

INDIAN CHRONICLE

Two MGNREGS workers die, five injured after rocks cave in Siddipet

Siddipet: Two workers of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) died and five others sustained serious injuries after rocks caved in on them. The incident happened while they were working at Goverdhanagiri village in Akkannapet mandal on Thursday. The two victims were identified as Kandarapu Sarojana (52) and her daughter Mamatha (25). The injured were rushed to a local hospital. Further details are awaited.

Andhra Pradesh to roll out WhatsApp governance

Hyderabad: No more running around government officials for certificates and other services if you are in Andhra Pradesh. Just get them sitting at home through your WhatsApp. The Chandrababu-led government is set to launch WhatsApp governance on Thursday (January 30), becoming the first State in India to roll out such a facility. The idea first came after the TDP government signed an MoU with Meta in October 2024. Initially, the initiative will offer around 161 services, including Endowments, Energy, Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation, Revenue, Anna Canteens, Chief Minister's Relief Fund and Municipal Administration. The government aims to increase the services in the coming days.

Maha Kumbh stampede: PIL in SC seeks action against officials



GNS News Agency, Jan 30
New Delhi: Following the tragic stampede at the Maha Kumbh in which at least 30 people were killed and around 60 others injured, a public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed before the Supreme Court seeking legal action against authorities and officials for their "negligent conduct". The petition said the incident depicts the drastic condition and fate of people due to the lapses, negligence and utter failure of administration purported by the government authorities. Apart from the "failure of maintaining and administering the supervision", the plea alleged that the authorities had also failed in controlling the crowd gathered for the event.

the Maha Kumbh 2025 stampede in Uttar Pradesh which took around 30 lives and left several injured, it is clear and visible to mention that nothing in the administration activity of our country has changed wherein such actions could have been avoided by showing reasonable duty of care and upfront repair and development activity," stated the petition. Quite often there are reports of casualties occurring due to overcrowding and lack of management by the administration and its municipal bodies, it highlighted, adding that every time such incidents take place "we have not learnt anything from the past". As per the petition, the event of Kumbh is one of the biggest and leading religious events of the nation, and hence, it becomes the collective responsibility of all states to ensure the safety and secure visit of its respective residents. "All states shall have to come forward for proper facilitation, security, medical facility, transportation and other facilities for their respective residents who are going to Maha Kumbh. Whenever such incidents happen, mostly the common and poor people become victims," the petition said. "There are several questions which are brewing up from this horrific incident of stampede thereby questioning the duty and lapse of State Government and Municipal Corporations," it added. Similar incidents of stampede had also taken place earlier in religious festivals, ceremonies and events, the petition said. It prayed that the Uttar Pradesh government be directed to file a status report on the Maha Kumbh 2025 stampede incident and initiate legal action against the authorities and officials for their negligent conduct.

CM Revanth Reddy Pays Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on His Death Anniversary

GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of his death anniversary. Remembering the Father of the Nation, who led the struggle for independence through non-violence and satyagraha, the Chief Minister honored his legacy. Marking the occasion of 'Martyrs' Remembrance Day,' Revanth Reddy also paid homage to the great souls who sacrificed their lives for the nation. He emphasized the importance of Gandhian values in contemporary society and reiterated the need to uphold the principles of truth and non-violence.



Telangana Congress online poll boomerangs; people call for return of KCR

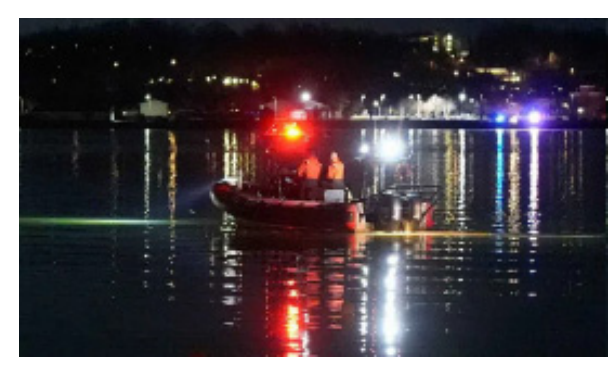


GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Hyderabad: An attempt by the Telangana Congress to insult the previous BRS regime by calling it 'farmhouse governance' through an online poll on X is boomeranging, with people calling for the return of the K Chandrashekhara Rao government. As part of an attempt to showcase the

"support" extended to the State government by the people, the official handle of Telangana Congress, @INCTelangana, launched an online poll asking X users which governance they preferred. The options were "A. Farmhouse governance" and "B. Prajalla Vaddaku Palana", with the Congress calling itself the people's government. However, as voting progressed, the trend favoured what the Congress tried to belittle by calling it the farmhouse governance, with more than 70 percent of the voters calling for the return of the BRS led by Chandrashekhara Rao. Sharing a screenshot of the Telangana Congress X handle's poll, in which the more than 70 percent favoured the BRS regime, BRS spokesperson Putta Vishnuvardhan Reddy said the message was clear. Many X users laughed their hearts at the way the poll boomeranged on the Congress and wanted the details not to be deleted, with a few insisting that screenshots of the Congress debacle be saved. There were a few, who criticised the Congress asking them how many times they would face such embarrassing moments.

Washington plane crash: 18 bodies pulled out from Potomac River

GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Washington: A mid-air collision over the Potomac River near Washington's Reagan National Airport has claimed at least 18 lives, as rescue teams continue to search for survivors, according to local media reports. The crash involved American Airlines Flight 5342 and a Black Hawk military helicopter. The military helicopter was carrying three soldiers when it collided with the regional passenger jet, which had 60 passengers and four crew members on board while approaching the airport for landing. No survivors have been found so far, CNN reported.



The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) confirmed that the collision occurred around 9 pm local time on Wednesday. As a result, all takeoffs and landings at the airport were temporarily halted while emergency teams worked at the crash site. The Pentagon and the Army are investigating the crash, said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. He wrote that the investigation was "launched immediately." "Absolutely tragic. Search and rescue efforts still ongoing. Prayers for all impacted souls, and their families," Hegseth added. President Donald Trump issued a statement expressing his concern over the tragic accident. "I have been fully briefed on the terrible accident which just took place at Reagan National Airport. May God bless their souls. Thank you for the incredible work being done by our first respond-

KTR slams Congress for keeping farmers in Telangana waiting for support

GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao launched a scathing attack on the Congress government for the never-ending wait of Telangana farmers for support in its one year of rule. He said farmers continue to wait for everything - from Rythu Bandhu to Rythu Bima, crop loan waiver to power and water supply, and urea supply to crop procurement. Sharing media reports on the farmers' plight on X, Rama Rao criticised the government for ignoring crucial issues, leaving farmers in Palamuru, Wyr, Bayyaram and Jagtial struggling for support prices for crucial crops, power, and fertilisers. "Farmers are being forced to abandon cultivation and hit the streets for their basic needs," he said. Contrasting it with the BRS regime, he said farmers, who once cultivated with confidence under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's rule, were now filled with sorrow and uncertainty under the Congress government. He warned that the progress achieved over the last decade was slipping away due to the current government's inefficiency. He called on for farmers and people of Telangana to take up the fight for their rights.



Harish Rao questions Congress government over non-payment of retirement benefits



GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao has demanded the State government to immediately release retirement benefits to nearly 8,000 retired employees and teachers since March 2024. He warned that if the government remains indifferent, the BRS would launch

a fight to secure justice for the retirees. In a statement, Harish Rao stated that dues ranging between Rs 80-90 lakh per employee, including provident fund, gratuity, insurance, commutation, and surrender leave benefits, had not been cleared for the last one year. Calling it shameful, he called out the government for its negligence and ignorance to the plight of those who dedicated three decades of service. "Is this how the government repays employees and teachers who served the people for 30 years?" he asked, explaining out how retirees were suffering mental anguish, falling ill, and running from offices to courts to claim their rightful benefits. Pointing to their struggles, Harish Rao said, "One is waiting for money for his child's wedding, another for her son's education, and another for medical treatment for his ailing wife. Yet, the government has shown no concern for months." He accused the Revanth Reddy government of cruelty towards retired employees and teachers, holding it responsible for their financial distress and suffering.

Telangana students to lose PG medical seat quota after SC ruling



GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Hyderabad: Meritorious students from Telangana are set to lose their domicile-based reservations in Post Graduate (PG) medical seats from the next academic year. The change will allow students from other States who have completed MBBS in Telangana to compete for super-specialty medical seats under the Competent Authority in Telangana. The Supreme Court's judgment on Wednesday declaring domicile-based reservations in PG medical seats as 'impermissible' also means that students from Telangana will lose all such reservations within the State.

without the domicile reservation. "Isn't it unfair to deny a candidate an opportunity in their native State, where they were born and raised, just because they completed their MBBS in another State? How is it equitable to grant State quota benefits to students who have resided in the State only for 5 years and at the same time deny benefits to domiciled students?" asks Dr Sunil T, a Nalgonda native who did his MBBS in Karnataka. Aravind Varier, well-known for his data analysis on platform X (@VarierAravind) said: "It would be difficult for the South Indian States to maintain the quality of healthcare without domicile reservation for PG medical seats."

Thousands of tribals congregate at Keslapur in Telangana

GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Adilabad: Thousands of tribals visited the Nagoba temple as part of the seven-day-long annual Nagoba jatara being celebrated at Keslapur village in Indervilli mandal on Thursday. Nearly one lakh aboriginal tribals and non-tribals belonging to various parts of Telangana, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha made a beeline to Keslapur from early morning till midnight on Wednesday and Thursday. They thronged the temple and performed special prayers. Presented naivedyam as a token of gratitude for the wellbeing of their families. The sleepy village has come alive with the presence of the devotees. They shopped for groceries and other home appliances at the Jatara. They indulged in fun games at the

fair. They camped under the make-shift tents and dined along with their relatives and friends. They also visited stalls displayed by various government departments. Security arrangements were made by deploying 600 policemen to prevent untoward incidents at the venue of the fair. Barricading was done to prevent stampedes. Parking lots were created on the outskirts of the village. Fire tenders were kept ready and the medical department's staff was tasked to handle emergencies. Meanwhile, 52 newly wedded women were inducted into the Mesram clan during the customary Bheting or introduction of the women conducted on Wednesday night. The unique programme was held in presence of elders of the clan. The women visited the deity of the temple and took blessings of the elders, attaining status of daughters-in-law.

Kavitha raises concern over rising food poisoning cases in Telangana's government schools, hostels

GNS News Agency, Jan 30
Hyderabad: BRS MLC K Kavitha has raised serious concern over the rising incidents of food poisoning in government schools and hostels across Telangana, calling it a reflection of administrative neglect under the Congress government. "In just one day, 50 cases have been reported across three districts. How many more innocent children must suffer before this irresponsible government wakes up (to take action)?" she questioned. Taking to X, Kavitha said while Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy was obsessed with political theatrics and photo-ops, students who were the future of Telangana, were suffering due to negligence. She urged the State government to address the issue immediately. She reminded that every child had the right to safe, nutritious food and dignity.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Maha Kumbh tragedy

A great tragedy has cast a shadow on the Maha Kumbh festival, the most magnificent spectacle India presents to the world every 12 years. Better crowd management could have prevented the stampede that took place in the Sangam area as crores of pilgrims jostled to take a holy dip on the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya in the wee hours of Wednesday. Ensuring a safe pilgrimage was an enormous challenge from the outset, and it is apparent that some lapses led to the pre-dawn melee. Anticipating a huge congregation, the mela authorities had issued an advisory on Tuesday, urging devotees to follow safety guidelines. However, the organisers and security personnel were caught off guard when some pilgrims climbed over the barricades at Akhara Marg.

The Uttar Pradesh Government has tried to downplay the incident, probably with the intention of averting panic and avoiding negative publicity, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered condolences to the devotees who lost their family members. A thorough probe is a must to find out how the situation spun out of control and who all were guilty of dereliction of duty. Creating a veil of secrecy will only fuel rumours and misinformation. The administration did appeal to devotees to bathe at the first ghats they reached so as to prevent overcrowding, while emphasising that all ghats at Sangam were equally sacred. However, this appeal should have been backed by proactive steps to make pilgrims move ahead in a disciplined way. The Sangam stampede should prompt the mela organisers to review security arrangements and to course correction. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that the government's first priority is to ensure the safety of devotees. This should be the way forward during the remaining four weeks of the Maha Kumbh. The spectre of death should not be allowed to mar a festival that proudly showcases India's spiritual grandeur.

Pune on my plate: SPPU's eateries are bound to satiate your hunger, without pinching your pocket



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

The sprawling campus of Savitribai Phule Pune University has its three prominent eateries, which help students and visitors assuage their hunger pangs. The open air canteen near the Department of English was once one of the most popular joints which drew a large crowd. But, now the refurbished canteens and other eateries have taken their place. Located under a banyan tree, Adarsh Canteen is one of the most popular eating spots on the campus. Located near the Jaykar Library, this canteen was recently refurbished in terms of management and transport. Tea is the most ordered beverage here as it is priced at Rs 10 a cup and coffee at Rs 20. The receptionist mentioned the canteen was on the verge of a makeover and a new menu will be unveiled soon. Shilpa Sanap, a student from the department of sociology, frequents the canteen as it is affordable. "I do like the tea served here," she said. Adarsh canteen is expected to run full swing with a complete menu in a fortnight. Like the Adarsh canteen, the food court has also undergone an infrastructure upgrade with new tables and wall fans fitted around the corners. The food court, located in front of the PUMBA (Pune University Masters of Business Administration) department, is a popular destination among foodies as it hosts multiple food outlets in a single area. Visitors here can get snacks, lunch (veg and non veg), beverages and desserts. Eateries at the food court are just as considerate about the taste as they are about distinct choices of visitors. There are a total of seven food outlets in the food court that present varieties of Indian and Chinese dishes.

Ranjit Group and Adarsh, two of the outlets at the food court, provide affordable breakfast varieties like poha, samosas, vada pav, sheera as well as idli and sambhar vada for south Indian breakfast. The most costly breakfast options are sambhar vada for Rs 35 a plate at Ranjit and pav bhaji at Rs 40 from Adarsh outlet. Poha with tea remains the most popular choice among visitors for being the cheapest at Rs 22 at Ranjit and Rs 20 at Adarsh Group. The veg thali from Aniket, priced at a reasonable Rs 80, comes with rice, chapati and two sabzis, making for a filling meal. Usually the outlets at the food court run from 7 am till 10pm. Route 93 dishes out chinese fast food and beverages which are affordable and tasty. The outlet has ample varieties of food like manchurian, noodles and schezwan rice, both veg and non veg. The most preferred meal here is chicken fried rice which comes at Rs 90 for a half plate, Rs 120 for a full one and thick chocolate shake, which comes at Rs 80, on the side. The food court is bustling during the wee hours as apart from the students of SPPU, students from a nearby college flock to the food court to assuage their hunger. A group of students from Modern College said they regularly visit the food court as it is accessible and comparatively affordable as compared to nearby food outlets. They also highlighted the hygiene here. "I come regularly here, but only two places provide hygienic food. One is Aniket outlet and the other is route 93," said Vikas Dendale, a student at Modern college.

Guest house canteen There is one more eatery located on campus in an inconspicuous spot. Guest House Canteen, adjacent to the Department of Education, provides breakfast items like poha, samosa and bread patties.

The price range here is identical to the other two canteens. The visitors here are very few and usually are the ones who occasionally visit here for a cup of tea. "I came here after a year. It remains open till 3pm and they do provide lunch here, but the students prefer the food court because of the variety of food items it provides," said a faculty member at the technology department. The food facilities in the campus have kept pace with the change in food habits and taste buds of the students and others.

Airport Customs arrest Tanzania national for smuggling cocaine worth Rs 7.5 crore



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Mumbai Customs on Friday arrested a 47-year-old Tanzanian national, who was detained at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on January 19 for allegedly trying to smuggle cocaine worth Rs 7.5 crore into India by concealing the contraband inside his body. Lukhmani Fahadi Mawaki was detained by Customs on the basis of passenger profiling. According to Customs officers, Mawaki gorged out around 17 capsules in pallet form at the airport's washroom. Later at the Sir JJ Hospital, 38 more capsules were recovered from him over January

20-23. According to the Customs officers, 55 capsules containing a white-coloured crumbled substance (cocaine) weighing 751 grams and priced at Rs 7.51 crore was recovered from the Tanzanian.

The accused had hidden the capsules inside his body as well as ingested them, the Customs officers said. The accused was subsequently arrested under relevant sections of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Meanwhile, Customs officers at the airport also seized smuggled gold and foreign currencies. During January 24-25, officers at Airport Commissionerate, Mumbai, Zone-III, seized 1.16 kg gold valued at Rs 86.68 lakh in two separate cases and foreign currency equivalent to Rs 22.40 lakh in one case. Two passengers arriving from Baku and Jeddah were intercepted by Customs and 24-karat gold dust in wax form weighing 1,010 grams and valued at Rs 75.47 lakh, and 24-karat gold bars weighing 150 grams and valued at Rs 11.20 lakh were seized. The gold was concealed inside their bodies and shoes of the passengers, Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officers said. One of the passengers was arrested under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962. The AIU also intercepted a passenger departing from Mumbai to Dubai and recovered foreign currency (one lakh Saudi Riyal), equivalent to Rs 22.40 lakh. The currency was concealed inside clothes, the agency said.

Upset over pay, Punjab NHM employees to march to poll-bound Delhi to 'expose' AAP governance

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

On February 1, employees under the National Health Mission (NHM) in Punjab will be marching towards the poll-bound New Delhi "to expose" Aam Adami Party and its leader Arvind Kejriwal. Dr Wahid Malerkotla, state president of NHM employees union, Punjab, said, the contractual employees will distribute pamphlets in the markets of Delhi to highlight AAP government's breach of promises in Punjab. "The 28 meetings held with the current Punjab government after coming to power have only proven to be hollow assurances," Dr Malerkotla said.

Punjab has approximately 9,200 medical, paramedical, and clerical health employees recruited by the state government under the National Health Mission for the past 18 years on "meagre" salaries. Employees are hired under National Health Mission, a Central Government programme to ensure quality and affordable healthcare services, on contract basis on a 60:40 pay ratio to be borne by the Central and State governments respectively. The Centre has also given the states the option to regularise the employees or hike the wages.

"However, the 28 meetings held between the Punjab government and the NHM Employees Union Punjab's state committee over the last three years have only resulted in verbal assurances. When AAP was campaigning ahead of 2022 polls in Punjab, they used to assure us of regular jobs and rationalisation of salaries on a par with regular employees but nothing has been done till date. Hence, we will be going in the streets of Delhi to tell the truth to Delhi voters as what AAP is doing in Punjab," said Avtar Singh, from NHM employees association's Mansa unit. NHM was earlier National Rural Health Mission when it was launched in 2008 with an aim to strengthen the rural health facilities. After five years, it was renamed NHM. Initially, the salary was decided to be split between the Central and state governments on a 3:1 ratio. After few years, this state's share was raised to 40 per cent and Centre's share reduced to 60 per cent. "In 2008, a staff nurse used to be paid Rs 8,500 per month, a computer operator Rs 6,500, auxiliary nursing midwife (ANM) Rs 6,000, while the rest of the staff got Rs 10,000 per month. The pay of the same staff after working for 17 years have been hiked to Rs 27,000 (staff nurse), Rs 24,000 (computer operator), Rs 23,000 (ANM), and Rs 30,000 for other clerical staff, which is too low," said Avtar Singh. The new recruits now get a monthly salary of Rs



10,000 each for ANM and computer operators, Rs 12,000 for staff nurse, community health officer and ayurvedic doctor get Rs 20,000 each on monthly basis.

"However the salary structure is decided by the state government and if the state will increase the package...the Centre will add 60 per cent of their share and state will have to add 40 per cent in that. But just because the state doesn't want to shell out larger share of 40 per cent they continue to give meagre salaries to NHM staff," Avtar Singh explained. "After an online meeting of the union held on Monday, all the employees in Punjab unanimously decided that during the Delhi Assembly elections in February, they would protest against the Punjab government by organising exposé rallies and distributing pamphlets," said Kiranjit Kaur, NHM Employees Union state committee member. As a first step, on February 1, 2025, the 'pol khol' campaign will be launched in New Delhi constituency of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, said state general secretary Gulshan Sharma from Faridkot. NHM Employees Union state committee pointed out that since 2017, neighbouring state of Haryana has been regularising NHM employees by enacting service laws and providing benefits such as regular pay scales, pay commission benefits, DA, and medical reimbursements and their salaries are at par with regular employees. The main demands of NHM employees include regularization, adoption of service laws like Haryana, an increase in current salaries, loyalty bonuses, a leave policy with paid leaves, gratuity, etc. Avtar Singh mentioned that with the announcement of protest in Delhi, the Punjab government has called them for a meeting on February 5, "but we have not postponed our protest plan".

CM Siddaramaiah's plea against MUDA 'scam' probe: Karnataka High Court adjourns hearing to March 22

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

MUDA scam Siddaramaiah and a former land owner J Devaraju are appealing against the September 24, 2024, order of Justice M Nagarasanna facilitating the investigation into the MUDA land grant. A division bench of the Karnataka High Court on Saturday adjourned to March 22 the hearing into appeals filed by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and a former Mysuru landowner against a single judge's order facilitating an investigation into alleged illegalities in the allotment of 14 MUDA housing sites to the CM's wife.

A bench comprising Chief Justice N V Anjaria and Justice M I Arun adjourned the matter after the counsel for Siddaramaiah sought time to facilitate the appearance of senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi on his behalf. Siddaramaiah and a former land owner J Devaraju are appealing against the September 24, 2024, order of Justice M Nagarasanna facilitating the investigation into the MUDA land grant.

Earlier on December 5, the division bench had adjourned the appeals to January 25 by noting that they would require a lengthy hearing. The high court, however, refused to stay proceedings in a petition before a single judge filed by the RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna seeking a CBI probe against Siddaramaiah in the alleged MUDA land scam case

102 kg ganja worth Rs 10.24 lakh seized from truck enroute Morbi district, 1 held



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

ganja seizure, gujarat, gujarat news, On orders from Additional SP Vagisha Joshi of the Dhandhuka Division, the truck and the narcotic substance were seized.

The Ahmedabad Rural Police on Friday seized 102 kg of ganja worth Rs 10.24 lakh. According to the police, the contraband was transported from Odisha to Gujarat by two men. The Bagodara police were conducting a vehicle check on Friday and as a part of this drive, it stopped a truck near the Bagodara toll tax plaza. Upon checking, they found ganja being transported in the vehicle. On orders from Additional SP Vagisha Joshi of the Dhandhuka Division, the truck and the narcotic substance were seized. The police learned that the truck had left from Odisha.

North winds to bring cold back to Bengal, foggy conditions to continue



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Cold air from the north is expected to return to Bengal starting Sunday, leading to a drop of 3 to 4 degree Celsius in the minimum temperature by Tuesday, said the weather office on Saturday. The minimum temperature in Kolkata is currently 4 degree Celsius above normal. On Friday, Kolkata recorded a minimum temperature of 18.2 degree Celsius and a maximum of 26.5 degree Celsius. Meanwhile, flight operations at Kolkata airport were disrupted Saturday morning due to the implementation of Safeguarding Procedures owing to dense fog conditions. Twenty-three arrival flights and 30 departure flights experienced delays in the first half. However, no flights were diverted during this period. A dense fog warning has been issued for four districts in South Bengal and four in North Bengal for three days starting Sunday. Visibility may drop to around 50 meters in some areas, said weather experts. The weather office has also predicted light rain in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Jalpaiguri in the next 24 hours.

MSEDCL proposes tariff reduction, Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission to take final decision



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Maharashtra solar energy benefits, Solar power for agriculture sector, MSEDCL tariff reduction proposal Maharashtra government's solar energy shift to benefit farmers and reduce electricity tariffs for consumers. The Maharashtra Government's decision to shift agriculture grids to solar energy will help reduce the cross-subsidy burden on domestic and industrial consumers, said Vishwas Pathak, Senior Independent Director, Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL), on Friday.

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, Pathak said, "The CM Solar Energy Scheme 2.0 generating 16,000 megawatt is a reality. The entire agriculture sector will operate on solar power. This will ensure economically feasible power rates as solar power is cheaper in the long run. Secondly, farmers will get continuous power during the day time." "Today, power is highly subsidised for farmers. Apart from the state government, cross-subsidy is borne by domestic consumers and industries. Annual cross-subsidy for the agriculture sector allocated by the government works out to Rs 10,000 crore," he added. "Domestic consumers in the next five years may have to pay a reduced power tariff of Rs 5.87 per unit. This will be applicable for those consuming power up to 100 units per month. For those using 101 to 300 units, the tariff will be Rs 11.82 per unit," the MSEDCL officer said, adding that they have proposed tariff reductions to the State Electricity Regulatory Commission to ease the financial burden on consumers. MSEDCL customers consuming up to 100 units per month currently pay Rs 7.65 per unit. Whereas domestic consumers in the 101-300 unit category pay Rs 13.49 per unit.

In a first, Safdarjung Hospital uses CAR T-cell therapy to treat cancer patient

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

In a first, Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi has carried out the Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell (CAR T-cell) procedure on a 48-year-old patient suffering from Non-Hodgkin lymphoma. This is the first time a central government hospital has used this therapy to treat a cancer patient who did not respond to conventional treatments.

CAR T-cell therapy is an advanced immunotherapy that harnesses the power of a patient's own immune cells, specifically T-cells, to fight cancer. The T-cells are genetically modified to target and destroy cancerous cells more effectively than the body's natural immune response. This treatment has proven to be a game-changer for patients with cancers such as Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, especially those with refractory or relapsed disease that has not responded to traditional treatments.

The procedure was conducted using indigenously developed CAR T-cell therapy by a company named ImmunoACT.

According to Dr Kaushal Kalra, head of the Medical Oncology department at Safdarjung, the patient was suffering from Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a type of blood cancer in which malignant cells form in the lymph system. It is resistant to conventional treatments. Dr Kalra said the patient was admitted to the hospital in the last week of December and is recovering well. "She has tolerated the treatment well, which is an encouraging outcome for both the patient and the medical team," he said.

3 Delhi Police officers conferred President's Medal for Distinguished Service, 17 for Meritorious Service



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

According to the Delhi Police, during Ali's tenure at DPA, around 75,000 personnel in the force, and other stakeholders were trained in new criminal laws. According to the Delhi Police, during Ali's tenure at DPA, around 75,000 personnel in the force, and other stakeholders were trained in new criminal laws. Twenty Delhi Police officers have been awarded different categories of President's Police medals ahead of the 76th Republic Day, informed Union home ministry officials on Saturday. Of them, three officers have been conferred with the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and 17 for Meritorious Service, they added.

Additional Commissioner of Police (2009-batch IPS) Asif Mohammad Ali, presently posted at Delhi Police Academy (DPA), and two Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACPs), Sanjay Dutt, presently posted with Special Cell,

and Somnath Paruthi, deployed at Police Commissioner's Office, have been awarded President's Medal for Distinguished Service. According to the Delhi Police, during Ali's tenure at DPA, around 75,000 personnel in the force, and other stakeholders were trained in new criminal laws. He also played a key role in the introduction of online services in the domain of licensing for various public services.

Dutt joined the force in 1989 as Sub-Inspector (Executive). During his tenure at Special Cell, he played a pivotal role in the neutralisation and arrest of several terrorists of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Hizbul-Mujahideen (HuM), and various gangsters, drug traffickers, arms traffickers, and dreaded criminals. He was promoted out of turn to the rank of Inspector in 2005 in recognition of his work in connection with cases related to serial bomb blasts in Delhi, the police said. ACP Paruthi has served as a Station House Officer at seven police stations and also worked at other units of the Delhi Police including Metro, Training, Traffic, and Police headquarters. He was awarded the Union Home Minister Medal for Excellence in Investigation in 2019, and Utkrisht Seva Padak in 2020, among others. Seventeen Delhi Police personnel – ACPs Harendra Singh, Manoj Kumar, Kamlesh Bisht, and Adarsh Kumar Sharma; inspectors Najma Tahira, Sheela Sharma, Pradeep Singh, and Rahul Kumar; sub-inspectors Bhupender Kumar, Hardwari Lal, Rakesh Kotiyal, Prabha and Sumita; ASIs Junaid Alam, Rekha Rani and Isidore Terkey, and head constable Shiva Ramula – have been chosen for President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

BBMP invites DPR bids for KR Puram-Nayandahalli tunnel and 10 elevated corridors

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

bbmp, elevated corridor, bengaluru, bbmp dpr bids, bengaluru news, The invitation of bids for DPR for the second tunnel comes at a time when there is already a strong backlash from environmentalists, urban mobility experts, and civic groups against a proposed 18km twin tube tunnel road. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has set the ball rolling and has invited bids for the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the proposed second tunnel road project between KR Puram and Nayandahalli (28 km). The second tunnel road has been proposed even as there is already a Purple metro line along the same stretch (Whitefield-Challaghatta via KR Puram and Nayandahalli) connecting the east and west of Bengaluru.

Additionally, the civic body has also invited bids for DPR preparation of several elevated corridors, including split flyover at the MEI junction and elevated corridors between KR Puram and Yeshwantpur, Konanakunte Cross and Banashankari, Ragigudda and Thalaghattapura, Old Madras Road and Madiwala, Ngawara and Bagalur, Hennur and Bagalur, Tannery Road and Nagawara, West of Chord Road and Nandini Layout and an additional link road to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA). The civic agency has invited DPR bids for the second tunnel and the elevated corridor projects based on the final feasibility report on the Comprehensive Bengaluru City Traffic Management Infrastructure Plan, prepared by Altinok Consulting Engineering. The report consists of a detailed feasibility study and proposes a 170-km network of tunnels, double-decker tunnels, elevated corridors and underpasses to streamline mobility and decongest Bengaluru traffic.

The study proposes traffic management and road infrastructure solutions in terms of vehicular tunnel, grade separators and road widening in selected corridors. As part of the plan, 16 elevated corridors and two tunnels have been proposed. The total length of elevated corridors/ double-deckers/ underpasses amount to 124.7km. Meanwhile, the total length of tunnels (North-South and East-West) amount to 46km. The report estimates the road infrastructure projects to cost Rs 54,964 crore. The invitation of bids for DPR for the second tunnel comes at a time when there is already a strong backlash from environmentalists, urban mobility experts, and civic groups against the proposed 18km twin tube tunnel road from Hebbal and Silk Board. The DPR for the same was awarded to Rodic Consultants at a cost of



Rs 9.5 crore. The DPR drew strong criticism from a section of society for the alleged "copy-paste" job after several flaws and discrepancies were flagged in the report.

The final feasibility report highlights the proposal of a double-decker tunnel with three lanes at the lower deck and two lanes at the upper deck connecting KR Puram and Nayandahalli. The total length of the East-West corridor of the project is 28km. The two-deck system consists of the upper deck connecting KR Puram to Nayandahalli circle and lower deck connecting Nayandahalli circle to KR Puram. The tunnel corridor also consists of an important intersection at the Lalbagh Botanical Garden where the metro line, East-West and North South tunnel corridors converge. The total cost for this tunnel corridor is estimated at around Rs 8,913 crore. Urban mobility experts and civic groups have been arguing that the proposed tunnel roads and elevated corridors are not part of original CMP (Comprehensive Mobility Plan) report 2020 and it is imperative for the government to focus on sustainable and public transport options rather than big ticket road infrastructure projects. Urban mobility expert Satya Arikutharam said, "The 4.5 crore Feasibility Report of the BBMP is of a very poor standard. Now, based on the unreliable Feasibility Report, the BBMP has called for a DPR work on other corridors. Note that the Purple Line already serves the east-west corridor and it is incredulous that the BBMP is proposing a double-decker tunnel road on the same corridor." Arikutharam added, "The BBMP has gone rogue with no accountability. Urban mobility governance in Bengaluru is in a state of comatose as the DULT (Directorate of Urban Land Transport) has become completely silent. I urge the Chief Minister to stop the BBMP DPR tenders immediately, order DULT to publish its review of the Feasibility Report outputs and fully establish the BMLTA."

Bengaluru Palace land takeover: Karnataka clears ordinance to withdraw TDR offer to avoid paying Rs 3,014 crore to Mysuru royal family



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bengaluru palace The Karnataka government will file an affidavit in the Supreme Court during the next hearing of the Palace Grounds matter indicating the decision to issue an ordinance to keep the Palace Grounds under the control of the state which would negate the TDR compensation demands.

Facing the prospects of having to pay a compensation of Rs 3,014 crore in the form of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) to the erstwhile royal family of Mysuru for acquiring 15 acres of land for road development from the Bengaluru Palace Grounds, the Congress government in Karnataka has decided to introduce an ordinance to withdraw the TDR offer for the acquisition of the Bengaluru Palace land. "The state government has decided to issue an ordinance for the use and control of the Bengaluru Palace Grounds. The allotment of TDR for Bengaluru Palace grounds is against the state's interest," Law Minister H K Patil said after a special Cabinet meeting on Friday. The Bengaluru Palace Grounds spread over 472 acres of land was acquired by the Karnataka government through the passage of the Mysore Palace Transfer and Acquisition Act of 1996 which received the assent of the President and came into force on November 18, 1996. The state was to pay Rs 11 crore as compensation for the land at the rate of Rs 2.30 lakh per acre. However, the acquisition by the state has remained in limbo since the royal family challenged validity of the acquisition law in the Supreme Court after the

Karnataka HC upheld the law on March 31, 1997. Subsequently, the Karnataka government acquired 15.36 acres of the palace land for widening of the Jayamahal Road and the Palace Road over a stretch of 2 km and a TDR compensation provision was provided.

The Supreme Court, in an order dated December 10, 2024, – in a contempt plea filed by the royal family – directed the Karnataka government to pay the transferable development rights or TDR for the palace land acquired for road widening – as per the prevailing guideline values for the areas adjacent to the Bengaluru Palace grounds. The TDR that has to be paid to the royal family for acquisition of 15.36 acres of land or 13,91,742 sq ft of land at the prevailing guidance value of Rs 2.70 lakh per sq metre would amount to Rs 200 crore for every acre and a total of Rs 3,014 crore, the law minister said. "Even today the litigation is pending and there is no stay and if the development work costs Rs 3,014 crore then Karnataka will be in danger as far as development is concerned," Patil said.

"Once TDR is paid it cannot be regained. It would affect the state's economy. We have decided not to pay the TDR. Since it is under litigation there are a lot of complications. The ordinance will empower us to keep control over the land. The appropriate decision on compensation will be taken at the right time," the law minister said. The Karnataka government will file an affidavit in the Supreme Court during the next hearing of the Palace Grounds matter indicating the decision to issue an ordinance to keep the Palace Grounds under the control of the state which would negate the TDR compensation demands. "If Rs 3,014 crore i.e. Rs.200 crores per acre is given for the development of only 2 km of road in the state, the economic situation of the state will be wrecked," Patil said. He said the ordinance would supplement the 1996 Palace Land Acquisition Act. "Promulgation of the ordinance empowers the state government to use as much space as required and abandon the other proposals. The Minister explained that the Ordinance would allow partial or complete withdrawal from any infrastructure project based on any court order or any decision.

Once voted back, AAP govt will clean, repair or replace sewer lines across Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal

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sewer lines, delhi sewer lines, delhi assembly elections, delhi polls, Arvind Kejriwal added that in many places where sewer lines were already laid, the network is old and crumbling. Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that if the party comes back to power, it will clean, repair or replace, where necessary, sewer lines across the city to address the demand that has been raised by the residents. Leaking and overflowing sewers have been a persistent problem in Delhi. Most of Delhi's sewer network in the authorised colonies was laid during the British rule and is in a poor condition now. While arterial networks have been updated in most areas, residential colonies are still suffering from poorly maintained lines. "When we first formed the government in 2015, there were many problems that we inherited. One of these problems was sewer lines. Delhi has 1,792 unauthorised colonies and here there was no development done as per the directions of the Centre and the Supreme Court. After crossing all those hurdles, we started working here. There were no sewer lines; it would flow in drains and onto the roads. In 10 years, we have put in new sewer pipelines in most colonies. We are now connecting houses to the line," Kejriwal said in a video address on



Saturday. He added that in many places where sewer lines were already laid, the network is old and crumbling. "I get complaints that sewers here are overflowing, leaking or are jammed, and that sewage is mixing with drinking water. I have decided that as soon as the AAP government is formed, faulty sewers will be replaced on a war footing. Don't worry, if there are sewer related issues in your area, as soon as we form the government, we will get sewers cleaned or replaced, where necessary," he added.

Geo-tagged digital identity helps Kashmir's famous chinar trees stand tall



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Facing destruction due to rapid urbanisation and infrastructure projects, a geo-tagged digital identity on the lines of the Aadhar card has been introduced this week to monitor the health of every chinar tree standing in the Kashmir Valley. The J&K Forest Research Institute's (JKFRI) 'Digital Tree Aadhar' initiative provides a unique number for each tree. For example, the chinar in the city centre of Lal Chowk is CG-JK010088. Metal cards featuring barcodes provide information, including the tree's location, height, and health. "Around 10,000 trees are being metal card-tagged as of now. It will help in the management of trees, and tourists will get to know how old a tree is by scanning the barcodes," Syed Tariq, project coordinator at the JKFRI, said. The JKFRI began a chinar census in the Union Territory in 2021. According to data from the JKFRI, Kashmir was home to around 40,000 chinar trees but the numbers are falling steadily. The widening of highways has also taken a toll on many chinar trees.

"The aim of the JKFRI is to establish a detailed database of chinar trees using the Geographic Information System (GIS)-based, quick response (QR) code-enabled surveys," Mr. Tariq said. Around 28,560 chinar trees have been geo-tagged across the region, with fresh plantations covered in recent years. Chinars grow in Jammu's Chenab Valley, and in the Pir Panjal Valley. They too will be covered under the digital initiative. Ganderbal district has the highest number of chinar trees, including the world's third-largest chinar, with a girth of 74 feet. "We will record the top 20 chinars of Kashmir, with girth between 60 ft. to 74 ft.," Dr. Tariq said. "We plan to create a chinar atlas of J&K. We treat them as collective heritage. This initiative will help create digital data," he added.

The JKFRI said chinars protect biodiversity as they are a favourite with avian species, especially crows and kites in Kashmir. They also absorb carbon. Kashmir is home

to multiple chinar groves. Geotagging has rescued the trees from illegal felling. The 'majestic chinar' or *Platanus orientalis* (oriental plane) grows to a height of 30 metres with a girth of 10 to 15 metres at the ground level. The tree features prominently in Kashmiri folklore, literature, politics, religious practices, and even romance.

Locally known as *buen*, Islamic preachers who travelled to Kashmir four centuries ago from Central Asia and Persia introduced the oriental plane to the region. The 700-year-old tree that rises to 14.78 metres and was planted by Sufi saint Syed Qasim Shah in Chattergam in central Kashmir's Budgam district is the oldest among them. In the 16th century, Mughal rulers planted chinar trees in the fabled Naseem Bagh, Nishat Bagh, Shalimar garden and Harwan in Srinagar. Several Bollywood blockbusters have been filmed with chinar trees as the backdrop. The tree is revered by both Muslims and Hindus, with shrines and temples sheltering it. From the Hazratbal shrine to the Kheer Bhawani temple, chinar trees are an intrinsic part of the setting of these religious places. With 'Digital Tree Aadhar', majestic chinar trees can now safely stand taller and longer in Kashmir.

Bangladeshi woman found murdered near Bengaluru lake, was residing 'illegally' in city

A Bangladeshi woman, who was allegedly staying in the city without valid documents, was found murdered in East Bengaluru, the police said Friday, adding that she may have been sexually assaulted. The body of the victim, identified as Najma, 28, was discovered near the Kalkere Lake in Ramamurthy Nagar in the morning with multiple injuries. According to police sources, preliminary investigations based on her husband's statement revealed that Najma did not possess a valid passport or any legal documentation to reside in India. Her brother has reportedly confirmed this claim. Najma's husband Suman has been working as a garbage segregator for the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Unlike her, Suman legally entered India with a valid Bangladeshi passport six years ago, the police said. The couple's three children currently live with relatives in Bangladesh. Employed as a domestic worker at an apartment complex in Kalkere, Najma lived with her husband in Ramakrishna Layout, Kothanur. She went missing on Thursday evening after informing her husband that she was heading to work.

Jailed ex-West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee admitted to ICCU as health worsens



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partha chatterjee Partha Chatterjee was arrested on July 23, 2022, after ₹21 crore in cash and jewellery worth above ₹1 crore was recovered from the Kolkata residence of his close aide, Arpita Mukherjee. Former Education Minister Partha Chatterjee, prime accused in the cash-for-job scam in the education department, was admitted to the Intensive Cardiac Care Unit (ICCU) of the SSKM Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata, on Thursday night after his health deteriorated. A medical team has been formed to monitor his condition and to take decision for the next course of treatment. According to hospital sources, the former minister was shifted to the ICCU of cardiology department from the emergency observation ward following complications in the heart functioning, which worsened.

Chatterjee, who has been in jail for almost three years, was brought to the hospital from Presidency Correctional Home on Monday after he experienced breathing issues. Further, doctors have reported that there are issues with Chatterjee's lungs and kidney and his sodium, potassium and creatinine levels are fluctuating, causing further complications. When Chatterjee was admitted he was administered nebuliser and then admitted to the cardiology

department and several tests were performed, hospital sources said. It was during Chatterjee's tenure as the state education minister during 2014-2021 that the alleged teacher recruitment scam took place in the SSC and the Primary Education Board. The Supreme Court on December 13 granted conditional bail to Chatterjee, stating that he can be released on bail on February 1, 2025 subject to his furnishing bail bonds to the satisfaction of the trial court. The Enforcement Directorate had arrested the senior Trinamool Congress leader in July 2022 in connection with irregularities in recruitment to the West Bengal School Service Commission during his tenure as the Minister of State Education Department.

Missing Hyderabad trader found dead in Khammam chilli field

Khammam: A Hyderabad trader, who had gone missing on January 19, was found dead in an agriculture field by the side of the Khammam-Suryapet highway in the district. Bollu Ramesh (52) of Vikramপুরi, Secunderabad, reportedly went to office on January 18 but did not return home. Both his mobile phones were also switched off. His wife Natti Janani, who called their relatives and friends to know where her husband was, could not get any information and lodged a complaint with the Karkhana police the next day. The police registered a missing persons case and started investigating. Based on Ramesh's call data, the police began efforts to trace his location. It was said that for the last couple of days, the police were searching areas alongside the highway as per the call data. On Friday, they took a suspect, Sajid, one of Ramesh's acquaintances, into custody. The suspect confessed to the police that he and two others killed Ramesh and hid the body in a chilli field along the highway.

Hamas hands over four Israeli women hostages to Red Cross in Gaza

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tinian prisoners would be released in return for the four. Phased ceasefire The ceasefire agreement, worked out after months of on-off negotiations brokered by Qatar and Egypt and backed by the United States, halted the fighting for the first time since a truce that lasted just a week in Nov. 2023.

In the first phase, Hamas has agreed to release 33 hostages in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. In a subsequent phase, the two sides would negotiate the exchange of the remaining hostages and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, which lies largely in ruins after 15 months of fighting and Israeli bombardment.

Hamas militants handed over four Israeli women hostages to the Red Cross in a Saturday (January 25, 2025) swap after parading them on a stage at a square in Gaza, an AFP journalist reported. The four, all Israeli soldiers dressed in military fatigues, had been held captive in the Palestinian territory since Hamas seized them during their attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. Palestinian militant group Hamas on Friday (January 24, 2025) announced the names of four Israeli women soldiers to be released in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in the second swap under the ceasefire deal. Hamas has said to release Karina Arie, Daniella Gilboa, Naama Levy and Liri Albag

Israel on return of Palestinians to northern Gaza Israel says it will not allow Palestinians to return to northern Gaza until Arbel Yehoud, one of the dozens of hostages held by Hamas, is released. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Yehoud was supposed to have been released Saturday as part of the Gaza ceasefire agreement. Hamas had earlier released four female Israeli soldiers. The exchange follows the release on the ceasefire's first day last Sunday of three Israeli women and 90 Palestinian prisoners, the first such exchange for more than a year. In the six-week first phase of the Gaza ceasefire, Israel has agreed to release 50 Palestinian prisoners for every female soldier released, officials have said. That suggests that 200 Pales-

China and U.S. partners are moving closer as Trump returns to the White House

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China's relations with Japan, India and other countries are improving as former U.S. President Joe Biden courted, just as Donald Trump brings his more unilateralist approach back to the White House. The change of leadership in Washington on Monday could be an opportunity for China, which has long railed against Biden's strategy of building partnerships with "like-minded countries" to counter its growing influence.

Mr. Biden reinvigorated a grouping known as the Quad — the United States, India, Japan and Australia. China's relations with all three of those U.S. partners are improving, as are its ties with Britain. The durability of Biden's legacy is now in question. During his first term, Mr. Trump didn't hesitate to challenge traditional U.S. partners. "It is possible that Trump may drift away from U.S. allies, making them pay more attention to China's role, and in fact it has provided a chance for China's diplomacy," said Wu Xinbo, dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai. "I think we should grasp the chance."

But U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Brian Hughes said that Trump "has a record of rallying the world toward a more competitive stance with China." Trump agreed to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy that Japan introduced during his first term and he backed excluding Chinese companies from telecom networks in the U.S. and many of its partners. On Tuesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio — hours after he was sworn in — met with the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India and Japan in Washington, a move that suggested engaging the Quad countries and countering China's influence will remain a priority for Trump. Beijing's rapprochement with the U.K. and Japan is in its early stages, and major differences remain that limit and could derail it. India turned the page with China on a bitter border dispute last October but protested when Beijing created two new counties in an area claimed by both nations. Still, new leaders in Australia, the U.K. and Japan have shown a desire to warm relations with China, the world's largest manufacturer and a source of strategic minerals. The government in Beijing has reciprocated in part because it wants foreign investment to help revive its economy, which could be set back if Trump follows through on a threat to impose higher tariffs. Chinese President Xi Jinping told European Council President Antonio Costa in a phone conversation last week that both sides could bring more "stability and certainty" to the turbulent global situation. China and Britain restarted economic and financial talks after a six-year hiatus when the U.K. Treasury chief visited Beijing this month.

"From China's point of view, improving relations with American allies and increasing economic cooperation will offset the shock to China-U.S. economic relations," Wu said. In Washington, there's a strong bipartisan consensus that the U.S. must prevail in its economic and tech rivalry with China to maintain its global leadership. During his confirmation hearing, Rubio called China "the most potent and dangerous near-peer adversary this nation has ever confronted." Biden kept the tariffs Trump levied on China and imposed more on Chinese electric cars and solar cells.

But unlike Biden, Trump has irked U.S. allies and partners with his recent remarks on possibly annexing Greenland, an autonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark, and making Canada the 51st American state. Hal Brands,

senior fellow at the Washington-based think tank American Enterprise Institute, said he believes some top strategists in Beijing are "salivating at the damage they think Trump is going to do to U.S. alliances and the opportunities this creates for Beijing to resurrect some of its relationships with ... Japan and Europe that had moved in a very sharply anti-China direction since COVID." Trump's rhetoric and attempts by adviser Elon Musk to interfere in British and German politics, "are certain to have a ripple effect," said Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center in Washington. "Countries want to at the minimum keep their options open," she said. "China is unlikely to be a better choice than the U.S., even under Trump, but it is important to find some counterbalance."

China's relations aren't improving with every U.S. partner. The Philippines complained recently about what it called a "monster" Chinese coast guard ship in nearby waters, and the foreign ministers of Japan and the Philippines said last week they would convey to Trump the urgent need for the U.S. to remain engaged in the region. China and the Philippines did reach a temporary deal last July that has prevented further violent confrontations around Second Thomas Shoal, one of several outcroppings that both countries claim in the South China Sea. Uncertainty about Trump's policies is prompting both China and Japan to seek a stable relationship, said Taizo Miyagi, an expert on Japanese diplomacy at Chuo University in Tokyo. A Japanese foreign minister has visited Beijing for the first time in seven years, and Chinese military officials were in Tokyo last week to resume defense exchanges after a five-year hiatus. "In a way it is a Trump effect," Miyagi said. "Many other countries are likely thinking the same and this could invigorate their diplomatic activities." British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has sought to rebuild ties with Beijing since his Labour Party's election victory last summer. It's a marked shift from predecessor Rishi Sunak, who in 2022 declared an end to his country's "golden era" of friendship with China. In Britain's case, Trump's return may not be driving the rapprochement. Many European leaders may not welcome Trump's America-first agenda, "but the idea that as a result they will all kowtow to Beijing for more trade is fanciful thinking on the part of some of our Chinese friends," said Steve Tsang, director of the SOAS China Institute at the University of London. Most would prefer to remain partners with Washington. French President Emmanuel Macron, outlining his vision for global diplomacy in a New Year's speech, declared that his country was "a solid ally" of Trump. He and others hope that Trump will respond positively to their outreach. Much will depend on what path the returning U.S. president takes, and how the rest of the world reacts.

U.S.' China policy to put America first: Rubio tells Wang Yi

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trading practices. In another development, Senator Ted Cruz introduced the Protecting Military Installations and Ranges Act to protect Department of Defense installations and training areas from American adversaries.

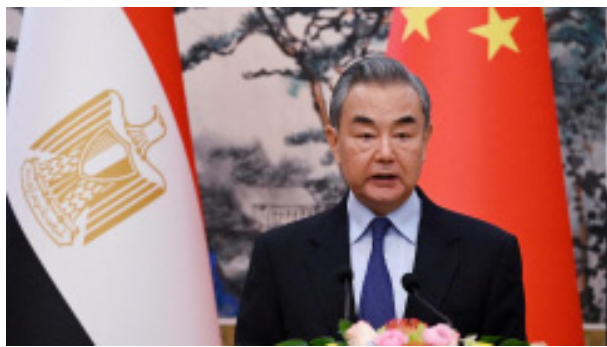
The bill restricts the purchase of certain property by a foreign person acting for or on behalf of Russia, China, Iran, or North Korea. "Foreign adversaries are exploiting loopholes to acquire land near our military bases and training routes, jeopardising the safety of our troops and the integrity of our operations," Cruz said. Congressman Dan Meuser has re-introduced the China Exchange Rate Transparency Act, legislation aimed at addressing China's opaque and manipulative currency practices that undermine fair trade and global economic stability. "China's long-standing disregard for financial transparency and its manipulation of foreign exchange markets have tilted the playing field against US businesses and disrupted global economic norms," said Meuser. "This legislation demands accountability and insists on adherence to international standards of transparency and fairness," he added. The China Exchange Rate Transparency Act (CERT Act) directs the United States Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to advocate for enhanced transparency in China's exchange rate arrangements.

The Trump administration will pursue a relationship with China that advances U.S. interests and puts the American people first, Secretary of State Marco Rubio told his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. Mr. Rubio on Friday (January 25, 2024) spoke today with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang, the first call between the two diplomats since President Donald Trump's administration took office on January 20. "Secretary Rubio emphasised that the Trump administration will pursue a US-PRC (People's Republic of China) relationship that advances US interests and puts the American people first," said the State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce.

"The Secretary also stressed the United States' commitment to our allies in the region and serious concern over China's coercive actions against Taiwan and in the South China Sea," Ms. Bruce said. China claims most of the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims. Rubio also discussed other issues of bilateral, regional, and global importance with Mr. Wang. In the first year of Trump's first term, the U.S.-China ties deteriorated amid a trade war that unleashed a series of tit-for-tat tariffs. Meanwhile, Congressman John Moolenaar, Chairman of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party and Congressman Tom Suozzi introduced the Restoring Trade Fairness Act, the first bipartisan bill that would revoke China's Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR). A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Tom Cotton and Jim Banks. This comes following President Trump's new executive order, directing the Secretary of Commerce and the United States Trade Representative to assess legislative proposals regarding Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. In 2000, as China prepared to enter the World Trade Organisation, Congress voted to extend PNTR status to the People's Republic of China (PRC), hoping the Chinese Communist Party would liberalise and adopt fair

China tells Rubio to behave himself in veiled warning

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emphasised that the Trump administration will pursue a US-PRC (People's Republic of China) relationship that advances US interests and puts the American people first," said the State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce.

China's veteran foreign minister has issued a veiled warning to America's new secretary of state: Behave yourself. Foreign Minister Wang Yi conveyed the message in a phone call on Friday (January 24, 2025), their first conversation since Marco Rubio's confirmation as President Donald Trump's top diplomat four days earlier. "I hope you will act accordingly," Mr. Wang told Rubio, according to a Foreign Ministry statement, employing a Chinese phrase typically used by a teacher or a boss warning a student or employee to behave and be responsible for their actions. The short phrase seemed aimed at Rubio's vocal criticism of China and its human rights record when he was a U.S. senator, which prompted the Chinese government to put sanctions on him twice in 2020. It can be translated in various ways — in the past, the Foreign Ministry has used "make the right choice" and "be very prudent about what they say or do" rather than "act accordingly."

The vagueness allows the phrase to express an expectation and deliver a veiled warning, while also maintaining the courtesy necessary for further diplomatic engagement, said Zichen Wang, a research fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, a Chinese think tank. "What could appear to be confusing is thus an intended effect originating from Chinese traditional wisdom and classic practice of speech," said Wang, who is currently in a mid-career master's program at Princeton University. China's sanctions on Rubio in July and August, first in response to U.S. sanctions on Chinese officials for a crackdown on the Uyghur minority in the Xinjiang region and then over what it regarded as outside interference in Hong Kong. The sanctions include a ban on travel to China, and while the Chinese government has indicated it will engage with Rubio as secretary of state, it has not explicitly said whether it would allow him to visit the country for talks.

U.S. interest over China Marco Rubio told previously that the Trump administration will pursue a relationship with China that advances U.S. interests and puts the American people first. Mr. Rubio on Friday (January 25, 2024) spoke today with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang, the first call between the two diplomats since President Donald Trump's administration took office on January 20. "Secretary Rubio

Rubio chooses Central America for first trip amid Panama Canal pressure

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Marco Rubio will pay his first trip as U.S. secretary of state to Central American nations including Panama, where President Donald Trump has threatened to seize the Panama Canal, a spokeswoman said Thursday (January 23, 2025). Mr. Rubio, who is the first Hispanic and first fluent Spanish speaker to serve as the top U.S. diplomat, has vowed to put a top priority on Mr. Trump's goal of curbing migration from Central American nations. State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said Mr. Rubio would travel starting late next week to Panama as well as Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

"It's about making sure that if we're going to be safe and prosperous and in good shape, we've got to have an interest in our neighbors — and in today's world, it's certainly South and Central America," Mr. Bruce said. "There's a reason why this is the first trip. It signals how seriously he takes it," she said. Mr. Bruce did not describe the details of any expected conversations on the Panama Canal. Mr. Trump in his inaugural address Monday (January 20, 2025) vowed that the United States would be "taking it back." Mr. Rubio in his confirmation hearing did not suggest military force but said the United States needed to address serious concerns about Chinese influence near the vital waterway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Panama, which has long been friendly to the United States, complained to the United Nations over Mr. Trump's threat.

President Jose Raul Mulino, during a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, said that the canal "belongs to Panama and will continue to belong to Panama." Enforcement against migration Mr. Trump — who during his campaign said that immigrants were "poisoning the blood of our country" — has put a top priority on halting undocumented migration into the United States. The Central American nations of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras — torn by endemic violence, poverty and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change — have been among the top sources of migration. Mr. Trump's predecessor Joe Biden vowed to look at the root causes of migration. Mr. Trump has quickly put an emphasis on enforcement, suspending a Biden program that gives asylum seekers a chance to make their case in an orderly way and threatening to use the military to help secure the U.S.-Mexico border.

El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, has been a favorite of Mr. Trump supporters for his lethal and ruthless crackdown on crime. The president's son Donald Trump Jr. attended Bukele's second inauguration last year. The Biden administration had a more distant relationship with Bukele, amid concerns over human rights, although it also largely worked with him as it sought to address migration. Mr. Rubio's decision to visit Guatemala likely marks a continuation of U.S. support for President Bernardo Arevalo, a once-obscure anti-corruption advocate who pulled off an upset election victory in 2023. The Biden administration hailed Mr. Arevalo's victory and quickly moved to work with him as he pushed back against an entrenched elite that sought to stop him from taking office. Mr. Arevalo has enjoyed some bipartisan support in Washington but his opponents have sought an alliance with fringe movements that refused to recognize Biden's 2020 victory over Mr. Trump. Mr. Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, on taking office said he would

stop State Department work that seeks to "facilitate or encourage mass migration," vowing to pursue Mr. Trump's goal of enforcement.

Myanmar conflict to feature in India-Indonesia talks

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The raging conflict in Myanmar will feature prominently in discussions between visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the weekend, sources said. Mr. Subianto, who will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations, began his official meetings by calling on External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and meeting industry bigwigs on Friday (January 24, 2025).

The inclusion of the prevailing scenario in Myanmar in the official agenda is significant as both India and Indonesia have been trying to stitch up a dialogue process among various domestic stakeholders in the conflict-torn south-east Asian country. Sources further mentioned that the two sides will discuss several "regional issues including the tension around the South China Sea" during the official talks that will be held in Hyderabad House on Saturday.

India recently hosted a number of ethnic armed organisations from Myanmar as well as members of the exiled National Unity Government at the Indian Council of World Affairs, soon after Indonesia also hosted such groups. The chain of engagements indicated that both the countries are trying to establish dialogue between the military junta in Nay Pyi Taw and the ethnic armed organisations that have captured large amounts of territory of Myanmar, including vast tracts of land near its borders with India's northeastern States.

The situation in Myanmar has escalated over the last year, with the military junta losing control over areas in Chin state, Rakhine, and the Sagaing region. Maungdaw near the Indo-Bangladesh frontier was the latest town to fall to the Arakan Army in December 2024. The Myanmar issue has been on the table of the ASEAN since the military coup of February 2021 and it is understood that the Indonesian president will continue the discussion on "regional issues" in Malaysia, which is his next destination after India. "Close cooperation with friendly countries has always been our priority to build a stronger and more prosperous region together," Mr. Subianto said,

India reiterates readiness to take back nationals 'overstaying' in U.S., other parts of the world

Amid the "massive deportation operation" in the U.S., India on Friday (January 24, 2025) reiterated its stance against illegal immigration, with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stating it will facilitate the return of Indian nationals "overstaying" or residing without proper documentation in the United States or "anywhere in the world." Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal addresses the media.

During a weekly press briefing in New Delhi, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We are against illegal immigration, especially because it is linked to several forms of organised crime." He added, "For Indians not just in the United States, but anywhere in the world, if they are Indian nationals and they are overstaying, or they are in a particular country without proper documentation, we will take them back, provided documents are shared with us so that we can verify their nationality and that they are indeed Indians. If that happens to be the case, we will take things forward and facilitate their return to India." Mr. Jaiswal also informed that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during his visit to the U.S. for Trump's inauguration also raised the issue of visas with Secretary of State Marco Rubio. "We have been continuously raising the issue (with the concerning countries) of the delay in issuing visas. If visas are conveniently issued, the people-to-people and economic ties between the two countries will improve."

All states/UTs expected to complete draft labour code rules by March



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

The labour ministry has said that all states and UTs are expected to complete draft labour code, including code on wages. A collaborative study is also being undertaken with the International Labour Organization to comprehensively assess various factors related to platform workers. All 36 states and Union territories (UTs) are expected to complete "harmonisation and pre-publication" of draft rules under the four labour codes by March 31, 2025, a release by the Labour Ministry said on Saturday. So far, barring five states and UTs, all others have pre-published the rules, setting the stage for the much-awaited rollout of the four codes — Code on Wages, Code on Social Security, Code on Industrial Relations, and Code on Occupational Health & Safety — by next year. The Labour Ministry has been consistently working for harmonisation of rules under the four codes across the states, said the release. This year, six regional meetings were held between August and Octo-

ber to facilitate the states and Union territories for framing the rules. Labour laws fall under the concurrent list of the Constitution. Hence, both the Centre and states are empowered to make rules. But in the event of a conflict between state and central laws, central legislation generally takes precedence, unless the state's law has obtained presidential assent. The four labour codes are a judicious combination of reforms aimed at easing labour market rigidities, and reinforcing workers' rights and welfare. As many as 44 labour related Acts were consolidated into the four codes in 2019-2020 with the objective of reinforcing trade and investment, facilitating ease of doing business and easing compliance. Several minor offences were decriminalised via the codes, while skill development and dispute resolution have been accorded due priority. Meanwhile, the ministry also is working towards development of a framework for social security coverage to gig and platform workers, said the release.

Extensive stakeholder consultations were conducted with aggregators, knowledge partners, platform worker organisations, and state/UTs this year to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the Social Security Code, 2020, and to develop collaborative approaches for a social security framework tailored to gig and platform workers, it said. Also, a collaborative study is being undertaken with the International Labour Organization to comprehensively assess various factors related to platform workers. "These include the number of platform workers, prevalent business models, potential schemes, financial implications (such as aggregator turnover and contributions), and a roadmap for implementing a social security scheme for platform workers," the release said.

West Bengal & Rajasthan new migrant destination hotspots; Uttar Pradesh tops

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

West Bengal and Rajasthan are the new centres of migrants movement from across the country and have found place in the list of top five states where maximum numbers of general or second class passengers travelled to by the Indian Railways, shows the latest working paper of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) on migration trends. Other three states in the top five are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. According to the analysis of data from the Indian Railways on unreserved tickets of non-suburban passengers (150+ kms journey), the council has concluded that while most of the states showed reduction in the passenger headed to them from outside, possibly as a result of an overall reduction in migration, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Karnataka are the states that showed the maximum amount of growth in percentage share of the arriving passengers.

Compared to 2012 data, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are now ranked a notch lower. Titled as "400 Million Dreams!", the PM advisory body in its report said that the overall number of migrants in the country has reduced by 11.78 per cent as compared to the 2011 census. The paper hypothesised that improved economic opportunities in smaller cities are among the reasons for the slowing migration in India.

Apart from ticket bookings data from Indian Railway Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) for year 2023 and 2012, EAC-PM used mobile telephone subscribers' roaming data and district level banking data on remittances to come up with the figure of 40.20 crore migrant, as of 2023, in the country. The total number of migrants in Census 2011 were 45.57 crore. According to its analysis, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana are the major origin states for arrivals into Maharashtra. Similarly, for Delhi, the major origin states are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. Apart from this, the major destinations for general class travellers heading out from Uttar Pradesh are Delhi, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana. Similarly, major destinations for passengers heading out from Bihar are Delhi, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

The report, which has been authored by economist Bibek Debroy, who passed away last month and was Chairman of EAC-PM, and Devi Prasad Misra, an IRS officer posted as Director in the council, showed that Uttar Pradesh to Delhi was the most popular state-to-state route in the country traversed by migrants using the Railways. Gujarat-Maharashtra was second, Telangana-Andhra Pradesh in third place, Bihar-Delhi was in fourth slot and Bihar-West Bengal in the fifth position. The paper goes on to provide district-level passengers movement data also. It shows that Mumbai remained on top position of destination district (migration) for non-suburban general class passengers.



Bengaluru Urban was at the second position, Howrah was third, Central Delhi was fourth and Hyderabad was at the fifth position. When compared with 2012 data, the order of districts have changed, but the composition of the top ten stays constant. However, if we look at the top originating districts of non-suburban (150+ km) passengers, it shows some new source districts in 2023 that were not there in 2012. While Valsad remains on the top, which is 193 kms from Mumbai, Villupuram (Tamil Nadu), Saharsa (Bihar), Moradabad (UP) and Murshidabad (West Bengal) are the new entrants in the top-10 originating district list. The trend could be reflective of daily commuters travelling up and down for work from Valsad to Mumbai in the first case, using the suburban railway service. The report says that the top origin districts are coalesced around major urban agglomerations viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata etc. The analysis further shows that at district level, Murshidabad to Kolkata was the top route of general class passengers movement. Paschim Bardhaman to Howrah, Valsad to Mumbai, Chittoor to Bengaluru Urban and Surat to Mumbai were in second, third, fourth and fifth position respectively.

The report also provides an answer to the question of who are the major migrants to cities like Delhi and Mumbai. While Agra, Patna, Kanpur Nagar, Jhansi and Bareilly are on the top source district for general class passengers to Delhi, Dausa and Ludhiana are the new districts in the top-10 list of origin districts to Delhi. In the case of Mumbai, while the number of passengers from the origin districts have changed, there is just one new entrant Sindhadurg in the top 10 list. Valsad, Surat, Nashik, Ratnagiri and Varanasi are top-5 origin districts of the passengers to Mumbai. EAC-PM used unreserved second class (Mail & Express/Ordinary) ticket data as it is the cheapest class of tickets on railways, which is used by blue collar migrants (working class people). While the railways data shows the trends in the movement, it has some limitations also as it this data does not capture details such as age, gender, reasons for migrating etc. Also, all railway data is recorded from Station to Station, therefore the actual origin and destinations may not always be captured accurately. The similar exercise was undertaken in Economic Survey 2016-17, when Arvind Subramanian was Chief Economic Advisor, for calculating the migration trends.

As tech firms look to translate the promise of AI in 2025, 3 clear templates emerge

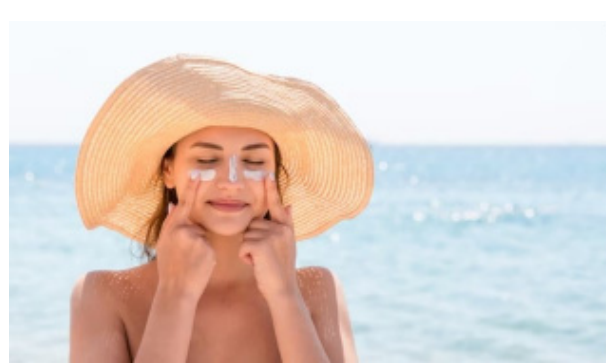
GNS News Agency, Jan 30

If the year 2024 started with the promise of generational AI, 2025 could be more about testing out the use cases of some of these AI tools. And finding answers to the quintessential question of monetising AI. Going forward, there could be three board templates for the most compelling use cases yet. One, is this clear focus on AI agents — artificial intelligence tools that can handle multi step chores like onboarding clients, approving expenses and not just routing, but actually responding to customer-service requests, all with minimal human intervention. While OpenAI Chief Executive Officer Sam Altman termed AI agents "the next giant breakthrough", San Francisco-based Salesforce Inc. has already started inking deals with some 200-odd companies to install its workplace AI agent called Agentforce. "We're really at the edge of a revolutionary transformation... This is really the rise of digital labor."

Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff said on the software company's most recent earnings call. While Salesforce launched Agentforce in September, San Francisco-based Anthropic launched its own product a month later, followed by a Microsoft launch in November. OpenAI is set to unveil an agent at a research preview in January. Agentic AI is clearly projected to become more widespread in 2025. Second, if monetising AI is a big question, San Francisco-based Perplexity AI has some answers. In November, Perplexity — a conversational 'answer engine' that uses large language models (LLMs) to answer queries using sources from the web and citing links within the text response — launched a user-focused shopping hub in a bid to beef up its platform as it attempts to take on Google's dominance in the search engine space. The idea is simple, but functional. For instance, a user can take out her phone, point it at a product that she wants to get, and just ask the Perplexity AI bot:

where can I buy this? The answer is generated right there, alongside options to buy the product and the different price at which it's offered on shopping websites. Or if a user were to ask Perplexity to help build her a library, or help her buy all the items needed to host a party, the AI bot will list out all the product options right there, alongside reviews hoovered up from different parts of the web. And the user can go further and fulfill the transaction to purchase the products, all on the Perplexity app. Backed by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and chipmaker Nvidia, Perplexity plans to double down on its shopping feature by giving users product cards showing relevant items in response to questions related to shopping, with each card providing product details in a visual format. The fact that the Amazon founder is a backer only helps the start-up as it works to monetise the AI-curated shopping experience. Third, is a doubling down on improving the AI interface by the segment leaders — a handful of companies such as OpenAI, Google, Meta, xAI and Anthropic that have converged at the top of the current generation of LLM models. In early December, OpenAI announced the full availability of its Canvas tool, a day after it launched its AI video generator Sora. Canvas was introduced by OpenAI in October as an editing tool for writing and coding. It's a notebook interface that sits beside the user's ChatGPT chatbot conversation, which allows users to edit responses and "collaborate" with ChatGPT. New to Canvas is the ability to get feedback and edits in the form of comments. From here, users can make changes based on ChatGPT's suggestions. Google too has a pitch in this segment, with the promise to launch Gemini 2.0, its most capable model that it says is built for the 'new agentic era'. With new advances in multimodality — like native image and audio output — and native tool use, Google said the new launch "will enable us to build new AI agents that bring us closer to our vision of a universal assistant".

Does your sunscreen irritate your eyes? Here's a guide



Sunscreen forms an integral part of one's skincare routine. Whether you want a dewy glassy finish, or a oil-controlling matte one, there's a formulation for everyone out there. Sometimes when we apply sunscreen, our eyes start stinging and burning. And trust us, no one enjoys tears streaming down their face while getting ready to go out! What causes our eyes to sting? And what are some ingredients to watch out for? Indianexpress.com spoke to skin experts to get more clarity. Dr Rikta Mohan, Dermatologist, Myrah DermaMed shared that our eyes can sting after applying sunscreen because some of its ingredients don't sit well. "Chemical filters like avobenzone, oxybenzone, and

octinoxate can irritate the eyes. While they protect the skin from UV rays, if they get into the eyes, they can sting or burn." She added that if the sunscreen has fragrance, it may not suit sensitive skin and eyes and can cause irritation. Preservatives can also potentially be a trigger for the same.

According to Dr Mohan, it is always a case of finding which sunscreen works for you, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to sun care. "People might have skin that is more sensitive to these ingredients, or a particular formulation. It could also be a cause of allergy to those ingredients. If it stings more than once, stop using the product immediately," she said. Sunscreen can get into your eyes from various sources, even through sweat or when rubbing it in your face.

And as such, if it stings your eyes, you need to stop applying it immediately. "Thoroughly rinse your eyes with clean, running water. Apply a cool, wet cloth to your eyes to soothe them and ensure there is no itching, irritation, or redness," said Dr Mohan. As for precautions to be kept in mind, she advised that the best way to ensure that you are using the sunscreen that is right for you is to consult a licensed dermatologist.

"They can suggest products that will work with your skin type and sensitivities and ensure that there is no irritation or sensitivity," said Dr Mohan.

How can you tell if you're in a relationship or situationship? Psychologist weighs in

Dating can be confusing. With several labels and terms encompassing the essence of relationships, you might find yourself scratching your head as to where you belong. If you have recently found yourself wondering whether you are in a relationship or a situationship, indianexpress.com comes to your rescue! Counselling psychologist Sriшти Vatsa shared that a situationship is a relationship that lacks clear boundaries, commitment, or future planning, often leaving one person feeling uncertain about the other's intentions.

Common signs that you are in a situationship include minimal emotional sharing or, conversely, overwhelming drama early on, with little effort to actively listen or engage. "The person may come on strong initially but then fade away without explanation, avoid discussions about the future, and leave you constantly trying to decipher mixed signals. You might find yourself preoccupied with why they aren't reaching out, while they remain distracted or disengaged, often prioritising other things, like scrolling on their phone, even when physically present," she explained. According to Vatsa, self-awareness is key to understanding your needs and emotions, helping you recognise when a relationship is fulfilling or when it's time to step away from something uncommitted or emotionally unavailable. Reflecting on feelings and your actions can guide you toward more mindful decisions about your emotional well-being.

When you find yourself asking this question, Vatsa encouraged doing the following: • Check for Anger or Resentment: Ask yourself, "Am I angry because my emotions are being dismissed, or do I feel unseen and unheard?" These feelings can signal unmet emotional needs. • Understand



Your Own Actions: Reflect on why you might be pushing for a commitment from someone who has shown they're not interested. Ask yourself, "Why am I trying to make this work when it's clear the other person isn't invested?" According to her, self-evaluation can help you make clearer decisions about your emotional well-being and whether to continue investing in the relationship. "Healthy relationships are built on trust, balance, and mutual respect. They can often feel 'boring' because there's a comforting sense of peace and security because neither person is walking on eggshells or constantly navigating unnecessary drama," she finally added.

Why does your lower back hurt during your periods? Expert shares tips to help

Periods can be painful. With bloating, acne, mood swings and pre-menstrual cramps making our life difficult, one can only deal with so much. Lower back pain is the reluctant cherry on top, and the cause for such back-breaking pain isn't discussed much. What exactly causes our lower back to hurt like hell during our time of the month? Indianexpress.com spoke to experts and found out how you can reduce this pain.

What leads to lower back pain?

"Period-related lower back pain affects about 1 in 10 women, with 40% experiencing symptoms severe enough to disrupt daily activities. This pain is primarily due to prostaglandins, hormones that trigger uterine contractions to shed the uterine lining, which can radiate to the lower back," shared Dr Gandhali Deorkhkar, Gynecologist & Obstetrics, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central. According to her, conditions like endometriosis, fibroids, ectopic pregnancy, PID, and pelvic cysts can also cause severe pain.

"Fluctuations in hormones like prostaglandins can cause muscle contractions, leading to pain. The uterus contracts to shed its lining, which can radiate pain to the lower back. Besides increased inflammation during menstruation, stress and tension in the pelvic muscles can lead to referred pain in the back," shared Dr Hansaji Yogendra — Director, The Yoga Institute, Yoga Guru & Author. Deorkhkar shared that home remedies to alleviate lower back pain may include massage, heat therapy, exercise, and dietary changes, such as reducing processed foods and sugar. Herbal remedies like basil, chamomile, and ginger root may provide relief. "Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID) are commonly recommended by doctors, and some women find hormonal birth control helpful in managing the pain. Regular stretching and walking breaks can also



alleviate discomfort," she added.

How can you reduce this pain?

Dr Yogendra shared that taking the following proactive measures can help alleviate or prevent lower back pain during menstruation.

1. Engage in regular physical activity to strengthen core muscles and improve flexibility.
2. Incorporate meditation, deep breathing exercises & gentle stretches in your daily routine.
3. Including Asanas like Bhujangasana, Ushtrasana, Viparita Karani and Supta Vakrasana in your Yoga practice strengthens the lower back.
4. Limit intake of caffeine and salty foods to prevent water retention and lessen bloating.
5. Include anti-inflammatory foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids, to support overall health.
6. Opt for loose-fitting clothes during your period to avoid additional pressure on the abdomen and back.
7. Maintain proper posture while sitting, standing and walking to minimise strain on the back.

Dietitian says even wooden chopping boards aren't safe – we find out what can you use instead

Wooden chopping boards, with their timeless appeal, are often a staple in these kitchens. However, as convenient as they are, these boards come with hidden risks that could affect your family's health if not handled properly.

Varsha Gorey, Senior Clinical Dietitian, Apollo Hospitals Navi Mumbai said that wood, by its very nature, is porous, which means it readily absorbs moisture from the foods we cut on it—be it the juices of fresh tomatoes, the residue of raw chicken, or the oils from ginger and garlic. In a tropical country like India, where high humidity levels prevail for much of the year, this moisture creates an environment perfect for bacteria, mould, and fungi to thrive. "Over time, regular wear and tear leave tiny grooves and scratches on the surface of wooden chopping boards. These small crevices are difficult to clean thoroughly, allowing harmful pathogens like Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria to lodge themselves. These bacteria can contaminate the food we prepare, increasing the risk of foodborne illnesses," she said. Moreover, as wooden boards age, she added that they may begin to splinter, shedding tiny wood particles into your

food. Consuming these particles might seem harmless, but they can irritate the digestive tract or, worse, introduce toxic chemicals if the board has been treated or varnished. Health risks associated with using wooden boards 1. Stomach flu: Pathogens such as E. coli and Salmonella from improperly sanitized wooden boards can lead to foodborne illnesses. Due to the gastrointestinal infection, people experience symptoms like fever, diarrhoea, vomiting, and dehydration, nausea, and fever. Young children and elderly family members are especially vulnerable to these infections. 2. Fungal Contamination: In damp kitchens, wooden boards can develop mold. This is not just a hygiene issue—it can result in the formation of mycotoxins, which are harmful compounds linked to respiratory issues and allergic reactions. 3. Gastrointestinal Irritation: Tiny wood splinters or particles shed from old boards can irritate the stomach lining, potentially causing discomfort or, in rare cases, intestinal injuries. 4. Cross-Contamination: Indian kitchens often see the same chopping board being used for raw meat, fish, and vegetables without proper sanitization between uses.

Abhishek Bachchan escapes unhurt, but did Shoojit Sircar slaughter his own film on the edit table?



Bachchan's flat line delivery or Sircar's confused direction, the moment barely registers. And so, when Arjun refers to it as a 'promise' that he made to Reya later on in the film, the declaration comes across as unearned.

For one, you never quite see his relationship with Reya evolve. She seemingly finds out about his dozens of surgeries years after he's had them. But she was with him the entire time. How did she not know what he was going through? Arjun would also make special videos for her from his hospital bed; did she never watch them? Did he not send them to her? It makes very little sense. But what's even more confusing is the suddenness with which they appear to bond. This evolution might have even worked, but as experienced in the film, it's like jumping from point A to point C without going through point B first. In one scene, Reya doesn't mince her words as she tells Arjun about the childhood trauma that his actions have inflicted upon her. And in the very next scene, he's admitting to his poor parenting. Wasn't there a more organic way to bridge this gap? There probably was, but *I Want to Talk* is the kind of movie that reveals the existence of Arjun's blood-brother after an hour has already passed, via a voiceover that was clearly added in post-production. "This is my brother," Arjun says, almost satirically. Bro is never seen again. Or even spoken about. Even Arjun's ex-wife has no role to play in the movie, beyond a single scene. Granted, she isn't an important character, but the movie barely respects those who are. For instance, the kind nurse who develops a bond with Arjun during his illness, and remains in touch with him through the years, dies off-camera.

Normally, a movie like this would examine the impact that life-threatening circumstances can have on people. And to a degree, *I Want to Talk* wants us to believe that Arjun has become a more empathetic man over the years. But aside from his accent, little about him changes. He remains just as self-centred as he was in the first scene, but for some reason, develops an uncle accent as he grows older. *I Want to Talk* lacks the grace of Sircar's previous work, and while the film isn't as inept as 90% of the output his contemporaries produce, the bar is simply too high with him. Even the final act, which suddenly introduces a marathon angle, feels like it's missing key pieces. Going by the version presented to us, it seems like Arjun is simply trying to get fit when he begins training under an instructor. But it is eventually revealed that he wants to participate in an endurance event in a faraway state. When did this happen? This development is presented to us like something that Arjun had been building towards this whole time. But it never came up. Things become weirder when he leaves Reya in their hotel room and goes to the marathon by himself. She catches up with him, and promises to accompany him to the finish line. It's a touching moment, wrapping their shared arc in a neat little bow. But in the very next moment, Reya runs off by herself, leaving Arjun all alone once again. "Drama begins where logic ends," a wise man once said. But you only begin questioning the logic when there is no drama. Post Credits Scene is a column in which we dissect new releases every week, with particular focus on context, craft, and characters. Because there's always something to fixate about once the dust has settled.

'Amitabh Bachchan put his reputation at stake and RGV Ki Aag became a laughing stock,' says Ram Gopal Varma



Director Ram Gopal Varma recently penned a heartfelt note after watching his modern-day classic film *Satya* for the first time since its release over 25 years ago. The filmmaker expressed his regret for not holding himself to a higher standard during his subsequent career. While RGV was one of the most popular filmmakers in the 1990s and early 2000s, having delivered films such as *Rangeela*, *Satya*, *Kaun*, *Bhoot* and a few others, he went through a big downfall when he started making films like *RGV Ki Aag*, a remake of the landmark film *Sholay*. In a recent interview, RGV looked back at his working relationship with Amitabh Bachchan, who worked with him on *RGV Ki Aag*, and said that he felt guilty for letting him down. He said that the film became a "laughing stock," and Amitabh Bachchan had "his reputation at stake."

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In a chat with Galatta Plus, while discussing *RGV Ki Aag*, the director said that he realised that the film was going wrong two months before its release, but by then, it was already complete. He said that at the time, he believed that he had put more effort in *Aag*, as compared to even *Sarkar*, which also starred Amitabh Bachchan. RGV recalled how he got Bachchan on board and said that when he had the initial idea for the film, he discussed it with his team and one of the publicity artists made a picture imagining Bachchan in the role of the villain. That really impressed RGV and when he showed it to Bachchan, the actor was just as impressed.

"He might have said that because he will assume that I will know what I am doing, he is an actor at the end of the day. And also he trusts me because of *Sarkar*," he said, and added, "He didn't ask me too many questions, he just reacted to the picture and took it for granted that I know what I am doing." RGV said that while he was making the film, he found himself more occupied with reinterpreting *Sholay* on a shot to shot basis, and the "emotion went out of my head."

RGV said that the line, "cried in guilt for my betrayals

Soha Ali Khan pens heartfelt note for Kunal Kemmu on 10th marriage anniversary

Mumbai: As they completed ten years of marital bliss on Saturday, actress Soha Ali Khan penned a heartwarming note for her actor-husband Kunal Kemmu. Soha took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a reel video featuring the precious moments they have spent together. The clip begins with the couple's day of marriage. They are seen reading out the vows to each other.

The video then moves ahead to the various places they have traveled, the experiences they have shared and Soha's pregnancy days. "Ten years later ... I still do, and I always will. Heart, infinity and evil eye emoji," Soha wrote. It was in 2009 on the sets of Umesh Shukla's 2009 comedy "Dhondte Reh Jaaoge", when Soha and Kunal met. They started dating while sharing screen space in the crime comedy "99" and "Mr Joe B Carvalho." They got married in 2015 and welcomed their daughter Inaaya Naumi Kemmu in

2017. On January 24, Soha shared a glimpse from their holiday in Japan. She shared a heartwarming photo on her Instagram, featuring her, Kunal, Rajkumar Rao and Patralekhaa. The image also includes Soha's daughter, Inaaya Naumi, posing with them. Sharing this candid click, Soha wrote in the caption, "In the land of the rising sun JP." Last year in September, Kunal and Soha reunited with Rajkumar and Patralekhaa, who were also enjoying a holiday in Europe. The two Bollywood couples were spotted taking group selfies and enjoying their time with a few other friends. Meanwhile, Soha recently provided an update on her brother Saif Ali Khan's health following a recent knife attack at his home. Speaking to the media, she said, "We are happy that he is recovering well. We are very thankful and feel blessed that it wasn't any worse. Thank you for all your wishes."

Rajamouli teases with Reel on Instagram; Mahesh Babu, Priyanka Chopra react



Hyderabad: A reel shared by director SS Rajamouli on Saturday has gone viral on Instagram, capturing a lot of eyeballs. In the Reel he posted, the RRR director teased at his upcoming project with Mahesh Babu, tentatively titled SSMB29.

In the video, Rajamouli is seen showing his passport against the backdrop of a lion's poster which is then captured behind bars, as if being put in a cage. The now-viral video was captioned 'Captured.' In response to the post, actor Mahesh Babu playfully used a popular dialogue from his film 'Pokiri' to confirm his commitment to the film. He replied, "Okasaari commit ayithe naa maata nene vinanu"

accompanied by a wink emoji. Meanwhile, Priyanka Chopra who is speculated to be the female lead, also commented on the post saying 'Finally' followed by an excited emoji.

Though there has been no official confirmation regarding Priyanka in the film, her recent visit to Hyderabad added to the widespread speculations. The actress who visited the Chilkur Balaji Temple shared the post on social media captioning it 'new chapter' which further fuelled the rumours. However, people speculate that with the actress now reacting to Rajamouli's post confirms her role in the film. Meanwhile, fans who were waiting for an update on the film, are delighted after the director's Reel on Instagram.

Akshay Kumar admits he isn't educated enough to be a fighter pilot: 'It's no joke'

Akshay Kumar feels most at home in action films and the actor has often claimed that he performs a lot of his stunts by himself. In his latest release, *Sky Force*, Akshay plays an Air Force Officer and in a recent chat, the actor was asked if he would be able to actually make it as a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force. Akshay's answer started with sincerity but the actor was quick to admit that because of the academic qualifications required for the job, he would fail.

In a chat shared on BookMyShow, when Akshay was asked about making it as a fighter pilot, the actor said, "I hope so, and I would definitely give my best shot. Fighter pilot training is no joke. It takes a lot of skill, focus, and discipline. But given my background in fitness and martial arts, I think I could handle the physical aspect of it." While Akshay sounded confident about the physical part of the job, he was quick to say that his academics would surely fail him here. "But if you see my education, I think I'd fail the test," he said and laughed. He went on to reiterate the levels of training needed to be inside those machines, and said, "Flying a fighter jet, that's a whole different level. Of course, I would need a lot of training to match our real heroes." Akshay

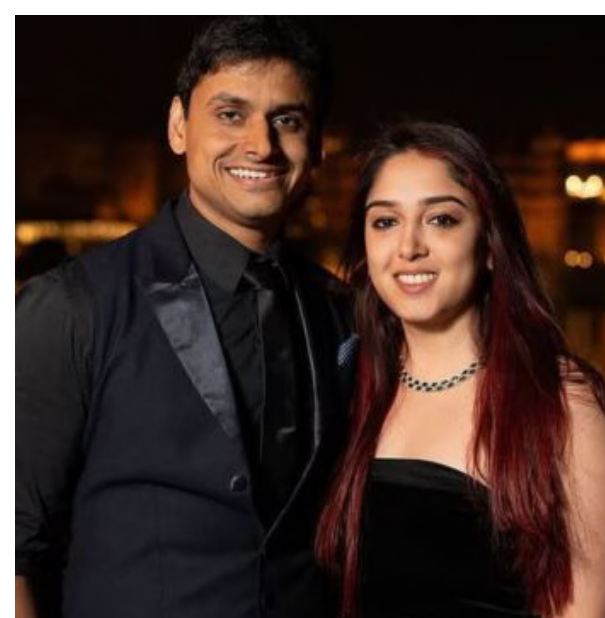


Kumar previously hosted the Colors TV show *Khatron Ke Khiladi* where he would perform a lot of stunts by himself. For many years, Akshay was known as the action hero and it was during this era that he earned the moniker 'Khiladi Kumar'.

Junaid Khan 'cuddled' in bed with brother-in-law Nupur Shikhare after drinking all night

Ira Khan married her longtime boyfriend Nupur Shikhare in 2024. But before they decided to get married, Nupur had to pass a test in front of Ira's brother Junaid Khan. Junaid recently shared that he always had a deal with his sister for the guys she decides to date. The boys were invited home and had to participate in a drinking game with Junaid. He shared that this was a test so his sister could see the guy at his most vulnerable in a drunk state, and decide for herself if she wanted to date him. And Nupur had to get through the same test as well.

In a chat with Hauterrfly, Junaid shared, "My only thing with my sister was that you can date whoever you want but you must bring them home and they have to have a drinking contest with me. They get to pick the liquor. The rules are we both take a shot every 15 minutes and if someone is unable to take a shot or throws up, they lose. As long as they beat me in a drinking contest, everything is fine. That has been my deal with my sister always. The idea being that she should see them at their drunkest. So she's looked after a lot of boyfriends. Well, a few boyfriends when they have been hammered." When the interviewer asked whether Nupur managed to beat him, the actor quickly replied, "Yeah." Junaid said that Nupur knew when to stop drinking so Junaid allowed him to win but what happened next was quite unexpected. "Ira took a video of it and it was very sweet. We spent rest of the night on the bathroom floor with



Ira next to him. Then I picked him up and I put him in bed and then he cuddled with me all night because he was in my bed," Junaid shared with a laugh.

Vishnu Manchu embarks on pilgrimage to 12 Jyothirlingas, shares insights on devotion, spirituality

Chennai: Actor Vishnu Manchu, who plays the lead in director Mukesh Kumar Singh's upcoming magnum opus, 'Kannappa', has now disclosed that he will be undertaking a journey to the 12 holy Jyothirlingas, situated across the country. Taking to Instagram, Vishnu Manchu, who penned the script for 'Kannappa' – a warrior devotee of Lord Shiva, posted a video in which he said, "I have to truthfully admit one thing. Before starting work on 'Kannappa', I was not such a big devotee of Lord Shiva. I was a devotee of Lord Hanuman and I would recite the Hanuman Chalisa every day even to this day.

"When I wrote Kannappa, I researched a lot and that brought about a lot of changes in me. I found out about what Jyothirlingas were and why one must visit them. I decided that I must visit all these 12 holy places where these Jyothirlingas are situated," the actor explained. Stating that he would be putting out a series of videos on this, Vishnu further said, "A lot of people do not know what these

Jyothirlingas are. I too did not know their significance until a while back. So, for people like me who do not know about the Jyothirlingas, I have decided to do a series of videos on Jyothirlingas." The actor then went on to explain the different beliefs in different yugas. "We are in Kaliyug now. In Sathyayuga, the belief was that one could get closer to God if one did penance. The belief then was that meditation would help you realise the purpose of your life. Now, in Kaliyug, the belief is that if you visit holy places, you will not only come closer to God but will also know the purpose behind your birth." These 12 Jyothirlingas are powerful places. These places are testimony to the fact that Lord Shiva walked among common people. From Kedarnath to Rameshwaram, there are 12 Jyothirlingas all across the country. There is a story behind each story. I wish to visit each one of the Jyothirlingas. The belief is that one will be able to realise one's life purpose near one of the 12 Jyothirlingas.

Shivam Dube set to join Indian squad in Rajkot for ongoing T20I series



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Allrounder Shivam Dube, who was part of the World Cup-winning campaign last year, has been added to India's T20I squad for the ongoing five-match T20 series against England by the senior selection committee.

Dube will join the Indian team in Rajkot. The Indian

Express understands that Dube has been called up to the squad as Nitish Kumar Reddy is reported to have picked up an injury from which he hasn't recovered yet. Dube played for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy match against Jammu and Kashmir, though his performances were disappointing at the Bandra Kurla Complex, where he got out 0 in both innings as Mumbai suffered a damaging defeat.

Dube wasn't originally picked for the Indian T20 team as selectors had gone with Reddy and Hardik Pandya as the two all-rounders in the squad. The Mumbai batsman has recovered from his back injury which had ruled him out for the initial phase of the Ranji Trophy. Later he got fit for Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy where he represented Mumbai which went on to win the title. India had won the first game against England at Eden Gardens and they are scheduled to play in Chennai on Saturday in the second match. The third T20I will be played in Rajkot on Tuesday, with the fourth match scheduled on Friday in Pune. The fifth and final T20I will be played in Mumbai on Sunday, February 2.

What's troubling Lakshya Sen? From the Viktor Axelsen challenge to finishing woes in matches

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Lakshya Sen's re-entry into Top 10 of the world rankings this past week, might have come about, thanks to indifferent results of other contenders. But some patterns in his losses remain pervasive. For a Top 4 finisher at the Olympics, it remains surprising that he has never made finals of a Super 750 tournament, while the All England Super 1000 final of 2022 is a one-off on the Tour. But even factoring in that Sen will be choosy and peak for big tournaments, owing to a defensively body-battering game style needing rationing of energies, his history of scalping marquee names at will, is rather sparse.

Sen aced a few match-ups, like he knows he can get the better of Anthony Ginting 3-0 (Head 2 Head), Li Shi Feng (7-4), Lee Zii Jia (5-2) and Loh Kean Yew (6-3). But he has also lost the Youth Olympics gold to Shi Feng and Paris Olympics bronze to Zii Jia. But he's compiling some repetitive H2Hs against Viktor Axelsen (1-8 win loss), Anders Antonsen (2-5) and Kunlavut Vitidsarn (3-6), which can chip at his confidence if not corrected intermittently. Still, his win against Jonatan Christie to get out of the group despite trailing him 2-4 in career scores, offer hope.

Viktor: Points differential

According to Badminton World Federation records, Viktor Axelsen has scored a massive 110 points more than Sen in their 9 matches (Sen has 297 points, Axelsen has 407, 1-8 H2H). Though the double Olympic champ, has an over 100-point differential against every player except Antonsen (4-6 H2H), Lee Zii Jia (3-7) and Li Shi Feng (1-0), there is a direct correlation between the wins teased out of the towering Dane and the number of points he's allowed to fleece. Not only does Sen need to defend well against him, he needs a far larger number of winners. The endgame from 18th point onwards is when Axelsen can swamp – or be swamped right back. Sen's point differential against his Thai contemporary Kunlavut Vitidsarn (points differential of -48) is particularly pesky to score off. Sen has 3 wins and 6 losses against the monkishly steady player with variety in stroke play. Sen has 2 wins, 4 losses against Christie (point differential of -5), Kodai Naraoka (-25) and Chou Tien Chen (Sen scored 316 points, ceded 315), all pointing to him staying in contention in the game, but not finishing well enough. Sen has a steady grip on Li Shi Feng, the Chinese heir apparent, with a 7-4 H2H, and a healthy +60 points differential. Sen will not balk at the prospect of facing him but the nonchalant mental hold he has over the Chinese, will be tested as time goes by. Finishing woes While losing 16-21, 21-12, 23-21 to Kenta Nishimoto at Indonesia Masters in Round 1, could be down to sub-par sharpness in the 73 minute battle, Sen has clearly struggled to summon his clutch play, evident in both Paris Olympic losses. At Jakarta,



he did well to come back from 16-19 down in decider to 19-all, but his shot selection and strategy got muddled as he navigated those 20-20, 21-21 situations in stringing those 2-3 points together.

Against Lu Guang Zu at Denmark, another three setter, Sen was 21-12, 16-11 up, but utterly botched it from 17-17.

Like the Olympics bronze playoff, losing these leads when being moments away from winning, completely deflates him in the third. Against Axelsen at Paris, Sen led 15-9 and 20-17, but couldn't convert. Against Anders Antonsen at the Indonesia Open, he had two leads, 20-18 in the first, and 16-14 in second, and lost in straight sets. The shock of holding the lead, then losing it, paralyses Sen completely at the crunch as he approaches the finish line as if it was a barbed wire.

Slabs of blankness A 'wodge' is a good word to describe the inexplicable bands or blocks of time-passages in a Lakshya Sen match when things go south. The youngster is not mentally brittle by any measure, he has in fact scored famous wins nicking them at crucial times. But midway through a set, with no warning whatsoever, Sen can suddenly slump. Whether it's a dip in concentration or trying too hard, or simply letting the opponent do his thing as he phlegmatically watches, only his team can figure. But Sen is notorious for losing points in a chunk. Against Axelsen, Sen has suddenly conceded 6 points or more (once, even 10 in a row), a whole 9 times, leaving the door ajar, and unable to stem the flood. Zii Jia famously collected 9 in a row, when he took Paris bronze. He probably needs the good of slowing-down tricks to not get blown away like this. But just when he managed to restrict the likes of Antonsen and kept it tight, Sen bumbles a finish. Thrice now though, Sen has gone on a 6+ point run of his own against Axelsen and still lost the match. These up and down bursts and cave-ins of energy perhaps need a median point, or staying in the present, as Kunlavut has mastered.

'Complete hors***t': FIDE vs players war heats up as Hikaru Nakamura hits out at CEO Emil Sutovsky



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

World No 2 Hikaru Nakamura has lashed out at FIDE CEO Emil Sutovsky for "personal insults" aimed at him in a long tweet posted on X by Sutovsky recently. In a video posted on his YouTube handle, Hikaru Nakamura called out Sutovsky's long tweet where the FIDE official took potshots at the American GM. Some of the FIDE's most prominent players and FIDE have recently argued over the upcoming Freestyle Chess Grand Slam tour, with players like Magnus Carlsen and Nakamura even contemplating pulling out of the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Championship in New York.

"I'm not the one creating this (the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam tour). So I find this really bizarre that I am the

one he chooses to attack. I'm not spearheading this. This is being spearheaded by Magnus Carlsen and Jan Henric Buettner. This is a personal insult," Hikaru Nakamura said in the video. "I don't know why he has to try and attack me. I can also make personal attacks but I choose not to. I have no equity in Freestyle Chess. I don't have any contract with them that I'm going to play every tournament or anything along those lines. So, it's kind of weird to try and make this in some way about me. It's funny that I'm apparently the bad guy."

In 2025, the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour will be a series of five chess events in cities like Weissenhaus, Paris, New York, New Delhi, and Cape Town. FIDE's top management has been at loggerheads with the organisers of the Freestyle Grand Slam Tour and the Freestyle Players Club, which includes Magnus Carlsen, over the upcoming tour. The bone of contention has been the organizers of the Freestyle event wanting to call their event a "World Championship". FIDE has objected to this, stating that as global governing body of chess, they alone hold the rights to decide which event can be called a "World Championship".

Hikaru Nakamura slammed Sutovsky for claiming that FIDE creates a lot of money for players. Sutovsky had posted on X: "FIDE does provide a lot of income for top players. Hikaru may not have won any amount significant enough for a top streamer – but here are the prize funds: World Championship Match: 2.5M USD, World Cup 2M+, Rapid and Blitz 1.428M, Grand Swiss is about to have almost 1M, etc." At this, Hikaru Nakamura clapped back saying: "This is complete hors***t. This is complete hors***t. The players are not making 2.5 million dollars." Nakamura pointed out that all the sums quoted by FIDE CEO were overall prize funds for the entire field competing, besides the World Championship, where the prize money was split between two "lucky players". He said that while FIDE CEO was trying to "make it look impressive", the money was actually being split among the whole field. "All this money gets watered down and players are not making that much money. The top players make most of their money from other events like Norway Chess, Grand Chess Tour and German Bundesliga," Hikaru Nakamura said.

Harbhajan Singh questions absence of Sanju Samson and Yuzvendra Chahal from India's Champions Trophy squad

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh has raised questions over the absence of wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal from India's Champions Trophy squad. "Truly, I feel bad for him (Sanju)," Harbhajan told Switch. "He scores runs but he is dropped. I know you can only select 15, but I feel his batting suits the format. He has an average of 55-56, but he isn't even there as a second wicketkeeper. When we talk about selecting him, people ask, in whose place? Places can be made," he said. Samson has scored a brilliant century in his last ODI outing against South Africa in December 2023. In the 14 outings, 30-year has batting average of 56.66 in ODI cricket. Harbhajan also lambasted selectors for not picking variety in the spin department. India have picked Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar and Kuldeep Yadav in their 15-member squad but the former India spinner feels the selectors missed a trick by not picking Yuzvendra Chahal. In 72 ODI matches played in his career so far, Chahal has picked 121 wickets at an average of 27.13 and an economy of 5.26 with two five-wicket hauls to his name. "Sanju isn't there. Yuzvendra Chahal isn't there, too,"



he said. Yuzvendra Chahal Yuzvendra Chahal appeals for a wicket. (Twitter/@yuzvi_chahal) You've picked four spinners, two of them are left-armers. "You could've included a leg-spinner for variation, too. Chahal is a superb bowler. I don't know what wrong he did, that he doesn't fit in this team," Harbhajan said. India are in Group A in the Champions Trophy and begin their campaign against Bangladesh on February 20, after which they play Pakistan on February 23, and New Zealand on March 2.

Australian Open final, Aryna Sabalenka vs Madison Keys: Head-to-head, key facts, when and where to watch

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka will battle American 19th seed Madison Keys in the final on Saturday looking to become the first woman since Martina Hingis from 1997-99 to win the Australian Open title three times in a row. Victory on Saturday would see the world No 1 become the sixth woman to win three straight Australian Open titles, joining Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, Steffi Graf, Monica Seles, and Hingis. It's a feat that has not been achieved in 25 years. At the other end of the spectrum is 29-year-old Keys, looking for that elusive first Major. Despite an impressive start to 2025, few would have expected Keys to get this far but the 29-year-old is a worthy finalist having beaten world No 2 Iga Swiatek in the last four. Swiatek was the third top 10 seed to lose to Keys after the American defeated sixth seed Elena Rybakina in the last 16 and 10th seed Danielle Collins in the third round. Keys lost to compatriot Sloane Stephens in her only previous trip to a Grand Slam final at the 2017 U.S. Open.

Aryna Sabalenka U.S. Open Aryna Sabalenka celebrates with the championship trophy after her match against Jessica Pegula (USA) (not pictured) in the women's singles final of the 2024 U.S. Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. Reuters/Mike Frey-Imagn Images

Head-to-head Sabalenka has won in four of the previous five previous meetings against Keys. Two of those clashes came at the Grand Slam level, with Sabalenka prevailing at the US Open semifinal as well as the Wimbledon quarterfinal in 2023. The US Open semifinal defeat was particularly tough on Keys, as she lost the match after blanking Sabalenka 0-6 in the first set. Keys' solitary win against Sabalenka came in Berlin in 2021, a three-set victory. When and where to watch Australian Open women's singles final The final will start at 2 pm IST and will be broadcast on the Sony Sports Network and streamed on Sony LIV in India. Key stats via Opta – With 8 years separating her 2 Grand Slam finals, Keys is the player with the longest gap between their first two title clashes at a Major in the Open Era. The previous record of 7 years was held by Amelie Mauresmo. – It's taken 11 attempts in the main draw for Keys to reach her first final at Australia Open. It equals the



record held by Caroline Wozniacki. Madison Keys vs Iga Swiatek Aus Open Madison Keys of the U.S. celebrates after defeating Iga Swiatek of Poland in their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, early Friday, Jan. 24, 2025. (AP Photo/Asanka Brendon Ratnayake) – At 29, Keys is the oldest women's singles finalist at the Australian Open since Serena and Venus Williams in 2017.

– Having won the titles last two years, Sabalenka's win streak at Aus Open is now at 20. She is the third player in the last 10 years to win 20+ consecutive matches in women's singles at a Major after Serena Williams (US Open and Wimbledon) and Iga Swiatek. – Sabalenka is only the eighth player in the Open Era to reach three consecutive women's singles finals at the Australian Open. Who's saying what Sabalenka: "It's crazy that I'm in a situation where I have a chance to put my name next to legends," said Sabalenka, who is also bidding for her fourth Grand Slam title after winning the 2024 U.S. Open. "I couldn't dream about that. It's going to mean a lot. I just feel at home. Last year I thought, 'Okay, I feel at home, I feel so good here, I feel all the support'. This year I feel it even more. It feels like coming home to my home Slam." Keys: "I've done a lot of work trying to NOT get rid of nerves, because I think in the past, in my head, it was kind of always. 'The people who play amazing in the tight moments, they either don't have nerves or they figure out how to get rid of them.' The big thing for me has just been knowing that there are going to be a lot of moments where I'm uncomfortable in the match.

Jannik Sinner: 'If Novak Djokovic retires from a match it means he has big issues, it was unfortunate to see'



World No 1 Sinner wished Djokovic a speedy recovery after the Serbian star had to retire hurt in the semifinal of the Australian Open.

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

World No 1 Jannik Sinner said he didn't end the first semifinal live but expressed his concern for Novak Djokovic as the Serbian star had to retire hurt against Alexander Zverev. Sinner prevailed against Ben Shelton in the second semifinal later in the day to set up a title clash against world No 2 Zverev. "I was warming up. I didn't see it live. I saw after how it happened," Sinner said in the press conference. "It's very unfortunate to see these kind of things, especially in semifinals of Grand Slams. But if Novak retires, it means that he has big issues. He has won here in

the past with some physical problems, and he always tried to do his best. He has given so much until now in his career for this sport. It's unfortunate to see. I wish him a speedy recovery."

Jannik Sinner of Italy celebrates after defeating Ben Shelton of the U.S. in their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne. Jannik Sinner of Italy celebrates after defeating Ben Shelton of the U.S. in their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne. AP Photo/Vincent Thian "Tried to recover for today's match but I could only push so far. Nevertheless, positives to take out of this year's Aus Open. Congratulations to Zverev for making another GS final. I wish you to win the title because you deserve it, my friend," Djokovic posted on his social media account. Sinner is now the youngest man since Jim Courier in 1992-93 to reach consecutive finals at the Australian Open. It was Courier who conducted the post-match interview with Sinner on Friday.

Watch Sinner's chat with Courier here:

Earlier in the day, in his post-match interview also with Courier, Zverev also condemned sections of the crowd for jeering Djokovic, who has dominated the year's opening Grand Slam since winning his first trophy at Melbourne Park in 2008. "The very first thing I want to say is, please guys, don't boo a player when he goes out with injury," Zverev said. "I know everyone paid for tickets and everyone wants to see hopefully a great five-set match. But ... Novak Djokovic is someone who has given this sport for the past 20 years absolutely everything of his life. He has won this tournament with an abdominal tear, won this tournament with a hamstring injury. So please show some respect." Zverev on Friday had said he was also surprised by Djokovic's retirement but noted the Serb's movement had fallen away in the tiebreak. "I thought it was a high-level first set," the world No 2 added. "Of course there are some difficulties ... in the tiebreak he was not moving. I did see him struggle a bit more."