

TGPSC to release Group-II exam preliminary key on January 18

Hyderabad: The Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC), which conducted the Group-II services recruitment exam comprising four papers on December 15 and 16, 2024, will release the preliminary keys and master question papers on its website https://www.tpspc.gov.in/ on Saturday. Candidates can access preliminary keys and question papers in their login up to January 22. The commission will accept objections, if any, on the preliminary keys through a link provided on its website from January 18 to 22 (5 pm). Candidates have been advised to submit their objections only in English, besides uploading proofs substantiating their claims.

Woman, three-year-old daughter killed in road mishap

Hyderabad: In a tragic incident, a woman and a three-year-old child died, and two others of the same family were injured when the bike they were riding on was hit by a rashly driven truck at Bandlaguda in Mailardevpally early on Friday. As per available information, Ruksana Begum (35) and her husband, Waseem Ahmed (40), were heading on a bike along with their two children — son Mohd Muzamil (6) and daughter Shifa (3) — from Langar Houz to Falaknuma when the incident occurred. According to the police, when the family reached Bandlaguda main road, an unidentified truck, being driven in a rash and negligent manner, hit their bike from behind. All four fell on the road and sustained injuries.

Revanth fails to meet Rahul again in Delhi, sparks rumours of his diminishing influence in Congress



GNS News Agency, Jan 17
Hyderabad: A Revanth Reddy's failure to meet Congress MP Rahul Gandhi yet again in New Delhi has fuelled fire to the speculations in the party over the state of affairs between the Gandhi family and the Telangana Chief Minister. Interestingly, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president YS Sharmila met Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi. She had a meeting with the Congress MP over the political affairs in Andhra Pradesh and discussed the measures being taken to strengthen Congress in the State. The Chief Minister, along with some of his Cabinet colleagues, was in New Delhi on Wednesday to participate in the AICC office inauguration.

Though, he was in the national capital on Thursday, he could not meet Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and this has left the State leaders dejected. Party sources claimed that Rahul Gandhi could not meet Revanth Reddy due to prior appointments. Accordingly, the State leaders, including the Chief Minister held a meeting with AICC general secretary KC Venugopal over a few aspects, including preparations for local bodies' elections and others.

After the meeting, the Chief Minister left the venue and TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud spoke to the media. Revanth Reddy has been to New Delhi quite a few times in the recent past but could not meet Rahul Gandhi or Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi. And, this is not going well with the party leaders, triggering enough speculations on the widening gap between the Chief Minister and the Gandhi family.

More so, the State leaders are perplexed over the fact that other Ministers, including Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister D Anasuya met Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi in New Delhi on December 10 last year, but the Chief Minister could not. Prior to this on October 26, TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud met AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi in the capital. He had also personally invited the Congress MP to participate in the State-level consultation on caste census held in November in the city.

BJP releases manifesto for Delhi polls, promises 21,000 for pregnant women and LPG cylinders for 500

GNS News Agency, Jan 17
Delhi BJP president J.P. Nadda, on Friday (January 17, 2025) announced the BJP manifesto 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana' in New Delhi. In their manifesto, the BJP promised ₹2,500 to women of Delhi through direct benefit transfers every month. Mr. Nadda said "We will provide LPG cylinders for 7500 to women from poor families, and one free cylinder each on the occasion of Holi Deepawali." He further added that "We will provide 6 nutritional kits and assistance of 21,000 to every pregnant woman under Chief Minister Matrivita Suraksha Yojana." Addressing a press conference while releasing the first part of the 'Sankalp Patra', Mr. Nadda said the party's manifesto is the foundation for a developed Delhi.



He also assured all existing public welfare schemes in Delhi will continue if the BJP is voted to power. Hitting out at the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party, he said all corruption charges in the existing public welfare schemes will be investigated. He promised that a BJP-led Delhi government will approve implementation of the 'Ayushman Bharat' in the city in its first Cabinet meeting, and also give additional health cover of ₹5 lakh.

Israel's security Cabinet recommends approval of ceasefire in Gaza; awaits full Cabinet's decision



GNS News Agency, Jan 17
Israel's security Cabinet recommended approval on Friday (January 17, 2025) of a ceasefire deal after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed an agreement had been reached that would pause the 15-month war with Hamas in Gaza and release dozens of hostages held by militants there. Mediators Qatar and the U.S. announced the ceasefire on Wednesday (January 15, 2025), but the deal hung in limbo for more than a day as Mr. Netanyahu insisted there were last-minute snags he blamed on Hamas. The militants maintained they were "committed" to the deal, while residents of Gaza and families of the hostages anxiously waited to see if it would materialise. The deal now goes to the full Cabinet of Ministers for final sign-off. It is expected to "OK" the ceasefire, which could start as soon as Sunday (January 19, 2025), even though it has drawn fierce resistance from Mr. Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners. However, their objections could destabilise his government. Hamas triggered the war with its October 7, 2023, cross-border attack into Israel that killed some 1,200 people and left some 250 others captive. Israel responded with a devastating offensive that has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not distinguish between civilians and militants but say women and children make up more than half of those killed. Beyond the death and destruction in Gaza, the conflict has also destabilised the Middle East and sparked worldwide protests. On Thursday (January 16, 2025), Israeli strikes killing at least 72 people in Gaza. In previous conflicts, both sides have stepped up military operations in the final hours before ceasefires as a way to project strength. Mr. Netanyahu instructed a special task force to prepare to receive the hostages returning from Gaza, and said that their families were informed a deal had been reached. The Prime Minister's office said that if the deal passes, the ceasefire

could start Sunday (January 19, 2025) and the first hostages could be freed then too. Under the deal, 33 of some 100 hostages who remain in Gaza are set to be released over six weeks in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Israeli forces will pull back from many areas, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians would be able to return to what's left of their homes, and there would be a surge of humanitarian assistance.

Tumukuru graduate to run for Canadian PM

GNS News Agency, Jan 17
Bengaluru: A MBA graduate from Tumukuru in Karnataka Chandra Arya has decided to run for the prime minister's post in Canada. After Justin Trudeau resigned, Chandra Arya, the Indian-origin Member of Parliament for Nepean, formally declared his intention to run for both the Liberal Party leadership and the prime ministership of Canada. Hours before the Liberal Party formally announced that it would elect a new leader on March 9, Arya made his announcement. In a statement he posted on 'X' Arya has stated that "I am running to be the next Prime Minister of Canada to lead a small, more efficient government to rebuild our nation and secure prosperity for future generations" In a video posted on LinkedIn, Arya is seen addressing the Canadian parliament in chaste Kannada and quoted Rashttrakavi KV Puttappa (Kuvempu) stating 'Yelladaru Iru, Yenthadaru Iru, Yendendigu Kannada vagiru' (wherever you are and whatever you are, be always Kannadiga) "We are facing significant structural problems that haven't been seen for generations and solving them will require tough choices. I have always worked hard for what is best for Canadians, and for the sake of our children and grandchildren, we must make bold decisions that are absolutely necessary. If elected as the next Leader of the Liberal Party I offer my knowledge and expertise to do so." He had migrated to Ottawa 20 years back after graduating in MBA from Kousali Institute of Management Studies of Karnataka University in Dharwad. He worked as a technical officer of KSFC. Batchmate in the institute Shankargouda Pappannavar, who has posted a brief on Chandra Arya and remembered that "Later she became an entrepreneur and moved to Canada." Arya was elected three times to the Canadian parliament since 2015 from the Nepean constituency.

After being rejected in Maharashtra, Congress tries to showcase Telangana guarantees in Delhi



GNS News Agency, Jan 17
Hyderabad: The Congress seems to have not learnt lessons from the past. After being rejected in Maharashtra last year, Congress is making yet another attempt to win the voters' confidence in New Delhi by showcasing the 'implementation' of guarantees in Telangana and roping in State leaders to campaign for the party. Incidentally, a majority of electoral promises are yet to be implemented in Telangana, but the Congress leaders are claiming in Delhi that all promises have been implemented in Telangana. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and his cabinet colleagues had campaigned for the Congress party extensively during the Maharashtra assembly elections held in November last. The Telangana ministers had campaigned vigorously in the constituencies bordering Telangana and with a high percentage of Telugu population. They had claimed that the guarantees assured to the Telangana people were being implemented 'successfully'.

However, save for the free bus travel for women, partial implementation of 200 units free power supply and Rs.500 gas cylinder supply under subsidy, many promises were yet to be implemented even after a year since the Congress came to power in Telangana. The party had promised to pay a monthly assistance of Rs.2500, under Rythu Bharosa, both land-owning farmers and tenant farmers were promised Rs. 15,000 per acre annually, landless labourers were assured assistance of Rs. 12,000 per annum, monthly unemployment allowance of Rs. 4,000 to every unemployed youth, electric scooters were promised to all young women above 18 years of age and pursuing education. The list of such promises can go on but they have not been delivered.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy Visits Singapore's ITE, Signs Key MoU for Skills Development

GNS News Agency, Jan 17
Hyderabad: As part of the Telangana Rising initiative, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, accompanied by Industries and IT Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, visited the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) in Singapore. The delegation, led by the Chief Minister, explored various domains of technical skill development at the institution, which specializes in over 20 fields. During the visit, CM Revanth Reddy interacted with experts and staff from ITE Singapore to understand their best practices in skill development. The visit highlighted Telangana's commitment to enhancing technical education and creating a skilled workforce. A significant milestone of the trip was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ITE Singapore and Telangana's Young India Skills University (YISU). The MoU, facilitated in the presence of CM Revanth Reddy, will foster collaboration in skill development programs, benefiting the youth of Telangana. V.L. VSS Subba Rao, Chancellor of YISU, signed the agreement alongside Parvinder Singh, Deputy Director of Academic and Admin Services, and Fabian Chiang, Deputy Director of Education Services at ITE Singapore. The discussions also included a campus tour,



where the delegation reviewed ITE's state-of-the-art facilities and curriculum. The Singapore-based institute expressed its willingness to support Telangana's initiatives, marking a step forward in global collaboration for education. In response to Telangana's invitation, a team from ITE Singapore is set to visit Hyderabad in the coming months to further the partnership and explore avenues for implementing skill enhancement programs. This collaboration underscores Telangana's vision for empowering its youth with world-class skills, aligning with the state's industrial and technological aspirations.

Centre announces Rs 11,440 cr financial package for Vizag steel plant

GNS News Agency, Jan 17
In a significant move to boost the struggling Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, the Central Government has unveiled a financial package of Rs 11,440 crore. The announcement was made by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav following a recent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu sought assistance for the plant. The allocated funds are intended primarily for operational payments, aimed at revitalizing the steel plant, which has faced ongoing financial challenges. Union Minister Rammohan Naidu expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Modi and the Central Government for their support, emphasizing the package's importance in restoring the plant to full-scale production and profitability. This effort will be very useful in overcoming the losses and putting the plant on the path of profits with full-scale production," Naidu tweeted. He also highlighted the



NDA government's commitment to the development of Andhra Pradesh and the aspirations of its people, noting that the financial package is a testament to that dedication.

Arvind Kejriwal writes to PM Modi, seeks discount for students in Delhi Metro

GNS News Agency, Jan 17
New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party convener and former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow a 50 per cent discount to students travelling the Delhi Metro. In a letter to PM Modi, Kejriwal said that both the Centre and the Delhi governments should share the financial burden of the Metro services as a result. In the letter, which was posted on social media, Kejriwal wrote in Hindi, "I am writing this letter to draw your attention to an

important matter concerning the school and college students of Delhi. Students of Delhi largely depend on the Metro to reach their school or college. To reduce the financial burden on students, I propose to provide 50 per cent concessions to students in Delhi Metro." He further wrote, "Delhi Metro is a 50:50 collaboration project between Delhi government and Central government. Therefore, the expenditure on this should be borne half by the Delhi government and the Central government."

Why have timings for release of CPI inflation and IIP data been advanced, and the likely problems with this change



"The CPI & Index of Industrial Production plays a critical role in economic policy and financial markets by reflecting inflationary trends across rural, urban, and combined sectors and industrial growth in the country," it said. Currently, the CPI and IIP are released by the MoSPI on the 12th of each month at 5:30 pm. If 12th is a holiday, then CPI data is released on the next working day and IIP is released on the previous working day if 12th falls on a holiday. The data release in November for both CPI and IIP will be made at 4 pm. The Ministry stated that the new release time aligns with the closing hours of major financial markets in India, "ensuring that CPI data dissemination does not interfere with active trading". "This adjustment also adheres to MoSPI's commitment to transparency and accessibility in data dissemination," it said. Analysts, however, point to the fact that while the stock markets may close by the 4pm release time, some financial markets such as the government bond and the foreign exchange markets, which are also sensitive to inflation data releases, remain open till 5 pm, The suggestion, therefore, is that the release time of 4 pm still does means the data could be sensitive, given the extended timings of the bond market and the currency market.

What is the significance of CPI and IIP data?

Consumer Price Indices (CPI) measure changes over time in the general level of prices of goods and services that households purchase for consumption. CPI is widely used as a macroeconomic indicator of inflation and as a tool by governments and central banks for inflation targeting and for monitoring price stability, and as deflators in the national accounts. Inflation is the rate at which prices for a basket of selected goods and services rise over a period of time and it is calculated by measuring year-on-year change in CPI, that is, current month CPI over CPI of same month of last year. At present, the CPI (combined), which is the most closely watched indicator for retail inflation, is linked to base year 2012 since the time of release in January 2015. Before that, it was linked to the base year 2010.

The IIP data measures the quantum of changes in the industrial production in an economy and captures the general level of industrial activity in the country. It is measured as an index number to value the short term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products during a given period with respect to the base period, which is 2011-12 at present.

It covers industrial growth across three sectors - Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity - and different use-based categories, that is, basic goods, capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer durables and consumer non-durables. The IIP is watched as a short-term indicator for industrial growth till the release of the Annual Survey of Industries and National Accounts Statistics.

What is the new change in data release timing?

While announcing the change in data release timing for retail inflation and IIP on Tuesday, the Ministry said it will provide more time on the day of release to access data.

Larsen & Toubro to buy 21% stake in E2E Networks for Rs 1,407 crore



Larsen & Toubro, E2E Networks, L&T, Indian Cloud and AI Cloud provider, Larsen and Toubro, Indian express business, business news, business articles, current affairs "The narrative in India has changed from being viewed as a digital colony to that of evolving into a provider of sovereign cloud platforms to the world," Dua said.

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has proposed to acquire a 21 per cent equity stake in E2E Networks, an Indian Cloud and AI Cloud provider, at a cost of Rs 1,407 crore through a combination of primary and secondary transactions. Under this alliance, L&T will integrate E2E Networks' cloud

and AI cloud platform with its expertise in data centre management and cloud solutions towards empowering startups, and enterprises, L&T said. The company will not acquire control in E2E Networks following the proposed acquisition and will be a minority shareholder with certain protective rights, it said. The collaboration aims to accelerate digital transformation for a diverse range of industries, fostering a technology-driven, sustainable future for India, L&T said. Tarun Dua, Chairman and MD of E2E Networks, said, "The strategic collaboration between E2E Networks and L&T marks a significant milestone for the future of adoption of domestically built HyperScaler Cloud Platforms in India. The partnership marks the next step in the journey towards 'Make in India' for running production-grade traditional CPU workloads and GPU-led GenAI innovation in India." The narrative in India has changed from being viewed as a digital colony to that of evolving into a provider of sovereign cloud platforms to the world," Dua said. "Collaborating with E2E Networks allows us to offer our clients seamless, scalable and secure cloud experiences. By combining our capabilities, we are delivering a cloud ecosystem designed for businesses in India that want to drive growth, optimise costs and unlock the full potential of AI and digital transformation," said Seema Ambastha, Chief Executive of L&T Data Center and Cloud Business.

The more carbon dioxide you emit, the more likely you are to be bitten by mosquitoes



mosquitoes are attracted to certain compounds that are present on human skin and in sweat, noted Dr Motta. "These compounds give us a specific odour that can draw mosquitoes in. Several different compounds have been identified as being attractive to mosquitoes. Some that you may be familiar with include lactic acid and ammonia," said Dr Motta.

People with high metabolic rates, like pregnant women and those who work out, "who generally have subnormal body temperatures," are more prone to mosquito bites, said Dr Motta. While a 2019 study found that the primary mosquito vector of dengue virus preferred people with type O blood to those with other blood types, Dr Motta noted that separate research notes that experimental and laboratory data evaluating whether blood type makes one person more (or less) attractive to mosquitoes has fueled a lot of speculation, but the science is contradictory. "Instead, the researchers report that the likelihood of being a 'mosquito magnet' has more to do with skin odours and microbiota than blood type," said Dr Motta. Taking proactive steps and following necessary precautions can help mitigate this situation.

People should rely more on renewable energy sources such as solar or hydroelectric power to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. "Use energy-saving appliances and light bulbs in your house to reduce the excessive energy consumption," said Dr Jain. Remember to apply a generous layer of mosquito repellent all over your body to protect yourself from being bitten by mosquitoes. "Immediately consult a doctor if you start to feel symptoms like fever, chills, muscle pain, vomiting, nausea, fatigue, lightheadedness, and skin rashes as it can indicate various mosquito-borne diseases," said Dr Jain. If a mosquito has bitten you, there are things you can do to help relieve the swelling and itch. Dr Motta shared the following suggestions: "Avoid scratching. Scratching can increase swelling, and it breaks your skin, putting you at risk of an infection.

"Apply a cold compress to the site, like a wet towel or cold pack, to help with swelling and itch." "Take deeper breaths so that you avoid too much CO2 emission.

If you've ever complained about being bitten by mosquitoes, we would not be surprised if you've been told it's because your blood is 'sweeter.' But is it true? To find out, we contacted Dr Jinendra Jain, consultant physician at Wockhardt Hospital, Mira Road, who said that it's not blood but increased levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the environment that could significantly lead to more mosquito bites. "Mosquitoes are generally attracted to carbon dioxide, mostly inhaled by humans and animals. Several factors can contribute to the emission of CO2. The higher carbon dioxide levels in certain areas with warmer temperatures and climate changes can create a perfect atmosphere for more mosquitoes to breed," said Dr Jain.

Dr Mallika Motta, MD (Homeopathy), The Vital Dose Homeopathy Clinic, noted that mosquitoes have nerve cell receptors that detect carbon dioxide, allowing them to sense the air we exhale from over 30 feet away. "Mosquitoes are attracted to the carbon dioxide that humans and other animals exhale. This is one of the primary ways they locate potential hosts for their blood meals. The more carbon dioxide a person or animal emits, the more likely they are to be targeted by mosquitoes," said Dr Motta. While carbon dioxide is a natural byproduct of respiration, increased levels in the atmosphere due to human activities like burning fossil fuels can contribute to a higher concentration of this attractant for mosquitoes, said Dr Motta. Apart from CO2,

Radhika Apte opens up about first trimester struggles, says was in 'denial' after learning about pregnancy: 'I was having a meltdown'



truth because pregnancy is very hard. Pregnancy is not fun. Some people have a better pregnancy; for some, it's easier than other people. But it's a very subjective case. Pregnancy is very hard, and bodies constantly go through very big changes," the Merry Christmas actor added.

Notably, Apte surprised her fans by appearing at the BFI London Film Festival last month, flaunting her baby bump. Taking a cue from the actor's admission, let's understand the changes that occur in the first trimester and what can help to cope. Dr Pratima Thamke, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospital, Kharghar, seconded Apte and said that the first trimester of pregnancy could feel like navigating through a wide range of emotions and physical changes, often leaving expectant mothers with anxiety and stress. "For many, the thought of bringing new life into the world is tempered by overwhelming fatigue and nausea. Hormonal shifts can create heightened sensitivity, stress, fatigue, and weight gain in a large number of women," said Dr Thamke.

Radhika Apte, due to deliver her first child in December 2024 with husband Benedict Taylor, recently opened up about her first trimester. Admitting that she was in "denial" for two weeks after learning about her pregnancy, Apte mentioned that she had "terrible bloating, severe constipation, and nausea" while she was shooting for those three months in 40-degree heat. "I was having a meltdown all the time. And people were telling me you need to be happy because you're having a child. I wanted to punch them. I'm telling you that I'm suffering, and you're telling me to be happy," said Apte, adding that she never planned to have children. In an interview with ETimes, Apte, 39, shared that the couple "never looked into what pregnancy means or what happens when you're pregnant." "What are the changes that the body goes through? There's so much sadness attached to pregnancy that nobody tells you the

According to Dr Thamke, emotional turmoil can cause loneliness, frustration, and irritation. "Initiating conversations about fears, hopes, and expectations can help form deeper bonds with partners while opening channels for essential support networks from families and friends during this time," said Dr Thamke. Moreover, mindfulness practices like journaling or gentle yoga can help "ground fluctuating emotions while promoting a sense of control during this journey." According to Dr Thamke, the challenges differ from woman to woman as every woman's journey is different, and the issues they experience will also not be similar. "It is better for pregnant women to stay calm and composed during the first three months by opting for relaxation techniques like meditation and regular check-ups with the doctor. Don't get bogged down; resilience is key during this crucial period. Pay attention to your health, eat a balanced diet, and follow the advice given by the doctor," said Dr Thamke.

Get chronic UTIs? Future treatments may add more bacteria to your bladder to beat back harmful microbes

Millions of people in the US and around the world suffer from urinary tract infections every year. Some groups are especially prone to chronic UTIs, including women, older adults and some veterans. These infections are typically treated with antibiotics, but overusing these drugs can make the microbes they target become resistant and reduce the medicines' effectiveness. To solve this problem of chronic UTIs and antibiotic resistance, we combined our expertise in microbiology and engineering to create a living material that houses a specific strain of beneficial E. coli. Our research shows that the "good" bacteria released from this biomaterial can compete with "bad" bacteria for nutrients and win, dramatically reducing the number of disease-causing microbes. With further development, we believe this technique could help manage recurring UTIs that do not respond to antibiotics. UTI Since beneficial bacteria cannot attach to and survive in the bladder for long, we developed a biomaterial that could slowly release bacteria in the bladder over time. Bringing bacteria to the bladder For the microbes living in people, nutrients are limited their presence varies between different parts of the body. Bacteria have to compete with other microbes and the host to acquire essential nutrients. By taking up available nutrients, beneficial bacteria can stop or slow the growth of harmful bacteria. When harmful bacteria are starved of important nutrients, they aren't able to reach high enough numbers to cause disease. Delivering beneficial bacteria to the bladder to prevent UTIs is challenging, though. For one, these helpful bacteria can naturally colonize only in people who are unable to fully empty their bladder, a condition called urinary retention. Even among these patients, how long these bacteria can colonize their bladders varies widely. Current methods to deliver bacteria to the bladder are invasive and require repeated catheter insertion. Even when bacteria are successfully released into the bladder, urine will flush out these microbes because they cannot stick to the bladder wall. Since beneficial bacteria cannot attach to and survive

in the bladder for long, we developed a biomaterial that could slowly release bacteria in the bladder over time.

Our biomaterial is composed of living E. coli embedded in a matrix structure made of gel. It resembles a piece of jelly about 500 times smaller than a drop of water and can release bacteria for up to two weeks in the bladder. By delivering the bacteria via biomaterial, we overcome the need for the bacteria to attach to the bladder to persist in the organ.

We tested our biomaterial by placing it in human urine in petri dishes and exposing it to bacterial pathogens that cause UTIs. Our results showed that when mixed in a 50:50 ratio, the E. coli outcompeted the UTI-causing bacteria by increasing to around 85% of the total population. When we added more E. coli than UTI-causing bacteria, which is what we envision for future development and testing, the proportion of E. coli increased to over 99% of the population, essentially wiping out the UTI-causing bacteria. Moreover, the biomaterial continued releasing E. coli for up to two weeks in human urine. Our findings suggest that E. coli could stick around and survive in the bladder for extended periods of time and successfully decrease the growth of many types of bacteria that cause UTIs. Improving biomaterials Our findings show that E. coli can not only control harmful bacteria it's closely related to but also a broad range of disease-causing bacteria in humans and animals. This means scientists might not need to identify different types of beneficial bacteria to control each pathogen - and there are many - that can cause a UTI. Our team is currently evaluating how effectively our biomaterial can cure UTIs in mice. We are also working to identify the specific nutrients that beneficial and harmful bacteria compete over and what factors may help beneficial bacteria win. We could add these nutrients to our biomaterial to be released or withheld. This research is still at an early stage, and clinical uses are not in development yet, so if it does reach patients it will be well in the future.

Microfinance delinquencies nearly double to over Rs 28,000 crore in a year

India's microfinance sector is experiencing a notable rise in delinquencies, particularly in the top ten states, despite the banking sector's celebration of a 12-year low in non-performing assets (NPAs). Microfinance loans to low-income groups saw a significant surge in portfolio at risk (PAR) - loans with an overdue of 31-180 days - doubling to `28,154 crore by September 2024 from `14,617 crore a year ago. The delinquencies in the 31-180 days overdue category work out to 6.8 per cent of the total portfolio of `4.14 lakh crore exposure of microfinance firms, including banks and NBFCs, as of September 2024 as against 3.8 per cent of `3.84 crore portfolio in September 2023, says a report.

The incremental rise in the 31-180 days PAR category of microfinance institutions stood at `8,117 crore for the quarter ended September, taking the overall incremental rise in PAR to `13,468 crore for the 12 months ended September, according to a CRIF High Mark report. PAR was 4.6 per cent of advances in June 2024.

MFIs also cut down their exposure from `4.32 lakh crore to `4.14 lakh crore during the three months ended September 2024, CRIF report said. Bihar, UP, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha accounted for 62 per cent of the incremental delinquency, with Bihar reporting a `1,715 crore rise in delinquency for the three months ended September 2024. Bihar was followed by UP with a rise of `1441 crore in PAR, Tamil Nadu `1,009 crore and Orissa `995 crore, the report said.

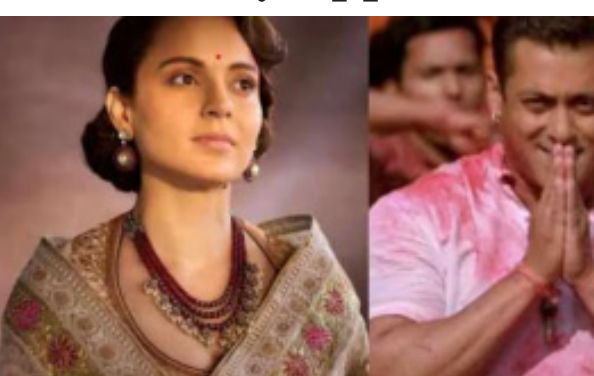
Several factors contributed to this decline in portfolio quality. MFIs were lending to over-leveraged borrowers and they taking on too much debt, leading to repayment difficulties. Further debt-waiver campaigns by states and politicians to waive off debts have disrupted the repayment cycle. There was high field-staff attrition with frequent changes in field staff, affecting the quality of loan disbursal and collection. Elections and extreme weather conditions hindered loan recovery efforts. This rise in delinquencies may push up the credit cost for NBFC-MFIs, potentially impacting the microfinance sector's growth.

The slowdown in the economy has also contributed to the indebtedness and stress in the microfinance sector. The Reserve Bank of India has set a common household limit of `30,000 for loans to qualify as microfinance. This limit



applies to all entities in the microfinance sector. On the other hand, gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) declined to a 12-year low of 2.6 per cent of advances in September 2024, says the Reserve Bank of India. India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) recently revised the outlook on the microfinance (MFI) sector to deteriorating from neutral, while maintaining a 'Stable' rating Outlook for FY26. The agency says that there are multiple headwinds for the sector such as borrower overleveraging for both MFI loans and non-MFI loans, reduced centre attendance, high attrition at branch levels and instances of frauds, all leading to a higher operating and credit cost for the sector in the medium term. "Ind-Ra has revised the sector outlook on MFIs to deteriorating from neutral, while maintaining a Stable rating outlook for FY26. Near-term challenges are likely to continue to play out with a recovery expected in 2HFY26. The Stable rating Outlook factors in adequate capitalisation and liquidity buffers and sufficient PPOp (pre-provision operating profit) margins which will help absorb the current asset quality downturn," said Karan Gupta, Head and Director Financial Institutions, Ind-Ra. The asset quality challenges faced by the sector and covenant breaches by players could lead to tighter funding from lenders. This could also lead to lenders assessing their incremental disbursements, thereby requiring monitoring of the rollover of the existing debt. This could impact the growth outlook for the sector in the medium term, it said.

Kangana Ranaut calls Salman Khan a 'good friend', talks about their collaboration: 'We had many opportunities to work together'



Kangana Ranaut has earned a reputation for voicing her unfiltered opinions about the Hindi film industry and its biggest stars. Recently, Kangana opened up about her bond with Salman Khan, describing him as a "good friend". She also shared that, despite multiple opportunities for collaboration with the Dabangg actor, none of them have materialised so far. However, Kangana admitted that the possibility of working with him in the future remains open.

Speaking to News18, Kangana said, "Salman is a good

friend of mine, and we've had many opportunities where we could work together. But, you know, let's see. Somehow it never came together." In an earlier interaction with Siddharth Kannan, Kangana Ranaut revealed that Salman Khan had offered her prominent roles in films like Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Sultan, but she turned them down. She explained, "Salman offered me a role in Bajrangi Bhaijaan, I was like, 'Yeh kya role diya hai? (What is this role?)'. He then approached me for Sultan. I didn't take that up. He was like 'What more do I offer to you now?'"

Kangana has emphasised that though she rejected roles offered by Salman, the actor has always been kind to her. "Salman is so kind. He keeps talking to me. He is even excited to watch Emergency. We have a common friend, he sent him and was like 'You go see what film she has made.' He called me and said, 'It's a nice film.' I was like, 'So you have the news, but you haven't watched it yourself.' This is the kind of bonding we share," she added. Kangana Ranaut's upcoming film, Emergency, is slated for a theatrical release on January 17. The movie, which she has directed and produced, features her in the role of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

When Jaya Bachchan spoke out on Amitabh Bachchan's rumoured affair with Rekha and if she'd mind them working together again: 'My life would have been hell if...'



Despite Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha consistently denying involvement with each other, it's doubtful if any other relationship rumour in Bollywood has endured as long or as intensely. Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan and Rekha in director Yash Chopra's 'Silsila'. Though Bollywood's Shahenshah Amitabh Bachchan and legendary actor Jaya Bachchan (née Jaya Bhaduri) have been married for 51 years, gossip circles continue to speculate whether Big B has a relationship with the thespian par excellence Rekha. Despite Amitabh and Rekha consistently denying involvement, it's doubtful if any other relationship rumour in Bollywood has endured as long or as intensely.

In fact, Jaya herself has faced this question multiple times. However, her response during a 2008 interview with People magazine stands out for its clarity and conviction. When asked about the alleged affair between Amitabh and Rekha, she replied, "If there was any, he would have been somewhere else, na? People liked them as a couple on screen, and that's fine. The media tried linking him with every one of his heroines. My life would have been hell if I had taken it all seriously. We are made of sterner stuff." Madha Gaja Raja movie review | Vishal, Santhanam power this

Sundar C throwback to simpler yet sus times Jaya Bachchan was also asked if she would object to Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha working together again, to which she firmly responded that she wouldn't. "Why should I mind? But I feel it will be more like a sensation than actual work. And that's a pity because one will miss the opportunity of seeing them together. Both of them probably realise it will go beyond work." On how she maintained a lasting marriage, Jaya explained, "By just leaving him alone. You have to have the conviction. I married a good man and a family that believes in commitment. You must not get too possessive, especially in our profession, where you know things aren't going to be easy. You can either drive the artiste crazy or you can help him or her grow. And if he goes, then he was never yours!" One of the most cherished on-screen couples of all time, Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha joined forces in several films including Do Anjaane (1976), Alaap (1977), Khoon Pasina (1977), Ganga Ki Saugandhi (1978), Muqaddar Ka Sikandar (1978), Mr Natwarlal (1979), Suhaag (1979), Ram Balram (1980) and Silsila (1981). However, they haven't shared the screen in 43 years since Silsila, directed by Yash Chopra, which also featured Jaya Bachchan in a key role.

Telangana govt revokes ticket price hike for Ram Charan's Game Changer

Ram Charan's Game Changer The Telangana government said early morning shows of Game Changer will not be permitted in future 'until public interest, health and safety are duly considered'. The Telangana government has revoked its earlier orders allowing an increase in ticket prices for actor Ram Charan starrer Game Changer.

Complying with the High Court directives, the government said early morning shows will not be permitted in future 'until public interest, health and safety are duly considered'. The orders withdrawing permission for screening the movie with enhanced rates would be effective from January 16, an official statement said on Saturday night.

Following a request made by the makers of Game Changer, the state government had issued orders on January 3 permitting screening of six shows on January 10 (including extra show at 4 am) with an additional amount of Rs 150 for multiplex theatres and Rs 100 for single theatres. It also allowed screening of five shows from January 11 to 19 (for nine days) with an additional amount of Rs 100 for multiplex theatres and Rs 50 for single theatres. While allowing additional shows and hike in prices, the government had said advertisements on adverse impact of narcotics and drugs and cyber crime should be screened.

However, the High Court passed interim directions on January 10 to review the decision issued in enhancing the ticket rates on Rs 150 for multiplex and Rs 100 for single theatres from the regular rates, within 24 hours from the date of receipt of a copy of the order, and also to not allow early morning shows. Opposition BRS MLA T Harish Rao on January 10 criticised the Congress government for allowing ticket price hike though state Cinematography Minister K Venkata Reddy spoke against it in the Legislative Assembly in the wake of the death of a woman in a stampede on December 4, 2024, at the premiere of Allu Arjun starrer Pushpa-2.



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Salman Khan recalls Raveena Tandon fighting with him on-set, reacts to Rasha and Aman's debut: 'Main wahi ka wahi hoon'



The latest episode of Bigg Boss 18 Weekend Ka Vaar featured Salman Khan welcoming debutant actors Rasha Thadani and Aman Devgan, who are gearing up for their big-screen debut with Azaad. Rasha is the daughter of Bollywood star Raveena Tandon, while Aman is the nephew of actor Ajay Devgn. During the episode, Salman greeted the two newcomers warmly, acknowledging his personal connection with them.

In a delightful surprise for viewers, Raveena also graced the Bigg Boss 18 stage, reuniting with her Andaz Apna Apna co-star. Salman expressed his fondness for the young stars and humorously remarked, "It's hard to believe that you guys have become a hero and heroine aur main wahi ka wahi (and I'm still the same)." Taking a playful dig at Ajay's dancing skills, Salman quipped, "Aman, you're a good dancer, and even Ajay will agree." Salman then invited Raveena onto the stage, referring to her as "Rasha's elder sister." Together, Salman and Raveena recreated the hook steps of some of their iconic songs.

Amid the fun interactions, Raveena Tandon recalled the time Salman Khan commented on her weight. As the show displayed throwback photos of the stars, one image

showed Salman carrying Raveena on his back. Sharing the story behind the picture, Raveena said, "He asked me, 'Tumhara wazan kitna hai? (How much do you weigh?)' And I was really fat at that time," she added with a laugh.

Throwback photos of Salman with a young Rasha Thadani, who was just 3 years old at the time, were also displayed during the episode. The heartwarming pictures captured Salman feeding cake to little Rasha and happily posing with her. Reflecting on the moment, Rasha said, "Wow, that was ages ago." Salman Khan and Raveena Tandon also indulged in playful banter, reminiscing about their time working together in the 1990s. Salman teased Rasha by saying, "Tumhari mummy mujhse bohot jhagda karti thi (Your mother used to fight with me a lot)." Raveena quickly responded with her own anecdote, "Hum saath mein shoot ke liye jaate the, tab Salman flights mein so jaate the. Tab Instagram ka zamana hota toh main bohot saare snaps leke dalti (When we traveled for shoots, Salman would sleep on the flight. If Instagram existed back then, I'd have clicked lots of pictures and posted them)." The Bigg Boss Weekend Ka Vaar episode airing on Sunday night will also feature cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal alongside Punjab Kings teammates Shreyas Iyer and Shashank Singh.

Disney pledges \$15 million in Los Angeles fire aid as more stars learn they've lost their homes

The Pacific Palisades wildfires torched the home of This Is Us star Milo Ventimiglia, perhaps most poignantly destroying the father-to-be's newly installed crib. CBS cameras caught the actor walking through his charred house for the first time, standing in what was once his kitchen and looking at a neighborhood in ruin. "Your heart just breaks." He and his pregnant wife, Jarah Mariano, evacuated Tuesday with their dog and they watched on security cameras as the flames ripped through the house, destroying everything, including a new crib. "There's a kind of shock moment where you're going, 'Oh, this is real. This is happening.' What good is it to continue watching? And then at a certain point we just turned it off, like 'What good is it to continue watching?'" More stars learn their homes are gone

Firefighters sought to make gains Friday during a respite in the heavy winds that fanned the flames as numerous groups pledged aid to help victims and rebuild, including a \$15 million donation pledge from the Walt Disney Co.

While seeing the remains of his home, Ventimiglia was struck by a connection to his This Is Us character, Jack Pearson, who died after inhaling smoke in a house fire. "It's not lost on me life imitating art." Mandy Moore, who played Ventimiglia's wife on This Is Us, nearly lost her home in the Eaton fire, which scorched large areas of the Altadena neighborhood. She said Thursday that part of her house is standing but is unlivable, and her husband lost his music studio and all his instruments.

Mel Gibson's home is "completely gone", his publicist Alan Nierob confirmed Friday. The Oscar winner revealed the loss of his home earlier Friday while appearing on Joe Rogan's podcast. Numerous stars have confirmed their homes were lost or sustained damage in devastating wildfires burning in and around Los Angeles. At least 10 people have died, thousands of structures and vehicles have been destroyed and more than 150,000 people remain under evacuation orders. The home that Miles Teller and his wife, Keleigh, shared was a pile of dust and debris, with only the fall shrubbery and a gate surrounding the lot still standing. Keleigh posted photos of the home on Instagram of before the wildfire and after, urging people to get out of the neighborhood and thanks to first responders. "We will come back stronger than ever," she wrote. She added that she wished she'd taken her wedding dress. Billy Crystal and his wife lost their home of 45 years. Paris Hilton, Jeff Bridges and Cary Elwes and R&B star Jhené Aiko have also said their homes are gone. Haley Joel Osment says he lost everything in Altadena. "I am so sorry for the losses that thousands of people are suffering and I'm trying to etch in my mind the unique details of this lovely town that are gone forever — thank you to everyone who has reached out and who has helped as we lose our home," the actor wrote on Instagram.



The company announced the donations Friday afternoon. It said the money would be spread across several groups, including the American Red Cross, the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. "Walt Disney came to Los Angeles with little more than his limitless imagination, and it was here that he chose to make his home, pursue his dreams, and create extraordinary storytelling that means so much to so many people around the world. We are proud to provide assistance to this resilient and vibrant community in this moment of need," Disney CEO Bob Iger said in a statement.

Vishal, Santhanam power this Sundar C throwback to simpler yet sus times

Madha Gaja Raja movie review: When one looks at films that are over a decade old, it is but natural to see if it has aged well. Are the dialogues still relevant? Is the narrative still fresh? Have the actors and filmmaker evolved? In fact, many a time, it takes us back to the time we first saw it, and our response to it today is a reflection of our own evolution. But what if it is a movie that you never saw, and you are watching it for the first time a decade after it was made. What if it is a movie that no one saw because it didn't release when it had to, and is finally hitting the screens 12 years later? Do you see it as a 2013 film? Do you see it as a 2025 film? That is the conundrum one finds themselves in while watching Sundar C's long-delayed Madha Gaja Raja, which was supposed to hit screens for Pongal 2013, but a time traveler moved a chair somewhere in the past, and it saw the light of day for Pongal 2025. This conundrum finds a way to solve itself by simply understanding that Madha Gaja Raja or MGR is a Sundar C film. Over three decades in the industry, Sundar C has managed to create a brand for himself. Despite dabbling in various genres, including comedy, action drama, horror, and slice-of-life films, most of his movies carry his brand of irreverence and glamour. For instance, one might ask why a film about what a friend would do to save the skin of his other friends in deep trouble, have him take time out to attend a Yoga session featuring a glamorous instructor and a roving camera in the hands of the cinematographer. But you don't ask it because you know it is a Sundar C film, and everyone, including the actors and the audience, are primed for the same. Now, is

it right? Is it needed? Is it voyeuristic? Does the gaze need an immediate revision? Are we reading too much into it? Should it be looked at with this amount of seriousness? Wait, Raja (Vishal) is now springing out of the well with Madhavi (Anjali) and Maya (Varalaxmi) in his arms, and has broken into the extremely catchy "My Dear Loverr-u" by Vijay Antony... let's come back to this debate after that. The first half of Madha Gaja Raja is a sped-up version of Adam Sandler's Grown Ups with a few changes made to accommodate local sensibilities. For instance, it is a running race instead of basketball, a glamorous sister-in-law instead of a glamorous step-daughter, a marriage function in the favourite teacher's family instead of the death of the favourite teacher, etc... Here too, Raga and his gang of friends are boisterous, crass, endearing, and the embodiment of the statement, "Boys will be boys." This leads to scenes where objectification is par for the course, and garden variety misogyny is thrown in for fun. But because it is about boys being boys, we are asked to sympathise with their plights. But if we are able to look past it all, and still laugh a lot or smile wide despite our eyes rolling, it is because the film brings back Santhanam, the comedian. He is in his elements, and like he effortlessly used to, masks all the cracks to make us split our slides with laughter. In fact, he powers the entire first half's humour quotient with his one-liners that borders on the risqué, and manages rare moments of vulnerability that shows us Santhanam's penchant for sentiment.

The hidden force behind India's Paralympic gold rush



mained unbroken. At ALC, Sumit discovered para-javelin as an alternative sport. His journey from countless hours of training with the prosthetic leg to becoming a two-time Paralympic champion speaks volumes about his resilience, clinching gold medals in both Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Paralympic Games with record-breaking throws in the men's javelin throw F64 category. Paralympics Sumit Antil won gold medals in javelin in Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Paralympics

"After such a tragic incident, one needs to get mental stability. The facility at ALC provided me with that mental strength. When I first walked into ALC in 2015, I never imagined I would walk out as a future Paralympic champion. The technicians at ALC didn't just design a prosthetic leg but engineered my comeback story. The centre's cutting-edge prosthetics and understanding of an athlete's needs turned my disability into my strength," said Sumit. Nitesh Kumar: gold in men's singles in badminton at Paris Paralympics 2024

Nitesh Kumar met with a tragic train accident in 2009 that left him bedridden, but it could not dampen his sporting spirit. During his stay at IIT-Mandi, he discovered para-badminton, finding a new purpose in life. His journey from rehabilitation to winning gold in the men's singles SL3 category at the 2024 Paris Paralympics showcases extraordinary determination and skill.

Nitesh Kumar Nitesh Kumar won gold medal in men's singles in badminton at Paris Paralympics 2024" was inspired by observing 'Anandan Gunasekaran,' a champion blade runner. I have walked for hours in the rehabilitation centre during my recovery phase. I was fitted with a high-end 'Flex-run Blade' and a 'Socket' for free which cost lakhs elsewhere. This has helped me move with agility on the badminton court. Every smash, every dive, and every victory on the court carries the spirit of those who rebuilt me, one step at a time and is a testament to ALC's commitment to transforming lives through sports," said Nitesh.

Where technology meets compassion What sets ALC apart is its cutting-edge prosthetics and human-centric approach. While using advanced technologies like computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), they don't just replace limbs but restore the dignity and potential of an individual.

"ALC happens to be the world's only centre that manufactures both endo-skeletal and conventional limbs simultaneously. Over 71,000 persons with disabilities are registered at ALC. And around 800 new beneficiaries are added yearly," said Brigadier C N Satish, Commandant of ALC Pune. "In India, the most significant challenge faced by the para-athletes is the lack of sports prosthetic facilities because very few manufacture them, they are costly, and many depend on its import. But we, as a defence organisation, can provide high-end prosthetics for sports persons. We also have a special team of para-athletes who offer highly skilled expertise in designing and manufacturing prostheses in-house. After this, we train them to use prostheses at our rehabilitation centre. And our collaborative team at the Indian Army's Paralympic node trains them in their respective sports," he added. "We have started a 'direct socket system,' for transfemoral prosthesis users, a novel interface where the socket is shaped and laminated on the residual limb, and takes around three hours to make, which took over a week earlier. We recently manufactured a 'Phoenix foot' that provides natural ankle movement on uneven terrain and comforts the hip and knee during long physical work. We are also planning to start implementing 3D printing technology-based manufacturing," said Brigadier Satish, talking of innovations inspired by the institute's motto of "No Wheelchair, No Crutches" "India achieved its most successful performance in Paralympic history at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games, securing 29 medals – seven gold, nine silver, and 13 bronze. I believe India will secure over 50 medals in the next Paralympic Games," said Murlikant Petkar.

Jasprit Bumrah set to miss Champions Trophy group stage matches because of back swelling



GNS News Agency, Jan 17

IN A setback for India, strike bowler Jasprit Bumrah is likely to miss the group stage of next month's Champions Trophy due to health reasons. The Indian Express has learnt that Bumrah, who has swelling on his back, has been asked to report to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru where his recovery will be monitored. The Champions Trophy, which will have the world's top eight ODI teams, begins on February 19, with the matches scheduled at Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Dubai for India's games. The national selectors, who met in Mumbai on Saturday to pick the team for the T20 series at home against England later this month, are learnt to have been updated about Bumrah's fitness status. Though the deadline for announcing squads for the Champions Trophy is Sunday, the BCCI has sought an extension.

Selectors are considering whether they should name Bumrah in the squad of 15 or add him to the list of reserve players for the tournament. It is learnt that the BCCI will initially submit a provisional squad to the International Cricket Council. As changes to teams can be made till February 12, it gives selectors time to monitor Bumrah's progress closer to the tournament. According to a BCCI source, Bumrah is expected to be fully fit only by the first week of March. "He (Bumrah) will be going to NCA for his rehabilitation. The initial report says he doesn't have a fracture but has swelling on his back. So the NCA will monitor his recovery and he will be there for three weeks. But even after that, he will have to play a match or two, even if they are practice games organised to check his match fitness," said the source. While India's last group match, against New

Zealand, is on March 2, it is unclear if Bumrah will be ready to play. Prior to this, India will play Bangladesh on February 20 and Pakistan on February 23. India will play all their matches in Dubai, as the team refused to travel to Pakistan citing security concerns and the ICC agreed to a hybrid model. The semi-finals are on March 4 and 5, and the final on March 9.

In the recent five-match Test series in Australia, Bumrah took 32 wickets and won the player of the series award. He sat out on the final day of the series in Sydney because of his injury. Australia won the series and took the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Bumrah has had issues with his back earlier too. He missed nearly 11 months of cricket — from September 2022 to August 2023 — after undergoing a surgery. He made a comeback at a T20 match against Ireland. The Indian team management has been mindful of his workload to prevent the strike bowler from straining himself. Bumrah was rested for the fourth Test against England in Ranchi at the start of last year. More recently, he was rested for the third and final Test against New Zealand in Mumbai so he could stay fresh for the Test series in Australia. In Australia, Bumrah bowled 151.2 overs in five Test matches with an average of 13.06 and a strike rate of 28.3. He was also the stand-in captain for the first Test in Perth as Rohit Sharma skipped the match. Bumrah also captained the side for the final Test in Sydney when Rohit decided to sit out.

Satwik, Chirag pair bows out of Malaysia Open semifinals

Kuala Lumpur: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's impressive run at the Malaysia Super 1000 badminton tournament came to an end following a straight-game loss to Korea's Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae in the semifinals, here on Saturday. Seeded seventh, Satwik and Chirag, who reached the finals last season, lost 10-21 15-21 in a 40-minute semifinal clash. "They played really well, and we could have followed our game plan a bit better. Instead, we played some random strokes, but kudos to them for playing a solid game," Satwik said. "Today, the pace of the game was very slow compared to the last three days. It's part of the game. It was a valuable learning experience for us."

No knee-jerk decisions in BCCI's review meet on India's disastrous Australia tour



GNS News Agency, Jan 17

New Delhi: India's disastrous tour of Australia was reviewed by the BCCI in an over two-hour-long meeting with under-fire skipper Rohit Sharma and head coach Gautam Gambhir on Sunday but the Board decided against any knee-jerk response to the debacle that was largely blamed on the poor form of senior players. The meeting was held at a five-star facility in Mumbai and BCCI President Roger Binny and secretary elect Devajit Saikia were in attendance along with Rohit and Gambhir.

"There was a detailed discussion on the Border Gavaskar Trophy performance and what all went wrong and the course correction required. But do not expect a hurried decision from the new dispensation of BCCI," a source privy to developments in the Board said. India surrendered the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the first time in a decade following the 1-3 loss to Australia. The team was also knocked out of the World Test Championship final in

June this year due to the defeat in the five-match series. It is understood that with an important ODI tournament like the Champions Trophy scheduled in another six weeks' time, any immediate reaction would have a negative impact on the team as well as the support staff. Rohit, who drew considerable flak for his underwhelming batting performance in Australia, is also the national ODI captain. The team will get a break only after the Champions Trophy, which concludes on March 9, and the players will then be seen in the colours of their respective IPL franchises after that. India's next big Test assignment is a five-match series against England in June. Speculation is swirling that the 37-year-old Rohit will not be selected for that series. Virat Kohli's future is also under the scanner although it is believed that he is in a slightly better position as of now. While Rohit managed just 31 runs in Australia, prompting him to drop himself from the fifth and final Test, Kohli managed a hundred in the opening game in Perth. With more than five months to go for the next Test series, many in the BCCI believe that there is no need to take a decision right away. However, how Rohit and Kohli perform in the Champions Trophy will be a major factor in deciding which direction their careers take in the coming few months. That the Indian Test set-up is in turmoil during a difficult transition was evident from the abrupt manner in which senior off-spinner R Ashwin retired mid-series after not being played for the majority of the games he was there. It is also learnt that players won't be allowed to pick and choose bilateral assignments based on their whims and fancies. They will have to provide valid medical reasons for skipping any games. The Board has already directed the stars to turn up for domestic engagements with Gambhir stating it firmly that all those who are committed to red-ball cricket must show up for Ranji Trophy matches.

Jemimah Rodrigues' first international century powers India to their highest ever total in women's ODIs

GNS News Agency, Jan 17

It was a record-breaking day in Rajkot for the Indian women's cricket team as a solid batting display, led by Jemimah Rodrigues' unbeaten 102 off just 91 balls, powered the hosts to a massive 370 for five against Ireland in the second ODI on Sunday. It is now the highest ODI total for Indian women, breaking the previous best of 358/2, which was also against Ireland in Potchefstroom, scored in 2017. Just recently, they had equalled that tally with 358/5 v West Indies in Vadodara. Opting to bat, Smriti Mandhana (73) and Pratika Rawal (67) forged a 156-run stand for the opening wicket. It's already their 100-plus opening stand in just their fifth match together at the top of the order. They have now scored 468 runs as a pair at an average of 93.60 per partnership.

But the headline belonged to Rodrigues as she scored her first-ever international century. Rodrigues and Harleen Deol (89) added another 183 for the third wicket. "It has been



a long wait to get this hundred," Rodrigues said after her knock that included 12 fours. "Glad that the team gave me a role at No. 4 and I could deliver. Today, the important thing for me was to be till the 50th over. Getting runs is not a problem, I am good at that, but being till the end was important and glad I could do that."

Karun Nair hits 4th consecutive List A hundred in Vijay Hazare Trophy, becomes 3rd Indian to record feat



GNS News Agency, Jan 17

Karun Nair became the third Indian to hit four consecutive List A centuries in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. (Instagram) Karun Nair became the third Indian to hit four consecutive List A centuries in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. (Instagram) Vidarbha captain Karun Nair extended his stupendous purple patch as he smashed his fourth consecutive century in the Vijay Hazare Trophy in the quarter-final clash against Rajasthan at the Motibaug Cricket Ground in Vadodara in Sunday.

Chasing a hefty 292-run total, the 33-year-old Nair walked in at number three after a 92-run opening stand between Yash Rathod and Dhruv Shorey. Nair then anchored

the chase with Shorey who got to his century in 114 deliveries. The former Karnataka batter reached his fourth hundred in consecutive innings off only 77 deliveries with 11 fours and three sixes, making him only the third Indian and the fifth batter overall to achieve the milestone in List A cricket. Shortly after the century, Nair smoked pacer Khaleel Ahmed for 24 runs in five deliveries with three fours and two sixes before Vidarbha secured a nine-wicket win in 43.3 overs.

Vidarbha qualified for the knockouts after winning all games in Group D of the tournament, with their final league game against Mizoram ending in a 10-wicket win. Within his four previous outings with the bat in the league stage, Nair set a new List A world record for most runs between two dismissals. Nair's scores during this run read: 112*, 111*, 163* and 44* against Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh and Chhattisgarh respectively. Nair had earlier started the tournament with a century against J&K. The overall streak makes him only the second batter to hit five centuries in an edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy after Tamil Nadu's Jagadeesan. Nair became the third batter after Devdutt Padikkal (4, 2020-21) and Jagadeesan to record four consecutive centuries in List A cricket. While Jagadeesan holds the world record with five consecutive centuries during the 2021-22 VHT, only Kumar Sangakkara (4) and Alviro Petersen (4) have achieved the landmark of four consecutive List A centuries outside India.

Shakib, Litton miss out on Bangladesh's Champions Trophy squad



Dhaka: Bangladesh on Sunday omitted former skipper Shakib Al Hasan, who has been suspended from bowling in international and domestic cricket because of an illegal action, from their Champions Trophy squad. Shakib, who failed a test of his bowling action at the Loughborough University in England last month, also could not procure a positive assessment in a second independent test conducted at the Sri Ramachandra Centre for Sports Science in Chennai recently.

The omission from the 15-member Champions Trophy squad could also mark the end of the 37-year-old's ODI career. The tournament begins on February 19. Shakib, who was retired from Test and T20i formats, was reported for a suspect bowling action during a one-off appearance for Surrey in the County Championship in September last. On-field umpires Steve O'Shaughnessy and David Millns made the report, which was termed "shocking" by Bangladesh Cricket Board officials.

Bangladesh, who will open their Champions Trophy campaign against India in Dubai on February 20, have also left out seasoned wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das after his recent modest outings. Das could not make a fifty in his last 13 ODI innings. His last 50-plus score was against In-

dia at Pune in October 2023. In fact, the 30-year-old's last seven innings read: 6, 1, 0, 0, 2, 4, 0. Other than these two big names, all-rounder Afif Hossain, and pacers Shoriful Islam and Hasan Mahmud too failed to get a place in the squad which will be led by Najmul Hossain Shanto. Najmul is returning to the side after missing the home ODIs last year against the West Indies due to a hamstring injury. Along with Najmul, experienced Mushfiqur Rahim and Mustafizur Rahman and promising top-order batter Towhid Hridoy too have made a comeback.