

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA




10-12-2025
Total pilgrims: 68,165
Tonsures: 25,087
Hundi kanukalu: 3.81 CR
Waiting Compartments...21

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

TO BOOK YOUR ADS CALL

99484 80279, 73307 78889



NATION | NEWS

Will not accept 'Veer Savarkar Award' nor attend the ceremony: Shashi Tharoor

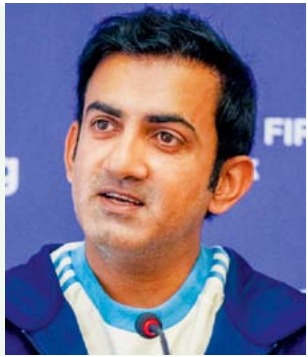


WORLD | NEWS

More than 30 dead after Myanmar military air strike hits hospital

SPORTS | NEWS

Gautam Gambhir Calls ODI Batting Orders "Over-Rated", AB de Villiers' Reply Can't Be Missed



Revanth meets Kharge, Priyanka briefs them on Global Summit



HYDERABA (TSIT) : AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Thursday congratulated Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on the unveiling of the Telangana Rising 2047 Vision Document.

The two AICC leaders praised the Chief Minister for drawing a roadmap for the development of the youngest state of Telangana in the vision document.

The Chief Minister, who is on a visit to the national capital, had separate meetings with Kharge and

AICC leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyanka Gandhi lauded Telangana CM Revanth Reddy for successfully unveiling the Telangana Rising 2047 Vision Document and attracting major global investments during the two-day summit.

Priyanka Gandhi at their residences. CM Revanth Reddy briefed them about the successful conduct of the two-day Telangana Rising Global Summit and the release of the vision

document in the presence of business honchos and global investors, according to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office.

The two AICC leaders also expressed profound delight over attracting huge investments from local and international companies and entering agreements during the two-day global summit.

Minister Vivek Venkataswamy, MPs Suresh Shetkar, M Anil Kumar, P Balaram Naik, Dr Mallu Ravi, K Raghuvver Reddy, and Gaddam Vamshi Krishna were also present.

Modi, Trump review India-US strategic partnership progress

New Delhi (TSIT) In a significant development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with US President Donald Trump on Thursday with both leaders discussing bilateral ties as well as regional and international developments.

During the call, PM Modi and President Trump underlined the importance of sustaining momentum in shared efforts to enhance bilateral trade.

"Had a very warm and engaging conversation with President Trump. We reviewed the progress in our bilateral relations and discussed regional and international developments. India and the US will continue to work together for global peace, stability and prosperity," PM Modi posted on X after the phone



call. The two leaders reviewed the progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and expressed satisfaction at the steady strengthening of bilateral cooperation across all sectors.

The leaders also exchanged views on expanding cooperation in critical technologies, energy, defence and security, and other priority areas that are central to the implementation of the India-US COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology) for the 21st century. They discussed various regional and global developments and agreed to work closely to address shared challenges and advance common interests.

India's First Quantum BioFoundry to Rise in Amaravati CM Naidu Pushes for Global Innovation Hub



Amaravati (TSIT) Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced that Amaravati will host India's first integrated quantum-bio-medical research ecosystem, positioning the state at the forefront of next-generation science.

The Chief Minister met top scientists, researchers, and technology innovators who presented the Amaravati Quantum BioFoundry Vision—a roadmap featuring a Quantum Simulation Centre, National Quantum

BioFoundry, Innovation Hub, and a nationwide spoke network.

The project aims to advance quantum medicine, quantum biology, and data-driven life sciences.

Emphasizing Andhra Pradesh's commitment to frontier technologies, Naidu said Amaravati should emerge as a global hub for research and innovation. He highlighted the need for a strong ecosystem that accelerates breakthroughs in quantum biomedicine, an area explored by only a few

countries.

He stressed the development of short-, medium-, and long-term applications, strong institutional partnerships, and a hub-and-spoke model to leverage India's scientific talent.

The CM urged researchers to "keep an open mind" as Amaravati prepares to lead in quantum health technologies.

The visiting delegation included experts in quantum computation, wet-lab sciences, and next-generation wearable technology.

Umar Khalid gets 14-day interim bail for sister's wedding

DELHI (TSIT): A Delhi court on Thursday, December 11, granted student activist Umar Khalid interim bail for 14 days to attend his sister's wedding. Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Sameer Bajpai stated that Khalid's bail will pertain from December 16 to December 29. He has been



instructed not to use any social media and to strictly meet his family, relatives, and friends only.

"Considering the fact that the marriage is of the real sister of the applicant, the application is allowed and the applicant is granted interim bail from 16.12.2025 to 29.12.2025," the court said.

It stated that the applicant must submit a personal bond of Rs 20,000 along with two sureties of the same amount and follow a set of conditions whilst on interim bail. The court added, "He shall remain at his home or at the places where the ceremonies of marriage as mentioned by him will take place."

Mamata calls Shah 'dangerous', alleges SIR used to delete voters



AGAR (WB): (DEC 11) West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday intensified her attack on Union Home Minister Amit Shah, calling him "dangerous" and accusing the Centre and EC of using the SIR of electoral rolls to unlawfully delete names of lakhs of eligible Bengali voters ahead of the 2026 assembly polls.

Addressing a rally in Nadia district's Krishnanagar, Banerjee alleged that Shah was directly guiding attempts

to remove as many as "1.5 crore names" from the voters' list, and warned that she would sit on an indefinite dharna if even a single eligible voter was excluded during the SIR exercise.

"The country's home minister is dangerous. His two eyes send a message of disaster — in one eye you see Duryodhan, and in the other, D u s h a s a n ,"

Banerjee said, dramatically intensifying the rhetoric she has been using over the past week in her public meetings.

RBI buys bonds worth Rs 50,000 cr to inject more liquidity into banking system



MUMBAI : The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday bought government bonds worth Rs 50,000 crore from the market in order to infuse more liquidity in the banking system to spur growth in the economy. The purchase is part of the RBI's monetary policy announcement last week to inject Rs 1 lakh crore in the market via the purchase of government securities and another \$5 billion equivalent via a foreign exchange swap facility.

The RBI has been selling US dollars in the market to prevent the rupee from going into a free fall, which has resulted in a lot of cash being sucked out of the banking system, which also tends to lead to an increase in interest rates in the market.



President Smt. Draupadi Murmu inaugurated and laid foundation stones of various developmental projects at the City Convention Center in Imphal, Manipur.

Vijay's TVK charts third-front path for '26, forms committee

CHENNAI: Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor-politician Vijay, on Thursday firmed up its coalition roadmap for the 2026 Assembly elections by constituting a high-powered committee to negotiate seat-sharing and alliance terms with like-minded parties. The decision, taken at a meeting of district secretaries at the party headquarters in Panaiyur, marks TVK's most structured move yet to build a non-DMK, non-AIADMK front.

TVK insiders said the new committee has been tasked with identifying and finalising partners willing to accept Vijay as the Chief Ministerial candidate — an approach publicly outlined in the party's first political rally. Parties such as TTV Dhinakaran's AMMK, Premalatha Vijayakanth's DMDK, and several smaller outfits are understood to have shown early interest, indicating the contours of a three-cornered contest taking shape in the State. Interestingly, on Thursday, the party also



received an invitation from the PMK (Anbumani faction) to join its December 17 protest demanding a caste-wise census. TVK's election campaign general secretary, Aadhav Arjuna, said the request would be placed before Vijay for a final decision.

Four resolutions passed at the meeting reaffirmed Vijay as

TVK's Chief Ministerial choice, accused the DMK government of corruption, and pledged to present a development-focused alternative. A Manifesto Drafting Committee has been set up under Vijay's supervision, along with a communication strategy to counter political attacks and misinformation.

Army mounts rescue after truck plunges into gorge, 21 missing

Itanagar/New Delhi, Dec 11 : The Indian Army on Thursday launched a large-scale search and rescue operation in the high-altitude Chaglagam region of Arunachal Pradesh after a truck carrying 22 workers from Tinsukia fell off a cliff along the remote Hayuliang-Chaglagam road, officials said. The accident, believed to have occurred on the night of December 8 near KM 40, came to light only late on December 10



when the lone survivor managed to reach the Chipra GREF Camp and alerted authorities.

According to preliminary inputs provided by the survivor, the vehicle veered off the treacherous mountain road and plunged nearly 200

metres into a dense, inaccessible forested gorge. The site, about 12 km short of Chaglagam, lies in a remote stretch with minimal connectivity.

Notably, no information about the missing workers had been reported by any local agency, contractor, or civil representative until the survivor's arrival, prompting immediate mobilisation of rescue resources.

On December 11, the Indian Army's Spear Corps deployed multiple

search and rescue columns along with medical teams, GREF personnel, local police, NDRF members and the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Hayuliang. "At 1155 hours, after four hours of intensive search and rope descent, the truck was spotted around 200 metres below the road near KM 40 in a re-entrant, inaccessible and not visible from helicopters or the road due to dense tree cover and thick foliage.



Will not accept ‘Veer Savarkar Award’ nor attend the ceremony: Shashi Tharoor

NEW DELHI: Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday categorically stated that he would not accept an award named after VD Savarkar, nor attend a related event, even as a senior party colleague wanted the Congress MP to not accept any honour named after the ideologue whom he claimed “bowed before the British.”

Tharoor said that he will not accept the “Veer Savarkar Award” and also won’t attend the event where it will be presented



in the absence of clarifications about its nature or the organisation presenting it.

Tharoor, the MP from Thiruvananthapuram, also said that “it was irresponsible on the part of the organisers to announce my name without my having agreed to receive it”. Earlier in the day, Congress leader K Muralaiah told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram that no party member, including Tharoor, should accept

any award in the name of Veer Savarkar “as he had bowed before the British.”

Goa fire: Delhi court dismisses Luthra brothers’ transit anticipatory bail pleas

Muralaiah said that he does not believe that Tharoor will accept the award as doing so would insult and embarrass the Congress party. Tharoor later told reporters in the national capital that he heard about the award on Tuesday and that he was not going for the ceremony. “I heard

Mahesh Kumar Goud Visits IEI Telangana State Centre Key Representations Made to Govt



Hyderabad: MLC and TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud visited The Institution of Engineers (India), Telangana State Centre (IEI-TSC), on Thursday following an invitation from Prof. Dr. Ramana Naik Banoth FIE, Chairman, IEI-TSC. He was warmly received and felicitated by the Chairman along with Er. Marri Ramesh, FIE, Secretary.

Several distinguished members participated in the interaction, including Dr. I. S. N. Raju, Council Member, IEI; Er. C. N. Raghu Prasad, Additional Commissioner, GHMC; Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao, Director, ESCI & Past Chairman, IEI-TSC; Dr. S. Murali, Member, IEI-TSC; Er. M. A. Kareem, and other Corporate Members.

During the meeting, the Chairman and Hon. Secretary urged Shri Mahesh Kumar Goud to take up with the State Government the proposal to rename Khairatabad Metro Station as “Institution of Engineers (India) Khairatabad Metro Station.”

The proposal is aimed at honouring the engineers who rebuilt Hyderabad after the historic Musi floods and who conceptualised Himayat Sagar and Osman Sagar, which continue to protect the city from flooding.

IEI-TSC, along with the Director of ESCI, also sought Government support for the approval and establishment of the proposed ESCI University at Gachibowli. Mahesh Kumar Goud responded positively and assured that he would pursue both matters with the Government. He congratulated the newly appointed Chairman and Secretary and expressed his full support for their initiatives to strengthen the institution. The Secretary extended heartfelt thanks to all dignitaries for their visit and valuable time at the IEI Telangana State Centre.

1st indigenous hydrogen fuel cell passenger vessel begins service in Varanasi



New Delhi, Dec 11 : The government on Thursday flagged off the commercial operation of the country's first fully indigenous hydrogen fuel cell passenger vessel at Namohat, Varanasi, marking a major step in its green maritime push.

The vessel is the first in India to demonstrate hydrogen fuel cell propulsion in a maritime setting and features fully indigenous technology. It operates on a ‘Low

enabling up to eight hours of operation on a single hydrogen fill. The vessel is certified by the Indian Register of Shipping.

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, said that under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is witnessing a transformative shift toward clean, sustainable and self-reliant transportation systems. “The launch of our first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell vessel is a shining example of the Prime Minister’s commitment to ‘Make in India’ and the transition to green mobility across all sectors. This milestone also strengthens the wider mission of rejuvenating and preserving our sacred Ganga,” said the minister. As we advance cleaner technologies on our waterways, we are not only promoting innovation but also ensuring that development goes hand in hand with ecological responsibility.

Delhi's air quality slips further, edges close to 'very poor' mark again

New Delhi, Dec 11 : Delhi's air quality remained lodged in the poor category for the third straight day on Thursday morning, though the overall air quality index (AQI) slipped further to 285, just below the 301 threshold that pushes conditions into the very poor bracket, data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) showed.

As of 7 a.m., at least ten monitoring stations across the city registered AQI levels above 300, placing them in the very poor range. At Anand Vihar, the AQI stood at 300, Ashok Vihar 328, Chandni Chowk 305, and ITO 309.

Noida's overall AQI was recorded at 294 (Poor), and sector-wise AQI ranged from 246 to 331, while Greater Noida's Knowledge Parks 3 and 5 recorded AQI levels of 235 and 331, respectively.

The city's 24-hour average AQI on Wednesday stood at 259, showing a slight improvement from Tuesday's reading of 282. After nine consecutive days of air quality dipping into the very poor zone, the capital recorded some relief on Tuesday, and due to



stronger daytime winds on Wednesday, conditions managed to remain within the poor category for the second day in a row. CPCB classifications state that an AQI between 0 and 50 is tagged as good, 51-100 satisfactory, 101-200 moderate, 201-300 poor, 301-400 very poor, and 401-500 severe. Alongside air quality fluctuations, temperatures in the city also showed a mild dip. Delhi recorded a minimum of 10 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, around 0.4 degrees below the seasonal average, while the day's maximum settled at 25.2 degrees Celsius, also about 0.4 degrees below normal.

Alientt Global Leaders Explore Telangana’s Culinary & Cultural Heritage at The Culinary Lounge, Hyderabad

Hyderabad: The Culinary Lounge, Hyderabad’s premier experiential space for corporate team engagement, hosted the global leadership of European consulting firm Alientt for a curated session celebrating Telangana’s culinary and cultural heritage. The delegation, in the city as part of Global Summit 2025, received an immersive introduction to the region’s traditions.

Alientt, which has facilitated nearly USD 700 million in public funding for deep-tech startups and SMEs across 40 countries, participated in a cook-off designed to build team engagement while showcasing Telangana’s everyday cuisine.

Telangana cuisine researcher Jyothi Valaboju led the session, guiding delegates through the preparation of Sarva Pindi, Barada and Godhuma Rotte. The participants approached the workshop with enthusiasm, treating the cook-off as both a cultural learning opportunity and an engagement-driven group activity. The session concluded with a Nawabi lunch highlighting Hyderabad’s signature flavours. The guests were also presented with a Telangana snack



basket featuring makka pelalu, Ippa puvvu laddu, nuvula laddu, and chakkinalu, offering

them a taste of the state’s festive and traditional delicacies.

A live performance of Perini Natyam, the ancient warrior dance associated with the Kakatiya era, added a strong cultural dimension to the experience. For several delegates visiting India for the first time, the performance served as a memorable introduction to Telangana’s artistic legacy.

Fabio Manzi, Founder of Alientt, said the experience added depth to their India visit: “Understanding local culture shapes the way we collaborate globally. Telangana’s heritage has given us valuable context and perspective.”

CHRO Marco Mirilli said the authenticity of the session exceeded expectations, adding that the Perini Natyam performance was “mesmerising and unforgettable.”

Culinary expert Jyothi Valaboju said she was delighted by the global team’s curiosity towards Telangana food traditions. Gopi Byluppala, Founder of The Culinary Lounge, said that team engagement built through cultural and culinary sessions helps global companies integrate meaningfully when they expand operations in Hyderabad.

The Alientt delegation included founders Fabio Manzi and Alessandro Ruffo, CEO Steven Kiberd, CTO Laetitia Gonzalez, CHRO Marco Mirilli, CSO Vinaya Gedam, along with the Hyderabad team members.

The engagement underlined Hyderabad’s growing reputation as a global innovation centre where culture, collaboration and technology come together.

Youth Must Enter Politics to Strengthen the Nation

Hyderabad: Nation People’s Party (NPP) Coordinator for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Gavvala Bharath Kumar called upon India’s youth to actively enter politics and contribute to the country’s progress. He cautioned that opportunistic and dynasty-driven politics pose a serious threat to national development and emphasized that young people must emerge as leaders instead of remaining passive vote banks.

A grand welcome was accorded in Hyderabad to NPP National Youth President Nickey Nongkhaw and NPP National General Secretary (Organisation) & Former Arunachal Pradesh Home Minister Paking Bage. The delegation was greeted with garlands and traditional drumbeats as they travelled in a rally from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport to Sundarayya Vignana Kendram, Bagh Lingampally, led by Bharath Kumar. The



rally also paid tribute to national leaders and their service to the country. Addressing the gathering, Bharath Kumar who shared that he comes from a humble and underprivileged background expressed pride in inspiring the youth of Telangana. He paid glowing tributes to former Lok Sabha Speaker P. A. Sangma, recalling his lifelong service to tribal and weaker sections. He noted that the visit coincided with International Human Rights Day, and urged collective efforts to transform the principle of equality into a ground reality. Bharath strongly criticised political parties that use youth merely as vote banks and outlined the National People’s Party’s priority issues, including: Regulation of education and medical fees, Improved pension and medical benefits for employees, Retirement security for Anganwadi and ASHA workers, Reasonable working hours for police personnel, Establishment of farm support centres, Timely DA and PRC for government staff, Free legal aid at the mandal level, Protections for contract and private-sector employees, Measures to address workplace stress.

GITAM Hyderabad Congratulates Dr. L. Sasikala on Earning Ph.D. in Chemistry

Hyderabad, TSIT: GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, has extended heartfelt congratulations to Dr. L. Sasikala on the successful completion of her Ph.D. in Chemistry. Her doctoral research, titled “HPLC-UV Method Development and Validation for Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms using QbD Approach,” marks a notable contribution to the field of analytical chemistry.

Guided by Dr. Vandavasi Koteswara Rao, Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry, Dr. Sasikala’s work focuses



on advancing analytical techniques to ensure drug safety, efficacy, and potency. Her research underscores the critical role of chromatographic methods in pharmaceutical analy-

sis due to their high precision, accuracy, and reproducibility. The study also aligns with global regulatory standards that mandate robust method validation for quality and safety of pharmaceutical products. Dr. Sasikala successfully developed and validated selective and precise analytical methods, including UV spectrophotometric and RP-HPLC techniques, for the assay of Vancomycin HCl, Bilastine, phosphate buffer agents in parenteral formulations, and Deferiprone. Each method was optimized under the Analytical Quality by

Design (AQbD) framework and subjected to stress studies to confirm stability and robustness. Key outcomes include a cost-effective long-term stability method for Bilastine, an eco-friendly phosphate buffer method, and a reliable stability-indicating assay for Deferiprone. Senior leadership and faculty—including Prof. D. S. Rao (Pro Vice-Chancellor), D. V. V. S. R. Varma (Resident Director), Dr. M. Reza, and Dr. Gousia Begum—joined the university community in congratulating Dr. Sasikala on her remarkable achievement.



The CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam releases the Report “Deepening the Corporate Bond Market Report” at NITI Aayog, in New Delhi.

EDITORIAL

Luthra Brothers To Be Deported: How Is It Different From Extradition?

The Luthra brothers - who fled to Thailand while their Goa nightclub, 'Birch by Romeo Lane', burned down last week, killing 25 people - have been detained in that country, sources told NDTV Thursday. Sources said this morning that a Goa Police team will leave for Thailand in 24-36 hours in anticipation of the Thai government deporting Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, who should be back in India shortly. They fled India on a Saturday morning IndiGo flight to Phuket; initial inquiries indicate tickets were bought from aggregator MakeMyTrip at 1.17 am, as fire-fighters were battling the blaze. Located swiftly – photographs emerged of Gaurav Luthra at Phuket airport – they have since asked a Delhi court for protection from arrest, arguing they cannot face criminal liability as they were not present when the fire broke. They also sought four weeks' transit anticipatory bail, which was refused. Meanwhile, the government has also suspended the brothers' passports, meaning they cannot leave Thailand – with whom India has an extradition treaty – even if they were free to do so. Luthra brothers: deportation or extradition? India and Thailand signed an extradition treaty in 2013, under the terms of which Bangkok is obliged to send the Luthra brothers back if the charges they face carry a minimum jail term of a year. The main (at this time) charge Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra face is culpable homicide not amounting to murder, which carries a minimum sentence of five years. That satisfies the main operational criteria of the 2013 treaty. Therefore, one option is to activate relevant provisions of the treaty. But typically this involves a formal request and proving 'double criminality', i.e., present evidence to a Thai court that says the accused is guilty of a crime punishable by both Indian and Thai laws. And this could take time. Also, attempts to extradite other wanted individuals - Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya from the United Kingdom, Mehul Choksi from Belgium, and Dawood Ibrahim from Pakistan - have rumbled on for years. So, can they be deported? Yes, and that is most likely what will happen. Deportation and extradition are not the same thing, though in both cases a state ejects a foreigner. In the former case a host country, India, for example, can remove foreigners living illegally in its territories. In the latter, as in this case, for instance, India would have to prove to the Thai authorities that its nationals - the Luthra brothers - committed acts viewed as criminal by both governments. The difference is in the legal minutiae. Deportation is typically an immigration measure; i.e., a country exercises its sovereign power to remove a foreign national. This typically happens when a foreigner violates the laws of the host country. And have the Luthra brothers broken Thai laws? Yes, although not by their own actions. Suspension of their passports means Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra are in Phuket without valid travel documents, which is an offence under Thailand's immigration laws. They can, therefore, be removed as 'undocumented foreigners', which will likely be a quicker route back to India to face trial. Goa nightclub fire Meanwhile, the investigation so far has uncovered a number of worrying details, including the widespread of use of flammable material, the lack of fire exits, and the absence of fire extinguishers. Also, the club did not have a broad-enough entrance for fire-fighting vehicles to approach the main structure; firefighters said they had to park 400 metres away, which complicated rescue efforts and may have led to some of the deaths. Investigators also found the club did not have a fire safety clearance.

Editorial

India-Russia Relations and the Changing Global Equations



The Ukraine War, Western Sanctions, and a New Test of Indian Strategic Autonomy India's relations with Russia have been built on a strong foundation of strategic partnership, defense cooperation, and political trust for decades. From the Cold War era to the present, Russia has been one of the few countries that supported India's interests even in difficult times. However, the Russia-Ukraine war that began in 2022 has transformed global politics, energy markets, financial structures, and strategic alliances, bringing India-Russia relations to a new turning point. Strict Western sanctions have not only impacted Russia's economy and defense production capabilities, but have also created unprecedented diplomatic challenges for partners like India. While the United States, Europe, and Indo-Pacific partners expect India to adhere to Western norms, India cannot ignore Russia's energy, defense, and international balance needs. India faces a crucial test at this crossroads: how to maintain relations with Russia while firmly establishing its strategic autonomy. The biggest complication today is that Russia appears to be gradually moving closer to China, and this equation is not entirely favorable from the perspective of India's interests. Russia's growing economic, technological, and military cooperation with China is affecting the regional balance within which India formulates its security strategy. India knows that China's intentions are not limited to Asian dominance, but rather to alter the global balance of power. Consequently, the Russia-China proximity complicates India's strategic calculations. Western sanctions are no less challenging for India. Defense imports from Russia and critical spare parts are being slowed by Western sanctions. Many of the key systems India's Air Force and



Army rely on are Russian-made or co-produced with Russia. The pressure on the Russian defense industry due to the Ukraine war has made India concerned about the timelines of several military projects. Delays in the delivery of some weapon systems and missiles also reflect this. This situation forces India to diversify its defense sources in the long term and focus more on domestic production. Meanwhile, trade imbalances have emerged as a serious aspect of India-Russia relations. A sharp increase in crude oil imports has made India's trade with Russia lopsided. India's exports to Russia are extremely low, and the payments system has clearly not stabilized. The rupee-ruble trading system has failed to achieve the desired efficiency due to Western sanctions and international banking regulations. This has increased uncertainty and risk in the trade structures between the two countries. On the other hand, Western countries also want India to reduce its support for Russia and adopt a "moral" stance on the Ukraine issue. However, India's foreign policy is based more on national interests than on shared morality. India has repeatedly abstained from voting at the United Nations, making it clear that it will not directly support any side. This balanced stance symbolizes India's strategic autonomy. However, it has received mixed reactions in Western countries. Some call it India's "pragmatic diplomacy," while others see it as "excessive sympathy" for Russia. India will have to deftly manage its foreign policy amid these pressures. India also faces the challenge of having both Russia and the United States as important partners. The United States is India's largest technological and economic partner today, and also an integral part of the Asia-Pacific security architecture through the Quad. Russia, meanwhile, is a traditional ally and has been a key pillar of India's defense structure for decades. Maintaining a balance between these two pillars is a complex but essential task for India's diplomacy. India must demonstrate that both partnerships offer complementary benefits, not contradictions. India can adopt several diplomatic strategies to maintain this difficult balance. First, it must accelerate the implementation of "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" by reducing its dependence on defense imports. Joint production and technical cooperation with Russia can be expanded on Indian soil, reducing dependence on direct imports and minimizing the impact of sanctions. Additionally, India must strengthen new defense partnerships with countries such as Europe, the United States, France, and Israel. Another important step would be for India to diversify its trade with Russia in energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, IT, and other non-defense sectors. This would reduce the trade imbalance and stabilize the economies of both countries. Third, India needs to develop a reliable and sanctions-proof payment system. Using BRICS, SCO, and alternative financial systems could be effective for this. At the diplomatic level, India must maintain a trustworthy dialogue with Russia, while also conveying to Western countries that India's neutrality is a result of responsible strategic thinking. India has previously demonstrated that it can protect its interests without joining any bloc. Today's global situation demands a more mature and multifaceted approach from India. Amid all these changes, it is crucial that India protect its national interests and not follow any superpower. India has always supported a multipolar world order, in which no single power dominates. While maintaining relations with Russia, India must maintain a clear independent foreign policy direction—one that neither makes decisions under pressure nor takes unnecessary sides in any conflict. Ultimately, India-Russia relations stand at a historic juncture. The Ukrainian conflict, the politics of sanctions, and changing alliance structures have made this relationship challenging, but they also hold opportunities. India must recognize that Russia is not just a defense partner, but a partner with whom energy security, international balance, and many aspects of Asian politics are intertwined. Similarly, the West is an essential partner in India's rise. Therefore, India's goal should not be to align itself with any one pole, but to choose a path of balance that strengthens its strategic autonomy, economic stability, and global role. This is the time for India to use its diplomatic skills, cool reasoning and determination to show the world that strategic autonomy is not just a policy but India's global identity.

The priceless value of blood the lifeline that sustains humanity



BY EV SRINIVAS RAO
MEMBER, STATE MANAGING COMMITTEE, RED CROSS SOCIETY

The human body is an extraordinary creation, functioning smoothly only when every organ works in perfect coordination. At the centre of this remarkable system is blood — the life-flow that keeps every cell alive. Without it, the light of human life fades within moments. Blood is not merely a fluid; it is humanity's most fundamental force of survival.

Why Life Depends on Blood

If the human body can be compared to a machine, the heart is its engine and blood is its fuel. With 70-80 beats every minute, the heart circulates blood across the body, supplying oxygen and nutrients to every organ. Despite tremendous advances in medical science and biotechnology, no artificial substitute has been developed to replace

human blood. Its irreplaceable nature makes it one of the most precious resources known to mankind.

When Blood Becomes the Only Hope

Across the world, millions of patients wait every day for blood to survive. The need arises in countless situations:

Accidents and emergencies:

Road crashes, industrial mishaps and fire accidents can lead to the loss of litres of blood within minutes. In such moments, only timely blood donation can save a life.

Major surgeries, cancer and chronic illnesses:

Blood, platelets and plasma are vital during heart surgeries, cancer treatments and kidney-related complications.

Childbirth complications:

Thousands of women lose their lives each year due to severe bleeding during delivery. A timely blood transfusion can save a mother, a family and an entire future.

Blood disorders in children:

Children suffering from thalassemia, sickle cell disease and haemophilia often require blood transfusions twice a month throughout their lives. These realities underline a simple truth — for many, life begins again the moment blood arrives.

Blood Donation: Safe, Scientific and Beneficial

Despite common misconceptions, blood donation is completely safe.

Medical facts show:



- Lost fluids are replenished within 24 hours.
 - New blood cells are generated within 48-72 hours.
 - The body fully recovers in two to three months.
- Studies even suggest that regular blood donors may enjoy better heart health.
- One Donor, Three Lives
- Every unit of donated blood

can be separated into three components — red blood cells, plasma and platelets — helping three different patients:

- Red cells for anaemia and surgical needs
- Plasma for burn injuries and liver disorders
- Platelets for cancer and dengue patients

One act of donation can therefore save three human lives.

Blood as an Emotion

Beyond biology, blood carries deep human meaning. When a patient lies unconscious after an accident and a doctor calls for blood, families are overwhelmed with fear and helplessness. In such

moments, a stranger who steps forward to donate becomes nothing less than a saviour. A few drops of donated blood can lift a family from darkness to hope.

That is the true value of blood — it is life, it is hope and it is humanity in action.

A Social Responsibility We Cannot Ignore

India's population is rising. Surgeries are increasing. Medical emergencies are more common than ever. Yet the number of voluntary blood donors is not keeping pace. This imbalance poses a serious challenge. Youth, colleges, offices and community groups must take the lead. Blood donation camps at workplaces, campuses and neighbourhood events can transform the situation. Blood is not a commodity to be sold. It is a gift to be shared — a gesture of compassion and solidarity.

Donors: The True Wealth of Society

Those who donate blood carry a special place in society. They:

- Think beyond themselves
- Stand up for humanity
- Light the lamp of life for three families at once

Blood donors are, in every sense, guardians of life.

The Essence of Blood Donation

The value of blood can be captured in three ideas

It is the power that saves life

It is the force that sustains humanity

It is the strength that binds society

Blood donation remains the most valuable gift we can offer. Every donor is a life-saver. Every drop is a promise of hope. Every donation is the rebirth of a family.

A small act in our hands becomes a blessing for someone waiting for life. Donate blood. Preserve humanity. Keep hope alive.

Trump launches \$1m 'gold card' immigration visas

President Donald Trump has launched a scheme offering fast-tracked US visas to wealthy foreigners who can pay at least \$1m (£750,000). The card will give buyers a "direct path to Citizenship for all qualified and vetted people. SO EXCITING! Our Great American Companies can finally keep their invaluable Talent," Trump said on social media on Wednesday. The Trump Gold Card, which was first announced earlier this year, is a US visa awarded to those who can demonstrate they will provide a "substantial benefit" to the country, according to the scheme's official website. It comes as Washington intensifies its immigration crack-down, including raising work visa fees and deporting undocumented migrants. The Gold Card scheme promises US residency in "record time" and will require a \$1m fee which is "evidence that the individual will substantially benefit the



United States", the programme's website said. Businesses sponsoring employees are required to pay \$2m, along with additional fees. A "platinum" version of the card that offers special tax breaks will also be available soon for \$5m, the website said. Extra fees to the government may be charged depending on each applicant's circumstances, the site said. Individuals are

also required to pay a non-refundable \$15,000 processing fee before their application is reviewed. The gold card scheme has faced criticism since it was first announced in February, with some Democrats saying that it would unfairly favour wealthy individuals. When Trump first unveiled the plan he described the visas as similar to green cards,

which allow immigrants of various income levels to live and work permanently in the US. Green card holders typically become eligible for citizenship after five years. But the Gold Card is aimed specifically at "high-level" professionals, Trump said, emphasising, "we want people that are productive". "The people that can pay \$5m, they're going to create

jobs," Trump said. "It's going to sell like crazy. It's a bargain." The scheme comes as the Trump administration has devoted significant resources to deporting immigrants. The US has also paused immigration applications by individuals from the 19 countries, mostly in Africa and in the Middle East, which are subject to the president's travel ban. The government has also halted all decisions on asylum applications and said it would review thousands of cases that were approved under the administration of President Joe Biden. In September, Trump also signed an order to charge a \$100,000 fee for applicants of the H-1B visa programme for skilled foreign workers. The decision caused panic among overseas student in the US and technology firms. The White House later clarified that the fee would apply only to new applicants who are currently abroad.

Mexico approves up to 50% tariffs on China and other countries

Mexican lawmakers have approved a package of new tariffs, impacting hundreds of products, many of which come from China. The measures, which President Claudia Sheinbaum has said are needed to boost domestic production, were passed by the Mexican Senate on Wednesday. The levies are set to take effect on 1 January 2026 and will apply to goods like metals, cars, clothing and appliances. Dozens of countries that do not have a free trade agreement with Mexico will be affected, including Thailand, India and Indonesia. The move comes as Mexico is in negotiations with the US over steep import taxes that President Donald Trump has threatened to impose on the country. The measures will impose tariffs of up to 50% on more than 1,400 products. The levies will "substantially harm the interests of trading partners, including China," said a spokesperson for Beijing's commerce ministry on Thursday. An investigation into Mexico's trade policy is in progress, they added, urging the country to "correct" its decision. This week, China also signalled its plans for more

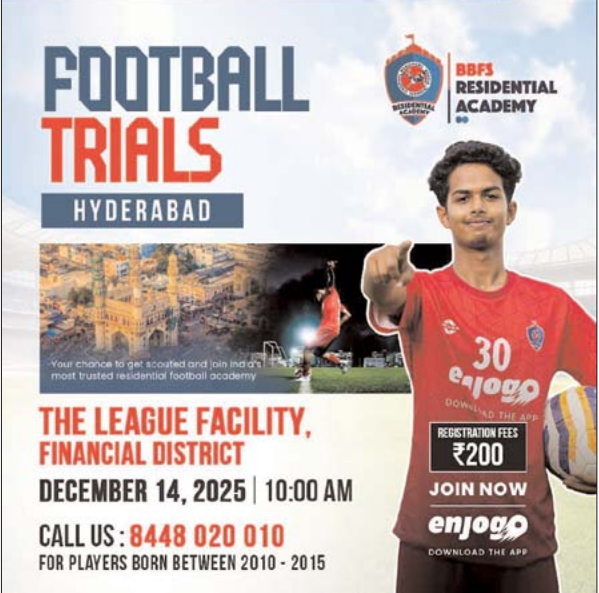


involvement with Latin American and Caribbean countries, as it aims to deepen its relationships in the region through trade and innovation. Chinese companies have been expanding their footprint in Mexico in recent years, with car brands like BYD and MG establishing operations in the country. But Washington has said Beijing may be using Mexico as a way to bypass US tariffs. The BBC has contacted the embassies in Mexico of Thailand, India and Indonesia for comment. Sheinbaum's government is in talks with the Trump administration as it tries to reduce tariffs on the country. They include 50% duties on Mexican steel and aluminium. Trump has also threatened to impose

extra tariffs on Mexico for various reasons, including a 25% levy as part of Washington's measures to pressure countries to do more to stop the flow of the synthetic opioid fentanyl into America. On Monday, Trump threatened to impose a new 5% tariff on Mexico, accusing it of violating an agreement that gives American farmers access to water. "It is very unfair to our US Farmers who deserve this much needed water," he posted on social media. Trump was referring to a more than 80-year-old treaty that grants the US water from Rio Grande tributaries. For decades the US has accused Mexico of not meeting the terms of the agreement. The US is Mexico's largest trading partner.

Bhaichung Bhutia's Residential Football Academy announces Hyderabad trials

Hyderabad Dec 2025: Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools (BBFS), one of India's largest and most-rated football development programs, will conduct scouting trials in Hyderabad to identify talented young student-athletes for the BBFS Residential Academy, the organisation's flagship high-performance football training and academic curriculum in association with reputed boarding schools across India. The trials will take place on Sunday, 14th December 2025, at The League Facility, Financial District, Hyderabad, with participants required to report at 10:00 AM. Footballers born between 2010 and 2016 are eligible to participate. Participants attending the trials must carry a valid government identity card for verification. They are required to report in full football attire, including jerseys, shorts, football boots, and shin guards, which are mandatory for participation. Athletes should also bring a personal hydration pack or water bottle, as the trial session will



include high-intensity activities. Registrations can be completed online through the Enjogo app, BBFS's official sports learning and participation platform. Expressing his thoughts on the initiative, Bhaichung Bhutia, Co-founder of BBFS and one of India's most celebrated football icons, said, "These trials are a tremendous opportunity for young players who dream of pursu-

ing professional football without compromising on their academic journey. We aim to identify committed student-athletes and provide them with the environment, coaching, and culture they need to learn, train, and excel. The BBFS Residential Academy gives talented youngsters a chance to grow holistically and prepare for higher levels of the sport." Over the years, BBFS has

built a structured scouting network comprising senior licensed coaches who cover major regions across India where the talent pipeline is strong. This large-scale talent hunt ensures that aspiring players have the opportunity to showcase their potential at the national stage. The BBFS Residential Academy offers an integrated football-and-academics model designed to support long-term player development. Created to mirror the standards of top global academies, the program combines elite football training with formal schooling, supervised by experienced educators and coordinators. Athletes follow a year-round schedule that includes technical and tactical training, strength and conditioning, nutrition planning, and participation in competitive tournaments at state and national levels. Each player is guided through an Individual Development Plan (IDP) tailored to their strengths, gaps, and long-term goals, supported by regular mentoring sessions that focus on performance, discipline, and personal growth.

IDFC FIRST BANK LAUNCHES FIRST WOW! BLACK, A PREMIUM CREDIT CARD WITH ZERO FOREX AND UPI-ENABLED SPENDS

Mumbai, December 2025: IDFC FIRST Bank today announced the launch of the FIRST WOW! Black Credit Card - an upgraded and more feature-rich version of the existing FIRST WOW! Credit Card, backed by a fixed deposit. It is designed for premium benefits on FD Backed Secured Card, at an accessible price. Key highlights of the card are ZERO Fx markup on International Spends, Dual card with Mastercard and RuPay UPI, and rewards on UPI Spends. Cardholders get a physical Mastercard plus a UPI-enabled RuPay virtual credit card both seamlessly linked to the same account with a unified credit limit and a single consolidated statement. Priced at ₹750 + GST (joining and annual fee), the card offers welcome benefits worth over ₹5,000, making it a strong value proposition in the secured credit-card space. Cardholders enjoy welcome benefits covering

IDFC FIRST Bank	
Feature	Details
Forex Markup	0% Fx markup on all international spends
Cash Withdrawal	0% interest till payment due date (upto 45 days). Only charge of ₹199 per withdrawal
Rewards Points	4 Reward Points per ₹150 on everyday spends (-1.3% value back) 3 Reward Points per ₹150 on eligible UPI spends above ₹2,000 (-1% value back) 50 Bonus RPs per ₹150 on hotel bookings (-16.7% value back) on IDFC FIRST Bank App 30 Bonus RPs per ₹150 on flight bookings (-10% value back) on IDFC FIRST Bank App
Rewards Points Value	₹0.50 per RP on travel bookings via the IDFC FIRST Bank app
Lounge Access	4 Domestic lounge access per year
Free Cancellation	Trip cancellation cover of up to ₹10,000 on flight & hotel bookings
Movie Offer	25% discount up to ₹100 on movie tickets, once every month
Fuel Surcharge Waiver	1% fuel surcharge waiver up to ₹200, every month
Roadside Assistance	Complimentary roadside assistance worth ₹1,399, available once every year
Comprehensive Insurance Cover	Personal accident cover of up to ₹2 lakh and lost card liability up to ₹25,000 for assured protection.

travel discounts, premium dining access & lifestyle offers, as well as an additional 5% cash-back (up to ₹1,000) on the first EMI transaction

made within 30 days. Annual fee (2nd year onwards) of ₹750 + GST is waived on achieving annual spends of ₹1,50,000, maximizing overall value.

Shirish Bhandari, Head - Credit Cards, FASTag & Loyalty, IDFC FIRST Bank, said: "The response to our earlier FIRST WOW! variant reinforced one clear insight: customers want simplicity and affordability, but without feeling like they are compromising on experience or benefits. FIRST WOW! Black is our answer an upgrade in every sense, delivering more value, more travel capability, and more everyday utility. Premium card experiences have often remained inaccessible for customers who are new to credit or prefer an affordable price point. FIRST WOW! Black shifts that paradigm with zero forex markup, domestic lounge access, stronger travel rewards, trip protection and many lifestyle benefits — offered at a price point designed for broad accessibility & making premium and aspirational privileges, truly democratic.

SBI Hyderabad Circle launches "FRAUD KA FULL STOP" Campaign across the State

State Bank of India (SBI), in partnership with Telangana State Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB), today inaugurated the two month "FRAUD KA FULL STOP" cyber-awareness campaign being conducted from 02 December 2025 to 31 January 2026. The campaign was ceremonially launched across all six Administrative Offices and 27 Regional Business Offices of SBI in Telangana on 11.12.2025. The inauguration was marked by blowing the conch, symbolizing the beginning of a State-wide war against cyber frauds. SBI reaffirmed its mission to protect customers by intensifying awareness at every touch point. As part of the initiative, SBI unveiled the Cyber Defender Program, deploying 355 trained Cyber Defenders across the Circle. They will engage customers twice daily in



branches and conduct outreach programs in schools, colleges, RWAs, and communities to reinforce safe digital practices. SBI has been a pioneer in cyber-awareness in Telangana, reaching lakhs of citizens through SMS/email alerts, park activities, mobile

awareness vans, Nukkad Natak, college programs, and Town Hall meetings. More than 1,000 SBI staff participated in mass-awareness drives this year alone. These efforts have already helped branches prevent several Digital Arrest fraud attempts.

BIG TECH BETS BIG ON AI - BUT CAN INDIA KEEP PACE IN THE GLOBAL RACE?

This week, tech giants Amazon and Microsoft pledged an eye-popping \$50bn-plus combined investment in India, putting artificial intelligence (AI) in the spotlight. Microsoft's Satya Nadella announced his company's largest investment ever in Asia - \$17.5bn (£13.14bn) - "to help build the infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for India's AI-first future". Amazon followed suit, and said it was putting in more than \$35bn in the country by 2030, with an unspecified chunk of that investment going into boosting AI capabilities. The announcements come at a particularly interesting juncture. As fears of an AI bubble swept global markets and tech stock valuations soared, several leading brokerages took a contrarian view on India's AI landscape. Christopher Wood of Jefferies said the country's stocks were a "reverse AI trade". That basically means India should outperform other markets in the world "if the AI trade suddenly unwinds" - or simply put, the global bubble bursts. HSBC also held a similar view, saying Indian equities offered a "hedge and diversification" for those uneasy with the ongoing AI rally. This comes as Mumbai stocks have lagged behind their Asian peers over the past year, with foreign investors moving billions



into Korean and Taiwanese AI-driven tech companies in the absence of comparable opportunities in India. In this backdrop, the Amazon and Microsoft investments provide a much-needed fillip - yet it remains worth asking where India truly stands in the global AI race. There are no easy answers. The adoption of AI in India has been rapid. Investments into some parts of the value chain - such as data centres, the physical backbone of AI, or chip-making facilities - have begun trickling in. Just this week, American chip-maker Intel announced a collaboration with Mumbai-based Tata Electronics to manufacture chips

locally. But when it comes to a sovereign AI model, it appears India is continuing to play catch-up. About a year-and-a-half ago, the Indian government launched an AI mission through which it began supplying start-ups, universities and researchers with high-end computing chips to develop a large homegrown AI model like OpenAI or China's DeepSeek. According to the federal electronics ministry, the launch of the sovereign model - which supports more than 22 languages - is imminent. In the interim though, the likes of DeepSeek and OpenAI have made further advances, launching newer variants. While the

government has recognised the need to reduce over-dependence on foreign platforms because of the risk of surveillance and sanctions, India's \$1.25bn sovereign mission is a shadow of France's \$117bn or Saudi Arabia's \$100bn programmes. The country's ambitions also face numerous other hurdles - from semiconductor availability to skilled talent and fragmented data ecosystems, according to global consultancy EY. India currently lacks enough computational infrastructure or the billions of dollars of research and development (R&D) investment made over decades that gave China and the US a distinct leg up. Despite its global strength in AI talent, India struggles to keep its developers at home. "The current tightening of overseas work visas provides India a window of opportunity to retain domestic talent and attract Indian-origin talent at home. However, given that top-tier AI talent is mobile globally, attractive policy incentives need to be put in place to incentivise relocation to India," the EY report says. China, for example, offers a range of incentives such as "financial support and subsidies, tax incentives and funding for research and development, special talent visas and fast-track immigration", the report says.

More than 30 dead after Myanmar military air strike hits hospital

At least 34 people have died and dozens more are injured after air strikes from Myanmar's military hit a hospital in the country's west on Wednesday night, according to ground sources. The hospital is located in Mrauk-U town in Rakhine state, an area controlled by the Arakan Army - one of the strongest ethnic armies fighting the country's military regime. Thousands have died and millions have been displaced since the military seized power in a coup in 2021 and triggered a civil war. In recent months, the military has intensified air strikes to take back territory from ethnic armies. It has also deployed paragliders to drop bombs on its enemies. The Myanmar military has not commented on the strikes, which come as



the country prepares to vote later this month in its first election since the coup. However, pro-military accounts on Telegram claim the strikes this week were not aimed at civilians. Khaing Thukha, a spokesperson for the Arakan Army, told the BBC that most of the casu-

alties were patients at the hospital. "This is the latest vicious attack by the terrorist military targeting civilian places," he said, adding that the military "must take responsibility" for bombing civilians. The Arakan Army health department said the strike, which occurred at around 21:00

(14:30 GMT), killed 10 patients on the spot and injured many others. Photos believed to be from the scene have been circulating on social media showing missing roofs across parts of the building complex, broken hospital beds and debris strewn across the ground. The junta has been locked

in a years-long bloody conflict with ethnic militias, at one point losing control of more than half the country. But recent influx of technology and equipment from China and Russia seems to have helped it turn the tide. The junta has made significant gains through a campaign of airstrikes and heavy bombardment. Earlier this year, more than 20 people were killed after an army motorised paraglider dropped two bombs on a crowd protesting at a religious festival. Civil liberties have also shrunk dramatically under the junta. Tens of thousands of political dissidents have been arrested, rights groups estimate. Myanmar's junta has called for a general election on 28 December, touting it as a pathway to political stability. But

critics say the election will be neither free nor fair, but will instead offer the junta a guise of legitimacy. Tom Andrews, the United Nations' human rights expert on Myanmar, has called it a "sham election". In recent weeks the junta has arrested civilians accused of disrupting the vote, including one man who authorities said had sent out anti-election messages on Facebook. The junta also said on Monday that it was looking for 10 activists involved in an anti-election protest. Ethnic armies and other opposition groups have pledged to boycott the polls. At least one election candidate in central Myanmar's Magway Region was detained by an anti-junta group, the Associated Press reported.

PAKISTAN'S MILITARY SENTENCES ITS FORMER SPY CHIEF TO 14 YEARS IN JAIL



Pakistan's former spy chief has been sentenced to 14 years in prison by a military court, on charges including violation of state secrets and interfering in politics. Faiz Hameed led Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency from 2019 to 2021, during the tenure of now-jailed former prime minister Imran Khan. He was known to be a staunch supporter of Khan, and took early retirement shortly after Khan was ousted in a no-confidence vote in 2022. It is the first time that an ISI chief in Pakistan has been court martialled. His

lawyer said he plans to appeal against the verdict. The ISI chief is seen as the second most powerful position in Pakistan's military. According to a press release issued by the public relations arm of Pakistani military (ISPR), the 15-month-long court martial proceeding began on August 12, 2024, under the Pakistan Army Act. Hameed was tried on four charges, including "involvement in political activities, violation of the Official Secrets Act which harmed the interest of the state, misuse of his powers and government resources, and causing harm to citizens". The ISPR statement added that Hameed had been given "the right to have a defence team of his choice" and that he has the right to appeal the decision in the "appropriate forum", which would be the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

'Architects of AI' named Time Magazine's Person of the Year



Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2025 is not a single person. Instead, the magazine has recognised the year's most influential figure as "the architects" of artificial intelligence (AI). Nvidia boss Jensen Huang, Meta head Mark Zuckerberg, X owner Elon Musk and AI "godmother" Fei-Fei Li are among those depicted on one of the magazine's two covers. Experts say it highlights how quickly AI, and the firms behind it, are reshaping society. It comes as a boom in the technology, ushered in by OpenAI's launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, con-

tinues at pace. Its boss Sam Altman said in September its chatbot is used by around 800 million people every week. Big tech firms are pouring billions of dollars into AI and the infrastructure behind it in a bid to stay ahead of rivals. There are two covers this year - one a piece of art depicting the letters AI surrounded by workers, and another a painting focused on the tech leaders themselves. At Meta, Zuckerberg has reportedly focused the firm around the tech, including its AI chatbot, which it has embedded in its popular apps.

POLAND ARRESTS RUSSIAN ARCHAEOLOGIST WANTED IN UKRAINE



Polish authorities have arrested a prominent Russian academic from St Petersburg's world-famous Hermitage Museum who is sought by Ukraine for allegedly conducting illegal excavations and partially destroying the ancient city of Myrmekion in Crimea. The suspect, identified under Polish

law as Aleksandr B, is the head of the Ancient Archaeology of the Northern Black Sea region at the museum, according to Ukrainian prosecutors. Ukrainian prosecutors accuse him of conducting illegal excavations at the site in Kerch between February 2014 and November 2025.

US seizes oil tanker off Venezuela as Caracas condemns 'act of piracy'

US forces have seized an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela, President Donald Trump said, marking a sharp escalation in Washington's pressure campaign against Nicolás Maduro's government. "We have just seized a tanker on the coast of Venezuela - a large tanker, very large, the largest one ever seized actually," Trump told reporters at the White House. Releasing a video of the seizure, Attorney General Pam Bondi described the vessel as a "crude oil tanker used to transport sanctioned oil from Venezuela and Iran". Caracas swiftly denounced the action, calling it an act of "international piracy". Earlier, President Maduro declared that Venezuela would never become an "oil



colony". The Trump administration accuses Venezuela of funneling narcotics into the US and has intensified its efforts to isolate President Maduro in recent months. Venezuela - home to some of the world's largest proven oil reserves - has, in turn, accused Washington of seeking to steal its resources. Brent crude prices inched higher on Wednesday as

news of the seizure stoked short-term supply concerns. Analysts warn the move could threaten shippers and further disrupt Venezuela's oil exports. US Attorney General Pam Bondi, who leads the US Department of Justice, said the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and the US Coast

Guard co-ordinated the seizure. "For multiple years, the oil tanker has been sanctioned by the United States due to its involvement in an illicit oil shipping network supporting foreign terrorist organizations," the nation's top prosecutor wrote on X. Footage shared by Bondi showed a military helicopter hovering over a large ship, and troops descending on to the deck using ropes. Uniformed men were seen in the clip moving about the ship with guns drawn. A senior military official told the BBC's US partner CBS that the helicopters used in the operation launched from the USS Gerald Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, which was sent to the Caribbean last month.

Venezuelan Nobel winner tells she knows 'risks' of Oslo trip after months in hiding



Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, who has been in hiding for months, has told the BBC that she knows "exactly the risks" she's taking by travelling to Norway to collect her Nobel Peace Prize. Machado appeared in Oslo in the middle of the night, waving from the balcony of a hotel. It was the first time she has been seen in public since January. The 58-year-old made the covert journey despite a travel ban and a threat from the Venezuelan government that she would be labelled as a fugitive. In an emotional moment, Machado waved to cheering supporters who had gath-

ered outside the Norwegian capital's Grand Hotel, blowing them kisses and singing with them. To their delight, she then came outside and greeted them in person, climbing over the security barricades to get closer. "Maria!" "Maria!" they shouted, holding their

phones aloft to record the historic moment. The Nobel Institute awarded Machado the prize this year for "her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy" in Venezuela. Earlier on Wednesday, her daughter, Ana Corina Sosa,

accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on her mother's behalf. Until Wednesday night, the mother of three had not seen her children in about two years, having sent them away from Venezuela for their own safety. In an interview with the BBC's Lucy Hockings after her balcony appearance, Machado said she had missed their graduations, and the weddings of her daughter and one of her sons. "For over 16 months I haven't been able to hug or touch anyone," she said. "Suddenly in the matter of a few hours I've been able to see the people I love the most, and touch them and cry and pray together."

AUSTRIA BANS HEADSCARVES IN SCHOOLS FOR UNDER-14S



Austria has passed a law banning headscarves in schools for girls under the age of 14. The conservative-led coalition of three centrist parties, the ÖVP, the SPÖ and the Neos, says the law is a "clear commitment to gender equality", but critics say it will fuel anti-Muslim feeling in the country and could be unconstitutional. The measure will apply to girls in both public and private schools. In 2020, a similar headscarf ban for girls under 10 was struck down by the Constitutional Court, because it specifically targeted Muslims. The terms of the new law mean girls under 14 will be forbidden from wearing "traditional Muslim" head coverings such as hijabs or burkas. If a student violates the ban, they must have a series of discussions with school authorities and their legal guardians. If there are repeated violations, the child and youth welfare agency must be notified. As a last resort, fam-

ilies or guardians could be fined up to 800 (€700). Members of the government say this is about empowering young girls, arguing it is to protect them "from oppression". Speaking ahead of the vote, the parliamentary leader of the liberal Neos party, Yannick Shetty said it was "not a measure against a religion. It is a measure to protect the freedom of girls in this country," and added that the ban would affect about 12,000 children. The opposition far-right Freedom Party of Austria, the FPÖ, which voted in favour of the ban, said it did not go far enough. It described the ban as "a first step", which should be widened to include all pupils and school staff. "There needs to be a general ban on headscarves in schools; political Islam has no place here", the FPÖ's spokesperson on families Ricarda Berger said. Sigrid Maurer from the opposition Greens called the new law "clearly unconstitutional".

Severe disruption hits Portugal in first general strike for 12 years

Dozens of flights and trains have been cancelled, schools closed and hospital operations postponed in cities across Portugal, as the two main union federations stage a general strike over unprecedented labour reforms. Public transport was down to a minimum service in many areas, and unions said refuse collections were at a standstill as the strike took hold on Thursday. The last time the CGTP and the generally less militant UGT joined forces was during the eurozone debt crisis in 2013, when a "troika" of international institutions demanded cuts in salaries and pensions as part of Portugal's bailout. Twelve years later, Portugal's economy has become the fastest



growing in the eurozone in recent months, but Prime Minister Luís Montenegro says it is still necessary to tackle "rigidities" in the labour market "so companies can be more profitable and workers have better salaries" as a result. "I will not give up on having a country with the ambition to be at the fore-

front, to be at the vanguard of Europe," he said on the eve of the strike. However, Montenegro appears to have been taken aback by the strength of feeling against his minority right-of-centre government's plans: one of his Social Democrat MPs is on the UGT executive and even he voted for a strike. The

prime minister tweaked some proposals after calling the federation in for talks late last month, but it was clearly not enough. Among the most controversial of the more than 100 proposals are: letting employers roll over temporary contracts for years on end lifting a ban on sacking workers then immediately rehiring them indirectly via outsourcing removing a requirement to reinstate employees who were unfairly dismissed. It is Portuguese in their 20s who are likely to be most affected by the changes - and opinion is rather mixed. Diogo Brito, who works as an air steward but has friends who do casual work in tourism, supports the right to strike but backs the package.

String of celebrity scandals renews debate on South Korea's 'cancel culture'



In a matter of days, three big names in South Korea's entertainment industry have made headlines in separate scandals that could derail their careers. The allegations that have embroiled comedians Park Na-rae and Cho Sae-ho, as well

as veteran actor Cho Jin-woong, are all different - ranging from workplace abuse to previous teenage detention to associations with a gang member. But the results have been the same: departures from the television screens where they had worked their way up to become household names. The scandals have also raised questions about the standards to which South Korea's public figures are held - especially in the entertainment industry. What are the scandals about? Park Na-rae, one of the country's most successful female comedians,

Shah Rukh Khan Reveals Plan For Lionel Messi's GOAT Tour Of India

In an amazing blend of Bollywood and sports, superstar Shah Rukh Khan is set to meet football great Lionel Messi during the latter's visit to Kolkata on December 13. For the unversed, Messi will be in India for a much-anticipated G.O.A.T Tour 2025, a three-day event spread across four major Indian cities from December 13 to 15. Hyderabad, Mumbai, and New Delhi are the other cities that will witness the arrival of Messi on their land. The presence of Shah Rukh at Salt Lake Stadium will give a boost to the crowd that is already on cloud nine over Messi's arrival. The Bollywood superstar himself shared the news of him being in attendance. "This time round not planning my Knight in Kolkata.... and hoping the day Ride is completely 'Messi'. See you guys on the 13th at the Salt Lake Stadium," wrote Shah Rukh on X, formerly Twitter. Messi, who is travelling



from Miami, is scheduled to land in Kolkata at around 1:30 am. He will have an extensive line-up of engagements in the city throughout the day, beginning with meetings at 9:30 am. The World Cup-winning captain is expected to attend multiple interactions and events before departing for Hyderabad at 2 pm. During his visit to Kolkata, Messi is

also scheduled to meet former India cricket captain Sourav Ganguly and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. In Hyderabad, Messi's itinerary includes a highly anticipated T77 exhibition football match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is expected to join him for the event. The

evening will culminate in a musical extravaganza celebrating Messi's illustrious career. Following his engagements in Hyderabad, Messi will travel to Mumbai and then to Delhi. The G.O.A.T India Tour 2025 is designed as a pan-India celebration, beginning in the East (Kolkata) and South (Hyderabad) on December 13, continuing to

the West (Mumbai) on December 14, and concluding in the North (Delhi) on December 15. The highly anticipated GOAT Tour featuring Argentina football legend Lionel Messi is just around the corner, and excitement among fans in India knows no bounds. Messi will visit India on December 13, 14, and 15, covering four cities during his jam-packed schedule. The 2022 FIFA World Cup winner will travel to Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and New Delhi, participating in several events. Before concluding his India tour, Messi will arrive in the national capital, where he is reportedly scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Joining Messi on the tour will be his long-time strike partner, Luis Suarez and Argentina midfielder Rodrigo De Paul. They will be part of the Mumbai leg of the tour, according to Satadru Dutta, the sole promoter of the 'G.O.A.T.'

Gautam Gambhir Calls ODI Batting Orders "Over-Rated", AB de Villiers' Reply Can't Be Missed

India head coach Gautam Gambhir backed his philosophy of deploying a floating batting order in ODI cricket, with the positions not being fixed, especially in the middle order. Gambhir remains determined to continue with the same approach, even if certain ODIs haven't gone India's way because of this philosophy. AB de Villiers, one of the greatest batters in the history of the game, isn't entirely in disagreement with Gambhir's approach, but has cautioned him against crossing the 'fine line'. "I do agree with him to a certain extent. I've always enjoyed a floating batting lineup in ODIs. But it's a fine line because you can't really play around too much with the players' roles. It's the top three, four to six, and then your tailenders who can hold the bat. It's almost like three segments, and you can really be creative with that. Play with right and left-hand combinations and certain situations of the game," De Villiers said about Gambhir's statement on his



YouTube channel. De Villiers was particularly impressed by India's consistency in T20 format, where Gambhir has adopted the same floating batting order philosophy. "It has been incredible, especially for a T20 format. It's the most volatile format of the three, and to have that kind of consistency tells you there must be something going on that's heading in the right direction. I think it's got to do with the depth of Indian cricket," said De Villiers. Gambhir's remarks about floating bat-

ting orders in white-ball cricket came after India sealed a 2-1 ODI series win against South Africa. Barring the opening combination, the India head coach doesn't think any batter needs to play in a specific position. "I think in a one-day format, you should know the template that you want to play with. I've always believed that in white-ball cricket, batting orders are very overrated, except the opening combination," said Gambhir after India beat South Africa 2-1 in the ODI series.

"It Will Backfire On Both Suryakumar And Gambhir": Ex-India Star's Massive Warning

Former India batter Robin Uthappa has warned senior men's team head coach Gautam Gambhir and T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav of excessive experimentation in the batting order. India have been making plenty of changes in the batting order. The message for the team is clear that there is a demand for a flexible line-up. The India head coach Gambhir even insisted earlier this month that "batting order is overrated" in white-ball cricket. However, Uthappa is of the opinion that Suryakumar and Gambhir would be under fire if this approach fails in the lead-up to the 2026 T20 World Cup, set to be jointly hosted by India and



Sri Lanka in February-March. After the ongoing five-match T20I series against South Africa, India will play a series of as many matches against New Zealand before playing the world event. With so little time left for preparation, the co-hosts need to make sure their experiment reaps

rewards; otherwise, there will be no turning back. "If this goes south, it'll backfire on both Surya and Gautam Gambhir. And people are anyway gunning for his (Gambhir) head. You can't go into a World Cup as the defending champions with your main batters not in good form. In the first T20I,

Hardik saved the skins out of India's innings. If it wasn't for him, we would have been 30-40 runs off that total and that's a 130. Those things concern me," said Uthappa on his YouTube channel. The ex-India player also talked about Suryakumar's poor form with the bat. Suryakumar averaged 15.07 in the first 16 T20Is he played this year. "Today it's not affecting him because India is winning matches. He's one of the most successful Indian captains right now with an 85 win percentage. But if that drops over the next nine games, then it starts impacting his batting and it starts impacting how he leads on the field as well.

Picture Of Yuvraj Singh's Funny Moment With Gambhir During 2nd India-South Africa T20I Goes Viral

India's World Cup-winning all-rounder Yuvraj Singh joined the team huddle ahead of the side's second T20I match against South Africa at Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, Mullanpur, New Chandigarh, on Thursday. During his presence with the players, the legendary all-rounder also met his former teammate and current India head coach Gautam Gambhir. Yuvraj shared a light-hearted moment with Gambhir, and a picture of it is going viral on social media. Before the start of the match, a stand named in Yuvraj's honour was inaugurated at the venue. An unchanged India have won the toss and elected to bowl first against South Africa.



The stadium is hosting its first men's international cricket match and becomes the 55th venue in India to join this bandwagon. India are currently leading the five-game series 1-0. "This has always been a wonderful ground. When we played here during franchise cricket, and recently saw a women's game also happen

here, it was wonderful, and it's the first men's game, I heard, that's happening here - international, so very excited for it. I'm sure the crowd are also excited," said India skipper Suryakumar Yadav. "It's really important for the boys to understand their responsibilities and see what the team demands in

that situation. They batted perfectly, looking at the situation. 175 on that wicket was a little over par. The way we bowled, I think it was a lovely effort," he added. He also heaped praise on seam-bowling all-rounder Hardik Pandya's match-winning efforts in the first T20I in Cuttack. "The balance that he (Hardik Pandya) provides in the team is amazing. The way he batted, the way he keeps calm on the ground when he's batting, when it's a pressure situation," Suryakumar said. "The way he bowled also, I think that's more important. His overs are also really important for the side. The way he carried himself throughout the game, it didn't look like he was injured.

Why Kylian Mbappe Remained An Unused Substitute Against Real Madrid



As Real Madrid suffered a 1-2 home defeat against Manchester City in the home Champions League clash on Wednesday, Kylian Mbappe remained an unused substitute. The Spanish giants struggled to score goals as Pep Guardiola's men proved their supremacy in the contest. Though Man City emerged as deserved winners in the contest, Real Madrid manager Xabi Alonso's decision to not bring Mbappe from the bench baffled many. Since the conclusion of the game, questions have been raised over Alonso's tactical decisions in the game, especially over the decision to not use Mbappe for a single minute. It has been reported that Mbappe wasn't fit to feature in the starting XI for the Champions League match against Man City because of muscular pain. Though Real Madrid maintained that the injury was not a serious one, there remained a risk that it could worsen in a match

as demanding as a Champions League clash against Manchester City. According to BeIN Sports, Mbappe was unable to complete the assessments at the expected level before the start of the match, leading to a decision aimed at preventing a more serious injury that could have sidelined him for several weeks, hurting Real Madrid's entire campaign. The final call over the decision to bench Mbappe was reportedly made only minutes before kickoff and was based strictly on medical assessments and risk management. With Real Madrid trailing a high-intensity Manchester City side the entire second half, Alonso decided against risking Mbappe by bringing him in from the bench, even as it meant that his side lost the game. Xabi Alonso On Kylian Mbappe's Absence Alonso said it was too early to know whether the player will be able to play Sunday at Alaves in the Spanish league.

Robin Uthappa, Chris Gayle, Jacques Kallis To Play In Legends Pro T20 League

The Legends Pro T20 League has added another group of heavyweight names to its debut season, confirming the participation of Chris Gayle, Jacques Kallis, Robin Uthappa, Ambati Rayudu and Stuart Binny. With each announcement, the league is shaping into a reunion of cricketers who have shared dressing rooms, rivalries, and countless memories over the years. "Some of my best cricket memories involve the guys who will be playing for the league," Gayle said. "I've played against Kallis when getting past him felt impossible, talked batting rhythm with Uthappa, and taken more Rayudu banter than I can count," he laughed. "And seeing names like Dhawan or Watson pop up again adds to



that feeling. Coming back together brings back the jokes, the competitiveness, the respect. The Legends Pro T20 League is giving us that chance." Jacques Kallis echoed the sentiment, reflecting on the relationships that endure long after a career.

more. And seeing Michael Clarke step in as league commissioner adds a fresh energy. He's always had a sharp cricketing mind, and his new role brings real professionalism and vision to the whole setup. It just makes you look forward even more to getting back out there and enjoying the game with familiar faces." Robin Uthappa spoke about reconnecting with players who shaped his journey. "I've faced Rayudu as an opponent and later shared a dressing room with him, and his intensity has always stood out," Uthappa said. "With Dinesh Karthik, I've had plenty of chats about finishing games, and having played with him since my Under-19 days, there's a natural camaraderie that comes from all those years together.

"How Do You Block Whatever Is Going On?" Smriti Mandhana Responds

India women's cricket vice-captain Smriti Mandhana made her first public appearance since her wedding to music composer Palash Muchhal was called off, taking a decisive step towards overcoming a difficult personal period. During an event, the star cricketer emphatically stated her unwavering love for cricket, highlighting that even when her personal life faces challenges, she relies on her bat and her work ethic to regain confidence. The 29-year-old also spoke candidly about the team's historic victory at the ICC Women's ODI World Cup. Mandhana shared her philosophy on preparation and self-assessment: "I have



always been a very simple person, not complicating my life by overthinking anything. One thing I believe is that if you put a lot of work in behind the scenes, because what happens on the ground, everyone looks at and judges, but what I

judge myself or the team on is the work we put in behind the scenes. I really pride myself on doing that work day in, day out. Even if I'm feeling good or bad about things, whatever it is, I think if you put in that work, when you go out to bat, you're just

very confident about what's going to happen," Smriti said during the event. The 'Women in Blue' secured their maiden ODI World Cup title on November 2nd, defeating South Africa in the final held at the DY Patil Stadium, Navi Mumbai. Speaking at the Amazon Sambhav Summit, Mandhana reiterated the significance of her commitment to the national team: "I don't think I love anything more than cricket. Wearing that Indian jersey is what motivates us. You set aside all your problems, and that thought alone helps you focus on life. As a kid, the madness for batting was always there.

'No-one downing tools' - Alonso's stay of execution despite loss to Man City

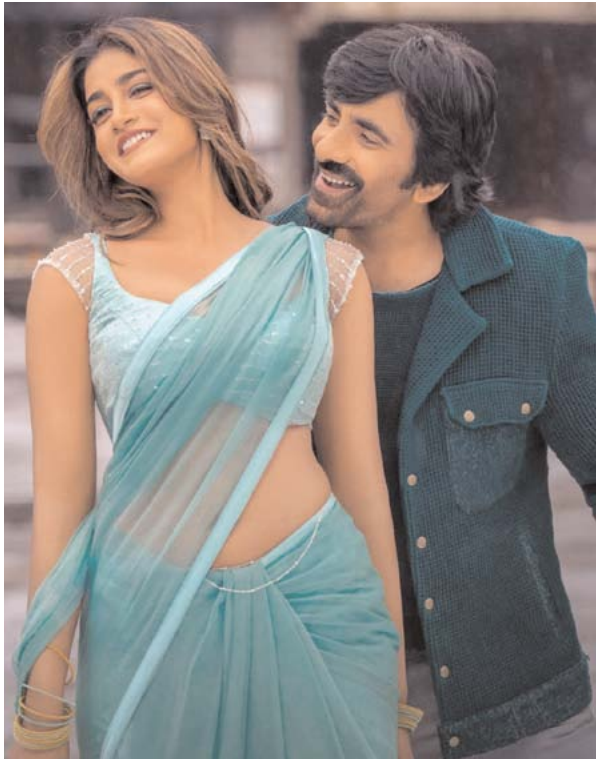


The deafening jeers that greeted former Barcelona boss Pep Guardiola before kick-off turned into away-fan cheers after Manchester City picked up a magnificent Champions League victory at Real Madrid that leaves Xabi Alonso clinging on to his job. Guardiola's connections with Real's rivals was not forgotten by the home faithful and it is ironic that a Barca man might have been the person to hammer the final nail in Alonso's coffin. Despite reports beforehand stating Alonso could lose his job with a loss, BBC Sport understands his position is not under immediate threat and is likely to see out the next few days, but a third consecutive defeat at Alaves on Sunday could finally spell the end. When the referee's whistle was blown on the 2-1 loss to City on Wednesday, the music inside the venue was pumped up to maximum level, possibly to drown out any boos that

may have been directed against Alonso. By that point, many had already left and once the volume was turned down, "We've got Guardiola" was the chant echoing around the stunning Bernabeu stadium from the 2,500 travelling supporters, a moment which will sting all Madridistas. Asked in the post-match news conference if he had spoken to chairman Florentino Perez, Alonso replied by saying: "I came straight here." The Madrid board discussed their options well into the night following the defeat by Celta Vigo on Sunday and it would be a major surprise if they were not to convene again. The start that Real made seemed like they had turned the corner, taking the game to City and going in front courtesy of Rodrygo's low drilled effort. But they conceded twice in the final 10 minutes of the first half through Nico O'Reilly poking in from close range and Erling Haaland's penalty. The Real ultras dressed all in white behind the goal had been chanting and clapping until that point, but when the Norwegian's spot-kick rippled the net in front of them they were silenced. There was, though, a period of unrest between minutes 65 and 71 when supporters whistled at the players in disappointment three times - the message was to say 'give us more'.

Express Your Love With The New Melody In Town- Mellifluous Number Addham Mundhu From Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, Dimple Hayath’s Bhartha Mahasayulaku Wignyapthi Unleashed

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja’s wholesome family entertainer Bhartha Mahasayulaku Wignyapthi, directed by Kishore Tirumala, features Ashika Ranganath and Dimple playing the heroines. Produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under the SLV Cinemas banner and presented by Zee Studios, the film features music by Bheems Ceciroleo and first single Bella Bella turned out to be a chartbuster. After teasing with a promo, the makers today unveiled the lyrical video of the second song-Addham Mundhu. This time, Bheems Ceciroleo scored a soulful and mellifluous track, with enchanting beats. Shreya Ghoshal’s soulful voice adds depth and magic, while Kapil Kapilan’s charming vocals are also equally remarkable. Lyricist Chandrabose captures the subtle beauty of love through heartfelt words. The song portrays a couple so deeply in love that they exist in their own little world, making every moment intimate and heartfelt. To all the husband-wife duo, express your love with the new melody in town. Addham Mundhu is a treat visually. Choreographed by



Sekhar Master and filmed in stunning European locales, the song highlights the sparkling chemistry between Ravi Teja and Dimple Hayathi. Their romantic exchanges, tender glances, and playful interactions elevate the track, making it a feast for both the eyes and ears. The song’s combination

of soulful melody, elegant lyrics, and captivating visuals makes it a track that stays with you long after listening. On the technical front, the film boasts a stellar crew—Prasad Murella behind the lens, National Award winner Sreekar Prasad handling the edits, and AS Prakash leading the production design.

‘It’s Not My Fault I Got a Job When I Was 12 and You Won’t Let Me Evolve’: Sabrina Carpenter



It’s Halloween night at Madison Square Garden, and a group of 20-some-things are deep into a sacred ritual: gabbing in the bathroom mirror with your girlfriends. They fluff their hair and touch up lip gloss while discussing the costumes they’re planning for a party the following night. “It’s so hard,” one of

them sighs, “to find something that’s both slutty enough and comfy enough.” Her posse groans in sympathy and agreement. Luckily, the artist they’re here to see has a solution. Sabrina Carpenter, who has retitled her long-running “Short n’ Sweet Tour” to “Short n’ Spooky” for the holiday.

Sahakutumbanam” to hit the theatres on December 19

Under the banner of HNG Cinemas LLP, Sahakutumbanam is directed by Uday Sharma, with Mahadev Goud and Nagaratna producing this heartwarming family entertainer. The film features Ram Kiran and Megha Akash in the lead roles, supported by an ensemble cast including Natakirithi Rajendra Prasad, Hasya Brahma Brahmanandam, Shubhalekha Sudhakar, Satya, Rajashri Nair, Racha Ravi, Giridhar, Tagubothu Ramesh, Bhadram, and others. With music composed by Mani Sharma, cinematography by Madhu Dasari, and editing by Sashank Mali, the film promises a wholesome family experience. The trailer released earlier received an overwhelmingly positive response across social media. Originally scheduled for release on December 12, the team has chosen to reschedule the release to December 19. This decision comes out of respect toward the release of “Akhandanda Tandavam”, directed by Boyapati Sreenu and starring Nandamuri Balakrishna garu ,



Highlights

■ Under the banner of HNG Cinemas LLP, Sahakutumbanam is directed by Uday Sharma, with Mahadev Goud and Nagaratna producing this heartwarming family entertainer.

which is releasing on the same date. The makers of Sahakutumbanam expressed that their intention is to ensure their film does not cause even the slightest disturbance to the release of Akhandanda Tandavam”, given the immense respect they hold for Balakrishna garu. They extended heartfelt wishes for the grand success

of Akhandanda Tandavam releasing on December 12. “Some decisions are made not for business, but for emotions. This is one such decision made for the spirit of ‘Jai Balayya’. We are happy to announce that Sahakutumbanam will now arrive in theatres worldwide on December 19,” the team stated.

There is organic comedy in Gurram Paapireddy, and audiences will enjoy every scene: director Murali Manohar

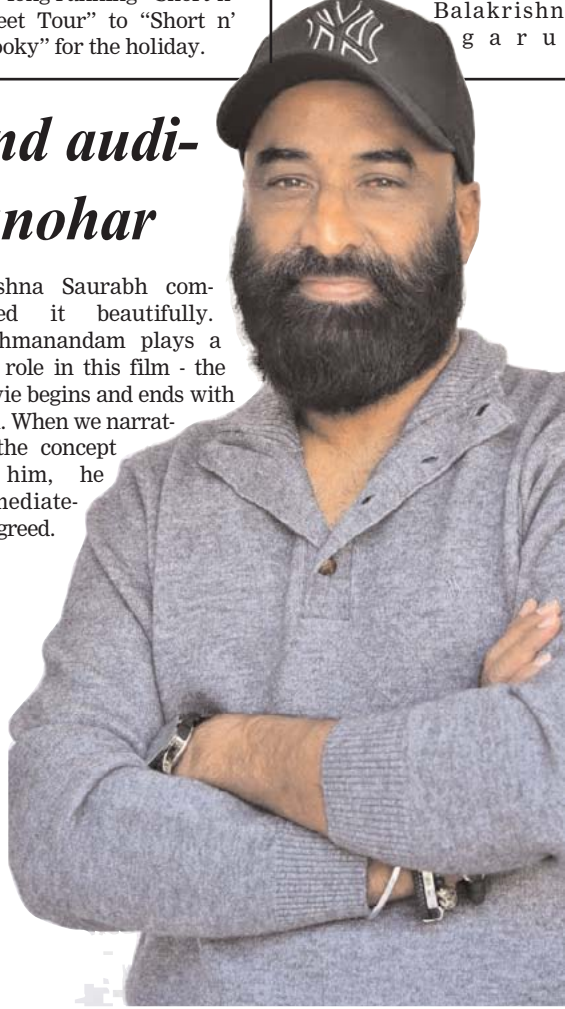
Nareesh Agastya and Faria Abdullah are playing the lead pair in the film Gurram Paapireddy. The movie is produced by Venu Saddi, Amar Bura, and Jayakanth (Bobby), and presented by Dr. Sandhya Goli. Director Murali Manohar has crafted the film as a dark comedy with a concept that Telugu cinema hasn’t explored before. With all production activities completed, the movie is set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on the 19th of this month. Speaking in an interview today, director Murali Manohar shared the highlights of the film: “My native place is Hyderabad. As a kid, watching films like Shiva and Naayakudu drew me towards the film industry. After completing my MBA here, I went to London,

where I studied at a film institute and worked at Warner Bros for eight years. Later, I returned to India and started working with director Sampath Nandi. I worked on many of his films and have been in Tollywood since 2010. - With Sampath Nandi’s support, I made the film Simbba, my first directorial. However, its release got delayed. By then, the project Gurram Paapireddy was already finalized. The producers naturally had doubts - why hadn’t my first movie been released yet? But they ultimately trusted my vision and decided to go ahead with Gurram Paapireddy. I don’t enjoy making regular commercial films. Even Simbba was very different from routine films. Compared to Simbba, Gurram Paapireddy is com-

pletely different. My upcoming films will also explore different genres. - The core story for this film was given by Poorna. The other writers and I worked on the script together. Our initial title was Paramapadasopanam, but we felt it wouldn’t have wide reach, so we changed it to Gurram Paapireddy, which is also the name of the character played by Nareesh Agastya. The story revolves around the clash between the clever and the foolish - how life changes when smart people do stupid things and foolish people end up doing smart things. We showcased this contrast with humor. The film contains a lot of organic comedy. Everyone has a bit of craziness in them, and we brought that natural, stupidity-driven humor onto the screen. -

Some people get into trouble because of their foolish actions, and those troubles make us laugh. I never want to make a hero-centric film. I want the hero to simply be a part of the story. While casting, we chose Nareesh Agastya because he blends naturally into any story. After talking to him, I felt he was perfect for the role. He performed very naturally as Gurram Paapireddy. After watching films like Jathi Ratnalu and Mathu Vadalaru 2, we felt Faria Abdullah would be perfect for the heroine’s role. She performed exceptionally well. She even wrote, sang, and choreographed one of the songs in the film. - The song “Paaisa Dum Dum” appears in the movie when all the characters enter a fictional world. Music director

Krishna Saurabh composed it beautifully. Brahmanandam plays a key role in this film - the movie begins and ends with him. When we narrated the concept to him, he immediately agreed.



Miss Universe India In A Universal Telugu Cinema, Introducing Rhea Singha From The World Of Jetlee

Tollywood’s most delightfully unpredictable combo- Satya and filmmaker Ritesh Rana, collaborate once again, this time with their new venture Jetlee. The makers earlier unveiled the first-look. The poster that presented Satya in a humorous avatar and the single line- “I am done with comedy,” ironically, has sparked more laughter than anything else. Produced by Clap Entertainment’s Chiranjeevi (Cherry) and Hemalatha Peddamallu, and presented by the powerhouse banner Mythri Movie Makers, Jetlee features Miss Universe India Rhea Singha, making her Tollywood debut as the leading lady. Extending birthday wishes to Rhea Singha, the makers unveiled her striking first-look poster today. The poster showcases her in a fierce and stylish action avatar, standing confidently amid a fiery explosion inside an aircraft, a gun gripped firmly in her hand. With her hair pulled back into a sleek high ponytail, she sports a fitted black tank top and maroon pants, exuding effortless glamour. Flying debris, shattered objects, and dramatic lighting intensify the high-octane atmosphere



around her. The overall look is bold and powerful, firmly establishing her as a commanding action heroine. Promoted as an action-comedy, the film promises a cocktail of chaos- wild stunts, sharp twists, and that signature, slightly twisted Ritesh Rana humour. The cast also includes Vennela Kishore

and Ajay in pivotal roles. The trusted technical crew from Mathu Vadalaru is onboard as well- Kaala Bhairava on music, Suresh Sarangam on cinematography, Karthika Srinivas as editor, and Nani Srinivas heading production design, reuniting to bring another wild Ritesh Rana world to life.

JINN – A Suspense Horror Thriller with a Unique Story, Grand Release on December 19

Of late, films with fresh and unique storylines are receiving tremendous responses. As long as the content is strong, even films with new faces are turning into big successes. Following the same formula, director Chinmay Ram is bringing a brand-new suspense horror thriller titled “Jinn”, crafted with a unique genre with an interesting subject that connects with audiences across all sections. The film stars Ammith Rao in the lead role and is being produced by Nikhil M. Gowda under the banner of Saadalamma Film Production. Varadaraj Chikkaballapura has provided the dialogues. The posters and videos released so far have received a highly positive response from audiences and significantly raised expectations. Amidst growing hype, this Telugu film is all set for a grand theatrical release on December 19. Key roles in the movie are played by Parvez Simbha, Prakash Thumbinadu, Ravi Bhatt, Sangeetha, and Balraj Wadi, while Alex has composed the music. The title “Jinn” itself has turned out to be a major plus point. The uniqueness of not just the story but even the title gives



the film a strong chance to reach audiences easily. The film was shot across Hyderabad and several other locations that perfectly suit the storyline, and the producers reportedly spared no expense in mounting the project on a grand scale. The film’s unit is highly confi-

dent, stating that the strong content and the way it has been presented will make the movie a definite theatrical success. While audiences have seen many suspense horror thrillers, the team promises that “Jinn” will stand out as a completely different experience.

Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson to Return for ‘The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping’



Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson are expected to reprise their roles as Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark in “The Hunger Games” prequel, “Sunrise on the Reaping.” The Lionsgate movie is based on the latest novel by Suzanne Collins and follows the events of the 50th Hunger Games, 24 years before Katniss and Peeta first entered the killing field as the tributes for District 12 with Haymitch Abernathy as their mentor. The story centers on Haymitch’s experience in the games when he was 16; Joseph Zada assumes the role of the young man, played by Woody Harrelson in the original film series. The nature of Lawrence and Hutcherson’s cameo is being kept under wraps, but as book readers will know, their beloved characters appear alongside Haymitch in the epilogue, which indicates some sort of flash-forward. “Sunrise on the Reaping” is slated for release on Nov. 20. Francis Lawrence, who has helmed every installment of the franchise since 2012’s “Catching Fire,” directs from a screenplay written by Billy Ray, with Brad Simpson and Nina Jacobson returning as producers. The five films in

the franchise so far have taken in over \$3.3 billion at the box office. While the original “The Hunger Games” movies made megastars out of Lawrence, Hutcherson and their co-star Liam Hemsworth more than a decade ago, the pair have been plenty busy of late, too. On Monday, Lawrence earned her seventh Golden Globe nomination for her latest film “Die My Love,” adding to her award-winning pedigree that includes an Oscar for best actress. Meanwhile, Hutcherson is relishing the successful launches of “Five Nights at Freddy’s 2” and the HBO series “I Love L.A.” In a recent interview with Variety, Hutcherson hinted at a possible return to the franchise. “I would love to be back on set with Francis, with Jen, with Liam, with Woody [Harrelson],” he said. “It would not take any convincing at all. I’d be there in a heartbeat.” Then, when asked more directly about whether that film would include the coda scene, Hutcherson played it cool. “That would be a dream come true,” he replied, holding interviewer Adam B. Vary’s gaze. “Do dreams come true? Sometimes. Sometimes not. Sometimes, yeah.”