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Teen girl ends life by jumping in front of running train in Hyde

Hyderabad: A 19-year-old Intermediate student allegedly committed suicide by jumping in front of a running train at Jamai Osmania railway tracks on Tuesday wee hours. The reason for the suicide was not yet known.

The victim was identified as K Bhargavi, a native of Pedda Koduru village in Siddipet district who was studying Intermediate second year and stayed in the Andhra Mahila Sabha hostel on the Osmania University campus. As per available information, Bhargavi was good at studies and as per her parents, she was normal and had not shown any signs of depression. Her body was found on the tracks by other rail passengers who further alerted the railway authorities.

Etela Rajender assaults real estate broker in Pocharam



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Hyderabad: BJP MP Etela Rajender has been accused of physically assaulting a real estate broker in Pocharam, Medchal district. The incident reportedly stemmed from allegations that the broker had encroached upon lands belonging to the poor. The MP visited Ekashila Nagar in Pocharam Municipality in the district, where the local residents reportedly complained to him that a real estate broker was encroaching on the lands of the poor and causing problems.

In this context, Rajender, who became angry at the encroachment of the lands of the poor, attacked the real estate broker. At the same time, the MP's followers and victims also attacked the real estate broker. Meanwhile, allegations are that real brokers were selling plots to innocent people in the canceled Ekashila venture. The video of MP Etela attacking brokers has now gone viral on social media.

Horrible..one's own father killed the girl

Sangareddy: On the 16th of this month in Sangapur village of Raikod Mandal, the police investigated the incident of the suspicious death of a girl named Vaishnavi in ??a well and concluded that her brother Satish was the murderer. On this occasion..Zaheerabad Rural CI Hanumantu said in a media conference that Vaishnavi's father Madugadda Satish had married Erukali Anita of the same village for love about 12 years ago. They have two daughters. Since last one year he was harassing his wife and could not bear such pain and left without telling anyone on 8-11-2024. Since last few days Satish's daugh-



ters Vaishnavi and Vaishu were going to Singapore Square many times with Aadhaar cards and clothes in a bag to go to his mother Anita, Satish brought them home. Everyone in the village knew that his wife was leaving and their daughters were leaving home again and again. So he came to know that everyone was laughing at him that his wife had got up with someone and that even the child Vaishnavi would be lost. He decided to kill the child so that no trace of his wife would remain in the village, with him, or at home. Date 9-1-2025 Thursday night, Vaishnavi and Satish were the only two at home. At 5 o'clock in the morning, Satish woke up and said that Vaishnavi will leave her with your mother. While she was taking her to Keshi Reddy's farm well, she asked where she was and asked her to take her and wash her face with water. He told him that the water was cold and he would not wash it, which means he slapped him on the cheek and strangled him and pushed him into the well. He brought a bag of her clothes and put it on the bank of the well and came back. When Satish's mother Samamma Vaishnavi is not seen, he says he doesn't know why. When I asked Samamma when did you see her, she said that she has not been seen since yesterday afternoon, but she searched the whole village with her mother as if she did not know anything. On 16-01-2025 at half past eight in the morning Srikanth, a villager, came to know that there was a body of a girl in the Keshi Reddy agricultural well. Then Satish didn't know what to do and went with his mother. Then the relatives of his mother and mother-in-law suspected Satish of Vaishnavi's death and cursed him that he had killed her. Today Satish was caught and interrogated in their own style and he confessed to the crime. They informed that Vaishnavi's bag, clothes, family photo and her Aadhaar card have been seized from him and they are taking him to remand. SI Narayana, Nikit, Wesley, staff Sangareddy and others were present in this meeting.

PM Modi congratulates 'dear friend' Trump on inauguration as 47th US president

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday (January 20, 2025) congratulated Donald Trump on his historic inauguration as the 47th U.S. president and said he looks forward to working closely together once again, to benefit both the countries as well as to shape a better future for the world. Mr. Trump was sworn in as the 47th U.S. president on Monday, marking his remarkable return to power for a second term.

PM Modi said in a post on X, "Congratulations my dear friend President Donald Trump on your historic inauguration as the 47th President of the United States! I look forward to working closely together once again, to benefit both our countries, and to shape a better future for the world. Best wishes for a successful term ahead!" he added. Mr. Trump, the 78-



year-old Republican Party leader, has vowed to put America "first." "The golden age of America begins right now," he said in his inaugural address. Congratulations my dear friend President @realDonaldTrump on your historic inauguration as the 47th President of the United States! I look forward to working closely together once again, to benefit both our countries, and to shape a better future for the world. "From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation, and we will

I-T raids on Mythri Movie Makers in Hyd

Hyderabad: Income Tax officials conducted searches at the homes of Mythri Movie Makers, the producers of Pushpa 2, and an online web portal owner in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The raids follow the massive box office success of Mythri Movie Makers production, Pushpa 2: The Rule.

Some of the notable films produced by the company are Srimanthudu, Rangasthalam, Janatha Garage, Pushpa: The Rise, Pushpa 2: The Rule. Established in 2015 by Naveen Yerneni, Yalamanchili Ravi Shankar and Mohan Cherukuri, Mythri Movie Makers is one of the top Telugu film production companies. Currently, the production house is headed by Naveen Yerneni and Ravi Shankar, as Mohan Cherukuri left in 2019 to start Vyra Entertainments. Earlier on Tuesday, I-T officials also raided the residence and office of producer Dil Raju, and his relatives. These raids reportedly came after these Telugu film productions earned record-breaking collections with their recent releases.

Saif Ali Khan discharged from Lilavati Hospital; attacker entered India illegally 7 months ago



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

After being hospitalised for five days, actor Saif Ali Khan has been discharged from Lilavati Hospital on Tuesday (January 21, 2025) following the knife attack at his Bandra residence in Mumbai on January 16. The accused, Shahzad, stabbed him and caused him six injuries, harming his thoracic spine. Doctors performed surgery to remove 2.5 mm knife piece.

Mr. Khan was hospitalised after he was attacked in alleged robbery attempt when accused broke into his house and in confrontation he got injured. Mumbai police arrested accused identified Shariful Islam Shahzad. On interrogation, police found he was Bangladeshi national living in India and worked with housekeeping company. According to police, Shahzad lived in India as Vijay Das. Shahzad was sent to five days of police custody for further interrogation on Sunday. Police has also gathered 19 fingerprints from the Bandra residence of Mr. Bandra and recreated the crime scene.

Maoist with 1 crore bounty among 14 killed in encounter at Odisha-Chhattisgarh border

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

At least fourteen Maoists have been killed along the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border in an anti-Maoist operation conducted in Gariaband district, the police said on Tuesday (January 21, 2025). The police had on Monday (January 20, 2025) said the number of fatalities in the operation was two but updated the figures based on the bodies recovered after the operation.

Those killed include Jayaram alias Chalpati, a senior member of the central committee, the highest decision making body of the Maoists, with a reward of ₹1 crore, Gariaband Superintendent of Police Nikhil Rakhecha told The Hindu.

Describing it as "another mighty blow" to Maoism, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday (January 21, 2025) said 14 Maoists were killed in a joint operation by the CRPF, SoG Odisha and Chhattisgarh Police along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border.

Modi right leader at right time for India, says AP Chief Minister Naidu at Davos



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Davos: India has got the right leader at the right time in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and he will take the country to the top across various economic and social parameters, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said on Tuesday. Speaking at the launch of an economic task force on 'Swarna Andhra by 2047', he said his State has huge growth potential and is progressing on the right path.

"Indians are the most accepted community globally

and it will continue in future," he said at the event organised by industry body CII. "We are having the right leader at the right time in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He has absolute clarity on reforms and policy framework for the country going ahead." "I'm fully confident that India will become a developed nation by 2047, and reach the number one or second spot in various areas," he said. India is the only country that has the advantage of a democratic dividend for the next 20-25 years, he said.

Naidu pitched moving forward from PPP model to P4 model or 'Public, Private and People Partnership' to tackle issues like poverty and hunger and improve the lives of everyone. Naidu also announced the setting up of a Centre of Global Leadership on Competitiveness in partnership with CII. Present at the event, Tata group chief N Chandrasekaran said it's his honour to become Co-chair of the economic task force on Swarna Andhra by 2047. He praised Naidu for his economic visions in his days as Chief Minister of erstwhile unified Andhra Pradesh. "While we develop this plan for 2047, it will have plans for immediate implementation as we progress towards the target year," he said. "The plan will have multiple components, special focus on certain sectors in the beginning as we target other sectors," Chandrasekaran said, adding "we will set up educational institutions of global eminence," he added.

All Genuine Claims Approved: Meesho Tightens Supply Chain Processes for Greater Fairness

"Hyderabad, 20th January 2025 – Meesho, India's only true e-commerce marketplace, has introduced transformative changes to its claims process, reaffirming its commitment to empowering sellers and delivering a seamless, transparent experience. These enhancements—faster resolutions, advanced checks, and proactive measures—are aimed at building trust within the seller community. "Since May 2024, Meesho has significantly improved its claims approval process, reducing the resolution time by 70% for the majority of cases. This progress has enabled faster outcomes for sellers, with 3.4 million genuine claims successfully approved, underscoring Meesho's dedication to creating a more efficient and supportive platform for all stakeholders. "To minimize wrong returns and ensure accountability, Meesho has introduced robust verification measures across the supply chain. "Image Processing with Generative AI: At Meesho, Generative AI is transforming supply chain operations, making processes smarter and more efficient. By analyzing images captured at different stages, AI tools identify risks and detect issues like incorrect or defective shipments. This helps reduce errors, streamline processing, and ensure a smoother experience for sellers and customers. "Strengthening Supply Chain Integrity: Since May 2024, Meesho has used advanced analytics to identify and remove around 15,000 non-compliant field executives (FEs) from the supply chain. This includes implementing thorough field audits, supported by AI-driven tools and data analytics to detect fraudulent patterns. To strengthen the ecosystem further, Meesho has partnered with third-party logistics (3P) providers to create a centralized blacklist, ensuring greater safety and reliability. "En-

hancing User Trust and Security: Meesho has removed thousands of suspicious users by leveraging advanced risk analytics and proactive measures. These actions help reduce incorrect returns to sellers, creating a secure and efficient ecosystem for genuine users and businesses while strengthening trust and operational reliability. "Secure Packaging Solutions: Meesho's packaging solutions go beyond traditional airway bills (AWBs) by establishing a detailed digital record for each package. Using barcoded packaging, along with images and scans captured at multiple transit stages, the platform ensures better visibility and traceability. This approach reduces discrepancies, secures deliveries, and fosters trust across the entire supply chain. "Seller-Friendly Reimbursement Policies: Meesho has built a strong claims resolution system that uses data and evidence to ensure fair outcomes. Majority of claim costs are covered by network participants when sufficient evidence is available, easing the financial burden on sellers. Sellers can also choose to deprioritize logistics partners they prefer not to work with, promoting accountability and creating a more reliable, seller-friendly ecosystem. "Proactive Measures Against Fraudulent Claims: Meesho has put in place strong measures to detect and manage fraudulent claims from sellers. Using advanced tools, the platform takes firm action against sellers with fraudulent intentions, helping maintain trust and fairness within the ecosystem. These efforts protect genuine sellers and address issues caused by users or logistics partners, creating a transparent and efficient environment that boosts seller confidence. "These efforts have greatly reduced the number of incorrect returns reaching sellers, fostering increased trust and satisfaction



with the improved claims process. Meesho is dedicated to expanding digital tracking across more stages of the shipment journey, enhancing traceability and accountability throughout the supply chain. The company continues to invest in advanced data science tools to accurately identify and resolve issues, enabling timely and effective solutions. A key priority remains safeguarding sellers from fraudulent user claims, with ongoing development of robust systems to protect their interests while ensuring transparency. These initiatives reflect Meesho's commitment to building a secure, seamless, and efficient e-commerce ecosystem for all stakeholders.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Letdown for Abhaya

LESS than six months after a doctor's horrifying rape-murder at a state-run hospital in Kolkata sparked a nationwide outrage, a district and sessions court has sentenced convict Sanjoy Roy to life imprisonment until death. Justifying his decision to reject the CBI's demand for the death penalty, the judge has observed that the crime did not fall in the "rarest of the rare" category. The verdict has been given the thumbs-down not only by the victim's parents but also by the ruling Trinamool Congress and its main political rival in West Bengal, the BJP. It's obvious that the last word on this case has not yet been said or written.

Perhaps no other crime has evoked so much anger and revulsion across the country since the Nirbhaya gangrape-murder of December 2012. A doctor duty-bound to save the life of every patient entrusted to her care was sexually assaulted and killed; it was undoubtedly an act of bone-chilling brutality. Circumstantial evidence seems to have proved Roy's guilt beyond any doubt. Thus, it's baffling that the Abhaya case was not regarded as the "rarest of the rare". The controversial judgment has left several questions unanswered: Was this really a 'lone wolf' incident? If not, who were the convict's accomplices and what was their role in the crime? Has the CBI thoroughly probed all aspects of the case? And what about the lapses on the part of the hospital authorities? Even as the CBI must get to the bottom of the matter, the unsavoury political slanging match should be avoided. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has claimed that had the case been handled by the Kolkata Police, the death penalty would have been a certainty. The BJP, in its turn, has demanded an investigation into the alleged role of then Kolkata Commissioner and the CM in the destruction of vital evidence. This is an unfortunate turn of events. One thing is clear:

Behind the veil: recounting the lives of Afghan women in books

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

The Taliban government's Morality Ministry in their November 2024 decree banned women from speaking to one another. They not only disallowed women from singing or reciting but also introduced a "vice and virtue" law that imposed sweeping behaviour codes, including the mandate that women's voices, like their bodies, should be "concealed" when outside their homes. This disturbing move even prompted Oscar-winner Meryl Streep to address the issue at a United Nations event, drawing a stark comparison by stating that "even a cat in the country has more freedom than the women." In a recent move by the Taliban, the authorities on December 30 ordered the closing down of all national and foreign non-governmental groups in Afghanistan employing women, allegedly because they didn't wear the Islamic headscarf correctly. However, for centuries, Afghan women have displayed remarkable courage as their country endured invasions and upheaval. Voices of heartbreak

My Dear Kabul (2024) is a vivid portrayal of a year in the life of an Afghan women's writing group, translated from Dari and Pashto by Parwana Fayyaz and Dr. Negeen Kargar. A group of 21 women writers came together in August 2021 as the Taliban closed in on Kabul. The various authors — a final-year university student, a lawyer, a teacher, and many others — joined a WhatsApp group to share their everyday experiences of horror, uncertainty, and despair. What unfolds is a collective narration of brutality and heartbreak yet tinged with resilience and hope. Sadaf, a teacher, writes to Maryam, a law graduate from the University of Kabul: "I don't know who sold this country again. But I saw that some named its price." Her anguish is palpable as she confronts a reality where the President has fled, paving the way for the Taliban's return. Marie, another member, in her plaintive observation writes, "The barbaric Taliban won't follow any rules," encapsulating the shared fear of what the future holds. In The Bookseller of Kabul by Norwegian journalist Asne Seierstad, readers gain a profound understanding of the impact of Taliban rule on Afghan women's lives. Even after the Taliban's fall in the early 2000s and the establishment of democracy, women continued to live as second-class citizens. Seierstad, who spent months with the family of Sultan (a pseudonym for a bookseller in Kabul), poignantly recounts the stark differences in the lives of men, women, and children.

Walking through the streets of Kabul in a burka, she describes: "Burka-women are like horses with blinkers; they can only look in one direction. Where the eye narrows, the grille stops, and thick material takes its place; another trick by the burka-inventor: a man must know what his wife is looking at." Unequal society The book also reflects on pivotal moments in Afghanistan's history, like in 1959, when then-Prime Minister Prince Daoud's wife appeared in a national daily without a burka, sparking a wave of women abandoning the purdah (veil). Women stepped out in long coats and hats, and by the 1970s, they were wearing skirts and working shoulder-to-shoulder with men in various professions. Yet, Seierstad's account of early 2000s Kabul reveals the grim inequality that persisted within households. Behind four walls, women had little autonomy, with the man of the house reigning as the ultimate authority. While some may argue that Seierstad's perspective is shaped by a Western lens, the discomfort at the systemic denial of even the simplest joys of life to women based solely on gender is undeniable. The book also equally depicts the challenges faced by the men, often caught between ambition and duty, and battling a lack of opportunity in a broken economy. However, to explore the compelling history and enduring mystique of Afghanistan, one can turn to Shadow City: A Woman Walks Kabul by Taran N. Khan. In this deeply personal narrative, the Indian author recounts her experience of Kabul through a series of extended visits spanning eight years. Her journey captures a city in flux — taking tentative steps toward recovery from decades of conflict, only to spiral back into instability. Discovering Kabul on foot Arriving in Kabul five years after the Taliban's initial fall, the author navigates the city on foot, inviting readers to join her as she uncovers its layers. From the muddy paths leading to ancient Buddhist monasteries to the vibrant yet chaotic markets, she paints a vivid picture of Kabul's streets and its resilient spirit. Through bullet-pocked windows, she witnesses a city shaped by both history and hardship. Khan's narrative offers a sharp and heartfelt exploration of a nation trapped in a cycle of destruction and renewal, portraying Kabul as a place of both profound beauty and enduring tragedy.

As Meta shifts away from professional fact-checkers, Indian firms await clarity



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Indian fact-checking organisations are on tenterhooks as they await the consequences of Meta's decision to abandon its partnerships with professional fact-checking organisations in favour of a community-led model, starting with the U.S. The change has accompanied the partisan atmosphere that has enveloped fact-checking in the U.S., where the recent election of Donald Trump as President has driven an ideological reorientation among Big Tech firms.

Amitabh Kumar, founder of Social and Media Matters, which has worked with large social media platforms, said that he was trying to keep an open mind on Meta's move. But, he highlighted, that there were concrete reasons that led to the introduction of fact-checking on social media platforms. "Cambridge Analytica happened because of Facebook," Mr. Kumar said, recalling how the firm's user data were used for behavioural campaigns.

There was also scrutiny of the firm's role in shaping opinions leading up to Brexit, the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. "Fact-checkers were brought in to counter this," he said. But Mr. Trump's election and the divisive rhetoric around fact-checking in the U.S., which drew criticism during the COVID-19 pandemic as posts and accounts were being taken down or flagged at a time when there wasn't yet total consensus among scientists on the disease's causes and origins or the risks

around its vaccines, have led to resentment towards professional fact-checking by social media platforms. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a video that fact-checking organisations had behaved in a "partisan" way. He added that the new community system would face fewer accusations of bias.

As The Hindu had reported last May, the implementation of Community Notes on X has been impeded by a requirement that people across the ideological spectrum must agree on the inclusion of a fact-check on a post. This requirement has led to political misinformation in particular frequently going unchecked. Two senior fact-checking executives contacted by The Hindu declined to comment on the Meta announcement's implications for India, citing uncertainty on immediate consequences. Meta has only announced the change for the U.S. at present, and has not released any timeline for if and when such a change will be implemented in other countries. Partnerships with firms like Meta is a key source of revenue for certain fact-checking firms. Indian law on fact-checking has been challenged in courts, at least as far as fact-checking with regard to the government is concerned. The Supreme Court has stayed the notification of a fact-check unit of the Press Information Bureau from having the power to flag posts as misinformation and strip social media platforms' immunity from liability under the law.

However, there has been a less-discussed aspect of the IT Rules, 2021, namely misinformation that does not involve the Union government. The Rules provide for a self-regulatory organisation (SRO) for such news as well. The Misinformation Combat Alliance, a fact-checking industry body in India, has positioned itself as the natural fit for this purpose. No fact-checking SRO has been notified by the IT Ministry as yet, but the requirements of the 2021 Rules clash with a community approach on fact-checking. IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in an interview with The Hindu on Wednesday that the controversy around fact-checking validated the government's point of view that ascertaining the truthfulness of a piece of information is best left to those to whom the misinformation pertains.

Affidavit reveals massive surge in Parvesh Verma's assets

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

the affidavit to declare assets filed by BJP candidate Parvesh Verma show a difference of nearly 93 crores between 2019 and 2025 the affidavit to declare assets filed by BJP candidate Parvesh Verma show a difference of nearly 93 crores between 2019 and 2025 Delhi Elections 2025: The national Capital of Delhi is nearing voting day and the nomination process is already in the final stage. With candidates from all parties filing their papers for fighting elections, the Affidavit filed by BJP candidate Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma shows an alarming leap in the value of assets owned by him from 3.2 cr in 2019 to a whopping 96.5 cr in 2025. Parvesh Verma, a candidate from New Delhi, filed an affidavit on Wednesday and here is a more comprehensive comparison of his assets: New Delhi constituency is witnessing a triangular fight this time as the AAP supremo and former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is being challenged by BJP's Parvesh Verma and Congress' Sandeep Dikshit. Interestingly, both these candidates are also sons of former Delhi Chief Ministers — Parvesh Sharma, the son of former CM Sahib Singh Sharma, and Sandeep Dikshit the son of former CM Sheila Dikshit.

Meanwhile, a non-cognizable report against him for allegedly distributing shoes to voters at a Valmiki Temple in the Capital was also filed on the same day. Verma, however, claimed that he was merely honouring the sanitation workers by placing shoes on their feet at the temple and not distributing footwear as alleged. The former two-time MP



Verma is the son of the former Chief Minister of Delhi, late Sahib Singh Verma and Sahib Kaur. He completed his education in Delhi, holding a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA). In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, he contested from the West Delhi constituency and won with a significant margin, marking his entry into national politics. He was re-elected from the same constituency in the 2019 elections with the biggest ever margin in Delhi Lok Sabha history, solidifying his position as a key BJP leader in Delhi.

The Delhi assembly elections are due to be held on February 5 with the counting of votes to be done on February 8. The national capital holds over 1.55 crore registered electors across 70 constituencies that are expected to participate in the 2025 assembly elections.

Protests near INS Kadamba naval base in Karnataka: Officer 'coerced' into vehicle, had to be 'rescued', says defence ministry



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Protests broke out near Mudga Civilian Gate of INS Kadamba naval base in Karnataka's Karwar earlier this week following a clash between naval personnel and residents over a minor accident that led to both sides filing police complaints against each other. While residents alleged that a naval officer and 20 colleagues assaulted a local, a defence ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday that the naval officer was "coerced" into a vehicle and had to be "rescued". The accident that led to the clashes occurred around 7 pm on Sunday on National Highway 66 under the jurisdiction of the Karwar rural police. Naval officer Amit Khanderi, who was riding a motorbike, collided with Srinivas Kodakar, causing injuries to his legs. Kodakar, a Guruswamy (a veteran Ayyappa devotee who has made several pilgrimages to Sabarimala), stays in a tent near the Civilian Gate. After the incident, Khanderi allegedly fled the scene, prompting other Ayyappa devotees in the locality to look for him inside the naval colony. Khanderi later agreed to transport Kodakar to a hospital and cover his medical expenses.

In a statement on Wednesday, a defence ministry spokesperson confirmed the accident but said that the local was given immediate medical assistance. "Two Naval personnel posted at Naval Base Karwar, whilst travelling on a two-wheeler, collided with a civilian, a 50-year-old male. Both parties sustained minor injuries. The sailors promptly extended assistance to the injured civilian. The sailors ensured the injured civilian received timely and adequate medical treatment. They escorted him to Dr Pikle's New Nursing Home in Karwar, where all necessary medical care was provided," the statement read. In their police complaint,

the residents alleged that while returning from the hospital in a vehicle belonging to a resident, Khanderi informed his colleagues that he had been attacked. In response, about 20 naval employees intercepted the vehicle near Toduru and allegedly assaulted its occupants with rods and helmets. The attackers fled when more residents arrived at the spot, the complaint alleged.

However, according to the defence ministry spokesperson, the sailors "disengaged and left the scene" but were "pursued". "Shortly after the accident, a group of 4-5 civilians gathered at the scene. Despite the sailors' efforts to de-escalate the situation, a minor scuffle ensued. The sailors disengaged and left the scene, but the civilians pursued them and demanded an additional ₹50,000 in compensation," the spokesperson said. "One of the sailors was then coerced into a four-wheeler and taken towards Amdalli. He managed to share his live location with friends, who intercepted the vehicle and rescued their colleague. The civilians abandoned the vehicle and fled. The incident was promptly reported to local police through the Naval Police, and the key to the abandoned vehicle was handed over to the authorities," the statement added. While the residents lodged a police complaint against Khanderi and his 20 colleagues, naval officer Yogesh Kumar lodged a complaint against Kodakar and several others. The alleged assault led to overnight protests by residents near Civilian Gate, prompting senior officials from the Navy, police, and district administration to intervene to pacify the protesters. Navy officials assured the residents that strict action would be taken.

Young B Tech graduate's death triggers protests in Khammam

Khammam: The death of B Tech graduate P Sanjay Kumar (22), of Rajiv Swagrha Colony in Khammam rural mandal in the district a couple of days ago triggered protests here on Wednesday. Sanjay's family members, colony residents, and friends staged a protest at the Karunagiri bridge area demanding that the police nab those responsible for his death. They alleged that the police were side-tracking the case while maintaining that the youth was killed when he tried to save a girl from unidentified assailants.

Semi-burnt body of Bengaluru dog breeder 'murdered' in upscale flat found in Tamil Nadu



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Bengaluru The police are in search of the flat owner identified as Brijesh, the key suspect, as CCTV visuals showed him and another person dragging a body wrapped in a blood-stained bedsheet to the lift of the apartment. The partially burnt body of a dog breeder, who went missing on January 10 after having gone to visit a client at a high-end apartment complex in the north-eastern part of Bengaluru, was found dumped at a location in Tamil Nadu. The police are in search of the flat owner identified as Brijesh, the key suspect, as CCTV visuals showed him and another person dragging a body wrapped in a blood-stained bedsheet to the lift of the apartment on the same day he went missing. "The body was partially burnt and dumped. The suspect in the case is the resident of the flat and his associate who were seen in the CCTV footage. They are yet to be traced," a senior officer with Bengaluru police said, adding that Brijesh has a criminal background and was involved in financial disputes in the past as well.

Dog breeder, Guna, 30, had disappeared on January 10 after he set out to meet the client at an apartment in an upscale property in the Bagalur area around 12.30 pm to collect money. Guna's wife Josephine Mary filed a missing complaint on January 12 with the Bagalur police after her husband did not return home. An associate, Chandru S, who had accompanied Guna to the apartment complex told the police that he was asked to wait on the ground floor while the dog breeder visited the client identified as Brijesh on the seventh floor to collect the dues. The associate told Mary that when he tried to contact Guna as he did not return after several hours, a man answered the phone and told him that the dog breeder had been taken away by the police from the neighboring Chikkaballapur district. Later in the day, Mary filed a second police complaint alleging murder of her husband and destruction of evidence, based on CCTV footage. "The CCTV visuals revealed my husband's body being dragged in a bedsheet to the lift. It was seen that the bedsheet was stained with blood. My husband was called to the flat by Brijesh to collect money," Guna's wife stated in her police complaint.

Gambling addict held in Pune for stealing sister's gold ornaments

pune police, gold ornaments theft case, pune crime, current affairs, indian express The police have recovered the stolen jewellery, estimated at Rs 9.37 lakh, from his possession. The Pimpri Chinchwad police have arrested a delivery boy, a gambling addict, for allegedly stealing his sister's gold ornaments on January 13.

The police have identified the accused as Shrikant Dashrath Pangare, 29, a native of Beed district, who has been currently residing at his sister's house in Walhekarwadi in Chinchwad from where he allegedly stole 125 grams of gold ornaments. The police have recovered the stolen jewellery, estimated at Rs 9.37 lakh, from his possession. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sandeep Doifode stated that the accused committed the theft to repay the loans he had taken from people that he lost in gambling. A probe by sub-inspector Ganesh Mane revealed that Pangare, a delivery boy with Zepto, lost money and five acres of farmland to online and offline gambling.

Based on the complaint of Pangare's sister, the Crime Branch team led by senior inspector Shailesh Gaikwad initiated a parallel probe into the theft at the house in Rajnigandha society. "Accused lost huge money in offline gambling at his native place as well as online gambling. He even sold his farmland and lost the entire money in gambling," said Gaikwad. The investigators found that it was not a case of house break-in as there was no tampering of the door lock, or latch of windows of the house or cupboards. The police said he not only committed theft but also accompanied his sister while lodging the FIR at the police station. Pangare who was nabbed on Wednesday over suspicion later admitted to his involvement in the theft. The police said the complainant woman runs a medical shop, while her husband goes for work during the day time. Pangare has been residing with them for the past four months. A First Information Report (FIR) was lodged at the Chinchwad police station.

Man held for accepting bribe of Rs 50,000 on behalf of head constable



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

bribe The complaint stated that Amritpal had told him that he could help him and demanded Rs 50,000 from him and also asked him to give the money to Gurpreet Singh.

The Vigilance Bureau (VB) on Wednesday arrested a man who was reportedly accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000 on behalf of a head constable who is posted in the Economic Offences (EO) Wing of the district police. The VB also booked the head constable. According to the information, a team of the VB arrested Gurpreet Singh while he was accepting Rs 50,000. The arrest was made on the complaint of Ashok Kumar who alleged that he was called at the EO Wing where he met head constable Amritpal Singh who was posted as the munshi.

Regulating online hate speech 'not censorship': U.N. rights chief



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

The United Nations rights chief insisted on Friday (January 10, 2025) that regulating hate speech and harmful content online "is not censorship", days after Meta scrapped its fact-checking programme on Facebook and Instagram citing censorship concerns. "Allowing hate speech and harmful content online has real world consequences. Regulating such content is not censorship," Volker Turk said on X. "My Office calls for accountability and governance in the digital space, in line with human rights," he added.

Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg announced on Tuesday (January 7, 2025) the group would "get rid of fact-checkers" and replace them with community-based posts, starting in the United States, complaining the programme had made "too many mistakes and too much censorship". Instead, Meta platforms including Facebook and Instagram, "would use community notes similar to X (formerly Twitter), starting in the US," he added. Meta's surprise announcement echoed long-standing complaints by Mr. Trump's Republican Party and X owner Elon Musk about fact-checking, which many conservatives see as censorship.

Facebook currently pays to use fact checks from around 80 organisations globally on the platform, as well as on WhatsApp and Instagram. AFP currently works in 26 languages with Facebook's fact-checking scheme. "Silenced" Without mentioning Meta or X, Mr. Turk elaborated on his comments on LinkedIn, cautioning that social media had the "demonstrated ability to fuel conflict, incite hatred and threaten safety". "When at its best, social media is a place where people with divergent views can exchange, if not always agree," he said. However, he said, "when we call efforts to create safe online spaces 'censorship', we ignore the fact that unregulated space means some people are silenced - in particular those whose voices are often marginalised". "At the same time, allowing hatred online limits free expression and may result in real world harms." Mr. Turk said "freedom of expression thrives when diverse voices can be heard without enabling harm or disinformation".

Accountability and governance in digital spaces, he said, "safeguards public discourse, builds trust, and protects the dignity of all". Asked about whether the UN might reevaluate its presence on Meta and X, UN spokesman Michele Zaccheo said the organisation was "constantly watching this space and evaluating it". "There is no doubt that on a number of social media platforms there is a lot of hate speech, which we have been very vocal about", he told reporters, adding that UN agencies had been victims of "misinformation campaigns and disinformation campaigns". But for now, he said, "it's important for us to be present with fact-based information". World Health Organization spokeswoman Margaret Harris agreed. "Our role is to provide good science-based health information, and we need to provide that wherever people are looking for it," she told reporters. "So we will (be) across all platforms, whenever possible," she added.

Local issues take center stage ahead of Delhi Assembly polls, residents raise concerns

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls on February 5, residents across the national capital have raised concerns over a range of civic issues, including poor road conditions, water quality and rising pollution levels. Mohammad Sadiq, a resident of Seelampur in northeast Delhi, highlighted the ongoing issue of contaminated water.

"We have electricity, but the water quality is very poor. We have to buy clean water for drinking and cooking, which costs between Rs 30 to Rs 50 per day. The condition of the roads in our area is another major concern. We expect the next government to resolve these issues," he said. Another resident from Hardevpuri, Durgapuri in northeast Delhi, Harsh Tyagi, pointed to multiple problems, including narrow lanes, lack of parking, and insufficient green cover. "The pollution level in our area is high due to the lack of trees. The narrow lanes lead to parking congestion and there is no proper drainage system," Tyagi said. In northwest Delhi, Nisha Sharma, expressed concerns about bad roads and stray cattle. "While we have access to electricity and clean water, the roads are in poor condition, with potholes everywhere. The main roads are fine, but the inner lanes in Trinagar and Wazirpur are in bad shape. Stray cattle is also a challenge, making it difficult to navigate through the area," Sharma said. Environmental advocate Verhean Khanna, founder of the New Delhi Nature Society, stressed the importance of reducing waste and increasing greenery to tackle pollution.

"We have to produce less amount of garbage, especially the plastic waste. There are some garbages which we cannot avoid. We need a proper and separate channels for disposing electronic wastes and biodegradable waste can be converted into fertiliser," Khanna said. "We have set up three pits in a park at our colony where we are converting the biodegradable waste, which we collect from the houses of the society, into fertilisers," he added.

Khushboo Tiwari, a resident of Chhatrapur, voiced concerns over drainage overflow during monsoons. Many areas in Delhi face drainage issues. A major gripe of the residents in inadequate drainage facilities and overflowing of roads. (File) She said the Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road sees major traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. Additionally, the drainage system overflows during rains, creating difficulties for the residents. There's also the issue of



hanging wires and electric poles near homes, posing safety risks, she added. Tiwari further claimed that there is no park in their area for the residents. Bittu Bhardwaj, a resident of southwest Delhi, said that after Anand Vihar, Palam is the most polluted area in the national capital.

"There is a lot of construction ongoing in this part of the city which causes high pollution level in the area. Palam is the second most polluted area in the national capital following Anand Vihar. The roads are in bad condition leading to traffic congestion in the locality," Bhardwaj said. Sunil Kumar Aledia, executive director, Centre for Holistic Development, called for collective participation to address the pollution and civic issues in Delhi. He said the population density is increasing leading to extra burden on the waste creation in several forms posing a significant challenge. There have been attempts at waste segregation for e waste / biodegradable waste / non-biodegradable waste but they have not been entirely successful. There have been attempts at waste segregation for e waste / biodegradable waste / non-biodegradable waste but they have not been entirely successful. (File) The issue of climate change is not being properly addressed due to which the society is getting impacted, he added. "We need to have proper planning and participation of all stakeholders of the society to deal with the rising civic issues. We also need to aware people before seeking their participation. There are garbage mountains in Delhi which are not being disposed off properly," Aledia said. He further said that the government should have a proper plan regarding the vehicles in the national capital. Voting for Delhi Assembly elections will take place on February 5, with counting to be held on February 8.

20,000 Indian students landed in Canada but failed to show up at colleges last year



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Indian students formed a significant portion of the nearly 50,000 international students reported as "no-shows" at Canadian colleges and universities in March and April 2024, according to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Of these, almost 20,000 were from India, representing 5.4 per cent of the total Indian students tracked by the agency. Overall, non-compliant international students accounted for 6.9 per cent of all study permit holders. The figures were collected under the International Student Compliance Regime, which requires educational institutions to report on enrolment twice a year to ensure adherence to study permits.

Reports indicated that students from 144 countries were tracked, with non-compliance rates varying widely. For instance, 688 students (2.2 per cent) from the Philippines and 4,279 (6.4 per cent) from China failed to attend their designated schools. In contrast, the non-compliance rate was much higher for Iran (11.6 per cent) and Rwanda (48.1 per cent). Indian law enforcement agencies have launched an investigation into alleged links between Canadian colleges and entities in India accused of facilitating illegal migration across the Canada-U.S. border. Some Indian

students reportedly used study permits as a pretext to enter Canada and cross into the U.S. illegally. Henry Lotin, a former federal economist and immigration expert, told The Globe and Mail that most non-compliant Indian students likely remained in Canada, working while aiming for permanent residency. The issue has drawn attention to potential gaps in the system. Lotin suggested requiring international students to pay fees upfront to prevent abuse. Immigration Minister Marc Miller recently introduced stricter rules, including penalties for institutions that fail to report on enrolment. A related concern highlighted discrepancies between Statistics Canada's estimates of over one million valid student visa holders in April 2024 and IRCC's smaller figures based on enrolment data. This gap has raised questions about the actual number of unaccounted-for students.

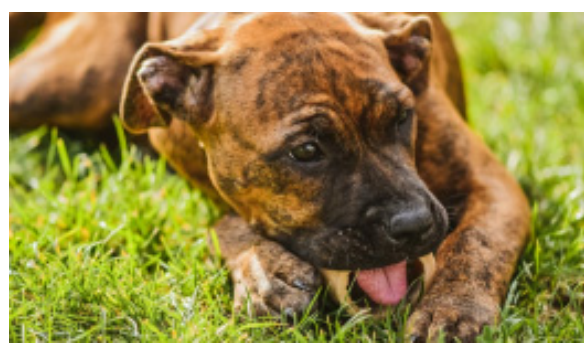
Experts have called for greater transparency and improved data collection to address these issues. Canadian immigration lawyers suggested restricting the use of foreign consultants in student visa applications to curb fraudulent practices.

Nalgonda Collector sacks absentee contract staff from PHC

Nalgonda: District Collector Ila Tripathi was surprised to find that none of the staff working in the primary health centre in Gurrampodu village turned up for duty on Wednesday.

Enraged over employees' unauthorised absence, she issued orders terminating the services of all contract employees and suspending regular employees.

Why is my dog behaving aggressively?



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Aggression in dogs is a complex behaviour often misunderstood by pet owners. While it's easy to attribute a dog's aggression to a single cause, the reality is that a mix of factors — including genetics, environment, health, and training — usually play a role. We explore the relationship between aggression and health issues in dogs, including the role of intestinal parasites.

Is aggression linked to deworming?

A common misconception among pet owners is that aggression in dogs may be linked to the deworming process. According to Dr Ishan, Pune Petcare Pro Clinic, aggression isn't directly caused by whether or not a dog has been dewormed. However, he said that intestinal parasites, if left untreated, can lead to discomfort, pain, or general irritability in dogs, which may contribute to aggressive behaviour. "When a dog feels unwell or distressed, they may act out more, but this is a symptom rather than a root cause," Dr Ishan explains. Discover why dogs eat grass! Explore the possible reasons behind this common canine

behaviour, from instinct to digestion, and learn when to seek a vet's advice. Lack of proper training and early socialisation may cause fear or dominance-based aggression. Aggression in dogs stems from various factors, and identifying the root cause is critical to addressing it effectively. As per the expert insights from Pune Petcare Pro Clinic, some of the most prevalent causes include: Genetics: Certain breeds are predisposed to more assertive behaviours due to their genetic makeup.

Environmental Factors: How a dog is raised, including exposure to abuse or neglect, plays a significant role. Medical Issues: Conditions like arthritis, thyroid imbalances, or infections can lead to pain and irritability, contributing to aggression. Training or Socialisation Problems: Lack of proper training and early socialisation may cause fear or dominance-based aggression. Fear or Anxiety: Dogs that feel threatened or insecure may respond with aggressive behaviour as a form of self-defence.

What should pet owners do?

Dr Ishan recommends pet owners consult a veterinarian to rule out any underlying medical issues contributing to aggression. "Many times, behavioural problems are rooted in health concerns that can be treated or managed," he advises. For behavioural aspects, seeking help from a professional dog trainer or behaviourist is essential. He also emphasises the importance of regular veterinary care, including timely deworming, to ensure overall health and well-being. "A healthy dog is a happy dog, and good health significantly reduces the risk of irritability or behavioural issues," adds Dr Ishan. With the right professional guidance and a commitment to your dog's well-being, you can help them lead a healthier, happier life.

Enhancement of OPD timings amongst measures announced to improve services at GMCH-48

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Amid several complaints from patients regarding irregular outpatient department (OPD) services at GMCH-48 (South Campus), daily OPD timings have been increased. To cater to more patients, the daily OPD timings have been increased from 9 am to 1 pm in GMCH-48, an order issued by the hospital administration of GMCH-32 said. A special geriatric OPD will also be operational on all days, and a procedure room will be constituted in room 207 on the first floor, the order added.

The administration said that new measures will be implemented immediately in the interest of patient care. It also urged all heads of departments to take necessary action to ensure strict compliance of the order. To provide speciality services in the Department of Cardiology, ECG machines, etc., have already been installed and will be made available from 9 am to 5 pm. According to the order, sample collection for biochemistry, haematology, microbiology, and pathology will be from 9 am to 11:30 am, with the laboratory and laboratory attendants in the collection centre responsible for depositing these samples in the departments for testing by 12 noon. To improve diagnostic services, the Department of Radiodiagnosis will operate X-ray facilities from 9 am to 5 pm.

Pharmacy drugs will be distributed in the Department of Community Medicine from 9 am to 1.30 pm, with the pharmacist incharge required to ensure that all possible inventory is available at the GMCH-48. The need to set up a



chemist shop/Amrit pharmacy is urgent so that patients with Ayushman cards can obtain medicines without visiting GMCH-32 and so the Estate Branch has been instructed to take appropriate action, according to the order. To facilitate safety and security at the hospital, two security guards will be deputed in the OPD area from 9 am to 2 pm. In a move to decongest the main campus, and also cater to more people, indoor patients of respiratory diseases, TB, radiotherapy, dermatology and psychiatry needing other speciality consultations will now be provided on call by the speciality at the GMCH-48, and specialists have been asked not to call any patients to GMCH-32 for consultation. Also, there will now be a provision of an ambulance from South Campus Hospital to GMCH-32. Last year, there were several complaints from patients regarding irregular OPD services, testing facilities and also OPD of only two hours.

'He is playing with High Court': Judge takes stern view of Bobby Chemmanur staying in prison despite bail order

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Bobby Chemmanur, Bobby Chemmanur bail, Indian express news, current affairs Chemmanur's advocate apologised and said it was only a slip of tongue. Admitting his submission, the court warned the businessman to keep away from making statements against the judiciary. The Kerala High Court Wednesday pulled up businessman Bobby Chemmanur for deliberately remaining in jail even after the court granted him bail.

The Bench of Justice P V Kunhikrishnan granted bail to Chemmanur after he was arrested last week on charges of making obscene remarks about actor Honey Rose. Even after the bail order reached him on Tuesday evening, Chemmanur remained in jail, reportedly as a gesture towards other prisoners who cannot afford to pay the bail amount. On Wednesday, the Bench of Justice Kunhikrishnan took cognisance of the development and directed his counsel to appear before the court at noon. But by then Chemmanur had exited the jail and told the media that he met 26 prisoners who were jailed for petty crimes but could not come out for want of a few thousand rupees.

"I told them I will solve the matter, so I remained in jail



for a day," he claimed. Later in the day, when the issue was taken up, the judge remarked: "You need not take vakalat of remand prisoners. If you want, I can cancel bail... He is playing with the High Court. When there is an order, he is keeping it in his pocket for media attention... and creating stories... Is this the manner in which an accused behaves?" the judge asked. Chemmanur's advocate apologised and said it was only a slip of tongue. Admitting his submission, the court warned the businessman to keep away from making statements against the judiciary.

Under protest pressure, Pinaryi govt dumps contentious amendment to Kerala Forest Act



Faced with mounting protest from within the ruling front and Opposition, Kerala Cabinet Wednesday decided to abandon the Bill to amend Kerala Forest Act 1961

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Faced with mounting protest from within the ruling front and Opposition, Kerala Cabinet Wednesday decided to abandon the Bill to amend Kerala Forest Act 1961. The Bill, which was slated to be presented in the session of the Assembly beginning next week, had several proposals that would adversely affect the people living in 430-odd village panchayats in the state.

After the Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told the media: "Suggestions and concerns have been raised about the amendments in the bill. The govern-

ment does not want to go ahead with the bill without allaying the fears in this regard. Framing a rule against the people living in hilly areas and the farmers is not on the agenda of the government, which has taken a serious note of the concern that the departments will misuse the powers vested with it. The chief minister said there would not be any amendment that will cause hardship to people or create concern among them.

There had been several controversial amendments in the Bill, which allowed forest officials to arrest or detain a person without warrant, even outside forest. Penalty for petty forest crimes, such as fishing in forest areas, had increased manifold. Temporary staff on roll were vested with powers of forest officials while the latter were given power to act against pollution of rivers flowing even outside the forest. Various farmer outfits have been protesting against the proposed amendments. Besides, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s Idukki district committee and ruling LDF ally Kerala Congress (M) have also raised concern about the bill, which they feared will lead to high-handedness of forest officials. Opposition Congress-led UDF has planned a massive campaign along the hilly regions of Kerala, which also forced the CPI(M) government to abandon the bill. As local body elections are 11 months away and assembly elections in April 2026, the government did not want to antagonise people living in areas close to forest tracts, who are already under increasing threat from wild animals.

Libraries in Punjab villages usher in in a silent revolution



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

In October 2024, Manpreet Sharma, a resident of Lopon village in Ludhiana district, achieved a milestone by securing the 83rd rank in the 2023 UPSC reserve list. Currently undergoing training, Manpreet attributes much of his success to the village library that played a pivotal role in shaping his career. Manpreet, an alumnus of NIT Jalandhar's 2016 mechanical engineering batch, left his corporate job in Gurugram in 2020 to focus on UPSC preparations. "I chose to stay in my village for UPSC preparation after quitting my job in Gurugram. The village library provided a conducive ecosystem for my studies. I used it from 2020 to 2023 and got selected in my third attempt," he said.

The library in Lopon, developed in 2016 by US-based NRI Balwinder Singh Dhaliwal on his agricultural land spanning 500 square yards, has become a source of inspiration for many. It fosters a culture of reading and learning in the village. The library is part of the six established under the Mera Pind 360 Degree project by NRIs and Punjab residents in different villages across the state. "Dhaliwal manages this library with his own funds, and the facility is free for readers," said Malhan Lal Garg, a retired supervising engineer from the irrigation department. Garg, who started a library in Maur Kalan village in Bathinda district in 2015 under the same project, said, "The Maur Kalan library is managed by the Maur Educational Welfare Society. Though I now reside in Chandigarh, I make it a point to visit all six libraries once a fortnight. The others are in Balloh (Bathinda), Kot Arayan (Jalandhar), Bassi Gujran (Ropar), and Machhiwara (Ludhiana). We also offer free computer training and plan to start English-speaking courses soon. The aim is to bridge the rural-urban education gap and encourage children to pursue studies."

While such libraries, run by individuals and organisations, have been around for some time, the trend of setting up reading rooms and libraries in Punjab's villages has seen a significant rise over the past two years. These spaces are particularly popular among students preparing for government jobs. In Bhutal Kalan, a quiet village in Sangrur district, two libraries were established in March 2020, just before the COVID-19 lockdown. One library is dedicated to boys and operates within a gaushala (cow shelter), while the other is for girls and is housed in a gurdwara. "The gaushala library has been a boon for the villagers. In the past three years, over 20 boys from Bhutal Kalan and nearby areas have secured government jobs. One of the boys is now preparing for the UPSC while completing his graduation," said Raghbir Singh, who recently became a librarian in a government school.

Simarjit Singh, a library user, added, "The boys' library has a double bed and mattresses, allowing students to study and sleep there, especially during summer. Those working during the day often study at night as the air-conditioned facility provides a comfortable environment." The library offers a mix of competitive exam books, including resources for state and central government job exams, as well as UPSC. A flex board at the entrance displays photos of students who have secured jobs, mostly in teaching, the army, Punjab Police, and clerical roles. Named the Sant Narayan Giri Library, it was inaugurated in 2020 by Parminder Singh Dhindsa, the then Lehragaga MLA.

As villagers were initially reluctant to let girls use the

gaushala library, they dedicated a hall in the village gurdwara exclusively for a girls' library. This library remains open all week. Sonika Sharma, a regular visitor, said, "I am preparing for undergraduate exams and aim to clear any government sector exam after completing my graduation. A government job is essential, especially for girls, to ensure financial security. I am particularly focused on teaching jobs." Varinder Diwana, a resident of Diwana village and a passionate book lover, has been running a library in his village in Barnala district for over 12 years. He said, "There are around 200 private rural libraries in Punjab that receive books from Punjabi Sahit Sabha in Delhi. They provide Punjabi literature books worth Rs 10,000 annually to promote the Punjabi language and literature. These libraries are mostly managed by villagers through voluntary donations, and sometimes a nominal fee is charged as an annual membership for students."

The story doesn't end here, as the Punjab government is also stepping in to promote rural libraries. Many old rural buildings are being renovated into libraries by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. Minister Tarunjeet Singh Sond stated last month that the government has so far renovated 114 rural libraries, with another 179 projects in the pipeline. Karandi, a village in Mansa district located at Punjab's border with Haryana, is one such example. In September last year, the dilapidated village panchayat building was renovated into a library following demands from the villagers. "Students in the village wanted a library, so the panchayat building was renovated. Earlier, they had to rely on a private reading room in the village that charged a monthly fee. This government facility now provides them with a free alternative," said Mansa Deputy Commissioner Kulwant Singh. The library, however, was the brainchild of the previous Deputy Commissioner, Paramveer. According to Sardulgarh SDM, over 50 students from the village use the facility regularly, even on weekdays.

Nitesh Kumar Jain said, "The library also has a discussion area and a space for unwinding. We are now planning to build a badminton court outside so that students can play during breaks." He added, "Around Rs 35 lakh was spent on its renovation, with funds sourced partly from the 15th Finance Commission and partly from the panchayat's income funds." In Mansa city, a youth library has been established by the district administration and the Red Cross, challenging the stereotype that Punjabis are not avid readers. Vishavdeep Singh, a resident of Mansa, said, "The previous Deputy Commissioner, Paramveer, initiated seven such libraries in the district in the past year. He had also started around eight libraries in Bathinda when he served as Additional Deputy Commissioner there. Bathinda is home to a large public and digital library inaugurated in 2021 by the then finance minister Manpreet Singh Badal, as it was his brainchild. Fazilka, a border town, has five libraries under the Kitaab project initiated by the district administration. In addition, Fazilka has several private reading rooms, popular among villagers preparing for teaching eligibility tests. These reading rooms operate 24/7, with monthly charges ranging from Rs 400 to Rs 600. Similar facilities can be found in Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala, and other districts.

Makhan Lal Garg, who leads the Punjab Library Movement to promote reading habits and increase library numbers across the state, said, "The rise in libraries is a positive sign, but we need qualified librarians instead of caretakers earning Rs 5,000-10,000 per month. Public libraries lack professional librarians, and the government needs to address this issue rather than focusing solely on renovating buildings." He added, "There is also a need to open more libraries in urban areas or improve the condition of existing ones. While rural students are making commendable efforts to crack competitive exams, as seen in the case of Manpreet Sharma, who cleared the UPSC, urban areas must not be overlooked." Some villages in Punjab also operate libraries on wheels, sponsored by NRIs, private schools, or philanthropists. In Ludhiana, Drishti Dr. R.C. Jain Innovative Public School runs a weekly library-on-wheels project in Narangwal village, where students and teachers engage in community service. "If the Punjab Library Act, pending since 2011, is passed by the Punjab government, the state could establish libraries on the lines of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, with 70% of funding from the central government," Garg said.

At Prayagraj, an encounter with naga sadhus and tent stays



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

She flows quietly, but the banks are bustling with excitement. Here, water from the river is packed in customised bottles, ready for devotees to take back to their hometowns. Priests perform pujas with reverential devotees, all set to take a holy dip, with cries of 'Ganga mata ki jai' frequently emerging from the many boats lined up here. The Sangam — or the Triveni Sangam — is the place to be at Prayagraj. It is the confluence of three rivers — the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati — and one has to travel quite a bit by boat from the banks to reach here. A dip here is said to cleanse one's soul and free them from rebirth. The Triveni Sangam is a major destination for Hindu pilgrimages and more so, during this time of the year. For, it is the 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela, a time when people gather for what is described as the biggest religious congregation in the world.

While the Kumbh Mela has often been associated with mammoth crowds and spiritual enlightenment, this year is all the more special, due to a rare celestial alignment that occurs only once in 144 years. "While the Ardh Kumbh Mela happens every six years, the Purna Kumbh Mela happens every 12 years. But this is the Maha Kumbh Mela and that happens only every 144 years," says Vikram Rana, a certified guide with UP Tourism who is currently based in Prayagraj. This once-in-144-years excitement is palpable on the streets of Prayagraj, formerly known as Allahabad. Sadhus arrive every day from various parts of India and set up makeshift tents on the banks; their home for a month or so. Some of them arrive in grand processions, while some others walk discreetly and settle down. And, for this grand event, braving the bitter Uttar Pradesh winter where temperatures can dip down to 7 degree celsius, devotees from across the world make a beeline to participate in the festivities and take a dip in the holy waters.

The major attraction during the Kumbh Mela is the Akharas (or Akhadas) — groups deeply rooted in the traditions of Hinduism. Akharas — said to be formed by Adi Shankaracharya to propagate spiritual learning and physical training — are currently 13 in number, falling under three sects or pants (the Shaivite, Vaishnavite and the udasin). Sadhus (ascetics) from different centres belonging to these Akharas are currently camping at Prayagraj, for the Maha Kumbh Mela, which takes place till February 26. Some of them have travelled from places like Varanasi, Haridwar, Rishikesh and Ujjain, while a few have come all the way from the Himalayas,

where they spend years in meditation and penance. The Naga sadhus are fascinating, with their unique appearances and rituals. We meet a sadhu who, for a decade now, has not sat down or attempted a typical sleeping position — he meditates with his arms resting on a mat. Another sadhu practises his yoga and penance with his hand tied up; his disciples say he has practised this form of hatha yoga for many years now. Another sadhu has had his left hand up in the air for many years now. Covered with ash and mostly naked, these sadhus evoke fear, admiration and respect from devotees, who seek their blessings, which also entail slapping the devotees hard on the back. "They (Naga sadhus) are the ferocious ones. They have even helped fighting against invaders in the past," explains our guide, Vikram.

Pray, where are you?

All these fascinating elements about the 2025 Maha Kumbh has led to an economic boost in Prayagraj, which is gearing up to provide for the surge in attendees. With about 40 crore people expected to experience the Mela, Prayagraj is among the most-discussed destinations this time of the year. Catering to this religious tourism are many travel players, who are putting together accommodation facilities for a peaceful experience of the Kumbh. Like jüSTa Shivir Jhusi, in which one can book luxury tents at about ?10,000 to ?35,000, which provides access to the Triveni Sangam via boat from its premises, thus by-passing maddening crowds. This 18-acre property, located on the banks of the Ganga, has 118 tents put together in the last few months specially for the Maha Kumbh 2025. They will be taken down after the festival.

"Religious tourism is an evolving market. It is moving to a needs-based market where patrons are looking for comfort. Here at the Kumbh Mela, we see two types of customer profile; a set that comes due to their religious inclination and another that comes to experience it as an event," describes Ashish Vohra, Founder-CEO, jüSTaHotels and Resorts. With people coming from across the world, jüSTa Shivir has already about 70 percent occupancy level, which is scheduled to rise during important dates such as the Shahi Snan. "We are looking at a surge in demand from the South once the temperatures here become a little more amiable. Tamil Nadu is a big market for us, and at times, devotees coming from South are even bigger in numbers than the North, as they combine the visit to the Kumbh Mela with other religious trips to Varanasi and Ayodhya. These events propel an economy and Prayagraj is at the centre of it right now," he adds. It certainly is, with more than 40 crore people likely in attendance (India's population is pegged at 140 crores now). "Now it's more of a show than a kumbh," says Mahamandeshwar Ji Maharaj of the Juna Akhada, one of the oldest and most respected Hindi monastic orders. His advice to devotees: "Come without arrogance and ego because you are meeting God here." For that, Prayagraj seems ready. Over the next 45 days, people arriving in over 13,000 trains and 250 flights from across the country will experience the largest public gathering in the world. Servicing them will be hordes of police personnel, hospital staff and specially-built pontoon bridges across the Ganga. There's also a Kumbh AI centre, with art installations and creative illuminations. There's even computerised state-of-the-art lost and found centres in case someone loses their way in the milling crowds. The evenings are cold, chilly and unsparring, even for those with layers of clothing. And yet, there is a spring in everyone's step. For, it is the Maha Kumbh Mela.

Draft DPDP Rules: What are the concerns related to localisation norms and government exemptions?

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on January 3, 2025, released the draft rules for implementing the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 — sixteen months after the law was notified in August 2023. The Union government is currently soliciting feedback on the draft rules through a fiduciary framework that effectively precludes both public disclosure and the submission of counter-comments. "The draft rules, coupled with the existing legislation, are inadequate for establishing a comprehensive data privacy framework. The Data Protection Board must formulate robust regulations and standard operating procedures to bridge the gaps in the law. Moreover, the government should consider submitting the rules to a parliamentary standing committee for scrutiny to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives beyond those of corporate entities and think tanks," Amar Patnaik, advocate and former Member of Parliament, told The Hindu. Data localisation mandate

The draft rules introduce a data localisation mandate that extends beyond the original scope of the legislation. Data localisation refers to measures that restrict the flow of data within a jurisdiction's borders. While the DPDP Act permits the government to limit personal data transfers, it confines such restrictions to specific notified countries. In contrast, the rules propose the creation of a government-appointed committee to define which classes of data cannot be exported from India. This mandate will apply to significant data fiduciaries (SDFs), as designated by the government based on the volume and sensitivity of the personal data they process. Major tech companies, such as Meta, Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon, are expected to fall within this classification.

The localisation provision likely stems from the challenges law enforcement agencies face in accessing cross-border data during investigations. In 2018, the Reserve Bank of India implemented a similar mandate, requiring payment data operators to localise their data within the country. Currently, financial, payment, and insurance data must be stored domestically, with copies of payment data allowed overseas solely to facilitate international transactions. However, the government has clarified that the proposed committee is envisioned as a central body that will collaborate with other ministries and sectoral regulators to ensure the effective implementation of local data storage without disrupting industry operations. This approach could also help prevent ad hoc data localisation mandates from government departments working in silos. Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw earlier told media portals that the government plans to provide the industry with a two-year timeline to establish the necessary systems for compliance. According to

Bangladesh Supreme Court acquits former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Bangladesh Supreme Court on Wednesday (January 15, 2025) acquitted former Prime Minister and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson Khaleda Zia in a corruption case, overturning the High Court's earlier 10-year prison sentence. The verdict was delivered by a bench led by Chief Justice Dr. Syed Refaat Ahmed after reviewing 79-year-old Ms. Zia's appeal against the High Court's ruling on Wednesday (January 15, 2025), the Dhaka Tribune reported.

The Supreme Court acquitted Ms. Zia, the party's Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, and all other suspects in their appeal over the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case, the

report added. The Appellate Division noted that the case was motivated by revenge. Ms. Zia was sentenced on February 8, 2018, by Dhaka's Special Judge Court-5 to five years of imprisonment for alleged embezzlement of government funds in the name of the Zia Orphanage Trust. The same verdict handed down 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for five other accused, including Ms. Zia's son Tarique and former chief secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui. Each of the accused was also fined Tk2.1 crore. Among the accused, Tarique, Siddiqui, and Ziaur Rahman's nephew Mominur Rahman have remained absconding. Ms. Zia appealed the trial court's verdict to the High Court, but the sentence was increased to 10 years by a High Court bench comprising Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman on October 30, 2018.

Ms. Zia subsequently filed a leave-to-appeal petition against this sentence. Following years of delays due to legal procedural issues and a lack of initiative from lawyers, the Appellate Division accepted Ms. Zia's leave-to-appeal on November 11, 2024. The Court also stayed the High Court's 10-year sentence pending the final hearing of the appeal. After concluding the hearing, the Appellate Division announced its decision to acquit Ms. Zia, officially clearing her of the charges in the case. Ms. Zia is ailing and travelled to London earlier this month for medical treatment. Ms. Zia served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from March 1991 to March 1996, and again from June 2001 to October 2006.

PM Modi congratulates ISRO scientists for successful docking experiment

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday (January 16, 2025) congratulated scientists and engineers at ISRO on the successful docking of two satellites in space.

"Congratulations to our scientists at @isro and the entire space fraternity for the successful demonstration of space docking of satellites. It is a significant stepping stone for India's ambitious space missions in the years to come," Mr. Modi said in a post on X.

Space agency Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully performed the docking of satellites as part of the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX), a crucial step towards several future missions, including setting up of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. The two satellites SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target) which were launched by the



PSLV C60 on December 30, 2024, successfully docked as the space agency officials from the Mission Operations Complex (MOX) at ISRO Telemetry, Tracking, and Command Network (ISTRAC) oversaw the complex docking procedure.



Aparajita Bharti, a founding partner at TQH Consulting, which advises tech companies on compliance with Indian laws, data localisation mandates could present substantial operational challenges for both large tech companies and start-ups. "It is extremely difficult for companies to segment different sets of data and determine the appropriate data centre for each tool. This will restrict business operations and result in higher operational costs," she said. Executive overreach Section 36 of the DPDP Act, read in conjunction with Rule 22, empowers the Union government, through the designated authorised person, to demand "any" information from a data fiduciary or intermediary (entities processing personal data) in the interest of India's sovereignty, integrity, or national security. Experts have cautioned that such sweeping discretionary powers are susceptible to misuse, potentially enabling surveillance or the suppression of dissent. Additionally, these provisions could compel social media intermediaries to compromise end-to-end encryption of messages—a concern raised by Meta-owned WhatsApp last year in its challenge to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. Rule 22 further prohibits companies from disclosing information about such government demands if doing so could "prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India or the security of the State." Apar Gupta, advocate and co-founder of the Internet Freedom Foundation, told The Hindu that this provision stands in stark contrast to the recommendations of the Group of Experts on Privacy, headed by Justice (ret'd.) A.P. Shah, in 2012. "The committee categorically recommended that individuals subject to interception should be notified. There is ample evidence of interception orders being misused by police departments under political influence. This provision effectively creates a giant backdoor for the government to requisition information without any checks and balances," he said. Ms. Bharti agreed, highlighting the absence of adequate restraints on the government. "The government should consider adopting safeguards akin to those under the Information Technology Act, 2000, to ensure that citizens are not left completely unaware of the nature and extent of data requisitioned by the government from data fiduciaries. Such expansive governmental discretion could also hinder commercial interests," she said.

US sanctions on Russian oil tankers to hit imports, Trump's stance key: Official



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

The sweeping US sanctions targeting Russia's oil trade announced on January 10, with as many as 183 tankers being placed under sanctions, could hit India's imports of cheaper Russian oil. Unlike the leeway offered by the earlier sanctions imposed on Russian entities, the new measures would effectively restrict the entry of oil tankers at Indian ports and is therefore far more targeted. A senior Indian government official said a lot would depend on how the incoming Donald Trump administration views the sanctions and how seriously it implements these in the coming months.

"The secondary sanctions would impact India as it would restrict oil tankers entry into Indian ports and could impact access to cheaper Russian oil. This was not the case when sanctions were imposed on Russian entities as there was a way around such restrictions. However, much will also depend on how strictly the Trump administration enforces the sanctions announced under the Joe Biden administration," the official said. Representatives of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of the Treasury, which administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on US foreign policy, met Indian government officials earlier this month, has learned.

The official quoted above said India's overall access to oil is unlikely to be impacted as Russian imports before the Ukraine war made up for minuscule amount of overall oil imports and that India has a well-diversified oil import base. "However, the sanctions would impact India's access to cheaper Russian oil as several other sources are not as reliable. For instance, the US regulates its oil production to control the oil prices," the official said. Notably, the outgoing Biden administration in Washington has also sanctioned two oil Russian oil majors—Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas—and Russian insurance companies, among others involved in the Russian oil sector and trade. In response to the latest US sanctions, the Kremlin has said that the sanctions risked destabilising global markets, and Moscow would do everything possible to minimise their impact. These sanctions are the latest in the list of actions the Western powers have taken to curtail Russia's revenue from oil exports, which they claim is helping Moscow fund its war in Ukraine. According to the US Department of the Treasury, the latest

action substantially increases the sanctions risks associated with the Russian oil trade. A large number of the now sanctioned vessels have been delivering oil to India and China.

According to sources in the Indian government, the country's refiners will refuse oil deliveries on the sanctioned vessels, except for the cargoes booked before January 10, which can be delivered using these vessels till March 12. This wind-down period has been provided by the US to enable the existing contracts for Russian oil to be fulfilled. While India itself is not part of the sanctions regime against Russia, like most other countries, New Delhi has generally followed a policy of not falling foul of US sanctions due to fear of secondary sanctions. Ship tracking data shows that a vast majority of oil tankers previously sanctioned by Washington have not been used since being designated. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 per cent of its requirement. From being a marginal oil supplier to India prior to the war in Ukraine, Russia is now India's biggest supplier of crude, thanks to Moscow offering oil at significant discount after the West started shunning Russian oil. In 2024, Russian oil accounted for nearly 38 per cent of India's total oil imports, per tanker data. More oil imports from West Asia likely

As per data from commodity freight analytics firm Kpler, 102 of the recently sanctioned tankers transported Russian crude to either or both China and India at least once in 2024. According to a note by Kpler's lead freight analyst Matt Wright, the newly sanctioned tankers handled over 530 million barrels of Russian crude exports last year. Of this, around 300 million barrels were shipped to China, and the bulk of the remaining exports went to India. Now, Russia would want to rapidly increase the number of non-sanctioned tankers at its disposal to deliver its oil to India and China and mitigate the impact of the latest round of sanctions. Industry experts, however, point out that such a mammoth exercise would take a while. "The swift sanctions aim to disrupt Russian oil exports, forcing sellers to seek alternative vessels to address the shipping shortfall—a challenge that will take time to resolve. Russian producers are expected to focus on securing non-sanctioned tankers to sustain crude flows, minimising the impact on production," Wright said. Meanwhile, given the low availability of tankers for transporting Russian oil, its freight costs are expected to shoot up, which in turn will eat into the discount on Russian crude and make oil from other major suppliers—particularly those in West Asia—more competitive, at least in the short term. In the absence of meaningful discounts on Russian crude, Indian refiners are bound to gravitate towards its traditional suppliers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. In fact, Indian refiners have increased in the recent past their oil imports from West Asia as Russia cut back on exports due to seasonally high domestic demand in that country. Sources in the government and India's refining sector indicate that ample supply is available from other major sources markets.

Six effective morning habits to lower cholesterol, according to cardiologist

Cholesterol management is key to maintaining a healthy heart, and adopting the right habits in the morning can make a significant difference. Whether it's what you eat, how you move, or even how you start your day mentally, these small but effective changes can help improve your cholesterol levels over time. If high cholesterol levels are a concern, incorporating specific morning routines into your daily life can provide lasting benefits. Here's what Dr Prateek Chaudhary, senior consultant, Interventional Cardiology at Asian Hospital, suggests you should do. Six morning habits that can help reduce cholesterol levels effectively

According to Dr Chaudhary the following morning habits can potentially help reduce cholesterol levels: Morning Walk: A brisk walk for at least 30 minutes, 5 out of 7 days, is highly beneficial for reducing cholesterol levels, improving obesity, and ensuring a more active day. In regions with heavy morning pollution or winter smog, it's advised to postpone your walk by a few hours. Reduce Saturated Fats: Avoid foods high in saturated fats like red meat and full-fat dairy during breakfast. These foods can increase your total cholesterol levels. Eliminate Trans Fats: Trans fats found in cakes, cookies, and processed foods should be eliminated from your morning routine, as they negatively impact cholesterol levels. Increase Soluble Fibre: Add foods rich in soluble fibre such as oatmeal, kidney beans, chia seeds, and fruits to your breakfast. These help in managing cholesterol levels. Nuts for Healthy Fats: Incorporate almonds, walnuts, or flaxseeds into your morning routine. These nuts are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help improve HDL (good cholesterol) levels. Start with Lukewarm Water: Begin your day with a glass of lukewarm water, possibly with lemon, to kick-start your metabolism, hydrate your body, and promote heart health. He asserts, while adopting these morning habits can significantly support cholesterol management, it is essential to consult healthcare professionals for personalised advice and to monitor your heart health regularly. Starting the day with sugary cereals can raise triglycerides and lower good cholesterol levels, negatively impacting heart health. Starting the day with sugary cereals can raise triglycerides and lower good cholesterol levels, negatively impacting heart health. How important is timing when it comes to these morning activities for cholesterol



management?

Dr Chaudhary states, "Morning timing plays a crucial role in cholesterol management because how you start your day sets the tone for the rest of it. Exercising in the morning improves your metabolism, increases energy levels, and ensures a more active day. Additionally, air quality is usually better in the morning, providing added benefits to those who work out at that time." However, he adds that in areas with high pollution or in winter when smog is prevalent, it's advisable "to delay outdoor activities until the air quality improves, especially for individuals with heart, lung, or diabetes issues."

Common morning mistakes people make that could unintentionally raise their cholesterol levels Here are some common mistakes Dr Chaudhary suggests people avoid: Consuming Sugary Cereals: Starting the day with sugary cereals can raise triglycerides and lower good cholesterol levels, negatively impacting heart health. Drinking Processed Juices: Ready-made juices, often high in sugar and low in fibre, should be avoided in favor of whole fruits, which offer more nutritional benefits. Avoiding Full-Fat Dairy: Full-fat dairy should be replaced with leaner options to help reduce cholesterol levels. Eating Cakes and Pastries: High-sugar and trans-fat-laden pastries should be avoided as they raise cholesterol levels and harm heart health. Consuming Processed Meats: Processed meats contain high amounts of sodium and can negatively affect both blood pressure and cholesterol, making them detrimental to heart health.

'Epic agreement could only happen because of our historic victory,' says Trump; claims credit for Gaza ceasefire deal

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Washington: US President-elect Donald Trump claimed credit for the ceasefire and hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas, which was announced just days before his return to power. Trump, in a series of posts on his Truth Social platform, expressed his excitement and claimed credit for the agreement, asserting that the deal would not have been possible without his administration's leadership. "We have a deal for the hostages in the Middle East. They will be released shortly. Thank you!" Trump wrote, even before the official announcement from the White House under outgoing President Joe Biden. In a follow-up post, Trump stated, "This EPIC ceasefire agreement could have only happened as a result of our Historic Victory in November," referencing his triumph in the 2024 elections. Trump emphasised his administration's focus on peace negotiations and how it had left a lasting impact on the region.

The deal is expected to involve a phased ceasefire, beginning with Hamas releasing 33 of the approximately

100 hostages held in Gaza over the course of a 42-day period. Trump's special envoy for the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, played a pivotal role in facilitating the agreement, working closely with Biden's negotiators. Trump extended his gratitude to Witkoff, adding that the US would continue to support Israel and its allies in preventing Gaza from becoming a haven for terrorism again. "We will continue to work closely with Israel and our Allies to make sure Gaza never again becomes a terrorist safe haven," he wrote. The agreement marks a significant shift in the conflict's dynamics. While the Biden administration had been engaged in talks for months, Trump's influence and his administration's groundwork, including the Abraham Accords, appear to have paved the way for this breakthrough. Trump suggested that Iran could one day join the Abraham Accords, hinting at further potential normalisation agreements in the region. Reaction to the deal has been mixed. In Gaza, crowds celebrated the news, with honking horns and cheers filling the streets. However, in Israel, some remain cautious, expressing doubt that the deal will be fully trusted until all hostages are safely returned.

Biden warns in farewell address about 'oligarchy' of ultrarich in US



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

President Joe Biden used his farewell address to the nation on Wednesday to deliver stark warnings about an "oligarchy" of the ultra-wealthy taking root in the country and a "tech-industrial complex" that is infringing on Americans' rights and the future of democracy. Speaking from the Oval Office as he prepares to hand over power on Monday to President-elect Donald Trump, Biden seized what is likely to be his final opportunity to address the country before he departs the White House to spotlight the accumulation of power and wealth in the US among just a small few.

"Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead," Biden said, drawing attention to "a dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a few ultra-wealthy people and the dangerous consequences if their abuse of power is left unchecked." Invoking President Dwight Eisenhower's warnings about the rise of a military-industrial complex when he left office in 1961, Biden added, "I'm equally concerned about the potential rise of a tech-industrial complex that could pose real dangers to our country as well." Biden used his 15-minute address to offer a model for a peaceful transfer of power and — without mentioning Trump by name — raise concerns about his successor. It marked a striking admonition by Biden, who is departing the national stage after more than 50 years in public life, as he has struggled to define his legacy and to steel the country against the return of Trump to the Oval Office. This time, the President, who has repeatedly called Trump a threat to the nation's system of governance, went even further, warning Americans to be on guard for their freedoms and their institutions during a turbulent era of rapid technological and economic change. Biden sounded the alarm about oligarchy as some

of the world's richest individuals and titans of its technology industry have flocked to Trump's side in recent months, particularly after his November victory.

Billionaire Elon Musk spent more than \$100 million helping Trump get elected, and executives like Meta's Mark Zuckerberg and Amazon's Jeff Bezos have donated to Trump's inaugural committee and made pilgrimages to Trump's private club in Florida for audiences with the President-elect as they seek to ingratiate themselves with his administration and shape its policies. Biden's speech in the Oval Office is the latest in a series of remarks on domestic policy and foreign relations he has delivered that are intended to cement his legacy and reshape Americans' grim views on his term.

Earlier in the day, he heralded a long-awaited ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, which could end more than a year of bloodshed in the Middle East. "It'll take time to feel the full impact of what we've done together but the seeds are planted and they'll grow and they'll bloom for decades to come," Biden said. It was a tacit acknowledgment that many Americans say they have yet to feel the impact of his trillions of dollars spent on domestic initiatives.

At the same time that Biden was criticizing social media companies for retreating from fact-checking on their platforms, Trump's incoming communications director and press secretary were sharing posts on X that falsely claimed the President had delivered a prerecorded speech. Biden has blamed his poor standing with the public on misinformation on social media and the challenges he has faced reaching voters in the disaggregated modern media ecosystem. Biden offered his own set of solutions for the problems that he laid out: change the tax code to ensure billionaires "pay their fair share," eliminate the flow of hidden sources of money into political campaigns, establish 18-year term limits for members of the Supreme Court and ban members of Congress from trading stocks. His policy prescriptions come as his political capital is at its nadir as Biden prepares to exit the national stage, and after he has done little to advance those causes during his four years in power at the White House. Federal Reserve data shows the wealthiest 0.1% of the country combined holds more than five times the wealth of the bottom 50% combined. Biden isn't leaving the White House in the way that he hoped. He tried to run for reelection, brushing aside voters' concerns that he would be 86 years old at the end of a second term. After stumbling in a debate with Trump, Biden dropped out of the race under pressure from his party, and Vice President Kamala Harris became the Democratic nominee.

South Korean impeached President Yoon arrested by law enforcement officers

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South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol was detained in a massive law enforcement operation at the presidential compound Wednesday (January 15, 2025), defiantly insisting the anti-corruption agency didn't have the authority to investigate his actions but saying he complied to prevent violence. In a video message recorded before he was escorted to the headquarters of the anti-corruption agency, Yoon lamented the "rule of law has completely collapsed in this country." Mr. Yoon, the country's first sitting president to be apprehended, had been holed up in the Hannam-dong residence in the capital, Seoul, for weeks while vowing to "fight to the end" the efforts to oust him. He has justified his declaration of martial law Dec. 3 as a legitimate act of governance against an "anti-state" opposition employing its legislative majority to thwart his agenda.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials said Yoon was brought into custody about five hours after investigators arrived at the presidential compound and about three hours after they successfully entered the residence, in their second attempt to detain him over his imposition of martial law. A series of black SUVs, some equipped with sirens, were seen leaving the presidential compound with police escorts. Yoon was later seen stepping out of a vehicle after arriving at the agency's office in the nearby city of Gwacheon. Following the questioning, Mr. Yoon was expected to be sent to a detention center in Uiwang, near Seoul.

The anti-corruption agency, which is leading a joint investigation with the police and the military over whether Yoon's martial law declaration amounted to an attempted rebellion, has 48 hours to request a court order for a formal arrest on a charge of attempting a rebellion, and if it fails to do so, Mr. Yoon will be released. If Mr. Yoon is formally arrested, investigators can extend his detention to 20 days before transferring the case to public prosecutors for indictment. The anti-corruption agency told reporters that Mr. Yoon, during his first two hours of questioning, exercised his right to remain silent. The detention warrant for Mr. Yoon, issued by the Seoul Western District Court, said there were substantial reasons to suspect that he committed crimes as a "ringleader of a rebellion."

Mr. Yoon's presidential powers were suspended when parliament impeached him on December 14. The impeachment case now rests with the Constitutional Court, which could formally remove Yoon from office or reject the case and reinstate him. In a separate message posted on his Facebook account after his detention, Mr. Yoon claimed that "martial law is not a crime," saying his declaration was necessary to raise awareness about an opposition that was exercising "legislative dictatorship by blocking laws and budgets" and "paralyzing" state affairs. He denied the rebellion accusations, describing his impeachment as "fraud." The scene at the compound

As they began the detention operation in the early morning, the anti-corruption investigators and police officers engaged in an hours-long standoff at the compound's gate with presidential security forces but otherwise encountered no meaningful resistance. Police officers were seen using wire cutters to remove the barbed wire placed by the presidential security service on the perimeter of the compound to block their entry. Some police officers used ladders to climb over rows of buses placed by the presidential security service near the compound's entrance, and then the investigators began moving up the hilly compound. The investigators and police later arrived in front of a metal gate with a gold presidential mark that's near Yoon's residential building. Some officers were seen entering a security door on the side of the metal gate, joined by one of Yoon's lawyers and his chief of staff. The presidential security service later removed a bus and other vehicles that had been parked tightly inside the gate as a barricade.

Despite a court warrant for Mr. Yoon's detention, the presidential security service had insisted it's obligated to protect the impeached president and fortified the compound with barbed wire and rows of buses blocking paths. The



preparations and the concerns South Korea's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, issued a statement early Wednesday urging law enforcement and the presidential security service to ensure there are no "physical clashes."

Following Mr. Yoon's detention, Choi met with diplomats from the Group of Seven nations, including the United States, Japan, Britain and Germany, as well as the representative of the European Union, to reassure them that the government was functioning stably. Why did the now-impeached President of South Korea declare martial law? | In Focus podcast Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which drove the legislative campaign that led to Yoon's impeachment on Dec. 14, said Yoon's detention is the "first step toward restoring constitutional order, democracy, and realizing the rule of law."

As investigators moved up the hillside compound, lawmakers from Mr. Yoon's People Power Party held a rally in nearby streets, decrying the efforts to detain him as unlawful. The National Police Agency met with field commanders in Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi province in recent days to plan their detention efforts, and the size of those forces fueled speculation that more than a thousand officers could be deployed. The agency and police had openly warned that presidential bodyguards obstructing the execution of the warrant could be arrested.

Mr. Yoon's lawyers have claimed that the detention warrant issued by the Seoul Western District Court was invalid. They cited a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge — which would be Mr. Yoon. They also claimed that the anti-corruption agency had no legal authority to investigate rebellion allegations.

"I am truly appalled to see illegalities upon illegalities upon illegalities being carried out and procedures being forcefully conducted under an invalid warrant," Yoon said in the video released before his detention. "I do not acknowledge the investigation by the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials. As the president, who is responsible for upholding the constitution and legal system of the Republic of Korea, my decision to comply with such illegal and invalid procedures is not an acknowledgment of them, but rather a willingness to prevent unfortunate and bloody incidents." Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose his impeachment near the presidential residence in Seoul, South Korea, on January 15, 2025

Mr. Yoon's supporters and critics have held competing protests near the residence — one side vowing to protect him, the other calling for his imprisonment — while thousands of police officers in yellow jackets closely monitored the tense situation. What led to this

Mr. Yoon declared martial law and deployed troops around the National Assembly on Dec. 3. It lasted only hours before lawmakers managed to get through the blockade and vote to lift the measure. The opposition-led assembly voted to impeach him on rebellion charges Dec. 14. The Constitutional Court held its first formal hearing in the impeachment case on Tuesday, but the session lasted less than five minutes because Yoon refused to attend. The next hearing is set for Thursday, and the court will then proceed with the trial whether or not Yoon is there

Focus on jobs in digitally delivered services, incentivise mid-sized firms, rationalise tariffs for GVC integration



A key focus of the 2024 interim budget had been on the issue of job creation and skill development. An associated focus had been on rationalisation of customs duties to help India's integration into global value-chains leading to expansion of its industrial base and exports that in turn create employment opportunities. The recommendations that follow focus on these very themes. Thanks to the digital revolution, a vast number of services across a range of occupations can now be performed remotely. Much of the work related to professional services like accounting, financial and legal services have been performed remotely for some time. But entirely new areas have come up in recent years. Consider a few examples. A security team based in Gurugram remotely monitors warehouses in Norway using drones. Locomotives in the UK are operated remotely by loco drivers sitting in Gurugram. Maintenance teams in Hyderabad monitor and remotely maintain critical equipment for factories across the world. The entire support team for a globally available dating app is based out of Pune.

Services already account for 42% of the value of global exports. Within services exports, Digitally Delivered Services (DDS) account for 56% share, and this will likely increase to 66% by 2030. The adoption of AI and automation will accentuate these trends. The rise of Global Capability Centres (GCCs) is integral to the growth of DDS. DDS represents a huge employment opportunity to college educated youth. Unlike the earlier IT/ITES revolution, job opportunities in DDS will be across a wide range of occupations, i.e., engineering, design, accounting, lab assistants, paramedics, yoga teachers, tuition teachers, maintenance technicians etc. To optimise this opportunity, India will have to leverage the competitive strength of its college educated youth, most of whom, especially those coming from less renowned universities/colleges in smaller towns are not considered employable. Cost competitiveness can also come from relocating to non-metro areas. In this context, two specific recommendations are: Creating a special scheme for 50 universities located in smaller Indian towns to develop dedicated programmes for courses that support the DDS industry across a range of occupational specialisations. In the same set of small towns, create DDS clusters that provide all amenities at competitive costs to firms in the DDS space, including Global Capability Centres (GCC). This will reduce the cost and hassle for these firms to operate out of smaller towns. These two interventions will take the global opportunity in services to India's smaller towns and integrate those graduates who are otherwise not being able to fully leverage these opportunities.

India has industrial policies for large firms. We are missing a dedicated focus on mid-sized firms. Mid-sized firms that are specialised in production of a narrow range of goods are the bedrock of GVCs. Such mid-sized firms (by Indian standards firms with revenues of Rs 100 to 1,000 crore) account for the bulk of exports and manufacturing employment in Germany, Japan, France, Italy etc. Realising the potential of such mid-sized firms that are large enough to have the economies of scale allowing rapid absorption of technology and skills essential to global competitiveness,

China has initiated a dedicated programme to develop its own mid-sized global champions called "Little Giants". The programme includes targeted subsidies, R&D support with state financing, and support with product development. China aims to create 1,000 such champion niche firms. Even if they achieve 25% of that target, it will have a major impact on global value-chains. India needs its own dedicated programme for mid-sized firms that show promise. Some specific interventions could include: Incentivising employment through EPFO contributions along the lines of the previous budget, but specially adopted for mid-sized manufacturing companies

Creating a specialised fund that supports acquisition of technology/firms overseas by mid-sized firms who unlike large corporations, would not be able to raise funds from the market for such investment. A programme that allows mid-sized firms to lease or rent manufacturing facilities in industrial parks at a discount for the first three to five years of operations. A high-profile recognition programme for innovators for development of new products that are commercially successful, especially in global markets. Rationalising India's tariff structure to support GVC integration. A recent FICCI report has highlighted inverted duty structures (where duties on inputs are higher than those on finished products that use them) in India's MFN regime as well as specific to FTAs. This coming Budget must ensure that any instances of inverted duty structures that impact India's manufacturing competitiveness are addressed proactively.

But this Budget should also pave the way for much more comprehensive structural reforms of tariffs. Consider the fact that India has 19 different MFN tariff rates today, ranging from 2.5% to 125%. This can easily be rationalised to no more than 5 different rates of duty. A plethora of tariff rates leads to transactions costs as well as rent seeking due to businesses trying to find favourable classification for their products, not to mention needless disputes and need for adjudication. This Budget should also address India's tariff structure, which is flawed in the opinion of this author. Strategically, India already has or is pursuing FTAs with all major global manufacturing economies - this includes Japan, Korea, ASEAN member states, Australia, EU, and the UK. The only major exceptions are China, US, and Mexico. US manufacturing would not compete with India on price. Therefore, our MFN tariffs would primarily apply to China in the coming years. But most of our tariffs, close to 67% of our tariff lines, are in the 5-10% duty range. This is at odds with almost all our key competitors. Countries like Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam have most of their tariff lines at very low levels, i.e., duties below 5% but keep between 20 to 25% of their tariff lines at very high levels, i.e., duties of over 15 or 20%. Essentially applying lower tariffs for most intermediates and raw-materials helping their manufacturing industry go up the value-chain but ensuring focused protection for key product lines representing both finished and intermediate goods at a very high level of tariff.

As our trade data clearly shows, 5-10% tariff protection is ineffective to protect our domestic industry from Chinese competition, but they add costs across the value-chain. However, only 13% of our tariffs are 20% duty plus. A much more effective strategy for MFN tariffs would be to move out most tariff lines from this 5-10% duty bracket to much lower band, especially in key intermediate products while moving about 20% products to a much higher 20% duty plus tariff line to provide effective protection from competition, especially potentially unfair competition from less transparent non-market economies. A rational and effective distribution of MFN tariffs would have 70% of our tariff lines below 5% duty, and have 25% of our tariff lines at 20% duty or more. Just 5% of tariff lines should be within these two bands, depending on need for flexibility or strategic trade concerns.

Trade deficit narrows to \$22 billion in December as gold imports ease to \$4.7 billion



Gold imports, trade deficit, gold imports miscalculations, gold imports data, Indian express news, current affairs. Geopolitical tensions in the Gulf region further exacerbated logistical challenges, affecting export flows to key markets like Europe, Africa, and the CIS," Kumar said. India's trade deficit narrowed to \$21.94 billion in December after a sharp surge to a lifetime high on the back of miscalculations in gold import and as gold imports in last month came in at \$4.7 billion compared to \$9.84 billion in the previous month, government data showed on Wednesday. Data showed that the exports contracted for the second month in a row by about 1 per cent year-on-year to \$38.01 billion due to global uncertainties, while imports rose by about 5 per cent to \$59.95 billion. Amid weak demand in the West, petroleum product shipments declined by 28.62 per cent to \$4.91 billion last month. During the first nine months of this fiscal also, these exports contracted by 20.84 per cent year-on-year to \$49 billion. "This shows the resiliency of our exports. In all the three quarters of this fiscal also, we have done better. We are doing much better in non-petroleum exports," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said, adding that Indian exports of services and goods would cross \$800 billion during the ongoing fiscal. On the revision of gold and silver import data for November 2024, the Secretary said a committee has been set up to create a robust mechanism for publishing consistent data.

The government revised gold import data for November 2024, bringing down numbers by \$5 billion to \$9.84 billion. As per the revised data, exports in November 2024 were down by 5.06 per cent to \$32.03 billion, while imports rose by 16 per cent to \$63.86 billion. The trade deficit stood at \$31.83 billion. Gold imports during the month under review rose by 55.4 per cent to \$4.7 billion against \$3 billion in December 2023. On the other hand, silver imports jumped by 211 per cent to \$421.91 million. In December, India's shipment rose positively to the US, Saudi Arabia, France, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. During the month, the top five

import sources were China, Switzerland, Thailand, Germany and the US. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) president Ashwani Kumar said that the slight decline in goods exports is due to the volatility in commodity and metal prices, along with ongoing international trade disruptions and currency fluctuations. "Geopolitical tensions in the Gulf region further exacerbated logistical challenges, affecting export flows to key markets like Europe, Africa, and the CIS," Kumar said. Kumar stressed the importance of a focused export strategy targeting key markets, particularly the US, as the tariff war presents new opportunities. On engineering goods exports, Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) chairman Pankaj Chadha said that despite challenges and uncertainties on the external front, India's engineering exports sector has shown remarkable resilience. Continuing the growth momentum for the last eight months, engineering exports grew 8.35 per cent year-on-year to \$10.84 billion in December 2024. "There is growing apprehension that once the Trump 2.0 administration assumes charge, some countries with which the US has a sizable trade deficit could face higher tariffs. This is likely to disrupt global trade and also affect India. As the US remains the top market for Indian engineering goods, we remain cautious of the possible fallout of tariff hikes by the Trump government," he said.

HDFC Life shares soar nearly 12 pc after December quarter earnings

New Delhi: Shares of HDFC Life on Thursday jumped nearly 12 per cent after the firm reported a 14 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 415 crore in the December quarter.

The stock surged 11.15 per cent to Rs 660.55 on the BSE. At the NSE, it soared 11.67 per cent to Rs 663.60. The private sector insurer's profit stood at Rs 365 crore in the year-ago period, HDFC Life said in a regulatory filing on Wednesday. However, total income declined to Rs 16,914 crore in the latest quarter from Rs 26,694 crore in the year-ago period.

The company's solvency ratio also declined to 188 per cent from 190 per cent as on December 31, 2023 as against the regulatory requirement of 150 per cent. For the nine-month period ended December, the life insurer posted a profit of Rs 1,326 crore as against Rs 1,157 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Investment in renewables to quadruple to Rs 19 lakh crore between FY25 and FY30: Crisil



India's power sector attracted Rs 5.2 lakh crore in green investments from FY19 to FY24 and is projected to draw another Rs 21 lakh crore between FY25 and FY30, from which Rs 19 lakh crore will flow into renewable generation, a Crisil Intelligence report said. Notably, the figure falls short of the Rs 30 lakh crore needed to meet India's 500 GW renewable capacity target by 2030, according to a recent estimate by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

Investments in renewable generation will grow from Rs 5.1 lakh crore to Rs 18.8 lakh crore, largely on account of solar and battery storage-linked projects. On the other hand, green investments in the transmission and distribution segments are expected to grow at a faster rate to support building of long-distance evacuation infrastructure and installation of smart meters. From a mere Rs 3,000 crore between FY19 and FY24, green investments in transmission is likely to surge to Rs 70,000 crore over the next five years, while investments in distribution will jump from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 1.4 lakh crore, the report said. Apart from

the projected Rs 21 lakh crore in investments to decarbonise the power sector, Crisil expects another Rs 10 lakh crore to flow in to decarbonise the automotive, oil and gas, steel, and cement sectors, taking the total projected green investments to Rs 31 lakh between FY25 and FY30.

In September, MNRE had said roughly Rs 9 lakh crore was invested to set up renewable capacity of nearly 130 GW between 2014 and 2024. To meet the 500 GW target by 2030, which excludes battery storage capacity, the ministry estimated another Rs 30 lakh crore would be required over the next five years. State-owned NTPC Ltd leads with plans for 60 GW of renewable capacity by 2032, followed by Adani Power Ltd's target of 50 GW by 2030, while SJVN Ltd, Tata Power Co Ltd, and JSW Energy Ltd have announced targets of 25 GW, 23 GW, and 20 GW respectively, according to the report. Currently, India's renewable capacity stands at 162 GW, of which 98 GW is solar and 48 GW is wind. "If one looks at the power sector, it stands out where investment potential is fairly strong and share in the overall GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions is also very high. Here, potential is high for investment due to favourable cost economics, large-scale adoption of RE (renewable energy) that we are seeing, and scaling of storage for round-the-clock power," Rahul Prithiani, senior director at Crisil, said. To facilitate investments into solar and wind energy generation, the report said adequate debt finance through banks, sector-focused development financial institutions (DFIs) and bond markets will be available. "Development of green bond markets is likely to provide significant opportunity, too. Besides, robust capital markets, monetisation of operational assets through secondary sale, and infrastructure investment trusts can ensure adequate equity funding," it added.

Kate Middleton shares health update, says her cancer is in remission: 'It takes time to adjust to a new normal'

Kate Middleton shares her remission milestone after cancer treatment. Explore what remission means, insights on recovery, and the challenges of navigating life after cancer. Kate Middleton shares her remission milestone after cancer treatment. Explore what remission means, insights on recovery, and the challenges of navigating life after cancer. In a heartfelt update, Kate Middleton has shared encouraging news about her health. Following her announcement in March 2024 that she had been diagnosed with cancer, the Princess of Wales has revealed she is now in remission.

"It is a relief now to be in remission and I remain focused on recovery," Middleton said on X on January 14, marking a hopeful milestone in her journey. Her announcement follows her September disclosure that she had completed chemotherapy. I wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you to The Royal Marsden for looking after me so well during the past year. My heartfelt thanks goes to all those who have quietly walked alongside William and me as we have navigated everything. Remission is a critical milestone in cancer treatment, signifying that the disease has responded positively to therapy. According to Dr Neeraj Goel, Director of Oncology Services at the CK Birla Hospital in Delhi, remission can be classified into two types Complete Remission: Cancer is no longer detectable in the body.

Partial Remission: Cancer has significantly reduced in size or activity but remains present. Dr Goel explains, "Remission does not guarantee that cancer won't return, which is why regular follow-ups are essential to monitor for recurrence and ensure timely intervention if needed." Recovery from cancer is a holistic journey. Recovery from cancer is multifaceted, encompassing physical, emotional, and practical aspects. Dr Niti Raizada, Principal Director of Medical and Hemato Oncology at Fortis Hospitals



in Bengaluru, says, "Achieving remission is significant, but maintaining it requires vigilance, follow-up care, and emotional resilience." She added that recovery is a unique and ongoing process that requires patience, support, and self-care. Physical Recovery: Regaining strength and energy post-treatment. Managing pain, discomfort, and treatment-related side effects like hair loss and fatigue. Restoring mobility and flexibility through rehabilitation. Emotional and Psychological Recovery: Coping with anxiety and emotional fluctuations. Rebuilding self-esteem and finding meaning in a "new normal." Reconnecting with relationships affected by the illness. Practical Recovery: Returning to daily life and work. Addressing financial and logistical challenges. Accessing support services to navigate the complexities of post-treatment life. While remission is a hopeful state, recurrence is possible. As Dr Goel explains, "Recurrence can happen if microscopic cancer cells remain in the body after treatment. These cells may grow and cause the cancer to return." Factors influencing recurrence include the type of cancer, treatment received, and individual characteristics. Regular screenings and close monitoring are crucial to detect and manage any recurrence early.

Why a daily glass of milk really could reduce bowel cancer risk – an oncologist explains

A glass of milk a day could help keep bowel cancer away – or so finds a study by Oxford University and Cancer Research UK. The research suggests that increasing daily milk intake by as little as one glass could have a significant impact on lowering the likelihood of developing bowel cancer. There are nearly 45,000 cases of bowel cancer every year in the UK, making it the nation's fourth most common cancer – and third worldwide – but many of these are preventable.

According to Cancer Research UK data, 54% of all bowel cancers could be prevented by having a healthier lifestyle. Smoking, lack of exercise, alcohol, eating processed meat, and poor diet are all significant factors in the development of bowel cancer. As an oncologist, I advise my patients about how diet and lifestyle can influence health, including the risk of developing cancer. But this research – one of the largest studies into diet and disease so far – has shed new light on how easy, cheap diet changes can help everyone to reduce their cancer risk. For example, as well as drinking an extra glass of milk per day, reducing consumption of alcohol and red and processed meat could also help protect against cancer. The study found that drinking an additional 20g of alcohol a day, equivalent to a large glass of wine, increased bowel cancer risk by 15%. Consuming more than 30g of red and processed meat daily was linked to an 8% increase in bowel cancer risk. Researchers took a novel, two-pronged approach to examine the association between milk consumption and bowel cancer risk.

First, they analysed genetic data from over 542,000 women and focused on variants – tiny changes in DNA – associated with lactase persistence, the ability to digest lactose in adulthood. Second, the team collected detailed dietary information from participants, including their daily milk intake. By combining these two data sets, the researchers were able to better estimate the causal effect of milk consumption on bowel cancer risk.

The analysis revealed that participants who consumed an additional 244g of milk per day – roughly equivalent to one large glass containing 300mg of calcium – had a 17% lower risk of developing bowel cancer. This reduction in risk applied to various types of milk, including whole, semi-skimmed and skimmed. Researchers found that the protective effect of milk consumption was independent of other dietary factors and lifestyle habits. This suggests that the benefits of milk in reducing bowel cancer risk are not because milk replaces unhealthy food choices or is consumed as part of an overall healthier lifestyle. The reasons why milk



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consumption may reduce bowel cancer risk are not fully understood, but the researchers propose several potential explanations. First, milk is a rich source of calcium, which has been linked previously to a reduced risk of bowel cancer. Calcium may help protect against cancer by binding to potentially harmful substances in the gut and promoting the death of abnormal cells. Next, many milk products are fortified with vitamin D, which has been shown to have anti-cancer properties and may help regulate cell growth and division. Also, the lactose in milk can promote the growth of beneficial gut bacteria that produce butyrate, a short-chain fatty acid with anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer effects. Finally, milk contains conjugated linoleic acid, a fatty acid found in meat and dairy products, which, according to a 2021 laboratory study, could also have anti-cancer properties. Crucially, milk consumption may not be suitable or beneficial for everyone. Those with lactose intolerance, milk allergies, or other dietary restrictions should consult with healthcare professionals before making significant changes to their dairy intake. Overall, this groundbreaking research provides compelling evidence for the potential role of milk consumption in reducing bowel cancer risk. The finding that a relatively modest increase in daily milk consumption could lead to a significant reduction in bowel cancer risk is particularly encouraging. It suggests that small, achievable changes in diet could have meaningful impacts on public health. As we continue to unravel the complex relationships between diet and disease, studies like this one provide valuable insights that can inform both individual health choices and broader public health strategies. The potential for a simple dietary change to have such a significant impact on cancer risk underscores the importance of continued research in this field and highlights the power of nutrition in shaping our health.

Saif Ali Khan attacked during attempted robbery at Mumbai home; Kareena, Jeh, Taimur were at home during attack



an attempted burglary in Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan's residence last night. Saif had an injury on his arm for which he is in the hospital, undergoing a procedure. The rest of the family is doing fine. We request media and fans to be patient and not speculate any further as the Police is already doing their due investigations. Thank you all for your concern." Dr Jaiil Parkar of Lilavati Hospital told SCREEN that Saif was stabbed at his Bandra home and was admitted to the hospital at 3:30 am. "Saif Ali Khan was stabbed by an unidentified person at his Bandra home and was brought in at 3:30 am. Saif has six stabs and two are deep. Of this, one is close to spine. He is being operated upon by team of doctors led by neurosurgeon Dr Nitin Dange, cosmetic surgeon Dr Leena Jain, anesthesiologist Dr Nisha Gandhi," he said.

Mumbai police confirmed that an unidentified person intruded at his home and the actor had a scuffle with them. It was during this that the actor was injured. The matter is currently under investigation. A senior police officer said that the house help also sustained minor injuries. DCP Zone 9, Dixit Gedam shared, "An unidentified person intruded in the residence of Actor Saif Ali Khan. The actor and the intruder had a scuffle. The actor is injured and is being treated. Investigation is going on." As per a statement by the actor's team, there was an attempted burglary at his Bandra residence. "There was an attempted burglary at Mr Saif Ali Khan's residence. He is currently in hospital undergoing a surgery. We request the media and fans to be patient. It is a police matter. We will keep you updated on the situation," the statement read. Director Kunal Kohli expressed concern for Saif on X as he shared, "Shocking & Scary incident. Praying for Saif's speedy recovery. #SaifAliKhan." Kunal and Saif worked together on YRF's Hum Tum. Jr NTR, who recently collaborated with Saif on Devara, shared, "Shocked and saddened to hear about the attack on Saif sir. Wishing and praying for his speedy recovery and good health." Pooja Bhatt called out the "lawlessness" of the city and shared on X, "Can this lawlessness please be curbed @MumbaiPolice @CPMumbaiPolice. We need more Police presence in Bandra. The city & especially the queen of the suburbs, have never felt so unsafe before."

Actor Saif Ali Khan was attacked at his Mumbai home during an attempted robbery, and is currently admitted to the Lilavati Hospital. The actor underwent surgery and is now recovering. His wife actor Kareena Kapoor's team confirmed that there was an attempted burglary at their residence on Wednesday night. The statement said that the rest of the family, Kareena and their sons Taimur Ali Khan and Jeh Ali Khan, are doing fine. At the time of the incident, Kareena, Taimur and Jeh were inside the house. Saif tried to save his family from the attack and got injured during the scuffle. Saif's older son, Ibrahim Ali Khan, brought him to the hospital. Crime branch officials said the suspect was not captured in the CCTV footage of the lift or the lobby of the building, so it is believed that the suspect entered the building through the back entrance of the building and climbed 12 flights of stairs. The officials believe that the suspect entered the apartment through the house help's quarters and had an argument with them. The suspect was then locked in the children's bedroom later but managed to flee.

The statement from Kareena's team read, "There was

Kareena Kapoor's team says kids Taimur and Jeh are safe, Saif Ali Khan recovering from knife attack

Actor Saif Ali Khan suffered injuries during an attempted burglary at his Mumbai residence in the early hours of January 16, at approximately 2:00 am. His wife, actor Kareena Kapoor Khan, has confirmed the attack and reassured fans that, while Saif is undergoing treatment at the hospital, the rest of the family, including their two sons—8-year-old Taimur Ali Khan and 4-year-old Jeh Ali Khan—are safe. A statement released by Kareena's team addressed the incident, saying, "There was an attempted burglary in Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan's residence last night. Saif had an injury on his arm for which he is in the hospital, undergoing a procedure. The rest of the family is doing fine. We request media and fans to be patient and not speculate any further as the Police is already doing their due investigations. Thank you all for your concern. Team Kareena Kapoor Khan."

During the burglary attempt, Saif Ali Khan was stabbed six times by the intruder. One of the stabs was dangerously close to his spine, causing serious concern. Dr. Jaiil Parkar of Lilavati Hospital shared further details with SCREEN about Saif's condition and the treatment being administered. He revealed that Race 3 actor underwent surgery and is now recovering. "Saif Ali Khan was stabbed by



an unidentified person at his Bandra home and was brought in at 3:30 am. Saif has six stabs and two are deep. Of this, one is close to spine. He is being operated upon by team of doctors led by neurosurgeon Dr Nitin Dange, cosmetic surgeon Dr Leena Jain, anesthesiologist Dr Nisha Gandhi," he said. It is not yet confirmed whether Kareena Kapoor Khan was present at the house when the burglary occurred. However, her Instagram Story from the previous evening suggests that she was attending a dinner party. Kareena shared glimpses of her evening out with sister Karisma Kapoor and friends Sonam Kapoor and Rhea Kapoor.

Ram Charan film lurches amid claims of inflated figures, earns Rs 140 cr

Game Changer box office collection day 5: Ram Charan and Kiara Advani's political action drama directed by Shankar has not lived up to expectations. At the box office, the film had been struggling after registering a good opening. On the festival of Makar Sankranti, it finally saw a slight jump. As per industry tracker Sacnilk, Game Changer returned to making double digits at the box office on its first Tuesday. The film's collection on the fifth day was Rs 10 crores. After its five-day run, Game Changer's nett India collection stands at Rs 106.15 crores.

Makers of the Ram Charan-starrer have been accused of inflating numbers with its first-day collections. Right from day 1 they were trying to project that the film already earned more than Rs 100 crores. However, it finally hit that mark in India only on Tuesday. Game Changer's gross India collection stands at Rs 114.7 crores so far. Overseas the film has earned around Rs 26 crores, while Game Changer's worldwide collection stands at Rs 140.7 crores. Ram Gopal Varma has criticised the film for inflating both its budget and box office figures in a scathing social media post. "If G Costed some 450 cr then RRR in its extraordinary never before seen visual appeal should have costed 450 cr and if G film's first day collections are 186 cr on day 1, then PUSHPA 2 collections should have been 1,860 cr," he wrote on X. Game Changer's overall occupancy in Telugu language was 36.15 percent, while in Hindi the film's overall occupancy was at 11.19 percent. In the Telugu-



speaking belt, Kakinada had the highest occupancy of 78.25 percent with 37 shows, followed by Mahabubnagar which had an occupancy of 77.50 percent with just 4 shows. In the Hindi version, Chennai has the highest occupancy of 83 percent with 8 shows, followed by Bengaluru with an occupancy of 33 percent and 14 shows. In Mumbai's Game Changer's occupancy was at 11.75 percent with 364 shows and in Delhi-NCR it was 6.50 percent with 646 shows.

Game Changer has reportedly been made on a budget of Rs 450 crore, and it seems difficult that it will manage to break even. Produced by Dil Raju under the banner of Sri Venkateswara Creations, Game Changer also stars S. J. Suryah, Nassar, Brahmanandam, Vennela Kishore, and Murali Sharma in key roles. The film had its theatrical release on 10th January 2025.

Rakesh Roshan shares titbits from docu 'The Roshans'

Mumbai: Director Rakesh Roshan, known for movies like 'Karan Arjun', 'Koyla', 'Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai', 'Koi... Mil Gaya' and others, gears up for his upcoming streaming documentary, 'The Roshans.' The director took to the Stories section of his Instagram, and re-shared a few assets from the documentary. One of the units shows his son, Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan sharing anecdotes about him. There's another monochromatic picture of the director. Earlier, the director celebrated 25 years of his directorial 'Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai.' On the occasion of the film's 25th anniversary, his son took to his Instagram, and shared notes from his secret diary which he made 2 years ahead of his debut. The notes highlight the extensive prep work of the actor, and prove why he deserved to become an overnight sensation with 'Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai,' which was directed by his father Rakesh Roshan. He shared how



he would have been embarrassed to share these notes on a public platform but thought to do it anyway to celebrate the film in all spirit.

Saif Ali Khan tried to protect Kareena Kapoor, kids Taimur and Jeh from attacker; sustained injury to spine; intruder overpowered and locked in children's room



More details about the attempted burglary at Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor's Mumbai home have emerged. According to sources close to SCREEN, the attack took place in the room of Saif and Kareena's children, Taimur Ali Khan and Jeh Ali Khan. Kareena Kapoor was also at home during the incident. Upon spotting the intruder, Saif confronted the burglar head-on to protect his family. In his attempt to safeguard them, he was attacked by the thief with a knife. According to a report by Hindustan Times, Saif's son from his previous marriage to Amrita Singh, Ibrahim Ali Khan, was the one who rushed to his father's aid and took him to the hospital after. Ibrahim, 23, does not live with the family but immediately came to Saif and Kareena's home upon hearing about the break-in. He then helped to take his father to the hospital, as stated by Dr Niraj Uttamani, the COO of Lilavati Hospital.

Crime branch officials also revealed crucial developments about the intruder's actions. They confirmed that the accused was not captured on CCTV footage in the lift or the main lobby of the building, leading investigators to suspect that the burglar may have climbed all 12 floors through the shaft. The intruder is believed to have first entered the maid quarters at the back of the house, where he reportedly had an argument with the staff. He was then overpowered and locked in the children's room. However, the burglar managed to escape from there. Reports also indicate that the safety wall at the back entrance of the building is not very high and only one watchman is stationed there. As for Saif's condition, the hospital has confirmed to The Indian Express that the actor sustained a total of six wounds. Two of these are deep cuts, primarily on his back, with one wound near his spine. A minor injury was found on his neck, while the remaining wounds are superficial. Saif underwent neurosurgery, which has now been completed, and doctors are proceeding with the plastic surgery to treat the actor's injuries. Kareena's team has released a statement reassuring the public that while Saif is undergoing treatment, the rest of the family, including their children, is safe. The statement read: "There was an attempted burglary in Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan's residence last night. Saif had an injury on his arm for which he is in the hospital, undergoing a procedure. The rest of the family is doing fine. We request media and fans to be patient and not speculate any further as the Police is already doing their due investigations. Thank you all for your concern. Team Kareena Kapoor Khan." While Saif is now recovering, many celebrities, including Pooja Bhatt, Jr. NTR, and Kunal Kohli, have expressed their anger and concern over the incident.

Kabir Bedi: The actor who became a European heartthrob, shocked India with his 'open relationship', had his female fans scream 'We want your babies'

Kabir Bedi is perhaps Hindi cinema's OG Greek God. Born to a Punjabi father and English mother, the actor was blessed with good looks. In his career spanning five decades, Kabir worked in Bollywood, Europe, and Hollywood. Not just his career, but his personal life always made headlines. Having married four times, Kabir dated several women including Parveen Babi. His journey started when he joined All India Radio to arrange his college fees. Kabir Bedi's parents were Oxford graduates. However, instead of taking up high-paying jobs, they joined the freedom struggle. They welcomed Kabir Bedi just a year before Independence. But as they were both idealistic, financial crisis was common to them. This motivated a studious Kabir Bedi to take up a freelance job at All India Radio to earn his college fees.

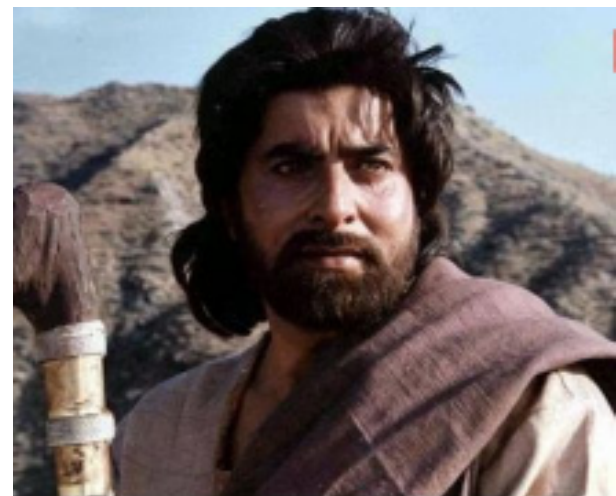
Here, as a reporter, a 20-year-old Kabir did the impossible. He became the only reporter to interview the iconic band Beatles. However, his achievement was short-lived after someone recorded another interview in the same cassette due to budget constraints in the government organisation. This incident angered Kabir, who decided to quit his job and move to Mumbai. With just Rs 700 in his pocket and a dream to become a filmmaker, Kabir headed to the city of dreams.

His next job was with an ad agency, where he worked as an ad filmmaker. In the first five-years of his life in Bombay, he worked in two different ad agencies as their film chief. It was during this time, he also met his first wife Protima Gauri. In an interview with Digital Commentary, Kabir said, "When I was working in the ad agency, I had become a senior executive quite early. The perks of this was that we were given a key to the bathroom. One day, I came to work and wanted to use the washroom, but didn't have the keys, so I entered my colleague Suresh Malik's cabin, and I asked him for the keys... there was a woman with him there and he introduced me to her, and when he did, I was struck by her. She was so beautiful and I was very attracted to her. But the problem was that she was a model. And I had decided as a filmmaker that I would never date a model because it will give a wrong impression. I said, 'Nice to meet you', and left. I knew this is not going to go anywhere, and I also had a girlfriend in Delhi at that time."

But destiny had other plans and the two eventually married. "Protima liked me too and she was everywhere I went, romance began between us and we ended up getting married."

Along with his love life, his career too changed when his boss from the ad agency cast him in a Girish Karnad's 1966 play Tughlaq. The play became a massive hit and this opened doors for Kabir to enter Bollywood with many producers reaching out to him with offers. Kabir, who wanted to become a filmmaker, saw acting as an opportunity to enter the industry. He featured in a couple of films, but it was Kuchhe Dhaage (1973), starring Vinod Khanna that brought him fame. This brought more offers. Five years into Bollywood, a team from Italy visited India as part of their Asian tour and hunt to find the finest actor who can play the main lead in the television series, Sandokan. Among the many actors, Kabir too was selected for an audition. He was called to Rome but at his own expenses. There, an already established actor in India, Kabir gave a full-fledged audition that included swimming, fencing, horse riding, drama scenes, love scenes and makeup trial. To his luck, he bagged the role which brought him fame. So much that when he once travelled to Spain to attend a book launch event, his female fans screamed at him: 'I want to have your babies', which ultimately became a viral headline.

Recalling the incident, Kabir told Bollywood Bubble, "I was in Spain. I had gone to attend a book launch event. It was on the top floor. Somehow I managed to get through the crowd and reach. But, as soon as I reached there, the manager came to me and said, 'You will have to leave immediately.' I was shocked. When he explained me the situation and massive crowd, I left the space. While I was trying to exit the venue... the female fans outside the venue started to scream: 'I want to have your baby' and this became a headline." To escape the crowd, like a scene from a dramatic film, Kabir climbed the roofs of the vehicles parked outside the venue and used them to cross the road. In the same interview, he said, "I was then summoned by the police for damaging about 36 vehicles. However, the store that had invited me for the book launch took the blame on them for not being able to manage the crowd and paid for the damages." The success of Sandokan opened doors of Hollywood for Kabir Bedi. The actor credits his childhood friends and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his brother Sanjay Gandhi for helping him learn horse riding



that helped him bag such roles. Among many small roles, he played the memorable Gobinda in the 1983 James Bond film Octopussy. Speaking to Digital Commentary, Kabir said, "Makers of James Bond were smart. I was very popular in Asia, Italy and Spain by then... they wanted to make their reach to these regions and they cast me in their film." This was also the time when Kabir's personal life was going through a shift. The actor told Digital Commentary, "At that time Protima and I wanted to stay together for the kids, but our intentions was to have affairs, so we decided to make it an open marriage. Eventually, that too didn't work for us and divorced each other. We remained friends all our life." At this time, Kabir was dating the Bollywood diva Parveen Babi. In his book, "Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Life of an Actor", the actor wrote, "Parveen was the balm for my wounded soul after I left my open marriage." Speaking about her, Kabir told Digital Commentary, "Parveen was very intelligent, smart, sensitive, and India's biggest actress. Us dating each other became a big deal with many blaming her for breaking my marriage. But, there has been no truth to it. My marriage was already broken." They dated for a couple of years, often attending events together. She accompanied him to his international trips. Kabir too would openly express his love for the actress but she was struggling with mental illness. In the same interview, Kabir said, "One of the reasons why our relationship ended is that when we went to London after Italy, I could see her situation worsening. I told her to take treatment and she was against it. We fought over this. She left me because of this. She had a paranoid mind and was scared that if the doctor will know about her condition, he will spread it in the industry, which will destroy her career. She left me, I didn't. But, media blamed me. They made headlines that due to my rejection she faced mental illness. Truth is she had mental illness even before she met me."

And just like that their years of relationship came to an end. Kabir married British-born fashion designer Susan Humphreys. With her, he had his third child, a son Adam, while he shared a daughter Pooja and son Siddharth with his first wife. This too ended in divorce after a decade. Kabir fell in love for a third time and married Nikki Bedi. In an interview with Lehren Retro, the actor told: "I have been married twice. Both ended but I always owned my responsibilities and maintain good relationship with my former partners. Currently, I am with Nikki and this is going to be my last relationship." But this marriage too resulted in divorce. Unlike his previous relations, this one was on a mutual note.

He told Bollywood Bubble, "Nikki and I, we tried to keep our relationship, but her career was in London and mine in India, we tried long distance for three years, but it didn't work out for us. Like any sensible adult, we decided to part ways. So not always you end relationship on a bad note, they are sometimes mutual." While there were a set of female fans outside India who wanted to have his babies, in India, women were quite afraid of him. After all, for them, he was the man who turned Rekha into crocodile food in Khoon Bhari Maang (1988). He told Bollywood Bubble, "After the film's release, there was an entire generation of woman who feared me. Many of them walked up to me and told me: 'Hum apse bahaut darte the'." Khoon Bhari Maang was more like a Bollywood comeback film for the actor, who was working in Hollywood. "I received a call from Rakesh Roshan, who said I have a unique lead role for you but its villainous and no hero is agreeing to take up the role here in India. I was like, 'Who is the heroine?', he said, 'Rekha!', quickly I replied, 'Done', he told Bollywood Bubble. In 2016, he married British-born Parveen Dusanji; his fourth wedding took place just a day before his 70th birthday.

Rishabh Pant to play Ranji Trophy after 7 years, confirms availability for Delhi's next match



GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Pant's confirmation came hours after a Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) official said that he and Virat Kohli must turn up for Ranji Trophy matches. "Rishabh Pant has confirmed that he will be available for selection for Delhi's Ranji Trophy game against Saurashtra in Rajkot," DDCA secretary Ashok

Sharma told The Indian Express after the India keeper and senior batter Virat Kohli were earlier named in the probables list for the last two league stage matches of the Ranji Trophy.

Pant, who featured in all five Tests for India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, was recently dropped from India's T20I squad for the upcoming five-match series against England. Pant is the latest member of the Test team to confirm his availability for the domestic tournament after the BCCI tightened the screws on the national team players after their 3-1 series defeat in Australia. Earlier, Shubman Gill was confirmed to feature in Punjab's match against Karnataka. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal also confirmed his availability to participate in Mumbai's next match while Test captain Rohit Sharma had started training with the Ranji squad in Mumbai on Tuesday. The 27-year-old has featured in all 10 Tests that India have played since September 2024 after making one appearance in the season-opening Duleep Trophy. Pant's last Ranji Trophy appearance was in the 2017-18 final against Vidarbha in December 2017.

India's Paris Olympics winners, including star shooters, complain about discoloured medals, want them replaced

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

The medals of some of India's Olympic heroes from the 2024 Paris Games, and those belonging to many of the greatest athletes from around the world, have shown signs of rust and deterioration, and could be replaced.

Some of the Indians who climbed the podium in Paris and they said their prized possessions were not in the best condition. Shooting bronze medallists Swapnil Kusale and Sarabjot Singh have complained that the colour had started to come off within days of the podium ceremony. "The colour of the bronze medal came off within seven days of winning the medal. When I reached India, friends, coaches and fellow shooters also pointed that out. An Olympic medal is a cherished possession for a shooter and the removal of coating was visible. All who saw the medal noticed that," Kusale, 50m 3-Position bronze medallist, said. Sarabjot, who won the mixed team medal with Manu Bhaker, also had a similar complaint. "I too had noticed the discolouring of the medal a few days after the ceremony and my team contacted the concerned authorities for the issue to be highlighted. Olympic medals inspire youth as well as current shooters to achieve Olympic glory and its deterioration should not happen," the pistol shooter said. Double medallist Manu Bhaker's two bronze medals — in the 10m air pistol individual and mixed events — have also lost their colour, PTI reported. It is in stark contrast to Olympic medals given decades ago that have largely maintained their pristine condition.

"It has been more than 40 years since Hardik Singh's granduncle Gurmail Singh won the Moscow Olympic hockey gold and that medal has seen years without any discolouration. The Paris Olympics bronze medal won by Hardik had discoloured and such things should not happen," said the hockey bronze medallist's father Varinder Pal Singh. The IOC said that Paris organisers are in contact with the national Olympic committees of the athletes concerned and that the replacement process will start in a few weeks. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) said that if any medallist approaches it in this regard, it will take up the case with the world body.

"An Olympic medal is a lifetime achievement and a cherished memory, and if any athlete feels that their medal has deteriorated because of poor quality and needs a replacement, we will request the IOC for replacement," IOA president PT Usha said. It's a problem that a lot of achievers from other countries are also facing. Despite the ab-



sence of any official figure from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the French Olympic Committee or Monnaie de Paris (the mint that produced the medals), it has been speculated that the number of such damaged medals is over 100. Problem beyond borders Even before the Games had ended, American skateboarder Nyjah Huston had posted a video of his bronze medal that he said had deteriorated. Recently, French swimmers Yohann Ndoye-Brouard and Clément Secchi posted images of their medals on social media, saying they looked like "crocodile skin," or ones dating back to 1924 rather than 2024. These complaints have reached the IOC and the French mint and they have decided to replace a number of such medals. "The Monnaie de Paris has taken the issue of damaged medals very seriously since the first exchange requests in August, and has mobilised its internal teams," the French mint was quoted as saying by the Associated Press. "Since then, the company has modified and optimised its relative vanishing process. The Monnaie de Paris will replace all damaged medals at the athletes' request during the first quarter of 2025."

The medals were designed by Parisian jewelry house Chaumet and each of them contained a hexagonal, polished chunk of iron taken from the Eiffel Tower. Kusale is hopeful of getting a replacement and believes an Olympic medal, which can provide encouragement to future generations, should stay in their original condition for as long as possible. "I believe in the Olympic legacy and the medals of sporting legends, whom we would see on TV and get inspired by watching them win Olympic medals, should retain their original form and the legacy should not be spoiled. I will be open to accepting the new medals as per the IOC and it should be done for all," he said.

Women's Hockey India League: Soorma beat Odisha Warriors, move to the top of the table

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

The last time Jude Menezes and Janneke Schopmann faced off in Ranchi, exactly a year ago, it ended in a win for the Japan coach; an outcome that cost India a place at the Paris Olympics. Although Wednesday's contest between the two tacticians wasn't of that big a consequence, the former India international once again outwitted the Dutch Olympic gold medallist in the Women's Hockey India League. And in doing so, Menezes' Soorma Hockey Club ensured they'll have a target on their back for the rest of the tournament. With India stalwart Savita Punia in goal, Soorma enhanced their reputation with a well-worked 2-1 win over Odisha Warriors, the side managed by former India coach Schopmann having a very strong squad on paper.

Young attacker Hina Bano (6th minute) opened the account for Soorma Hockey Club and Sonam (47') doubled their lead in the last quarter. Freeke Moes (57') brought the Warriors back in contention by pulling one back with three minutes left to play. But Soorma held on for a crucial win. Odisha ended strongly, just like they started — within minutes of



the push-back, Baljeet Kaur weaved her way into the opposition circle and forced Soorma goalkeeper Savita into action. But it was Soorma who were more potent. Playing on the left wing, Ajmina Kujur launched a counterattack and played the ball into the 'D'. It found Hina, who deflected the ball past Jocelyn Bartram to score the first goal of the game.

Stunned by the early blow, Odisha responded when Sakshi Rana earned a penalty corner minutes later but Ishika Chaudhary was unable to guide the ball towards goal. They continued to press forward in search of the equaliser and Moes had an opportunity close to the end of the quarter, but her shot sailed off target. The second quarter, too, was an

end-to-end affair with both teams trying to assert themselves on the field. Soorma created the majority of the opportunities as the quarter progressed but were missing the finishing touch. It was the same with Warriors as well — with six minutes left in the quarter, Moes earned a penalty corner but Claire Colwill failed to bypass Savita and her defenders. Moes continued to threaten down the right wing and pressurise Soorma's defence but failed to create a scoring chance. Moes was easily the standout player for the Warriors — perhaps also the most impactful outfield player overall — as she weaved past multiple players and earned another penalty corner with three minutes left in the third quarter but Bibbi Jansen's flick on

goal was swatted away by Savita and Soorma maintained their one-goal lead heading into the last quarter. As Odisha pushed forward in search of an equaliser, they opened themselves to the threat of counterattack and Soorma capitalised. Charlotte Englebert crossed to Sonam from the right wing, who dinked the ball into goal and doubled Soorma's lead early in the fourth quarter. Enjoying a two-goal cushion, Soorma defended resolutely to thwart Odisha's attempts to claw back into the match.

But the in-form Moes ensured a thrilling end to the tie by pinching the ball high on the pitch and unleashing a reverse hit to beat Savita in goal and bring the Warriors back into the game.

'I know fake news is easy to spread..': Jasprit Bumrah dismisses recent 'bed rest' reports



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Jasprit Bumrah called out a post on X that claimed he was advised bed rest for his back injury. (BCCI) Jasprit Bumrah called out a post on X that claimed he was advised bed rest for his back injury. (BCCI) India pacer Jasprit Bumrah has quashed reports of him being advised bed rest for the back injury he sustained during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia on Wednesday. According to the said report, Bumrah was advised bed rest at home and was urged to not push for a quick return to competitive cricket. The original tweet from a content aggregator on X was deleted after Bumrah's reaction with a quote tweet. Reacting to the original post, Bumrah wrote: "I know fake news is

easy to spread but this made me laugh. Sources unreliable." had reported last Sunday 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. Bumrah's injury concerns had forced India to defer their plans to announce the 15-member squad for the Champions Trophy by a week. Jasprit Bumrah's reaction to a post on X. Jasprit Bumrah's reaction to a post on X.

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. "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," a BCCI source had told the Indian Express. 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.

2000 runs at 100-plus average: Devdutt Padikkal's record-breaking Vijay Hazare Trophy form powers Karnataka towards final berth

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

Devdutt Padikkal's incredible purple patch continued unabated as he smashed his seventh consecutive fifty-plus score in the Vijay Hazare Trophy to power Karnataka towards the final of the 2024-25 edition on Wednesday. Steering Karnataka's 238-run chase against Haryana at the Kotambi Stadium in Vadodara, Padikkal opened the batting with Mayank Agarwal and led the chase after the skipper fell for a three-ball duck. During Wednesday's knock, Padikkal reached 2000 List A runs in only his 31st innings, averaging over 83 while crossing the mark. The 24-year-old completed 2000 runs in VHT with a 100-plus average in his 27th innings. Padikkal also equalled his own tournament record of registering seven consecutive fifty-plus scores in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, matching the feat from a stupendous 2021-22 season, before falling on 86 off 113 deliveries. His current streak spanning across two different seasons read: 86, 102, 114, 93*, 70, 117 and 71*.

Returning after the four-month long Australia tour, Padikkal had smashed a 99-ball 102 in his first Vijay Hazare Trophy appearance since 2023 in the quarter-final against Baroda. The tall left-hander has piled on runs at a blistering pace in List A cricket, majority of which have come in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Padikkal has tallied 9 hundreds in the



Vijay Hazare Trophy in only 27 innings since debut in 2019. In the 2020-21 VHT season, Padikkal recorded seven consecutive fifty-plus scores in as many innings. He also smashed four consecutive centuries in the edition, becoming the first Indian batter to achieve the feat in List A cricket. The mark has only been bettered by Tamil Nadu's N Jagadeesan, who smashed five consecutive hundreds in the 2022-23 edition of the tournament. Karnataka's last VHT title and final appearance came in the 2019-20 season when Padikkal topped the charts in his debut season with 609 runs.

India Open badminton: Close friends Anupama Upadhyaya & Rakshitha Ramraj keen to take the next step on big circuit

GNS News Agency, Jan 21

"I couldn't play hard smashes because she returned everything," Rakshitha Sree Santosh Ramraj burst out smiling, speaking about Anupama Upadhyaya, her opponent on the day. "By the time she hit 20 strokes, I was tired. I had back pain for the past month and started playing only a week ago. My stamina was zero, and this girl knew it!" More hearty laughter. "And she made me do the tosses!" "Come on! Don't say that. The court was damn slow!" Anupama chimed in, defending as well as she did on court. "How can I hit smashes at you? You'll convert it, and then I will have to run more... Everyone is playing only rallies here." But Rakshitha was having none of it: "But you know I was injured!"

They emerged from the playing area after a hard-fought, sometimes scrappy, first-round match at the India Open on Wednesday, still sweating profusely after their 43-minute battle. Anupama, 19, had gotten the better of Rakshitha, 17, in the all-Indian clash 21-17, 21-18. But as they started speaking to the media, the intensity made way for light-hearted banter. The foes on the court quickly reverted to being the friends that they are, off it.

Two of India's brightest young talents, who train together at Pullela Gopichand's academy, were not supposed to face each other as per the original draw. Anupama was PV Sindhu's first-round opponent. But the tournament regulations mandated for a redraw after withdrawals, and it pitted the two pals against each other. "We have played against each other four or five times, including in juniors. Since 2019, we've played in the world junior selection trials, and now we're competing at the senior level," Anupama said. "It's really good to play against a friend and partner who goes to the same academy. We attend tournaments together and also stay together. We enjoy, dance, watch reels, go out, and shop." Anupama, as the older and higher-ranked player, has played in a few big events on tour. But for Rakshitha, the India Open was her first Super 750 level event. Both have high hopes for 2025, one of the common targets being winning a Super 300 event. "I want to find a standard at this level so I can compete against top-10 players. This is my first time playing the India Open Super 750. Last year, I was just watching all of them play," Anupama said. "I also played at the Malaysia Open, against Pornpawee Chochuwong and could have won that match but in the third game, I wasn't feeling well, had stomach pain. Last year, I played my first 750 event at the China Masters and won my match against Beiwen Zhang. All this helps me know that I can be their equal. I have the speed and ability against them." Rakshitha, who is from Tamil Nadu, has been at the Gopichand Academy longer while Anupama only joined last October, but they have quickly developed a bond. "Her smash power is really good, as is her footwork. Her deceptive drops from mid-court are impressive," Anupama said of Rakshitha, who is a fan of Tai Tzu-Ying. "Her defence is extremely good! She retrieves everything. That is the worst part of playing her," Rakshitha responded in grudging ad-



miration about Anupama. On their journey from here on, as they look to climb the world rankings, the two teenagers have evidently got each other's back.

Gauff, Osaka, Pegula, Sabalenka advance to third round of Australian Open

Melbourne: American youngster Coco Gauff extended her winning streak to nine matches with a 6-3, 7-5 defeat of Jodie Burrage in the Australian Open second round. The American had to come from 5-3 down in the second set to reel in the World No. 173. Gauff's speed and consistency saw her ease to a 3-1 second-set lead over Burrage. However, the Briton threatened to turn the tables with a run of four straight games before Gauff responded with four straight of her own to get over the finishing line. With a win, Gauff set up a third-round encounter with 2021 US Open finalist and No. 30 seed Leylah Fernandez, who defeated Cristina Bucsa 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 for a place in the third round. In other Day 4 action, two-time Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka secured a berth in the third round of a Grand Slam for the first time since giving birth in July 2023. The world No. 51 Japanese rallied from a set down to earn a 1-6, 6-1, 6-3 win over 20th seed Karolina Muchova on Wednesday after battling for almost two hours. Osaka finished with 33 winners to 27 unforced errors, while Muchova hit 27 winners to 29 unforced errors. The four-time major winner's next opponent is Switzerland's Belinda Bencic, who is competing in her first Grand Slam since giving birth last year. Bencic advanced with a straight-sets dismissal of Dutchwoman Suzan Lamens, 6-1 7-6(3). In another match, seventh seed Jessica Pegula snapped her losing streak against 2018 semifinalist Elise Mertens with a 6-4 6-2 victory at Margaret Court Arena. Pegula, who reached three straight Australian Open quarterfinals between 2021 and 2023, needed 1 hour and 11 minutes to beat Mertens, the highest-ranked unseeded player.