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## GMR Hyderabad International Airport launches more travel options from Hyd to Phuket

Hyderabad: GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) on Friday announced the launch of new flight services between Phuket and Hyderabad, enhancing international connectivity for travellers.

The inaugural flight took off on Friday. To begin with, Air India Express will operate three weekly flights on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, and from February 15 the frequency of the flights will be six days a week on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The duration of the flight is approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes. Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd, said, ".

## Apollo Hospitals collaborates with New Jersey caregiver

Hyderabad: Apollo Hospitals Group and Hackensack Meridian Health (HMH), a health care network from New Jersey, USA, on Friday announced a strategic affiliation agreement to explore and implement innovative health care solutions, a press release said.

The collaboration will leverage the strengths and resources of both Apollo and HMH to develop and implement joint initiatives focused on enhancing patient care, improving affordability, and promoting community health. "By combining our respective strengths, we aim to create impactful solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and health care systems.

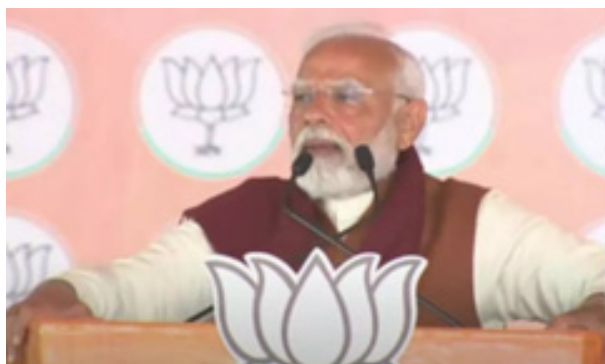
## 'Congress hates poor': PM Modi slams Sonia, Rahul's remarks on President's address

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hit out at the Congress and the AAP-da (AAP) party for their arrogance and launched a blistering attack on the "Royal (Gandhi) family" of the Congress for mocking President Droupadi Murmu after her speech in Parliament. Addressing an election rally in west Delhi's Dwarka, PM Modi said: "Today, our respected President addressed the Parliament, highlighting development and the vision for Viksit Bharat." "But a member of the Royal family of the Congress said the President gave a boring speech another member of the Royal family of the Congress insulted a tribal woman by calling her 'poor thing'," he said.

"This is an insult to 10 crore tribals and every poor in the country. The Royal family of the Congress does not like Dalits, STs or OBCs rising in life," he said, indirectly referring to reaction of Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to the President's address on the opening day of the Budget Session of Parliament. "Abusing people and defaming the country abroad and loving Urban Naxals is their forte," said PM Modi referring to both the Congress and the AAP. "These two arrogant parties have joined hands behind the scenes and we need to stay alert," he said, asking voters to elect a BJP government in the February 5 Assembly election in Delhi. Arrogance is common to both the AAP-da and Congress - the AAP-da considers itself the owner of Delhi and the Congress considers itself the ruler of the country, he said. Referring to the political storm over pollution in the Yamuna, the PM said due to the fear of loss in election AAP-da leaders are pursuing zehrili rajniti (poisonous politics),

PM Modi hit out at the ruling party in Delhi for the poor state of the Yamuna and indulging in blame game and corruption. He said the AAP-da government has not increased the budget for infrastructure over the past four years. "They are not spending money on public welfare but on their publicity and ads," he said. Hitting out at corruption in the AAP-da government and calling it an enemy of the middle class, he said: "Those who live in Sheesh Mahal have no respect for a two BHK of a middle class family." "Touching upon Arvind Kejriwal's Yamuna 'poison' remark, he said the AAP-da people hate Haryana. "They blame the neighbouring state for air pollution, and now they



are blaming Haryana for poisoning Yamuna water," he said. The land which gave the message of Gita has been accused of poisoning the Yamuna. "Yamuna is not just a river but a part of the Indian ethos, but it is in a decaying state today," he said. He said in Gujarat, the poor state of Sabarmati river in Ahmedabad used to hurt him. "I later rejuvenated the river and developed a river front there," he said, adding, "I would personally oversee the revamp of the Yamuna in Delhi as well". He said the BJP government will change the future of Delhi NCR by developing the Yamuna. "The water will be cleaned, we will develop the river front, we will build a green tourism corridor and run water Metro for transportation," he said, adding that rejuvenation of a river also promotes the economy. Claiming that the BJP not only undertakes development but also facilitates savings for the poor, he said: "We will give houses to the poor in Delhi at double the speed once a BJP government is formed."

Repeating BJP's no tolerance for corruption, PM Modi said the BJP government will call an Assembly session early and the CAG report, carrying details of the AAP government's financial lapses, will be tabled to expose the corruption spread by the AAP-da government. He also highlighted the PM Surya Ghar solar energy scheme under which the BJP government will give Rs 75,000-80,000 to each household for installing a solar plant, which will translate into 300 free units of electricity every month. He urged women to link their bank accounts with phone numbers as they will soon get messages on their phones that Rs 2,500 financial assistance has been deposited in their account under the Mahila Samridhhi Scheme."

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Hyderabad: Amidst protests by Goshamahal Parirakshana Samithi demanding the government to withdraw the plans, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy laid foundation for construction of new Osmania General Hospital (OGH) building on Friday. People have been raising concerns over the traffic issues, environmental issues and others due to the construction of OGH. Accompanied by Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha, R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and others, the Chief Minister laid foundation for the OGH building. The project is being taken up with a cost of Rs.2700 crore and is expected to be ready in two years. The Government is utilizing 26 acres of the 38 acres, for developing the hospital with 2000 beds. The balance 11 acres are likely to be used by police department for its requirements. The existing OGH is a heritage structure and case is under progress in the High Court. With



heritage activists opposing the plans to construct the new building at the same place, the government is constructing the new structure in police grounds, Goshamahal.

## India has world's 3rd-largest metro network: Prez Murmu in Parliament address

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

India has the world's third-largest metro network, said President Droupadi Murmu in her address to the joint sitting of Parliament on Friday. She said the country's metro rail network has now crossed the 1000-kilometre milestone, and "India has the world's third-largest metro network". The President highlighted the government's achievements in expanding the rail network and modernising it at the same time and also connecting the unconnected areas for the first time. "Today, several Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat and Namoo Bharat trains are being operated. In the last six months, 17 new Vande Bharat trains and one Namoo train have been introduced. The government is working rapidly... In the last decade, my government has given new energy to the journey of Viksit Bharat." She also said that in the last six months, the Central government has made record investments in future infrastructure and highlighted the engineering marvel of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project. "I am happy to inform you that the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project has been completed and now the country will be connected by railway line from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Under this ambitious project, the world's highest rail bridge has been constructed over the Chenab River," she said. After successful trial runs of passenger and freight trains, the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is set for its much-awaited official inauguration in the first week of February 2025. President Droupadi Murmu in her Praleimant address also said that digital fraud and deepfakes were serious challenges to national security and that the gov-



ernment was working to curb this. She said, "My government is continuously working towards ensuring efficiency in cyber security. Digital fraud, cybercrime and DeepFake are serious challenges to social, financial and national security." She said that today, India is making its presence felt as a major global player in the field of digital technology. "Developed nations of the world are also impressed with the success of India's UPI transactions system... My government has used digital technology as a tool for social justice and equality." The President said the government aims to make India a global innovation powerhouse. "Our aim is to make India a global innovation powerhouse... In the area of artificial intelligence, India's AI Mission has been started," she said. In her address to the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, President Murmu highlighted the government's various schemes and goals. She said that the government was committed to fulfilling the dreams of the poor and the middle class and also was aiming to make India a global innovation powerhouse. "Today our youth is bringing glory to the country in every field from startups to sports to space... India is showing the way to the world in the fields of Artificial Intelligence and the adoption of technology," the President said.

## KCR slams Congress over Telangana's economic decline, vows to join people's movement

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Hyderabad: Former Chief Minister and BRS chief K Chandrashekhara Rao on Friday said the Congress government would not be forgiven if it continued to neglect public welfare. He declared that if the Congress continued to ignore people's issues, there would be a major backlash from the public. "I will also participate in people's movements. Time has come to take an aggressive stance," he said, addressing hundreds of BRS supporters from Medapalli village in Zaheerabad constituency, who walked 140 km over five days to meet him, at his Erravelli residence to express their dissatisfaction with the current Congress government.

Citing a CAG report, Chandrashekhara Rao pointed out that while the BRS government ensured an annual revenue growth of Rs 15,000 crore over the last five years, the Congress rule had led to a Rs 13,000-crore decline, pushing Telangana towards economic instability. He said economists feared that the financial health of the State would be irreparable if such situation continued any further. He pointed out that the government was not even releasing retirement benefits to retired employees since March last year. He blamed



the Congress for undoing Telangana's progress, stating that under the BRS rule, the State had achieved irrigation growth, drinking water supply through Mission Bhagiratha, constructed reservoirs such as Mallanna Sagar and launched major welfare schemes like Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima.

## Embrace deregulation to let businesses prosper, says Chief Economic Advisor

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

New Delhi: Give entrepreneurs and households back their time and mental bandwidth, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said while making a strong case for significant roll back of regulations both by the Union and State governments. In the Preface of the Economic Survey 2024-25, he said, "Getting out of the way" and allowing businesses to focus on their core mission is a significant contribution that governments around the country can make to foster innovation and enhance competitiveness. "The most effective policies governments - Union and States - in the country can embrace is to give entrepreneurs and households back their time and mental bandwidth. That means rolling back regulation significantly. That means vowing and acting to stop micromanaging economic activity and embracing risk-based regulations," Nageswaran wrote. Effective government policies also mean changing the operating principle of regulations from 'guilty until proven innocent' to 'innocent until proven guilty'. Adding layers of operational conditions to policies to prevent abuse makes them incomprehensible and regulations needlessly complicated, taking them further from their original purposes and intentions, said Nageswaran, who led the team which authored the key pre-Budget document. Observing that there is no choice but to trust the people, he cautioned that "business as usual carries a high risk of economic growth stagnation, if not economic stagnation". "Yes, trust is a two-way street and the non-government actors in the



economy have to vindicate the trust reposed. In fact, quite a significant chunk of the complicated compliance requirements stem from the efforts of businesses wanting to keep out domestic and foreign competition to the detriment of other industries and the economy," he added.

The chief economic advisor emphasised that wiping out the trust deficit in the country as it is imperative and government agencies have to set the agenda in this regard. "Then, it is a good bet that the Indian public will overcome the challenges and turn them into opportunities on the way to Viksit Bharat by 2047," he said. The survey argues that the government needs to embrace risk-based regulations and change the operating principle of regulations from 'guilty until proven innocent' to 'innocent until proven guilty'.

## BRS president KCR asks cadre to gear up for direct fight with Congress

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Hyderabad: Breaking his silence on the Congress administration in the State, BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao on Friday, asked his party cadre to gear up for a direct fight with the Congress regime. He announced a massive public meeting in the last week of February. "I have been watching the Congress administration silently for the last one year. But it is time to take up a direct fight. I would not strike my opponents easily, as it has to be decisive and forceful. People of Telangana as well as Congress leaders are well aware of it," he declared.

Speaking to BRS leaders from the Zaheerabad constituency at his Erravelli residence, Chandrashekhara Rao launched a full-throttle attack, charging the Congress of betraying people who trusted it and voted it to power. He criticised the ruling party for failing to implement a single welfare scheme properly, stating that Telangana was facing a severe crisis under the Congress leadership. He said people were already disillusioned with the Congress's one-year rule and were gearing up to thrash Congress leaders. He reminded that he had warned voters about the Congress's lack of commitment to farmer welfare and Dalit empowerment, but the electorate ignored it.

"The people of Telangana did not listen to my warnings during the elections. They voted for Congress, believing in false promises. Now, they are paying the price," he said. The former Chief Minister remarked that the Congress leaders were suppressing dissent by filing police cases against those questioning the government. He said under the Congress rule, Telangana is facing power cuts, drought, and water shortages. Key irrigation projects like Sangameshwara and Basaveshwara were stalled, while the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme was being emptied, putting the lives of farmers in jeopardy. He called upon BRS leaders to conduct large-scale protests at irrigation project sites, demanding timely water supply for farmers. He also expressed concerns over falling land prices, deteriorating conditions in Gurukul hostels, and food poisoning incidents among students, blaming Congress's negligence. "Let us show the power of the people of Telangana to the Congress and bring them to their knees," he said. Chandrashekhara Rao charged the Congress with using the Muslim community for votes and failing to uphold its promises. He alleged that welfare funds had dried up, leading to economic instability. Comparing the current situation to Telangana's past



struggles under the Congress regime, he said history was repeating itself. "Telangana is once again suffering in the hands of the Congress leaders." He gave a strong counter to the Congress leaders who have been criticising his Erravelli residence as a farmhouse giving an impression of a palatial building where illegal activities are conducted, though it is his residence and he cultivates crops."

## BRS will return to power in 2028, KCR will be Telangana CM again: KT Rama Rao

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Friday asserted that the party would return to power in 2028, with K Chandrashekhara Rao reclaiming the Chief Minister's position. He criticised the Congress government for halting the progress achieved over the last decade. He reiterated that the people of Telangana would soon recognise Congress'

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, **Edara Nagamani** W/o Suryanarayana, currently residing at 3-45/4, Bankapuram, Nidamanoor Mandalam, Nalgonda District, Telangana, 508278, hereby confirm that I have changed my name to **Eedhara Nagamani** W/o Suryanarayana for all future purposes and official communications. I kindly request you to change my name in all your records passport accordingly. Please treat this as my official confirmation for the name change.  
**Eedhara Nagamani**  
(Contact Information: 9963336051)









## Need to maintain upward trend in AI and tech-specific investments



Despite multiple challenges and uncertainties, India's Gross Development Product (GDP) growth rate has rebounded, largely driven by the services sector, which accounts for approximately 55 percent of the current GDP, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. This growth is particularly notable in the IT sector, which contributes about 56 percent of India's total services exports on the national landscape, as per a report by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

As reported by World Bank, the US\$3.5 trillion Indian economy enters 2025 with immense potential in areas such as healthcare and insurance, infrastructure, Electric Vehicles (EVs), Fast-moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and renewable energy. It is expected to be another exciting year for the technology sector, which will continue to play a pivotal role in the previously mentioned (but not limited to) areas. Notably, the rise of AI/GenAI in the tech space is revolutionising various aspects of governance, economy, security and society at large.

According to Nasscom, India's AI market noted a CAGR of 25–35 percent and is projected to reach about US\$17 billion by 2027. AI's growth in India is supported by a robust ecosystem comprising start-ups, academic institutions, government initiatives and MNCs. India's IT services and Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are expected to grow to US\$100 billion by 2030, as per a report by Inductus. They are also setting up AI/GenAI Centres of Excellence (CoEs), signalling an uptrend for AI/GenAI technologies and associated workforce training.

Government bodies and public-sector organisations have been some of the early adopters of AI. Spending on AI software for digital government services is expected to reach US\$6 billion by 2027, as per International Data Corporation (IDC).

AI in India and the government's push The Government of India has been bullish on new-age advancements. Investments in the semi-conductor space (~US\$10 billion investment, according to the Ministry of Electronics & In-

formation Technology), Quantum technologies (~US\$0.7 billion investment, as per the National Quantum Mission (NQM) by the Department of Science & Technology) and AI/GenAI (commitment of ~US\$1.2 billion investment, as per the Government of India) underscore the government's focus on high-tech. In 2018–19, the Finance Minister mandated the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog to establish the National Programme on AI, which aims to guide the R&D of emerging technologies. NITI Aayog released the National AI Strategy, outlining the government's vision for AI development in the country. In March 2024, the cabinet approved the comprehensive national-level IndiaAI Mission with a budget outlay of US\$8.8 billion. This step further boosts the vision of "Making AI in India" and "Making AI Work for India." To realise "Vision 2047," the government must continue its push on AI, as India is a rewarding destination considering its skilled talent pool. Per a Deloitte report on Generative AI in Asia Pacific, India leads in GenAI adoption across Asia Pacific, with 93 percent of students and 83 percent of employees actively engaging with the technology.

Key sectors for AI The government must establish AI research centres and innovation hubs that help solve specific healthcare, agriculture and education challenges. For example, the agri-industry could benefit from AI through precision farming, pest and disease detection, crop yield optimisation, smart rainwater harvesting and AI-powered drones. Other applications of AI are in the manufacturing sector, such as predictive maintenance, quality control, supply chain optimisation and smart manufacturing. AI can also help deploy social and welfare programmes through improved identification of beneficiaries, personalised welfare programmes, fraud detection and effective resource allocation. Budget expectations

For FY2024–25, the Indian government allocated INR551.75 crore to the IndiaAI Mission to strengthen the country's AI infrastructure. This allocation is expected to increase as India aims to position itself strategically as a high-tech destination on the global map. While all industries stand to benefit from an AI push, advancements in sectors such as healthcare and education would lead to significant social

impact. AI in healthcare could assist in areas such as early diagnosis and detection, telemedicine, targeted interventions and chronic disease management. Similarly, the education sector should benefit from personalised tutoring, e-learning in regional languages and AI-driven counselling. The government should provide benefits and incentives to solidify a strong R&D ecosystem that fosters economic growth and job creation. Conclusion The government must continue with an upward trend in AI and tech-specific investments with a special focus on key industries. There could not be a more opportune time to position India as an AI innovation hub.

## Madhabi Puri Buch's 3-year term ends Feb 28; govt invites application for SEBI Chairman

The Ministry of Finance has invited applications for the post of Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) by February 17. The current three-year tenure of SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch will end on February 28. She took over the charge as the chief of capital markets regulator on March 2, 2022. "Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for filling up the post of Chairman in Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)," according to a notice by the Department of Economic Affairs (Financial Markets Division).

The chairman will hold office for a period of five years or till the age of 65 years of age, whichever is earlier, and will be eligible for re-appointment, the notice said. The SEBI Chairman will have an option to receive pay as admissible to a Secretary to the government of India; or a consolidated salary of Rs 5,62,500 per month.

Buch who took over as the SEBI Chief in March 2022, was the first person from the private sector to be at the helm of the regulatory body. Before being appointed as the SEBI Chairperson, Buch served as a whole time member



of the regulator, till October 4, 2021. In August last year, US-based Hindenburg Research has alleged that Sebi Chairperson Buch and her husband, Dhaval Buch, had stakes in offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal. The Buch couple had denied the allegation. Later in September 2024, nearly 500 SEBI employees had protested against the "toxic" work culture at the regulator.

## Laveesh Bhandari: 'Need focus on labour laws, land and cities; speed up overburdened judicial system'

Budget 2025-26 should be seen in the context of India's march towards Viksit@2047. While new opportunities such as those in technology, high-tech manufacturing, etc need to be utilised, we must also unlock India's immense energies held back due to our own inaction.

A difficult labour law regime prevents businesses from managing their operations well. At the core of this sits the Industrial Disputes Act whose Chapter 5 prevents businesses employing more than 100-300 workers, depending upon state laws, from laying off a worker without the permission of the union(s) and the government. Other labour laws such as Contract Labour Act also consequently need to be more stringent to ensure that people don't circumvent the IDA Chapter 5. Effectively hundreds of rules and regulations, worsened by judicial delays, prevent firms from having the freedom to manage their workers as they need to. If businesses can't lay off, assign work, or contract easily, productivity is naturally compromised. This also impacts investment and therefore growth. There is enough data to show that the average productivity level of Indian labour is lower than in comparable countries.

There are many ways of protecting workers, but instead of protecting the worker's job, why don't we protect the worker's consumption or income? That is, why not replace Chapter 5 with a comprehensive unemployment insurance for industrial workers?

Land is extremely expensive in India, many times than that in comparable countries, for one because of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act of 2013 that was implemented in 2015. The year the Bill was passed and implemented reveals that there has been a political consensus on this and therefore we cannot hope to repeal it. The net outcome of the act is inordinately high land prices for manufacturing in India, and a complex process of acquiring large tracts of land. These when combined with poor land records and judicial delays make it extremely costly and cumbersome for businesses to acquire land. Land for industry is also available in about 4,700 industrial parks spread across India, but most are poorly run, have poor facilities, and are costly. So the government needs to make the land cheap and ensure key facilities and services such as effluent and waste management, lighted streets, etc of good quality are available at low cost for manufacturing units. By getting state governments to privatise industrial parks and the Union government fully

absorbing the cost of land both these goals of cheap land and good facilities can be met. If the land is cheaper, investment requirements are lower, interest burden is lesser, thereby reducing the costs of manufacturing and enhancing global competitiveness.

The 8,000 odd cities across India are mostly run by officers and not by politicians. They go by different names, but let us refer to them as CEOs who report to the states' Ministry of Urban Development. They have little motivation to improve their city as their future career is not dependent on their performance as city CEO. And therefore they spend their times looking for their next transfer rather than improving city's financial resources, utilities and public facilities. So let us change that. Academic work talks of decentralising cities and empowering mayors. That's not going to happen due to the politics of it. So let us give more powers to the city-CEOs, and make their next transfer dependent on improvement in their city's economic growth, employment and basic facilities. This is broadly how China runs its cities. To do this, monitor economic performance of cities, employment generation, improvement in facilities and services for each of the 8,000 cities well, empower city-CEOs by delegating more authority and resources to them, and motivate city's CEO better by awarding good performance and punishing bad one. Something similar happened in Surat and Indore, now let's do that for the other 8,000 cities. The bulk of urban employment is in the informal sector which includes a mix of micro and small units including craftsmen and many service providers. Remarkably, whether it be informal manufacturing, craftsmen, traders, mechanics and many service providers, across India no physical space is allocated to them. Consequently, the informal sector, both manufacturing and services, operates perpetually in the illegal domain. Municipal inspectors and police personnel are able to therefore harass them. The problem unfortunately is not just corruption, but because of this lack of space-allocation and associated illegality the informal sector participants are perpetually prepared to run, rather than invest in their business improvement. The MUDRA scheme helped them by providing credit to the informal sector, but that did not address the space problem. The Budget therefore will need to implement a new scheme where the crores of informal sector participants are allocated some space for their livelihood. This space may not be complete ownership but temporary occupation rights along with a basic rental.

## 'Felt this hand sliding in through the window, under my pillow...': Ruskin Bond's tug-of-war with a spectacle thief during his obscenity trial in 1975



In a landmark case that challenged literary boundaries, renowned author Ruskin Bond faced an obscenity trial in 1975 after publishing his provocative short story 'The Sensualist' in Debonair, a men's lifestyle magazine. Recalling the incident in an interview with Twinkle Khanna for Tweak India, the author shared a humorous anecdote from a turbulent time in his life, saying, "That was the year of the Emergency. Somebody complained and there was an obscenity charge brought against me and I had to go to Bombay to appear in court. It was quite a funny journey in a way because we went by passenger train in those days, which took I think two nights and two days. And I was told, 'Mr Bond when the train gets into Baroda, make sure the window is closed because people snatch things.' I said, 'I've got nothing to lose.' I didn't keep my wallet under my pillow, so I kept the window open. I put my glasses under the pillow... and the train stopped there for almost an hour and then I felt this hand sliding in through the window, under my pillow and my spectacles were moving away, and I grabbed. So I caught one arm and the thief, who was just a boy, had the other arm. So we had a tug-of-war, I got my glasses back. But the arms (of the spectacle) were very loose, and they kept slipping off. I had to appear in court in Bombay that morning. But every time the judge asked me a question, and I would say, 'Yes, your honour,' the glasses kept

falling off because they were so loose. It was quite a ridiculous experience."

The story that sparked controversy

Bond's narrative was no ordinary piece of writing. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly changing India, 'The Sensualist' offered an unflinching exploration of human sexuality — a subject typically shrouded in silence and social taboo. The story's raw, unvarnished depiction of sexual experiences shocked the conservative sensibilities of the time, immediately drawing the attention of legal authorities. The legal battle begins Charged under Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code — a legal provision designed to suppress 'obscene' publications — Bond faced a potentially career-destroying prosecution. The stakes were high: potential fines, imprisonment, and the very real threat of being branded a literary pariah. The timing was particularly significant. India was in the midst of the Emergency period (1975-77), a time of unprecedented political suppression and curtailed personal freedoms. Against this backdrop, Bond's legal battle became more than just a personal struggle — it was a defiant stand for artistic integrity.

The trial was gruelling. Bond navigated a complex legal landscape for two years, his reputation and creative freedom hanging in the balance. Debonair magazine stood by him, transforming the case into a broader conversation about literary expression and censorship. In 1976, the verdict arrived. Bond was acquitted. The court's decision was more than a personal victory — it was a landmark moment for Indian literature. By distinguishing between literary exploration and legal obscenity, the judgement carved out critical space for writers to push creative boundaries. A defining moment The trial crystallised Bond's reputation as a fearless storyteller. It demonstrated his willingness to challenge societal norms and confront uncomfortable truths about human experience. For Bond, the experience was transformative. It reinforced his commitment to honest, uncompromising storytelling and highlighted the power of literature to challenge, provoke, and ultimately, enlighten. Today, the incident is remembered as a pivotal moment in India's literary history — symbolising the enduring power of creative expression in the face of institutional resistance.

## 'High maintenance to be low maintenance': An (expensive) skincare trend redefining beauty investments

The beauty and wellness industry is embracing the "high maintenance" trend, which advocates investing in expensive, professional treatments to streamline and reduce daily skincare routines. These include laser hair reduction, advanced facials, and semi-permanent makeup, promising long-term convenience and cost savings. In the simplest of terms, it can be understood as a trade off — significant upfront investment in professional treatments to minimise daily grooming efforts. Win-win, right? Indianexpress.com spoke to industry professionals and learnt more about the pros and cons associated with the trend.

Ajit Marathe, founder and chief innovation officer at Skin Beyond Borders, said that while not new, social media has amplified this trend, framing these treatments as essential investments for a modern lifestyle. IV Drip therapy, for instance, has gained traction through influencer promotions. Krishna Vakharia, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Kumar Lifespaces, believes that taking the time to nurture her skin through a high-maintenance routine isn't about extravagance, but empowerment and consistency. "I use Argireline, sunscreen, and moisturizer. My evening routine involving caffeine-infused under-eye serum and collagen sleeping masks work to preserve and enhance my natural glow," she shared.

Vakharia also supports her skin with vitamins, minerals, collagen, and probiotics for radiance, immunity, and firmness, complemented by regular dermatologist visits for expert guidance. According to Dr Rashmi Shetty, aesthetic dermatologist, a one-time hyaluronic acid injection might be expensive, but it becomes a cost-effective alternative compared to layering on 25 creams and serums in a quest for hydrated skin. Skin booster injections with popular names such as "skin weave," "profilo," and "skin booster" are all the rage in the market right now



that aim to stimulate your collagen and elastin.

"Proteins that you put on the skin, aka peptides to increase your cell turnover and keep your skin youthful, such as the retinol can now be supplemented by in-clinic treatments such as PDRN Peptides, available in the form of Salmon Sperm extracted PDRNs," Shetty said. While retinol were the gold standard for skin treatments, they required consistent daily use in a certain quantity, concentration, and formulation. They also carried risks of purging, sensitivity and flakiness. According to Shetty, hybrid lasers, including carbon dioxide and erbium glass combination, work brilliantly to give you more rejuvenated, refreshed, and even-toned skin with fewer visible pores. "It is expensive, but one shot in two or three months and you're good to go," she said. "Ultherapy, a machine using Ulterra technology called Hifu — highly focused ultrasound — prevents the skin from becoming excess and coming down onto your jaw and spoiling the jawline, and requires once a year session," she said. She also said, "fillers are always an option to get rid of lost volume from the face, a common result of ageing. Despite social media demonising filler migration, these are permanent till dissolved and are a worthwhile one-time investment." Dr Neha Khuraana, MD, a Board-certified dermatologist and founder of House of

Aesthetics, Delhi, said, "People also tend to go for laser hair reduction (LHR) to reduce the need to shave or wax the body hair regularly, chemical peels to diminish the appearance of skin pigmentation, microneedling to reduce the occurrence of wrinkles and acne scars by boosting collagen synthesis, botox and fillers that aim to offer a youthful glow by reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, semi-permanent tattooing or makeup to reduce the daily hassle of makeup application." Khuraana considers skin treatments a worthy investment, provided a well-trained dermatologist executes them. "By cutting down the cost of routine salon visits and cumulative savings on the products, you actually save money. Certain treatments such as laser hair reduction and botox save both time and energy for daily grooming," she said. Marathe, however, shared concerns about the way these treatments are being promoted. "Influencers create compelling content showing supposedly effortless results but rarely discuss the ongoing maintenance, costs, or potential risks. A person might see a glowing review of a hair smoothing treatment but won't hear about the touch-ups needed every few months," he said. "In India, this trend is part of urban lifestyle and is being discussed among peers. But the difference now lies in how these services are marketed as time-saving investments

rather than luxury treatments. The 'low maintenance' claim often overlooks these ongoing commitments," Marathe said. Consumers should prioritise personal needs over trends. "Not every treatment suits every skin type or budget," Marathe said, stressing that transparency and informed decision-making are key.

What's the way forward? Marathe emphasised on the need for more transparent dialogue about beauty treatments: "We need to move beyond the 'quick-fix' narrative and foster more honest conversations about what these treatments truly entail — both the benefits and the commitments they require and consumers can always consult a dermatologist for the right information." Swagatika Das, co-founder, Nat Habit, shared that investing in high-effort routines like treatments from dermatologists, clinical facials, or multi-step skincare routines might feel high-maintenance initially, but it's really about creating a strong foundation so your skin can thrive over time. "When products work at a deep level, they repair damage, strengthen the skin barrier and enhance natural regeneration processes. For those trying to save time and effort, it's important to understand your skin first. Do your research, figure out which ingredients suit you, and stick to a routine," she said.

## Rakesh Roshan recalls Hrithik Roshan's near-death accident on Krrish set; actor refused to stop shooting: 'This fear will remain with me'

Hrithik Roshan's father and director Rakesh Roshan recently shared details about his son's near-fatal mishap on the Krrish set and how the actor escaped from it unhurt. Krrish is the second instalment in the eponymous franchise that began with the 2003 sci-fi action drama Koi... Mil Gaya. No matter how many precautions the team takes, every action sequence in a movie comes with a certain degree of risk. The danger is even greater when doing actioners. During the filming of the superhero movie Krrish (2006), Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan had a near-death experience, which he escaped by a hair's breadth. Recently, his father and the film's director Rakesh Roshan shared details about the incident and how the actor escaped from the mishap unhurt.

"While filming Krrish, before every shot featuring Hrithik, I would pray that everything goes well. When he's swinging from one place to another, he's on a pendulum and people below are controlling him. These controllers are so experienced that if he had to land somewhere, his legs needed to touch the ground first. If he landed on his knees, they would have been broken. Since the speed is so high, every shot of him swinging from one place to another was filmed at 200 fps instead of (the usual) 24 fps," he shared during a recent chat with Connect Cine.

Recalling the near-tragic accident that occurred in Singapore in 2005, Rakesh said, "He was climbing very high and I was sitting across the road with the cameras. I could sense that he wasn't comfortable and was trying to adjust something. By the time I got up from my chair to inform my action director, he had already fallen. The cable snapped and he fell. Since he fell behind a tree, I couldn't see what had happened. So, we all rushed to the spot. Fortunately, he landed on a canopy." He continued, "I believe these are all God's blessings. Just half an hour before that, it had rained in Singapore, so all the restaurants had their



canopies out. He fell right in the centre of one of the canopies and didn't even touch any of the iron rods. And then he said, 'Papa, I am fine; don't worry.' I told him we wouldn't shoot today, but he replied, 'No, we have to shoot today; otherwise, this fear will remain with me.'" The second instalment in the franchise that began with the sci-fi action drama Koi... Mil Gaya (2003), Krrish featured Priyanka Chopra, Naseeruddin Shah, Rekha, Sharat Saxena and Manini Mishra in key roles. The film later received a sequel in 2013 titled Krrish 3.

## Chhaava director Laxman Utekar deletes dance scenes from Vicky Kaushal-starrer amid controversy: 'Raj Thackeray gave guidance'

Laxman Utekar, the director of highly anticipated period drama Chhaava, has announced that a song featuring film's leads Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna has been removed from the film following objections. Chhaava is based on the life of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj with Vicky essaying the lead role. The ruling Shiv Sena and the descendants of Shivaji Maharaj had raised objections about the historical accuracy of the movie. On Monday, Chhaava director Laxman Utekar confirmed that the makers will remove the sequence which has Sambhaji Maharaj performing a Lezim dance with his wife, Maharani Utesubai. The decision came after his meeting with MNS chief Raj Thackeray. In an official statement released to the media, Utekar emphasises that the dance scene is nothing in front of the legacy of the Maratha king.

Chhaava in Marathi means 'lion's cub'. The film is based on Chhaava, a book written by late novelist Shivaji Sawant. In a statement, the director said, "I have met Raj Thackeray. He is an avid reader and studious person. So I have taken some suggestions and guidance from him. And I can say, his words are very helpful for me. And after meeting him, I have decided to delete those scenes where we have shown Sambhaji Maharaj was playing Lezim dance." "Lezim dance is not a big deal. Sambhaji Maharaj is very much bigger than that Lezim dance. So we are going to remove those scenes from film," Laxman said.

He further explained and said, "When Sambhaji Maharaj launched an attack in Barhanpur, he was just 20 years old. We have taken the rights of Shivaji Sawant's book titled Chhava where he wrote about Sambhaji Maharaj taking part in the Holi festival. He would remove a coconut from the holy fire. We thought of Maharaj as a 20-year-old. It was obvious that he had played the Lezim dance. And why not? Lezim is a part of Maratha culture. It is just our traditional dance. But, if anyone is hurt by those dance moves or Lezim dance, we will remove them. Lezim dance is not bigger than Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj." The director also



took the concerns of many Maharashtra ministers into account, demanding that experts should watch the film prior to its release. Hence, he said, "We have organised a special premiere show on 29th of January. Some historians and people who study history will be there. We will take their guidance."

Earlier, Maharashtra minister Uday Samant's had written on X (formerly Twitter), "It is a matter of joy that a Hindi film based on the life of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the protector of religion and protector of freedom, is being made. Such efforts are necessary to make the world understand the history of Chhatrapati. However, many have expressed their opinions that there are some objectionable scenes in this film. Our position is that this film should not be released without first showing it to experts and knowledgeable people. Anything that will harm the honour of the Maharaj will not be tolerated." Meanwhile, Laxman Utekar confirmed in his statement that the movie would hit the theatres as scheduled on February 14. Chhaava also stars Akshaye Khanna, Ashutosh Rana, Diana Penty and Divya Dutta, among others.

## Madhuri Dixit reveals sons Ryan, Arin inherited love for cooking from dad; recalls 3-year-old Ryan instructing nanny on making eggs

Actor Madhuri Dixit and her husband, Shriram Madhav Nene, frequently share glimpses of their personal life on their YouTube channel. In a recent video, the couple was joined by their sons, Ryan Nene and Arin Nene, for a heartwarming family chat. During the conversation, the family discussed their shared love for cooking and how the boys developed an interest in it from an early age, inspired by watching their parents, especially their father, cook for them regularly. Madhuri also reminisced about a time when Arin cooked a meal for the family after they had returned home jet-lagged from a trip abroad.

Ryan, Madhuri's younger son, acknowledged during the chat that he has led a privileged life. However, he shared that studying overseas has taught him to manage daily tasks independently, including cooking for himself. Reflecting on Ryan's early affinity for food, Madhuri recounted a memorable incident from his childhood. She shared, "We



had a new live-in nanny in Denver and in the morning I woke up and I heard noises downstairs. When I stepped down I saw Ryan instructing the nanny on how to cook the eggs how he likes it. He told her to put milk in eggs and then whisk it. You developed this interest because

you saw dad and how he loves cooking."

Speaking about the time their elder son Arin cooked them a whole dinner, she said, "You started cooking at 9:30 and we had dinner at 10:30. It was a whole dinner with salad and this

and that." Arin humorously recalled, "Yes, and you guys were jet-lagged so you woke up from your sleep, woke up for the food and went back to sleep." Shriram Madhav Nene concluded the video by emphasizing that every family has an activity that brings them closer.

## Sana Khan reveals name of her son, shares first family photo: 'Becoming a parent is one of the biggest blessings...'

On Sunday, actor-turned-businesswoman Sana Khan revealed the name of her second child and later shared a photo, which featured elder son Saiyad Tariq Jamil, newborn Saiyad Hasan Jamil, and husband Mufti Anas Saiyad. Sana also shared a photo with Saiyad Hasan. Sharing the pictures, Sana wrote, "Alhamdulillah ??? Allahu barik ??? Becoming parents is one of the biggest blessings from Allah SWT."

Earlier, Sana Khan shared a video, and the text on it read, "All praises are due to you, along with your blessings and grace. Grant us the ability to raise him well, guide us to be kind and just toward him, and make him among your righteous servants." She added, "Dear loved one, with hearts full of gratitude, we humbly request your prayers for our baby boy. May Allah bless him with a life of health, happiness and barakah. We named our prince: Saiyad Hasan Jamil".

Sana Khan and her husband welcomed their second child, a baby boy, on January 5. "We are overjoyed to share the beautiful news of the arrival of our little prince! Alhamdulillah for everything we have. Alhamdulillah for everything e had. It's a Boy! Overflowing with joy, Big brother Tariq Jamil welcomes his baby brother! Born on 5th January 2025," read the text on announcement video. Sana captioned the post, "Allah Taala Ne Har Chiz Mukaddar Me Likhe Hai... Waqt Aane Par Allah Usko Atta Karta He Aur Jab Atta Karta He To Jholiya Khushiyon Se Bhar Deta Hai



(God has written everything in destiny... At the right time, God will grant it and when he does, life will be showered with happiness)... Happy Parents." In October 2020, Sana Khan announced her decision to step away from the entertainment industry, citing her desire to "serve humanity and follow the order of her Creator". Sana Khan and Mufti Anas Saiyad tied the knot on November 21, 2020, in Surat, Gujarat. They welcomed their first child, Saiyad Tariq Jamil, on July 5, 2023.

## Dhoom Dhaam trailer: It's band, baaja and blast as Yami Gautam and Pratik Gandhi's wedding night turns into a nightmare

It's all about band, baaja, and plenty of fireworks in Yami Gautam and Pratik Gandhi's upcoming film Dhoom Dhaam. The makers unveiled the trailer on Monday, giving audiences a glimpse into this high-energy romantic action-comedy. Directed by Rishab Seth, the film also stars Ajaz Khan in a pivotal role.

The trailer introduces Koyal (Yami Gautam) and Veer (Pratik Gandhi) as newlyweds. The story kicks off with Ajaz Khan, playing a menacing antagonist, barging into Veer and Koyal's hotel room on their wedding night. He demands to know the whereabouts of a mysterious "Charlie." As Veer tries to reason with him, Koyal surprises everyone by picking up a gun and firing at the intruders to protect herself and her husband. This marks the beginning of a chaotic adventure, where the seemingly timid bride transforms into a fierce, swearing, and unabashed protector. Meanwhile, Veer, the nervous groom, follows



Koyal's lead in an attempt to survive the mayhem. Though their wedding night turns into a nightmare, Koyal seems to revel in the chaos, enjoying the thrill of the unexpected adventure. The trailer also teases a cameo by Prateik Babbar, who plays Koyal's ex-boyfriend.

Earlier, the makers re-

leased the film's teaser, which hinted at the same wild and entertaining premise. Dhoom Dhaam is produced by B62 Studios, co-founded by Yami's husband Aditya Dhar, in collaboration with Jio Studios. Reflecting on their recent projects, Yami Gautam previously starred

in Article 370, a box-office hit. On the other hand, Pratik Gandhi featured in four films last year, including Madgaon Express, Do Aur Do Pyaar, Dedh Bigha Zameen, and Agni. While none of these were major box-office successes, Pratik received widespread acclaim for his performance in Madgaon Express.

## Alia Bhatt reminisces about her wedding at Sabyasachi's 25th anniversary show, poses with Ananya Panday.



Alia Bhatt, Ananya Panday, Sabyasachi, sAlia Bhatt and Ananya Panday were a part of Sabyasachi Mukherjee's special show to commemorate 25 years of his label. Alia Bhatt, Ananya Panday and Deepika Padukone, among others, were a part of designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee's special show to commemorate 25 years of his label. Alia and Ananya took to their Instagram accounts to share glimpses of their looks for the night. The two were also seen posing for photos.

Along with a note for her favourite designer Sabyasachi, Alia shared a series of photos and videos. Alia captioned her post, "25 years of crafting dreams, preserving heritage, and redefining excellence. To me Sabya, you are more than a designer—you're a visionary and a storyteller." Alia, who wore a Sabyasachi creation for her wedding, added, "I've been privileged to wear your creations over the years, from global red carpets to personal mile-



stones (wedding memories I'll cherish forever). Your work isn't just fashion—it's art, blending tradition and innovation with unmatched finesse." "You once said, 'I believe that the best fashion comes from a deep understanding of culture and heritage.' And that's exactly what you do. Your commitment to Indian craftsmanship and culture is an inspiration to us all ??? Here's to many more years of brilliance and magic!!!!!!", wrote Alia.

Ananya Panday also shared her look for the night and wrote, "In @sabyasachiofficial for #25YearsOfSabyasachi ?? What an experience !! What a show!! What a moment !! In awe and beyond ?? big big big congratulations to the genius and the entire team ??." See Ananya Panday's photos from Sabyasachi's 25th anniversary celebration: Stylist Anaita Shroff Adajania shared a photo of Alia Bhatt and Ananya Panday from the event and wrote, .

