

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



11-12-2025
Total pilgrims: 64,367
Tonsures: 25,193
Hundi kanakulu: 4.71 CR
Waiting Compartments: 31

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens). 12 H

TO BOOK YOUR ADS CALL

99484 80279, 73307 78889



NATION | NEWS

Stalin projects Tamil Nadu as India's top state by 2031 under 'Dravidian Model 2.0'



WORLD | NEWS

Trump's 'historic' peace deal for DR Congo shattered after rebels seize key city



SPORTS | NEWS

Vaibhav Suryavanshi Reacts To Surpassing Virat Kohli As 'Most Searched Indian' In 2025

Messi, Revanth Reddy play friendly match as Uppal Stadium turns festive

HYDERABAD (TSIT): Football fever peaked at Uppal Stadium on Saturday as Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and global football legend Lionel Messi arrived to take part in a high-profile friendly match amid tight security.

The stadium was packed with enthusiastic fans as "Messi mania" gripped the city, with supporters wearing Argentina jerseys bearing the iconic No.10. Hyderabad police made elaborate security arrangements and took control of the stadium and surrounding areas to ensure the smooth conduct of the event.

The friendly match was played between the Singareni RR and Aparna teams, with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy representing Singareni RR and Lionel Messi turning out for the Aparna team. The match drew huge cheers



Messi mania grips Hyderabad as Rahul Gandhi arrives for football event

Hyderabad: Amid growing excitement over the arrival of global football icon Lionel Messi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi reached Hyderabad on Saturday evening to attend the much-anticipated football event. Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and senior Congress leaders welcomed Rahul Gandhi at Shamshabad airport before leaving together. Congress sources clarified that the visit is pure-

ly sports-related and not connected to any political programme. With football fans across the country eager to witness Messi in action, social media posts highlighted the spirit of sportsmanship, stating that the focus of the visit was football and not politics. The presence of a world-renowned player like Messi and a national leader at the event has further intensified the football frenzy in Hyderabad.

from the crowd as the two teams took the field. Adding to the festive atmosphere, the event featured a musical night and laser show. Popular singers Mangli and Rahul Sipligunj entertained the audience with energetic folk songs, while Sipligunj's rendition of "Naatu Naatu" received a rousing response. Police remained on high alert throughout the event, keeping in view recent security concerns elsewhere in the country.



Angry fans on rampage as Messi's Kolkata tour turns 'Messy', Mamata apologies

KOLKATA (TSIT): Chaos erupted at the Salt Lake stadium here on Saturday as thousands of fans protested after failing to get a clear glimpse of Argentine football icon Lionel Messi during a much-hyped event, prompting police to baton-charge and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to order a high-level enquiry. What was billed as a marquee football spectacle turned into anger and disorder as Messi's brief and tightly ring-fenced appearance, his first at the venue since 2011, left large sections of the crowd frustrated despite many having paid hefty sums for tickets.

Accompanied by long-time strike partner Luis Suárez and Argentine teammate Rodrigo De Paul, Messi, the World Cup-winning captain,

Fans, who had paid between Rs 4,500 and Rs 10,000 for tickets to watch the Argentine star, hurled bottles and damaged fibreglass seats.



arrived at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan around 11.30 am.

His vehicle was parked near the touchline, and as he stepped onto the field, he was quickly surrounded by VIPs, organisers, celebrities and security personnel, leav-

ing spectators in the galleries straining for a view.

Messi walked a short distance on the pitch and waved briefly towards the stands amid loud chants of "Messi, Messi". Fans, however, soon realised that the footballer remained tightly

cordoned off and was barely visible from large sections of the stadium. Several spectators said even the giant screens failed to offer a clear view. Frustration mounted when it became evident that Messi would not complete the full lap of the stadium that had been part of the original programme. Instead, he turned back midway and was escorted out well before the scheduled end of his appearance. As word spread that the Argentine star had left the field prematurely, anger spilt over. Bottles and plastic chairs were hurled onto the pitch, sponsor banners and hoardings were torn down, fibreglass seats were smashed, and sections of the crowd attempted to rip open barricades to force their way onto the field.

GRAP Stage-4 curbs kick in as Delhi's air quality turns 'severe'



NEW DELHI (TSIT) A thick blanket of smog shrouded the national capital on Saturday morning, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) registering a reading of 431, under the 'severe' category, prompting the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to invoke Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). "Keeping in view the prevailing trend of air quality and in an effort to prevent further deterioration of air quality in the region, the CAQM Sub-Committee on GRAP decides to invoke all actions as envisaged under Stage-IV of the extant GRAP - 'Severe' Air Quality (DELHI AQI > 450), with immediate effect, in the entire NCR.

K'taka govt issues order to constitute team to expedite Mekedatu project

BENGALURU (TSIT): The Karnataka government on Friday said it has issued an order to form a team under the leadership of KERS Director K G Mahesh to expedite the Mekedatu dam works in view of "the favourable Supreme Court order". The Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir Project involves constructing a dam across the Cauvery River primarily to supply drinking water to the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region and generate hydro-electric power. The cost of the project is estimated to be between Rs 9,000 crore and Rs 14,000 crore, officials said.

According to the Government Order dated December 11, which was shared with the media on Friday, the committee will comprise the Deputy Chief Engineer and other staff of Karnataka Engineering Research Station (KERS) and will operate from its



project office to be set up in Ramanagara, the district headquarters town of Bengaluru South. The order further stated that Caveri Neeravari Nigama Limited (CNNL) will take steps to set up the Mekedatu project office. On November 13, the Supreme Court rejected Tamil Nadu's plea against the project, calling the objection "premature".

A bench comprising then Chief Justice of India BR Gavai, Justices K Vinod Chandran and Justice NV Anjaria had said the plan would be approved only after considering the objections of

the state as well as the opinion of the expert bodies, Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) and the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA).

The proposed project, located near the deep gorge of Mekedatu (goat's leap in Kannada)-where the Arkavathi River joins the Cauvery on the border of Ramanagara and Chamarajanagar districts-aims to utilise 4.75 TMC feet of water to meet the growing drinking water needs of Bengaluru and surrounding areas, while generating about 400 MW of power annually. According to officials in the Water Resources Department, the reservoir will act as a buffer, ensuring Tamil Nadu receives its share of Cauvery water without depleting the Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) dam.

LEADERSHIP ROW: DKS will assume CM post on Jan 6, claims K'taka MLA

BENGALURU (TSIT): Amid the leadership tussle in Karnataka, Congress MLA from Ramanagara, Iqbal Hussain, a close aide of Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress President D.K. Shivakumar, has claimed that DKS will assume the post of Chief Minister on January 6, 2026.

The statement has caused ripples in state political circles and within the ruling Congress.

Speaking to reporters in Ramanagara on Saturday, Iqbal Hussain said: "The post of Chief Minister should be handed over to Deputy CM Shivakumar. He must be given an opportunity. The high command is responding to this demand. There are



chances of Shivakumar becoming the Chief Minister on January 6. I am 99 per cent sure about this." "January 6 and January 9 are lucky numbers for D.K. Shivakumar. We are 140 MLAs, and it does not matter who has the numbers in terms of strength. The Congress is a disciplined party, and we are committed to the

decision of the high command," he said.

"There are no factions within the Congress party. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM Shivakumar are both assets to the Congress. Our demand is that Shivakumar should reap the fruits of his struggle and hard work," Iqbal Hussain maintained.

"I will be taking part in the 'Vote Chori' protest in Delhi on Sunday (December 14) under the leadership of Shivakumar. We are not meeting any high command leaders in Delhi. We have conveyed our plea to the high command and are confident that they will respond positively. They will take a decision soon," he said.

90% of IndiGo flight operations return to normal: Union minister



PUNE (TSIT): About 90 per cent of IndiGo's flight operations have returned to normal, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said on Saturday. He was speaking to reporters in the city, where he attended the inauguration of the Pune Book Festival at Fergusson College. Asked about the recent crisis faced by carrier IndiGo, Mohol said, "Air services will resume gradually in the country.

FORGOTTEN MONEY IN YOUR OLD BANK ACCOUNTS?



RBI will help you recover what's yours

Money in Inoperative Accounts (inactive for more than 2 years and up to 10 years) lying with your bank / Unclaimed Deposits (Beyond 10 years) is transferred to DEA Fund of RBI. You or your legal heirs can claim it anytime.



3 EASY STEPS TO CLAIM YOUR MONEY

1. Visit any branch of your bank, even if it's not your regular branch
2. Submit a form with KYC documents (Aadhaar, Passport, Voter ID, or Driving Licence)
3. Receive your money with interest, if any, after verification

To find your unclaimed deposits

Search your bank's website or check RBI's UDGM portal (<https://udgam.rbi.org.in>) covering 30 banks currently

Visit Special Camps on Unclaimed Assets being conducted in all districts across the country during October to December 2025



RBI Kehta Hai... Jaankaar Baniye, Satark Rahiye!



For more details, visit <https://rbikehtahai.rbi.org.in>
For feedback, write to rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in



Official WhatsApp No. 99990 41935



Issued in public interest by भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक RESERVE BANK OF INDIA www.rbi.org.in

Parliamentary panel asks govt to come up with updated air quality norms at earliest

NEW DELHI: A parliamentary panel on Friday asked the Centre to come up with the updated India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards "at the earliest", noting that the standards were last revised in 2009. In a report tabled in the Lok Sabha on Friday, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change also recommended that all manual stations in Delhi-NCR be upgraded to continuous ambient air quality monitoring systems. It observed that the current distribution of air quality monitoring stations in Delhi is "heavily skewed" towards central and southern parts of the city, which are relatively less populated, greener and more affluent.



The committee said this geographical bias leads to "a distorted and nonrepresentative dataset", systematically excluding more polluted, densely populated and less affluent areas. The panel also noted that most of the six new continuous monitoring stations proposed for Delhi were again planned in relatively greener areas such as the JNU campus, while the trans-Yamuna

region has "again been left out". It "strongly" recommended that the Environment Ministry reconsider the sites for these six stations and evenly redistribute monitoring stations across Delhi and the wider NCR. Raising concern over the high GST on air purifiers and HEPA filters, the committee said it was contradictory that while attempts to control air pollution have

fallen short, a prohibitive tax is levied on a device citizens use for personal protection. "Imposing such a tax effectively monetizes a public health failure. The committee feels that the citizens of the country should not be penalized for trying to save themselves from a catastrophic situation," it said, recommending that the government either abolish or reduce the GST. The panel said delivery riders, traffic police personnel, bike taxi riders and similar groups are "more vulnerable to the hazards of air pollution" and called for targeted programmes for their protection. These could include directing e-commerce and logistics companies to provide high-quality protective masks such as N95 free of cost, mandatory company-funded annual health

check-ups with additional check-ups after severe pollution episodes and the creation of a dedicated health risk profiling and monitoring system. It also recommended enforceable SOPs for high-pollution days, including limits on continuous outdoor exposure and ensuring access to indoor rest areas, along with targeted public health campaigns on protective measures. It suggested that major public hospitals consider dedicated OPD counters for respiratory ailments to ensure "timely and hassle-free medical attention" for these workers. The committee said the situation for children and the elderly becomes acute during peak winter pollution and they "cannot afford to wait for government policies to yield results".

Delhi LG chairs UT-level workshop at Police Headquarters, praises action in Red Fort blast case

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday addressed a Union Territory-level workshop held at the Delhi Police Headquarters to review the actionable points emerging from the All India DGPs/IGPs Conference-2025 in Raipur, an official said. Senior Police officers made a detailed presentation on the actionable points of the national conference. Special CP (Crime) Devsh Chandra Srivastava outlined the performance of Delhi Police across various domains and assured the LG of time-bound compliance on all directives, adopting a whole-of-government approach. Addressing

the gathering, Delhi Police Chief Satish Golchha noted the force's achievements in counter-terror operations, stating that 70 sleeper modules have been dismantled and 30 terrorists and their associates arrested in the last three years. He also said the force is putting greater focus on extortion and threat calls made by gangsters. CP Golchha added that Delhi Police is intensifying its cybercrime crackdown, including reducing the threshold for filing e-FIRs in cheating cases from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 lakh. "Operations such as Cyhawk are being used to target cyber-criminal networks," the CP added. The CP also outlined the force's efforts against nar-

cotics, expansion of PCRVs, community policing initiatives like Sashakti, stronger action against overstaying foreigners and measures to improve traffic management. According to a statement of the Delhi Police, the LG praised Delhi Police for its investigation of the Red Fort car blast case and actions against organised crime, drugs and gangster networks. He said over 45,000 kg of seized narcotic substances worth around Rs 14,000 crore have been destroyed in the last three years. LG Saxena has approved the grant of Honorary Ranks -- one level above their existing posts -- to personnel on the day of their superannuation.

Govt approves 'CoalSETU' for auction of coal linkages without end-use restrictions

NEW DELHI: The government on Friday approved the 'CoalSETU' window for the auction of coal linkages for diverse industrial uses and exports to ensure fair access and optimal utilisation of the resource. The Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Policy for Auction of Coal Linkage for Seamless, Efficient & Transparent Utilisation (CoalSETU), according to an official statement. The policy will allow allocation of coal linkages on an auction basis for long-term for any industrial use and export by adding a separate window named 'CoalSETU' in the NRS (Non-Regulated Sector) Linkage Auction Policy of 2016. Any domestic buyer requiring coal can partici-

pate in the linkage auction, irrespective of the end use. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, briefing the media about the Cabinet decision. The coking coal will not be offered under this window, he said. The minister further said that the country has produced so much coal that we can start looking at exports, and the government is now focusing on the promotion of coal exports. Linkage holders can now export up to 50 per cent of their quantity and flexibly utilise the fuel among group companies as needed. According to the existing framework, coal linkages are given through the auction route to certain specified non-regulated sectors, including cement, steel (coking), sponge iron and aluminium. The existing coal sup-

ply arrangements to non-regulated sectors needed revision "in view of the evolving market conditions, and with the objective of improving ease of doing business". Accordingly, it has been decided to extend coal linkages in the NRS to consumers without end-use restrictions, the statement said. The move is expected to accelerate the utilisation of domestic coal reserves and reduce dependence on imported coal to meet the country's energy requirements. "The present auction of coal linkages for the specified end-user sub-sectors in NRS (Non-Regulated Sector) shall continue. The specified end-user can also participate in this window," the statement said. The modification comes in tandem with the opening up of the coal

sector for commercial mining, a move which enabled the allocation of coal blocks without any end-use conditions. Coal linkages allocated through the CoalSETU window are permitted for own consumption, coal exports, coal washing, or any other purpose—except domestic resale, it said, adding that participation by traders will not be permitted under this new window. The coal linkage holders can export up to 50 per cent of their allocated quantity. They may also flexibly allocate the coal among their group companies as needed. To meet rising demand for washed coal, allocations to washery operators will boost the domestic supply of washed coal, cutting import reliance. Washed coal may also be exported to international markets, it said.

Hyderabad to Host Niri9 International Film Festival 2025, Strengthening North East-Telangana Cultural Exchange.

Hyderabad, December 13, 2025: The Niri9 International Film Festival is set to return with its third edition in Hyderabad on January 10 and 11, 2026, marking a significant moment of cultural convergence between the North Eastern region and Telangana. Organised with the cooperation of His Excellency, the Governor of Telangana, and the Telangana Cultural Department, the festival reflects the state's growing interest in deepening artistic and cultural linkages with the North East.

This year, the festival received an impressive 176 film entries across categories, including 40 Feature Films, 65 Short Films, 56 Shorter Films, and 15 Documentaries, underscoring its expanding presence on the national and global film



landscape. Out of this the top 19 films will be screened in the final round at Hyderabad. (Feature Film 6, Short Film 5, Shorter Film 5, Documentary 3) Festival Director Dr Junmoni Devi Khaund, who was recently felicitated by the Governor of Telangana, Shri Jishnu Dev Varma, and Cinematography Minister Shri Komatireddy Venkat

Reddy during the NE Connect Festival, shared her vision for this edition. She said, "This event is not just a festival; it's a movement of stories, cultures, and connections. Hosting the festival in Hyderabad reflects our commitment to bringing the North East and Telangana closer through cinema. With the invaluable support of His

Excellency the Governor and the Telangana Cultural Department, we hope to create a space where filmmakers, audiences, and storytellers truly discover each other."

Adding to the cultural fabric of the event, the festival will also feature performance of global performer Carlyta Mouhini, legendary musician Lou Majaw, Monisha Bordoloi and the event will also be showcasing the traditional dance and music of Assamese and Telangana folk and traditional dance during the event.

The Niri9 International Film Festival 2025 promises to be a vibrant and enriching celebration of cinema, storytelling, and cultural unity, bringing together diverse creative communities in the heart of Hyderabad.

Goa CM Sawant should apologise over nightclub fire incident, says Kejriwal

PANAJI: Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant should at least apologise to the people for the nightclub fire at Arpora which claimed 25 lives last week. Speaking at a public meeting in South Goa, the AAP leader alleged that the 'Birch of Romeo Lane' nightclub did not have requisite permissions, still it could operate because it paid bribes to government officials. "I want to ask Pramod Sawant, tell me one activity that happens (in Goa) without bribing the officers," Kejriwal said. "This is perhaps the most corrupt government, and the least the chief minister could do is to apologise to the people of Goa for Arpora incident and ensure safety in all the establishments," he added. The coastal state, known for



its scenic beauty earlier, is now "famous for its corruption and the Arpora incident," he commented. The nightclub, where the tragedy unfolded on December 6, was operating without occupancy certificate, trade licence, building permissions and other licences, said Kejriwal. "Without the building permissions they got electricity and water connection. The

local panchayat had ordered demolition of the structure one year ago, but still the club operated because they used to pay 'hafta' (regular bribes) to officials," the former Delhi chief minister alleged. No one can believe that the Pramod Sawant government was not aware of these things, he said, adding that the owners, Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, were "made

to flee" the country after the incident. The coastal state, known for its scenic beauty earlier, is now "famous for its corruption and the Arpora incident," he commented. The nightclub, where the tragedy unfolded on December 6, was operating without occupancy certificate, trade licence, building permissions and other licences, said Kejriwal. "Without the building permissions they got electricity and water connection. The local panchayat had ordered demolition of the structure one year ago, but still the club operated because they used to pay 'hafta' (regular bribes) to officials," the former Delhi chief minister alleged. No one can believe that the Pramod Sawant government was not aware of these things, he said, adding that the owners, Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, were "made

EC deploys SIR observers in 8 states

NEW DELHI: Seeking to ensure greater transparency, the Election Commission has deployed 'special roll observers' in eight states to oversee the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls. The observers have been appointed in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the poll authority said in a statement on Friday. The special roll observers (SROs) have already begun their work and are expected to be present two days a week in these states until the final electoral rolls are published in February 2026. They will hold meetings with the state-level and district-level leadership of all the national and state political parties. The SROs will also attend meetings with the chief electoral officers and district election officers of the states, either physically or virtual-



ly, to ensure that the entire Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise is completed in a smooth, transparent and participatory manner. The SROs will observe the process of SIR so that no eligible elector is left out and no ineligible person is included in the electoral rolls. On Thursday, the poll panel extended the timeline for SIR in five states and one Union territory following

requests from the chief electoral officers. The schedules were revised for Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The enumeration period for these six states and UT was to end on Thursday, and the draft electoral rolls were to be published on December 16. The enumeration period

for Tamil Nadu and Gujarat has been extended till December 14, where the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 19, the statement said.

For Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the enumeration period has been extended till December 18, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 23. The enumeration period for Uttar Pradesh has been extended till December 26, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 31.

The enumeration period for Goa, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan and West Bengal will end on Thursday, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 16.

The schedule for Kerala was revised earlier. The enumeration period for the state will end on December 18, and the draft electoral roll will be published on December 23.

Odisha's first steel-based 'zero energy building' inaugurated

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha's first steel-based 'zero energy building' (ZEB), constructed using advanced light-gauge steel frame (LGSF) technology, was inaugurated here on Friday, an official statement said. The 1,836 sq ft building, constructed by Tata Steel in partnership with World Steel Association (WSA) under steel construction market development programme 'constructsteel', was inaugurated by Tata Steel CEO and MD T V Narendran in the presence of WSA Director General Edwin Basson. "The steel-based zero energy building reflects the future of construction," Narendran said, adding that modern, energy-efficient, and low-carbon solutions

can be replicated at scale across India and integrated into mainstream infrastructure. The LGSF technology, where precisely manufactured steel sections are assembled like a frame, allows the building to achieve a tight envelope with minimal air leakage, better insulation, and reduced energy loss. Steel makes the structure lighter, faster to build, and highly durable, while its recyclability ensures lower long-term environmental impact, the statement said. Designed to produce as much energy as it consumes, the steel-based ZEB combines ultra-low operational energy demand with on-site renewable energy generation, achieving annual net-zero energy use.

Par committee expresses concern over uneven distribution of medical seats across country

NEW DELHI: A Parliamentary committee has expressed concern over the uneven distribution of medical seats across the country and the huge cost of medical education "as if there are no takers for the poor guardian to get their off-springs admitted in the medical colleges". Flagging the seat distribution issue, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare in the 167th report presented to Rajya Sabha on December 11 stated that while some states have a high concentration of medical seats, some are severely lacking against the national average of 75 MBBS seats per million population. It suggested the government open up new medical colleges to provide quality medical education in Del-

hi so that students from the national capital do not have to travel to other states or even other countries to pursue medical education. Not accepting the Action Taken by government on the its recommendations/observations contained in the 157th Report on "Quality of Medical Education in India", the panel strongly recommended that the NMC must come forward with guidelines for establishing new medical colleges in states where there are fewer than hundred MBBS seats per million population. It observed that Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu have approximately 150 MBBS seats per million and Puducherry has close to 2,000 or even more MBBS seats for a population of just about one mil-

lion. While some other states have less than 50 seats per million population, Bihar has only 21 seats per million, it stated in the report. "The committee further suggests that the government may consider to plan to open new medical colleges to provide quality medical education in Delhi so that students from Delhi have not to travel to other states or even other countries to pursue medical education," the report said. The Committee appreciated the UG-MSR 2023 guidelines regarding setting up of new medical colleges providing approval for annual intake capacity of 50/100/150 MBBS seats. Notwithstanding the same, it stated that as per the guidelines, given that the infrastructure and facul-

ty position required are in place, a college, whether old or new, may be considered for granting permission to increase the undergraduate MBBS seats up to a maximum of 250 in a phased manner. It further recommended that adequate attention must be given for opening of medical colleges in underserved districts which can be encouraged to use the locally available government medical colleges and hospitals for imparting healthcare services. The committee further reiterated that the affordability of medical education in the country continues to be a matter of concern due to huge cost of medical education that ranges between Rs 60 lakhs to Rs 1 crore or even more, "as if, there is no takers for the poor guardian to get their

off-springs admitted in the medical colleges". It endorses that the government may apply the fee structure to 50 per cent of seats in private medical colleges and the state government fee may be levied to this 50 per cent of MBBS seats while the other 50 per cent to be decided in consultation with the fee regulatory committee of each of the states. The panel reiterated its recommendation that the ministry in collaboration with states consider need-based scholarships to deserving students. Other suggestive options that can be explored were running the medical college and hospital on a PPP model, giving tax benefits to the company/group, etc, it stated in the report. On the issue of addressing faculty shortages in medical colleges, especially in

remote areas, the panel stressed that it is essential to provide incentives for teaching positions and opined that competitive salaries, job security, and structured career growth need to be prioritized over ad-hoc or contractual appointments for streamlining and strengthening the faculty. The Committee reiterated that clear criteria and milestones for promotions by recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching, research, and clinical work are required to be embedded in the system. Moreover, streamlining the sanctioning of posts and ensuring a balanced reservation policy will facilitate the timely filling up of vacancies, ultimately strengthening medical education and healthcare services, it underlined.

EDITORIAL

New Labour Codes Erase a Century of Hard-Won Workers’ Rights in One Stroke

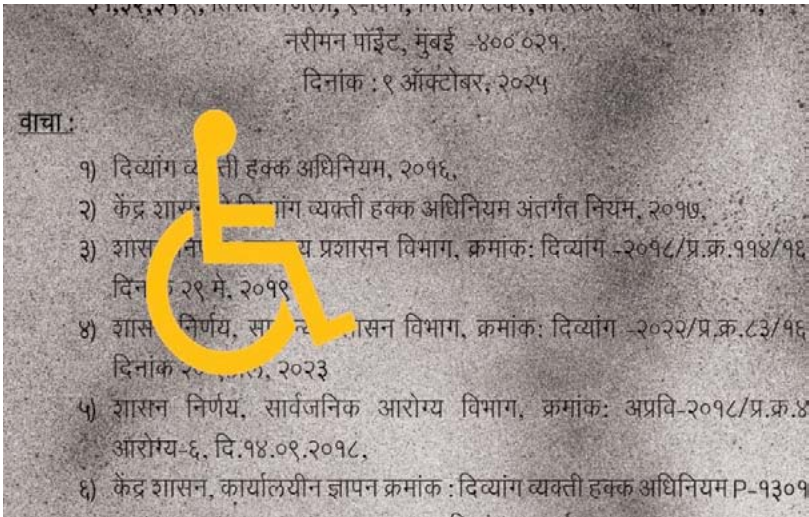
On November 21, 2025, the Indian government implemented four labour codes through executive fiat. This would come as a surprise to only those who forgot that the Codes were passed in the parliament without debate while most of the opposition members were suspended for protesting the three farm bills passed the previous day. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has once again used its majority to change the face of labour legislation and jurisprudence in the country. In one sweeping stroke, the government has wiped away the struggles of millions of workers in the subcontinent over the last century and a half. From the time the Codes were legislated in September 2020 to now, the government has steadfastly refused to consult with trade unions, disregarding the tripartite process in its entirety, and even the state governments, defying the constitutional spirit that placed labour in the Concurrent List. The BJP government has even ignored the opposition from Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), their own fraternal organisation in the larger Sangh family.

Constitutional rights under attack

There are three broad reasons why trade unions, irrespective of their differences, are opposing the codes – one, its attempt to redefine the Constitution and constitutional rights of working people; two, its attempt to further skew the balance of power between labour and capital by tilting the laws that protected basic labour rights in favour of capital; and three, its violation of the international labour standards as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. Labour is a subject in the Concurrent List. Yet, the Codes grant the Union government sweeping powers to frame rules, override existing state laws and dictate regulatory structures. States have been reduced to mere implementing agencies with no meaningful legislative authority. This is a direct assault on the federal balance envisioned by the Constitution under Articles 246, 254 and the Seventh Schedule. The Codes hand over essential legislative powers to the executive – particularly the Union government – through blanket rule-making authority. The power to decide the national floor wage, access to social security, inspection mechanisms, and thresholds for layoffs have been removed from Parliament and handed to bureaucrats. This violates the separation of powers and the principle that essential legislative functions cannot be delegated. By creating arbitrary thresholds regarding the number of workers for applicability of the Codes, the new legislation has excluded the majority of India’s workforce. Additionally, the move towards fixed-term employment, relaxation of safety norms, and diluted inspection systems creates unjustifiable discrimination between workers performing the same work in the same establishments, thereby legalising inequality in violation of Article 14 of the Constitution. The Codes, for the first time, introduce the concept of a national floor level wage (NFLW) within the legal structure and state that no wage can be set below the NFLW. Under the Minimum Wage Act, no wage could be lower than the minimum wage and if it was so set, it was deemed to be forced labour and would be a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment. By creating a NFLW, the codes remove the criminal liability of non-payment of minimum wages, thereby allowing forced labour in violation of Article 23 of the Constitution.

Re-Examined, Re-Verified: Maharashtra's Humiliation of Disabled Workers

When the Puja Khedkar scandal broke earlier this year, I warned in an interview: “Those with genuine disabilities will now be doubly scrutinised.” I wish I had been wrong. But what followed proved the prediction with painful accuracy. Within weeks, a senior IAS officer in Telangana made a shocking remark that demeaned the competence of disabled officers. Soon after, a former G20 Sherpa and former CEO of Niti Aayog insinuated that persons with disabilities lack professional capability and reservation for disabled and transgender persons needs to be revisited. And now comes the latest Tughlaqi farmaan – not from fringe voices but directly from the state machinery of Maharashtra, India’s second-most populous state and ironically the last major state to implement disability rules under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, doing it only in 2024. The newly created Persons with Disabilities Welfare Department has issued a sweeping, legally unsound directive ordering all government departments, hospitals, and subordinate offices to re-verify and medically re-examine every disabled employee – faculty members, doctors, Class I officers, and administrators – irrespective of whether they already hold a permanent Unique Disability ID (UDID) or a legally valid disability certificate. This is not governance. This is harassment masquerading as vigilance. And it raises some deeply troubling questions. Why are only disabled employees treated like suspects? No other reserved category – Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) – is asked to repeatedly “prove” their identity. Only persons with disabilities are subjected to the indignity of endless scrutiny: from pillar to post, from medical board to medical board, from exam



to re-exam. Why must only disabled officers undergo this ritual humiliation again and again? A state that can’t clear its own backlog now wants to re-verify everyone Maharashtra currently has 1.2lakh pending UDID applications, the second-highest backlog in India. Fourteen district and sub-district hospitals – from Ahikyanagar, Yavatmal Nagpur, Nashik, Nanded, Nandurbar, Dharashiv, Jalna, Raigad, Sangli, Satara, Thane to Wardha – have not issued a single UDID card. Not one. Yet instead of cracking down on this administrative paralysis, the government chooses to re-verify those who already hold valid, permanent certificates. Does Maharashtra have so much free time that it prefers re-examining legitimate employees rather than processing lakhs of pending cases? ‘First, do no harm’ – a principle forgotten At KEM Hospital, ground zero of this bureaucratic overreach, 848 UDID applications remain pending in just the last three months. Instead of completing this backlog, KEM doctors are being asked to spend precious hours humiliating their own colleagues. Here, the phrase “primum non nocere”

–first, do no harm– finds no resonance. Those entrusted with healing are instead reproducing stigma and harm, violating the very ethics they teach their students. Medical boards without doctors with disabilities: A direct violation of Supreme Court orders Despite the Supreme Court’s landmark judgment in Om Rathod v DGHS, 2024, which accepted my recommendation of mandatory inclusion of a doctor with a disability in medical boards assessing disability, not a single such member is present in these re-verification boards. Is the Maharashtra government choosing to ignore the Supreme Court? Employees already submitted details in June: Why this second round of harassment? In June this year, the state asked all departments to submit UDID details. Employees complied. Yet today, they are again being forced to undergo full medical examinations. What purpose does this serve except creating fear and subjugation? A few journalists asked me why, if the order was issued in October, are concerns being raised only now? This is because many people with disabilities struggle with internalised ableism.

Editorial

Dear Modi, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya is Not Your ‘Da’



APARNA BHATTACHARYA

Shakespeare famously asked, “What’s in a name?” implying that “a rose by any other name would smell as sweet”. In the high-stakes theatre of Indian politics, especially in culturally-wired West Bengal, Shakespeare couldn’t have been more wrong. A name isn’t just a label. They are passcodes into a shared cultural memory. Get them wrong, and you’re not just mispronouncing a syllable, you’re announcing you don’t belong. By now, Narendra Modi should have understood that in Bengal’s ruthless political arena, a slip of the tongue is rarely just a mistake – unless you’re Mamata Banerjee with a different kind of immunity. For the Bharatiya Janata Party, the core challenge in the state has always been the “outsider” tag. To counter Trinamool Congress’s nativist appeal, Modi has repeatedly tried to stitch himself into Bengal’s cultural fabric. And in doing so, he often walks into a trap of his own making. One of the most telling instances came in the Lok Sabha this week, when Modi referred to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay as “Bankim da”. One could see what he was trying to do. In a debate marking 150 years of Vande Mataram, he reached for a Bengali touch of intimacy, adding the affectionate da, meaning brother, to Bankim Chandra’s name. In Gujarat, or in the Hindi belt, such improvisations might pass unnoticed. In Bengal, however, they land with a thud. Within seconds, TMC MPs pounced. “You should say Bankim Babu,” Saugata Roy cut in. Modi, to his credit, promptly corrected himself, thanked Roy and switched to “Bankim Babu” for the rest of his speech. But the damage was done. It is a textbook fish-out-of-water moment for @BJP4India. For years, these BOHIRAGOTO interlopers have tried to dishonestly appropriate Bengal’s cultural icons, hoping that borrowed reverence might compen-



sate for their utter political bankruptcy in the state. Each attempt has only exposed how grotesquely alien they are to Bengal’s cultural consciousness, history, and vocabulary.” TMC said in a post on X. “In a clumsy, performative display of CULTURAL COSPLAY, @narendramodi, insultingly patronising as always, refers to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay as “Bankim da.” No, Modi ji, Bengal does not casually slap the suffix “da” onto figures it venerates. Only a CULTURAL ILLITERATE would think that sounds respectful,” the party added in the same post. In Bengal, specific honourifics matter. “Babu” implies reverence for the canonised. You do not casually call Rabindranath Tagore or Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay by a sibling suffix. Bengalis do use “da” for some revered personalities – “Master da” Surya Sen, “Manik da” for Satyajit Ray, but the unwritten rule is clear. That intimacy is earned, organic, rooted in real social memory. It is almost never retrofitted onto 19th-century icons via a Delhi-based speechwriter. The warmth Modi tried to project felt manufactured, and that is what TMC hammered. It was not just a gaffe, but a presumptuous attempt to appropriate Bengal’s icons. By misapplying the suffix, he didn’t just make a linguistic mistake, he validated the TMC’s accusation that he is “grotesquely alien” to Bengal’s cultural consciousness. This is not an isolated case. Modi has repeatedly attempted to court Bengali sentiment through cultural gestures and symbolic overtures, yet each effort has spectacularly back-

fired. His 2018 Mann Ki Baat anecdote about waking up at 5:30 AM as a child to listen to Rabindra Sangeet on the radio, is a classic example. It’s a lovely story. Young Narendra, pre-dawn, absorbing Tagore’s songs he doesn’t even linguistically understand, yet spiritually connects with. The only problem was All India Radio’s schedule. Fact-checkers quickly pointed out that AIR’s morning transmission in those years didn’t start as early as 5:30 AM, and that the Rabindra Sangeet slot came significantly later. Then came the 2021 Bengal campaign. The longer beard that suddenly invited “Modi as Tagore” comparisons with right-wing social media influencers gushing about the “Gurudev” look. The outcome was predictable. “Just by growing a long beard nobody becomes Rabindranath Tagore,” Mamata sniped, and everyone got the joke. But let’s not pretend the gaffe economy is a Modi monopoly. Mamata Banerjee has her own rich catalogue, and her opponents know it line by line. Mamata Banerjee’s own set of gaffes In 2009, long before she became chief minister, Banerjee famously recalled Rabindranath Tagore offering juice to Mahatma Gandhi to break his fast in Kolkata during the 1947 Kolkata riots. This otherwise poignant statement had one fatal flaw. Tagore had been dead six years by then. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), then in power, gleefully weaponised the slip. “How can someone who gets basic dates wrong lead a state that worships Tagore?” they asked, playing to the bhadralok

gallery. It did nothing to halt her rise. And then there are the more surreal moments. The mysterious “Dohar Babu” no one can identify (Dahar is Santhali word for a road), or the Kolkata Book Fair proclamation that Tagore had a great camaraderie with Shakespeare and Keats, all of whom were separated by decades or centuries. The problem is not merely that politicians misremember names or references. The deeper danger is that these errors allow politics to retreat entirely into the symbolic and superficial, successfully diverting attention from substantive issues. Bengal’s political discourse repeatedly circles back to cultural identity markers. Whether it is Vande Mataram, Jai Shri Ram, or other emotive symbols, these debates resurface cyclically, each time reigniting old divisions. With “Bankim da”, the prime minister thus handed the three-time Bengal chief minister another springboard to direct public debate from governance to symbolism. It is just what she needed. Soon after the gaffe, Mamata escalated with her own theatre. She dramatically tore up a central government note on MGNREGA conditions at a public rally, shifting the focus from technical questions of funding and compliance to a visually potent “battle for dignity and rights” that cast her as Bengal’s fierce defender against a “disrespectful” Union government. It is a ready-made “dead cat” strategy. Throw a shocking distraction onto the table so everyone argues over the spectacle instead of the uncomfortable reality of poor governance.

THE 'RED CARPET' QUESTION:

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THE WEST ABOUT REFUGEES

International Human Rights Day is meant to reaffirm a simple idea: dignity isn’t a favour granted by the state. Rights are supposed to attach to people because they are people, not because they carry the right passport, belong to the right religion, or arrive in ways that are convenient for border regimes. And yet, in refugee debates, we keep returning to a different script: that those who cross borders without permission are not primarily human beings in danger, but problems to be managed. That is why a recent remark made by the Chief Justice of India Surya Kant posing the question of whether people who entered “illegally” should be welcomed with a “red carpet” – has struck such a nerve. A rhetorical question can do real political work. It doesn’t simply express doubt; it sets the frame for what counts as “reasonable,” what counts as “excessive,” and whose suffering counts at all. The law is a door, and before the door sits a gatekeeper Scholar Eddie Bruce-Jones asks a deceptively simple question: Does international refugee law belong to human rights law or immigration law? The question matters because it determines what we think refugee protection is. Is it a regime anchored in dignity and the restraint of state power? Or is it a managerial apparatus for regulating entry – where compassion is optional and exclusion is the default? This question invites deeper reflection on the divergent – and sometimes convergent – logic underpinning these frameworks. I argue that immigration law is an infrastructure that enables and sustains colonial powers in a post-colonial world. It is a technology of sorting that decides whose mobility is normal and whose mobility is suspicious; whose movement is “travel,” and whose movement is “invasion.” It converts human beings into categories – legal/illegal, admissible/removable,



deserving/undeserving – and then asks us to mistake those categories for moral truth. International refugee law, as we know it, emerged in response to shifting European conceptions of “charity and humanitarianism to restitution, reparations, and responsibility” – key elements of Europe’s post-war and post-imperial reckoning, tied to the paternalism of the “white man’s burden.” It was formed amidst a specific historical and geopolitical context where states grappled with their roles in the aftermath of war and empire. But this origin story contains a contradiction. Refugee law speaks the language of responsibility while operating in a world still shaped by colonial afterlives: uneven borders, uneven mobility, and uneven legitimacy. Immigration control becomes the mechanism through which old hierarchies reproduce themselves under new names – sovereignty, security, “orderly migration.” When immigration logic colonises refugee protection, refuge stops being a human-rights project and becomes border management with a humanitarianist accent. What the “red carpet” comment reveals about India’s refugee discourse The Supreme Court hearing that produced the “red carpet” line concerned a

petition alleging the disappearance of Rohingya persons from custody and seeking that if deportation occurs, it should be carried out through due process. Yet the exchange that travelled into public debate pivoted quickly from the state’s duties to the migrant’s supposed audacity. As reported, the Chief Justice offered a hypothetical of illegal entry – “you cross the fenced border illegally, you dig a tunnel, and you enter India” – and then asked whether, after entry, a person can insist that “your laws must apply to me,” including show-cause notice, food, shelter, and entitlements for children, concluding: “Do we want to stretch the law like this?” The line that crystallised the posture was: “If an intruder comes, do we give them a red-carpet welcome...?” This is precisely the moment where the Bruce-Jones question becomes concrete. If refugee law belongs to human rights, then the purpose of law is to restrain the state – especially when the state’s power over a person is total and the person’s political voice is nil. If refugee law belongs to immigration control, then the refugee becomes a management problem, and the demand for legal safeguards can be framed as an unreasonable entitlement.

After US, Mexico approves tariffs of up to 50 pc on goods from India

Washington: Mexico's Congress has approved a bill that seeks to impose higher tariffs on imports from India, China, Brazil and several other countries with which the North American nation doesn't have free trade agreements. The levies, which is set to take effect on January 1, 2026, was passed by Mexico's Senate on Wednesday after the lower house approved it. The development comes months after US President Donald Trump imposed steep 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods entering American markets, including 25 per cent for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, in August. The bill, submitted to Congress by President Claudia Sheinbaum in September, proposes modifications to 1,463 tariff categories (or products) covering more than a dozen sectors, including auto parts, light vehicles, plastic, toys, textiles, furniture, footwear, clothing, aluminium and glass, according to the Mexico News Daily. The proposed tariffs range from 5 per cent to 50 per cent. Among the other countries



that will be affected by the proposed higher tariffs are India, China, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, the daily said. China will be the most affected country. The paper said that the government believes that the proposed tariffs would generate additional revenue of USD 3.8 billion per year. The Mexican government is aiming to reduce reliance on imports from Asian countries, especially China, it added. The proposal to increase tariffs on China and other countries with

which Mexico doesn't have free trade agreements represents "an alignment with US trade policy," Horacio Saavedra, a Mexican diplomat, was quoted as saying by the news outlet La Silla Rota. "The [tariff] measure responds to the shared concern of Mexico and the US about practices that have affected national industries, especially textiles, clothing and certain manufacturing sectors," Saavedra said. India was Mexico's 9th largest trading partner in 2023, with a trade of USD 10.58 billion. The bilateral trade in 2023 con-

sisted of Indian imports of USD 2.54 billion and exports of USD 8.03 billion to Mexico. In the trade basket from the Indian side, the most important items of export are automobiles and auto parts, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and chemical products. From the Mexican side, the most important item is crude oil. Other products of export to India are gold and related jewellery, chemical compounds and telephone machinery. India shipped goods worth \$5.3 billion to Mexico in the last fiscal year, of which cars made up

close to \$1 billion, according to the letter and commercially available customs data. Skoda Auto accounts for nearly 50 per cent of India's total car shipments to Mexico. Hyundai shipped cars worth \$200 million, Nissan's exports stood at \$140 million, and Suzuki's at \$120 million, the data showed. In meetings with government officials last month, carmakers said the majority of shipments from India to Mexico are compact cars with an engine size of less than one litre, which are designed for the Mexican market and not for further export to the U.S., one of the sources said. "Indian-origin vehicles are not a threat to Mexican local industry, as Indian vehicles do not cater to high-end segments manufactured by Mexico for serving the North American market," the industry group said in its letter. Car makers also told Indian officials that of the 1.5 million passenger vehicles sold in Mexico each year, about two-thirds are imported, and India's shipments make up "just about 6.7 per cent" of the total sales.

Croma Launches First Store in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh

Vizianagaram , December 13, 2025: Croma, India's trusted omni-channel electronics retailer from the Tata Group, has strengthened its footprint in Andhra Pradesh with the launch of its first store in Vizianagaram. The new Vizianagaram - Krishnarajapuram outlet also marks Croma's 19th store in the state, reinforcing the brand's commitment to serving customers across key markets in South India. Strategically located at Plot No. 110 & 111, 100 Feet Ring Road, Ice Factory Area, Krishnarajapuram, Vizianagaram - 535002, the store spans 8,559 sq. ft. and is designed as an immersive experience centre. Customers can explore the latest electronics, enjoy hands-on product demos, and seek expert guidance to make informed choices across categories such as smartphones, laptops, televisions, home appliances, and more. Exclusive Launch Offers: Celebrate the launch with exciting deals on select smartphones, LED 32inch and 40inch TV, Laptops, Refrigerators and Front Load Washing Machines: · Dec 12 - Dec 26: 5% off up to ?1,200 · Dec 27 - Jan 11: 4% off up to ?800 "Vizianagaram is a fast-growing market, and we are



excited to open our first store in the city. Croma is committed in offering customers access to the latest electronics and home appliances under one roof. This store reflects our ongoing effort to reach new regions and bring world-class electronics closer to consumers." said a spokesperson

on of Infiniti Retail Ltd. The store will be open daily from 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM. For more information on products, services, and ongoing offers, please visit the new Croma store in Vizianagaram, or log on to www.croma.com. *Offers valid on select brands, categories, and models only. Terms and conditions apply.

Rupee slumps 9 paise to close at all-time low of 90.41 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated by 9 paise to close at an all-time low of 90.41 against the US dollar on Friday, as uncertainty over the India-US trade deal and persistent foreign fund outflows dented investor sentiment. Forex traders said the rupee is under pressure, largely due to aggressive dollar purchases by importers amid surging global precious metal prices. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.43 against the US dollar, then fell further to a record intraday low of 90.56 against the greenback, registering a fall of 24 paise from its previous close. The unit settled the day at 90.41 against the US dollar, down 9 paise over its last close. On Thursday, the rupee had plunged 38 paise to close at an all-time low of 90.32 against the US dollar. The rupee is expected to trade with a negative bias as the delay in the trade deal between India and the US may weigh on the domestic unit. India and the US on Thursday concluded two days of talks, during which



both sides exchanged views on trade-related issues, including the ongoing negotiations for a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump on Thursday discussed ways to sustain momentum in the bilateral economic partnership amid signs of the two sides inching closer to firming up a much-awaited trade deal. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias amid uncertainty over the Indo-US trade deal. However, improved global sentiments and falling crude oil prices may support the rupee. A weak dollar and

any intervention by the central bank may also support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, MiraeAsset ShareKhan. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.07 per cent higher at 98.41. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.02 per cent higher at USD 61.27 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex jumped 449.53 points to settle at 85,267.66, while the Nifty surged 148.40 points to 26,046.95. Foreign Institutional Investors sold

equities worth Rs 2,020.94 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. India and the U.S. on Thursday (December 11) concluded two days of talks, during which both sides exchanged views on trade-related issues, including the ongoing negotiations for a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday (December 11) discussed ways to sustain momentum in the bilateral economic partnership in a phone conversation amid signs of the two sides inching closer to firming up a much-awaited trade deal. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias amid uncertainty over the India-U.S. trade deal. However, improved global sentiments and falling crude oil prices may support the rupee. A weak dollar and any intervention by the central bank may also support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, MiraeAsset ShareKhan.

Meta India appoints Aman Jain as new public policy head

New Delhi: Meta India on Friday named Aman Jain as the new head of public policy, tasking him with steering policy strategy and engagements in a market the US-headquartered social media giant considers strategic. Jain will also be a member of the India leadership team. He will join the company early next year and will report to Simon Milner, Vice President of Policy, Asia Pacific (APAC) at Meta, the company said in a release. "Aman brings over 20 years of public policy and business strategy experience, with a proven track record at Amazon, Google, the Government of India, and international organisations," Meta said announcing the appointment. Jain has held senior roles at Google India, including country head for government affairs and public policy. Most recently, he served as Director of Public Policy at Amazon, leading policy strategy across marketplace, operations, competition, and technology. India is a strate-



gic market for Meta, the parent company for popular apps, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger. As the country's digital economy accelerates across areas such as AI, emerging tech and the creator economy, Meta aims to help build a more inclusive, trusted, and future-ready internet ecosystem for India, Milner said. Jain's extensive experience in public policy and technology, will help Meta be an even more effective partner to regulators and industry stakeholders in developing an enabling

policy environment, Milner said, adding that he will also be a strong addition to Meta's APAC Policy leadership team. Jain's appointment comes amid recent leadership changes at Meta India. Earlier this year, Shivnath Thukral stepped down as Vice President of Public Policy at Meta India and joined PhonePe as Vice President for Public Policy and Government Affairs. Mid this year, Meta named Arun Srinivas as the new Managing Director and Head for its India operations, effective July 1, 2025.

The appointment came after Sandhya Devanathan, previously leading India, was given an expanded role overseeing both India and Southeast Asia. India is a high-stakes market for global technology and social media giants and the government has been moving swiftly to tackle issues related to AI governance, content moderation, and misinformation, while mooted new guardrails and frameworks suited to the digital era. Earlier this year, Centre proposed changes to IT rules, mandating the clear labelling of AI-generated content and increasing the accountability of large platforms like Meta and YouTube for verifying and flagging synthetic information to curb user harm from deepfakes and misinformation. This month, a committee set up by the DPIIT has proposed giving a mandatory blanket licence to artificial intelligence developers for using all legally accessed copyright-protected works to train AI systems.

AWS to invest USD 7 billion for data center expansion in Telangana

Hyderabad: The Telangana government and Amazon Web Services (AWS) have signed an agreement under which the latter will invest USD 7 billion for a massive expansion of cloud data center infrastructure over the next 14 years. As part of the agreement signed during the Telangana Rising Global Summit held on December 8 and 9, the state government will extend a comprehensive set of facilitation measures, infrastructure support, and ease-of-doing-business interventions to enable AWS to rapidly scale its data center footprint here, an official release said on Thursday. "With the newly announced USD 7 Billion expansion over the next 14 years, the Hyderabad AWS Region will play a central role in powering cloud services, AI, startups, enterprises, and government platforms across India," it said. Hailing



the investment, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said, "We are delighted by the extraordinary confidence shown by global leaders like Amazon in Telangana. The scale of this commitment reflects the trust investors now place in our governance, stability, and long-term vision to propel Telangana to the 3 trillion dollar goal. This is Telangana Rising 2047 in action." Sandeep Dutta, President of AWS India and South Asia

said, "This framework agreement represents our continued commitment to supporting India's digital transformation and fostering innovation across the region. "We look forward to contributing to Telangana's vision of becoming a global technology hub by creating more employment opportunities, supporting local businesses and enabling a skilled workforce that will drive India's digital economy forward," he said.

SAMSUNG UNVEILS NEW INNOVATION VISION AS IT CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN INDIA

GURUGRAM, India – December 13, 2025 – Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, today unveiled a renewed strategic vision — #PoweringInnovationForIndia — that places people-centric innovation, Indian talent, and India-led product development at the heart of its next phase of growth in the country. Marking 30 years of operations in India, Samsung's new vision reinforces its commitment as a long-standing partner in India's digital transformation, Make-in-India manufacturing ambitions, and innovation-driven economic growth. Since entering India in 1995, Samsung has expanded from introducing televisions that redefined home entertainment to establishing one of the world's largest mobile manufacturing facilities in Noida, driving India-built innovations that now power its global ecosystem. With revenue of INR 1.11 lakh crore, Samsung is the only brand in India with a truly end-to-end AI ecosystem, bringing Galaxy AI (smart-

phones, tablets, wearables), Bespoke AI (refrigerators, washing machines, and A/Cs), and Vision AI (televisions and smart monitors) together through SmartThings. "From selling our first TV in India in 1995, when liberalisation was unlocking new possibilities to becoming the most trusted technology partner for Bharat today, Samsung's journey has been shaped by India's confidence, creativity, and limitless ambition. As the most loved and widely adopted brand inside Indian homes — through our smartphones, TVs, digital appliances, and a seamlessly-connected ecosystem — we are proud to make lives better every day for millions of Indian families. Young Indians expect technology to be secure, intuitive, and always evolving, and we are committed to delivering personalised innovations for them. We believe the next era of meaningful global innovation will be led by India — where the future of smart homes, connected living, and intelligent devices is rapidly



taking shape with AI that understands India's cultural diversity. We will continue to work closely with the Government of India for a Viksit Bharat, creating a digitally empowered nation where innovation fuels inclusive progress and co-prosperity. Our vision is clear: to build advanced technologies here that will shape how the world lives, works, and connects tomorrow," said JB Park, President & CEO, Samsung Southwest Asia.

Powered by India: Innovation Begins with People For 30 years, Samsung has believed in one simple philosophy: India powers innovation. Today, its two plants in Chennai and Noida, three R&D centres in Delhi, Noida, and Bengaluru, and a state-of-the-art design centre in Delhi NCR are shaping Samsung's next era of people-centric technology — with India at the heart of its global roadmap. Samsung Design Delhi is building experiences that feel uniquely Indian. These are innovations that understand the country's culture and creativity. Breakthroughs born here — from Kids TV, which creates safe and meaningful learning for digital-native children, to vibrant CMF designs for Galaxy M and F Series — reflect Samsung's belief that design must begin with people. Similarly, across its R&D ecosystem, Samsung teams are leading advancements in AI, accessibility, streaming, and digital displays along with

pushing the boundaries of language intelligence and next-generation networks. As one of India's leading private sector patent filers, with over 14,000 patents, Samsung is also showcasing India's role as an innovation powerhouse. **Investing in India's Future Innovators** Samsung's vision of #PoweringInnovationForIndia goes beyond just products, as the company is expanding its university collaborations and open innovation initiatives with Indian startups — ensuring that more ideas born in India scale globally. Similarly, through initiatives such as Samsung Solve for Tomorrow, Samsung Innovation Campus, and Samsung DOST, Samsung is nurturing India's next-generation workforce, aligned with the requirements of Industry 4.0. Samsung is providing students across the country access to grants, incubation support, skills in AI, IoT, digital technologies, and employment opportunities.

Cambodia shuts border crossings with Thailand as fighting continues

—Cambodia has shut its border crossings with Thailand, as fighting continues between the two forces on Saturday despite US President Donald Trump earlier saying they had agreed to a ceasefire. The crossings will be closed until further notice, according to Cambodia's interior ministry. Earlier, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said he told Trump a ceasefire would only be possible after Cambodia had withdrawn all its forces and removed landmines. Thai officials said four soldiers were killed on Saturday, as both sides reported continued bombing and artillery exchanges. Cambodia has not been updating its military casualty figure. Cambodia's defence ministry said that Thai fighter jets bombed hotel buildings



and a bridge, while Thailand reported several civilians were injured in a Cambodian rocket attack. The four deaths on Saturday bring Thailand's total military death toll since Monday to 15, with 270 others injured. It added that six civilians had also been injured. On Friday,

Cambodia said at least 11 civilians had been killed and 59 others injured. At least 700,000 people have been evacuated on both sides of the border. Trump had claimed earlier in the week that he could stop the fighting between Thai and Cambodian forces that broke out on Monday just

by picking up the phone. After speaking to both prime ministers on Friday night he wrote on social media that the two countries had agreed to "cease shooting effective this evening" and go back to the agreement they signed in front of the US president in October. "Both countries

are ready for peace," he wrote. But in their comments after speaking to the US president, neither side mentioned an imminent ceasefire. Anutin said he told Trump that Thailand was not the aggressor, and that Cambodia must show that it had withdrawn its forces and removed landmines from the border before a ceasefire was possible. "They must show us first," he said. The Cambodian leadership said they must fight on to protect their country's sovereignty. There was no mention of the use of tariffs as leverage to force the two sides to disengage, as happened in July. Thailand has warned the US not to link the conflict to trade. On Saturday Cambodia reported that it had been struck by more Thai air strikes. "On

December 13, 2025, the Thai military used two F-16 fighter jets to drop seven bombs" on a number of targets, the Cambodian defence ministry said in an X post. "Thai military aircraft have not stopped bombing yet," it said. The Thai military also confirmed that fighting continued. The long-standing border dispute escalated on 24 July, as Cambodia launched a barrage of rockets into Thailand, which responded with air strikes. Both countries have accused each other of initiating the attacks. After days of intense fighting which left dozens dead, the neighbouring South East Asian countries agreed to an "immediate and unconditional ceasefire" brokered by Trump and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

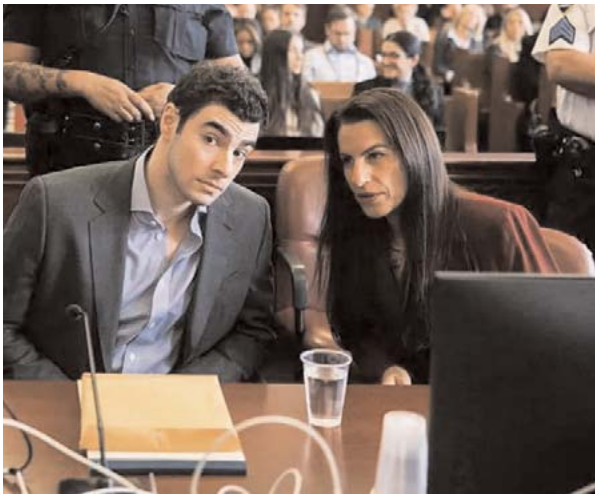
Ukraine's health supplies hit in series of Russian strikes on medical warehouses



Warehouses supplying the vast majority of Ukraine's pharmacies have been destroyed in a series of Russian attacks over recent months. Medical supplies worth about \$200m (£145m) were destroyed in just two strikes in December and October. A large warehouse storing medicines in the city of Dnipro was destroyed in a Russian air strike on 6 December. As a result, about \$110m worth of medicines were destroyed - estimated at up to 30% of Ukraine's monthly supply. "It was a

missile and drone strike against our facility. The missiles flew past, but the drones hit it," said Dmytro Babenko, acting director-general of pharmaceutical distributor BADM. "They caused a fire which unfortunately proved impossible to contain and the whole facility was destroyed." BADM is one of two companies that supply about 85% of Ukrainian pharmacies in roughly equal shares. The other company is Optima Pharm, whose warehouses have been hit three times this year.

AN EYEBROW TIP and MCDONALD'S FOOTAGE: TAKEAWAYS from Luigi Mangione's evidence hearing



Luigi Mangione, the man accused of fatally shooting United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson in a case that sparked national attention, watched as new testimony and never-before-seen footage from the day of his arrest in a McDonald's was unveiled during a hearing this week. Mr Mangione has pleaded not guilty to state charges related to the 2024 murder of Mr Thompson, a father of two, as well as federal counts that carry the possibility of the death penalty. The pre-trial hearing is focused on the defence's attempts to keep certain evidence out of the trial, which has not been scheduled yet, including items found in his backpack during his arrest and statements he made to officers. During the first two weeks of the hearing, supporters of Mr

Mangione - the scion of a prominent Maryland family and Ivy League graduate - filled the back rows of the Manhattan criminal courtroom, some wearing a pin portraying him as a saint-like figure. Prosecutors and Mr Mangione's legal team are expected to question over a dozen witnesses from the day of his arrest, including the employees who spotted him and the police who arrested him. Here is a look at some of the key pieces of evidence discussed that offer a window into Mr Mangione's trial. An eyebrow giveaway The pre-trial hearing has centred on the small-town McDonald's in Altoona, Pennsylvania, where officers were shocked to find the high-profile suspect days after Mr Thompson was fatally shot.

Migrant Channel crossings resume after four-week gap



Migrants have been pictured arriving in Dover on Saturday after the longest period without any small boat crossings in seven years. Photos appeared to show dozens of migrants wearing life jackets being brought in to Dover, Kent, aboard a Border Force vessel. Before the weekend, no migrants had made the journey for four weeks, according to Home Office figures. The last recorded

arrivals before Saturday were on 14 November, marking the longest uninterrupted stretch since 2018. December is typically a quieter month for crossings due to adverse weather conditions, and this is thought to have contributed to the lull. Home Office figures on the number of migrants that arrived in the UK on small boats on Saturday will be published on Sunday.

NEW PHOTOS FROM EPSTEIN ESTATE SHOW TRUMP, ANDREW AND BILL CLINTON

Democratic US lawmakers have released two new batches of photos from Jeffrey Epstein's estate, revealing details of the convicted paedophile's home and ties to the rich and powerful. US President Donald Trump, former prince Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and former Trump adviser Steve Bannon are among the high-profile figures featured in the photos. The images, many of which have been seen before, do not imply wrongdoing. The nearly 100 photos released by members of the House Oversight Committee on Friday are some of more than 95,000 images obtained via subpoena, the Democrats said. The justice department is separately approaching a deadline next week to publish all Epstein-related documents. In the first batch of



photos released on Friday by lawmakers, Epstein is seen with multiple high-profile figures, none of whom have yet commented. Many of them have previously denied any wrongdoing in relation to Epstein. Trump appeared in three of the images released on Friday. One image showed him standing next to a woman whose face has been redacted. Another showed Trump standing next

to Epstein while talking to model Ingrid Seynhaeve at a 1997 Victoria's Secret party in New York - an image that was already publicly available. A third photo showed Trump smiling with several women, whose faces have also been redacted, flanked on either side of him. An additional photo showed an illustrated likeness of the president on red packets next to a sign that reads: "Trump

Condom". The White House called the release a "Democrat hoax" against Trump that has been "repeatedly debunked". Trump had for months argued the Epstein saga was a distraction orchestrated by his critics to take attention away from his administration's accomplishments. Friday's files also include private images of Epstein, including one of him in a bathtub and another that appears to show sexual toys. They also show him with several other prominent people including former President Bill Clinton and tech billionaire Bill Gates. One photo featuring Clinton shows him standing next to Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell, who was convicted in 2021 for her role in facilitating the disgraced financier's abuse.

Trump's 'historic' peace deal for DR Congo shattered after rebels seize key city

The US ambassador to the UN has accused Rwanda of leading Africa's Great Lakes region toward war, just over a week after a peace deal was signed in Washington to end the decades-long conflict. US President Donald Trump Trump hailed the deal between DR Congo's President Félix Tshisekedi and Rwanda's President Paul Kagame as "historic" and "a great day for Africa, great day for the world". But the M23 rebel group says it has "fully liberated" the key city of Uvira in an offensive the US and European powers say is backed by Rwanda. UN experts have previously



accused it of having "de facto control" of the rebel force's operations. Rwanda denies the allegations, however, its presence in Washington was a tacit acknowledgment of its influence over the M23. The rebels were not signatories to Trump's deal - and have been taking part in a

parallel peace process led by Qatar, a US ally. The latest fighting risks further escalating an already deeply complex conflict. Why did the M23 seize Uvira now? Prof Jason Stearns, a Canada-based political scientist who specialises in the region, told the BBC that the view in

M23 circles was that "they need more leverage in the negotiations", while the feeling in the Rwandan government is that Tshisekedi cannot be trusted. He added that the assault on Uvira, in South Kivu province, "flies in the face of all the negotiations that are under way". "It appears to humiliate the US government. I'm not sure what strategic purpose that would serve," Prof Stearns told the BBC. The M23's new offensive in South Kivu started a few days before Kagame and Tshisekedi flew to Washington last week to ratify the agreement first hammered out in June.

Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi arrested in Iran, supporters say



Iranian security forces have "violently arrested" Nobel Peace Prize winner and women's rights activist Narges Mohammadi, her foundation has said. The Narges Foundation said Ms Mohammadi, 53, was detained in the eastern city of Mashhad, along with other activists. The Nobel Committee said it was "deeply concerned by today's brutal arrest of Narges Mohammadi" and called on the authorities "to immediately clarify Mohammadi's whereabouts, ensure her safety and integrity, and to release her without conditions". Iran does not appear to have commented. Ms Mohammadi was awarded the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize for her activism against female oppression in Iran and promoting human rights. In December 2024, she was given a temporary release from jail for three weeks on medical grounds, after being held in Tehran's notorious Evin prison since 2021. She was expected to

return to prison soon after, where she was serving multiple sentences. Her latest arrest reportedly came as she attended a memorial ceremony for Khosrow Alikordi, a lawyer found dead in his office last week. Norway-based group Iran Human Rights had called for an independent inquiry to establish how he died, saying the circumstances around his death were "suspicious". Several other activists were detained at the ceremony, where it's reported they shouted slogans, including "death to the dictator" and "long live Iran". Taghi Rahmani, Ms Mohammadi's husband, told BBC Persian: "They arrested Narges violently. The brother of the lawyer witnessed her arrest at the memorial. "This act is against human rights laws, and amounts to some kind of revenge. "This happened in Mashhad today and is concerning because the establishment's crack-down has intensified recently."

ONE MILLION HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT POWER IN UKRAINE AFTER RUSSIA ATTACKS ENERGY GRID

More than a million households are without electricity in Ukraine after a barrage of overnight Russian strikes hit energy and industrial infrastructure, officials said. Ukraine's internal affairs minister, Ihor Klymenko, said five regions were hit and at least five people were injured, and work was under way to extinguish fires and restore supplies. While Russian attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure have been common throughout the war, Moscow has intensified strikes as the country heads into winter. It comes as US President Donald Trump's overseas envoy will travel to Germany this weekend to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and European leaders for more

talks on ending the war. Steve Witkoff, who has been leading White House attempts to mediate between Ukraine and Russia, will discuss the latest version of the proposed peace agreement in Berlin. On Saturday, Zelensky said more than 450 drones and 30 missiles were used by Russia in overnight strikes. Klymenko said the Dnipropetrovsk, Kirovohrad, Mykolaiv, Odesa and Chernihiv regions were hit. Russia's defence ministry said it used weapons including Kinzhal hypersonic missiles in the strikes - which are hard to track as they can change direction mid-flight. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant temporarily lost all offsite power



overnight "due to widespread military activities affecting the electrical grid", but is now reconnected. The plant is in Russian-controlled territory in Ukraine. It is not operating, but relies on a constant power supply to cool its reactors. In Russia, regional governor Roman Busargin said two people were killed in Saratov

after a drone strike hit a residential building. The Trump administration is pushing for a deal to end the war to be in place by Christmas and has held several rounds of talks with Ukrainian and Russian representatives in recent weeks, though there has been little sign a breakthrough is imminent. It has not yet been

confirmed which European leaders will attend the Berlin talks. The Wall Street Journal, which first reported details of the meeting, said UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz would all take part. The Witkoff-Zelensky meeting comes after Ukraine gave the US its revised version of a 20-point peace plan, the latest iteration of a proposal which first emerged in late November and has triggered a flurry of diplomatic activity. The fate of territory in eastern Ukraine remains one of the most intractable topics in the negotiations, with Kyiv refusing to cede land which has been illegally occupied, and Moscow repeating its inten-

tion to take the Donbas region in full by force unless Ukraine withdraws. Zelensky has reacted sceptically to the White House's latest proposal on resolving the territorial question, which is for Ukraine's army to pull out of the region and for it to be turned into a "special economic zone". The Ukrainian president told reporters that under the US-proposed terms, the Kremlin would undertake not to advance into the areas vacated by Ukraine's forces, with the land between Russian-controlled parts of the Donbas and Ukraine's defensive lines effectively turned into a demilitarised zone. "What will restrain [Russia] from advancing? Or from infiltrating disguised as civilians?" said Zelensky.

Decoding The Utter Chaos In Kolkata On GOAT Tour That Led To Embarrassment

Lionel Messi's visit to Kolkata ended in embarrassment, as the 'G.O.A.T. Tour of India 2025' got off to a disastrous start on Saturday morning. Fans were left terribly upset as Lionel Messi himself was barely visible from the stands at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata, having been surrounded by what seemed like hundreds of politicians and dignitaries. As fans began to show their disapproval, Messi was whisked away from the stadium after just 20 minutes. Images from the event have gone viral on social media, in which Messi is almost impossible to be seen from certain areas of the stadium. Within minutes of Messi's arrival at Kolkata's gigantic Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) Stadium, the 38-year-old was surrounded by several officials and dignitaries who attempted to grab a moment with the football icon. That, in turn, ended up disrupting the view of the thousands of spectators who



had flocked to catch a glimpse of their favourite footballer. Many of these fans had paid well in excess of INR 5,000 to attend the event, and were left frustrated after being unable to witness him. Indeed, several videos and photographs have been cir-

culated on social media, where Messi (and his Inter Miami teammates Luis Suarez and Rodrigo de Paul) can barely be spotted amidst the crowd around him. What was supposed to be a two-hour-long event - during which Messi would've inter-

acted with superstar actor Shah Rukh Khan, cricket legend Sourav Ganguly and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee - ended abruptly as Messi's security team guided him out of the arena after just 20 minutes. This led to further anger

from fans, whose dreams of witnessing their beloved football icon had been left unfulfilled despite the thousands they had paid for it. Several fans threw bottles and chairs from the stands in protest, damaging the barricades of the Salt Lake Stadium.

Who Is Satadru Dutta? Main Organiser Of Lionel Messi Event Who Was Arrested After Kolkata Chaos

=Lionel Messi's Kolkata leg of the 'G.O.A.T. Tour of India 2025' turned into complete chaos on Saturday morning, as the Argentina football legend left the Salt Lake Stadium after just 20 minutes, leading to vandalism from unhappy fans who barely got a glimpse of him. Following the chaos, it was confirmed by Additional Director General Law and Order Jawed Shamim that Satadru Dutta, the main organiser of the Messi event, had been arrested. But who exactly is Satadru Dutta? Satadru Dutta is the main organiser and promoter of the event, and the man behind Messi's much-awaited arrival to India. Under all promotional banners and posters of Messi's 'G.O.A.T. Tour', it can be seen that they have been organised as part of 'A Satadru Dutta Initiative'. 'There's a great atmosphere of joy that Messi is coming to India after 14 years... It's also good for the fans, an opportunity to see Messi. Football's connection to India is growing again.



Never before have so many sponsors come to Indian football," Satadru Dutta had told reporters, ahead of Messi's arrival. In the past, Dutta has played a crucial role in bringing football icons Pele and Diego Maradona to India. In an interaction on Instagram, Dutta had also spoken about his desire to bring legendary Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo to India. However, on Saturday, Messi's highly-anticipated Kolkata visit turned into nightmare. Within minutes of arriving at the Salt Lake

Stadium in Kolkata, Messi was surrounded by a bevy of politicians, police officers, VIPs and their aides, forming a human blockade that ensured the paying public saw everything except Messi. Messi looked confused and bemused, gamely signing autographs for former players while attempting a slow circuit of the ground. The situation only worsened. Promoter Satadru Dutta, his voice choking, repeatedly pleaded over the public address system: "Please leave him alone.

"Captain's Job Is Not Just To Toss And Manage The Bowlers": Suryakumar Yadav Reminded By Ex-India Star

India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav is facing the heat over his poor batting form in the format. It has been 20 innings since the right-handed batter smashed a T20I fifty. Since November last year, Suryakumar has scored only 227 runs at an average of 13.35. His poor string of performances continues during India's ongoing five-match home series against South Africa. Suryakumar scored 12 in the first game and only five in the following match. After his latest failure, former India batter Aakash Chopra has reminded the player about his role. "You are the team's captain, but a captain's job is not just to toss and manage the



bowlers. It's not just about making the strategy. If you bat in the top four, your primary role is to score runs," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. "It's been many matches. If you have an average of 14 in 17 innings and the strike rate is also not very good, you don't have a single fifty, and have crossed

25 just twice, it's been a problem on either side of the IPL," he added. The cricketer-turned-commentator clarified that he was not against Suryakumar captaining the Indian side, but added that the swashbuckling batter needs to have runs under his belt going into the T20 World Cup 2026. The mega event

will be taking place in February-March next year in India and Sri Lanka. "I am not saying there is any doubt over Suryakumar Yadav's captaincy, or that he won't be India's captain in the World Cup. I am not suggesting that at all, so don't ever misquote me, but the truth is that he needs to score runs," said Chopra. "If you are playing at No. 3 or No. 4 and are not scoring runs, and they aren't being scored consistently and over a long period of time, you won't be that confident when you start the World Cup. So, Suryakumar Yadav, the captain, and Shubman Gill, the vice-captain, scoring runs is absolutely imperative," he added.

Smriti Mandhana Congratulates Harmanpreet Kaur After PCA Unveil Stand In Her Honour

India's vice captain Smriti Mandhana congratulated her teammate and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur after the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) unveiled a stand in her honour at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium on Thursday. Two new stands were inaugurated at the venue on Thursday, with the other one being named after former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh. The inauguration ceremony was led by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and PCA President Amarjit Mehta, with Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Mithun Manhas and Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria also in attendance. BCCI posted a video of



the same on their social media handles, and sharing the same on her Instagram story, Mandhana wrote, "Congratulations @imharmanpreet kaur!! What a day for women's cricket and so so proud of you!" In the video, Harmanpreet said, "After winning the World Cup, a lot of things have changed in my

life. But I think this is a special moment for me. The soil on which I started playing—today I will finally have a stand on my name. So I think it's a very proud moment for me and I really want to thank the Punjab Cricket Association for that. All the hard work, all the struggle, has paid off today. So I think

it is a very emotional moment for me. But also, whoever is going to watch this video, whoever is listening, I think it is going to be very motivational for all of them." Last month, Harmanpreet made history by leading the Indian team to their first senior ICC women's cricket trophy as the Women in Blue beat South Africa by 52 runs at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai to lift the coveted silverware. She became only the third female Indian cricketer to have a stand named after her. Previously, legends of the game Jhulan Goswami (Eden Gardens, Kolkata) and Mithali Raj (ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium, Visakhapatnam) were bestowed with this honour.

'Noosa, Noosa, Noosa' - England's Ashes break ends



England have left their Ashes break in Noosa and will resume training on Sunday before the crucial third Test in Adelaide. The tourists, who must win at the Adelaide Oval to keep their hopes of regaining the urn alive, flew from Brisbane on Saturday. England spent four nights in the beach town of Noosa, a trip that was planned well ahead of the series and not altered despite defeats in the opening two Tests. Captain Ben Stokes' men attracted plenty of attention during their time on the Sunshine Coast. They were pictured in bars, playing golf and on the beach. The England squad were happy to interact with locals and media alike - Stokes even posed with two radio presenters dressed in full whites carrying signs that read: "For sale - moral victories" and "Bazballers anonymous - free counselling". Australian newspapers have paid close attention

to England's downtime. The Brisbane Courier Mail claimed England are "not even trying anymore", the Advertiser from Adelaide labelled the tourists "rub a dub duds" and Sydney's Daily Telegraph carried the headline "Surfed and Turfed". Former Australia fast bowler Jason Gillespie told ABC radio: "The tourism commission will be licking their lips. It's been Noosa, Noosa, Noosa. "There's been a lot of criticism about the England team having a break. I don't have a problem with it. I think it's absolutely fair and reasonable." England's decision to take the break in Noosa has continued the debate around their preparation and training on the tour of Australia. Billed as a huge opportunity for England to earn a rare win down under and the most anticipated Ashes for a generation, this series is at risk of being over at the earliest opportunity.

ICC, JioStar Break Silence On Indian Media Rights Deal Collapse Reports

The International Cricket Council (ICC) and JioStar have denied reports of a split after media reports claimed that their four-year India media-rights agreement could come to an abrupt end. A report in The Economic Times claimed that JioStar - controlled by Reliance Industries formally informed the ICC that it cannot fulfil the remaining two years of their media rights contract. This would have meant that JioStar would withdraw as the official broadcaster for the ICC T20 World Cup 2026, scheduled to be held in India and Sri Lanka, and the subsequent commitments in the current contract. "The International Cricket Council (ICC) and JioStar have noted recent media reports concerning the status of the ICC's



media rights agreement in India. These reports do not reflect the position of either organisation. The existing agreement between the ICC and JioStar remains fully in force, and JioStar continues as the ICC's official media rights partner in India. Any suggestion that JioStar has withdrawn from the agree-

ment is incorrect," the joint statement read. ICC and JioStar, in a joint statement, confirmed that their \$3 billion deal remains fully in force, and that they are fully committed to "delivering uninterrupted, world-class coverage" to cricket fans in India. "JioStar is fully committed to honour its contractual obliga-

tions in letter and spirit. Both organisations remain focused on delivering uninterrupted, world-class coverage of upcoming ICC events to fans across India, including the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, one of the sport's most anticipated global tournaments. Preparations for these events are progressing exactly as planned, and there is no impact on viewers, advertisers, or industry partners. ICC and JioStar, as long-term commercial partners, maintain regular communication on operational, commercial and strategic matters focused on the role the partnership can play in growing the sport," he added. As per media reports, JioStar's sudden exit was believed to be the heavy financial losses the platform has been incurring.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi Reacts To Surpassing Virat Kohli As 'Most Searched Indian' In 2025

India's batting prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi has reacted to becoming the most-searched Indian personality on Google in 2025. The 14-year-old on Friday continued his rich vein of form in 2025, slamming a record-breaking 171 off just 95 balls, shattering the mark for the highest score by an Indian in the U19 Asia Cup. He achieved the feat during India's Group A opener against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the ICC Academy Ground in Dubai. After the match, Suryavanshi was asked about his growing popularity as the broadcaster reminded him that he was the most searched Indian in 2025, even surpassing Virat Kohli. "When we conduct research



about you, you may not be aware of this. According to Google, you are the most searched person in India overall over the last year, even surpassing Virat Kohli. You are in the sixth spot in terms of being the most searched personality in the world. Our job

is to build you up; our job is to do research about you. But it is not your job; your job is to keep the focus. Amidst all this hype, how do you stay grounded?" the broadcaster asked. The 14-year-old from Samastipur, Bihar, admitted that while these things do give

him happiness and joy, his focus remains on improving his game. "I don't pay attention to these things. I keep the focus on my game. Yes, I do hear about these developments, and it does feel nice. I look at it, feel good about it and then move forward. That's about it," replied Suryavanshi. Suryavanshi's record-breaking knock is now the second-highest score by an Indian in youth ODIs, behind Ambati Rayudu's unbeaten 177 against England in 2002 and the ninth-highest score by a batter in a men's U19 ODI. Suryavanshi's knock was laced with nine fours and 14 sixes - the most by any batter in a single innings in the U19 level.

Watt has surgery on collapsed lung



Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker TJ Watt has had surgery to repair a partially collapsed lung sustained during dry needle treatment. Watt, the 2021 NFL Defensive Player of the Year, made six tackles in Pittsburgh's victory over Baltimore Ravens last Sunday. But the 31-year-old was taken to hospital for a lung evaluation after feeling discomfort on Wednesday. Dry needling is a treatment for pain and movement issues involving the insertion of tiny needles into the body. The Steelers made no reference to dry needling in an update on Friday but that element was revealed in a post on X, external by his older brother JJ. "Yesterday TJ had suc-

cessful surgery to stabilize and repair a partially collapsed lung suffered Wednesday after a dry needling treatment session at the facility," said JJ Watt, who is a minority investor in Premier League side Burnley. "Recovery timeline is still TBD [to be determined], but all went well and he is being released from the hospital today. He and his family are very appreciative of everyone's kind words and well wishes." Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said TJ Watt, who signed a three-year contract extension in July, will miss Monday's game against Miami and is at "home and resting comfortably" but does not know when he will be back.

“Dhandoraa Is an Emotion and One of the Best Scripts I’ve Heard This Year; the Whole Country Will Talk About It,” Says Shivaji at the Title Song Release Event

The makers of Dhandoraa unveiled the title song of the film at a media interaction attended by the cast, crew, distributors, and members of the press. Presented by Smt. Muppaneni Srilakshmi under the banner of Loukya Entertainments, the film is produced by Ravindra Benarjee Muppaneni and directed by Muralikant. Dhandoraa stars Shivaji, Navadeep, Nandu, and Bindu Madhavi in the lead roles. The film is set for a December 25, 2025 theatrical release, with early overseas premieres beginning December 23, 2025. Opening the event, Editor Srujana Adusumilli thanked the media and everyone who graced the occasion. She said that while the title song itself is effective, the film is even more impactful than the song, and requested audiences to wait for December 25 and watch the film in the theatres. Music Director Mark K. Robin thanked everyone for attending and shared that the title song was the very first composition he worked on after listening to director Muralikant's narration. He said the narration was extremely strong and that its



impact directly translated into the song. He added that the film features a strong ensemble of actors and said it was an honour to be part of such a project. Director Muralikant thanked Mark K. Robin for delivering what he described as a “kick-ass song and a kick-ass album.” He revealed that the title song was composed immediately after the first narration and that the moment they heard it, they knew it was the right one. He added that the entire album has come out equally

strong and mentioned that one more song from the film is yet to be released. He requested audiences to support the film in theatres if they liked the teaser, songs, and content released so far, and said the team would love to hear audience feedback. Producer Ravindra Benarjee Muppaneni said he hoped everyone liked the title song and stated that the intent of the song is the intent of the film itself. He spoke about the many questions faced during the making of the movie and

said that the confidence that audiences would support good cinema is what kept the team moving forward. He added that after the film was completed, Mythri Movie Makers' Shashidhar Reddy, Prime Show Entertainment's Niranjan Reddy, and Atharvana Bhadrakali Pictures immediately came on board after watching the film, giving the team confidence that Dhandoraa had landed in safe hands for both domestic and international release. He also mentioned

that the team is attempting early premieres in India along with the overseas premieres. Actress Manika Chikkala thanked everyone for attending and said the film is ten times more impactful than the title song. She shared that she watched the song for the first time along with the audience at the event and felt deeply moved. Praising Mark K. Robin, she said he had “killed it” with the composition and added that she was extremely proud to be part of Dhandoraa. Actor Ravi Krishna thanked the media for being supportive and helping the film reach a wider audience. He said Dhandoraa would be one of the most remarkable films of the year and noted that the buzz around the film has grown organically because of its content. Describing the title song as a “killer” track, he praised Mark K. Robin and expressed confidence that after the trailer release, audiences would automatically start looking forward to December 25. Actor Nandu congratulated Mark K. Robin, stating that while the composer has delivered notable work earlier, this song truly announces his arrival.

'Bad Girlz' to hit the cinemas on December 25th



Anchal Gowda, Payal Chhangappa, Roshini Yashna, Rohan Surya, and Moin are the main actors in 'Bad Girlz'. The tagline for the film, 'Kani Chala Manchodlu', contradicts with the title in an interesting way. Sasidhar Nalla, Emmadi Soma Narsaiah, Ramisetty Rambabu, and Ravula Ramesh are producing this film. This Entertainer film is set to release on December 25th.

Director Phani Pradeep Dhulipudi has described his movie as a complete entertainer that explores what it would be like if female characters headlined a Jathi Ratnalu or a MAD. “We are very happy with how the film has shaped up. It's for everyone to like. You are in for a thorough entertainer,” the director said. He added that the talented Anup Rubens has provided excellent music, and that the Oscar-

winner Chandra Bose penned the lyrics for all the songs. “The songs have come out very well. The song 'Ila Chusukuntane', which was recently released, received a good response and got 6 Million views. The recent release Bad Girlz Anthem song is getting a good response in Social Media. We will be releasing the remaining songs soon. Please watch our movie in theatres on December 25th.”

I will marry Ayaan', confesses Farrhana Bhatt



Mumbai: Bigg Boss 19 may be over, but the spotlight on its contestants continues to shine bright. One of the most talked-about names this season has been Farrhana Bhatt. While she narrowly missed lifting the trophy, Farrhana won millions of hearts with her fierce gameplay and strong presence, eventually walking away as the runner-up. Ever since stepping out of the Bigg Boss 19 house, Farrhana has been busy with back-to-back interviews, many of which are now going viral for her candid and fun statements. In one such recent media interaction, the actress surprised everyone when she jokingly said that she would “marry” Ayaan Lal, the son of her former co-contestant Kunickaa Sadanand.



UNIQUE DARK COMEDY THRILLER GURRAM PAAPIREDDY TRAILER OUT NOW; GRAND THEATRICAL RELEASE WORLDWIDE ON DECEMBER 19TH

Starring Naresh Agastya and Faria Abdullah, "Gurram Paapireddy" is presented by Dr. Sandhya Goli and produced by Venu Saddi, Amar Bura, and Jayakanth (Bobby). Director Murali Manohar brings a fresh concept with a dark comedy story that is unlike anything audiences have seen on screen so far. The teaser, songs, and character looks released from the film have already received a huge response. Today, the makers have released the official trailer of "Gurram Paapireddy." The trailer introduces Judge G. Vaidyanathan played by Brahmanandam, an expert in dealing with foolish people. He is approached with an unusual case. Meanwhile, four friends - Gurram Paapireddy played Naresh Agastya, Saudamini played by

Faria Abdullah, Military played by Rajkumar Kasireddy, and Chilipi played by Vamshidhar Kosgi head to the Srisaillam forest to steal a buried dead body for their con. Along the way, they encounter rival grave robbers, leading to a series of hilarious conflicts. The trailer raises curiosity with intriguing elements: whose body is buried in Srisaillam, why multiple gangs are after it, how the Yogi Babu character turns the story, and the link between Kalinga Pothuraju (who lived from 1927 to 1987) and Sri Markandeya Raju. The trailer impressed with a perfect team behind the project, featuring a strong cast including Brahmanandam, Yogi Babu, John Vijay, Motta Rajendran, Jeevan Kumar, and Prabhas Sreenu, creating a strong impact.

“VICHITRA” – A Mother–Daughter Sentiment Film Starring “Killer” Fame Jyothi Apoorva, Ready for Release



Under the SIS Films banner, the emotional family entertainer “Vichitra” is getting ready for its theatrical release. The film features Jyothi Apoorva in the lead role, with Ravi Ravan Rudra and Shreya Tiwari playing the hero and heroine. Baby Sri Harshini and Meenavvasu appear in special roles. Produced and directed by Saifuddin Malik, Vichitra is soon to arrive before the audience. “Vichitra” is crafted as a heart-touching mother–daughter sentiment drama, promising to appeal strongly to family audiences. The film has recently completed its censor formalities and is now set for release. Director–Producer Saifuddin Malik's Statement Speaking on the occasion, director-producer Saifuddin Malik said: “Vichitra is a warm and emotional film centered around a mother–daughter bond.



“WIFE” Title & First Look Launched as Adhira Talkies Production No.1

Adhira Talkies Production No.1, titled “WIFE”, was officially launched with the unveiling of its title and first look in the presence of several prominent filmmakers. The film is being produced under the Adhira Talkies banner with the support of Cinitary Media Works, which has contributed to over 100 films in the industry. Directed by Srinivas (Bujji), the film features Naren Tej and Suhana in the lead roles. Murali Krishna Varma handles cinematography, Satya Kashyap composes the music, and Nandamuri Hari serves as the editor. The title and first look were launched under the guidance and encouragement of renowned directors. Speaking as the chief guest, noted director Chandra Mahesh said, “Thank you to the entire team for inviting me to the title and first look launch of WIFE. The strong media support itself indicates that this film will achieve good success. The backing of Cinitary Media Works and Venkat garu adds great strength to the project. Music will also be a major asset. The title WIFE, which symbolizes strength to the husband and

the family, perfectly suits this film. I wish the entire team great success.” Renowned director Samudra shared, “I thank everyone who attended this event. Everyone has a wife in their life, and choosing WIFE as the title is very apt. Many talented technicians are working on this film, and I sincerely wish it great success.” Producer Rama Satyanarayana stated, “The backbone of this film is Cinitary Media Works CEO Venkat garu. Another highlight is K Music acquiring the film's audio rights. Publicity plays a crucial role in taking good cinema to the audience. I thank everyone for supporting this film and congratulate director Bujji.” Director Srinivas (Bujji) said, “My salutations to my parents, my favorite director Ram Gopal Varma garu, and everyone who attended this event. We have already completed one schedule. WIFE will be a crime and suspense thriller. I thank every technician who worked on this film. We will be starting the next schedule soon and request continued media support.” Venkat, CEO of Cinitary Media Works, remarked.



The launch of the Ammoru Thalli song, under the Shourya Creations banner, took place grandly at Prasad Labs in Hyderabad

M.L. Raja composed the music for this song, which features Amani and Nagadurga in the lead roles. Speaking on the occasion,

Nagadurga said, “This song is different from all my previous songs. We all worked very hard for this song. It will give the

audience a new experience,” and thanked the producer for giving her the opportunity.

Industry prominent figures participated in the song launch event and congratulated the song team. The captivating choreography for this song was provided by Veda, and the cinematography was handled by Pawan.