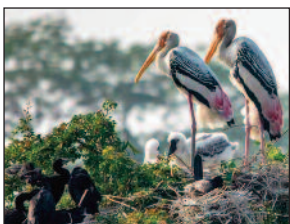
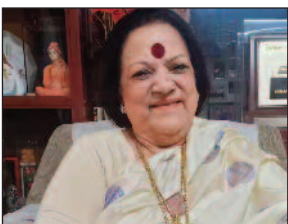


Absence of Migratory Birds at Rabindra Sarobar Marks Unusual Start to Winter Season
-Pg: 2



haimanti shukla pays tribute to late singer pratima bandopadhyay on her birth anniversary
-Pg: 3



Delhi LG Approves Prosecution of Arvind Kejriwal by Probe Agencies in Corruption Case
-Pg: 7



Setback for Former IPL Chairman Lalit Modi as BCCI Demands ₹10.65 Crore Penalty
-Pg: 8



weather report

Kolkata Weather

16 °C | °F

Precipitation 35%

Humidity 79%

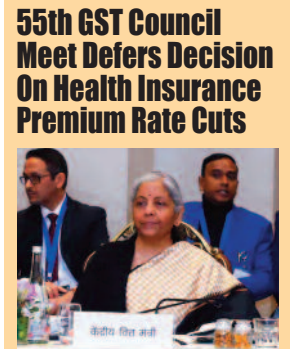
Wind 5km/h

Mostly cloudy with a t-storm

Gold Rates	
Today gold price in Kolkata	71,000 77,450
»	
Today gold price in Bangalore	71,000 77,450
»	
Today gold price in India	71,000 (₹600) 77,450 (₹650)
Indian Indices	
NIFTY 50	23587.50 -364.20 -1.52
SENSEX	78041.59 -1,176.46 -1.49
NIFTY BANK	50759.20 -816.50 -1.58
NIFTY IT	43771.05 -1,183.10 -2.63
BSE SMALLCAP	55149.22 -1,188.47 -2.11



Protesters attend a rally against South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, in Seoul, South Korea.



55th GST Council Meet Defers Decision On Health Insurance Premium Rate Cuts

New Delhi, 21 December: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on Saturday deferred the decision on rate cuts on life and health insurance premiums, as some more technicalities need to be ironed out. The GST exemption/reduction on life and health insurance premiums is a long-pending demand of the industry, as the move would alleviate the tax burden on both insurers and policyholders.

According to people in the know, the GST Council in its 55th meeting in Jaissalmer, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, has deferred the decision on potential tax changes for insurance premiums. While most of the panel members of the Group of Ministers (GoM), led by Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, had pitched for "full exemption" on health and life policy premiums, a few panel members suggested reducing the rate to 5 per cent from the current 18 per cent.

"Some members said more discussions were required. The GoM will meet in January again," Mr Chaudhary told reporters. The GoM suggested exemption from GST on premiums paid for term life insurance policies. It was also proposed to exempt GST on premiums paid by senior citizens for health insurance cover. For individuals other than senior citizens, an exemption was recommended for health insurance premiums covering policies up to ₹ 5 lakh. However, the current 18 per cent GST rate would remain applicable for policies with coverage above ₹ 5 lakh.

The GST Council will go for further deliberation on the recommendations in its next meeting, as some more technicalities need to be ironed out. Meanwhile, the GoM on GST compensation cess is likely to get a six-month extension till June 2025 to submit their report. Another key agenda at the meeting is to decide whether the 5 per cent GST on delivery charges by food delivery platforms will be applied retrospectively from 2022. Currently, food delivery companies do not pay GST on delivery charges. Also, the GST Council is likely to take up the issue of bringing aviation turbine fuel under the GST ambit.

Special 7-Member Team Formed to Probe Rahul Gandhi's Alleged Parliament Assault Case

New Delhi, 21 December: The Ministry of Home Affairs announced the formation of a special 7-member team to investigate the alleged assault on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi within the premises of the Parliament earlier this week. The decision comes after a heated exchange of statements between political leaders and growing concerns over the safety of lawmakers in the legislative institution. The incident, which occurred on December 18, allegedly involved Rahul Gandhi being physically assaulted by unidentified individuals while inside the Parliament complex. According to eyewitness reports, the Congress MP was pushed and shoved by several people during a verbal altercation in one of the corridors. Gandhi later claimed in a tweet that he had been "attacked by those with a vested interest in suppressing truth and dissent," referring to what he described as an organized attack orchestrated by political adversaries. The formation of the special team was announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a statement late on Thursday, after discussions with senior security officials and parliamentary authorities. "We are deeply concerned about the security of our parliamentarians and the sanctity of the institution. A special team has been formed to investigate the alleged assault on Shri Rahul Gandhi in Parliament," Shah said. The team will include experts from the Intelli-



gence Bureau, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the Delhi Police, ensuring a thorough and impartial investigation. Sources from the Home Ministry indicated that the team will primarily focus on gathering evidence, questioning witnesses, and identifying the individuals responsible for the alleged assault. The investigation will also involve analyzing CCTV footage from the Parliament building to determine the sequence of events and whether any security lapses occurred during the incident. The probe team consists of senior officers, including a deputy director from the Intelligence Bureau, a senior CBI officer, and senior Delhi Police officers specializing in handling cases of political violence. A forensic expert has also been included to examine any physical evidence related to the incident. The formation of the

special team has been met with mixed reactions. While Congress leaders have welcomed the investigation, calling for swift action, they have also raised concerns about the fairness and transparency of the process. "We are hopeful that justice will be done and the truth will come out. However, we also urge that this investigation be impartial and free from political interference," said Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala. On the other hand, BJP leaders have called for a thorough and unbiased probe but have dismissed allegations that the incident was politically motivated. "Rahul Gandhi's allegations are exaggerated, and we do not believe there is any truth to the claim of a premeditated assault. We trust that the investigation will clarify the facts," said BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia. Political analysts have pointed out that the incident has escalated tensions between the ruling BJP and the opposition Congress, especially as both parties prepare for upcoming state elections and the 2024 general elections. Rahul Gandhi's allegations, if proven true, could have significant implications for the political discourse, raising questions about the safety of opposition leaders and the functioning of Parliament as a democratic institution. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have assured that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure the safety of parliamentarians.

Time Has Come For Change In Approach Of Police In Northeast: Amit Shah



Agartala, 21 December: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said time has come for a change in approach of the police force with the end of insurgency in the northeast, in order to ensure that people get speedy justice. Amit Shah, addressing the 72nd plenary of the North Eastern Council (NEC) here, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought peace in the region by inking 20 peace accords in 10 years, leading to the surrender of 9,000 armed militants. "The police has fought insurgency in the northeast for the past four decades. As insurgency has now ended, we need to change the approach of the force to ensure people get justice within three years of lodging FIRs," he said.

The home minister also said the Centre has spent ₹ 81,000 crore for rail connectivity and ₹ 41,000 crore for road network in the northeastern region. Besides, the central government has been focusing on organic cultivation in the region, said Mr Shah. "The Centre has already constituted the National Organic Corporation Ltd to boost the sector. I urge all the CMs (in the northeast) to sign agreements with NOCL for packaging, marketing and exporting of organic products," he added.

Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought peace in the northeastern regions by signing 20 peace accords in the last 10 years of his tenure, which led 9,000 armed militants to surrender. Shah said time has come for change in approach of the police to tackle and eliminate insurgency in the northeastern regions. Addressing the 72nd plenary of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Tripura, Shah further said that connectivity was no longer a problem in the region as the Centre "has spent Rs 81,000 crore for rail connectivity and Rs 41,000 crore for road network in the northeastern states."

"The police fought insurgency in the northeast for the past four decades. As insurgency has now ended, we need to change the approach of the force to ensure people get justice within three years of lodging FIRs," the Union home minister was quoted as saying by news agency PTI. Shah said northeast was always one of the key areas for the central government's developmental works as Union ministers "spent 700 nights" in the states of the northeastern regions since coming to power in 2014. "After the exchange of enclaves (land boundary agreements) with Bangladesh, the whole world will open for the northeast. This will change the investment ecosystem in the region," he said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with others upon his arrival at the airport, in Kuwait.

CBI Does Not Seek Further Custody of Sujay Krishna Bhadra; Court Denies Bail

New Delhi, 21 December: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday informed a special court that it was not seeking further custodial remand of Sujay Krishna Bhadra, the prime accused in the high-profile case involving financial irregularities and cybercrimes. The court, however, denied him bail, stating that there were strong grounds to believe that he could influence witnesses and tamper with evidence if released. Bhadra, who has been under CBI custody for the past 15 days, was arrested following his alleged involvement in a nationwide network of illegal online operations targeting financial institutions, government departments, and several private entities. His activities reportedly caused millions of dollars in losses, leading to a complex investigation by multiple agencies including the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

In a brief statement, the CBI clarified its stance during the proceedings, saying that while it did not require his further custody, it would continue to investigate his role in the cybercrimes and fraudulent activities linked to an international ring of money launderers. The investigating agency also emphasized the severity of the allegations, which spanned across several states, with Bhadra being linked to various shell companies and bank accounts used for laundering money. "The case against the accused involves serious crimes with global ramifications. Although we



are not requesting his custodial remand at this time, the investigation is far from complete," a senior CBI official said after the court proceedings. "Our primary concern now is to ensure that justice is done and the victims of these crimes are compensated," the official added. Despite the agency's statement, Bhadra's legal team sought his release on bail, arguing that the CBI had not produced sufficient evidence to justify his continued detention. His lawyers pointed to the lack of direct evidence linking him to the alleged financial fraud and argued that his prolonged custody violated his rights.

However, the special court disagreed, noting the gravity of the charges. "The nature of the offense and the magnitude of the criminal network involved in this case are factors that weigh heavily against granting bail," the judge stated in his ruling. The court also

expressed concerns that Bhadra might use his resources and influence to interfere with the ongoing investigation. This decision comes amid mounting pressure on the CBI to expedite its investigation, as numerous individuals and businesses have reported significant financial losses attributed to Bhadra's operations.

In recent weeks, the agency has uncovered a web of shell companies and bank accounts that were allegedly manipulated by the accused to move illicit funds. Bhadra, a former technology executive, is believed to have masterminded the cybercrime syndicate that exploited digital platforms to orchestrate large-scale fraud. He is accused of hacking into secure networks, bypassing security systems, and using sophisticated methods to siphon funds from unsuspecting entities. The CBI has also indicated that they are closely monitoring Bhadra's connections to a larger criminal syndicate that operates across borders. As part of the investigation, international cooperation from foreign law enforcement agencies is expected in the coming months, given the complex nature of the operations. The case has raised significant concerns about the vulnerabilities of digital financial systems and the growing threat posed by cybercriminals exploiting emerging technologies. The CBI's efforts to dismantle this criminal network are expected to continue as the investigation unfolds.

Karnataka Minister Targets Amit Shah, Claims He Was "Bitten by Rabid Dog" Amid Ambedkar Row

Bengaluru, 21 December: A sharp political altercation unfolded in Karnataka on Thursday as state minister Priyank Kharge took a direct swipe at Union Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing him of being "bitten by a rabid dog." The unusual and aggressive remark came amid the ongoing Ambedkar row, which has sparked significant controversy in the state. The Ambedkar row stems from remarks made by BJP leaders regarding Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, in relation to a controversial statement made earlier in the week. Kharge, who serves as the Minister for Social Welfare in the Karnataka government, lashed out at Shah following the latter's

comments on the Ambedkar issue. Shah had been critical of certain state government policies and suggested that Karnataka was not doing enough to honor Ambedkar's legacy. Kharge, taking offense at Shah's remarks, delivered a blistering response during a public event in his home constituency of Chittapur.

"Amit Shah has been bitten by a rabid dog, and this is why he is speaking nonsense. His comments are baseless, and they show his utter disrespect for the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar," Kharge said, his voice laced with sarcasm and anger. He continued, accusing Shah and the BJP of trying to twist the legacy of Ambedkar for political gain

and undermining his contributions to the country's social fabric. Kharge's comments immediately became the center of media attention, stirring a fresh round of political debate and fueling further discord between the Congress-led state government and the BJP. The BJP, which had previously held power in Karnataka before the Congress took over in 2023, wasted no time in responding. Senior BJP leaders condemned Kharge's remarks as inappropriate and demanded an apology. "It is shameful for a public representative to make such an outrageous statement. The minister's behavior is an insult not only to Amit Shah but to the people of this state," said BJP spokesperson Ramesh

Jarkiholi.

The Ambedkar row began earlier this week when BJP leaders in Karnataka criticized certain state government policies, particularly those concerning the distribution of Dr. Ambedkar's statues and the state's approach to honoring his legacy. The BJP alleged that the Karnataka government had been neglecting Ambedkar's contributions and had failed to adequately celebrate his role in the making of the Indian Constitution. Kharge, who comes from the prominent Kharge family, with his father Mallikarjun Kharge being a senior leader of the Congress party, has long been an advocate of Dr. Ambedkar's ideals. In his ad-

dress, he emphasized the importance of preserving the integrity of Ambedkar's philosophy and ensuring that political groups did not use his name for personal or electoral gain. The exchange highlights the intense political rivalry between the Congress and BJP in Karnataka, a state that has been a battleground for both parties in recent years. The war of words between the two parties is expected to escalate as the state heads toward its next set of elections, with each side vying for the support of the state's diverse voter base. Political analysts believe that the Ambedkar row could become a key issue in the coming months as the debate over his legacy intensifies.

Absence of Migratory Birds at Rabindra Sarobar Marks Unusual Start to Winter Season

Kolkata, 21 December: The usual sight of migratory birds flocking to Rabindra Sarobar in the early days of winter has been conspicuously missing this year, raising concerns among environmentalists and nature enthusiasts. Known for its vibrant birdlife, Rabindra Sarobar has long been a haven for hundreds of migratory birds, especially during the winter months. However, the beginning of this winter season has seen an alarming absence of these winged visitors, prompting questions about changing ecological patterns and environmental health. Rabindra Sarobar, a large man-made lake and urban green space in South Kolkata, has been a prime stopover for migratory birds migrating from colder regions like Himalayan foothills, Central Asia, and Europe. Every year, starting in October-November, the lake and its surrounding areas become home to a wide variety of migratory species, including pelicans, swan geese, gadwalls, teal, and bar-headed geese, among others. For years, residents and birdwatchers have eagerly awaited the arrival of these birds, marking the beginning of winter with the beauty of these avian travelers. The sight of birds nesting, feeding, and flying over the lake has not only been a significant ecological feature of the area but also a major attraction for nature lovers and photographers. This year, however, the situation is different. Despite the onset of the winter season, there has been an unusual delay, if not complete absence, of migratory birds at Rabindra Sarobar. Local residents and birdwatching groups,

who usually observe a wide variety of bird species by early December, have reported seeing very few birds in the area. "We've been coming to Rabindra Sarobar for years to witness the bird migration, but this year it's almost silent," said Soumya Ghosh, a birdwatcher from South Kolkata. "There are very few birds, and it's a strange feeling. Usually, by now, the



lake is filled with migratory species." Environmentalists and experts are deeply concerned about this sudden change in patterns, particularly because it marks a departure from the norm over the past several decades.

Experts attribute the absence of migratory birds to a variety of possible factors, including climate change, pollution, and human activity around the lake. Changes in temperature patterns, both in Kolkata and the migratory birds' native habitats, may have altered migration routes or timing. While the birds are known to travel long distances, shifts in seasonal weather and fluctuating temperatures could affect

their migration habits. Some migratory species may have chosen alternative destinations where the environmental conditions are more favorable. Once known for its clean and peaceful environment, has faced increasing pollution issues over the years. Toxic water and air quality deterioration can discourage birds from migrating to this location. Experts have long warned about the ecological degradation of urban lakes, with plastic waste, untreated sewage, and encroachment threatening the water quality and wildlife. Rapid urbanization around the lake, along with construction projects and encroachments, could be disrupting the natural habitat that birds rely on. Additionally, disturbances from visitors and vehicles could make the environment unsuitable for birds to settle or nest in peace. There have been reports of global disruptions in migratory patterns due to the ongoing effects of climate change. Birds that used to migrate regularly to certain areas might be adjusting their routes based on shifting climates, availability of food, and even changes in the timing of their migrations. Environmentalists have raised alarms about the lack of migratory birds at Rabindra Sarobar and are calling for immediate action to address the factors causing this shift. According to Dr. Anirban Mukherjee, an environmental biologist and bird conservationist, The absence of migratory birds is not an isolated event. It is a reflection of larger, global environmental changes that are affecting not just Kolkata but ecosystems worldwide.

Multiple Aadhar Centers Likely Involved in Fake Passport Racket, Police Launch Investigation

Kolkata, 21 December: A major fake passport racket has come to light, with authorities suspecting the involvement of several Aadhar centers across the city in facilitating the illegal issuance of passports using fraudulent documents. The discovery has raised serious concerns over the security and integrity of the Aadhar system and the potential misuse of personal identification information. The Bengal Police have launched an investigation into the matter, with early indications pointing to a well-organized network operating within the region.

The case first came to attention when passport officials noticed several anomalies in the documentation of individuals applying for passports from various centers. Investigators found that many of the applicants were using forged birth certificates, fake identity documents, and duplicate Aadhar cards. These fake documents were reportedly being processed at specific Aadhar enrollment centers, which were not following the standard verification procedures.

According to sources within the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which has been roped in to assist local authorities, the racket involved individuals who were either illegally obtaining or fabricating Aadhar cards with fake identities. These fake Aadhar cards were then used as part of passport applications, which were processed at local passport offices. The Aadhar centers played a crucial role in creating fraudulent documentation that bypassed the usual scrutiny.

"We are currently investigating the role of several Aadhar enrollment centers which are suspected to have issued fake documents. Some individuals might have exploited the system by submitting manipulated records, allowing them to acquire Aadhar cards that facilitated the passport process," said Sanjay Chakraborty, an officer from the Bengal Police.

Aadhar centers, which were originally set up to provide residents with a unique identification number linked to biometric and demographic data, have now come under scrutiny for their possible involvement in the illegal activities.

These centers are authorized to issue Aadhar cards after verifying the identity of applicants through biometric data, such as fingerprints and iris scans. However, law enforcement authorities have found that some unauthorized operators running Aadhar centers may have bypassed the verification process, issuing cards with fraudulent details.

Police Uncover New Leads in Salt Lake Youth Death Case, Investigation Intensifies

Kolkata, 21 December: The investigation into the mysterious death of a young man in Salt Lake has taken a significant turn with the police receiving new information, bringing them closer to unraveling the circumstances surrounding the tragic incident. The body of Sourav Ghosh, a 23-year-old youth, was discovered in a secluded area near Sector V, Salt Lake, early on December 19. The police had initially suspected foul play, and now, new developments are emerging that could provide vital clues to the case. Sourav Ghosh, a resident of Bidhannagar, Salt Lake, had been reported missing a day before his body was found. He was last seen leaving his office on the evening of December 18 after a long day of work. According to his family, Sourav had texted his friends about being tired and planned to return home early. However, when he did not return, his family

grew concerned and reported him as missing. The police initiated a search and launched an investigation, which led them to the discovery of Sourav's body in a deserted area near Sector V, a prominent business district in Salt Lake. His body showed signs of injury, leading investigators to believe that his death might not have been accidental.

Following initial investigations, the police have uncovered new information that could shed light on the tragic event. According to Bidhannagar Commissionerate Police, they have received crucial witness testimonies and have managed to recover some surveillance footage that places Sourav at a nearby cafe just hours before his death. "We have been able to obtain some valuable footage from nearby CCTV cameras. The footage shows Sourav meeting an unidentified individual at a cafe

near BD Block around 8:00 PM on the evening of December 18," said Subrata Roy, a senior officer involved in the investigation. "We believe this could be an important lead in the case. We are now in the process of identifying this person." In addition to the footage, the police have also spoken with witnesses who reported hearing an argument in the area where Sourav's body was found. "A few people reported hearing raised voices around 11:00 PM on the night of December 18, near the spot where the body was discovered," Roy added. The witnesses claim they could not identify the voices but mentioned hearing sounds of a physical altercation. As the investigation progresses, the police are exploring two possible motives: personal enmity or professional disputes. Sourav, a software engineer, had been working at a well-known IT firm in Salt Lake.

16 Injured After Missile Launched By Yemen Lands Near Tel Aviv, Says Israel

Jerusalem, 21 December: Israel's military said Saturday it had failed to intercept a "projectile" launched from Yemen that landed near Tel Aviv, with the national medical service saying 16 people were lightly wounded. "Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in central Israel, one projectile launched from Yemen was identified and unsuccessful interception attempts were made," the Israeli military said on its Telegram channel.

Yemen's Iranian-backed Huthi rebels have repeatedly launched missile attacks against Israel since the war in Gaza began more than a year ago, most of which have been intercepted. In return, Israel has struck multiple targets in Yemen -- including ports and energy facilities in areas controlled by the Huthis. "A short time ago, reports were received of a weapon falling in one of the settlements within the Tel Aviv district," Israeli police said Saturday.

According to Israeli media, the projectile fell in the town of Bnei Brak, east of Tel Aviv. Israel's emergency medical service said 14 people had been injured. "Additional teams are treating several people on-site who were injured while heading to protected areas, as well as those suffering from anxiety," a spokesman said. The Huthi rebels say they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians and last week pledged to continue operations "until the aggression on Gaza stops and the siege is lifted".

On December 9, a drone claimed by Huthis exploded on the top floor of a residential building in the central Israeli city of Yavne, causing no casualties. In July, a Huthi drone attack in Tel Aviv killed an Israeli civilian, prompting retaliatory strikes on the Yemeni port of Hodeidah. The Huthis have also regularly targeted shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, leading to retaliatory strikes on Huthi targets by US and sometimes British forces. The rebels said Thursday that Israeli air strikes that day killed nine people, after the group fired a missile toward Israel, badly damaging a school. While Israel has previously hit targets in Yemen, Thursday's were the first against the rebel-held capital Sanaa. "The Israeli enemy targeted ports in Hodeida and power stations in Sanaa, and the Israeli aggression resulted in the martyrdom of nine civilian martyrs," rebel leader Abdul Malik al-Huthi said in a lengthy speech broadcast by the rebels' Al-Masira TV.

Fresh Reports Of Idol Vandalism In Bangladesh, Hindu Temples Targeted

Dhaka, 21 December: In fresh incidents, eight idols have been vandalised in three Hindu temples in Bangladesh's Mymensingh and Dinajpur over two days, a media report said on Friday. Police have arrested a suspect concerning vandalism at one of the temples, The Daily Star newspaper reported. These are the latest in a series of incidents against the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh. In Mymensingh's Haluaghat sub-district, three idols of two temples were vandalised early Thursday and Friday. Quoting temple sources and locals, Abul Khayer, officer-in-charge (OC) of Haluaghat Police Station, said the attackers ransacked two idols of Bonderpara Temple in the Shakuai union of Haluaghat in the early hours of Friday.

No case was filed and no arrests have been made in the incident yet, he said. In another incident, criminals vandalised an idol at Polashkanda Kali Temple in Beeldora union of Haluaghat early Thursday. Police on Friday arrested a 27-year-old man of the Polashkanda village over his alleged involvement. During interrogation, the man, Alal Uddin, confessed to the crime, said the OC. He was produced before a Mymensingh court this afternoon, which sent him to jail, he added.

Earlier Thursday, Suvash Chandra Sarker, president of the Polashkanda Kali Temple committee, filed a case accusing unidentified persons. In Dinajpur's Birganj sub-district, five idols were vandalised at Jharbari Shashan Kali Temple on Tuesday. The incident came to light on Thursday, according to the report. "We've never seen such an act here," Janardan Roy, president of the temple committee, was quoted as saying. Officer-in-Charge Abdul Gafur said they are investigating the incident. Last week, law enforcement agencies arrested four people for vandalising and damaging a Hindu temple



and houses and shops of the community in Sunamganj district in north Bangladesh. On November 29, three Hindu temples were vandalised by a slogan-shouting mob in Bangladesh's Chattogram which witnessed protests and violence since a former ISKCON member was booked under sedition charges.

The relations between India and Bangladesh came under strain after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country on August 5 following a student-led protest. The relations deteriorated further in recent weeks over continued attacks on Hindus, especially after the recent arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former member of ISKCON Bangladesh and now, a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote organisation. Last week, Bangladesh acknowledged 88 incidents of communal violence against minorities, primarily Hindus, following Hasina's ouster. The increasing number of anti-Hindu incidents has led to a diplomatic row between India and Bangladesh. Earlier, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri flagged regrettable incidents of attacks on minorities and conveyed India's concerns, including those related to the safety and welfare of minorities, during his meetings with the Bangladeshi leadership in Dhaka.

"Time For You To Step Aside": Canada MP's Letter To Justin Trudeau

Ottawa, 21 December: Canadian MP Chandra Arya has added to the uncertainty of the future of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's leadership in the country as he said that he believes it is "time" for the PM to "step aside" as the leader of the Liberal caucus immediately. Arya's statement comes as Canadian opposition parties have united to vote on a no-confidence motion against Trudeau. "Thank you for your leadership. Thanks to you, our Liberal Party experienced a revival in 2015, and under your guidance, we have achieved significant accomplishments. You have delivered on the trust Canadians placed in you. However, it became apparent today that you no longer hold the confidence of the House of Commons. Now I am reasonably certain that a majority of the Liberal caucus no longer supports your leadership," the Canadian MP wrote in a letter addressed to Trudeau.

Pitching for Chrystia Freeland, the former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister who resigned recently, as Trudeau's alternative, Arya said that she marked a "pivotal shift". "While I was disap-



pointed by the timing of her announcement, I must acknowledge her exceptional political acumen. Whether by design or circumstance, she has emerged as a credible and stable alternative to your leadership. Despite your low approval ratings, my support for you stemmed from the lack of a viable and reassuring alternative. Chrystia has now filled that void," he wrote.

According to the Canadian MP, the Liberals will "preserve Trudeau's legacy" under Freeland's leadership. "Chrystia's years of dedication to building and maintaining caucus relationships - something unparalleled even by your closest advisors - give her a

unique ability to unite the party. I am confident the caucus will rally behind her. Under Chrystia's leadership, we can preserve your legacy and protect it from being dismantled by the current official opposition," he said. Freeland resigned on Monday, hours before she was set to deliver a statement on Canada's economy. In her resignation letter, she cited political disagreements between her and Trudeau on the "best path forward for Canada" in light of tariff threats posed by US President-elect Donald Trump.

Trudeau, who was able to retain his position despite political turmoil over the last several months, looks set to lose power early next year. On Thursday, one of his key allies and the leader of New Democratic Party (NDP) Jagmeet Singh, announced that he will move a no-confidence motion in the House of Commons against the PM. According to him, the Liberals don't deserve another chance. In an open letter posted on social media, Singh said, "Justin Trudeau failed in the biggest job a Prime Minister has: to work for people, not the powerful.

Rare Coin Exhibition Opens at Haldiram Banquet in Kolkata, Attracts Collectors and Enthusiasts

Kolkata, 21 December: A three-day Rare Coin Exhibition kicked off at the Haldiram Banquet in Kolkata on Friday, attracting collectors, numismatists, and history enthusiasts from across the city and beyond. The exhibition, which will run until Sunday, offers a unique opportunity for visitors to explore a fascinating collection of coins from different historical periods and regions, including rare artifacts dating back to ancient times. Organized by the Indian Numismatic Society in collaboration with various coin collectors' groups, the event features over 500 rare and antique coins, ranging from ancient Indian coins from the Mauryan and Gupta periods, to colonial-era coins and post-independence Indian currency. The exhibition aims to showcase the rich numismatic history of India and provide a platform for collectors to engage with each other and learn more about the art of coin collection. The exhibition has been divided into several sections, each representing a different era of Indian history.

Visitors can witness the evolution of Indian coins starting from the Indus Valley Civilization, where the first forms of coinage were believed to have originated. There is a special section dedicated to Mauryan coins, which are among the oldest surviving coins from ancient India. Some of the most notable exhibits include punch-marked coins from the Magadha kingdom, and the famous coins of Chandragupta Maurya that bear the symbol of a horse. Another highlight is the collection of Gupta Empire coins, which are renowned for their exquisite artistry and are considered a golden period in Indian numismatics. These coins often feature detailed images of kings and gods, reflecting



the sophistication of Gupta-era art and culture. Additionally, the exhibition features coins from the Delhi Sultanate, Mughal Empire, and the British Raj, providing a comprehensive look at the evolution of Indian coinage over the centuries. One of the standout exhibits includes a rare gold coin of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, inscribed with Persian script, and another set of silver coins from the reign of Sher Shah Suri, renowned for their remarkable accuracy and uniformity. The event has become a haven for numismatists and avid coin collectors, with many people visiting the exhibition specifically to either add to their collection or learn about rare coins that have been hidden in private collections for decades.

A wide range of collectors, from first-time buyers to seasoned experts, have gathered at the exhibition, exchanging valuable insights on the history and value of specific coins. Speaking about the exhibition, Dr. Pradeep Banerjee, an experienced numismatist and one of the chief organizers of the event, said, "This exhibition is a celebration of the rich history of Indian coinage. Coins are not just a means of transaction; they are a reflection of the social, economic, and political dynamics of their times. Through this exhibition, we aim to raise awareness about the importance of coin collec-

tion and the preservation of these precious artifacts." In addition to historical coins, the exhibition also features modern rare coins, such as limited edition commemorative coins, and coins issued by India's Reserve Bank during various milestones in the country's post-independence history. Visitors can also see coins featuring iconic Indian personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi. As part of the exhibition, organizers have also scheduled a series of expert talks and interactive sessions for attendees to engage with renowned numismatists, historians, and collectors. These sessions aim to shed light on the technical aspects of coin grading, preservation techniques, and the significance of collecting rare coins. Attendees will also have the opportunity to get their coins authenticated by certified numismatic experts present at the event. "We are not only displaying rare and antique coins but also educating people about the value and history behind them. This exhibition offers a unique chance to learn from experts and gain a deeper understanding of the art and science of numismatics," said Ankit Saha, a renowned coin collector and speaker at the event. The exhibition has also attracted several coin dealers and traders, who are offering visitors the opportunity to buy, sell, and trade rare coins.



Today's Horoscope

	ARIES : Today is the day for creativity, while you leave the logic for tomorrow, even when it comes to work. You are bent upon success at work.
	TAURUS : You will be dying squander it away and get rid of it as fast as possible. You'll be tossing it around as if you owned a gold mine. Ganesha urges you to hold your horses and tighten.
	GEMINI : A hectic and busy day awaits you. You need to think about how, where and in what proportion to concentrate your energies upon the numerous jobs thrust upon you.
	CANCER: You will go out for dinner with your friends or family. It may so happen that you will take out time from your hectic schedule to prepare tasty food and invite friends and relatives.
	LEO : If you are the one who sets the corporate mantra each morning, then know that today, your mantra will be fabulous, and will be chanted by many in your organisation.
	VIRGO : Watch you step, warns Ganesha. Trouble is lurking just round the corner and waiting to waylay you. At work, you will find yourself in a high-spirited mood.
	LIBRA : Today seems like a good day to take a break and go on a pleasure trip to revitalise yourself, says Ganesha. Even on the business front, it will do you a world of good to take a break.
	SCORPIO : Today you are likely to remain the unvarying object of emotions and sentiments, predicts Ganesha. Your inkling for performing arts may draw you to take up some lessons.
	SAGITTARIUS : Simple living and high thinking, says Ganesha, will be your mantra today. Approach your work with innovative thoughts and diplomatic words.
	CAPRICORN : The day will have a bundle of things to offer today, some good, some not so good. At work, you are likely to overlook the most obvious things.
	AQUARIUS : It always pays to have extra cash, and in that regard, you will be a happy person today! You may carefully update and crosscheck your financial position.
	PIECES : A good day is in the offing, says Ganesha. You are likely to receive news you will be glad to share and celebrate with your family. A few pending deals are likely to be finalised.

Veteran Singer Haimanti Shukla Pays Tribute to Late Singer Pratima Bandopadhyay on Her Birth Anniversary

Mumbai, 21 December: On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the legendary Bengali playback singer Pratima Bandopadhyay, veteran singer Haimanti Shukla took to social media to pay a heartfelt tribute to the musical icon. Shukla, who has been one of the leading voices in Bengali music for decades, expressed deep admiration and respect for Bandopadhyay, remembering the singer as a trailblazer whose contributions to Bengali music continue to inspire generations. Pratima Bandopadhyay, born on December 20, 1930, was one of the most celebrated playback singers in West Bengal during the 1950s and 1960s. Known for her rich, melodious voice, Bandopadhyay sang for numerous Bengali films, earning a special place in the hearts of music lovers. She was particularly known for her collaborations with some of the finest composers and lyricists of the time, and her songs continue to be cherished as classics. In her tribute, Haimanti Shukla, herself a prominent figure in the Bengali music industry, fondly remembered Pratima Bandopadhyay as both a mentor and a source of inspiration. Shukla, who has worked in both Bengali cinema and classical music, spoke of the impact Bandopadhyay had on her own career and the music industry at large. "Pratima didi's voice had the magic to transcend time," Shukla wrote in a post shared with her fans on social media. "Her songs were not just melodies; they were emotions that spoke directly to the soul. As an artist, I have always looked up to her for the strength and depth she brought to her music. On her birth anniversary, I bow down to the great legend who has given Bengali music so much to cher-



ish." Shukla also shared anecdotes of her personal interactions with Pratima Bandopadhyay, describing the late singer as a kind and humble person despite her monumental success. "Pratima didi's humility was as remarkable as her singing. She never let fame cloud her grace, and she always encouraged young artists like myself. It is because of her that many of us found our way in the world of music," Shukla added. Pratima Bandopadhyay was one of the first voices to bring the Bengali film industry to prominence in the realm of music. She was known for her distinct vocal style, which combined classical music influences with contemporary melodies. Throughout her career, she worked with some of the most respected composers in Bengali cinema, including Salil Chowdhury, Hemanta Mukherjee, and Satyajit Ray. Her voice became synonymous with some of the most beloved songs in Bengali music history, including hits from films like "Sare Chuattar" and "Anurag". One of her most enduring contributions was her ability to convey complex emotions through

her singing. Whether it was an upbeat track or a heart-wrenching ballad, Bandopadhyay's performances were always deeply expressive. Her versatility in handling various genres, from romantic songs to devotional bhajans, made her a favorite of both music enthusiasts and filmmakers alike. Bandopadhyay's contributions were not limited to just playback singing. She was also a revered figure in Rabindra Sangeet, the genre of songs written by the famous poet Rabindranath Tagore. She was known for her flawless renditions of Tagore's songs, which are an integral part of Bengali cultural heritage. Her renditions of songs like "Amar Shonar Bangla" and "Ami Chini Go Chini" remain etched in the memories of many. Despite the changing tides of the music industry, Pratima Bandopadhyay's legacy has remained steadfast, with her songs being passed down from one generation to the next. Her recordings continue to be appreciated by music lovers, and she remains a towering figure in the history of Bengali music. Haimanti Shukla's tribute is a reminder of the powerful impact that Pratima Bandopadhyay had on the music world. For generations of artists, she set the benchmark for excellence in both vocal technique and emotional expression. Shukla's own illustrious career, which spans decades and includes hit songs in Bengali films, classical performances, and numerous awards, has been shaped by the trail that Bandopadhyay blazed. Shukla's acknowledgment of Bandopadhyay's influence speaks volumes about the respect and admiration that the current generation of artists holds for the late singer.

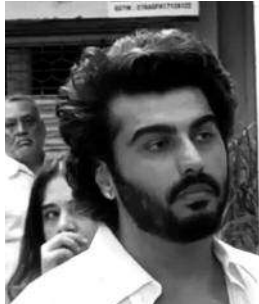


After a meet-and-greet at Howrah Bridge, Sonu visited College Street, home to Asia's largest second-hand book market.

Arjun Kapoor Opens Up About Being by Malaika Arora's Side During Her Father's Death

Mumbai, 21 December: Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor has recently shared an emotional account of the time he spent supporting his girlfriend, Malaika Arora, during the tragic loss of her father, Anwar Arora, earlier this year. In a candid interview, Arjun opened up about why he was there for her during such a difficult time, shedding light on the couple's bond and their relationship in the face of adversity. The heartbreaking loss of Malaika's father, who passed away in April 2024, left her devastated. While many knew the couple had been in a steady relationship, Arjun's presence at such a vulnerable moment made headlines, as he stayed by her side throughout the funeral proceedings and the mourning period. In a heartfelt conversation with a popular media outlet, Arjun reflected on the role he played in providing emotional support to Malaika. He revealed that being there for her during the most difficult time in her life was a natural step for him, as he deeply cares about her well-being. "I've always believed that when someone you love goes through a difficult time, it is important to show up, not just in words, but through your actions. I couldn't imagine not being there for Malaika, especially when she needed support," Arjun said, with visible emotion in his voice. He went on to explain that their relationship, which began a few years ago, has grown stronger over time. Arjun emphasized how Malaika's strength and resilience in the face of personal loss had further deepened his respect and admiration for her. "I've always admired her as a person, and seeing her handle

such a loss with grace and courage only made me want to stand by her more. It's not about making grand gestures, but being there when it matters the most," he added. Arjun and Malaika's relationship has often been under public scrutiny due to their significant age gap and the attention they have received. Despite this, the couple has remained relatively private about their personal life, al-



though their occasional public appearances and social media posts reflect their growing closeness. Arjun admitted that it can be challenging to deal with the constant media attention, but he has learned to navigate it with a sense of calm and perspective. "At the end of the day, it's about prioritizing your loved ones and doing what feels right for you, irrespective of what the world thinks," he said. "People talk about our relationship, but we know the truth. Our bond is about understanding, support, and respect." Arjun also shared that while the attention can sometimes be overwhelming, they try to keep their relationship grounded. "Both Malaika and I are private individuals when it comes to our personal lives. We prefer to focus on the things that matter — love, family, and each other," he explained. Malaika Arora, a popular actress and

fashion icon, has long been admired for her resilience and grace in both her professional and personal life. The loss of her father, however, was a major blow to the family, and many fans were quick to notice how supportive Arjun had been throughout this period. When Anwar Arora passed away, Malaika took to social media to express her grief, thanking friends, family, and fans for their love and support. She wrote a heartfelt post: "My heart is heavy with loss, but I am grateful for the strength I have received from those around me. Thank you, Arjun, for being by my side during this difficult time." Her words touched the hearts of many who have followed her journey over the years. In the same interview, Arjun spoke about the importance of supporting loved ones during times of loss. He recalled how the Arora family had embraced him when he was going through his own struggles, and how the bond between him and Malaika had strengthened through these shared experiences. "I think when you go through hard times together, you either grow stronger or drift apart. We've chosen to grow stronger," he said. Arjun and Malaika's relationship has been a topic of interest in the media for quite some time. The couple, who first met a few years ago, initially kept their relationship low-key, but their frequent appearances at social events, vacations, and candid moments shared on social media have made their bond more apparent. The two have been spotted together at family gatherings, including the Kapoor family's famous Sunday brunches, and at several public events.

Bengali Actor Ritwick Chakraborty Opens Up About His New Film Shontaan and Career Journey

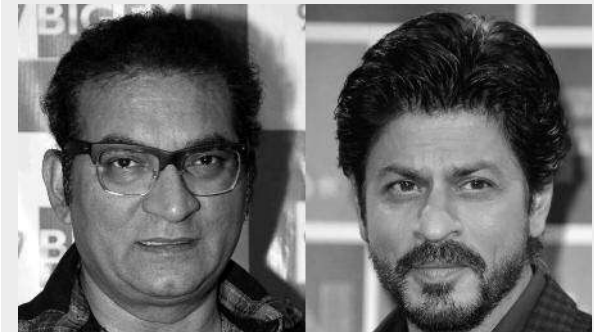


Kolkata, 21 December: Renowned Bengali actor Ritwick Chakraborty is back in the spotlight with his latest project, Shontaan, a poignant family drama that has generated significant buzz ahead of its release. Known for his versatility and naturalistic style, Ritwick has once again garnered attention for taking on a role that showcases his exceptional acting range. In an exclusive interview, Chakraborty shared insights about his character in Shontaan, his evolving career, and the future of Bengali cinema. Shontaan, directed by Abhijit Guha and Sudeshna Roy, revolves around the complexities of family dynamics and the emotional turmoil of parenthood. Ritwick plays the role of Raghunath, a middle-aged man grappling with the sudden responsibility of raising his estranged son after a personal tragedy strikes. The film explores themes of love, regret, reconciliation, and the painful realization of life's fleeting moments. In the interview, Ritwick spoke about his experience portraying Raghunath, a character who undergoes significant emotional transformation. "The role of Raghunath is one of the most challenging I've taken on in recent years," he revealed. "He is a man filled with contradictions — a father

struggling with his past mistakes while trying to build a future with his son. There's a lot of emotional depth to the character, and I wanted to bring out the nuances of his internal struggle." Ritwick explained that his preparation for the role involved connecting with real-life stories of estranged parents and children, drawing from his own observations and experiences. "It's easy to relate to the themes of loss and reconciliation, especially in today's fast-paced world where relationships often get sidelined. I hope the audience finds something personal in the film, as it speaks to universal emotions," he added. Ritwick Chakraborty's career has been marked by a series of bold and unconventional choices. Over the years, he has carved a niche for himself in Bengali cinema with a diverse range of roles, from intense dramas to quirky comedies. Known for his nuanced performances in films like Bisorjon, Faltu, and Hami, Ritwick has earned a reputation for being one of the most critically acclaimed actors in the industry. When asked about his career trajectory, Ritwick reflected on the challenges and rewards of working in the Bengali film industry. "I've always believed in following my instincts when choosing roles,"

he said. "There are so many amazing stories to tell in Bengali cinema, and I try to pick projects that resonate with me on a personal level. I want my work to have an impact, whether it's making people laugh or making them reflect on their own lives." Ritwick emphasized that his approach to acting has always been about truth and authenticity. "The audience can sense when an actor is being honest in their portrayal of a character. For me, it's all about being real, not just acting for the sake of it, but living the character on screen," he explained. This philosophy has contributed to his ability to seamlessly transition between various genres and roles, something that has endeared him to both critics and viewers alike. As the Bengali film industry continues to evolve, Ritwick is optimistic about the future of regional cinema. He believes that the rise of streaming platforms and changing audience preferences have brought new opportunities for creative freedom and storytelling. "The landscape of Bengali cinema is changing, and it's a very exciting time to be a part of it," he said. "Audiences are more open to diverse narratives, and platforms like Hoichoi and Zee5 are giving filmmakers the chance to experiment with content. There's a huge potential for unique stories to reach people far beyond Bengal." He also pointed out the importance of regional cinema in contributing to the national conversation. "Bengali cinema has always had a rich legacy, but we are now seeing a resurgence of fresh ideas and experimental films that are gaining attention both in India and internationally.

Abhijeet Bhattacharya Opens Up on Rift with Shah Rukh Khan: "No Personal Grudge"



Kolkata, 21 December: Legendary playback singer Abhijeet Bhattacharya has finally addressed the long-standing rumors surrounding his strained relationship with Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan. Known for his iconic voice that gave Bollywood some of its most memorable songs, Abhijeet's professional journey has often been intertwined with Shah Rukh's rise to stardom. However, over the years, whispers about a rift between the two have made headlines, especially after Abhijeet made some pointed remarks in the media. In a recent interview, the singer opened up about the situation, clearing the air and sharing his perspective. The tension between Abhijeet Bhattacharya and Shah Rukh Khan has been a subject of speculation for many years. The two were once close, having collaborated on several hit songs for Shah Rukh's films, such as Baazigar, Karan Arjun, and Yes Boss. Abhijeet was the voice behind many of SRK's on-screen romantic numbers, establishing a strong musical association between the two. However, in recent years, Abhijeet's comments about Shah Rukh Khan have created a stir. On multiple occasions, he seemed to take jabs at SRK, which led to rumors of a falling-out. The singer was vocal about his discontent with the industry's treatment of him, and on more than one occasion, he seemed to indirectly blame Shah Rukh Khan for distancing him from Bollywood's top circle. In the interview, Abhijeet addressed these long-standing rumors head-on, shedding light on his perspective. "There's no personal grudge between me and Shah Rukh Khan. We both have our careers and priorities, and sometimes, things don't align as expected. It's not something that should be blown out of proportion," Abhijeet clarified. While Abhijeet was quick to emphasize that there was no personal animosity, he did touch upon the professional reasons behind the growing distance between him and Shah Rukh. According to the singer, the shift began during the early 2000s when he noticed a change in Shah Rukh's musical preferences. "Shah Rukh and I worked together on so many iconic songs. But as his career evolved, his musical choices changed. The kind of songs he wanted, and the way the industry was evolving, I found myself being replaced by younger voices," Abhijeet explained. He also mentioned that the rise of new composers and singers in the 2000s, coupled with the industry's changing tastes, contributed to the shift. "I was one of the leading voices in the 90s. I sang for almost every big star. But things changed. You have to evolve with the times, and sometimes, the music industry doesn't accommodate everyone," he added. Abhijeet also mentioned that he had no issues with the fact that Shah Rukh Khan collaborated with other singers and composers, but felt somewhat sidelined in the process. "It's not about having an issue with anyone.

I just feel that my contribution to his career was undervalued at times," he said. Despite these professional differences, Abhijeet made it clear that there were no hard feelings. "Shah Rukh and I have no personal issues. We've had our differences, yes, but that's a part of any professional relationship. In the end, I respect what he has achieved in his career, and he respects me as a singer," Abhijeet stated. He also recalled his early days of working with Shah Rukh, describing them as "incredible." "We had some great times. His energy, his enthusiasm, and the way he would make every song come alive were something special. I will always cherish those moments," he added. Abhijeet also acknowledged that his relationship with Shah Rukh Khan had been publicly speculated upon, but he urged fans and the media not to read too much into it. "There's no drama. We are both professionals. He has his journey, and I have mine. People should focus on the work we've done rather than making it about personal differences," he said. In the interview, Abhijeet also spoke about the evolution of the music industry and his place in it. Known for his distinctive voice, Abhijeet became synonymous with Bollywood's romantic ballads in the 90s. However, as the industry moved toward more contemporary, fast-paced music and electronic sounds, Abhijeet's style found itself becoming less in demand. "I come from an era where melody was king. Songs had depth, and they told stories. Today, the industry is driven by trends, and things change so quickly. It's harder for artists like me to stay in the spotlight, but that's not something I regret," he said. Abhijeet, who has sung for a wide array of films and actors, reflected on his legacy in the industry.

"Pushpa 2" to Release on OTT on January 9? Here's the Truth Behind the Rumors

Mumbai, 21 December: In the age of digital streaming, rumors about blockbuster films releasing on OTT platforms have become increasingly common. One such rumor recently spread like wildfire, suggesting that the highly anticipated sequel to Allu Arjun's 2021 smash hit, Pushpa: The Rise, Pushpa: The Rule, would be released on OTT on January 9, 2024. The claim immediately stirred excitement among fans, with many eagerly awaiting the film's digital release. However, the truth behind these speculations is far more complicated, and fans may need to manage their expectations. "Pushpa: The Rise" became a cultural sensation upon its release, breaking records and establishing Allu Arjun as a pan-India star. Directed by Sukumar, the film was a massive success, grossing over ₹350 crore worldwide. The film's gripping storyline, intense performances, catchy music (especially the viral song "Srivalli"), and Allu Arjun's

rugged portrayal of Pushpa Raj made it one of the most talked-about films of 2021. The sequel, Pushpa: The Rule, was officially announced shortly after, and fans have been waiting with bated breath for its release. The recent buzz about Pushpa 2 releasing on OTT on January 9 stems from various social media posts and unverified sources claiming that the film would skip the theatrical release or release simultaneously on both theatres and OTT. According to these claims, Amazon Prime Video—which had acquired the streaming rights for the first film—was also set to stream the sequel, following the same trajectory. These rumors quickly gained traction, as the OTT release strategy for several big films, particularly post-pandemic, has become more common. With digital platforms becoming an increasingly significant avenue for film distribution, especially for pan-India hits like Pushpa, the notion of a simultaneous

OTT release seemed plausible to many. However, official sources close to the makers of Pushpa: The Rule have debunked these rumors. Mythri Movie Makers, the production house behind the film, and representatives from Amazon Prime Video have clarified that Pushpa 2 will NOT be releasing on OTT on January 9. The film will first hit theaters, as originally planned, and there has been no official confirmation of any digital release date as of now. The reason behind this decision is clear: Pushpa 2 is expected to have a massive box-office release. Given the immense popularity of the first film, the makers are keen to maximize its theatrical earnings before considering an OTT release. Moreover, the theatrical experience, especially with films like Pushpa, which are designed for a larger-than-life audience experience, remains the preferred choice for both the filmmakers and fans. Sources in-

dicate that Pushpa: The Rule is aiming for a grand theatrical release in 2024, likely around the Makar Sankranti or Republic Day weekend, when major films traditionally debut. This timeline aligns with the makers' desire to capture the maximum audience in cinemas before exploring the digital space. Despite the OTT release confusion, the excitement surrounding Pushpa: The Rule remains undiminished. The sequel is expected to pick up right where the first film left off, with Pushpa Raj's rise to power and his increasing clashes with rival factions. Allu Arjun's character is set to face even greater challenges as he consolidates his control over the red sandalwood smuggling empire, while also dealing with personal vendettas. Fans can also expect a return of the electrifying performances from Rashmika Mandanna as Sri Valli, Fahadh Faasil as the menacing SP Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat, and Jagapathi Babu, along with several

new faces joining the cast. The film is also expected to delve deeper into the character arcs, with more intense action sequences and high-octane drama. In addition to the compelling narrative, the sequel promises more of Devi Sri Prasad's chart-topping music, with songs like "Oo Antava" from the first film already proving that the Pushpa franchise has a soundscape that fans adore. While the Pushpa 2 OTT release rumor has been debunked, the conversation around OTT and theatrical releases for big-ticket films in 2024 is far from over. With streaming platforms continuing to invest heavily in Indian content, many upcoming films are expected to have simultaneous releases on OTT and in cinemas, especially for projects that have already seen substantial theatrical success. This trend has already been seen with movies like "RRR" and "KGF Chapter 2", which had their digital releases shortly after the theatrical run.

Editorial

Sarada Devi's Life: A Beacon of Harmony and Generosity for All Religions

Where religious divides often fuel conflict and intolerance, the life of Sarada Devi stands as a timeless example of harmony, compassion, and generosity that transcends all boundaries of faith. The revered spiritual figure and consort of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sarada Devi, was not just a devoted wife but also a profound teacher whose life and teachings continue to inspire people from all walks of life. Her approach to religion was simple yet profound: it was about recognizing the oneness of all beings, regardless of their faith, and living a life of selfless service. As we grapple with the growing divides between communities, the lessons from Sarada Devi's life offer a refreshing perspective on how humanity can strive towards unity and understanding. In an age where intolerance sometimes overshadows empathy, Sarada Devi's unwavering belief in the essential unity of all religions can help remind us of the shared values of love, kindness, and peace that bind us together as human beings. Sarada Devi, born in 1853 in the small village of Jayrambati in Bengal, is often regarded as the embodiment of the divine feminine. She was deeply devoted to her husband, Sri Ramakrishna, whose spiritual teachings emphasized the unity of all religions. However, it was Sarada Devi's own life and interactions with people that exemplified this vision of religious harmony in the most tangible way. While she followed the path of devotion to the Divine, Sarada Devi did not subscribe to sectarianism or exclusivism. She believed that all religions were paths to the same ultimate truth. She famously said, "There are many paths to the same goal," and she lived this truth by embracing people from all religions, offering them love and solace, irrespective of their faith. She encouraged followers to practice their own religions sincerely, but also taught them the importance of respecting others' beliefs. In a deeply polarized society, where religion often becomes a source of division, Sarada Devi's inclusive worldview offers a powerful lesson. Her life teaches us that spiritual wisdom transcends religious labels, and that harmony is achieved not by rigid adherence to one belief system but by recognizing the truth inherent in all religions. Generosity was a cornerstone of Sarada Devi's character. Her compassion knew no bounds, and her love was not confined to any one group of people. Whether it was the poor, the destitute, or those from different religious backgrounds, Sarada Devi treated everyone with equal respect and care. Her generosity was not just material; it was spiritual. She showed her disciples how to lead a life of service and sacrifice, with love and kindness at the center of every action. In her interactions with people of all faiths, Sarada Devi demonstrated that true generosity lies in giving without expecting anything in return. She welcomed devotees of different religions, offering them guidance and solace irrespective of their background. Her example shows that true generosity goes beyond charity; it is about the genuine desire to alleviate suffering and contribute to the well-being of others, regardless of their religious or social identity. In the context of today's world, where religion is sometimes weaponized for

political gain, Sarada Devi's example of unconditional love and service offers a stark contrast. Her life reminds us that the essence of all religious traditions is compassion, and it is this compassion that we must nurture to create a peaceful and harmonious world. Sarada Devi's life was marked by simplicity, humility, and devotion. She lived a life devoid of material desires, focused solely on the well-being of others and the service of God. Her simplicity was not just in her lifestyle but in her approach to spirituality. She taught her followers that spiritual growth is not about external rituals but about the purity of heart and selfless service. In her teachings, Sarada Devi emphasized the importance of inner peace and purity of mind. She often said, "The best way to serve God is to serve humanity." Her teachings aligned closely with the message of Sri Ramakrishna, who advocated for living a simple, virtuous life, free from ego and attachment. In an age where people are often distracted by the pursuit of material wealth and status, Sarada Devi's example of simplicity offers a profound lesson. She demonstrated that true happiness comes not from external achievements but from inner peace and a heart filled with love and compassion. By living a life of devotion and service, she showed that spiritual fulfillment and worldly detachment can coexist in harmony. In today's world, where religious intolerance, sectarianism, and communal violence seem to dominate headlines, Sarada Devi's message of harmony is more relevant than ever. Her life shows that religious differences should not be a source of conflict but a reason for celebrating the diversity of human thought and experience. She emphasized the importance of tolerance and respect for all religious traditions, and her teachings remind us that at the core of every religion lies the same universal truth: the oneness of all beings. Sarada Devi's life also teaches us the importance of selfless service and generosity. In a world that often prioritizes individual success and material accumulation, her example offers a refreshing reminder that true fulfillment lies in serving others, in giving without expectation, and in sharing our love and resources with those in need. In a society riddled with inequality and injustice, we need more people who embody the spirit of Sarada Devi—individuals who live for the greater good and who put the welfare of others above their own interests. Sarada Devi's life serves as an invitation for all of us to transcend religious and societal divisions and to embrace the shared values of love, compassion, and generosity. In a world that is often fragmented by religious conflict and intolerance, her example of religious harmony offers a blueprint for creating a more peaceful and compassionate world. If we take the lessons from Sarada Devi's life to heart—if we cultivate a spirit of generosity and respect for all faiths—perhaps we can begin to build a society where unity prevails over division and where the light of compassion shines brighter than the shadows of prejudice. Her life is a beacon of hope, reminding us that true spirituality is not about rigid dogmas, but about the universal values of kindness, service, and harmony among all people.

134 Years to Gender Equality: A Wake-Up Call for India's Progress

Recent reports indicate that India may take as long as 134 years to achieve gender equality. This projection serves as a chilling reminder of the deep-rooted challenges that persist in bridging the gender divide. Despite significant progress over the past few decades in some sectors, women in India continue to face immense barriers in education, employment, healthcare, and political participation. The figures starkly highlight how far India remains from realizing the promise of equal rights and opportunities for all its citizens, regardless of gender. India's gender gap, despite improvements in some areas, is still vast. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2023, India ranks 127th out of 146 countries, with a score of just 0.625 on a scale from 0 to 1. This score reflects the overall state of gender equality across key dimensions such as economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The projection of 134 years to achieve gender equality comes from a combination of factors, primarily the slow pace of change in key areas such as economic participation, education, and the political representation of women. While laws and policies have been enacted to ensure women's rights, societal norms and deep-seated gender biases continue to hold women back from achieving their full potential. One of the most glaring areas of disparity is the gender gap in the workforce. Women in India are significantly underrepresented in the labor force, and those who do participate earn, on average, much less than their male counterparts. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the female labor force participation rate in India was only 23.6% in 2021, one of the lowest in the world. The reasons are manifold—cultural barriers, lack of adequate childcare, poor safety measures, and the burden of unpaid domestic labor. In many cases, even when women do enter the workforce, they face discrimination in hiring, pay, and promotion. According to a study by McK-



insey & Company, women in India are underrepresented in leadership roles, with only 29% of managerial positions occupied by women. The leadership gap is particularly noticeable in the private sector, where only 17% of senior roles are held by women. In addition to pay inequality, women also face the challenge of balancing work and home responsibilities. In a society where women are still expected to carry the brunt of domestic duties, many find it difficult to continue in their careers after marriage or childbirth. The absence of sufficient support systems like affordable childcare and parental leave further exacerbates this problem. While India has made considerable strides in improving women's access to education, gender disparities in education remain a significant issue. According to UNESCO, the gender parity index in primary education in India has improved over the years, with near-equal enroll-

ment rates for boys and girls. However, when it comes to secondary and tertiary education, the gap widens. A study by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) found that fewer girls than boys attend school beyond the primary level, especially in rural areas. Cultural norms that prioritize boys' education over girls' education persist in many parts of the country, leaving girls vulnerable to early marriages and domestic responsibilities. Moreover, the gender gap in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields is also alarming. Women represent only about 30% of the STEM workforce in India, with even fewer making it into leadership positions. In a rapidly changing global economy, this lack of gender diversity in high-growth sectors limits both women's potential and the country's overall economic growth. Despite an increasing number of women participating in the political landscape, gender

disparity in political representation remains a major concern. Women hold only 14.4% of the seats in India's Parliament, significantly lower than the global average of 25%. This underrepresentation limits women's ability to influence policy decisions that directly affect their lives. The Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to reserve 33% of seats in Parliament and state assemblies for women, has been stuck in the political quagmire for decades. The absence of women in decision-making roles perpetuates gender-biased policies and hampers efforts to address issues such as women's health, safety, and economic security. Although there have been recent efforts to increase female participation in politics, progress has been slow, and the political establishment remains largely male-dominated. Women's health and safety continue to be critical issues in India. Despite improvements in maternal mor-

tality rates, India still has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world, with more than 20,000 women dying during childbirth every year. The lack of access to quality healthcare, coupled with societal norms that discourage women from seeking medical help, exacerbates this problem. Women's safety, especially in urban areas, remains a significant concern. The rise in gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, trafficking, and domestic abuse, underscores the deep-rooted misogyny and patriarchal values that still pervade Indian society. While laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act have been enacted to protect women, enforcement remains weak, and many cases go unreported due to fear of stigma and retribution. India stands at a critical juncture where achieving gender equality is not just a matter of social jus-

tice but also an economic imperative. The country's growth potential cannot be fully realized without harnessing the talents and capabilities of its women. The government, civil society, and businesses must collaborate to accelerate progress in closing the gender gap. First, there is an urgent need for stronger policies and enforcement mechanisms to protect women from discrimination, violence, and exploitation. Companies must adopt gender-inclusive practices, from equal pay for equal work to women-friendly workplaces. The education system must prioritize the empowerment of girls and women, especially in rural areas, by ensuring access to quality education and vocational training. Political representation must be enhanced by passing the Women's Reservation Bill and creating a conducive environment for women's leadership.

Is Donald Trump Responsible for Climate Deterioration? Questions Arise as Global Impact Grows

As the world grapples with increasingly severe climate events—wildfires, hurricanes, heatwaves, and floods—questions are being raised about the role of political leaders in contributing to the climate crisis. Among them, former U.S. President Donald Trump's environmental policies during his tenure have come under intense scrutiny. His administration's approach to climate change, particularly its rollback of environmental regulations and withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, has led many to ask: Is Donald Trump responsible for accelerating the deterioration of the climate? While climate change is undoubtedly a global issue, the actions of world leaders have far-reaching consequences, especially when the United States—one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases—is involved. Trump's environmental legacy is one of the most contentious aspects of his presidency, and his policies continue to shape the climate discourse in profound ways. As global temperatures rise and the planet faces unprecedented environmental challenges, it is essential to examine the extent to which Trump's policies may have played a role in exacerbating climate change. One of the most striking features of Donald Trump's presidency was his concerted effort to undo environmental protections established by previous administrations. From the very beginning of his tenure,



Trump signaled a shift away from environmental regulation, arguing that many of the policies in place were overly restrictive to businesses and impeded economic growth. Under Trump, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) saw significant reductions in its budget, and several key environmental regulations were rolled back or repealed. The Clean Power Plan, aimed at reducing carbon emissions from power plants, was one of the first to be rescinded. The EPA also rolled back fuel efficiency standards for cars, weakening emissions regulations for the automobile industry. Perhaps most infamously, Trump announced in 2017 that the U.S. would be withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, a historic global accord that sought to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Trump's policy of deregulation was championed by many in the business community, particularly fossil fuel industries,

which benefited from the relaxed standards. The U.S. saw a boom in oil and gas production, with the expansion of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and an increase in fossil fuel extraction on public lands. Critics argue that these policies not only failed to mitigate the environmental damage caused by such industries but actively encouraged practices that are known to contribute to climate change. One of the most controversial decisions made by Trump was his withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. Signed in 2015 by nearly 200 nations, the agreement marked a critical global commitment to combat climate change through national climate action plans. It set ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting global temperature rise. The U.S. under President Obama had committed to reducing emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025. However, in June 2017, Trump announced that the

U.S. would be pulling out of the agreement, citing the economic harm it would cause to American workers, especially those in the coal and manufacturing industries. This decision sent shockwaves through the global community. It was seen not only as a rejection of international cooperation on climate change but also as a setback in the fight against global warming. Trump's move was criticized by environmentalists, world leaders, and scientists who warned that the U.S. stepping away from the Paris Agreement would undermine global efforts to limit emissions and mitigate climate impacts. Though President Joe Biden rejoined the Paris Agreement in 2021, Trump's four years of withdrawal left a significant gap in global leadership on climate change. The U.S. is one of the world's largest carbon emitters, and its decision to distance itself from the Paris framework had real-world consequences, particularly in terms of international climate diplomacy. Trump's approach to climate change was characterized by skepticism and denial. He frequently dismissed the science behind climate change, calling it a "hoax" and questioning the consensus of the scientific community. His administration's stance undermined efforts by state and local governments to implement their own climate policies and left American environmental groups to fight an uphill battle against federal inaction.

Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules in West Bengal: An Unmet Challenge

The rapid pace of urbanization and infrastructural development in West Bengal has led to a significant increase in construction and demolition (C&D) waste. While the state has made efforts to regulate and manage this growing issue through the implementation of C&D waste management rules, the reality is far from ideal. These regulations, though well-intentioned, are largely inapplicable on the ground, resulting in environmental degradation, unsightly urban landscapes, and health hazards. The state's inability to enforce these rules effectively raises serious questions about its commitment to sustainability and urban planning. As cities like Kolkata expand and modernize, the amount of construction debris—comprising rubble, concrete, metals, plastics, and wood—has reached alarming levels. According to estimates, C&D waste accounts for nearly 30% of all solid waste generated in major urban areas. The improper handling of such waste not only strains landfill capacities but also exacerbates pollution, further contributing to the state's already precarious environmental health. So, why are the C&D waste management rules in West Bengal proving ineffective? The answer lies in a combination of regulatory shortcomings, poor enforcement, and a lack of adequate infrastructure. In 2016, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued a set of guidelines for the management of C&D waste under the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules to be adopted by all states in India. These rules required urban local bodies to establish waste management systems that could efficiently collect, segregate, recycle, and dispose of C&D waste. The rules stipulated that builders and contractors be held accountable for the waste generated, and they were encouraged to recycle a substantial portion of the debris rather than dumping it in landfills. In response, West Bengal formulated its own State Action Plan for Waste Management, outlining measures to regulate the disposal of C&D waste. The state government established collection centers for construction waste, proposed recycling initiatives, and mandated registration of contractors for waste disposal. However, the reality on the ground has not matched these lofty goals. Despite the regulations in place, the implementation of C&D waste management in West Bengal remains dismal. One of the major reasons for this failure is the lack of a robust infrastructure for waste collection and processing. The state has failed to develop dedicated facilities for sorting, recycling, and disposing of C&D waste at the scale required. In cities like Kolkata, which witness constant construction activities, the waste generated is often dumped in open areas or illegally disposed of, creating hazardous conditions for the environment and local populations. Without adequate processing plants or recycling centers, much of the debris from demolished buildings and construction sites is sent to landfills, contributing to the depletion of landfill space and the increase in non-biodegradable waste. This creates a vicious cycle where landfills become overburdened, and environmental concerns such as groundwater contamination and air pollution are exacerbated.

Small-Cap Stocks Under Rs 100: Experts Recommend Six Shares to Buy Next Week Despite Stock Market Volatility

Where major indices have faced sharp declines, experts are recommending a select group of small-cap stocks under Rs 100 that could offer substantial upside potential for investors looking to capitalize on the volatility. Despite the overall market crash, which has rattled investor confidence, analysts believe these stocks are poised for recovery and growth, driven by strong fundamentals and attractive valuations. The Indian stock market has been under pressure recently, with the benchmark Sensex and Nifty 50 indices witnessing significant corrections. Factors such as rising inflation, global geopolitical tensions, and concerns over domestic economic growth have led to a sell-off in the markets. The small-cap sector, in particular, has borne the brunt of this downturn, with many stocks losing value in recent days. However, experts argue that market corrections, though unsettling in the short term, often present opportunities for long-term investors. In particular, stocks trading below Rs 100, which are often overlooked during market crashes, could see strong recoveries once market sentiment improves. Dilip Buildcon, a leading infrastructure company, has faced headwinds in the past few weeks



due to concerns about project delays and rising costs. However, analysts believe the company's solid order book and robust infrastructure projects across India position it well for a rebound. With a healthy pipeline of orders from both government and private sectors, Dilip Buildcon is seen as a solid long-term bet in the infrastructure space. V-Mart, a prominent player in the Indian retail sector, has seen a sharp decline in its stock price due to weak consumer demand and rising input costs. Despite these short-term challenges, the company's strong presence in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, along with its focus on affordable fashion, makes it an attractive investment option. Analysts are optimistic that with the

festive season approaching, V-Mart will see a bounce-back in sales, making it a good buy at current levels. Saregama India, a leader in the music and entertainment industry, is trading at attractive valuations following a recent dip in its stock price. Despite the market crash, the company has continued to grow its digital content library and expand into new business areas, such as film production and music streaming. With the entertainment sector poised for long-term growth, Saregama presents a promising opportunity for investors seeking exposure to the media and entertainment space. Jindal Poly Films, a leading manufacturer of flexible packaging and polyester films, has seen its stock price take a

hit due to concerns over rising raw material costs and supply chain disruptions. However, experts believe that the company's strong brand equity, coupled with its diverse product portfolio, positions it well for a strong recovery. With the packaging industry expected to grow rapidly, Jindal Poly Films remains a solid pick under Rs 100. Tata Elxsi, a prominent player in the design and technology space, has faced a short-term decline amid broader market sentiment. However, analysts are bullish on the company's future growth prospects, given its strong presence in high-growth sectors like automotive, healthcare, and media. The company's strong order book and consistent earnings growth make it a compelling investment despite recent market volatility. Oriental Carbon & Chemicals, a leading manufacturer of rubber chemicals, has seen its stock price fall due to recent market turbulence. However, experts believe the company's focus on innovation, along with a diversified customer base in both domestic and international markets, will allow it to outperform the broader market in the long term. With a strong financial position and improving margins, Oriental Carbon is expected to benefit from an

upturn in industrial production and global economic recovery. According to Ramesh Nair, a senior market analyst, "While the current market conditions are challenging, small-cap stocks often present an excellent opportunity to buy when sentiment is low. Investors with a long-term horizon should look at these stocks, as they offer attractive valuations and growth potential." Another expert, Shruti Mehta, portfolio manager at a leading mutual fund, added, "Stock market corrections, particularly in the small-cap space, often lead to overreactions. This creates buying opportunities in fundamentally strong companies that may see a sharp recovery once market sentiment stabilizes." Despite the ongoing volatility in the stock market, small-cap stocks under Rs 100 could offer significant upside potential for investors willing to take a long-term view. By focusing on companies with strong fundamentals, solid growth prospects, and attractive valuations, investors can position themselves for a successful rebound once the market stabilizes. As always, however, it is crucial to conduct thorough research and, if necessary, consult with a financial advisor before making investment decisions.

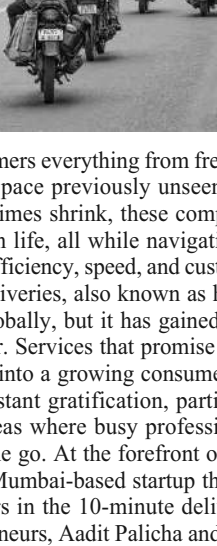
Siemens Sounds Alarm as Capital Goods Stocks Plunge Amid Capex Concerns



Siemens India has raised alarms over the potential negative impact of slowing capital expenditure (Capex) on the industry's growth prospects. The company's cautious outlook has sent ripples through the stock market, contributing to a sharp decline in the stock prices of capital goods companies, with analysts warning of potential challenges ahead for the sector. Siemens India, a key player in the country's capital goods and industrial infrastructure space, recently issued a statement signaling concern over the slowdown in capital spending by both government and private enterprises. The company highlighted that the ongoing economic uncertainties, coupled with rising input costs and global supply chain disruptions, could hamper the momentum of infrastructure and industrial projects in the country. "Capex has slowed down, particularly in key infrastructure sectors, which could significantly impact the growth prospects of the entire capital goods sector," said Prakash Bansal, CFO of Siemens India, in a recent investor call. The warning came in the wake of disappointing quarterly results and a more subdued outlook for the rest of the fiscal year. Siemens' caution has raised concerns among analysts, who believe that if this trend continues, it could affect the profitability and growth trajectory of other companies in the capital goods and engineering space. With Capex traditionally being a key driver of demand for industrial machinery, electrical equipment, and engineering services, the slowdown in capital spending poses a major threat to the sector's overall health. Siemens India's warning triggered a sharp sell-off in the stock prices of several other companies in the capital goods sector, including Larsen & Toubro (L&T), Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL), and ABB India. The Nifty Capital Goods Index, which tracks the performance of the sector, witnessed a significant dip following the news, reflecting investor concerns about a potential slowdown in capital spending. L&T, one of India's largest infrastructure and construction companies, saw its stock fall by over 3% on the back of Siemens' announcement. Similarly, shares of BHEL, which primarily operates in the power equipment sector, and ABB India, a key player in automation and electrical technology, also experienced declines, further compounding fears of a wider sectoral downturn. The slowdown in capital goods stocks is not isolated to Siemens alone. Broader macroeconomic factors, including rising interest rates, inflationary pressures, and global uncertainties surrounding supply chains, have created a challenging environment for businesses

considering large capital investments. Despite the Indian government's push for infrastructure development and initiatives like the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), private sector participation in capital spending has been slow. Businesses remain wary of making large capital commitments due to concerns over cost overruns, project delays, and an uncertain economic environment. Experts suggest that the current slowdown in Capex is symptomatic of a broader hesitancy in the corporate sector to undertake high-investment projects. "There is a clear wait-and-watch approach among private players, and the recent global volatility is further delaying investment decisions," said Arun Kumar, a senior economist at a leading financial consultancy. The capital goods sector is a critical pillar of India's industrial economy, providing machinery, equipment, and technology solutions for a wide range of industries, including power, construction, manufacturing, and transportation. A slowdown in Capex could have ripple effects on employment, demand for raw materials, and growth in allied sectors like engineering and construction. With global inflationary pressures and rising interest rates increasing the cost of capital, companies in the capital goods sector may find it more difficult to maintain profitability. Siemens' warning underscores these concerns, as the company is seeing higher costs for materials and logistics, which could lead to margin compression in the coming quarters. Further, with the government aiming to boost manufacturing and economic growth through initiatives such as "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat," a slowdown in capital spending could undermine these efforts. Industry insiders fear that without a strong push in Capex, India's ambitious infrastructure and industrialization targets could be delayed, affecting both short-term growth and long-term economic aspirations. Despite the current challenges, some analysts remain optimistic about the long-term prospects of the capital goods sector. They point to the Indian government's focus on infrastructure development and the eventual recovery of global supply chains as potential catalysts for growth. "While the short-term outlook may be challenging, the Indian capital goods sector has a strong long-term growth trajectory. The government's emphasis on infrastructure and industrialization will likely drive Capex in the future, albeit at a slower pace," said Neelam Mehta, an analyst at a leading brokerage firm. Experts recommend that investors monitor the broader economic situation closely, as well as developments in the government's infrastructure spending plans, which will be key to shaping the sector's performance in the months ahead. Siemens India's warning has highlighted growing concerns over the slowdown in capital expenditure, which could severely impact the capital goods sector. With the stock prices of leading companies taking a hit, investors are cautious, waiting for signs of stabilization in Capex before making new investments. While the outlook remains uncertain, experts advise maintaining a long-term perspective, as the sector's fundamentals remain strong despite short-term challenges. The next few quarters will likely be critical in determining whether the sector can recover or if these concerns will persist into the foreseeable future.

10-Minute Food Delivery War Enters India: How Zepto, Blinkit, and Others Are Delivering Eggs to Earphones at Breakneck Speed



India's food delivery landscape is experiencing a dramatic transformation, with ultra-fast delivery services now promising to bring groceries and essentials to your doorstep in as little as 10 minutes. Amid fierce competition, startups like Zepto, Blinkit, and a slew of other players are vying for dominance in this high-stakes race, offering customers everything from fresh eggs to electronics like earphones at a pace previously unseen in the e-commerce world. As delivery times shrink, these companies are rethinking the logistics of urban life, all while navigating a fast-evolving market that demands efficiency, speed, and customer loyalty. The trend of super-fast deliveries, also known as hyperlocal delivery, is not entirely new globally, but it has gained immense traction in India in the past year. Services that promise to deliver within 10 minutes have tapped into a growing consumer demand for speed, convenience, and instant gratification, particularly in India's largest metropolitan areas where busy professionals and urban dwellers are always on the go. At the forefront of this new wave of deliveries is Zepto, a Mumbai-based startup that has become one of the leading players in the 10-minute delivery race. Founded by two young entrepreneurs, Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra, Zepto raised eyebrows with its ambitious claim to deliver groceries and essentials to urban customers within just 10 minutes. The startup's rapid rise is a testament to the changing dynamics of the Indian food and grocery delivery market. Not far behind is Blinkit (formerly Grofers), one of India's most established grocery delivery platforms, which has also jumped on the fast-track delivery bandwagon. Blinkit's focus on hyperlocal, quick deliveries is reshaping how consumers access daily essentials. The model has been adopted by several other startups, with brands like Dunzo, Fynd, and Pickrr also looking to capture market share with lightning-speed service offerings. The ability to deliver groceries and even non-food items like earphones within 10 minutes requires a highly sophisticated logistical infrastructure. Companies like Zepto and Blinkit have restructured their entire operations to ensure that they can meet the demands of the ultra-fast consumer. These companies rely on a network of dark stores—small, hyperlocal fulfillment centers strategically placed across cities. These dark stores are stocked with high-demand products like fruits, vegetables, dairy, snacks, electronics, and personal care items. By positioning their warehouses closer to their customers, these startups minimize delivery distances, allowing their fleet of delivery agents to reach consumers quickly. The entire process is optimized using advanced algorithms and AI-based route planning systems that determine the fastest and most efficient delivery routes. Delivery personnel, often on bicycles or motorbikes, are dispatched immediately upon receiving an order. This, combined with the availability of a highly efficient inventory management system, makes the 10-minute delivery model possible. Zepto: Zepto's rise has been meteoric. The platform has captured significant attention for its fast delivery times, delivering over 2,000 SKUs of daily essentials and groceries. Zepto's network includes over 100 dark stores spread across cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, and Pune.

The company has attracted top-tier investors, including Y Combinator and QED Investors, to fuel its rapid expansion. Blinkit: Blinkit, rebranded from Grofers in 2022, is another key player in the race for the fastest delivery. Blinkit offers a vast selection of groceries, snacks, and household products and has positioned itself as a leader in the ultra-fast delivery space. The company already has a well-established infrastructure in major metros and has been ramping up its dark store network to meet the growing demand for rapid deliveries. Dunzo: Dunzo, originally a logistics and courier service, has also pivoted to quick-commerce with its 10-minute delivery model. The platform, which originally focused on delivering packages and documents, now caters to a wide array of products ranging from groceries to electronics. Dunzo has partnered with local stores and established dark stores to meet the rising demand for lightning-fast deliveries. Fynd and Pickrr: While not as large as the aforementioned platforms, Fynd (a Tata Group-backed venture) and Pickrr have been carving out niches in hyper-local logistics, focusing on fast deliveries and tapping into the growing trend of instant gratification.

Supreme Court Removes Credit Card Penalty Cap, Decision Likely to Inconvenience Lakhs of Users

The Supreme Court of India has removed the cap on penalty charges that credit card issuers could impose on users for late payments. The decision, which comes as a blow to millions of credit card holders, is expected to significantly impact the financial burden on consumers, leading to higher costs for those who miss payment deadlines. Experts warn that the move could inconvenience lakhs of users, especially in a time of economic uncertainty. The Supreme Court's decision to eliminate the penalty cap has sent shockwaves through the banking and financial sectors, as well as among credit card users. Until now, credit card companies were limited in the amount they could charge as late-payment penalties, with the cap set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to prevent exorbitant charges. However, the court ruled that the penalty structure and interest rates would be determined by the individual credit card issuers without any specific limit set by regulatory authorities. In the past, the RBI had mandated that credit card companies could not charge late fees exceeding a certain amount (usually around Rs 500 to Rs 1,000, depending on the type of card and outstanding balance). This cap was intended to protect consumers from being overwhelmed by excessive fees, especially for those who occasionally missed payments due to unforeseen circumstances. The Supreme Court's decision now leaves these charges at the discretion of individual issuers, which could lead to an increase in penalty fees. For the millions of credit card holders across the country, this decision could have significant financial implications. Credit cards are widely used for both small and large purchases, and many consumers rely on them to manage short-term expenses. However, missing a payment can trigger hefty late fees and interest charges. With the cap now lifted, consumers may face steeper penalties that could quickly escalate if multiple payments are missed. "It's a worrying decision for credit card holders, particularly those who are already facing financial strain due to economic uncertainties or other personal reasons," said Ravi Kumar, a financial expert based in Mumbai.

bai. "Consumers might now find themselves in a situation where the cost of missing a payment could be disproportionately high, leading to greater debt cycles." The increased penalty charges could also deter new users from adopting credit cards or could force existing users to reconsider their credit card usage, especially for those who have a history of delayed payments. The potential for unregulated fee hikes could also lead to widespread dissatisfaction among consumers. Consumer rights groups have raised alarms over the Supreme Court's ruling, arguing that it could encourage unfair practices by credit card companies. The lack of a cap could lead to inconsistent penalty charges across different issuers, with some companies potentially imposing excessive fees that disproportionately affect low-income or financially vulnerable users. "While credit card issuers argue that penalties are necessary to discourage late payments, the reality is that this ruling opens the door for unscrupulous practices," said Arvind Saxena, a spokesperson for the Consumer Protection Foundation. "This will not only increase financial distress for consumers but could also lead to debt traps, particularly for those already struggling with rising inflation and economic downturns." Further, the lack of a penalty cap could also make it more difficult for consumers to compare credit card products effectively. Without uniform penalty structures, credit card holders may find it harder to make informed decisions about which card to choose, especially when the fees and penalties associated with delayed payments could vary greatly between issuers. Credit card companies are likely to benefit from the Supreme Court's decision, as it provides them with more flexibility to set penalty charges and interest rates. Many issuers could seize the opportunity to introduce higher late fees, which could boost their revenue streams. However, the move might also risk alienating customers if they perceive the charges as excessive.



sive or unfair. Some analysts predict that credit card companies may adjust their fee structures gradually, introducing higher penalties in a bid to maximize profits without alienating large segments of their customer base. Others believe that the move could lead to more transparency in how fees are communicated, as issuers will be required to clearly outline penalty charges in their terms and conditions. The ruling has already sparked a public outcry, with many consumers taking to social media platforms to express their dissatisfaction. Critics argue that the decision undermines efforts to protect vulnerable consumers and may exacerbate the financial pressures many individuals are currently facing. In response to the decision, several consumer advocacy groups have called for regulatory intervention to prevent credit card companies from exploiting this newfound leeway. There is also growing pressure on the RBI to step in and provide clearer guidelines on the penalties that can be charged, even if the cap is lifted.

The central bank may feel compelled to introduce new measures aimed at ensuring transparency and fairness in the way penalty charges are applied, but for now, the lack of a cap remains a significant concern for both consumers and regulators alike. The Supreme Court's decision to remove the credit card penalty cap has raised alarms among millions of consumers, who now face the prospect of much higher costs for missed payments.

Kia Seltos to Be Crash-Tested by Bharat NCAP Soon: Can It Achieve a Full 5-Star Rating?

Kia Motors is all set to have its popular model, the Kia Seltos, undergo a crash test by the Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat NCAP), India's official vehicle safety rating system. The move has generated significant buzz in the automotive industry, with experts speculating whether the Seltos can achieve the coveted 5-star safety rating. Given the increasing emphasis on vehicle safety in India, this crash test is expected to have far-reaching implications not only for the brand but also for the broader market as consumers become more safety-conscious. Bharat NCAP, launched by the Indian government in 2020, aims to assess the safety performance of vehicles sold in India. Modeled on international safety rating programs such as Euro NCAP, Bharat NCAP evaluates vehicles on various parameters, including crashworthiness, child safety, pedestrian protection, and other key safety features. The program has gained traction in recent years as Indian car buyers become more aware of the importance of vehicle safety, making safety ratings a critical factor in their purchasing decisions. The 5-star rating is the highest accolade under Bharat NCAP, and it is awarded to vehicles that demonstrate superior safety in crash tests and other evaluations. A high safety rating often leads to improved market perception and consumer trust, making it a key goal for automakers. The Kia Seltos, which has been one of the best-selling SUVs in India since its launch in 2019, is considered a strong contender for a top safety rating. The compact SUV has been praised for its modern design, feature-rich cabin, and a broad range of safety features, including multiple airbags, ABS with EBD, electronic stability control (ESC), and advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) in higher variants. Kia has made significant investments in ensuring that the Seltos meets global safety standards. In international markets like South Korea and Australia, the Seltos has already undergone crash testing by organizations like the Euro NCAP and Australasian NCAP, receiving commendable safety scores. For example, in Euro NCAP testing, the Seltos secured a solid 4-star safety rating, with commendations for its adult occupant protection and child safety.

However, India's Bharat NCAP follows slightly different crash testing protocols that consider local road conditions, safety regulations, and the impact of vehicle design on occupant protection in Indian driving environments. While the international crash tests offer insights into the vehicle's performance, the Seltos will now need to prove its worth under Bharat NCAP's rigorous standards. The Seltos comes equipped with a host of safety features, which could play a pivotal role in achieving a high safety rating. The Seltos offers up to six airbags, including front, side, and curtain airbags, enhancing the protection of all occupants during a collision.

ESC helps to maintain control of the vehicle during extreme driving conditions, such as sharp turns or slippery roads, reducing the risk of skidding or rollovers.

Name Change

I, SAHINA BEGAM SARDAR W/O MD
SELIM SARDAR resident of Bankra Natun
Pura, PO-Bankra, PS-Domjir, Dist-Howrah
711403 WEST BENGAL, India do hereby
solemnly affirm & declare my actual name
SAHINA BEGAM SARDAR instead of
SAHINA BEGUM which is wrongly recorded
in my daughters (SABIYA SARDAR & FAIZ
PARVEEN) passport, vide an affidavit sworn
before the notary public at Howrah on
24/11/2024. SAHINA BEGAM SARDAR and
SAHINA BEGUM both are same and one
identical person.

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১. নাম, নামাজি বাবা, পিতাঃ মদনচন্দ্র বাবু, বয়ঃ ৩৩, বৈবাহিক - বিধি, গৃহস্থ ও সন্তানঃ সন্তান দুই জন।
 ২. নামঃ মদনচন্দ্র, জেলাঃ পূর্ব বঙ্গাল, পিতা ৭১১৩০১৩।
 ৩. অধিঃ পূর্ব বঙ্গাল প্রশাসনিক অঞ্চল থেকে কারিগরি, ১।
 ৪. আরি মনুসিংহের ভায়েকের মনুসিংহ কুন্তল পাণ্ডাটিক।
 ৫. আরো পিতার সন্তান দুই জন মদনচন্দ্র বাবা, যা আরো
 ৬. জেটোর অধিঃ কার্ড নং YAJ1200609, আরো কার্ড
 নং ৫৯৬২২২০০১৫ এবং ৫৯৬২২৪৫ ৫ উভয় কার্ড
 রয়েছে।
 ৭. আরো সন্তান শিখারতল নবিতাও আরো
 পিতার আরো সন্তান ফুলচোরা Madhusadhan Roy
 Roy এর আরো Madhusadhan Roy
 নামে রয়েছে।
 ৮. আরো সন্তান অধিঃ কার্ড তারিখ হচ্ছে
 ২৯/০৩/১৯৯২ যা আরো কার্ড শাসনোপে উক্তের
 কার্ড হয়েছে যেটি বেঞ্জিট্রননং ২০৩ তারিখ
 ৩০/০৩/১৯৯২ অথ নির্দিক, ৭৩০২৫৫৫
 ৯. আরো কার্ড বাবা আরি কার্ড হচ্ছে ৫. যে
 ১০. জেটোর অধিঃ কার্ড নং YAJ1200609, আরো কার্ড
 নং ৫৯৬২২২০০২ ২৪১৫, পিতার কার্ড
 নং AY5FR3344N এবং আরো আরিগ কার্ড
 কার্ড, মাদামিক সাধিগিকিউপে ১৫/০৪/১৯৯১
 তুলনাবাদে আরিগ কার্ড তারিখ লেখা হয়েছে। আরো
 সন্তান অধিঃ কার্ড তারিখ হচ্ছে ২৯/০৩/১৯৯২ ৬. যে
 ১১. আরো আরিগ Madhusadhan Roy
 Madhusadhan Roy এক ও অজিত
 বাজি।

নাম পরিবর্তন



আমি, গোপাল চন্দ্র দাস, পিতা - মৃত গিরীন্দ্র দাস, হিকনা - মার্গনপুর, পোঃ- জাহাঙ্গীর, থানা - নান্দাঘাট, জেলা - পূর্ব বর্ধমান, পিন - ৭১৫০১৩। গত ১৮-১১-২০১৪ তারিখে কালনা আদালতে হলফনামা বলে আমি গোপাল চন্দ্র দাস, পিতা - মৃত গিরীন্দ্র দাস নামে সর্বত্র পরিচিত হলাম, যা তত্ত্বাবধি আমার আখার কার্ডে (No. 4336 5142 0393), গোপাল দাস, পিতা - গিরীন্দ্র কুমার দাস আছে। গোপাল চন্দ্র দাস, পিতা - মৃত গিরীন্দ্র দাস এবং গোপাল দাস পিতা - গিরীন্দ্র কুমার দাস উভয়ই একই ব্যক্তি।

Name Change

I, ASHIS PAL MY NAME HAS
BEEN RECORDED IN MY
AADHAAR CARD AS ASHIS PAL
OTHER DOCUMENT MY NAME
IS ASIT PAL AFFIDAVIT BY
EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE
KRISHNAGAR COURT ON 12-9-
17. ASHIS PAL AND ASIT PAL IS
SAME PERSON. VILL+PO-
JAHANGIRPUR, DIST NADIA

CBI Does Not Seek Further Custody of Sujay Krishna Bhadra, Court Denies Bail

Kolkata, 21 December: In a significant development in the ongoing investigation involving Sujay Krishna Bhadra, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has decided not to seek further custody of the accused in a case linked to financial irregularities and alleged corruption. Despite this, the court has denied his application for bail, citing the seriousness of the charges against him and the need for continued investigation.

Sujay Krishna Bhadra, a prominent figure with alleged connections to a wide network of corruption-related activities, has been under the CBI's radar for several months. His arrest was part of a larger investigation into financial malpractices involving several high-profile individuals and corporate entities. The case has garnered considerable media attention due to the scale of the alleged financial scams, which reportedly involve large sums of money and affect multiple sectors. In the latest court proceedings, the CBI informed the judge that they did not require further custody of Bhadra for the purpose of investigation. According to CBI officials, they have completed their primary line of questioning and gathered the necessary evidence, and no further interrogation is deemed necessary at this stage. The CBI's decision comes as a surprise to many, as they had previously sought an extension of Bhadra's custody to probe deeper into his alleged role in the financial scam.

The move to release Bhadra from CBI custody comes after several weeks of intense questioning, during which the accused is believed to have provided crucial information about the ongoing investigation.



However, despite this, the CBI has indicated that it continues to gather evidence and will pursue the case with rigor. While the CBI chose not to pursue further custody, the court was not inclined to grant Sujay Krishna Bhadra bail. The decision was based on the severity of the charges against him and the fact that the investigation is still ongoing.

The court highlighted that Bhadra is accused of involvement in a complex financial conspiracy that has allegedly caused significant harm to several sectors of the economy. It was pointed out that allowing him bail at this stage could potentially compromise the investigation, as he might have access to resources that could influence witnesses or tamper with evidence.

"The nature of the charges against the accused are serious, and there is a substantial likelihood of his influence over the ongoing probe. Given the complexity of the case, the investigation requires time and space

to unfold, and the accused's release could impede that," the court observed in its ruling.

In addition to the risk of tampering with evidence, the court also cited Bhadra's influential position within the alleged conspiracy as a reason to deny bail. It was noted that the case involves a network of individuals and entities, and Bhadra's release could lead to potential threats or intimidation against key witnesses or whistleblowers. Sujay Krishna Bhadra is facing multiple charges in connection with an alleged financial fraud that spans several years. The accusations include money laundering, criminal conspiracy, and misappropriation of funds, among others. According to the CBI's investigation, Bhadra played a pivotal role in a complex scheme that allegedly siphoned off large sums of money from several state-backed and private financial institutions.

While the details of the scam are still emerging, the case is believed to involve the diversion of funds meant for infrastructure development and welfare programs into private accounts. This has led to severe financial losses and has raised concerns about the lack of oversight and accountability in the systems that were supposed to monitor such transactions. The investigation also reportedly connects Bhadra to a number of influential figures in both the political and business world. His alleged links to these high-profile individuals have raised eyebrows, suggesting that the scam could be far-reaching, with several individuals and entities involved in a complex web of financial mismanagement.

Two Fake Doctors Arrested in Bardhaman City for Impersonating Medical Professionals

Bardhaman , 21 December: The Bardhaman police arrested two individuals on Thursday for posing as qualified doctors and providing medical treatment to unsuspecting patients. The duo, who had been running an illegal medical practice in the city for several months, were caught red-handed during a raid conducted by the police at a local clinic. The arrested individuals have been identified as Rajesh Kumar (35) and Subhajit Das (28), both residents of Bardhaman. They were operating a private clinic in the heart of the city, where they allegedly treated hundreds of patients without having any legitimate medical qualifications. The police have charged them under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Indian Medical Council Act, which prohibits the practice of medicine without a recognized medical degree.

The arrest came after several complaints were lodged by concerned citizens and local health professionals who suspected the two men of being frauds. The complaints indicated that the individuals had been treating patients with prescriptions, injections, and medications without any valid medical credentials. According to the Bardhaman Police, the authorities were alerted after a local pharmacist raised a red flag when one of the accused tried to purchase large quantities of prescription drugs without any formal medical qualification. A surveillance operation was set up, and the police began investigating the clinic.

On Thursday, a team of officers, along with health department officials, raided the clinic and found that the two men were practicing medicine illegally. They were operating out of a small clinic in the Naba Diganta area, where they were treating patients with various health issues. During the raid, the police discovered several medical devices, fake prescriptions, and unapproved medicines that were being administered to patients. "We had received multiple complaints from concerned citizens about the activities of these men. After monitoring their operations for some time, we raided the clinic. Upon investigation, we found that neither of the two individ-

uals had any recognized medical degree or license to practice," said Suman Saha, a senior officer at the Bardhaman Police Station.

The two fake doctors reportedly posed as specialists in different fields of medicine. Rajesh Kumar claimed to be an expert in general medicine, while Subhajit Das presented himself as a specialist in pediatrics. They had set up their clinic in a relatively busy area, hoping to attract patients seeking affordable treatment. Upon further investigation, it was revealed that Rajesh Kumar had worked as a nurse at a local private hospital in the past but had no formal medical training. Subhajit Das, on the other hand, had no background in healthcare and had reportedly worked in various unskilled labor jobs before attempting to establish himself as a "doctor."

Both men had been using fake degrees and forged documents to convince patients and pharmacy owners of their legitimacy. They had even employed staff members, including a receptionist and a couple of assistants, who were unaware of their illegal activities. "It's shocking how these individuals could so easily deceive the public by pretending to be doctors. They used forged documents and even pretended to have experience in the medical field. They knew how to exploit the vulnerabilities of the local population," said Dr. Amitava Ghosh, a senior doctor in Bardhaman who had raised concerns about the clinic's operations.

The arrest has raised serious concerns about public health and the potential risks posed by such unqualified individuals practicing medicine. The accused had treated numerous patients over the past few months, and the health department has been instructed to track down all patients who may have been treated by these fake doctors.

"We urge all patients who might have been treated by these individuals to come forward and undergo proper medical checks. There could be serious health risks involved, especially with the unregulated drugs and treatments that they administered," said Dr. Neelima Banerjee, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Bardhaman.

Ansarullah Bangla Team Suspected of Planning Lone Wolf Attack in Bengal, Authorities on High Alert

Kolkata, 21 December: Intelligence agencies have raised a serious alarm about a possible lone wolf attack being planned by the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), an Islamist extremist group with links to international terror organizations. According to recent reports, the group is reportedly targeting West Bengal as a potential location for its next attack. The state government and law enforcement agencies have ramped up security in vulnerable areas, particularly in Kolkata and other major cities, to thwart any such threat.

Ansarullah Bangla Team, a Bangladeshi extremist outfit, has been on the radar of Indian security agencies for several years. The group, which is believed to be an offshoot of the Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI), is notorious for its links to al-Qaeda and other global terrorist networks. The group is believed to be responsible for several attacks in Bangladesh, including the murder of secular bloggers and activists, and has often targeted individuals deemed "blasphemous" by radical Islamic ideologies. In India, the group has been linked to the Bangladeshi migrant community, especially those living in states like West Bengal and Assam, where it has been recruiting individuals to carry out attacks. The latest intelligence suggests that members of the group may be planning a lone wolf attack in Bengal, a strategy which involves a single assailant acting independently to carry out an attack without direct support from the main terror cell.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Indian intelligence agencies have intercepted communications that suggest a lone wolf operant from the ABT may be targeting soft spots in the state. This includes highly populated areas such as markets, public transport hubs, and places of religious significance. The agencies have warned that such an attack could be executed using basic weapons, explosives, or knife attacks, aimed at creating fear and public unrest rather than causing mass casualties.

"We have received credible intelligence indicating the possibility of a lone wolf attack being planned in Bengal by members of the Ansarullah Bangla Team. Our priority is to prevent any such attack by tracking down the individuals involved and tightening security measures," said Arvind Kumar, the Director-General of Police (DGP) of West Bengal.



A slum in Topsia was gutted down in a fire on Friday around 12.50pm. Fifteen fire tenders were deployed on the spot to bring the fire under control.

People Around Jhargram Forest Face Trouble as Access is Restricted Due to Royal Bengal Tiger Presence

Kolkata, 21 December: The Jhargram Forest in West Bengal, local communities are facing increasing challenges as they are now restricted from entering the forest due to the presence of a Royal Bengal Tiger in the area. The situation has led to heightened tensions, with villagers and forest officials grappling to balance human safety with the protection of wildlife.

The presence of the Royal Bengal Tiger was first reported by forest rangers and local residents about two weeks ago, when they noticed signs of the big cat's movements in the forest, including paw prints and scat. Officials confirmed the sighting through camera traps set up in the region. The discovery of the tiger, a species listed as endangered and protected under India's Wildlife Protection Act, has sparked both excitement and concern.

Located in the southwestern part of West Bengal, Jhargram is surrounded by dense forests, which are home to a variety of wildlife, including elephants, leopards, and deer. The presence of the tiger, however, has led to significant concerns, as it has entered areas closer to human habitation. Forest officials believe that the tiger, which may be young or displaced from its natural habitat, is trying to establish a new territory.

To ensure the safety of both the vil-

lagers and the tiger, the Jhargram Forest Division has imposed a ban on human entry into the forest, particularly in the regions where the tiger has been sighted. This measure has led to considerable inconvenience for the locals, who rely on the



forest for their livelihoods.

The forest area is a vital resource for the surrounding villages, providing fuelwood, medicinal plants, and grazing grounds for livestock. Many of the villagers also gather non-timber forest products like honey, tendu leaves, and mushrooms. With the restricted access, these communities are now unable to carry out their daily activities, affecting their income and sustenance. "Normally, we go into the forest to collect wood and grass for our animals. But since the news of the tiger's presence spread, we've been

warned not to enter. It's causing a lot of difficulties, especially for those who depend on the forest for their daily needs," said Madhusree Patra, a local woman from one of the nearby villages.

Forest officials, along with local wildlife experts, have been monitoring the movements of the tiger closely. Several teams have been deployed to track the animal's movements and to keep the villagers informed about the tiger's whereabouts.

"We understand the difficulties faced by the villagers, but human safety is our priority. Tigers are naturally elusive, but they can become aggressive if they feel threatened. Therefore, we've decided to close off the forest temporarily until we can ensure that the tiger moves to a safer area," said Sanjay Bera, the Forest Range Officer of Jhargram.

In addition to the entry ban, the authorities have set up watch towers and patrolling teams in the forest area to monitor the tiger's activities. They are also raising awareness among the local communities, urging them to stay alert and avoid venturing into the forest alone or after dark. The restrictions have put a strain on the villagers, many of whom live in poverty and rely heavily on the resources that the forest provides.

TMC Leader's Body Recovered from Mandarmani Hotel on Saturday; Mystery Surrounds Death

Mandarmani , 21 December: In a shocking incident, the body of a Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader was found in a hotel room in Mandarmani, a popular seaside town in East Midnapore district, on Saturday morning. The leader, identified as Dipankar Saha, was reportedly found in an unresponsive state in his hotel room, with initial reports suggesting possible foul play. Authorities have launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

The body was discovered by hotel staff at the Seagull Resort, a mid-range hotel located along Mandarmani's coastal stretch. According to hotel sources, Saha had checked into the hotel on Friday afternoon, apparently for a brief stay. He was seen dining at the hotel restaurant and socializing with a few associates before retiring to his room.

"On Saturday morning, when housekeeping went to check on him, the door was locked from inside. After repeated calls and knocking went unanswered, the staff had to break the door down. We were shocked to find him lying on the bed, unresponsive," said Subrata Banerjee, the hotel manager. The staff immediately alerted local police, who arrived at the scene within minutes.

Upon receiving the call, a

team of Mandarmani police and local health officers rushed to the hotel. Initial medical examinations did not show any clear signs of physical violence or injury. However, the police were unable to rule out the possibility of foul play or an overdose until further investigations were carried out.

According to a senior officer from the East Midnapore Police, the body was sent for a post-mortem examination at the Contai Sub-Divisional Hospital to determine the cause of death. Authorities are particularly concerned about the lack of any immediate signs of natural death, which has raised questions regarding possible poisoning, a drug overdose, or other external factors. "We are waiting for the post-mortem results and toxicology reports. Until then, we are not ruling out any possibilities, including the suspicion of foul play," said Koushik Das, an investigating officer from the Mandarmani Police Station.

Dipankar Saha, 45, was a relatively well-known Trinamool Congress leader from East Midnapore and had been active in local politics for over a decade. He held an influential position within the party in the region and was particularly known for his strong network of supporters in the coastal areas of Mandarmani and nearby towns.

Local TMC workers were visibly shaken by the news of his death, with many expressing disbelief over the incident. Moumita Dutta, a close associate of Saha, said, "He was in good health and there were no signs that he was under any stress. It's very difficult to believe he is gone like this. We are all in shock." There were also reports that Saha had been involved in recent political activity, which could be linked to his death. However, it remains unclear whether his death is related to his political affiliations or personal matters.

Saha's death has sparked widespread speculation in local media, with some suggesting that it may be linked to internal party rivalry, while others hint at personal disputes. TMC leaders have called for a thorough investigation into the incident, with some party workers demanding a clear explanation.

The police must conduct a full investigation to determine the cause and circumstances. We trust the law enforcement agencies will get to the bottom of this." Meanwhile, opposition parties have raised concerns over the increasing incidents of violence and criminal activity in the state, calling for a probe not only into the circumstances of Saha's death but also into the broader safety issues in the region.

Budget-Friendly Accommodation for Visitors at Bolpur's Youth Hostel During Poush Mela

Bolpur, Birbhum , 21 December: With the Poush Mela just around the corner, visitors from across the country and abroad are flocking to Santiniketan, the cultural heart of West Bengal. Known for its rich legacy of Rabindranath Tagore, art, and culture, Santiniketan attracts thousands of tourists every year, especially during the vibrant Poush Mela. However, accommodation has often been a challenge for those on a budget. This year, the Bolpur Youth Hostel is emerging as a pocket-friendly option, providing much-needed relief for travelers looking to explore the festivities without burning a hole in their pockets.

The Poush Mela, which takes place annually in Santiniketan, is a celebration of the Bengali harvest festival. It is also a major tourist attraction, with cultural performances, handicraft exhibitions, and an overwhelming display of local art and music. The fair, named after the Bengali month of "Poush," draws people of all ages, from students to artists, and even tourists eager to experience the unique blend of folk culture and modern creativity.

However, as the number of visitors swells during this time, finding affordable accommodation has always been a concern, especially for younger travelers and students. Santiniketan's guesthouses and hotels can often be expensive during the festival period, with prices surging

due to high demand. This is where Bolpur Youth Hostel comes in as a perfect solution for those seeking an affordable and comfortable stay.

Located just a short distance from the bustling fairgrounds of the Poush Mela, the Bolpur Youth Hostel has gained popularity in recent years as a budget accommodation option for both domestic and international visitors. Run by the West Bengal Youth Welfare Department, the hostel offers a no-frills, yet comfortable, stay for tourists who prioritize affordability over luxury.

The hostel features both dormitory-style accommodations and private rooms, making it suitable for solo travelers, families, and groups. With spacious rooms, basic amenities, and clean facilities, it offers great value for money. Prices start as low as ₹300 to ₹500 per night for dormitory beds, with private rooms available at ₹800 to ₹1,500 per night—a significant saving compared to other hotels and guesthouses in the area. "We wanted to create an affordable place where young travelers can stay without compromising on comfort. Santiniketan is known for its culture and heritage, and we wanted to make sure that even budget-conscious tourists could experience it," said Suvendu Ghosh, the warden of Bolpur Youth Hostel.

One of the biggest advantages of staying at the Bolpur Youth Hostel is its proximity to Santiniketan. Sit-

uated just 2 kilometers from the famous Visva-Bharati University and the venue of the Poush Mela, the hostel offers easy access to the festival grounds and other popular attractions in the area, including Tagore's Ashram, Chhatimtala, and Rabindra Bhavan. The strategic location

also makes it convenient for visitors to explore the local markets, shop for handmade craft items, or enjoy local Bengali cuisine at affordable eateries.

Transportation is also not a problem, as the hostel is well-connected by local buses, auto-rickshaws, and taxis. Visitors can easily get to and from the hostel to the Mela venue or any other part of Bolpur and Santiniketan.



Delhi LG Approves Prosecution of Arvind Kejriwal by Probe Agencies in Corruption Case

New Delhi, 21 December: Delhi's Lieutenant Governor (LG), V.K. Saxena, has granted permission for central investigation agencies to initiate prosecution against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in connection with an alleged corruption case. This decision marks a major political development in the ongoing conflict between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led central government. The case in question involves allegations of corruption linked to the implementation of the Delhi Excise Policy, introduced in 2021. The policy, which aimed to liberalize the liquor trade in Delhi by privatizing retail outlets, was purportedly meant to boost government revenue while promoting responsible drinking. However, opposition parties, particularly the BJP, accused the Delhi government of implementing the policy in a manner that allegedly benefited certain liquor manufacturers and distributors at the expense of public money.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have been investigating the case for several months, with multiple arrests being made in connection with the policy's rollout. The key charge against Kejriwal and other senior officials is that they were involved in a conspiracy to provide undue benefits to certain private liquor distributors, in exchange for kickbacks. The prosecution clearance from the Lieutenant Governor comes after the CBI submitted a report detailing its findings, claiming there was enough evidence to charge Kejriwal and other Delhi government officials



with corruption. In line with the provisions under Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the LG has the constitutional authority to grant or withhold permission for the prosecution of a sitting Chief Minister. In a statement, the office of the Delhi LG confirmed that V.K. Saxena had given the green light for the prosecution of Arvind Kejriwal. The decision followed a recommendation from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which had advised the Lieutenant Governor to allow the investigation agencies to proceed with the case. The statement also mentioned that the approval was granted after a thorough review of the case materials and the findings presented by the probe agencies.

"The Lieutenant Governor, after careful consideration of the matter, has decided to allow the prosecution of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The action will be pursued in accordance with the law," the statement read. It is important to note that the Lieutenant Governor's decision is considered to be a

key political move, especially given the context of the ongoing tussle between the Delhi government and the BJP-led central government. Arvind Kejriwal has frequently accused the BJP of using agencies like the CBI and ED to target political opponents, particularly from the opposition parties, using their investigative powers for political gain.

The decision to prosecute Kejriwal has sparked immediate political reactions, with the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) vehemently rejecting the charges and accusing the BJP of engaging in a politically motivated witch-hunt. In a statement, Arvind Kejriwal called the move "completely false" and accused the BJP of trying to undermine the AAP's popularity in Delhi and other states. "This is nothing but a political conspiracy. The BJP is trying to use all its power and agencies to target me, but they will not succeed. This is an attack on democracy, and we will fight it with all our strength," Kejriwal said. Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia, who was arrested by the CBI in connection with the excise policy investigation, also condemned the decision.

"The BJP is afraid of AAP's rising popularity and is using central agencies to intimidate us. We are ready to face any investigation, but we will not bow down to such tactics," Sisodia added. On the other hand, the BJP welcomed the decision, stating that it was a necessary step to uphold accountability in governance. BJP leaders claimed that the approval for prosecution was a testament to the central government's commitment to fighting corruption and ensuring transparency in public office.



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Pollution-Free Environment Constitutional Right: High Court On Authority's Inaction

Mumbai, 21 December: The Bombay High Court on Friday said pollution-free environment was a constitutional right, and pulled up the Maharashtra government and other authorities for their failure to tackle the issue of air pollution. A division bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar said the right of citizens to a pollution-free environment was a concomitant of Article 21 of the Constitution.

"Innocent citizens cannot be victims of air pollution and helplessly suffer on such count, due to inaction of the authorities, in taking appropriate, timely and continuous measures," the court said.

The bench had in 2023 taken suo motu (on its own) cognisance of the issue of poor air quality index in the city and state. On Friday, the court said it was "quite pained" to learn that hardly any effective steps are being taken in the present season. The bench said the state machinery gets activated and takes action only when the court passes orders.

"There needs to be an inherent will, desire and resolve to curb environmental pollution, and effective and drastic steps in that regard being required to be taken, so that people are not adversely affected on health and other counts, more particularly when Mumbai, being a city of international repute and the commercial capital of the country," the HC said.

"No doubt that development/construction activities and other commercial activities need to go on, however, it cannot be that such activities are undertaken in an uncontrolled manner generating pollution and to the peril and health hazard of lakhs of inhabitants of the city," it added.

The court said urgent attention is required on vehicular pollution particularly along Mumbai's arterial roads such as the Western Express Highway and the Eastern Express Highway, where ongoing road and metro construction works have caused severe traffic congestion. "Traffic management on such roads is inadequate, resulting in severe conditions directly responsible for vehicular pollution, which seriously affects not only nearby residents, but also the environment in its entirety," the bench remarked.

The court directed the Traffic Department to curb congestion and improve traffic flow throughout the day to reduce vehicular emissions. Nodal officers are to be appointed to monitor pollution levels on key roads, while the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) must deploy machinery to measure pollution and report violations promptly.

Yogi Adityanath Declares Sanatan Dharma as National Religion of India

Lucknow, 21 December: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has declared Sanatan Dharma as the national religion of India. Speaking at a cultural event in Varanasi on December 20, 2024, the BJP leader emphasized the historical and cultural importance of Sanatan Dharma, claiming that it is the "root" of India's identity and civilization. His comments have stirred both support and controversy, highlighting the ongoing discourse about India's religious and cultural foundations. At a gathering of Hindu religious leaders, scholars, and cultural figures, Yogi Adityanath stated that Sanatan Dharma — often considered a term for eternal law or universal religion, encompassing the core principles of Hinduism — forms the essence of India's spiritual and cultural legacy.

"Sanatan Dharma is not just a religion; it is the national soul of India. It is the guiding principle that binds us all together, transcending religious differences, and forging the unity of this great nation," Adityanath said, adding that India's rich heritage, rooted in Sanatan principles, continues to guide its spiritual and social fabric. According to the Chief Minister, the philosophy of Sanatan Dharma not only shapes the Hindu community but also influences millions



across the world. He pointed to India's history, where diverse civilizations, cultures, and peoples have coexisted under the umbrella of Sanatan values. "Sanatan Dharma is a tradition that teaches respect for all life, a belief in dharma (righteousness), karma (action), and the pursuit of moksha (liberation). It is a religion that upholds the values of tolerance, respect, and unity. It is time that we recognize it as the national religion of India, for it is the foundation of our unity and pride," Adityanath added. Yogi Adityanath's remarks come at a time of growing political polarization in India, where the BJP and the opposition have been engaged in sharp debates over issues related to religion, secularism, and national identity. The Chief Minister's statement aligns with the BJP's broader ideological platform, which emphasizes the Hindu identity

of India and often highlights the country's ancient religious traditions in contrast to secular ideals. The BJP's commitment to Hindutva — a form of Hindu nationalism — has been a cornerstone of its political strategy, and Adityanath's declaration further solidifies this position. Many in the party and its supporters view Sanatan Dharma as the natural, defining faith of the nation, and its recognition as the "national religion" is seen by some as a way to restore the country's cultural pride. However, critics argue that such a move could deepen religious divisions in India, a country that is home to significant Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, and other minority communities.

They argue that the declaration of Sanatan Dharma as the national religion could challenge the secular framework enshrined in the Indian Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom and equality for all citizens. Supporters of the BJP and the Hindu nationalist movement have praised the statement, describing it as a long-overdue recognition of India's cultural roots. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat echoed similar sentiments, calling the statement a "clarion call to reclaim India's ancient identity."

Nearly 65 Hours Lost in Lok Sabha Winter Session Due to Protests and Adjournment Motions

New Delhi, 21 December: The Winter Session of the Lok Sabha, which began with high expectations of productive discussions and legislative action, has seen nearly 65 hours of parliamentary time lost due to ongoing protests and the frequent filing of adjournment motions. This has sparked concerns over the effectiveness of the session, with opposition parties accusing the government of stifling debate, while the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) claims that the disruptions are the result of a deliberate strategy by the opposition to avoid discussing critical issues. The ongoing winter session, which began in November 2024, has been marred by multiple disruptions from opposition parties over a range of issues. Protests in the Lok Sabha have centered around several key topics, including economic policies, government handling of social justice issues, and inflation. How-

ever, the most intense protests have revolved around the Arvind Kejriwal prosecution case, the Madhya Pradesh agricultural crisis, and allegations of central government overreach. The opposition, led by the Indian National Congress (INC), the Trinamool Congress (TMC), and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has staged sit-ins, raised slogans, and frequently walked out of the session, demanding the resignation of ministers and a full-fledged inquiry into various government actions.

Despite repeated requests from the Speaker to maintain decorum, the protests have resulted in the frequent adjournment of the House. In the past three weeks alone, the Lok Sabha has witnessed over 12 adjournments, with each adjournment often lasting for hours, leading to a cumulative loss of nearly 65 hours of parliamentary time. This includes disruptions

caused by protests, walkouts, and the motion for adjournment raised by opposition members to discuss matters they claim are urgent. The adjournment motion has been a key instrument used by the opposition parties during this session. The adjournment motion is a parliamentary tool that allows members to bring urgent issues to the floor for discussion. However, it also requires the House to be adjourned temporarily to accommodate a debate. While adjournment motions are a normal part of parliamentary procedures, the frequency with which they have been invoked during this session has raised concerns about the efficacy of parliamentary proceedings. On several occasions, the opposition has raised adjournment motions over what they term as "government inaction" on critical national issues, including price hikes, employment rates, and healthcare policies.

Crime Branch of Delhi Police to Investigate FIR Against Rahul Gandhi in Parliament Scuffle

New Delhi, 21 December: The Crime Branch of the Delhi Police has been tasked with investigating the First Information Report (FIR) filed against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in connection with a scuffle that took place inside the Parliament complex earlier this week. The incident, which occurred during a heated debate, has sparked a political firestorm, with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accusing Gandhi of breaching parliamentary decorum, while the opposition Congress party has condemned the move as politically motivated. The scuffle, which occurred on December 18, 2024, during a session in the Lok Sabha, involved Rahul Gandhi and several MPs from the BJP. According to eyewitness accounts, the altercation broke out after a particularly heated exchange between Gandhi and a few BJP members over issues related to economic policy and governance. Reports suggest that the Congress leader allegedly confronted the BJP

MPs after what he described as a "personal attack" during the debate. What began as a verbal altercation reportedly escalated when some MPs from both sides exchanged strong words, leading to a brief physical altercation. The confrontation was captured on CCTV footage, which quickly went viral on social media. While the footage did not show any significant physical violence, it revealed a chaotic scene, with MPs from different parties intervening to separate the individuals involved. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Om Birla, immediately intervened, adjourning the session and calling for disciplinary action against those responsible for disrupting the proceedings. Shortly thereafter, an FIR was filed by the Parliament security team against several MPs, including Rahul Gandhi, for their alleged involvement in the scuffle. The FIR filed by the Parliament authorities primarily accuses Rahul Gandhi and his associates of misbe-



havior and disrupting parliamentary proceedings. The charges include breach of privilege, public mischief, and causing a disturbance in a public place, specifically within the precincts of Parliament.

The complaint also mentions that the actions of the involved MPs violated the rules of conduct within the Lok Sabha. In response to the FIR, the Delhi Police's Crime Branch has been assigned the task of conducting a thorough investigation into the matter. A senior police offi-

cial confirmed that the Crime Branch would examine the CCTV footage, interview witnesses, and assess the severity of the altercation before taking further action. The investigation will also look into whether the actions of the accused MPs warranted criminal charges, given the nature of the incident within a highly sensitive environment like Parliament. "This is a matter of public interest, and the police will take all necessary steps to ensure that the truth comes to light,"

said Suman Kumar, a senior officer with the Delhi Police. The scuffle has already ignited fierce political debate. The BJP has strongly condemned Rahul Gandhi's actions, with party spokespersons accusing the Congress leader of disrupting parliamentary decorum and creating chaos. The ruling party has called for a thorough investigation into the incident, demanding strict action against those involved in the altercation. "The behavior of Rahul Gandhi and his party colleagues in Parliament is disgraceful. Such actions undermine the very sanctity of this esteemed institution," said BJP leader Rajiv Pratap Rudy. "We stand with the Speaker's decision to take disciplinary action." On the other hand, the Congress party has come out in full support of Rahul Gandhi, labeling the FIR as a retaliatory move by the BJP to silence its critics. Congress leaders have alleged that the FIR is a politically motivated attempt to discredit Gandhi, especially

given his outspoken criticism of the government on issues like unemployment, inflation, and corruption. "This is nothing but a politically driven vendetta. Rahul Gandhi was simply standing up for the truth and responding to the personal attacks made against him," said Pawan Khera, Congress spokesperson. "We are confident that this baseless FIR will not stand, and the truth will come out." Legal experts suggest that while the FIR against Rahul Gandhi is a serious matter, the charges may not hold up unless concrete evidence is found that the actions of the MPs amounted to criminal offenses. Kavita Sharma, a constitutional lawyer, explained that breach of privilege is a parliamentary matter, and the Speaker typically decides the disciplinary action in such cases. However, if the charges extend to criminal offenses like public mischief, the Crime Branch investigation could lead to a more formal judicial process.

Setback for Former IPL Chairman Lalit Modi as BCCI Demands ₹10.65 Crore Penalty

New Dlehi, 21 December: Former Indian Premier League (IPL) Chairman Lalit Modi has suffered a major setback after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) demanded a hefty ₹10.65 crore penalty from him, citing violations of financial regulations during his tenure. The BCCI's demand comes after a long-running dispute over alleged financial mismanagement, breach of rules, and other irregularities that took place during Modi's time as the head of the IPL. This new twist adds to the ongoing legal and financial challenges faced by Modi, who has been living abroad since he was suspended from the BCCI in 2010. Modi, who was instrumental in the creation of the IPL and its massive commercial success, has been accused of various wrongdoings, including the improper allocation of broadcasting and sponsorship rights, as well as conflicts of interest in his dealings. The BCCI's Allegations The BCCI's demand for ₹10.65 crore is related to an alleged violation of the board's financial rules during the IPL's early years. According to the BCCI, Modi, while serving as the IPL Chairman, was involved in a series of questionable decisions that benefited him personally or entities with which he had connections. The alleged financial discrepancies include improper allocation of media rights, sponsorship agreements, and the unapproved distribution of funds to certain IPL franchises. In a statement issued by the BCCI, the board said that these violations led to substantial losses for the organization, both in terms of revenue



and its brand integrity. The board's legal team has pointed to a breach of fiduciary duties and unethical business practices that could have impacted the long-term financial health of the IPL. The ₹10.65 crore penalty reportedly covers not only the financial irregularities but also interest accrued on the amounts allegedly mishandled. The BCCI has given Modi a deadline to settle the matter, warning of further legal action if the payment is not made. Lalit Modi's Response Lalit Modi, who is currently based in London and has been evading Indian authorities since his suspension, has vehemently denied all allegations. Speaking exclusively from his overseas residence, Modi described the BCCI's claims as baseless and politically motivated. He further accused the board of seeking revenge for his role in revolutionizing Indian cricket with the launch of the IPL. Modi also pointed to the substantial commercial success of the IPL under his

leadership, arguing that his contributions led to the league becoming one of the most lucrative sporting events globally. He maintained that all financial dealings were transparent and above board, adding that the BCCI's attempt to penalize him was nothing more than an attempt to tarnish his reputation. "I have always operated in full compliance with the rules and regulations. This demand is nothing but a ploy to discredit me and my legacy," Modi stated in his public response. The Legal Landscape The legal battle between Lalit Modi and the BCCI has been ongoing for over a decade. Modi was suspended in 2010 after allegations of corruption, money laundering, and match-fixing surfaced during the IPL. While no criminal charges have been conclusively proved against him, his fall from grace has remained a subject of significant controversy within Indian cricket circles. In 2013, the BCCI handed Modi a lifetime ban from cricket, citing misconduct and violation of its code of ethics. Despite the suspension, Modi continued to be active in the cricketing world from abroad, using social media platforms to voice his opinions on various cricket-related issues, often critical of the BCCI's governance. The new penalty demand from the BCCI is the latest chapter in this long-running saga. While Modi has challenged the ban and other sanctions against him in various courts, the legal proceedings are far from over. As of now, no formal charges have been filed against him in India related to the penalty.



Bayern Munich's Konrad Laimer in action against RB Leipzig' s Vermeeren during their Bundesliga game on December 21 at Allianz Arena, Germany.

Jose Molina Satisfied with Mohun Bagan's Performance Despite Loss to FC Goa

Kolkata, 21 December: Mohun Bagan head coach Jose Molina expressed his satisfaction with his team's overall performance despite a 2-1 defeat against FC Goa in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Thursday. The match saw Mohun Bagan dominate large portions of the game but fall short in the final moments, with FC Goa making the most of their clinical finishing. In a highly competitive encounter, Mohun Bagan came into the match with confidence after a strong start to their season. The Mariners pressed FC Goa from the outset, controlling possession and creating several chances in the first half. However, it was FC Goa who struck first, with a clinical goal in the 34th minute. A brilliant through ball from Hugo Boumous found Goa's striker, Alvaro Vazquez, who coolly slotted the ball past Bagan goalkeeper Amrinder Singh to give the hosts a 1-0 lead. Despite going behind, Mohun Bagan refused to be rattled. The team, led by veteran midfielder Javi Hernandez, continued to push forward, maintaining a high pressing game and controlling the midfield. They were rewarded for their persistence just before halftime when a well-executed corner from Lenny Rodrigues found the head of Brazilian centre-back Eduardo Ferreira, who powered a header past Goa keeper Dheeraj Singh to equalize in the 43rd minute. The goal lifted Mohun



Bagan's spirits, and they headed into the break with renewed optimism. The second half was an intense affair, with both teams trading possession and attacking with intent. Mohun Bagan looked the more dangerous side at times, particularly through their dynamic wingers, Ashique Kuruniyan and Liston Colaco, who tested Goa's defense on several occasions. However, FC Goa's defense, led by the experienced Ivan Gonzalez, held firm under pressure. Just as it appeared the match would end in a hard-fought draw, FC Goa struck again in the 84th minute. A counter-attack led by Boumous saw him release a perfectly weighted ball to a sprinting Alvaro Vazquez, who completed his brace with a composed finish past Amrinder Singh. The goal proved to be the decisive moment in the match, as Mohun Bagan, despite their best efforts, could not find an equalizer in the dying minutes. Post-match, Mohun Bagan's coach Jose Molina praised his team's overall effort but acknowledged the need for improvement in key areas. "I am very happy with the way we played. The team showed great character, especially after going behind early. We created many chances and controlled the game for long periods. However, football is about taking those chances, and that's where we fell short today," Molina said in the post-match press conference. Molina also highlighted the importance of improving their finishing in upcoming matches. "We need to be more clinical in front of goal. We created enough opportunities to win the game, but we didn't convert them. It's something we will work on in training. I am confident the players will learn from this and improve," he added. FC Goa's head coach, Carlos Pena, meanwhile, expressed relief and satisfaction after the win, especially after the late goal from Vazquez. "It was a tough match, and Mohun Bagan played very well. But in the end, it was our clinical finishing that made the difference," Pena said.

After Getting Sacked, Prithvi Shaw Will Now Lead This Mumbai Cricket Association Team

Mumbai, 21 December: While Prithvi Shaw's career seems to be derailing rapidly, he has been handed another lifeline by the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA). Shaw's apparent indiscipline led to him being dropped from Mumbai's Vijay Hazare Trophy squad, despite boasting good statistics in List A cricket. Now, however, Shaw has been included to play in another tournament. Shaw has been named in the 18-man squad that will represent the MCA Colts in the Police Invitation Shield Cricket Tournament 2024-25. Moreover, Shaw has been made captain of the side. While the level of the tournament may be beneath what a player of Shaw's talent is capable of, the decision to include him in the team shows that the MCA are still willing to persist with Shaw in some capacity. Although Shaw was a part of Mumbai's victorious Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy squad, skipper Shreyas Iyer had said that Shaw needs to get his "work ethics" right. After he was dropped, Shaw took to social media, stating, "Tell me God, what more do I have to see." In the aftermath of those statements, however, anonymous sources within the MCA have revealed the reasons behind Shaw being dropped. While the primary concern has been Shaw's fitness, an unnamed source also told PTI that Shaw cannot be babysat anymore, and that he would often miss training sessions after staying out all night and returning at "six in the morning". "The fitness concern is there, but the performance is also not there currently. He needs to work on his fitness, discipline, and performance. The main issue is the fitness. You see the matches. You get the image, right? Just by looking at his frame, the fitness issues are there for everyone to see," a source within the Mumbai Cricket Association," had told Hindustan Times.

Aussie Media Stirs Controversy After Ravindra Jadeja Snubs English Questions at MCG During Border-Gavaskar Trophy

Melbourne, 21 December: The ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy between India and Australia has been marred by a fresh controversy after Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's refusal to answer questions in English during a post-match media interaction at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). The incident has drawn attention from Australian media, sparking a debate about language barriers and media protocols during international cricket tours. The incident took place after India's commanding victory over Australia in the third Test, which gave them a crucial lead in the four-match series. Jadeja, who was instrumental in India's win with both bat and ball, was selected for the post-match press conference. However, when the first question was asked by a reporter in English, Jadeja, who is fluent in both Hindi and English, chose to respond in Hindi. When a second reporter attempted to ask the same question in English, Jadeja politely but firmly declined, stating, "I prefer to answer in Hindi. I hope you understand," before continuing with his response in Hindi. While Jadeja's preference for Hindi, his mother tongue, was not unusual in Indian cricketing circles, the Australian media took of-



fense, with several outlets questioning his professionalism and accusing him of disrespecting the media's language norms. "Jadeja's snub to English questions was an unnecessary display of arrogance," a headline from one of Australia's leading sports newspapers read. "While we understand the importance of speaking in one's native language, this was a moment for the Indian cricketer to adapt and answer in English, the universally accepted language of international cricket." The situation quickly escalated, with some former Australian cricketers expressing their displeasure. "When you're on foreign soil representing your country, it's part of the job to engage with the media, and that includes speaking in English," said former Australian fast bowler Brett Lee. "It's disappointing to see Jadeja avoid English questions, especially after such a performance where he de-

served to be the center of attention." However, the response from Indian fans and the broader cricket community was one of support for Jadeja. Many pointed out that language should not be a barrier to expressing oneself, especially in a country as diverse as India, where Hindi is the most widely spoken language. Indian cricketers have often opted to converse in Hindi or their native languages during media interactions, a practice not seen as controversial in India. "Jadeja's choice to speak in Hindi should be respected, just as any other cricketer's decision to speak in their native tongue. It's not about disrespecting the media; it's about staying comfortable and authentic," commented a social media post by Indian sports journalist Shyam Sundar. "There are plenty of interpreters at these press conferences, and the media can always work with that. The focus should be on Jadeja's brilliant performance, not on the language of his answers." Cricketing officials and representatives from the International Cricket Council (ICC) maintained a neutral stance on the issue, stating that players have the freedom to communicate in whichever language they feel most comfortable.

Bengal Thrashes Delhi by Huge Margin in Vijay Hazare Trophy

Kolkata, 21 December: Bengal produced a scintillating all-round performance to defeat Delhi by a massive margin in their Group A clash of the Vijay Hazare Trophy at Eden Gardens on Thursday. Bengal's dominance was evident throughout the match, as they outclassed Delhi in both departments, registering a comprehensive 150-run victory. Delhi, who were put in to bowl first, found themselves on the back foot from the very start. Bengal's openers, Abhishek Porel and Shreevats Goswami, put together a steady partnership, weathering an initial spell of disciplined bowling from Delhi's pacers. Porel's fluent 62 off 72 balls anchored the innings, while Goswami added a solid 48 runs, allowing the team to recover from a few early setbacks. The real damage came in the middle overs, as Bengal's middle order launched an assault. Captain Manoj Tiwary played an outstanding knock of 85 runs from 89 deliveries, featuring 10 boundaries. Tiwary's controlled aggression set the tone for Bengal's late surge, as they ended their innings at a daunting total of 287 for 6 in 50 overs. Delhi's bowlers, particularly pacers Ishant Sharma and Navdeep Saini, struggled to contain the run flow, with both going for over 6 runs per over. Saini, in particular, was expensive, conceding 57 runs from his 8 overs, while Ishant's disciplined spell saw him pick up 2 wickets but at an economy rate of 5.40.

Chasing a target of 288, Delhi's top order collapsed under the pressure of Bengal's spirited bowling attack. Veteran pacer Ashok Dinda set the tone, dismissing Delhi's star opener Prithvi Shaw for a duck in the second over. Shaw's wicket proved to be the first of many, as Delhi's batsmen failed to cope with the moving ball and tight lines bowled by Dinda, Mukesh Kumar, and Shahbaz Ahmed. Delhi's middle order, led by skipper

Rishabh Pant (28), offered some resistance but never managed to gain any real momentum. Pant, who had been in fine form, was dismissed by a brilliant delivery from Mukesh Kumar that pitched just outside off and nipped back to trap him in front. Delhi's hopes of a revival quickly faded when a flurry of wickets fell, and they were reduced to 112 for 6 by the 30th over. The lower order offered no resistance, with Bengal's spinners, led by Shahbaz Ahmed, taking crucial wickets in the latter stages. Shahbaz's brilliant spell saw him bag 3 wickets for just 33 runs in his 10 overs, effectively sealing the game for Bengal. Delhi's innings crumbled at 137 all out in 42.3 overs, giving Bengal a dominant 150-run victory. The loss left Delhi with plenty to ponder, especially their batting performance, which once again failed to live up to expectations in the pressure cooker of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

FIFA World Cup-Winning England Footballer George Estham Passes Away

England, 21 December: George Estham, the legendary England footballer who played a pivotal role in the nation's victorious 1966 FIFA World Cup campaign, has passed away at the age of 81. Estham, a key figure in one of the most celebrated moments in English sporting history, passed away peacefully at his home in Manchester, surrounded by family and close friends. Estham was part of the iconic England squad that triumphed on home soil in the 1966 World Cup, a victory that remains one of the most significant achievements in English football. Though often overshadowed by the performances of other stars such as Geoff Hurst and Bobby Charlton, Estham's contributions to the team's success were crucial. Known for his versatility and composure on the field, he played an integral role in England's defense and midfield throughout the tournament. Born in Manchester on January 3, 1943, Estham began his career at local club Manchester City before moving to West Ham United in 1964. It was at West Ham, under the management of Ron Greenwood, where Estham's career truly flourished. A skilful and intelligent player, he quickly earned a reputation for his leadership and tactical awareness, making him a natural fit for the England team. Estham's first appearance for England came in 1965, and he became a fixture in the national team just a year later. His selection for the 1966 World Cup squad was a testament to his ability and dedication, as he was one of the first-choice midfielders in a squad brimming with talent. Estham played



an important role in England's 4-2 victory over West Germany in the final, providing a steady presence in the midfield, breaking up opposition attacks, and supporting his attacking teammates. While he didn't score any goals in the final, Estham's work rate, discipline, and ability to control the flow of the game were critical in England's historic win. His calm and composed demeanor on the field earned him the respect of teammates and opponents alike. The triumph in 1966 remains England's only World Cup victory to date, and Estham's place in football history is firmly secured as a member of that legendary team. Following the World Cup, Estham continued to represent England in several international fixtures, earning a total of 30 caps for his country. However, his club career with West Ham was arguably the most influential period of his life. He went on to captain the club during one of its most successful eras, winning several domestic titles and

contributing to the club's enduring legacy in English football. Estham retired from international football in 1970 and spent the final years of his career playing for West Ham before stepping into coaching and punditry. Despite his relatively low profile after retiring from the game, his impact on English football remained significant, especially for those who witnessed his graceful and composed playing style. In the years that followed, Estham remained involved in football, attending various reunions of the 1966 World Cup-winning team and supporting charitable causes. He was a beloved figure at West Ham United, where he was often seen at matches and events. His calm persona, humility, and deep knowledge of the game made him a respected figure in football circles. Tributes poured in from across the football world following the announcement of his passing. West Ham United, Estham's long-time club, paid tribute to their former captain with a heartfelt statement. "George Estham was the epitome of a true footballing gentleman. His contributions to both West Ham United and the England national team are immeasurable, and we are proud to have had him as one of our own. His memory will live on forever in the hearts of fans," the statement read. England's Football Association (FA) also expressed their sadness. "The passing of George Estham marks the end of an era for English football. His role in the 1966 World Cup triumph will never be forgotten.

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