

बलिदान की उन सैकड़ों कहानियों का गवाह रहा हूँ, जिन पर वर्तमान को मुझपर अभिमान है। कभी लहूँ देकर मेरा सम्मान किया गया, तो कभी उन जलती चिता को देखकर मैंने आंसू बहाए जो मेरी बेटी थी, जो मेरा बेटा था, मेरी धरती पर उन बेटों ने जन्म लिया है, उन बेटियों ने जन्म लिया है, जिनपर आज भी मुझे गर्व है। आज मैं अपनी कहानी सुना रहा हूँ मैं चित्तौड़गढ़ हूँ, आज मैं अपने इतिहास।

वीरतापूर्ण लड़ाइयों, राजपूत शूरता, महिलाओं के अद्वितीय साहस की कई और कहानियाँ सुना रहा हूँ, दुनिया में वीरता, बलिदान, त्याग, साहस के न जाने कितने किरदार आपने देखे होंगे और सुने होंगे, पर मुझे नाज है कि हिंदुस्तान की संरक्षणी पर इतने सारे नायकों से मेरी धरा कोई नहीं है।

## मेरा इतिहास मेरी जुबानी

चित्तौड़ की इस पानन धरा ने तो अन्याय और अत्याचार के खिलाफ ही लड़ना जाना। हमें क्या पता थे सियासत क्या होती है। हिंदू-मुसलमान के नाम पर हमें मत बांटो। हमने अपने बेटों को कभी धर्म और संप्रदाय की आंखों से नहीं देखा। जब मुगल बाबर ने हमें आंखें दिखाई थी, तो खन्दा के युद्ध में मेरे बेटे राणा सांगा का साथ देने के लिए हसन खान चिरथी और महमूद लोदी ही तो आए थे। जब अत्याचारी अहमद शाह हमें लूटने पहुँचा, तो हमारी राजमाता कर्णावती ने रक्षा के लिए अपने मुगल भाई हुमायूँ को ही तो राखी भेजी थी। जब मेरे प्रतापी बेटे महाराणा प्रताप के खिलाफ सभी सगे संबंधी मुगल अकबर के साथ हो गए, तो प्रताप का सेनापति बनकर पटान योद्धा हाकम खान सूर ने ही युद्ध में बलिदान दिया। मुझे किसी कर्णी सेना के नाम पर किसी जाति में मत बांधो। जब खुद के एक मेरे नालायक बेटे बनवीर ने मेरे ऊपर अत्याचार किए, तो मेरे वारिस उदय सिंह को बचाने के लिए गुर्जर जाति की पन्नाधाय ने अपने बेटे चंदन का बलिदान कर मेरे वारिस को बचाया था। जब महाराणा प्रताप की मदद किसी ने नहीं की, तो एक वैश्य ने सबकुछ बेचकर मेरी 12,000 सेनाओं का खर्च उठाया। जब राजपूत राजा हमारे लिए लड़ रहे प्रताप की सेना में लड़ने के लिए घूमंतु आदिवासी गड़रिया लुहार ही साथ आए थे। जब अकबर ने हमला किया तो किसी रानी ने नहीं बल्कि फूलकंवर के नेतृत्व में मेरे गोद में चित्तौड़ की सभी महिलाओं ने आखिरी जोहर किया था।

पांचवीं सदी में मौर्यवंश के शासक चित्तौरंगन मौरि ने जब 7 मील यानी 13 किमी की लंबाई, 180 मी. ऊंचाई और 692 एकड़ में फैले इस पहाड़ी पर मुझे बसाया था। तब किसी को कहां पता था कि दुनिया का सबसे बुजुर्ग गढ़ है, यानी चित्तौड़गढ़, हिंदुस्तान की माटी का तिलक बन जाईगा। मौरि वंश के अंतिम शासक मान सिंह मौरि के बाद मेरे पास 728 ईसवी में गोहिल वंश के शासक आए। गोहिलों के शासन के बाद रावल वंश का शासन चला। कहते हैं गोहिलों ने दहेज में राजकुमारी को ये किला भेंट किया। रानी, राजकुमारी से रावल वंश के वंशज बापा रावल की शादी हुई थी। सातवीं से 13वीं सदी तक मेरे वैभव का काल था। जब हमारी सुचिता, वैभव और पराक्रम की कहानियाँ दूर-दूर तक कही जाने लगीं। लेकिन चौदहवीं सदी से लेकर 16 वीं सदी तक हमने सबसे बुरा दौर देखा। जाने किसकी नजर हमारे चित्तौड़गढ़ पर लग गई और रावल वंश के शासक रतन सिंह के शासन के दौरान 1303 में अलाउद्दीन खिलजी ने मेरे उपर हमला कर दिया। हिंदुस्तान के सबसे सुरक्षित माना जाने वाला अभेद्य दुर्ग सबसे कमजोर भी हो सकता है ये खिलजी की युद्धनीति ने पहली बार

# बलिदानियों की धरती चित्तौड़गढ़

सामने ला दिया। फिर यहीं से हम हमेशा के लिए कमजोर बनते चले गए। सात दरवाजों से घिरे मेरे अंदर सात विशाल दुर्ग दरवाजे हैं, जिसे कोई पार नहीं कर सकता। लेकिन 1303 में खिलजी ने जाड़े में चारों तरफ से मुझे घेरकर मैदान में डेरा डाल दिया। वो मेरे अंदर नहीं आ सकता था। लेकिन दुर्ग के अंदर हमारे राशन-पानी को बंद कर दिया। सात महीने में हम बेबस होकर युद्ध के लिए मैदान में आए और हमारे रावल रतन सिंह और उनके दो बहादुर सेनापति गोरा-बादल शहीद हुए।

हमारी रुपवती रानी पद्मिनी को 16000 रानियों के साथ जोहर करना पड़ा। ये पहली बार था, जब हमारी वीरता और साहस-बलिदान की अमर कहानी दुनिया ने देखी। कहते हैं अलाउद्दीन लंपट स्वभाव का था और पद्मिनी को पाने के लिए युद्ध किया था। लेकिन हिंदुस्तान की सबसे ताकतवर सेना के होते हुए भी वो हमारी महारानी को नहीं पा सका। रावलों के शासन का यही अंत हुआ। 13 साल तक अलाउद्दीन खिलजी और उसके बेटे खेजर ने मेरे ऊपर राज किया। इस दौरान पूरे महल को तोड़ दिया गया और 1000 हजार से भी ज्यादा मंदिर भी तोड़ दिए। ये हमारे ऊपर हुए अत्याचार की इंतहा थी। लेकिन हमने उम्मीद नहीं छोड़ी थी। उसके बाद गोहिल वंश के ही भाई राणा वंश के सिसोदियाओं ने हमारे ऊपर राज किया। 1325 में राणा हमीर ने इसे अपना किला बनाया और राणा वंश यानी सिसोदिया वंश का शासन चलना शुरू हुआ। और आखिरी तक मेरे ऊपर सिसोदिया वंश का ही शासन रहा। मेरे उपर सबसे ज्यादा सिसोदिया वंश ने ही राज्य किया। और इस वंश में कई प्रतापी राजा हुए। राजा रतन सिंह से लेकर महाराणा प्रताप ने चित्तौड़गढ़ पर शासन किया। महाराणा सांगा, महाराणा कुंभा भी चित्तौड़गढ़ के महान राजाओं में से एक हुए। इन राजाओं ने चित्तौड़गढ़ को एक अलग पहचान दिलवाई। मैं यानी चित्तौड़गढ़ किला अभेद्य था। पहाड़ी के किनारे-किनारे खड़े चट्टानों की पंक्ति थी। साथ ही साथ दुर्ग में अंदर जाने के लिए लगातार सात दरवाजे बनाए गये थे। लिहाजा, दुश्मनों के लिए किले के अंदर जाना नामुमकिन था। लेकिन, विशाल मैदान के बीच में पहाड़ी पर ये किला बना था। जिसकी वजह से दुश्मन विशाल



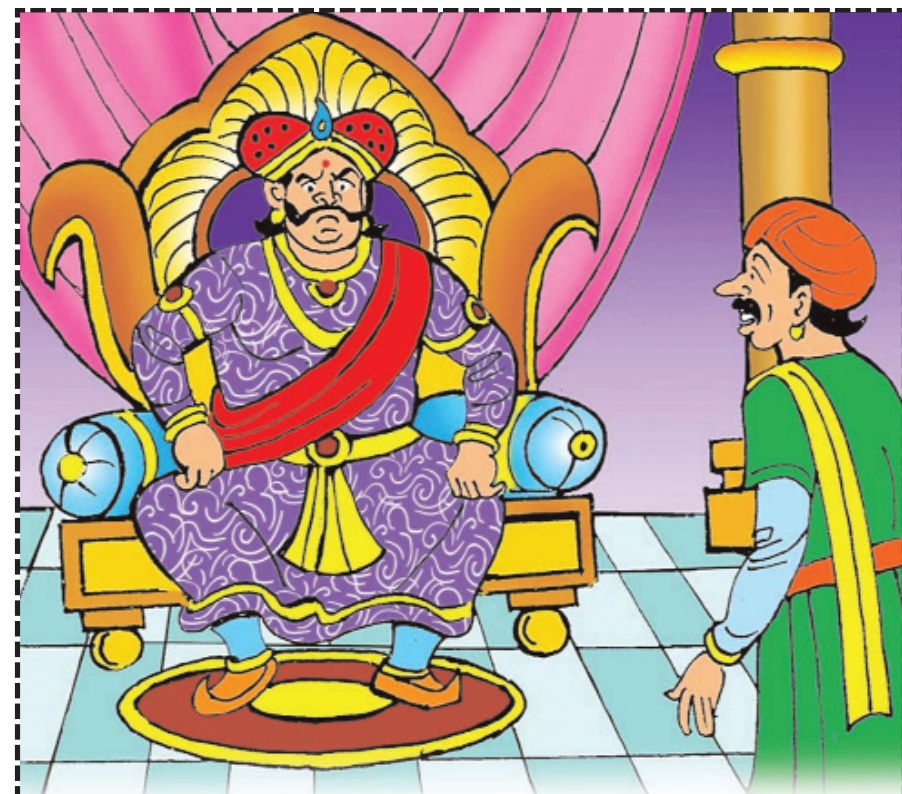
## महाराणा प्रताप

जब अकबर ने एकबार फिर 1567 ईवी में मेरे ऊपर हमला किया, तो उड़ई सिंह मेरे ऊपर राज करते थे। अकबर ने पूरी तरह से किले को बर्बाद कर दिया। एक बार फिर फूलकंवर के नेतृत्व में मेरे अंदर जोहर हुआ। तब हमारे राजा उदय सिंह ने 1568 में अकबर के संधि के अनुसार मुझे छोड़कर उदयपुर को अपनी राजधानी बना लिया। तब तय हुआ कि चित्तौड़ यानी मैं हमेशा के लिए वीरान रहूँगा और यहां कोई निर्माण नहीं होगा। दरअसल दिल्ली के सुल्तानों और मुगलों को हमेशा डर सताता था कि अगर चित्तौड़ आजाद और आबाद रहा, तो कभी दक्षिण नहीं जीत पाएंगे। मुगलों के साथ बारूद भारत में युद्ध में प्रयोग होने लगा तब तो हम बिल्कुल असुरक्षित हो गए थे। मगर मेरी गोद वीर पुत्रों से खाली नहीं थी। 16 साल तक मेरी गोद में खेले

महाराणा प्रताप को सरदारों ने चित्तौड़ का शासक घोषित कर दिया। मैंने आखिरी हमला दिल्ली की गद्दी पर बैठे अकबर का देखा और फिर हमेशा-हमेशा के लिए इतिहास बन गया। उदय सिंह की हार हुई और मुगल की संधि के अनुसार इस किले को सिसोदिया वंश को छोड़ना पड़ा। उदय सिंह ने अपनी राजधानी उदयपुर बना ली। मगर उनके जेट पुत्र महाराणा प्रताप इसे भुला नहीं पाए। वो इसी किले की तलहटी से अकबर से दो-दो युद्ध लड़े। और आखिरी बार हल्दीघाटी की लड़ाई हुई।

ये युद्ध हिंदुस्तान के सबसे मजबूत शासक और मुट्टी भर लड़ाकों के साहस की लड़ाई थी। जिसे दुनिया प्रताप की वीरता के लिए याद रखती है। प्रताप और उनके हथियार बनाने वाले गड़रिया लुहारों ने ये प्रतीज्ञा ली थी कि जबतक मुझे नहीं पा लेंगे वो किले में प्रवेश नहीं करेंगे। भारत आजाद हुआ तो खुद देश के प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू ने गड़रिया लुहारों को लेकर 1955 में मेरे अंदर यानी किले में प्रवेश किया। 1905 में अंग्रेजों के समय से अबतक हम दिल्ली की सरकार के अधीन रहे। मगर तब से हमारी सार संभाल ही हो रही है।

न जाने कितने कवि, लेखक और इतिहासकारों ने विभिन्न कालखंडों में मेरे बारे में और मुझ पर राज करनेवालों के बारे में क्या-क्या लिखा। मगर 2017 में इसे फिर से लिखा जा रहा है। इस बार कोई हमलावर चित्तौड़ नहीं आया है और न ही मेरे बहादुर चित्तौड़ के सैनिक इस लड़ाई को लड़ रहे हैं। मुझे इस लड़ाई से क्या हासिल होगा मुझे पता नहीं है। मैंने दुनिया के खुंखार से खुंखार आक्रांताओं और हमलावरों की खून की होली देखी है। मैं सब जानता हूँ, मुझे मेरी हिफाजत करनी आती है। मैं बूढ़ा नहीं हुआ हूँ, मैं चित्तौड़ हूँ।



माधो जंगल में लकड़ियां बीन रहा था। अचानक अपने गांव से आग की लपटें उठती देखकर वह घबरा उठा। पड़ोसी राजा को अपने किले में काम कराने के लिए गुलामों की आवश्यकता थी। उस समय उसके सैनिक ही गांव वालों को गुलाम बनाकर ले जा रहे थे। माधो जान बचाने के लिए घने जंगल में भाग गया। दिन बीतने पर माधो गांव लौटा, लेकिन वहां कोई नहीं था। उसके माता-पिता को भी निर्दयी सैनिक पकड़कर ले गए थे। माधो क्रोध से उबल पड़ा। वह राजा के किले की ओर चल दिया। वह किसी तरह गांव वालों को छुड़ाना चाहता था। किसी तरह छिपता हुआ माधो किले के अंदर पहुँच गया। गांव वालों के साथ उसके माता-पिता तपती धूप में राजा के खेतों में काम कर रहे थे। पानी मांगने पर सिपाही उन पर कोड़े बरसाते थे। तभी पास खड़ी एक गरीब बुढ़िया ने माधो से पूछा, तुम्हें क्या कष्ट है बेटा? मैं राजा की मालिन हूँ। माधो ने उसे सारी बात बताई। मालिन भी राजा की क्रूरता से बहुत दुखी थी। वह माधो को अपने घर ले गई। उसे माला गूथना सिखा दिया। फिर एक दिन उसे राजा से भी मिलवाया। राजा माधो की बनाई माला देखकर बहुत प्रसन्न हुआ। वह माधो को महल दिखाने लगा। माधो ने पूछा, महाराज, कोई शत्रु आपके महल में घुस आए तो?

## निर्दयी राजा

राजा उसे दीवार में लगी एक मुटिया दिखाकर बोला, अगर ऐसा हुआ, तो हम यह मुटिया घुमा देंगे। किले के सारे पानी में बेहोशी की दवा चुल जाएगी। पानी पीने वाले बेहोश हो जाएंगे। थक-मांदे शत्रु के सैनिक आते ही पानी तो पिएंगे ही। फिर राजा ने माधो को एक बड़ी सी चाबी दिखाई और बोला, यह चाबी देखो, इससे हम किले का दरवाजा बंद कर देंगे। होश में आने पर फिर कोई बाहर नहीं निकल सकता। मालिन ने माधो को नागगंध की एक माला बनाकर दी। उसे पहनते ही राजा और रानी गहरी नींद में सो गए। माधो ने जल्दी ही वह मुटिया घुमा दी। फिर राजा की जेब से किले की चाबी निकालकर महल से बाहर आ गया। पानी पीते ही राजा के सैनिक बेहोश होकर गिरने लगे। गांव वाले पानी पीने दौड़े, तो माधो ने उन्हें पानी नहीं पीने दिया और फौरन किले से बाहर निकल जाने के लिए कहा। सब बाहर आ गए, तो माधो ने चाबी से फाटक को बंद कर दिया। निर्दयी राजा अपने सिपाहियों के साथ अपने ही किले में बंद हो गया। गांव वाले उसके अत्याचार से मुक्त हो गए थे।

## इस किले के परिसर में है 65 से अधिक ऐतिहासिक महल, मंदिर व जलाशय



चित्तौड़गढ़ किला जिसे चितोर दुर्ग के नाम से भी जाना जाता है भारत के प्राचीनतम किलों में से एक है। यह किला भारत ही नहीं अपितु विश्व भर में प्रसिद्ध है। वर्ल्ड हेरिटेज साइट में शुमार इस किले को देखने हर साल हजारों विदेशी सैलानी भारत आते हैं।

- चित्तौड़गढ़ किला जिसे मेवाड़ की राजधानी के नाम से भी जाना जाता है उदाहरण के तौर पर यह किला प्राचीन समय में 834 सालो तक मेवाड़ की राजधानी रह चुका था। इसकी स्थापना 734 इक में मेवाड़ के सिसोदिया वंश के शासक बापा रावल ने की थी।
- चित्तौड़गढ़ किला भारत का सबसे बड़ा किला माना जाता है। इसकी लम्बाई 3 किलोमीटर, त्रिज्या 13 किलोमीटर और यह किला लगभग 700 एकड़ जमीन पर फैला हुआ है।
- प्राचीन इतिहास के अनुसार ऐसा माना जाता है कि चित्तौड़गढ़ किले को सातवीं सदी में मौर्यों सासको द्वारा बनवाया गया था और इस किले का नाम मौर्य शासक चित्रांगदा मौरि के नाम पर रखा गया था।
- आपको जानकर हैरानी होगी इस किले के परिसर में लगभग 65 ऐतिहासिक निर्मित संरचनाएं जैसे मंदिर, महल, जलाशय, स्मारक इत्यादि बनाए गए थे।
- चित्तौड़गढ़ किले में कुल सात द्वार बनाए गए थे जो प्राचीन समय में रात्रि के समय बंद कर दिए जाते थे इन द्वार पर लगे विशाल किवाड़ (दरवाजे) आज भी इस किले की मजबूती की गवाही देते हैं।
- प्राचीन समय में इन दरवाजो का नाम मुख्यतः प्रथम पड़नपोल, दूसरा भैरव पोल, तीसरा हनुमान पोल, चतुर्थ गणेश पोल, पंचम जोरला पोल, छटा लक्ष्मण पोल व सातवे दरवाजे को राम पोल के नाम से जाना जाता था।
- इन दरवाजो के संदर्भ में कहा जाता है की प्राचीन समय में प्रत्येक दरवाजे पर द्वारपाल व पहरेदार 24 घंटे दरवाजी की निगरानी करते थे प्रत्येक दरवाजे पर बड़े बड़े घंटे टोंगे गए थे जिन्हें बजा कर दरवाजो को खोला और बंद किया जाता था।

- इस किले में कई मंदिर स्थापित हैं जैसे कालिका मंदिर, जैन मंदिर, गणेश मंदिर, सम्मिदेश्वर मंदिर, नीलकंठ महादेव मंदिर और कुंभश्याम मंदिर आदि
- इस किले के परिसर में बनाया गया पद्मिनी महल एक छोटे सरोवर के निकट स्थित बहुत ही खूबसूरत महल है। इस महल के अंदर सीसे कि नकाशी कि गई है जो दिखने में बेहद खूबसूरत लगती है।
- आपको जानकर हैरानी होगी चित्तौड़गढ़ किले में आज भी 22 जलनिकाय मौजूद है इन जल निकायों में पानी का श्रोत्र प्राकृतिक भूमिगत जल और वर्षा से प्राप्त जल के द्वारा होता है।
- चित्तौड़गढ़ किले में बनाया गया भीमला जल भंडार भारत के प्राचीन इतिहास को समेटे हुए है। ऐसा माना जाता है पांडवों में भीम ने जमीन पर अपने हाथ के वार से पानी निकाल दिया था और भूमि के जिस हिस्से से पानी निकला उसे भीमला के नाम से जाना जाता है।
- चित्तौड़गढ़ किले के खम्बों पर की गई खूबसूरत चित्रकारी प्राचीन कलाकारी का उत्कृष्ट नमूना है। ऐसा कहा जाता है इस चित्रकारी को बनाने में 10 वर्षों का समय लगा था।
- आपको जानकर हैरानी होगी इस किले में आज भी लोग निवास करते हैं। उदाहरण के तौर पर चित्तौड़गढ़ किले में लगभग 20000 लोग रहते हैं।
- यह किला राजस्थान के शासक राजपूतों, उनके साहस, बड़पन, शौर्य और त्याग का प्रतीक है
- राजस्थान में मनाया जाने वाला जोहर मेला इसी किले में मनाया जाता है।
- चित्तौड़गढ़ का किला अपनी स्थापत्य कला, निर्माण शैली व पर्यटक स्थलों जैसे महल, जलाशय, स्तंभ, इत्यादि के लिए विश्व भर में प्रसिद्ध है। हर साल देश-विदेश सैलानी इस किले को देखने राजस्थान आते हैं।
- राजस्थान के पर्यटन विभाग द्वारा चित्तौड़गढ़ किले में बेहद खूबसूरत लाइटिंग की गई है जो रात के समय इस किले की खूबसूरती में चार चाँद लगा देती है।
- चित्तौड़गढ़ किले को यूनेस्को द्वारा साल 2013 में वर्ल्ड हेरिटेज साइट में शामिल किया गया था।



## Why it's politically incorrect to be privileged

EVER since the Israeli invasion of Palestine entered its new chapter last year, I have been in touch with a friend living in West Bank, who runs a famous school there. We have known each other from our university days at Cambridge, where we did our PhDs together. While departing, I was gifted a lovely ceramic cup by her, emblazoned with elegantly swirling floral motifs rendered in earthly hues. The object has sat on my desk for the past five years, holding my stationery and, thereby, by imagination together, often reminding me of the school that my sole Palestinian acquaintance runs. Every time I have written or recorded a message of concern and prayer for her and her family, I have felt the language falling short of its purpose, even though it remains the fundamental means to communicate one's feelings. In our latest conversation, my friend assured me that she and her family were safe and away from the conflict zone. But she added a caveat: that the ongoing genocide and its escalating horrors have robbed her of any feeling of enjoyment of even the most basic privileges. Thus, having water, electricity, shelter and everything else has injected a permanent sense of 'guilt' in her, making her question whatever she possesses. Anyone with even an iota of sensitivity can relate with such a predicament, albeit from one's own context. We have, most unfortunately, reached a point in our evolution as a species where there is hardly anything that cannot potentially fall under the ambit of 'privilege'. Such are the increasing inequalities and inequities that now, even to breathe the clean air or have a window with the view of a healthy landscape comes with a premium.

Consequently, over the last few years, the word 'privilege' itself has garnered an astonishingly bad reputation. Unless fully and repeatedly acknowledged, it has also ineluctably got associated with being 'politically incorrect'.

Tellingly, in my experience, an honest acknowledgement of one's wherewithal also doesn't necessarily guarantee the absence of negative criticism — such is the immorality automatically expressed by the term 'privilege'.

A fair amount of this criticism is rightly levelled at those in power, from authorities to institutions, who deny ordinary people the dignity to live. These establishments are more than often hands-in-glove with discriminatory practices and atrocities of all kinds. Hence, the burgeoning critique of their offensive, politically incorrect actions is not only required but also the need of the hour. The protests in support of the Palestinians the world over are an effort in this direction, as are the boycotts by literary communities of Israeli cultural institutions complicit with the genocide. Increasingly, there are also calls cast in black-and-white: you are either with the Palestinians or not, and any kind of affinity with the Israelis fundamentally marks a betrayal of the larger cause, a debasing of political correctness.

While, in principle, there can be no doubt regarding the above, in reality, the idea of associations and the experience of relationality is frequently more complex, and ridden with contradictions. It is ironic, especially as an Indian citizen, that one of the most widely reported developments that directly pierces through this black-and-white reading comes from the marginalised sections of society.

Since the end of the last year, thousands of Indian workers have been applying for jobs in Israel amidst persistent joblessness and the lack of opportunities back home. These openings have become possible because Israel suspended the work permits of scores of Palestinians after the beginning of the Gaza offensive. From carpenters to floor-tile fitters and plasterers to ironworkers.

## The weakening Chinese economy needs a stimulus

China's third major challenge in 2025 is Donald Trump, who has vowed to impose 60 per cent tariffs on all imports.

CHINA'S GDP growth slowed during the first three quarters of 2024, from 5.3 per cent to 4.7 per cent to 4.6 per cent, raising fears that the country would not achieve its annual growth target of around 5 per cent. But the latest data suggests that China's economy is finally turning the corner. Economic activity in China has been relatively weak since the Covid-19 crisis. This was not unexpected, at least not at first: three years of pandemic lockdowns strained household, corporate, and local-government balance sheets. Declining business confidence — partly a response to a regulatory crackdown on finance, the property sector, and the platform economy — did not help matters.

In early 2021, when the US emerged from the worst of its pandemic lockdowns, American households quickly began spending the money they had accumulated. Chinese households, by contrast, continued to accumulate savings even after the lockdowns were over: between January 2020 and August 2024, household bank deposits in China swelled by \$9 trillion, with the wealthy accounting for a significant share. China's government introduced some supportive policies over this period, but in contrast to past disruptions, it refrained from implementing aggressive stimulus policies, owing to concerns about possible side effects. The massive stimulus package the government introduced after the 2008 global financial crisis spurred growth. However, it also fuelled a real-estate bubble, drove up local-government debt, and reduced investment efficiency. The government's calculations changed at the end of the third quarter of 2024, when it became clear that China's economy would need more help to lift its growth trajectory. In late September, People's Bank of China Governor Pan Gongsheng unveiled three measures: a reduction in banks' reserve ratio, a policy-rate cut, and the creation of monetary-policy instruments to support the stock market. Moreover, on October 12, Lan Fo'an, China's Finance Minister, announced that new fiscal measures would focus on addressing

local-governments' debt problems, stabilising the real-estate market, and supporting employment. He followed this announcement in early November with a \$1.38 trillion debt-swap plan for local governments. Both Pan and Lan have suggested that more stimulus measures are in the pipeline, with Lan noting that China's central government still has plenty of room to increase its debt and deficits. But recent data on high-frequency economic indicators, which tend to be the quickest to respond to macroeconomic-policy changes, suggests that the government's actions began taking effect almost immediately. In October, total "social finance" (total financing to the real economy) was up by 7.8 per

cent year on year, and outstanding bank loans had increased by 7.7 per cent. Retail sales had risen by 4.8 per cent year on year, and by 1.6 percentage points from the previous month. The manufacturing purchasing managers' index reached 50.1, after three months of sub-50 readings, and increased again, to 50.3, in November.

In more good news, the surveyed urban unemployment rate dropped by 0.1 percentage points in October, to 5 per cent. Even the property market improved marginally, though land sales and real-estate investment remained weak. If these positive trends continue, GDP growth will probably return to around 5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024. The outlook for 2025, however, is less clear. If China is to achieve 5 per cent GDP growth next year, assuming this is the government's target, policymakers will have to overcome three key challenges, starting with stabilising the property sector, which contributes about 20 per cent of GDP growth and accounts for 70 per cent of household wealth. The second challenge is local governments' balance sheets. A shortage of funds has lately been driving local authorities to cut spending, such as by reducing officials' salaries, and grasping for revenues, such as by chasing corporate back taxes and even detaining private entrepreneurs from other regions.

None of this is good for growth. The fundamental problem is that spending responsibilities now exceed fiscal revenues, which are no longer being bolstered by land sales and local-government investment vehicles. The central government must urgently transfer a significant amount of general-purpose revenue to local authorities. More fundamentally, China needs to reconfigure the balance of fiscal responsibilities across levels of government. The third major challenge that China will confront in 2025 is US President-elect Donald Trump, who has vowed to impose 60 per cent tariffs on all imports from China during his first year in office. Given that China's exports to the US account for 3 per cent of its GDP, such tariffs, and even much lower ones, would have a material impact on growth in 2025. The investment bank UBS, for instance, predicted that China's GDP growth would slowdown to 4 per cent in 2025. There has been much debate in China over whether the economy needs structural reforms or more macroeconomic stimulus. The truth is that it needs both. A decisive stimulus package, with a robust fiscal-policy component, must come first; this will make the biggest immediate difference.



But once the package is in place, the government should turn its attention to structural reforms, with a focus on boosting confidence among consumers, investors, and entrepreneurs. Over the past year, China's government has published several policy documents aimed at restoring confidence. But with market participants not fully convinced, it must go further, implementing — boldly and visibly — some of the measures it has announced, such as stronger protections for private enterprises. Reining in local officials' scrutiny of old tax records in search of missing payments would also go a long way toward strengthening business confidence.

## PF a swipe away

### ATM withdrawals to cut bureaucratic delays

THE Labour Ministry's initiative to enable Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) subscribers to withdraw funds directly from ATMs by 2025 is a landmark step toward simplifying social security. This reform exemplifies the integration of advanced technology with public service to enhance efficiency and accessibility. Currently, EPFO withdrawals are marred by procedural delays, taking up to 10 days for funds to reflect in bank accounts. The proposed PF withdrawal cards aim to eliminate such red tape, providing real-time access to funds. However, prudence prevails with the capping of withdrawals at 50 per cent of the total balance, ensuring financial discipline and safeguarding long-term savings. The broader agenda under EPFO 3.0, which includes increasing contribution limits and converting provident fund savings into pensions, indicates the government's commitment to modernising the country's social security systems. This aligns well with India's



growing emphasis on digitisation and ease of living for its workforce, which has swelled by 70 million EPFO members since 2017.

In a related welcome step, the ministry is finalising a scheme for gig and platform workers, who often remain excluded from traditional employer-employee arrangements. The inclusion of this rapidly growing workforce in social security nets, with benefits like health coverage and financial aid, is a vital stride in formalising labour markets and addressing future workforce challenges.

These measures signal a shift toward a technology-driven welfare framework. By reducing human intervention and operational inefficiencies, the government underscores its commitment to improving citizen-centric services. While challenges like implementation hurdles and awareness gaps must be addressed, the potential benefits far outweigh them. Ultimately, this is not merely a technological upgrade but a profound leap toward equity and convenience in labour welfare, fostering trust in public institutions and bolstering the workforce's resilience.

## Musings on a book and a movie

### TRYSTS AND TURNS: Both 'Autocrats' and 'Amaran' offer insights into authoritarian leadership, fear and unity

MY dear wife, who left this world when she was 84, used to bemoan the rigours of old age. My reaction to her lament was always the same — "What is the alternative?" I would ask. Death answered the query, while the one she left behind occupies himself by reading and watching movies on television. A book I read and a movie I saw last week absorbed my time and my attention. I write on my reflections on that book and the film. The ouster of the Syrian Strongman, Bashar al-Assad, by rebels in his own country prompted me to write this article. My neighbour Mona Roy had sent me a book titled "Autocrats — Charisma, Power and their Lives" written by her family friend Rajiv Dogra, a distinguished Indian Foreign Service officer, now retired. Dogra is a scholar and a writer. Two of his previous (he has written seven) books "Where Borders Bleed" and "Durand's Curse" are a must read. When reading his latest book "Autocrats", I got the uneasy feeling that he had Narendra Modi in sight. But Rajiv is a trained diplomat, unlike me, a policeman who served for four full years as Ambassador without any grounding in diplomacy.

Incidentally, Rajiv Dogra was Ambassador to Romania, simultaneously accredited to Albania and Moldova, as I also was a few years earlier. The intelligentsia in Romania recognised him as a scholar. He was honoured with an honorary doctorate by the University of Oradea and made an honorary professor in the University of Targoviste. Rajiv's assertion that the "word authoritarian does not convey the immense harm that an all-pervasive atmosphere of fear does to a society" attracted my attention. Since such an element of fear does prevail today in the minds of the minority population of our beloved country, I read his book with more care than normal. The book had a profound effect on me and I would recommend that it be read by all compatriots who think and question. The modern authoritarian's cult of

personality, for instance, can be compared to that of the ancient Roman emperors, like Nero and Caligula, who were deified by their compatriots. In the 20th century, Benito Mussolini of Italy had his image imprinted on every bar of soap so that none would or could forget him even in the bath. I did not find any reference to Modi in the book. Was that diplomacy at work? Or, did the author want his readers to draw their own conclusions? He does mention Indira Gandhi, "who did not flinch at anything to maintain herself in power even if her actions proved a danger to democracy."

Dogra lists some characteristics of an autocrat which "should be taken as a sign of worry":

1. Belief that he or she is special and unique.
2. Lack of empathy for others.
3. Need for excessive admiration.
4. Obsessive sense of self-importance.

Rajiv mentions many world leaders through the ages with autocratic tendencies. Some could even be described as tyrants or dictators, but all were autocrats. Hitler, of course, leads the pack, as does Mussolini. On the other end of the scale is Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore, whose balancing act in a camouflaged dictatorship, earned him more plaudits than curses. Yet, he detained for two years many political opponents and allowed only one party, one newspaper, one trade union and one language. Rajiv concludes that "the quest for a benevolent, all-performing dictator has more often than not led to a bitter dead end." "That there are many similarities that can be listed in the actions taken by strongmen in the course of history is an accepted conclusion that readers will draw on reading "Autocrats". The author has meticulously studied their doings and their differing personalities and family backgrounds. The facts will fascinate students of history

and politics, alike. Even cursory readers like me will benefit from the knowledge that the book so lucidly disseminates. Applying this knowledge to present-day India and specifically Narendra Modi, I would not place him in the slots allotted to tyrants and dictators. He is



authoritarian alright. So was Indira Gandhi. Does India need an authoritarian leader to steer our democracy? My view is it does. What I worry about is the spread of fear and divisiveness in a multi-religious, multi-cultural society that has been spawned by the present regime. Will that lead the country to prosperity and greatness? I harbour serious doubts on this score. Of course, time alone will tell. But can the country afford the price it is bound to pay at the end? Can the caste divisions, embedded in the culture of the majority, be surmounted so that the 80 per cent-strong majority becomes one, as intended?

While mulling over the answers to my own questions, I found that my eyesight would not allow me to read for more than three hours at a time. My need to keep my mind occupied led me to the television. The fine print of the written word is substituted by pictorial representations of life on television.

I found a movie titled "Amaran" made in Tamil Nadu by leading movers of the state's film industry. I saw the film dubbed in English. I could relate to the script and the story because it was based on the courage and devotion to duty of an army officer, Major Mukund Vardharajan of the Rajput Regiment, seconded for duty to the 44 Rashtriya Rifles, which operates mainly in Jammu & Kashmir to keep terrorists in check. My friend Rahul Bose, the actor, had a big part to play in the movie, but the principal character was a Hindu Tamilian officer married to a Malayali Christian girl, whom he had met while they were students in Vellore Christian College. Their travails in getting their respective parents to consent to an inter-faith union was compounded by the fact that the mothers of both the boy and the girl were not happy with the protagonist's choice of a career in the army. The rapport of the officer with his own men was built on his determination to lead them personally in battle, unlike the Duke of Plaza Torro, "who led his regiment from behind whenever there was any fighting."

I loved the film and the message of patriotism, true qualities of leadership as well as the inter-religious amity it exuded. Readers should see it. And I wish that my country's acknowledged leader, PM Modi, sees it and recommends it to his faithful followers.

## French economist Thomas Piketty calls for more detailed income tax data from India

**NEW DELHI.** Calling upon the Indian government to release detailed income tax data, especially details regarding the billionaires or richest 100 persons in the country, French economist Thomas Piketty on Friday said there has been a deterioration in the "transparency and quality of information" from over six decades ago. Piketty, who is co-director at World Inequality Lab, suggested levying wealth and inheritance tax on the rich in India, which in turn, would help fund higher expenditure on health and education.

The suggestion to levy a higher tax on the rich was, however, countered by Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran, who said a higher tax rate could result in flight of capital. The CEA said for the average aspirational Indian, the data showing that 248 million people escaped multidimensional poverty between 2014 and 2023, matters much more than the number of billionaires in the country. "Reduction in poverty, not inequality, is the litmus test of inclusive growth," he said. Piketty said he has worked a lot with the income tabulations from many countries. "But, it is quite a unique situation of India, which is a deterioration in the transparency and quality of information over time. Income tax tabulations that we have today... are less detailed than what we had in the 1960s and 1970s. This is not saying that in the '60s, '70s, there was no tax evasion... but if you don't publish data, how are we going to be able to improve the situation? I am all for discussing to improve our estimates, but please be more transparent about the working of the tax system in India," Piketty said at a panel discussion on 'Inequality, Income Growth and Inclusion' organised by the Delhi School of Economics and think-tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries. Piketty, who is also the professor of Economics and Economic History at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences and the Paris School of Economics, said whatever be the imperfection of the data that is there presently, the conclusion is that India is a very unequal country, adding that it can reduce poverty faster by having less inequality. "I am asking you a simple question — how much income tax was paid by the top billionaires over the past 10 years? If you take the top 100 richest individuals in India — I am not asking for names — but just give us the average for the top 100 richest taxpayers. From what I know, from all the data I have, the income that they report to the income tax system is 0.01 per cent of their wealth. So you can increase your tax rate from 43 per cent to 70 per cent or 99 per cent... but if the income that they report is a really small fraction of their wealth, that's not going to matter," he said.

## Sebi proposes allowing retail participation in algo trading

**NEW DELHI.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Friday proposed to review the existing regulatory framework on algorithmic trading (algo trading) to facilitate participation of retail investors. Algo trading refers to orders generated using automated execution logic. Such trading provides significant advantages of timed and programmed order execution. "There has been an increasing demand for algo trading by retail investors. In order to facilitate participation of retail investors in algo trading, it has been decided to review and refine the existing regulatory framework to ensure proper checks and balances, to safeguard investor interest as well as integrity of the market," SEBI said in a consultation paper. At present, algo trading is limited to institutional investors, who have Direct Market Access (DMA) facility. DMA is used to describe clients / investor accessing the market directly using Computer to Computer Link (CTCL) software of a trading member and routing the orders through the trading member's infrastructure. The regulator has proposed to facilitate participation of retail investors in algorithmic trading through stock brokers who have obtained requisite permission of the stock exchange for each algo.

"All algo orders shall be tagged with a unique identifier provided by the stock exchange in order to establish audit trail and the broker shall seek approval from the Exchange for any modification or change to the approved algos or systems used for algos," the draft paper said.

## Gold rally may slow down in 2025: WGC

**NEW DELHI.** Gold prices are set to rise more slowly in 2025 after a record-breaking run this year, according to the World Gold Council.

Bullion is up more than 30% so far in 2024, but gains next year will likely be tempered by variables like growth and inflation, the WGC said. Possible trade wars in US President-elect Donald Trump's second term and complicated interest-rate outlooks may spill over into subpar economic growth, hurting demand from investors and consumers, the industry association said in its 2025 outlook report released on Thursday. "All eyes are on the US. Trump's second term may provide a boost to the local economy but could equally elicit a fair degree of nervousness for investors around the world, it said. Bullion's rally in the early part of 2024 was driven by large purchases by central banks, especially the People's Bank of China and others in emerging markets. It got a further boost from the Federal Reserve's recent monetary easing and haven demand during periods of heightened geopolitical tensions including wars in West Asia and Ukraine. However, gains have stalled due to a rally in the dollar following Trump's election win.

Some banks are still bullish on the prospects of the precious metal, currently trading near \$2,700 an ounce, next year. Goldman Sachs Group is forecasting it will get to \$3,000 by the end of 2025, while UBS AG sees \$2,900.

# Switzerland cancels 'most favoured nation' status to India over Nestle ruling

**NEW DELHI.** The Swiss government has suspended the most favoured nation status (MFN) clause in the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between India and Switzerland, potentially impacting Swiss investments in India and leading to higher taxes on Indian companies operating in the European nation. According to a December 11 statement by the Swiss finance department, the move follows the Supreme Court of India last year ruling that the MFN clause doesn't automatically trigger when a country joins the OECD if the Indian government signed a tax treaty with that country before it joined the organization. India signed tax treaties with Colombia and Lithuania that provided tax rates on certain types of income that were lower than the rates it provided to OECD countries. The two countries later joined OECD. Switzerland in 2021 interpreted that Colombia and Lithuania joining the OECD meant a 5 per cent rate for dividends would apply to the India-Switzerland tax treaty under the MFN clause, rather than 10 per cent as outlined in the agreement. But post suspension of

the MFN status, Switzerland will from January 1, 2025, levy a 10 per cent tax on dividends due to Indian tax residents who claim refunds for Swiss withholding tax and for Swiss tax residents who claim foreign tax credits. In the statement, the Swiss Finance Department announced suspension of the application of the MFN clause of the protocol to the agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of India for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income. Switzerland cited a 2023 ruling by Indian Supreme Court in a case relating to Vevey-headquartered Nestle for its decision to withdraw the MFN status.

This means that Switzerland will tax dividends that Indian entities will earn in that country at 10 per cent from January 1, 2025. According to the statement, in 2021, the Delhi High Court in the Nestle case upheld the applicability of the residual tax rates after taking into account the MFN clause in the double taxation avoidance treaty. However, the Indian Supreme Court, in a decision dated October 19, 2023, reversed the lower court's decision



and concluded that, the applicability of MFN clause provided "was not directly applicable in the absence of 'notification' in accordance with Section 90 of the Income Tax Act". Commenting on the decision of Swiss authority decision, Nangia Andersen M&A Tax Partner Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, said the unilateral suspension of application of the MFN clause under its tax treaty with India, marks a significant shift in bilateral treaty

dynamics. "This suspension may lead to increased tax liabilities for Indian entities operating in Switzerland, highlighting the complexities of navigating international tax treaties in an evolving global landscape," he said. It also underscores the necessity of aligning treaty partners on the interpretation and application of tax treaty clauses to ensure predictability, equity, and stability in international tax framework, Jhunjhunwala said.

AKM Global, Tax Partner, Amit Maheshwari, said that the main reason behind the decision to withdraw MFN is of reciprocity, which ensures that taxpayers in both countries are treated equally and fairly. "Swiss authorities announced in August 2021 that based on the MFN clause between Switzerland and India, the tax rate on dividends from qualifying shareholdings would be reduced from 10 per cent to 5 per cent, effective retroactively from July 5, 2018. However, the subsequent Supreme Court ruling in 2023 contradicted the same," Maheshwari said.

## Mobikwik, Vishal Mega Mart IPOs see massive investor response as primary market closes 2024 strong

**NEW DELHI.** The primary market is closing calendar year 2024 with a bang as two of the most awaited initial public offerings (IPOs) garnered a blockbuster response from investors.

While the initial share sale of fintech firm Mobikwik was subscribed more than 119 times, the offering of supermarket chain Vishal Mega Mart, which launched a mega issue of Rs 8,000 crore, was subscribed little over 27 times. In the Mobikwik IPO, the portion set aside for retail investors is subscribed 134.67 times while the portion reserved for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIB) was booked 119.50 times. The quota reserved for Non Institutional Investors (NII) was booked 108.95 times. For Vishal's IPO, QIB's led the charge as this category's quota was booked nearly 81 times.

The enthusiasm shown by investors for the two IPOs is in line with interest shown by them for other IPOs



throughout the year. As per BSE data, the IPO market saw a total of 76 listings (as of December 13, 2024). While 58 IPOs delivered positive listing gains, 18 IPOs experienced negative listing day returns. Recent data shared by Prime Database stated that 75 Indian companies raised over Rs 1.5 lakh crore through mainboard IPOs. This is a big jump given 57 IPOs had raised Rs 49,435 crore in 2023 and 40 IPOs had raised Rs 59,301 crore in 2022. Himansi Shah, Co-Fund Manager, Alchemy

Capital Management said that companies in the power, energy, and industrial sectors performed well, driven by anticipated increases in capital expenditures.

"Additionally, many of these companies offered some valuation upside for investors. When company valuations account for potential upside, leaving no room for investors, they often get discounted or corrected... 2025 is likely to see strong IPOs in industrials, capital goods, and renewable energy sectors, as these are driving India's growth story," added Shah. The biggest IPO of this year and the biggest so far in India's capital history was of Hyundai Motor India Ltd. The Rs 27,870 crore IPO was subscribed 2.37x and listed at a discount of 1.33%. The other big IPOs were launched by Swiggy, NTPC Green and Bajaj Housing Finance.

## Pharma market rebounds, asthma drug top seller

**NEW DELHI.** After months of sluggish sales, strong demand for derma and cardiac drugs drove the organised pharma retail market to double-digit growth in Nov, with heavy pollution in several parts of the country boosting Foracort sales. The medication, used for asthma and respiratory issues, topped the market in Nov with sales of Rs 82 crore, according to the latest data culled by TOI from IQVIA. Foracort assumed the top slot in Nov with a growth of 29%, while antibiotic Augmentin ranked second with a growth of 9% registering Rs 76 crore sales, and antidiabetic therapy Glycomet GP, ranked third, was almost flat at Rs 69 crore.

In terms of therapies, urology led the growth with 18% rise, while the derma, cardiac, and pain-relief segments followed with growth rates of 16%, 13%, and 13%, respectively.

Further, pain-relief medication Zerodol SP posted a growth of 22%, while others which grew over 20% month-on-month include Ryzodeg, Rosuvas, Cilacar, Rybelsus and Duphalac.

Sun Pharma continued to lead the pack with a share of 8% in the overall pharma retail market valued at Rs 2,28,059 crore. Cipla and Dr Reddy's also increased their share month on month. During the month, both acute - mainly



painkillers and anti-infectives - and chronic medication, those prescribed for long-term ailments, posted a double-digit growth of 11% each.

"After a lull for the last three months, industry volumes reported positive growth of 3.5%. Rebound in growth for anti-infectives was led by key molecules like amoxicillin+clavulanic acid and ceftriaxone,

pantoprazole+domperidone combination was main growth driver for gastro-intestinal therapy, cough syrups, formoterol+budesonide and levocetirizine+montelukast drove growth in respiratory therapies," an analyst from ICICI said. Domestic companies registered growth of nearly 11%, whereas MNCs grew just over 10%. In 2025, the market will continue to grow by high-single digits, led by price increase and new launches, while volume growth remains muted, an analyst from HSBC told TOI. "In 2025, we assume Indian companies will start their journey in GLP-1 (Glucagon-like peptide-1) drugs with the launch of generic liraglutide," he added. GLP-1 is a hormone that helps control blood sugar levels and plays a role in weight management. Globally, MNCs including Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly have launched blockbuster drugs for obesity and diabetes, which are expected to be launched in India over the next few years.

FY25 (H2FY25) to be nearly Rs 8,000 crore.

Currently, Vodafone Group holds a 22.56% stake in VIL, while the Aditya Birla Group owns 14.76% and the Indian government is the largest shareholder with a 23.15% stake. VIL remains the only private telecom service provider in India that has yet to launch its commercial 5G network. In contrast, its competitors, Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, have already rolled out 5G services. This delay in 5G rollout has led to customer churn. The company has, however, announced plans to launch its commercial 5G services in March 2025, beginning with Delhi and Mumbai. VIL has reduced its losses to Rs 7,176 crore in Q2FY25 as against Rs 8,738 crore in the same quarter last year. During the quarter, its mobile average revenue per user (ARPU), excluding machine-to-machine connections, grew by 7.8% QoQ, rising from Rs 154 in the April-June period to Rs 166.

Plans to deploy 4G network across 16 circles

The telco, in an investor presentation, also revealed plans to deploy its 4G network on the sub-GHz 900 MHz band across 16 circles, aiming to improve coverage and enhance the user experience. This capital expenditure (capex) will also support the rollout and expansion of VIL's 5G network in key urban areas and regions.



## The Nifty IT index reached a new high and rallied around 3 per cent during the week after US inflation data met expectations, boosting hopes for a Fed rate cut next week.

**Mumbai.** The surge in the Indian stock market on Friday helped the Indian benchmark indices end the week on a positive note. A strong 2,000-point rebound from the lows suggests that the buy-on-dips strategy is working well in the market, experts said on Saturday.

"With inflation coming within the RBI's tolerance level and an expectation of further ease in food prices on account of seasonal corrections in vegetable prices, it could build up the expectation for ease in monetary policy in February," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. On the last trading session this week, Nifty witnessed a sharp recovery of



more than 2 per cent from day's low, rebounding from a significant dip earlier in the session, to close with gains of 220 points at 24,768 (+0.9 per cent). Buying in FMCG, IT and banking stocks supported the recovery, even as broader market sentiment remained cautious. "The intraday sell-off in Indian equities followed weakness across Asian markets, which posted steep losses amid a stronger

dollar, rising US Treasury yields and continued skepticism over China's economic revival," said Siddhartha Khemka from Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. The lack of clarity in China's stimulus plans weighed on metal stocks, dragging the Nifty Metal index down by 0.7 per cent. On Friday, Sensex was up 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent, at 82,133.12. During the session, BSE's

benchmark made an intra-day high of 82,213 after recovering from a low of 80,082. Midcap and smallcap stocks underperformed compared to largecaps. Nifty midcap 100 index closed at 58,991, down 30 points or 0.05 per cent, and the Nifty smallcap 100 index closed at 19,407, down 59 points or 0.30 per cent.

According to experts, a gradual recovery in IIP and core sector data is pointing towards a better H2 earnings performance compared to subdued H1 FY25. Currently, it is believed that FII selling has subsided, at least in the short to medium term, which will add further impetus to the sentiment, they added. The Nifty IT index reached a new high and rallied around 3 per cent during the week after US inflation data met expectations, boosting hopes for a Fed rate cut next week. Meanwhile, gold witnessed a sharp sell-off as profit booking intensified following mixed signals from US economic data. MCX Gold tumbled from Rs 79,000 to Rs 77,450. The current weakness suggests a potential trading range of Rs 76,000- Rs 78,000 in MCX, with the short-term outlook remaining cautious amid ongoing market volatility.



# Haryana cops use tear gas, water cannons as farmers try to march to Delhi

**New Delhi.** Farmers resumed their march to Delhi on Saturday, marking their third attempt to enter the capital to press the Centre for various demands, including a legal guarantee for a minimum support price (MSP). However, Haryana Police fired tear gas shells and water cannons on them at the Shambhu border (Haryana-Punjab), stopping them from proceeding further. Visuals showed farmers holding flags as cops used water cannons and tear gas on them. Ambala's Superintendent of Police told the farmers that they should get permission from the authorities to march towards Delhi. However, farmers urged the authorities not to block them, with one farmer leader requesting not to "suppress their voices", news agency ANI reported.

"... if you want to go to Delhi, you should get proper permission and once you get the permission, we will allow you to go. There was a hearing in the Supreme Court yesterday... Instructions have been given to hold a meeting... The next date of the meeting is December 18. We appeal to you to sit here peacefully and follow the rules," Ambala SP said to protesting farmers.

Congress leader Bajrang Punia pointed out the two-faced behaviour of the government. "On one hand, the government is saying that we are not stopping the farmers, but on the other hand, they are using tear gas and other things. It is being treated as if it is Pakistan border. When leaders go to Delhi to protest, do they take permission?... Farmers only want MSP for their crops... We will always support the farmers. The government should fulfill its promises," he was quoted as saying by ANI. Amidst the ongoing protest, to prevent disruption, internet services in parts of Ambala have been suspended from 6 am on December 14 until December 17. Earlier in the day, farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher questioned the government's reasoning for preventing 101 farmers from marching on foot, deeming it unjustified. He also reiterated the demand for the government to initiate talks, emphasising the urgency of addressing their grievances to prevent an escalation of the protests. The farmers' agitation, which began on February 13 at



the Shambhu and Khanauri borders between Punjab and Haryana, is rooted in demands including a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP) on crops. The protest gained further urgency after Jagjit Singh Dallewal, a prominent farmer leader, began a fast-unto-death on November 26. His deteriorating health has become a focal point of concern for both protesters and leaders, with reports indicating that he has lost 14 kilograms since his hunger strike began. On Friday, December 13, farmer leader Rakesh Tikait visited Dallewal at the Khanauri border to

show solidarity, calling for the unity of all farmer organisations to press the government for a resolution, news agency PTI reported. Tikait hinted that this time, instead of surrounding Delhi at its borders as in the previous agitation against the now-repealed farm laws, the farmers might adopt a strategy of encircling the capital from the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) expressway. The situation escalated earlier when the farmers' attempts to march towards Delhi were met with tear gas shelling by Haryana police. The clashes resulted in injuries, forcing the protesters to suspend their previous marches. Farmer unions also delayed their foot march due to concerns over Dallewal's critical health condition. Addressing questions about the risks posed to Dallewal's life, Pandher remarked that while no one wants to lose a family member, the farmers are fighting for a resolution to their plight, which has driven many to suicide. He criticised the government's alleged indifference to the issues, stating that the protest would continue peacefully but with firm resolve.

## Delhi Schools Receive Bomb Threats For 2nd Consecutive Day, Probe On

**Again Delhi Schools including DPS RK Puram, Ryan International School, Vasant Kunj received a bomb threat email," Delhi Police said.**

**New Delhi.** A day after over 30 schools in the national capital received bomb threats, several schools in Delhi, received similar threat emails on Saturday, Delhi Police said.

"Today again Delhi Schools including DPS RK Puram, Ryan International School, Vasant Kunj received a bomb threat email," Delhi Police said. According to the police a group mail was received by the schools at 6:12 am today.

On Friday, South East Delhi Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Ravi Kumar Singh said that as many as 30 schools across Delhi received hoax bomb threat emails. The DCP said that the investigation into the fake threats revealed that the e-mails sent to the schools had been generated outside the country. Upon receiving the information, schools



were evacuated and the Bomb Disposal Squad carried out checks at the locations.

The threatening emails raised concerns among parents and staff, though the police assured that investigations are ongoing and safety remains their priority. No explosives or hazardous materials have been found in any of the schools so far. This is not the first instance of such threats disrupting schools in the national capital, underlining the need for robust security protocols. The schools that received the threats on Friday, included the Bhatnagar Public School in Paschim Vihar, Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri, Delhi Public School in East of Kailash, and Delhi Public School in Defence Colony. Earlier, over 40 schools in the national capital received bomb threats via e-mail demanding a ransom of USD 30,000. This email came on December 8 at around 11:38 pm.

Former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Friday voiced serious concerns about recurring bomb threats targeting schools in the national capital. Kejriwal questioned the potential psychological and academic impact on children, saying such incidents could disrupt their studies and well-being if they continue unabated. Earlier on November 19, the Delhi High Court instructed the Delhi Government and Delhi Police to develop a comprehensive action plan, including a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to address bomb threats and related emergencies. The court set a deadline of eight weeks for the completion of these directives.

## Kiren Rijju's dig at Congress: They avoided roads near border to stop encroachment

**NEW DELHI.** While participating in a debate on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju on Saturday claimed that Congress did not want to build proper roads in the border areas as they feared that the initiative could facilitate the passage of army personnel from the neighbouring country into the frontier state. "The former Defence Minister said in the Rajya Sabha that I am the Defence Minister of the country and I have no hesitation in saying that our Congress government had set a policy that roads should not be built in border areas. If roads are built, China will come through the same route and occupy our land: Parliamentary Affairs Minister," Rijju said



while quoting a former Defence Minister of India. In his speech, the Union Minister also took a veiled jibe at the opposition, saying that while India has given equal voting rights to all, some claim that minorities have no rights in the country. The parliamentary affairs minister also cautioned that "our words and actions should not diminish the image of the country in the world fora". India not only provides legal protection to minorities, it also has a provision for affirmative action to protect their interests, the minister asserted. Rijju said successive governments worked for the welfare of minorities. "The Congress has also done that, I am not undermining its role." Rijju was the first speaker on the second day of the debate in the Lok Sabha on 75 years of the Constitution's adoption.

## Gangster wanted in double-murder case injured in encounter in UP, succumbs later

**NEW DELHI.** A 39-year-old gangster died following an encounter with police in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district in the early hours of Saturday, December 14. According to the police, Anil alias Sonu Matka, a known associate of the Hashim Baba gang in Delhi, was critically injured in the encounter with a joint team of UP STF and Delhi Police Special Cell. He succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Matka was wanted in connection with several crimes in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, including the killings of a man and his nephew



in the national capital's Farsh Bazar area and was also carrying a bounty of Rs. 50,000. The encounter broke out in the early hours of Saturday in Merrut's TP Nagar area after the police received input about his location. In the encounter, Sonu Matka was critically injured and died during treatment, police said. After the encounter, the police seized two sophisticated pistols, 10 live rounds and a bike from Sonu Matka. "The encounter took place in the jurisdiction of TP Nagar police station. The joint operation was conducted by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh Police and the Delhi Police's Special Cell," Additional Director General of Police (STF) Amitabh Yash was quoted as saying by news agency PTI. The officer added that the Baghatpat native was involved in numerous cases of robbery and murder in both Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

# ISRO Achieves Significant Milestone For Gaganyaan Mission

**New Delhi.** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that it has reached a significant milestone in the Gaganyaan Programme, with the first solid motor segment moved from the production plant to the launch complex. The space agency said, "India's human spaceflight dreams are taking shape!" In a post on the social media platform X, ISRO stated, "A significant milestone for the Gaganyaan Programme! The first solid motor segment has been moved from the production plant to the launch complex, marking a key step towards the HLV M3 G1 flight."



In September, ISRO Chairman S Somanath said that efforts were underway to launch India's first human spaceflight programme, Gaganyaan, by the end of this year. "Gaganyaan is ready for launch; we are trying to launch it by the end of this year," Somanath had said. The Gaganyaan Programme, approved in December 2018, envisages human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and the establishment of technologies required

for a long-term Indian human space exploration endeavour. On 18 September, the Cabinet approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission to the Moon. This mission aims to develop and demonstrate technologies to return to Earth after a successful lunar landing, as well as collect and analyse Moon samples on Earth. The Chandrayaan-4 mission will achieve foundational technologies and capabilities needed for an eventual Indian landing on the

Moon (planned by 2040) and a safe return to Earth. Key technologies for docking, undocking, landing, safe return, and lunar sample collection and analysis will be demonstrated. The central government's expanded vision for the Indian space programme during the Amrit Kaal includes an Indian Space Station (Bharatiya Antariksh Station) by 2035 and an Indian landing on the Moon by 2040.

## "Attention Seeking Divas...": Mahua Moitra's Dig At DY Chandrachud

**Officials said that till date, 573 projects worth Rs 523 crore have been sanctioned, with Rs 960 crore transferred to the Delhi Development Authority for the programme implementation.**

**New Delhi.** TMC MP Mahua Moitra accused the BJP-led Centre on Friday of "bleeding the Constitution from a thousand cuts" and said it is crystal clear that the political executive has "systematically eroded democracy" over the last 10 years. Participating in a debate in the Lok Sabha on 75 years of the Constitution, Moitra asserted that the need of the hour is to ensure that the idea of India survives in its purest form. For a significant part of her speech, the Trinamool Congress MP trained her guns on former chief justice of India D Y Chandrachud, without naming him, and said what troubles the opposition is that some members of the higher judiciary appear to be doing their best to compromise the independence and integrity of the country's constitutional



courts. The outgoing CJI waxed eloquent on how the right to bail has been granted during his tenure.... From A for Arnab to Z for Zubair, his alphabets (sic) seem to be abbreviated because it did not include G for Gulfisha Fatima, did not include H for Haney Babu, did not include K for Khalid Saifi, did not

include S for Sharjeel Imam, U for Umar Khalid and countless others," she said. Moitra said the former CJI made it a point to state that the Supreme Court is not meant to act like a political opposition. "We in the opposition do not need the Supreme Court to do our job. We are not asking it to (do so) but what troubles us is that some members of the higher judiciary appear to be doing their best to compromise the independence and integrity of our constitutional courts," she said. Moitra also apparently criticised Chandrachud for hosting Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence during the Ganapati festival. "I do not think the framers of our Constitution ever imagined a scenario where judges would rely on private conversations with the god to write judgments rather than on objective logic, on reasoning, on law and on the Constitution," the TMC MP said.

# Paracetamol May Raise Heart, Kidney Related Complications In Elderly: Study

**New Delhi.** Paracetamol, a common over-the-counter medication, may increase the risk of gastrointestinal, heart- and kidney-related complications among adults aged 65 and above, a new study has found. Taken commonly for treating mild-to-moderate fever, paracetamol is also the first drug recommended for treating osteoarthritis -- a chronic condition causing pain, stiffness and swelling in the joints due to wear-and-tear -- as it is considered Effective, relatively safe and accessible. However, some studies have provided evidence to contest the effectiveness of paracetamol in relieving pain while others have shown increased risks of gastrointestinal side effects, such as ulcers and bleeding, from prolonged use. The latest study, conducted by researchers from the University of Nottingham, UK, found that paracetamol use was linked to a 24 per cent and 36 per cent increase in risk of peptic ulcer bleeding (bleeding due to ulcer in the digestive tract) and

lower gastrointestinal bleeding, respectively. Taking the drug may also increase the risk of chronic kidney disease by 19 per cent, heart failure by 9 per cent and hypertension by 7 per cent.

"This study shows a significant incidence of renal, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal side effects in older people, who are prescribed acetaminophen (paracetamol) repeatedly in the UK," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Arthritis Care and Research. "Due to its perceived safety, paracetamol has long been recommended as the first line drug treatment for osteoarthritis by many treatment guidelines, especially in older people who are at higher risk of drug-related complications," said lead researcher Weiya Zhang from the University of Nottingham's School of



Medicine. "Whilst further research is now needed to confirm our findings, given its minimal pain-relief effect, the use of paracetamol as a first line pain killer for long-term conditions such as osteoarthritis in older people needs to be carefully considered," Zhang said. For their analysis, the researchers looked at health records of 1,80,483 (1.80 lakh) people repeatedly prescribed

paracetamol (more than two prescriptions within six months). Their health outcomes were compared to those of 4,02,478 (4.02 lakh) people of the same age who were never prescribed paracetamol repeatedly. Data from the Clinical Practice Research Datalink-Gold was analysed for the study. The participants were aged 65 and over (average age 75) and had been registered with a UK general practitioner for at least a year between 1998 and 2018.

A 2016 study in The Lancet journal pooled and analysed data from 76 randomised trials, involving 58,451 patients, published between 1980 and 2015. Researchers from the University of Bern found that paracetamol did not provide the minimum levels of effective pain relief or improve physical function in patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis.

## NEWS BOX

## BBC files complaint with Apple over AI-generated fake news attributed to it

LONDON. The BBC on Friday said it had filed a complaint with US tech giant Apple over AI-generated fake news that was shared on iPhones and attributed to the British public broadcaster.

The Apple Intelligence, which was launched in Britain this week, produces grouped notifications from several information sites that have been generated by artificial intelligence. One of those suggested that the BBC News website had published an article claiming that Luigi Mangione, who was arrested in the US over the murder of a healthcare executive in New York, had committed suicide. "BBC News is the most trusted news media in the world. It is essential to us that our audiences can trust any information or journalism published in our name and that includes notifications," a BBC spokesperson said in a statement.

## US: OpenAI Whistleblower Suchir Balaji Found Dead In San Francisco Apartment

world. Suchir Balaji, a 26-year-old former OpenAI researcher and whistleblower, was found dead in his San Francisco apartment on Buchanan Street, according to multiple reports. The San Francisco Police Department and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) confirmed the death, with the medical examiner ruling it a suicide.

Balaji, who worked at OpenAI for nearly four years, was discovered deceased in his apartment on November 26. A spokesperson for the OCME stated, "The manner of death has been determined to be suicide. The next-of-kin have been notified, and there are no further comments at this time." Police officials added that they found no evidence of foul play. In October, Balaji publicly raised concerns about OpenAI's practices, accusing the company of breaking copyright laws with its generative AI products like ChatGPT. He expressed these concerns in interviews and posts on social media, where he shared his apprehensions about the ethical implications of the technology.

In a widely circulated post on X (formerly Twitter), Balaji wrote, "I was at OpenAI for nearly 4 years and worked on ChatGPT for the last 1.5 of them. I initially didn't know much about copyright, fair use, etc. but became curious after seeing all the lawsuits against GenAI companies." He further explained his concerns: "Fair use seems like a pretty implausible defence for a lot of generative AI products, for the basic reason that they can create substitutes that compete with the data they're trained on." Balaji grew up in Cupertino, California, and studied computer science at the University of California, Berkeley. He joined OpenAI after graduation and played a significant role in developing ChatGPT, working on the project for 1.5 years before resigning. He told The New York Times that he left OpenAI because he believed the technology had the potential to cause more harm than good to society.

## Florida man who shot Walmart drone ordered to pay \$5,000, sparks viral support from netizens: 'New Jersey could use this guy right now'

world. A Florida man, 72-year-old Dennis Winn, has been ordered to pay \$5,000 in restitution to Walmart after he shot down one of the company's drones in June, claiming it was surveilling him. The incident has sparked a viral reaction online, with some netizens suggesting that New Jersey could benefit from having a man like Winn on their side amid growing concerns over mysterious drone sightings in the state. Winn, from Lake County, Florida, was charged with multiple offenses after he fired at the drone, which was flying over his home in the Overlook at Lake Louisa neighborhood on June 26. The drone was part of a mock delivery operation conducted by Walmart's drone delivery service. According to reports, after the drone was shot, the workers operating it fled the scene and returned the drone to Walmart. When Lake County deputies arrived to interview Winn, he explained that he believed the drone was surveilling him, citing past experiences with similar incidents. He then retrieved a 9mm pistol from his gun safe and fired at the drone. The authorities noted that children were playing nearby at the time of the shooting. Winn's actions led to charges of discharging a firearm in public, criminal mischief, and shooting or throwing deadly missiles at a dwelling, vessel, or vehicle. During his arrest, Winn seemed surprised when informed that the drone belonged to Walmart, responding with "Really?" The officer also informed him that the drone likely cost tens of thousands of dollars, though Winn had not reported previous drone concerns to the police, only to his homeowners' association (HOA).

In a court agreement on November 27, Winn accepted a restitution order, agreeing to pay \$5,000 for the damage caused to the drone. His attorney clarified that this payment was an acknowledgment of wrongdoing but not a guilty plea. Winn will avoid jail time if he remains charge-free for the next six months. While the legal case has been settled, the incident has ignited a flood of online reactions. On social media, many have rallied behind Winn, with some suggesting that his actions might have been more justified than initially thought.

One user tweeted, "New Jersey could use this guy right now," referencing the ongoing saga of mysterious drone sightings in New Jersey. The Garden State has seen an increase in drone reports, particularly around Thanksgiving, sparking conspiracy theories and intense media coverage. Gov. Phil Murphy and other state officials have called for answers from federal authorities, but so far, the mystery remains unsolved.

## 'Shoot them down': US President-elect Trump on mystery drone sightings

WASHINGTON. US President-elect Donald Trump has called for the "shooting down" of the mystery drones that have been appearing in various parts of the country.

These drones were first spotted in New Jersey a few days ago and are now being seen in other areas as well. The federal government and the White House have so far maintained that these do not pose any national security threat and nor there is any evidence of a foreign hand in it. The appearance of the mystery drones, however, continues to be the subject of investigation. "Mystery Drone sightings all over the Country. Can this really be happening without our government's knowledge? I don't think so," Trump said on Friday in a post on Truth Social, a social media platform owned by him. "Let the public know, and now. Otherwise, shoot them down!!! DJT," he said with his personal signature at the end of the post.

The White House on Thursday said there was no evidence yet that the reported drone sightings pose a national security or a public safety threat or that they have a foreign nexus. The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI are

investigating these sightings, working closely with state and local law enforcement to provide resources, using numerous detection methods to better understand their origin, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby told reporters.

He added that "...upon review of available imagery, it appears that many of the reported sightings are actually manned aircraft that are being operated lawfully." "The United States Coast Guard is providing support to the State of New Jersey and has confirmed that there is no evidence of any foreign-based involvement from coastal vessels and, importantly, there are no reported or confirmed drone sightings in any restricted airspace," Kirby said. In a joint statement, the Department of Homeland Security and FBI also said that there was no evidence yet that the reported drone sightings pose a national security or a public safety threat or have a foreign nexus.

"We are supporting local law enforcement in New Jersey with numerous detection methods but have not corroborated any of the reported visual sightings with



electronic detection. To the contrary, upon review of available imagery, it appears that many of the reported sightings are actually manned aircraft, operating lawfully. There are no reported or confirmed drone sightings in any restricted air space," the statement read. In a letter to the DHS, FBI and the Federal Aviation Administration, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senators Cory Booker and Andy Kim said that "since late November, communities in the New York City area and northern New Jersey have reported several incidents of

unattributable drone sightings at night, alarming both residents and local law enforcement".

They highlighted that "the potential safety and security risks posed by these drones in civilian areas is especially pertinent considering recent drone incursions at sensitive military sites in and outside of the continental United States over the past year". Congressman Josh Gottheimer from New Jersey on Friday urged federal law enforcement agencies, led by the FBI and DHS, to allow state and local law enforcement to deploy assets that can safely take down drones that "should not be in our skies". He wrote a letter to the FBI, DHS and the FAA, asking them to immediately brief the public.

"They also need to work closely with state and local law enforcement to give them the equipment they need to monitor drone activity. There is clearly too much of it here in Jersey and other parts of the country," Gottheimer said.

## Brazil President Lula says he's 'strong' after surgery, shares video of him walking

SAO PAULO. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva declared he was "strong and steady" Friday, in a video of him walking around unassisted after emergency surgery earlier this week.

"Please rest assured. I am strong and steady! I am walking the halls... talking a lot, eating well and, soon, ready to return home and continue working and taking care of every Brazilian family," he wrote on X and other social media.

The video included in the post showed him walking a hospital corridor with his neurosurgeon, Marcos Stavale. They were the first public images of Lula, 79, since Monday, when doctors detected intracranial bleeding related to a bad fall he had in October and rushed him to the Hospital Sirio-Libanes in Sao Paulo. He underwent the surgery on Tuesday to relieve the pressure on his brain, with doctors conducting a trepanation -- drilling through his skull. Lula's medical team says he suffered no brain damage from the emergency and was doing well post-surgery.

In the posted video, Lula is seen walking and stopping to talk with Stavale and with his wife, First Lady Rosangela da Silva. The president, wearing blue

casual wear, sports a bandage on top of his head where the surgery occurred.

In the accompanying message, Lula thanked the public for the prayers and words from well-wishers, passed on by his wife, and said he looked forward to



"many meetings in Brazil and around the world" in the coming year.

"Thank you for your affection and for all the dedication of the medical team. The love I receive keeps me always ready to move on!" he wrote. On Friday he was taken out of intensive care, and he was expected to be allowed to leave hospital early next week. The hospital said in a public medical update that Lula remains "under semi-intensive care," which a presidency official explained meant monitoring at regular intervals, instead of around-the-clock,

as in intensive care.

Remote working

Despite the doctors restricting visits to family members and saying the president needed to rest, Lula has been sporadically carrying out some of his duties while convalescing.

He has been speaking with officials and signing documents electronically, ministers said. Lula's vice president, Geraldo Alckmin, has been taking on some of the president's workload but the presidency has not officially tapped him to assume full presidential duties.

The latest medical emergency adds to a list of health problems Lula has suffered over the years, including treatment in 2011 for throat cancer, and a hip replacement operation last year.

On Thursday, doctors performed a follow-up procedure to the surgery by inserting a catheter to block blood flow going through an artery to the area of his head that was operated on, to minimize the risk of a hemorrhage reoccurring. They also removed a medical drain that had been put in on Tuesday to remove blood from the problem area.

## British royal family staff arrested after Christmas party 'brawl' at bar



world. Buckingham Palace has launched an investigation after a staff member was arrested following a Christmas gathering that escalated into a "punch-up" and "bar brawl" at a London pub, a palace spokesperson said on Friday. London police said that a 24-year-old woman was arrested at the venue near the royal residence on

Thursday, on the suspicion of common assault, property damage, and disorderly conduct under the influence of alcohol. "Officers were called to a bar in Victoria Street following reports that a customer had smashed glasses and attempted to assault a member of staff," a police official said. The incident took place during a social event involving

around 50 palace staff, according to The Sun newspaper. The staff had attended an early evening reception at Buckingham Palace before moving to a nearby pub to continue their celebrations. However, the gathering took a chaotic turn, leading to police intervention on Tuesday, December 10, after the staff member allegedly attempted to assault a bar employee, police added. Palace spokesperson clarified that the gathering was an "informal social gathering, not an official palace Christmas party." "We are aware of an incident outside the workplace involving a number of household staff who had previously attended an early evening reception at the palace," the spokesperson said in a statement. "While this was an informal social gathering, not an official Palace Christmas party, the facts will be fully investigated, with a robust disciplinary process followed in relation to individual staff and appropriate action taken," the spokesperson added.

## Georgia political crisis deepens as far-right leader Kavelashvili set to become president

More unrest is expected on Saturday, when Georgian Dream is set to appoint far-right former footballer Mikheil Kavelashvili as president in a disputed election process.

TBILISI. Georgia's political crisis deepened on Friday, as new pro-Europe protests gripped Tbilisi ahead of the controversial nomination of a far-right government loyalist as president. The Black Sea nation has been in turmoil since the governing Georgian Dream party claimed victory in contested October parliamentary elections. Its decision last month to delay EU accession talks ignited a fresh wave of mass rallies. More unrest is expected on Saturday, when Georgian Dream is set to

appoint far-right former footballer Mikheil Kavelashvili as president in a disputed election process. On Friday, demonstrations rocked the capital, Tbilisi, for the 16th consecutive day, as thousands of pro-EU protesters filled the streets, marching in a dozen different locations before gathering in the evening outside parliament. Speaking to AFP at a rally, Dariko Gogol, 53, said Georgian Dream "rigged the election, and they are just dragging us towards Russia." "We need new elections," she said, adding that current President Salome Zurbishvili "has to stay (as president) and somehow guide us in this really difficult situation."

'Unprecedented constitutional crisis'

On Saturday, an electoral college controlled by Georgian Dream is expected to elect Kavelashvili as president in an indirect vote in parliament boycotted by the opposition. Zurbishvili has refused to step down and is demanding new parliamentary elections, paving the way for a constitutional



showdown. "What will happen in parliament tomorrow is a parody -- it will be an event entirely devoid of legitimacy, unconstitutional and illegitimate," Zurbishvili told a press conference on Friday. Opposition groups accuse Georgian Dream of rigging the parliamentary vote, democratic backsliding and moving Tbilisi closer to Russia -- all at the expense of the Caucasus nation's constitutionally mandated bid to join the European Union. Kavelashvili, 53 -- a sole candidate for the largely ceremonial post -- is known for his

vehement anti-West diatribes and opposition to LGBTQ rights.

Georgian Dream scrapped direct presidential elections in 2017. With Zurbishvili refusing to leave office, opposition lawmakers boycotting parliament, protests showing no signs of abating, and constitutional law experts saying the vote will be illegitimate, Kavelashvili will see his presidency undermined from the onset.

AOne author of Georgia's constitution, Vaktang Khmaladze, has argued that all decisions by the new parliament are void, as it ratified the mandates of newly elected MPs in violation of the legal requirement to await the outcome of a court case filed by Zurbishvili contesting the legitimacy of the elections. "Georgia is facing an unprecedented constitutional crisis," Khmaladze told AFP. It remains unclear how the government will react to Zurbishvili's refusal to step down after her successor is inaugurated on December 29.



WASHINGTON. Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been hospitalized after she "sustained an injury" during an official engagement in Luxembourg, according to a spokesman.

Pelosi, 84, was in Europe with a bipartisan congressional delegation to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Her spokesman, Ian Krager, said in a statement that she is "currently receiving excellent treatment from doctors and medical professionals" and is unable to attend the remainder of events on her trip. He did not describe the nature of her injury or give any additional details, but a person familiar with the incident said that Pelosi tripped and fell while at an event with the other members of Congress. The person requested

anonymity to discuss the fall because they were not authorized to speak about it publicly. Krager said that Pelosi "looks forward to returning home to the U.S. soon." The former leader's fall comes two years after her husband Paul was attacked by a man with a hammer at their San Francisco home. The man, who was sentenced in October to 30 years in federal prison, broke into their home looking for Pelosi.

Pelosi, who was first elected in 1987 and served as speaker twice, stepped down from her leadership post two years ago but remained in Congress and was re-elected to represent her San Francisco district in November. She has remained active in the two years since she left the top job, working with Democrats in private and in public and attending official events.

Last summer, she was instrumental in her party's behind the scenes push to urge President Joe Biden to leave the presidential ticket.

She attended the Kennedy Center Honors in Washington last weekend and was on the Senate floor Monday to attend the swearing in of her former Democratic House colleagues, Adam Schiff of California and Andy Kim of New Jersey. Earlier this week, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, 82, tripped and fell in the Senate, spraining his wrist and cutting his face. McConnell, who is stepping down from his leadership post at the end of the year, missed Senate votes on Thursday after experiencing some stiffness in his leg from the fall, his office said.

## NEWS BOX

## Kane Williamson kicks ball onto stumps in bizarre dismissal vs England

Kane Williamson, New Zealand's veteran batter, endured a bizarre and frustrating dismissal on Day 1 of the third Test against England on December 14. In an unusual turn of events, Williamson inadvertently kicked the ball onto his stumps, leaving him dismissed by England pacer Matthew Potts. The incident was as surprising as it was unfortunate, even for the usually composed Williamson. New Zealand began the day strongly with a 105-run opening partnership between Will Young and skipper Tom Latham. Williamson, coming in at No. 3, carried forward the momentum with a determined knock of 44 off 87 balls. However, his innings came to a dramatic end when a delivery from Potts deflected off his pads and bounced off towards the stumps. In a reflexive attempt to block the ball with his leg, Williamson accidentally nudged it into the stumps, leaving him stunned and visibly frustrated. Williamson's reaction—head hung low and a dismayed expression—reflected the oddity and disappointment of the moment. His dismissal marked a turning point in New Zealand's innings, as England capitalised on



the breakthrough to take wickets in quick succession. Despite the openers' promising start, New Zealand collapsed from 105/1 to 232/7 by the middle of the third session. Williamson's knock remained the last significant resistance from the BlackCaps' top order, as the middle and lower order struggled against England's disciplined bowling attack. Heading into the final Test of the series, New Zealand aimed to avoid a home whitewash after losing the first two matches. However, the hosts' inability to build on their strong opening partnership left them in a precarious position. With only Williamson showing signs of resilience before his unlucky dismissal, New Zealand now face an uphill battle to post a competitive first-innings total at Hamilton. The unusual nature of Williamson's dismissal has added another chapter to the annals of cricketing quirks, while New Zealand will need a substantial recovery effort to remain competitive in the match.

## Rohit Sharma's decision to bowl first left me surprised: Matthew Hayden

New Delhi. Former Australia cricketer Matthew Hayden revealed that Rohit Sharma's decision to bowl first at the toss during the third Test against Australia in Brisbane left him surprised. Notably, the India skipper won the toss and elected to bowl first in the third match of the series. Explaining the reasoning behind this decision, the India skipper said that he wanted his bowlers to make full use of the overcast conditions as the wicket had a tinge of green on the surface. However, much to everyone's surprise, the wicket didn't



behave as the India captain anticipated, as his bowlers didn't get any assistance from it in the first session nor was the ball moving in the air. The behaviour of the pitch made everyone question Rohit's decision to bowl first and Matthe Hayden also weighed in his opinion on the matter. The former opener said that he was left surprised with Rohit's call as Brisbane had witnessed heavy rains in the lead-up to the Test match.

"I was really surprised that actually, Rohit won the toss and decided to bowl, because I felt like it was over-prepared. I thought it was because of the how much weather. There were almost 12 inches of rain in the past two weeks. And so we've got this showery pattern and it's been that way for a month and a bit. So the groundsman would have been thinking, we've got to get our preparation in early, and that's why I thought that it was gonna be as good a batting conditions as you're gonna see now in these first two days, with the view that it will break up and, and turn," said Hayden on Star Sports. Further speaking ahead, Hayden mentioned how the cracks will open up on the pitch after the first few days which will bring spinners into play.

## Border—Gavaskar Trophy: 'If not now, when' moment for India's youngsters at Gabba

## It's the trifecta of Jaiswal, Gill and Pant who will determine whether India dominate or not.

BRISBANE. Morne Morkel was at the start of his short run-up, ready to jog in at the outdoor nets of The Gabba on Friday afternoon. He had been at it for a while on a breezy afternoon in Brisbane. Facing him at the crease was Yashasvi Jaiswal, who seemingly looked down at his stance just when Morkel was starting. The former South African pacer and India's current bowling coach stopped midway and gestured with his hand, checking what happened. Morkel tried to start again, and Jaiswal looked down just then. And again. Thrice in a row.

At this point, Morkel wasn't amused one bit. This time, he waited. He waited till Jaiswal looked up after looking down and then ran in. A sharp bouncer came the youngster's way and he ducked. Morkel wasn't done. He delivered another bumper which Jaiswal awkwardly tried to pull before playing down the last one.

If Morkel had the upper hand for the span of those three balls, Jaiswal, along with Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant (who were

the only sure starters turned up for optional training on Thursday), took him on with ease through the rest of his stint. Watching from the outside, it seemed like an instantaneous contest while prepping for a particular tactic, but evidently, there was more to it. "He keeps teasing us that I used to bowl like this in my youth," Gill explained of Morkel in the pre-match press conference. "So when we play, we say that the wicket is good to bowl, show us how you used to bowl. We have fun in such contests," added the youngster.

That, in essence, sums up the kind of attitude this generation of batters have brought to the table. India's famous win at the Gabba last time around was a result of it. Whether it is the freakish genius of Pant or audacious stroke-making of Gill, or the serenity that Washington Sundar showed, it all played a part in India making history. As they return to The Gabba with the series levelled 1-1, it is these three youngsters India will be looking at with hope. Yes, KL Rahul looked good in Perth, Virat Kohli scored a century, and Rohit Sharma will continue to search for runs. However, it's the trifecta of Jaiswal, Gill and Pant who will determine whether India dominate or not. It is these three who haven't shied away from taking Australia on and has the ability to change the course of the game in a matter of few hours. They are not intimidated by what Pat Cummins has to say



or teasing Mitchell Starc that he is not fast enough. They go into bat looking to take on the ball with no care in the world for whose hand it comes from. They do not have the scars of past series defeats and what happened before their time is irrelevant to them. "I think the last four series we played against Australia, we have won. We have won the last two times, and we have won in India too. If you are a batter, then you should watch the ball, that thing is more in this generation, that it doesn't matter who is bowling," said Gill.

When they bat together, even if it is at the nets, they talk about not going too far with the attack while ensuring they don't go into a shell. They know what went wrong for them so far as well. Take the case of Gill. He admits that he missed a straight delivery in

the first innings in Adelaide while struggling to sight the full-length inswinger from Starc in the second. However, he knows that the red ball is going to be different. He knows that once it's 30 overs old, there is a 50-over period where the batters can cash in.

That is what the Indian batting line-up would be looking at when they get on the field in the first innings. Not just the three youngsters, but it has been the discussion amongst everyone. "As a batting group we are looking to post a big total first up, this has been one of the key discussions and depending on every batter, I think is going to have its own game plan. Collectively we are going to try to get a big first-inning score, that's what the discussion was about after Adelaide," said Gill.

However, it is not going to be easy. The pitch, while described as a 'good wicket', has a tinge of green even after the grass is shaved off. And then there is the forecast for rain on Saturday. While India would want to bat first and put in a big total, it will be interesting to see how the morning of day one looks. One thing is clear though. Irrespective of when they get to bat, a lot will ride on how the youngsters rise up to the occasion. As former head coach Rahul Dravid famously said to Gill in Ranchi earlier this year, if not them, who? If not now, when?

## World Champion D Gukesh reacts to Magnus Carlsen's criticism of Ding Liren match

World Champion D Gukesh has responded to the criticism from Magnus Carlsen about his final against Ding Liren in Singapore. Gukesh secured a thrilling win against the former champion in a fiercely contested 14 games in Singapore as both men went toe-to-toe till the very end. A blunder from Liren in the final game saw Gukesh capitalise and secure the win and become the youngest chess World Champion in history. However, the quality of the final did come under scrutiny. Former world champions Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik were vocal in expressing their displeasure at the Gukesh vs Liren match. Kramnik called it "the end of chess as we know it," while Carlsen would comment that it felt like a second or third round clash in an open tournament. Gukesh was asked if he was hurt by the comments from Carlsen and said he was unfazed by it. The Indian grandmaster said that while the quality may not have been high in some of the games, World Championship matches are decided not purely by chess alone and is also dependent on who has the better character and willpower. Not really."



"I get that maybe in some of the games, the quality was not high but I think the world championship matches are decided not purely by chess but by who has the better character and who has the better willpower. And I think those qualities, I did show quite well," said Gukesh. The Indian grandmaster admitted that he could have played at a better level but managed to strike at the critical moments and get the win. "And the pure chess part, it was not at a very high level as I would have liked it to be because it's a new experience for me. So the workload was different, the pressure was different. It's understandable that I was a bit off but I managed to strike at the critical moments, which I am happy about," said Gukesh. Magnus Carlsen has ruled out chances of facing India's D Gukesh or playing against other opponents in World Chess Championship title clashes.

## Shardul Thakur reveals how Rohit's 'sign language' helped him during Gabba knock

## India all-rounder Shardul Thakur recently revealed how Rohit Sharma's sign language helped him massively during his famous innings in the Gabba Test in 2021.



New Delhi. India all-rounder Shardul Thakur recently revealed how Rohit Sharma's sign language helped him during his famous knock at the Gabba, Brisbane in 2021. Notably, Playing just his second Test, Thakur stitched a crucial 123-run partnership for the seventh wicket with Washington Sundar which helped India get closer to Australia's first innings total of 369. Thakur walked in to bat with India reeling on 186/6 and played a magnificent knock of 67 (115) smashing nine fours and two sixes. Recently, the all-rounder opened up on his famous knock and revealed how Sharma was letting him know which players were getting tired through sign language from the dugout.

"Rohit was talking to me in sign language from

the dugout. He would indicate when a bowler was tiring or coming to the end of his spell. Like, I think that happened when Hazlewood was coming to the end of a spell. Rohit asked me to wait and not push to play shots," Shardul told The Cricket Monthly. Further speaking ahead, Thakur shared the incident from the second innings when he failed to finish the game and got a scolding from Rohit. "I was riding high on confidence from the first-innings performance. Unfortunately, attempting to hit over the leg

side, I top-edged. I had picked two runs off a similar sort of delivery, which I had flicked off the hips. The pressure was once again on. When I headed to the dugout, Rohit scolded me for not finishing it, but I defended myself saying I was not playing a rash shot," he added.

Shardul Thakur went unsold in the IPL 2025 auction. Thakur also picked up seven wickets in the match at an average of 22.14 including figures of 4/61 in the second innings. Courtesy of his performance and vital contributions from other players, India managed to end Australia's 32-year-long unbeaten streak at the Gabba and won their second consecutive Test series in Australia.

Meanwhile, Thakur recently went unsold in the IPL 2025 auction as none of the ten franchisees showed any interest in him. The all-rounder had kept his base price at Rs 2 crore and found no bidders for him after being released by Chennai Super Kings (CSK) ahead of the auction. He's currently playing in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy for Mumbai and has picked 13 wickets from eight matches at an average of 25.15. Earlier, he picked 14 wickets from five matches (10 innings) in the Ranji Trophy 2024-25 and scored 127 runs from five innings.

## Hunger for big runs defines Gavaskar-esque Yashasvi Jaiswal: Sanjay Bangar

New Delhi. Former India cricketer Sanjay Bangar showered praise on young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, likening his hunger for big runs to that of the legendary Sunil Gavaskar. Bangar highlighted the 22-year-old's work ethic and consistency as the driving factors behind his rapid rise in Test cricket. Jaiswal, one of the youngest members of the Indian Test squad, has become an indispensable player for the team. His contributions in 2024 have been phenomenal, amassing 1304 runs in just 14 matches, including two double centuries against England. Speaking on Star Sports, Bangar emphasised how Jaiswal has built a strong foundation early in his career has set him apart, making him a promising asset for the future. Two things. One is that he is

extremely technically sound, and that means that he's got a great foundation for him to work his way up, and then the temperament part very early in his career. He's gone through lots of a lot of ups and downs in his personal life as well," Bangar said. "Cricketer means a lot to him. He's worked hard to be where he is and his hunger for big scores that actually defines him as a batsman. Most of his hundreds so far or all of his hundreds in Test cricket have been scores of about 150 and that tells you the kind of hunger that, as a batter that you wanted to see as a batter in young players. Now, who was an earlier batter of similar calibre? and we had to go a long way back in someone like a Sunil Gavaskar," he added. Since making his debut in the West Indies last year, Jaiswal

has played 16 Tests, scoring 1,592 runs at an impressive average of 54.89. His top score of 214 not out and his rapid rise to second in the ICC Test batting rankings further underscore his potential. Notably, Jaiswal also holds the distinction of being the youngest Indian to score a T20 century, a feat he achieved during the Asian Games in Hangzhou last year.

In the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Jaiswal has already displayed glimpses of his talent. Despite a disappointing start in Perth, where he was dismissed for a duck by Mitchell Starc in the first innings, the young southpaw bounced back brilliantly. His second-innings knock of 161 off 297 balls, featuring 15 fours and three sixes, was a masterclass in patience and aggression.

## Lights out during Adelaide Test: Nathan Lyon reveals reason behind delay

## Nathan Lyon has revealed the possible reason behind the lights out moment during the Adelaide Test between Australia and India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The incident occurred on Day 1 of the match while Australia were batting late in the day.

New Delhi. Nathan Lyon has revealed the hilarious reason behind the lights going out during the Adelaide Test between Australia and India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. In an unusual incident at the Adelaide Oval, the floodlight towers malfunctioned twice during the 18th over of Australia's innings on

Day 1 of the pink-ball Test. The disruptions occurred in the evening session, causing brief delays. Indian fast bowler Harshit Rana, who was mid-over when the lights failed for the second time, visibly showed his frustration. Meanwhile, the on-air commentators found humour in the situation, which seemed to annoy the Indian players, eager to capitalise on the crucial twilight period to take wickets.

"It looks like someone has turned off the switch," one of the commentators remarked as the floodlights flickered back on within a minute of the second outage. Well, it seems like that was the case as Lyon revealed his side of the story. The Australia spinner said that he was



supposed to be the night watchman for his side in the match and had gone out to the nets with the assistant coach to get a couple of hits in. Lyon revealed that he told the security if he could switch on the lights in the nets and

the next thing he saw was the ground going dark.

"Yes, I can believe that. I was with our assistant coach sitting out there in the dark. I asked the security guy if he could switch on the lights in the middle it would be great. And in the next minute, it (the whole ground) went off. And I said to Boroughs (assistance coach) 'he hit the wrong switch'. He said 'nah' and then we sat in the dark for 15 minutes in nets waiting to take a hit," said Lyon.

Lyon wasn't needed as the night watchman during the match in the end, as Australia won in Adelaide by 10 wickets to level the series. The spinner still continues to be in the side for the Brisbane Test as India won the toss and opted to field first.



# Rasha Thadani

Visits Jaipur For Azaad's Promotions, Calls It An 'Unforgettable Experience'

Ajay Devgn's nephew, Aaman Devgan, and Raveena Tandon's daughter, Rasha Thadani, are on a promotional spree for their upcoming debut film, Azaad. Ahead of their big release, the duo has been out and about in the city promoting their film. Recently, Rasha and Aaman travelled to Jaipur to promote their film, and their visit was every bit heartwarming. For the Jaipur event, Rasha Thadani went all traditional and opted for a beautiful, vibrant pink salwar kurta set. Her right choice of accessories, perfectly styled hair, coupled with on-point makeup, stole the limelight. The actress dropped a video of their visit on her social media. In a humble demeanour, she can be seen interacting with the huge crowd. Sharing a video on Instagram, Rasha penned, "KHAMMA GHANNI JAIPURRRR... this was one of the most special and unforgettable experiences for me, with my favourite 2 right by my side @gattukapoor @aamandevgn So grateful."

As the film nears its release, the makers are leaving no stone unturned to keep the excitement intact. Recently, they also unveiled the first single, Birangay, giving fans a peek into the world of 'Azaad'. In the video, both the debutants,

Rasha Thadani and Aaman

Devgan, are seen enjoying the

vibrant celebration of Holi while grooving to the peppy track. Ajay Devgn, who also stars in the film, shared the song video on his Instagram. Sharing the video, Ajay Devgn wrote, "Holi ke ho koi bhi rang, aaj dikhenge sab in do Birangay patangon ke sang! #Birangay Song Out Now. Witness the adventure of #Azaad on big screens on 17th January 2025."

Speaking about Azaad, the film stars Ajay Devgn, Rasha Thadani, Aaman Devgan and Diana Penty in pivotal roles. Directed by Abhishek Kapoor and backed by Ronnie Screwvala and Pragya Kapoor, the film is set against the backdrop of pre-independence India. In the film, Ajay Devgn plays a master horse rider who escapes from the brutal English army. However, the plot takes a turn as his horse goes missing. To find the missing horse, he sets out on a mission with the help of a young boy, played by Aaman. Mark your calendars! The film is scheduled for a grand release in January 2025.



## Bigg Boss 18: Kamyaj Panjabi Questions Avinash And Eisha's Loyalty Towards 'Friend' Vivian



With non-stop drama, unexpected twists and turns and intense brawls in the house, Bigg Boss 18 is undoubtedly providing ample entertainment for viewers in each episode. Tensions are running high as contestants clash over tasks and the recent task was no different. Recently, contestants were asked to grab a photo, run to the garden area and hand it over to Avinash Mishra, the current Time God. This task was performed to save one of the contestants from the nominations this week, but it eventually made the entire house chaotic. While Chum Darang saved Karan Veer Mehra from this week's nominations, Eisha Singh had an emotional breakdown as she handed over Vivian's frame last and failed to save the actor. As the drama unfolds, former Bigg Boss contestant and ardent follower of the reality show Kamyaj Panjabi recently posted a tweet on X criticising Avinash Mishra and Eisha Singh for their unfavourable decisions for Vivian.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), the actress wrote, "Tum itna jo muskura rahe ho kya gummi hai jisko chhupa rahe ho... Ek dost nominate karta hai aur dusra make sure karta hai you stay nominated...!!! (You are smiling so much; what is the secret that you are hiding... One friend nominates and the other makes sure that he stays nominated!!!)." In another tweet, Kamyaj questioned Avinash about the reason for the change towards Karan Veer Mehra. Her tweet read, "Yeh jo ??? ???? hua hai #AvinashMishra ka towards #KaranveerMehra iski wajah kya hai jo bhi hai as I said before also Avinash jab apne liye aur solo khelega stand out hoga... (What is the reason behind #AvinashMishra's change towards #KaranveerMehra? Whatever it be, as I said before also, when Avinash plays solo for himself, he will stand out.)"

This week, watch the Weekend Ka Vaar episode on ColorsTV to see who gets evicted from the remaining nominated contestants - Chaaht Pandey, Tajinder Bagga, Digvijay Rathee, Edin Rose and Vivian Dsen. Speaking about Kamyaj Panjabi's work, the actress has been part of several hit shows like Shakti: Astiva Ke Ehsaas Ki, Sanjog and Doli Armaano Ki. She also was part of the controversial reality show Bigg Boss 7.

## Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor Arrive For Raj Kapoor's Centenary Celebration; Neetu Kapoor Compliments Bahu



Bollywood's favourite couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt made a dazzling appearance as they arrived for the centenary celebrations of the late filmmaker-actor Raj Kapoor on Friday. Neetu Kapoor and her daughter Riddhima Kapoor Sahni also joined them. The family shared an endearing moment as they posed together for paparazzi pictures. Neetu was seen complimenting Alia's look for the night, while Riddhima chatted with her brother Ranbir before they all came together to pose for pictures. Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt were seen walking hand-in-hand as they arrived at the venue for Raj Kapoor's 100th birth anniversary celebrations. Ranbir rocked a moustache, and was seen wearing a black velvet bandhgala with white pajamas, Alia looked stunning in a flowy white saree with dainty floral print over it. She simply accessorized with a golden neckpiece. Meanwhile, Neetu Kapoor and Riddhima also joined them for the pictures. Alia greeted her mother-in-law lovingly and hugged her. Neetu, was then seen complimenting her daughter-in-law's look for the night. The family then posed for some lovely pictures for the paparazzi. Check out the videos below.

Neetu Kapoor was seen in a light grey kurta set, while Riddhima donned an ethnic white and brown printed suit. Not just the Kapoor clan, the stalwarts of the Indian film industry will be seen coming together for the grand event of Raj Kapoor's centenary celebration, and honouring the late filmmaker. Apart from Randhir Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and others, the biggest stars of Hindi cinema including Rekha, Jeetendra, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Rajkumar Hirani, and Karan Johar, Aamir Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Anil Kapoor, Vicky Kaushal, Kartik Aaryan, Sunny Deol, and Bobby Deol are expected to attend the grand event tonight. The Raj Kapoor 100 film festival will commemorate the legendary actor-director's centenary across ten cities, 40 cinemas, and 135 screens.

Meanwhile, the Kapoor family recently met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to invite him to the 100th birth anniversary celebrations of legendary actor-filmmaker Raj Kapoor. Speaking about the meeting, Ranbir Kapoor admitted to being nervous. In a video shared by the Prime Minister's office, Ranbir called it a special day for his family and expressed gratitude to PM Modi for his time and respect.



# Kubbra Sait

Praises 'Dearest' Ananya Panday For Being Honest About What Hurts Her The Most

Ananya Panday is one such actress in B-town who never shies away from revealing her honest feelings. The actress, who has a history of being in a relationship with eminent names in the industry, once revealed that "not feeling loved" hurts her the most. As the video from her interview went viral, Kubbra Sait came in support of her and penned a heartfelt note for her.

The video making rounds on the internet features one of the segments from Ananya Panday's interview with YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia, in which the host asked her, "What hurts you in your heart?" The Kho Gaye Hum Kahan actress replied, "What hurts me in my heart - not feeling loved. Because I feel like... that could be by anyone." She then went on to explain that the love she gives doesn't come back to her. In a grief-filled tone, she expressed, "Like I just feel like I have a lot of love to give, and I try to be as pure, again I'm using the word honest as I said I can, and I really wear my heart on my sleeve."

Ananya also mentioned that she trusts people very easily, which results in oversharing from her side. She added, "It really hurts me sometimes when someone says you shouldn't have overshared, or if you said that, you know they can go and tell someone else. I say like I never thought of it in that way. I do like to see the best in people, and I..." Soon, Ranveer interrupted her, saying, "You are just 23, man," and before he could finish the entire sentence, the CTRL fame stated, "I know, and I'm still untouched by the world, but yeah, I think not being loved back is that could really hurt."

Kubbra Sait reshared the video on her Instagram stories. Alongside it, the Sacred Games actor gave Ananya two cents of her advice and wrote, "Dearest @ananyapanday it don't matter if you are 20 whatever old or blah just continue to be you... coz the reward in the end is you knowing you did best and were truthful and honest to your own self. MORE POWER TO YOUR BIG HEART and GO GET BIGGER SLEEVES! Kubbra even signed the note with experience of a "40 Year BIG HEART." Ananya seemingly got a bit emotional and reposted Kubbra's meaningful words in her Instagram stories. The Student of the Year 2 fame showed love towards Kubbra and penned, "Kubraaaaa! Sooo sweet BIG love to you," followed by a heart emoji. Coming to Ananya's rumoured relationship, she was alleged to be dating Karan Jaising, Kartik Aaryan, Ishaan Khatter, and Vijay Deverakonda as a friendly date, followed by Aditya Roy Kapur which went from almost August 2022 to March 2024.

