just the 'mother of democracy,' but democracy is ingrained in our way of life." PM Modi also remotely flagged off the inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special tourist train under the Pravasi Teertha Darshan Yojana. Departing from Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi, the train will take Indian diaspora members to various religious and tourist destinations across the country over three weeks. The event was attended by External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar, Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, and Ashwini Vaishnaw, among other dignitaries. It began with a performance by three-time Grammy Award winner Ricky Kej. EAM Jaishankar emphasised that hosting the PBD in Odisha reflects the Modi government's "Poorvudaya" policy, showcasing the development and cultural richness of eastern India. Welcoming the Indian diaspora, PM Modi said, "In this sacred land of Lord Jagannath and Lord Lingaraj, I wel-

come the Indian diaspora from across the world. This is a time of vibrant festivals in India, from the upcoming Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj to Makarsankranti, Lohri, Pongal, and Magh Bihu." January 9 also holds historical significance as it marks the day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1915 after a long stay abroad. Your presence here adds to the festive spirit of this occasion," he said. The Prime Minister acknowledged the contributions of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee in establishing the PBD, which has evolved into a vital platform to strengthen bonds between India and its diaspora. "Together, we celebrate India, Indian-ness, our culture, progress, and our roots," he said. Highlighting Odisha's heritage, PM Modi said, "This land reflects India's rich legacy, with sites like the Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves, the Konark Temple, and ancient ports such as Tamralipti and Manikpatna. These treasures evoke immense pride." Expressing gratitude to the diaspora, he added, "I have always considered diaspora members as our nation's ambassadors. The love and respect I receive from you worldwide remain unforgettable." PM Modi underscored the role of Indian values in global respect for the diaspora. "In the last ten years, I met several leaders of the country. Every leader of the world lauds the Indian diaspora. One of the main reasons for this is the social values, that you embed in the societies of the world. We are not just the 'mother of democracy,' but democracy is a part of our life; our way of living. We do not have to teach diversity, but our life goes along with diversity," he said. During the event, PM Modi will also inaugurate four exhibitions: Vishwaroop Ram: The Universal Legacy of Ramayana by ICCR; Diaspora's Contribution to Technology by MEA; Bharat Bharatiya: Swadesh Pardes - Abhilekhiye Virasat by the National Archives of India; and Heritage and Culture of Odisha by the Odisha government. He also visited promotional stalls showcasing contributions by Union Ministries and state governments. The convention featured a virtual address by Chief Guest Christine Carla Kangaloo, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

## KTR Appears Before ACB in Formula E Car Race Case, Denies Allegations



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

BRS leader and former minister K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) appeared before the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) today for questioning in the ongoing Formula E car race controversy. The ACB investigation into the case lasted for over seven hours, with KTR cooperating fully throughout the process. After the lengthy interrogation, KTR addressed the media, stating that he had informed the ACB officials that the case was baseless. He reiterated that he had provided all the information he knew to the authorities and would be willing to appear again for any future inquiries. KTR also mentioned that he was questioned about certain issues raised by Revanth Reddy, clarifying that he had answered all questions and fully cooperated with the investigation. He also expressed doubts about the corruption allegations, asking where the evidence of money transfers or corruption was in the case. During the

press interaction, KTR further questioned the police's fear of the media, wondering why such an attitude was being displayed. Meanwhile, after completing the questioning, KTR was seen leaving the ACB office and was expected to head towards Telangana Bhavan. As he made his way out, BRS party leaders and supporters gathered in large numbers near Banjara Hills Road Number 12, chanting slogans in opposition to Revanth Reddy's stance. KTR's legal counsel, Ramachandra Rao, was also present during the questioning. Several key aspects of the case were reportedly discussed, with KTR providing detailed responses on the matter.

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

New Delhi: Amidst the Aam Aadmi Party offering freebies one by one ahead of the February 5 voting for Delhi Assembly polls, and Congress already announcing a Rs 2,500 monthly benefit for women to counter AAP's increasing welfare schemes, the BJP is also likely to come out with sops and freebies to counter them. The Bharatiya Janata Party is prepared to match these offers with new initiatives aimed at appealing to a wider section of Delhi's electorate. One of the key proposals the BJP is likely to introduce is a free electricity scheme, sources said. The

## Governor Approves Telangana's "Bhoo Bharati" Act



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

The Telangana government's "Bhoo Bharati" Act, aimed at providing a permanent solution to land-related issues, has received approval from Governor Jishnu Dev Varma. The bill was introduced in the Assembly on December 18, 2024, by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy. Following discussions in the Legislative Assembly on December 20 and the Legislative Council on December 21, the bill was passed and subsequently sent to the Governor's office for approval.

Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy expressed his gratitude to all those who contributed to the formulation of the Act. He stated that the government would take steps to implement the law at the earliest to ensure improved revenue services for the people of Telangana. He also instructed officials to focus on framing guidelines and policies related to the Act. On Thursday, Revenue Department Principal Secretary Naveen Mittal handed over a copy of the Governor-approved Bhoo Bharati Act to Minister Srinivas Reddy at the Secretariat. The government is expected to roll out the necessary measures for the Act's implementation in the coming days.

## Kejriwal to fight polls only from New Delhi; shoots down BJP's claim



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Quashing BJP leaders' claims that he would contest the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections from a second seat out of fear of losing from New Delhi, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday (January 9, 2025) said he will contest the polls from one seat only. Mr. Kejriwal also asserted that the Assembly polls are not an INDA bloc affair as there is a direct contest between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Delhi. A three-time sitting MLA from New Delhi since 2013, Mr. Kejriwal this time is locked in an intense triangular contest against the sons of two former Chief Ministers of Delhi. While the BJP has fielded former Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma's son Parvesh Verma, Congress has given ticket to Sandeep Dikshit whose mother Sheila Dikshit was a three-term Chief Minister of Delhi. "I am contesting one seat only," Mr. Kejriwal said at a press conference when asked about BJP's claims that he was going to fight from a second seat out of fear of losing from New Delhi. The AAP leader's clarification came after BJP's IT cell chief Amit Malviya claimed in a post on X that fearing his imminent defeat from New Delhi, Mr. Kejriwal is making "baseless allegations" about voter list in his constituency and "talking" about contesting from two seats. The AAP leaders have accused the BJP of filing applications in bulk from different constituencies, including New Delhi, for the deletion of thousands of AAP supporters' names from the electoral roll. At the presser, Mr. Kejriwal said a meeting of AAP leaders with officials of the Election Commission is due Thursday (January 9, 2025) evening, in which all the issues, including deletion of voters' names, will be discussed. The AAP supreme also thanked INDIA bloc members, including the Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT), for extending support to AAP for the Assembly elections.

## BJP may pitch for free power in its manifesto

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

party is likely to announce that Delhi consumers will receive up to 300 units of electricity free of charge each month, sources added. The AAP-led Delhi government currently provides free electricity for up to 200 units a month. Under the existing free electricity scheme, the Delhi government provides free electricity to consumers with a monthly consumption of 200 units. Whereas, a 50 per cent subsidy is given to people with a consumption of 201-400 units of electricity. In a bid to further win over religious communities, the BJP is considering extending this electricity benefit to religious places such as temples and gurdwaras.

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Politicising VCs

The University Grants Commission (UGC) Draft Regulations 2025, released on Monday for public feedback, herald significant changes in higher education. While touted as reforms aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, several provisions appear to dilute academic standards and invite undue politicisation into university administration. Most troubling is the removal of restrictions on contract teaching appointments. Under the previous guidelines, such appointments were capped at 10 per cent of an institution's total faculty. The removal of this cap risks turning critical academic positions into temporary, cost-cutting measures that prioritise convenience over quality. Contract positions, while expedient, undermine long-term institutional stability and the career prospects of the faculty.

Equally contentious is the restructuring of vice-chancellor (VC) appointments. By granting chancellors — often state governors — the authority to appoint search committees, the draft centralises power in a manner that could compromise university autonomy. Moreover, opening VC positions to industry experts and public sector professionals, while potentially bringing fresh perspectives, risks sidelining academics who understand the nuances of higher education. This redefinition of eligibility dilutes the academic integrity of university leadership. While the draft abolishes the outdated quantitative Academic Performance Indicator (API) system, replacing it with qualitative assessments, the implementation remains opaque. Criteria such as innovation, societal contributions and digital content creation are commendable but lack clear evaluation mechanisms, opening the door for favouritism.

It is argued that these changes will foster flexibility and inclusivity, yet the draft's rushed timeline for feedback — 30 days — raises concerns about genuine stakeholder engagement.

## Bengaluru's water resilience project: World Bank lays down disbursement-linked indicators for 3,500 crore loan



The water resilience project now approved for the city will be carried out during a five-year period (2026-31) and the money will be disbursed in three to five installments and each installment is linked to these DLIs

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

The World Bank, which is giving a loan of \$426 million (3,500 crore) to Bengaluru for its water resilience project, has imposed nine disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs), including service benchmarking, digital governance, climate financing, and mobilisation of own resources, for the loan. The loan is being given under the World Bank's Program-for-Results Financing (PforR), where the grant of loans are linked to outcomes. The water resilience project now approved for the city will be carried out during a five-year period (2026-31) and the money will be disbursed in three to five installments and each installment is linked to these DLIs, sources said.

Under the project, totally worth around ₹5,000 crore, with the World Bank loan component being ₹3,500 crore and the rest financed by the State government, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will take up the work of fortifying storm-water drains (SWDs) and building sewage treatment plants (STPs). Recently, the civic agencies and representatives from the World Bank held a stakeholders consultation meeting, where the Bank's representatives briefed them of the project and spelt out the DLIs, sources said.

"The DLIs imposed are good in intent, but these need to have specific targets. For instance, the BWSSB is building new STPs and sewer lines using these funds and the BBMP is building SWDs. Ideally, the DLI should be the quality of water in the lakes rejuvenated through these STPs," a lake conservation activist, part of the meeting, said. The World Bank has insisted on focusing on the reuse of treated water in the city as part of a circular economy, installation of sensors in SWDs to create an advanced alert system for flooding in the city, and proper operation and maintenance works. The civic body will also install sluice gates at lakes, sources said.

The international monetary agency has also insisted on climate financing in the city, for which the civic body has pointed towards the Climate Action Plan and that the civic agencies should raise its own resources. While the BBMP has pointed towards its property tax reforms, the BWSSB is all set to increase water tariff. The BWSSB has recently written to all city MLAs seeking suggestions on a tariff hike and the hike is expected to be implemented in 2025. One of the other mandates by the World Bank has been to implement disaster-risk governance in the city. A state-of-the-art control room to manage climate risks for the city will come up at the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre at a cost of ₹350 crore, sources said. A senior city official said that most of the DLIs mentioned by the World Bank had already been implemented in the city in some form or another. "We will soon submit all documentation for the same," the official said. Meanwhile, all the DLIs will be adhered to while implementing the projects taken up under the World Bank loan, the official added.

## Special education teachers: When ikigai takes a toll



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Yaazhini had been dyslexic as a child so helping children like her became the purpose of her life. After completing her Masters in English and Psychology and a diploma in Child Counselling and Psychology, Ms. Yaazhini became a special education teacher. And today she runs the Bubblee institution in Chennai for children with learning disabilities. Ms. Yaazhini has built a strong connection with the children she educates. Some children confide in her and share their personal experiences, which they may not share with their parents. She says her job satisfaction from being a special educator is immense. Ms. Yaazhini also feels professions such as hers inculcate the value of humanity. But the picture isn't rosy through and through. Educators and trainers for children with special needs battle several challenges in their professional lives. While most of them enter the profession to help children and their parents to enable them to cope with everyday challenges, their own lives are affected. Unfortunately, many educators drop out from the profession as they struggle to maintain a work-life balance, and handle pressure from some parents.

Ms. Yaazhini, for instance, recalls interacting with parents who are in denial of their child's special needs, or those who overthink and label an otherwise normal child as one with ADHD or autism. Both types of parents need to understand their child and get the correct diagnosis before making judgments. "Some parents do not accept that their child could be like this (with disability). Some are impatient. Within two or three months, they want their kids to be perfect, like other kids", explains Jutika Boro, a private practitioner at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. Both Ms. Yaazhini and Ms. Jutika are concerned about parents' hesitancy regarding sending their children to a special school as it might reveal their child's disability to society.

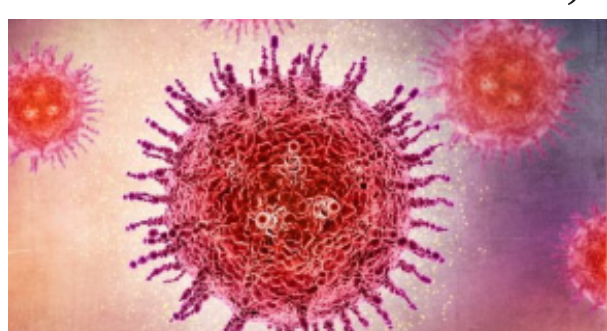
"Most of the parents do not accept their children's condition and compare their children with the performance of other (neurotypical) children. The parents start guiding the special educators what to teach. Parents blame teachers for not bringing easily discard all the efforts and blame for not bringing changes immediately", remarks Chitra Kaliappan, who runs Bhairavi Child Development Centre in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Ms. Chitra flags safety of special educators who sometimes experience dangerous situations while handling children with behaviour issues. Educators

do undergo special training to handle such situations. This includes developing patience while training a child and the ability to walk, run, or move with them to catch up with their pace. While younger special educators might not find it difficult, it is exhausting for the older ones. "Most special educators lose interest in their profession and opt for early retirement. This could lead to a dearth of experienced special educators," warns Ms. Chitra. Saradha Easwaran is a specialist in education and rehabilitation, and is a founder consultant at the Sarvae Jana Suki centre in Coimbatore. Nearly 26 years ago, when she was a fresher in rehabilitation, she would train a boy with autism from her neighbourhood and engage him in educational activities. While she trained other children, for this boy the teacher was his world. "After getting married, I moved to my in-laws' place. He (the boy) was very upset. I visited them and tried explaining the transition to him but all in vain. They decided to relocate elsewhere. I have learnt to handle the family and the children with special needs for such twists and turns using visual supports and a strategy of diverting activities to keep them emotionally strong", recalls Ms. Saradha. While attachment with children can be helpful, it can also be very difficult emotionally, as it directly affects educators' personal lives.

Possible solutions Educators mention they need to learn to break complex tasks into small parts to make the learning process easy. Children with special needs may not grasp their lessons at the very first attempt. It takes several attempts to get a child's attention on the task at hand, whether it is related to language, communication, activities for daily life, or play. In case of a break in routine due to vacations, or illness, educators need to start all over again, as many children with learning disabilities fail to retain and recall information. While training, some children are required to be continuously prompted for tasks such as climbing stairs or jumping. All of these require patience from the special educator. Ms. Chitra suggests, "Teaching strategies must be creative and innovative. They can be tailored to suit the student's needs. Our children are very smart. They do what they like and neglect whatever they are uncomfortable with."

Despite the challenges, educators take special care of their own mental health. Support from their family members goes a long way. Apart from activities for mindfulness, they also recommend investing time and effort in personal and professional growth. "I am a special educator, but I know need to gain additional knowledge. Many special educators do not know about speech or occupation therapy", adds Ms. Jutika who also learned speech therapy. Many educators conduct training programs and workshops for parents and other educators. They run short online courses for parents and professionals on relevant topics. Some trainers and volunteers also go for home visits as may be required. The challenges and health risks special educators face do not deter them from helping children with special needs. "I feel complete when I am in service. I believe I am destined to do more for the community in need. Whatever I have done so far, is not enough", exclaims Ms. Saradha.

## 3-month-old tests positive for HMPV in Ahmedabad, third case in India



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

A three-month-old baby tested positive for the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) Monday in Ahmedabad — the third case to be reported from the country. This comes hours after two confirmed cases were reported from Bengaluru. A baby boy tested positive in Ahmedabad's Orange Children Hospital. According to doctors, the baby's parents belonged to Dungarpur, Rajasthan. The three-month-old had been admitted to the hospital a week ago with a cough, cold, and fever. Dr Sagar Patel, a neonatologist, said while the paediatric hospital usually reported 2-3 HMPV cases every year, they reported the latest case to the state government due to the panic being spread over a virus "that is endemic to India".

"We conducted a viral panel which came positive for HMPV. The child was admitted about a week ago and was on a ventilator. Four days ago, we sent the samples to a private laboratory and they came positive for HMPV. But by the time the report arrived, the condition of the child had already improved, and was off the ventilator support," the doctor said. In a statement issued Monday morning, the Union Health Ministry said the virus was already in circulation in India as well as globally, "and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with HMPV have been reported in various countries."

## Mumbai's new cable-stayed bridge at Reay Road set to open in February

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

cable bridge, reay road Workers put the finishing touches on the new iconic cable-stayed bridge at Reay Road, set to be inaugurated next month. This impressive 385-meter structure boasts two ramps and six lanes, supported by six pairs of cables. The Maharashtra Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation is overseeing the re-construction of the aging British-era ROB. The city of dreams is all set to welcome its second cable-stayed bridge—the first of its kind built entirely on a landmass. The cable-stayed road overbridge at Reay Road, located in South Mumbai on the harbour railway line, is poised to open next month. It promises not only to improve connectivity but also to become a significant architectural addition to Mumbai's landscape.

The construction of the overbridge began in February 2022 and has been progressing steadily under the supervision of Maharashtra Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (MahaRail). At an event in Nagpur on Sunday, MahaRail CEO Rajesh Kumar Jaiswal announced that the bridge's work was almost complete, stating that the structure would be ready for vehicular movement by February. A first on land, a second for Mumbai While Mumbai is already

home to the iconic Bandra-Worli Sea Link, the Reay Road overbridge sets itself apart as the city's first cable-stayed bridge built entirely on land. Spanning 385 m, including two ramps, the six-lane bridge is equipped with pedestrian footpaths and has been constructed at a cost of Rs 175 crore, up from the previously estimated Rs 145 crore. Its design incorporates cutting-edge technology featuring a central pylon system with stay cables extending from the structure's spine. The old road overbridge was built in 1910 and had only 1.5 lanes on both sides. The bridge's design prioritises functionality and innovation. By employing limited piers and cable-stayed technology, the construction team minimised the need for extensive foundations. This approach also reduced interference with underground utilities, speeding up construction and minimising inconvenience to traffic. The bridge's long span provides a seamless connection between Barrister Nath Pai Road and the Eastern Freeway while maintaining the required vertical clearance for vehicles passing beneath it. To further enhance the bridge's visual appeal, MahaRail has integrated architectural LED lighting, promising to transform the Reay Road bridge into a striking feature of Mumbai's nighttime skyline.

## A comprehensive plan to control sewage flow into Vrishabhavati valley to be drawn up



GNS News Agency, Jan 9

The city administration will shortly draw up a comprehensive action plan to control sewage flow in the Vrishabhavati river valley. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) will jointly carry out this exercise. Chief Civic Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath, who chaired a multi-agency review meeting on the subject on Saturday, highlighted the growing pollution caused by untreated sewage entering the valley and instructed officials of these agencies to formulate an integrated action plan.

He emphasised the need to identify all points where sewage enters the valley and compile a comprehensive list. He also called for a detailed inspection of apartments along the banks of the valley to verify whether sewage is being directly discharged and whether sewage treatment plants (STPs) in these complexes are functioning effectively. The BWSSB was instructed to provide an update on the number of operational STPs, plans for constructing new STPs, and to ensure that all sewage flowing into the valley is redirected to these facilities via pipelines.

Action against encroachments With 42 lakes being linked through the Vrishabhavati valley, Mr. Nath urged officials to identify and clear encroachments in the region. He suggested conducting land surveys with the assistance of revenue officials and taking strict action to reclaim encroached areas. To prevent waste from being dumped into the valley, precautionary measures like installing fences were suggested. He also ordered the deployment of earthmovers for removing silt to ensure smooth flow of water in the valley. The Vrishabhavati valley spans 28.08 km within BBMP limits. The BBMP has also taken up beautification of the entire valley on the lines of the K-100 project. The V-100 stretch covers 14.04 km from Sankey Tank to Bangalore University, while the V-200 stretch extends 14.04 km from Goraguntepalya to Bangalore University.

## BJP's Hardik Patel slams Nirma chairman of 'dividing Patidars' following his remarks on 2015 Patidar agitation



In a video Karsanbhai Patel of the Nirma group is purportedly heard saying that only those who led the protests reaped political benefits. BJP MLA Hardik Patel slammed the statement saying 'a billionaire like Karsanbhai wouldn't know'

GNS News Agency, Jan 9

Purported statements by leading Patidar industrialist and Nirma group Chairman Karsanbhai Patel over the 2015 Patidar quota agitations have heated up the political atmosphere in Gujarat, with the leader of the agitation, BJP MLA Hardik Patel, accusing the businessman of attempting to "divide" the community. In a video being circulated on social media, Karsanbhai, while speaking to media persons at a social function Sunday, is purportedly being heard saying that "nothing" came of the protests. The authenticity of the video has not been independently verified. In August-September 2015, the Patidars launched a protest demanding reservation in government jobs and educational institutions. The protests eventually turned violent, leading to 14 deaths.

"If you remember, we had this quota agitation. Patidars were the ones who did it. What happened in that? Nothing. Our youths got martyred and those who did the agitation reaped political benefit out of it," Karsanbhai is heard saying. "A daughter of Patidar, that too Leuva Patidar's daughter, who was the CM (Chief Minister) had to leave. So, was it an agitation to get reservations or to remove someone... It is not possible that Patidars themselves remove Patidars. So, this is a subject to be researched upon." Anandiben Patel, who was Gujarat's chief minister at the time, stepped down from her position as the protests intensified.

Karsanbhai's remarks drew criticism from Hardik Patel, a BJP MLA from Viramgam, who said that the industrialist wasn't aware of what the community managed to get from the protests "because he is a billionaire and this agitation was for the poor Patidar families". "Because of the agitation, not only the Patidars, but more than 50 communities that were not getting reservations got Yuva Swavlamban Yojana of Rs 1,000 crore, got a commission and a corporation for non-reserved communities, and the economically poor Patidars got 10% reservation. Due to this scheme, in the last three to four years, thousands of youths are studying free of cost and have got jobs," Hardik said on social media. He further said: "There are a number of leaders like Karsanbhai who are dividing the Patidar community on the lines of Leuva-Kadva (the two major sub-castes of the Patidar community). There is a need to identify such leaders because they can't see the community united. If the community is united then the status of such leaders gets suppressed."









## Gaurav Taneja reveals why he's pitching to sharks after claiming he does 'Rs 1 cr sales in 1 hour', says 'if this fails...'



co-founder of Snapdeal, responds, "It's Flying Beast, the influencer." Surprised, Singh asks, "Gaurav Taneja?! He's coming?" After Bahl nods in confirmation, the teaser cuts to Taneja entering the stage with a wide smile. "Sharks, these days all founders want to become influencers. Don't know where they get the urge from," he says, prompting Vineeta Singh to quip, "And influencers want to become founders!" Shark Tank India 4: Aman Gupta reacts sharply to entrepreneurs' claim their headphones outperform boAt's

Introducing Beast Life, Taneja explains that it is not just a health and supplement brand, but a "healthy way of life." During the pitch, a person from the company, accompanying Taneja, claims that Beast Life generated Rs 1 crore in sales within just one hour of launching, which stuns the sharks. "That is a dream for a lot of businesses," Aman Gupta, co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of electronics brand boAt Lifestyle, points out. Concluding his pitch, Taneja can be seen asking the sharks "Rs 1 crore for 1 per cent of equity." Bahl, curious about Taneja's background, asks, "Generally, IIT-ians go to Google, Facebook etc or go for start-ups. How come your trajectory is different?" As Gupta points out, "These days a lot of influencers are floating brands," Peyush Bansal, co-founder and CEO of Lenskart, asks, "What is the kind of income an influencer can generate today?" "You earned Rs 1 crore in 1 hour, then what are you doing here asking for Rs 1 crore (for 1 per cent equity)," asks Singh. In response to the questions posed by the sharks, Taneja says, "Just like the 'Beast' in the name 'Beast Life', my everything is in this. If this fails, I can't create another one (brand). This is my life." The promo video concludes on a cliffhanger, leaving viewers wondering if Flying Beast will secure a deal with the sharks.

The stage is set for yet another edition of the much-beloved business reality television series Shark Tank India and the teasers released so far suggest that season four, which premieres on January 6, will be even more intense and filled with high-stakes drama than previous seasons. Recently, the show's makers unveiled another promo video showing social media influencer and entrepreneur Gaurav Taneja, popularly known as Flying Beast, stepping onto the Shark Tank India floor to pitch his fitness brand named Beast Life. The Shark Tank promo video begins with Vineeta Singh, CEO and co-founder of SUGAR Cosmetics, asking her fellow sharks who the next contestant is, to which Kunal Bahl,

## Aaman Devgn is obsessed with 'duniya ka sabse sundar ghoda' in period drama starring Ajay Devgn, Rasha Thadani

The much-anticipated trailer of Azaad starring debutantes Aaman Devgn and Rasha Thadani is finally out. The film, also starring Aaman's uncle and actor Ajay Devgn revolves around a horse named Azaad and how Aaman's character is hellbent on making Azaad his own with a parallel love story with Rasha Thadani. The trailer of the film begins with Aaman's character praising Azaad, calling it "smart". He says, "Vikram Singh ka ghoda hai Azaad". The next frame introduces Ajay Devgn as Vikram Singh, who is a baaghi (rebel) against the Britishers. The video moves on to introduce Rasha Thadani, and clips of various songs and Aaman Devgn's meeting with Vikram Singh.

Vikram asks, "Ghod sawari jaante ho? (Do you know horse riding?)" Aaman replies, "Ghudsawari ke pyaar mein hi toh apke jaisa daaku bane hai hum (I became a bandit like you only for my love for horse riding)." Ajay Devgn corrects him, "Not bandits, baaghi." The next few frames show Aaman's failed attempt at riding Azaad. With frustration, he complains, "Iska daru, khana, paani sab dekh rahe hai, par yeh humein baithe bhi nahi deta hai (I have been his caretaker but he never lets me ride him)."

The dialogue follows with a dialogue by Ajay Devgn, "Rishwat se toh insaan kabu mein aate hai... ghoda paseene mein bahaduri aur wafa ke mehak se (Bribery can control people, horses are controlled with pride and loyalty)." The trailer then shows Britishers wanting to send Indian labourers to South Africa, with villagers pleading to stop the torture. How Aaman gets to ride Azaad and free his village is to be uncovered in the film releasing on January 17. Apart from Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha, Aaman and Ajay Devgn, the film also stars actor Diana Penty, Mohit Malik and Piyush Mishra in important roles. Azaad, directed by the maker of Rock On, Kai Po Che, and Kedarnath, Abhishek Kapoor, is co-produced by the direc-



tor as well as Ronnie Screwvala and Pragya Kapoor.

The film written by Ritesh Shah, Suresh Nair, and Chandan Arora along with Abhishek Kapoor, is composed by Amit Trivedi. Abhishek Kapoor is known for directing films like Rock On, Kai Po Che, and Kedarnath among others. Previously, the trailer of the film had gained a wide recognition from the viewers also garnering praises for the newcomers. The trailer too has caught the attention of movie buffs who have flooded the comment section of the trailer with comments like, "Congratulations Azaad team, superb trailer", "Ab toh dekhna padega Azaad", "January mein toh bahaut movie aayenge, but I think this will become the best movie." Other comments read, "The newcomers Aaman Devgn and Rasha Thadani look promising... All The Best." Many even compared Ajay Devgn's role with his cameo in RRR. In a statement, Abhishek Kapoor said, "Azaad" is a long-held vision that has finally come to life, and I'm thrilled to share it with the world. This film is a testament to the transformative power of human-animal connections, and I firmly believe its universal themes will strike a chord with audiences of all ages."



Recalling what inspired him to work in the Hansal Mehta show, the actor recalled, "I was working then and my salary was Rs 5,000 per month. I had Rs 75,000 in savings and it was a big amount at that time. I lost it all during Harshad Mehta scam. When I found out about Scam 1992, I insisted that I would play this role despite Hansal Mehta saying it was a small role. It was based on RK Damani who is the owner of D Mart and my personal story made me decide that I would definitely play it." During the conversation, the actor recalled the time when he got a call from director Anees Bazmee for the role in Welcome. "I had already worked with Anees in No Entry. When Welcome was being shot, my show Baa Bahoo Aur Baby was airing on Star Plus. Anees bhai called and said that there's an interesting character in the film for you and you will have to come to Dubai on so and so dates for 15 days," he shared. Paresh further added, "I told him that my show is going on and I shoot it for 25-27 days in a month. It will be difficult for me, I can't do it. He tried to convince me but I apologised and said that I won't be able to do it because this is my prior commitment."

However, Anees tried to get him on board again after some time, but this time, for a day's shoot. "After 6 months, he called me again and asked me to come for a one day shoot to Lonavala to shoot just one climax scene and you can't say no. I just asked him about the dates and went to the shoot at Tiger Point in Lonavala."

The Bhoole Bhulaiyaa 3 director is known to give freedom to his actors for improvisation and that's what hap-

## Payal Kapadia on taking All We Imagine as Light to Golden Globes, no win for film: 'A very small film made with the struggles'



Filmmaker Payal Kapadia made history after she bagged two nominations at the 82nd Golden Globes Awards for her film, All We Imagine as Light. Payal was nominated for Best Director and her film was in the running for Best Non-English Film category, however, the team missed out

on both awards. Yet, seeing her project during many other renowned films Payal Kapadia feels honoured. While at Golden Globes, she spoke about the recognition All We Imagine as Light received. She said, "It's absolutely incredible, ours is a very small film made with the struggles of a lot of people who put resources into making it. The fact that it is here with all these amazing people makes me feel really happy and honoured." Payal has been the second Indian filmmaker after Shekhar Kapur who has been nominated for the Golden Globes.

Payal's film All We Imagine as Light has had quite a glorious run in the festival circuits. The film has bagged awards in several parts of the world including the Cannes Film Festival. Though the film had a limited release in India and also missed out on the opportunity to be India's official entry to the Oscars, Payal Kapadia's film surely left a strong impression on the global stage on several occasions. All We Imagine as Light stars Kani Kusruti and Divya Prabha in the lead roles. The film is an international co-production between companies from France, India, Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Italy. Other than Kani and Divya, All We Imagine as Light also stars Chhaya Kadam, Anand Sami, and Hridhu Haroon. The film revolves around the life story and struggles of two nurses Prabha and Anu.

## Malayalam actor Honey Rose alleges stalking, sexually coloured remarks by unnamed person; one detained

Malayalam actor Honey Rose has come forward alleging that a person, whose identity she chose not to reveal, has been making disparaging remarks about her through innuendos and persistently stalking her. Taking to social media on Sunday, the actor explained that her decision to speak out stemmed from repeated potshot-like queries from people asking whether her silence meant she enjoyed such remarks or agreed with them. Rose also noted that the said person's sexually coloured remarks against her constituted prima facie criminal offences.

"The said person, as if taking revenge for my refusal to go to the events he invited me to, shows up at other functions I attend and makes derogatory mentions of my name in the media whenever possible. If you ask me whether one can insult any woman using the arrogance of wealth and the legal framework in India provides no protection against this, it is evident that the individual's actions prima facie constitute offences under the Indian Penal Code, involving making sexually coloured remarks and stalking a woman with such intent," she wrote on social media.

Don't Miss | Shark Tank India 4: Aman Gupta reacts sharply to entrepreneurs' claim their headphones outperform boAt's "Personally, I usually dismiss such rants from mentally disturbed persons with both contempt and pity. That does not mean I lack the ability to respond. The definition of one's personal freedom does not include the liberty to insult another's personal freedom," Rose concluded. She later told Asianet News that if the said person continues to do the same, she will initiate legal action. Meanwhile, a day after the Malayalam actor shared the post, a man has been taken into custody by the Kochi Central Police and at least 30 people have been booked for allegedly posting obscene comments on her social media pages, according to a re-



port by news agency PTI. The case was registered based on a complaint she filed on Sunday night. The accused were charged under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Section 75 (sexual harassment) and Section 67 (punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material electronically) of the IT Act. "Interrogation of the person in custody is going on," a police officer told PTI. Honey Rose, who began her acting career with director Vinayan's Boyy Friend (2005), has featured in films across Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, including Trivandrum Lodge, Hotel California, Thank You, 5 Sundarikal, Daivathinte Swantham Cleetus, Ring Master, 1 by Two, Kanal, Chalakkudykaran Changathy, Big Brother, Monster, Pattaampoochi, Veera Simha Reddy and Ajantha. Despite being a frequent target of cyberbullying and offensive remarks on social media, this is the first time the actor has publicly addressed the issue so firmly.

## Rohit Roy recalls surprising daughter Kiara who is studying at Brown University in USA: 'I travelled for 20 hours... she started crying'

Actor Rohit Roy opened up about his daughter Kiara and the bond they share. Rohit, married to actor Mansi, said fathers rarely show their emotions or feelings to their children but he decided to break the pattern when he booked tickets to the US on an impulse and travelled 20 hours to surprise his daughter who is studying at the prestigious Brown University. "I missed her badly, I booked the tickets and surprised her", said the actor.

Recalling the incident, Rohit told Cyrus on his podcast, "I went to America to surprise my daughter. I just landed up at her door step. I think it was a Sunday morning, she looked at me and she was like, 'Are you here?' She started crying thinking she was hallucinating." He also spoke highly of Kiara who is in her final year at the university and is scoring near perfect grades. He said, "She is in the final year at Brown and I was missing her. For father, we can't tell anybody anything. I said, 'What do I do, I simply booked tickets and went to her. I was all alone. For once, Mansi didn't say a thing. I landed at night, but I waited. I love to take Uber in the USA. I booked one in the morning and reached her. We spent seven blissful days together. I haven't ever spent days like that. I regret I had nobody to record that moment."

The actor shared he wanted to involve his daughter's roommate in the surprise, so that she could at least record the entire thing, but he let it pass. "I thought, kids speak, and what if something slips out of her mouth. My whole 20-hour journey would have gone in waste. Also, Kiara is a kind of person who doesn't like too much of pictures and videos."

Though the actor couldn't record that moment, he said, "I will never ever forget that moment. It is now imprinted in my mind." Previously talking about his daughter on RiteBite



Max Protein TV YouTube channel, the actor said, "I feel like the luckiest man on earth to have Kiara in my life. She's a truly sorted individual. She lives her life, she studies hard. She goes to Brown, and her GPA is 3.9 on 4." The actor had also shared that his daughter was offered a role in Zoya Akhtar's The Archies, but she couldn't give it a thought due to her education. He told The Indian Express, "About a year and a half back, I was at a fashion event hosted by Shabana Azmi. There was a great amount of media and paps and of course many stars. Later, Excel called me for The Archies. I told them that she is studying at the Brown University but I will check. I did tell her but she couldn't give it a thought given the space she is in, where competition is intense. I have told her once you finish your education and want to give it a thought, we would wholly support you."

## Chiranjeevi shares life lessons with budding entrepreneurs

Hyderabad: Megastar Chiranjeevi had some words of inspiration for young entrepreneurs. "My journey from 'nowhere to somewhere' came from the qualities I developed over time. I believe sharing my success story would inspire others," he said while speaking at the American Progressive Telugu Association's (APTA) Global Business Conference, Catalyst, in Hyderabad on January 5.

Sharing lessons from his life and career, the actor said passion, discipline and hard work helped him succeed. "If we stay focused on our goals, work hard and persevere, success will inevitably follow." The megastar also revealed how he loved sports but had to give them up due to injuries.

He then joined the NCC, which taught him discipline. He remembered being part of the Republic Day Parade in New Delhi, which became a turning point in his life. Later, his love for acting led him into films. He also spoke about the challenges early in his career, including rejection and negativity. "People who mistreated me eventually returned to me with opportunities." Chiranjeevi advised entrepreneurs to focus on building trust and credibility instead of quick financial gains. "Your network is your biggest strength," he said, adding that his fans supported him not only in films but also in social causes like blood donation. Lauding the APTA for organising the event, he appreciated the efforts of the Telugu community in supporting entrepreneurship.

