













## The year of rapid strides in AI, space

EXCITING new advancements with potentially far-reaching implications were reported in the sphere of science and technology this year. Developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and space technology dominated 2024, garnering much public attention. While generative AI technologies became integral to laptops and smartphones, the world was surprised when Demis Hassabis, co-founder and CEO of Google DeepMind, was declared a co-winner of this year's Nobel Prize in chemistry. The recognition denotes the potential of applying AI in diverse fields. Hassabis has developed an AI model for creating new proteins — a breakthrough that can revolutionise the development of new medicines and vaccines.

In India, too, the application of AI technologies is picking up fast. Research related to AI is in progress, while the government has announced an AI Mission. In September, scientists at the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, made a major announcement that could impact AI and computing. They have developed a computing platform capable of storing and processing data in an astonishing 16,500 'conductance states' within a molecular film. Data storage and processing are limited to just two 'conductance states' in currently used digital computers. This could mean that complex AI tasks such as training LLMs (large language models) would not need supercomputers and could be handled with personal devices like laptops and smartphones in future. The new platform, developed by a team led by Sreetosh Goswami, is based on neuromorphic computing — computing that mimics the brain.

As the use of AI continued to spread to many areas, concerns were raised about potential ethical and privacy issues. India took baby steps for regulation with an advisory in March requiring companies engaged in AI to seek government permission before deploying certain AI models to prevent 'algorithmic discrimination' and the spread of deepfakes. Following the industry's objections that it would hamper innovation, the advisory was kept in abeyance. Globally, the European Union has taken the lead with its AI Act coming into force in August. It seeks to impose controls on providers of AI services based on their potential for causing harm. In space technology, the year saw significant developments towards achieving a fully reusable rocket. In October, private space firm SpaceX launched its Starship spacecraft using a 70-metre-tall rocket, Super Heavy, and made it return to the earth through controlled descent after launching the spacecraft. Not just this, the rocket was caught on the launch pad using a giant tower named Mechazilla with its gigantic robotic arms. The test demonstrated that rockets can be reused after they launch spaceships and satellites. At present, rockets burn down after propelling spacecraft in their orbit and some are partially usable. SpaceX CEO Elon Musk envisages refuelling of Super Heavy and its return to the launch pad within half an hour of its flight just like an aeroplane in the near future. Reusable rockets can bring down the cost of space transportation and change the dynamics of the space industry.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is engaged in developing a Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV); it conducted an important test — horizontal landing — with its winged vehicle Pushpak in June. In 2023, the government announced a grand space vision for Amrit Kaal under which India would establish the Bharatiya Antariksha Station by 2035 and send an Indian to the moon by 2040. This year, formal approval was granted for the construction of the station, envisaging the launch of its first module by 2028. The space station could take a final shape by 2035 and its assembly would be taken up along with the human space flight initiative, Gaganyaan. As per the approvals granted in September, four missions under the Gaganyaan programme are expected by 2026.

India, however, is way behind China, which already has its space station running. China has also forged ahead with its lunar exploration. In June, it accomplished the first-ever mission for the retrieval of lunar rock samples from the moon's far side.

## How India's economy can catch up with that of China

Post-liberalisation policies must be reassessed and reformed to create faster learning enterprises and more productive employment.

SOME economists say India was in the dark ages before 1991, when the economy was lit up with the IMF-induced reforms. I grew up in post-Independence India. The world did not seem dark. There was aspiration to build a new nation and exhilaration in learning new capabilities. I worked for 25 years with the Tata group, building enterprises; then as a consultant to 'learning enterprises' in the US and other countries for 20 years. I became a Member of India's Planning Commission in 2009, tasked to determine why India had lost the industrialisation race to China after 1991 and propose corrections to Indian policies. Let's step back into the pre-1991 history. India needed wheels for economic growth when it became independent: trucks to carry goods and buses for public transport. Four joint ventures were licensed in 1954 to produce such commercial vehicles; the Tata-Daimler Benz joint-venture was one. A multi-year phased manufacturing programme (PMP) was laid down in consultation with several foreign technology providers. Indian companies had to learn to produce more complex components in each phase with the technology provided by their foreign partners. The PMP in the automobile industry extended to 15 years, by the end of which 90 per cent of the vehicle had to be produced domestically.

The Tatas were good learners. Within 15 years, they produced trucks and buses to Daimler Benz's exacting standards, with over 95 per cent domestic content, incorporating components produced by hundreds of domestic companies, large and small, around the country. The Tata group established its own design and development centre in Pune, the first in India. When the technological tie-up with Daimler Benz ended, the group became free to export Indian-made vehicles. By the mid-1980s — before the 1991 liberalisation — Tata trucks and buses were running on roads of 50 countries, overtaking foreign competition. Sustainable economic growth is a process of enterprises in a country learning new skills and creating collective capabilities they did not have before. In a competitive world, late industrialists must learn faster than those ahead of them. A country's policymakers must create conditions for nurturing industries until they are strong enough for more open competition. That's how Germany, Japan, South Korea and China became industrial powerhouses. India lost the plot when, swayed by the Washington economics, it abandoned industrial policies prematurely. Ultimately, the race between countries is one between the abilities of their policymakers to learn faster. Chinese policymakers have proved to be faster

learners. The Chinese and Indian manufacturing and capital goods sectors were of comparable size in 1991. By 2010, China's manufacturing sector was eight times larger, its capital goods' sector 50 times and China was exporting machinery and computers around the world.

The economy of a large country is a complex adaptive system. Many industries must grow together. Lopsided growth of one industry can harm others, weakening the economy. India cannot rely only on software/services growth. It needs more hardware/manufacturing.

India's software industry has produced wealth for promoters of companies. They obtained the wealth from the arbitrage between low cost, English-speaking Indian engineers produced by IITs, and prices of software services abroad. The firms reaped the benefits of public investments in India's world-class engineering



institutions. They were also given incentives to invest and grow their businesses — land at low cost and extended tax holidays. Software engineers require computer hardware to work on. India complied quickly with the Information Technology Agreement, concluded by 29 participating countries at the WTO's Ministerial Conference in Singapore in December 1996, led by the US, to do away with import duties on computer equipment. The Indian government agreed in March 1997, persuaded by its software industry, to reduce its hardware costs. China signed only in 2003. It used the shield of import duties to strengthen its own electronic hardware sector, which has grown formidably since then, and even become a threat to the US. India must build its own hardware industries quickly for its own security. The government has introduced production-linked incentive

schemes to promote manufacturing. It is also re-negotiating agreements with its trading partners. Liberal economists complain that these policies are a return to what, in their minds, were the dark ages before 1991.

Economists obsessed with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth as a panacea for a nation's success are realising that policies to spur GDP growth are insufficient for all-round progress. Growth must be more inclusive and environmentally sustainable, too. Citizens are included in economic growth with jobs and livelihoods that provide them good incomes; poverty also reduces in an economically sustainable manner. Whereas price subsidies and unearned income support, which governments are politically compelled to give when the economy is not functioning well, are unsustainable in the long run. The evolution of India's industrial policy stalled

in 1991 because industrial policy was a bad phrase in the Washington Consensus' framework that swept the world with the fall of the Soviet Union. According to the new economic consensus, open trade across national borders and freedom for capital to roam the world is good for everyone. It is good for consumers everywhere, who can buy the best products at the cheapest prices. Unsurprisingly, the opening of the Indian economy was broadly supported by Indian citizens.

The catch is that citizens must earn enough to buy the products they are tempted to buy with open trade. For this, they need to earn adequate incomes. The unintended consequence of India's open-market reforms is haunting the country now. Insufficient incomes, under-employment and inadequate social security — in agriculture, manufacturing and even services — is causing unrest nationwide.

Industrial depth was forsaken in recent decades for growth stimulated by free trade, which spurred shallow GDP growth. India's post-liberalisation policies must be reassessed and reformed to create faster learning enterprises and more productive employment. Premature and muddled liberalisation made it easier for investors to do business, but harder for the common man to earn and live with dignity. Ultimately, there are no shortcuts to the nurturing of human assets for the growth of economy. It is good for the people and good for economic growth, too.

## Detention revisited

### Infra to back students who fail exams poor

THE Central Government's decision to scrap the no-detention policy in the schools it governs marks a significant shift in the approach to elementary education. Under the new framework, students of Central schools in classes V and VIII who fail their exams will now face re-examinations and, if necessary, be held back. The shift is geared towards promoting accountability and elevate learning results. Around 20 states and UTs have already scrapped the no-detention policy.

However, the policy change exposes a glaring gap: inadequate infrastructure to support detained students. Remedial programmes, personalised teaching approaches and extensive teacher training are essential. But they remain woefully underdeveloped. In their absence, detention risks punishing students for systemic failures rather than addressing their learning needs. This could exacerbate stigma, fear of failure and dropout rates, particularly among marginalised



communities. Tamil Nadu's refusal to implement such

measures serves as a cautionary tale of the policy's potential to undo progress made under the Right to Education framework.

At the same time, the implementation of the no-detention rule under the right to primary education has, over the academic sessions, faced criticism for diluting academic rigour and fostering complacency among students and educators alike. Year after year, various surveys and reports have highlighted alarming gaps in the basic literacy and numeracy outcomes of students. The fall in the academic standards expected of them does necessitate reform. But education reform must strike a balance between academic excellence and inclusivity. It is not enough to abandon old policies; we must also invest in a framework that enables every child to thrive. It should not come at the expense of a child's self-esteem or access to education.

## Remembering Vajpayee, the tall statesman

The Vajpayee government not only boosted economic growth but also brought distant regions closer, fostering unity and integration.

TODAY, December 25, is a special day for us. The nation marks the 100th jayanti of our beloved former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He stands tall as a statesman and continues to inspire countless people.

Our nation will always be grateful to Vajpayee for being the architect of India's transition into the 21st century. When he took oath as PM in 1998, the country had passed through a period of political instability. In about nine years, we had seen four Lok Sabha elections. The people of India were getting impatient and sceptical about the government's ability to deliver. It was Vajpayee who turned this tide by providing stable and effective governance. Coming from humble roots, he realised the struggles of the common citizen and the transformative power of effective governance.

One can see the long-term impact of Vajpayee's leadership in so many sectors. His era marked a leap in the world of information technology, telecom and communications. This was particularly important for a nation like ours, which is also blessed with a dynamic yuva shakti. The NDA government under Vajpayee made the first serious attempt to make technology accessible to the common man. At the same time, there was foresight in connecting India. Most people still recall the Golden Quadrilateral Project, which connected the length and breadth of India. Equally notable were the Vajpayee government's efforts to enhance local connectivity and through initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. His government also gave a push to metro connectivity by doing extensive work for the Delhi Metro, which stands out as a world-class project. Thus, the Vajpayee government not only boosted economic growth but also brought distant regions closer, fostering unity and

integration.

Regarding the social sector, an initiative like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan highlights how Vajpayee dreamt of building an India where modern education is accessible to all people, particularly for the poor and marginalised sections. At the same time, his government presided over many economic reforms which set the stage for India's economic surge after several decades of following an economic philosophy which encouraged cronyism and stagnation. A wonderful example of Vajpayee's leadership can be seen in the summer of 1998. His government had just assumed office and on May 11, India conducted the Pokhran tests, known as Operation Shakti. These tests exemplified the prowess of India's scientific community. The world was stunned that India had done the tests and expressed its anger in no uncertain terms. Any ordinary leader would have buckled, but Vajpayee was made differently. And, what happened? India stood firm, with the government calling for another set of tests two days later, on May 13! If the May 11 tests showed scientific skill, the May 13 ones showed true leadership. It was a message to the world that gone were the days when India would buckle under threats or pressure. Despite facing international sanctions, the then NDA government stood firm, articulating India's right to safeguard its sovereignty while simultaneously being the strongest proponent of world peace. Vajpayee understood the Indian democracy and also the need to make it stronger. He presided over the NDA's creation,

which redefined coalitions in Indian politics. He brought people together and made the NDA a force for development, national progress and regional ambitions. His parliamentary brilliance was seen throughout his political journey. He belonged to a party with a handful



of MPs, but his words were enough to rattle the might of the all-powerful Congress party of that time. As Prime Minister, he blunted the criticisms of the Opposition with style and substance. His was a career spent largely in the Opposition Benches, but it never carried any trace of bitterness against anyone, even though the Congress stooped to new lows by going to the extent of calling him a traitor! He was also not one to cling to power through opportunistic means. He preferred to resign in

1996 rather than follow the path of horse-trading and dirty politics. In 1999, his government was defeated by one vote. A lot of people told him to challenge the immoral politics happening then, but he preferred to go by the rules. Eventually, he came back with another resounding mandate from the people.

When it comes to commitment to protecting our Constitution, Vajpayee, again, stands tall. He was deeply impacted by the martyrdom of Syama Prasad Mookerjee. Years later, he was a pillar of the anti-Emergency movement. In the run-up to the 1977 elections after the Emergency, he agreed to a merger of his own party (Jan Sangh) into the Janata Party. I am sure it would have been a painful decision for him and the others, but safeguarding the Constitution was all that mattered to him.

It is also noteworthy how deeply rooted Vajpayee was in the Indian culture. Upon becoming India's External Affairs Minister, he became the first Indian leader to speak in Hindi at the United Nations. This one gesture showcased his immense pride in India's heritage and identity, leaving an indelible mark on the global stage.

Vajpayee's persona was magnetic and his life enriched by his love for literature and expression. A prolific writer and poet, he used words to inspire, provoke thought and even offer solace. His poetry, often reflective of his inner struggles and hopes for the nation, continues to resonate with people across age groups.

## SVAMITVA scheme: What is it and 3 things to know

**New Delhi.** The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) announced on Wednesday that rural residential properties worth Rs 1.37 lakh crore could now be monetised for credit access under the SVAMITVA scheme. This landmark initiative, utilising drone technology for surveying and demarcating properties in rural areas, aims to unlock the economic potential of villages and improve financial inclusion.

### TRANSFORMING RURAL ECONOMIES WITH PROPERTY CARDS

Launched in 2020 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme addresses the long-standing issue of unmapped rural properties in several states. The lack of clear land ownership records had previously denied rural residents access to institutional credit.

By issuing legally-backed property cards, the scheme enables property owners to secure loans, spurring economic activity in rural areas.

So far, 317,000 villages—92% of the targeted 344,000—have been surveyed, with 136,000 villages already receiving property cards. On December 27, PM Modi is set to distribute five million additional property cards across India.

### BENEFITS AMID CHALLENGES

Beyond financial inclusion, the SVAMITVA scheme has resolved disputes, empowered women through joint property ownership, and helped gram panchayats tackle encroachments. However, challenges persist, particularly in tribal areas where communal land ownership and family disputes complicate title claims. The parliamentary standing committee on Panchayati Raj has urged the government to address these issues within the legal framework. States like Jharkhand have resisted implementation, while Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and Odisha, having updated rural land records, opted out of the scheme. Despite hurdles, the ministry aims to complete the project by FY 2026.

### PAVING THE WAY FOR RURAL PROSPERITY

By granting clear ownership of residential properties, the SVAMITVA scheme lays the foundation for rural economic growth. As more villages come under its ambit, this transformative initiative holds the promise of empowering millions and driving sustainable development in India's hinterlands.

## Sagility India share price jumps 5%, up 71% post-listing. More gains ahead

**New Delhi** Shares of Sagility India surged 5% on Thursday, continuing their upward trajectory since the company's recent market debut. The stock hit an intraday high of Rs 158.40, up 5.09%, before settling at Rs 155.30, reflecting a 4.91% gain. Since its listing, Sagility India's shares have delivered a 71% return, significantly outperforming the broader indices. Sagility India, which operates in the business process management (BPM) space, has attracted strong investor interest due to its growth prospects in healthcare outsourcing. The company's expansion into emerging markets and increasing demand for tech-driven BPM solutions have boosted market confidence. Analysts have offered varied outlooks for the stock, with most acknowledging the fact that the company's post-listing performance has been strong. While there are some concerns about valuations, analysts see more upside potential in the company's stock.

On the technical front, the stock shows strong support in the Rs 140–Rs 135 range, with resistance seen around Rs 165–Rs 170. Analysts suggest maintaining a cautious approach as the stock consolidates after its steep rise.

Sagility India focuses on healthcare BPM services, offering end-to-end solutions powered by artificial intelligence and data analytics. With its global presence and scalable business model, the company aims to capture a larger share of the healthcare outsourcing market.

## Explained: Why Ola Electric share price surged 6% in early trade

**New Delhi** sOla Electric Mobility's share price gained 6% after it announced a significant expansion of its retail footprint. The electric two-wheeler (E2W) maker increased its network to 4,000 stores nationwide, a fourfold jump from its previous count.

This includes the addition of 3,200 new stores integrated with service facilities. The company aims to enhance electric vehicle (EV) adoption by extending its reach beyond tier-1 and tier-2 cities to smaller towns and tehsils across India. The stock hit an intraday high of Rs 99.90 on Thursday, reflecting a 6.22% increase. It was last seen trading 1.78% higher at Rs 95.72, marking a 30.41% gain over the past month. However, the company's shares pared some gains and were trading 1.84% higher at Rs 95.78 on the BSE. Despite the stock's upward momentum, the company has faced regulatory scrutiny.

Earlier this month, Ola Electric received a showcause notice from the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) for additional documents regarding its handling of consumer complaints.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR OLA ELECTRIC?

Market analysts offered mixed views on the stock's outlook. Kranthi Bathini, Director of Equity Strategy at WealthMills Securities, told Business Today that the stock is currently in an uptrend after hitting its all-time low of Rs 66.60. "Investors with a high-risk appetite can consider adding it for a one-year horizon," Bathini told the publication.

Technically, the stock has support in the Rs 92–Rs 80 range, with a potential upside of Rs 100–Rs 110.

Ravi Singh, Senior Vice-President (Retail Research) at Religare Broking, stated, "The overall structure on daily charts is not strong. Buying around Rs 85 could offer an upside target of Rs 100, with a stop loss at Rs 80." Ola Electric, founded in 2017, specialises in manufacturing electric vehicles and their key components, including battery packs and motors, at its Ola Futurefactory. Promoters held a 36.78% stake in the company as of September 2024.

# Global Capability Centres to expand workforce in India by 20% in 2025

## Bengaluru alone accounts for 870 GCCs, followed by Hyderabad with 550 centres.

**BENGALURU.** Top executives from across various sectors believe Global Capability Centres (GCCs) landscape will expand further in 2025. In 2024, GCCs and their growth, apart from job opportunities, were widely discussed by the top executives across various sectors. As of 2024, there are over 1,700 GCCs, more than 2,975 units, employing over 1.9 million people in the country. Bengaluru alone accounts for over 870 GCCs, followed by Hyderabad with 550 centres. Vikram Ahuja, co-founder, ANSR and CEO of Talent500, points out that GCCs in the country will expand their workforce by 18-20% in 2025, and that hiring will surpass 2024 levels. According to ANSR, over 60,000 jobs were created by GCCs in 2024 in



Bengaluru alone. Karnataka released its GCC policy in November and it aims to establish 500 new GCCs by 2029. Upasna Nischal, India site head and head of HR-India, Fidelity International, said the number, kind and quality of capabilities that are delivered from India continue to grow and evolve and now nearly 90% of the GCCs operate as multi-functional centres, supporting technology, operations, product engineering and more. Close to \$64 billion business is generated by GCCs. Guardian India, the GCC for the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, plans to ramp up its hiring in 2025 as compared to the previous year. "In 2025, we aim to expand

our workforce and capability substantially to meet the growing demands of our parent organisation, to improve capability and drive innovation," said Shiney Prasad, country head, Guardian India. It aims to

scale its operations in both Gurugram and Chennai. Its key areas include technology—particularly in AI/ML, data science, suggestive decisioning, business operations—and specialised roles in actuarial, finance and underwriting.

## BPCL to invest Rs 6,100 crore for refinery in Andhra

**BENGALURU.** State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) has approved plans to build a new refinery in Andhra Pradesh. In an exchange filing, the company said it will invest about Rs 6,100 crore in pre-project activities for the refinery. BPCL's board has granted approval to begin initial activities for setting up a greenfield refinery and petrochemical complex on the East Coast of India.

The pre-project activities will involve a range of crucial tasks, including initial studies, land identification and acquisition, preparation of a detailed feasibility report (DFR), environmental impact assessment (EIA), basic design engineering package, and front-end engineering design (FEED), the company said in the filing. The refinery and petrochemical complex is expected to become one of the largest refineries on India's East Coast, following the 15 MTPA Paradip refinery by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) in Odisha and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation's (HPCL) expanded Visakhapatnam refinery in Andhra Pradesh. The BPCL refinery is a part of the commitments made under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act of 2014.

## Mazagon Dock share price rises nearly 5% in early trade. Should you buy

**New Delhi.** Shares of Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd climbed nearly 5% on Thursday in a volatile market, reflecting strong investor interest in the multibagger defence stock. The stock rose 4.72% to an intraday high of Rs 4848.40, compared to its previous close of Rs 4629.50. However, Mazagon Dock shares pared some gains to trade just 1.5% higher at Rs 4,698.85 on the BSE at 12:49 pm. It is worth noting that the defence stock has delivered strong returns, gaining over 105% in the past year and 486% over two years. In 2024 alone, Mazagon Dock shares have risen 106%, highlighting its sustained growth momentum.

From a technical perspective, the stock's Relative Strength Index (RSI) stands at 47.9, indicating it is trading in a neutral zone—neither overbought nor oversold. The shares are trading below their 5-day, 10-day, and 20-day moving averages but remain above

their 30-day, 50-day, 100-day, 150-day, and 200-day averages. Analysts at Axis Securities highlighted this as a medium-term support base, adding that the daily RSI has broken above a downward-sloping trendline,



signaling a potential breakout. They project target levels of Rs 4,965 and Rs 5,085 in the near term. Mazagon Dock is one of India's leading defence public sector undertakings under the Ministry of Defence. In

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## Sumitomo Mitsui strengthens Indian subsidiary with Rs 3,000 crore funding

**New Delhi** Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (SMFG) has invested Rs 3,000 crore in SMFG India Credit Co. Ltd (formerly Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd.) through a rights issue. This latest capital infusion includes Rs 300 crore directed to SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd (formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd.), also known as SMFG Grihashakti.

The funding highlights SMFG's commitment to strengthening its presence in the Indian market. With this, SMFG India Credit has seen its highest-ever annual fund infusion of Rs 4,300 crore in the 2024 financial year, following an earlier investment of Rs 1,300 crore in April 2024. SMFG India Credit's Chief Financial Officer, Pankaj Malik, said the infusion demonstrates SMFG's confidence in India's growth potential and the company's vision. He said, "The enhanced capital base allows us to scale our business operations and

strengthen our ability to serve a diverse customer base. Our focus remains on driving financial inclusion and empowering underserved communities



across the country." SMFG INDIA CREDIT OPERATIONS Registered as a Non-Banking Financial Company – Investment and Credit Company (NBFC-ICC) with the Reserve Bank of India, SMFG India Credit has been operating since 2007. It has built a strong presence in India with

over 828 branches across more than 670 towns and 70,000 villages. SMFG India Credit's Chief Financial Officer, Pankaj Malik, said the infusion demonstrates SMFG's confidence in India's growth potential and the company's vision. He said, "The enhanced capital base allows us to scale our business operations and strengthen our ability to serve a diverse customer base. Our focus remains on driving financial inclusion and empowering underserved communities across the country." SMFG INDIA CREDIT OPERATIONS

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## How Steve Jobs' advice fuelled the creation of Salesforce's AppExchange

### Salesforce's Marc Benioff credits Steve Jobs' visionary advice for inspiring the creation of the transformative AppExchange platform.

**New Delhi.** Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff recently recounted a life-altering encounter with the legendary Steve Jobs that reshaped his career and Salesforce's future. Speaking on Lenny's Podcast, Benioff revealed how Jobs' enigmatic guidance during a creative slump in his entrepreneurial journey led to the creation of Salesforce's groundbreaking AppExchange.

**JOBS' TRANSFORMATIVE CHALLENGE** During their conversation, Jobs gave Benioff three directives that were as ambitious as they were cryptic. The first was a bold challenge: "Your company, it better get 10 times larger in 24 months, or it's over." He also advised securing a key client, like Avon, and concluded with a cryptic suggestion: "You better go build an application economy."

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### JOBS' TRANSFORMATIVE CHALLENGE

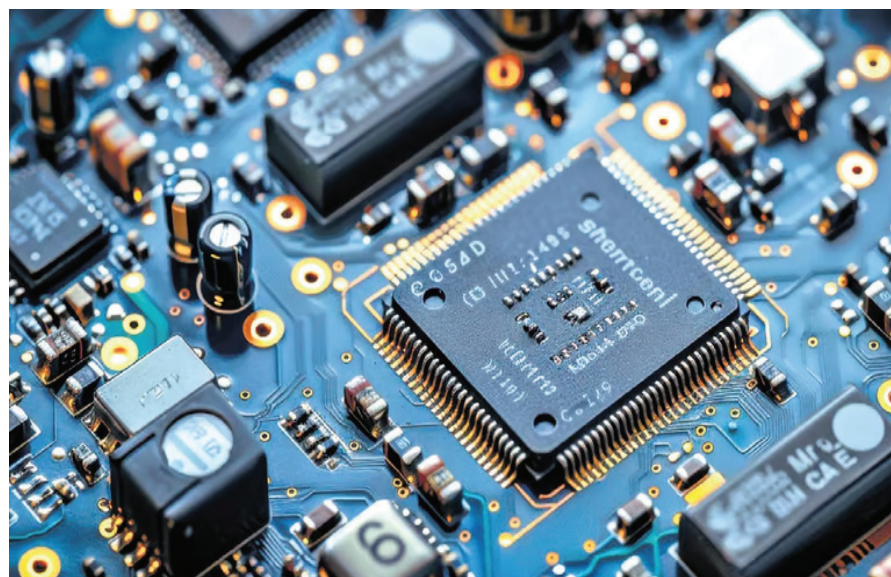
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# 2024 landmark year for semiconductor industry in India

## 2024 landmark year for semiconductor industry in India

**NEW DELHI.** This year has been a landmark one for the country's semiconductor industry as the government announced first semiconductor fab in Dholera, Gujarat.

The government approved the first fab proposal, which will be set up in partnership with Tata Electronics, a subsidiary of Tata Group, and Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp (PSMC) of Taiwan, at a cost of Rs 91,000 crore. As per the government, the plant will produce 50,000 wafer starts per month (WSPM). Additionally, the government has approved the establishment of two ATMP (assembly, testing, marking, and packaging) units—one in Assam and the other in Dholera, Gujarat. Assam's Morigaon plant, with an



investment of Rs 27,000 crore, is expected to generate 15,000 direct jobs and 11,000 to 13,000 indirect jobs. Another semiconductor assembly and test (OSAT) facility, being set up by CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd. (CG) with an

investment of Rs 7,600 crore, is a joint venture with Japan's Renesas Electronics Corporation and Thailand's Stars Microelectronics. So far, chip industry has attracted investments of Rs 1.26 lakh crore, including the approval last year of

US semiconductor giant Micron Technology's packaging unit in Gujarat. This year, the government approved a proposal from Kaynes Semicon to establish a semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat, Rs 3,300 crore investment.

The proposed unit will have a capacity of 60 lakh chips a day and will serve a range of applications, including industrial, automotive, electric vehicles, consumer electronics, telecom, and mobile phones. The government maintained that construction of all four chip units is progressing rapidly, and a robust semiconductor ecosystem is emerging around these units.

In a separate development, the Maharashtra government has approved a chip manufacturing project to be jointly set up by Israel's Tower Semiconductor and the Adani Group. The project, located in Panvel, Raigad district, will involve an investment of Rs 58,763 crore in the first phase, with an additional Rs 25,184 crore in the second phase, creating 15,000 jobs. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has not yet approved any related applications.



# Crackdown on 'illegal' migrants: Civil rights groups raise plight of homeless

**The groups have written to the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), highlighting many homeless people are being denied access to shelter homes due to the lack of Aadhaar cards or mobile phones.**

**NEW DELHI.** More than 20 civil rights groups have raised objections to the ongoing crackdown by Delhi authorities on alleged illegal immigrants, citing its adverse impact on homeless individuals. The groups have written to the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), highlighting many homeless people are being denied access to shelter homes due to the lack of Aadhaar cards or mobile phones. With temperatures plummeting during the harsh winter, activists argue that such exclusions violate the right to a dignified life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. "We raise concerns about reports of homeless individuals being refused entry to night shelters due to the absence of Aadhaar cards or mobile phones. These shelters, designed to provide refuge to the most vulnerable during

harsh weather conditions, have inadvertently become inaccessible to those who need them the most. Many homeless individuals lack



these documents or devices precisely because of their precarious living and working conditions. With Delhi experiencing one of its coldest winters in 14 years, with temperatures dropping to as low as 4.9 degrees Celsius, this

discriminatory practice poses a severe threat to the lives of vulnerable populations," the group stated. The appeal cites key data and judicial mandates underscoring the dire need for action. "The Supreme Court, in 2010, mandated the Delhi government to provide shelter and food to homeless individuals. The court reiterated in 2012 that the right to dignified shelter is an essential component of the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution. The National Urban Livelihoods Mission - Shelter for Urban Homeless (NULM-SUH) policy guarantees access to permanent shelters with essential amenities such as water, sanitation, and security," the group mentioned. The citizen groups have made several demands to address these issues. They urged DUSIB to direct all shelter operators to admit homeless individuals without requiring Aadhaar cards, mobile phones, or other identity documents.

## Cold wave, dense fog hit capital

**NEW DELHI.** A cold wave and dense fog engulfed Delhi on Christmas morning, causing a sharp drop in temperatures and poor visibility across the city. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) recorded a minimum temperature of 8.4 degrees Celsius, while visuals from Kartavya Path, Janpath, Dwarka, and India Gate showed no visibility due to the dense fog. The minimum temperature was 1.5 degrees Celsius below the season's average, while the national capital recorded a maximum temperature of 22.4 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal. Visibility in the city was recorded at 100 meters due to dense fog at 5:30 am. The visibility prompted the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport to issue an advisory over the possible impact on flights. At least 20 trains to Delhi from various parts of the country were running late due to foggy conditions on Wednesday. The trains to Delhi running late included Goa Express, Poorva Express, Kalindi Express, Rewa-Anand Vihar Terminal SF Express and others. The Delhi airport said in its advisory that flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected, requesting passengers to contact the airline for updated flight information. IndiGo airline also asked passengers to check the flight status before heading to the Delhi airport. CAT III compliant flights are those aircraft that have a Category III (CAT III) system, which enables them to land safely even during poor visibility conditions, such as dense fog.

## CRY launches 'Girl Interrupted' initiative to champion education

**NEW DELHI.** Child Rights and You (CRY) has launched the initiative 'Girl Interrupted' under its ongoing Poori Padhai Desh Ki Bhalai campaign. This campaign is aimed to address one of the most pressing issues—an interruption in girls' education, particularly at the secondary level. The 'Girl Interrupted' campaign shines a spotlight on the stark reality that millions of Indian girls face when societal norms, financial barriers, and gender biases disrupt their educational journey. These interruptions don't just curtail their potential but significantly hinder societal and national progress. The campaign is a series of images that make one stop and question why they are incomplete. In a world of technology, this is going back to basics where the 'Girl Interrupted' initiative redefines how we perceive disruptions in education by creatively and provocatively showcasing their ripple effect. From visuals and videos to nationwide awareness activities, every element of this campaign drives home the critical importance of uninterrupted secondary education for India's girls. Conceptualized by Tista Sen, the campaign will emphasize the importance of a woman's contribution to society and how a nation can prosper when women prosper. Tista Sen said "This project is all heart. The issue that as a nation we are losing out because women are interrupted in their pursuit of education is both detrimental to society and a woman's well-being. We wanted to shake apathy." Puja Marwaha, the CEO of CRY said, "In the first phase of Poori Padhai Desh Ki Bhalai, the campaign highlighted how essential it is for girls to complete their school education—not just for them but because the entire nation benefits from it."

## Three arrested as police bust honey trap racket, accused faked as cops to extort money

**NEW DELHI.** Delhi Police's Crime Branch on Wednesday claimed to have busted a gang of fake policemen who would extort people after setting up honey traps in outer Delhi's Kanjhawala area, police said. Three fake Delhi Police identity cards and a Delhi Police head constable rank uniform were also recovered from the accused. "Neeraj Tyagi alias Dheeraj alias Dheeru, 42 Years, of Tilak Nagar, Ashish Mathur, 31, of Karala, and Deepak alias Sajjan, 30, of Kharkhoda were arrested near Budh Vihar Nala, Main Kanjhawala Road on Tuesday," Additional Commissioner of Police (crime) Sanjay Bhatia said. The accused were taken to the Crime Branch office for further interrogations where they tried to escape from the custody but were overpowered, Bhatia added. Neeraj and Deepak were wanted in a honey trap case of Bindapur in the Dwarka district, he said. Another officer said that in August, 2024, a 60-year-old doctor was contacted through telephone by an unknown girl. The girl had some chat with the doctor and after a few days, the girl called him at her home, saying that her mother was ill. "The doctor went to the address of the girl, located near the Janakpuri Metro station, West Delhi. There, she served him snacks," the officer said. The girl unbuttoned the doctor's shirt and four people, including two in police uniform, entered the room, police said in a statement. The girl escaped and all the four people caught the doctor and allegedly extorted Rs nine lakh from him by threatening arresting in a criminal case, it stated. The complainant reported the incident to the local police of Binda Pur and a case under relevant sections of the BNS was registered. Four accused, including two women, were arrested but Neeraj and Deepak were absconding, Bhatia said.

## Bid to acquire ill-gotten gains not money laundering: Delhi Court



**NEW DELHI.** A Delhi court has declined to take cognisance of a chargesheet against Adhunik Corporation Limited (ACL) and its two directors, Mahesh Kumar Agarwal and Nirmal Kumar Agarwal, in a coal scam case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The court held that merely attempting to acquire proceeds of crime or anticipating undue benefits does not constitute money laundering under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Special Judge Arun Bhardwaj provided relief to ACL and its directors in the case linked to the allocation of the New Patra Para coal block in Odisha. The ED alleged that Rs 50.37 crore was infused into ACL through family members and group companies in anticipation of benefits from criminal activity related to a scheduled offence registered by the CBI. The judge, in the order, noted that the ED's own findings indicated that any undue benefits were merely anticipated, and no actual proceeds of crime were in existence. "An attempt to acquire proceeds of crime or anticipating undue benefits cannot be considered money laundering as there are no proceeds of crime at that stage," the judge ruled. The court further observed that the capital infusion by family members and group companies began even before the alleged conspiracy related to the predicate offence. Additionally, no external investors had funded ACL due to the coal block allocation. As such, the investments could not be categorised as "proceeds of crime" under PMLA. The court highlighted that even after the de-allocation of the coal block seemed imminent due to lack of progress, family members and group companies continued their investments, which reinforced the view that these were independent of the alleged criminal activity. This decision comes after the accused were convicted in a related corruption case filed by the CBI, where they were sentenced to four years in prison for conspiracy and cheating the government. However, their jail term was stayed by the Delhi High Court pending appeals against their conviction.

# 'Promises are imaginary': BJP hits out at AAP chief

**Sachdeva pointed out that for the first time in 12 years of governance, the government promised to fix erroneous electricity and water bills and repair dilapidated roads—but only after being re-elected.**

**NEW DELHI.** The BJP on Wednesday accused AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal of resorting to fictitious schemes in a desperate bid to secure re-election, following his release from jail. The party claimed that Kejriwal, sensing impending defeat in the upcoming assembly elections, began announcing policies that lacked concrete implementation and were merely aimed at winning votes. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "After returning from jail, Kejriwal realised he could lose the upcoming election. This is when he began announcing promises that were entirely imaginary and had no basis for real execution." Sachdeva pointed out that for the first time in 12 years of governance, the AAP-led government promised to fix erroneous electricity and water bills,

ensure clean water supply instead of contaminated water, and repair dilapidated roads—but only after



being re-elected. "These promises come with no concrete plan or timeline," he added. The Delhi BJP president also accused Kejriwal of repackaging old schemes in an attempt to salvage his image. He criticised Chief Minister Atishi for reintroducing the Mahila Samman Scheme, which he

claimed had already failed in Punjab. "After deceiving women in Punjab with the same scheme, Kejriwal is now trying to sell the same unfulfilled promise of '2,100 per month to women in Delhi,'" Sachdeva said. Additionally, Sachdeva highlighted Kejriwal's opposition to the Ayushman Bharat scheme, despite BJP MPs fighting for its implementation in Delhi. "Kejriwal has persistently resisted Ayushman Bharat but now promises a new 'Sanjeevani Scheme' for senior citizens, once again only after elections," he said. "Both the schemes by Kejriwal—without any official notifications—are misleading people, particularly women and senior citizens," Sachdeva said. The allegations come at a time when the AAP is intensifying its poll campaign.

# 246 teams constituted for survey to identify 'out of school children'

**The survey will focus on identifying OoSC, including children with special needs (CwSN) and those with disabilities, for enrollment in nearby schools.**

**NEW DELHI.** The Delhi Directorate of Education has formed 246 teams to identify Out-of-School Children (OoSC) during the winter vacation and facilitate their enrolment in schools. In a circular dated December 18, Samagra Shiksha, a society under the education department, announced an extensive survey from January 1 to January 15. The survey will focus on identifying OoSC, including children with special needs (CwSN) and those with disabilities, for enrollment in nearby schools. The survey will be conducted district-wise by Samagra Shiksha-Delhi teams led by District Urban Resource Centre Coordinators (DURCCs), district coordinators, and the Inclusive Education Branch (IEB). The survey will cover children in the age groups of below six years and 6 to 19 years. It will be conducted daily



between 9 am and 1 pm. The survey teams are required to submit daily records to the DURCCs, which will then be mailed to the OoSC Cell at Samagra Shiksha headquarters by 5 pm. A complete report, signed by the Coordination Team and countersigned by the DURCC, must be submitted to Samagra

Shiksha headquarters by January 15, the circular mentioned. The department stated that children identified during the survey, including CwSN, will be admitted to schools by January 31. A final report on their enrolment will be submitted by February 7. District coordinators have been directed to rope in the services of attendants and others are utilised for door-to-door verification of out-of-school CwSN and the implementation of home-based education (HBE) during the winter vacation, it read. However, attendants and others working in special schools, hostels, and resource centres will be exempted from participating in the survey, the circular stated. It added that details of the newly identified OoSC must be uploaded on the Prabandh portal for the 2025-26 academic session by January 15.

# AAP says Parvesh Verma giving cash to voters, BJP leader refutes charge

**A defiant Verma, however, asserted that he has launched a scheme to help women with the financial assistance of Rs 1,100 through the 'Rashtriya Swabhiman', an organisation founded by his father.**

among women of the New Delhi constituency, with AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal calling him a "traitor" and CM Atishi demanding his arrest. Kejriwal, who has held the seat since 2013 and is the AAP's candidate from the constituency for the upcoming Assembly polls, also claimed that Verma is the BJP's chief ministerial face in the elections and asked Delhiites if they wanted such a C.M.A defiant Verma, however, asserted that he has launched a scheme to help women with the financial assistance of Rs 1,100 through the 'Rashtriya Swabhiman', an organisation founded by his father.



In a dig at the AAP chief, the BJP leader said he was only helping people and "not distributing liquor like him". The former Delhi CM lashed out at Verma in over a dozen posts on X. "They are giving Rs 1,100 to each voter every day and asking them to vote for their party. Are you helping the needy or openly buying votes? Your father must be ashamed of a traitor son like you," Kejriwal assailed the BJP leader in one of the posts in Hindi. In another post, he said, "According to sources, the BJP is going to declare

Parvesh Verma as its CM face. Would the people of Delhi want such a person to be their CM?" The AAP chief claimed that he visited many areas in New Delhi where people told him about being offered Rs 1,100 and also asked women of Delhi to visit Verma's house and demand the money from him. At a press conference here, Atishi alleged that Rs 1,100 each was being given to women from slum clusters at Verma's Windsor Place residence and their voter ID details were being noted down. Denying the charges, Verma said the money was distributed as part of a scheme by 'Rashtriya Swabhiman'. "I ask the Delhi Police, CBI, ED to conduct raids at the bungalow where crores of rupees are kept," Atishi said, adding AAP will make formal complaints to the police and the EC.

## NEWS BOX

## China To Build World's Largest Hydropower Dam In Tibet

**Beijing.** China has approved the construction of what will be the world's largest hydropower dam, kicking off an ambitious project on the eastern rim of the Tibetan plateau that could affect millions downstream in India and Bangladesh. The dam, which will be located in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, could produce 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, according to an estimate provided by the Power Construction Corp of China in 2020. That would more than triple the 88.2 billion kWh designed capacity of the Three Gorges Dam, currently the world's largest, in central China.

The project will play a major role in meeting China's carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals, stimulate related industries such as engineering, and create jobs in Tibet, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. A section of the Yarlung Zangbo falls a dramatic 2,000 metres (6,561 feet) within a short span of 50 km (31 miles), offering huge hydropower potential as well as unique engineering challenges.

The outlay for building the dam, including engineering costs, is also expected to eclipse the Three Gorges dam, which cost 254.2 billion yuan (\$34.83 billion). This included the resettling of the 1.4 million people it displaced and was more than four times the initial estimate of 57 billion yuan.

Authorities have not indicated how many people the Tibet project would displace and how it would affect the local ecosystem, one of the richest and most diverse on the plateau. But according to Chinese officials, hydropower projects in Tibet, which they say hold more than a third of China's hydroelectric power potential, would not have a major impact on the environment or on downstream water supplies.

India and Bangladesh have nevertheless raised concerns about the dam, with the project potentially altering not only the local ecology but also the flow and course of the river downstream. The Yarlung Zangbo becomes the Brahmaputra river as it leaves Tibet and flows south into India's Arunachal Pradesh and Assam states and finally into Bangladesh. China has already commenced hydropower generation on the upper reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo, which flows from the west to the east of Tibet. It is planning more projects upstream.

## Bashar Al-Assad's Wife Asma Battling Leukemia, Has 50% Chance Of Survival: Report

**World.** As Thma al-Assad, wife of deposed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, is reportedly battling leukemia, an aggressive cancer of the bone marrow and blood, and has a 50-50 chance of survival. The British-born former first lady has been isolated to minimize the risk of infection and is undergoing treatment, reported The Telegraph. According to the report, Asma has previously battled breast cancer in 2019. She had declared herself cancer-free after a year of treatment. But the blood cancer is believed to have reappeared after a period of remission, the report said.

Born in London in 1975 to Syrian parents, Asma al-Assad has a dual British-Syrian citizenship. She completed degrees in computer science and French literature at King's College London before pursuing a career in investment banking. Asma married Bashar al-Assad in December 2000. The couple has three children: Hafez, Zein, and Karim. Asma has reportedly sought to exile herself in London with her children since the Syrian uprising began. Reports suggested that she has also filed for divorce from the ousted Syrian President as she is "dissatisfied" with her life in Moscow. However, the Kremlin has rejected the reports, saying, "No they do not correspond to reality". She has also allegedly applied to a Russian court seeking special permission to leave the country, with her application currently under review by Russian authorities. Bashar al-Assad, along with his family, fled Syria on December 8 following an 11-day rebel offensive led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), after years of civil war sparked by his violent crackdown on anti-government protests in 2011. The war has killed over 500,000 people and displaced more than half the country's population.

## At Least 33 Killed In Mozambique Prison Riot On Christmas Day

**Maputo.** A prison riot in Mozambique's capital Maputo left 33 people dead and 15 injured, the country's police general commander Bernardino Rafael said on Wednesday, as civil unrest linked to October's disputed election continues.

A decision on Monday by Mozambique's top court confirming long-ruling party Frelimo's victory in the election has sparked fresh nationwide protests by opposition groups and their supporters who say the vote was rigged. While Rafael blamed protests outside the prison for encouraging the riot, Justice Minister Helena Kida told local private broadcaster Miramar TV that the unrest was started inside the prison and had nothing to do with protests outside.

"The confrontations after that resulted in 33 deaths and 15 injured in the vicinity of the jail," Rafael told a media briefing. The identities of those killed and injured were unclear. About 1,534 people escaped from the prison in the incident but 150 have now been recaptured, Rafael said, adding that there were prison break attempts at two other prisons. "We are worried as a country, Mozambicans and security forces," Rafael said. "We expect in the next 48 hours a rise in crime."

Mozambique's interior minister said on Tuesday that at least 21 people were killed in unrest after the top court's decision. Prior to Tuesday, civil society monitoring group Plataforma Decida said at least 130 people have been killed in clashes with police since the unrest started.

## New York taxi crashes into pedestrians on Christmas Day, 7 injured

**The incident, which took place in Midtown Manhattan near Macy's flagship store in Herald Square, injured at least seven people on Wednesday, the police said.**

**World.** A taxi jumped a sidewalk and hit pedestrians in New York outside a Macy's department store on Christmas Day when the taxi driver suffered a medical episode, the New York police said. The incident, which took place in Midtown Manhattan near Macy's flagship store in Herald Square, injured at least seven people on Wednesday, the police said. The accident site is near the corner of West 34th Street and Avenue of the Americas, or Sixth Avenue.

The store is decorated with full elaboration for Christmas and New Year and is an attraction point for tourists and New Yorkers around the holiday season. The taxi driver who suffered the medical episode is 58 years old. The injured include a 9-year-old boy, alongside two women aged 49 and four other women aged 19, 37 and 41, the police further said. Out of the seven people who were injured, three were taken to the hospital for treatment. The 9-year-old boy suffered a cut, one of the 49-year-old women suffered leg injury and the 41-year-old woman who suffered injuries to her head. The other three people who were hurt in the accident declined medical treatment, while all the injuries reported were non-life threatening, the police added.

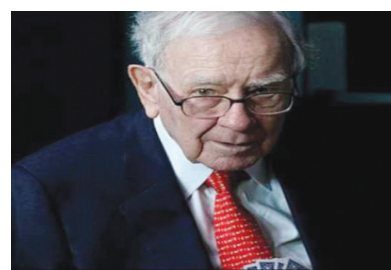


## How Warren Buffett Plans To Distribute His Fortune After Death

**World.** Billionaire Warren Buffett has shared his thoughts on the future of his immense fortune and offered advice on inheritance in a message to his company's shareholders.

The Berkshire Hathaway CEO revealed his plans for wealth distribution in a letter posted to the company website. Mr Buffett announced that \$1.1 billion of his Berkshire shares would be donated to his family's four foundations, with the remainder of his holdings to be gradually distributed by his three children after his passing.

The 94-year-old's message carried an introspective tone, reflecting on the inevitability of mortality. "Father time always wins. But he can be fickle — indeed unfair and even cruel — sometimes ending life at birth or soon thereafter while, at other times, waiting a century or so before paying a visit. To date, I've been very lucky, but, before long, he will get around to me," he wrote. Acknowledging the challenges his children may face due to their own advancing years — now aged 71, 69 and 66 — Mr Buffett said that he has appointed three potential trustees to ensure his wishes are honoured if his children cannot complete the task.



"Three potential successor trustees have been designated. Each is well known to my children and makes sense to all of us. They are also somewhat younger than my children," Mr Buffett wrote. He underscored his preference for decisions within the foundations to be made unanimously and shared his approach to simplifying his will, which he reviews periodically. Mr Buffett also offered advice for parents navigating the sensitive topic of inheritance planning. He said, "I have one further suggestion for all parents, whether they are of modest or staggering wealth. When your children are mature, have them read your will before you sign it." He stressed the importance of transparency, urging parents to explain their decisions to avoid misunderstandings. "Be sure each

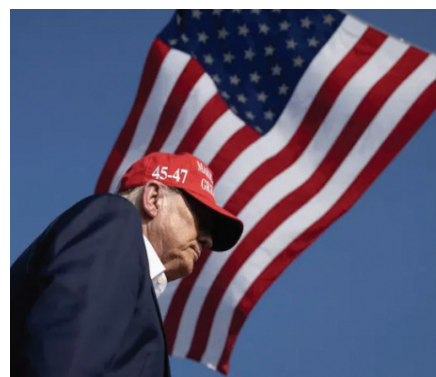
child understands both the logic for your decisions and the responsibilities they will encounter upon your death. If any have questions or suggestions, listen carefully and adopt those found sensible. You don't want your children asking "Why?" in respect to testamentary decisions when you are no longer able to respond."

Reflecting on decades of observation, Mr Buffett noted how unresolved issues stemming from wills have caused discord among families. He recounted instances he and his late business partner, Charlie Munger, witnessed when miscommunication and perceived inequities led to fractured relationships. "Jealousies, along with actual or imagined slights during childhood, became magnified, particularly when sons were favoured over daughters, either in monetary ways or by positions of importance," Buffett wrote. Yet, he also highlighted success stories of open discussions about a will bringing families closer and together. "Charlie and I also witnessed a few cases where a wealthy parent's will that was fully discussed before death helped the family become closer. What could be more satisfying?" Buffett added.

## Panama Canal, Canada, Greenland - Donald Trump's Christmas Wishlist

**World.** In his Christmas greetings, US President-elect Donald Trump repeated his call to acquire the Panama Canal and Greenland and annex Canada. In a series of posts on his social media platform 'Truth Social', Trump fired at "radical Left lunatics" and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He began by addressing the issue of the Panama Canal and making it clear that the US would take control.

"Merry Christmas to all, including to the wonderful soldiers of China, who are lovingly but illegally operating the Panama Canal, where we lost 38,000 people in its building 110 years ago, always making certain that the United States puts in billions of dollars in 'repair' money, but will have absolutely nothing to say about anything," he wrote. Later in the day, while announcing Kevin Marino



Cabrera as the US Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, Trump said the country is "ripping" the US off on the Panama Canal, "far beyond their wildest dreams". Reiterating his idea to make Canada the 51st US state, Trump charged at Trudeau and said that if it were to happen, "their taxes would be cut by more than 60 per cent, their

businesses would immediately double in size, and they would be militarily protected like no other country anywhere in the World." Similarly, he gave a message to the people of Greenland, who he thinks wanted the US to be there - "we will". In another post, he charged at "radical Left lunatics", who are constantly trying to "obstruct our court system and our elections." He refused to wish a Merry Christmas to those "lucky souls" or "37 most violent criminals", who were given a pardon by Joe Biden. "Instead, will say, GO TO HELL!" In another post, he charged at "radical Left lunatics", who are constantly trying to "obstruct our court system and our elections." He refused to wish a Merry Christmas to those "lucky souls" or "37 most violent criminals", who were given a pardon by Joe Biden. "Instead, will say, GO TO HELL!"

## Japan Airlines Hit By Cyberattack, Domestic, International Flights Delayed

**Tokyo, Japan.** Japan Airlines on Thursday reported a cyberattack that caused delays to domestic and international flights but later said it had found and addressed the cause. Problems with the airline's baggage check-in system had delayed more than a dozen flights at several Japanese airports, public broadcaster NHK said, but there were no mass cancellations or major disruption.

Japan Airlines (JAL) is the country's second-biggest airline after All Nippon Airways (ANA). "We identified and addressed the cause of the issue. We are checking the system recovery status," JAL said in a post on social media platform X. "Sales for both domestic and international flights departing today have been suspended. We apologize for any inconvenience caused," the post said.

Earlier Thursday, a JAL spokeswoman told AFP the company had been subjected to a cyberattack. Network disruption began at 7:24 am on Thursday (22:24 GMT Wednesday), JAL said in a statement. Then "at 8:56 am, we temporarily isolated the router (a device for exchanging data between networks) that



was causing the disruption", it added. JAL shares fell as much as 2.5 percent in morning trade after the news emerged, before recovering slightly. The airline is just the latest Japanese firm to be hit by a cyber attack. Japan's space agency JAXA said in 2023 that it was likely penetrated by a cyber attack by unknown entities, but no sensitive information about rockets or satellites was accessed.

The same year, Nagoya Port, one of Japan's busiest, was crippled by a ransomware attack that was blamed on Lockbit, a Russia-based cybercrime organisation.

Japan's National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity (NISC) -- the agency responsible for defences against cyberattacks -- was itself reportedly infiltrated by hackers in 2023 for as long as nine months. In 2022, the government said a cyberattack was behind disruption at a Toyota supplier that forced the top-selling automaker to halt operations at domestic plants for a day.

More recently, the popular Japanese video-sharing website Niconico suspended its services in June because it was under a large-scale cyberattack, its operator said.

## Baby froze to death overnight in Gaza as Israel, Hamas trade accusations of ceasefire delays

**JERUSALEM.** A baby girl froze to death overnight in Gaza, while Israel and Hamas accused each other of complicating ceasefire efforts that could wind down the 14-month war. The 3-week-old baby was the third to die from the cold in Gaza's tent camps in recent days, doctors said, deaths that underscore the squalid conditions, with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians crammed into often ramshackle tents after fleeing Israeli offensives. Israel's bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza has killed over 45,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children. The offensive has caused widespread destruction and displaced some 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands are packed into tent camps along the coast as the cold, wet winter sets in. Aid groups have struggled to deliver food and supplies and say there are shortages of blankets, warm clothing and firewood.

Israel has increased the amount of aid it allows into the territory, reaching an

average of 130 trucks a day so far this month, up from around 70 a day in October and November. Still, the amount remains well below than previous months and the United Nations says it is unable to distribute more than half the aid because Israeli forces deny permission to move within Gaza or because of rampant lawlessness and theft from trucks.

The father of 3-week-old Sila, Mahmoud al-Faseeh, wrapped her in a blanket to try and keep her warm in their tent in the Muwasi area outside the town of Khan Younis, but it wasn't enough, he told The Associated Press. He said the tent was not sealed from the wind and the ground was cold, as temperatures on Tuesday night dropped to 9 degrees Celsius (48 degrees Fahrenheit.) Muwasi is a desolate area of dunes and farmland on Gaza's Mediterranean coast.

"It was very cold overnight and as adults we couldn't even take it. We couldn't stay warm," he said. Sila woke up crying three times overnight and in the morning they found her unresponsive, her body stiff.



"She was like wood," said al-Faseeh. They rushed her to a field hospital where doctors tried to revive her, but her lungs had already deteriorated. Images of Sila taken by the AP showed the little girl with purple lips, her pale skin blotchy. Ahmed al-Farra, director of the children's ward at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, confirmed that the baby died of hypothermia. He said two other babies — one 3 days old, the other a month old — had been brought to the hospital over the past 48 hours after dying of hypothermia. Ceasefire complications

Meanwhile, hopes for a ceasefire looked complicated Wednesday, with Israel and Hamas that runs Gaza trading accusations of delaying an agreement. Although Israel and Hamas have expressed optimism that progress was being made toward a deal, sticking points remain over the exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, people involved in the talks say.

On Wednesday, Hamas accused Israel of introducing new conditions related to the withdrawal from Gaza, the prisoners and the return of displaced people, which it said was delaying the deal. Israel's government accused Hamas of reneging on understandings that have already been reached. Still, both sides said discussions are ongoing. Israel's negotiating team, which includes members from its intelligence agencies and the military, returned from Qatar on Tuesday evening for internal consultations, following a week of what it called "significant negotiations."

## NEWS BOX

## What will happen at MCG if temperature rises to extreme conditions on day one

MELBOURNE: Just as Australia captain Pat Cummins won the toss and opted to bat first against India in the fourth Test of the ongoing Border Gavaskar Trophy at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, thousands of fans are still lining up to enter the monumental stadium. The tickets are already sold out and Cricket Australia had even released an extra thousand seats to accommodate as many fans as they can for what is going to be an extremely hot day in Melbourne. The weather prediction has been there for a while, especially for day one where the temperature is expected to close in on 40 degree Celsius. It is perhaps one of the reasons why India decided the grass cover on the MCG surface despite to go in with two spinners in Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja. That Shubman Gill was struggling for form perhaps made the decision all the more easier. Going by the team sheet, captain Rohit Sharma who



pushed himself down the order in Adelaide is slotted at No 3 with Washington coming down the order. Two days out from the Test, the Melbourne Cricket Club chief had asked fans to stay hydrated with the venue providing free water and sunscreen for those who are coming in. Just outside the venue, even as fans walk in from Jolimont junction, volunteers could be seen distributing free water bottles to assist the fans. There is no exaggeration to what has been said about the weather. Through the course of the day the temperature is expected to go up to 39 degrees and it is not going to be easy out in the middle. The officials are going to be keeping track of the conditions using Wet Bulb Globe Temperature. It is an experimental forecast tool indicating expected heat stress on the human body when in direct sunlight. According to the National Weather Service, the WBG estimates the effect of temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, and solar radiation on humans using a combination of temperatures from three thermometers. And at any point through the day should the conditions be deemed extreme for play, the umpires are empowered to suspend play according to law 2.7.1. During the 2017-18 Ashes, such hot conditions led to England captain Joe Root getting hospitalised after getting to his half century at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

## Coaching &amp; playing: Twin role with purpose for TN shuttler duo

CHENNAI. Shuttlers Lokeshviswanathan and Naveen P's journey is a tale of perseverance, hard work and resourcefulness. In the just-concluded national championships in Bengaluru, the doubles specialists from Tamil Nadu were one of the standout performers as they reached the title match before going down with a fight. What makes their effort noteworthy is the fact that their day job is coaching the sport, something they took up out of passion and to meet their day-to-day expenses.



This is uncommon, especially among some of the top medal contenders at the domestic circuit, who generally tend to have a healthy support system. A lot of them are associated with some of the famed academies in the country. "To meet our day-to-day expenses, we have to take up coaching. The other players will be training for four to five hours per day. We generally train for the last 10 days or so before we take part in matches," Lokeshviswanathan said.

The top talents are generally funded for international events, where they can obtain much-needed exposure. More importantly, they also gain valuable ranking points in order to be eligible for marquee events and a chance to represent the country. That is still a distant dream for Lokeshviswanathan and Naveen, who have multiple state titles to their name. "Even if we take part in four or five international tournaments, we won't have enough ranking points," Lokeshviswanathan explained.

Having endured many challenging days in the early days of their playing career, Lokeshviswanathan, who acquired his coaching certificate from SAINIS Patiala, is hoping to pass on the knowledge to the youngsters. They are running a private academy in Coimbatore, where 20 professionals and 20 beginners are part of the training programme. "I always wanted to stay connected with this sport. I wanted to guide my juniors. While playing, I planned it. I learned under several coaches and for the last few years, me and my partner have been running an academy of our own," he said. zaving learned things the hard way, he intends to make things easier for his wards.

## ICC likely to punish Virat Kohli for shouldering Sam Konstas: Sources

➔ **A top source within the ICC has indicated that Virat Kohli could face punishment for shouldering Sam Konstas on Day 1 of the Boxing Day Test. The source stated that the match referee and umpires will review the matter and may call the players for an explanation.**

**New Delhi** The International Cricket Council (ICC) is set to review the on-field altercation involving batting star Virat Kohli and Australian teenage debutant Sam Konstas on Day 1 of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. Kohli appeared to deliberately bump into the young Sam Konstas, who had been aggressively taking on the Indian fast bowlers after Australia won the toss and chose to bat in Melbourne.

During the break between the 10th and 11th overs of the Australian innings, Konstas and



Usman Khawaja were switching ends when Kohli walked toward the young batter and collided with him. Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting, commentating at the time, remarked that he believed Kohli had made deliberate contact. Replays revealed

that Kohli was fully aware of his trajectory, while Konstas, with his head down and adjusting his gloves, unintentionally walked into the Indian batter. According to a senior source within the ICC, the incident has not gone unnoticed and could lead to

disciplinary action against the veteran Indian batter. "It is now up to the match referee and umpires to review the footage and assess the situation. They may call the players involved for explanations," the source revealed.

The clash occurred in the heat of the game as Konstas, making his debut for Australia, was involved in a routine exchange on the field. Kohli's apparent shoulder nudge was captured by cameras, sparking immediate reactions from fans and pundits alike.

"If the explanation provided by Kohli does not satisfy the officials, he could face punishment in the form of demerit points,"

the source added. Demerit points are part of the ICC's disciplinary system, which can lead to fines or even suspension if a player accumulates too many points within a specified period. While the ICC has yet to make an official statement on the matter, the incident has already stirred significant

debate in cricketing circles. The final decision now rests with the match referee and umpires, whose report will determine the course of action. "Let's see what stand the referee takes," the ICC source concluded.

## Melbourne crowd pays floppy hat tribute to Shane Warne on Boxing Day

**New Delhi** In a heartwarming moment on Day 1 of the Boxing Day Test between Australia and India, cricket lovers at the Melbourne Cricket Ground paid tribute to legendary Shane Warne. At 3:50 pm local time on Thursday, December 26, fans took a moment to doff their floppy hats as a tribute to the legendary leg-spinner, who died in March 2022.

The tradition of doffing floppy hats began in the Boxing Day Test in 2022 and has continued ever since. Shane Warne's children were also in attendance at the MCG on Thursday, kickstarting the tributes for their late father. The play was halted for a minute at 3:50 pm and those with floppy hats in the stands did not miss the opportunity to remember Shane Warne. A video clip of the leg-spinner was played on the big screen, much to the cheers of the crowd. It was done at 3:50 pm as a tribute to Warne's shirt



number. In the Boxing Day Test of 2022, fans and players donned iconic floppy hats, a signature of Warne's laid-back yet fiercely competitive style. The stands were awash with white as attendees celebrated his immense contribution to Australian cricket and the global game. A special ceremony featured highlights of Warne's career,

evoking memories of his match-winning spells at the MCG. On Thursday, more than 80,000 fans turned up to watch the much-awaited opening day of the fourth Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. And the on-field action lived up to the hype when 19-year-old debutant opener, Sam Konstas, torched the Indian bowling attack. Konstas hit just 60 off 66 balls, taking the attack to Jasprit Bumrah, smashing the fast bowler for 34 runs in his first spell. India were taken by surprise by the teenager's power-packed knock. Usman Khawaja went on to hit his maiden fifty of the series while Marnus Labuschagne showed signs of returning to form with a stroke-filled fifty. Australia went past the 200-run mark in the third session. Australia, however, lost a bit of momentum in the final session, losing the wickets of Labuschagne (72) and Travis Head in quick succession.

## Brave Sam Konstas reverse scoops as Jasprit Bumrah concedes first Test six in 3 years

**New Delhi** Nerveless teenage opener Sam Konstas lit up the Boxing Day Test with an unconventional onslaught of ramp shots against Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. Konstas, the youngest player ever to open the batting in a Test match for Australia, struck two boundaries and a six using reverse ramp shots against Bumrah. Bumrah conceded a six after 4,483 deliveries and three years since Cameron Green hit him for one in Sydney in 2021. Remarkably, Konstas achieved this feat with a reverse ramp just 23 balls into his debut innings. The Indian pacer, who has dominated Australia's top order throughout the series, could only laugh as Konstas flicked him over the wicketkeeper's head for back-to-back boundaries. Konstas sprinted to the wicket with infectious energy and completed his first national anthem as a Test cricketer with a smile and a musical flourish. He then survived a challenging opening over from Bumrah, who beat his bat four times. Not since records began in 2006 has there been as many play-and-misses in the first two overs of a Test match. Nerveless teenage opener Sam Konstas lit up the Boxing Day Test with an unconventional onslaught of ramp shots against Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. Konstas, the youngest player ever to open the batting in a Test match for Australia, struck two boundaries and a six using reverse ramp shots against

Bumrah. Bumrah conceded a six after 4,483 deliveries and three years since Cameron Green hit him for one in Sydney in 2021. Remarkably, Konstas achieved this feat with a reverse ramp just 23 balls into his debut innings. The Indian pacer, who has dominated Australia's top order throughout the series, could only laugh as Konstas flicked him over the wicketkeeper's head



for back-to-back boundaries. Konstas sprinted to the wicket with infectious energy and completed his first national anthem as a Test cricketer with a smile and a musical flourish. He then survived a challenging opening over from Bumrah, who beat his bat four times. Not since records began in 2006 has there been as many play-and-misses in

the first two overs of a Test match. The 19-year-old raced to his half-century in just 52 balls, becoming the youngest Australian in more than seven decades to score a fifty. The teenage sensation had already made his mark with a blazing 60-run knock before Ravindra Jadeja trapped him in front of the stumps. "I wonder if he sat back last night and said, 'You know what, boys? I'm going to reverse sweep him all day here,'" Ponting quipped. Konstas' daring approach to Bumrah contrasted starkly with the Indian bowler's typically dominant performances. Despite the initial misses, the young opener's persistence paid off, unsettling Bumrah and setting the tone for a brisk start to the innings. His unorthodox methods drew comparisons to his explosive performances in recent matches, including a century against India for the Prime Minister's XI and a quick-fire half-century for the Sydney Thunder. Adding to the drama, Konstas later walked down the pitch to a delivery from Mohammed Siraj, engaging in a heated exchange with the fiery Indian pacer. His aggression complemented his partner Usman Khawaja's steadier approach, with Khawaja surviving an early lbw review to anchor the other end.



scored 195 off 233 balls on Day 1. He blew us away, we couldn't believe the confidence," Langer said during his commentary stint on Star Sports. Konstas also demonstrated his ability to take on experienced bowlers, smashing Mohammed Siraj for boundaries and unsettling the Indian attack. His innings included six boundaries and two maximums, as he formed an 89-run partnership with veteran Usman Khawaja. Langer noted that Konstas' aggressive approach eased the pressure on Khawaja, who had struggled for form throughout the series. "We also see that the way Konstas has played on debut, he has freed up Usman Khawaja. He has looked at ease, he was used to batting with David Warner, who played with an aggressive approach. Now, he's playing with a partner with a similar approach, and that takes a lot of pressure off," Langer added. The debutant's confidence wasn't limited to his batting. A verbal exchange with Virat Kohli after a mid-pitch collision demonstrated Konstas' spunk, while his unconventional tactics drew both sledging and applause. Despite the fiery atmosphere, he stood firm, delivering a promising start to his Test career.

## AUS vs IND, 4th Test: Jasprit Bumrah, India recover from Konstas punch on Boxing Day

➔ **Boxing Day Test: Australia's top-order stepped with the bat to guide the hosts to 311 for six at the close of play on Day 1. Jasprit Bumrah-inspired India took 4 wickets in the final session to script a small comeback after Sam Konstas's**

**New Delhi** Jasprit Bumrah's comeback spell in the final session helped India pull back after four Australian batters hit fifties to guide the hosts to 311 for six at the close of play on Day 1 of the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the MCG. Sam Konstas, Usman Khawaja,

Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith hit fluent fifties after Pat Cummins won the toss and opted to bat first. Australia, at one point, were cruising at 237 for 2 but Bumrah's late burst in the final session helped India get four wickets and script a small but morale-boosting comeback at the MCG.

Australia's 19-year-old debutant, Konstas, showed why he is regarded as one of the brightest young talents in world cricket after Australia opted to bat on a pitch conducive to batting. With a quick-fire 60 off 65 balls, Konstas displayed remarkable composure and skill, particularly in his 89-run opening stand with veteran Usman Khawaja (38 not out). Konstas' fearless approach was evident from the start. After a few play-and-misses off Jasprit Bumrah's first over, the teenager found his rhythm, playing a series of audacious shots. Konstas' reverse lap-scoop against Bumrah was followed by a six over mid-on, and another reverse lap-scoop brought a boundary wide of third man. The teenager's boldness drew attention, particularly as Bumrah, usually a difficult

bowler to handle, had never been hit for two sixes in his first spell of a Test match morning. Konstas' confidence didn't go



unnoticed, as the young opener engaged in a verbal exchange with Virat Kohli after the Indian batting star shouldered the Australian on the field. Despite the pressure from experienced bowlers like Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, who tried to unsettle him with short-pitched deliveries, Konstas

remained undeterred. He hit six boundaries and two sixes before Ravindra Jadeja broke the partnership, trapping Konstas in front with a clever arm ball.

## BUMRAH COMEBACK

Konstas' debut special allowed his veteran opening partner, Khawaja (57 off 121 balls), the opportunity to find some form with a patient half-century. However, Khawaja would likely be frustrated with himself after failing to time a pull shot off a Bumrah half-track, which went straight into KL Rahul's hands after the lunch break. Labuschagne became the third Australian batter, after Usman Khawaja and Sam Konstas, to score a half-century. He built a crucial partnership of 83 runs off 127 balls with Steve Smith before being dismissed by Washington Sundar for 72 off 145 balls. Bumrah then dismissed Travis Head for a duck and Mitchell Marsh for four just after the tea break. This is a rare failure for the in-form Australian batter, who had scored two centuries and a fifty in the series so far.

Shakti Kapoor Joined Bigg Boss To 'Stay Away' From Alcohol For

# Shraddha Kapoor

'Wanted To Prove...'

Veteran actor Shakti Kapoor has always been known for his larger-than-life personality, both on and off-screen. However, his appearance on Bigg Boss Season 5 in 2011 had a deeply personal motive tied to his daughter, Shraddha Kapoor. The actor revealed that Shraddha had encouraged him to abstain from alcohol, prompting his decision to join the reality show as a contestant. Shakti Kapoor stayed on the show for 28 days before being evicted as the fifth contestant.



he added humorously. While Shakti Kapoor has significantly reduced his on-screen appearances in recent years, he did return in 2023 with a role in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal, starring Ranbir Kapoor. Despite his limited presence in films, his legacy as one of Bollywood's most iconic comic and villainous actors remains intact.

# Bhumi Pednekar's Hunt For Chole Bhature In Delhi Is So Relatable

Bhumi Pednekar is an ultimate foodie. Recently, the actress decided to try the quintessential Delhi street snack -Chole Bhature. Well, we don't blame here. The pipping hot bhature served with spicy chole has the power to take your tastebuds on a joyride. And, for Bhumi, it was no different. The actress has dropped a video of herself exploring the vibrant streets of the



National capital under the cold winter sun along with her team members to search for the Best Chole Bhature. In the clip, Bhumi could be heard saying, "I can't believe I'm once again on the streets of another city trying to find food. I think I have come to Nirula's after almost 10 years. I want chole kulche, but I can't believe they're not available!" She then makes a sad face and says, "We have no time, we really have to go and get it." The clip ends with the actress relishing over a hot tempting plate of Chole Kulche at a famous restaurant in Delhi,

while her teammate is seen holding a plate of Chole Bhature. "I've craved this. Just the best," Bhumi concluded the video. She wore a black sweatshirt paired with blue jeans and white sneakers. The video caption reads, "On the streets to find chole bhature."

As soon as the video was shared online, it captured the audience's attention. Bhumi's sister Samiksha Pednekar commented, "Yummm!!" Another one wrote, "Come to my home I make the best ever!!", while many users recommended different places to try the Best Chole Bhature in the National capital. Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress last appeared in the thriller film Bhakshak. Helmed by Pulkit, the film was backed by Shah Rukh Khan's production banner Red Chillies Entertainment and received good responses from fans and critics alike.

She will be next seen in an untitled romantic comedy film alongside Arjun Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh. Any new update regarding the film is still awaited.

Bhumi will be making her web series debut with Daldal in which she will be seen playing a cop. Filming of the series is already completed. It will be released on Prime Video next year. Apart from this, she also has another web show titled The Royals opposite Ishaan Khatter. The show also features celebs like Nora Fatehi, Chunky Panday, Sakshi Tanwar, Dino Morea and Milind Soman.



Aishwarya Rai's Jodhaa Akbar Lehenga Displayed At Academy Museum: 'All Hail Queen'



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, a global icon and one of the most celebrated faces of Indian cinema, continues to make waves internationally. Her unforgettable performance as Jodhaa Bai in Ashutosh Gowariker's 2008 epic Jodhaa Akbar left an indelible mark on cinema lovers. The film's grandeur, storytelling, and intricate costumes transported audiences to a historical era of splendor. Recently, the red wedding lehenga worn by Aishwarya in the film made its way to the prestigious Academy Museum, earning praise from fans worldwide. The Academy took to its social media handle on December 24 to pay tribute to the iconic costume. Referring to it as "a lehenga fit for a queen, designed for the silver screen," the post celebrated the craftsmanship of designer Neeta Lulla. "Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's red wedding lehenga is a feast for the eyes: vibrant zardozi embroidery, centuries-old craftsmanship, and a hidden gem—quite literally. Look closely, and you'll spot a peacock, India's national bird, made entirely of jewels," read the caption.

Fans were overjoyed to see Indian cinema receiving recognition on such an international platform. "Finally, iconic Indian movies are getting featured on The Academy page," one user commented, while another praised Aishwarya's role in bringing global attention to Bollywood's artistry. "So academy finally recognised Aishwarya Rai Movie," a third user said. A fourth user wrote, "All Hail Queen."

The lehenga, with its intricate zardozi embroidery and jewel-encrusted peacock motif, stood as a testament to India's rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship. Designed by Neeta Lulla, the ensemble was more than a costume—it was a work of art that reflected the essence of Jodhaa Bai's regal character. Jodhaa Akbar featured Hrithik Roshan as Emperor Akbar and earned widespread acclaim for its grand sets, compelling performances, and A. R. Rahman's memorable music. Fans have long regarded the film as a masterpiece, and the inclusion of Aishwarya's costume in the Academy Museum reinforces its legacy. Fans continue to celebrate this moment, hailing it as a win for Indian artistry on the world stage.

**Akshay Kumar, Abhishek Bachchan And Others Starrer Housefull 5 Shoot Completed**



Akshay Kumar starrer comedy drama Housefull 5 shoot has been completed today. The makers shared the wrap photos on social media which have gone viral. Fans have also reacted to it. The film also features Riteish Deshmukh, Abhishek Bachchan, Shreyas Talpade, Chunky Panday, Jacqueline Fernandez, Nargis Fakhri, and more. Taking to their Instagram handle, Nadiawala Grandson shared a series of photos and wrote, "That's a wrap for Housefull 5! A rollercoaster of emotions, filled with laughter, hard work, and unforgettable memories. Get ready to laugh your hearts out on 6th June 2025 in cinemas near you!! #SajidNadiawala's #Housefull5. Directed by @tarun\_mansukhani". Akshay Kumar is missing from the photos. One of the fans wrote, "Housefull 5 biggest blockbuster loading." Another wrote, "Where is akki paaji."

Recently, Akshay Kumar addressed reports of an eye injury sustained on the set of his upcoming film, Housefull 5. The actor humorously assured fans and media about his well-being during a press conference. When asked about the injury, Akshay playfully responded, "I can see you," with a thumbs-up, quipping that his vision remained unaffected. For those unaware, reports from Hindustan Times revealed that the incident occurred during a stunt sequence in Mumbai. An object unexpectedly hit Akshay's eye, causing an injury. A specialist was immediately called to examine him, and his eye was bandaged. Although advised to rest, Akshay quickly returned to the set to resume shooting, ensuring the film's schedule wasn't delayed.

Known for his commitment, Akshay took only a brief break while the team proceeded with other cast members' scenes. The actor's dedication has always been a hallmark of his career, and this instance further reinforced his work ethic. Housefull 5 is highly anticipated by fans, as it marks the continuation of one of Bollywood's most successful comedy series. The buzz around the film has already begun, with fans eagerly awaiting the release of its first look.

Akshay Kumar's quick recovery and return to work have reassured his fans, showcasing his professionalism and resilience. With Housefull 5 in its final stages of production, audiences can expect another laughter-filled entertainer from the franchise that has delivered consistent box-office hits.

