

PUBLISHED FROM Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal and Jammu

The Sikh Times National Daily

VISIT: www.thesikhtimes.in Email:sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

Vol. 16 No. 206 RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465 New Delhi, Saturday, 7 December 2024 sikhtimesindia@gmail.com 9654077232 12 pages ₹ 3

RBI keeps policy rate unchanged, cuts GDP forecast to 6.6%

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, Dec. 6: The Reserve Bank of India on Friday decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the 11th time in a row but sharply

lowered the GDP growth forecast to 6.6 per cent for the current fiscal, as against earlier projection of 7.2 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained the status quo on interest rate despite July-September quarter GDP growth falling to 7-quarter low of 5.4 per cent, as against its own projection of 7 per cent. The rate increase cycle was paused in April last year after six consecutive rate hikes, aggregating to 250 basis

points since May 2022. Announcing the fifth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent while keeping policy stance unchanged at neutral. He said MPC will remain watchful of incoming macroeconomic data for future action. The RBI sharply cut the GDP growth projection to 6.6 per cent from the earlier level of 7.2 per cent, while raising inflation target to 4.8 per cent from the previous projection of 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal. In a bid to make available more money with banks for lending so as to boost economic activity, the RBI slashed Cash Reserve Ratio to 4 per cent from existing 4.5 per cent. This would lead to release of Rs 1.16 lakh crore to banks and improve their lending capacity. The CRR is the percentage of a bank's total deposits that it is required to maintain in liquid cash with the RBI.

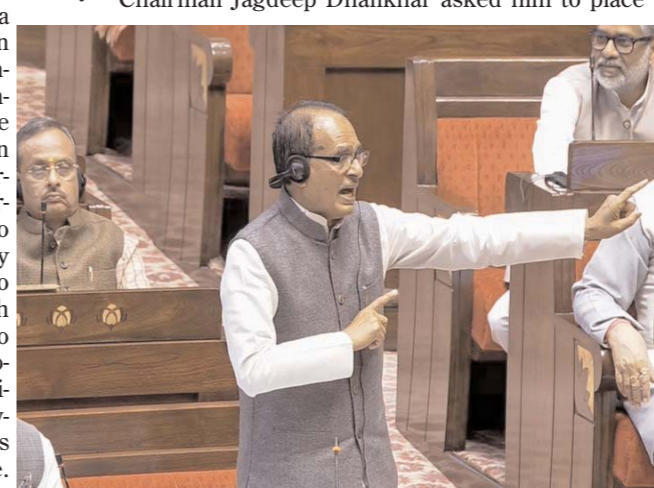


Modi govt will purchase all farm produce at MSP: Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Dec 06: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi. The Narendra Modi government will purchase all farm produce at minimum support price, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in Rajya Sabha on Friday. He gave the assurance while answering supplementaries during Question Hour on the issue of MSP to farmers. The assertion came on a day when farmers embarked on a foot march to Delhi with a charter of demands, which includes a legal backing to MSP. "I want to assure the house through you that all produce of farmers will be purchased at minimum support price. This is the Modi government and the guarantee to fulfil Modi's guarantee," Chouhan told the house. "When our friends from the other side were in power, they had stated on record that they cannot accept the M S Swaminathan Commission recommendations, especially on giving 50 per cent more than the cost of produce. I have the record," he said. He cited former MoS Agriculture Kantilal

Bhuria, Agriculture Ministers Sharad Pawar, and K V Thomas to back his claim. After his remarks, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar asked him to place on record the documents to substantiate his claim, which Chouhan agreed to. "They have never honoured the farmers and never gave a serious consideration to farmers' demands for remunerative prices. I want to assure the house through you that since 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi has

decided to calculate the minimum support price by giving 50 per cent profit on cost of production to farmers," the minister claimed. He also claimed the Modi government is already giving remunerative prices to farmers, saying that paddy wheat, jowar, soyabean were being purchased at 50 per cent above the cost of production from three years ago. He also cited intervention in changing export duties and prices whenever rates of commodities fall. Asked by Congress member Jairam Ramesh on his thoughts on MSP, Chouhan said, "I have a clear thought about MSP. We will fix MSP at more than 50 per cent profit and purchase the produce of farmers too." He added, "You did not purchase the farmers' produce, we will purchase that and fix higher MSP.. When Congress was in power, they never purchased farmers' produce at MSP and farmers shed tears of blood, but for me 'kisan ki sewa' is like 'bhagwan ki pooja'." Ramesh then recalled the words of the Chairman, who holds a constitutional post, to the minister to speak to farmers on MSP Chairman Dhankhar said he had travelled with the agriculture minister and was assured of his commitment towards farmers.



Rajya Sabha grapples with a suspicious bundle of currency found on Abhishek Singhvi's seat

Naresh Malhotra New Delhi, Dec 06: The information regarding the suspicious bundle, detected by Parliament security during a routine anti-sabotage drill in the House, was shared with MPs by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar. The House of Elders found itself grappling to ascertain the source of a wad of currency notes of Rs 500 denomination located on the seat of Congress MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi in the Rajya Sabha this morning. The information regarding the suspicious bundle, detected by Parliament security during a routine anti-sabotage drill in the House, was shared with MPs by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar who named Singhvi, to the displeasure of the Congress. Dhankhar said during routine anti-sabotage checks after the adjournment of the House yesterday, a wad of currency notes was recovered by security officials from seat no. 222

allotted to Congress's Singhvi, elected from Telangana for the term from 2024 to 2026. "The matter was brought to my notice and I felt it expedient as per practice to ensure investigation takes place in accordance with the law and the same is under way. "It was my duty and I am obliged to inform the House. Information has been imparted for a simple reason. When it was brought to my notice, I thought someone would come to reclaim it. But no one came. You cannot make out from the surface whether these notes are fake or

not. Apparently the denomination is Rs 500. All these are subject to serious investigation. No one should be opposed to a serious probe," said Dhankhar. Noting that India was progressing towards a less-cash and more formal economy, Dhankhar asked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman if what happened was normal. "Does it indicate the state of the economy that people can afford to forget (their money)?" Dhankhar asked the Finance Minister. At this point Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge got up to say that till the time a probe is on and authenticity of the source of money is ascertained, the Chairman should not name anyone. "Where it was found and on what seat...the name should not be mentioned till the probe is complete...You are all lawyers, can he do like this?" Kharge asked his Rajya Sabha colleagues amid ruckus. Singhvi later took to X to say "Heard of it for the first time now. Never heard of it till now! I carry one 500 Rs note when I go to RS. First time I heard of it. I reached inside the house at 1257 PM yesterday and the house rose at 1 PM. Then I sat in the canteen till 130 pm with Ayodhya Rami Reddy, then I left Parliament. Pl quote me if u do full"



India shaping global conversations, good moment to be minister: Jaishankar

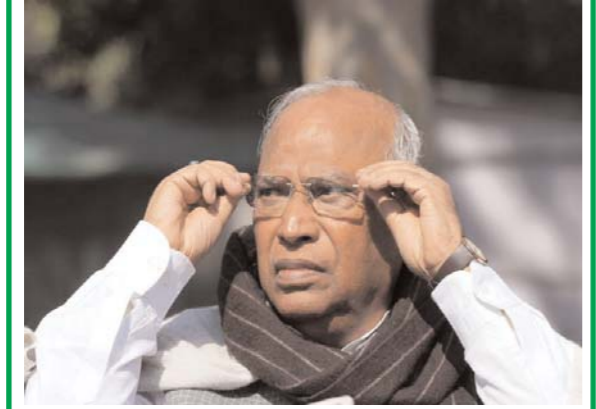
New Delhi, Dec 06: S Jaishankar on Friday said it is a good time to be the external affairs minister of the country, which is shaping global conversations with confidence and facing challenges like on the bor-

aspirational, more ambitious, more capable, and more confident. But most of all, we are an India that is more Bharat. We can actually see in the eighth decade after Independence that democracy has delivered," Jaishankar said. The minister said he felt empowered by the changes he saw in the country that has been the co-inventor of the Quad formation and progenitor of the International Solar Alliance. "India is a country of ideas, it is a country which is shaping global conversations. That too is a reason why I am particularly fortunate to represent the country and hold this responsibility," he said. Jaishankar also recalled the challenges India faced for four-and-a-half years on the borders with China and the firmness, determination and fortitude with which they were responded to. "Look at the way we are responding today to terrorism. A country which let an attack as big as 26/11 actually pass unanswered is today sending a very clear message through strikes in Uri and Balakot," Jaishankar said.



Kharge dissolves entire Uttar Pradesh Congress unit

ST Correspondent New Delhi, Dec 06: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge during a press conference, in New Delhi, Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has dissolved the pradesh, district, city and block committees of the party's Uttar Pradesh unit with immediate effect. The move came late last night, months after the Lok Sabha polls and days after bypolls in the state in which the Congress did not field any candidates, supporting the Samajwadi Party and INDIA bloc allies in the nine Assembly seats. Apparently, the move to dissolve the party units in the state is aimed at restructuring the party organisation



in Uttar Pradesh and strengthening the party at the grass-roots level. "Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has approved a proposal to dissolve the pradesh, district, city and block committees of the party's Uttar Pradesh unit with immediate effect", a statement issued by Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal said.

India asks Pakistan to take strong action against Masood Azhar

New Delhi, Dec 06: India on Friday demanded strong action from Pakistan against Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar, after a report emerged that he delivered a speech recently at a public gathering in Bahawalpur. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said if the report is correct, it has exposed Pakistan's "duplicity" in containing terrorist activities. "We demand that strong action be taken against him (Azhar) and he should be brought to justice. There has been denial that he is not there in Pakistan," Jaiswal said. "If the reports are correct, then it exposes the duplicity of Pakistan. Masood Azhar is involved in cross-border terror attacks on India and we want that strong action be taken against him," he added. Jaiswal made the remarks in response to a question at his weekly media briefing.

Farmers to resume their march to Delhi on Sunday

New Delhi, Dec. 6: Protesting farmers on Friday suspended their march to Delhi for the day after a few of them suffered injuries due to teargas shells lobbed by security personnel, according to Punjab farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher. Six protesters were injured on Friday after Haryana Police and paramilitary forces lobbed teargas shells at agitating farmers at the Shambhu border. Teargas shells were fired by the security personnel after the protesters were heading towards the barricades at the border. A group of 101 farmers, named 'Marjeevda Jatha', began its foot march to Delhi from their protest site at the Shambhu border, but was stopped a metres away by a multilayered barricading. Citing prohibitory order clamped under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, Haryana Police asked farmers not to proceed further. Meanwhile, Delhi Police have tightened security at borders ahead of the farmers' march to the National Capital. The farmers are marching to force the Centre for a legal guarantee for minimum support price for crops.



India to commission new warship in Russia

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, Dec 06: India will commission, a new warship, INS Tushil, that has been made in Russia. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will preside over the commissioning ceremony at Kaliningrad, Russia, on Dec 9. INS Tushil is upgraded version of earlier sister ships. Six such warships are already in service in Indian Navy - three of Talwar class ships, built at Baltiysky shipyard, St. Petersburg, and three follow-on Tega class ships, built at Yantar shipyard, Kaliningrad. INS Tushil, the seventh in the series, is part of the two-ship order placed on Russia in October 2016. The ship's construction was closely monitored by an Indian team

of specialists from the warship over-seeing team stationed at Kaliningrad. The ship has undergone sea trials and delivery acceptance trials by a

these trials being successfully completed, the ship would reach India in a near combat-ready condition ready to deliver its effects from the world. "The ship's name, Tushil, means 'the protector shield'. The 3900 warship is 125 metres long and packs a lethal punch and is an impressive blend of Russian and Indian cutting edge technologies and best practices in warship construction. The ship's new design provides it with enhanced stealth features and better stability characteristics. The Indian origin content of the ship has been enhanced to 26 percent. Major Indian companies involved the project included, among others, BrahMos Aerospace, Bharat Electronics Limited, Keltron, Nova Integrated Systems from Tata, Elcome Marine, Johnson Controls India.



Civil society asks Parliament to discuss pollution

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Dec. 6: A petition highlighting India's worsening air pollution crisis was submitted in Parliament on Thursday, in which civil society members called on the lawmakers to convene a joint session to address the issue. The petition sought immediate measures to address what it described as an "unprecedented environmental and public health disaster". Clean air is a fundamental human right under Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees to life, it said, adding that deteriorating air quality in North India, particularly in Delhi-NCR, posed a grave threat to this right. The petition addressed to all the members of Parliament claimed that according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) has remained in the "poor" or "very poor" category since September 2023, with "hazardous" levels of 1,500 to 2,000

recorded during the winter months. It also outlined the "devastating" impact of air pollution on public health, citing data that attributes 1.7 million deaths annually in India to pollution-related problems, accounting for 18 per cent of all fatalities.



In Delhi, the average life expectancy is reduced by up to 12 years due to pollution, while across the country, 3.57 years of life expectancy is lost to air pollution, surpassing the gains of curing all cancers,

the petition claimed. The health of children is particularly at risk, with 30 per cent of Delhi's kids suffering irreversible lung damage, according to a 2022 report by the Lung Care Foundation, the petition said. The petition also highlighted the enormous economic toll of pollution, which it claimed is costing the country Rs 77 lakh crore annually, equivalent to 3 per cent of its GDP. This financial burden is twice the nation's public health expenditure, driven by premature deaths and illness caused by toxic air, the petition claimed. It also identified the key contributors to the pollution crisis in Delhi-NCR, including perennial sources such as vehicular emissions, construction dust, industries, and open burning of garbage. Episodic sources like stubble burning and firecrackers during festivals further exacerbate the problem, it said. Highlighting these issues, the petition

called for a joint session of both the Houses in Parliament to formally recognise air pollution as a national crisis. It also demanded the strengthening of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, with stricter standards for pollutants, enhanced air quality monitoring, and tougher penalties for violators. Barring for empowering the pollution control boards with additional resources and authority, the petition suggested the formation of a joint parliamentary panel to oversee the reforms and implement legally-binding air quality targets. The petition also recommended establishing a dedicated healthcare fund to address the medical consequences of pollution, urging the government to formulate a multi-ministerial strategy to combat the crisis. Emergency measures, such as promoting regional public transport, providing incentives to farmers to prevent stubble burning, and mandating cleaner vehicle standards, were also stressed in the plea.

NEWS BOX

New Gunadala railway station set to commence commercial ops soon

VIJAYAWADA. The under-construction Gunadala Railway Station, part of the South Central Railways' (SCR) Vijayawada division, is being developed swiftly under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS). Railway officials led a media tour on Thursday to highlight the project's progress and amenities. Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure) PE Edwin and Gati Shakti Deputy Chief Engineer PV Ramana Rao briefed reporters on the developments.

Approximately 25% of the construction is complete, including platform extensions, waiting halls, modular toilets, and BiPV solar panels. Officials aim to finish the project at high speed to aunch commercial operations soon. The station's upgrade, with a cost of Rs 35.5 crore, aims to transform Gunadala into a satellite station to reduce congestion at Vijayawada Junction. The station, previously used only for operational purposes, is being developed to hadl increased passenger traffic. During the media tour, officials showcased ongoing infrastructure work, including roof-mounted BiPV solar panels. These will make Gunadala an energy-neutral station, capable of sustaining its electrical needs.

Future plans include expanded passenger facilities and enhanced infrastructure to accommodate growing demand. Officials emphasised that the development aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision under the ABSS, which targets the upgrade of 22 stations in the division. Gunadala's strategic location will enhance regional connectivity, benefiting commuters and boosting the local economy. The project focuses on providing modern passenger amenities such as spacious waiting halls, improved flooring, and platform covers.

All set for Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam in Vijayawada

VIJAYAWADA: The second edition of Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam, a celebration of Carnatic music, traditional crafts, and culinary heritage, will take place at Tummalapalli Kshetranya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada from December 6 to 8.

Organised by the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministries of Culture and Textiles and Andhra Pradesh Tourism, the festival highlights India's cultural richness. Spread across three venues, Tummalapalli Kshetranya Kalakshetram, Durga Ghat, and Kanaka Durga temple, the event features 35 performances by 140 artists. Audiences can enjoy Nadaswaram, Harikatha, vocal concerts, and Devi Kritis. The programme celebrates legendary Telugu composers, aiming to connect audiences with classical traditions while spotlighting Andhra Pradesh's cultural legacy. nion Minister Suresh Gopi will inaugurate the festival, with Kandula Durgesh as the guest of honour.

Notable attendees include MP Kesineni Sivanath, Health Minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav, Tourism Secretary Vinay Chand, MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao, and other key cultural and tourism officials. A heritage exhibition hosted by the Ministry of Textiles will display GI-tagged crafts from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, such as Mangalagiri Cotton, Uppada Jamdani, and Kondapalli Toys.

Educational institutions exempt from Consumer Protection Act: SCDRC

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Students' grievances against educational institutions, except coaching institutes, will not come under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act, the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has ruled. The SCDRC set aside an order passed by the



Kasaragod District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission against a Bengaluru-based dental institute. The SCDRC's order came on an appeal filed by the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) against the district commission's order. It was based on a petition by a Kasaragod student alleging a deficiency of service on the part of a dental institute in Bengaluru. The case followed a dispute between the student and the institute over relieving him from the institute after he secured admission at another institution. In its order, the district commission directed the institute, which was the second opposite party in the case, to refund an amount of Rs 52,500 and pay Rs 10,000 as compensation.

Sathanur Dam flood alert failure? Tiruvannamalai villagers left in chaos after sudden release

TIRUVANNAMALAI. The sudden release of water to the tune 1.8 lakh cusecs from Sathanur dam in Tiruvannamalai district on Sunday night may have triggered the flooding in many areas along the Thenpennai river in Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram, and Cuddalore districts, but lack of specific details about the level of flooding or pointed instruction to move to designated relief shelters, during the initial hours of the calamity, seem to have put the residents to avoidable trouble. hile the Tamil Nadu government had said that it did everything as per the standard operating procedure and alerted the people along the banks of the river, a visit by TNIE to many of these villages showed that a majority of the residents either did not receive proper alerts or the communication was insufficient. N visited Puthur Chekkadi, Rayandapuram, Thiruvathanur, and Kolamajanur villages, all of which were included in the fifth and final flood warning sent by the Assistant Executive Engineer of Sathanur Dam Sub-Division of Water Resources Department in the early hours of Monday to the Tahsildars of Thandarampet, Chengam, Tiruvannamalai and Tirukoilur taluks. All these villages were affected in the floods. Most of villagers said that this was the worst flooding they have seen in their living memory, while some of the elderly people



recalled a similar flooding in the early 1970s. S Venkatesan from Puthur Chekkadi, which is home to over 500 houses, said that only a few people in the village received SMS alerts from the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority, that too on Monday morning, when the village was already flooded. The message read, "Water is being released from Sathanur Dam. People living on the banks of Thenpennai river are advised to move to safer places." He further said that the village did not receive any alert over the four days preceding the flooding by any revenue official about the possibility of release of water. We had to rely on neighbours and our personal social networks to secure ourselves on Sunday night. "Despite our efforts, the flood caused extensive damage," he told

TNIE. Residents of Rayandapuram, which has around 100 houses, said they received alerts between November 25 and November 30, but alleged that the warnings lacked specific details or pointed instructions to move to any designated relief shelter. "They asked us to move but there was no mention of the extent of possible flooding. After witnessing the intensity of the rainfall on Sunday, we predicted the worst and shifted. However, there was no specific warning about release of such a huge quantity of water on Monday morning," said Ramaraj R, a 32-year-old resident of Rayandapuram. The lack of alerts has left many villagers devastated, especially since they were unable to save their cattle, one of their primary sources of livelihood.

Construct check dams on Chinnar river basin to address water scarcity: Palacode residents

DHARMAPURI. Residents of Palacode urged the administration to construct more check dams in the Chinnar river basin to address water scarcity.

Chinnar is a rain-fed river which flows across Palacode and Pennagaram taluk. It has its water catchment areas in Bettamugilalam, Namagiri, Perungadu and Sastri Mutlu hills in the district and reaches the Chinnar dam. Every year the surplus water drains into Cauvery River. Citing this, residents urged the administration to construct more check dams in the Chinnar river basin and store water.

S Arumugam, a resident of Palacode, said, "Chinnar water flows all the way to Dharmapuri feeding dozens of water bodies in Palacode, Pennagaram and Dharmapuri. During heavy rain, most of the water in the river drains into the Cauvery and becomes unusable. To ensure that this water benefits the farmers in



Palacode, we urge the administration to take steps to construct more check dams wherever possible."

Another resident R Kumar said, "Right now, the Chinnar river is not the only river that is revived by the rains from Fungal. Thollagathu river which drains into the Chinnar has also revived, these waters are wasted every year. During summer farmers are not able to irrigate sugarcane, banana plantations. The administration must take steps to identify such water bodies and build check dams to store more water," he said.

Officials in the PWD (WRD) department said they assured to look into the matter.

Five years on, Srinivasapuram tenements' reconstruction proposal gains momentum

CHENNAI. In the wake of 22-year-old S Syed Gulam's death, the proposal to reconstruct TNUHDB Srinivasapuram tenements has again gained momentum. This structure was one of the 61 scheme areas recommended for reconstruction by a technical committee, considering their age and waning structural stability. However, even five years after the recommendation was made by the panel, no headway was made. Sources said after the technical team recommended the reconstruction of all 1,356 tenements in Srinivasapuram, a Central Sanctioning & Monitoring Committee (CSMC) approval was obtained under PMAY (U)-Housing For All (HFA) programme in 2019 for rebuilding the area with an additional 660 houses at a cost of Rs 262.08 crore. The project was later dropped and officials attributed the decision to resistance from families. "There was resistance from the families, who were opposed to shifting to the high-rise structures that were proposed to be constructed as they



were used to a maximum of G+4 blocks. They also wanted the additional 660 houses to be allotted to their heirs instead of outsiders," an official said. Hence, the proposal was dropped and the CSMC was suitably notified in 2020. Officials said that following Syed Gulam's death on Wednesday night, the residents have become more receptive to the reconstruction proposal. "We will begin biometric

enumeration of the houses on Monday and complete it in the next two days," an official said. The reconstruction is expected to be completed in about 18 months. The residents are entitled to a one-time shifting allowance of Rs 24,000.

The officials have now assessed a requirement for 3,000 houses, including units for 1,000 'encroachers' residing in temporary structures and huts. The Srinivasapuram scheme now has 1,356 tenements in 68 blocks in the G+1, G+3 and G+4 categories. According to TNUHDB records, the construction of these tenements began in 1972 and ended in 1977. Meanwhile, the state government in a press release said that eviction notices were issued to the residents in January and March 2022. Further, several rounds of discussions were held with residents in September and November 2024. However, no consensus was reached in these discussions regarding their eviction and reconstruction of tenements.

Odisha HC grants bail to four accused, asks them to plant saplings

CUTTACK. The Odisha High Court on Wednesday granted bail to four persons on a condition that they must plant 50 to 100 saplings and maintain them for two years. The single judge bench of Justice SK Panigrahi passed the orders on bail petitions filed by Soumya Rajan Palai accused of attempt to murder, Purnanda Nayak accused of rape, cheating and extortion, Budhadev Das accused in case of his wife's murder and Nirmal Sana accused in an NDPS case. The criminal cases against them are pending in courts at Tangi, Bhubaneswar, Keonjhar and Malkangiri respectively. Justice Panigrahi directed these courts to release them on bail on stringent terms and conditions. "The petitioner shall plant saplings (50 in two cases and 100 in the other two) of local varieties like mango, neem, tamarind, etc. around his village over government land/community land/private land, if it is in the possession of the petitioners or their family members," said Justice Panigrahi in identical orders on the four petitions. "Violation of the above condition shall entail cancellation of the bail. The inspector-in-charge of the police station concerned in coordination with the local forest officer shall monitor whether the petitioner has planted the saplings or not," Justice Panigrahi also specified in the orders. Justice Panigrahi further directed the petitioners "to file before the local police station affidavits after plantation of the saplings assuring that they will maintain those plants for two years". The cases were registered at Tangi police station (2024), Mahila police station, Bhubaneswar (2023), Turumunga police station (2024) and Malkangiri police station (2020).

Mob assaults family, stakes claim to property in Whitefield, Bengaluru

BENGALURU. There was high drama in front of a sprawling house on Borewell Road in Whitefield, with a group staking claim to a large piece of property, vandalising it and attacking the residents on Thursday morning. The Baliga family, residing here since 1990, has filed an FIR at the Whitefield police station against the attackers for intimidation, harassment and assault. The FIR names Jawahar Gopal, a businessman, and many others. Things came to such a pass that the family was surrounded by a mob, and the senior citizen of the family fired a bullet from a 12-bore rifle in a bid to disperse the crowd outside their home.



Vishal Baliga, who runs a chain of restaurants in the city, told TNIE, "A case has been going on in court between us and Jawahar's family for quite some time in the high court. The next hearing is slated for December 20. They attacked us suddenly, accompanied by nearly 80 people." The property, measuring 2 acres and 6 guntas, was bought by the family and a house built in 1990, following which they moved in there.

We have the original documents of the property owned by my grandmother. They have forged her signature in a sale deed created after her death. It was readied eight years after she died," he alleged. An FIR has already been filed about the issue in 2008 in the same

Whitefield station, he said. In a different case relating to property involving an uncle of the family, police filed a chargesheet against Jawahar and others in 2017 for forging documents, he alleged. Vishal was dragged by the collar outside the house and beaten up, he added. "Using bulldozers, they have broken our compound wall, damaged my gate and destroyed our 40-year-old trees and plants, and even stolen fruits

from our orchard. In self-defence, my elderly father, Dinesh Baliga, who is a licensed gun holder, had to fire in the air to make them leave our property.

The group only mocked and laughed at him. Cops, including senior officials, did not do anything," Vishal added. "We had to call up the school where my son (two-and-half years old) is studying and ask them to detain hi there for some time," he said. While the father-son duo went to the police station, the women in the house were attacked. "My elderly mother Lakshmi Baliga was slapped while my wife Priya was dragged down the stairs, beaten and punched in the eye by the women in the crowd. She is now in hospital along with the police taking CT scans," he added.

An eyewitness told TNIE, "The women who were alone in the house were being beaten up while the cops stood watching. I was completely stunned." A top cop told TNIE, "The family claims to have documents but did not produce any of them. Their house was not attacked and only portions outside it. The Gopal family, which carried out the attack, says they are the actual owners and have purchased the property from their family in the past through a General Power of Attorney. We cannot do anything. They need to fight the matter through civil court. No one in the Gopal family could be reached for their comment

Last-mile connectivity: The key to unlocking Metro Rail's potential

BENGALURU. Urban mobility is at the heart of building resilient and sustainable cities. The MAP (Multisectoral Actions Pathways) Declaration for Resilient and Healthy Cities, launched at COP29, underscores the urgent need for multilevel and multisectoral action to combat climate change in urban areas.

his declaration highlights urban sustainable transport as a critical area for collaboration, alongside climate resilience, green construction and urban climate finance. At the High-Level Opening on Multilevel and Multisectoral Climate Action, global leaders emphasized the transformative potential of integrating climate action into city planning, with COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev, Azerbaijan's Minister for Ecology and Natural Resources, highlighting the MAP Declaration as a catalyst for cross-sector collaboration. Among these efforts, investments in public transport - particularly

metro rail systems - have emerged as a cornerstone of sustainable urban development. India, for example, has invested over \$25 billion in metro systems since 2010, spanning 17 cities with nearly 1,000 kilometers of operational networks. However, the success of metro systems depends on more than the network itself. Seamless access to and from the metro (last-mile connectivity) is essential to ensuring that the benefits of these systems are fully realized. A WRI India study shows metro users predominantly rely on walking or low-cost shared last-mile modes, reflecting their high price sensitivity. hile on-demand options like ride-hailing services are available, their higher costs make them unviable for a significant portion of commuters. Instead, shared paratransit modes such as autorickshaws and shared e-rickshaws play a crucial role in bridging the



gap. WRI India research highlights that metro systems like Bengaluru's Namma Metro face some of the highest last-mile costs in the country. This cost burden disproportionately affects price-sensitive demographics, making affordable shared solutions critical. However, existing last-mile options often fail to meet user expectations, especially regarding reliability and frequency. Frequency is a key

determinant of last-mile mode choice. For instance, users are unlikely to prefer modes with waiting times exceeding 10 minutes, highlighting the need for consistent and frequent service.

Additionally, fare structures for existing last-mile options often do not accommodate generated travel patterns, such as trip-chaining, where multiple stops are made during a single journey. This mismatch between user needs and available options drives up costs for commuters who seek faster, more convenient modes of transport. Government incentives and innovative financing models are accelerating EV adoption.

For instance, the FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) scheme and state-level subsidies are making e-autos increasingly accessible to operators.

NEWS BOX

World Bank Announces Record \$100 Billion Support For World's Poorest Countries

Washington, United States. The World Bank announced Thursday that it had raised close to \$24 billion to provide loans and grants for some of the world's poorest nations, which it can leverage to generate a record \$100 billion in total spending power. Donor countries committed \$23.7 billion to replenish the bank's concessional lending arm, known as the International Development Association (IDA), a World Bank spokesperson told AFP, marking a slight increase from the roughly \$23.5 billion pledged during the last fundraising round three years ago.

The Bank can use this money to borrow on financial markets, allowing it to leverage the amount raised by around four times, unlocking around \$100 billion in new loans and grants, up from \$93 billion in 2021.

"We believe the historic success of this IDA21 replenishment is a vote of confidence and support from donors and clients," a World Bank statement read, referring to the current IDA funding round.

"This funding will be deployed to support the 78 countries that need it most," World Bank President Ajay Banga said in a separate statement, referring to the developing countries that are eligible for IDA support. It would, he added, help provide "resources to invest in health, education, infrastructure, and climate resilience," as well as helping to stabilize economies and create jobs. The World Bank's announcement follows two days of talks in the South Korean capital, Seoul, a city still reeling after President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law late on Tuesday local time, before backtracking under pressure from lawmakers. IDA has become the single largest source of concessional, or below-market, climate finance, and around two-thirds of all IDA funding over the past decade has gone to support countries in Africa, according to the World Bank. IDA replenishment is a crucial part of the Bank's operations, and happens once every three years, with much of the funding coming from the United States, Japan and several European countries including the United Kingdom, Germany and France. This year, the United States announced ahead of time that it would commit a record \$4 billion in new funding to the IDA, while other countries -- including Norway and Spain -- also significantly stepped up their financial support.

Thirty-five former recipients of IDA assistance have graduated from developing economy status in recent decades, including China, Turkey and South Korea, with many of them now donors to the fund.

French President Macron Vows To Stay In Office Despite No-confidence Vote, Pledges To Appoint New PM Soon

Paris. French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to continue his five-year mandate despite the recent no-confidence vote that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Michel Barnier. Macron also emphasized his responsibility to ensure the continuity of the state, the proper functioning of institutions, and the protection of the French people. The remarks by the French President came while he addressed the nation on Thursday from the Elysee Palace. "Finally, the mandate that you democratically entrusted to me is a five-year mandate, and I will exercise it fully until its end. My responsibility requires ensuring the continuity of the State, the proper functioning of our institutions, the independence of our country, and the protection of all of you." He added, "I have been doing this from the beginning, at your side, through social crises, the Covid-19 epidemic, the return of war, inflation and so many trials that we have shared." Elysee said. He said, "From today, a new era must begin where everyone must act for France and where new compromises must be built. Because the planet is moving forward, because the challenges are numerous and because we must be ambitious for France. We cannot afford divisions or inaction."

"This is why I will appoint a Prime Minister in the coming days. I will charge him with forming a government of general interest representing all the political forces of an arc of government, who can participate in it or at least who undertake not to censor it. The Prime Minister will have to lead these consultations and form a tight government at your service," Macron said.

Hezbollah Vows Support For Syrian Govt Amid Rebel Offensives

Beirut. Hezbollah will support the Syrian government amid escalating offensives by rebel forces, Hezbollah leader Sheikh Naim Qassem said in a televised speech.

While Qassem did not clarify the form of support, he assured on Thursday that Hezbollah would "do what it could". Qassem accused the US and Israel of instigating aggression against Syria due to their failure in Gaza. He also claimed that "terrorist groups" sought to shift Syria's alignment from supporting the resistance to backing Israeli occupation, Xinhua news agency reported. "We face a very dangerous Israeli project against the Middle East," he warned.

His comments came hours after Syrian opposition forces captured the strategic city of Homs in central Syria, marking a significant advance in their offensive that started on November 27. The rebels had previously seized Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, in earlier assaults. The United Nations World Food Program reported that more than 280,000 people had been displaced by the recent violence, according to a post on X.

Bangladesh To Remove Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Image Off Currency Notes

According to the central bank, banknotes of Taka 20, 100, 500, and 1,000 are being printed on the instructions of the interim government.

Dhaka. Months after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as prime minister, Bangladesh has begun the process of erasing the image of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- her father and the iconic figure behind the founding of the country -- from its currency notes. Bangladesh Bank is printing new notes, including in them features of the July uprising, the Dhaka Tribune reported Thursday, referring to the student-led



protests that forced Hasina to flee to India on August 5. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took charge as Chief Adviser, the head of an interim government.

According to the central bank, banknotes of Taka 20, 100, 500, and 1,000 are being printed on the instructions of the interim

government. "The new notes will not include image of 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," the paper reported, quoting the bank. Religious structures, Bengali traditions, and "graffiti" drawn during the July uprising will be included, it said. "I hope the new note could be

released in the market within the next six months," it quoted Bangladesh Bank executive director Husnara Shikha as saying.

According to the paper, officials from the bank and the Ministry of Finance said the leader's image will be removed from the current notes. Initially, the design of the four notes is being changed, and the others will be redesigned in phases, they said.

The Finance Ministry's Finance Institute Division submitted a detailed design proposal for the new notes in September.

The legacy of Mujibur Rahman -- often called the Father of the Nation -- came under attack during the protests, which were initially against a controversial job quota. His statues and murals bearing his image were targeted as his daughter fled to India, and is reported to be still living there. She has directly targeted Yunus in recent remarks, accusing him of failing to protect the minorities, including Hindus.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal has termed her remarks as "hate speech", and the country's leaders said a smear campaign is on against the Yunus government.

Police release new photos as they search for gunman who killed UnitedHealthcare CEO

NEW YORK. The masked gunman who stalked and killed the head of one of the largest U.S. health insurers had the words "deny," "defend" and "depose" emblazoned on his ammunition, echoing a phrase used by industry critics, two law enforcement officials said Thursday.

The words were written in permanent marker, according to one of the officials, who were not authorized to publicly discuss details of the investigation into the shooting early Wednesday outside a Manhattan hotel and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

With the gunman still at large, police also released photos of a "person of interest" wanted for questioning in connection with the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. The images, showing an unmasked man in the lobby of a Manhattan hostel, add to a collection of photos and video that have circulated since the shooting -- including footage of the attack itself, as well as still frames of the suspected gunman stopping at a Starbucks beforehand. Thompson, 50, died in a dawn ambush as he walked from his midtown hotel to the company's

annual investor conference at a Hilton across the street, blocks from tourist draws such as Radio City Music Hall, the Museum of Modern Art and Rockefeller Center, where the famed Christmas tree was lit Wednesday night. The reason for the killing remained unknown, but New York



City police say evidence firmly points to it being a targeted attack.

The messages on the ammunition mimic the phrase "delay, deny, defend," which is commonly used by lawyers and insurance industry critics to describe tactics used to avoid paying claims. It refers to insurers delaying payment, denying a claim and then defending their actions. Health insurers like UnitedHealthcare have become frequent targets of criticism from

doctors and patients for denying claims or complicating access to care. Investigators recovered several 9 mm shell casings from outside the Hilton and a cellphone from the alleyway through which the shooter fled. Inside a nearby trash can, they found a water bottle and protein bar wrapper that they say the gunman purchased from Starbucks minutes before the shooting. The city's crime lab is examining those items for DNA and fingerprints. The killing and the shooter's movements in the minutes before and afterward were captured on some of the multitude of security cameras in that part of the city. The shooter fled on a bicycle and was last seen riding into Central Park.

A tip that the shooter may have stayed at a hostel brought police Thursday morning to at least two such establishments on Manhattan's Upper West Side, according to one of the law enforcement officials briefed on the investigation. The photos made public Thursday were taken in the lobby of the HI New York City hostel. "We are fully cooperating with the NYPD and, as this is an active investigation, can not comment at this time.

Student's Science Project With Bird Poop Leads To Discovery Of Cancer-Fighting Compound

World. Young school students from the James R Jordan Boys and Girls Club in Chicago made a groundbreaking discovery while studying goose poop in a local park. The school students, under the supervision of researchers from the University of Illinois and Professor Brian Murphy at Chicago, identified a potential cancer-fighting compound. The students participated in a STEM program that turned them into bona fide biomedical scientists before they even started high school. Students carefully isolated a bacterium from the goose poop that showed antibiotic activity. The findings were published in the journal ACS Omega, with student Camarria Williams credited as a co-author. Professor Murphy's research laboratory is focused on discovering antibiotics from natural sources, and the cohort of young scientists participated by supplying environmental samples from their local communities. According to a press release by the American Chemical Society, one of the 14 samples of goose poop collected from the Garfield Park Lagoon contained a strain of bacteria called *Pseudomonas idahoensis*. The students interpreted the bacterium's bioassay data and concluded it had antibiotic activity



and produced a never-before-seen compound. Then, the university researchers determined the compound's molecular structure using nuclear magnetic resonance and mass spectrometry, named it orfamide N after the family of molecules it belongs to, and investigated its biological activity.

Although orfamide N was not responsible for the antibiotic activity that the team initially observed from *P. idahoensis*, the compound inhibited the growth of human melanoma and ovarian cancer cells in culture tests. Further studies could reveal other advantageous properties of this newly characterized molecule, as per the ACS release. The researchers say that this work proves that it's possible to combine educational outreach with natural product discovery research, and it emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship between universities and their local communities.

These school students' work is an inspiring example of how curiosity and learning can lead to significant breakthroughs, even in unexpected places. Camarria Williams, a student, was listed as a co-author on the findings, which were published in the journal ACS Omega.

EAM Jaishankar Highlights Potential Of India-Japan Semiconductor Collaboration

New Delhi. At the India-Japan Forum's Inaugural Session, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar highlighted the burgeoning potential for semiconductor collaboration between India and Japan, emphasising its significance in reshaping global geopolitical dynamics.

He pointed out that both nations, while revitalising their semiconductor industries, are also working with Taiwan, paving the way for a transformative partnership in this vital sector. Japan is today revitalising its semiconductor sector, and India, after a very long period of neglect, has announced a semiconductor mission. There are a lot of things happening. It is

interesting that both of us also happen to be working with Taiwan.

TRENDING NOW I'm seeing the beginnings of something potentially important here, and potentially really significant for both countries," he said, underlining the strategic importance of the endeavour.

Jaishankar acknowledged the nascent stage of this collaboration but noted its exceptional promise, placing it among the top five areas of focus despite its early phase. "Normally, I would say, 'Okay, it's just beginning...' but in this case, I would make an exception, because I think this is such a vital field which is going to be so important in a way that balances geopolitical level

equations in this coming decade," he remarked. He also stressed the growing interest and determination among stakeholders from both nations to deepen ties and address past shortcomings in their bilateral relationship. "I hear much more discussion and interest, and initiatives actually from organisations and people who have been involved in the relationship, which is really at one level, some dissatisfaction about why we have not been able to do more, but also some determination that we want to do more," Jaishankar said, adding that industry-level initiatives, such as boosting training and language skills, have been promising steps forward.

George RR Martin Provides Disappointing Update On Future Of 'The Winds Of Winter' Book

For the first time, George RR Martin expressed doubt that he'll ever finish writing the next entry in the series.

WORLD. American author George RR Martin does not know if he will ever finish *The Winds of Winter*, the next book in the *A Song of Ice and Fire* fantasy series which birthed the iconic *Game of Thrones* (GoT) TV series on HBO. Mr Martin released the last book in the series, *A Dance with Dragons*, 13 years ago when the first episode of GoT aired the same year. While the TV series may have concluded with its rather rushed and disappointing ending, the fans of the books have been waiting for Mr Martin to come up with the instalment to give his take on the ending. However, speaking to Hollywood Reporter, Mr Martin for the

first time, expressed doubt that he'll ever finish writing the next entry in the series. Unfortunately, I am 13 years late. Every time I say that, I'm [like], 'How could I be 13 years late?' I don't know, it happens a day at a time," said Mr Martin.

"But that's still a priority. A lot of people are already writing obituaries for me. [They're saying] 'Oh, he'll never be finished.' Maybe they're right. I don't know. I'm alive right now! I seem pretty vital!" he added. Quizzed about retirement, Mr Martin said that he could never retire as he's "not a golfer". Social media users were left disappointed by the update from Mr Martin with some saying they had made peace with the fact that he may never finish the book series.

"As disappointing as this is, at least we don't have to wait anymore. It ain't coming, y'all," said one user, while another added:



"George is the kind of guy to keep saying 'I've almost finished', when he hasn't even started." A third commented: "He's been talking about *Winds of Winter* since before the *Game of Thrones* TV series even came out, so I'm betting it will never get done." This is not the first instance

when GRRM has been pressed about the future of the series. A few years ago, Mr Martin said the final books in the series were drifting "further and further away" from the TV show. Another question that I get a lot, especially since the end of *Game of Thrones* on HBO, is whether *A Song of Ice and Fire* will end the same way," Mr Martin said. "An architect would be able to give a short, concise, simple answer to that, but I am much more of a gardener. My stories grow and evolve and change as I write them." "I generally know where I am going, sure...the final destinations, the big set pieces, they have been in my head for years...for decades, in the case of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. There are lots of devils in the details, though, and sometimes the ground changes under my feet as the words pour forth," he added.

News box

Delivery agent held for vandalising Shivakumara Swami bust in Bengaluru

BENGALURU. The Girinagar police arrested a 34-year-old delivery agent for vandalising the bronze statue of late Dr Shivakumara Swami of Tumakuru Siddaganga Mutt. The accused, identified as Raj Vishnu, also known as Shiva Krishna, resides in Byadarahalli. During investigation, he claimed that he had been instructed in a dream to damage the idol. The statue, installed five years ago by the Jaya Karnataka Janapara Vedike near Veerabhadranagar bus stand in Girinagar, was vandalised on November 30. Further, police sources said that the accused had noticed the idol earlier, on his way to work. Later that night, he returned on a scooter and used a hammer to deface it. The incident came to light the following morning. Outraged by the act, local residents staged a protest, demanding stringent action against the accused. Paramesh, president of the Vedike, filed a complaint in this regard, urging the police to examine CCTV footage in the vicinity. The footage helped track the accused, leading to his arrest on Wednesday. The incident also garnered attention on social media, with BJP MLA Arvind Bellad sharing details on X. A formal complaint was also submitted to city police commissioner B Dayananda. Further investigations are on.

BBMP DCF writes to special commissioner to blacklist 'unruly' contractor

BENGALURU. Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Forest Division BLG Swamy wrote to Special Commissioner of Forest and Lakes Preeti Gehlot, seeking action against a contractor for his alleged unruly behaviour. It is alleged that contractor Srinivas, allegedly barged into the DCF office on November 22, seeking details of a file, which had nothing to do with him. When denied, he allegedly used abusive language against the officer. The DCF filed a police complaint in this regard immediately but the police filed an FIR only three days ago. Sources said that Srinivas sought permission from BBMP to permit him to fell trees in Yelahanka zone. When the request was denied, he allegedly threatened to file a complaint with Lokayukta and also threatened to get the DCF transferred. Further, the DCF also informed the special commissioner about the contractor harassing another forest officer Rachappa from Dasarahalli Zone in the past, for which a complaint was filed against him. Sources also informed that the Halasuru Gate police was asked to register a rowdy sheeter case against Srinivas on the grounds of preventing government servant from discharging his duty and criminal activity. BBMP officers and Employees' Welfare Association president Amrut Raj condemned the incident and said, if the officer approaches the association, it will intervene and seek justice. "The official is on deputation and onus is on him to come to association and register a complaint," said Amrut Raj.

Woman dies, son injured as crowds throng theatre for 'Pushpa 2' screening in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD. A woman died and her son was hospitalised due to asphyxiation as crowds 'jostled' at a film theatre here during the premier show of actor Allu Arjun's "Pushpa 2: The Rule", police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday night when a large number of fans thronged the cinema hall to have a glimpse of the actor, they said. There were no arrangements by the theatre management or prior information about the arrival of the actor and other members of the film, police said. A heavy crowd rushed ahead and the woman and her son, who were trying to enter inside the theatre, suffocated and fell unconscious apparently after being pushed by the crowd. police said, based on preliminary investigation. A police official pointed out that the theatre was small, and it could not accommodate such a massive crowd. Police personnel conducted Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) on the woman and her son and shifted them to a hospital, where the woman died and her son is undergoing treatment, a senior police official said. To control the situation, police used mild force to disperse the surging crowd.



Bengaluru-Mysuru highway to have continuous service road soon

The lack of continuous service roads was one of the major complaints ever since the road was opened for traffic in March 2023.

BENGALURU. Soon, users of the service road of the Bengaluru-Mysuru access-controlled highway will not need to take long diversions into the towns. Due to the presence of railway tracks, there is no continuous service road. To fix this, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will build railway-over bridges where the service road is discontinued due to railway tracks. Once this is complete, users can reach Mysuru on the service road parallel to the main carriage, without taking any deviations. Speaking to , Regional Officer (Karnataka) Vilas P Brahmkar said, "NHAI has taken up works on fixing complaints at the entry and exit points of the Bengaluru-Mysuru access-controlled highway. Along with this, works will be taken up to build the incomplete service



road along the main carriage."The lack of continuous service roads was one of the major complaints ever since the road was opened for traffic in March 2023. Not only had the vehicle owners

demand service roads, but the villagers on either side of the highway had complaints relating to the incomplete service roads. "Vehicles on the service road have to take long diversions from the access-controlled highway. While the main carriage goes above the railway tracks, the service roads end before the tracks and we have to take diversions at places like Bidadi, Channapatna and then join the service road again," said Prashanth, a regular commuter on the route. "Tenders have been invited for the construction of the railway over bridge and works will commence soon. Once the works are completed, the service roads will be complete along the entire stretch, from Bengaluru to Mysuru," Brahmkar said.

The clackety-clack legacy of a typewriting institute

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. As one ascends the wooden stairs of Fort Technical Institute, the clackety-clack of typewriters — once the soundtrack of ambition and hustle — starts to dominate the air. For 105 years now, the institution in Pazhavangadi has been tutoring students on typewriting skills and, in the process, keeping alive a legacy. "The institute was started by my grandfather Appu Iyer with just two typewriters in 1919," recalls Subramanya Iyer, the institute's custodian. It has remained relatively untouched since, save for, of course, very necessary modifications. "He was a typist at the government Secretariat," Subramanya continues. "He started this as a means for my grandmother's sister, a widow, to earn a living." When it began, there were no other typewriting institutes in the area and so, students came from even distant places to learn. "Between 1980 and 1986, about 600 students were learning here in multiple batches," Subramanya says. Back then, typewriters were imported from foreign countries and brands like Royal Typewriter and Imperial Typewriter were the vogue. "Only English typewriting was available at the time. There were no options for Malayalam or Hindi. Later, companies like Remington, Halda and Godrej started producing typewriters in India, bringing more options," he adds. Malayalam typewriters were introduced later. But many of them had different keyboard layouts. To standardise it, a proposal was submitted to the government, which eventually led to the creation of a uniform Malayalam keyboard layout. However, today, typewriter production has waned because offices no longer orders them. During its heydays, classes at the institute were conducted every day except Sundays, from 6 am to 8 pm, with each batch having an hour-long session.

CPM men erect stage on busy road near Vanchiyoor; leaves public livid

All this happened right in front of the Vanchiyoor police station, which itself is just a stone's throw from the Vanchiyoor court complex.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Making a mockery of the law, CPM workers erected a stage on a busy stretch of road near Vanchiyoor junction on Thursday, throwing traffic out of gear and causing immense inconvenience to commuters. The stage was erected across the road, fully blocking vehicular movement, in connection with the party's Palayam area committee conference. All this happened right in front of the Vanchiyoor police station, which itself is just a stone's throw from the Vanchiyoor court complex. The stage was erected for the public conference scheduled to be held in the evening. School buses and hospital-goers had difficulty navigating the road. Though



the situation, they could do little what with the entire road being blocked. As criticism mounted, the police booked the organisers for obstructing traffic. The people were livid at the party workers. A woman, who had to travel to the General Hospital, said she reached the hospital late due to the traffic obstruction. "This is insane; blocking an entire road to conduct a party programme. It looks more weird as it happened right in front of the court and the police station. Also, the ruling party is doing this, which makes it all the more awkward," she fumed.

Tripunithura residents demand KMRL to fulfil promises of park, foot overbridge

Meanwhile, the CPI is set to hold a protest demanding development of the Pettah T-junction, where accidents are rising in the absence of a traffic island or signalling system.

KOCHI. The realisation of the Kochi Metro connectivity to Tripunithura has given a complete makeover to the stretch from Vyttila to Tripunithura railway station with the roads getting wider and a couple of old bridges being reconstructed. However, the residents are unhappy, as they want the KMRL (Kochi Metro Rail Ltd) to honour a couple of promises it made at the earliest. These include an open air auditorium or minipark at the widened Pettah Junction and a foot overbridge (FoB), connecting the Tripunithura metro station with the railway station. "The KMRL had promised to set up either an open air auditorium or a minipark at Pettah once it completed the Pettah-SN Junction section. It's been two years

since the section was opened, but the promise was not kept," said A B Sabu of the Manaveeyam Cultural Centre, the former chairman of a standing committee of the Kochi corporation. Meanwhile, the CPI is set to hold a protest demanding the development of the Pettah T-junction, where accidents are rising in the absence of a traffic island or signalling system. "The authorities promised to redevelop the junction once the metro's work on the stretch got over. However, nothing is being done even after the completion of the activities. The metro land there is currently lying unused. There is no median or traffic island at the junction where vehicles from three busy roads converge. Also,

they have razed the bus waiting shed for metro construction and have not set up a waiting station for commuters yet. We'll hold protest next week demanding redevelopment of the junction at the earliest," said S Russel, CPI Maradu local committee member. Representatives of the Manaveeyam Cultural Centre called on KMRL MD Lokanath Behera recently, who promised to look into it. Meanwhile, the Tripunithura Rajanagari Union of Residents Association (TRURA), an apex body of residents associations, demanded "timely" implementation of another promise by the KMRL — construction of a FoB connecting Tripunithura metro station with the railway station.

BRS MLA Harish Rao taken into custody for obstructing investigation against MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy

Noting that he is not afraid of threats and illegal cases, Rao asserted that the people of Telangana will themselves teach a lesson to CM Revanth Reddy. **HYDERABAD.** High drama prevailed at Gachibowli police station for over 10 hours on Thursday when BRS MLA T Harish Rao was detained by police allegedly for obstructing them from investigating a case filed against fellow legislator Padi Kaushik Reddy at the latter's residence in Kondapur. Harish Rao reached Kaushik's residence amidst reports that latter will be arrested for threatening Circle Inspector (CI) KM Raghavendra at Banjara Hills police station on Wednesday. Cyberabad police, however, took Harish Rao into preventive custody and shifted him to Gachibowli police station. They also took former minister G Jagadish Reddy and other BRS leaders into custody. After a 10-hour detention, Harish and other were released in the night. Meanwhile, Kaushik Reddy was arrested by Banjara Hills police in connection with a case registered against him and others on Wednesday for allegedly threatening CI Raghavendra at the police station. According to police, Kaushik Reddy was interrogated during the day and he will be produced in the court on Friday. Meanwhile, speaking to , Madhapur DCP G Vineeth said: "Yesterday, a case was registered against MLA (Kaushik Reddy) at Banjara Hills police station and personnel from that PS sought our support in further investigating the case. As these leaders were gathering in front of the MLA's house and hampering the proceedings, we took them into custody." "Is this Indiramma Rajyam or Emergency rule?" Harish Rao termed the Congress' rule as "demonic" regime. "Is this Indiramma Rajyam or Emergency rule? When he went to the police station to complain about phone tapping, a false case was filed against MLA Kaushik Reddy. In the morning, police arrived at the MLA's house and tried to illegally arrest him. When we questioned this evil, the BRS leaders and I were treated badly. We were illegally arrested and taken to the police station. If I ask, they arrest me. If I question, they charge me. If I oppose, they threaten me. You are continuing with your demonic regime by claiming it to be a democratic rule," he posted on X.

Opposition slams Tamil Nadu government over 'contamination' deaths

BJP state president K Annamalai criticised minister TM Anbarasan's response that the issue was unlikely due to water contamination.



CHENNAI. Leaders of various political parties on Thursday strongly condemned the deaths of two persons and hospitalisation of many more allegedly due to contamination of

drinking water in Pallavaram. Expressing shock, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said the government should have ensured proper supply of drinking water without

contamination from sewage pipelines, especially after the recent cyclone. Palaniswami criticised the DMK government for its 'negligence'. BJP state president K Annamalai criticised minister TM Anbarasan's response that the issue was unlikely due to water contamination. "If the government claims the water is not contaminated, will the minister or DMK members step forward to drink the same water being supplied to the affected areas," Annamalai asked. PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss demanded a compensation of Rs 25 lakh for the families of the deceased and Rs 2 lakh for those hospitalised. He urged the state to act decisively to prevent such incidents. AMMK general secretary TTV Dhinakaran and DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant also condemned the incident.



Hope for a reset in Akali politics

DECEMBER 2, 2024, will be remembered as an important day in the contemporary history of the Sikhs and the regional politics of Punjab. It saw the Sikh religious seat of power, the Akal Takht, reasserting its authority over the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). The five Jathedars summoned nearly the entire party leadership, asking it to admit the criminal misdeeds (gunaah) it had committed while in power and seek forgiveness. Speaking clearly and sharply, they highlighted these 'misdeeds' and how they had seriously hurt the Sikh sentiment, interests and wellbeing. Perhaps the most serious of these misdeeds, they proclaimed, had been their indifference and glaring failure to prevent incidents of disrespect (be-adabi) for the Guru Granth Sahib.

The 'main accused' who appeared before the Takht was former SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal. But he was not the only one who was held responsible for the criminal wrongdoings. The Jathedars asked all those who had worked with him while he was the Deputy Chief Minister of Punjab to also own up to their involvement and seek forgiveness. They also held the late Parkash Singh Badal, then Chief Minister, equally responsible for these misdeeds and withdrew the honour of Panth Rattan Fakhr-e-Quam bestowed upon him by the Takht in 2011. Given the nature of their authority, the Jathedars pronounced a range of nominal punishments for all those found 'guilty', which the accused 'humbly' accepted. They also directed that the SAD be dissolved, along with its parallel or dissident offshoots. The Jathedars announced the formation of a committee and assigned it the task of rebuilding the political party. The Sikh political system, as we know it today, evolved during the 1920s as an offshoot of the popular movement for the liberation of historic gurdwaras from the control of 'corrupt mahants'.

The movement came up with the idea of managing gurdwaras democratically through a body to be elected by common Sikhs, which came to be known as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). It was under the aegis of the SGPC that the SAD came into being as its political wing. The colonial state gave it formal recognition in 1925 as the sole custodian of all historic gurdwaras of Punjab. The SGPC continues to have legal status in independent India.

The history of the Akal Takht, the throne of the timeless one, goes back to the sixth Guru, who established it as a seat of temporal authority (miri), facing the Darbar Sahib (often referred to as the Golden Temple), the seat of its spiritual authority (piri). The Takht became the site for the Sikhs to assemble and discuss the political challenges facing the community. After its formation, the SGPC appointed five Jathedars to collectively deliberate upon and decide on issues of politics and justice. Over the years, the electoral political process acquired a kind of autonomy and ascendancy over Sikh religious institutions. The SAD emerged as the power centre and its leadership started controlling the affairs of the SGPC as well. Though members of the General House of the SGPC are separately and independently elected by the Sikh electorate, they have tended to be subservient to their political bosses in the SAD. This became most pronounced between 2007 and 2017, when the SAD ruled the state in alliance with the BJP, with the senior Badal as the CM. It was also the time when the SAD formally acquired a 'secular' character, claiming to be a party of all Punjabis. From a Panthic party of the Sikhs, it began to represent itself as a regional party of Punjab, similar to its counterparts in other regions of India. Its organisational character also changed. From a cadre-based party of the Sikh Sangat, it turned into a family-centric party with a limited social base among the agrarian classes/castes of the state.

Israel scrambles for support to counter ICC arrest warrants

Contrary to the bravado displayed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his advisers on the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on November 21, there are indications that they were worried at that possibility even earlier,...

Contrary to the bravado displayed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his advisers on the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on November 21, there are indications that they were worried at that possibility even earlier, in April this year, and were trying to prevent it by enlisting other powers' support.

On April 19, 2024, The Times of Israel, quoting Channel 12, said that an "emergency discussion" was held at the Prime Minister's Office to decide how to "fend off" the potential warrants. The paper also said that Netanyahu had raised this possibility with visiting Britain Foreign Secretary David Cameron and Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and "sought their help".

The same paper said on April 28 that Netanyahu was "under unusual stress" over the prospect of an arrest warrant against him by the ICC "which would constitute a major deterioration in Israel's international status." Hence, steps were taken to give a "rare briefing on Shabbat" to the international media through Israeli Defence Force (IDF) spokesman Nadav Shoshani on the government's support to the American-sponsored temporary humanitarian pier off Gaza. Their worry was heightened when another UN body, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), started hearing the genocide case against Israel, launched by South Africa on December 29, 2023.

Two hearings in the case were held on January 11 and 12, 2024.

The ICJ, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), was established in 1945 under the UN charter for adjudicating disputes between states and fixing responsibility of a state under international law after inquiring whether a state party to the case has breached it. It can issue "provisional measures" to preserve those rights until the case proceedings are completed. In this case, provisional orders to prevent and punish incitement to genocide and to allow relief materials were passed on January 26, 2024. On July 19, 2024, the ICJ, in a different context, gave its advisory opinion that Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, along with the associated settlement regime, annexation and use of

natural resources was unlawful. This was on a reference made by the UN General Assembly in 2022. The ICJ mandated Israel to end its occupation, dismantle its settlements, provide full reparations to Palestinian victims and facilitate the return of displaced people. The ICC, established in 2002 by the "Rome Statute", is different from the ICJ as it seeks to establish individual criminal responsibility for serious international crimes. Through its



prosecutor, who has the power to carry out investigations of crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC, the court can issue arrest warrants for individuals.

Israel is in a bind as it had signed the Rome Statute on December 31, 2000, after considerable reluctance, although in the 1940s, the Jews were ardent supporters of such a court, having suffered under the Nazi regime. The procedure is that either the UN Security Council or any of the 124 member states of the Rome Statute can refer a situation to the court, asking the prosecutor to conduct a preliminary investigation. The prosecutor can also launch an investigation on his own initiative.

The court does not have a police force, but all states that have signed are obliged to comply with a requested arrest warrant. Hearings are conducted as a criminal trial, with prosecution and defence counsels before a tribunal of judges.

Israel complained to the ICC on October 5 that its prosecutor Karim Khan did not give it an

opportunity to investigate "his allegations before seeking arrest warrants against its leaders, which was a fundamental principle of the ICC's founding charter." According to it, the prosecutor should have, under Article 18 of the Rome Statute, provided "sufficiently specific information to the state under investigation about the crimes that they are investigating" to examine whether that country was willing to launch prosecutions against the errant individuals. It alleged that Khan relied upon a 2018 notification sent to Israel about alleged crimes "relating to Israeli settlement policy and claims raised in previous hostilities in Gaza" and not on the Israeli operations consequent to the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and two US senators supported this, saying that Khan "rushed" to get the warrants "to politically target Israel." As things stand, it is not clear what the signatories, especially from Europe of the Rome Statute, would do. America, Israel, Russia, China and India have not ratified the Rome Statute. President Joe Biden has said that America had rejected the ICC decision. Incoming Republican leader John Thune has urged the Senate to pass a Bill that was cleared by the House of Representatives, under which the US would impose sanctions on people "engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies."

There are many imponderables here. While Britain, supported by EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, originally said that it would honour the treaty obligations, there are reports that France is reconsidering its earlier stand by Prime Minister Michel Barnier that the country was bound to abide by all treaties. On November 27, Israeli newspaper Haaretz quoted the Quai d'Orsay (French foreign office) to reveal that Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant could be entitled to immunity from arrest warrants issued by the ICC. This was after the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, helped by French President Emmanuel Macron.

At the same time, western powers led by America are apprehensive that any dilution of the ICC's powers might boomerang on the ongoing investigations against Argentina and Russia, which they want to pursue.

Cost of freebies

BOTH Punjab and Himachal Pradesh are reeling under severe financial stress, a crisis stemming from populist promises made during electoral campaigns. In Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) commitment to provide 300 units of electricity free of cost to the...

BOTH Punjab and Himachal Pradesh are reeling under severe financial stress, a crisis stemming from populist promises made during electoral campaigns. In Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) commitment to provide 300 units of electricity free of cost to the consumers has resulted in a subsidy bill of over Rs 20,000 crore for the current financial year. Himachal, where the Congress is in power, revived the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), adding a significant burden to an already strained exchequer.

Punjab's predicament is worsened by delayed subsidy payments, with the pending bill crossing Rs 4,500 crore. The Punjab State Power Corporation Limited is struggling with a dip in collection efficiency, dropping from 106% to 73%, and soaring transmission losses. Attempts to raise revenue, including recovering dues from defaulters and government departments, have yielded little relief. With the state



nearing its borrowing limit, the sustainability of the free electricity scheme is under question. Himachal Pradesh faces a similar plight. The restoration of OPS has inflated the state's financial obligations, requiring Rs 2,000 crore

monthly to meet salary and pension commitments. Exhausting its loan limit of Rs 6,200 crore, the state is now relying on future borrowings to manage day-to-day expenses. The situation is set to worsen as the Centre's revenue deficit grant is expected to be halved next fiscal year.

Both states accuse the BJP-led Centre of withholding funds and showing a discriminatory attitude. Himachal's exclusion from the Special Assistance for Capital Investment Scheme has sparked a political outcry, while Punjab alleges bias in the allocation of development funds. However, the root cause lies in unsustainable fiscal policies driven by electoral populism. As state governments grapple with mounting debt and shrinking revenues, it is imperative to shift focus from doles to structural reforms. Fiscal prudence, efficient tax collection and targeted subsidies are the need of the hour.

Centre must aid states on new criminal laws

Making rules for ensuring the implementation of a number of new concepts, as envisaged in the BNSS, is the key to success.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the successful implementation of the new criminal laws to the nation at a grand function in Chandigarh on December 3. Home Minister Amit Shah complimented the Chandigarh police for being the first unit to enforce the new legislations, and meticulously. He hoped that the laws would become operational fully throughout the country within three years — the time needed to create infrastructure and integration of database with several portals for the purpose of coordination between the various wings of the Criminal Justice System (CJS), which are time-consuming processes. The Home Minister stated that 11,34,698 policemen had been imparted training and more than 11 lakh criminal cases registered after July 1, 2024 under the new provisions of laws; 9,500 of them had already been decided upon. Such is the impact of these new procedures that the Chandigarh police have achieved 85 per cent conviction rate in the cases decided following the new scheme.

It was a historic moment for the people to be witness to the new-era penal legislations adopting the Indian soul, which subscribed to the people-centric and justice-oriented approach. They replaced the colonial laws as standposts of suppression and retribution, said the PM. The occasion offered an opportunity to the professionals in the field of justice delivery to undertake an operational audit of the working of the new laws to identify bottlenecks and shortcomings and suggest measures for credible performance in future. It is said that laws do not operate in isolation.

Police investigating officers have started applying the new sections of the criminal laws in all cases. The successful implementation, though, would mean much more than that. It requires the creation of

electronic and digital infrastructure and the recruitment and training of staff for the proposed digitalisation of CJS. The enactment of a large number of subordinate legislations by the states in the form of rules, operating procedures, forms and formats, etc is essential to bring the laws in full operation. Upgrading of the software relating to Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) and Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) for linking between the stakeholders is necessary for proper coordination between the enforcers. Making rules for ensuring the implementation of a number of new concepts, as envisaged in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), is the key to success. Implementing provisions relating to the e-registration of first information report (FIR), e-service of summons and warrants, zero FIR, witness protection schemes, community service, trial in absentia, seizure and forfeiture of proceeds of crimes, time-bound disposal of case properties, sharing of forfeited proceeds of crimes with the victims of crimes, commutation of sentence, storing of videography footage, etc would not be a reality unless the operational protocols and rules are framed by the states immediately. In their absence, these novel concepts would remain on paper only.

The Home Minister called the forensic experts the 'fifth pillar of CJS.' The network of forensic science



laboratories (FSLs) is scanty. To ensure mandatory visits of forensic experts on all scenes of crimes entailing punishment of more than seven years, as per the new laws, the FSLs would require extension up to the police station level. Given the limited availability of forensic experts, it is a huge task. Integrating the main pillars of criminal justice — the police (CCTNS), courts (e-courts), jails (e-prisons), forensic lab (e-forensic) and prosecution (e-prosecution) — through the ICJS is a Herculean task. The work has just begun. It cannot be completed unless all other related works falling in the domain of

state agencies is accomplished. The time-bound disposal of case properties is a welcome feature of the new procedural law. Unfortunately, this provision had not found favour with the courts till now — perhaps, for want of urgency on the part of law enforcers or due to lack of infrastructure. One of the striking features of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, (BNS) is contained in Section 48, which criminalises the abetting of offences in India by terrorists and gangsters sitting in foreign countries. Section 107 of the BNSS provides for the forfeiture of the proceeds of crimes. Section 356 of the BNSS pertains to the concept of 'trial in absentia' for bringing absconders of law to justice. It is intriguing that none of the criminals operating from outside the country could be nailed down under these provisions so far. Community service as a sentence is included in the list of punishments under the BNS, but no identified apparatus and protocols are in place to execute it. Moreover, the sentence of community service has just a cosmetic effect in the new criminal laws as offenders involved only in six petty crimes out of all the offences contained in the BNS are punishable with this sentence. There is a case to extend the scope of this punishment for all first-time petty offenders. Some other noticeable anomalies are also there in the new laws, which need appropriate resolution.



Homes go green with indoor Plants

Rather than putting up modern art paintings in their homes, Faridabad's residents prefer to go green and beautify their homes with house plants instead. While it may seem simple, however, there are a few things you should know before you bring a plant home. Read on to find out what Faridabad's residents say is a must-have for keeping potted plants indoors.

Finding the right place

While everyone knows that plants should be kept in a place with a lot of sunlight, there are some spots in your house that you

should avoid at all costs. Don't keep your plant near a heater, air-conditioner, between curtains or near a window that allows cold drafts to pass through. It's best to keep your plant at a window facing south, as this will get the most sunlight. Windows that face east, west or north always have lesser light. However, some plants need partial shade, so be sure to look up every plant's separate requirements. Debashish Ghose, who is a resident of Sector 21-D, Faridabad, says, "The spaces between your furniture can be used to keep

indoor plants, which add to the 'green look' of your house. Even if you can't put them in a place where they have sunlight constantly, you could always expose them to light for a few hours each day. Every weekend, when I am at home, I clean the leaves of the plants and expose them to the sunlight for at least four-five hours."

Keep your plant healthy

When selecting a plant, you should check for signs of pests or diseases. If you see spots on the leaf or the leaf is a colour it's not supposed to be, then it probably has a disease. This will leave any other plants you have in your home at risk of getting infected as well. You should also do some research on what type of fertilizer your plant requires.

Shailesh Jha, who also lives in Sector 21-D, says, "Initially, when I shifted to my flat, I wanted to have a small garden, but couldn't do that because there was no space. However, I later decided to keep potted plants in the balcony. I called up my gardener and made holders in the balcony's railing to accommodate small pots. The right amount of fertilizer is important for your plants and you can find out which type you'll need by visiting a nearby nursery. The months from January to September are the best time for plants to be fertilized. I usually

call my gardener every week and spend a few hours discussing what fertilizer should be used."

Know how much you should water your plant

Every plant is different and while some need a good amount of water, others need their soil to dry out between watering sessions. A common mistake people make is to water the plant every day, which could inadvertently kill some types of plants.

Drainage

Since you might often give your plant too much water, be sure to create a proper draining system in the pot. The best way to do this is to have a layer of pebbles of around 2.3-four cm at the bottom of the pot. The pebbles will keep the roots of the plant away from any excess water at the bottom of the pot. If the plant is placed in the balcony, you could even buy a pot that has a draining hole.

Dust the leaves

Make sure you don't let dust settle on the plant's leaves because if too much dust gathers, your plant could have difficulty in breathing. You can fix this problem by taking a soft towel or a paintbrush and sponging both sides of the leaf each week.



How to store your boots

Clean them
Give your boots a scrub. If they have stains, use a soft-bristled toothbrush and a solution of water and vinegar to remove them. Use a leather cleaner to clean any remaining spots.

Deep condition
Get your boots conditioned, especially if they are leather boots, immediately after you clean them.

Get them repaired
Have them repaired instead of waiting until next winter to fix any damage that they have sustained.

Stuff them
Before putting your boots away, stuff them with either a shoe tree or newspapers so that their shape is maintained. You can also use rolled-up magazines, which will help keep the boot's shaft upright.

Deodorize
Buy a shoe deodorizing spray, or fill a sachet with baking soda and put it in your boots before storing.

Store them properly
Though storing them upright is ideal, you can also store them in bins. But make sure you put the heaviest ones down first. Lay a cloth or old t-shirt between every pair or use a cloth bag.



Shopping at a hypermarket? Keep these tips in mind

shopping for essentials in a supermarket is now passe. With hypermarkets mushrooming all around the city, the shopping experience has just gotten bigger. Here's how you can make your shopping experience even better. Shop on weekdays: Often, these markets have less crowd on weekdays, so make some time during the week for a less-free shopping experience.

Stick to your list
Most of us set out shopping with a specific list of items to buy. The sheer size and the number of items available in a hyper market can be distracting. So make sure, you stick to your list.

Don't fall for cheap buys
Often at the store, one is likely to spot massive offers, which seem too good to be true. Make sure you check the manufacturing date of such products.

Have a stand-in at the billing counter
Have a friend or relative take a spot at the long queue at the billing counter when you are at the end of your shopping, to speed things up.



How to reuse an old toothbrush

An old toothbrush is perfect for cleaning dirty spots around taps. Wet the brush with some vinegar and use the toothbrush to scrub it.

- Remove mud from shoes.
- An old toothbrush is perfect for cleaning computer keyboards.
- You can also clean the bristles of other brushes and combs with a good scrub with an old toothbrush.
- Remove dead skin from



your lips by wetting an old toothbrush and rubbing it across your lips.

- A slightly damp toothbrush is perfect for cleaning delicate jewellery.
- Get the grime between your bathroom or kitchen tiles out with an old toothbrush. Don't scrub too hard on or near the sealant because it could break.
- Keep an old tooth brush at hand for spot cleaning stains and spills on clothes or around the house.

Design ideas to try in your small bathroom

in a city like Mumbai where houses offer minimum space, here are a few ideas that you can incorporate in your bathroom to make it look bigger and better.

Gilded fixtures

Give your outdated bathroom a makeover and get a fresh look by choosing fittings which are gold plated. You can opt for blue and white tiles along with it to lend a nautical look.

Metallic and marble combo

Metallic doors and bathroom fittings along with marble flooring are the best option to make your washrooms look classy and chic. You can choose from a wide variety of bathroom fittings in metallic - shower, taps and the washbasin. But when choose a marble flooring, make sure that the floors are not too slippery.

Pink and monochrome magic

If you want a classy bathroom, it is always great to choose a colour scheme that stands out. It's a great option for the urban couple. While pink will lend a feminine effect to the washroom, the monochrome shade will be a perfect choice for your man. If you are not too keen on going completely pink and monochrome, you can have a pink washroom with a monochrome decal on the main wall.

Antique accessories

Just like any other corner in your house, your bathroom too requires accessories that will make your washroom stand out. A big antique mirror in your bathroom is a good option. You can also have bathroom fittings which are quite vintage in its look and will give a traditional feel to it.



Faux wooden flooring

To make your bathroom look bigger, opt for wooden flooring that will make your bathroom look bigger. Well, actual wooden flooring may get damaged in the long run; thus opt for faux wooden flooring. You can then have tiled bathroom fittings.

Soothing pattern on the walls

When choosing the bathroom tiles on the walls of your bathroom, make sure that you opt for shades and patterns that are soothing to the eyes. Apart from making it look calm, these shades will also maximise the space in your washroom. A classic white and beige combination always works wonders. Apart from this, it also spells elegance.

Delhi triple murder: Police recover murder weapon

➤ According to the police, Tanwar did not have good relations with his parents, who he claimed favoured his sister Kavita in all aspects of life.

NEW DELHI. Delhi Police on Thursday recovered the murder weapon, an army knife, which was used by a 20-year-old man to murder his entire family of three people in southwest Delhi's Neb Sarai area. Apart from the knife, the police also recovered the blood-stained clothes from a nearby forest which were worn by the accused, said officials.

Twenty-year-old Arjun Tanwar, a second-year BA student at Delhi University, was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly killing his parents and elder sister. Ex-armyman Rajesh Kumar (51), his wife Komal (46) and their daughter Kavita (23) were found dead at their house in Deoli village on Wednesday morning.

According to the police, Tanwar did not have good relations with his parents, who he claimed favoured his sister Kavita in all



aspects of life. The police recovered his blood-stained sweatshirt and the army knife which he used for killing his parents and sister from Sanjay Van late Wednesday night. During interrogation, Tanwar told the police that he first slit his sister's throat who was sleeping on the ground floor.

Then he went to the first floor where he found his father in a deep sleep, while his mother had already woken up and was inside the washroom. Arjun slit his father's throat and moved on to his next target, his mother. As she came out, Arjun first smothered her and then stabbed her neck repeatedly, till she died on the spot. Tanwar then changed his blood-stained clothes, put them in his gym bag and went to Sanjay Van where he dumped the bodies, they added. After returning home, he tried to clean the blood spots in the washroom and other articles in the house, the officials said.

Tanwar then provided a false alibi to the police, claiming he had been at the gym when the crime took place. The accused was a trained boxer. He represented Delhi in a state boxing event, where he won silver.

Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel quits electoral politics

He also assured that he would continue to be part of the party and take on any responsibilities assigned to him.

NEW DELHI. Delhi Assembly Speaker and AAP MLA from Shahdara, Ram Niwas Goel, announced his retirement from active electoral politics on Thursday, citing advancing age as the reason for his decision. Goel, 76, informed AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal in a letter, expressing gratitude for the respect shown by party legislators.

He also assured that he would continue to be part of the party and take on any responsibilities assigned to him. In response to Goel's announcement, Kejriwal tweeted, "Ram Niwas Goel's decision to retire from electoral politics is an emotional moment for all of us. His guidance has been invaluable, both inside and outside the House, for many years. Due to his age and health, he had recently expressed his desire to step back from active politics. We respect his decision. Goel Sahab was, is, and will always be the guardian of our family."

Reacting to Goel's retirement, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "Goel has been a staunch supporter of Kejriwal for the last 10 years, but after the party's recent developments, including the entry of Shunty, he had no option but to retire."

AAP MLA Naresh Balyan sent to one-day judicial custody in MCOCA case

NEW DELHI. Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court on Thursday sent AAP's Uttam Nagar MLA Naresh Balyan to a day's judicial custody in connection with a case lodged against him under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) as arguments on the police plea seeking his remand for interrogation remained inconclusive. Earlier in the day, the Dwarka court dismissed the police's application seeking 10 days of custody for Balyan; however, the court rejected it. Additional Sessions Judge Vandana Jain, presiding over the case at the court, rebuked the prosecution for its approach. "I do not have the power to transfer the case. Show me a precedent where this has been done. What was the need to come here? This is a sheer waste of my time," said Judge Jain. She granted liberty to the Investigating Officer (IO) to seek custody before the appropriate MP/MLA court. According to the Delhi Police, Balyan is allegedly linked to a crime syndicate led by gangster Kapil Sangwan. The prosecution claimed Balyan facilitated organised crimes, specified targets, and invested money on behalf of the syndicate.

Delhi govt to launch AI-powered traffic violation system in April

NEW DELHI. Traffic monitoring through artificial intelligence (AI) enabled automated number plate recognition (ANPR) system in the city is expected to begin at the start of the next financial year.

Officials said that the Delhi government has floated the tender to develop the system for which over a dozen private firms have shown interest so far. While the timeline has not been fixed, the tender allotment and implementation would take about four months, they added.



CCTV cameras equipped with state-of-the-art technology will be installed at 500 places. About 400 of them will be at petrol pumps, while

the locations for the rest of them are being worked out. The firm that will be awarded the tender will create an ANPR violation system on a revenue-sharing model. A command centre will also be set up to analyse the feed and data, so that traffic plans can be made based on the analysis. A part of the revenue earned through fines imposed on violators will be given to the company. The contract with the firm will remain in effect for 20 years. "Initially, 500 places will be monitored. After this, the number will be increased as per the need," a senior transport department official said.

"Many traffic violations of two-wheeler riders, private cars, cabs, cargo and passenger vehicles can be fined through AI. The traffic police currently challans violators on the spot. Work on the project will start 30 to 45 days after the tender is allotted," the official added.

2020 riots: Delhi HC quashes one of two FIRs against AAP councillor Hussain

NEW DELHI. The Delhi HC has quashed an FIR against former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, linked to 2020 Delhi riots, citing the existence of a prior FIR covering the same incident.

Justice Subramonium Prasad ruled that the chargesheet filed in the quashed FIR would be treated as a supplementary chargesheet in the earlier case, allowing the trial to proceed without prejudice to the victims.

The court noted that the second FIR, registered on February 27, 2020, detailed allegations of rioting and arson on the first floor of a building, while the first FIR, dated February 25, 2020, pertained to similar offences on the ground floor of the same building. "A perusal of the two FIRs shows that the rioters first broke open the



shutters of Pradeep Parking and set fire to vehicles parked there, and then proceeded to the first floor, where they destroyed goods prepared for a marriage ceremony. Both incidents are part of the same episode," the court stated.

Acknowledging that the victims in both FIRs were different, the court emphasised that quashing the second FIR outright could deny justice to the aggrieved parties. It observed that nine eyewitnesses and 23 additional witnesses were common in both cases, ensuring that there was no prejudice if the chargesheet from the second FIR was integrated into the first case.

"The mistake of the prosecution in filing two FIRs for an incident within the same building cannot result in injustice to the victims. This court is inclined to quash FIR 116/2020, dated February 27, 2020, registered at Police Station Khajuri Khas, with a direction that its chargesheet be treated as a supplementary chargesheet in FIR 101/2020," the court ordered.

Delhi HC asks govt to clarify stand on illegal dog breeding, questions lax enforcement

The court is hearing a PIL seeking stringent control over illegal dog breeding in Delhi, a plea that has been pending for six years.

NEW DELHI. The Delhi High Court urged the Delhi government on Thursday to clarify its position on the existence of dog breeders in the city amid allegations of illegal breeding operations.

A bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela directed the state government to submit a status report detailing measures against violators of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Rules, 2017 and 2018.

The court expressed scepticism over the claim that there are no breeders in Delhi, citing the broad definition of "breeders" under the relevant laws. It instructed the Delhi government to file an affidavit explicitly stating its stance and outlining steps to identify and regulate breeders within the National Capital Territory (NCT). "It is contended that there are no breeders in



Delhi, and therefore, no further action is required under the breeding rules," noted the bench.

However, it called for concrete action to substantiate such claims. The government's counsel informed the court that a registration drive for pet shop owners was in progress and expected to conclude within 90 days. Following the registration, authorities would enforce compliance with breeding regulations, and violators - whether registered or not - would face appropriate action. The bench sought

an update on the status of this registration exercise and the action plan to address violators. It also instructed the Secretary of the Animal Husbandry Department to file an affidavit detailing measures already taken and the roadmap for future enforcement. The court is hearing a PIL seeking stringent control over illegal dog breeding in Delhi, a plea that has been pending for six years. The bench expressed frustration at the lack of progress, particularly in light of increasing dog bite incidents.

In its previous order, the court directed the Delhi government to disclose a detailed timeline for implementing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Rules. Despite repeated directives, it noted that no significant action had been taken.

Congress promises free power, auto licences ahead of Delhi elections

➤ Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav said that if Congress forms the government in Delhi in 2025, its top priority would be implementing the Tehbazari, the Street Vending Act of 2014.

NEW DELHI. The Congress is making a series of promises to appeal to voters from the lower middle-income class during the final leg of its Dilli Nyay Yatra.

Among the key promises are doubling free electricity units, granting property rights to homeowners in resettlement colonies, implementing the Street Vending Act of 2014, and renewing auto rickshaw licences. Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav said that if Congress forms the government in Delhi in 2025, its top priority would be implementing the Tehbazari, the Street Vending Act of 2014.

The law, passed by the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre, aims to protect the rights of urban street vendors and regulate street vending activities.

"During the Delhi Nyay Yatra, we came across



thousands of street vendors who shared their struggles with us," Yadav said.

"They complained about facing constant harassment from the police and MCD officials due to the absence of designated vending zones and licenses."

Additionally, Yadav promised to resume the registration of auto rickshaws, providing permits to end black marketing and

benefiting over 4 lakh people in the national capital. Currently, 93,654 auto rickshaws are registered in Delhi.

"After AAP's victory in 2014, Kejriwal announced several initiatives, such as increasing auto fares based on inflation, ending police harassment, raising the number of auto permits to one lakh and building at least 300 auto stands across the city. However, Kejriwal failed to fulfill any of these promises, betraying auto rickshaw drivers," Yadav said. On the issue of property rights for residents of resettlement colonies, Yadav stressed that these rights would allow residents to access bank loans for education, marriage, and other necessities. "When Congress was in power in Delhi and at the Centre, we prioritised the welfare of the poor."

Meet Kerala priest George Jacob Koovakad, to become Cardinal in Vatican on Dec 8

Monsignor George Jacob Koovakad, a distinguished priest from Kerala, will be officially elevated to the rank of Cardinal by Pope Francis in a ceremony scheduled for December 8, 2024, coinciding with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

New Delhi. Monsignor George Jacob Koovakad, a 51-year-old priest from Kerala, is set to join the prestigious College of Cardinals, one of the highest honours in the Catholic Church. His appointment by Pope Francis underscores a remarkable journey of service, spirituality, and dedication to both the global and Indian Catholic communities. The official ceremony for this elevation will take place on December 8, 2024, coinciding with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

A JOURNEY ROOTED IN FAITH AND SERVICE

Born on August 11, 1973, in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Monsignor Koovakad belongs to the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Changanacherry, a prominent Catholic community in India. He was ordained as a priest on July 24, 2004, and soon pursued further theological and diplomatic training at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome. This led him to a distinguished

career in the Vatican Diplomatic Service starting in 2006.

ADIPLMAT FOR THE HOLY SEE

Monsignor Koovakad has served in various Apostolic Nunciatures across the globe, including Algeria, South Korea, Iran, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. His roles ranged from Secretary to Counsellor in these missions. In 2020, he was appointed to the Vatican's Secretariat of State, taking charge of organising Pope Francis's international travels—a critical responsibility in representing the Church worldwide.

A MOMENT OF PRIDE FOR INDIAN CATHOLICS

Monsignor Koovakad's elevation to cardinal is a historic moment for Indian Catholics. It reflects Pope Francis's ongoing efforts to make the Church more inclusive and diverse. Archbishop Thomas Tharayil of Changanacherry hailed him as "a man of spiritual integrity"



and "a dynamic presence in the ecumenical Church." This honour is particularly significant for the Syro-Malabar Church, which rarely sees representation at this level.

A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO POPE FRANCIS

Monsignor Koovakad's close relationship with Pope Francis extends beyond

professional duties. In a heartwarming gesture, the Pope personally video-called Koovakad's 95-year-old grandmother, Sosamma Antony, in September 2023, offering blessings and humour during her recovery from Covid-19. This act highlights the deep bond between the Pope and his trusted envoy.

THE CONSISTORY AND ITS GLOBAL IMPACT

The consistory on December 8 will see 21 new cardinals, with representatives from diverse

countries, including Japan, Brazil, Canada, and the Ivory Coast. Monsignor Koovakad, as one of the youngest cardinals, will also be eligible to vote in the next papal conclave, influencing the future direction of the Church. This is a reflection of Pope Francis's vision to bring fresh perspectives and reforms to the Catholic hierarchy.



According to a study, there is a positive association between screen time and exposure to cyber-bullying, video game addiction, offline meetings and online sexual behaviours. Read more about the study here.

Economic Forum noted that over 50 per cent of the age bracket was susceptible to cyber-bullying, video game addiction, offline meetings, disinformation and online sexual grooming. Notably, the problem is more acute in emerging economies, where "internet adoption has been more rapid and less subject to appropriate safeguards by parents, industry or government". The study of 38,000 children noted that 47 per cent have been victimised through cyber-bullying in the past year. "Today's youth make up an important part of our informed society, they will be tomorrow's voters and our future

leaders. Ensuring they are better equipped to face the challenges of hyper-connected life, earlier on, should be a societal priority," said Cheryl Martin, MD Head of Industries and Member of the Managing Board at the WEF. Moreover, the children spend an average of 32 hours per week in front of digital screens for entertainment alone— longer than the time they spend in school, the study said. There is a positive association between screen time and exposure to cyber-bullying, video game addiction, offline meetings and online sexual behaviours, it said. "We must act

Majority of 8-12 yr subject to Old kids Online threats



quickly and take positive steps to help these children...especially in emerging countries. We need to work together to help our children outsmart cyber-risks and become successful and responsible digital citizens who maximise their potential and minimise cyber-risks," said Yuhyun Park, founder and CEO of DQ Institute, Singapore. The purpose of the '2018 DQ Impact Report' is to highlight the need for concerted action by government, industry and civil society to help parents counter the threats facing the youngest 'digital citizens' and such a need is more acute in emerging economies.



Outdoor classes make students more open to learning: study

About 300 students participated in a programme called "researcher weeks" aimed at getting pupils excited about the natural sciences. Students were prepared for a one-week stay in the classroom. This was then continued on site during the research week, culminating in a two-day research expedition with experiments



well as positive social relationships exert the primary influences on motivational behaviour, researchers said. The study showed that motivational behaviour in both contexts was influenced equally strongly by these three needs, albeit at different levels. Basic needs are met to a significantly higher degree during outdoor instruction than in the classroom. A sense of achievement particularly increases motivation during outdoor instruction. On the other hand, the student-teacher or student-student relationships had little or no influence on this increase. Nor did gender have any influence on the results. The study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, found that outdoor instruction with explorative learning methodology significantly promotes the attitudes of students toward learning, ie. their intrinsic motivation. "Explorative" means nothing more than simply giving students the freedom to discover the subject matter through independently organised experiments. These outdoor dynamics, which provide a strong boost to more situational interest for science and engagement with the subject, can be evoked in occasional

Teaching science subjects outdoors instead of within closed classrooms can increase students' motivation to learn and participate, a study has found. The study by the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and the University of Mainz advises offering more outdoor instruction at the lower secondary level. About 300 students participated in a programme called "researcher weeks" aimed at getting pupils excited about the natural sciences.

Students were prepared for a one-week stay in the classroom. This was then continued on site during the research week, culminating in a two-day research expedition with experiments. Both before and after the course, the students completed a questionnaire on their satisfaction and overall motivation. At the end of the week, the students again shared their experiences during the outdoor class. Basic psychological needs to experience autonomy and competence as

outdoor instruction sessions as well. The teaching techniques explored and developed for this instructional program should therefore be included as a standard feature of lessons in schools. "Whether it involves rural study centres away from school or forms a part of the science curriculum, or both, this statistical analysis demonstrates that regular outdoor teaching is an appropriate strategy to meet the

challenges of the 21st century," said Ulrich Dettweiler, associate professor at the University of Stavanger in Norway. "Such models might even be suitable to bridge the existing gap between science education and environmental education in the long term," said Dettweiler, who was at TUM at the time of the study.



You May Soon Draw PF Money Through ATMs; Amazing Feature Likely Coming In EPFO 3.0 Next Year

New Delhi. In order to improve services for EPFO members, the Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) intends to update to a new version, EPFO 3.0. One of the most significant aspects of EPFO 3.0 is that subscribers will get the option to withdraw Provident Fund (PF) from ATMs, ET Now has reported. To make withdrawals easier, the EPFO is coming up with a new initiative that will allow subscribers to withdraw their PF money directly from the ATMs, ET Now has said. An ATM card, akin to a debit card, would be issued by the labour ministry to enable members to take out PF money directly from ATMs. Nevertheless, the maximum amount that can be taken out will be 50% of the entire deposit. This feature might be implemented somewhere between May and June of 2025, it added. At the moment, it takes seven to ten days for the withdrawal amount to be credited to the bank account that is linked to the EPF account. The updated feature will streamline the withdrawal process by enabling members to take out their PF amounts straight from ATMs. The prevailing 12% contribution cap may be lifted by the government. This will allow employees to contribute as much amount as they want. On the other hand, the employer's contribution will be fixed based on the employee's salary, and therefore the employer will not be burdened.

Vishal Mega Mart's Rs 8,000 crore public offer to open on December 11

MUMBAI. Leading supermarket player Vishal Mega Mart's Rs 8,000 crore initial public offer will be opening on December 11.

The company is yet to announce the price band for the mega issue. The issue is entirely offer for sale (OFS) by promoter Samayat Services, and has no fresh issue of shares, therefore, no money from the issue will go to the company, according to the final IPO papers filed with the capital market regulator Sebi on Thursday. Currently, Samayat Services holds 96.55% stake in the Gurugram-based supermart major. Vishal offers apparel, general merchandise and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) categories through its 626 stores and the mobile application and website. Vishal Mega Mart competes with Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Retail, Tata Group's Trent and grocery retailer Avenue Supermarts, which runs the D-Mart labelled supermarters chain and is owned by leading stock broker Damani, among others. Vishal is among the two leading offline-first diversified retailers in terms of same-store sales growth.

The updated draft filing was filed in October after Vishal's confidential offer document was approved by Sebi late September. The company filed its offer document in July through the confidential pre-filing route. The retailer had strong financial performance in the past years, with consolidated net in financial year 2023-24 growing 43.8% to Rs 461.9 crore on a revenue of Rs 8,911.9 crore, a growth of 17.5% over financial year 2022-23.

New credit card issuances plunge 50% in October to 7.8 lakh as against 16 lakh a year ago

MUMBAI. The credit card industry seeing a sharp 50% year-on-year decline in new card issuances to a meagre 7.8 lakh in October as against 16 lakh cards issued in the same month last year. In November 2023, the Reserve Bank, fearing a bubble build-up in the unsecured loans segment, which has been growing at three times the other loans for nearly two years, asked credit card issuing banks to set aside 25 percentage points more money as risk capital, taking the total to 150%. Still, banks continued to aggressively push credit cards and since the second quarter almost all lenders have begun to report higher delinquencies. The worst affected ones are Kotak Mahindra Bank, RBL Bank, and Axis Bank, among others. Domestic brokerage Anand Rathi



stated that the industry, led by HDFC Bank with about 24% market share followed by SBI Card with close to 20%, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank; has added only 7.8 lakh new credit cards in October. May 2024 was the lowest in many years when the industry added just 7.6 lakh customers. But on an annualised basis, the October numbers as much as 45% less than what the industry did last year. Despite this decline, net additions in October 2024 were higher than in June 2024, contributing to a 16% quarter-on-quarter rise in cards in force, the report said. The report also highlights the total spending through credit cards reached Rs 1.78 trillion in October 2024, reflecting a 13% YoY growth. According to the report, the share of the e-commerce segment in total spending value dropped to 61% in October from 65% in September, while point of sale transactions saw its share rising to 39% from 35% in the previous month. PoS and e-commerce volumes continued to move in favour of the former, now nearly 51%, while the latter's share declined to about 49%, while in terms of transaction volume, the preference continued to move towards PoS transactions, which now account for nearly 51% of total credit card transactions.

Markets Face Volatile Trends After RBI Policy Announcement

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 259.67 points to 81,506.19 soon after the announcement. The NSE Nifty also went lower by 87.9 points to 24,620.50.

Mumbai. Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty turned highly volatile trade after the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy announcement.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 259.67 points to 81,506.19 soon after the announcement. The NSE Nifty also went lower by 87.9 points to 24,620.50. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained the status quo on interest rate despite July-September

quarter GDP growth falling to 7-quarter low of 5.4 per cent, as against its own projection of 7 per cent. The rate increase cycle was paused in April last year after six consecutive rate hikes, aggregating to 250 basis points since May 2022. Announcing the fifth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent while keeping policy stance unchanged at neutral.

The RBI sharply cut the GDP growth projection to 6.6 per cent from the earlier level of 7.2 per cent, while raising inflation target to 4.8 per cent from the previous projection of 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal. In a bid to make available more money with banks for lending so as to boost economic activity, the RBI slashed Cash Reserve Ratio to 4 per cent from existing 4.5 per cent. This would lead to release of Rs 1.16 lakh crore to banks and improve their lending capacity.

The CRR is the percentage of a bank's total deposits that it is required to maintain in liquid cash with the RBI. "Monetary policy has delivered exactly what the



economy and markets need in the present context. The governor's emphasis on price stability is appropriate given the elevated level of inflation. The decision to cut the CRR by 50 bps facilitating injection of Rs 1.16 trillion of liquidity into the system will ease the liquidity constraints and more importantly reduce the banks' cost of funds. From the market perspective, this is an excellent policy

response. Banking stocks will remain resilient," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said. From the 30-share pack, Infosys, UltraTech Cement, Tata Motors, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Consultancy Services and Asian Paints were among the laggards. Axis Bank, ITC, Larsen & Toubro, Titan, State Bank of India and Power Grid were among the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 8,539.91 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo were trading lower while Shanghai and Hong Kong quoted in the green. US markets ended lower on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.04 per cent to USD 72.05 a barrel. Rallying for the fifth day running, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 809.53 points or 1 per cent to settle at 81,765.86 on Thursday. The Nifty surged 240.95 points or 0.98 per cent to 24,708.40.

CEA calls for striking balance between corporate profitability, workers' income

NEW DELHI. The anemic growth in private consumption has started to give jitters to the government as the chief economic advisor (CEA) to the Ministry of Finance Dr V Anantha Nageswaran on Thursday called for a balance between corporate profitability and workers' income growth.

Speaking in an event organized by ASSOCHAM, the CEA noted that even as corporate profitability was at a 15-year high in FY24, much of this income was diverted by companies to reduce their leverage. He expressed concern that workers' salaries have not grown commensurate with corporate profitability. "While it is good to improve balance sheets, corporate profitability and workers' income growth has to be balanced, without this parity, there will not be adequate demand in the economy for corporate products to be purchased," said Nageswaran. The CEA emphasised on private sector large

heartedness and the role corporates can play in propping up consumption. "If consumption has to drive economic growth, then we must look at the post-Covid hiring trends, where there has



been a shift to contractual labour. While these contracts are formal in nature – the workers receive employee benefits like provident fund and health insurance etc – but the wage growth for contract employees have not kept up with inflation," CEA Nageswaran said.

CEA's statement assumes significance as second quarter GDP growth in the current financial year fell to a 2-year

The CEA emphasised on private sector large heartedness and the role corporates can play in propping up consumption.

low of 5.4% primarily because of slow private consumption and capex growth. In the second quarter, private consumption grew by 6%, down from 7.4% in the previous quarter. The Q-o-Q drop in consumption was despite a low base of 2.6% growth in the same quarter previous year.

Most FMCG companies have raised the issue of slowness in consumption growth due to very high inflation and stagnant wages. Many FMCG companies pointed out that they have been witnessing slow volume growth and in some even contraction

Trump tariffs: Government tries to identify areas of gain

NEW DELHI. With Donald Trump threatening to impose additional duties against China and Mexico, government has launched a multi-pronged exercise, which seeks to identify areas where India can tap into an opportunity but is also keeping close tabs on currency movement. While the recent depreciation of rupee is seen to be helpful in making Indian goods more competitive, a lot will also depend on how other currencies move. Official sources told TOI that all eyes are on China as a steep depreciation of the yuan could help the Asian giant counter some of the impact of the additional tariffs that the Trump administration imposes.

Since October-end, rupee has weakened around 0.7% against US dollar, while the Chinese currency has seen a near 2% depreciation. Several other currencies have weakened even more. The jury is, however, divided on the extent of China's benefit from

depreciation. While govt officials keep tabs on Trump's next set of moves, they are breathing easy as India has not yet figured in the US president-elect's trade war calculations. But, they are not ruling out the possibility of steps coming in the future, which many believe will be a negotiating strategy by the new US administration to get India to offer some concessions to American goods. For the moment, the commerce department is assessing sectors, where India can gain from actions being taken against China, as well as Chinese companies. Textiles, electronics goods and pharma are among sectors, where govt is assessing the capacity that manufacturers in India have and if they can ramp it up to tap into any opportunity in future. Sectors, such as textiles and garments, are seen to be especially lucrative as the recent tension in Bangladesh could also help Indian players.

"We have seen an increase in mobile

production in India, which is also catering to export demand. Similarly, there is a need to push the production of laptops and personal computers in India, which can also meet demand in other countries, especially as China faces pressure," a senior official told TOI. India will, however, have to compete with countries such as Vietnam to grab a bigger share of the American pie. In last fiscal year, the US was India's largest trading partner with bilateral trade of almost \$120 billion. With exports of \$77.5 billion, India had a trade surplus of over \$35 billion, according to commerce department data. According to US data, India had the seventh highest trade surplus, with Trump's recent threat focused on the top three countries with a favourable balance of trade – China, Mexico and Canada. Government officials have said goods trade numbers need to be looked at along with services, where the US enjoys significant advantages.

RBI Hikes Rate Caps On Diaspora's Foreign Currency Deposits To Attract Flows

According to the BBC report, "Enmetazobactam, developed by Chennai-based Orchid Pharma, is the first antimicrobial invented in India to be approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)."

Mumbai. The Reserve Bank on Friday announced a raise in the interest rate caps on the diaspora's foreign currency deposits, in a move aimed at attracting more capital flows amid pressures on the rupee. Announcing the fifth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said it has been decided to increase the interest rate ceilings on Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank deposits or FCNR (B) deposits as per tenors. It can be noted that the move comes at a time when rupee has been hitting lifetime

lows against the dollar, and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) seems to be deploying forex reserves to contain the volatilities, as seen in the sharp fall in the kitty over the last few weeks. Starting from Friday, banks have been now permitted to raise fresh FCNR (B) deposits of 1 year to less than 3 years maturity at rates not exceeding Overnight Alternative Reference Rate (ARR) plus 400 basis points, as against 250 basis points earlier. Similarly, deposits

with maturity between 3 to 5 years can be paid an interest of ARR plus 500 basis points, as against the 350 basis points ceiling earlier, Das said. The relaxation will be available only till March 31 next year, he said. It can be noted that India, which is the largest beneficiary of remittances in the world, has introduced sweeter deals to NRI deposits in the past episodes of rupee coming under pressure. Das said the rupee has



depreciated by 1.3 per cent mainly on strengthening of the US dollar and selling pressure from foreign portfolio investors in October and November, and added that the volatility was less when compared to peer emerging markets. Stressing that the RBI's exchange rate policy has been consistent to let the markets determine the levels, Das said foreign exchange reserves are used judiciously to mitigate undue volatility,

maintain market confidence and preserve overall financial stability.

Meanwhile, the Governor also announced an Expansion in the reach of forex-Retail Platform through linkages with Bharat Connect on Friday.

Das said with the objective of bringing greater transparency and fairness in the pricing of foreign exchange for users, especially for individuals and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL) launched the FX-Retail platform in 2019. Presently, the FX-Retail platform is accessible through an internet-based application, he said, adding that it is proposed to facilitate the linking of the FX-Retail platform with Bharat Connect (earlier known as Bharat Bill Payment System) operated by the NPCI Bharat Connect.

NEWS BOX

Big blow to India as shooting, hockey out of 2026 Youth Olympics

NEW DELHI. In a significant setback to India's medal prospects, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive board has removed shooting, hockey, and other sports from the roster of medal sports for the much-anticipated 2026 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in Dakar, Senegal. The decision was made during a meeting held in Lausanne on December 3, where the IOC confirmed the events and athlete quotas for the Games, scheduled to take place from October 31 to November 13, 2026.

The IOC announced that all 35 International Federations (IFs) would maintain official involvement in Dakar 2026, with 25 sports included in the competition programme and 10 designated as part of the engagement programme. The engagement programme will showcase non-medal sports, including canoe-kayak, golf, hockey, karate, modern pentathlon, shooting, sport climbing, surfing, tennis, and weightlifting.

Dakar 2026 will feature one discipline from each of the 25 medal sports, which include athletics, aquatics, archery, badminton, baseball, basketball, boxing, breaking, cycling, equestrian, fencing, futsal, gymnastics, handball, judo, coastal rowing, rugby sevens, sailing, skateboarding, table tennis, taekwondo, triathlon, beach volleyball, beach wrestling, and wushu.

This marks a sharp contrast from the 2018 Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, where India won 13 medals, including three golds, nine silvers, and one bronze. Shooting alone contributed four medals, including two golds and two silvers, while hockey and weightlifting added two silvers and one gold, respectively. The absence of shooting, weightlifting, and hockey from the medal events is likely to impact India's performance significantly. In 2018, star shooter Manu Bhaker secured gold in the girls' 10m air pistol and silver in the mixed 10m air pistol, while Simran Kaur earned a silver in the girl's freestyle 43kg wrestling. However, in Dakar 2026, wrestling will only feature as beach wrestling. The IOC emphasized that the excluded sports would still hold a presence through interactive activities on-site and digital platforms, highlighting their importance as integral components of the Youth Olympic Games.

The Dakar YOG will feature 151 events, a reduction from the 241 events held during the Buenos Aires edition, with an equal distribution of 72 events each for men and women, alongside seven mixed-gender events. The total athlete quota has been set at 2,700. The IOC noted that full gender equality would be achieved for the first time in Summer YOG history, not only in the overall athlete quota but also across every sport, discipline, and event. This decision aligns with the IOC's commitment to delivering a streamlined and efficient programme while maintaining the competition's elite nature.

'I Was Not Serious When I Was Young': Nitish Reddy On His Cricketing Journey

NEW DELHI. In his own words, he was not "serious" about cricket in his early days. But everything changed for Nitish Reddy when he saw tears rolling down his father's face owing to their financial struggles. It was a transformative moment for the young all-rounder who vowed to work harder and achieve success in the game, which culminated in a fine debut for India in the first Test against Australia at Perth. Reddy produced an impressive show, scoring 41 and 38 runs in the two innings against the likes of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood at Optus Stadium. He also claimed a wicket as India registered a massive 295-run win. "To be honest, I was not serious when I was young," he said in a video released by the BCCI on Thursday. "My father left his job for me and there has been a lot of sacrifice behind my story. One day, I saw him crying because of the financial problems we were facing, and I



was like, this is not how you can be... that my father made the sacrifices and you play cricket just for fun." At that time, I became serious and I got the growth. I worked hard and it paid off. As a son from a middle-class family, I am so proud that my father is happy now. I gave my first jersey to him and saw the happiness in his face," he added. The 21-year-old is likely to retain his spot in the Pink-ball second Test at Adelaide Oval, having slammed 42 off 32 balls in the day-night warm-up match against the Prime Minister's XI in Canberra. In the second innings at Perth, Reddy shared an unbroken 77-run partnership with his hero Virat Kohli, who handed him his maiden Test cap ahead, thus fulfilling a childhood dream.

Recalling the time when he took a selfie with Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma during the 2018 BCCI awards night, Reddy said, "This was a safety photo, at the time he (Virat Kohli) was so famous. I felt that if I don't get a chance for photo later, let's take a picture now."

As National Wrestling Championships begin on December 6, WFI to discuss RSPB's decision to skip event in AGM

The source, however, said this decision has been depriving several wrestlers from competing in the nationals.

CHENNAI. Even as the National Wrestling Championships begins in Bengaluru on Friday, all eyes will be on the annual general meeting (AGM) of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) scheduled on the last day (Sunday).

As the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) has decided not to field its wrestlers, the championship, as reported by this daily, will not see participation from most of the country's elite wrestlers including the Paris Olympics bronze medalist Aman Sehrawat. A similar situation arose last year when the WFI held the nationals in Pune while the ad-hoc panel, which was then running the day-to-day affairs of the federation, organised it

in Jaipur with the RSPB being the hosts. "This is the second time, the RSPB is not sending its wrestlers for the nationals. The reason is said to be the sports ministry's order wherein it suspended the WFI. But if that is the case then the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) should also not have sent the entries for the Bengaluru event. This issue will be discussed in the AGM," a WFI source told this daily.

Coincidentally, Prem Chand Lochab, secretary of the RSPB, is also secretary-general of the wrestling federation. He had told this daily that the Railway wrestlers were not competing in the nationals as the federation has been suspended by the sports ministry.

The source, however, said this decision has been depriving several wrestlers from competing in the nationals. "As many as 12 RSPB wrestlers took part in the state championships of a few states to qualify for the nationals. They will be representing states like Chandigarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. This shows how the wrestlers are



desperate to compete but their employer is not allowing them," added the source.

Former national champion Sandeep Mann, who has switched his weight category, is one of such RSPB employees. He will represent his home state Punjab in the 86kg. "Yes, I have won gold in the state championship and qualified for the nationals. The RSPB has neither prevented us nor asked us to compete in the nationals. As I am on leave, I will

compete at the event representing Punjab," Mann told this daily.

Another issue which might be discussed in the AGM is devising a criterion to prevent wrestlers from changing their states frequently in their bid to qualify for events like nationals. "Given the tough competitions in the states like Haryana and Maharashtra, fringe wrestlers from these states compete in other units like Delhi and Chandigarh. It has become quite normal but it hurts the chances of wrestlers from these adopted states. The WFI will try to curb this practice by coming up with a criterion," said the source. Meanwhile, the nationals will begin with competitions in the men's freestyle on Friday followed by bouts in Greco-Roman and two weight categories of women's

wrestling the next day. The last day will witness competitions in the remaining eight categories of women's wrestling apart from the AGM. Top wrestlers from the RSPB are missing the championship, the tournament will provide a chance to the upcoming wrestlers to win medals in their respective weight categories and stake their claims for the national camp.

England all out for 280 after sizzling Brook century

WELLINGTON. Harry Brook smashed a century before England were dismissed for 280 on day one of the second Test against New Zealand in Wellington on Friday.

Brook top-scored with 123 after the tourists were put in to bat on a green Basin Reserve pitch and he put on a key partnership with Ollie Pope to rescue an England innings which was teetering at 43-4. Brook was run out on the last ball of the second session after powering England out of trouble to 259-7, before the final three wickets fell quickly after tea. The in-form Brook registered his eighth century in just 23 Tests and his dismissal was a major boost for the home side after he and wicketkeeper Pope (66) counter-punched with a stand of 174 off just 158 balls. The partnership was reminiscent of the first Test in Christchurch when the same pair combined for a rapid 151 to rescue their first innings and set up an eight-wicket win for the tourists. Brook went on to score 171 at Hagley Oval and unfurled another sparkling knock at the Basin Reserve, where he scored 186 when the teams met here last year.



The lanky 25-year-old's power once again couldn't be contained by New Zealand's seam-heavy attack, striking five sixes and 11 fours from his 115 balls faced before his concentration slipped.

He set off for a single to short midwicket but Chris Woakes didn't respond and Brook was caught short when bowler Nathan Smith hit the stumps in his follow-through.

It took Brook just 91 balls to bring up three figures, his second-fastest century, with his

most notable shots being two towering sixes over extra cover in the first session.

Will O'Rourke (3-49) finally removed Pope, who mis-timed a pull shot, and the pace bowler struck again to dismiss England captain Ben Stokes for two, caught behind.

Smith (4-86) helped to wrap up the tail to cap an impressive start to just his second Test. Matt Henry (2-43) and Smith claimed two early wickets each to put the hosts well on top. New Zealand's poor catching was a major weakness in Christchurch but there was no repeat, with three batters falling to sharp chances in the field. The impressive Henry had Ben Duckett caught by a diving Tom Latham at second slip without scoring before bowling fellow-opener Zak Crawley for 17.

Smith had both Jacob Bethell (16) and Joe Root (3) caught behind, with Daryl Mitchell grabbing a flyer with one hand at first slip to remove Root.

How live broadcast of ongoing World Chess Championship was arranged

Organisers have ensured no broadcast delays after putting an elaborate security mechanism in place and adopted a time limit to tackle the issue of mobile phone usage by spectators.

SINGAPORE. In the weeks after Singapore won the right to host the World Championship, they had two main requests. Allowing spectators to carry mobile phones at all times was one. And for the broadcast to have no delays. "This was the most commercially attractive set-up for spectators," Kevin Goh, head of the Local Organising Committee, told this daily.

Both of them could have created specific problems and that's why the LOC and FIDE — the world governing body for chess — discussed it at length. While the world body signed off on the request for 'live' broadcast, the two organisations met halfway regarding mobile phones. "We understood that the mobile phones issue... there were complications we couldn't resolve," Goh, the CEO of the Singapore Chess Federation, said. "Hopefully, one day we will have the

technology to do it. The best way right now is for spectators to bring in their phones and take pictures and videos for the first 30 minutes before going out and depositing it."

FIDE and the LOC, though, were aligned when it came to ensuring there would be



no broadcast delays. It might seem outrageous to suggest not having live broadcast as normal but this is chess in 2024. One regular anti-cheating measure in place at other tournaments is to have deferred transmission (this measure was

also present at the Candidates early this year). The organisers ensured no delays after putting an elaborate security mechanism in place. It's so thorough the devices would detect if the players have as much as a cold. The process Once the players go down to the playing hall, they are ushered down the corridor and into the players' lounge. From the lounge till the time they enter the fish tank, multiple devices are employed to scan them.

The first layer is the basic frame you see in airports. That's the first security layer. Interestingly, that's so common at all tournaments Goh didn't even count it as a layer. Then comes the NLJD (non-linear junction device). There is also a thermal scanner as well as a device that picks up magnets. There is a fifth security apparatus the players face after the games are done.

"We all agree this is the best outcome for everyone," Goh said. "It doesn't make sense when you have live spectators sitting around and they are looking at it (the game) but the screens aren't live. This is an outcome everybody wanted. To try and balance everything."

Twilight challenge: Upbeat India take on desperate Australia

Having taken a 1-0 lead, Rohit and Co will look to repeat all the things they did right in Perth

CHENNAI. It's that time of the tour Down Under again. The breathtaking evening skies of Adelaide and Test cricket under the lights with the pink-ball seaming around like nobody's business. The Indian team, and fans, wouldn't forget the last time they were here. 36 all out. While fans would never want to relive it again, back then, Ravi Shastri, who was the head coach of the team, had asked the team to wear their lowest Test score ever like a badge of honour. And boy, did they do. From arguably the lowest point of Indian cricket in the field in the last decade, they made it into what is perhaps the greatest Test series win for the country. Four years on, as India are back in South Australia for yet another pink-ball contest, it is hard to say

whether they will be looking at the scars of that match or the glory that followed. However, things are clearly different from 2020. For starters, India is coming into the match with a 1-0 lead in Perth. More than the win, the manner in which it happened and the way the younger generation rose to the occasion on their first visit Down Under will give them a lot of confidence. So much so that captain Rohit Sharma, who was injured and missed the last pink-ball Test, had pushed himself down the order to keep the successful KL Rahul-Yashasvi Jaiswal pair at the top. Then there are the likes of Nitish Kumar Reddy and Harshit Rana who showed that they belong at the highest level on debut in Perth. In a very "kids these days" way, Sharma attributed their success to not having the baggage of the past. In fact, it has been the trend every time India visited Australia in the last decade. From Rishabh Pant to Shubman Gill to now Jaiswal, they have all succeeded on their first trip Down Under. "When we came to Australia for the first time, we only thought about how to



make runs. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves. But look, every generation is different. The boys of today are very fearless. And I think this is working in their favour. Whenever I talk to them or listen to them, they only think about how to win the match. When you start thinking like this, individual performances happen on their own... I don't know if anyone talks to them about these things. This is their natural mindset," explained Sharma.

That said, the next few days will not be easy.

hybrid model, like the Asia Cup last year, PCB had taken a stand, asking for a long-term solution for the issue. They had proposed a new formula where Pakistan, too, will not travel to India for the ICC events till 2031 and that will require a hybrid model for the same.

PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi, who spoke to a few reporters in Dubai on Saturday, had said: "This situation arises all the time. This one-sided thing that we travel to India and they refuse to come to our country cannot continue. At the moment, we are talking to settle it once for all. I promise, whatever will happen will happen on equal terms. Whatever it is, it would be for the long term not only for the Champions Trophy. Things will be decided for the upcoming tournaments as well." Meanwhile, Jay Shah, who was the BCCI secretary till Saturday, taking charge as ICC Chief, visited the global body headquarters in Dubai on Thursday. He met with the ICC staff and the ICC's Media Rights partners at the annual broadcast workshop which was being hosted in Dubai, UAE. With the global cricketing body under pressure from the official broadcast partners to finalise the schedule and venues for the Champions Trophy for them to go ahead.





Alia Bhatt

Wears A Mask, Keeps It Stylish In Comfy Casuals As She Gets Papped In The City

Alia Bhatt is one of the most loved actresses and she has always impressed fans with her fashion sense. Today, she was spotted in the city, effortlessly blending style and comfort in her casual attire. The Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani actress was papped by shutterbugs as she stepped out wearing a mask. The video of her outing has gone viral on social media. In the video, shared by Filmgyan, we can see Alia Bhatt coming out of a jetty ride. She looks cool in pants and a top. She is holding her bottle and also greeted paps. One of the fans wrote, "Pretty." Many have dropped heart emojis in the comment. Recently, she was spotted with Ranbir Kapoor at the airport. Both were twinning in a white colour outfit.

Recently, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor were spotted enjoying an exciting evening at the Indian Super League on Saturday, cheering for Ranbir's team, Mumbai City FC as it played against Hyderabad FC, in Mumbai. Both actors kept their outfits casual yet stylish — Ranbir opted for a Mumbai City FC jersey, while Alia sported a chic black oversized shirt layered over a white tank top.

But the real scene-stealer was their little one, baby Raha, who joined in on the fun dressed in her own mini Mumbai City FC jersey paired with denim and white sneakers. Her adorable game-day look captured hearts as she cheered alongside her parents. Alia Bhatt and Vedang Raina's latest release Jigra is all set to release on OTT. The film will be released on Netflix on December 6, 2024. The OTT platform shared the announcement along with the poster. Fans also reacted to the news and expressed their excitement.

Taking to their Instagram handle, Netflix wrote, "Phoolon aur taaron ne kaha hai, ulti ginti shuru karlo Jigra is arriving tomorrow on Netflix." One of the fans wrote, "One of the finest movies of 2024, watched it in theatres two times.. Alia Bhatt and Vasana Bala made a masterpiece, the genre is quite a new in Bollywood, looking forward to see again in Netflix." Another wrote, "hopefully this film gets it rightfully deserved due now.. cause it hurts to see such a well made film not getting the recognition. it's made like a hollywood movie with the heart of Indian story telling."

Jigra is an action-packed prison-break thriller that centres on the relationship between siblings. Alia Bhatt takes on the role of Satya, while Vedang Raina plays her brother, Ankur. The film is directed by Vasana Bala, with a script by Debashish Irengbam and Vasana Bala. Despite the controversies, Jigra has faced a dismal box office performance. This is the worst opening for an Alia film since 2014, leading many to question its viability in theatres. In comparison, her previous solo hits Raazi and Gangubai Kathiawadi garnered significantly higher opening day collections, between Rs 7.5 crore and Rs 10.5 crore.



Salman Khan, Sanjay Dutt And Sachin Tendulkar Pose For A Rare Photo At Devendra Fadnavis' Swearing-In



A viral photo featuring cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, Bollywood stars Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt at the swearing-in ceremony of Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai has captured the nation's attention. It's a rare frame that combines the worlds of sports, cinema, and politics in one moment. In the photo, Salman Khan is seen flanked by cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar on one side and actor Sanjay Dutt on the other. Salman opted for a sharp look, donning a black suit paired with a maroon shirt underneath. Meanwhile, the Master Blaster kept it casual in a powder-blue shirt. Right behind the trio, actors Arjun Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal can also be spotted, adding more star power to the already iconic frame. Check it out here:

Mumbai's iconic Azad Maidan buzzed with activity on Thursday as business tycoons, Bollywood stars, and key political figures gathered for Devendra Fadnavis' swearing-in as Maharashtra Chief Minister. Fadnavis, who famously said "I'll be back" after the BJP lost power in 2019, was sworn in for his third term. In a significant development, Eknath Shinde took on the role of Deputy Chief Minister, while Ajit Pawar also took the oath for the same position.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside Chief Ministers from BJP-ruled states and Union Ministers, graced the occasion. The guest list included Bollywood icons like Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Ranbir Kapoor, and Ranveer Singh, as well as business leaders like Pranav Adani and Kumaramangalam Birla. In another video that is going viral on the internet, one can see Salman Khan greeting Shah Rukh Khan with a warm hug. Mukesh Ambani and his family were seen at the ceremony in the first row. Ranveer Singh was also spotted greeting Shah Rukh Khan and Sachin Tendulkar.

Keerthy Suresh's Wedding Invite LEAKED; Actress To Marry Boyfriend Antony Thattil On THIS Date



Keerthy Suresh recently hit the headlines after she made her relationship with longtime boyfriend Antony Thattil Instagram official. The two are all set to get married in a few days, and speculations about their upcoming wedding in Goa have been swirling on the Internet. They will tie the knot on December 12, according to a wedding invite that has been leaked on social media. A wedding invite with the first names of Keerthy and Antony has gone viral on social media. The note, written by Keerthy's parents G Suresh Kumar and Menaka Suresh on the invitation card, reads, "It is our great pleasure to inform you that our daughter is getting married on December 12 in an intimate gathering. We hold your blessings in high regard and sincerely hope you will keep them in your thoughts and prayers. We would be grateful if you could shower your blessings upon them as they begin a new chapter of their lives together. With warm regards and lots of love G Suresh Kumar and Menaka Suresh Kumar." Check out the viral wedding invite below.

It was on November 27 that the actress shared her first picture with boyfriend Antony Thattil on Instagram. She dropped a throwback photo from their Diwali celebrations and wrote, "15 years and counting It has always been.. AntoNY x KEerthy (Iykyk)." A few days later, Keerthy was seen visiting the Tirupati temple. In an interaction with the media outside the temple, she confirmed that she is getting married in December, which is why she came for the darshan of Srivaru. She also revealed that she and Antony will tie the knot in Goa.

Keerthy Suresh and Antony Thattil have been dating for 15 years. Antony is a Dubai-based businessman who reportedly owns a chain of resorts in Kochi. He also owns a couple of companies registered in Chennai, Keerthy's hometown. Meanwhile, on the professional front, Keerthy Suresh was last seen in the Tamil political comedy film 'Raghu Thatha', which released in August. She will soon make her Bollywood debut with the upcoming action thriller 'Baby John', alongside Varun Dhawan. Also starring Wamiqa Gabbi and Jackie Shroff, the film is presented by Jio Studios in association with Atlee and Cine1 Studios. Reportedly, Salman Khan will also make a cameo in Baby John. The film will hit theatres on December 25, 2024.

Taapsee Pannu's Interaction With Paparazzi Is Trending: 'Meri Image Achchi Mat Karo'

Taapsee Pannu is known for her acting chops and sartorial fashion. She has mesmerised fans with her performances in films such as Thappad, Haseen Dillruba, and Dunki. Well, Taapsee also makes headlines with her witty remarks and hilarious banter with the paparazzi. Yet again, the actress' interaction with the paparazzi caught the internet's attention. In a video making rounds on the internet, Taapsee was seen leaving a building when paparazzi approached her for photos and videos. However, the actress, who was seemingly in a hurry, said, "Ati hui di thi nah photo. (I had posed before the event.)" Then, one of the paps behind the camera said, "Main nhi aya tha nah. (I wasn't there at that time)" To this, she replied, "Abhi late comers ke liye main kuch nhi kar sakti." (I cannot do anything for the latecomers). In the middle of this, a person added, "Uski gari kho gyi. (His car got towed.)" But the actress was still reluctant to pose for the shutterbugs, and replied, "Toh main kya karu bhai? Meri gaari aa rahi hai piche, hat jao, main kehe rahi hu lag jayegi." (What can I do in that case. My car is coming, please move aside, otherwise you may get hurt.)

One of the shutterbugs, determined to get a better glimpse of Taapsee, complimented her saying, "Aap itna achcha bolti hain." (You speak so well). To this, the actress sarcastically replied, "Mai nhi achcha bolti yaar, kaun bola main achchi bolti hu, main bilkul achcha nhi bolti, meri image achchi mat karo, consistent raho." (I do not speak well friend, who said that I speak well, I do not speak well at all, do not improve my image, be consistent).

This is not the first time when Taapsee indulged in a witty conversation with the paps. Earlier, after an awards night in Mumbai, Taapsee interacted with the paps while exiting the venue with a trophy in her hand. When a paparazzo warmly greeted her and asked how she was, the actress replied, "Main bahut sundar hu. Tum bataao? Aaj kal kaise chal raha hai." (I am very beautiful. Tell me? How are you doing these days?) The light-hearted exchange continued with the pap responding, "Aapko miss kar rahe hain. Aap ek dum cutie ho." (I am missing you. You are so cute). On this, Taapsee responded, "Aur 2-3 achi cheezein bolo. But caption kharab hi likhna, meri image achi mat karna, warna meri unique image kharab ho jaayegi." (Say 2-3 good things. But write a bad caption, don't make my image good. Otherwise my unique image will be ruined). On the work front, Taapsee was last seen in the film Khel Khel Mein. Next, reports suggest that she will portray the role of ACP Komal Sharma in an upcoming comedy movie titled Woh Ladki Hai Kahaan.

