

INDIAN CHRONICLE

12 January, 2025 | Sunday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:286 Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Flying kites near railway tracks is fraught with risk: SCR advisory

Hyderabad: The SCR has advised citizens against flying kites near railway stations or tracks which have live electric wires running overhead and could cause harm to their lives. To prevent any untoward incident from happening, while flying kites along the railway tracks, the Government Railway Police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) have taken up awareness programmes on the premises. "Children and youngsters tend to fly kites from nearby residential colonies and at some places come on the railway tracks to fly them, which could prove fatal," said an SCR official adding that it could become worse when they snip another kite and then chase to get it in their hands.

Traffic Jam on Hyderabad-Vijayawada Highway as people flock to hometown for Sankranti

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Saturday morning saw significant congestion on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada National Highway as commuters made their way home for Sankranti festivities. A notable traffic jam formed at the Pantangi Toll Plaza in Choutuppal, prompting traffic management staff to direct vehicles headed towards Andhra Pradesh through 10 toll booths, while those travelling towards Hyderabad were filtered through six gates.

The situation was further exacerbated by ongoing underpass construction work at the Choutuppal junction, with authorities predicting increased congestion today and throughout the weekend.

In response to the traffic delays, police are advising motorists to consider alternative routes. Meanwhile, bus stands in MGBS, JBS, Dilsukh Nagar, and LB Nagar have



also experienced heavy traffic due to the influx of commuters, adding to the city's transport woes. Motorists are encouraged to remain patient and plan their journeys accordingly.

Maha Kumbh 2025 to feature Maha Mrityunjaya Yantra at Triveni Sangam



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

New Delhi: The Maha Kumbh 2025 will witness the installation of a 52-foot-long and 52-foot-wide Maha Mrityunjaya Yantra. This yantra, the first of its kind globally, will be set up on the sacred sands of the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj. Designed based on the 52 letters of the Maha Mrityunjaya mantra, its dimensions, length, width, and height, all measure 52 feet. The yantra will be consecrated by renowned scholars and is expected to radiate positive energy across the world.

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, the head of the Maha

Mrityunjaya Yantra Institute, said, The world's largest Maha Mrityunjaya Yantra is set to be established on the holy land of Prayagraj in 2025. This extraordinary divine event will be a historic moment for humanity. Saints and spiritual leaders from across India and the globe are coming to witness this grand occasion. He further explained that the yantra's dimensions symbolise the 52 Siddha Peeths (sacred sites) of Hinduism. Furthermore, aligning with the Prime Minister's call for a clean Kumbh, hundreds of thousands of eco-friendly bags will be distributed to ensure cleanliness during the event.

Earlier on Friday, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During their meeting, the two leaders discussed preparations for the Maha Kumbh Mela. CM Yogi extended an invitation to PM Modi for the spiritual event. The Prime Minister's Office shared the information on social media platform X, stating, "Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has met with PM Narendra Modi." The Maha Kumbh, one of Hinduism's most revered gatherings, takes place every 12 years and will be held from January 13 to February 26, 2025. It will commence with the Pausa Purnima Snan at the Triveni Sangam. Millions of devotees, including spiritual leaders, saints, and pilgrims, are expected to attend, making it a monumental occasion in India's spiritual calendar.

Phone tapping case: Telangana High Court extends interim relief to Harish Rao

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Hyderabad: Justice K Lakshman of the Telangana High Court on Friday extended the interim order granted to BRS MLA T Harish Rao till January 28, in connection with the phone tapping case. In the interim order, the court has directed the Punjagutta Police not to arrest him. During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel stated that Rao is ready to cooperate with the investigation and he would appear before the police if required by the police. The case, registered on December 1, accused Harish Rao of involvement in criminal conspiracy, extortion, breach of trust, criminal intimidation, and violations of the IT Act, 2008. The police department has filed its counter and the same is taken on record. The FIR stems from allegations made by Gadhagani Chakradhar Goud, who claimed that Harish Rao used State intelligence resources to illegally tap his phone and those of his family members. The complaint alleged that these ac-



tions were part of a broader effort to intimidate Goud due to his social activism and political rivalry with Harish Rao. Justice Lakshman adjourned the case to January 28 for further hearing.

CAG report on excise policy projects loss of 2,026 cr., exposes Arvind Kejriwal, says BJP

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

The CAG has projected a loss of ₹2,026 crore due to the Delhi government's excise policy, and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party has not tabled the report in the Assembly to hide its misdeeds, the BJP claimed on Saturday (January 11, 2025). BJP leader Anurag Thakur told a press conference the CAG report has arrived at 10 major findings about the policy, which was scrapped by the AAP government amid a row, asserting that former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will have to answer the questions it has raised. "He will have to say who pocketed the money," Mr. Thakur said, alleging that Mr. Kejriwal is the kingpin of the scam. BJP president J P Nadra claimed the CAG report has exposed intentional lapses, leading to a loss of ₹2,026 crore loss to the exchequer. Mr. Nadra said on X, "Intoxicated by power, high on misgovernance. 'AAP' DA model of loot in full display and that too on something like liquor." He said it is just a matter of a few weeks before the AAP government is voted out and punished for its misdeeds. He alleged, "CAG Report on 'Liquorgate' exposes @ArvindKejriwal and @AamAadmiParty Gov. Intentional 'Lapses' in Policy Implementation. Rs 2026 Cr Loss to Exchequer money." The then Chief Minister Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia were arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the case of alleged corruption in framing the excise policy, which was later scrapped. Both were released on bail after spending months behind bars. The said CAG report has not been officially released as yet but its purported content have been



reported in some sections of the media. Asked about the BJP allegations, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "Where is the report? The BJP itself keeps saying no CAG report has been tabled." At his press conference, Mr. Thakur asked who will be the chief ministerial face of the Aam Aadmi Party as it has been left with no "honest face". He said "Arvind Kejriwal cannot become the Chief Minister." "BJP leaders have often suggested that the Supreme Court's bail conditions for Kejriwal in the excise case rule him out for the job. The former Union Minister said the AAP's journey over the last 10 years is of scams and sins. It has delivered liquor scam and "sheesh mahal" instead of fulfilling the promises related to schools, sanitation and self government. Its eight ministers and 15 MLAs ended up in jail, he said, adding that Mr. Kejriwal and M-c. Sisodia were also incarcerated.

CCTVs to keep an eye on students for Telangana inter practical exams

Hyderabad: CCTV cameras will be turned into observers for the forthcoming intermediate practical exams. To put an end to malpractices, the Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TG BIE) decided to hold practical examinations amidst the CCTV surveillance system.

The decision from the Board comes as several corporate junior colleges have not been holding the practical examinations as per the rulebook, allowing students to pass exams with inflated results. Now, this directive is aimed at ensuring students complete their practical exams independently.

PM Modi to inaugurate Z-Morh Tunnel on Jan 13, boosting all-weather connectivity in J&K

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) on January 13 to inaugurate the Z-Morh Tunnel, a key infrastructure project designed to provide all-weather connectivity to the scenic hill station of Sonamarg. According to official sources, the Z-Morh Tunnel, a 6.5-kilometre-long, two-lane road tunnel between Gagangir and Sonamarg, will bypass the avalanche-prone Gagangir-Sonamarg road. The tunnel is named after the 'Z-shaped' stretch of road it replaces, drastically reducing travel time to just 15 minutes compared to hours along the previous route. A local resident expressed his gratitude, stressing the importance of the route for enhancing connectivity in winter.

"It is very important, after its construction, the Sonamarg-Ladakh road will now remain open throughout the year. Since Ladakh is a border area, therefore, for Defence, the normal goods that had to be transported by air, could now be transported by road after the construction and opening of this tunnel. So, this is very important," he said. "People are happy, and we thank the Central government. The Prime Minister is going to inaugurate it on January 13. The Central government, especially Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, has taken many initiatives with this," he added. The tunnel, along with the adjacent Zoji-La Tunnel, is strategically vital for providing weather-proof connectivity to areas like Baltal (Amarnath Cave), Kargil, and Ladakh.



The infrastructure will not only enhance military logistics but also stimulate tourism and economic activities, creating employment opportunities for the local youth. Started in 2018, the Z-Morh Tunnel is one of 31 road tunnels being developed in the region -- 20 in Jammu and Kashmir and 11 in Ladakh. The project, however, faced tragic challenges, including a terror attack on October 20, 2024, when two terrorists stormed the workers' camp at Gagangir, killing seven civilians, including six non-local workers and a local doctor. The Z-Morh Tunnel's inauguration marks a milestone in improving connectivity and fostering development in the region, further reinforcing its geostrategic and economic significance.

Several workers trapped in Kannauj railway station building collapse in Uttar Pradesh

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

An under-construction building at the Kannauj railway station collapsed on Saturday (January 11, 2025) afternoon, trapping around two dozen workers under the rubble, a senior official said. Six workers have been rescued and rushed to hospital. Video grab of people pulling out workers trapped under the collapsed building in Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh, on January 11, 2025. Initial visuals from the site showed scenes of chaos and confusion with crowds, clouds of dust and broken beams as people tried to rescue those who had been trapped. "According to preliminary information, the incident occurred when the under-construction shattering of the roof collapsed," said District Magistrate (DM) Shubhrant Kumar Shukl said. "Our first priority is to rescue the workers who are trapped. We are using all resources at our disposal for the rescue efforts," Mr. Shukl, who had rushed to the spot along with other senior officials to oversee the rescue operation, added. A shaken Mahesh Kumar, among those at the site, recalled his narrow escape. "As soon as the concrete was poured over the shuttering, it suddenly collapsed. Everyone on it fell. I was standing at the edge and managed to escape," he said. Taking cognisance of the incident, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed offi-



cial to ensure safe recovery of those trapped inside and their proper medical treatment. State Relief Commissioner Bhanu Chandra Goswami is in touch with the Kannauj district administration for all possible help in relief work, State government officials said. Teams of NDRF and SDRF have been deployed at the site where frantic efforts are underway to rescue the workers. Ambulances have been kept on standby to provide first aid and take the injured to hospital.

Kejriwal writes to CEC over BJP transferring votes to its leader's address, urges action

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

After Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday accused the BJP of allegedly submitting fake voter registration applications, its National Convener Arvind Kejriwal has called out the Bharatiya Janata Party for transferring 33 votes from across the country to the New Delhi assembly using the addresses of its own MPs. In a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner, Kejriwal expressed his concern over BJP's alleged attempt to manipulate the voters list. "33 new notes have been submitted for being transferred to BJP's candidate Parvash Verma", the official letter which also demands Verma's disqualification reads. Kejriwal also drew comparisons with instances of booth capturing during elections across the country, further alleging that its rival party, BJP, has engaged in "backdoor tactics" to



secretly alter electoral rolls for winning elections in the past. AAP's accusations come ahead of Delhi Assembly polls slated to be held on February 5.

Governor unable to digest progress of Tamil Nadu: Chief Minister Stalin

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday hit out at Governor RN Ravi, alleging that he was unable to accept the progress made by the State. Responding to the debate on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address, Stalin remarked, "As the incumbent Chief Minister, I may be an ordinary person. But the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly (TNLA) has a century-old history, built on the sentiments of crores of people." CM Stalin continued his criticism of the Governor, particularly for refusing to deliver his speech in the State Assembly and protesting the rendering of the national anthem at the conclusion. The Chief Minister accused the Governor of politically motivated behaviour that insulted the dignity of the State Assembly and was unbecoming of his office. "By disrespecting the dignity of the House, the sentiments of the people, and daring to insult the Tamil Thai Vaazhthu (Tamil State song), the Governor has demeaned his official position with political intent. The House has never witnessed such acts, and it must not witness them again,"

Stalin said. The Chief Minister also highlighted that the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly has been subjected to unusual incidents in recent years. "The Governor visits the House and leaves without delivering his speech. That is why I described his behaviour as childish," he said. Citing Article 176(1) of the Constitution, Stalin reiterated that the Governor must read the speech prepared by the State government.

Five from Hyderabad drown in Kondapochamma Sagar

Siddipet: In a shocking incident, five persons, who ventured into Kondapochamma Sagar, drowned on Saturday. A team of seven friends came to see the reservoir from Musheerabad in Hyderabad. When they ventured into the reservoir for a swim, five of them accidentally drowned. The police, irrigation, and other department officials have put collective efforts into retrieving the dead bodies.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

INDIA wilting

JAMMU & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has ruffled quite a few feathers, particularly in the Congress camp, by raising doubts about the INDIA bloc's future and suggesting that it should be wound up if it was meant only for the parliamentary elections. His obvious targets are two alliance partners — AAP and the Congress — which are working at cross purposes in the Delhi Assembly elections. Omar's outburst comes in the wake of RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav's remark that the bloc was formed only for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Putting on a brave face, senior INDIA leader and Omar's father Farooq Abdullah has claimed that the alliance is about "strengthening India and eliminating hatred", but he didn't sound very convincing when he vouched for the bloc's longevity. The cracks are undoubtedly widening. The alliance is becoming a rudderless ship, if not a sinking one, merely seven months after its creditable performance in the Lok Sabha elections. Who is at the helm? The Congress took its leadership of INDIA for granted, only to be rudely jolted by successive poll setbacks — first in Haryana and then in Maharashtra. The grand old party is playing second fiddle to regional parties in both Jharkhand and J&K, where INDIA triumphed last year. The Congress has lost not only bragging rights but also the ability to spearhead a pan-India coalition that can challenge the BJP. The onus, however, is still on the Congress to keep the bloc intact, as pointed out by Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena action. It continues to be the largest party in the Opposition alliance. The Gandhis — all three of them are in Parliament now — and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge need to reach out to disgruntled allies. The least they can do is to set INDIA's agenda for this year in consultation with other stakeholders. Letting things drift will be a win-win situation for the BJP.

Countries like Canada lost war against drugs and legalised them, but India can still fight: Devendra Fadnavis



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Fadnavis Navi Mumbai police Commissioner Milind Bharambe said they launched a helpline number, 8828112112, where people in Navi Mumbai can call and anonymously give a tip-off about drugs and promised prompt action. Quoting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Wednesday that countries like Canada had "lost the war" against drugs and had to legalise them, but India is in a position to fight the menace.

During the inauguration of a helpline number announced by the Navi Mumbai police for reporting drug abuse and trafficking, Fadnavis emphasised that India is in a war against drugs which have become widespread. He highlighted that these substances are being sold on platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, which drug peddlers have turned into marketplaces. He said external enemies can no longer attack India directly, as Indians have begun to stand up against them. He mentioned that these enemies are using drugs to weaken the younger generation, getting them addicted and thus undermining the country from within. "We have seen how in Punjab, which is a border state, youth are being made addicted to drugs. If those at the border are weak, how will they fight challenges before them from outside?" he asked. Talking about a meeting Amit Shah had with home ministers and director generals of police (DGP) from across the country, Fadnavis quoted Shah as saying that Canada had legalised drugs since things had gone out of control. "How many people can you put in prison? It is not that they are liberal and hence legalised drugs, but they have lost the battle (against drugs). India is in a state that they can win. Hence, all states should cooperate, and the fight has started with Navi Mumbai," Fadnavis said. Earlier, Navi Mumbai police Commissioner Milind Bharambe said they launched a helpline number, 8828112112, where people in Navi Mumbai can call and anonymously give a tip-off about drugs and promised prompt action. Actor John Abraham leads the Navi Mumbai police's anti-drug campaign as the brand ambassador. Speaking at the event, Abraham said, "Let me tell you that I have never done drugs in my life or cigarette and alcohol. Self-discipline is important in life."

Vedanta's Anil Agarwal turns art lover, acquires London's iconic Riverside Studio

New Delhi: The founder and chairman of Vedanta Group Anil Agarwal is the new owner of the iconic Riverside Studio in London, announced a press release on Wednesday. The 100-year-old studio, which is a renowned global centre for arts and located on the north bank of the river Thames in the centre of London, will now operate under the name 'Anil Agarwal Riverside Studios Trust', it informed. "I have always believed that art has the power to transcend boundaries, unite people, and elevate human experience. Riverside Studios will become a premier global destination for showcasing Indian and global arts and culture. I invite Indian artists and the film fraternity to showcase their artistic talent and cinematic depth at this world-renowned venue for a truly enriching experience. Global leaders from various spheres now have an opportunity to enthrall the audience with their real-life experiences and journey, here," said Agarwal, who turned a tiny scrap metal business into London-headquartered Vedanta Resources, in a statement.

US move to ease dual-use tech exports to India likely to boost commercial space cooperation ties



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

* In 2008, an Indian-origin businessman in the United States was sentenced to 35 months in prison for using his international electronics business to procure electronic components for India's space and military programme amid a ban on supply of the dual-use equipment to India under the Missile Technology Control Regime and other laws. In India, an attempt at a space business by a start-up led by Indian-origin US space tech entrepreneur Ramachandran Vishwanathan, through the 2005 Devas-Antrix satellite deal, landed in a legal quagmire after criminal action was initiated against him and ex-ISRO officials in 2014 citing corruption in the "sweetheart" deal.

Over the years, commercial space cooperation between US and Indian firms has been constrained by protectionist policies on both sides but the recent announcement of changes in the US Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) combined with a new Indian Space Policy 2023 where "nothing is off limits for the private sector" are now expected to boost ties between both countries. During his visit to New Delhi this week, Jack Sullivan, the US National Security Adviser (NSA) in the outgoing Joe Biden administration, announced changes in the US MTCR. "...as a result of new updates to our missile technology control export policies that President Biden signed out just last week — and which I'm glad to announce publicly for the first time today — our commercial and civil space partnership is set for lift-off," Sullivan said in Delhi on Monday.

A fact sheet on the capstone meeting between the US NSA and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval this week stated that one of the aims of the "new era of space cooperation" between the two countries would be: "Reducing barriers to collaboration around commercial space technology following the US government's recent conclusion of updates to Missile Technology Control Regime export policy, which will open the door to additional technology licensing and co-development opportunities in support of the US-India space partnership". The changes to the MTCR export policy are now expected to lead to more US companies entering the Indian space sector which has been opened up for private participation under the new 2023 space policy. While ISRO and NASA have been working for the last few years on developing a remote sensing satellite NISAR (NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite) which will "map the entire globe in 12 days" — the launch is scheduled this year — new collaborations are also expected in the launch of large US communication satellites by ISRO for the first time.

In June 2023, Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had welcomed the new Indian space policy under which space technology developed by ISRO would be transferred to private players. "Welcoming India's Space Policy — 2023, the leaders called for enhanced commercial collaboration between the US and Indian private sectors in the entire value chain of the space economy and to address export controls and facilitate technology transfer," a joint statement by the two leaders stated on June 22, 2023. With US space entrepreneur Elon Musk, an influential policy figure in the incoming Donald Trump administration, moving his space enterprise SpaceX into the realm of launching heavy space cargo, US businesses could avail smaller launch vehicles

developed by ISRO for lighter cargo with greater ease following the recent easing of MTCR export norms, say experts.

"There will be less reliance on bigger launch vehicles in the coming days. In this market, India will play a major role and US companies are interested. In the US, space launch firms like SpaceX are involved mainly with heavy-lift launches. We may be an autorickshaw compared to the Volvo bus of the US but autorickshaws are also going to be needed," M Annadurai, the former director of the ISRO Satellite Centre, said about evolving space partnerships with the US. According to commentary by the US-based think tank Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the MTCR policy reform could be beneficial for the transfer of satellite technology, more launch vehicle orders, and momentum for more relaxation on tech transfers from the US to India. "While a special regime or carve-out for Indian space enterprises under the ITAR [International Traffic in Arms Regulations] would be challenging in the short term, perhaps the current relaxation under United States' policy on MTCR could lead to forward-looking discussions on a possible pilot program like the Open General License scheme extended to Australia for the AUKUS [a trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States]," the commentary said.

An ecosystem is being created in the Kulasekarapattinam Spaceport (ISRO's second spaceport apart from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh) under development in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu for the launch of small satellite systems and this is expected to make India a major player in the small satellites development and launch space, Annadurai said. "The future is small satellite configurations for both remote sensing and communications," he pointed out. The number of small satellites that can be launched is in the thousands, he said. "With the new spaceport development along with the new space policy, India is emerging as a key player in aerospace on the lines of Japan and Germany for automobiles," he said. "Now semiconductor industries are being set up in India. We have our own Vikram processor and many of the things we are indigenously developing. Even materials we are getting in India. We also work with Japanese firms. There is competition between Japanese and US firms following the 'Make in India' thrust," Annadurai said.

India's space vision under the new policy Under a decadal vision, the Indian government is aspiring to take its space economy from its current value of \$ 8 billion to \$ 44 billion by 2033. "This is one of the most challenging tasks for this is a 5x improvement or increase. We are looking at every sub-sector in the space industry be it launch vehicles, satellite manufacturing, data disseminations, application ground stations and so on to see how we can move the space economy," Pawan Goenka, the chairman of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe), had said at the 2024 Bengaluru Space Expo. "It is very easy for ISRO to launch satellites but we have decided that rather than ISRO doing it, we will have the private sector coming in owning the satellites, operating them and monetising these satellites," he said. One of the major ISRO technologies that New Space India Limited (NSIL) — the new commercial arm of the Department of Space — is looking to commercialise is the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) which had a successful test flight in August last year. The SSLV costs one-fourth the cost of a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), which has been the workhorse of the Indian launch vehicle system for over three decades. While NSIL signed a deal for a maiden commercial flight of the SSLV in 2019 — with a satellite of a US space start-up Spaceflight — even before it was tested, the deal fell through due to the subsequent Covid crisis and delays in the realisation of the SSLV rocket. The first major commercial flight of the SSLV with a foreign payload is now expected to be in 2026 with the Optimus satellite of the Australian space firm Space Machines.

'Taken to Belarus forest instead of Germany, tortured': Haryana man says Patiala firm cheated him of Rs 8.5 lakh



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Haryana Police have lodged a FIR against a Patiala-based immigration company over a Kaithal resident's allegations that the firm promised to take him to Germany after taking a payment of Rs 8.5 lakh but instead, took him to the forests of Belarus in August 2024 where he was tortured. The family of Majid Ahmad in Kaithal district's Kharaudi village had lodged a police complaint in September last year after he managed to return. The case was, however, only registered on January 6, 2025, after the man's father alleged that he was tortured in Belarus with burning cigarettes.

Assistant Sub Inspector Ram Chander, who is investigating the case, said on Wednesday that the FIR was lodged after the economic cell of the police carried out a preliminary probe. "Now, we will conduct an investigation after asking the firm to join the probe," he added. According to the family, Majid wished to go abroad. His father Sardar Ahmad told the police that he accompanied Majid to the Patiala establishment on August 1, 2024, after they saw an advertisement on social media. He added that a couple in the office promised to send Majid to Germany in lieu of Rs 8.5 lakh. Sardar said they had assured to send Majid to Russia first and then to Germany. "They charged Rs 4 lakh for the Russian visa and asked to pay the remaining Rs 4.5 lakh after he reached Germany. On August 12, my son landed in Russia. We kept talking to Majid till August 18, 2024. After that, his phone was found to be switched off," he said. The family contacted the firm owners on August 19 and was assured that Majid was okay and would soon be sent to Germany. "On August 29, the agents connected me with Majid on their phone. Majid asked us to pay the remaining amount to the travel agents stating that he was

in Germany," he added. The second instalment of Rs 4.5 lakh was subsequently paid. "On September 12, 2024, I received a phone call from Majid from an unknown number. He said some people with the travel agents took him to the forests of Belarus where he was held hostage. Majid was assaulted, tortured with burning cigarettes and kept hungry. He told us that he had earlier about arriving in Germany due to fear. The kidnappers also snatched the 700 dollars he had and threw him in the forest. Some people took him to the local hospital there," Sardar explained.

Later, the family arranged his air ticket and Majid returned to India on September 21, 2024. He was medically examined at a hospital in Guhla, Kaithal. Six days after he returned home, Sardar filed a police complaint alleging cheating of Rs 8.5 lakh, besides assault and torture of his son. The police have lodged an FIR under charges of criminal breach of trust, cheating and in connection with the Emigration Act, 1983. The investigation officer said no arrest has taken place yet. The accused travel agents were unavailable when phone calls were made to the immigration firm, while a woman who introduced herself as a relative of the accused did not respond to subsequent phone calls.

Tuition teacher in Bengaluru who eloped with 15-year-old student arrested after one-and-half months

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Bengaluru The house owner of the accused who happened to see the lookout notice on television informed a friend, who in turn alerted the police. The house owner of the accused who happened to see the lookout notice on television informed a friend, who in turn alerted the police.

A 30-year-old tuition teacher in Bengaluru who had reportedly eloped with his 15-year-old student one-and-a-half months ago was arrested from near Mandya on Monday, the police said. The accused, who is already married and has a two-year-old daughter, left behind a note on November 23 that he was in love with his student and was eloping with her, the police said. The man and the girl were traced from a rented house where they were living as a newly married couple. The man was arrested under the sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, 2012, and sent to Bengaluru Central Prison. The police had issued a lookout notice on January 3 as they had remained untraceable for weeks and announced an award of Rs 25,000 for those providing information about the man.

Many Sena UBT leaders in touch with Eknath Shinde, would soon be part of Shiv Sena: Minister Uday Samant

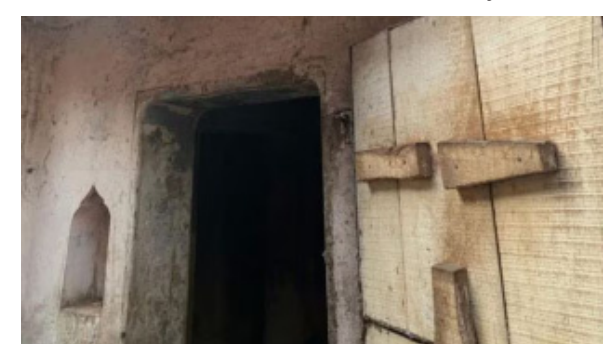


GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra Minister Uday Samant claimed Wednesday that several elected representatives of the Shiv Sena (UBT) are in touch with Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and would soon join their party. While responding to the question of an alleged attempt by Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) to poach MPs from the Sharad Pawar-led party, Samant said, "I don't know about NCP (SP) MPs joining the NCP. But I had said this earlier too... Just after the poll results were declared several public representatives of the Sena (UBT) were in touch with Shinde ji. Soon, you will witness that those public representatives of Sena UBT will be in the Shiv Sena". "A decision about it will be taken by Shinde ji," he said. Samant said if any Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders want to join the Ajit Pawar-led NCP, the Shiv Sena will welcome it.

A source in the Shinde-led party said that since the drubbing in the Maharashtra Assembly elections held last year, several MLAs and MPs of the Uddhav Thackeray-led party are unhappy and have contacted the Sena leadership about the possibility of joining Sena. The Eknath Shinde-led Sena won seven Lok Sabha seats to become the third largest ally in the NDA. If it manages to poach more MPs from the Sena (UBT), the party will further strengthen its position in the NDA on the national level and weaken the Sena UBT's position in the Opposition INDIA bloc.

'Temples' found in Firozabad, excavation underway



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Authorities in the city on Wednesday began excavation at two sites after the purported discovery of "ancient temples" there. The digging was being carried out under police supervision, following appeals from Hindu right bodies. One of the two sites, located near Mohammadi Masjid in the Kashmiri Gate area under Rasulpur Police Station, was discovered two days ago, police said.

Police reached out to local Muslim representatives after they were approached for action at the site by the Hindu right bodies. Rasulpur Station Officer Anuj Kumar Singh said, "Following appeals from Hindu organisations, both communities were consulted, and work began peacefully." Bajrang Dal district chief Mohan Bajrangi, present at the site, said the structure appeared to be a Shiv temple. "Details about the idols and artifacts will emerge after the excavation is completed," he said. Akeel Ahmed, a native of the area, said the area was part of farmland owned by Hindu families till about 60 years ago. It is believed several Hindu families left the place after an increase in the Muslim population. Another "temple" was discovered in Chishti Nagar's 60-foot Road area under Ramgarh Police Station on Monday evening. Rajeev Sharma, president of the Vishva Hindu Parishad's Firozabad unit, along with his team, cleaned the place in the presence of the police and local Muslims. Ramgarh SHO Sanjeev Dubey said about 50 years ago the area was dominated by Hindus and there was a temple. "Now this area is Muslim dominated. The excavation work is on and there is communal harmony in the area," he said.

Delhi HC refuses to direct Centre on plea for rehabilitation package to Pakistan migrants

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

he migrants were in need of comprehensive resettlement measures to enable them to live with dignity in India, the plea said. The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to direct the Centre to provide a comprehensive rehabilitation package for migrants from Pakistan who obtained citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. A bench of acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said it was a policy matter of the government and asked the Centre to decide the petitioner's representation instead.

Petitioner Akhil Bhartiya Dharma Prasar Samiti said there was a sizeable number of migrants from Pakistan who obtained citizenship pursuant to the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. The migrants were in need of comprehensive resettlement measures to enable them to live with dignity in India, the plea said. Some of them, it said, lived in deplorable conditions prompting an urgent need to provide them with the rehabilitation measures towards shelter, access to healthcare, education, water, electricity and sanitation. The bench said the rehabilitation package and the extent of its requirement was "purely a matter of policy". The petitioner was said to have already made a representation to the authorities for considering the rehabilitation package to such persons. "In view of the above, we consider it appropriate to dispose of the petition by directing the respondents to consider the representation and take an informed decision," the bench said.

'Kejriwal's Sheesh Mahal will be AAP's graveyard in Delhi': Haryana minister Anil Vij



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar Anil Vij said that for years, political parties won elections by exploiting emotions, making false promises, and campaigning under slogans like 'Eradicate Poverty. Haryana minister Anil Vij on Wednesday furthered the BJP's allegations of opulence targeting Delhi chief minister's official residence, and said the "Sheesh Mahal" renovated by Arvind Kejriwal during his tenure as CM would bring doom for the Aam Aadmi Party. The BJP has accused the Aam Aadmi Party of converting Bungalow number 6 on Flagstaff Road in north Delhi's Civil Lines, the CM's official residence, into a 'Sheesh Mahal' by adding "extravagant luxuries" such as mini-bars, golden toilets and swimming pools. As the official residence of the Delhi CM has been a poll issue by the BJP, the leaders of the ruling party on Wednesday staged a sit-in outside the Prime Minister's official residence after they were stopped from opening the CM's bungalow to the public so as to expose the BJP's false propaganda. "The Sheesh Mahal, built by the Aam Aadmi Party to showcase their luxurious lifestyle, will itself become the party's graveyard in Delhi. The Prime Minister has not built any new residence. All Prime Ministers have resided in the same house. It is the Delhi govern-

ment of the AAP that constructed something new, which they flaunt," Vij told reporters in poll-bound Delhi. Anil Vij, Haryana's energy, transport and labour minister, is in his third term as Haryana's cabinet minister. But, unlike his cabinet colleagues, Vij had never stayed in ministerial official accommodation allotted in Chandigarh or Panchkula. Instead, he has always stayed at his personal residence, which is 45 km away from capital city Chandigarh, in Ambala cantonment—the constituency that he represents.

Regarding the Delhi Assembly elections scheduled on February 5, Vij said the Bharatiya Janata Party will win in Delhi like in Haryana. "We have already hoisted the BJP's victory flag in Haryana, signalling our momentum, and this will extend to all regions. In Haryana, we marked the BJP's victory, paving the way for triumph nationwide. After Haryana, Maharashtra elections were held, and the BJP secured victory there. Now, Delhi elections are next, and the BJP will win here as well because Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji has reshaped the direction of politics," he said. Vij said that for years, political parties won elections by exploiting emotions, making false promises, and campaigning under slogans like 'Eradicate Poverty.' "However, PM Modi Ji has introduced the politics of work and results, which the people appreciate. Hence, the BJP will win the Delhi Assembly elections", Vij explained. On farmers' protest at Shambhu and Khanauri borders, Vij claimed that farmers are protesting on land governed by the AAP in Punjab. "Despite the loud claims made in Delhi, no AAP leader or Chief Minister has visited the farmers to understand their issues. Even the Honourable Supreme Court has formed a committee to hold talks with farmers and issued directives, but the AAP government is unwilling to implement it. I believe the AAP is waiting for an incident, like the hunger strike of farmer leader Dalalwaj Ji, to exploit it for political gain across the country," the Haryana minister said.

Rocking Star Yash drops wild 'Birthday Peek' from 'Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-ups'

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Rocking Star Yash, the phenomenon who shattered boundaries and redefined Indian cinema with the 'KGF' franchise, turned 39 today. A birthday treat arrived in the form of a 'Birthday Peek' video from his highly-anticipated film, 'Toxic – A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups'. This video showcases Yash's unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of cinematic storytelling. In the 'Birthday Peek', Yash, impeccably dressed in a crisp white suit, fedora and holding a cigar, makes a commanding entrance. The sultry ambience of the club, pulsating with extravagance, indulgence and sinful soiree, sets the stage for this 'Fairy Tale for grown-ups'. As Yash commands attention, every gaze in the room is drawn to him. The teaser, brimming with bold and provocative moments, invites viewers into an intoxicating and captivating world.



Speaking on Yash and creating the world of 'Toxic', director Geetu Mohandas said, "'Toxic – A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups' is a story that defies convention and is sure to provoke the chaos within us. Today, as we release the first peek of our film, we also celebrate Yash. I have observed his brilliance and to those who know him or follow his journey, his process is as mysterious as it is meticulous. It is both a privilege and a thrill to have co-written this captivating world alongside a mind that sees the extraordinary where others see the ordinary." "When our two worlds of thought collided, the result is neither compromise nor chaos — it's the transformation that happens when artistic vision meets the precision of commercial storytelling transcending bor-

ders, languages, and cultural confines. We hope to bring an experience woven to ignite something primal in all of us — a film not just to be watched, but to be felt," Mohandas continued. "Through his process of quiet reverence for his craft, he taught me that the journey of creation is sacred. To him, nothing is certain except the thrill of the journey ahead. These words are not just spoken from a director about her actor and not just for his ardent admirers, but for anyone seeking to understand his unwavering passion for cinema and boundless spirit of creativity. Happy birthday to our 'Monster' mind!", she further added. Jointly produced by Venkat K Narayana and Yash under KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations, 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups' has been directed by internationally acclaimed filmmaker Geetu Mohandas.

Kingfisher beer off shelves in Telangana as beer maker United Breweries halts supply

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Hyderabad: Kingfisher Beer lovers are in for a heart break in Telangana. United Breweries, the manufacturers of Kingfisher brand beer has decided to suspend supply of all brands of Kingfisher beer with immediate effect to the Telangana Beverages Corporation Ltd (TGBCL) due to what it termed as 'significant and ongoing operating losses'. The beer maker maintained that despite the continuous efforts over last two years, there was no increase of the base prices offered to its products. "This has resulted in escalating losses, making our operations in the State unviable", a statement from the company said on Tuesday. United Breweries makes the popular brands of Kingfisher, Kingfisher strong, Kingfisher Ultra, Kingfisher UltraMax and some other beer brands which are most popular in Telangana. In fact, Kingfisher beer brands account for nearly 60 to 70 per cent of the total beer sales in the state, industry sources say. What seemed to have queered the pitch is that the Telangana Government had increased beer prices to the consumers, but had not increased the base price paid to the manufacturers. Moreover, the inordinate delay in payments from the TGBCL was also leading to mounting losses to the company, which contributes more than Rs 4500 crore to the State exchequer every year.



"We have a fiduciary responsibility to all our stakeholders, and with each beer sold at a loss, it has become unsustainable for us to continue our operations. Additionally, the substantial overdue payments for the supplies made to TGBCL further complicate the situation", the statement said. The statement further said the Brewers Association of India (BAI) has made multiple representations to the Government regarding the industry-wide challenges, urging price increases to offset inflation, but unfortunately, there has been no resolution to date. "Meanwhile, the Telangana Wine Dealers' Association president D Venkateshwar Rao has urged the government to expeditiously settle the issue so that the beer supply was streamlined. He said the liquor sellers in the State lost business last summer also.

Microsoft joins hands with India, to skill 5 lakh people by 2026 under India AI Mission

New Delhi: Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella here on Wednesday announced several AI partnerships in the country, which includes an MoU with the government's 'India AI Mission' to skill 5 lakh people. The MoU with India AI, a division of Digital India Corporation, aims to leverage AI to drive innovation, enhance productivity, and foster inclusive growth across the country. As part of the MoU, Microsoft and India AI together will skill 500,000 individuals, including students, educators, developers, government officials, and women entrepreneurs, by 2026.

They will also establish an AI Center of Excellence, called 'AI Catalysts', to promote rural AI innovation and support 100,000 AI innovators and developers through hackathons, community-building solutions, and an AI marketplace. As part of the MoU, they will also set up 'AI Productivity Labs' at 20 National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs)/NIELIT centres in 10 states to impart foundational courses for 20,000 educators. The collaboration will also

focus on developing AI-enabled solutions for citizen-scale domains such as healthcare, education, accessibility, and agriculture. "We are excited to work closely with the government to extend the benefits of the India AI mission to every corner of the country and democratise access to technology and resources," said Puneet Chandok, president, Microsoft India and South Asia. RailTel and Microsoft also entered a five-year strategic partnership to advance digital, cloud, and AI transformation in the Indian railways and public sector space. A recent IDC study, commissioned by Microsoft, showed AI usage in India jumped from 63 per cent in 2023 to 72 per cent in 2024. On Tuesday, Microsoft announced plans to invest \$3 billion in cloud and AI infrastructure in India over the next two years, including the establishment of new data centres. The tech giant also announced to train and skill 10 million people in AI by 2030. The company has already empowered 2.4 million Indians, including civil servants, college students and people with disabilities, with AI skills.

Centre has notified grant of classical language status to Marathi: Maharashtra minister Uday Samant



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Months after granting classical language status to Marathi, the Union government issued an official notification to this effect on Wednesday, said Maharashtra minister Uday Samant. Although the Union cabinet accorded classical language status to Marathi, alongside Assamese, Bengali, Pali, and Prakrit on October 3 last year, an official notification had not been issued in this regard until Samant met Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in New Delhi on Wednesday. The demand to include Marathi in the list of India's classical languages had been pending for 11 years. Sadanand More, chairperson of the Maharashtra State Board of Literature and Culture, was also present at the meeting, following which Shekhawat handed over the notification to Samant.

"I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shekhawat ji for issuing the official notification granting classical status to Marathi. I will submit whatever proposals are necessary in the next eight to fifteen days. A study is being conducted under the chairmanship of Sadanand More. Shekhawat has assured us of funding for it," said Samant. Samant added that Shekhawat would visit Pune on January 31, February 1, and 2 for the inauguration of the Marathi World Conference. "Today, on behalf of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, and the cabinet, I thank Shekhawat. We will strive to preserve and promote the Marathi language at the international level. I also thank all the writers who have worked to achieve the status of a classical language," the minister said. "A decision was made last year to provide a fund of Rs 2 crore to the Sahitya Sammelan. Similarly, the same fund will be allocated this year as well. There are Marathi schools in Delhi and other areas, and we are also working to strengthen those schools," he added. For his part, Sadanand More said he had been working for the Marathi language for many years. "I also wrote the article Garja Maharashtra. This language has a history of 2,000 to 2,500 years. Maharashtra Prakrit has influenced Sanskrit literature. It will now be possible to work for Maharashtra Prakrit and the Marathi language. It is gratifying that the earlier version of the Marathi language, known as Prakrit, has also been granted the status of a classical language," he said.

TMC's Malda town president arrested in connection with party councilor Dulal Sarkar's murder

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Narendranath Tiwari, malda, kolkata, indian express Narendranath Tiwari, the party's Malda town president and Hindi cell district president, was summoned to the Englishbazar police station for questioning on Tuesday. (FB) The police arrested Trinamool Congress leader Narendranath Tiwari and another accused named Swapan Sharma in connection with the murder of Malda TMC leader Dulal Sarkar alias Babla Sarkar. They were arrested by the Malda district police on Wednesday after a marathon interrogation since last night. "So far, seven persons have been arrested in the case," SP Pradip Kumar Yadav Narendranath Tiwari, the party's Malda town president and Hindi cell district president, was summoned to the Englishbazar police station for questioning on Tuesday. His brothers Dhirendranath Tiwari and Akhilesh Tiwari were also questioned in the case. "Primarily, a personal grudge over an old incident seems to be the motive behind the murder, however, the investigation is on," a senior cop told The Indian Express. The accused persons have been booked under BNS sections 103 (1) (murder), 61 (2) (criminal conspiracy), and under various sections of the Arms Act.

Three other accused persons were initially arrested on January 2. They were Sameer Akhtar of Azamnagar, Katihar in Bihar, Tinku Ghosh of Malda, and Mohammad Abdul Gani of Katihar in Bihar. All three were produced before the court on the same day and police obtained 14 days of their remand. A motorcycle along with other objects were seized from the scene of the crime. On January 3, another two accused persons were arrested, namely Abhijeet Ghosh



of Ghoshpara and Amit Rajak of Malda district. They were produced before the court on January 4 and granted 13 days of police remand. Reacting to Tiwari's arrest, BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar said, I had earlier said during elections. Tiwari had contested as an independent candidate. People may call it a political murder but this is a clear case of a land and money dispute. Leaders like Dulal Sarkar and Narendra Tiwari have made properties of crores of rupees by doing land business. The Hindu TMC leaders of Malda have only one work to do and that is to sell properties to establish control over land... It is their source of money in the area. "Sarkar, a close associate of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and a Trinamool Congress (TMC) councilor from Malda was shot dead by assailants on January 2. The incident occurred in the Jhaljhalia More area of Malda district and was captured on CCTV camera. Sarkar was shot multiple times at close range by bike-borne individuals.

MSU vice-chancellor resigns, his lawyer informs Gujarat HC

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

The Vice-Chancellor of MS University, VK Shrivastava, Wednesday informed the Gujarat High Court that he had tendered his resignation to the Additional Chief Secretary on Tuesday evening, a day ahead of the hearing of a writ petition challenging Shrivastava's appointment before the HC. Gujarat Advocate General Kamal Trivedi informed the court that the state government has decided to accept Shrivastava's resignation and hand over the temporary charge of the post to another official. Even as Shrivastava's tenure ends on February 8, his lawyer Mrugen Purohit told the Division Bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice Pranav Trivedi on Wednesday of the resignation. However, Advocate General Kamal Trivedi informed the court that the charge of the post had to be handed over to another person and therefore, the final acceptance of the resignation would be done by Thursday.

The HC was hearing a petition filed by Senior Professor Satish Pathak of the Department of Education challenging the February 10, 2022 appointment of Shrivastava. On January 3, the state government had informed the court that a search committee had been constituted to decide the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of MS University and 80 applications had been received for the same. The state also informed the court that the new VC for MSU would be appointed by February 8, the end of Shrivastava's term.

Shrivastava's tenure of about three years has seen controversies and protests within the campus. It was in November 2023 that Pathak approached the Gujarat High Court, seeking a PIL, contending that the appointment of Shrivastava was "illegal" as he did not fulfill the eligibility University Grants Commission (UGC) criteria of 10 years



of experience as a professor. Speaking to The Indian Express on Wednesday, Pathak said, "The main procedural contention was that Shrivastava had only three years and three months of experience as against the required UGC requirement of 10 years. The fact that this development has occurred and the state government has decided to accept his resignation is indeed a good sign for MSU. The University needs a good administrator and more importantly, a good human being. That should be the priority for the government in deciding the next candidate. In the interim for about a month until February 9, the charge should be handed over to a senior professor, who has passion for MSU... Since the resignation has happened, it is likely that the government may also expedite the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor." Pathak, who has been a two-term senate member of the university, had also made a reference to the Supreme Court judgment in a civil writ petition challenging the appointment of Professor Shishir Kulkarni as the VC of Sardar Patel University, who was eventually removed from the post in March 2022.

Painter arrested for stealing diamond jewellery, cash from actor Poonam Dhillon's house in Mumbai

Poonam Dhillon, 62, is best known for her role in the 1979 film Noorie. Some of her other notable films are Samundar, Dard, Sohni Mahiwal, Teri Meherbaaniyaan, Karma, and Naam. Poonam Dhillon, 62, is best known for her role in the 1979 film Noorie. Some of her other notable films are Samundar, Dard, Sohni Mahiwal, Teri Meherbaaniyaan, Karma, and Naam. The Mumbai police arrested a painting worker on Monday for allegedly stealing ornaments and cash from actor Poonam Dhillon's house at Pali Hill in Bandra, the police said. According to the police, Dhillon's manager, Sandesh Chaudhary, 39, on Sunday filed a complaint with the Khar police station, claiming the actor's diamond jewellery, and Indian and foreign currencies were missing from her cupboard in her Bandra West house. Her son discovered the theft, as per the complaint. During an

investigation led by Senior Inspector Sanjeev Dhupal, the police learned that three painters had visited Dhillon's house for painting work. During their questioning, one of them, Sameer Salim Ansari, 37, gave vague answers, leading to suspicion about him. He was subjected to sustained interrogation, leading to him confessing to his crime, the police said. The police arrested Ansari under Section 305 (theft) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and recovered diamond earrings and cash worth Rs 1.26 lakh and \$500. Who is Poonam Dhillon? Poonam Dhillon, 62, is best known for her role in the 1979 film Noorie. Some of her other notable films are Samundar, Dard, Sohni Mahiwal, Teri Meherbaaniyaan, Karma, and Naam. In addition to her work in films, she has appeared in several TV shows, including 'Ekk Nayi Pehchaan', 'Dil Hi Toh Hai', and 'Kittie Party'.

Keep sewers as pristine as your arteries, says Madras High Court



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Observing that manual scavenging deaths might not occur if people maintained sewers and drains "as pristine as their arteries" without letting them choke due to garbage, the Madras High Court said that society, as a whole, must apologise to every human being forced to enter the sewer lines. Justice D. Bharatha Chakravarthy made these observations while directing the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) to pay a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the surviving legal heirs of a 22-year-old youth who died 24 years ago while clearing a sewer blockage in Chennai. The judge also made it clear that the demand draft should be accompanied by a letter of apology, on behalf of society, for not only for having made the youth, Sridhar, lose his life by letting him enter the underground sewage channel but also for the enormous delay in paying compensation to his family. "When we, the inhabitants of the city, push everything inside the drains and sewers indiscriminately, it is nothing short of a homicide by an insensitive society. How many more lives do we want to sacrifice before learning that we must treat and maintain our sewers and drains as pristine as our arteries carrying blood?" the judge asked.

Compensation delay He pointed out that the youth, employed for manual scavenging by a contractor engaged

by CMWSSB, died in the year 2000 and his father Kannaiyan had filed an application before the Deputy Commissioner of Labour in 2002 seeking compensation under the Workmen Compensation Act of 1923.

The application was kept pending for five long years and dismissed for default in 2007 due to the absence of the claimant. It was, however, restored in 2008 following a sub-application filed by the claimant but got dismissed once again in the same year on the same ground of non-appearance of the applicant. In 2009, Kannaiyan took out one more sub-application for restoring his claim for compensation and urged the Deputy Commissioner of Labour to also condone the delay in filing the sub-application. The officer refused to condone the delay and hence, the claimant moved the High Court in 2010. Disposing of his writ petition, pending in the High Court for the last 14 years, Justice Chakravarthy wrote: "This case does not need any elaborate reasoning. Suffice it to state that one of our fellow human beings had died because of manual scavenging. This violates all tenets of human rights."

The judge pointed out that the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act of 1993 was very much in force in the country when the youth had died and therefore, the CMWSSB, as well as the Deputy Labour Commissioner, ought to have been alive to the situation. Not wanting to remand the matter back to the Labour department for determination of compensation, the judge cited the Supreme Court's 2014 verdict in Safai Karamchari's case that every death due to manual scavenging must be compensated with ₹10 lakh to the family of the deceased. Therefore, he ordered that the family of Sridhar should also be paid the same amount. Taking into account that the youth's father, mother, and a sister had died in the last 24 years, the judge ordered payment of the compensation amount to the two surviving sisters and two minor children of the dead sibling. Observing that it would be easy to blame the authorities in the present case, the judge said, society should also take the blame equally.

NHRC concerned at death of sanitation workers despite steps to eradicate manual scavenging

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Expressing concern over continuous death of sanitation workers despite legal provisions to eradicate manual cleaning of sewage and hazardous waste, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) chairperson Justice (ret'd.) V. Ramasubramanian on Monday (January 6, 2024) said it was necessary to study and understand the causes to suggest remedial measures. He pointed out that manual scavenging is the one area that is being tackled legislatively, managed executively and supervised judicially to eradicate it, but death of sanitation workers is rampant and stressed on the need for running a pilot project using technology/ robots for cleaning sewer lines and septic tanks to begin with in one State to see its outcome and further replication in other parts of the country.

Justice Ramasubramanian was speaking at an open house discussion organised by the commission on 'Dignity and Liberty of the Individuals- Rights of Manual Scavengers' in New Delhi. According to the government data, 377 persons have died during the last five years from 2019 to 2023 due to hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. The commission maintained that manual scavenging is one of the biggest challenges facing society, which needs to be addressed with concerted efforts. NHRC Secretary General Bharat Lal highlighted how certain castes and communities are disproportionately affected by this



practice. The commission had taken up the issue of implementation of mechanised cleaning processes by various States. The commission members listed measures to check manual scavenging, including conducting surveys for effective implementation of rehabilitation programmes and ensuring minimum wages. The NHRC suggested to maintain transparency in manual scavenging data and sewer death reporting, budget analysis, and awareness campaigns under SBM and NAMASTE schemes. "There is a need for a monitoring mechanism to identify the persons involved in manual scavenging and to create a database for health insurance, education, etc.," the commission said.

'Explain why aren't you liable': Allahabad HC summons DM, SP in Hathras stampede case

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

The Allahabad High Court has directed the then District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police of Hathras to personally appear on January 15 and explain why they should not be held liable for the stampede in 2024 that claimed 121 lives. Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav on January 6 said such incidents were the result of poor arrangements made by the organisers. "The organisers call innocent people for their benefit and due to lack of proper arrangements, such incidents happen. It is the responsibility of the administration to see whether there is proper arrangement of police force, medical, etc., or not," the judge said while hearing the bail plea of one Manju Devi.

The court further said, "In the past, many such incidents have been seen where lakhs of people gather in such events, poor and illiterate people gather due to faith and belief, and due to losing their temper, people die untimely in the stampede." Government counsel Rupak Chaubey said the organisers sought permission estimating a crowd of 80,000 people, but a crowd of 2.5 lakh turned up at the venue. On July 2, 2024, a stampede occurred during the



"satsang" organised by the followers of Surajpal alias Bhole Baba in Fulrai Mughalgarhi Village of Hathras district leaving 121 dead and several injured. While FIR was registered on the complaint of sub-inspector Brijesh Pandey, the petitioner's name cropped up during the investigation. The court expressed the need for the district and police administration to take lessons from the Hathras incident and make proper arrangements for the upcoming Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj to avoid such mishaps.

Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government imposes section 144 in Kurram for 2 months

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

The provincial government of northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pukhtunkhwa has imposed section 144 for two months in the violence-torn Kurram district to restore peace following an attack on a government convoy, which injured a top district official. The decision to impose section 144, banning the display of arms and assembly of five people or more, was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Sunday (January 5, 2025). The meeting also decided to ban all public meetings and rallies on the main Parachinar highway between the Tari and Chapri areas.

It was in a bid to restore peace and harmony in the sectarian-violence-hit Kurram district after the attack on a government convoy in Bagan resulted in injuries to Deputy Commissioner Javedullah Mehsud and seven others. The attack on Saturday (January 4, 2025) came days after a peace agreement was reached between warring Alizai and Bagan tribes following sectarian clashes that resulted in the killing of 133 people in the district between November 21 and December 2. The provincial government termed the Bagan incident a violation of the agreement. It was reported that the attackers who targeted DC Mehsud's vehicle were



identified and cases were registered against them. Efforts are underway to arrest them. During the meeting, it was decided that the government would impose bounties on those involved.

According to sources, the attackers were assisted by five facilitators who will also face legal action. Authorities will seek the help of locals and tribal elders to apprehend the culprits. The attack took place when Mehsud was in the area to review arrangements for an aid convoy that was to take food and medical aid items to Kurram.

The rebounding of Pakistan's Afghan strategy



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

On December 27, 2024, the Director-General of Pakistan's Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that 383 officers and soldiers in the Pakistani security forces had lost their lives in counter-terrorism operations during 2024. He also claimed that 925 terrorists and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists had been eliminated in approximately 60,000 intelligence-based operations. Giving a detailed account of Pakistan's generosity towards Afghanistan, he nonetheless asserted that Pakistan would not allow its citizens to be targeted by the TTP, which is alleged to enjoy safe haven in Afghanistan. It is, however, ironic given that Pakistan has itself, for long, provided logistical, military and moral support to the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network, the two formerly insurgent-cum-terrorist groups now leading the outcaste regime in Kabul, during their fight against the West-backed Afghan government and American security forces. Pakistan's special representative for Afghanistan Muhammad Sadiq Khan had visited Kabul in December 2024, where he had held parleys with top-ranking Taliban leaders to de-escalate the tensions between two countries. But this is likely to be a diplomatic failure as it was during his stay in Kabul that the Pakistan Air Force conducted air strikes against alleged TTP targets in eastern Paktika province on December 24. The Afghan authorities claimed that 46 people were killed in the air strikes which were apparently in response to the TTP's attack, on December 21, on a security post in South Waziristan, killing 16 Pakistani soldiers.

The two countries seem to be locked in a dangerous stalemate. On December 28, Afghanistan's so-called Ministry of Defence claimed attacks on multiple locations inside Pakistan in retaliation for the air strikes. Interestingly, the ministry did not mention the fact that Pakistan's territory was targeted, but, instead, chose to highlight that the strikes were executed beyond the "hypothetical line" — a term used by the Afghan government to refer to the Durand Line. These incidents serve to highlight the limits of Pakistan's ability to exercise its influence over its former proxy by virtue of either coercive methods or diplomatic persuasion. Pakistan's Afghan strategy has now become a victim of its own success. Instead of evolving as a "strategic depth" for Pakistan, the return of the Taliban has made Afghanistan a "strategic ditch" for Pakistan's security establishment, which seems to be getting deeper and deeper with no sight of escape. The tit-for-tat killing frenzy has dangerous implications as Pakistan's already tense relationship with Afghanistan has plunged into a deep crisis. Pakistan has been facing significant challenges from the TTP which shares many ideological affinities with the Afghan Taliban, leading to a growing perception that both constitute the sides of the same coin. Against a backdrop of inflamed passions and growing suspicion, Pakistan has been under constant public pressure to demonstrate retaliatory action. But nothing could be more ironic and ridiculous than the entreaties from a section of the Pakistani government to Washington to come to its rescue. In response to the deadly attack on a military camp in Pakistan in December 2023, claimed by the Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), Balochistan's caretaker Information Minister, Jan Achakzai, suggested the Pakistani government propose offering U.S. "drone bases to target militant sanctuaries in Afghanistan". Other measures included "special targeted operations, air strikes, border closure with Afghanistan, return of Afghan refugees, anti-TTA [Tehrik-e-Taliban Afghanistan] political opposition gathering in Islamabad." However, Mr. Achakzai later deleted this controversial tweet. When Pakistan's Army chief, General Asim Munir, had callously asserted in January 2024 that, "When it comes to the safety and security of every single Pakistani, the whole of Afghanistan can be damned", it merely fed the narrative that Pakistan's security establishment is

largely ignorant of the subtleties required to persuade the Afghan Taliban by means other than firepower. It is another matter that in a conciliatory tone afterwards, Gen. Munir pleaded with Afghan rulers not to prioritise the TTP "over their long-standing and benevolent brother Islamic country".

When it comes to Afghanistan's messy political dynamics, Pakistan's ruling elite has been living in a fantasy land, ignoring Afghanistan's notoriety as a 'graveyard of empires'. Instead of trying to extract Pakistan from the Afghan conflict after 9/11, Rawalpindi overextended its involvement, chasing a wild dream of unbreakable Pakistan-Afghan alliance against India. An explosion was bound to happen, but Pakistan was extremely slow to react to the gathering threats. Perhaps the only surprise is that this explosion came out of the Taliban-led Kabul, which was supposed to be a pliant regime. It is shocking that Pakistan got the Afghan Taliban-TTP nexus utterly wrong.

The creator of its own terror problem The terrorism problem that Pakistan faces is one that is of its own making. It is Pakistan's Afghan policy and the unnecessary obsession about a threat from India which should be blamed for fuelling jihadist extremism and terrorism. Pakistan has been pursuing an ill-considered policy of supporting violent extremist groups that are seen capable of hurting India and keeping Kabul under its thumb. It is not that Pakistan's military was oblivious to Afghan Taliban's intransigence. Rather, it thought of it as an expedient chess piece in the great game against India. Imran Khan, Pakistan's former Prime Minister, in prison for defying the powerful military, had compared the Taliban's triumphant return with Afghans having "broken the shackles of slavery". Now, the excitement heralding the Taliban's recapture of Kabul has been surpassed in intensity by the inexorable realpolitik, interspersed with the ideological rigidities of the Taliban movement. The unsurprising outcome is confusion and paralysis for those in Pakistan who are charged with understanding how the military and political aspects of their response should fit together. A pushback

The tension in the Afghanistan-Pakistan relations goes well beyond cross-border terrorism. No Afghan regime has ever accepted the 1893 Durand Line as a legitimate border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. And, Kabul claims Pakistan's Pashtun territories near the border. The problem with international boundaries in conflict zones is that they are not red lines inscribed on stone. After all, it was Rawalpindi which was complicit with the mujahideen in violating the very sanctity of the Durand Line during the so-called Afghan jihad against the red army.

The Afghan Taliban's fierce opposition to border fencing has come as a shock to Pakistan which was hopeful that the return of the Taliban would also bury the demand for a 'greater Pashtunistan' — an idea of creating a Pashtun homeland by uniting the frontier region of Pakistan with Afghanistan. The Taliban have not done anything to suppress Pashtun nationalism with Islamist ideology, fuelling Pashtun nationalist sentiments against Pakistan. Of course, Islamabad's 'Pashtunistan' puzzle is not new, but given the vicious potential of the militants that Pakistani security forces are now facing, the stakes of resolving the puzzle are much higher. If not meant as an intentionally sarcastic snipe, the Afghan Taliban's disdainful refusal to treat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a Pakistani province is tantamount to calling for Pashtun unity, which is going to exacerbate Pakistan's fears about Afghan irredentism. The reality of confronting irredentism is often far messier. In all probability, the Afghan border security personnel will continue to challenge Pakistani attempts to fence the border. Given the alarming rise in terrorism being blamed on the Afghan Taliban's inaction, Pakistan is reluctant to unilaterally recognise the new regime in Kabul as it had done previously in early 1990s. The magnitude of the challenge posed by the TTP to the legitimacy and authority of the Pakistani state, along with the utter disregard of the Afghan Taliban to Pakistan's persistent demands for credible action against the TTP, may have left Rawalpindi with diminishing options to create the terms for political engagement with the Taliban-led Afghanistan. Vinay Kaura is Assistant Professor, Department of International Affairs and Security Studies, Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Rajasthan, and Non-Resident Scholar, Afghanistan-Pakistan Studies, Middle East Institute, Washington DC

Afghans arrive in the Philippines to complete visa processing for resettlement in U.S.



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Teresita Daza said the Afghan nationals who landed in the Philippines on Monday were provided entry visas. File | Photo Credit: Screenshot from Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs Instagram handle A group of Afghan nationals arrived in the Philippines on Monday (January 6, 2025) to process special immigrant visas for their resettlement in the United States, as part of an agreement between Manila and Washington. The Philippines agreed last July to temporarily host a U.S. immigrant visa processing centre for a limited number of Afghan nationals aspiring to resettle in America. Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Teresita Daza said the Afghan nationals who landed in the Philippines on Monday (January 6, 2025) were provided entry visas. She said they had completed extensive security vetting and undergone full medical screenings prior to their arrival. "The U.S. government will cover the costs for the Afghan nationals' stay in the Philippines, including their food, housing, security, medical and transportation expenses," she said. She didn't specify how many Afghans arrived or how long the visa processing would take. Under the Philippines' rules, visa applicants can stay for no longer than 59 days.

A senior Philippine official told The Associated Press last year that only 150 to 300 applicants would be accommodated in the Philippines under the "one-time" deal. The official who knew about the negotiations agreed to speak on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to

speak publicly. The Afghan nationals seeking resettlement primarily worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan or were deemed eligible for U.S. special immigrant visas but were left behind when Washington withdrew from the country and Taliban militants took back power in a chaotic period in 2021. "U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken first relayed the request to his Philippines counterpart in 2022, and President Joe Biden discussed the request with Philippines leader Ferdinand Marcos Jr. when he visited the U.S. last year," Philippine officials said. Marcos has rekindled relations with the U.S. since winning the presidency by a landslide margin two years ago. In February last year, he allowed an expansion of the American military presence under a 2014 defence agreement in a decision that upset China.

GMR Group gets Rs 6,300 cr investment from Abu Dhabi Investment Authority

New Delhi: GMR Group has received Rs 6,300 crore investment from Abu Dhabi's sovereign wealth fund ADIA and the funds will help in reducing the debt of promoter group entity GMR Enterprises Pvt Ltd (GEPL). In October last year, the group had announced securing Rs 6,300 crore debt funding from the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). GMR Infra Enterprises Pvt Ltd (GIEPL) has received the amount towards the allotment of Optionally Convertible Debentures (OCs) on January 7, according to a regulatory filing. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of GEPL, a promoter group entity controlled by G M Rao. GEPL is the promoter of GMR Airports Ltd (GAL). "This investment shall facilitate the company (GMR Enterprises Private Ltd, Promoter HoldCo) to pay down its debt, which was taken against pledge of shares and shall result in substantially reducing its share pledges and refinancing risk. This transaction establishes a capital partnership between GMR Promoters and ADIA," the filing, submitted to BSE late on Tuesday, said.

Israeli TV reporter who lost ability to speak clearly, seeks AI's help to get back on air



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

When a renowned Israeli TV journalist lost his ability to speak clearly because of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), he thought his career might be over. But now, using artificial intelligence software that can recreate his widely recognised gravelly voice, Moshe Nussbaum — known to generations of viewers simply as “Nussi” — is making a comeback. Mr. Nussbaum, 71, was diagnosed two years ago with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a progressive disease also known as Lou Gehrig's disease that attacks nerve cells that control muscles throughout the body. At the time, he vowed to viewers of Israel's Channel 12 News to continue working as long as he was physically able. But, gradually, it became more and more difficult.

It was a devastating blow to the career of a leading, no-nonsense reporter who for more than 40 years had covered many of Israel's most important stories from the field. He had appeared from the scenes of suicide bombing attacks and the front lines of wars in Gaza and Lebanon, and had covered scandals in Israel's parliament and high-profile court cases. First war in his career after Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war in Gaza, Mr. Nussbaum was unable to report from the field. It was the first war of his career he had ever sat out, he noted in a recent interview with colleagues at Channel 12, the country's largest station. Even though he was having trouble moving and speaking, he launched a segment interviewing injured soldiers from Israeli hospitals. His questions were slow and halting, but he kept it up for the first half of the war. Then, as it became increasingly difficult to speak, and to be understood, his interviews became less frequent. On Monday (January 6, 2024), Channel 12 made the surprising announcement that it would bring Mr. Nussbaum back to the air in the coming weeks as a commentator — with the help of AI.

“It took me a few moments to absorb it and to understand that it is me speaking now,” Mr. Nussbaum told The Associated Press via text message. “Slowly, slowly, I'm understanding the incredible meaning of this device for everyone with disabilities, including me.” Mr. Nussbaum will report his stories, and then write them up, using an AI programme that has been trained to speak using Mr. Nussbaum's voice. He will be filmed as if he were presenting, and his lips will be “technologically adjusted” to match the words.

People with speech disorders have used traditional text-to-speech technology for years, but those voices sound robotic and flat and lack emotion. In contrast, AI technology is trained using recordings of a person's voice — there are thousands of hours of Mr. Nussbaum speaking thanks to his lengthy career in TV and radio — and it can mimic their intonations and phrasing. Thrilled by the possibilities the technology affords him, Mr. Nussbaum said he is also worried about the ease with which the technology could be used by bad actors to spread fake news and falsehoods. In its current form, the technology will not work for live broadcasts, so Mr. Nussbaum won't be able to go out into the field, which is his favourite part of the job, he said. Instead, he will focus on commentary and analysis about crime and national security, his areas of expertise for decades. Ahead of the broadcasts, Channel 12 released a preview showing snippets of Mr. Nussbaum speaking naturally — garbled and difficult to understand — followed by the new “Nussi AI.” The new version sounds strikingly like the old Mr. Nussbaum, speaking quickly and emphatically. Mr. Nussbaum was filmed as if he was presenting the report, sitting straight with his trademark bushy eyebrows moving up and down for emphasis.

“It feels a bit strange.” “Honestly, this is my first time sitting here in the studio after more than a year,” AI Nussbaum says in the preview. “It feels a bit strange, and mostly, it tugs my heart.” AI-powered voice cloning has grown exponentially in recent years. Experts have warned that the technology can amplify phone scams, disrupt democratic elections and violate the dignity of people — living or dead — who never consented to having their voice recreated to say things they never said. It's been used to produce deepfake robocalls mimicking President Joe Biden. In the US, authorities recently charged a high school athletic director with using AI to generate a fake audio clip of the school's principal making racist remarks. But the technology also has tremendous potential to help people who have lost their ability to speak clearly. A US congresswoman who cannot speak due to complications from Parkinson's and a related palsy has used a similar AI programme to give a speech on the House floor, and the technology has also helped a young woman who lost her voice due to a tumor.

Channel 12 declined to say which AI programme it was using. Mr. Nussbaum had worried that ALS would rob him of the career he loved. In an interview with Channel 12, he recounted telling his managers “don't feel like you're pitying me, doing me a favour,” he said. “The day you come to the conclusion that this is it — tell me. I'll know how to accept it without a problem.” He calls his new AI-enabled persona a “magic trick” that enabled his comeback and believes it will raise awareness in Israel of ways that people with disabilities — especially progressive disabilities — can continue to work. “The fact that Channel 12 and my news managers are allowing me to reinvent myself anew, that is one of the most important medicines I can get in my fight with this disease,” he said.

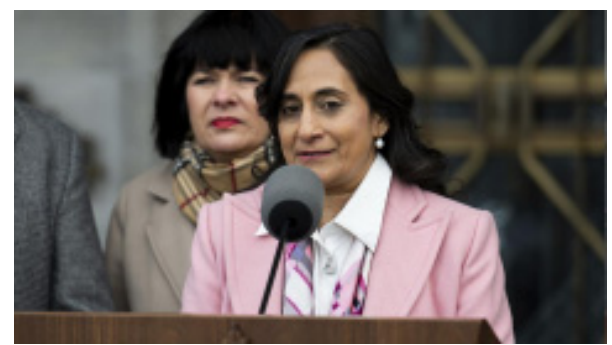
liament since 2019 and has held several high-profile positions, including Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Minister of National Defence, and President of the Treasury Board. Serving as Canada's Minister of National Defence since 2021, she is credited with leading the country's efforts to modernise its military capabilities and ensuring robust support for Ukraine amid ongoing geopolitical tensions. She assumed her current role as Minister of Transport in 2024. Since becoming Minister of Transport in 2024, Anand has focused on modernising Canada's infrastructure and improving roads, highways, and railways while prioritising the transportation sector's climate change and safety reforms. Addressing climate change has been central to her vision for Canada's clean and green transport sector.

Before this, Anand served as Minister of Public Services and Procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic, where she played a pivotal role in securing vaccines and critical medical supplies for Canadians. Her efforts earned her widespread recognition for her effective crisis management and negotiation skills. In addition to her ministerial portfolio, Anand has become a vocal advocate for increasing the representation of women and minorities in Canadian politics, making her a symbol of progressive leadership within the Liberal Party. If selected to replace Trudeau, Anita Anand would make history as the first woman of color and the first Canadian of Indian origin to become Canada's Prime Minister. While Kim Campbell briefly held the position in 1993 as a Progressive Conservative, no woman from the Liberal Party has ever served in this role. Anand's potential leadership marks a significant milestone in Canadian politics.

What's next for Canada?

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on January 6, 2025, officially announced he will resign, following months of political turmoil, declining approval ratings, and increasing internal party division. Trudeau, who has been in power since 2015, stated that he will step down once the Liberal Party elects a new leader. The leadership race for his successor will be a “robust, nationwide competitive process,” as Trudeau explained. Canada's next federal election is scheduled to take place on or before October 20, 2025. In this election, the party that secures the most seats in the House of Commons will form the government, with the leader of that party becoming the next prime minister.

Who is Anita Anand? Top contender to replace Justin Trudeau as Canadian PM



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

As speculation grows about Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's future as leader of the Liberal Party, Anita Anand has emerged as a frontrunner to replace him. Indian-origin Anita Anand, who held the Transport portfolio in Justin Trudeau's government, is a prominent candidate among the names being put forward, along with important names like Dominic LeBlanc, Chrystia Freeland, Melanie Joly, François-Philippe Champagne, and Mark Carney. Here's all you need to know about her.

In 2021, Anita Anand, Canada's first woman Defence Minister. She has carved out a reputation for decisive leadership during turbulent times. She led the charge in overhauling the Canadian Armed Forces, tackling systemic issues such as sexual misconduct and lack of diversity. Her approach to reform has earned her respect across party lines and a strong following among Liberal Party loyalists. Born and raised in rural Nova Scotia, Anand moved to Ontario in 1985. According to the Canadian government's website information, she and her husband, John, raised their four children in Oakville. Her parents were both physicians. While her father's family is from Chennai in Tamil Nadu, her mother was born in a small town in Punjab. She is a trained lawyer and academic. Before entering politics, she was a professor of law at the University of Toronto, specialising in corporate governance. She holds degrees from Queen's University, Dalhousie University, and the University of Oxford. Anand entered federal politics in 2019, representing Oakville, Ontario, and quickly rose through the ranks of Trudeau's cabinet.

Key Achievements of Anita Anand A senior member of the Liberal Party, Ms. Anand has been a Member of Par-

Sam Altman reacts to his sister's allegations of financial, sexual abuse; “untrue”, says OpenAI CEO

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has denied allegations that he sexually abused his sister, calling all of her allegations of abuse against him and his family “untrue” while claiming that his sibling was experiencing mental health challenges. Altman posted a note on the social media platform X on January 8, explaining that he was responding to a lawsuit his sister had filed against him.

In the lawsuit, Altman's sister claimed that the abuse began when she was three and her brother was 12, with the sexual assault causing mental distress and depression, reported CNBC on January 7. Altman's sister is active on X and has accused him publicly before. The sexual assaults took place between 1997 and 2006, per CNBC. “All of these claims are utterly untrue,” said the OpenAI CEO in his re-

sponse. “This situation causes immense pain to our entire family. It is especially gut-wrenching when she refuses conventional treatment and lashes out at family members who are genuinely trying to help.” In the note, Altman claimed that his family had tried to support his sister with both financial aid and medical help, but said that his sister was demanding more money. The OpenAI CEO alleged that her claims of sexual abuse against him and claims of financial abuse and internet censorship against other family members was related to this. “Over the years, she has accused members of our family of improperly withholding our father's 401k funds, hacking her wife, and “shadowbanning” her from various websites including ChatGPT, Twitter, and more,” stated Altman in the note.

Tibet earthquake aftermath: Thousands of homes destroyed, 126 killed as rescue efforts continue



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

More than 400 people trapped by a strong earthquake in the foothills of the Himalayas have been rescued, Chinese officials said, while over 30,000 residents have been relocated, as the search for survivors entered a second day on Wednesday (January 8, 2025). The epicentre of Tuesday's (January 7) magnitude 7.1 quake, one of the region's most powerful tremors in recent years, was located in Tingri in China's Tibet region, about 80 km (50 miles) north of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain. It also shook buildings in neighbouring Nepal, Bhutan and India. Twenty-four hours after the temblor struck, survivors trapped under rubble will have endured a night in sub-zero temperatures and be at risk of succumbing to hypothermia and dehydration.

An initial survey showed 3,609 homes had been destroyed in the Shigatse region of Tibet, which is home to 800,000 people, Chinese state media reported late on Tuesday, citing local officials. More than 500 people and 106 ambulances had been dispatched to help the injured. At least

126 people were known to have been killed and 188 injured on the Tibetan side, China's state broadcaster CCTV reported. No deaths have been reported in Nepal or elsewhere. Temperatures in the high-altitude region dropped to as low as minus 18 degrees Celsius (0 degrees Fahrenheit) overnight, adding to the misery of those left homeless. Tents, food rations, electrical generators and other supplies had reached the site by late on Tuesday, and all sections of road damaged by the temblor had been reopened, CCTV added. Southwestern parts of China, Nepal and northern India are often hit by earthquakes caused by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, which are pushing up an ancient sea that is now the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau. The entire plateau is seismically active, as well as its eastern and northern rims, which overlap with the Chinese provinces and regions of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai.

Beijing, which administers Tibet as an autonomous region within China, rejects criticism from rights groups and exiles who accuse it of trampling on the religious and cultural rights of the Tibetan people. More than 500 aftershocks with magnitudes of up to 4.4 had followed the quake as of 8 a.m. (0000 GMT) on Wednesday, the China Earthquake Networks Centre said. Over the past five years, there have been 29 earthquakes with magnitudes of 3 or above within 200 km of the epicentre of Tuesday's temblor, according to the Sichuan province's earthquake bureau. In 2008 an 8.0 magnitude earthquake hit Sichuan's Chengdu, claiming the lives of at least 70,000 people, the deadliest quake to hit China since the 1976 Tangshan quake that killed at least 242,000 people. Tuesday's quake was the worst since a 6.2 magnitude earthquake in 2023 that killed at least 149 people in a remote northwestern region of the country.

U.S. Congressman challenges Biden administration's decision to investigate Gautam Adani

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Challenging the decision of the Biden administration to investigate the activities of billionaire Gautam Adani, an influential Republican lawmaker in the U.S. has said such selective actions risk damaging critical alliances with key partners. In a strongly worded letter to U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland, Congressman Lance Gooden, a member of the House Judiciary Committee also asked, “What will the U.S. do if India refuses to comply with an extradition request.” Mr. Gooden also demanded answers on the Justice Department's selective prosecution of foreign entities and the potential harm such actions pose to the U.S.'s global alliances and economic growth and if there is any George Soros connection to it. “The Department of Justice's selective actions risk damaging critical alliances with key partners like India, one of America's strongest allies in the Asia-Pacific region,” Mr. Gooden said in his letter dated January 7. Gautam Adani indictment: In-depth coverage “Instead of pursuing cases with tenuous jurisdiction and limited relevance to the U.S. interests, the DOJ should focus on punishing bad actors at home, rather than chasing rumours abroad,” he said. “Harms the U.S.” The five-term Republican lawmaker said that targeting entities that invest tens of billions of dollars and create tens of thousands of jobs for Americans only harms the U.S. in the long run.

“When we forego real threats from violent crime, economic espionage, and CCP influence and go after those who contribute to our economic growth, it discourages valuable new investors who are hopeful of investing in our country,” he said. “An unwelcome and politically charged atmosphere for investors will only stall efforts to revitalise America's industrial base and economic growth, directly undermine President Trump's commitment to revive the economy with increased investments.” Given the timing of these decisions coincides with the end of the Biden administration, concerns arise that the only true goal here is disruption for President Trump,” Mr. Gooden said. Instead of expending valuable taxpayer resources on opening lengthy and perhaps politically motivated pursuits in foreign countries thousands of miles away, the Department should cooperate with the incoming administration on better serving the American people, he said. “As a cog in the outgoing administration, it is your duty to the public in being mindful of not creating further complications that could compromise America's geopolitical eminence,” Gooden said in the letter two weeks ahead of the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th president of the United States on January 20. “Straining America's global alliances”

“I am writing to inquire about the Department of Justice's (DOJ) recent selective pursuits of cases against foreign entities that could irreparably strain America's global alliances,” he said. “As our country enters a new period under President Trump, Americans are hopeful it will mark



the revival of prosperity, growth, economic recovery, and political freedom. An important factor in our quest to revive our country's prosperity includes the ability and freedom of prospective investors to do business in America,” he wrote.

“In complete abeyance of public outcry about the rising violent crimes at home, the DOJ seems to be pursuing new expeditions to target businesses for alleged injustices abroad,” he said. “The allegations in the Adani case, even if proven true, would still fail to make us the appropriate and final arbiter on the issue. These ‘bribes’ were allegedly paid to Indian state government officials, in India, by Indian executives of an Indian company, with no concrete involvement of or injury to any American party,” Mr. Gooden wrote. Gautam Adani has been charged by US prosecutors for allegedly being part of an elaborate scheme to pay \$265 million (about ₹2,200 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms for solar power contracts. Adani Group, however, denied the charges saying the allegations by U.S. prosecutors are “baseless” and the conglomerate is “compliant with all laws”.

“Conversely, Smartmatic, an American company responsible for conducting our elections, had executives who allegedly laundered money and paid bribes to foreign governments, according to the DOJ's indictment earlier. However, despite numerous attempts by my colleagues and I to have our concerns addressed before the elections, we were never briefed by your department,” Mr. Gooden wrote. Mr. Gooden asked why has the DOJ not indicted a single American if the case involves a significant nexus with the United States. “Were there no Americans involved in this alleged scheme? Why has the DOJ pursued this case against Gautam Adani when the alleged criminal act, and the parties allegedly involved are in India? Do you seek to enforce justice in India?” he asked. “Will the DOJ seek an extradition of the Indian executives involved in this case? What is the DOJ's contingency plan if India refuses to comply with an extradition request and claims sole authority over this case? Is the DOJ or the Biden administration willing to escalate this case into an international incident between the United States and an ally like India?” the lawmaker said.

I was an umpire; not a player or spectator to be interested in outcome of cases, says judge on last day of service

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Justice N. Seshasayee of the Madras High Court retired from service on Tuesday penning down his last judgement describing himself to have served as an umpire, for over two decades, without being interested in the outcome of the “matches” (cases) since he was neither a player nor a spectator. Dismissing a writ petition filed by Cheran Enterprises Private Limited, represented by its managing director K.C. Palanisamy (KCP), regarding foreign investments in the company, the judge wrote: “In this case, I am required to umpire the final match of the series between the team-petitioner and the team-respondents.”

After discussing the facts of the case in detail and not finding any merits in the petitioner's plea filed against the Reserve Bank of India, the judge said: “The match is over... But it may require some time for team-petitioner to realise that it has lost a match that it was desperate to win.” He went on to state: “Apparently, KCP and his team failed to realise that cricket is synonymous with fairness, and it knows how to assert itself. In retrospect I thought it was not petitioner's bad strategy that let it down, but its unfairness in developing the very strategy.” Continuing his observations, the judge said: “Unfairness may tempt; unfairness may even pay at times; but unfairness certainly fails. And, it must fail. Fairness in thought and equity in conduct, form the soul of Dharma, and it must permeate into the deeper layers of conscience in guiding every action and every conduct.” He also quoted the Sanskrit verses from the epic Mahabharata and said: “Yato Dharma-Sthato Jayah (whence justice, thence victory) for Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshitah (Dharma protects the one who follows it).”



Thanking all the “players (litigants as well as lawyers) and groundsmen (court staff)” for making his journey through the game engaging and comfortable, Justice Seshasayee said: “Time reminds me that my moment to leave the ground has arrived.” He movingly concluded his verdict saying: “I begin to walk, a long lonely walk to the world beyond the cheers of the crowd this ground has witnessed many times and will be witnessing in times to come. As I step out of the ground I see the horizon decked in golden streaks interspersed with many silver lines waiting to welcome me. I turn towards the ground, give it a smile and salute it with gratitude after officiating my last match. As I walk to melt in the wilderness of this world, I heard a feeble echo of the Shakespearean lines within me: If we do meet again, why, we shall smile; if not this parting was well made.”

Supreme Court directs liquidation of Jet Airways under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code



The Supreme Court Thursday ordered the liquidation of Jet Airways under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) exercising its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution. Allowing appeals by the lenders, including the State Bank of India (SBI), its largest lender, a bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra set aside the order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) allowing transfer of ownership of the airline in accordance with the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process in which Jalan Kailash Consortium (JKC) had emerged as the Success-

ful Resolution Applicant (SRA). SRA, according to the resolution plan, was to pay Rs 4783 crore and infuse Rs 350 crore as the first tranche of the payment.

On January 18, 2024, the SC set aside NCLAT's decision to allow JKC to adjust the first tranche of payment of Rs 350 crore against a Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG), given as security by the lenders. On Thursday, the Supreme Court bench said the NCLAT order allowing JKC to adjust the first tranche of payment of Rs 350 crore against the PBG was "perverse" and in "flagrant disregard" of its January 18 order. The bench pointed out that the bank guarantee has to be kept alive till the resolution plan is completed and forfeiting it would be in breach of the plan. The bench ruled that as the resolution plan is not possible to be implemented, the liquidation option has to be kept open. The bench said SRA had "contravened" the resolution terms, and asked the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Mumbai, to forthwith appoint the liquidator to carry out the liquidation. Amid mounting financial woes, the State Bank of India initiated insolvency proceedings against Jet Airways before NCLT, Mumbai, in 2019, after which the company was admitted to the resolution process. In 2021, JKC emerged as the successful resolution applicant to re-commence the operations of the airline.

Tech sector set to gain, but face challenges

The \$245 billion Indian tech sector which employs around 5.4 million people are cautiously optimistic about the resounding victory of Donald Trump as the next US President. The return of Trump is expected to boost increased spending by US firms, leading to the possibility more revenue for Indian tech companies. This was reflected on the stock markets with IT Index rallying over four per cent, led by Infosys and TCS share which jumped over four per cent each. Analysts and experts said there are several 'ifs and buts' relating to the opportunities for Indian tech firms. If the past record of Trump administration is any indication, Indian tech firms are set to gain from Trump's new plans while H1-B visa holders are expected to face some uncertainties. While there have been concerns regarding Trump's re-election with respect to tougher H1-B visas, its effect on Indian IT service companies may not be as significant as perceived. Over the past few weeks Indian IT service companies have corrected probably factoring some of this impact due to the re-election, said an analyst. Manish Bandhri, the Founder, CEO & Portfolio Manager at Vallum Capital Advisors, said both the US and Indian IT sectors stand to gain from increased IT investments. However, offshoring might face challenges if Trump encourages more jobs in the US. A cut in corporate tax by Trump is likely to bring more business for the Indian tech companies. Under Trump's first term, IT companies grew at a CAGR of 13 per cent during 2016-2020 and the IT index generated a return of 45 per cent despite challenges on visa and offshoring, he said. "Trump's proposal to cut the corporate tax rate from 21 per cent to 15 per cent is likely to ease budgetary pressures for US enterprises and businesses which augurs well for Indian IT service companies which have seen their IT service revenue growth rates plummet over past several quarters due to restraint exercised by their clients on discretionary spends. Overall, we see Trumps re-election as positive for Indian IT services companies," said Shaji Nair, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

"We may see changes in the nature of government spending towards supply side, as against consumption. Focus will be on incentivising companies through tax reductions. It is to encourage more capacities coming up in USA," said Vaibhav Sanghavi, Chief Executive Officer of ASK Hedge Solutions. "From a sector perspective, we may see some sentimental impact on IT services as companies might have increased investment post some savings



in potential tax decreases." However, Trump's victory could likely result in more spending in the US, which could also translate into inflation remaining somewhat elevated. At the same time, it would also mean stronger dollar but more trade barriers, said Anitha Rangan, Economist, Equirus. "India's IT sector might also see a slowdown in demand, as a trade war and economic slowdown could reduce discretionary spending in the US," said Nitin Aggarwal, Director, Investment Research and Advisory, Client Associates. "Investors are closely monitoring the US election results, anticipating policy changes, trade agreements, and potential rate cuts that could strengthen the US economy and benefit IT companies through increased client spending," said Ameya Ranadive, Sr Technical Analyst, StoxBox. The Trump administration's impact on H-1B visas has been significant. In his first term, denial rates for H-1B visas jumped to an average of 18 per cent from 2016 to 2020, compared to just 3.2 per cent under the Biden administration. Further, requests for evidence (RFEs) nearly tripled from 12 per cent to 34 per cent. These changes have created uncertainty for high-skilled workers, making it tough for international students and immigrants to secure or maintain employment. There were 7.55 lakh H-1B visa admissions in 2023.

Trump introduced several rules to restrict the H-1B programme in the previous term. The Department of Labor's wage rule increased minimum wages for H-1B workers, making it harder for employers to afford them. The US also proposed rule replaced the lottery with a ranking system based on salary level, prioritising higher-paid workers. H-4 visa holders, spouses of H-1B workers, also faced challenges. The million-dollar question is whether he will go for tough policies in the tech sector visas in the second term.

Getty Images buying Shutterstock to create USD 3.7 billion visual content company

Getty Images is buying Shutterstock to create a \$3.7 billion visual content company. The merger comes at a time when companies that use still images are facing increased competition from images generated by artificial intelligence.

The companies said Tuesday that they have complementary portfolios and that a merger will provide customers with a broader array of still imagery, video, music, 3D and other media. "With the rapid rise in demand for compelling visual content across industries, there has never been a better time for our two businesses to come together," Getty Images CEO Craig Peters said in a prepared statement. Peters will serve as CEO of the combined business. "We are excited by the opportunities we see to expand our creative content library and enhance our product offering to meet diverse customer needs," Shutterstock CEO Paul Hennessy said. Getty Images shareholders will own about 54.7% of the combined company at closing and Shutterstock stockholders will own approximately 45.3%.

Shutterstock shareholders can choose to receive either approximately \$28.85 per share in cash for each share of Shutterstock common stock they own; about 13.67 shares of Getty Images common stock for each share of Shutterstock common stock they own; or a mixed consideration of 9.17 shares of Getty Images common stock plus



\$9.50 in cash for each share of Shutterstock common stock they own. The combined company will operate as Getty Images, and will continue to trade on the New York Stock Exchange under the GETY ticker symbol. Its board will have 11 members, comprised of Peters, six directors designated by Getty Images and four directors designated by Shutterstock, including Hennessy. The chairman will be Mark Getty, current chairman of Seattle-based Getty Images. Shares of New York-based Shutterstock jumped more than 30% before the market opened, while Getty Images' stock soared more than 58%.

Ghaziabad Police cracks down on unauthorised hotels using 'OYO' brand

New Delhi: Travel booking platform OYO on Wednesday said the Ghaziabad Police has sealed over 50 hotels that were 'fraudulently' using its branding. The police have also submitted a report to the licensing authority following a complaint filed by the company against these establishments. OYO said in a statement.

The OYO also said, "the company and Ghaziabad Police have launched a joint operation to 'crack down on unauthorised hotels fraudulently using OYO's branding'."

The travel tech platform had previously issued legal notices to these hotels, demanding the removal of its branding. "As part of the operation, police visited the identified properties and issued warnings to their management, emphasising the legal consequences of using fake OYO branding," it stated.

The statement by the company quoted Rajesh Kumar, officiating additional commissioner of police, Ghaziabad, as saying, "The drive was specially directed against such

unauthorised establishments which have mushroomed and were misusing 'OYO' brand name on their boards. They were not authorised to operate. Such establishments were identified and sealed as per procedure." Varun Jain, Chief Operating Officer, OYO India said "These unauthorised hotels often deceive customers... Our partnership with law enforcement ensures action against fake hotels misusing OYO's name, safeguarding our guests and brand integrity".

On Sunday, it was reported that the travel tech platform has launched a new check-in policy for partner hotels, starting from Meerut, introducing guidelines effective this year whereby unmarried couples will no longer be welcome to check-in. Under the revised policy, all couples will be asked to present valid proof of relationship at check-in, including online bookings. OYO has empowered its partner hotels' discretion to decline couple bookings based on their judgment, aligning with local social sensibility, the company said.

Trump's return may fuel trade ties amid global uncertainty: India Inc



Donald Trump's resounding return as the US President not only marks an end to the month long uncertainty around the world but also promises to open a new chapter on deepening US-India partnership with substantial potential for growth in trade, skilled workforce demand, collaborative economic development, and stability in the markets, experts said. Even as there are concerns over global rise in inflation on account of tariff hikes that Trump has been talking about, there has been broader enthusiasm in the markets which was reflected in the 901 points or 1.1 per cent jump in benchmark Sensex at BSE that was aided by tech stocks which rallied by over four per cent.

Over the years, the two nations have built a resilient relationship grounded in shared aspirations for economic advancement and technological innovation. "The US has become one of India's foremost investors, with significant contributions across sectors like technology, infrastructure, renewable energy, and manufacturing, fuelling India's development, creating jobs, and positioning India as a competitive global player," said Ramesh Alluri Reddy, Chief Executive Officer, TeamLease Degree Apprenticeship. President Trump's pro-business policies are expected to further strengthen this alliance, driving increased investments and favourable trade dynamics as the demand for a skilled Indian workforce continues to grow in industries pivotal to the digital economy and sustainable development. A key area of expansion lies in the growth of Global Capability Centres (GCCs), with numerous US companies eager to tap into India's skilled labour pool, setting the stage for job creation and reinforcing India's standing as a global talent hub. "Trade data over the past decade reflects this deepening connection," Reddy said.

According to Rashesh Shah, chairman and CEO, Edelweiss Group, the first important aspect is that the investors and markets are relieved that the uncertainty that prevailed over the last four to five weeks is over. "While on the geopolitics front India is positioned well, so I don't think that India will get caught on the crossroads," he told The Indian Express. "On the economic front, while the imposition of tariffs can be inflationary and that is what everyone is worried about, however, we may witness a softening in oil prices, which may have a positive impact on the Indian economy," Shah said adding that the outflow of FPI money from Indian markets should also get arrested now.

Given the fact that India is fairly insulated in terms of exports and imports, it may be one of the least impacted from the disruptions caused by tariff hikes. "In the longer term, we will have to see how those countries get impacted and how that starts to impact our economy and markets," Shah said. Analysts said Trump's return is unlikely alter long-term investment themes. "With Trump's victory a near term hawkish stance is more likely. For global investors, this may mean continued US dollar strength despite some views that Trump prefers a weaker dollar—an idea contradicted by the dollar's appreciation during his first term, especially post-2018 tariffs. Trade tensions with China could also persist, potentially benefiting select Indian exporters over the longer term," said Arindam Mandal, Head of Global Equities at Marcellus Investment Managers.

Trump's victory could likely result in more spending in

the US, which could translate into inflation remaining somewhat elevated. "At the same time, it would also mean stronger dollar but more trade barriers. However more than who wins, a clear result will be more of a relief to the markets which have been on a volatile mood predicting the outcome," said Anitha Rangan, Economist, Equirus. This could translate positively for India as India's trade relations with the US remains robust. Furthermore, clarity on the results will also be constructive to restrict volatility and return to fundamentals, Rangan said. Given the results, the extension of the 2017 Trump tax cuts is somewhat assured. "It is probable that the statutory and effective corporate tax rates will be lowered (the former to perhaps 15%) and that sweeping changes to business regulation will follow. What is less certain is whether tariffs will be increased on the scale and scope matching Trump's campaign rhetoric. That outcome will likely be determined on a case-by-case via bargaining among trading partners and with considerable input from the US business community," said Christy Tan, Investment Strategist at Franklin Templeton Institute. Notably, trade between the two countries grew robustly from 2017 to 2021 during Trump's previous presidency, underscoring the potential for another era of strong trade expansion. This momentum is further bolstered by the influential Indian diaspora, which continues to elevate India's standing in the US. "As Trump's administration seeks to deepen economic ties, India has the potential to support these efforts by bridging skill gaps and enhancing workforce readiness, ensuring young talent is prepared to meet rising demand," Reddy said. While global trade volatility may rise, India stands to benefit as a relative beneficiary amongst emerging markets as US companies pursue a 'China +1' strategy, likely boosting sectors like EMS, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Experts are optimistic about the impact on stock markets. "Our outlook for Indian markets under a potential Trump administration remains optimistic. While global trade volatility may rise, India stands to benefit as a relative beneficiary amongst emerging markets as US companies pursue a 'China +1' strategy, likely boosting sectors like EMS, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals," said Trideep Bhattacharya, President & CIO-Equities, Edelweiss MF, said. "Going forward, we believe investor attention may pivot towards economies driven by robust domestic demand growth. In this light, Trump's pro-business policies might drive interest in the US as well as economies like India that are driven by strong domestic demand growth," Bhattacharya said. Nitin Aggarwal, Director, Investment Research and Advisory, Client Associates, said a Republican-led government under Trump could significantly reshape trade dynamics, with heightened tariffs and a more protectionist approach to international trade. "One of the key focal points of Trump's presidency was reducing the US trade deficit, a policy that heavily relied on increasing tariffs on imports.

While these measures could help shrink the trade deficit, they risk pushing up inflation by making imported goods more expensive. This, in turn, could delay interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve, which is already grappling with persistent inflationary pressures," Aggarwal said. For India, the consequences of such a policy shift could be twofold. First, certain sectors like pharmaceuticals and IT may experience challenges. Indian generic drug manufacturers could face increased tariffs on their exports to the US, affecting the pharmaceutical industry. Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman, Aditya Birla Group, said the US economy is incredibly dynamic, and the group's continued investments will support the revitalisation of the growing American manufacturing sector while demonstrating "our commitment to our customers and our communities." "We have invested over \$15 billion in the US to date and look forward to finding new opportunities for the Aditya Birla Group to continue to invest in the country moving forward," Birla said.

Arjun Kapoor opens up about being diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease at 30: 'Almost like I can take a flight and gain weight'

Arjun Kapoor has opened up about being diagnosed with an autoimmune condition — Hashimoto's disease — at 30 and dealing with the associated physical health setbacks while shooting for films back-to-back in 2014-15. "You will have moments of self-doubt in any profession. You fight through it. You look for validation. I am a fat kid at heart. I was diagnosed with mild depression, which was circumstantial. When you have an autoimmune disorder — I have something called Hashimoto's — it's an extension of having a thyroid issue, but your antibodies fight against you. So, it's almost like I can take a flight and gain weight because the body goes into stress," the Singham Again actor told Hollywood Reporter India.

The 39-year-old added that his late mother, Mona Kapoor, and sister, Anshula Kapoor, were diagnosed with the condition, too. "So, the more relaxed I am, the better I look, which is ironic because in this profession, you are not really relaxed.

That happened to me when I was 30, and I defied it. I said, no, it can't be because my mom used to have it. I used to be nonchalant because I became fit; I lost 50 kgs. I said, it is not going to bother me. My sister also has it. I said I will deal with it. But I remember when I was doing Tevar, Ki and Ka, Half Girlfriend, and Mubarakan, it started showing up. I shot back-to-back. If I look back, I was trying but my body kept changing. That's 2014-15, and that's 7-8 years of holding that physical trauma," expressed Arjun. Aking a cue from his revelation, let's understand more about the condition.

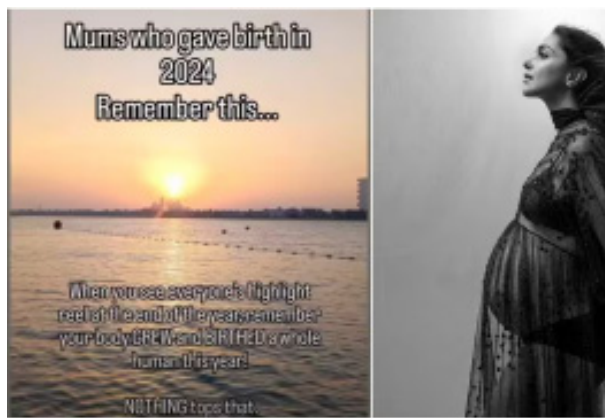
Dr Anil Bhoraskar, senior diabetologist, SL Raheja Hospital, Mahim and secretary — Diabetic Association of India (Scientific Section) said hypothyroidism is a common condition where the thyroid gland produces insufficient thyroid hormones. It is the third most common condition after obesity and diabetes, affecting all age groups. "There are many conditions that are known to produce hypothyroidism; one of them is autoimmune thyroiditis known as Hashimoto's disease," said Dr Bhoraskar. Dr Shobha Gupta, medical director, gynecologist and IVF specialist, Mother's Lap IVF Centre New Delhi and Vrindavan said Hashimoto's disease, also known as Hashimoto's thyroiditis, is an autoimmune disorder where the immune system mistakenly attacks the thyroid gland, a small gland at the base of the neck.



Symptoms The symptoms of it are tiredness, weight gain, constipation, dry skin, joint pain and stiffness, brittle hair, puffy face, irregular menses, mood swings, low sex drive, and even infertility, said Dr Aarti Ullal, physician and diabetologist, Gleneagles Hospital Parel. "Some may also experience a goiter, an enlargement of the thyroid gland, which can cause discomfort in the neck," added Dr Gupta. People with celiac disease, lupus, type 1 diabetes, and Sjögren's syndrome can also be at risk of suffering from Hashimoto's disease. Diagnosis typically involves blood tests to measure levels of thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) and thyroid antibodies, said Dr Gupta. "Once diagnosed, Hashimoto's is managed by hormone replacement therapy, usually with synthetic thyroid hormone levothyroxine, to normalise hormone levels and alleviate symptoms.

Regular follow-up with an endocrinologist is essential to monitor thyroid function and adjust treatment as needed," said Dr Gupta. While the replacement of thyroid hormone helps to manage hypothyroid symptoms, innovative perspectives that emphasise holistic and personalised care are recommended as adjuvant therapies, said Dr Ullal. Dr Ullal stressed that integrative strategies such as dietary modifications, stress management techniques like yoga or meditation, and targeted nutritional supplementation garner attention for their role in supporting thyroid health. "Individuals can find that much-needed relief through comprehensive treatment plans that address hormone levels and nurture mind-body harmony for lasting change," said Dr Ullal.

Deepika Padukone shares post about 'mums who gave birth in 2024': 'Your body grew, birthed a whole human'



day, Deepika reposted a note on his Instagram story. The post read, "Mums who gave birth in 2024 Rembert this...When you see everyone's highlight reel at the end of the year, remember your body GREW and BIRTHED a whole human this year! NOTHING tops that..." In an earlier conversation, Deepika had discussed her experiences with postpartum challenges, including feeling sleep-deprived, burnt out and stressed.

"When you are sleep-deprived or burnt out the decisions that you make and I think sometimes I can actually feel it. I know on particular days when I am feeling stressed or burnt out because I haven't slept enough or practice my self-care rituals...I can tell that my decision-making is getting affected to some extent," shared Deepika during an interaction with an entrepreneur for a series on World Mental Health Day 2024. On Tuesday night, Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone were spotted together at Mumbai airport. The couple reportedly travelled to the Maldives to celebrate Deepika's 39th birthday, which was on January 5. Ranveer and Deepika were also joined by their daughter, Dua Singh Padukone, who was sleeping in the car and the dotting parents made sure that she is not disturbed.

Actor couple Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh welcomed their first child Dua Singh Padukone on September 8, 2024. The new mom has been keeping her little one away from the media glare, but she has been vocal about her postpartum journey. Time and again, Deepika re-shared the post related to new moms and their struggles. On Wednes-

Aman Gupta loses cool after catching Shark Tank India pitcher whisper 'air ho jayega' during bidding war, butts heads with Kunal Bahl

A heated bidding war broke out between the 'sharks' on the second episode of Shark Tank India season 4, leading to incredible drama and a high-value deal. The young entrepreneurs Devansh and Ackshay pitched their online peer-to-peer platform Culture Circle to the panel of 'sharks', including Vineeta Singh, Namita Thapar, Aman Gupta, Ritesh Aggarwal, and this season's newest member, Kunal Bahl. The entrepreneurs asked for Rs 1.2 crore in exchange of 0.5% equity, for a whopping valuation of Rs 240 crore. "Hum paagal hain kya (Are we insane?)" was Aman's immediate reaction to the ask. He also noticed that Devansh was wearing shoes worth Rs 10 lakh, but the young entrepreneur had a comeback at the ready. "You can get it for Rs 6 lakh on Culture Circle," he said, eliciting laughter from the panel. He said that they were able to raise Rs 16 crore in funding in May 2024, which happens to be just two months after he graduated from IIM Ahmedabad. This impressed Vineeta, but she was skeptical about the entrepreneur's real reasons behind appearing on the show. Describing their ask as a 'waahiyat valuation', she said that they were on the show only for marketing purposes.

She became more suspicious when the entrepreneurs declared that they have Rs 17 crore in the bank. "I'm finding it impossible to believe that you've come here with the intention to make a deal. You're here for free marketing and no-deal scenario, which would be a win-win for you," she said. Vineeta said that there is no way major brands such as Dior and Gucci will continue to do business with them if they grow, because they have relationships to maintain with offline sellers such as Reliance. "The moment you become a serious business, they will come and stop you, but I hope they don't," she said, adding, "It's unfair that you get to have Rs 17 crore in the bank and take the place of an entrepreneur who actually needs the money."

But the entrepreneurs assured her, and the other 'sharks', that they truly want to strike a deal. With Vineeta out, the other four 'sharks' showed great interest. Kunal



made a whopping offer of Rs 8 crore, but asked for 10% equity, while Ritesh and Aman also presented offers. Namita showed interest as well, but was determined to get a royalty. This was a sticking point for Devansh and Ackshay. They countered with an ask for Rs 2.4 crore for 2% equity, and wondered if Ritesh, Kunal and Aman would want to make a joint offer. Kunal said, "Let's raise the round then," and offered Rs 4 crore in exchange of 5% equity. Partnering up on the deal also caused friction between him and Aman, who told Kunal that he mustn't go solo later. "You're new on the show," he said, and Kunal replied,

"But I'm not new to making deals. I've made more deals than you." Sensing the drama, Devansh and Ackshay had a conversation between themselves, during which Devansh said, "Air ho jayega (This will air)." Everybody heard him, and Aman was furious. "I'm out," he said, getting up from his seat. But Kunal and Ritesh were still interested, as was Namita. Ultimately, they struck a deal for Rs 3 crore for 3% equity, valuing their business at Rs 100 crore. "Aman hates us," Devansh said, as he accepted the deal.

It's not Akshay Kumar's fault that his films are flopping, says Ram Kapoor: 'Blame big producers he is working with'

Akshay Kumar has not had a hit film in the last five years with a few exceptions like Sooryavanshi (2021) and OMG 2 (2023). In 2022, the actor starred in six films including Bachchan Paandey, Samrat Prithviraj, Raksha Bandhan, Cuttputli, and Ram Setu, among others. In 2024, he was seen in five films including Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, which too met with the same fate as his previous releases since COVID-19 pandemic. His film choices became a topic of discussion among industry insiders. Many blamed the actor for making repetitive content. Now, Ram Kapoor has spoken about the actor's career choices and backed him claiming, "it is not Akshay who should be blamed, its the big producers he is working with."

Ram Kapoor, who recently appeared on Siddharth Kannan's YouTube chat show said it is easy for the outsiders to say things about a star and his choice of films but the reality is completely different. He said, "What happens is they commit to several projects about two-three years in advance. Once they have committed to it, they don't have a choice to back out." He explained the reason behind Akshay Kumar not backing out of any project is that he understands the importance of maintaining good relations with producers and directors to survive the industry. "If a director or producer you have worked with in the past returns to you with new projects, you can't say no to them for the sake of good relationship. You can't suddenly become arrogant and say, 'No, I can't do another film with you'", shared Ram Kapoor. He went on to explain further that because these actors are booked for three years in advance, the dates that they can commit for newer projects are only after finishing the commitments for the coming three years, which they have signed way back in the days. "Unfortunately, we might see it as repetitive but he has signed five years in advance. Now, he doesn't have a choice, he has to do it." To prove his point, the television star took the example of Aamir Khan and said, "It is easy for the outsiders to say, 'He (Akshay) did this or that', but the thing is when Aamir decided to do one film a year, it took him about eight years to get there because he had committed to so many projects. He had to finish all that before he could decide to commit to one film a year."

Praising Akshay Kumar, Ram Kapoor said, "His professionalism is legendary. He is the first one to arrive on set and doesn't go to his van. He doesn't leave the set at all. So, if Akshay is doing films that you might think is repetitive. You need to know he has signed them five years ago." He further said nobody chooses a project for it to flop. They see the person that is backing it, sound script, sound



Akshay Kumar has not had a hit film in the last five years with a few exceptions like Sooryavanshi (2021) and OMG 2 (2023). In 2022, the actor starred in six films including Bachchan Paandey, Samrat Prithviraj, Raksha Bandhan, Cuttputli, and Ram Setu, among others.

money, and sound role. "Now you never know what works when, nobody has been able to crack it."

Speaking about the actor doing "repetitive" content, Ram Kapoor shared it is not just Akshay Kumar who is at fault. "It is the producer's fault. He works only with the biggest of the big producers. Now, if these people are saying that you have to work in this film, this will work... then how is it Akshay's fault? It is not one person's decision... it is an entire team. You can't blame one person." He took the example of filmmaker David Dhawan and said, "He is known to all but his entire career has been repetitive. Its all about the phase. What works when." The actor also named Govinda, who was the biggest star in the 90s and "all he did was similar films." In the same interview, Ram Kapoor admired how even after all the setbacks over the years, Akshay Kumar remains to be the star he was thirty years ago. He said, "This industry is so cut throat... they throw people out in seconds. So, if you still managing to be the star you were thirty years ago... there is something that you must be doing right. It is not easy." Ram Kapoor is currently in the news for his drastic physical transformation. He is known for his popular television shows such as Kasamh Se and Bade Achhe Lagte Hain. He has also starred in several Bollywood films like Karthik Calling Karthik, Shaadi Ke Side Effects, Humshakals, and Student of The Year, among others.

Ekta Kapoor hits back at 'unprofessional' actors spreading 'false information' about her show, netizens say message is for Ram Kapoor



Producer-director Ekta Kapoor has ruled television content for years, with some of the biggest and best shows. With these, Ekta has also forged a long-lasting relationship with actors who have worked with her. Just recently, Shweta Tiwari praised Ekta in an exclusive interview with SCREEN. Ekta is very fierce when defending her public image. The Balaji Telefilms producer recently hit back at

'unprofessional actors' who have been spreading 'false information' about her shows. Ekta Kapoor put up a cryptic message on social media saying, "Unprofessional actors giving interviews about my shows shud shut up! False information N skewed stories. Can only last till. I talk'..... but there is dignity in silence." This comes a few days after actor Ram Kapoor shared in a viral interview how he was hesitant to kiss Bade Achhe Lagte Hai co-star Sakshi Tanwar. He also stated that the show's TRPs were negatively impacted.

During an interview with Siddharth Kannan, Ram Kapoor said, "Ekta's the one who wrote the scene, wanted us to do the scene... I told Ekta, 'Are you sure? Ye television mein pehle kabhi hua nahi hai, it was the first kiss of television, which is a big thing. And three generations watch (the show) together... but Ekta was very confident ki wo karna hai.... I said, okay, I'll first get a go-ahead from my wife... Fir maine Sakshi ko bola ki look, I will handle Ekta. If you have a problem, tell me." While Ekta slammed unprofessional actors, netizens are sure she was hinting at Ram. On the work front, Ekta's last production The Sabarmati Report starring Vikrant Massey, Ridhi Dogra, and Raashii Khanna received a great response from the audience and critics.

Ram Kapoor says he quit smoking on daughter Sia's insistence, now smokes only with Saif Ali Khan: 'Both of us have quit but...'



Actor Ram Kapoor has been making headlines for his impressive body transformation, but what's even more inspiring is his journey to a healthier lifestyle. In a recent conversation, Ram opened up about his struggles with smoking and how his daughter's concern helped him quit the habit.

Ram revealed that at one point, he was smoking 40 cigarettes a day. However, everything changed when his daughter Sia, who was just seven years old at the time, saw an anti-tobacco ad on TV. The ad stated that smoking kills, and Sia was deeply concerned about her father's habit. Ram recalled the conversation he had with his daughter in an interview with Siddharth Kannan. He relived the moment when he returned home from a shoot in Australia a few years ago. He shared, "She said, 'dada I want to talk to you,' and I said, 'yes darling?' She didn't say, 'please quit smoking,' please understand. She said, 'I saw an ad which said smoking kills. Are you going to die?' She only wanted me to assure her that I was not going to die."

Ram was deeply moved by his daughter's concern and realised that he had to quit smoking for her sake. "All she wanted to know is if I'll die because, if yes then stop, if not then please continue. So I realised that I have to, so I

stopped." Ram admitted that he has smoked twice since then, but only socially with his friend and Humshakal co-actor Saif Ali Khan. However, he emphasised that both, he and Saif, have quit smoking. He shared, "After that I have smoked twice with Saif (Ali Khan). When he is drinking he likes to smoke. He has given up smoking. But when he is drinking he likes to smoke. Twice, at his villa in Mauritius and once I don't remember where but we smoked and the next day nothing. And I smoke in films of course. Smoked nonstop for work but I am not a smoker for ten years now." Ram also spoke about his approach to substance use and how he encourages his kids to have experiences in life, but with him. "They have seen me give up everything in life the minute I want to — smoking, substances, alcohol. Maine har cheez ki hai life mein (I have done everything in life). And I'll make my kids do everything as well. Have every experience in life but don't let it control you. You control it. If you don't have experience in your life then you are not living." Ram's advice to his kids is to "do everything" but with him. "I have told them 'jo bhi karna hai mere saath karo' (do anything you want to do, but do it with me)." This approach, he believes, will help them make informed choices and avoid getting controlled by their experiences.

Aman Gupta tells Vineeta Singh 'fire your team' after listening to Gujarati entrepreneur's Shark Tank India pitch, offends Kunal Behl by saying 'naya hai'

The fourth season of Shark Tank India kicked off this week with a trio of dramatic pitches. Episode two of the new season featured Mayur, an entrepreneur from Gujarat, who pitched his lehenga brand BL Fabrics to the panel of 'sharks'. Joining returning 'sharks' Ritesh Aggarwal, Namita Thapar, Aman Gupta and Vineeta Singh this season is Kunal Behl. Peyush Bansal and Anupam Mittal were absent in the episode. Aman was his usual self during the pitch, cracking jokes at both Vineeta and Kunal. Mayur asked for Rs 1 crore in funding in exchange of 2% equity, valuing his brand at Rs 50 lakh. The 'sharks' were all impressed by Mayur's brand, but they were especially taken by his social media acumen. Mayur said that his brand has a combined total of 3 million followers on YouTube and Instagram. While giving a presentation of his social media platforms, Mayur said that his most viral Reel has accumulated 47 million views. Namita was stunned. "Is he serious?" she remarked, asking Ritesh to physically verify this claim. Ritesh got up from his chair and walked over to the display screen, and was surprised to learn that Mayur's claims were, in fact, true.

The 'sharks' asked Mayur who handles his social media, and were further surprised to learn that he does it all alone. Aman looked at Vineeta and said, "Fire your team immediately." Namita said, "I have an entire team that handles my content, there is a second team that makes videos, and there is a third team that figures out strategies. We have agencies! And here you are, doing everything yourself! And you've been doubling your revenue because of it. You went from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore to Rs 17 crore. Superb."

But Mayur's one-man-army approach to running his business also backfired at him. Vineeta said that she finds his operation 'not investable' at the moment, even though he is projecting revenue of Rs 17 crore this year. Namita was also unsure of investing in him, because he doesn't have a number two to run operations in his place. But Ritesh and Kunal showed interest, and offered Mayur a deal for Rs 1 crore, but in exchange of 5% equity. Aman excused



The 'sharks' asked Mayur who handles his social media, and were further surprised to learn that he does it all alone. Aman looked at Vineeta and said,

himself from the negotiations, and took on the role of mediator. Mayur was conflicted between the two identical offers, and countered by asking for Rs 1 crore in exchange of 3% equity. He also asked Ritesh and Kunal if they'd want to partner up on the deal. Kunal shook his head, and Aman interjected, "Talk it out among yourselves. Kunal naya hai ghabra jaata hai (Kunal is new, he gets hassled)." Kunal didn't seem to be pleased, and he said with an uncomfortable laugh, "Kya bola (What did you say)?" But he came to an agreement with Ritesh, offering Mayur Rs 1 crore in exchange of 5% equity, which would be lowered to 4% on the condition that he hits Rs 15 crore in revenue. And with that, Mayur walked away with a deal.

Pakistan set to miss Kho Kho World Cup in New Delhi



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Pakistan are set to miss the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup, scheduled to take place in New Delhi from January 13-19, after a delay in being granted visas to travel across the border for the tournament. Less than a week before the event was scheduled to begin with the marquee India-Pakistan clash at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, it was confirmed that the Pakistan team was yet to receive their visas on Tuesday. Later on the day, a press release from the KKF also said that the opening clash is set to see the Indian men's team take on Nepal on January 13, instead of the Indian women's team taking on Pakistan as earlier planned.

According to the release, the number of teams, previously advertised as 40, was reduced to 39 and neither Pakistan's women's team nor their men's team was mentioned in the list of participating nations. "When we made the schedule, we had hoped for it to go as planned. But this is not really in our control, the Ministry of External Affairs have not approved their application so it seems like they are unlikely to play," Geeta Sudan, COO of the Kho Kho World Cup, said.

Embittered sporting ties have persisted between the two nations for over a decade, and the impasse has been revived this month over India's refusal to go to Pakistan for

'Reverse ramping on Day 1...confrontation with Virat were the two catalysts that shot him up 200k' Beau Webster on Sam Konstas' spike in Instagram followers

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Australia handed the debut caps to Sam Konstas and Beau Webster at MCG and SCG respectively. However, the latter did acknowledge that he did not have a spike in Instagram followers as the teenager Konstas did. "Certainly don't have 200,000. I think the reverse ramping on Day 1 of the Boxing Day Test and the confrontation with Virat were the two catalysts that shot him up 200k. But no, the Instagram following certainly increased but not to that scale. He's an overnight sensation," speculated 31-year-old Webster on Willow Talk on why there was a spike in followers for Konstas. Konstas did spring in a surprise when he decided to scoop Jasprit Bumrah on Day 1 of the MCG Test. Bumrah till the point was the best bowler in the series. Konstas' approach ensured that Bumrah missed his accuracy in his first spell. The innings got under the skin of the Indian players and Virat Kohli in that game went onto shoulder barge young Konstas for which Kohli later was fined by ICC.

Unlike Konstas' debut Webster who plyed his trade in Australian domestic cricket and churned out runs and picked wickets consistently season after season has had a more subdued but effective debut at Sydney. In the first innings, he scored a half-century coming in a tricky situa-

tion to bat. In the second innings he got the wicket of Shubman Gill when the Indian batter was looking to change gears and scored Webster scored a 39* to see Australia home and regain the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "It was like a fairytale. We needed 8 to win and I managed to backfoot punch for a four then there were two balls left and I thought I don't think I am ever going to get another chance here to win a game with a boundary for the country in a fifth and deciding Test, so I run down the wicket, initially I was trying to hit it for a six and it actually dropped a little bit on me shorter but still managed to get a good piece of it through mid-off," Webster

the Champions Trophy cricket tournament, set to take place between February 19 and March 9. Despite Pakistan being approved as the sole host of the tournament as far back as 2021, Indian authorities, citing terror concerns, refused to travel to the country to participate. In return, they did not forfeit from the tournament, but instead, were accommodated by the International Cricket Council (ICC) – whose newly-elected chair, Jay Shah, is the former BCCI secretary – in the form of a hybrid model that has been used in the past. All of India's matches, one semifinal, and the final (if India qualify) will now take place in Dubai instead.

The latest showdown has further frozen sporting relations that had shown signs of easing in the recent past. Sports teams from Pakistan had travelled to India as recently as 2023. Their men's hockey team played the Asian Champions Trophy that year, while the men's cricket team, after much deliberation and last-minute schedule changes, played the 2023 ICC ODI World Cup too. Pakistan had also played the SAFF football championship in the summer of 2023 in Bengaluru. While more sparingly, Indian sports teams have recently travelled to Pakistan too. Their bridge team travelled to Lahore in 2023 while early last year, after a failed appeal to keep it in a neutral venue, the Indian Davis Cup tennis team travelled to Islamabad for their World Group 1 playoff tie. "All the other teams will be travelling as planned and we hope to put on a good show regardless (of Pakistan potentially missing the tournament)," Sudan said.

The tournament, first of its kind, will see 20 men's and women's teams from 24 different countries participate in a big boost to the stakeholders of the sport that hope to boost the indigenous game to a broader audience and give it greater competitive legitimacy. "This is essentially an indigenous sport. It has also been played in parts of Asia and Africa for long, but after the International Kho Kho Federation (IKKF) was developed in 2017, it has spread to places like England and the US. We hope to showcase the best of it this month," Sudan added.



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Sydney pitch rated 'satisfactory': A step in the right direction says Cricket Australia official



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

India's Washington Sundar is out bowled by Australia's captain Pat Cummins during play on the third day of the fifth cricket Test between India and Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground, in Sydney, Australia, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025. India's Washington Sundar is out bowled by Australia's captain Pat Cummins during play on the third day of the fifth cricket Test between India and Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground, in Sydney, Australia, Australia has won the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1. Across the five Tests, the teams have contested at five different venues, getting exposed to different conditions. ICC has rated the pitches for the first four Tests in Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Melbourne as "very good," which is the highest rating. Meanwhile, in Sydney, where the game ended in two and a half days on a green seaming wicket, ICC has rated the pitch as 'satisfactory,' which is the second highest category. "The SCG has been striving to bring out their unique characteristics of early pace and bounce before the pitch wears and spins. This year was a step in the right direction to achieving this which provided an exciting finish to the Border Gavaskar Trophy series and bodes well for the Ashes summer in 2025-26 said Peter Roach, CA Head of Cricket Operations and Scheduling. "We are delighted by the quality of pitches produced," Roach said. "We encourage pitches that bring out the unique characteristics of that venue and this has long been a feature of Australian cricket. We strongly believe that this is one of the reasons that Test cricket is so popular in Australia. We don't look to prepare wickets that favor the home side or suit our situation in a series. We seek a good contest between bat and ball and pitches that are likely to produce a result," he added. Australia after losing two back-to-series at home against India have won their first bilat-

eral Test series since 2014/15. India though started well in Perth by smashing the hosts by 295 runs Australia made a resounding comeback in Adelaide by winning with 10 wickets. Thanks to rain the Third Test in Brisbane the game ended up in a draw. The fourth Test at MCG which seemed like a draw till the final session of the Test match saw India capitulating and losing the Test by 184 runs with an hour in the game left. Going into the final Test India had a chance to level the series and retain the trophy but could not match Australia and lost by six wickets.

Elon Musk's father reveals his son interested in buying Liverpool; FSG say not looking to sell Premier League club

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Elon Musk speaks before Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump at a campaign rally at Madison Square Garden on Oct. 27, 2024, in New York. (AP Photo) Elon Musk speaks before Donald Trump at a campaign rally at Madison Square Garden when the latter was a Republican presidential nominee. Elon Musk's father Errol Musk has revealed in an interview that this billionaire son was interested in buying English Premier League club Liverpool. Talking about Liverpool and his son's interest in buying the club, Errol Musk said in an interview with Times Radio: "I can't comment on that. They'll raise the price." Then, when he was pushed for an answer, Errol Musk added: "Oh yes, but that doesn't mean he's buying it. Elon would like to, yes, obviously, anybody would want to. So would I."

The Premier League club, which is currently leading in the Premier League standings at the halfway stage, is privately owned by Fenway Sports Group (FSG). The Merseyside club won its first English Premier League title in 30 years in 2020 — one season after winning the Champions League title. FSG purchased the team for £300 million in 2010. FSG has not indicated it wants to sell the club. But it must be noted that the group has accepted external investment in the past. In September 2023, FSG sold a minority stake to US investment firm Dynasty Equity.

Sam Konstas opens up on altercations with Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah: 'Told I idolise him, my family loves him'



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

India's Virat Kohli, talks to Australia's Sam Konstas (second left) as Usman Khawaja (right) looks on during the first day of the fourth Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. (AP Photo) India's Virat Kohli, talks to Australia's Sam Konstas (second left) as Usman Khawaja (right) looks on during the first day of the fourth Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Sam Konstas has said he had a 'little chat' with Indian superstar Virat Kohli and cleared the air after the Australian teen sensation was shoulder-barged by the Indian superstar during the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. However, he did not get a chance to speak to Jasprit Bumrah after the Sydney Test.

Konstas, 19, had a breakthrough series after he was handed a Test debut in Melbourne where he went on to make a half-century with an aggressive approach that forced Team India to alter their gameplan. At the same time, he was involved in multiple altercations with Indian players, including Kohli and Bumrah. After the MCG Test, which Australia won, Konstas said he walked up to Kohli, his boyhood hero. "I had a little chat after the game telling him that I idolise him, and it's obviously a huge honour playing against

him," Konstas told The Daily Telegraph. He added: "When I did verse him, I was like, 'Wow, Virat Kohli is batting.' He just had that presence about him, all the Indian crowd getting amongst it. Chanting his name. It was quite surreal. He was very down to earth. A lovely person and just wishing me all the best saying hopefully I go well on the tour of Sri Lanka he said if I'm in. 'My whole family loves Virat. I've idolised him from a young age and he's a legend of the game. He's changed the game with his batting style, the way he goes about things. He's good in all three formats, for such a long period of time. Hopefully one day I can aspire to be that.'" Konstas added the use of the ramp shot against Bumrah was premeditated and in doing so, 'played the role he thought was needed against the master Bumrah and that this is not how fans should expect to see him bat all the time', the newspaper reported. "I thought that was the best method at that time," Konstas told the Sydney-based daily. "With me being new into the team I thought, let's try put a bit of pressure because all series I don't think we had a lot of intent like that. Maybe it was a bit too much. But I thought that was the best style at that time but on future tours, I think it will change with my game plans and how I go about things." Opening up about the controversy during the final over on Day 1 of the Sydney Test, when he exchanged words with Bumrah, Konstas claimed all he 'said to Bumrah was that Khawaja was not ready to face up'. He, however, conceded he 'shouldn't have gotten involved from the non-striker's end'.

"I feel like I love being in the contest and trying to put my best foot forward," Konstas said. "I feel like it's probably a good learning for me. I was trying to waste a little bit of time there so they didn't get another over. But he (Bumrah) had the last laugh. Obviously, he is world class and he took, what, 32 wickets in the series. If that happened again, maybe I wouldn't have said anything."

Michael Holding on two-tier Test system proposal: 'ICC seem so weak... it must run cricket'

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Former West Indies fast bowler Michael Holding slams ICC after amidst reports of two-tier system in the Test arena. India, Australia and England, is exploring the possibility of a two-tier Test system to facilitate more series between these three nations. Earlier it has been reported that Jay Shah, the new ICC chairman, is set to meet Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird and his England counterpart Richard Thompson later this month to discuss the finer points. Holding would suggest that ICC should run cricket instead of the big three. "When England visit their countries, when India visit their countries, when Australia visit their countries, they will make money. It has to be a matter for the International Cricket Council but they seem to be so weak. They have got to get some strength where they can dictate a proper schedule and say, 'this is what has to happen'. And people do not just go about and do as they feel like." Holding wrote in his Telegraph Column. "Because next thing you know, Australia, England, India or whoever are going to say, 'Oh, I'm not going to that country. Waste of time. Why should I go?' It has to be something that's mandatory. This is what you do. For all its faults, at least Fifa actually runs football. The ICC must run cricket," Holding added. Holding also



mentioned about the two-tier system. "If there is no promotion and relegation, the top division will just keep on making all the money. The bottom division will get poorer and teams will disappear. Maybe that is what they want. I get the impression that a lot of these countries that have a lot of money and take all the money out of the game want to continue and perhaps make it worse." "But if they are interested in the entire cricketing landscape being better, they have to go down that route. If Division Two teams have Division One teams visiting them and can sell the television rights for good money, they have the chance to pay their players a little bit better," he said.

UK politicians want England cricket team to abandon match vs Afghanistan in Champions Trophy due to Taliban's restrictions on women

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

England cricket Cricket - Fifth One Day International - England v Australia - Bristol County Ground, Bristol, Britain - September 29, 2024 England's Phil Salt celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Australia's Travis Head off the bowling of Brydon Carse Action Images via Reuters A set of politicians in the United Kingdom urged the England Cricket Board to abandon their match against Afghanistan in the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025 citing restrictions on women by the Taliban. In a letter signed by more than 160 lawmakers, the officials wanted the England players to speak out against the treatment of women in Afghanistan. "We also urge the ECB to consider a boycott of the upcoming match against Afghanistan in the ICC Champions Trophy Group stage on February 26th to signal that such grotesque abuses will not be tolerated," the letter stated. Women and girls have been barred from sports and gyms, a breach of the International Cricket Council's (ICC) rules. The Afghanistan women's team was also disbanded, with several members fleeing the country after 2021. England is scheduled to face Afghanistan in a group-stage match on Feb. 26 in Lahore, Pakistan. ECB chief executive Richard Gould responded by calling for a uniform approach from all member nations towards Afghanistan's participation in international cricket. "The ECB strongly condemns the treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime," Gould said. The ICC Constitution mandates that all member nations are committed to the growth and development of women's cricket. In line with this commitment, the ECB has maintained its position of not scheduling any bilateral cricket matches against



Afghanistan. "While there has not been a consensus on further international action within the ICC, the ECB will continue to actively advocate for such measures. A coordinated, ICC-wide approach would be significantly more impactful than unilateral actions by individual members." In January 2023, Australia postponed an ODI series against Afghanistan scheduled to be held in March due to similar issues. CA had then explained that the "decision followed the Taliban's recent announcement regarding further restrictions on women and girls' education and employment." Following consultation with the Australian Government, CA previously postponed the ODI series against Afghanistan scheduled for March 2023 after a marked deterioration in human rights for women and girls in Afghanistan, stating we would: "Continue to engage with the?Afghanistan?Cricket Board in anticipation of improved conditions for women and girls in the country," CA said in its statement at the time.

Kohli, Rohit will play Champions Trophy, confirm BCCI sources

New Delhi: After India's 1-3 loss against Australia in the 2024-25 Border Gavaskar Trophy series, many questions were raised on the side's senior players, mainly Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, after a series of poor outings for the duo. Head coach Gautam Gambhir and his support staff's role too has come under scrutiny. But as things stand, all three will survive the debacle and BCCI sources said that Rohit and Virat will remain in contention to represent the country in the Champions Trophy and the five-match Test series against England in June.

Both Rohit and Kohli have been a vital part and

mainstay of India's top-order for the past decade, and were crucial in the country winning their second T20 World Cup in June, but have heavily struggled since then. According to sources, a review of the recent performances will be conducted soon but the BCCI does not blame head coach Gautam Gambhir for the defeat. "Yes, there will be a review meeting but no firing. C'mon, you can't sack a coach for the batters' poor show in one series. Gautam Gambhir will remain the coach, and Virat and Rohit will feature in the England series. The focus is Champions Trophy," BCCI sources said on Tuesday. Kohli began the series on a high note, scoring a century in the opening Test in Perth.