

INDIAN CHRONICLE

23 January, 2025 | Thursday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:294

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

TS Medical Council serves notices to Alakananda Hospital

Hyderabad: Taking suo moto cognizance of the alleged illegal kidney transplantation racket at Alakananda Hospital, Saroonagar, the Telangana State Medical Council (TSMC) served notices to the hospital. The hospital was seized by the Health Department following a raid on Tuesday.

The Council directed the hospital management to share all the details, including the registration of doctors and surgeons involved in transplantations. Medical records from the hospital related to donors, and organ recipients and human resources were also sought.

Rare planetary parade visible in Hyderabad skies: How to witness it

Hyderabad: In an excellent opportunity for stargazers and astronomy enthusiasts in Hyderabad, four planets—Venus, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars—align in the city's January skies. This rare planetary parade offers a fantastic opportunity to observe these planets with the naked eye, no telescopes required! According to N Sree Raghunandan Kumar, founder president of the Planetary Society of India (PSI), this event is a unique chance to catch four planets in a matter of minutes, provided the weather and light conditions are favorable. Time: Visible near the eastern horizon early in the night, appearing above your head around midnight, and setting in the west before sunrise. Move away from bright city lights for clearer visibility and ensure the skies are clear to avoid obstructions for best viewing experience.

Outrage at Grama Sabhas reflects discontent against Telangana Congress government: KTR



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao stated that the widespread public outrage at the ongoing Grama Sabhas reflected their discontent against the Congress government in Telangana. He pointed out that people were openly confronting the Congress leaders and questioning them about the government's six guarantees and other electoral promises. "In the Grama Sabhas being held across the State, people are questioning the Congress government on its unfulfilled guarantees and expressing frustration. Their anger is palpable as citizens are tearing down tents set up for these meetings and confronting officials as well as the Congress leaders on the electoral promises. It reflects how people are vexed up with the Congress rule," he said.

Addressing a meeting of BRS leaders from the Saththupalli municipality at Telangana Bhavan on Wednesday, Rama Rao attributed the failures of the Congress government to its inability to sustain the development initiated during former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's tenure. Under the Chandrashekhara Rao government, villages and towns witnessed unprecedented growth. Once, allocations of Rs 50 lakh to municipalities were viewed as unprecedented. But under the BRS rule, it had become a routine affair, resulting in substantial development initiatives," he said. He appreciated the loyalty of Saththupalli's BRS municipal councillors, noting that 23 were elected under the party banner, with 17 still steadfast with the party. Referring to setbacks in Saththupalli and Khammam constituencies, he vowed to revive the BRS' dominance and urged leaders to intensify their efforts. Asserting that the BRS would regain its stronghold, Rama Rao said the party flag would fly high again in Saththupalli. "Let us fight together to make our leader K Chandrashekhara Rao as the Chief Minister once more," he said, adding that Chandrashekhara Rao would soon chair a meeting with the Saththupalli leaders.

R.G. Kar rape-murder case: CBI files appeal in HC seeking death penalty for convict



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Wednesday filed an appeal before the Calcutta High Court seeking death penalty for the convict in the case of rape and murder of a young woman trainee doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, said an agency source on Wednesday. A Sealdah court has convicted Sanjay Roy and sentenced him to life imprisonment until death, observing that the case does not fall under the "rarest of the rare" category.

Following legal consultation, the CBI decided to move the Calcutta High Court, requesting for enhancement of punishment to death on the plea that it falls under the "rarest of the rare" category. Earlier, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said the Kolkata Police would have ensured death penalty for the convict in the case, but the probe was later handed over to the CBI. Responding to the remarks, the Bharatiya Janata Party alleged that on the Chief Minister's instructions, the police and the hospital administration were involved in covering up the gruesome crime. Citing the court order, the BJP alleged "significant lapses in the investigation" at the initial stage, "fabrication of records", "delayed complaint filing", and "mishandling of evidence". The judgment, the BJP said, also made observations about "superficial investigation", as saying "PW-50 did not conduct a thorough investigation but merely compiled existing evidence without delving deeper into the case". The BJP said the court emphasised that the investigative shortcomings should not undermine the prosecution's case. "In conclusion, the court criticised the indifferent attitude of the Tala police station officers and the hospital authority, stating that their negligence and perfunctory investigation cannot invalidate the prosecution's evidence. The court remains committed to uncovering the truth and ensuring that the guilty are held accountable.

At least 11 killed, many injured as train runs over passengers near Maharashtra

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

At least 11 people were killed and many more injured after they stepped down from their train on the tracks and were run over by another train coming from the opposite direction in North Maharashtra's Jalgaon district on Wednesday (January 22, 2025). "An incident occurred near Pachora town in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district, where eleven persons lost their lives and four to five were injured after jumping off a moving train," said Maheswar Reddy, Superintendent Of Police, Jalgaon. Later in the evening, Mr. Reddy confirmed that rescue operation has been completed. Meanwhile, the bodies of the victims were sent to the Jalgaon government hospital. The incident occurred at 5.30 p.m. near the Pachora Railway Station in Jalgaon after some passenger tried to disembark from the moving Pushpak Express — the train was



travelling from Jalgaon to Mumbai — due to panic over a suspected fire.

As the train approached the village of Paradhade, the driver suddenly applied the brakes, causing sparks due to friction. A few passengers sitting at the doors, mistook the train was on fire and jumped off, landing on the tracks and were hit by an oncoming train from the opposite direction, the Karnataka Express, as per the initial enquiry, Mr. Reddy said. An ACP occurred in Train No. 12533 Lucknow-CSMT Pushpak Express, at km 372/07 in the

UP direction, between Maheji and Pardhane. The train stopped at the spot, and some passengers got down from the Pushpak Express. Seven to eight people were injured by the passing Train No. 12627 Senior officials, including the District Collector, railway officials, and Sub-Divisional Officer Bhushan Ahire reached the site after the accident.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that government officials have reached the site of the incident and the district administration is working towards treating the

injured. "The tragic incident of the loss of lives in a very unfortunate incident near Pachora in Jalgaon district is deeply distressing. I pay my heartfelt tributes to them. My colleague Minister Girish Mahajan and the Superintendent of Police have reached the spot and the District Collector will reach there shortly. The entire district administration is working in coordination with the railway administration and immediate arrangements are being made for the treatment of the injured. 8 ambulances have been dispatched. The general hospital as well as other nearby private hospitals have been kept ready for the treatment of the injured. Emergency equipment like glass cutters, floodlights etc. have also been kept ready. We are monitoring the entire situation and all necessary assistance is being provided immediately. I am in touch with the district administration," Mr. Fadnavis said in a post on X.

Mild tension prevails at Chintal Basti as Danam creates ruckus over HYDRAA demolitions

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Hyderabad: Mild tension prevailed when Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender created ruckus while the civic authorities were carrying out demolitions of alleged illegal structures near Shadan College in Chintal Basti on Wednesday afternoon. The MLA who angrily marched to the spot, demanded the authorities to stop the ongoing demolitions. Nagender was also furious with the officials saying how the demolitions were taken up without his knowledge as he was the local elected representative. He further warned that the demolitions should be stopped immediately and no action should be taken against structures until Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy returned from his Davos tour. He said that demolishing the houses of the poor was not right. On Hydras, Danam Nagender had earlier claimed to have told the authorities not to show their strength on the poor dwellers in slum areas. There were many alleged illegal constructions, he said suggesting they should be demolished. The Saifabad police and Khairatabad police personnel reached the spot to pacify the MLA and ensured he left the spot. Later, they



took the situation under control. Additional police force was deployed at the demolition spot to prevent any breach of law and order.

Middle-class people are victims of 'tax terrorism': Kejriwal in new poll pitch ahead of Union Budget

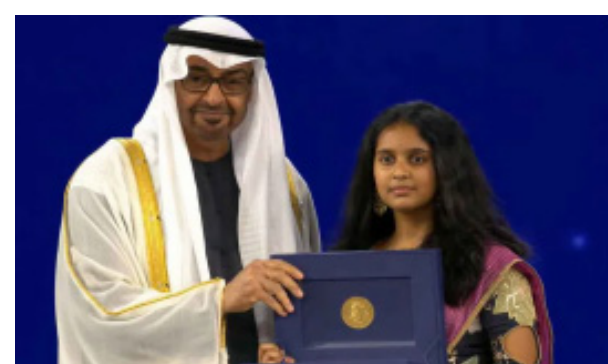


GNS News Agency, Jan 22

In a bid to woo middle-class voters ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal presented to the Centre seven demands including removal of the Goods and Services Tax on essentials in the upcoming Union Budget. The demands that are part of the AAP's latest political pitch are— increase the education and health budget to 10 per cent, impose a nationwide cap on all private school fees, provide scholarships for students pursuing higher studies, remove GST on essential commodities, levy zero tax on annual income of up to Rs 10 lakh, establish a pension scheme for senior citizens along with proper retirement plans and offer free healthcare and 50 per cent concession on train tickets for senior citizens. The former chief minister also referred to middle-class people as "victims of tax terrorism". "Promises made during elections are often called political tactics to get votes. Some political parties make promises in the name of caste, religion... some make promises for the underprivileged section and some for the rich. They make such promises for these two classes as one is a note bank and the other is a vote bank. But there is another section that comes in the middle. They are neither here nor there. They are middle-class people. No party in the country cares about them. They have remained just an ATM for the Government. They just pay the tax," he said. "The relationship between this section and the Government is very strange. They

just pay taxes, spending 50 per cent of their money on taxes. The truth is that middle-class people are the 'victims of Indian tax terrorism'," he said in a video message.

Telugu NRI girl wins prestigious award for air quality solution in UAE



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Dubai: A Telugu NRI student in UAE bagged the prestigious Shaikh Zayed Sustainability Award for developing an innovative solution, CarbonSponge, to improve air quality in classrooms. 15-year-old Monica Akkineni, native of Eluru in Andhra Pradesh and student in Abu Dhabi, was recognised for her groundbreaking project to improve air quality and reduce CO2 emissions in classrooms using biodegradable carbon sponge made from coconut fibre and natural rubber infused with carbon-absorbing algae. UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed and several royals and high-level officials attended the ceremony and presented the awards to winners. Monica, daughter of Bhupesh and Sweety, both software engineers working in Abu Dhabi, received the award from Shaikh Mohammed.

Appointment of six judges in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh HCs gets Centre's nod



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

New Delhi: The Centre on Wednesday cleared the appointment of four additional judges in the Telangana High Court and two additional judges in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. "In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint (i) Smt Tirumala Devi Eada Alias Thirupathamma K, to be an Additional Judge of the Telangana High Court with effect from the date she assumes charge of her office till 01.06.2026 and (ii) Smt Renuka Yam, (iii) Shri Narsing Rao Nandikonda, and (iv) Shri Madhusudhan Rao Bobbili Ramaiah, to be Additional Judges of the Telangana High Court, for a period of two years, with effect from the date they assume charge of their respective offices," said a notification issued by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice.

The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by CJI Sanjiv Khanna, in its meeting held on January 11, had approved the proposal for the appointment of four judicial officers as judges of the Telangana High Court, namely, Renuka Yara, Narsing Rao Nandikonda, Tirumala Devi Eada @ Thirupathamma K, and Madhusudhan Rao Bobbili Ramaiah. Another notification issued by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice said, "In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint S/Shri (i) Avadhanam Hari Haranadha Sarma and (ii) Dr Yadavalli Lakshmana Rao, to be Additional Judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, in that order of seniority, for a period of two years with effect from the date they assume charge of their respective offices." In its meeting held on January 11, the apex court Collegium approved the proposal for the appointment of judicial officers, Avadhanam Hari Haranadha Sarma and Yadavalli Lakshmana Rao, as judges of the Andhra Pradesh HC.

KT Rama Rao blames Revanth Reddy's reckless decisions for farmer suicides



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday said all farmer suicides were government murders and blamed Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's reckless decisions and failure to fulfil promises to farmers as major causes for farmers committing suicide in Telangana. He made it clear that there was no political agenda behind the BRS constituting a committee to study the issue of farmer suicides, its sole aim was to stand by the farmers. Formed under the directive of BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao, the committee aims to meet the farmers directly and identify the root causes of their distress.

Speaking to the media after the first meeting of the study committee held at former Minister S Niranjan Reddy's residence here on Wednesday, Rama Rao said the committee was set up in the wake of a tragic incident where a farmer took his life by consuming pesticide inside a bank in Adilabad. Starting its work on January 24 from Adilabad district, the committee will examine pressing issues such as the status of crop loan waivers, electricity supply, farming conditions, support prices, bonuses, procurement centres, and the functionality of Rythu Vedikas, among others, over the next month.

"The committee will examine the ground-level challenges faced by farmers, analyse the causes of suicides, and submit its findings to BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, the State government and also the State Agriculture Commission," he said.

The BRS working president pointed out that the Congress party led by Rahul Gandhi made several promises to farmers during the 'Farmer Declaration' event in Warangal including a Rs 2 lakh loan waiver, Rs 15,000 per acre as annual Rythu Bharosa farm assistance, support prices, bonuses, and setting up extensive purchase centres. "Believing these promises, farmers handed over power to the Congress party. However, the Congress has miserably failed to live up to its promises," he added.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Trump unfettered

The much-dreaded turbulence has begun, and that too on the very first day of US President Donald Trump's second term. In a tearing hurry to Make America Great Again, Trump bombarded his country and the rest of the world with a slew of executive orders on Monday. He withdrew the US from the World Health Organisation, alleging that the global agency had mishandled the Covid-19 pandemic. His own handling of the coronavirus catastrophe was dreadful — over 3,50,000 deaths were reported in the US in 2020, the final year of his first term — but those glaring lapses are of no consequence to him now. He has washed his hands of international collaboration to combat any future pandemic. Trump also signed America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement, whose main goal is to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Last year ended as the planet's hottest on record, and the target looks even more improbable now with the US jumping ship. But the US President couldn't care less as he is himself adept at turning up the heat on any foe, real or imaginary. No wonder he has warned that 100 per cent tariffs will be imposed on countries of the BRICS bloc, which includes India, if they dare to dump the dollar. If Trump is to be believed, America's golden age has begun (any resemblance to India's Amrit Kaal is purely coincidental). None will agree with him more than the 1,500-odd protesters who stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in a bid to prevent lawmakers from certifying his election defeat. The incident was a big blot on American democracy, but the President has chosen to reward his supporters for their loyalty by pardoning them. In stark contrast, there is bad news for those desperate to sneak into the US as Trump has declared illegal immigration at the US-Mexico border a "national emergency". It's America First for him — and the world must brace itself for the worst.

An unlikely mystery: studies shed new light on how genes are made

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

The alikeness of identical twins can be startling. They are alike because all their genes are alike. Genes are those segments of the genome where, if changes occur, the characteristics of an organism change. Non-identical twins vary in 50% of their genes and are much less alike. Thus, genes define our individuality in many ways. In December 2024, two research groups addressed how new genes are created. The University of Nevada, Reno, group reported its findings in Molecular Biology and Evolution and the other, from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology Plön, Germany, reported in Genome Biology and Evolution.

A group of 24 molecules of DNA gives identity to our 24 chromosomes. These are the chromosomes numbered 1 to 22 and the sex chromosomes X and Y. Our cells contain two sets of the genome: one derived from the mother's egg and the other from the father's sperm. Eggs and sperm receive only one chromosome of each pair. When they fuse and form the zygote, the latter has two sets again. The zygote then multiplies to form a baby. The cells in human bodies possess two copies of chromosomes 1-22. Biological females have two X chromosomes whereas biological males have an X chromosome and a Y chromosome. Identical twins arise from a single zygote while non-identical twins from two zygotes produced simultaneously. Each DNA molecule has two strands held together by bonds between compounds on the strands, called base pairs. Our genome contains 3.2 billion base-pairs. A gene is typically a few-thousand base-pair-long segment of a DNA.

When a gene is 'expressed', it means a cell will transcribe the underlying base pair sequence to a molecule called a messenger RNA (mRNA), and read the mRNA like a recipe to make a protein. In the human genome, there are 20,000 protein-coding genes and 20,000 genes that cells use to create RNA that influences the expression of other genes. There are also some genes, called promoters and enhancers, which tell the cell when and where other genes are copied into mRNA. Two compounds involved in forming the base pairs are cytosine and thymine. Sometimes the cytosine molecules bind to a methyl ion and are said to be methylated. A methylated cytosine molecule is likelier than an unmethylated one to mutate and become a thymine molecule.

In 1970, Japanese-American biologist Susumu Ohno proposed that the main source of new genes is gene duplication. When the body's genome has two copies of the same gene, one copy can continue to provide the original function while the other is free to mutate and acquire new functions. Ohno's proposal was simple but had one flaw: it didn't explain how the organism's cells would deal with producing twice the quantity of the same proteins as a result. Protein over-expression can lead to debilitating conditions. The University of Nevada, Reno, researchers addressed this problem.

Humans and mice last shared a common ancestor 75 million years ago. The researchers compared genes duplicated in human or mouse genomes, those duplicated in both, and those not duplicated in either. They found the promoters of duplicated genes had more methylated DNA than the promoters of genes that hadn't been duplicated. Increased methylation would have prevented the cells from manufacturing twice as many proteins, minimising the ill effects of duplication, and allowing the duplicate gene to survive long enough to acquire new functions. The researchers reported that the higher rate of methylation also elevated the rate of mutation.

The Max Planck Institute group inserted exogenous DNA into a population of cells derived from a human. (Exogenous means the DNA came from sources separate from the cells.) The researchers were careful to insert the DNA at a specific site in the genome, and allowed the cells to make proteins with them. The exogenous DNA had a chunk that consisted of a random sequence of base-pairs — which means the proteins the cells made with it would be random as well. The researchers put together a collection of cells of 3,708 types and nurtured them for 20 days. At regular intervals they checked the relative abundance of different cell types. After 20 days, the team found that 53% of cell types had become less abundant, 8% more abundant, and 40% didn't swing either way. That is, more often than not, random DNA sequences affected cell growth and thus became relevant for evolution to act upon. For a genome to retain a gene, it must have some use or the genome allows it to mutate. But establishing a gene's usefulness is challenging.

Digitise, reorganise, beautify: Revamp of police stations in Faridkot boosts facilities, cheers up cops



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Organised record rooms, white-washed buildings, digitised files, plants for beautification — eight police stations and five police posts in Punjab's Faridkot district entered the New Year with a refreshing new look and attitude. "It took us six weeks to refurbish them. In the New Year, we welcomed people in the renovated stations and police posts," Dr Pragya Jain, Senior Superintendent of Police (Faridkot), told The Indian Express. "Significant improvements have been made and facilities for public convenience enhanced in all these places in a bid to provide better services and strengthen police administration," she added. The next step is to auction the unclaimed vehicles lying in various police stations after obtaining court orders. The first set will go under the hammer this month itself, sources indicated.

"Messy record rooms have been reorganised and digitised. Additionally, we have started to dispose of outdated and unclaimed vehicles at police stations," the SSP added. Faridkot Jagtar Singh, SHO (Faridkot city), said the changes have made their station look more spacious, even prompting complainants to remark that it feels like a different place. Rajesh Kumar, Station House Officer (SHO) of Jaitu police station, said, "Besides white-washing the building, iron grill and mesh were added on the boundary wall to strengthen it further. The waiting room and duty officer's

room were renovated. The records have been organised year-wise and even in the malkhana (record room), everything has been organised according to the year of crime." "Case properties like vehicles have been parked in an organised manner with two-wheelers on one side and four-wheelers on the other. We have planted a few seasonal flowers in the open area for beautification," SHO Kumar elaborated.

He mentioned that the Jaitu prison has a historically significant cell. "It is where former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru was kept during the British rule. It was cleaned and new lights installed. We now feel happy while sitting in the neat and clean place." Jagtar Singh, SHO (Faridkot city), said the changes have made their station look more spacious, even prompting complainants to remark that it feels like a different place. "Earlier it was hard to enter the malkhana... The vehicles parked in disarray outside the malkhana have now been arranged properly. Some of us now sit under the winter sun in the space outside which was earlier cluttered with case property vehicles," he said. Kotkapura police station Kotkapura police station SSP Jain, known for her innovative approaches, implemented similar changes during her probation period at the Dugri station under the Ludhiana Police Commissionerate in 2019. "When a complainant visits a police station, they should feel that they have come to a well-organised and welcoming place. Similarly, a clean and conducive workspace enhances the efficiency of the staff. The makeover project was launched to meet these objectives and now all police stations in the district are ready with the new look," she said. Measures have also been taken to manage cleanliness, strengthen security posts, maintain transparency in record-keeping, reduce clutter and ensure proper arrangements for bathrooms and water supply, the SSP added. Besides, police warehouses have also been cleaned and separate rooms set up for investigating officers. Enhanced seating areas and water arrangements have been made for the public. In addition, advanced security measures including reinforced sentry posts and bulletproof fortifications ensure the safety of staff as well as visitors.

'Biggest moment in our family's sporting history': Pune-origin siblings shine for Australia at Kho Kho World Cup



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

With 50 seconds left, the scoreboard read Australia 35-Malaysia 34. It was Australia's last match in the men's Kho Kho World Cup Group D stage and 18-year-old Mangesh Jagtap, their only remaining defender, had to survive to ensure a victory for his team. Under pressure, Mangesh effortlessly dodged the Malaysian attackers until the final whistle blew. Australia won and Mangesh was mobbed by his teammates, including elder brother Tejas. "Mangesh had no energy left in his legs but had to save the game for Australia. He played with his heart and won the game for us. That is the biggest moment in our family's sporting history," Sandeep Jagtap, Mangesh's father, said.

Sandeep, who played for local football clubs in Pune, moved to Australia in 2004. His sons Mangesh and Tejas are now part of the Australian team participating in the ongoing Kho Kho World Cup in Delhi. Despite the win, the Australian men's team finished third in their group and did not qualify for the next rounds. Mangesh, however, had a spectacular tournament as he won two best attacker awards and two best player awards in four matches.

At your service in Kabir Kutir: Keen to build image of a "people's man", Haryana CM Nayab Saini sets up "war room" at CM house

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

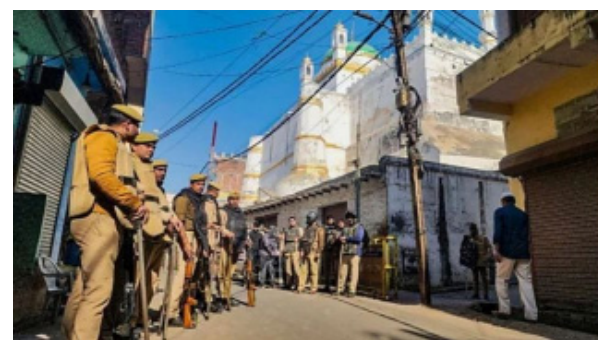
At 7 pm, Ramdevi (51) steps into Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's official residence in Chandigarh, her face a mix of hope and determination. She has travelled from Kurukshetra by bus, planning to voice her grievance and return home by train, confident that the Chief Minister will act on her complaint. "At the entrance, the staff only asked for my Aadhaar card as identity proof to issue an entry pass. I came to lodge a complaint against my brother-in-law, a former policeman, who has been harassing us. The Chief Minister assured me that my complaint will be forwarded to the SP Kurukshetra for action," Ramdevi told. Since taking office in March this year, Saini has, according to his supporters, transformed access to the Chief Minister. "Whenever the Chief Minister is free, even if it's midnight, he asks his staff, 'Are there any visitors?' If there are, he meets them before retiring for the night," says Praveen Attrey, Saini's media secretary. Late-night interactions frequently make their way to social media. On December 10, 2024 Saini shares photos on X at 11.31 pm, captioning them: "Whether it's 12 am or 2 am, I am available to serve you 24x7. Today, I met visitors at the Chief Minister's residence—'Sant Kabir Kutir'—to understand their problems. I directed the concerned officers to resolve the issues promptly."

Saini (54), who comes from a farming background, appears focused on building his image as a "people's man" by personally addressing grievances. An official at the CM's residence noted: "Earlier, under former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, visitors needed appointments via telephone or the official website. Without an appointment, entry was not permitted. The 'CM Window' system was introduced to register complaints without requiring physical visits." The CM Window remains operational during Saini's tenure. However, his aides emphasise that he is accessible to the public at his residence whenever he is avail-

able. An official revealed that over 1.5 lakh visitors have been received at the CM residence in the past nine months.

"In the initial months, the Chief Minister himself would call the concerned officers to act on complaints. However, with daily footfalls ranging between 600 and 800, this became unfeasible. A decision was then taken to establish a 'war room' at the residence," an official said. This war room, staffed by 21 personnel, manages complaints handed over to the CM and senior officers. Led by a Haryana Civil Services (HCS) officer serving as OSD to the CM, the team coordinates with a call centre for follow-ups and gauging complainants' satisfaction. Each of the state's 51 government departments has a nodal officer tasked with responding to complaints within five days of receiving communication from the war room. Visitors often raise issues ranging from streetlights and anganwadi centres to staff transfers. While government job transfers are now processed online, people still visit the CM residence to request exceptions, officials noted. The war room also tracks action on complaints received during Khattar's Jan Samwad programmes held between January 2023 and February 2024. Among the visitors was 82-year-old DS Sharma, general secretary of a Gurgaon-based education and research committee. His delegation sought to reclaim the playground of Jangid Brahmin High School, reportedly leased out for parking. "The CM took our representation and instructed his PA to note down the details," said Sharma, adding, "We came without an appointment, and entry passes were issued after our phone numbers were recorded." Satish Valmiki (39) and other sanitation workers from Kaithal demanded regularisation of their services. "We have been working for Rs 9,000 per month for the past eight years. Our jobs should be regularised under Haryana Kaushal Rojgar Nigam," he said. Though they couldn't meet the CM directly, a senior officer forwarded their representation to the Kaithal deputy commissioner via WhatsApp.

Non-bailable warrants issued against 24 accused



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Sambhal, Sambhal case, Sambhal violence case, Five people died and several others, including police officials, sustained injuries during the violence that broke out on November 24 last year. A local court in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal on Thursday issued non-bailable warrants (NBWs) against 24 absconding accused allegedly linked to the large-scale violence that broke out in the town in November last year following a survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid.

"We have arrested 60 accused, including six women, who pelted stones on the police from their rooftops that day. As many as 91 more offenders are under the police radar for their involvement in the violence. They have either taken shelter in other states or at places of their relatives in nearby districts. We got 24 NBWs from a local court yesterday. No one will be spared," Krishna Kumar Bishnoi, Superintendent of Police (SP), Sambhal, said on Friday. Five people died and several others, including police officials, sustained injuries during the violence that broke out on November 24 last year after the second court-ordered survey of the mosque to ascertain if it was built after destroying a temple.

The police arrested Mohsin, 28, and Husnain, 32, after identifying them through CCTV footage. They have been accused of sparking violence in the Hindupura Kheda locality near the mosque. Among the 60 accused arrested is Adnan Mohammed, 30, a resident of Deepa Sarai locality, who allegedly fired at the SP during the violence. He was arrested from Batla House in New Delhi. The police have also arrested Zikra Khatun, 45, who had allegedly pelted stones at senior police officials.

Railways to construct new terminal at Devanahalli; Bengaluru suburban rail corridor deadline pushed to 2027



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

V Somanna, Minister of State for Railways, on Thursday announced that a new terminal would be constructed at Devanahalli railway station to reduce the congestion at Bengaluru's railway stations. The minister, who was inspecting the infrastructure works at Whitefield, Hoodi Halt, and Carmelaram railway stations, also said the development work worth Rs 1,200 crore at the busy KSR Bengaluru station is progressing under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Plans to construct two additional platforms at KSR Bengaluru station, with an estimated budget of Rs 180 crore, and plans for a circular railway network around Bengaluru covering 280 km are in progress to accommodate increased passenger demand, he said. Somanna stated that two suburban rail corridors — Benniganahalli to Chikkabanavara (25 km) and Heelalige to Rajanukunte (46.8 km) — are scheduled for completion by March 2027. He said that Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Ltd (KRIDE) and the Railways are working towards expediting the project. Initially planned to be finished within 72 months (6 years) of its approval in October 2020, the project saw its foundation stone laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2022. At the time, Modi had assured that the long-pending project that was delayed for 40 years would be completed within 40 months. Somanna also said that the quadrupling of the railway line between Bengaluru Cantonment and Whitefield is progressing well and is expected to enhance connectivity in the region. "Rainwater drainage is primary challenge."

Following the inspection of railway infrastructure works, Somanna pointed out that the primary challenge in the region has been rainwater drainage and emphasized the importance of addressing this issue. He mentioned that the focus will be on constructing or improving Road Over Bridges (ROBs), Road Under Bridges (RUBs), underpasses, and water vents to ease the flow of traffic and water. He also mentioned that steps will be taken to rename the Bellandur Road Railway Station to Panathur Railway Station.

Bidar police team reaches Hyderabad to gather details

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Hyderabad: A team of the Bidar police reached Hyderabad to gather details about the firing at Afzalgunj, in which a manager of a travel agency suffered a bullet wound.

Two suspects had earlier in the day shot dead a security guard and another person before escaping with Rs 90 lakh cash.

The police suspect the same criminals had shot at manager-cum-cleaner Jahangir at Afzalgunj when he tried to check their luggage. The criminals later fled the spot.

An official of the Bidar police, on condition of anonymity, said they suspect the gang hails from Bihar or Madhya Pradesh and was on its way to their hometown via Raipur in Chhattisgarh.

Telangana students get extended deadline to pay fees for March 2025 Inter exams



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Hyderabad: The Telangana Board of Intermediate Education on Friday extended the last date to pay fee for the Intermediate Public Exams March 2025 with a late fee of Rs.2,500 up to January 25. All first and second intermediate students belonging to regular and vocational streams, along with private candidates (once failed), can utilise the opportunity and pay the exam fee till the extended date. The

Board extended the exam fee payment deadline as the State government recently kept the order mandating fire NoC for junior colleges operating in mixed occupancy buildings (commercial and college) in abeyance for the academic year 2024-25. Without fire NoC, the Board refused to extend affiliation to 235 junior colleges operating under mixed occupancy buildings. The government's decision has allowed the board to grant affiliation to colleges, enabling students to sit for the inter exams.

The intermediate theory exams are scheduled to be held from March 5 to 25 with first year exams commencing from March 5 and second year exams from March 6. Both the exams will be conducted from 9 am to 12 noon. Prior to theory exams, the Board will hold practical exams. As per the timetable, the English practical exam for the first and second year students is scheduled on January 31 and February 1 respectively. Similarly, the practical exams for both general and vocational streams will be conducted from February 3 to 22. The exam timings are 9 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5 pm. The ethics and human values exam for backlog students is scheduled for January 29 from 10 am to 1 pm and environmental education test for regular students is on January 30 from 10 am to 1 pm.

'God answered our prayers': Year after they lost firstborn to boat tragedy, Vadodara couple welcomes baby girl

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Vadodara resident Umar Kothari (35) chokes up as he remembers his firstborn Alishba was nine when she, along with 11 other children and two teachers, died after the boat they were travelling in during a school picnic capsized in the Harni Lake Zone due to alleged overcrowding on January 18, 2024. Harni boat tragedy PTI On January 18, 2024, 12 students and two teachers of New Sunrise School in Vadodara had died after the boat they were travelling in during a picnic capsized in the Harni Motnath Lake.

A year on, Umar and his wife Adiba (30) received "consolation in times of anguish" as they became parents to another girl. The Kotharis cannot help but marvel at the "resemblance" the child, born around two weeks ago, bears to Alishba. "She is an identical copy of Alishba," remarks Umar. "Her birth has flooded us with more memories of our departed daughter," he wistfully adds. Umar recalls how just days before her death, Alishba had expressed the wish to have a younger sister. "We were celebrating Uttarayan (the kite-flying festival in Gujarat) that day..." he shares with Alishba with her brother and parents Alishba with her brother and parents

Umar remembers January 18, 2024 like it was yesterday. Until the day of the tragedy, he was against Alishba joining the picnic. But eventually, he relented to his daughter's wishes. "I regret that I gave in. We are constantly haunted by the guilt of losing a child. Every single moment since the tragedy, we remember our old times and routines. My eight-year-old son, Usaid, misses his elder sister every day," he says. "When we lost her, we prayed fervently to have our daughter back. And now, when we were told that we have been blessed with a baby girl, we were overwhelmed. Our friends and relatives, too, can't help marveling at her likeness to Alishba," Umar adds.

The Kotharis have decided to call their newborn Fatima — a name that they once wanted for Alishba. "We wanted to change her name to Fatima. We did not change the official records but had begun addressing her by that name at home," Umar, who works at a private company, tells. Although Fatima's birth has given him some solace, Umar says nothing can take away the pain the family has been living with after Alishba's passing. "Our wounds can never heal... Although God has been kind and (with Fatima's birth) has conveyed to us that he is there to lessen our pain, we cannot help but remember our firstborn..." he says. Umar says it was a matter of pure luck that his son Usaid was not a part of the picnic. "My son had to sit an academic year out as he did not fit the new age criteria for primary school admission. Otherwise, in all likelihood, he would have been on the boat... I shudder to think what would have happened..." Meanwhile, the birth of Fatima has lent optimism to another couple who lost their child to the Harni tragedy. The couple, who did not wish to be identified, has undergone a procedure for contraception reversal in the hope of becoming parents again. Long road to justice

Umar says the delay in commencement of trial in the case continues to "gnaw at the guilt". He tells The Indian Express: "Even God has answered our prayers but the justice system is failing us. The complainant in the FIR (Rajesh Chauhan, former Executive Engineer of Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC)) has been found guilty of dereliction of duty by the civic body but has not been made a co-accused in the case. As per our laws, two FIRs cannot be registered in the same incident and so, we are fighting. We are putting up a fight to ensure the VMC and the school are also taken to task but justice seems to be eluding us." The arrested accused included Binit Kotia of M/s Kotia Projects as well as Paresh Shah, who allegedly oversaw the day-to-day running of the lake zone. The other partners of M/s Kotia Projects, including Paresh Shah's wife Nutan, son Vatsal and daughter Vaishakhi, former VMC town planning officer Gopaldas Shah, Jatin Doshi and his two daughters-



in-law Tejal Doshi and Neha Doshi, Dharmin Bhatani, Dipen Shah, Dharmil Shah, Bhimsinh Yadav, Vedprakash Yadav and Rashmikant Prajapati were also arrested in the case. Nilesh Jain of Dolphin Entertainment, who had been subcontracted to run the boating facility and children's rides as well as Alpesh Bhatt of Tristar, who owned the boats and previously ran the recreation facility, along with Lake Zone Manager Manager Shantilal Solanki, and boatman Nayan Gohil and Ankit Vasava were also among the 20 arrested persons in the case. All of the accused who were arrested are out on bail. "They are living their life while we do not know when the trial will even commence. Most of the partners of the firms that managed the Lake Zone have filed a discharge application, stating that they were not involved in the running of the recreation area."

In line with the November 29, 2024 order of the Gujarat High Court, which is hearing a suo motu PIL in Harni boat tragedy, the Deputy Collector of Vadodara district is conducting hearings to decide the compensation to be paid by contracting agency M/s Kotia Projects to the victims. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Corporator of VMC Ward 15, Ashish Joshi, who has been assisting the families in their fight for justice, told The Indian Express, "We (the families) have demanded a compensation of Rs 5 crore for each of the 14 grieving families. The next hearing for the compensation is on January 20 and thereafter, the Deputy Collector will submit a report to the HC for further directions. The parents have also petitioned that action should be initiated against the VMC and the New Sunrise School, which has filed an affidavit before the Deputy Collector stating that they had no liability in the case." During the hearing of the suo motu PIL in the HC in November 2024, the victims had submitted that like in the case of the Morbi tragedy, where Oreva company was directed to pay an "exemplary compensation", M/s Kotia Projects should be ordered to pay a similar relief in the Harni tragedy. In October 2022, 135 people, including 55 children, had died after a suspension bridge across Machhu river in Morbi town collapsed.

It was alleged that 30 people were seated in the boat meant for just 14. It was alleged that 30 people were seated in the boat meant for just 14. At his home in Vadodara's walled city, Umar says sending his son on a school picnic is out of the question now. "I even fear sending him to school in overcrowded vans because of the reports we read about neglect during transportation," he adds. "I can't trust anyone."

What is the Harni boat tragedy?

On January 18, 2024, 12 students and two teachers of New Sunrise School in Vadodara had died after the boat they were travelling in during a picnic capsized in the Harni Motnath Lake. It was alleged that 30 people were seated in the boat meant for just 14. Deployed by a contractor, the vessel was being operated by a boatman who had no prerequisite qualification to run a motorised boat, according to the report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Vadodara police. The SIT had arrested a total of 20 persons in the case, including partners of M/s Kotia Projects, contracted by the Vadodara Municipal Corporation for the redevelopment of the lake. All the accused are currently out on bail.

cellations due to low visibility during landings and takeoffs. Over the last few days, hundreds of trains and flights stood delayed due to extremely low visibility.

IMD's yellow alert due to dense fog in the capital is expected to remain in place for today and tomorrow, but light rains after the weekend are expected to improve the AQI and visibility in Delhi.

In its most recent forecast, IMD predicted western disturbances in northwest India from January 18. It is likely that Delhi will receive another spell of light rains on January 21. The temperature in Delhi is likely to see a drop due to the rains next week. On Thursday, the city's 24-hour average air quality index stood in the "very poor" category with a reading of 302. The AQI is expected to improve next week due to light to moderate rains in the capital. Meanwhile, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has revoked Stage-IV measures of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for Delhi and NCR following a notable improvement in air quality.

'Shocked over 79k pending FIRs despite lapse of statutory period', HC seeks Punjab's Action Plan



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Shocked at the staggering 79,000 FIRs still awaiting logical conclusion despite the lapse of the statutory period, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has asked the Punjab Director General of Police to submit an Action Plan within two weeks. Posting the matter for a hearing on January 30, the single bench of Justice Sandeep Moudgil said the action plan should depict the dates of FIRs, the time prescribed under the Court for the completion of the investigation and the proposed time frame to conclude the same. "The said information shall be furnished by way of an affidavit of the Director General of Police, Punjab," Justice Moudgil said. Justice Moudgil was hearing an application filed by one Saraj, seeking revival of his main petition, which was dismissed on September 17, 2024, on the assurance given by the State of Punjab to complete the investigation into an attempt to murder FIR registered at the Sadar Ferozpur police station.

The applicant stated that the Sadar Ferozpur SHO was apprised of the HC order dated September 17, 2024, and he was requested to complete the investigation. "However, the SHO showed his inability to conduct a proper investigation until and unless bail granted to the accused by the Additional Sessions Judge, Ferozpur, is not cancelled," the applicant said. Saraj, thus, sought a revival of the main petition to reconsider the cancellation of the accused's bail. Following this, Ferozpur Senior Superintendent of Po-

lice Saumya Mishra filed an affidavit.

The HC, on perusing the affidavit, found "no explanation for why the investigation was delayed and a challan was not filed so far in the FIR registered way back on July 16, 2021". Punjab counsel Additional Advocate General ADS Sukhija then filed another affidavit, which when perused by the HC revealed that the case lacked any details on the use of scientific methods to apprehend the accused, such as tracking his mobile phone or its location, or monitoring any bank account transactions made by Bansi Lal, the attempt to murder accused.

Justice Moudgil, on hearing the matter and contentions of the state counsel, said, "Having experienced lacklustre response of the State Government not only in the instant petition, where the investigation has been delayed beyond the usual timeframe but also in other cases presented before this Court on the same day...related to the districts of Ludhiana and Jalandhar, respectively, this Court directed the Director General of Police to provide details of all FIRs pending within the State of Punjab where investigations have not been completed within the prescribed statutory period. Furthermore, it was noted that in the majority of cases, no extension for investigation has been sought, as observed by this Court during the hearing of multiple petitions." The bench noted, "In response, a bulky affidavit was filed by Gaurav Yadav, DGP, Punjab, Chandigarh, along with an affidavit from Saumya Mishra, Senior Superintendent of Police, Ferozpur, by the State and the affidavits included a district-wise breakdown of FIRs, revealing over 10,000 FIRs in the State are still pending investigation, despite the lapse of the prescribed 90 days period within which the Investigating Agency is required to submit a final report." The HC thus noted, "Shocked at the staggering figure of 79,000 FIRs still awaiting logical conclusion in the FIRs despite lapse of the statutory period, State is called upon to submit an Action Plan within a period of two weeks, which shall depict the date of FIR, the time prescribed under the Court for the completion of the investigation and the proposed time frame to conclude the same."

Dallewal's indefinite fast enters day 52: 101 farmers to resume Delhi march on Jan — 4th attempt in a month

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

A group of 101 farmers will resume on January 21 their march to Delhi from Shambhu border point to press the government to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) for crops, their fourth such attempt in a month and fifth in a year. The decision to initiate a fresh march was taken in a meeting of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Majdoor Morcha (KMM), latter's coordinator Sarwan Singh Pandher said. "Both the forums decided that the jatha of 101 farmers will resume their march to Delhi on January 21 from the Shambhu border. We have seen and we also feel that the government is not ready for any talks. It was the decision of both the forums to intensify the agitation," Pandher told reporters at the Shambhu border point.

The jatha of farmers will be led by BKU Doaba state president Manjit Singh Rai and BKU state president Balwant Singh Behramke. Earlier, jathas of 101 farmers each had made three attempts to head towards Delhi on foot — on December 6, December 8 and December 14, last year at the Shambhu border. The farmers have been camping at Khanauri and Shambhu borders since February 13 last year after security forces in Haryana stopped their initial Dilli Chalo march. The fresh march plan comes a day after a group of 111 farmers began a fast-unto-death on the Haryana side of the border near Khanauri in solidarity with SKM (non-political) coordinator Jagjit Singh Dallewal, whose fast-unto-death entered its 52nd day, Thursday.

At Khanauri, farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar said Dallewal has lost about 20 kgs — from 86.9 kg when he began the fast unto death on November 26 to 66.4 kg now. Dallewal's weight was measured through a digital machine, Kohar said, adding there has been a 23.59 per cent loss of his total body weight. Dr Harinder Singh of Rajindra Medical College in Patiala said Dallewal's body has a positive ketone level — a higher level of ketone indicates that the body is using stored fat for energy instead of glucose. Sharing information about Dallewal's vitals, Dr Singh said his blood pressure was 120/70 and pulse rate was 80. His health is "deteriorating" every day and he is suffering from dehydration, the doctor said. Dallewal has refused any medical aid during his fasting, which has caused his health to worsen. According to farmers, Dallewal's ketone level was 6.50 mmol/L (millimoles per litre) as against the normal range of 0.02-0.27. They had earlier said that his body was not even accepting water and whenever he

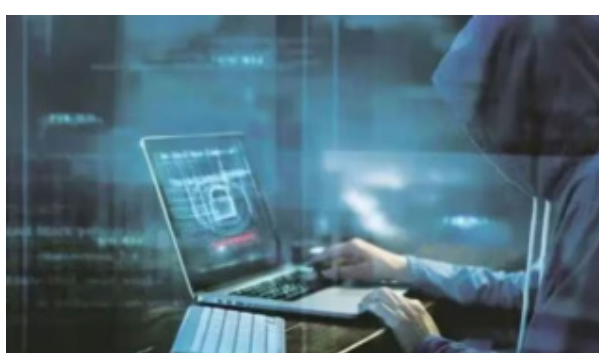


drinks water, he vomits. The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Punjab government for a copy of the health reports of Dallewal to be examined for an opinion from the medical board of AIIMS.

Meanwhile, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is not part of the ongoing protests, said they will write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the deteriorating health of Dallewal and demand that the Centre initiate talks with farmers. "A series of protest action and interaction with political parties will be undertaken to put pressure on the Union government with the demands of immediately holding talks with all the farmer organisations on the long-pending demands, including MSP and loan waiver, save the life of Dallewal, and immediately withdraw the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing," the SKM said in a statement. It further said that SKM will organise Kisan Mahapanchayat in all states. "The respective state coordination committees (SCCs) of SKM will meet immediately to decide the date and venue. A massive Kisan Mahapanchayat has been scheduled on February 11 in Patna," the statement said.

They also said SKM delegations will meet the chief ministers in different states and urge them to adopt a resolution in the assemblies to "reject the anti-farmer, anti-federal National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM)". The chief ministers will also be urged to write to the prime minister over Dallewal's ongoing fast. "SKM will hold a one-day dharna on January 20 or any other suitable date in front of the residence/office of the respective MPs and urge them to put pressure on the prime minister," it said, adding the central trade unions have decided to join the January 26 tractor/vehicle/motorcycle parade in support of the farmers' demands.

Retired principal in Punjab kept under digital arrest, duped of Rs 47 lakh



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

An 80-year-old retired college principal was allegedly put under 'digital arrest' for five days on the pretext of being involved in money laundering. The fraudsters also made her transfer Rs 47.30 lakh in a bank account as security. The victim, Sushila Verma of Rajguru Nagar, said that she received a call from an unidentified number on January 7. The caller introduced himself as a CBI officer and accused her of using a Mumbai-based bank account for laundering money linked to the private airliner. The accused sent her fake arrest warrants and warned her against disclosing the matter to anyone.

The complainant said the fraudsters intimidated him by making a video call from what appeared to be a CBI office. She said he was convinced of their legitimacy and transferred the money in multiple transactions to bank accounts provided by the accused. She was told that the money was needed for a forensic examination of his transactions. The complainant said the fraudsters promised

the money would be returned within 72 hours. Throughout the con, she was kept under digital surveillance via video calls. When she realised that she had been duped, she filed a police complaint.

Kia begins production of Syros SUV from Anantapur plant

Hyderabad: Kia India has commenced mass production of its SUV Kia Syros. Officially unveiled last December, the SUV will roll out from the company's plant in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. According to the company, the five-seat Syros has recorded 10,258 pre-orders.

"We're delighted with the interest our customers in India have already shown in the new Kia Syros SUV," said Ho Sung Song, president and CEO of Kia.

The model introduces first-in-segment rear sliding, reclining and ventilated seats, and has over 80 connected features. It also offers a dual-pane panoramic sunroof, a Harman Kardon Premium 8 Speaker Sound System, and first-in-segment Over-the-Air (OTA) software update capability, the company stated. Safety features include Forward Collision Avoidance Assist, Lane Keep Assist, a 360 Degree Camera with Blind View Monitor and Smart Cruise Control with Stop & Go.

Kia Syros sales will officially begin in India from February 1. The company will reveal the price on February 1, which is expected to be in the range of Rs 9.7 lakh to Rs 16.50 lakh (ex-showroom).

Dense fog in Delhi-NCR: IMD issues

'orange' alert in capital, predicts light rain

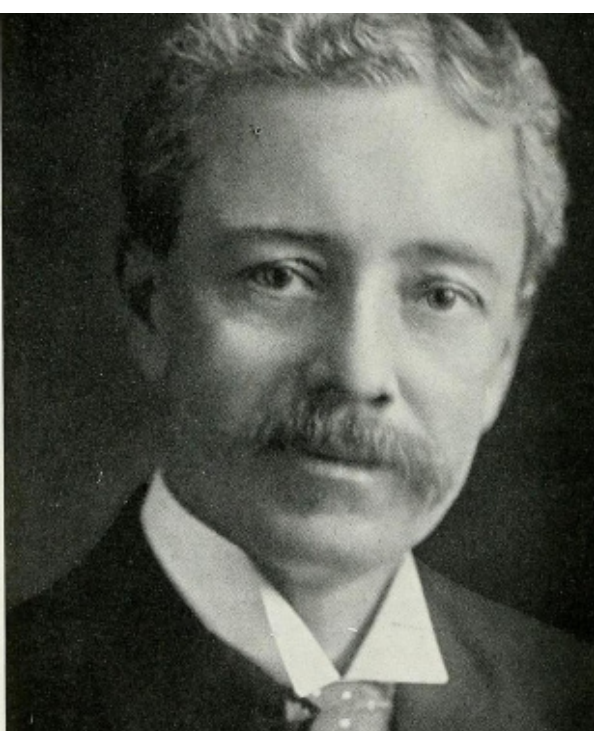
GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Parts of Delhi and NCR woke up to dense fog on Friday morning, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an orange alert in the capital for today. The weather agency predicted that moderate to dense fog will continue for two days amid the 'poor' air quality index in Delhi.

Some areas of Delhi and Noida recorded zero to 50 m visibility, with high-traffic routes such as DND and Sarai Kale Khan recording dense fog in the early hours of Friday. Zero visibility prevailed over Palam at 3 am, which improved to 50 m at 6.30 am due to better wind speed (from 8-10 kmph to 12 kmph westerly). It may improve further to moderate fog conditions in the next two hours, as per the IMD officials.

The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) issued a warning at 5.30 am on January 17, urging all passengers to check with their respective airlines for any delays or can-

X-rays, balloons, and a way with students



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Born in Greensboro, U.S., in July 1859, Henry Louis Smith did his schooling at the local high school, which was run by his uncle. He entered Davidson College in 1877, and while he graduated with honours in 1881, his involvement with them lasted much longer. He served as the principal of the Selma Academy for five years, during which time he not only demonstrated his teaching ability, but also how he could engage in promotional activities. During his tenure, the school's enrollment quadrupled, and a new building was constructed for classes. That brought him back to Davidson College, where he was recruited to be the professor of natural science (physics and astronomy). Smith, however, availed a year's absence and put that time to good use by obtaining an M.A. degree in 1887 from the University of Virginia. He commenced his teaching after that, briefly returning to Virginia again in the academic year of 1889-90 to earn his Ph.D. in physics.

Bringing X-rays to the U.S. On two major occasions, Smith's scientific knowledge had positive consequences globally. The first of those was in January 1896 when he played a telling role in bringing X-rays to the U.S. Having read about Roentgen's recent discovery of X-rays and his experiments in Germany, Smith decided to put it to the test in his laboratory. Working with some of his students, Smith constructed an X-ray machine using Crookes tube. While the accounts vary here as to whether or not Smith was directly involved, we can say with certainty that on January 12, 1896, X-ray pictures were produced for the first time in the U.S. A variety of objects were X-rayed, including rifle cartridges, rings and pins inside a pillbox, and even a human finger (story goes that three students bribed a janitor to let them into the anatomy lab on campus, before using a pocket knife to slice a finger from a corpse... doing all of this in secrecy, afraid of the consequences if they were to be found out!). Smith conducted further experiments in February. He himself obtained the hand of a corpse from a local physician, and shot a bullet into that hand. The resulting X-ray image was probably the first demonstration of X-rays

'Driver, guard were made company directors': ED attaches Rs 443 Cr properties of ex-promoters of Kwality

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

ED Kwality An ED spokesperson said the FIR alleged that Kwality Limited indulged in falsification and fabrication of books of accounts by misrepresentation of sales, purchases, debtors and creditors and thereby cheated the consortium of banks. The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday said it has attached several immovable properties worth Rs 442.85 crore in the bank fraud case of erstwhile Kwality Limited under PMLA. The provisionally attached properties comprises a farmhouse at DLF Chattarpur of 12,000 sq yards, residential properties at Vasant Vihar and Punjabi Bagh and several residential plots at Karnal and Mohali. "All the attached properties were owned by the then erstwhile promoters Siddhant Gupta and Sanjay Dhingra of Kwality Limited through dummy companies. The driver and security guard of the said Promoters were the directors in such companies. ED initiated investigations on the basis of FIR registered by CBI against Siddhant Gupta and Sanjay Dhingra of M/s. Kwality Limited for cheating Banks. Kwality Limited, was engaged in processing, and trading of milk, ice creams and various dairy products," an ED spokesperson said.

According to the spokesperson, the FIR alleged that Kwality Limited through the erstwhile Directors indulged in falsification and fabrication of books of accounts by misrepresentation of sales, purchases, debtors and creditors and thereby cheated the consortium of banks.

"As per FIR, bank fraud is to the tune of Rs 1400.62 crore. ED investigation has revealed that the then promoters/directors fudged the books of accounts to show higher sales and debtors. Huge amounts of trading (sales/purchase) were made without actual physical deliveries or re-

ability to tellingly reveal both natural and foreign objects within the human body. This picture was published on February 27 in the Charlotte Observer. In the years that followed, Smith conducted one of the first clinical applications of X-rays. Along with a team of medical practitioners, Smith employed X-rays to detect a tailor's thimble that a child from Harrisburg had swallowed, which the doctors then successfully removed. Balloons for peace

The year he brought X-rays to the U.S. was also the year in which Smith grew further at Davidson College, as he was named vice-president in 1896. The turn of the century worked wonders for him as he was elected president of Davidson College in 1901. He held that position for over a decade, departing only to become the president of Virginia's Washington and Lee University. The fact that his father had graduated from here had been a tug strong enough for Smith to make the move and make his presence felt there. Council of Four at the WWI Paris peace conference in 1919. From left to right, U.K. Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Italy's Premier Vittorio Orlando, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. Council of Four at the WWI Paris peace conference in 1919. From left to right, U.K. Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Italy's Premier Vittorio Orlando, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. | Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Alas, World War I was just around the corner and it drew the energies of almost everyone involved. While it is well established that wars and the accompanying arms race usually bring benefits to the fields of science and technology, Smith ensured that science and tech provided an impetus on the peace efforts of World War I too. Close to the end of that war, a prize was offered for those who could come up with a method of informing the German people about U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's plans for peace. Keeping in mind the prevailing winds, Smith suggested attaching Wilson's message to gas-filled balloons and releasing them from France. With the timing seemingly right, the Allies acted on the idea and sent across innumerable such balloons in the hope that it would be carried to Germany. The plan worked as the majority of German soldiers who surrendered carried this message with them. Wilson, in fact, credited Smith for shortening the war considerably. Able teacher and administrator The success that Smith enjoyed at Selma Academy was something that he was able to replicate wherever he went. Blessed with an energetic mind and endless energy, Smith more than tripled Davidson College's enrollment during his time there, and more than doubled the size of the student body at Washington and Lee University.

An administrator par excellence, he is celebrated largely for the work that he put in to not only enhance intellectual standards, but also raising the bar for admission requirements. A gifted speaker, Smith lost no opportunity to seek funds from all sources, even if it meant travelling extensively for the cause of promoting his institution. At heart, however, Smith was a teacher. He was recalled by students as "brilliant" and "enthusiastic" and he initiated and implemented so many projects for his students that they aptly gave him the nickname "Project". Even after retiring from academic life at the age of 70 in 1929, Smith remained active until shortly before his death in February 1951. As someone who set up facilities for recreation and exercises for his students as he believed that a strong body was necessary for a strong mind, Smith made sure he was agile throughout, both intellectually and physically.



ceipt of the goods at factory premises. It was also noticed that sham companies/firms operated through implanted/dummy owners were used to divert the bank funds," the spokesperson said. "The funds diverted through the stated modus was circulated, layered so as to conceal its origin and routed to different accounts as per the instructions of the promoters for purposes not intended by the banks. ED had earlier conducted search operations in 15 locations connected with the erstwhile promoters of Kwality Ltd on November 27 last year. During the search operations, cash amounting to Rs 1.3 crore and various evidence related to assets/ bank accounts held through several shell companies by the promoters were recovered and seized," the spokesperson alleged. "High end luxury cars like Porsche, Mercedes, BMW, etc having purchase value of about Rs four crore purchased in the name of the benami and dummy companies were also found during the search and were seized. Further demat accounts having investment value of about Rs 2.5 crore were also frozen," the spokesperson said.

As casualties mount, how Bihar govt is trying to overhaul traffic regulation

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

traffic violations, Bihar traffic violations, Bihar government, Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras, CCTVs and Artificial Intelligence, Indian express news, current affairs According to the official, the state has so far rewarded 1,200 Good Samaritans and disbursed compensation in 76 percent of the total hit and run cases. Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras, CCTVs and Artificial Intelligence for traffic violations and increase in compensation for road fatalities and injuries — these are some of the most significant measures that the Bihar government has introduced as it overhauls its traffic regulation system in the light of growing casualties. According to data from the state government, the state has seen 42,726 road accidents between January 2019 and September 2024. A total of 7,205 deaths were reported in 2019, followed by 6,699 deaths in 2020, 7,660 deaths in 2021, 8,898 deaths in 2022 and 8,873 deaths in 2023. Till September 2024, the state reported 6,690 deaths. Alarmed by the numbers, the state transport department has decided to introduce a series of measures, which include increasing the compensation for road fatality to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 4 lakh and for injuries to Rs 1.5 lakh from Rs 50,000. Meanwhile, the state will con-

tinue to reward Good Samaritans who bring the wounded to the hospital with a cash award of Rs 10,000 and save them from any legal hassle or unnecessary police questions. "Close on heels of the road safety awareness campaign, we announced a host of big initiatives, which will be implemented from April 1," Bihar Transport Department Secretary Sanjay Kumar Agrawal told The Indian Express. "With the increasing number of vehicles and alarming number of road accidents, we have decided to use third eye technology — CCTV and ANPR cameras — to monitor and regulate traffic like that of the major cities of India. We will use AI to issue e-challans for traffic violations — mainly for not using helmets, which cause most fatalities. So far, we have identified 72 main crossings in 26 districts for close monitoring". According to the official, the state has so far rewarded 1,200 Good Samaritans and disbursed compensation in 76 percent of the total hit and run cases. Khurshid Ahmad, head of the voluntary group Advantage Support, which was instrumental in the campaign, said the awareness drive involved street plays, puppet shows and dialogues involving traffic police, doctors and government officials. "We have also spread word on government's initiatives on how almost all toll plazas in the state have an e-detection method to check insurance, pollution

Kerala samadhi case: Self-styled guru's body found in sitting position and covered in ash, police say



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

The mystery behind the death of self-styled spiritual guru Gopan Swami was a step closer to being solved on Thursday after his body was exhumed from a concrete chamber in the premises of his house in Thiruvananthapuram and a postmortem was conducted. Neyyattinkara Assistant Superintendent of Police S Shaji said a final conclusion on whether the 69-year-old died of natural causes would be arrived at after getting reports on chemical analysis, visceral examination, and histopathology. "There were no external injuries on the body. After the postmortem, the body was handed over to family," the ACP said. Police said the body was found in a sitting position inside the chamber and was covered with ash.

Several people at Aralamudu in the Neyyattinkara area

Woman posts WhatsApp status accusing in-laws of harassment, then dies by suicide in Rajasthan

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Rajasthan woman suicide, woman suicide, Rajasthan, Rajasthan suicide, Rajasthan woman dies by suicide, Indian express news, current affairs SHO of Hadan police station, Om Prakash, said that an FIR has been registered and investigation is ongoing. A 22-year-old woman died by suicide in Rajasthan's Bikaner district after putting up a WhatsApp status accusing her in-laws of harassing her.

The woman got married four years ago. On Tuesday, before her death early in the morning, she posted a WhatsApp status that read: "I am committing suicide. I am fed up of the harassment from my father-in-law and sister-in-law. Miss you mummy-papa. My mother-in-law is fond of handcuffs. Please let her be handcuffed after my death." SHO of Hadan police station, Om Prakash, said that an FIR has been registered and investigation is ongoing. "The post-mortem report is awaited. We will take

further actions later. The funeral was held on Wednesday and we are waiting for the woman's parents to give their statements. This is a case of dowry harassment," said Om Prakash. Her family members alleged that since the marriage, her in-laws had been harassing her for more dowry. Her brother told The Indian Express, "We had promised to give more jewellery after marriage, but her in-laws kept demanding for more." In September 2024 we brought her back home after she was beaten up by her father-in-law. After two months we sent her back. They again started torturing her. On Tuesday when we saw her WhatsApp status, we immediately called up her in-laws, who told us that she has died. The family treated our daughter with disrespect," said the grieving brother. Her husband's name was not mentioned in the woman's WhatsApp status, and it also does not figure in the FIR. Police said arrests would be made after they complete their investigation.

'We will retaliate four times if a criminal fires on us': Bengal DGP goes 'Dabang' after under trial shot and injured two cops

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

In a stern warning directed at criminal elements following an attack on two policemen in Uttar Dinajpur district, West Bengal Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar on Thursday said: "If someone fires at police, we will respond with four times the force". Kumar was speaking to mediapersons in Siliguri a day after an undertrial prisoner overpowered two policemen escorting them and opened fire before fleeing in the Goalpokhar area of Uttar Dinajpur district. The injured officers, assistant sub-inspector Deben Baishya and constable Nilkanta Sarkar, are currently undergoing treatment at a private nursing home in Siliguri's Matigara area.

On Thursday morning, Kumar visited the injured officers at the hospital and held a closed-door meeting with senior police officials, including the inspector general of North Bengal, the Siliguri police commissioner, and SPs from various districts. After the meeting, he visited the site of the attack to review the situation. "They are injured. I am here to see them... A general message to my colleagues. We normally provide security to citizens and ensure that they live peacefully. But if any criminal fires at us, we will fire back four times. We are basically trained for this. If anyone tries to fire at us, we are trained to deal with it very strongly," Kumar said. "The investigation into Wednesday's attack has started, and we are committed to bringing the culprits to justice. The culprits will be nabbed soon," Kumar added. Meanwhile, police said that both the injured policemen "are now out of danger".

"According to our preliminary investigation, the accused undertrial somehow got a gun from an accomplice while he was inside the court premises. He used that gun



and fired at our colleges. We have released the picture of the accused Sajak Alam and his accomplice Abdul Hussain and announced a reward of Rs 2 lakh for any information on them," a senior police officer of Islampur said, adding a manhunt has been launched to nab the accused. On Wednesday, undertrial, Sajak Alam, accused in a murder case, was produced at a court in Islampur for hearing. In the evening, while he was being escorted in a prison van to Raiganj jail, Alam urged accompanying policemen in the prison van to allow him to use a toilet. As he disembarked from the prison van, he overpowered two policemen and fired at them before fleeing. The incident took place on National Highway 27 under Goalpokhar police station area. On the same day, another attack on police personnel took place in Domkal, Murshidabad, where a policeman was injured by a sharp weapon during an operation to apprehend a criminal. Meanwhile, the DGP's remarks have drawn mixed reactions. BJP leader Jagannath Chattopadhyay said, "Let police act instead of making bold statements."

PETA helps Andhra police nab superstitious goat killers who used blood for 'Daaku Maharaj' movie promotion

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Hyderabad: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India worked with senior police officials of Tirupati district to register a first information report (FIR) against a group who beheaded a goat for superstitious reasons to support the release of actor Nandamuri Balakrishna's movie Daaku Maharaj. The goat was killed outside Pratap movie theatre, Tata Nagar, Tirupati and the cruel incident was caught on video, which shows men surrounding a frightened goat. The video then shows the goat, fully conscious, being beheaded with a machete and the slaughter taking place in full public view. The video also shows a man smearing the blood of the sacrificed goat on the movie poster, PETA said. The FIR was registered against five identified persons under sections 325 & 270, read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; sections 4 & 5, read with 6 & 8 of the Andhra Pradesh Animals and Birds Sacrifices (Prohibition) Act, 1950; and sections 3, 11(1)(a) and 11(1)(l) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. "Killing an animal and smearing their blood on a poster doesn't make you a super fan—it makes you a villain and a criminal. True fans celebrate their favourite stars with movie tickets and supportive social media posts, not with acts of violence or cruelty," says PETA India Cruelty Response Coordinator Saloni Sakaria. "PETA India commends Tirupati police, especially the Superintendent of Police, Sri L. Subbarayudu, IPS, for swiftly registering an FIR and sending the message that cruelty to animals will



not be tolerated." In its complaint, PETA India pointed out that Section 4 of the Andhra Pradesh Animals and Birds Sacrifices (Prohibition) Act, 1950 prohibits any person from officiating, performing, serving, assisting, or participating in sacrificing an animal in any congregation. Section 5 prohibits the use of a place of public religious worship or adoration or its precincts for sacrificing animals by any person in possession of such precinct. Section 6 prescribes the penalties, and Section 8 makes all offences under the Act cognisable. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka prohibit religious sacrifice in any place of public religious worship, adoration, its precinct, or any congregation or procession connected with religious worship on a public street. Gujarat, Kerala, Puducherry, and Rajasthan also have specific laws prohibiting the religious sacrifice of any animal in any temple or its precinct.

As Biden warns of an 'oligarchy,' Trump will be flanked by tech billionaires at his inauguration



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

President Joe Biden's warning about the U.S. becoming an "oligarchy" of tech billionaires will be illustrated at Donald Trump's inauguration when the world's three richest men will sit on the dais as Mr. Trump is sworn in for a second term. Elon Musk, the world's wealthiest person, took an unprecedented, hands-on role in the final stretch of Mr. Trump's campaign, spending some \$200 million through a super PAC. Mr. Musk has a new role in reshaping government in the upcoming administration and will be joined on the dais by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. Both men's companies have enormous contracts with the federal government.

Rounding out the trio is Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who recently changed his company's priorities to align with Trump's and has cozied up to the President-elect less than six months after Mr. Trump threatened to imprison him. The three men are worth nearly \$1 trillion combined and will be joined at the inauguration by the chief executive officers of OpenAI and the social media platform TikTok, which is scheduled to be shut down in the U.S. over the weekend under a new law that Mr. Trump opposes.

The mega-rich have long had a prominent role in national politics, and several billionaires helped bankroll the campaign of Trump's Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris. Mr. Biden recently gave the Presidential Medal of Freedom to George Soros, a billionaire donor to liberal causes. But the inaugural display highlights the unusually direct role billionaires have in the incoming administration. Mr. Biden's use of the word "oligarchy" was no accident — it's a direct reference to the form of government in Russia, whose leader Mr. Trump has long spoken warmly about. Russian President Vladimir Putin preserves the super-rich's wealth and keeps them under control with threats. Here's a look at the dynamics of the incoming administration and the mega-rich:

Inequality in the U.S. actually dropped during most of Mr. Biden's term and is slightly lower than it was 10 years ago, but remains quite high historically. Consider that the wealthiest 0.1% of Americans — about 131,000 households — owned nearly 14% of the nation's wealth as of last fall, or more than \$22 trillion in stocks, bonds, real estate and other assets, according to the most recent data from the Federal Reserve. That is up from up from 10% two decades ago. The bottom half of the U.S. population — or about 65 million households — collectively own just 2.4% of the nation's wealth, or just under \$4 trillion, according to Federal Reserve data. A relatively new development, however, is the stratospheric levels of wealth of a handful of the country's several hundred billionaires. Musk, for example, is worth \$450 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Bezos, at \$242 billion and Zuckerberg, at \$212 billion, have also reached new heights. They are the only people worth more than \$200 billion in the world. All but two of the top 10 wealthiest people in the world are technology moguls.

The exploding levels of affluence have led Democrats to try to revamp the U.S. tax code to target wealth. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren proposed a wealth tax during her unsuccessful 2020 bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Democrats in 10 states last year unsuccessfully tried to create wealth taxes. Several Democratic-leaning states impose higher taxes on those making more than \$1 million as a way to address income

An alliance of democracies, with India at its core

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

The year 2024 was the super-election year around the world, and 2025 must be the year when the world's democracies regroup and find new ways to support each other. Nowhere is this truer than in the relationship between Europe and India, a partnership that, for too long, has been big on strategies, but small on delivery. For nearly 17 years, European Union (EU)-India relations were seen through the prism of on/off Free Trade Agreement negotiations. As a free trader, I believe that the benefits of the world's biggest democracy and its largest trading bloc coming together to buck protectionist headwinds would be an economic and geopolitical game-changer. Look at the bigger picture

However, we cannot be naive to the hurdles ahead. If a big-bang trade deal eludes us in the short term, we should develop another track away from the negotiators and bureaucrats. Fixed firmly at the highest political levels, it would focus on bigger picture geostrategic issues such as economic security, defence cooperation and a common agenda for space, emerging technology, and critical industry sectors such as pharmaceuticals. On the geopolitical level, Europe was undoubtedly frustrated with India's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and continued close ties. These ties are historic.

Conversely, India has broad rivalry with China, despite cooperation through the BRICS group and a substantial trading partnership. As a growing economy I can understand why India would not want to be sucked into power competition as the world divides into democratic and autocratic blocs. However, fundamentally, India is a democracy and its entanglement with Moscow and Beijing is unnatural. In the same vein, India's accusations of double standards from Europe are not without substance. We cannot demand that India severs all ties with Russia without also addressing our own economic dependence on China. A restart in relations should, therefore, start with a common assessment that Russia and China — with their 'No Limits' partnership — are both a threat to the global democratic world which includes India, Europe and the United States. What happens in the Atlantic affects the Indo-Pacific and vice versa. On this basis we should focus on a series of practical measures to break down barriers to trade and investment piecemeal while strengthening our joint security, including economic security.

This will include reducing dependencies on China in areas such as critical raw materials and developing new supply chains, with Europe seeing India as a 'Trusted Partner'. Defence and trade in defence, India and the U.S. already enjoy strong defence cooperation, with India being America's 'Major Defence Partner' and a member of the

inequality. Mr. Trump, Vice President-elect JD Vance — who worked as a venture capitalist with conservative Silicon Valley billionaire, Peter Thiel — and others in their inner circle identify themselves as men of the people, promising to wrest back power from interest groups and elites and restore it to Americans.

Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk, a prominent conservative influencer, has repeatedly called the U.S. government an "oligarchy" that rejects the will of the citizens for its own military and financial interests. Trump, of course, is himself a billionaire. And part of his pitch has always been a billionaire-focused form of populism. He and his allies have argued that a vast array of intellectual elites — lawyers, executives, journalists and academics — have held back the country's lower and middle class and that rich entrepreneurs can free them.

That tension came out Thursday during the confirmation hearing of Mr. Trump's nominee to be Secretary of the Treasury, Scott Bessent. Vermont's Democratic Sen. Bernie Sanders noted high levels of wealth inequality in the country and the control the mega-rich have over social media. "Would you agree with President Biden that an oligarchy is taking shape in America?" Sanders asked Bessent. The nominee replied: "The billionaires you listed make the money themselves." Bessent, a hedge fund manager, is one of several billionaires Trump has tapped for his Cabinet. If the growing involvement of Musk and other uber-wealthy tech executives in the nation's politics has caught the attention of the public, it's not necessarily in a positive way. An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll finds that about six out of 10 Americans believe it would be somewhat or very bad for the president to rely on billionaires for advice on government policy. That sentiment was most pronounced among Democrats, according to the survey taken earlier this month. Republicans were less skeptical of billionaires advising presidents, with 44% having no strong opinion and about 2 in 10 saying it would be somewhat or very good. The term "oligarchy" has been most associated with Russia in modern times. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, a group of businessmen took advantage of the privatizing of state industries under then-Russian President Boris Yeltsin to quickly snap up vast holdings.

They became known as "oligarchs," and by the time Putin came to power in 2000, they had amassed both vast wealth and power while millions of ordinary Russians had struggled through turbulent economic times. After Putin took office, he met with top oligarchs at a closed-door meeting in the Kremlin and reportedly offered a deal: Stay out of politics and your wealth won't be touched.

Russian oligarchs who didn't end up imprisoned or dead became super-wealthy and largely remain under Mr. Putin's control. The U.S. is a long way from Russian-style oligarchy, with a diverse, strong economy and resilient institutions. The risk is that if wealth is increasingly determined by executives' relationships with the government, it can increase inequality and lead to stagnation for most. That's the cautionary tale of Russia. Some worry that's starting to happen in the U.S. as Trump prepares to take office. Just look at the technology sector, with which Trump spent much of his first term feuding with and vowing to retaliate against if he returned to office. Google and Microsoft both reportedly donated \$1 million to the president-elect's inauguration fund. Zuckerberg is cohosting a reception with wealthy Republican donors next week for the inauguration, and Microsoft's chief executive officer had lunch with Trump and Vance at Trump's Florida headquarters at Mar-A-Lago this week. And Amazon recently bought exclusive rights to a documentary about Trump's wife, incoming first lady Melania Trump. Brooke Harrington, a sociologist at Dartmouth College who studies the world's wealthiest people, dubbed the new wave of Trump tech supporters "broligarchs." "It's not going to be good for democracy anywhere in the world," Harrington said of their rise, "because they have essentially acquired so much wealth that they're more powerful than the governments of individual nations."

'Quad' — sometimes referred to as the 'Asia-Pacific NATO'. Europe should support the continued development of this security alliance to give India more security guarantees.

EU-India defence discussions have increased but should accelerate to a high political level as Europe looks to bring much-needed investment into our industries, which can also offer India better weapons than Russia. The EU's new dedicated Defence Commissioner should visit India at the earliest opportunity and develop more collaboration, in defence and in space where both the EU and India have ambitious plans.

India and the EU have in place a Trade and Technology Council (TTC) to mirror a similar council with the Biden administration. Whether the EU-U.S. TTC survives President Donald Trump is unclear, but the EU-India Council has not reached its potential, especially in coordinating a technology agenda. Here, we can also draw inspiration from India's ties with the U.S., where the U.S.-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET); iCET is promoting collaboration at the National Security Adviser level. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute illustrates the scale of the challenge. It tracks the top 64 emerging technologies. In 57 of them, China is winning the global race.

The U.S. is hot on its heels. However, India is also emerging as a key centre of global research innovation, with many other European countries also still in the running. Individually, we are doing okay in this existential race, but by combining forces, the free world can jump ahead to lead the world in all emerging technology, from quantum computing to advanced biotech. We must not hand victory to China. In perspective

Europe and India should focus on a far more practical relationship built on tangible connections, including stronger people-to-people ties. For Europe, the benefits are obvious: India will become the world's third largest economy in the next decade, at a time when European global GDP share continues to fall. But there is a wider prize: forming an alliance of democracies that has India at its core. If Europe wants to anchor India in that alliance, we need to change our approach to the subcontinent. That does not mean brushing differences or difficulties under the table. India has many challenges to its democracy, but so does Europe. We should seek to address them together. Europe, India and the United States are individually powerful, but, together, we are unstoppable against the united autocrats. Anders Fogh Rasmussen served as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General from 2009-14 and was the Prime Minister of Denmark from 2001-09.

China's population falls for a third straight year, posing challenges for its government and economy

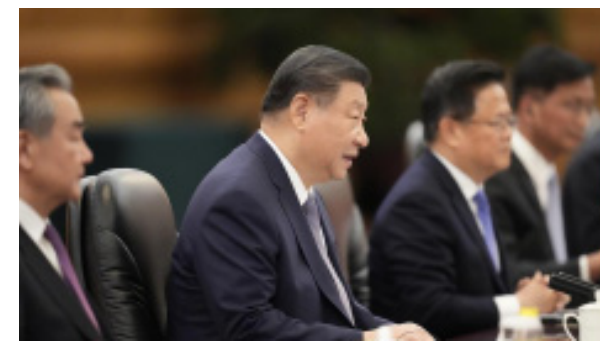


GNS News Agency, Jan 22

China's population fell last year for the third straight year, its government said pointing to further demographic challenges for the world's second most populous nation, which is now facing both an ageing population and an emerging shortage of working age people. China's population stood at 1.408 billion at the end of 2024, a decline of 1.39 million from the previous year. The figures announced by the government in Beijing follow trends worldwide, but especially in East Asia, where Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and other nations have seen their birth rates plummet. China three years ago joined Japan and most of Eastern Europe among other nations whose population is falling. The reasons are in many cases similar: Rising costs of living are causing young people to put off or rule out marriage and childbirth while pursuing higher education and careers. While people are living longer, that's not enough to keep up with the rate of new births. Countries such as China that allow very little immigration are especially at risk.

China has long been among the world's most populous nations, enduring invasions, floods and other natural disasters to sustain a population that thrived on rice in the south and wheat in the north. Following the end of World War II and the Communist Party's rise to power in 1949, large families re-emerged and the population doubled in just three decades, even after tens of millions died in the Great Leap Forward that sought to revolutionize agriculture and industry and the Cultural Revolution that followed a few years later. After the end of the Cultural Revolution and leader Mao Zedong's death, Communist bureaucrats began to worry the country's population was outstripping its ability to feed itself and began implementing a draconian "one child policy." Though it was never law, women had to

The red flag as China's expansionist strategy rolls on



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

In recent days, India has witnessed two significant incidents of Chinese aggression along the China-India border, highlighting vulnerabilities that not only threaten India's territorial integrity but also undermine its sovereignty. The Chinese government's announcement of the construction of a dam on the Yarlung Zangbo river (which is the Brahmaputra river), and the creation of two new counties in north-eastern Ladakh, have set alarm bells ringing. India has strongly condemned these Chinese actions, asserting that they are illegal and a direct challenge to India's sovereignty. In response to China's ambitious hydropower project, India has expressed concern, noting that it is monitoring the situation and will take necessary measures to safeguard its national interests. These developments are particularly disturbing given the recent consensus on troop disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). These new moves further underscore the unpredictability of China's approach in the region. The transboundary water issue

India is not alone in facing the brunt of China's expansionist policies. Other South Asian countries such as Nepal and Bhutan have been subjected in a similar manner to Chinese territorial encroachments. Disputes over land boundaries persist between China and several of its South Asian neighbours, and China's unilateral actions with respect to transboundary rivers, particularly the Brahmaputra and Indus river systems, have the potential to jeopardise water security in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Pakistan. Despite these challenges, each country has opted to engage with China on a bilateral basis. The proposed Chinese dam, with an annual capacity to generate 300 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year, is located on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo near the China-India border. This massive infrastructure project presents significant challenges for downstream countries, particularly India and Bangladesh.

The construction of the dam is likely to reduce the amount of water and silt reaching downstream, which could have severe long-term consequences for agriculture, fisheries, and biodiversity in India and Bangladesh. Further, during the monsoon season or in times of geopolitical tensions, the uncontrolled release of water could result in devastating floods along the Indian border, which will be an issue of strategic vulnerability for India. In anticipation, India has accelerated plans to build its own hydropower projects and reservoirs, including an investment of \$1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in Arunachal Pradesh. Border disputes, cartographic aggression China's recent actions, including the creation of the two new counties, are a part of its ongoing strategy of cartographic aggression aimed at asserting control over disputed territories. This kind of tactic is intended to gain strategic leverage over its regional adversaries.

China's territorial disputes with India are multifaceted, with the most recent aggression occurring along the western front, specifically in Ladakh. Additionally, China continues to lay claim to Arunachal Pradesh, a State that is an inalienable part of India. Beyond India, China also asserts overlapping claims on territories in countries such as Nepal and Bhutan. China's tactics in asserting territorial claims — such as renaming locations within Indian-controlled territories, establishing settlements in disputed areas, and incorporating contested regions into official maps — are becoming increasingly visible. For instance, in 2023, the Chinese government standardised 11 locations in Arunachal Pradesh to assert its ownership, following similar actions in 2021

apply for permission to have a child and violators could face forced late-term abortions and birth control procedures, massive fines and the prospect of their child being deprived an identification number, effectively making them non-citizens.

Rural China, where the preference for male offspring was especially strong and two children were still ostensibly allowed, became the focus of government efforts, with women forced to present evidence they were menstruating and buildings emblazoned with slogans such as "have fewer children, have better children." The government sought to stamp out selective abortion of female children, but with abortions legal and readily available, those operating illicit sonogram machines enjoyed a thriving business.

That has been the biggest factor in China's lopsided sex ratio, with as many as millions more boys born for every 100 girls, raising the possibility of social instability among China's army of bachelors. Friday's report gave the sex imbalance as 104.34 men to every 100 women, though independent groups give the imbalance as considerably higher. More disturbing for the government was the drastically falling birthrate, with China's total population dropping for the first time in decades in 2023 and China being narrowly overtaken by India as the world's most populous nation in the same year. A rapidly ageing population, declining workforce, lack of consumer markets and migration abroad are putting the system under severe pressure.

While spending on the military and flashy infrastructure projects continues to rise, China's already frail social security system is teetering, with increasing numbers of Chinese refusing to pay into the underfunded pension system. Already, more than one-fifth of the population is aged 60 or over, with the official figure given as 310.3 million or 22% of the total population. By 2035, this number is forecast to exceed 30%, sparking discussion of changes to the official retirement age, which one of the lowest in the world. With fewer students, some vacant schools and kindergartens are meanwhile being transformed into care facilities for older people. Such developments are giving some credence to the aphorism that China, now the world's second largest economy but facing major headwinds, will "grow old before it grows rich." Government inducements including cash payouts for having up to three children and financial help with housing costs have had only temporary effects. Meanwhile, China continued its transition to an urban society, with 10 million more people moving to cities for an urbanization rate of 67%, up almost a percentage point from the previous year.

and 2017. However, international law does not recognise territorial claims based solely on cartographic assertions. In various landmark cases, which include the ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Minquiers and Ecrehos dispute between the United Kingdom and France, maps were deemed insufficient evidence of sovereignty. The ICJ ruled that effective administrative control and sovereignty are crucial for determining ownership of contested territories. Therefore, China's use of cartographic aggression, while provocative, lacks legal validity under international law. Nevertheless, China's efforts to establish a physical presence in disputed territories, such as by building settlements, could complicate matters for India in the future. The South Asian response

While China has sought economic engagement with all South Asian nations, its territorial and water-related disputes with these countries continue to strain regional relations. Unlike the Southeast Asian nations, which have employed collective responsive measures through multilateral organisations such as the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian countries, including India, have chosen to address their concerns with China on a bilateral basis. This approach has largely been shaped by the power asymmetry between China and its smaller neighbours.

India, as the dominant regional power in South Asia, should take the lead in fostering a collective response to China's actions. A unified approach, including regional forums, multilateral institutions, or enhanced diplomatic coordination would strengthen South Asia's position in addressing China's increasing influence and territorial ambitions. A comprehensive strategy involving diplomatic engagement and regional cooperation is crucial for India's sovereignty and regional security in the face of China's growing assertiveness.

World Bank projects India's growth to be 6.7 pc in next two fiscal years

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

United Nations: The World Bank projects India's economy to grow by 6.7 per cent in the next fiscal year starting in April, slightly higher than in the current fiscal year, and continuing to top the growth tally.

The World Bank's Global Economic Prospects released on Thursday estimated the current fiscal year's growth rate at 6.5 per cent, down from the 8.2 per cent in the previous period.

But it said that "the services sector is expected to enjoy sustained expansion, and manufacturing activity will strengthen, supported by government initiatives to improve the business environment", buoying the growth projections of 6.7 per cent for the next two fiscal years. With global gross domestic product growth rate stuck at 2.7 per cent since 2023 and into the projections till 2026 according to the Bank, India is the world's fastest growing large economy.

China follows it with a projected growth of 4.5 per cent this calendar year, and slowing down to 4 per cent next year. The world's largest economy, the US, was estimated to have grown by 2.8 last year with the projected growth slowing down to 2.3 per cent this year and 2 per cent next year. The report warned about the risks to the world economy from trade tensions and tariff hikes without naming the US President-elect Donald Trump, who has threatened to upend world trade. "Adverse trade policy shifts in major economies" could pose a risk for India, the report said.

The World Bank projections for India's GDP growth hew closely to the United Nations projections released last week — 6.6 per cent for this calendar year and 6.8 per cent for next year. The World Bank attributed the drop in India's growth rate from 8.2 per cent in 2023-24 to 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year to "a slowdown in investment and weak manufacturing growth".

Commerce Ministry's Budget pitch: 'Prioritise MSMEs under Rs 3,000-crore Interest Equalisation Scheme'



Commerce Ministry's Budget pitch, Budget pitch, MSME, MSMEs, MSME sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Indian express business, business news, business articles, current affairs The IES scheme, announced in April 2015, gives subsidies on interest provided on pre- and post-shipment export credit varying between 3 per cent and 5 per cent to exporters. Ahead of the Union Budget 2025-26, the Commerce and Industry Ministry has approached the Finance Ministry to seek an extension of the revamped Rs 3,000 crore Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) to prioritise focus on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in exports, a government official said. The two ministries are in discussion to decide the final contours of the scheme, which lapsed on December 31 last year.

Amid concerns raised in the Finance Ministry that most of the benefits of the Interest Equalisation Scheme were accruing to large exporters, especially by non-MSMEs, both the ministries are looking to resolve the issue by not completely ending the scheme that would end up hurting MSMEs. A tweak in the scheme will provide a renewed support to MSMEs for exports as MSMEs contribute around 45 per cent to India's total exports.

"We have not renewed IES. We (Commerce Ministry) are still negotiating with the Finance Ministry to allow it in a slightly modified format. But there have been a number of questions on IES. There are concerns about IES being cornered by non-MSMEs, so we have suggested that the scheme can be confined to MSME," the person quoted above said. "There are a number of different kinds of options. We are seeking extension of the scheme for five months in a slightly modified form for MSMEs seeking similar allocation. The present outgo of the scheme is Rs 3,000

crore. We are not suggesting an increase in the outgo. It is an ongoing scheme so it may not be part of the budget announcement. Any modification, revamping will happen through an Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) route," the person said.

Exporters had raised the demand for an extension of the IES scheme in their pre-Budget consultation meetings with the government. An extension of the scheme would be crucial for exporters to get bank loans at a subsidised interest rate. Exporters have argued that rising inflation and logistics challenges due to the Red Sea crisis are leading to a substantial jump in the requirement of export credit. Export credit declined between March 2022 and March 2024 despite rising need for the same due to longer voyage time amid the Red Sea crisis. According to Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), the value of export credit outstanding has come down to Rs 2,17,406 crore in the March 2024 quarter from Rs 2,27,452 crore in the previous year. In its Budget proposal, FIEO had conveyed to the Finance Ministry that slow off take of inventories with lesser purchasing power, owing to high inflation, has led to liquidity challenges for the buyers. This has also resulted in demand for credit for longer duration. "Buyers, who used to pay between 30-60 days, are now asking for credit between 120-150 days or even longer. With increased credit demand for longer duration, the cost of credit has become all the more relevant. This has brought focus on the Interest Equalisation Scheme which currently is only available up to December 2024 and that too to manufacturers in MSME with an annual cap of Rs 50 lakh per IEC holder, which is insufficient for many MSMEs," FIEO had said in its pre-Budget submission to the government. A long-term IES will help the exporters to quickly conclude orders offering the most competitive rates to push exports, exporters said, adding that this is more relevant for orders in which the profit margins are wafer thin and availability of interest subvention of 3 per cent may help the exporters to clinch or lose the order. The IES scheme, announced in April 2015, gives subsidies on interest provided on pre- and post-shipment export credit varying between 3 per cent and 5 per cent to exporters. "While the subsidy provided by the IES is making exports competitive, in few cases, it may be adding to the profitability of exporters who have better profit margins due to value addition, branding etc. Since, the IES is addressing a disability of our economy, which is the high cost of credit, we have to look from the perspective of the majority of exporters," FIEO said.

Reliance Industries Ltd posts 11.9% increase in Oct-Dec profit

Reliance Industries Ltd, Reliance Industries Ltd profit, ril increase in Oct-Dec profit, Indian express business, business news, business articles, current affairs "A superior understanding of customer needs and preferences enables Reliance Retail to serve a wide variety of demographic profiles with the right product, at the right time, through the right channel..." Ambani said.

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has reported an 11.9 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 21,804 crore for the third quarter (Q3) ended December 2024 as against Rs 19,488 crore in the same period a year ago. Net profit attributable to the owners of the company rose by 7.38 per cent to Rs 18,540 crore for Q3 as against Rs 17,265 crore last year. Gross revenue rose by 7.7 per cent to Rs 267,186 crore for the third quarter as against Rs 248,160 crore a year ago.

Its digital arm Jio Platforms (JPL) posted a 19.2 per cent rise in revenue to Rs 38,750 crore due to continuing flow through of tariff revisions for mobility services, and healthy growth in homes and digital services businesses. JPL's net profit rose 26 per cent to Rs 6,861 crore for the third quarter. Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd has posted a 10 per cent increase in net profit to Rs 3,458 crore for Q3 and a revenue at Rs 90,333 crore, up 8.8 per cent amid growth across consumption baskets driven by festive buying and wedding season. RIL Chairman and MD Mukesh D. Ambani said, "it gives me great pleasure to see Reliance grow exponentially over the years and set new benchmarks that demonstrate the inherent strength and resilience we have



across all our businesses. The delivery of record EBITDA and PAT at a consolidated level for this quarter is a testament to this."

Ambani said robust growth in digital services business was led by sustained subscriber addition and consistent improvement in customer engagement metrics. "This was well supported by a favourable subscriber mix, with an increasing number of users upgrading to 5G networks. Jio's compelling offering of home broadband services also continued to rapidly gain ground and maintain its pre-eminent market position," he said. "A superior understanding of customer needs and preferences enables Reliance Retail to serve a wide variety of demographic profiles with the right product, at the right time, through the right channel..." Ambani said.

India suffered economic losses of over Rs 1 lakh crore in natural catastrophes in 2023: Report

Floods in northern India and Sikkim, coupled with tropical cyclones (TC) Biparjoo and Michaung, pushed overall economic losses for the year to \$12 billion, well above the previous 10-year (2013-2022) average of \$8 billion, global insurance giant Swiss Re said in a report. Economic losses in 2024 are yet to be calculated. Swiss Re said the high losses were the result of disasters striking areas of large exposure and asset concentration. For example, the Category 3 TC Biparjoo made landfall in Kutch, Gujarat on June 16, 2023, shutting down all ports in the Saurashtra and Kutch regions including Kandla and Mundra ports. Strong winds, heavy rainfall, and storm surge caused large-scale damage in the state. The cyclone also impacted the neighbouring states of Maharashtra and Rajasthan, it said. Likewise, TC Michaung, which made landfall on December 5, 2023, brought extreme rainfall that caused large losses in Chennai. "Floods caused by heavy rains in northern India between July 10-15, 2023 impacted Himachal Pradesh, including the town of Shimla, and Delhi," Swiss Re said. According to the Swiss Re, analysis of natural catastrophe-related losses in India over the last two decades shows that floods have accounted for, on average, about 63 per cent of total annual economic losses. This is due to the climate and geography of the country.

"India is under the sway of summer monsoon from June to September, and northeast monsoon from October to December. Monsoon depressions generate extreme rainfall that in turn can cause severe flooding," it said. Mahesh H Puttaiah, head insurance market analysis, Swiss Re, said, "the rapid pace of India's economic growth has moved faster than actions taken to reduce the vulnerabilities posed by natural catastrophes." Since the turn of the century, several large flood events have caused economic losses above \$1 billion. For example, the floods in Mumbai in 2005, Uttarakhand in 2013, Jammu and Kashmir in 2014, Kerala in 2018, and northern India in 2023, all of which occurred during the summer monsoon. The Chennai flood in 2015 occurred during the northwest monsoon season, Swiss Re said.

Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are the top three states in terms of industrial production, contributing 13.3 per cent, 13 per cent, and 10.5 per cent, respectively, to India's total industrial output of \$605 billion in 2023.

"The major urban centres in the three states, respectively Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Chennai, and their adjoining areas are major natural catastrophe hotspots, given exposure to multiple natural perils. So too is Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR). Gujarat appears to be most exposed to natural catastrophes as it experiences floods, TCs and (occasionally) earthquakes. Tamil Nadu (Chennai) and Maharashtra are exposed to floods and TCs. Delhi is exposed to floods and earthquakes," Swiss Re said. The report also indicates the extent of exposure to flood hazard (river flooding) and storm surge of the four major cities with large industrial clusters, seaports, and airports. Industrial clusters, and the transport infrastructure of Ahmedabad or Chennai specifically, can be very much in the range of harm if a cyclone like Tauktae or Vardah occurs in near proximity. The report also mentions about the earthquake hazard: New Delhi and Ahmedabad are more exposed. "The impact from an earthquake with its epicentre in the Himalayas, but from which the ripples extend as far as Delhi or, alternatively, a smaller event with its epicentre close to a main city like Mumbai or Delhi, could result in losses that far exceed those that the 2001 earthquake in Bhuj, Gujarat would generate today," the report warned. Many people, households and businesses in India are under- or uninsured, leaving them vulnerable to significant financial pressure when a natural catastrophe strikes, Swiss Re said. "Resilience building with insurance can be approached as a three-step process. The first step is granular hotspot identification," it said. The second step is accurate assessment of risk accumulation, using state-of-the-art models based on granular and recent exposure data. The final step is designing appropriate re-insurance programmes to reduce under-insurance and natural catastrophe protection gaps, which currently stand at above 90 per cent in India, it said.

Diabetics, here's what happens to the body if you skip breakfast



Skipping breakfast can set off a cascade of physiological and psychological effects, complicating blood sugar management and increasing the risk of long-term complications. (Source: Pexels) Skipping breakfast can set off a cascade of physiological and psychological effects, complicating blood sugar management and increasing the risk of long-term complications. For those with diabetes, breakfast isn't just the most essential meal. It's critical to maintaining balanced blood sugar levels and supporting overall health. Skipping breakfast can create a cascade of physiological and psychological effects, complicating blood sugar management and increasing the risk of long-term complications.

Despite the morning rush or fasting trends, understanding the significant impact of missing breakfast is crucial for long-term health and well-being, said Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietician and diabetes educator.

1. Blood sugar control disruption

Skipping breakfast can cause elevated blood sugar levels, or hyperglycemia, later in the day. This is because the body undergoes prolonged fasting overnight. When the morning meal is missed, subsequent meals can provoke a more robust glucose response, leading to spiked postprandial (after-meal) blood sugar levels. Over time, this pattern exacerbates glycaemic variability, a challenge for individuals aiming to stabilise their blood sugar.

2. Worsened insulin resistance

Insulin resistance, a hallmark of type 2 diabetes, hin-

ders the body's ability to use insulin effectively. Studies suggest that skipping breakfast can aggravate insulin resistance, making glucose regulation even more challenging, Malhotra said. This condition, if persistent, can accelerate diabetes progression and elevate the risk of associated complications like heart disease.

3. Long-term health risks

Regularly missing breakfast has broader implications, according to Malhotra. Chronic high blood sugar levels increase the risk of: Type 2 diabetes development: For pre-diabetic individuals, skipping breakfast may fast-track the progression to type 2 diabetes. Organ damage: Prolonged hyperglycemia is linked to complications such as neuropathy (nerve damage), nephropathy (kidney damage), and retinopathy (vision issues).

4. Nutritional and metabolic imbalance

Breakfast provides a vital opportunity to consume nutrients like fibre, protein, and healthy fats, which stabilise blood sugar levels, Malhotra explained. Skipping this meal often leads to more significant meal portions or poor food choices later in the day, disrupting metabolic function and contributing to weight gain—an additional risk factor for diabetes-related complications.

5. Psychological impact

The effects aren't just physical. According to Malhotra, missing breakfast can cause: Increased hunger: Leading to overeating or poor snack choices. Mood swings and irritability: Resulting from unstable blood sugar levels. Reduced focus and productivity: Due to a lack of consistent energy supply. Healthy breakfast tips for diabetics To optimise blood sugar control, individuals with diabetes should prioritise a well-balanced breakfast, Malhotra said. Here's what to include: Low glycaemic index (GI) carbs, such as whole grains or oats, release energy steadily. Lean proteins: Eggs, Greek yogurt, or tofu to stabilize blood sugar. Healthy fats: Avocado, nuts, or seeds to provide sustained energy. Fibre-rich foods: Vegetables or chia seeds to promote digestion and satiety. Avoid processed or sugary items that can cause rapid glucose spikes and disrupt metabolism.

Understanding the 'hot, cold, deaf, and blind' sleep hack

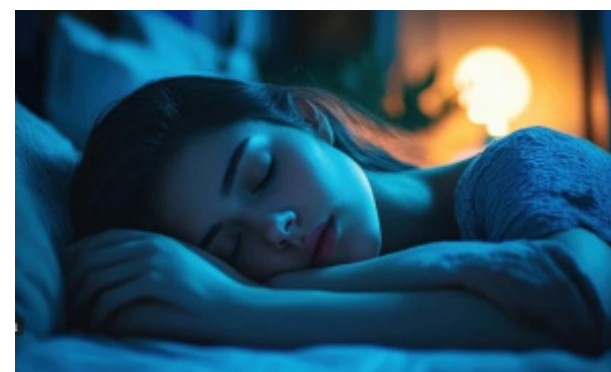
Quality sleep is essential for both physical and mental well-being, yet achieving it often feels elusive in today's fast-paced world. While the number of hours you sleep matters, how well you sleep plays an equally critical role. Content creator Prashant Desai has suggested a sleep hack, which he calls the 'Hot, Cold, Deaf, and Blind' method to improve sleep by focusing on environmental and physical cues: taking a warm shower, keeping the room cool, blocking out noise, and reducing screen time.

In a reel posted on Instagram, he says, "Here are 4 hacks that will help you sleep better. Remember the four words: hot, cold, deaf, and blind." But does this method really work? Can small adjustments to your bedtime routine significantly impact sleep quality, or are other factors at play? Indianexpress.com turned to an expert to uncover whether this popular hack holds scientific merit.

How effective are these four steps for improving sleep quality?

Dr Kadam Nagpal, head at neuroimmunology and senior neurologist Salubritas Medcentre, says, "Adequate sleep hygiene is essential for a proper night's sleep as it reduces frequent nighttime arousals and insomnia. Warm showers before bed can promote good sleep by aiding thermoregulation, but some individuals, like athletes, may prefer cold showers." He further suggests that the room's temperature should be optimum — not too warm or too cool — for comfort. A completely dark and silent room is also crucial, with curtains drawn and no light sources. Digital devices should be kept away or turned off to avoid disturbances like buzzing sounds that disrupt sleep.

Other factors to consider when trying to improve their sleep patterns beyond this hack Additional factors include



wearing light cotton garments to prevent skin irritation, sleeping on breathable cotton bedding, and avoiding excessively warm bedding that can disrupt thermoregulation, notes Dr Nagpal. He suggests, "Avoid stimulants like caffeine, alcohol, and smoking before bed, as these can interfere with sleep quality. Ensuring overall sleep hygiene is key for improving nighttime rest and daytime functioning." Avoid stimulants like caffeine, alcohol, and smoking before bed Avoid stimulants like caffeine, alcohol, and smoking before bed (Source: Freepik)

Are these methods equally effective for everyone, or do they vary based on individual sleep needs and habits?

"These methods can be universally beneficial as part of good sleep hygiene," confirms Dr Nagpal. However, individual preferences, like athletes favoring cold showers, may influence their effectiveness. It is important to customise sleep routines based on personal needs and avoid behaviours like consuming stimulants that could compromise sleep quality, he concludes.

Peripheral artery disease – the biggest killer you've probably never heard of



Imagine putting your socks on one morning and noticing your big toe, which has been painful for a few weeks, has started turning black. A trip to your doctor ends in being referred urgently to a specialist. They tell you a bypass operation of a blocked artery in your thigh is needed to save your foot. This is the reality for far too many people. In the UK, vascular surgeons performed more than 3,500 amputations in 2023.

Efforts are being made throughout the NHS to reduce the number of amputations performed due to peripheral artery disease. The vascular surgery unit in Glenfield Hospital, Leicester, aimed to streamline the process from referral to treatment for people at risk of amputation. With colleagues, I co-authored a new study that shows this focus on speed may have reduced the risk of amputation by half. Peripheral artery disease is the narrowing and blocking of the arteries in the legs. This process of furring up of the blood vessels is the same that causes cardiovascular disease. But while the signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke are well known, few have heard of their equivalent in the legs. More than one in ten people aged over 65 in the UK have peripheral artery disease. With the rise in prevalence of diabetes and a steadily ageing population, it is also

becoming even more common. Most people have no symptoms but still have a higher risk of heart attacks, strokes or death. The first symptoms are pain in the calf when walking, termed intermittent claudication – window-shopping legs, as the Dutch call it. Blood thinners and cholesterol-lowering drugs are prescribed for the early stage of the disease. Lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, exercising and managing diabetes or high blood pressure are also important parts of treatment. For many people, this is all the treatment for peripheral artery disease they will need.

As the disease progresses, it can cause pain at rest, foot ulcers and even gangrene, necessitating leg-saving surgery or major amputation. This end-stage of the disease is called chronic limb-threatening ischaemia. The survival of people with this stage of the disease is worse than many cancers – less than 50 per cent will be alive five years from diagnosis. Peripheral artery disease Recognising the signs of a foot at risk – constant pain in the toes, a foot wound that won't heal or dark discoloration to one or more toes – and seeking help quickly, may just save someone's foot.

People with diabetes often also have nerve damage causing numbness in their feet. They may not be aware of having peripheral artery disease until a foot ulcer that doesn't heal appears. These people often need surgery on their foot and intensive wound management as well as procedures to improve blood supply. The cost of this care to the NHS ten years ago was estimated at nearly 1 billion pounds and has probably only increased since then. Unfortunately, awareness of peripheral artery disease is poor among the public and even non-specialist healthcare professionals. Delays can happen in all stages of the treatment pathway – recognition of symptoms by patients, referral to specialist assessment, timely limb saving surgery. There are also potentially missed opportunities to start treatment and refer patients leading to unnecessary amputations. Urgent improvements were required in the treatment of chronic limb-threatening ischaemia. The NHS has rapidly adopted newer technologies to enable complex keyhole procedures to unblock arteries. UK guidelines now recommend surgery to restore blood supply is performed within two weeks of referral for those that need it. To help achieve these targets, vascular surgery units in the NHS are increasingly using rapid-access clinics to see and treat patients quickly – showing promising results.

Peyush Bansal tells 'emotional' Shark Tank India pitcher to take 'no more loans' after he reveals he sold his house to run loss-making business



pressed their concerns. Vinish, who came across as an "emotional" entrepreneur, revealed that he has been working in the garment and leather goods industry since 1998, but has had many ups and downs – mainly during the 2008 global recession, and then during the 2020 pandemic. When Aman asked him to elaborate, Vinish said with a smile, "Life mein hi up down chala hai (Life has had many ups and downs)." Peyush called him "observant," as he revealed that he has been handling the designing part of his Gen-Z clothing brand.

When the time came to share revenue figures, Vinish revealed that in the first year, the company made Rs 1.44 crore, Rs 2.45 crore in the second year, and in the third year, they have already made Rs 2.75 crore (in the first six months), and hoped to close the year at Rs 8 crore. While these sounded like good figures, the unit economics did not convince the 'sharks', and it was evident to them that Vinish did not have a strong hold over the finances.

The founder then revealed that he had invested Rs 2.5 crore of his own money into the business last year, by selling his house. He had then taken a Rs 3 crore loan from friends. Anupam was shocked to hear this, and advised Vinish to change his approach as he could foresee that the founder was going down a risky path and digging a hole that would be difficult to get out of. "This risk is dangerous," he said. Peyush advised him to get a co-founder who can handle the business so Vinish can focus on design. He also told the founder to say no to any loans from now on. "Zero loans," he said. Vinish and Angel walked away without a deal.

Shark Tank India 4, which is currently streaming on SonyLIV, recently saw a father-daughter duo pitch their family-run garment business on the show, seeking Rs 80 lakh for 2 percent of the company. Valued at Rs 40 crore, the garment brand Go Devil, run by Vinish Arya and his daughter Angel Arya, started in 2022 strongly but faced some struggles in the following months. As the judges present on the panel – Anupam Mittal, Peyush Bansal, Kunal Bahl, Vineeta Singh and Aman Gupta – investigated more about the business, they found some holes in the figures and ex-

Sharmila Tagore, Sara-Ibrahim, Alia-Ranbir, Malaika Arora, Sanjay Dutt visit to Saif Ali Khan after attack.

After the midnight shocking event, Kareena Kapoor Khan was at sister Karisma Kapoor's residence with kids Tamiur and Jeh. Kareena Kapoor Khan shared in a social media statement on Thursday that it was "an incredibly challenging day," for the family, and that they were all "trying to process" the events that unfolded at their home on Thursday morning. Saif was attacked by an intruder, who broke into their Bandra home. He was later rushed to Lilavati Hospital, where he underwent surgery. Later in the day, his friends and family were seen paying visits to the hospital.

It was reported that Saif's eldest son, Ibrahim Ali Khan, rushed him to the hospital after being summoned home after midnight. He was spotted along with his sister, Saif and his first wife Amrita Singh's daughter, Sara Ali Khan, as they paid him a visit later that day. Kareena, who was probably with the kids Taimur Ali Khan and Jeh Ali Khan after the incident, also paid a visit to the hospital in the afternoon. Kareena's sister, Karisma Kapoor, was also spotted, as was director Siddharth Anand. In the evening, Saif's mother, Sharmila Tagore, was seen arriving at the hospital, mere hours after his sister, Soha Ali Khan, was seen leaving with her husband, Kunal Kemmu.

Kareena's cousin, actor Ranbir Kapoor was seen at the hospital with his wife, Alia Bhatt. Others who were spotted paying Saif a visit were Kareena's cousin Armaan Jain and his wife Anissa Malhotra. Kareena's father Randhir Kapoor and mother Babita Kapoor visited Karisma Kapoor's residence to meet Kareena and the kids. Malaika Arora, Sanjay Dutt, Karan Johar, Amrita Arora, and Arjun Kapoor also paid a visit to Kareena and Karisma's home. Later in the evening, Sara Ali Khan and Ibrahim Ali Khan were again seen together, as they arrived at Karisma's residence to be with the family.

Kareena posted a statement, requesting privacy. She wrote, "It has been an incredibly challenging day for our family, and we are still trying to process the events that



have unfolded. As we navigate this difficult time, I respectfully and humbly request that the media and paparazzi refrain from the relentless speculation and coverage. While we appreciate the concern and support, the constant scrutiny and attention are not only overwhelming but also pose a significant risk to our safety. I kindly request that you respect our boundaries and give us the space we need to heal and cope as a family. I would like to thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation during this sensitive time." Saif Ali Khan is currently admitted to Lilavati Hospital and undergoing treatment for the multiple injuries that he sustained during the attack. He is said to be out of danger.

Kangana Ranaut on whether she is 'embarrassed' that PM Modi met tough critic Diljit Dosanjh before meeting her; met Saif Ali Khan but didn't grant her audience



Kangana Ranaut, who's currently promoting her latest film, Emergency, which also marks her solo directorial debut, has been vocal about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent meeting with singer Diljit Dosanjh. Interestingly, Kangana herself has never had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister, despite being a Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from Mandi, since June 2024. This development comes after Diljit Dosanjh shared pictures and details of his meeting with PM Modi on social media, calling it a "fantastic start to 2025". The meeting reportedly included discussions about music and other topics. A video of Modi's meeting with Diljit went viral, showing the PM giving blessings to the pop star, and tapping his fingers to his music.

When asked about her stand on the meeting, Kangana stated in a podcast with Shubhankar Mishra, "He was the main person. He was in the forefront during the farmers' protest, to defend them, to defend those people. He was in the forefront defending those jo utpaat macha rahe the (who

were creating havoc)." The conversation took a turn when Kangana was asked about her failed attempts to meet the Prime Minister. Kangana's response to this was, "What's embarrassing about this? I don't feel the need to be embarrassed about the PM not meeting me but Diljit. For him (the PM) everybody is an equal in the janta." Kangana further clarified that she was not disappointed about not meeting the Prime Minister, stating, "I was not disappointed. In fact, I have never met him. Maybe I have met him once and said namaste but never interacted with him." She also mentioned that many of her friends, including Manoj Muntashir and Anupam Kher, have met the PM and had insightful discussions with him. When reminded of the PM's recent meetings with sports persons, their families, and Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt along with the extended Kapoor family on December 10 to personally invite him to the Raj Kapoor Film Festival, Kangana expressed her admiration for the Prime Minister and her desire to interact with him some day.

Kartik Aaryan says he has a 'love-hate relationship' with Karan Johar, assures their new film will see the light of day unlike Dostana 2



Kartik Aaryan and Karan Johar's work relationship has been through many ups and downs. The duo first announced that they would be working together on Dostana 2 in 2019, but the partnership fell through as he film was shelved midway. It was widely reported that Kartik and Karan had a massive rift, but the duo has now made up, and is working on another film. At the recent SCREEN LIVE event in Mumbai, Kartik spoke about his relationship with Karan after he was shown a picture of the two of them together. In the picture, Karan is pulling Kartik by the ear.

The photo got a big laugh from the audience, and Kartik who was at a loss of words, started laughing too. "Ispe kya bolu? (What do I say to this)," he said. Kartik said that he has a "love and hate relationship" with Karan, and this photo was a "representation" of the same. He said, "I think yeh love and hate relationship hai..."

Kartik recalled that the photo was taken just before they started working on Dostana 2. "Yeh moment tab ka hai jab hum logo ne pehli film, jo humari honi thi kabhi, voh sign ki thi. Toh tab ka moment hai. I think he knew ki main... photo pehle se le li thi (This was the moment when our first film, which was going to happen, was signed. This was then. I think he knew that I... so he took the picture beforehand)," he recalled.

Kartik assured his fans that he is collaborating with Karan again. Titled Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, the film is produced by Dharma Productions, and is being directed by Sameer Vidwans for a 2026 release. Kartik said, "But abhi main inke sath film kar raha hu. And hum sath mein kar rahe hain yeh film and I hope yeh film toh hogi. Yeh film main puri tarah karunga and voh bhi puri tarah karengi yeh film. (Now I am doing a film with him. We are doing it together and I hope it happens. I will do this film and he will do it too.)"

Ram Charan's film plummets to alarmingly low occupancy, can it recover from a stunning box office slump?

Game Changer box office collection day 7: Ram Charan's political thriller film, Game Changer, which hit the screens on January 10, 2025, has witnessed a significant drop in occupancy despite its decent opening day numbers. The film, directed by S Shankar, carried immense expectations but unfortunately, did not meet them, resulting in mixed word-of-mouth response at the box office.

The box office figures of Game Changer continue to dwindle, with the film earning Rs 117.90 crore net to date, as reported by industry tracker Sacnilk. The decline in collections has been steady over the past few days, with day six and day seven revenues standing at Rs 7 crore net and Rs 4.75 crore net, respectively. To break even, the film needs to reach a minimum of Rs 130 crore nett, a target that seems increasingly challenging given the current trend. Although Game Changer has entered the prestigious Rs 100 crore club, its collections are declining rapidly in many areas. On a global scale, the film has grossed Rs 158 crore worldwide in six days, according to Pinkvilla.

Game Changer's Telugu occupancy took a hit on Thursday, plummeting to 18.02% from 26.59% just a day earlier. The decline was also reflected in the number of shows, with Hyderabad witnessing a reduction from 411 shows on Wednesday to 401 shows on Thursday. This trend was not limited to Hyderabad, as other major cities like Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Chennai, and Bengaluru also saw a decrease in the number of shows.

Despite the decline in occupancy, Ram Charan has been praised widely for his solid performance in the film. In fact, he even took to social media to thank his fans while wishing them on the occasion of Sankranti. However, director Shankar's comments on not being satisfied with the final output have caused controversy and upset many fans of Ram Charan. In an interview, Shankar admitted that he was not satisfied with the final product, which has sparked



a heated debate among fans and critics. Speaking to Behindwoods TV, Shankar said in Tamil, "No filmmaker is ever satisfied with their film. I definitely feel like the film could have done better. There were so many good scenes, but they were trimmed, due to which we missed a lot of good things. I can't put every scene in a three-hour film."

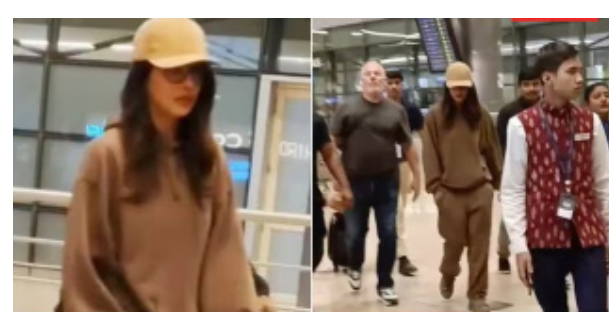
The Game Changer team is visibly upset with anti-fans and a few reviewers who targeted the film, and Ram Charan has shared a strong message thanking his team and critics for supporting his performance. With the festive holidays concluding, it remains to be seen how much more the film can earn in the coming days. The upcoming weekend may bring a slight boost in traction, but it's unlikely to reverse the film's declining trend.

Priyanka Chopra is in Hyderabad for a film announcement with SS Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu?

Priyanka Chopra touched down in Hyderabad on Thursday evening, leaving her fans excited about a possible film announcement. Priyanka has been working abroad for several years, and her fans have been eagerly waiting for her comeback. Clips of Priyanka arriving at the Hyderabad airport surfaced on social media on Thursday evening. She was dressed in a casual brown outfit, which she paired with a beige cap. The actor walked alongside tight security, and appeared to be avoiding the cameras.

A few reports suggest that Priyanka is in Hyderabad to participate in a grand announcement for RRR director SS Rajamouli's upcoming film, starring Mahesh Babu. This would be her first Indian film in over five years. Reacting to the video, a fan wrote in the comments section, "I'm literally praying to God that Priyanka must be the female character of ssmb29 movie ????", while another posted, "I hope she's finalised.. That'd be seriously epic."

If the reports are true, the film will also mark Priyanka Chopra's comeback to Telugu cinema after 23 years. She was a part of P Ravi Shankar's 2002 romantic drama Apuroopam. Her last Indian theatrical release was Shonali Bose's The Sky Is Pink in 2016. Priyanka was also attached to Farhan Akhtar's buddy road movie Jee Le Zaraa, co-starring Alia Bhatt and Katrina Kaif, but no clear updates



about it is being shared by the makers.

In December last year, Priyanka revealed that she is close to zeroing in on a new Hindi project as she wants to return to her home turf. "Not joking, I meet many filmmakers here, read scripts. I have actively been looking for something I want to do in Hindi. This year was really busy for me. But I have something up my sleeve, I will leave it at that," Priyanka said during a chat with HT City. Priyanka Chopra has many international projects in the pipeline. Priyanka will be next seen in Heads of State, The Bluff, and Citadel season 2. She also has a holiday movie alongside the Jonas Brothers, for which she recently began filming in Toronto.

Here's how to watch Coldplay's India concerts live: Streaming and travel details

Hyderabad: Coldplay's fans that are disappointed because they could not viit Music of the Spheres shows are still in a pleasure that the magic would happen. This experience would be enhanced by Disney+ Hotstar streaming spectacular performances of the iconic British band in India for people all over the country to look at and experience within the cozy confines of their homes. Pretty soon, then, it would not be wrong to say that quite a number of the fans Coldplay boasts, the world over, would catch a whiff of its mix of electrifying songs, including Yellow, Fix You, Viva La Vida, and A Sky Full of Stars.

For concerts at Mumbai and Ahmedabad, much has been done to turn it into a hassle-free event all around. There are special trains of the Western Railways from Mumbai starting January 25 and 26 at Mumbai and ending at Ahmedabad for the convenience of those many thousands of fans who want to see their stars live.



Opening performances have been arranged with the incredible Indian singer-composer Jasleen Royal, who performs several of her popular hits including Kho Gaye Hum Kahan, Love You Zindagi, and Ranjha.

BCCI issues curbs on personal staff, family travel, endorsement shoots during tours for centrally-contracted cricketers; violators may face IPL ban



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

India's Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli wait for play to start on day three of the third Test between India and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane, Australia. (AP Photo) BCCI India's Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli wait for play to start on day three of the third Test between India and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane, Australia. Days after the BCCI conducted a review meeting to assess the debacle Down Under, it has sent 10 guidelines to India's centrally-contracted players. Among these guidelines, accessed by The Indian Express, participation in domestic tournaments is mandatory for selection and tops the list followed by rules for family travel, baggage allowance, and restrictions on personal staff, ad shoots and a ban on players returning home if matches end early.

To underline the severity of these guidelines, the BCCI has stated that any player who doesn't comply with it may face disciplinary action which includes sanctions from playing tournaments conducted by the board including the Indian Premier League and deduction in annual contract and match fee. Exceptions if any must be pre-approved by the head coach and chief selector, the policy document for Team India stated. After India lost the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 in Australia earlier this month questions were raised about the team atmosphere and the cohesion in the side. As previously reported by this newspaper, there have been differences in the set-up and in the aftermath of the defeat, apart from the performances of the established players, other issues were discussed in the review meeting which was attended by the top brass of the BCCI, captain Rohit Sharma, head coach Gautam Gambhir and chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar.

Domestic cricket mandatory The BCCI stressing that playing domestic cricket is mandatory is the second such notice in less than 12 months after former secretary Jay Shah had written one in the middle of the home series against England earlier in February 2024. Since then, little has changed with top players including the likes of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja, who all struggled in Australia, choosing not to turn up for the Duleep Trophy tournament.

Yuvraj Singh praises Rohit Sharma for dropping himself in Sydney: 'How many captains have done that in the past'

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Rohit Sharma's form has declined steeply since the series against New Zealand in 2024. In the Border Gavaskar Trophy, things went from bad to worse for the Indian skipper. He missed the first Test due to the birth of his second child. However, after averaging 6.20 in the three Tests he played, Rohit decided to drop himself from the final Test in Sydney. Former Indian cricketer Yuvraj Singh heaped praises on Rohit for dropping himself. "The guy has stepped down from the last match and given somebody else a chance. How many captains have done that in the past? Please tell me," Yuvraj said at a press event.

"So basically, runs are not coming from my bat, I am not in form, it is an important match, we need players in form, the boys in our batting are not in form, so you cannot carry too many out-of-form players in the team," Rohit said at the time in an interview with Star Sports. In addition to Rohit's form, there has also been scrutiny over his captaincy. He became the first captain under whose watch India lost a series 3-0 and lost the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after 10 years.

"I always look at the team graph over five years or three years. Gautam has just come into the system, he

ment which was held before the start of the Test season. Following the review meeting, few of the players, including Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill, have already committed to play the next round of Ranji fixtures starting on January 23 with no clarity on the participation of Rohit, Kohli and Jadeja for their respective state units.

The BCCI has stated that these guidelines have been introduced to promote discipline, unity and a positive team environment as it has also banned the presence of personal chefs, security guards, hairdressers and stylists on tours. But how much of it is well received by the players remains to be seen, especially with regards to not having chefs on tours. Some of the big name Indian players take chefs on tours to manage their diet which is programmed according to their personal needs. Similarly, in recent years, it has become a common habit for players to use private vehicles once their training or practice session is done to commute to the hotel and vice versa. To end this practice, the BCCI has now made it mandatory for all the players to only use the team bus even if players have families accompanying them to the ground on match days. "All players are expected to travel with the team to and from matches and practice sessions. Separate travel arrangements with families are discouraged to maintain discipline and team cohesion." The BCCI has also decided to go back to its old policy with regards to families on tours. In recent years, especially since the onset of Covid, players were allowed to let their family stay for the entire duration of the tour. In several such instances the support staff have revealed privately how some of the players are not available for informal team meetings and planning sessions, instead choosing to spend time with family. Now the BCCI will go back to its old policy which has been around since the central contract system was introduced which will allow players to have their families (partners and children) for a maximum of 14 days, provided an away tour longer than 45 days. And unlike recent years, players have been told to attend the practice sessions in full which means the optional training sessions may not be allowed going forward. Indian players usually don't opt for full practice sessions on the eve of a game and it remained optional under the tenure of Ravi Shastri and Rahul Dravid.

No shoots during a tour New restrictions have also been set with regards to players attending endorsement programmes in the middle of a series and tour. "Players are not permitted to engage in personal shoots or endorsements during an ongoing series or tour. This policy avoids distractions and ensures players remain focused on cricket and team responsibilities." Lastly, the BCCI has also decided to end the habit of players returning home individually at the end of tours. Of late, it has become common for players to head home separately at the conclusion of tours at home and abroad. And the BCCI has put a full stop to it with this reason: "Players must stay with the team until the scheduled end of the match series or tour, even if matches conclude earlier than planned. This ensures unity, fosters team bonding, and avoids disruption to team dynamics."



needs more time. Rohit Sharma has won the T20 World Cup as captain, he was captain when India played the ODI World Cup final. He led MI (Mumbai Indians) to five IPL titles," Yuvraj backed Rohit. However, he did acknowledge the loss against 3-0 loss against New Zealand was "a tougher pill to swallow," 2024 has been a year of two halves for the Indian skipper. Rohit did manage to win the 2024 T20 World Cup in West Indies ending the 11-year drought of ICC trophies and he did deliver match-winning performances against Australia and England with the bat. However, as the year went things turned sour.

Dinesh Karthik on Karun Nair: 'Don't think he'll make it to the Champions Trophy squad'



"Karun Nair, it's been unreal to see the form that you've been in. Even Mayank Agarwal has been in some really good form. But the beauty is, it's coming at a stage when the Indian ODI setup is almost ready to go. There can't be too many changes," Karthik said on Cricbuzz.

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Former India cricketer Dinesh Karthik said he doesn't think that in-form batter Karun Nair will make it into India's squad for the upcoming Champions Trophy to be played in Pakistan and the UAE. Without doubt, Karun Nair has given selectors a name to ponder over, as an unreal average of 752 can't be brushed aside by merely citing a packed batting line-up. The 33-year-old is yet to get out in the ongoing

Vijay Hazare Trophy. In eight matches, he has been dismissed only once and out of the seven innings he has batted, he has crossed 50 six times with an unbeaten 44 against Chhattisgarh in the opening game being his lowest score so far. Karun Nair broke the List A record for most consecutive runs between dismissals with his third successive Vijay Hazare Trophy century. (BCCI) Karun Nair broke the List A record for most consecutive runs between dismissals with his third successive Vijay Hazare Trophy century. (BCCI) "Karun Nair, it's been unreal to see the form that you've been in. Even Mayank Agarwal has been in some really good form. But the beauty is, it's coming at a stage when the Indian ODI setup is almost ready to go. There can't be too many changes," Karthik said on Cricbuzz.

"Yes, it's very tempting to bring a Karun Nair into the setup, and I think he has earned the right to be part of the talks." But I don't think he'll make it to the Champions Trophy squad. But if he keeps going like this, why not? A form batter like that who plays fast and spin well, he's a gun player, and I'm very happy for him," he added. Meanwhile, Karthik is confident that Yashasvi Jaiswal is picked for the England ODIs and he will also be part of India's Champions Trophy squad. "He (Jaiswal) is rested (for England T20Is). He has had a very long tour of Australia, mentally draining for a young kid like that. He needs a break," he said. "Playing a 5-match series, a Test series is not a joke. I think they (selectors) have done the right thing. 100% he will be in the ODIs against England and the Champions Trophy. Don't worry. He is batting brilliantly well. These five T20s won't make a difference to him."

Nathan Lyon donates signed bats of Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon has donated three bats at the National Cricket Inclusion Championships (NCIC) which also include bats signed by Indian players Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah. NCIC is an organization that supports disabled cricketers in Australia and Lyon is the ambassador of it. All the bats donated by Lyon for the cause have an "a sport for all" quote written in the center in Braille. Earlier Nathan Lyon speaking to Cricket Australia after attending a net session with an Intellectual Disability said, "The position we're in as role models, if we can inspire boys and girls to go out there and play this beautiful game, which I believe is a sport for

all, then it's worth it. "These guys are representing South Australia up in Brisbane, so in my eyes, they are playing state cricket and hopefully they can put their hands up for international selection in the Australian ID team." The tournament in 2025 will start on January 19 and will be played till January 25 at Marchant Park in Brisbane with 22 teams across all states and territories in Australia. Blind & Low Vision Mixed, Blind & Low Vision Women's, Cricketers with an Intellectual Disability, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Men, and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Women's are the five divisions across the championships. "The National Cricket Inclusion Championships are a great event that showcases the best Australian cricketers with a disability, and Cricket Australia's mission to be a sport for all, said Cricket Australia General Manager, Events & Operations Joel Morrison. "The NCIC continues to go from strength to strength, and we're excited to see them evolve even further in 2025 with a full week of blind and low-vision women's games, building on the success of last year's exhibition matches. "It's a testament to the growing passion for inclusive cricket across the country, and we're excited to see these incredible athletes inspire the next generation while showcasing their talents on a national stage," Morrison added. "The Championships form an important representative pathway for cricketers, and we look forward to experiencing what the 2025 tournament has to offer," Morrison concluded.

Champions Trophy: If India had come to Pakistan, we would have given them a grander welcome, says Fakhar Zaman

GNS News Agency, Jan 22

ICC Cricket World Cup, Fakhar Zaman Bengaluru: Pakistan's batter Fakhar Zaman celebrates his century during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between New Zealand and Pakistan, at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. "We enjoyed a lot during our visit there for the ODI World Cup 2023. We were delighted with the kind of support and the hospitality we got there. The locals gave us a warm welcome when we went to Hyderabad for the first time, they all showered their love on us. Yes, we will miss it all," Zaman said.

Pakistan will take on India on February 23 at the Dubai International Stadium. "If India had come to Pakistan, we would have given them an even grander welcome and hospitality but they are not coming. It's fine, but we're excited to play against them in Dubai," Zaman added. The 34-year-old swashbuckling opener, who has been discarded by the Pakistan selectors for his tweet in support of Babar Azam after the latter was dropped from the Pakistan squad for the second Test against England in October, is likely to replace injured Saim Ayub for the Champions Trophy. Fakhar is currently playing in the ILT20 league, where he is featuring for



the 2023 runners-up Desert Vipers. "A 100%, I will play for Pakistan (again)," Fakhar, 34, told the Vipers Voices podcast. "Actually, many people do not know about that, but after the T20 World Cup I got sick and because of the medical condition I was not fit, so I was not a part of the team. "But now I [have] recovered 100%, and you will see me in the next white-ball series which Pakistan play." Incidentally, it was in the 2017 Champions Trophy that Fakhar shot to prominence with a title-winning 114 against India in the final at The Oval in London.

India Open badminton: Sindhu, Ratchanok, Marin, Tai Tzu-Ying, Okuhara – how shuttle's golden generation bonds together



GNS News Agency, Jan 22

Scroll down to December 2018 on PV Sindhu's Instagram page, and one will find a post with the caption: "Wang Yihan, long time no see, finally I get to see her!", with a generous dose of emojis. Also tagged in that post is Ratchanok 'May' Intanon, and one of the hashtags read: "Friends for life!" In a BWF Unlimited video posted in 2023, shuttlers from around the world are asked who their best friend on the tour is, and Intanon's response is PV Sindhu.

Born exactly five months apart in 1995, the two 29-year-olds made headlines on the senior badminton circuit as teenagers in 2013. Intanon made history for Thailand by becoming World Champion at 18, whereas Sindhu won the first of her five Worlds medals when she clinched bronze. And at the start of 2025, the journey continues. "Actually, I had made plans to come visit Sindhu at her wedding," Intanon told The Indian Express on Thursday at the India Open. "Finally, it proved difficult for me to journey here for one or two days. I had already booked my flight too, but I didn't have anyone to accompany me. I told her 'congrats'. In our badminton careers, we have always supported each other. Sometimes, we exchange direct messages like 'we have to fight, we have to keep going,' and we are still competing." At the start of this season, when Intanon made a bright beginning in Malaysia to reach the semifinals, Sindhu sent a social media message to her: "Let's go, May!" Intanon responded. "We have to earn more and more, haha! Thank you for listening and sharing this life with me, it's a really hard life." Friends and rivals

Indeed, in this era of women's singles, the off-court friendship between Sindhu and Intanon has been the



norm and not the exception.

At the India Open, Intanon and Nozomi Okuhara faced off in the opening round and reminisced afterwards about this golden generation fondly. Then there is Sindhu and Carolina Marin, who have had some spicy battles over the years but have often spoken about their special bond since that memorable day at the 2016 Olympics when Sindhu's embrace with the tearful champion made for iconic images. When Marin suffered yet another nasty injury in Paris when on the brink of reaching another final, Sindhu wrote a post to one of her 'greatest rivals and dearest friends'. "Deep down, I believe there was no player on tour I hated playing against more than you. Your sheer determination and uncanny ability to put players under pressure are unmatched. Knowing you and your willpower, it's only a matter of time, buddy! Just know I will always be your biggest supporter." Marin responded with a thank you note, asking Sindhu to take a break herself and recover well. In Tokyo, after beating Sindhu in the semifinal, Tai Tzu-Ying fell one step short of her ultimate dream of winning the Olympic gold. Later, she shared a story. "Sindhu ran over to hug me, held my face, and told me: 'I know you are uncomfortable, but you have played very well. Today is not your game.' That kind of sincere encouragement made me cry directly. Then she held me in her arms and said that she knew all about this feeling." Such examples have been aplenty over the last decade among this group of outrageously talented shuttlers, who each had their unique signature. And as their careers wind down, the world won't just miss them for their badminton, but also for how they made the game beautiful away from the court.