

BJP's Rahul Narwekar elected unopposed as Maharashtra assembly Speaker

Sanjay Kumar

Mumbai, Dec 09: BJP MLA Rahul Narwekar, on Monday, was elected unopposed as the Speaker of the 15th Maharashtra legislative

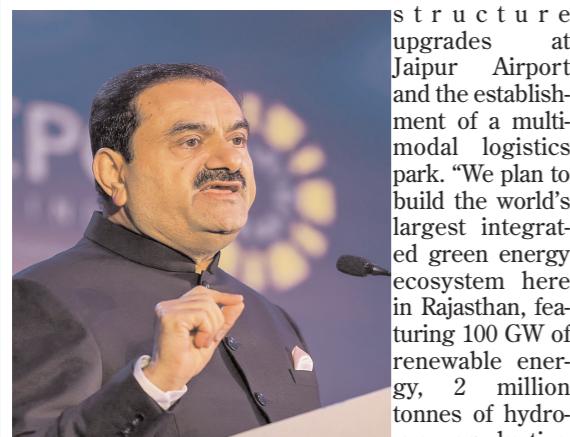


assembly. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, in his congratulatory speech, highlighted that Narwekar is the second member of the lower House to be re-elected to the post since the state's formation in 1960. "Balasaheb Bharde was the only Speaker of the legislative assembly to be re-elected to the post twice since 1960 when Maharashtra was formed.

Adani Group to invest over Rs. 7.5 lakh crore in Rajasthan

ST Correspondent

Chandigarh, Dec 09: The Adani Group has announced plans to invest over Rs 7.5 lakh crore across various sectors of Rajasthan's economy, with over 50 per cent of the investment expected in the next five years. Karan Adani shared these details at the 'Rising Rajasthan Global Summit' organised today. The investments would be spread across several key sectors, including the creation of the world's largest green energy ecosystem, expansion of the cement industry, infra-



and 1.8 GW of pumped hydro storage. These investments will transform the state into an oasis of green jobs," said Karan Adani. In addition to energy, Rajasthan plays a vital role in the Adani Group's ambition to become India's largest cement company. The group intends to set up four new cement plants in the state, boosting production by 6 million tonnes per annum. Other planned investments include a world-class facility at Jaipur Airport, a multi-modal logistics park, and Inland Container Depots (ICDs) to support the state's transformational growth plans.

'Dilli Chalo' protest by farmers suspended for indefinite period

Patiala, Dec 09: The 'Dilli Chalo' protest by the farmers has been suspended for an indefinite period. No jatha will proceed towards Delhi on Tuesday, farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said on Monday. Earlier, the farmers had suspended their march to Delhi on Sunday after seven of them sustained injuries in tear gas shelling at the Sambhal border near here as security personnel thwarted yet another attempt by the protesters to enter Haryana from Punjab. Meanwhile, police officials on Monday said their meeting with the farmer unions is taking place to reach an amicable solution to the issue. DIG, Patiala Range, Mandeep Singh Sidhu, is heading a team that met farmer leader Jagjit Dallewal and have requested the union members to ask Dallewal to take his medicine.

Will we have lollipop while you occupy our land: Mamata

Naresh Malhotra

Kolkata, Dec 09: Taking a dig at a section of Bangladeshi politicians, who said the country has legitimate claims over Bengal, Bihar and Odisha, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday wondered whether Indians "would have lollipop" when external forces would try to occupy Indian lands. Speaking in the West Bengal Assembly, she urged people to remain calm and not get provoked by statements made in Bangladesh, stating that West Bengal will always stand by any decision taken by the Centre. Mocking some Bangladeshi leaders, who have made provocative statements recently, she said, "Stay calm and healthy and have peace of mind." In a public meeting held in Dhaka recently, a Bangladeshi Nationalist Party (BNP) leader said that the country has legitimate claims over Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. Asking people of West Bengal to remain calm and not get swayed by provocative statements made by some people in Bangladesh, she said, "In our state, even imams have condemned the com-

ments and attacks on minorities in Bangladesh." "The same blood flows in the veins of Hindus and Muslims and all other communities. We must all work together to ensure nothing is done to aggravate the situation in West Bengal," she said. Congress-led INDIA bloc mulls motion for removal of Rajya Sabha chairman Dhankhar" "West Bengal is

rivals, not to do anything that might aggravate the situation, she also urged media houses to act responsibly while commenting on the situation in the neighbouring country. "West Bengal is not Uttar Pradesh that we will buy your telecast. But act responsibly in the interest of West Bengal and its people. If trouble breaks out here, will it not affect you? Similarly, if the situation worsens in Bangladesh, it will affect our relatives and friends there. Please maintain restraint while commenting on the situation," she said. The West Bengal Chief Minister said her government and party, the Trinamool Congress, will follow the guidelines of the Ministry of External Affairs and will not speak out of turn. "Our foreign secretary is in Bangladesh for talks. Let us not speak more than what is required. Let us wait for the outcome. We are responsible citizens. Our country is united," she said. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday held talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart Mohammad Jashim Uddin, amid strained bilateral ties since August, following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Misri arrived in Dhaka earlier in the day on an Indian Air Force jet for a day-long visit, officials said.

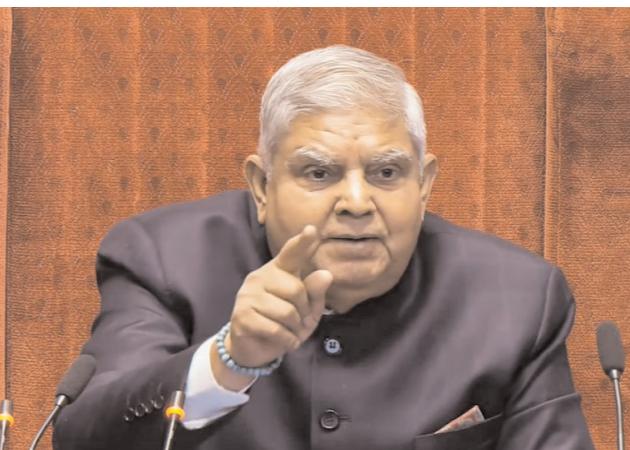
the first state in the country where people irrespective of caste, creed or community staged collective protest against the situation in Bangladesh," the Chief Minister said. Asking everyone, including her political

Congress-led INDIA bloc mulls motion for removal of Rajya Sabha chairman Dhankhar

Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Dec 09: The Congress-led INDIA bloc is mulling to bring a motion for the removal of Vice-President and Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, alleging partisan approach of the Chair in the House of Elders. A top Congress source confirmed to The Tribune that a resolution to this effect was in the process of being drafted and opposition INDIA alliance MPs in Rajya Sabha were being rallied to support it. The Congress move follows another wasted day in the Rajya Sabha which was adjourned amid a ruckus between the BJP and opposition Congress MPs over ruling party allegations of a senior Congress leader's alleged links with Hungarian-American businessman George Soros. The BJP MPs inside and outside Parliament on Monday alleged that Gandhi had links with Soros and Congress was hand in glove with anti-India forces, a charge the Congress denied. In the Rajya Sabha, chairman Dhankhar allowed several ruling party MPs led by Leader of the House J P Nadda to speak on the issue, much to the resist-

ance of the Congress which accused the chair of being "party to the BJP conspiracy." The Congress has planned to bring the motion against



Dhankhar under Article 67 (B) of the Constitution of India, which says the V-P can be removed by a resolution of the Rajya Sabha passed by an effective majority and agreed upon by the Lok Sabha with a simple majority. Although the opposition is in minority in Lok

P "This is a grey area - whether 14 days can be counted over two consecutive sessions or whether these should be counted over a single session. This is being discussed," a Congress source said adding that there is no precedence of any motion to remove the Vice-President in the past.

Miffed over 'traitor' remark on Rahul, Congress set to stall Parl again

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, Dec 09: The first two weeks of the ongoing winter session of Parliament remained paralysed amid protests by the Congress-led Opposition over the Adani bribery charges and Sambhal violence. The ruling BJP added fuel to the fire by alleging that Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi had links with billionaire George Soros and calling him a "traitor". These developments are set to cast a shadow over the third week of the session, which begins on Monday. The BJP's "traitor" remark is likely to see the Congress going ballistic and disrupting the proceedings. However, it will be interesting to see what tactics do the two major constituents of the INDIA bloc — Samajwadi Party and TMC — adopt. The last week's proceedings were washed out and the government could not get the Railways Amendment Bill passed. However, both the SP and the TMC did

not support the Congress' protests over the said remark. While the TMC had not supported the Congress protest over the



Adani issue, saying it was not a people-centric matter, the SP is sulking after Rahul tried to visit violence-hit Sambhal. Senior SP leaders alleged the Congress had not supported it on the Sambhal

issue. However, with both Samajwadi Party and TMC having got the chance to raise the Sambhal and the issue of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, respectively, it remains to be seen what kind of floor strategy they adopt vis-à-vis the Congress in both Houses the coming week. Congress-led INDIA bloc mulls motion for removal of Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar" With only the Banking Amendment Bill having been passed out of the slew of Bills lined up for introduction and passage during the session, the Centre on its part will try and get the Railways Amendment Bill and the Disaster Management Bill passed this week. The government had earlier accepted the Opposition's demands of holding a discussion on Sambhal violence and the Constitution, in what seemed to be a sign of truce between the treasury and opposition benches.

MCOCA court remands 13 accused to police custody till Dec 16

Mumbai, Dec 09: A special court in Mumbai on Monday remanded 13 accused arrested in the NCP politician Baba Siddique's murder case to police custody till December 16. The Mumbai crime branch, probing the case, has until now arrested 26 individuals, including the alleged main shooter Shivkumar Gautam, in connection with the October 12 murder of the former Maharashtra minister. Police on November 30 invoked stringent provisions of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against all the 26 accused. Of the 26 accused, 13 were produced before the MCOCA court, which remanded them to police custody till December 16. The police sought their custody. They say that financial aspects related to the crime needed to be probed. The rest of the arrested accused were already in jail under judicial custody. Brother of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, Anmol, and another person Shubham Lonkar are listed as wanted accused in the case. Baba Siddique, 66, was shot dead by three assailants outside his son Zeeshan's office in Mumbai's Bandra (East) area on the night of October 12.

New Delhi, Dec 09: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a PIL seeking directions to apply the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) to political parties and asked the petitioner to first approach the Election Commission on the issue. "The petition is disposed of with liberty to the petitioner to approach the competent authority (EC). In case the petitioner's grievance is not effectively addressed, she shall be at liberty to approach a judicial forum in accordance with law," a Bench led by Justice Surya Kant told senior counsel Shobha Gupta, who represented petitioner Yogamaya MG. The direction came after Gupta told the Bench that political parties were registered entities as per Section 29A of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951 and recognised by the Election Commission.

The Bench also pointed out that the Kerala High Court had held that POSH Act was not applicable to political parties and that the said judgment has not been challenged. Initially, the Bench said the Election Commission needed to be made

response. Making the Centre, BJP, Congress, AAP, TMC, NCP, NPP, BSP, CPI(M) and CPI parties to the PIL, the petitioner sought a grievance redressal mechanism for enforcement of the Act. Making the POSH Act applicable to political parties would create varied levels of protection and support for victims of sexual harassment, the PIL contended. During the hearing, Gupta sought to emphasise that the POSH Act covered all aggrieved women and workplaces. Responding to a query from the Bench about the applicability of the Act to unorganised sectors, Gupta said it covered such entities through local committees. The PIL highlighted non-compliance with the POSH Act by political parties — many of which have not constituted Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) to deal with sexual harassment complaints. "The current exclusion of political parties from the

POSH Act's scope is a significant concern, as it leaves women in politics vulnerable to harassment and abuse. To effectively address this issue, inclusion of political parties under the Act is crucial. This would provide women politicians with a safer and more supportive environment, enabling them to participate fully in the political process", the PIL submitted. It demanded that the definitions of 'workplace' and 'employer' under the POSH Act should be harmoniously interpreted to make the law applicable to political parties. The PIL urged the top court to hold political parties accountable for preventing and addressing sexual harassment and ensure a safe and inclusive work environment for women in political parties.

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NEWS BOX

Arakkal bell continues to resonate with the legacy of Kerala's sole Muslim dynasty

KANNUR. The Arakkal bell, a poignant symbol of the Arakkal dynasty, stands as a bridge to a bygone era. While iconic figures such as Ali Raja and Arakkal Beevi, along with the grandeur of the Arakkal Kettu (palace), remain etched in collective memory, the bell offers visitors to the Arakkal Museum a profound connection to the region's illustrious past.

Erected in 1600, the bell tower was a lifeline for the community, serving to alert both residents and merchants. Though its chimes have fallen silent in recent years, the bell continues to captivate tourists and history enthusiasts, and has been immortalised in photographs and social media posts.

"The bell tower we see today was built in the 16th century, but it wasn't always like this. Earlier, it had a roof of clay tiles. The current concrete roofing was added just 50 years ago," explains Muhammed Shihad, founder of the Kannur City Heritage Foundation and a local resident. "Historical records suggest that the Arakkal dynasty the state's only Muslim kingdom used a bell even before the 16th century." The Arakkal bell played a pivotal role in the lives of the subjects. Its resonant chimes alerted people to foreign invasions, sea attacks, and other dangers. It also served to announce namaz (prayer) timings, important public information, and even deaths. In an era devoid of clocks and loudspeakers, the bell dictated the rhythm of daily life. At prayer time, the bell tolled, signalling residents to head to the mosque.

Traditionally, the bell tolled when a member of the Arakkal dynasty passed away, a custom observed without interruption for decades. Even until two years ago, it rang five times daily to mark prayer times. P Rashid, a merchant based near the bell tower, was among the last to oversee this duty.

Illegal rice exports: Andhra Pradesh govt to reconstitute SIT

VIJAYAWADA. The State government has decided to reconstitute the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the illegal export of Public Distribution System (PDS) rice following allegations against three of its members. The allegations against DSPs T Ashok Vardhan, M Balasundara Rao and R Govinda Rao seem to have cast suspicion on their impartiality during the probe.

The SIT, originally constituted on December 6 under the leadership of CID IGP Vineet Brijlal, comprised six members. However, reports submitted by TDP leaders from Darsi, Chirala and Vizianagaram claim that the three DSPs were politically biased towards the YSRCP during the recent general elections.

Allegations being levelled against Ashok Vardhan were that he supported the YSRCP in Darsi constituency, working against TDP candidate Gottipati Lakshmi. Similarly, Balasundara Rao was accused of aiding YSRCP candidate in Chirala against TDP contestant Madduluri Malakondaiah Yadav. On the other hand, Govinda Rao allegedly maintained close ties with former minister and YSRCP MLC Botcha Satyanarayana, influencing the elections in Vizianagaram. Taking the feedback from the party cadre and others, the TDP-led NDA government reportedly decided to issue a fresh GO amending GO RT No. 2103 to reconstitute the SIT, excluding the three DSPs.

Andhra Pradesh govt initiates reforms for better municipal school management

VIJAYAWADA. Municipal schools in the State are poised for improved management and better educational outcomes, benefiting both students and teachers with the government directing Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to address key administrative and maintenance issues. The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department issued a circular to this effect. It called for reinstating non-teaching staff, improve school sanitation and infrastructure, and funding provisions to ensure smooth operations and enhanced educational standards at municipal schools.

As per the circular, the supervision and administrative responsibilities of municipal schools, including service matters of municipal teachers, was entrusted to the School Education Department. Instructions were also issued to continue employing non-teaching staff in municipal schools and ensure proper maintenance of the facilities. A GO, issued earlier this year, clarified that part-time staff such as sweepers in municipal schools would remain under the purview of the MA&UD Department. Additionally, municipal councils and corporations would retain responsibility for the upkeep of school premises, payment of electricity bills, and necessary repairs. Appreciating the decision, State President for Municipal Teachers Federation (MTF) S Ramakrishna thanked the government for recognising the difficulties faced by headmasters due to the absence of non-teaching staff.

Madurai Bench of Madras HC criticises govt's lethargy in filing appeal, refuses relief in getting back govt land

The government had failed to file an appeal against the said decree and had belatedly approached the Kanniakumari district court in 2009 seeking to condone the delay of over 11 years.

MADURAI. Criticising the lackadaisical approach of government officials in managing legal proceedings, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court recently dismissed an appeal filed by the commissionerate of land administration against a single judge's order directing the authorities to reclassify and grant patta to a woman for a 1.1 acre land in Kanniakumari district. A bench comprising Justices MS Ramesh and AD Maria Clete noted that through the above appeal, the government was indirectly trying to challenge a civil suit decree passed by Kuzhithurai sub court in favour of the woman - Mary Isabella - in 1997.

The government had failed to file an appeal against the said decree and had belatedly approached the Kanniakumari district court in 2009 seeking to condone the delay of over 11 years.

Ironically, the government had cited the 2004 Tsunami as one of the reasons for the delay, though the civil suit decree had been passed as early as in 1997 and there was no connection between the two events, the judges noted.

adding that the said application was also dismissed by the district court.

"It is concerning that the law officers representing the state have endorsed such an application in the grounds of this writ appeal, which

over the property, the judges rejected it citing that the government failed to take action on time. "Safeguarding government properties demands the government's vigilance, for even a moment's lapse invites irreparable loss," the judges added.

Noting that the government had disregarded the civil court's decree without enforcing it and forced the petitioner to file a second round of litigation, the judges opined that the said action deserves imposition of cost against the government but they refrain from saddling the state exchequer, mindful that the burden of the official's lethargy should not fall upon the public coffers.

Mary Isabella owned a 2.15-acre land in Kanniakumari. Of this, 1.23 acres was government puramboke land, leading to interference in her possession in the early 1990s. She filed a civil suit in Kuzhithurai court, which ended in her favour in 1997 and the government was told to pay '35,000 as damages for cutting down 77 yielding coconut trees during the pendency of the suit.

**'Not IUML view': Shaji dismisses Sathesan's stand on Munambam**

KOZHIKODE. In a significant political development, IUML state secretary K M Shaji has dismissed Leader of Opposition V D Sathesan's claim that the disputed land at Munambam is not a waqf property. Addressing a public meeting at Koomanna in Malappuram district on Saturday night, Shaji said Sathesan's remark is his personal opinion and that the IUML does not share his view.

It may be recalled that Sathesan has asserted many times that the land at Munambam is not waqf property. He had said the land has been subjected to multiple transactions and hence it cannot be a waqf property. Moreover, he said waqf should be unconditional but there are some conditions mentioned in the original deed.

"Munambam is a big issue, and not a minor one as you think. There are possibilities for a big controversy. The leader of opposition said it is not waqf land. It is his personal view. IUML has no such opinion," Shaji said.

Growing discontent may force Sucharita to leave YSRCP soon

VIJAYAWADA. The YSRCP is facing another potential exit of senior leader and former Home minister Sucharita Mekathotti with the growing discontent. Her likely resignation adds to the list of senior leaders distancing themselves from the YSRCP, which is still grappling with the aftermath of its rout in the recent general elections. Sucharita, a three-time MLA of Prathipadu constituency, who served as the first Home Minister in the YSRCP government, and contested from Tadikonda in the 2024 elections, has been one of the party's prominent leaders. However, sources close to her indicate that she is seriously contemplating leaving the party due to various grievances and decisions that have left her feeling sidelined. According to her supporters, the discontent started when YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy promised the Bapatla Lok Sabha seat to her husband and IRS officer M Dayasagar. But Nandigam Suresh was allotted the seat instead. Suresh eventually lost to TDP's Krishna Prasad Tenneti in the elections.

In addition to this, Sucharita was not given her own constituency of Prathipadu in Guntur district, and was instead asked to contest from Tadikonda, where she faced a crushing defeat at the hands of TDP candidate Tenali Sravan Kumar. Meanwhile, Balasani Kiran Kumar, YSRCP candidate from Prathipadu, lost to TDP's Burla Ramanjaneyulu. Not only was she unhappy after the elections, but also completely stayed away from party activities. The YSRCP's internal decisions, including the appointment of Diamond Babu, Deputy Mayor of Guntur, as the new incharge of Tadikonda, further alienated her from the leadership.

CHENNAI. About 1.27 lakh women beneficiaries have been removed from the Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai (KMUT) scheme, which was launched in September last year. While the majority of them were removed due to being dead, a small number were disqualified for reasons such as family members purchasing vehicles like cars or jeeps, acquiring land, securing government jobs or filing income tax returns that exceed the prescribed annual income limit of Rs 2.5 lakh.

Following updation, the total number of beneficiaries under the KMUT scheme - as of October 31 - has dropped to 1.14 crore from 1.15 crore previously, as per official data obtained by TNIE through the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Unlike pensioners from state and union governments, women heads of families

The IUML leader came down heavily on the Farook College management, to whom the land was given a waqf. "What right do they (management) have to say that it is not waqf property. Who are the real culprits in the Munambam issue? It is not the people who purchased the land. Who gave them the land? Who sold waqf property? Who prepared the documents for them? It is not the responsibility of the IUML, Congress or the CPM to catch them. There is a government to do the duty," he said.

IUML leader M K Munee also obliquely supported Shaji's stand. He told reporters that the Muslim Coordination Committee that met in Kozhikode two months ago under the leadership of Panakkad Sadiq Ali Thangal never said Munambam land is not waqf property.

What Thangal said is final word, says Kunhalikutty

"IUML is for an amicable settlement of the issue without evicting the people who are residing

there," he said. Meanwhile, Muslim League national general secretary P K Kunhalikutty said what Sadiq Ali Thangal said is the final word on the issue. Talking to reporters in Kozhikode, he said the party intervened when the BJP and the CPM were trying to create a communal division in the issue. "You don't try to become the party and don't use it to make controversies," he told mediapersons.

Shaji's comment has come at a point when all the major Muslim organisations have started asserting that the land in Munambam is indeed a Waqf property. Samastha Kerala Jemiyathul Ulama mushawara member Umar Faizi Mukkam was the first person who broke the silence on Sathesan's claim. Other Muslim organisations, including the two factions of the Sunnis, KNM (Markazudawa), PDP and two factions of the IUML also raised their concern over portraying the land as outside the purview of Waqf. They believe that a settlement can be possible only after establishing the Waqf claim.

College, principal booked for forging documents of law student in Tamil Nadu

The case was registered by GCP in November 2019, and a special court in Chennai last week dismissed the discharge petitions filed by Vipin and then principal Himavantha Kumar.

CHENNAI. The Greater Chennai Police (GCP) has arraigned an Andhra Pradesh college, its then principal and correspondent as an accused in the case pertaining to forged documents submitted by a retired railway guard turned advocate for enrolment in the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in 2019, according to the chargesheet filed before a Chennai court.

The probe by GCP's Central Crime Branch found that Basava Rama Tarakam Memorial Law College (SBTRM) in Kadapa had issued the bonafide certificate that stated the accused, B Vipin, had attended 80% of the classes, which was based on fraudulent details entered in the attendance register.

Vipin had allegedly paid Rs 25,000 to two advocates Ulaganathan and Mohan Doss in October 2019 based on an assurance of an enrolment in the bar council by influencing committee members. This was nine months after the Bar had rejected his enrolment as he had completed his law degree from 2015-18 when he was working as a guard in the Southern Railway.

Vipin took voluntary retirement on May 20, 2017. In November 2019, Vipin approached the Bar again where an attempt to pay a bribe to the council was made, after which the then secretary Rajakumar filed a police complaint.

The case was registered by GCP in November 2019, and a special court in Chennai last week dismissed the discharge petitions filed by Vipin and then principal Himavantha Kumar. Charges have been framed under sections for cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy under IPC, and also under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) for attempting to bribe a public official. The investigation has conclusively established the role of Vipin and Kumar in the crime, CCB said before the court.

Navy to train Gaganyaan astronauts on water survival techniques

The Navy is the lead service responsible for the crew's recovery from the sea. The module is expected to land in the Indian Ocean and the Navy will be positioning its vessels in the region.

KOCHI. While the four astronauts selected for India's inaugural human space flight programme undergo rigorous training to reignite India's space odyssey, a team in Kochi is waiting anxiously for the proud moment when Indian dreams soar into space.

While the ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) and DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) are pioneering the space flight, the Indian Navy has shouldered the responsibility of recovering the crew module from the Indian Ocean on its return to earth after the three-day mission.

The water survival training facility (WSTF) at INS Garuda in Kochi will be training the astronauts on survival after landing in the sea. The Navy is the lead service responsible for the crew's recovery from the sea. The module is expected to land in the Indian Ocean and the Navy will be positioning its vessels in the region. The ISRO has marked the waters for landing with 48 backup spots. After landing, an astronaut

can open the module's hatch and jump into the water. He can inflate the personal safety pack and sit in it while awaiting the recovery team's arrival.

"This is our first attempt. The Navy, in coordination with ISRO scientists, has



prepared a standard operating procedure on recovering the crew. The recovery team has been trained to ensure safe extraction of the astronauts even in harsh weather conditions," said Captain Shinodh Karthikeyan, officer in charge of WSTF. Established in August 2013, the WSTF is the third comprehensive facility in the world, imparting lessons of survival at sea for aircrew. The facility features the survival training simulation

theatre (STST), which helps simulate environmental conditions of day/night, rain, winds up to 40 knots, wave of more than 1.5 m height along with thunder and lightning effects. Its insignia is the 'matsya' avatar of Lord Vishnu.

The key components include the helicopter underwater egress trainer, cockpit underwater egress trainer, parachute drop trainer, parachute drag and disentanglement trainer, rescue hoist trainer and environmental simulation equipment. Designed for rigorous survival exercises, the WSTF has trained more than 4500 aircrew of Navy, Air Force and Army to survive a range of challenging scenarios at sea.

"We train aircrew to survive in rough sea conditions. Their safety is of paramount importance.

Naval aircraft fly low over the sea as our job is to search for a target, life or a capsized boat in the vast sea. We have to train the aircrew on how to come out of the aircraft and survive in case of ditching at sea.

1.3 lakh women removed from Tamil Nadu's monthly aid scheme

receiving the 1,000 cash assistance under the scheme are not required to submit life certificates every 12 months.

Updation of records was based on the Civil Registration System (CRS) database, which tracks births and deaths in the state using Aadhaar. Officials from the Special Programme Implementation department, which oversees the KMUT scheme, said the CRS data is used to identify deceased beneficiaries every month. On average, 58,000 deaths have been registered in Tamil Nadu per month since 2022.

A senior official explained that CRS data is forwarded to the revenue department for field verification, which then recommends the removal of names of deceased beneficiaries. The official added that most deletions are due to the beneficiaries being dead, with only a negligible number disqualified for reasons such as increased



income, land purchases or government jobs. Beneficiary bank accounts, along with transactions involving land registration, income tax returns and vehicle registrations (monitored via the Vahan portal) are digitally monitored on a monthly basis by the social security commissionerate before funds are transferred. In October, 1,140 crore was

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NEWS BOX

Sudan: 28 Killed, 37 Injured In Bombardment Of Fuel Station In Capital City Khartoum

Khartoum. At least 28 people were killed and 37 others injured in a bombardment targeting a fuel station south of the Sudanese capital Khartoum, according to a volunteer group and local media. "The ammonia fuel station, in the new Market 6 in Mayo neighborhood, north of Bashair Hospital, was bombed, resulting in significant human and material losses," South Khartoum Emergency Room, a local volunteer group, said in a statement on Sunday.

The injuries included 29 burn cases, three of which were first-degree burns, and eight cases of shrapnel wounds, Xinhua news agency reported. The group said medical efforts were going on to deal with the incident, calling for additional medical assistance for the injured. The Sudanese news portal Al-Rakoba confirmed on Sunday that 28 people were killed and



37 others injured in the bombardment of the ammonia fuel station. So far, no party has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. Sudan has been gripped by a devastating conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since mid-April 2023. The deadly conflict has resulted in more than 27,120 deaths and displaced over 14 million people, either inside or outside Sudan, according to estimates by international organisations.

If We Are Subsidising Canada, Mexico Let Them Become A State Of The US: Trump

Washington. Observing the US is subsidising its two neighbours Canada and Mexico to the tune of USD 100 billion and USD 300 billion, respectively, incoming US President Donald Trump on Sunday said that if that is the case then these two countries better be a part of America. Trump, 78, has threatened to impose hefty tariffs on both Canada and Mexico if they don't stop the flow of illegal immigrants into the US through their territories. "We're subsidising Canada to the tune of over USD 100 billion a year. We're subsidising Mexico for almost USD 300 billion. We shouldn't be subsidising. Why are we subsidising these countries? If we're going to subsidise them, let them become a state (of the US),"

Trump told NBC News in an interview, his first on a Sunday talk show after winning the November 5 presidential elections. We're subsidising Mexico, we're subsidising Canada, and we're subsidising many countries all over the world. All I want to do is have a level, fast, but fair playing field," he asserted. Trump refuted the observations by some American CEOs that tariffs would cost the US and increase the cost of common commodities thus putting a strain on common people. They cost Americans nothing. They made a great economy for us. They also solve another problem. If we're going to have problems having to do with wars and having to do with other things, tariffs, I have stopped wars with tariffs by saying, you guys want to fight, it's great, but both of you are going to pay tariffs to the United States at 100 per cent. They have many purposes (for), tariffs if properly used. I don't say you use them like a madman. I say properly used," he said.

"But it didn't cost this country anything. It made this country money. We never really got the chance to go all out because we had to fight COVID in the last part. We did it very successfully. When I handed it over to Biden, the stock market was higher than it was just previous to COVID coming in. It was higher. Tariffs, if properly used, are a very powerful tool, not only economically, but also for getting other things outside of economics," he said.

NYPD releases new photos of suspected killer of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson

World. The New York Police Department (NYPD) has released two new photographs of the suspected killer of UnitedHealthcare's CEO, with one photograph showing him seated in a taxi's back seat on the shooting day. The killer shot Brian Thompson outside Manhattan's New York Hilton Midtown on Wednesday and is still not arrested despite an extensive search operation extending beyond New York City's boundaries. A photograph shows the unknown suspect looking forward from the rear seat, wearing a blue surgical mask, dark headwear and black hood. The second photograph, taken through glass, shows him walking along the street wearing identical mask attire, a black puffer coat and hooded covering. The suspect boarded a taxi at approximately 7 am Wednesday in the Upper West Side shortly after Thompson's shooting, according to police reports. The suspect travelled northward to a coach station near the George Washington Bridge, potentially boarding an interstate coach. These photos are recent additions to evidence as authorities analyse thousands of surveillance footage hours to understand the suspect's movements. They also discovered bullet casings at the crime scene marked with "depose," "deny" and "delay" - potentially referencing insurance claim avoidance terminology.

Ousted Syrian President Assad, His Family In Russia, Granted Asylum: Report



World. Ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his family have arrived in Russia's Moscow after the rebels took over the country's capital city Damascus on Sunday, Russian news agencies reported citing a Kremlin source. "Assad and members of his family have arrived in Moscow," the source told the Russian news agencies. Assad family has been granted asylum by the Russian authorities on "humanitarian grounds", the source added.

Earlier in the day, Russia announced that Assad had resigned from the post of the President of Syria and left the country to an unknown destination. "As a result of negotiations between B. Assad and a number of participants in the armed conflict in the SAR, he decided to leave the presidential post and left the country, giving instructions to transfer power peacefully," the Russian foreign ministry had said in a statement. Speculations swirled over the fate of Assad after the rebels advanced the capital city. It was

assumed that he might seek refuge in Russia or Iran. As reported earlier, the ousted leader was visiting Moscow just before the rebel offensive and Iranian news agencies published a photograph of him that showed him meeting a top Iranian official in Damascus. Assad has not spoken in public since the rebels advance a week ago, when insurgents seized northern Aleppo in a surprise attack before marching into a succession of cities as frontlines crumbled.

Meanwhile, as per the sources, Moscow had received guarantees from Syrian insurgents of the security of Russian military bases and diplomatic posts in Syria.

Fled To Unknown Destination

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said Assad left on a private plane that took off from Damascus international airport at 10:00 pm (1900 GMT) on Saturday night, without specifying where he headed.

There were also the reports of Assad being killed in a plane crash after it abruptly reversed course and flew in the opposite direction for several minutes before vanishing from radar near the city of Homs, Reuters reported.

What Fueled Speculations Of Assad's Death?

Reuters cited data from the Flightradar website and reported that a Syrian plane took off from the Damascus airport around

the same time when the capital city was stormed by the anti-regime forces.

The flight initially moved towards Syria's coastal region which is believed to be his stronghold. However, the plane made a U-turn abruptly and flew in the opposite direction for some time before it disappeared from the map. The abrupt U-turn and disappearance from the radar fueled speculations Assad might have been killed mid-air.

Syrians Celebrate Assad's Ouster

Celebrations erupted around Syria and crowds ransacked Assad's palace earlier today the HTS, formerly known as the Al-Nusra Front and affiliated with the terror group Al-Qaeda, along with allied factions, ended five decades of Baath party rule.

Who Is Bashar al-Assad?

Bashar Al-Assad came to power succeeding his father Hafez Al-Assad in 2000 and ruled Syria for over two decades till an armed rebellion overthrew his regime.

Damascus Spring': Reports say Assad arrives in Moscow after rebels seize Syria

World. Islamist-led rebels overran Damascus in a lightning assault on Sunday, driving President Bashar al-Assad out of the country and bringing the Assad family's 50-year grip on Syria to a dramatic end.

Russian state news agencies were reporting that President Bashar Assad and his family had arrived in Moscow and were given asylum. Russia said Assad left the country after negotiations with rebel groups and that he had given instructions to transfer power peacefully. The Syrian capital woke up on Sunday to chanting, cheering and celebratory gunfire following the fall of Assad. Rebels led by the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) announced they had entered the city and toppled the longtime ruler. State media broadcast a declaration of his overthrow and reported a mass release of detainees.

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, a former al-Qaida commander who cut ties with the group years ago leads HTS, the biggest rebel faction in Syria, and is poised to chart the country's future. He made his first public appearance since fighters entered the Damascus suburbs, at the capital's sprawling Umayyad Mosque, and called himself by his given name, Ahmad al-Sharaa. He said Assad's fall was "a victory to the Islamic nation." Syrians around the country toppled and trampled on statues of Bashar al-Assad's late father Hafez, who founded the brutal system of government that his son inherited.

In Damascus, people cheered as they stood on a toppled statue of former president Hafez al-Assad, in a highly symbolic moment for a country ruled with an iron fist by his clan. The scenes came as Islamist-led rebels wrested city after city from his control, culminating with their arrival in Damascus.

After five decades in power, most Syrians are too young to remember a time when the country was not ruled by the Assads. Russia, a staunch ally of al-Assad, confirmed on Sunday that the Syrian president had resigned following negotiations with the sides involved in the conflict and had left the country, without saying where to. As a result of talks between B. Assad and a range of participants of the conflict on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, he took the decision to resign from his presidential post and leave the country, giving instructions to proceed with the peaceful transfer of power," Russia's foreign ministry said. "Russia did not take part in these talks." Meanwhile, Dozens of Syrians explored Assad's luxurious Damascus home after it was looted on Sunday, an AFP correspondent said, following the fall of the capital to rebel forces. Women, children and men could be seen touring the home and its large garden, with the rooms completely empty, save some furniture and a portrait of Assad thrown on the floor. "I came for revenge, they oppressed us in incredible ways," Abu Omar, 44, told AFP. "I am taking pictures because I am so happy to be here in the middle of his house," he added, showing photographs on his mobile phone. The residence in the upscale al-Maliki neighbourhood comprises three six-storey buildings.

bombing targeted the Indonesian Hospital wounding six patients, one of them seriously. It is the largest hospital north of Gaza City.



"We demand international protection for hospitals, patients and medical staff," the ministry said in a statement that also urged safe passage to and from hospitals, more medical supplies and fuel and safe evacuation of the wounded. The Israeli military Sunday evening said it was unaware of any attack on the Indonesian Hospital "in

the last three to four hours." Meanwhile, the military said it briefly closed the key Kerem Shalom crossing after fighters launched mortar shells several meters (feet) from the nearby humanitarian corridor toward its troops. It said Gaza's main cargo crossing was reopened after those who fired were "eliminated," though it added that the arrival and distribution of humanitarian aid was delayed.

Kerem Shalom is the only crossing between Israel and Gaza that is designed for cargo shipments and has been the main artery for aid since the Rafah crossing with Egypt was shut in May. Last month, nearly two-thirds of aid entering Gaza came through Kerem Shalom. A second cold, rainy winter is beginning in Gaza, with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in squalid tent camps and reliant on international aid.

Fall of Assad regime 'historic opportunity for people' of Syria: Biden

WASHINGTON. The fall of the Assad regime that brutalised, tortured and killed thousands of innocent Syrians over the past half a century is a historic opportunity for the people of the country, outgoing US President Joe Biden said on Sunday. Biden spoke at the White House hours after rebel groups took over the country following more than a dozen years of violent civil war and decades of leadership by Bashar Assad and his family. After 13 years of civil war in Syria and more than half a century of brutal authoritarian rule by Bashar Assad and his father before him, rebel forces have forced Assad to resign his office and flee the country. We're not sure where he is, but there's word that he's in Moscow. At long last, the Assad regime has collapsed. He observed a new opportunity for the people of Syria now. The Syrian opposition that brought down Assad is led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which the US says is a terrorist organisation with links to al-Qaida. However, the group says it has since broken ties with al-Qaida. Looking ahead, the United States will do the following. First, we'll support Syria's neighbours, including Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Israel, should any threat arise from Syria during this period of transition. I will speak with leaders of the region in the coming days. I had long discussions with all of our people earlier this morning. I'll send senior officials from my administration to the region as well.

Second, we will help ensure stability in eastern Syria, protecting our personnel against any threats, and our mission against ISIS will be maintained, including security of detention facilities, where ISIS fighters are being held as prisoners. We're clear-eyed about the fact that ISIS will try to take advantage of any vacuum to reestablish its capabilities and create a haven. We will not let that happen, he said. Just today, US forces conducted a dozen precision strikes, airstrikes, within Syria, targeting ISIS camps and operatives. Third, we will engage with all Syrian groups, including within the process led by the United Nations to establish a transition away from the Assad regime towards independent and sovereign Syria, with a new constitution, and a new government that serves all Syrians. And this process will be determined by the Syrian people themselves. Biden said. A day earlier, Trump ruled out any role for the US in Syria. In any event, Syria is a mess, but is not our friend and THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. THIS IS NOT OUR FIGHT. LET IT PLAY OUT. DO NOT GET INVOLVED! he wrote on Truth Social. US Secretary of State Tony Blinken said the US would closely monitor developments as they unfold and engage with our partners in the region. We will support international efforts to hold the Assad regime and its backers accountable for atrocities and abuses perpetrated against the Syrian people, including the use of chemical weapons and.

Lara Trump steps down as RNC co-chair, addresses speculation about Florida Senate seat



World. Lara Trump will step down as co-chair of the Republican National Committee as she considers a number of potential options with her father-in-law, President-elect Donald Trump, set to return to the White House. Among those possibilities is replacing Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, whom Trump tapped to be the next secretary of state. If Rubio is confirmed, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will choose who takes the seat through the remainder of Rubio's term, which expires in 2026. "It is something I would seriously consider," she told The Associated Press in an interview. "If I'm being completely transparent, I don't know exactly what that would look like. And I certainly want to get all of the information possible if that is something that's real for me. But yeah, I would 100% consider it."

Elected as RNC co-chair in March, Lara Trump was a key player in the Republicans retaking the White House and control of the Senate while maintaining a narrow House majority. What she does next could shape

Republican politics, given her elevated political profile and her ties to the incoming president. The idea of placing a Trump family member in the Senate has been lauded in some Republican circles. Among the people pushing for her to replace Rubio is Maye Musk, mother of Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk. "The Senate is an old man's club. We desperately need a smart, young, outspoken woman who will reveal their secrets," she posted on X. Lara Trump is 42. Elon Musk, who was with Lara Trump on election night at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, responded to his mother's post: "Lara Trump is genuinely great." Led by chairman Michael Whitley and Lara Trump, the RNC invested heavily in recruiting roughly 230,000 volunteers and an army of lawyers for what it called its "election integrity" effort, four years after Donald Trump lost his reelection bid to Democrat Joe Biden, citing false or unproven theories about voter fraud.

"With that big win, I kind of feel like my time is up," she said. "What I intended to do has been done." Lara Trump praised Musk's new endeavor, the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, a nongovernmental task force headed by Musk and fellow entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy. They've been tapped to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations as part of Trump's "Save America" agenda for his second term. "I really don't think we've seen movement like this in our federal government since our country's founding in many ways," she said. "And I think if they are successful in what they plan to do, I think it is going to be transformative to America in a great way." She said she expects a different presidency this time, beginning with the structure of the administration. While Trump's daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner served as White House advisers in his last administration, Lara Trump said.

News box

CCB cops register FIR over alleged misappropriation of funds in CAR

BENGALURU. The Central Crime Branch (CCB) police registered an FIR over allegations of misappropriation of funds to the tune of Rs 59.8 lakh in the central unit of the City Armed Reserve (CAR). A complaint in this connection is filed by CAR's assistant administrative officer (AAO) D Rajalakshmi. The accused has been identified as DS Prashanth, Second Division Assistant (SDA) and B Saroja, retired AAO. According to the FIR, during the audit of financial transactions between 2020 and 2023, a shortfall of Rs 59.80 lakh was found. The deficit was found in the amount deposited into the bank account under the name 'Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) CAR,' and unauthorised transactions were reported by the Accounts Officer. At the time, Saroja was serving as the AAO, and Prashanth was the special officer in charge of the cash branch, the complaint stated.

"The authority to approve the files submitted by Prashanth rested with Saroja. Prashanth was in-charge of managing the departmental transactions of the CAR central unit, but after he was transferred, no charge was handed over to the successor. Furthermore, Saroja, the then AAO, failed to take disciplinary action regarding the unauthorised transactions and did not provide proper responses or documents during the departmental inquiry," the complaint further mentioned.

26-year-old nurse accuses friend of drugging, raping her in Bengaluru

BENGALURU. A 26-year-old woman has alleged that her friend raped her after giving her sleeping pills. The accused also allegedly used casteist slurs against her and threatened to release her private videos on social media. The High Grounds police have registered a case.

The accused has been identified as Akki Lakshmi Reddy, a native of Andhra Pradesh. According to the FIR, the woman, a nurse at a hospital in the city, met Lakshmi Reddy in 2019 at a bank in RT Nagar, where he worked in the credit card department.

The two became friends and often had casual phone conversations. In November 2019, Lakshmi Reddy invited the victim to his sister's birthday party in RT Nagar. During the party, he allegedly gave her tea laced with sleeping pills, raped her, and recorded the incident.

Using these videos, the accused allegedly sexually assaulted the victim multiple times. The accused is reported to have insulted the victim's caste and used abusive language against her and her family. The case has been registered at the High Grounds police station.

Chennai Beach-Chengalpattu route to have 24 fewer trains on Sundays

CHENNAI. Rail passengers using local trains on Sundays will have to wait longer at stations, as 24 services on the Chennai Beach-Chengalpattu route have been cancelled on weekends to accommodate line and engineering maintenance works.

According to the suburban timetable that came into effect on July 14 last year, the section previously had 206 services on Sundays, but this has now been reduced to 182. The number of services during weekdays (Monday to Saturday) remains unchanged at 235.

While railway authorities have attributed the decision to low patronage, and the need to block lines to carry out maintenance, the move is expected to affect rail passengers during peak hours. Suburban trains experience high patronage during festival seasons such as Ayudha Puja, Deepavali, Pongal, and other festivals. The suburban section also sees significant crowds on auspicious days, extended holidays, and special events such as IPL matches and music concerts. The patronage is too low for several trains on Sundays, said B Vishwanath Erya, Divisional Railway Manager, Chennai. "We also need the tracks for carrying out a lot of maintenance and station redevelopment-related works," he said.

According to the new Sunday timetable, the interval between trains from Chennai Beach has been extended from 13 minutes to 20 minutes between 7am and 10am. The number of trains operated between 6.30am and 7.30am has been reduced from four to three. Similarly, services have been gradually cut throughout the day, increasing the gap between services. However, the operational hours of train services have not been reduced. Local trains will still be available from 4am onwards from Chennai Beach. The last train to Chengalpattu will depart Chennai Beach at 10.45pm and Tambaram at 11.59pm. Similarly, the last train to Chennai Beach will leave Chengalpattu at 11pm. S Ramachandran, a regular commuter, pointed out that regular services not only cater to office-goers but also to those travelling to Egmore, Central, and Tambaram to board express trains. "I frequently travel to New Delhi and may face issues in reaching Chennai Park," he said.

Pedestrian safety goes for a toss in state capital

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Defunct traffic signals, poorly maintained pathways, unchecked street vending and inadequate road safety measures are putting the lives of pedestrians and commuters at risk in the state capital. Despite repeated tragedies, East Fort – infamous for pedestrian fatalities – continues to be in a precarious condition.

On Friday, a 52-year-old man lost his life after getting caught between two moving buses at East Fort. Three people have lost their lives at East Fort alone this year. As per data, around 5,000 pedestrians have died in road accidents across the state between 2018 and 2022. An official of NATPAC said 25% of the total accident victims were pedestrians.

According to studies, the peak hour pedestrian footfall in the busy Overbridge Jn to East Fort stretch comes around 10,000 to 15,000. The pedestrian infrastructure at East Fort, unscientifically planned, remains unused and ineffective. Meanwhile, an average of 800 buses, both private and KSRTC, operate in the region causing traffic chaos. The tussle between private bus operators and KSRTC has also been going on for years now. However, the changing governments and the local leadership have failed to resolve the issue.

Open drains are also becoming a major threat to commuters and pedestrians. In a recent incident at Sreekaryam, a 72-year-old was found dead in a drain.

A top official of the city corporation said the matter will be discussed in the next traffic



advisory committee meeting.

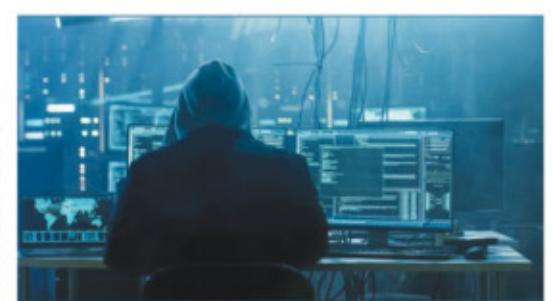
"We have come to realise that foot overbridges in the city are under-utilised and multiple stakeholders are involved in ensuring the pedestrian safety. We have decided to place this as a major agenda in the traffic advisory committee meeting," said the official.

A draft master plan of the city corporation proposes a mobility hub at Anayara and the state town and country planning department has proposed a 'town square'

or 'city plaza' at East Fort – which falls in the core part of the city. Road safety expert and former managing director of TRDCL (Trivandrum Road Development Corporation Ltd) Anil Kumar Pandala said the proposals by TRDCL as part of the city road improvement project were killed by various stakeholders. "The authorities should encourage commuters and pedestrians to utilise the foot overbridges and it should be strictly enforced. Ideally, the city bus operations should be shifted to Thampanoor Bus Terminal and the operations of inter-district buses should be relocated to Enchakkal.

Nobody is making efforts to implement these suggestions," he said.

Meanwhile, the motor vehicle department and the traffic authorities on Saturday strengthened enforcement activities at East Fort in response to Friday's tragic accident. "We did a drone surveillance and a decision has been taken to put more police force to manage traffic. A traffic official will be in charge at East Fort to enforce line traffic. Vehicles will not be allowed to stay longer," said assistant commissioner Suresh R, Traffic (South).



CHENNAI. The Tamil Nadu police have arrested 70 people involved in 135 cases in the last three days in Operation Thiraineeku targeting cyber criminals across the state. The accused are involved in complaints of fraud to the tune of 42 crore, according to a release from the Tamil Nadu Police Cyber Crime Division.

The large-scale operation was based on accused profiling through NCRP Portal and portals of Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and bank fund trail linkages established by financial data analysis of cyber criminal networks, targeting those involved in 158 NCRP (National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal) complaints, the release stated.

Special teams under the district superintendents and commissioners of police worked on the operation planned by the cyber crime wing. ADGP (cyber crime) Sandeep Mittal supervised the entire operation, according to the release.

"Efforts are underway to trace and apprehend other members, recover defrauded funds, and identify broader links to nationwide cyber crime activities," the release said.

Tower Exchange fraud: Bengaluru court rejects anticipatory bail pleas

The CID said it had found a deposit of the amount collected through Tower Exchange Group in a bank account of Su Paul Services Private Ltd.

BENGALURU. The Principal City Civil and Sessions Court dismissed the anticipatory bail pleas of Manish Kumar and Rahul Kumar Raja, natives of Bihar, who allegedly cheated several persons by inducing them to invest for higher returns through Tower Exchange app. The accused moved court for anticipatory bail in connection with a case registered by cybercrime police against Tower Exchange app and others under the IT Act, IPC and Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019, based on a complaint filed by Sachin Prakash Shet in 2021.

In the order rejecting the petitions, the Principal City Civil and Sessions Judge Muralidhar Pai B said investigation done so far has revealed that Manish Kumar, being CEO, and Rahul Kumar Raja, being director of Su Paul Services Private Ltd, collected money as investment through bank accounts and



the accusation made against them is grave. The court said the facts and circumstances of the case gave an impression that the investigating agency could not make a major headway in the probe

because of the modus operandi used by the accused, making use of technology, and also because of non-cooperation on the part of the petitioners.

The CID said it had found a deposit of the amount collected through Tower Exchange Group in a bank account of Su Paul Services Private Ltd. It was stated that on July 2, 2024, investigating agency officials had visited Millennium Aviation Academy in Patna, which was being run by the petitioners, and came to know that Manish Kumar had gone abroad and Rahul Kumar Raja had not come for duty on that day.

As the petitioners failed to appear before the investigating officer on July 8, 2024, another notice was issued on July 9, calling on them to appear on July 15, but they have not come up with any explanation, the CID told court.

'Indian citizens' set up 'bar' on car bonnet, attack cops on bridge

According to the Panangad police, it was around 2am that they noticed a luxury car parked right in the middle of the Kumbalam-Panangad bridge.

KOCHI. A group of inebriated youngsters from Alappuzha, out to explore the hangouts in Ernakulam in a Mercedes-Benz car on Saturday night, gave the officers on highway patrol a hard time before landing in police custody in the early hours of Sunday.

According to the Panangad police, it was around 2am that they noticed a luxury car parked right in the middle of the Kumbalam-Panangad bridge.

A few of them were standing on the bonnet of the car with liquor placed on the bonnet, while a couple of them lay on the footpath nearby. When questioned, they yelled at the police that 'they are citizens of independent India and they have the right to stand there and do

whatever they want to'. After a round of filthy dialogues, they started abusing the officer on patrolling duty," said a senior officer with the Panangad police.

When the accused continued to abuse and challenge the police, Panangad Sub Inspector Bharathan along with CPOs Sajju and Satheesh arrived to take the accused into custody but they attacked the officers. Then, on the instructions of

the Control Room Assistant Commissioner Ibrahim PH, who was on night echo duty, a police party led by Thrikakkara Inspector Vibin Das, who was in charge of the sub-division, reached the spot and took the accused into custody. The injured police officers later sought treatment at the Tripunithura Taluk Hospital. All seven of the accused belong to Thaikkattussery in Alappuzha district. The arrested are Velamveli Veetil Shameer (37), Vathiveetil Anoop (37), Kumbalassery Manu (35), Pallathiparambil Veetil Varghese (35), Jayakrishnan (28) of Ambadikrishna Nivas, Punnampozhi Veetil Kiranbabu (25), and Veliyil Veetil Ajay Krishnan (28).

Can CSML's silt pusher help SWTD resume services to Mattancherry?

SWTD blames Irrigation dept for failing to act on its repeated pleas to remove silt from channel

KOCHI. The Cochin Carnival, the biggest gala of West Kochi, is off to a lively start as tourist arrivals to the historical spots of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry have started witnessing a rise. And the State Water Transport Department (SWTD) is desperate to resume its boat services to Mattancherry to cater to the tourist demand. But the failure of the irrigation department to remove the silt accumulated in the channel has hit its plans big time.

Now, as a last-ditch effort, the department has sought the help of the Cochin Smart Mission Ltd (CSML) to clear the channel of the silt deposits using the new silt pusher machine that the latter is acquiring for the Kochi corporation.

"Our plan was to resume the services ahead of the Cochin Carnival. Despite continually pursuing with the irrigation department to clear the silt deposits and make the channel navigable, nothing has happened for nearly six years. Now, we're hopeful that the silt pusher can help resume the boat services to Mattancherry

in two weeks, in time for the New Year festivities that culminate with the burning of pappanji on the night of December 31," a senior SWTD official told.

Recently, the CSML bought a number of



modern machines, like 15 refuse compactors, mobile cold emulsion spray compaction pothole patching machine, weed harvester, silt pusher, and jetting machine as part of a joint initiative with the Kochi corporation to transform the city. Minister for Local Self Government M B Rajesh inaugurated the '130-crore' project last month. "We're even acquiring a new boat FC-6, which will be delivered by

December 14, taking the fleet strength in the Ernakulam region alone to nine. Now, we've sufficient boats and even spare ones to operate on the Mattancherry route. The current situation is that we cannot operate even the emergency rescue boat through the backwater channel because of a lack of depth following the formation of large silt deposits post the 2018 flood," the official said. The SWTD has taken up the issue with the CSML, following which the latter agreed to experiment with the silt pusher machine to clear the channel of silt. "During the talks, the operator exuded confidence of completing the work in two weeks," he said. CSML CEO Shaji V Nair said the silt pusher has been purchased to remove waste from drains and canals in the city. "But when SWTD brought up the issue that has remained unresolved for many years, we thought of giving it a try using the machine. If the effort proves successful, SWTD can resume boat operations to Mattancherry before the carnival day. The machine will be handed over to the corporation only after this exercise," Shaji said.

Meanwhile, there was a leakage around the sluice on the southern side of the lake two months ago. Authorities, however, allegedly are yet to act on it. Against this backdrop, on December 3, heavy rains induced by Cyclone Fengal increased water flow into the lake and caused the breach, submerging about 20 acres of paddy fields around. Renganathan, a farmer from A Mettur, said, "It is the first lake in the district to fill up every year during the rainy season. Knowing that the water flow to this lake is high, why didn't the authorities construct a new structure at Periyasamy temple check dam for four years? The negligence of the authorities led to the breach." Another farmer, Raja Chidambaram, said, "Even now officials are only taking temporary measures to fix the breach. A permanent solution should be taken without delay. Compensation should also be paid for affected paddy cultivation."



Touchstones: Pant, Lungi, dhoti, salwar

The other day, a reader sent me a funny post about the huge amount paid to Rishabh Pant (Rs 27 crore) while the South African cricketer, Lungi Ngidi, was paid a mere Rs 1 crore as franchise fees. The bottomline said, 'Knew that a Pant is costlier than a Lungi. But didn't know that it is 27 times costlier!' My maiden name was Pant too, and then another funny episode came to my mind. I must have been about 11 years old and studying in Nainital. In those days, the production quality of our Hindi textbooks was pathetic and the broken line sketch accompanying a poem by the poet Sumitranandan Pant in my textbook made it difficult to make out the contours of the poet's face. Also, I had inherited my textbook from an older cousin (as was the custom in those frugal days), who had added lavish flourishes to the picture; so, earrings hung from poor Pantji's ears, a bindi adorned his forehead and a nath dangled from his nose. The poet also proudly sported long, curled locks so I had a gender-baffling portrait of this famous Romantic (chhayavadi) poet in front of me. Our Hindi teacher, who knew my mother was a writer, asked me one day: 'Ira, are you related to Sumitranandan Pant?' I looked at that funny picture, and since his name was Sumitranandan, assumed foolishly that it must be that of a woman. 'Yes,' I replied airily, 'she is my aunt.' For years after that, that teacher would ask me, 'So, how is your aunt, Ira?' and I would blush. Funny as it seems today, it is a reminder of how privileged we were to know the literary fraternity of Allahabad, where our family went after Nainital. Allahabad in the 1960s was where some of the most iconic Hindi writers and poets lived. Periodically, they would gather at someone's house for a sahityik goshti (literary soiree) and discuss their work to each other. Many young and aspiring writers joined such sittings to read out their work and have it critiqued and assessed by such eminent names. Their modest lives and mutual respect are a distinct memory and something to remember in these times when every young writer wants to write a bestseller, and make a pile of money by selling it to a big publisher. There are actually agencies now that offer their services (at a huge cost, naturally) for editing (and often re-writing the original work), marketing and ensuring high visibility. I suppose these are a sign of our fiercely competitive times for I see such hustling everywhere. In films, music and the performing arts, the shy, self-effacing person stands no chance. The hype created by this ecosystem has seriously damaged creativity in most spheres and many 'outstanding' first performers and writers sink without a trace soon enough. In contrast, the place occupied by an older generation is beyond all this. Whether writers, lyricists, poets or artists, their reputation has been built over time and reading or listening to their work is a perennial pleasure. Related to this is another concern and that is our dismissal of anything that is not written in English. The wealth of talent that exists in our regional languages is something I have written about earlier and now with good translations, I hope this trend will hold. The enormous popularity of Tamil and Telugu cinema is an example of how subtitling or dubbing into Hindi makes it possible for viewers to open their eyes to a new world and genre. The most visible proof of this is our English language media that had, until quite recently, occupied prime time space. Regional language newspapers and local broadsheets were considered beneath their notice and something that was bought by the sahib log for their staff. The shoe is on the other foot now: our mainstream English media gets left behind, for the regional language media far outstrips these old ladies of Bori Bunder where advertising is concerned. Look at our Parliament, the glib English speakers who wear expensive handloom and flash designer bags and glasses, grab all the media attention. Most of them are inheritors or dynasts and patnis.

Rewriting the rules of survival in Gir territory

The resilience of the big cats is a testament to nature's ability to adapt, even in the face of human encroachment and environmental change

"The world is not to be put in order. The world is order incarnate. It is for us to harmonise with this order." The picture was mesmerising — two farmers, their hands resting on weathered knees, seated calmly amid golden fields. Just a few paces behind them, two sub-adult male Asiatic lions stood tall, their watchful eyes surveying the landscape. It was a photograph that seemed almost surreal. Social media was abuzz with opinions — was it real or just another digital fabrication? My curiosity got the better of me, and I found myself drawn into an investigation, piecing together accounts from Gujarat's forest officials, wildlife experts and local communities. What emerged was a tale of change, adaptation and an evolving coexistence between humans and the wild. The Asiatic lions, with their shorter manes and regal strides, have a history as expansive as their former range — from Greece to India. By the early 20th century, their empire had dwindled to the dry deciduous forests of Gir in Gujarat. Less than 200 lions remained, clinging to survival in the sanctuary that would become their last refuge. Gir National Park, a sprawling mosaic of forests, scrublands and grasslands, has been a lifeline for these lions. Here, prides thrive in familial bonds, hunting deer, antelope and wild boar in the soft light of dawn and dusk. Among them, the Maldharis — traditional herders — have long lived as neighbours, their livestock an occasional temptation for the hungry predators. Efforts to mediate this uneasy coexistence, from compensation schemes to grazing alternatives, have shaped the park's conservation narrative for decades. These conservation measures and relentless efforts of the Forest Department have resulted in a significant increase of lions. As per the latest census, the number of lions in Gir is above 650. But the Gir forest itself is changing. Teak plantations, planted over the years, have grown dense, transforming open expanses into shadowy corridors. The forest floor is now a thick carpet of dry teak leaves, crackling underfoot with every step. For lions, stealth — so crucial for hunting — has become a challenge. The leaves, while innocuous to the untrained eye, act as an acoustic alarm for the prey, scattering potential meals before a lion can pounce. The leaves also pose another threat: they are a tinderbox, waiting for a spark to ignite biodiversity loss, destroying ground nests, invertebrates, and the fragile ecosystem underfoot. Furthermore, the lions have outgrown the carrying capacity of protected area, and, therefore, the prides often move out of the notified boundaries of the national reserve. As per



wildlife experts, the notified area of the park (1,410 sq km) is just enough to support 350-400 lions, and hence, some lions have sought solace beyond the protected area of Gir's boundaries into the agro-pastoral landscape of Saurashtra, covering nine districts. Surprisingly, their new home, the agricultural fields, which are open stretches, mimic the savannahs of their evolutionary past, and hence offer space to roam and better opportunities to hunt. Blue bulls, wild boars, and deer — drawn to farmers' crops — have unwittingly brought lions into the fold. For the big cats, it's a buffet; for the farmers, it's a blessing in disguise. "We don't mind the lions," one farmer told me. "They keep the crop raiders away." This unspoken alliance between the predator and the farmer has cultivated a remarkable tolerance, even towards the occasional hunt of domestic cattle by these lions. Unlike in dense forests, the fields allow lions to hunt with ease, and the well-fed pride reduces damage to crops. It is important to note that this phenomenon isn't unique only to Gujarat. It was observed in eastern India where tea plantations were

grown over a century ago. The leopards of the area found it easy to hunt and hide in the newly-developed tea garden habitat, rather than dense woodlands. It seems these apex predators are more adaptable than we once believed. But not all is idyllic. With lions venturing closer to human settlements, the risk of conflict looms. Therefore, the growing overlap of human and lion habitats underscores the need for proactive measures. Community education, better livestock management and innovative coexistence strategies will be essential. Engaging locals as stakeholders, not just spectators, in conservation efforts could turn potential conflicts into collaborative solutions.

The story of Gir's lions is far from over. From the dense teak forests to the sunlit agricultural fields, these big cats are rewriting the rules of survival. Their resilience is a testament to nature's ability to adapt, even in the face of human encroachment and environmental change. For me, the photograph that started this journey has become more than just an image — it's a symbol of coexistence.

Reviving Aravallis

Project to reclaim vanishing hills takes shape

THE Aravalli Green Wall Project, an eco-restoration initiative by the Union Environment Ministry, promises to be a turning point in combating land degradation and desertification. Covering over 1.1 million hectares across Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi, this 1,400-km-long and 5-km-wide green corridor aims to restore the Aravalli hills' ecological vitality. Once a thriving ecosystem of hills, forests, fauna, aquifers and natural drainage, the Aravallis now bear the unfortunate distinction of being the country's most degraded forest range. Over 30 hillocks have already vanished, particularly in Haryana's Gurugram, Faridabad, Mewat, Mahendragarh and Rewari districts. Relentless urban expansion has replaced verdant landscapes with concrete jungles, disrupting the ecological balance. Within decades, habitats thriving for millennia now teeter on the brink of extinction. The cost of this development has been immense, with the loss of



indigenous species, widespread deforestation and drying up of critical groundwater recharge zones. Inspired by Saudi Arabia's green initiatives, the Green Wall Project

aims to reverse this destruction. Indigenous species and community engagement lie at its core. Haryana's proactive measures, such as reviving 75 water bodies and restoring 35,000 hectares of degraded land, exemplify the potential of collaborative efforts among states to tackle this environmental crisis. The World Bank is supporting the Aravalli project with funding for initiatives like afforestation, water conservation and pollution control.

However, the project's success depends on enforcing conservation laws to prevent illegal mining and encroachments. Preserving legal safeguards, such as the Punjab Land Preservation Act, is crucial. The states must transcend political boundaries to protect these shared ecological treasures. The Green Wall Project is a fight to reclaim the Aravallis and reverse decades of destruction. With robust public-private partnerships and community involvement, the initiative offers hope to revive these ancient hills.

Consumers Beware! — Why feedback has lost its meaning

If businesses are genuinely interested in consumer response to their queries, there ought to be respect for the negative feedback and acknowledgement of suggestions for improvement

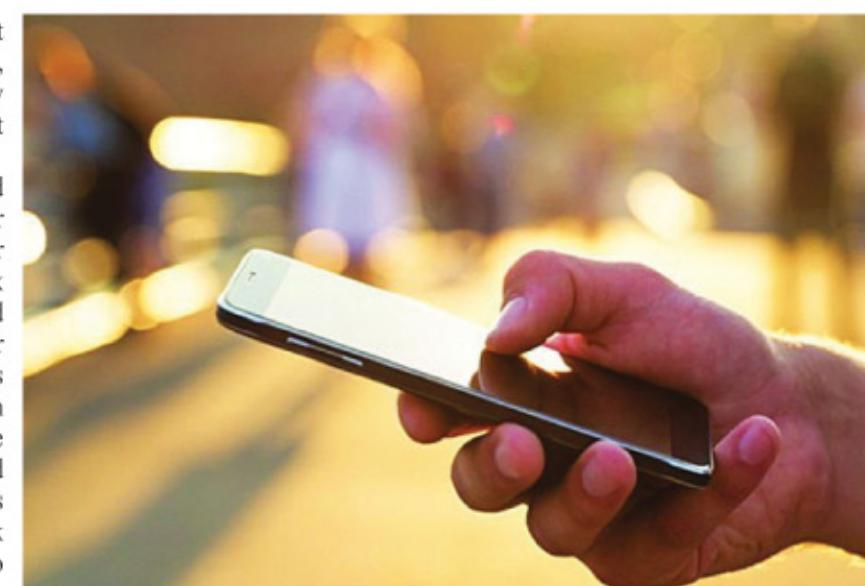
You walk into a shoe store, buy a pair of flip-flops and even as you are stepping out, you hear a 'ping' on your mobile. You know what it is: a WhatsApp message from the brand, requesting your feedback on your shopping experience! When you get out of a cab, you are asked to rate your experience. You get off an airplane, and the airline wants your feedback on the service. You go to a restaurant and the owner requests you to fill out a questionnaire. You get your car serviced and you are urged to give your opinion on the service performance. You call the customer care number of a business and you are immediately asked to rate your satisfaction with the resolution of your complaint.

From hairdressers and telecom operators to couriers, gyms, hospitals and online and offline stores, businesses are chasing you for feedback, cluttering your message boxes and WhatsApp with survey forms that are supposed to help them improve the quality of their goods and services! However, the formats of these surveys make you wonder whether they are serving consumer interest in any way!

Here is a sample: "On a scale of 0-5, how likely are you to recommend the store to your friends or colleagues?" asks a typical 'customer satisfaction' survey. If you say it is unlikely that you would recommend it to anyone, the questionnaire should ask you to cite reasons and request suggestions for improvement. However, the online feedback form gives you only four predetermined answers to choose from. If your answer is not one of them,

that's too bad! You try to suggest improvements, but after two lines, the online questionnaire abruptly closes, never mind that you have not even completed your sentence. If businesses are genuinely interested in consumer response to their queries, there ought to be respect for those giving them negative feedback and a desire to seek and acknowledge suggestions for improvement. After all, consumers are investing their time in responding to these surveys in the hope of seeing better services and products. In fact, most consumers say that the way these feedback forms are designed, there is no opportunity for them to give meaningful suggestions and even where they do get such a chance, they do not see any improvement based on their constructive criticism. So much so that the 'feedback request' seems more like a meaningless, routine exercise, a charade to give consumers a false impression that the businesses care for their views and opinions.

Here is an example of a consumer who ordered some clothes from an online marketplace while on a holiday in another city. The clothes were delivered the next day as promised, but were not what she had ordered. However, the website showed that the item chosen by her had been delivered. Since the



customer interface on the website did not provide for resolution of such a complaint, she was forced to call the helpline number, not once, but three times, without success. What was even more frustrating was that after every call, she got a text message on her cellphone asking her to evaluate the customer care service. She gave it the lowest ranking every time, but there was no way for her to explain, through the survey, that the customer care personnel could not even understand the problem, let alone come up with a solution. Any wonder then that consumers feel that filling up these forms is a futile exercise, a waste of time and the

feedback messages are an annoyance. I am not discounting the importance of customer feedback to businesses, but commenting on the poor format used by them and the lack of transparency and accountability in the entire process. How is it that businesses never acknowledge the suggestions made by consumers, nor inform them of the action taken based on the responses? In fact, one wonders what happens to all those feedback forms that customers so painstakingly fill in the hope of seeing an improvement in service. Surely, consumers too are entitled to feedback! And how about feedback forms with simple, open-ended questions such as "What did you dislike about our service" or "What problem did you face with our customer service" or "How can we improve our customer interface?"

If businesses are serious about consumer opinions, they must provide them with an opportunity to have their say, voice their grievances. Feedback should be designed to elicit meaningful information from consumers on the deficiencies in the system and utilised to bring about positive changes. And consumers must get feedback from businesses on the action taken on their suggestions and complaints. That would not only enhance consumer interactions with businesses, but also improve the quality of consumer feedback and thereby the quality of goods and services.

How to steep the perfect Cup of Tea?



A hot cup of tea gives a lot of comfort during winters, but do you know who to steep the perfect cup of tea? Avoid boiling water. It scalds the leaves and affects the flavours adversely says an expert.

Rishav Kanoi, Tea Expert and Founder at Tea Trove also has some tips to share:

- * One shall understand the four different types of tea: White, Green, Oolong and Black.
- * One shall not call it brewed; tea is steeped.
- * One shall steep tea as per suggested steeping time of 5 minutes for Black and White teas, 2 minutes for Green tea and 4 minutes for Oolong Tea.
- * One shall use filtered or bottled water to make tea.
- * One shall use a proper teaspoon for every 180 ml of water.
- * One shall not use a tea bag but shall only use loose teas.
- * One shall steep loose tea leaves 2-3 times by adding hot water and increasing the steeping time with each infusion.

Making tea may seem a simple and easy task but to brew the perfect cup, one needs to take care of some key details. Kaushal Duggal, founder and CEO – Teabox elaborates how:

- * The quality and freshness of tea defines a good tea experience. Buying fresh whole leaf teas is key to savouring delicate tastes and aromas.
- * When you've acquired the best loose leaves, then the quality of water plays a

very important role in bringing out the best flavours. Water should be as fresh as possible.

* Temperature plays a crucial role in steeping tea. Use water just when it starts to boil (around 85°C – 95°C). This will effectively bring out all the right flavours and curb the unwanted bitterness.

* Avoid boiling water. It scalds the leaves and affects the flavours adversely.

* A tablespoon (2.5 gms) of leaves is

recommended for every cup of water (180ml).

* Choose a clean tea-maker/pot, ideally porcelain, glazed ceramic, or glass to avoid unwanted peculiarities of taste.

* Pour hot water over the tea leaves and not the other way around. A lot of people overlook this simple step. Leave the infusion covered for 2-5 minutes according to the instructions provided. Your tea is ready to drink.

* For cold brews, you'll need 1.5 times more leaves than a regular hot brew for every cup of water. Add leaves into a flask/jar and pour cold fresh water over it. Depending on the type of tea let it steep for 4-10 hours. Steep white, Oolong, green teas for shorter durations and blacks, flavoured fruit/floral infusions for longer.

* You can also refrigerate the brew if you prefer colder drinks.

Malai Ghevar



Malai Ghevar is an extremely interesting and yummy dessert recipe that you can make for your loved ones on special occasions and festivals. Those with a sweet tooth would love to gorge on this delicious treat!

Courtesy: Chef Ashish Deva, Executive Chef, Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa

Ingredients of Malai Ghevar

500 gm all purpose flour

1 1/2 litre water

50 gm sugar

1 gm saffron

150 gm ghee

1 litre milk

5 gm powdered green cardamom

2 ice cubes

For Garnishing

20 gm chopped almonds

10 gm chopped melon seeds

20 gm chopped cashews

For The Main Dish

500 gm sugar

1 pinch saffron

250 ml water

3 cup ghee

How to make Malai

Ghevar

Step 1

Heat

ghee in a heavy-bottomed pan and cool by adding ice, by this all the impurities are left behind and pure ghee gets accumulated on the surface.

Step 2

Massage the ghee nicely till it is smooth and start incorporating the flour and water slowly till you get batter.

Step 3

Heat ghee in a heavy-bottomed pan, place a circular mould and start pouring the batter in center, fry till it is golden brown.

Step 4

Now, to prepare the sugar syrup for the main dish, heat water and sugar till the sugar dissolves completely.

Step 5

Add the fried Ghevar to the warm syrup and remove.

Step 6

To make the malai, heat milk, sugar, cardamom powder and saffron and reduce to half. Cool till it thickens.

Step 7

Top the malai on the ghevar and garnish with chopped nuts.

I had chole bhature as My breakfast for 5 days and here's what happened!



Chole bhature: The breakfast king

Breakfast is the king of all meals, we know this but how often do we follow it? If you don't start your day right, it won't end right. This was proven by one of our readers, Shreyan Behl, who shared with us what happened with him when he had 'chole bhature' for five consecutive days for his breakfast. Though really happy for the first two days, the daily-chole-bhature-dictum soon became what he had never expected. Let's hear from him to know what exactly happened.

Chole bhature chronicles

Being born in a typical punjabi family, chole bhature was something I enjoyed eating since my childhood. Sunday breakfast was fixed and it was none other than our family's favourite chole bhature from Davinder uncle's shop. However, I never had an experience of eating chole bhature so frequently until I had to eat them for five continuous days as my mother was out of

town and I and my dad hardly knew how to even boil water.

Convenient, cheap and near to our house, my dad started getting two plates of chole bhature every day before I left for college. And this became a religion, though five-day-long only. My mother had to return after a week but I changed my breakfast on the sixth day. Why? Here I tell you.

DAY 1

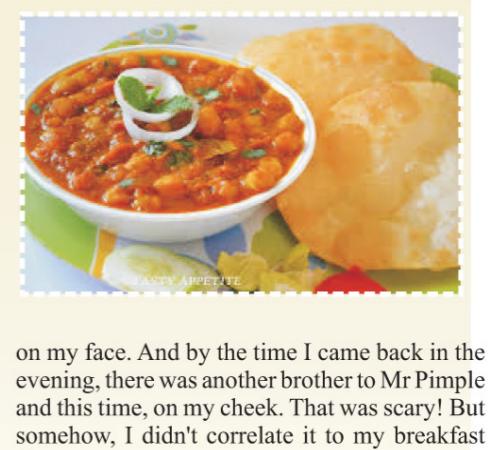
It was nothing special or different as there were many days in the past also when I ate chole bhature as my breakfast. But, like always, I loved them, specially the carrot and green chilly pickle, mint chutney and onions that came along with it.

DAY 2

Without even giving it a thought, I just finished my plate of chole bhature as without mom it was a task to find my things in the morning. Plus, they are yum. I was getting late for college and just rushed.

DAY 3

In a rush, I somehow finished my share of bhature and on the way, I realised that I have a new pimple



on my face. And by the time I came back in the evening, there was another brother to Mr Pimple and this time, on my cheek. That was scary! But somehow, I didn't correlate it to my breakfast fiesta.

DAY 4

I realised the culprit of my pimples was none other than my father's favourite chole bhature. I decided that I would not eat them today, but hungry and late, I did not have a choice and had to eat them again. By evening, I not only had a group of pimples but felt bloated and uneasy. I took an antacid which relieved me and made me sleep better.

DAY 5

Feeling better on my stomach as I got up, I immediately looked in the mirror and checked my face if it had any new pimples. Surprisingly enough, there were no new ones today. I thought everything was fine and I can have chole bhature today for the last day since my mother decided to come back early and from tomorrow onward, we won't eat them anyway. Though I did not like the taste and was almost done with eating chole bhature for next I don't know how many months, I still ate them.

I finished my plate and there was what I was dreading: sickness. I had a sudden stomach pain followed by loose motions. What else could I have expected? But this was not it as by evening, loose motions were accompanied by vomiting. My father took me to the doctor and I was on medication for the next three days, along with a rehabilitating bed rest.



Trainee IPS officer accused of assault in wedding brawl, cross complaints lodged

Vikas Dhayal, a UPSC coach, alleged that on December 6, during a wedding at Mahak Tala Farms, IPS trainee Rahul Balhara struck him on the head with a whiskey glass, causing him to collapse.

NEW DELHI. A cross-complaint was filed at Kapashera police station after a heated altercation between a 2023-batch trainee IPS officer and a UPSC coach escalated into a violent incident at a wedding, police said on Sunday. Vikas Dhayal, Rajendra Nagar resident and UPSC coach, alleged that on December 6, during a wedding at Mahak Tala Farms, IPS trainee Rahul Balhara struck him on the head with a whiskey glass, causing him to collapse. Dhayal shared a video purportedly showing the assault, including images of his blood-covered face and clothes. Expressing his outrage on social media platform X, Dhayal wrote, "This is what one year of IPS training teaches you: getting drunk on power, assaulting people without consequence." He further alleged that Balhara, after clearing the UPSC exam, engaged in similar violent behaviour. Despite his complaint to the police, Dhayal claimed no FIR was initially registered. He accused cops of acting only after



his social media post went viral. In a subsequent post, he stated, "Delhi Police took no action against Rahul Balhara despite clear CCTV evidence. Instead, they lodged a complaint against me, even though I didn't touch anyone." Dhayal has also been issued a notice by the cops to join the investigation following a complaint by Balhara. Advocates Anshul Kumar and Pranjal, representing Vikas Dhayal, told this newspaper that the police are pressuring Dhayal to withdraw his complaint by

implicating four other persons. "We submitted our complaint before Balhara did, yet the police registered Balhara's complaint first and issued notice to Dayal to join the probe," said Anshul. Anshul also claimed that Balhara and Dhayal had known each other since their college days, and Balhara had allegedly assaulted other people on multiple occasions even before being selected as an IPS officer.

Police said that no FIR has been registered in the case yet, but an investigation has commenced following complaints from both parties. "We are reviewing the CCTV footage of the incident. Preliminary information indicates that a dispute occurred between two persons, during which one person struck the other with a glass. We have received complaints from both sides, and both are currently being investigated," a senior police officer said. Last month, in a similar incident in Gurugram, a 28-year-old man lost his life when he and the attacker reportedly had a drunken altercation which led to the deadly assault.

2 SpiceJet flights diverted over technical glitches mid-air, one was hit by bird



NEW DELHI. In separate incidents on Monday, two SpiceJet flights—one heading to Shillong and the other to Kochi—were diverted due to technical issues, ensuring the safety of all passengers and crew members. A Delhi-Shillong SpiceJet flight faced a technical glitch mid-air and was diverted to Patna. The aircraft landed safely at Patna's Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport at 8.52 am, according to Patna Airport Director Anchal Prakash. "Alternative arrangements are being made for the passengers," he stated. It was a normal landing, and all passengers and crew members on board were reported safe. In another incident, a Kochi-bound private carrier carrying 117 passengers and crew made an "emergency landing" in Chennai after a technical issue was detected mid-flight. The aircraft returned to Chennai, where it landed safely. A SpiceJet spokesperson said, "SpiceJet Q400 aircraft operating from Chennai to Kochi returned back to Chennai due to a technical issue on December 9, 2024. The aircraft landed safely, and passengers were deplaned." Required safety measures were in place and the aircraft made a safe landing, officials at the airport said.

No repeated petitions: Supreme Court rejects plea to remove farmers from highways

NEW DELHI. The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a petition seeking directions to immediately clear the blockage of national and state highways in Punjab, where farmers have been protesting for almost a year. "Why are you filing repetitive petitions? We have taken some initiatives already... Don't think we are the only ones who are concerned with issues, there are other people also. We will not tag the petition, we are already on a larger public interest issue. This case is not about multiple petitions," a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Manmohan told the petitioner, a Punjab-based social activist.

The plea had claimed that the "people of Punjab and neighbouring states are facing great difficulty as they are unable to reach hospitals on time in case of medical emergency, as even ambulances are being stopped from running on national and state highways". It also sought directions to the Centre and state to remove restrictions on farmers' protests and to ensure that national highways and railway tracks were not blocked by the agitating farmers for smooth public movement.

Farmers under the banner of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February this year after their march to Delhi was stopped by security forces. On Sunday, a delegation of 101 farmers suspended their march to the national capital from the Shambhu protest site after nine farmers were allegedly injured during clashes with law enforcement. The farm leaders will hold an internal meeting to decide the further course of action.

In the wake of the farmers' renewed attempt to march towards Delhi, security has been heightened at the Punjab-Haryana border, with barricades and prohibitory orders under Section 163 (formerly Section 144) in place to prevent the gathering of more than five people. Besides Shambhu, the Khanauri border between Punjab and Haryana has also been sealed under tight four-layered security, with 13 contingents deployed. On December 6, farmers tried to move toward the national capital but suspended their bid after several protesters sustained injuries when security personnel fired tear gas shells at the border.

Need to work towards preserving unity, sovereignty: India on Syria crisis

The Ministry of External Affairs said that the Indian embassy in Damascus is in contact with the Indian community and called for a peaceful, inclusive power transfer while urging respect for Syria's unity and sovereignty.

NEW DELHI. The Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday (December 9) that the Indian embassy in Damascus is in touch with the Indian community. The ministry also called for a "peaceful" and "inclusive" process of power transfer in Syria after rebels claimed control of the capital, Damascus, marking the end of President Bashar al-Assad's rule. "We are monitoring the situation in Syria in the light of on-going developments. We underline the need for all parties to work towards preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We advocate a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process respecting the interests and aspirations of all sections of Syrian society," a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday.

The Ministry added that India's embassy in Damascus is in touch with the



members of the Indian community in Syria. "Our Embassy in Damascus is in contact with the Indian community, for their safety and security," the statement added. Rebels in Syria announced on Sunday that they had seized control of the capital, Damascus, in a swift offensive, and proclaimed the end of President Bashar al-Assad's decades-long "tyranny". The 59-year-old autocratic leader fled the war-hit country and

landed in Moscow where he was given asylum following the toppling of his 24-year-old regime by opposition forces in a lightning offensive. The Syrian capital saw celebrations as fighters and a section of residents took to the streets cheering. Rebel factions, led by the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), declared Damascus "liberated" and said, "We announce the freedom of our city and the fall of the tyrant Assad". The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group began its lightning offensive two weeks ago, capturing the key cities of Aleppo, Homs, Hama before proceeding to Damascus unopposed and seizing control of the Syrian capital on Sunday. Government forces loyal to Assad were forced to retreat as rebels captured control of key cities one by one, in a move that challenged the Assad family's nearly six decades of autocratic rule.

Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting judge of the Allahabad High Court, made the controversial remarks while speaking on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) event in Prayagraj.

Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting judge of the Allahabad High Court, said he had no hesitation in saying that "Hindustan would run as per the wishes of the majority people" living in the country. "This is the law.... The law, in fact, works according to the majority. Look at it in the context of family or society... Only what benefits the welfare and happiness of the majority will be accepted," Justice Yadav was quoted as saying by LiveLaw while speaking on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) event in Prayagraj.

The Uniform Civil Code seeks to establish a set of standardised personal laws that apply to all citizens, regardless of religion, gender, or caste. This would cover aspects such as marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession. Without naming the Muslim community, the judge said that practices like having multiple wives, triple talaq and halala were "unacceptable". "If you say that our personal law allows this, it will not be accepted. You can't disrespect a woman who has been recognised as a goddess in our Shastras and Vedas. You can't claim the right to have four wives, perform halala, or practice triple talaq. You say, 'we have the right to triple talaq and not give maintenance to women'. But this right will not work. The UCC isn't something that the VHP, RSS, or Hinduism advocate. The country's top court also talks about it," he added. The judge acknowledged that there were social evils in Hinduism like child marriage and Sati, "but reformers like Ram Mohan Roy fought to end these practices".

He also said that Hindus do not expect other communities to follow the same culture and traditions, but they are "definitely expected not to disrespect the culture of this country, the great personalities, and the god of this land". "In our country, we are taught not to harm even the smallest animals, not to kill ants, and this lesson is ingrained in us. Perhaps that is why we are tolerant and compassionate; we feel pain when others suffer. But in your culture, from a young age, children are exposed to the slaughter of animals. How can you expect them to be tolerant and compassionate?" While expressing hope for a nationwide UCC, he said that building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya took time, but "the day is not far when it will be clear that if there is one country, there should be one law, and one penal law.

Unite against anti-India forces: Kiren Rijiju on 'Sonia Gandhi-George Soros link'

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju urged unity against forces working against India, referring to the BJP's allegations linking Sonia Gandhi to the George Soros Foundation, which allegedly has taken anti-India stances.

NEW DELHI. A day after the BJP alleged that Congress leader Sonia Gandhi had links to the George Soros Foundation, which has allegedly supported anti-India stances, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, referring to the same on Monday, said that everyone should unite against forces working against India. "The issue that has come to light in the country right now is George Soros. Whether it is the name of Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi," Rijiju said. His comments came at a time when Congress was protesting inside and outside Parliament, demanding discussion over businessman Gautam Adani's indictment in the US. "I want to tell the leaders of the Congress party that everyone should unite against the forces working against India. The issue of George Soros has already been raised in

Parliament," the minister said at a press conference. He added, "I want to appeal to the leaders of the Congress party and its workers that if even their leaders are found to have links with anti-India forces, they also should raise their voices". The Parliamentary Affairs Minister claimed that the BJP "does not see this issue politically" and stressed that "we want to run the House". "We do not see it as an issue relating to the Congress party, Rahul Gandhi. We should take the issue seriously, if it is related to anti-India forces," he said. The winter session of Parliament continued to witness disruptions on Tuesday as well, leading to adjournments amid opposition protests. While the Congress and INDIA bloc partners demanded a discussion on Gautam Adani, the BJP called for a debate on the alleged link between Soros and Congress.

The BJP on Sunday claimed that former Congress president Sonia Gandhi had links to an organisation financed by the George Soros Foundation and which has backed the idea of separating Kashmir from India. The saffron party further charged that this "association" shows the influence of foreign entities on India's internal affairs.

The BJP also claimed that Rahul Gandhi's press conference on Gautam Adani was live telecast by George Soros-funded OCCRP, which the Congress leader "used as a source to criticise Adani". The Congress has been alleging an "internal nexus" between Prime Minister Modi and Gautam Adani, suggesting that Adani has received undue favours from the government.

The cost of pollution: Delhi's construction workers bear the brunt of winter pollution measures

As air quality in Delhi-NCR deteriorates every winter, the city braces itself for strict pollution-control measures under Graded Response Action Plan. This annual cycle, however, wreaks havoc on the livelihoods of construction workers.

Delhi. November's plunge in air quality to the "severe" category under the Air Quality Index (AQI) triggered a blanket ban on all non-essential construction work. This directive halted activities across hundreds of sites, leaving thousands of workers jobless. For these labourers, the bans are not just an inconvenience—they represent a significant disruption to their already precarious existence. Shambhu Kushwaha, a worker from Bihar, described how his family went without food for an entire day due to the sudden halt in work. "I used to earn roughly 500 rupees a day, but I haven't been able to find work for several weeks now. If this continues, I don't know how I will feed my family," he said. For daily earners like him, the loss of even a single day's wages can destabilize household finances. Some workers have also sought alternative means of income. Jitendra, a welder from Madhya Pradesh, has begun washing utensils at a Dhaba to make ends meet.

However, such options are limited and unreliable, leaving most labourers with no choice but to contemplate returning to their hometowns. Desperation has led some workers to flout the ban, risking fines and legal action. In south Delhi's Kailash Colony, laborers continue working under the cover of temporary tin enclosures. A security guard at one such site revealed, "When authorities come, they pretend to be just staying here. They are taking the risk because they have no other option." Others, like Naresh Kumar from Uttar Pradesh, remain unaware of the restrictions altogether. Employed at a Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) construction site in Sarai Kale Khan, Kumar said, "Nobody told us to stop work. If they do, I'll have to go back home." Public sector projects like RRTS, deemed "essential services," are exempt from the ban, but their workers are still worried about the future. Demands for

compensation On November 27, hundreds of construction workers staged a protest near the Delhi Lieutenant Governor's office in Civil Lines on Wednesday, demanding compensation for income losses caused by the ongoing ban. Organized by the Building Workers Union, affiliated with the All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU), the workers submitted a memorandum to the Lieutenant Governor's office and the Labor Department, urging immediate action. They demanded increased daily

compensation rates—Rs 783 for unskilled workers, Rs 868 for skilled workers, and Rs 954 for highly skilled workers—and called for a structured policy to address livelihood losses during pollution-related restrictions and strikes.

Protesters, carrying placards with messages like "Stop attacking the livelihood of workers" and "We demand daily minimum wage, fair compensation," marched from the Sushruta Trauma Centre to the Lieutenant Governor's office but were stopped by police. "During the Covid-19 lockdown, the government provided Rs 5,000 monthly assistance to workers.

Why can't they do the same now?" asked Madan Bhatri, a worker from Bihar. The union also demanded a five per cent allocation in the Delhi government's budget for worker welfare and action against alleged corruption in labour offices, which they claim hinders access to government benefits.



Food investments

As February is a month of budgets — or namely, the Budget — it made me think about food in a similar way. If getting the best out of your investments is indeed the goal, why not maximise the time and resources spent on food? The fact is that all food aren't created equal and some do absolutely nothing for either your well-being or your health. To that end, I thought I'd chime in with those that offer the best returns on investment.

Carbs

I think one of the biggest and most consistent reactions from my clients is one of shock when I prescribe a healthy dose of carbs on my meal plans. So many people are shocked that I prescribe pretty much everything in moderation, including rice (starchy water drained out), pasta (same), bread, rotis, rava and noodles. Carbs are fuel, carbs are beautiful, they spare

my proteins for its important functions and, eaten in moderation, work beautifully to provide you with better sleep, more energy, and leave you with a better mood.

Antioxidant-rich Food

Antioxidant foods combat disease and ageing. Environmental stressors, unhealthy foods, excessive drinking as well as smoking, elevate the levels of free radicals in our bodies. While some amount of free radicals are naturally flushed out, an excess of free radicals in the body have been linked to cancer and ageing. Fruits, vegetables and vegetable juices are packed with antioxidants.

Egg Whites

Clocking in at 16 calories per egg white, this food is the best source of protein in existence. Egg white is a 100% reference protein, which basically means that

100% of the protein in it is absorbed by your body, making it a very efficient food to eat. Quinoa is another great complete protein, and is an alternative for vegetarians.

Water

When it comes to investments, water is the best kind of SIP. Research shows that water helps your body burn more calories, produce bile (that in turn digests fat), and also helps you feel fuller.

Probiotics

Probiotics (derived from 'pro' and 'biota', which means 'for

life') are friendly microorganisms that are essentially good bacteria and help with digestion, hunger management, absorption and elimination. Probiotic drinks are available as standalone foods, and even probiotic enhanced milk/ milk products are available as well. Drink up. Eat well.

Mushroom and Tomato Toast



A tempting Continental recipe, this Mushroom and Tomato Toast is a perfect quick meal you can have in your breakfast. Sautéed mushrooms, tomatoes and jalapenos served with toasted bread slices have an amazing aroma and flavour that can make anyone's day. This easy recipe is also ideal for your kid's lunch box and picnics.

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon virgin olive oil
2 chopped, de-seeded jalapeno
1 chopped tomato
1 pinch coriander powder
8 toasted bread slices
1 finely chopped onion
250 gm washed & dried, sliced mushroom button
1 pinch chilli powder
1 pinch cumin powder

1 pinch salt
How to make Mushroom and Tomato Toast
Step 1
Heat oil in a large pan. Add onions and jalapeno. Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, until the onion is soft and translucent. Add the mushrooms and tomato.
Step 2
Cook till the mushrooms are soft. Add the chilli powder, coriander powder, cumin powder and salt. Sauté for a minute or two.
Step 3
Spread the mushroom-tomato mixture on 4 slices of toasted bread. Cover with the remaining 4 slices. Cut into triangles and serve with ketchup.

Eating prebiotics may improve sleep, cut impact of stress

Intake of prebiotics — dietary fibers found naturally in foods like chicory, artichokes, raw garlic, leeks and onions — may help improve sleep and act as a buffer against the physiological impacts of stress, a study shows.

Prebiotics are certain types of non-digestible fibers that probiotic bacteria feed on, such as the fibers found in many plant sources like asparagus, oatmeal, and legumes as well as in breast milk.

The findings showed that rats on the prebiotic diet spent more time in non-rapid-eye-movement (NREM) sleep, which is restful and restorative and is dreamless, than those on the non-prebiotic diet.

"We found that dietary prebiotics can improve non-rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, as well as REM sleep after a stressful event," said lead author Robert Thompson, post-doctoral student at University of



Boulder. For the study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Behavioural Neuroscience*, the team fed three-week-old male rats a diet of either standard chow or chow that included prebiotics. They then monitored the rats' body temperature, gut bacteria and sleep-wake cycles — using EEG, or brain activity testing — over time.

Boulder.

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After being exposed to a stressor, the rats on the prebiotic diet also spent more time in rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep.

REM sleep is believed to be critical for promoting recovery from stress — previously been shown to reduce healthy diversity of gut bacteria.

But rats on the prebiotic diet were buffered from the impact, maintaining a healthy and diverse gut microbiota and normal temperature fluctuations even after stress exposure, the study said.

Garden Vegetable Thin

Crust Pizza

Garden vegetable thin crust pizza is a cheesy vegetable filled pizza that is full of peppers and mushrooms. This pizza recipe has thin crust which is crispy and relishing. If you are looking for a vegetarian recipe of pizza, this should be your first pick.

INGREDIENTS
3/4 cup all purpose flour
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 cup sliced zucchini
1/4 cup finely chopped capsicum (green pepper)
1/2 cup mozzarella
3 thinly sliced jalapeno
1/2 cup Wheat flour
1 teaspoon dry yeast
1/2 cup Water
1/4 cup Pizza sauce
1/2 cup thinly sliced mushroom
3 pinches chilli flakes
1/4 cup boiled Frozen Sweet corn

How to make Garden Vegetable Thin Crust Pizza
Step 1
Cut each bread diagonally into 12 slices. Cut the mozzarella into small pieces. Spread the sundried tomato paste on each slice.
Step 2
Arrange the cheese on the bread and put the slices on a baking tray. Sprinkle the herbs and drizzle the oil.
Step 3
Bake in a preheated oven at 220 degree C for 5 minutes or till the cheese starts bubbling.
Step 4
Remove from the oven and allow to stand for a minute before serving.



Step 4
Keep the dough in a bowl and cover with a warm, damp cloth. Keep aside for 30 minutes.

Step 5
Transfer it back to a lightly floured surface. Gently roll out to about 12 inches.

Step 6
Place it onto a greased baking sheet. Spread pizza sauce.

Step 7
Arrange zucchini slices, mushrooms, corn, jalapenos, and capsicum. Sprinkle red chilli flakes and mozzarella cheese.
Step 8
Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface. Knead dough for 5 to 8 minutes, add extra flour if required. Knead till smooth and slightly damp, but not sticky.
Remove and serve hot.

Paytm shares rise above Rs 1,000 today. 3 things you need to know

NEW DELHI. Paytm shares rallied over 3% on Monday, hitting a 52-week high of Rs 1,007 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The surge comes amid major corporate announcements and improving investor sentiment, driving renewed interest in the fintech giant. With gains of 20% in the past month and over 52% this year, the stock has outperformed key benchmarks. Here are three key factors propelling Paytm's stock upward: Paytm's Singapore-based unit approved the sale of its Stock Acquisition Rights (SARs) in Japanese payments firm PayPay to SoftBank Vision Fund 2 for JPY 41.9 billion (around Rs 2,364 crore). The transaction values PayPay at JPY 1.06 trillion. Expected to close by December 2024, the sale proceeds will significantly bolster Paytm's cash reserves, enabling future growth initiatives.

PayTM'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Paytm reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 928.3 crore in Q2 FY25, marking a sharp recovery from a net loss of Rs 290.5 crore a year earlier.

While revenue from operations declined 34.1% year-on-year to Rs 1,660 crore due to business restructuring, a one-time gain from selling its ticketing business to Zomato helped the company achieve profitability.

WHAT BROKERAGES SAY

Brokerage firm Bernstein raised Paytm's target price from Rs 750 to Rs 1,000, maintaining an 'Outperform' rating. The firm sees a potential doubling of earnings per share (EPS), driven by payment margin recovery, lending expansion, and regulatory tailwinds. Analysts also anticipate market share gains in UPI transactions, adding to long-term growth prospects. With these developments, Paytm's stock remains a top watch for investors eyeing India's booming fintech sector.

With Stipend Upto Rs 7,000 Who Can Apply For LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana

New Delhi. In line with the central government's commitment to women empowerment and financial inclusion, Prime Minister is all set to launch LIC 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' in Panipat. This initiative of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is designed to empower women aged 18-70 years, who are Class X pass. They will receive specialized training and a stipend for the first three years to promote financial literacy and insurance awareness. After training, they can serve as LIC agents and the graduate Bima Sakhis would have the opportunity to qualify for being considered for Development Officer roles in LIC. Prime Minister will also distribute appointment Certificates to prospective Bima Sakhis. Stipend Upto Rs 7,000 Under Bima Sakhi Yojana

The 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' will train one lakh women across India as LIC agents, including 8,000 from Haryana. These women will receive a monthly stipend of Rs 7,000 in the first year, Rs 6,000 in the second, and Rs 5,000 in the third, while promoting financial literacy and insurance awareness.

India Resurgence Fund invests Rs 1,000 crore in Anthea Aromatics

MUMBAI. The India Resurgence Fund (IndiaRF) has agreed to invest up to Rs 1,000 crore in Anthea Aromatics. IndiaRF is an India-focused investment platform promoted by the Piramal Group and global fund house Bain Capital in a joint venture. The investment gives IndiaRF a controlling stake in the aroma specialty chemicals firm founded by Dr Vincent Paul in 1992. IndiaRF currently manages close to \$850 million in assets from its maiden fund. The present investment is from its second fund. The first fund has been deployed in 12 investments spanning nine sectors. Over the years, Anthea has grown into a leading aroma specialty chemicals group and operates five manufacturing facilities across Maharashtra and Karnataka. Anthea has a combined capacity of 10,590 tonne per annum. It has a strong R&D setup and a track record of developing and producing a broad range of specialty chemicals. The chemicals are used in flavours and fragrances, home and personal care, pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals. The global aroma specialty chemicals market is over \$5.5 billion and is growing 5-6 percent annually. Fragrance applications account for the largest share of over 70 percent of the end use of aroma chemicals. Anthea is largely export-driven, generating over 80 percent of its revenue from international markets. It holds a global market and has a capacity share of 12-15 percent. It is also ranked among the top five players worldwide in its key product categories. Shantanu Nalavadi, Managing Director of IndiaRF said the domestic specialty chemicals sector, known for its reliability, quality, and cost competitiveness presents a strong export opportunity. Paul Menacherry, the Executive Director of Anthea said he notices a significant export-led growth potential and IndiaRF's expertise in business transformation will help unlock it.

TVS launches iQube E-scooter in Sri Lanka

CHENNAI. Chennai-based TVS Motor Company (TVSM) on Sunday launched a new 2.2 kWh battery variant of the TVS iQube electric scooter in Sri Lanka. TVS iQube now offers three variants in six colours. The new 2.2 kWh battery variant of the TVS

iQube is designed to make premium electric mobility more accessible and reduce the total cost of ownership for customers. Madhu Prakash Singh, Vice President, E V, International Business, TVS Motor Company, said, "We are delighted by the growing adoption of the TVS iQube in Sri Lanka within just a few months of its launch." Globally, the TVS iQube has crossed a milestone of 400,000 customers.

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Edited excerpts:
How has the wealth management business evolved over the years? Where do you see its future in the next 5-10 years?
The wealth management industry in India has witnessed tremendous evolution, reaching market size with current assets under management estimated between

The current situation index (CSI) moderated by 0.7 points to 94 in November 2024 from 94.7 in September 2024.

NEW DELHI. Indian consumers' confidence about general economic situation, employment scenario, their income and spending have weakened, according to the latest survey of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Domestic households also see inflation inching up further, showed another survey of the RBI. "Consumer confidence for the current period declined marginally owing to weaker sentiments across the survey parameters except household spending," the RBI's bi-monthly consumer confidence survey (CCS),



which was conducted during November 2-11, 2024, showed. The current situation index (CSI) moderated by 0.7 points to 94 in November 2024 from 94.7 in September 2024. The survey collects current perceptions (vis-à-vis a year ago) and one year ahead expectations of households on general economic situation, employment scenario, overall price situation, own income and spending

across 19 major cities. Households displayed somewhat higher optimism on one year ahead outlook for major economic parameters, except prices. The future expectations index (FEI) improved by 0.5 points to 121.9 in the latest survey. The CCS survey showed that households anticipated higher spending over one year horizon on the back of higher essential as well as non-essential spending.

Separately, the RBI's inflation expectations survey of households showed that households' median perception of current inflation rose by 30 basis points (bps) to 8.4 per cent, as compared to the previous survey round. One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

Median inflation expectation for three months horizon moderated marginally by 10 bps to 9.1 per cent, whereas it inched up by 10 bps to 10.1 per cent for one year ahead period. In the monetary policy announced on Friday (December 6), the RBI raised its inflation forecast for FY2025 to 4.8 per cent from an earlier estimate of 4.5 percent.

The consumer price-based index (CPI) inflation for Q3 FY2025 has been revised to 5.7 per cent from 4.8 per cent and for Q4 it has been raised to 4.5 per cent from 4.2 per cent. Compared to the September 2024 round of the survey, a somewhat larger share of respondents expects the year ahead price and inflation to increase, mainly due to higher pressures from food items and housing related expenses, the RBI survey showed.

India To Invest Over Rs 143 Lakh Crore In Urban Infra By 2030, Land Prices To Surge

Mumbai. Anticipating the growing need for quality urban infrastructure in years to come, India is expected to invest over Rs 143 lakh crore in infrastructure by 2030, a report said on Monday, adding that this will lead to further land price appreciation. Rapid infrastructure development driven by nodal authorities is fuelling the growth of satellite townships across the country, said the Colliers report. Most of this expenditure is to be directed towards urban clusters, driving significant activity in infrastructure-led urban development. Projects under consideration include second airports, inter-city metro connectivity, aero-cities, highways (including quick transit freeways), high-speed rail corridors, IT+ITES zones, large datacenter concentration zones, among others. The trend is magnified in and around the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), with the planned decongestion of Mumbai and ancillary locations, with potential returns reaching four times over the next decade.

"The growth of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is driven by various infrastructure projects, including the Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link (MTHL), Navi Mumbai Airport Influence Notified Area (NAINA), Virar-Alibaug Multimodal Corridor, Mumbai-Pune Missing Link Project, and the JNPT extension," the report mentioned. The operationalisation of Bangalore Kempegowda International Airport added a new dimension to the expansion of North Bangalore.

The announcements of new projects have contributed to a nearly 2.5 times land price appreciation, from Rs 1,800 to Rs 4,500 per square feet in the period 2020 to 2024—most pronounced around the north Bangalore micro-markets like Devanahalli, Chikkaballapur, Hebbal and Yelahanka. The upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport is going to be India's first airport with multi-modal transport connectivity. This new airport will have the capacity to serve 9 crore passengers annually and will boost growth around the 90,000 acres of surrounding land, via the NAINA project.

This, in turn, would drive the growth of real estate in the region, with land prices appreciating nearly 3.9 times in next five years from Rs 4,200 to Rs 16,200 per sq ft (2024-2030) in micro markets like Khopoli and Pen.

The upcoming Jevwar airport in Uttar Pradesh is the biggest catalyst for urbanisation in Uttar Pradesh. Government initiatives like YEIDA, International Film City and Metro Line Expansion have provided further impetus to the growth of Jevwar as a township. These initiatives have contributed to a land price appreciation of nearly 1.4 times in the last 5 years from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 per sq ft. The Chennai Peripheral Ring Road project, once completed, is expected to drive the growth of satellite towns like Sripurumbudur, Singaperumalkoil, and others.

Shares of CEAT surged 11% in early trade on December 9, touching a fresh record high of Rs 3,370. This rise in share price followed the company's announcement of a definitive agreement with Michelin to acquire Camso brand's Off-Highway construction equipment bias tire and tracks business. The all-cash deal is valued at approximately \$225 million.

CEAT shares reached an all-time high of Rs 3,466.40 during the day before settling slightly lower at Rs 3,393.60, marking a 9.75% increase at the time of writing. The stock has rallied 28% since the start of the year, showcasing strong investor confidence. The acquisition includes the Camso brand's Off-Highway Tyres (OHT) and tracks business, which caters to high-margin segments such as:

Agriculture tyres and tracks
Harvester tyres and tracks
Power sports tracks
Material handling tyres

This strategic move is expected to expand CEAT's product portfolio, enhancing



its presence in the lucrative OHT market.

BROKERAGE VIEWS
The announcement has drawn positive responses from brokerages, many of which have revised their target prices upward: Axis Capital: Maintains a 'buy' rating with a target price of Rs 3,450, suggesting a potential upside of 11% from the last closing price of Rs 3,086. Axis noted that the deal, priced at

approximately a 1x price-to-sales multiple, is reasonably valued. However, the brokerage cautioned that integration challenges could impact the balance sheet.

IIFL: Reiterates its 'buy' rating with a higher target price of Rs 4,000. The brokerage sees the acquisition as a strategic fit and expects it to contribute a 7-8% rise in earnings per share (EPS) by FY26. IIFL considers the valuation reasonable and believes the deal strengthens the case for re-rating CEAT's stock. **nvestec:** Maintains a 'buy' rating with a target price of Rs 3,750. It views the acquisition as a critical step to boost growth in the specialty tire segment and considers CEAT a preferred pick in the tire sector.

Despite the recent rally, CEAT's Q2 performance showed mixed results: Net Profit: Fell 41.5% year-on-year to Rs 12.15 crore, compared to Rs 20.7 crore in the same period last year.

Over-aggressive fiscal deficit target to hit growth, says CII

To aid longer term fiscal planning, the government should consider instituting Fiscal Stability Reporting.

NEW DELHI. Amidst the growing voices for a less aggressive fiscal consolidation road map, industry body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has suggested sticking to the fiscal deficit target of 4.9% of GDP for FY25 and a target of 4.5% FY26. However, CII has also pointed out that overly aggressive targets beyond the ones mentioned could adversely affect growth. CII has also welcomed the

announcement in the Union Budget 2024-25 to keep the fiscal deficit at levels that help reduce the debt to GDP ratio. In preparation for this, the forthcoming budget could lay out a glide path to bring the Central



Government's debt to below 50% of GDP in the medium term (by 2030-31), and below 40% of GDP in the long term. CII has suggested, "Such an explicit target would have a positive impact on India's sovereign credit rating, and further on the interest rates

in the economy in general," said the industry body in a press statement. To aid longer term fiscal planning, the government should consider instituting Fiscal Stability Reporting.

This could include issuing annual reports on fiscal risks under different stress scenarios and the outlook for fiscal stability. The exercise will help forecast potential economic headwinds or tailwinds and assess their impact on the fiscal path. "India has been growing rapidly amidst a slowing global economy. Prudent fiscal management for macroeconomic stability has been pivotal to this growth," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII. "The fiscal management has maintained the perfect balance between the fiscal deficit and fiscal support to growth. This has provided macroeconomic stability to the economy and helped build resilience in an environment of great global economic uncertainty," added Banerjee.

Wealth management industry likely to grow at a CAGR of 25-30%

NEW DELHI. The investment strategies of the ultra-rich have always intrigued retail investors, especially amidst the astronomical rise in the number of high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNIs) in recent years. With the wealth management sector now managing assets estimated at \$1-1.2 trillion, the industry is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by a growing base of high-net-worth individuals, asset appreciation, and shifting client expectations. In an interaction with Arshad Khan of The New Indian Express, Srikanth Subramanian, Co-Founder & CEO of Ionic Wealth (formerly Angel One Wealth Ltd.), shares his insights on the evolution of India's wealth management industry, opportunities in global markets, and where the super-rich are channelling their investments.

Edited excerpts:

How has the wealth management business evolved over the years? Where do you see its future in the next 5-10 years?

The wealth management industry in India has witnessed tremendous evolution, reaching market size with current assets under management estimated between

\$1-1.2 trillion. We are confident in the "Triple Multiplier Effect" driving this growth – an expanding segment of high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNIs) in recent years. With the wealth management sector now managing assets estimated at \$1-1.2 trillion, the industry is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by a growing base of high-net-worth individuals, asset appreciation, and shifting client expectations.

In an interaction with Arshad Khan of The New Indian Express, Srikanth Subramanian, Co-Founder & CEO of Ionic Wealth (formerly Angel One Wealth Ltd.), shares his insights on the evolution of India's wealth management industry, opportunities in global markets, and where the super-rich are channelling their investments.

HNIs and UHNIs, especially the new generation from family businesses, approach wealth management with a more strategic and expansive vision than a retail investor. While retail investors focus on short-term financial goals, HNIs and UHNIs focus on legacy, wealth preservation, and diversified growth.

This generation, shaped by international exposure through education or work experience, brings a global mindset and is actively exploring opportunities beyond traditional investment products. The share market is trading around record-high levels. Would you enter the market at

the current prices or wait for the valuations to become a little more attractive? India has seen an unprecedented run in equities in the last 3 years. This has pushed the valuations on the expensive side. Now, the earnings are slowing as is seen in the latest earnings season. Of the data releases, BSE 500 PAT has contracted by 4% YOY. Additionally, external events such as the US elections and geopolitical tensions are creating a global risk-off environment which is reflecting on India equities. There are signs of slowdown in the domestic

economy, as is seen by the high frequency data. However, all of this is likely to be transient and the current domestic investing landscape can rather be an opportunity to invest for the long term.

Besides equity, what are the other avenues you prefer or advise your clients to invest into? Beyond equities, we advise clients to consider a well-diversified approach across several asset classes- debt, precious metals, commodities, FX, unlisted equities, global equities, credit and more. On the Indian debt, we believe strong demand for Indian bonds, coupled with improvements in the twin deficit, points to a favourable long-term outlook for bonds. In the global equities space, we are proposing a stable US and a tactical China allocation. Given the mix of valuations available worldwide, there's a huge case of Indian investors to avoid home bias and take advantage of the global opportunities. Precious metals are attractive in today's market, especially as they typically perform well during periods of equity volatility, offering a perfect hedge against equity.



International Business, TVS Motor Company, said, "We are delighted by the growing adoption of the TVS iQube in Sri Lanka within just a few months of its launch." Globally, the TVS iQube has crossed a milestone of 400,000 customers.

NEWS BOX

1st ODI: Sherfane Rutherford century steers West Indies to victory over Bangladesh

NEW DELHI. Sherfane Rutherford's outstanding debut century guided the West Indies to a five-wicket victory against Bangladesh in the opening one-day international at Warner Park on Sunday. In his 10th ODI appearance, Rutherford's spectacular innings of 113 from 80 deliveries, featuring seven fours and eight sixes, brought West Indies close to achieving the ground's highest successful chase.

The 26-year-old entered at 94-3 as West Indies pursued Bangladesh's total of 294-6 from their allocated 50 overs. He formed a crucial 99-run partnership for the fourth wicket with skipper Shai Hope, who contributed 86 runs from 88 balls, before being caught by Jaker Ali at midwicket off Mehidy Hasan Miraz's bowling. Rutherford then collaborated with Justin Greaves (41 not out) in a 95-run stand for the sixth wicket, steering West Indies towards victory. "I think he's really improved his batting," said Hope of his match-winner.



"We ask for consistency, we always speak about it, and he's showing that. He strikes the ball really well and the hard work is paying off in the middle. He was disappointed not to finish the game."

Bangladesh, having opted to bat first, established a solid foundation through Tanzid Hasan (60) and captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz (74).

Mahmudullah remained unbeaten on 50, whilst Jaker Ali (48) contributed to a 96-run partnership for the sixth wicket, but their efforts proved insufficient against Rutherford's brilliance.

Pakistan Prime Minister PCB's Stance As Pakistan Prepares For Historic Champions Trophy 2025

New Delhi. In a highly anticipated meeting, Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif extended his unwavering support to Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi as the country readies itself to host the prestigious ICC Champions Trophy in 2025. With the tournament's preparation and venue planning still in flux, the meeting highlighted Pakistan's resolve to maintain its dignity and the PCB's unwavering stance in the face of challenges, particularly the ongoing dispute over the participation of India. The meeting between PM Shehbaz and PCB Chairman Naqvi was crucial, as it came at a time when the fate of the tournament hung in the balance. Despite looming uncertainties, including India's refusal to travel to Pakistan for the event, the Prime Minister expressed full confidence in Naqvi's leadership and his diplomatic negotiations at the ICC.

"The stance you have adopted regarding the



Champions Trophy resonates with the sentiments of 240 million Pakistanis," said PM Shehbaz, emphasizing the significance of this moment for the nation. His words reflected the collective pride of the Pakistani people, underscoring the importance of hosting the event as a symbol of national honor. Naqvi reassured the Prime Minister of the PCB's preparedness, stating, "We are fully ready to host the Champions Trophy in Pakistan. Our commitment is to ensure that both Pakistan and cricket emerge victorious." His statement was met with a sense of optimism, despite the challenges that continue to surround the event.

The Hybrid Formula and India's Reluctance One of the most significant points discussed during the meeting was the ongoing debate over the "hybrid model" for the Champions Trophy 2025. India, citing security concerns, has refused to play in Pakistan, which has prompted the PCB to propose a compromise. According to this plan, India would play its matches in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Annabel Sutherland, who initially played the second fiddle to Perry soon took over and scored a century of her own.

CHENNAI. It was the opening day of one of the least talked about tournaments in women's cricket. With all the T20 franchise leagues getting more and more attention every passing month, the domestic 50-over competitions don't become the talk of the town unless something extraordinary happens in the course of them. Australia's Women's National Cricket League is one of them. On the opening day of the regular season in 2022, with most of the national team players representing their respective states, there was nothing eye-catching in general about the 50-over competition.

In Melbourne, some three kilometers away from the iconic Adelaide Oval, at the Karen Rolton Oval, named after her first

international captain, Ellyse Perry had to walk in early after losing Sophie Molineux early. While this wasn't Perry's first season as a Victorian, after finishing the previous season with only one win, she had a responsibility on her shoulders. In true Perry fashion, she slowly took charge of the innings with her drives, backfoot punches and pull shots and scored a brilliant century against the South Australian team led by Tahlia McGrath. Annabel Sutherland, who initially played the second fiddle to Perry soon took over and scored a century of her own. In the tall chase of 262, McGrath stepped up to hit three back-to-back sixes in the final over of the day to take South Australia over the line - en route scoring a century of her own. If that wasn't enough, Alana King, another Australian national player, took five wickets for Western Australia against the Australian Capital Territory team. It was one of the impressive performances from the players who had already made it to the international level.

Then there was Georgia Voll. At North Sydney Oval, which might one day get renamed after Ellyse Perry, Voll went after New South Wales bowlers like a veteran. She forged meaningful partnerships with Georgia Redmayne, Mikayla Hinkley and Laura



Harris on her way to a magnificent century, which set the perfect tone for Queensland as they defeated 17-time WNCL champions NSW by a whopping 111 runs.

If Perry was elegant, Sutherland was calculative and McGrath was all flash and bang, Voll was a perfect mixture of all of that. One could see the enormous impact of another Australian player — Beth Mooney on the way the youngster batted. The footwork was spot on so was her immaculate wristwork. There were textbook on-drives and beautiful looking pull shots. While she got a lifeline batting on 48 from none other

than her close friend, Phoebe Litchfield, there was no stopping Voll that day. She was smart about her shot selection and did not flinch even when she lost partners at the other end. Once she got past three figures, she even threw a few ramp shots off Sammy-Jo Johnson, which would have even made Mooney proud. By the time she finally got out, she had batted for close to 46 overs to smash 145 off 161 deliveries, which ultimately led to Queensland putting a mammoth 307 for nine on the board. That was the day Perry, the two players considered her heir apparent, and one 19-year-old player from Toowoomba, Queensland, scored centuries.

From the outside looking in, it was yet another day of domestic cricket in Australia. Not many outside the country even paid attention to it, but believe it or not, that is where the seeds of Australia's highest score against India were sown. On Sunday, when most of India was waking up with the hope of their men's team staying alive in the pink-ball test in Adelaide, the women's team was looking for answers of their own against Australia. In due course, Voll scored a century on her second international outing. Perry broke multiple records in ODIs while adding another 100 to her name.

Sherfane Rutherford's maiden hundred helps Windies seal 1st ODI vs Bangladesh

New Delhi. West Indies broke a 11-match losing streak against Bangladesh by winning the 1st ODI match of the series. Playing in St Kitts on Sunday, December 8, Windies chased down a 295-run target against Mehidy Hasan Miraz's team. Sherfane Rutherford was the start of the show, smashing 113 runs in 80 balls as West Indies secured a five-wicket win over Bangladesh with 14 balls remaining. Rutherford struck eight sixes and seven boundaries at Basseterre's Warner Park before he was caught by Nahid Rana off Soumya Sarkar in the 47th over with only seven more runs needed. West Indies finished on 295-5. Rutherford found good support from Shai Hope after struggling early in the game. The batter was hit on the helmet twice by Bangladesh pacers early in the innings but found his range later in the game. Once Rutherford started striking the ball well, there was no stopping him. "The key is working hard. I have been working hard on my game. Just be disciplined and give myself the best chance to do well. I tried to hit the gaps and



Gukesh's brilliant novelty in Game 11 forced Ding Liren into a shocking blunder, turning a likely draw into a decisive win. The Indian prodigy now stands on the brink of becoming the youngest World Chess Champion.

New Delhi. Gukesh D channelled his 'uber cool' avatar in the 11th game of the World Chess Championship against Ding Liren. In a dramatic turn of events, Ding Liren's blunder under mutual time pressure handed Gukesh a crucial victory in their world title match on Sunday. The win propelled the 18-year-old Indian challenger to a 6-5 lead, marking his first time ahead on the scoreboard with just three games remaining. The abrupt end to an intensely complex battle has brought Gukesh tantalizingly

tense finish with both players low on time. Ding Liren made a critical blunder that left Gukesh Dommaraju visibly shocked. Seizing the moment, Gukesh responded with a brilliant Queen's sacrifice, forcing Ding to resign and securing a remarkable victory. The dramatic sequence not only highlighted

Gukesh's composure under pressure but also shifted the momentum decisively in his favor. Indian teenage Grandmaster D. Gukesh has credited his team's preparation after taking a decisive step toward his maiden World Chess Championship title by defeating reigning champion Ding Liren. Gukesh praised his team for the remarkable opening advantage in the game, stating, "My team did some amazing work in this line. I looked at the line; I felt it was very interesting, and the risk-reward ratio was quite nice because I would surprise him for sure." The 18-year-old Indian also dismissed speculation that Liren was playing conservatively for a draw. "I don't think my opponent was playing for draws - he had some better positions in the match. It's a 14-game-long match and you can't plan from the start to take the match to the tie-breaks, because in chess mistakes always happen," Gukesh remarked.

Devon Conway set to miss 3rd Test vs England due to birth of his child

New Zealand's Devon Conway will miss the 3rd Test vs England due to the birth of his first child. England already lead the 3-match Test series 2-0 vs the hosts.

New Delhi. New Zealand opener Devon Conway is all set to miss the 3rd Test vs England due to the birth of his child. Conway and his wife are all set to welcome their first child and hence the opener won't be there with the squad. The third and the final Test of the 3-match series will be played in Wellington itself, where New Zealand lost by 323 runs vs England. Mark Chapman has been drafted in as a replacement for Conway. Squad News | Devon Conway will miss the third Tegel

Test against England as he awaits the birth of his first child in Wellington this week. Conway will be replaced in the Test squad by @aucklandcricket Aces batter



Mark Chapman who will join-up with the team in Hamilton ahead of Saturday's third and final Tegel Test. Coach Gary Stead said the team supported Conway's decision. The BLACKCAPS arrive in Hamilton on Wednesday," the official social media of the BlackCaps posted.

New Zealand's coach Gary Stead also supported Conway's decision to be with his

family. "Family comes first in this environment and we're all really excited for Dev and his wife Kim to welcome their first child," said Stead. "Mark was with the Test squad in India recently and returned to the Plunket Shield by scoring an impressive 276 - so it's a good time for him to be joining us." Conway to become father Will Young to comeback?

With Devon Conway absent, Will Young is expected to return to the playing XI. Young, who was named Player of the Series during New Zealand's historic tour of India last month, amassed 244 runs at an average of 48.40. However, he has been sidelined for the past two weeks as England secured a dominant 2-0 series lead.

Young lost his spot to Kane Williamson, who returned from a hamstring injury that had kept him out of the India series. Williamson has been in fine form since his comeback, scoring two half-centuries and leading the team's batting charts with 195 runs at an average of 48.75.



run hard. I always knew I could make up in the end. It's part of the game to get a hit. Took a few blows for the team. Always good batting with Hope. We were batting in small partnerships. I am looking to be consistent," Sherfane Rutherford said after his maiden ODI century.

West Indies vs Bangladesh: 1st ODI Highlights
Earlier, Bangladesh had won the toss and chose to bat first, posting a respectable 294-6 in 50 overs with captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz top scoring with 74 runs in 101 balls. Opener Tanzid Hasan hit a run-a-ball 60 which featured three sixes and six fours.

Mahmudullah was 50 not out off 44 deliveries, and Jaker Ali hit a 40-ball 48, with both hitting three sixes each. Ali was out to fast-medium Romario Shepherd (3-51 in 10 overs) off the penultimate ball of the innings.

In reply, West Indies were 100-3 after 23 overs. When captain Shai Hope was dismissed by Mehidy for an 88-ball 86, including four sixes, West Indies was 193-4 after 37.1 overs. Rutherford and Justin Greaves (41 not out off 31) were up to the task and secured a statement win for the side..

Border-Gavaskar Trophy: Adelaide not so pretty in pink for the visitors

The good thing is that India has ample time to come back from this deficit in the five-match series. Their next stop is Brisbane and in less than a week, they will be on the field again.

CHENNAI. "We were not good enough with the bat." That was India captain Rohit Sharma on Sunday afternoon attempting to sum up their ten-wicket loss against Australia in the pink ball Test at Adelaide. At this point, it is a phrase Rohit had to repeat

after every Test he has captained since October 16. It all began on that gloomy Bengaluru day where he chose to face the media after India crumbled for 46 runs in the first innings against New Zealand. From day two evening till day three at the Adelaide Oval, there hasn't been a day where Rohit has walked back off the field at stumps knowing that they had a good day at work. From admitting that he was wrong in Bengaluru, to acknowledging that they were not good enough in Adelaide, Rohit had accepted the defeat on the face of it in a very pragmatic, matter-of-fact manner. While it looked good to hear the captain own his mistakes in Bengaluru, hearing very similar things after every match since has led to a perception of whether he and the team are not learning from the things that they did wrong. Come back to Adelaide again. After opting to bat first on day one, India did not last more than

two sessions. The challenge of playing pink ball is well established, but the manner in which India's batting failed — similar kinds of dismissals among some of them, captain's poor form with the bat this time in a new position — meant there was a clear pattern. Jasprit Bumrah cannot conjure magic every time the team gets out for a below-par score and that is exactly what happened here. India were all out in 44.1 overs, but barring Bumrah, others could not replicate a similar kind of success and that cost them dearly. The second innings was also the same story, except this time they were staring down a barrel (read the 157-run lead Australia had on them). If you are not going to spend more than 81 overs in the middle across both innings (44.1 and 36.5), there is no way on earth you can come back into the contest. So when Rishabh Pant and Nitish K Reddy started day three, they were living on borrowed time. For them, to pull India out of that hole, they would have had to replicate something similar to Kolkata 2001 or Adelaide 2003. In the end, Pat Cummins took five wickets and Australia walked away with a win, levelling the series 1-1. The good thing is that India has ample time to come back from this deficit in the five-match series. Their next stop is Brisbane and in less than a week, they will be on the field again.



Triptii Dimri

Looks Elated As She Kicks Off Christmas Festivities With Rumoured BF Sam Merchant



Triptii Dimri got into the Christmas spirit, and kicked off the holiday season with her rumoured boyfriend Sam Merchant last night. The actress gave fans a sneak-peek into her fun-filled

outing yesterday as she painted the town red with Sam Merchant, and their friends. The actress looked cheerful and posed for several pictures as she fully embraced the holiday spirit.

Triptii Dimri took to her Instagram stories on Saturday to share some glimpses from the Christmas festivities. The 'Animal' actress, her rumoured beau Sam Merchant and their friends enjoyed a special event in Mumbai, called 'Starry Starry Night.' Two selfies clicked by Sam Merchant show Triptii Dimri and their friends posing happily. Meanwhile, other pictures and videos give us a glimpse of the event. The actress beamed with joy in the pictures, and was seen wearing a brown sweatshirt with blue denim jeans. Meanwhile, Sam was also dressed casually and was seen in a black tee. The last picture is a selfie of Triptii wherein she is seen relaxing at the end of the day, with a 'Merry Christmas' cushion next to her. Check out the pictures below!

While neither Triptii nor Sam has ever acknowledged their dating rumours, their pictures and social media posts for each other only add fuel to the rumours. Just a few days ago, IMDD named Triptii as the 'Most Popular Indian Star of 2024.' Sam Merchant gave her a shoutout and expressed how proud he is of her. Sharing the news on his Instagram story, he wrote, "Making us proud," along with several evil eye, clapping and sunglasses emoji. A few days ago, Triptii was spotted enjoying a bike ride with Sam Merchant in the city. Pictures and videos shared by the paparazzi showed her riding pillion behind Sam. As the photographers approached, the actor was seen turning her face away to avoid the cameras.

According to media reports, Triptii began dating Sam after her rumored breakup with Karmesh Sharma, Anushka Sharma's brother. The two were said to have parted ways in December 2022.

Kareena Kapoor

Wishes Mother-in-law Sharmila Tagore Happy Birthday, Calls Her 'Coolest Gangsta'

Kareena Kapoor Khan shares a strong bond with her mother-in-law Sharmila Tagore. Today, the veteran actress is celebrating her birthday. And her doting daughter-in-law Kareena has shared some cool photos to wish her happy birthday. The actress has called her coolest gangsta. Fans too reacted. Taking to her Instagram handle, Kareena shared photos and wrote, "Who's the coolest

veil. A morning after the star-studded event, Bebo dropped a sun-kissed selfie of herself flaunting her no-makeup look. Not long ago, Kareena Kapoor also posted a multi-picture post giving fans a glimpse of her stunning look at the opening night of the prestigious Red Sea International Film Festival in Saudi Arabia. The beauty arrived in style on the red carpet in an Oscar de la Renta appliqued strapless gown. Her stunning look, paired with crystal-adorned jewels, including rings and dangling earrings, raised the oomph factor, leaving fans in awe of her beauty. Sharing her insights on what makes a movie truly successful in today's cinematic landscape, the actress said that the only successful formula for a film to work is that it has to create magic. Talking about Kareena Kapoor Khan's professional commitments, the actress has been a part of some exciting projects like The Buckingham Murders and Singham Again.

Rohit Shetty's multi-starrer also starred Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Ajay Devgn, Tiger Shroff, Deepika Padukone and Arjun Kapoor. Meanwhile, the star has also bagged the Best Actor and Web Original Film (Female) award at the Filmfare OTT Awards 2024 for her role in Sujoy Ghosh's directorial Jaane Jaan.



Gangsta ever? Do I need to say? Happy birthday to my mother in law Just the Best.. In the photos, Kareena is posing with Sharmila Tagore. In other photos, the veteran actress is playing with Jeh. Fans dropped heart emojis in the comment section.

On December 5, the actress graced the opening night of the film festival in Jeddah. The Singham Again actress turned heads with her oh-so-gorgeous purple gown and a sheer



Rajkummar Rao Celebrates Entertainment Leader Of The Year Award On Social Media: 'Forever Grateful'



Rajkummar Rao's journey in Indian cinema is a testament to resilience, passion, and an unwavering commitment to his craft. From humble beginnings to becoming one of the industry's most celebrated actors, Rao's story is as inspiring as the characters he portrays. This year, he added yet another milestone to his illustrious career with Street 2, a horror-comedy that broke box office records, earning ₹505 crore globally in just 10 days. Recognizing his immense contribution to content-driven storytelling, the CNBC-TV18 India Business Leader Awards 2024 named him the Entertainment Leader of the Year. Celebrating the accolade, Rao shared his gratitude on Instagram, posting pictures from the event and writing, "Such an honour to be awarded the Entertainment Leader of the Year at @cnbcv18india India Business Leader Awards. Forever grateful to the audiences, creators, and teams that make this journey possible. #Gratitude."

Rajkummar Rao's rise to stardom wasn't without its challenges. In a candid interview with Barkha Dutt, he reflected on his financial struggles growing up in Gurugram, where even basic needs like school fees were sometimes out of reach. "I was raised in a joint family in Gurgaon, and I was not raised with money. We didn't have enough. But she never made us feel it," Rao said, referring to his mother. "There were times when school teachers paid our school fees because financially, it used to become very tough, for months. Money was an issue, but she never made us feel that there was a problem. She would arrange it somehow. For me to think that I would be a film actor one day was an impossible dream. But my mother really supported me." Moving to Mumbai in 2008 came with its own set of challenges, from surviving on a tight budget to navigating an unfamiliar city with no connections. Rao described those years as some of the toughest in his life.

Sobhita Dhulipala-Naga Chaitanya Give Sneak-Peek Into Telugu Wedding Rituals; Share Dreamy PICS From Ceremony



Sobhita Dhulipala and Naga Chaitanya have finally shared the official pictures from their wedding ceremony. The couple got married in a traditional Telugu ceremony on December 4 at Annapurna Studios in Hyderabad. While several visuals from their special day surfaced online, fans were eagerly waiting for the newlyweds to post the official pictures. Much to their delight, Chay and Sobhita have finally dropped some dreamy photos from their wedding ceremony that give fans a sneak-peek into the beautiful traditional wedding rituals. The first picture shared by Sobhita and Naga Chaitanya shows the actress rubbing haldi on Chay's face. As part of Madhuparaka ritual, Sobhita is dressed up in a white sari with a red border. Meanwhile, another picture shows the bride and groom exchanging jaimalas. Sobhita and Chay are seen playfully exchanging flower garlands. Another picture features Sobhita during the Talambralu ceremony. As part of the Telugu ritual, the bride and the groom pour a rice and turmeric mixture over each other's head. The picture shows Sobhita beaming with joy as the rice mixture is poured over her.

Meanwhile, another picture shows Sobhita wearing a toe ring. In one photo, she is seen seated on a huge, decorated basket that looks like a lotus. She looks stunning in a beautiful golden kanjivaram saree. Another picture shows Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita looking lovingly at each other at the wedding ceremony. The last black-and-white snap is from the Arundhati Nakshatram ritual, where the bride and groom are shown stars representing Arundhati and Vasistha. Naga Chaitanya is seen lovingly holding Sobhita's hand as she pointed out at the stars.

Soon after Sobhita and Naga Chaitanya shared the pictures, congratulatory messages started pouring in. Music composer Vishal Dadlani wrote, "Congratulations guys! The best of all things, always! @sobhitad." Meanwhile, their fans showered them with love and blessings. Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala's wedding was attended by celebrities such as SS Rajamouli, Ram Charan, Chiranjeevi, Rana Daggubati, Karthi, Anurag Kashyap, among others.