

INDIAN CHRONICLE

4 March, 2025 | Tuesday | Volume No:13 | Issue No:15 | Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Telangana's GST growth slumps to one per cent

Hyderabad: In one of its worst performances, Telangana recorded just one per cent GST growth in February this year, compared to last year's 10 per cent. The State now finds itself at the bottom of the list in terms of GST growth rate, alongside Arunachal Pradesh. As per the latest data released by the Centre, States like Tripura (21 per cent), Haryana (20 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (15 per cent) lead the country, neighbouring Andhra Pradesh (4 per cent) and Chhattisgarh (7 per cent) outperformed Telangana in terms of GST growth rate. When it comes to revenue collections, Maharashtra topped the list with Rs 30,637 crore, followed by Karnataka with Rs 14,117 crore. They recorded a growth rate of 13 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. Telangana ended up at 10th spot with Rs 5,280 crore in GST collections. Responding to the reports, BRS working president KT Rama Rao blamed the Revanth Reddy government for the State's drastic fall in GST growth.

Rescue operations continue amid grim atmosphere

Hyderabad: Even as the atmosphere was grim with little hopes left of any of the eight trapped workers surviving after 10 days underneath the debris of the SLBC tunnel roof that collapsed on February 22, rescue operations continued in Domaipenta. On Monday, officials intensified efforts to establish the conveyor belt to transport steel and other debris out of the tunnel. To make rescue operations even challenging, there was continuous seepage of water inside the tunnel. Amidst the heaps of debris and silt, officials were finding it a task to clear the debris faster and move further ahead. Efforts are on to establish a conveyor belt from the incident location to the tunnel exit, besides dewatering the tunnel. Special Chief Secretary (Disaster Management) Arvind Kumar is monitoring the operations and coordinating with the 12 different departments involved in the exercise. All measures were being taken up to use advanced technology for clearing the accumulated sludge and debris.

Day after KTR's ultimatum, Irrigation officials promise water from Ranganayaka Sagar



GNS News Agency, March 3

Rajanna-Sircilla: A day after BRS working president KT Rama Rao served an ultimatum on the State government over the release of irrigation water for farmers in Sircilla, officials visited the Ranganayaka Sagar canal in Jakkapur of Thangallapalli mandal on Monday. Irrigation officials led by Superintendent Engineer Ravinder and farmers examined the canal and promised to release water into the canal to protect standing crops. The SE also promised to enhance the water flow. Farmers from Jillella, Nerella, Chinnalingapur, Ramachandrapuram and Dacharam of Thangallapalli mandal had on Sunday met Rama Rao and requested him to take steps to release water into the canal from Ranganayaka Sagar. Responding to the farmers' request, Rama Rao spoke to the irrigation SE over phone and requested him to protect the standing crops by releasing water into the canal. Based on Rama Rao's instructions, irrigation officials on Monday visited the canal and assured to supply water up to Jillella. Water would be supplied equally to all farmers, they assured. Officials also promised to take steps to provide compensation to farmers who lost their lands in the canal as well as to release a pending compensation of Rs.55 lakh.

Standing crops withered in Dharmapuri segment, says Koppula Eshwar

GNS News Agency, March 3

Peddapalli: Senior BRS leader and former Minister Koppula Eshwar alleged that standing crops were withering in Dharmapuri constituency due to negligence of the Congress government. Eshwar along with farmers from surrounding villages examined the abruptly stalled works of a link canal constructed as part of Nandi reservoir near Nandi Medaram of Dharmaram mandal on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, he informed that in order to supply water to tail-end lands in Velgatoor mandal from Mallapur mandal, the link canal was sanctioned three years ago.

Notifications issued for elections to 10 MLC seats in Telangana, Andhra

GNS News Agency, March 3

Hyderabad/Amaravati: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday issued notifications for biennial elections to five Legislative Council seats each in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Members of the Legislative Assembly in both Telugu states will elect the MLCs on March 20. As per the schedule announced by the ECI, nominations can be filed till March 10 while scrutiny of nominations will be taken up on March 11. The deadline for withdrawal of nominations is March 13. The 10 MLCs are retiring on March 29. In Telangana, the retiring MLCs are Mahmood Ali, Satyavathi Rathod and Seri Subash Reddy of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), Malleshram Yegge, who defected to Congress from BRS last year and Mirza Riyazul Hassan Effendi of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). The ruling Congress party is likely to secure three seats while



the remaining two may go to the main opposition BRS. It remains to be seen if Congress leaves a seat to AIMIM, which became a friendly party after Congress wrested power from BRS in November 2023. The AIMIM has seven seats while Congress ally CPI has one seat and their support will be crucial for the ruling party. The BRS, which has 28 MLAs, is likely to retain former minister Satyavathi Rathod and name a new face for the other seat. The BJP has seven members in the Telangana Assembly. In Andhra Pradesh,

Duvvarapu Rama Rao, Paruchuri Ashok Babu, B. Tirumala Naidu and Yanamala Rama Krishnuudu of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) are retiring on March 29. The seat of Janga Krishna Murthy has been vacant since May 15, 2024, after he was disqualified by the Council chairman following his rebellion against the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). The TDP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Andhra Pradesh is likely to sweep the elections, given its huge majority in the 175-member Assembly. With 164 MLAs, the coalition

is set to bag all five seats. The TDP may leave three seats for its partners - two seats for Jana Sena and one for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Among the prominent aspirants for MLC tickets from NDA is actor Nagendra Babu, brother of Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has already announced that Naga Babu, as Nagendra Babu is popularly known, will be inducted into the Cabinet. The TDP may nominate two leaders who withdrew from the Assembly election last year for the candidates of alliance partners. SVSN Varma, who withdrew from the Pithapuram constituency for Pawan Kalyan, is likely to be nominated to the Council as per the promise made by Chandrababu Naidu. The TDP may also reward senior leader former minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao, who withdrew from the Mylavaram constituency in favour of V. V. Krishna Prasad.

Banks, ATMs must update security systems: Rachakonda CP Sudheer Babu



GNS News Agency, March 3

Hyderabad: The recent heist at an ATM centre in Raviryal village, Maheshwaram, Rangareddy district, where a gang broke open the ATM with cutters and iron bars, and decamped with Rs 30 lakh cash, has raised questions over whether banks have upgraded their security systems. Apart from this incident, a few days ago, an interstate robbery gang from Bihar had opened fire on cash management staff, who were refilling an ATM in Bidar and made away with cash of Rs 93 lakh. From Bidar, the robbery gang came to Atfalgunj and opened fire on a travel company staff and escaped. Such instances only end-up raising safety concerns over customers and cash at ATMs and even banks in Hyderabad. To understand and find a solution to such instances, recently the Rachakonda police conducted a field inspection of security at ATMs and banks by visiting 489 branches of various banks under the Commissionerate.

The findings of the top cop, however, were not encouraging. It was found that more than half of the banks are still using old security systems. The RBI has clearly stated that there should be systems that alert local police station in case of any incident at an ATM or even a bank. Without such a system, the work of thieves is becoming easier. Rachakonda Police Commissioner, G Sudheer Babu, who identified this problem, had earlier met the bank representatives and requested them to rectify such issues. However, there has been no development in that direction. "It was found that several banks had deficiencies such as sub-standard buildings, weak security arrangements and locking system, lack of alertness or non-appointment of security guards, outdated alarm system, absence of CCTVs, and only single backup of data footage," the Commissioner said. He made several suggestions to the bank representatives regarding security infrastructure and that new technology should be adopted from time to time and new security devices should be installed to prevent unauthorized access.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta drills holes in AAP's health model



GNS News Agency, March 3

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday hit out at the previous AAP government for making city hospitals sick and using ghost patients for misappropriating funds, while failing to fill vacancies of doctors and nurses. Concluding the discussion on Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Performance Audit on 'Public Health Infrastructure & Management of Health services', CM Gupta hit out at the Mohalla Clinic scheme of the AAP government saying, "Everything related to Mohalla Clinics was fake - medicine, staff and test - but only one thing was real and that was payment."

The Opposition members walked out of the House as she enlisted failures of the AAP government and highlighted that 234 posts of duty medical officers are vacant, over 2,000 nursing posts are vacant and 2,796 posts of paramedic posts are vacant. She also hit out at wasteful expenditure under the AAP government, saying the godowns of the hospital are full of PPE kits, masks, oxygen cylinders and other equipment but are lying unused. "During Covid, one mask costing Rs 10 was bought for Rs 150 to swindle money," she said, referring to the findings of the CAG report. CM Gupta slammed the mismanagement under the AAP government, saying that 24 hospital projects which were launched under the previous regime could not be completed. "Many of the projects' costs have been doubled and till now these are far from complete," she said.

Even Arvind Kejriwal also accepted his failure in delivering on promises, including cleaning the Yamuna and providing clean water. "I am happy that in the end Kejriwal ended up accepting his failures," she said. CM Gupta said the Opposition members have been shaken by just the two CAG reports that have been tabled in the House. "They don't have the courage to face the criticism," she said.

Earlier, Tilak Nagar legislator Jamail Singh was ordered to be marshalled out of the House for disrupting CM Gupta's address with slogan shouting. Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh lamented the AAP government for not utilising fully the funds provided by the Centre during Covid. He read out a CAG observation which said, "Under Emergency Covid Response Plan, GNCTD received total funds of Rs 787.91 crore (Lump sum amount of Rs 24.67 crore, Rs 292.22 crore in first phase and Rs 471.02 crore in the second phase) from Government of India. Out of this, GNCTD utilised only Rs 542.84 crore (November 2021)." "I feel sorry and ashamed to share the dark deeds of the previous government. It is painful to recall how a government indulged in such gross negligence," he said. "In the coming days we will introduce a Hospital Information Management System (HIMS) under which a unique patient ID will be allotted each patient. The system will make treatment easy as all the information will be available online," he said. Highlighting shortcomings in the functioning of AAP government's health

department during Covid, procurement of substandard drugs, failure to give care to pregnant women, shortage of staff and underutilisation of dialysis machines, the Health Minister cited several paras from the CAG report during the discussion. Referring to a Delhi High Court's direction, he said that the AAP government was supposed to start radiological diagnosis services from November 2024 but it failed to do so. "I want to assure the people that our government is committed to comply with the High Court order of war footing," he said.

BRS criticises CM Revanth Reddy for blaming KCR over Congress's failures, but taking credit for achievements



GNS News Agency, March 3

Hyderabad: Former Minister S Niranjana Reddy launched a broadside against Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, for making it a daily habit to blame former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao and the BRS government for the failures of the Congress government. However, he pointed out that the Chief Minister was shameless taking credit for the former Chief Minister's good work.

He likened Revanth Reddy's rhetoric to Indira Gandhi's infamous "foreign hand" allegations for the then Congress government's failures. "The Chief Minister was making a mockery of himself by attributing everything wrong to his predecessor," he said. Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Monday, Niranjana Reddy pointed out that the Chief Minister merely relaunched projects initiated during Chandrashekhara Rao's tenure instead of announcing new developments. He charged Revanth Reddy with lacking basic information about these projects and called such actions a disgrace to the office of the Chief Minister.

The BRS leader compared Revanth Reddy's tactics to the BJP leaders who discredit Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru while having no role in the freedom movement, stating that attempting to tarnish Chandrashekhara Rao's legacy would not succeed. He stated that Wanaparthy witnessed a major transformation in the last 10 years, by sanctioning medical and nursing colleges, JNTU engineering college, BC Residential Agriculture Women's College, roads, and double-bedroom houses, among others under the BRS government. Mocking Revanth Reddy's claim that he would complete the Jurala project, Niranjana Reddy reminded him that the project was finished 14 years ago. He charged Revanth Reddy with using uncivilised language that tarnished Telangana's reputation.

Explosion at Kakinada Transport Hub: Five Porters Injured in 'Onion Bomb' Blast



A routine unloading task turned into a tragedy on Monday when five porters sustained severe injuries in an explosion at Jai Balaji Transport Agency in Kakinada.

GNS News Agency, March 3

Kakinada: A routine unloading task turned into a tragedy on Monday when five porters sustained severe injuries in an explosion at Jai Balaji Transport Agency in Kakinada. The blast occurred within the One Town police limits as the workers handled a consignment containing 'onion bombs'—crude explosive devices disguised within onion sacks. Among the injured, B. Madhu Kumar is in critical condition, while the other victims—Ashok Kumar, Lova Raju, Pothuraju, and Nagesh, all residents of Kakinada—are receiving treatment at Kakinada Government General Hospital. Kakinada Superintendent of Police (SP) G. Bindu Madhav stated that the explosion was triggered when a porter unknowingly threw a bag containing the hidden bombs from a transport vehicle.

DECLARATION

I, PERALA SHRUTHI W/O CHUKKA SUDHAKAR S/O MALLAIAH R/O Chinnapadigala Adduguduru Married on 18-06-2022 residing at chinnapadigala, PERALA SHRUTHI parents resides at Pachilla village, Gundala mandal District Yadadri.

Declarant.
PERALA SHRUTHI
W/O CHUKKA SUDHAKAR

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK

ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH

H.No. 4-3-67/21 & 4-3-67/22, Ward No.21, Dwaraka Nagar, Adilabad-504001 (T.S.)

AUCTION NOTICE

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK

ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH

Auction sale under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and

Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 of the movable property

hypothecated/immovable property mortgaged to the **TELANGANA****GRAMEENA BANK, ADILABAD MAIN BRANCH** (Formerly known as Deccan

Grameena Bank) for recovery of the secured debts Rs. 18,53,658/- (+ interest

other charges) of which the property brought to sale.

(a) Date and time of auction : 07/04/2025, Time 12.00 (noon) to 1.00 pm.

(b) Place of auction : M/s E-Procurement Technologies Limited (Auctiontigger),

https://sarfaesi.auctiontigger.net

(c) Reserve Price : Rs. 18,00,000/-

(d) Amount of Secured debt : Rs. 18,53,658/- (+ interest & other charges)

(e) Name of the Borrower : Kommawar Nanda Kumar

(f) Name of the mortgagor : Kommawar Nanda Kumar

Description of the property under boundaries ** (give full details)

House bearing Flat No. 202 Mani sai residency in second floor having built up

area admeasuring 850.00 sq. feet = 94.4 sq.yards = 78.86 sq.meters undivided

share in land 33.33 sq.yards inclusive of common & parking area on plot No. 136 & 137 in sy no. 14 situated at Dasnapur, Mavala, Adilabad Dist.

East	6' wide passage	West	Open to sky
North	Open to sky	South	Flat No.201

Terms and conditions of the auction:

i) The property shall be auctioned on 'as is and where is' condition.

ii) For participation in the auction, the intending bidder have to deposit an

amount equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price of the property being auctioned

as a refundable Earnest Money Deposit by way of cash or money order or

Banker's cheque or D.D. drawn in favour of **TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK,****Nallakunta Branch to the following Account No. CA: 79073063538; Name:****E-Auctions - Earnest Money Deposit Account, IFSC code: TGRB0000224.**

iii) The successful bidder should deposit 25% of the amount on the same day of

the sale in cash / D.D. drawn on any Nationalized Bank and the balance within

15 days from the date of sale.

iv) The successful bidder shall bear all expenses like stamp duty, registration fee

etc., for getting the sale certificate registered in his favour.

v) In case of default in whatsoever manner by the successful bidder in adhering

to the terms and conditions of the sale the earnest money and other amounts

deposited by him as the case may be shall be forfeited.

vi) The Authorized Officer shall have powers to accept or reject bids or

postpone/cancel the auction without assigning any reasons thereof.

vii) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending bidders

may contact the Branch Manager, Adilabad Main Branch, Phone

No.9491041704, 9704040708 and they are at liberty to make their own

assessment/enquiry about the property.

Place: Adilabad

Date: 03.03.2025

Sd/- Authorised Officer,

Telangana Grameena Bank

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Nasty showdown

American President Donald Trump is not known for exercising restraint in word or deed. And he certainly pulled no punches during his showdown with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office on Friday. However, the Russians saw things in a different light. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova lauded Trump and his deputy JD Vance for displaying a 'miracle of restraint' by refraining from hitting 'scumbag' Zelenskyy. Even though Trump mercifully didn't go the whole hog, Russia has every reason to be ecstatic about the disastrous meeting. The US President blew his top when the Ukrainian leader held Vladimir Putin responsible for triggering the war in 2022. Springing to the Russian President's defence, Trump chided Zelenskyy for "speaking badly about somebody else". That left no room for doubt about which way the American wind was blowing.

The writing was on the wall last month when Trump called Zelenskyy a dictator and accused him of starting the Ukraine war. The latter had hit back by saying that the US President was "living in a disinformation space" created by Russia. Now, US-Ukraine relations have hit a new low. The unsavoury development has prompted Europe to go into a huddle. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who greeted a visibly rattled Zelenskyy with a comforting hug in London on Saturday, is still hopeful that peace talks can be revived. Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, who met Trump in Washington last week, are trying to convince him that a forced ceasefire that doesn't provide security guarantees to Ukraine would fail to deter Russia from launching another invasion. The challenge for European leaders is to pacify the US President and stop him from rushing headlong into a deal skewed in Russia's favour. That looks like a tall order right now — Trump seems to be lapping up all the Russian praise coming his way and is in no mood to forgive an 'ungrateful' Zelenskyy.

BJP won Delhi, Maharashtra polls using fake voters with ECI blessing; our target 215 plus seats in Bengal polls: Mamata

GNS News Agency, March 3

mamata banerjee, tmc, west bengal polls, west bengal assembly election, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee waves a list from the stage, claiming that it is that of "fake voters". The BJP won the Delhi and Maharashtra Assembly elections by using fake voters, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged on Thursday while addressing a mega meeting of the Trinamool Congress members at the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata.

Setting the tone for the 2026 West Bengal Assembly polls, Banerjee also earmarked a goal of more than 215 seats out of 294. In 2021, the party had won 214 seats. "I agree with Abhishek (party MP Abhishek Banerjee). We should get at least one more seat than what we got in 2021 (214 out of 294). We should ensure 215 seats and try for more. We should ensure that candidates of the BJP, the CPIM, and Congress lose or forfeit their deposits in the elections," said Banerjee.

Training guns at the BJP, Banerjee asked TMC leaders and workers to start physically verifying the voters' list, alleging that the BJP has manipulated it with "the blessing of the Election Commission of India (ECI)". She said this would be the first job of the party workers and leaders in preparing for the elections. "Booth workers should start doing this immediately. District presidents should oversee the process and give back feedback within seven days," Banerjee said. She also announced a high-level committee with MPs, MLAs, and other leaders to oversee the voter list verification process. Backing her claim that the BJP used fake voters to win the recent elections, Banerjee said, "Parties (non-BJP) in Maharashtra could not catch this, parties in Delhi could not catch this. But we did. That is how (the BJP) won in Maharashtra and Delhi." "After Maharashtra and Delhi, now you are targeting Bengal. We will give you a befitting reply. Once again, 'khela hobe' (games will be played). I ask workers to hit the ball harder this time," Banerjee said.

She waved a list from the stage, claiming that it was that of "fake voters". "I have examples from all districts. Here it is. Names of people from Haryana and Gujarat are there, with names of West Bengal residents with the same EPIC (Election Photo Identity Card). Fake voters are put up online," the CM said. Banerjee alleged that the BJP is trying to influence the ECI. "I had respect for the Election Commission. But now, it seems they are filled with BJP-minded people. The new chief Election Commissioner (Gyanesh Kumar) used to be a secretary in the co-operation department under the Union Home Minister. Don't forget we can also sit for dharna near the Election Commission office in Delhi," she said. She asked workers and leaders to connect with the people by going house-to-house. "I will promote those who are doing good work. I will have no mercy for those who are just giving lip service and not doing any work," she warned.

Hyderabad police nab three for peddling ganja

GNS News Agency, March 3

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad police on Thursday arrested three persons who were allegedly involved in drug peddling and seized 41.13 kilograms of ganja, Rs. 40,440 in cash and a bike from them.

The arrested are Bala Hantal alias Raju of Odisha, Srinivasulu of Kukatpally and Abhishek of Kukatpally and a native of Andhra Pradesh.

According to the police, Srinivasulu worked previously in an IT company and after getting addicted to online gambling incurred huge debts.

To clear the loans, he planned to sell ganja. Through some friends, Srinivasulu learnt about one Bala Hantal, of Odisha who was selling ganja.

Srinivasulu through one Kalyan Rao contacted Bala Hantal and purchased ganja from him at a price of Rs. 5,000. He brought it to the city and through Abhishek was selling it to customers, said Y V S Sudheendra, Hyderabad Narcotics Enforcement Wing (HNEW).

On a tip off, the HNEW and the Madhuranagar police laid a trap and nabbed them.

Abhishek Banerjee reiterates allegiance to Mamata, says 'will identify' party traitors



GNS News Agency, March 3

abhishek banerjee, tmc, west bengal polls, Abhishek Banerjee asked workers and leaders to prepare for the assembly polls next year and ensure more than 214 (out of 294) seats. TMC MP and the party's all-India general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said he will "continue to expose traitors" within the party, while addressing rumours that he would join the BJP or form a new party. "In the past too, I had identified those who have betrayed the party, from Mukul Roy to Suvendu Adhikari. In the coming days too, I will identify such people," said Banerjee, speaking at the mega TMC meet of leaders and workers at Kolkata's Netaji Indoor Stadium on Thursday.

"News is being circulated that Abhishek Banerjee will go to the BJP or will float a new party. Even with a severed head, I will say, (Chief Minister) Mamata Banerjee zindabad. Whatever is coming out in the news these days is a blatant lie," he said. In a word of caution for a section of party leaders, Banerjee said, "Those who are working at the grassroots level are the assets of the party. But there are leaders, block presidents, and others who want to grab power. They think that being an MP or an MLA, they will hold power. That will not be allowed." "There is no point in stoking a conspiracy. Those who are engaging in WhatsApp

Family of Maharashtra student in a coma in US gets appointment for emergency visa: 'We thank everyone who helped us'

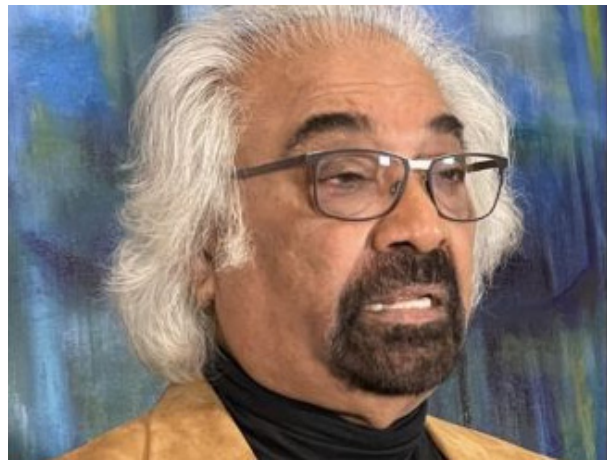


GNS News Agency, March 3

Neelam Shinde Pune US emergency visa Neelam, 35, met with an accident after her bike was hit by a vehicle on February 14, and was admitted to a hospital with serious injuries to her head, hands, legs, and chest. The family of a student from Maharashtra's Satara district, who is lying in a coma in the US after a road accident, said Thursday they got an appointment for an emergency visa to travel to America after they sought the government's intervention.

Neelam, 35, met with an accident after her bike was hit by a vehicle on February 14, and was admitted to a hospital with serious injuries to her head, hands, legs, and chest. According to her family, they were told about her accident on February 16 by her roommates, and they have been trying to get an emergency visa for her father since then. She had to undergo immediate surgery for which the hospital sought consent through an e-mail and asked the family

Sam Pitroda denies allegations of illegal land occupation in Bengaluru: 'I don't own any land or home in India'



GNS News Agency, March 3

Indian Overseas Congress president Sam Pitroda said he has never in "my entire life — spanning 83 years — paid or accepted any bribe, in India or in any other country," in a post on X. (Credit: x/@sampilroda) Indian Overseas Congress president Sam Pitroda said he has never in "my entire life — spanning 83 years — paid or accepted any bribe, in India or in any other country," in a post on X. Days after Karnataka BJP leader N R Ramesh filed a complaint accusing Congress leader Sam Pitroda of illegally occupying 12.35 acres of reserve forest land in Bengaluru, Pitroda Wednesday denied the allegations.

Ramesh, a former corporator of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), filed the complaint with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Karnataka Lokayukta. The BJP leader also named officials, including former and current IAS and IFS officers, accusing them of facilitating the alleged illegal occupation. In a statement on X, Sam Pitroda said: "In light of recent reports in the Indian media, both on television and in print, I wish to categorically state the following: I do not own any land, home, or stocks in India". "Additionally, during my tenure working with the Government of India — whether with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the mid-1980s or with Dr. Manmohan Singh from 2004 to 2014 — I have never taken/received any salary.

group politics should know there is no point doing this. Those who are conspiring will be impacted themselves," added the Diamond Harbour MP, who is also Mamata Banerjee's nephew.

"A lot of leaders have been saying things to stay relevant in the media by not following party discipline. Do not do so. Those who have done this have been identified," he said. Banerjee asked workers and leaders to prepare for the assembly polls next year and ensure more than 214 (out of 294) seats, and "forget about your differences in the next year and pay attention to working for the people. Make sure that people are receiving benefits of the welfare schemes." "Practically, there are three to four months at hand since there are festivities, monsoon, and examinations. We must start now. We should work together to ensure at least one more seat than what we got in 2021. We should ensure 215 seats at least," he said. Regarding his name in the third chargesheet of CBI in connection with the state school jobs scam, the MP said, "In its chargesheet of many pages, the CBI has put my name in two places. But there is no address or anything else. I had said this five years back, I am saying it now. I will hang myself if it is proved that I got money in any illegal way. The CBI had called me and I went to the Delhi office where I spent 10 hours. I do not fear the agency."

Ravik Bhattacharya is the Chief of Bureau of The Indian Express, Kolkata. Over 20 years of experience in the media industry and covered politics, crime, major incidents and issues, apart from investigative stories in West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and Andaman Nicobar islands. Ravik won the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award in 2007 for political reporting. Ravik holds a bachelor degree with English Hons from Scottish Church College under Calcutta University and a PG diploma in mass communication from Jadavpur University. Ravik started his career with The Asian Age and then moved to The Statesman

Woman poses as doctor working on cancer research, dupes Mumbai resident of Rs 9.68 crore



GNS News Agency, March 3

The Amboli police in Mumbai Tuesday booked a woman who allegedly posed as a doctor doing clinical research on cancer treatment and defrauded another woman of a whopping Rs 9.68 crore. As per the complaint filed by a woman from Andheri, the accused, Shehnila Ahtisham Syed, received payments from her between October 2014 and February 2025. The complainant told the Amboli police that Syed, while introducing herself, said she was doing her clinical research at D Y Patil Medical College in Navi Mumbai. She allegedly lured the complainant to invest money in her project, offering to double the investment and a monthly interest of 4 to 5 per cent.

The police said the accused accepted money in her accounts with ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, and IndusInd Bank. The complainant said the accused later returned Rs 1.18 crore to her as a profit. However, she also claimed that this money was not a profit but part of the amount she had invested. "The accused, in the name of clinical research work, accepted money from me and used it for self-gain, breached my trust, and defrauded other people and me," the complainant stated in the FIR. The Amboli police booked the accused under sections 318(4) (cheating) and 316(2) (criminal breach of trust) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and are looking for her.

Officials do not prioritise security, sit in their cabins,' says parking operator amidst protest

GNS News Agency, March 3

NCP (SP) protest at MSRTC bus depot Swargate on Thursday where 26 year old girls raped in a bus on Tuesday, bus station NCP (SP) protest at MSRTC bus depot Swargate on Thursday where 26 year old girls raped in a bus. Activists, students, and citizens Thursday staged a massive protest at a bus station in Pune demanding justice for a young woman who was allegedly raped at the busy transport hub. The demonstration, led by the Stree Mukti League, saw strong calls for swift legal action and accountability from authorities. The chants of "Nyay Dya, Suraksha Dya! (Give Justice, Ensure Safety!)" echoed through the station.

Addressing the gathering, Swapnaja Limkar, Coordinator, Stree Mukti League, said, "Crimes against women are increasing at an alarming rate. Schools, colleges, roads, hospitals, even homes, no place is safe anymore. This is the result of a deeply entrenched patriarchal mindset that enables such atrocities while shielding perpetrators. We demand immediate and strict legal action, the resignation of Home Minister Devendra Fadnis, and accountability of the bus station authorities and the police." Social activist Trupti Desai criticised the delay in arresting the accused. "It has been 48 hours since this horrific crime took place... What action has the government taken? The accused is still at large. Women rely on government buses for safe travel, yet incidents like this expose the glaring failure of the police and the Home department. If they cannot ensure safety, they are failing in their fundamental duty," she added. Desai also targeted the Women's Commission. "We don't need the Commission to remind us not to trust strangers; women already live with that reality. The real question is, what is the Commission doing to protect women?" she asked, singling out Maharashtra State Women's Commission Chairperson Rupali Chakankar, who hails from Pune. "If women are unsafe in her city, what is she doing to change that?" Desai remarked. Among the protesters was Shrutika Yadav, a university student who frequently commutes by bus. "I use this bus station every day. If such an incident can occur here, where people are around, then nowhere is safe. Who is responsible for our security?" she asked. A parking operator said officials at the bus station do not prioritise security. "They take a quick round and then sit in their cabins. The police only show up when something serious happens," he added.

Maharashtra education dept proposes reduction of school-level committees, draft plan to be submitted to state govt

GNS News Agency, March 3

maharashtra, school committees, education department, Currently, schools in Maharashtra have more than 15 mandatory committees that operate simultaneously. The Maharashtra education department has recently proposed a major reduction in the number of committees at the school level. The department has prepared a draft plan to merge over 15 existing committees into just two or three, with the proposal set to be submitted to the state government for approval. Currently, schools in Maharashtra have more than 15 mandatory committees that operate simultaneously. These include the School Management Committee, Transport Committee, Parent-Teacher Association, Mid-Day Meal Committee, Women's Grievance Redressal Committee, and the Sakhi Savitri Committee, among others. All of these committees involve principals, teachers, parents, and representatives from various organisations. They were created to address a range of school-level issues, such as students' safety, better coordination between parents and teachers, convenient transport services, and the provision of quality mid-day meals. However, serious concerns have been raised by school principals and teachers regarding the time spent working on these committees.

Car driver in Bengaluru makes obscene gesture at woman Youth Congress worker, held

The accused, identified as Harsha H B, a resident of Vijayanagar, was arrested following a complaint from Akshatha Ravikumar, a national media panelist of the party. The accused, identified as Harsha H B, a resident of Vijayanagar, was arrested following a complaint from Akshatha Ravikumar, a national media panelist of the party.

The Bengaluru police on Wednesday arrested a 43-year-old car driver for allegedly making an obscene gesture at a woman, a Youth Congress member, in the middle of traffic, officers said. The accused, identified as Harsha H B, a resident of Vijayanagar, was arrested following a complaint from Akshatha Ravikumar, a national media panelist of the party. Ravikumar recorded a video of the incident and posted on X, showing the accused flipping her off before driving past her car near Gopalan Mall around 4 pm on Wednesday.

Uddhav Thackeray praises party workers for strong protest, Sule urges Devendra Fadnavis to review city's law and order

chief told More over a phone call.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said, "It is my appeal to the state home minister that you use the home ministry for political use and harassing the leaders of Opposition parties so do a favour and use the same for the safety and security of women in the state." Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis holds the home portfolio. NCP(SP) executive president Supriya Sule took a dig at the law and order situation of the city. "It is very sad if the police have failed to take note of the serious safety-related issue raised by the manager of the Swargate depot due to private agents and other miscreants. I urge the state home minister to review the law and order situation in Pune and take steps for ensuring safety of women and security at public places like Bus depots," she said. Meanwhile, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Pune Guardian minister Ajit Pawar said the rape incident was "very disturbing". "The accused should get the death penalty and I have given instructions to police on handling the situation efficiently," said Pawar. He said Chief Minister Fadnavis has been closely monitoring the investigation into the rape incident, and added the accused will be arrested soon. Earlier, the NCP(SP) held protests against the Mahayuti for failing to maintain the law and order situation in the city and the safety of women. Trupti Desai of the Bhumata Brigade also staged a demonstration at Swargate and tried to block the vehicle carrying Maharashtra Minister of State for Home Yogesh Kadam who visited the bus stand to review the investigation. Meanwhile, the Pune police have announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for information leading to the arrest of Dattatraya Ramdas Gade, the man accused of raping the woman on February 25. The police also released the photograph of Gade, who has been on the run for over 48 hours.

GNS News Agency, March 3

Shiv Sena UBT workers protest at Pune's Swargate bus stand after a woman was raped in a state-run bus, Uddhav, protests, devendra fadnavis Shiv Sena UBT workers protest at Pune's Swargate bus stand after a woman was raped in a state-run bus. Opposition parties in Maharashtra Thursday stepped up their attack on the Mahayuti government over the rape of a woman inside a state-run bus parked at a bus stand in Pune with protests as they criticised authorities over the law and order situation in the city. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray praised his party workers led by Vasant More for ransacking the office of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation at the Pune bus stand. "You did good. The incident is beyond words to talk about. We are fighting against whatever is happening. It is very painful to see what is happening in the state. The situation of Mumbai. There is no fear of police left. Convey my thanks to everyone else who protested and continue to be vigilant," the Shiv Sena (UBT)

'Well-dressed...with neatly tucked-in shirt, accused visited multiple bus stands earlier,' says minister Yogesh Kadam

GNS News Agency, March 3

pune rape case Dattatraya Ramdas Gade, the 37-year-old man accused of raping a woman inside a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus parked at Swargate depot Maharashtra Minister of State for Home Yogesh Kadam, who visited Pune in the backdrop of the rape of a 26-year-old woman in an MSRTC bus at Swargate bus depot, said on Thursday that the accused had been to multiple bus stands in the days before the incident, possibly as part of his modus operandi. Kadam also said that the accused fled by bus after the incident and that his movements have been tracked.

The woman was waiting at Swargate bus depot to catch a bus to her hometown in Satara district early Tuesday when the accused, identified as Dattatraya Gade, allegedly took her to an empty, semi-luxury MSRTC bus and raped her. "The incident took place at around 6 am (on Tuesday) and the complainant came to the police around 9 am. So three hours passed in between. Once the complaint was received, we identified the accused within half an hour. We then tracked his movements with the help of CCTV footage which showed he went to a certain location. He has travelled by bus and that too we have tracked," Kadam said, briefing the media at the Pune police commissioner's office, after visiting Swargate bus depot on Thursday. "Once the accused was identified, it was revealed that over the past four-five days, he had been to multiple bus stands. He was moving in a well-dressed attire with a neatly tucked-in



shirt, etc. Possibly, this was a part of his modus operandi. Once the accused is arrested, we will have more details. We hope to arrest him very soon," Kadam added.

Asked about a letter from the MSRTC depot manager seeking security against anti-social elements at the Swargate depot, Kadam said, "Police teams, including a senior officer from the police station, patrolled the bus stand at 1.30 am and 3 am, in the hours before the incident. However, providing 24-hour security is the responsibility of the MSRTC, for which they have hired a private security agency. So, not having adequate private security presence is the responsibility of the depot manager. By merely sending a letter, one cannot get away from accountability. If the private security personnel were present, the incident would not have occurred."

'People of Bihar have zero civic sense': Kendriya Vidyalaya teacher suspended after her videos complaining about posting go viral

GNS News Agency, March 3

A probationary primary teacher of Kendriya Vidyalaya, recently posted in Bihar's Jehanabad, has been suspended after her videos with alleged derogatory remarks about the state and its people went viral on social media. The 24-year-old teacher had expressed frustration about her first posting being in Bihar, which she described as "unacceptable". In a video that quickly spread online, the KV teacher, who said she hails from West Bengal, purportedly says, "I will always remember my first posting... Kendriya Vidyalaya has many regions. People don't like the Kolkata region, but I was ready for even that. I am ready to go to places like Kolkata, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, or even Ladakh, where no one wants to go, but not Bihar."

"The ground reality is that people of Bihar have zero civic sense... India is a developing country because of Bihar. The day we remove Bihar, India will be a developed country," she is purportedly heard saying. The video sparked strong reactions, with many calling her words inappropriate, especially for an educator. The video was reportedly deleted after it went viral, but the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) MP from Samastipur, Shambhavi Choudhary, wrote to the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) Commissioner on February 26, demanding action against the teacher.

"Such statements are highly inappropriate, unacceptable, and unbecoming of an educator, who is responsible for imparting knowledge and values to students," Choudhary said in her letter. "This incident has deeply hurt the sentiments of the people of Bihar, and immediate action is necessary to maintain the trust and integrity of the institution." The KVS had already issued an order dated February 25, suspending the teacher with immediate effect "under Rule 10 (1)(a) of the Central Civil Services (Classification, Control, and Appeal) Rules, 1965". The order stated that the probationary teacher had been transferred to Kendriya Vidyalaya in Mashrak, Chhapra, during the suspension period and specified that "she must not leave the Mashrak school without prior permission from the principal". The district administration of Jehanabad, in a press release issued on February 26, reiterated that the suspension was carried out in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations. Calling the teacher's actions "highly condemnable", the press release states, "Through social media, she attempted to insult the people of Bihar by using offensive language. This is a very regrettable act, and appropriate action has been taken." The police have also taken



cognisance of the videos. "A notice was sent to her and she was called to Cyber Police Station for questioning yesterday. She has given her statement. No FIR has been registered as of yet. We are further investigating the incident from all angles, and appropriate legal action will be taken in due course based on the findings," Jehanabad Superintendent of Police Arvind Pratap Singh said.

Jogulamba temple priest Anand Sharma in trouble following Alampur MLA's complaint to Speaker

Jogulamba Gadwal: Jogulamba Alampur temple senior priest Anand Sharma is in trouble for capturing images and videos of Alampur MLA Vijayudu and his family while they were watching a movie in a theatre.

Apart from lodging a complaint with the II-Town Police, the MLA, who is a Dalit, also lodged a complaint with Speaker G Prasad Kumar. Accordingly, the Speaker directed the District Collector to conduct an enquiry and submit a report on the motive behind the priest capturing the MLA and his family's images and videos. The incident occurred two months ago. MLA Vijayudu along with family was watching a movie in a theatre and incidentally the priest also happened to be in the theatre. Covering up his face with a handkerchief, the priest captured the MLA's and his family members' images. Noticing the priest, the MLA immediately caught hold of him and checked his mobile.

How spitting in public cost Mumbai man Rs 40,000 'fine'



GNS News Agency, March 3

mumbai-spitting-fine According to the police, the 'officer', sporting khaki trousers and black boots, who came on a motorcycle asked the man identified as Vasant M to get onto his Bullet and later made him pay the "fine" and fled the scene. A 58-year-old man who took a moment from his journey back home from South Mumbai to chew tobacco was allegedly taken for a ride on Tuesday when a man posing as a narcotics officer confronted him to pay a "fine" of Rs 40,000 for spitting the juice in public. According

to the police, the 'officer', sporting khaki trousers and black boots, who came on a motorcycle asked the man identified as Vasant M to get onto his Bullet and later made him pay the "fine" and fled the scene.

The First Information Report stated that the incident took place around 7 pm near Airoli while Vasant was chewing the tobacco. The accused stopped his Bullet next to him, and asked him to get onto his vehicle to proceed to the local police station to bear the consequences of spitting on a public road, the complainant said. "Vasant, who mistook him for a narcotics officer, immediately got onto the Bullet, and midway through the ride the accused told him he would have to pay a fine of Rs 68,000 fine. Eventually, they stopped at two ATMs from where the complainant withdrew Rs 40,000 and handed it over to him," said an officer. After reaching close to the Navghar police station, the accused said that they would be going to another police station and eventually returned to where Vasant originally kept his motorcycle, the police said. The fraudster told him to wait and then sped off on his Bullet. Vasant realised that he was duped when he discussed the incident with his friends the next day. He then lodged a complaint with the Navghar police station.

As bank freeze petitions flood courts, Delhi High Court urges Centre to frame uniform policy

GNS News Agency, March 3

The Delhi High Court recently urged the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to take "proactive steps to address" and chalk out a uniform policy and standard operating procedures after consultation with various stakeholders with petitions challenging "blanket freezing" of bank accounts "flooding the courts". The suggestion from the court came in an order on February 20 where an account of Neelkanth Pharma Logistics Pvt Ltd with HDFC Bank was frozen due to an "innocuous entry of Rs 200 credited" in an otherwise withdrawable balance of over Rs 93.50 lakh in the account.

Justice Manoj Jain recorded in the order, "There is nothing to suggest that petitioner is suspect or accused of any cyber-crime. The petitioner, quite possibly, may not even be connected with the offence under investigation and might be an unintended beneficiary. In such types of cyber-crimes, if any fraudster cheats a complainant and with the help of cheated money, when such fraudster buys something using such money, the police, chasing such money trail, directs freezing the bank accounts of all concerned and in the process, many innocent recipients have to bear the brunt, for no fault of theirs." The court noted that instead of directing for the preservation of the Rs 200, the bank was directed to freeze the entire account, which "left the petitioner high and dry", leading to "significant adverse financial consequences, including dishonouring of several cheques issued by the petitioner and the complete disruption of its business operations."

The bank account was frozen following instructions from Vartaknagar police station in Thane, Maharashtra, on November 29, 2024. After the firm filed a petition, and subsequent to another communication from the investigating agency on January 29, the bank account freeze was removed and a lien of Rs 200 was marked. Justice Jain held that while the investigating agency "is fully empowered to conduct an investigation, and can also, under appropriate circumstances, send a request to the concerned bank, directing freezing of the entire account," in case of such freezing, "it must assign reasons." "Such blanket measure, if taken recourse to, without offering any reason, can certainly play havoc with the financial concerns of such account holders. In relation to small-time vendors, it can disrupt the prospects of their mere existence, even. It is not difficult to imagine that any such action can put their lives in complete disarray... Therefore, the possibility of marking a lien on a disputed amount, whenever it is identifiable, should be explored as a more appropriate interim measure. Ideally, it



should be the first and foremost option. This would, naturally, mitigate the undue hardship being caused on account of blanket freezing of account and would also ensure that the alleged cheated money remains secured and intact," the court reasoned. While disposing of the plea, Justice Jain said, "The issue raised in the present petition has been a matter of recurring concern as many such like petitions are flooding the Courts. It is, therefore, high time that the investigating/law enforcement agencies, in the context of freezing bank accounts, act with requisite care, caution and yes, compassion as well."

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) informed the court that similar issues have cropped up before various other High Courts and suggested that a uniform advisory can be prepared to deal with such cases, and highlighted that such advisory can come from MHA. "In light of the frequent filing of such matters concerning blanket freezing of the accounts, this Court feels that the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, should take proactive steps to address the same. It may consider consulting all concerned stakeholders, including respective States/UTs and then, with the consensus of everyone, chalk out a uniform policy, standard operating procedures and guidelines to ensure that such matters are handled with requisite consideration and compassion. The aim should be to balance the rights of a complainant in any such criminal investigation vis-a-vis the right of innocent and unwary account holder, made to face unwarranted hardship on account of blanket freezing of account, despite being completely innocent and unaware of the commission of any crime," the court recommended. Recently, the court ordered to de-freeze the account of a small vendor selling chhole bhature in Delhi's Ashok Vihar for alleged cyber fraud of Rs 105, and marked a lien of the disputed amount. The vendor's bank account was frozen after the UPI transaction was traced to a cyber fraud worth Rs 71,000 registered in Andhra Pradesh.

How 3 Maharashtra cops worked at a brick kiln in UP to solve robbery case

GNS News Agency, March 3

Two years ago, three policemen from Dombivli, on the outskirts of Mumbai, travelled to Uttar Pradesh to catch a man they suspected was involved in a house break-in. But the accused, Rajesh Rajbhar, was in hiding and could not be traced. It was then that the police team came up with an ingenious solution that helped them crack the case: they decided to work in a local brick kiln. In August 2023, a Dombivli resident approached the police, saying that when he returned home after a visit to his native village, he found that his house had been broken into. Gold and silver jewellery worth Rs 21.26 lakh had been stolen, the man told the police.

As the probe began, the police looked for CCTV footage from the area and narrowed down on Rajbhar, an alleged history-sheeter who had been booked in multiple cases of theft. When the police began searching for Rajbhar, they found out that he hailed from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh. The police received information that he had fled to a village in the district and was hiding there. After reach-



ing UP, the policemen decided to stay in the village without alerting Rajbhar. They decided to pose as brick kiln workers. Since many of the workers migrated from different parts of the country, the men took up the job without arousing suspicion. Over the next 10 days, the police team interacted with locals and gathered inputs on Rajbhar's location. The police claimed that Rajbhar was accused in over 20 cases of theft in Dombivli, Thane, Palghar and other areas on the outskirts of Mumbai. He was arrested in a few cases and later granted bail, the police added.

Delhi University to revamp student union election process to eliminate 'money and muscle power'

GNS News Agency, March 3

Delhi University has proposed to overhaul its students' union election process for a poll free of "money and muscle power". The suggestion was presented at the varsity's Executive Council meeting Thursday. The university administration took note of the Delhi High Court order issued on November 11, 2024, in Prashan Manchanda vs. Union of India, where the court proposed a structural shift from the current single-tier election to a two-tier model. The proposal, according to the court, is designed "to prevent defacement and the use of muscle and money power at the university level". Last year, the Delhi High Court summoned 15 candidates from the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections for defacing public and private property while campaigning for the polls. The court on Monday directed them to give an undertaking that "they shall not deface or mutilate any public property" in the future. It is learnt that the committee formed following the high court orders suggested replacing its existing election system with a two-tier model

that decentralises the voting process. The proposed system allows colleges, departments, and centres to conduct their own elections, with elected representatives advancing to the university level to determine the DUSU office bearers. "The committee merely presented its suggestions in the EC meeting today as a reporting item. It is not part of the agenda. The suggestions are being shown to the stakeholders to get their suggestions on how to conduct the elections to ensure they are free from money and muscle power. This structure that is being proposed is how elections used to be conducted in the 1990s, too," a higher official at DU told The Indian Express. "The procedure suggested is that the colleges, its societies, and the departments will have their own elections, and the ones who win internally will have a chance to get a spot on the DUSU panel. This is being proposed to make the election free and fair and to ensure safety on the campus during the campaigning," the official added.

Austria is getting a new coalition government without the far-right election winner



GNS News Agency, March 3

Three parties announced Thursday (February 27, 2025) that they have reached a deal to form a new centrist Austrian government, five months after an election was won by a far-right party that later failed in an attempt to form an administration. A statement from the conservative Austrian People's Party, the center-left Social Democrats and the liberal Neos said they agreed on a programme for a coalition after the longest post-election hiatus in post-World War II Austria. The country's politicians broke a record of 129 days to form a new government that dated back to 1962. New People's Party leader Christian Stocker is expected to become chancellor. The parties planned to present

their programme later. This was the second attempt by the three mainstream parties to form a new government without the far-right, anti-immigration and euroskeptic Freedom Party, which in Austria's Sept. 29 election emerged for the first time as the strongest political force. It took 28.8% of the vote. Their first effort collapsed in early January, prompting the resignation of conservative then-Chancellor Karl Nehammer — and setting the scene for Austria's president to ask Freedom Party leader Herbert Kickl to try to form a government.

Mr. Kickl's own attempt to put together a coalition with the People's Party, which finished second in the election, collapsed in mutual recriminations on Feb. 12. The mainstream parties, which faced the risk of a new election that was unlikely to do them any favors, resumed their effort to find common ground. The outgoing government, a coalition of the People's Party and environmentalist Greens now led by interim Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg, has remained in place on a caretaker basis since the election. The People's Party and Social Democrats often governed Austria together in the past but have the barest possible majority in the parliament elected in September, with a combined 92 of the 183 seats. That was widely considered too small a cushion, and the two parties sought to bring in Neos, which has 18 seats and hasn't previously joined a national government.

Gene Hackman and wife Betsy Arakawa found dead in Santa Fe home; no foul play suspected

GNS News Agency, March 3

Two-time Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman and his wife, classical pianist, Betsy Arakawa, were found dead in their Santa Fe, New Mexico, home on Wednesday, along with their dog. Hackman was 95, and Arakawa was 63. Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza confirmed their deaths early Thursday to the Santa Fe New Mexican, stating there were no immediate signs of foul play. The exact cause and time of death have not been disclosed. Hackman, a two-time Academy Award winner, was celebrated for the versatility of his performances across a career spanning over six decades. He earned his first Oscar for Best Actor as Detective Jimmy "Popeye" Doyle in *The French Connection* (1971) and a second for Best Supporting Actor as "Little" Bill Daggett in *Unforgiven* (1992). From the cunning Lex Luthor in *Superman* (1978) to the troubled surveillance expert in *The Conversation* (1974), Hackman's many faces had cemented his reputation as one of Hollywood's most dynamic actors.

Born Eugene Allen Hackman on January 30, 1930, in San Bernardino, California, he joined the Marine Corps at 16, later pursuing journalism and radio before turning to acting. Hackman's breakthrough role came as Buck Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), earning him an Academy Award nomination. He continued to deliver memorable performances in films such as *Hoosiers* (1986), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), and *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), for



which he received a Golden Globe. Gene Hackman holds the Cecil B. DeMille award presented to him by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association for his "outstanding contribution to the entertainment field" during the 60th annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, January 19, 2003. In 1991, Hackman married Arakawa, and the couple relocated from Los Angeles to Santa Fe, where they resided until their passing. Hackman retired from acting in 2004 after his role in *Welcome to Mooseport*, subsequently focusing on writing historical fiction novels. Sheriff Mendoza said that there is no threat to the community and that an active investigation is underway to determine the circumstances surrounding their deaths. Hackman is survived by his three children from his first marriage to Faye Maltese: Christopher, Elizabeth Jean, and Leslie Anne.

Aaditya Thackeray slams social media posts against cricketer Mohammed Shami and lyricist Javed Akhtar

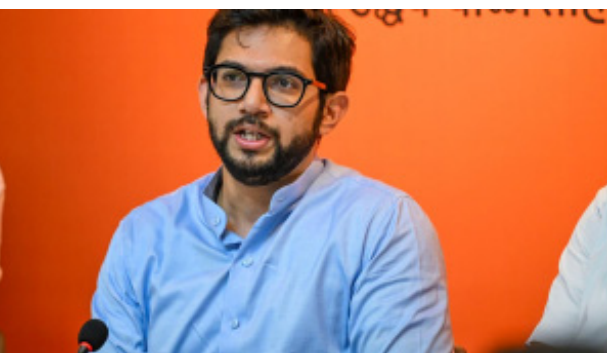
GNS News Agency, March 3

Taking a sharp jibe at posts by online 'trolls' on social media platform X, former Maharashtra Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT or Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) MLA Aaditya Thackeray on Monday (February 24, 2025) criticised comments against cricketer Mohammed Shami, and screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar's patriotism based on their religion during the India vs Pakistan match in the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy. Expressing his displeasure, Mr. Aaditya Thackeray shared a post with screenshots of Javed Akhtar's tweets on Sunday, praising the Indian cricket team, in which Mr. Akhtar said: "Virat Kohli, zindabad!!!. We all are so so proud of you!!!" Mr. Akhtar's tweet followed antagonistic comments from social media users, including, "Aaj suraj kaha se nikla. Andar se dukh hoga apko to (where did the Sun rise from today? You must be disappointed inside)". "Javed Babar ka baap kohli hai bolo Jai Shree Ram (Javed Babar's son is Kohli, say Jai Shree Ram)," another post said.

Mr. Akhtar responded: "Maen to sirf yeh kahoonga ke tum eik neech insaan ho aur neech hi marogay. Tum kya jano desh prem kya hota hai (I would only like to say that you are a vile person, and you will die a vile person. How would you know what patriotism is)." To another commentator, Mr. Akhtar said, "Beta jab tumhare baap dada angrez ke jootay chaat rahe thay tab mere aazadi ke liye jai aur kala paani mein thay. Meri ragon mein desh premion ka khoon hai aur tumhari ragon mein angrez ke naukaron ka khoon hai. Iss anter ko bhoolo nahin (son, when your ancestors were licking the boots of the Britishers, mine were fighting for freedom and were imprisoned in Kala Pani. I have the blood of freedom fighters running through my veins. And you have the blood of the British servants running in yours. Never forget this difference)."

Of Mr. Shami, a social media user said: "Mohammad Shami is playing for his team today. Every time he has taken wickets, but today against Pakistan, he showed his true color!" A day later, Mr. Thackeray tweeted in support of Mr. Akhtar and Mr. Shami. "The worst of where our andh bhakts [blind devotees] are taking our country to. Doubting Shami and Javed Akhtar ji on their patriotism because of their religion. Both proud Indians, contributing actively to Indian glory through their own skill. But the same trolls are too afraid to speak on a BJP leader and former minister who sat with a cricketer- who has been outspokenly anti Bharat. The very same former minister whose party tells every other opposition member to "go to Pakistan" and this minister screams "desh ke gaddaro ko" [traitors of the country] on the streets. Aaj desh ka gaddaar kaun hai [today, who is the traitor]?" Mr. Aaditya Thackeray attached to his post a photograph of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Anurag Thakur, seen sitting next to former Pakistani cricketer Shahid Afridi, and watching the match.

"Oh and the media debates. Sadly, this is what the BJP's philosophy is- create divisions within our own country, make us fight within our own country- divide Hindus and Muslims- so that BJP can win. But their bosses and boss' families can chill, party with those from Pakistan, especially those who have been openly anti-India," Mr. Aaditya Thackeray said. "Oh before we forget, this is the same BJP run BCCI [Board of Control for Cricket in India] that played cricket with Bangladesh [in an informal tournament by invitation] when the BJP's social media ecosystem and media told us that Hindus in Bangladesh faced violence.



BJP now is: Elections done, Hindus forgotten, Patriotism forgotten," he added. "When they teach you patriotism and Hindutva again, show them this photo of their leader enjoying the match with the anti-India cricketer and ask the BJP if they are ok with this? My Patriotism and Hindutva is clear: respect mine, I respect yours. But no compromise with hate- of any kind, from anyone," Mr. Aaditya Thackeray said, referring to the photos again.

Donald Trump threatens to sue authors and media who use anonymous sources

GNS News Agency, March 3

U.S. President Donald Trump, furious over a disparaging new tell-all book about him, threatened on Wednesday to sue authors and media outlets that use anonymous sources. Trump has made suing people an integral part of his brand as he made his way up from New York real estate mogul to the U.S. presidency twice, and this time he is taking aim at the common practice of books and news stories using unnamed sources.

Trump is also famously contemptuous of mainstream media in America, which he routinely labels the "fake news" media. His latest move comes after the publication of a new expose by journalist Michael Wolff that has Trump and his team livid. Among other assertions the book says that after surviving an assassination attempt last summer during the election campaign, Trump "seemed possibly on the verge of cracking," unable to finish sentences and flying into rages that were stunning even for the famously thin-skinned former reality TV star. In a social media post Trump said that after what he called his wildly successful first month back in power, "Fake books and stories" with anonymous sources are coming out and "at some point I am going to sue some of these dishonest authors and book publishers" to determine if these sources exist, "which they largely do not."

Trump added: "They are made up, defamatory fiction, and a big price should be paid for this blatant dishonesty. I'll do it as a service to our Country. Who knows, maybe we will create some NICE NEW LAW!!! The new book by Mr. Wolff — he had a bestseller that came out in 2018 called "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House" — among other bombshell claims also quotes a Mar-a-Lago source as saying Trump's wife Melania hates him.

Donald Trump on 'Gold Card' visa: A \$5 million potential path to US citizenship; would 'sell like crazy'



GNS News Agency, March 3

U.S. President Donald Trump said Wednesday that his plan to sell a "gold card" visa — with a potential pathway to U.S. citizenship for \$5 million — would "sell like crazy". "I happen to think it'll sell like crazy. It's a market," Mr. Trump said. "But we'll know very soon." During the first meeting of his second-term Cabinet, Mr. Trump suggested that the new revenue generated from the programme could be used to pay off the country's debt. Trump plans to offer "gold cards" for \$5 million path to citizenship. U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday (February 25, 2025) that he plans to offer a "gold card" visa with a path to citizenship for \$5 million, replacing a 35-year-old visa for investors. | Video Credit: The Hindu

"If we sell a million, that's \$5 trillion dollars," he said. Of the demand from the business community to participate, he said "I think we will sell a lot because I think there's really a thirst." Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told reporters during the same meeting that Mr. Trump's initiative would replace the EB-5 program, which offers U.S. visas to investors who spent about \$1 million on a company that employs at least 10 people. Mr. Lutnick said that the programme "has been around for many years for investment in projects" but "it was poorly overseen, poorly executed." Shift in U.S. immigration policy The new programme could mark a dramatic shift in U.S. immigration policy but isn't unprecedented elsewhere. Countries in Europe and elsewhere offer what has become known as "golden visas" that allow participants to pay to secure immigration status in desirable places. Congress, meanwhile, determines qualifications U.S. for citizenship, but the president said "gold cards" would not require congressional approval. Mr. Trump said of future possible recipients of the

gold visa program: "They'll be wealthy and they'll be successful and they'll be spending a lot of money and paying a lot of taxes and employing a lot of people, and we think it's going to be extremely successful." Henley & Partners, an advisory firm, says more than 100 countries around the world offer "golden visas" to wealthy individuals and investors. That list includes the United States, United Kingdom, Spain, Greece, Malta, Australia, Canada and Italy.

"Companies can buy gold cards and, in exchange, get those visas to hire new employees," Mr. Trump said. Despite similar programmes already occurring outside the U.S., he insisted, "No other country can do this because people don't want to go to other countries. They want to come here." "Everybody wants to come here, especially since Nov. 5," he said of his Election Day victory last fall. A pathway to citizenship as part of the new program also would set it apart from the EB-5 program. Mr. Trump said vetting people who might be eligible for the gold card will "go through a process" that is still being worked out. Not much restrictions based on nationality. Pressed on if there would be restrictions on people from China or Iran not being allowed to participate, Mr. Trump suggested it will likely not "be restricted to much in terms of countries, but maybe in terms of individuals." About 8,000 people obtained investor visas in the 12-month period ending September 30, 2022, according to the Homeland Security Department's most recent Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

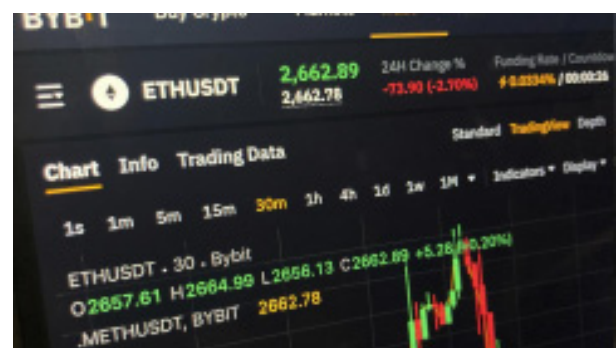
The Congressional Research Service reported in 2021 that EB-5 visas pose risks of fraud, including verification that funds were obtained legally. Then-President Joe Biden signed a 2022 law bringing big changes to the EB-5 program, including steps meant to investigate and sanction individuals or entities engaged in fraud as part of it — meant to curb some of those risks. Mr. Trump offered few details on how the new program might work, including making no mention of existing EB-5 requirements for job creation. While the number of EB-5 visas is capped, meanwhile, the Republican president mused that the federal government could sell 10 million "gold cards" to reduce the deficit. He said it "could be great, maybe it will be fantastic." "It's somewhat like a green card, but at a higher level of sophistication," the president said. "It's a road to citizenship for people — and essentially people of wealth or people of great talent, where people of wealth pay for those people of talent to get in, meaning companies will pay for people to get in and to have long, long term status in the country."

North Korea behind \$1.5 billion crypto theft, FBI says

GNS News Agency, March 3

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation accused North Korea of being behind the theft of \$1.5 billion worth of digital assets last week, the largest crypto heist in history. Dubai-based cryptocurrency exchange Bybit reported last week that it had been robbed of 400,000 in cryptocurrency Ethereum. According to the company, attackers exploited security protocols during a transaction, enabling them to transfer the assets to an unidentified address. "(North Korea) was responsible for the theft of approximately \$1.5 billion in virtual assets from cryptocurrency exchange, Bybit," the FBI said in a public service announcement.

The bureau said a group called TraderTraitor, also known as the Lazarus Group, was behind the theft. It said they were "proceeding rapidly and have converted some of the stolen assets to Bitcoin and other virtual assets dispersed across thousands of addresses on multiple blockchains." "It is expected these assets will be further laundered and eventually converted to fiat currency," the FBI added. Lazarus Group gained notoriety a decade ago when it was accused of hacking into Sony Pictures as revenge for "The Interview," a film that mocked North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. It was also allegedly behind the 2022 \$620 million heist of Ethereum and USD Coin from the Ronin Network in 2022, previously the biggest crypto theft in history. In December, the United States and Japan blamed it for the theft of cryptocurrency worth over \$300 million from



the Japan-based exchange DMM Bitcoin. North Korea's cyber-warfare program dates back to at least the mid-1990s, and the country has been dubbed "the world's most prolific cyber-thief" by a cybersecurity firm. Pyongyang's program has grown to a 6,000-strong cyber-warfare unit known as Bureau 121 that operates from several countries, according to a 2020 U.S. military report. A United Nations panel on North Korea's evasion of sanctions last year estimated the nation has stolen more than \$3 billion in cryptocurrency since 2017. Much of the hacking activity is reportedly directed by Pyongyang's Reconnaissance General Bureau, its primary foreign intelligence agency. Money stolen helps to fund the country's nuclear weapons program, the panel said.

Supreme Court says critics of Bhopal toxic waste disposal adopting 'not-in-my-backyard' principle, refuses to intervene



GNS News Agency, March 3

The Supreme Court on Thursday (February 27, 2025) remarked the petitioners opposed to the transportation and disposal of 337 metric tons of Bhopal gas tragedy toxic waste at a Pithampur facility in Madhya Pradesh are indulging in the 'NIMBY' (not in my backyard) principle. A Bench headed by Justice BR Gavai rejected the pleas made by the local populace of Pithampur and civil rights organisations to intervene in a Madhya Pradesh High Court order on December 3 to shift and destroy the hazardous waste which had been lying buried in and about the Union Carbide India Limited (UCL) plant site for nearly 40 years after a methyl isocyanate gas leak claimed over 5400 lives in one of the biggest industrial disasters in history. "You seem to be following the NIMBY principle, that is, not in my backyard. You are saying if they want to pollute, they may do it somewhere else, but not in my backyard. Not in Indore," Justice Gavai remarked at the petitioners.

The court noted that the State action to take the waste to Pithampur and dispose of it there was based on reports by an expert committee which had comprised Central and State officials, the Director of the National Environment Engineering Institute (NEERI), the Director of the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) and the Chairman of the Central Pollution Control Board. The Bench said even the Supreme Court consulted NEERI if it faced difficulties

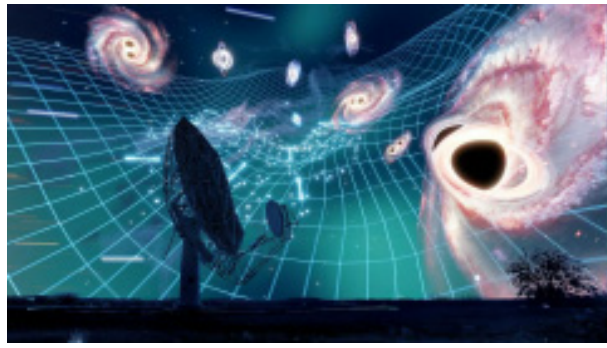
in adjudications involving environmental issues. The NGRI was similarly acclaimed in the field of geophysics. The State had gone about with its action plan to dispose of the toxic waste only after getting the approval from these experts. Senior advocate Devadatt Kamat, appearing for petitioner Chinmay Mishra, said the reports and recommendations for safe transit and destruction are not being followed by the State government. The facility in Pithampur was a private one. Senior advocate Anand Grover, for intervenors who represented civil society working with Bhopal gas tragedy victims, said there were better ways of disposal of the toxic waste than incineration.

"Incineration will not completely get rid of the toxic waste," Mr. Grover said. Advocate Jayasree Narasimhan said local bodies were not consulted by the State before taking the decision to move the waste to Pithampur. "The local bodies were not even represented in the High Court," Ms. Narasimhan submitted. She said no signatures were given by her client, a local person, consenting to the disposal of the waste in Pithampur.

The apex court responded that the High Court was continuing to monitor the case and the petitioner and intervenors could approach it with their grievances. Justice Gavai reminded that it was the High Court which had goaded the "lethargic" State government to act on the toxic waste lying at the Bhopal gas tragedy site.

The Bench said the petitioner and intervenors could also give their suggestions to the State government, which would place them before the expert committee for consideration. The Madhya Pradesh counsel queried whether the State could go ahead with its first "trial run" of transporting and disposal of 10 metric tonnes of toxic waste in Pithampur which was scheduled for February 27. He sought a copy of the order to be published at the earliest. Justice Gavai replied that the case was out of the apex court. As regards the implementation of the apex court order, Justice Gavai said "our order is in effect from the moment it is pronounced in open court".

Astronomers build galaxy-sized 'detector' to map universe's vibrations



GNS News Agency, March 3

Using the largest gravitational wave detector ever made, we have confirmed earlier reports that the fabric of the universe is constantly vibrating. This background rumble is likely caused by collisions between the enormous black holes that reside in the hearts of galaxies. The results from our detector — an array of rapidly spinning neutron stars spread across the galaxy — show this "gravitational wave background" may be louder than previously thought. We have also made the most detailed maps yet of gravitational waves across the sky, and found an intriguing "hot spot" of activity in the Southern Hemisphere. Our research is published today in three papers in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society. Ripples in space and time

Gravitational waves are ripples in the fabric of space and time. They are created when incredibly dense and massive objects orbit or collide with each other. The densest and most massive objects in the universe are black holes, the remnants of dead stars. One of the only ways to study black holes is by searching for the gravitational waves they emit when they move near each other. Just like light, gravitational waves are emitted in a spectrum. The most massive black holes emit the slowest and most powerful waves — but to study them, we need a detector the size of our galaxy.

The high-frequency gravitational waves created by collisions between relatively small black holes can be picked up with Earth-based detectors, and they were first observed in 2015. However, evidence for the existence of the slower, more powerful waves wasn't found until last year. Several groups of astronomers around the world have assembled galactic-scale gravitational wave detectors by closely observing the behaviour of groups of particular kinds of stars. Our experiment, the MeerKAT Pulsar Timing Array, is the largest of these galactic-scale detectors. Today we have announced further evidence for low-frequency gravitational waves, but with some intriguing differences from earlier results. In just a third of the time of other experiments, we've found a signal that hints at a more active universe than anticipated. We have also been able to map the cosmic architecture left behind by merging galaxies more accurately than ever before. Black holes, galaxies and pulsars at the centre of most galaxies, scientists believe, lives a gargantuan object known as a supermassive black hole. Despite their enormous mass — billions of times the mass of our Sun — these cosmic giants are difficult to study. Astronomers have known about supermassive black holes for decades,

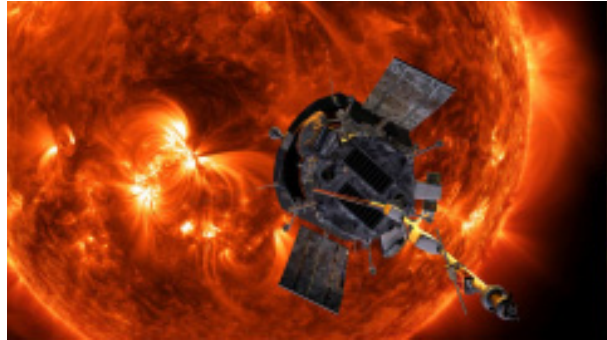
but only directly observed one for the first time in 2019.

When two galaxies merge, the black holes at their centres begin to spiral towards each other. In this process they send out slow, powerful gravitational waves that give us an opportunity to study them. We do this using another group of exotic cosmic objects: pulsars. These are extremely dense stars made mainly of neutrons, which may be around the size of a city but twice as heavy as the Sun. Pulsars spin hundreds of times a second. As they rotate, they act like lighthouses, hitting Earth with pulses of radiation from thousands of light years away. For some pulsars, we can predict when that pulse should hit us to within nanoseconds. Our gravitational wave detectors make use of this fact. If we observe many pulsars over the same period of time, and we're wrong about when the pulses hit us in a very specific way, we know a gravitational wave is stretching or squeezing the space between the Earth and the pulsars. However, instead of seeing just one wave, we expect to see a cosmic ocean full of waves criss-crossing in all directions — the echoing ripples of all the galactic mergers in the history of the universe. We call this the gravitational wave background. A surprisingly loud signal — and an intriguing 'hot spot'

To detect the gravitational wave background, we used the MeerKAT radio telescope in South Africa. MeerKAT is one of the most sensitive radio telescopes in the world. As part of the MeerKAT Pulsar Timing Array, it has been observing a group of 83 pulsars for about five years, precisely measuring when their pulses arrive at Earth. This led us to find a pattern associated with a gravitational wave background, only it's a bit different from what other experiments have found.

The pattern, which represents how space and time between Earth and the pulsars is changed by gravitational waves passing between them, is more powerful than expected. This might mean there are more supermassive black holes orbiting each other than we thought. If so, this raises more questions — because our existing theories suggest there should be fewer supermassive black holes than we seem to be seeing. The size of our detector, and the sensitivity of the MeerKAT telescope, means we can assess the background with extreme precision. This allowed us to create the most detailed maps of the gravitational wave background to date. Mapping the background in this way is essential for understanding the cosmic architecture of our universe. It may even lead us to the ultimate source of the gravitational wave signals we observe. While we think it's likely the background emerges from the interactions of these colossal black holes, it could also stem from changes in the early, energetic universe following the Big Bang — or perhaps even more exotic events. The maps we've created show an intriguing "hot spot" of gravitational wave activity in the Southern Hemisphere sky. This kind of irregularity supports the idea of a background created by supermassive black holes rather than other alternatives. However, creating a galactic-sized detector is incredibly complex, and it's too early to say if this is genuine or a statistical anomaly. To confirm our findings, we are working to combine our new data with results from other international collaborations under the banner of the International Pulsar Timing Array.

NASA spacecraft 'safe' after closest-ever approach to Sun



GNS News Agency, March 3 NASA said that its Parker Solar Probe was "safe" and operating normally after successfully completing the closest-ever approach to the Sun by any human-made object. The spacecraft passed just 3.8 million miles (6.1 million km) from the solar surface on December 24, flying into the sun's outer atmosphere called the corona, on a mission to help scientists learn more about

Earth's closest star. The agency said the operations team at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Maryland received the signal, a beacon tone, from the probe just before midnight on Thursday.

The spacecraft is expected to send detailed telemetry data about its status on January 1, NASA added. Moving at up to 430,000 mph (692,000 kph), the spacecraft endured temperatures of up to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit (982 degrees Celsius), according to the NASA website. "This close-up study of the Sun allows Parker Solar Probe to take measurements that help scientists better understand how material in this region gets heated to millions of degrees, trace the origin of the solar wind (a continuous flow of material escaping the Sun), and discover how energetic particles are accelerated to near light speed," the agency added. The Parker Solar Probe was launched in 2018 and has been gradually circling closer towards the sun, using flybys of Venus to gravitationally pull it into a tighter orbit with the sun.

U.S. and China renew bilateral S&T Agreement | Explained

GNS News Agency, March 3 China and the U.S. agreed to extend the Agreement between China and USA on Co-operation in Science and Technology for an additional five years, effective from August 27, 2024. They also signed a protocol to amend it. With that the uncertainty over the Agreement's continuation came to an end. Observers have welcomed the development as an affirmation of science and technology cooperation between the two major powers. The incoming Donald Trump administration is also likely to endorse its continuation. The Agreement was first signed on January 31, 1979, by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and U.S. president Jimmy Carter at a time when both countries had established diplomatic relations and agreed to cooperate on agricultural research and technology. Since then the Agreement has been renewed every five years as well as expanding in scope. It was due to be renewed in 2023 but was extended for six months in August 2023 and again in February 2024, paving the way for a fresh renewal. The Agreement is governed by the US-PRC Joint Commission on Scientific and Technological Cooperation; the U.S. and China each appoint co-chairs and an agency from each country is nominated as the 'executive agent'. There are also additional protocols between agencies and 40 sub-agreements in different areas, from agriculture to nuclear fusion. Bilateral S&T agreements Bilateral science and technology agreements have been key to promote cooperation in these fields. Often there are specific agreements or cooperation pacts as part of a larger engagement framework. While these agreements don't mention specific investments in science and technology, they often pave the way for forms of cooperation that aren't confined to state institutions. They also facilitate joint research, mobility between the countries for students and scientists, and encourage institutional cooperation, and set up bilateral research centers. India has such bilateral agreements with 83 countries. This said, while countries routinely sign such agreements as part of routine engagements, both countries need to have the capacity and the intention to pursue the cooperation earnestly for the instruments to suc-

ceed. Token initiatives have never cut it. In this regard, the Agreement between China and the U.S. is probably the most successful of its kind. Conflicts between the U.S. and China, particularly over the export of certain technologies to China and concerns about China overtaking the U.S. in science and technology indicators, have become sticking points of late. To address them, the newly amended Agreement has measures to enhance provisions for researcher safety and data reciprocity. Also the collaboration will henceforth be confined to the intergovernmental level, to basic research, and to previously identified themes of mutual benefit (including, for example, earthquake studies and basic health). The instrument will also exclude cooperation in critical and emerging technologies to assuage stakeholders that China won't extract disproportionate benefits — especially (and allegedly) at the U.S.'s expense — from the Agreement. Indeed, the last concern isn't restricted to the fringe: experts who reviewed the Agreement flagged China's ability to make better use of the research ecosystem as well as concerns over intellectual property rights. One report by the Congressional Research Service stated: "In 2017, U.S. patent and trademark officials identified over 400 [Chinese] patents tied to [Agreement] projects that [China] commercialised without U.S. commercial benefit." So before the Agreement was renewed this year, the U.S. was faced with three options: to renew it as usual for five years, to rescind it or to renew it with new measures to restrict the scope and add additional conditions. The U.S.'s decision to opt for the third option implies that while there are deep concerns about the Agreement's continued usefulness to the U.S., the outgoing administration would rather not altogether allow it to expire or rescind it. China expanded its cooperation on science and technology in the 1970s by signing agreements with the U.S. and the European Union; until then these deals had been restricted to some east European countries and the erstwhile Soviet Union. Between then and now, the country has emerged as a strong contender for the leadership of global science.

Illegal night bazaars rule the roost as new currency woes hit traditional stores in Zimbabwe



GNS News Agency, March 3

Harare (Zimbabwe): Batsirai Pabwe picked detergents, toothpaste, snacks and some pasta among several grocery items spread on the tarmac of a car parking space — an unorthodox night bazaar lit by cellphone flashlights and fluorescent lamps in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare. Traditional stores are struggling to survive as the volatility of Zimbabwe's new currency pushes prices up. Many like Pabwe now shun them for much cheaper informal markets that pop up at night to avoid the glare of authorities.

From dusk, sidewalks, store or office verandahs and car parking spaces burst into unorthodox open-air bazaars, offering anything from groceries to fresh meat, electronics, clothes, medicines, fashion accessories and stationery. Unfettered by expenses such as rising energy costs, taxes and laws that force formal retailers to accept the local currency at artificially low official exchange rates,

informal traders, including children, offer better bargains. A box of juice that sells for \$3 in a supermarket costs half of that on the street. The once-prosperous southern African nation of 15 million people in April introduced a new gold-backed currency called ZiG, short for Zimbabwe Gold, to replace one that had been battered by depreciation and often outright rejection by the people. It is the country's sixth attempt at a new currency since the spectacular 2009 collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar and adoption of the US dollar as legal tender amid hyperinflation of 5 billion per cent, one of the world's worst currency crashes to date. The US dollar has since remained legal tender alongside successive local currencies. The latest currency, the world's newest, came with pomp and fanfare — promotional catchy jingles and songs played repeatedly on public radio, television and online. Seven months on, the ZiG seems to be tanking, like its predecessors. The gap between official and black market exchange rates continues to widen, with many people and informal traders who dominate the economy again preferring the more stable dollar. Traditional stores, forced by authorities to charge using the local currency, are increasing prices to make ends meet. But they have also become uncompetitive against unregulated informal markets, the Retailers Association of Zimbabwe, an industry representative group, said in September. "Everything is against their survival. The informal sector works at night, (if there is) no electricity they use their phones, they don't care. They are there for survival," Mugano said. "Business is booming," said Oswald Gari, a vendor, adding that he only works at night when the police leave. More than 80 per cent of Zimbabwe's employable population ekes out a living in the informal sector, according to official figures and the International Labour Organisation.

How the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake transformed tsunami science

GNS News Agency, March 3

December 26, 2004, marks the 20th year since the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. The tsunami generated by the quake of magnitude 9.1 was sourced off the Sumatran coast and was the third largest (by magnitude) in the world since 1900. The source was 30 km below the ocean floor, in the Sunda trench, where part of the Indo-Australian plate subducts beneath the Burma microplate, which is a part of the Eurasian plate. The 2004 earthquake ripped through 1,300 km of the plate boundary, the fault tearing from Sumatra in the south to Cocos Islands in the north. The quake was felt in Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It caused severe damage and killed hundreds in Northern Sumatra and in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The tsunami was most impactful on distant shores, affecting 17 countries lining the Indian Ocean. In all, with an astounding death toll of around 227,000 plus 1.7 million more displaced, the 2004 tsunami is the deadliest in recorded history. Unprecedented magnitude

In less than six years, on March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.1 earthquake hit the east coast of Japan, the largest ever recorded in that country. It generated a tsunami that reached as high as 39 metres and travelled up to 8 km inland. The twin disasters killed more than 18,000 people, displaced more than 500,000, and resulted in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident. Although devastating tsunamis have occurred in the past — 1960 Chile and 1964 Alaska, for example — the two 21st century events taught us important lessons. Particularly, the 2004 tsunami highlighted how vulnerable the world was to natural hazards. It landed like a bolt from the sky, hitting the most unexpected locations, and placed a premium on the importance of tackling disaster risk through preparedness and resilience. As Margareta Wahlström, head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), observed in a panel discussion: "Ten years after the Indian Ocean tsunami, the world has taken significant measures to make the world a safer place against disasters." The 2004 tsunami surprised researchers and hazard managers alike with its transoceanic reach. With no recorded history of any event of such magnitude, the research community hadn't anticipated it occurring along India's eastern seaboard. The only previous tsunamis had occurred in 1881, caused by a large earthquake (magnitude ~8) off Car Nicobar island, and another in 1883 due to the explosion of Krakatoa. These events produced only small sea surges as recorded by tide gauges at different points on the east coast.

This view from the air shows coastal devastation on Katchal Island, part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in 2005. The island lost some 90% of its population in the December 26, 2004, tragedy. However, in the two decades since 2004, researchers have made tremendous leaps in the scientific understanding of tsunami generation and the technical aspects of earthquake monitoring. The Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC), established in 2007 by the Union Ministry of the Earth Sciences of the Government of India, is perhaps the most significant step in this direction. Operating from the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) at Hyderabad, ITEWC operates seismological stations as well as bottom pressure recorders and tidal stations across the Indian Ocean basin — all 24/7. These systems can transmit offshore and deep ocean tsunami observations that enable early warnings. Earthquake data from the stations operated by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and 350 global stations are also available at INCOIS. Ocean monitoring systems also pass data in real-time. In about 10 minutes, for example, the system can identify a potential tsunami-producing earthquake and issue tsunami alerts or warnings — depending on the expected severity — for countries bordering the Indian Ocean. India is the fifth country in the world, after the U.S., Japan, Chile, and Australia, to have an advanced tsunami warning system of this kind. A new practice The 2004 incident also spurred important new developments in research. The work of tsunami geology, pioneered by Brian Atwater of the U.S. Geological Survey, prompted researchers in Asian countries including India to search for evidence of tsunamis in history. Atwater's work along the Washington coast of the western U.S. had revealed evidence of an earthquake and tsunami in 1700, plus their predecessors. One fascinating part of this work was the use of land elevation changes caused by the earthquake, which left trees stressed or just killed them. Atwater had used the imprints of these effects to determine when some piece of land had been deformed and thus when it was suffering the effects of a tsunamigenic earthquake. Inspections of subsided mangrove swamps revealed how the 2004 earthquake had rendered changes in elevation of up to 3.5 metres at some places along the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Scientists also wondered if there could have been past events that also caused the mangroves to subside. As it turned out the 2004 earthquake had reopened the coffins of the past and exposed their skeletons, in the form of



dead roots sticking out from tidal platforms during a low tide. Such roots exposed near Port Blair were used to infer that the last earthquake had occurred about a thousand years ago. Excavations at Mahabalipuram, a port of the Pallava dynasty, unearthed evidence of a tsunami of the same vintage. It was the first proof of a pre-2004 tsunami reported by an Indian team. Researchers also sifted through sedimentary deposits along the islands and coastal areas of the mainland to find evidence of other ancient tsunamis, while learning to distinguish between tsunami and storm deposits.

This effort is a good example of how the 2004 tsunami prompted the science of tsunami geology to become a new practice, leading to many new research papers and doctoral theses. The demand for more knowledge about tsunamis also facilitated quantum leaps in the use of GPS systems and earthquake instrumentation. With funding from the Ministry of Earth Sciences, research institutes established several new stations along the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, strengthening seismic observations and geodetic studies. In another important step, the tsunami modelling using mathematical tools helped researchers determine inundation limits. In particular, the disaster provided a stark reminder that nuclear power plants established along Indian coasts could be vulnerable to a hitherto underestimated risk. While the Kalpakkam nuclear power plant withstood the giant waves, it also shut down automatically after the rising water levels tripped the detectors. There was no release of radioactive material and the reactor was restarted six days later. The no. 3 nuclear reactor of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is seen burning after a blast following an earthquake and tsunami in this handout satellite image taken March 14, 2011. But the 2011 Tohoku earthquake reminded the world, and India, how quickly a nuclear disaster can happen in the absence of a failsafe. It was clear the radiation from the Fukushima facility had entered the human food chain. Researchers even found radioactive caesium in the breast milk of some women tested near Fukushima prefecture three months after the disaster. What if the waves in 2004 had been high enough to damage the reactors at Kalpakkam? This question continues to resonate as the government has been pursuing large developmental projects in Great Car Nicobar, including the construction of an international transshipment terminal. Some experts have also argued that the last great earthquake that affected the region before 2004 was a millennium ago, so there is no imminent danger. But this question hinges on how much we still don't know. What if an unbroken patch of the subduction zone between Myanmar and India gives way? A still-unexamined portion of the crust between Great Nicobar and Car Nicobar suddenly breaking into a powerful earthquake and a tsunami can't be ruled out. Experts and policymakers must also focus on other problem spots, like the Makran Coast in the northern Arabian Sea and the Myanmar coast adjoining the Northern Indian Ocean. Both of them have the potential to produce large tsunamis. The Makran Coast, cutting through Iran and Pakistan, could direct a tsunami's energy towards India's west coast, which also hosts nuclear reactors and the city of Mumbai. A major milestone Science tells us that stress builds between tectonic plates until it reaches a critical strain, at which point the accumulated potential energy is released as an earthquake. Subduction zones like the Andaman-Sumatra region are becoming significant as they provide clues to earthquake generation. The discovery of slow slips — tectonic faults that move many orders of magnitude slower and generally just a bit deeper — has also added a new dimension to this picture. Of late, researchers have been studying seismic slips at plate boundaries to understand the processes that occur before and after major earthquakes. They have elucidated the occurrence of premonitory and post-seismic slip transients using laboratory experiments and numerical simulations. Some of these studies have implications for earthquake prediction: they indicate a creative process that initially involves stable, slow rupture growth within a confined zone on a fault just before unstable, high-speed rupture. One paper published in 2015 (coauthored by one of the authors of this article) indicated a perceptible downward ground movement in South Andaman between 2003 and 2004, before the earthquake — a silent event with a moment

EU AI group co-chair on LLMs vs publishers: 'Wrong for developers to monetise someone's work and not pay them'



It would not be sustainable if developers of artificial intelligence (AI) large language models, who scrape content from the open Internet, did not compensate original creators of that work, such as news publishers, said Michael McNamara, member of the European parliament, and co-chair of its AI Working Group. In an interview with Soumyarendra Barik, McNamara also spoke about the potential for collaboration between India and the EU on AI technology and people transfer, the conversation around over-regulation in Europe, and whether data transfers from the bloc to India would be easy. In India, and several other countries, news publishers have sued companies like OpenAI over copyright issues. On a fundamental level, do you think the LLM developers, who have scraped the work of original creators, need to compensate the publishers?

It's a very difficult question, and it's one that's obviously a huge issue in Europe as well. There are various working groups developing a code of practice, where it is hoped that developers will sign up to it at the European level. At the moment one of the biggest issues of contention is the copyright issue between copyright holders on the one hand and the large language model developers on the other. The developers are saying that they can't possibly publish every single piece of data that they've used. In the case of Google, for instance, the entirety of the Internet has been scraped. Nevertheless, they have to comply with the law. But at a more principled level, taking it back to answer your question, I think it would be wrong to have a situation where people can monetise somebody else's endeavor and not pay them anything for what they have created. That's clearly not sustainable.

Do you think the EU AI Act was perhaps a bit premature given the fast changing nature of the AI industry?

I wouldn't necessarily agree that the law in Europe was premature. I think it will be useful, it is necessary, particularly with regard to high-risk AI. We see more and more computing power, risks evolving, like catastrophic risk, but then on a different level we see a risk of child pornography, and abuse, more generally.

Some EU lawmakers seem to be hinting that the bloc might loosen its regulatory grip for AI. Are we seeing an Europe that is detracting from its image of being a tough tech regulator?

The AI Act bans high risk AI and guidelines on prescribed practice AI have already been published by the European Commission, which will be implemented by the member states from August. But for most small businesses, it will have relatively little impact. I think the Commission is setting up an SME office so that SMEs can go and find out exactly what impact it will have and what they need to do to be compliant. They will be pleasantly surprised that they need to do very little to be compliant, that this is something that will affect high-risk AI, large developers to an extent. There's a certain conflation of the GDPR, and in the way it was applied in a very fragmented manner. Different member states adopting slightly different perspectives, that

brought its own fragmentation. Frankly, if we see that with AI, it would be catastrophic for Europe in my view. But, lessons have been learnt, and I don't believe we will see that with regard to AI. The proposed AI liability directive was withdrawn by the Commission. To Brussels insiders, it wasn't a huge surprise because it was deadlocked in any event. The European Parliament was in favour of it, but there was no agreement at the Council, so it hadn't progressed.

The primary conversation at the Paris AI Summit seemed to move away from safety from the first summit that happened in the UK, with ease of business taking centre stage. Broadly do you believe safety will not be the focal point of AI discussions?

I think safety will remain a concern for EU member states, some more than others. India, too, signed the declaration at the Paris Summit, which included calls for AI to be developed safely and the risks to be mitigated. The United Kingdom and the United States didn't sign the declaration. I suppose the fact that the UK didn't, came as a surprise to many, given the initial summit that happened in the UK. It appears that both on this issue and data, the new British government seems less concerned about risks and protecting privacy and protecting data rights than the previous Tory government.

India and EU are resuming crucial trade discussions, where AI and chips are expected to feature. From your vantage point in Brussels, what potential areas of collaboration do you see between EU and India on AI — in terms of technology, regulations, and people?

India and Europe seem to share values around openness, and respect for individual rights. There is clearly a huge capacity for trade and also for data sharing, etc. because nobody, I think, sees India as a threat to European values. Equally, I think the degree of hostility that's developed between Europe and China is deeply unhelpful. Just because you don't agree with somebody, doesn't necessarily make them your enemy. And that seems to be an approach which has grown in Europe, one I don't understand and one that worries me, if I'm to be critical on the European side.

But the way India has maintained its own course, sort of a middle course in the world, is something that I find laudable and very admirable. And I think that is clearly paying dividends now, along with, of course, the huge amount of economic progress the state is making, particularly, and the human capital that the country undoubtedly offers.

More specifically, do you see a possibility of movement of skilled Indians to Europe to work on AI and other cutting edge technologies?

Obviously migration is a very hot topic in Europe at the moment. I think a lot of young graduates leaving a country to work elsewhere is on the face of it a bad news story, but it doesn't have to be if you can attract them back, though I suppose that is a challenge. It's a challenge for Ireland, it's a challenge for India, it's a challenge for every country. Data transfers from Europe to other jurisdictions is always tricky given the GDPR and its adequacy requirements. The EU and the US have not been able to agree on a system that works so far. Why would it be any easier for India?

In the cases which challenged the adequacy agreements with the US, the court looked very much at what would happen, what was the legal regime there, and I suppose in the absence of legislation that becomes more difficult but that's a sovereign matter. The Court of Justice of the European Union has looked in detail and has displayed caution with regard to data transfer agreements. One would expect them to adopt a similar approach if reviewing any future agreements.

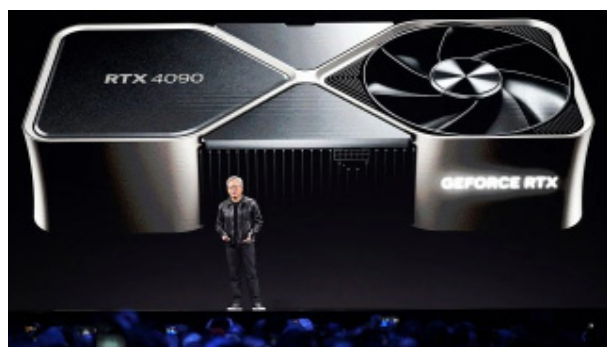
Nvidia's Q4 result: Blackwell chips propel record growth of nearly 80% amid AI boom

Nvidia Q4 Earnings Report: Nvidia, the California-based technology giant, reported a significant surge in fourth-quarter profit and sales on Wednesday, driven by soaring demand for its new Blackwell chips, which are at the heart of the latest artificial intelligence (AI) systems. The company's earnings sent its stock higher in after-hours trading, underscoring Nvidia's continued dominance in the AI hardware space. For the three months ending January 26, Nvidia posted revenue of \$39.3 billion, a 12 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a remarkable 78 per cent jump from the same period a year earlier. Adjusted for one-time items, the company earned 89 cents per share, exceeding Wall Street expectations. Analysts surveyed by FactSet had forecast adjusted earnings of 85 cents per share on \$38.1 billion in revenue.

In a statement accompanying the earnings release, Nvidia's founder and CEO Jensen Huang highlighted the unprecedented demand for the company's Blackwell architecture, which powers many of the world's most advanced AI models. "Demand for Blackwell is amazing as reasoning AI adds another scaling law — increasing compute for training makes models smarter and increasing compute for long thinking makes the answer smarter," Huang said. Huang also noted that Nvidia has rapidly scaled up production of its Blackwell AI supercomputers, achieving billions of dollars in sales in the architecture's first full quarter on the market. "AI is advancing at light speed as agentic AI and physical AI set the stage for the next wave of AI to revolutionize the largest industries," Huang added.

Nvidia's fourth-quarter earnings not only beat market expectations but also shattered previous records for the company. Net income for the quarter came in at \$22.06 billion, comfortably surpassing analysts' predictions of \$19.57 billion. Data centre sales, which are a core part of Nvidia's business, accounted for much of the growth, with revenue in this segment soaring 93 per cent year-over-year to \$35.6 billion. As Nvidia continues to ride the wave of AI demand, the company is projecting continued growth in the coming year. For the first quarter of fiscal 2026, Nvidia is forecasting revenue of approximately \$43 billion, suggesting that its AI-driven momentum shows no sign of slowing down.

Nvidia's dominant position in the data centre market coincides with broader developments in the AI infrastructure landscape. US President Donald Trump has recently promoted a \$500 billion joint venture involving OpenAI, Oracle, and SoftBank, which aims to build infrastructure tied to AI advancements. Dubbed the Stargate project, the initiative is set to create data centres and energy generation systems critical to the future development of AI technologies. Nvidia, with its pivotal role in AI hardware, is a key partner in the venture. A screen displays financial news



about Nvidia on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange on Wednesday. A screen displays financial news about Nvidia on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange. During an earnings call with investors, Nvidia Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress noted that Blackwell's early success exceeded even the company's optimistic forecasts. "We delivered \$11 billion of Blackwell architecture revenue in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2025, the fastest product ramp in our company's history," Kress was quoted as saying by news agency Associated Press. Kress highlighted that demand for Blackwell has been particularly strong among large cloud service providers, which represented about half of the company's data centre revenue during the quarter. Nvidia's technology is increasingly essential for the computational power needed to train and run advanced AI models. Nvidia's rapid ascent in the AI industry has been nothing short of extraordinary. The company is now valued at over \$3 trillion, making it the second-largest firm on Wall Street, trailing only Apple. Just two years ago, Nvidia's market value was below \$600 billion, a testament to the explosive growth driven by AI. The company's stock performance has also played a crucial role in lifting major indexes like the S&P 500, which has recently reached record highs, bolstered in part by Nvidia's outsized gains. Nvidia's latest earnings report comes at a time of intensifying global competition in the AI space. Recently, Chinese company DeepSeek made headlines by announcing that it had developed a large language model (LLM) capable of rivaling US-based ChatGPT and other leading AI systems. What makes DeepSeek's achievement notable is its reported efficiency in using Nvidia's own chips to train the model on vast amounts of data. The news briefly rattled investors, wiping \$595 billion off Nvidia's market value before the stock rebounded. However, Nvidia issued a statement applauding DeepSeek's achievement, calling it "an excellent AI advancement" that uses "widely-available models and compute that is fully export control compliant." Huang expressed confidence in Nvidia's future, noting that the company is at the centre of what he described as the "next wave" of AI innovations.

'I am taking immunotherapies': Hina Khan shares cancer treatment update, revealing that her chemotherapy is over



The actor, who was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer in 2024, spoke to a reporter after attending the Big Impact Awards. This video was posted on paparazzo Viral Bhayani's Instagram page. Known for her resilience and positive outlook, she clarified that while chemotherapy and surgery are behind her, her journey isn't over yet. When asked about her last chemo session, she responded, "Not last chemo. My chemos are over, my surgery is also over, I am on other treatment right now. I am taking my immunotherapies, and everything is going good." Khan highlights an important aspect of cancer recovery — treatment doesn't always end with chemotherapy or surgery. Many patients undergo extended care, including immunotherapy and other targeted treatments, to prevent recurrence and strengthen the immune system. As medical advancements offer new options for post-cancer care, it raises questions about what patients can expect after completing primary treatment and how these therapies contribute to long-term recovery.

How does immunotherapy work, and how does it differ from chemotherapy?

Immunotherapy empowers the body's own immune system to recognize and attack cancer cells. "Unlike chemotherapy, which directly targets rapidly dividing cells — including both cancerous and healthy ones — immunotherapy works by enhancing the immune system's natural ability to detect cancer-specific markers," explains Dr

Srinath, senior oncologist and founder at Asha Hospitals and Research Centre. It may block inhibitory pathways like PD-1/PD-L1, which cancer cells use to evade immune detection, or stimulate immune cells for a stronger response. While chemotherapy often causes side effects such as hair loss, nausea, and bone marrow suppression due to its broad action on dividing cells, immunotherapy's side effects are immune-related, including skin rashes, colitis, or thyroid dysfunction. "The effectiveness of immunotherapy varies depending on the type of cancer and the individual's biological makeup, but it generally offers a more targeted approach with a different profile of risks and benefits compared to chemotherapy," Dr Srinath adds.

Key lifestyle changes and precautions after chemotherapy and surgery

After chemotherapy and surgery, a comprehensive recovery plan is crucial. "It is essential to adopt a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains to support healing and restore energy levels," says Dr Srinath. Regular, moderate physical activity — adjusted to one's capacity — can improve cardiovascular health, reduce fatigue, and enhance well-being. "Adequate rest, stress management techniques such as meditation or yoga, and maintaining a consistent sleep schedule are also critical during recovery," he advises. Patients should follow medical guidance closely, attending regular check-ups and avoiding infections through good hygiene and gradual activity re-introduction to ensure a smoother recovery. Post-treatment monitoring is essential. "Patients should follow a structured schedule of regular check-ups, including blood tests, imaging studies, and physical examinations, which help in the early detection of any recurrence," says Dr Srinath. Lifestyle choices play a significant role in reducing recurrence risk — maintaining a nutritious diet, engaging in regular exercise, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol, and managing stress effectively are key factors. "Being vigilant about any new symptoms and promptly consulting healthcare providers is crucial for timely intervention," he adds. Some patients may also benefit from support groups or counseling, which offer emotional support and practical advice for managing long-term health after cancer treatment.

Maha Kumbh 2025: When and where is the next Kumbh mela likely to be held?

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 took place in Prayagraj, marking a rare spiritual event held every 144 years. Discover the history, dates, and upcoming Kumbh Mela schedules for Nashik, Ujjain, Haridwar, and Prayagraj. The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 took place in Prayagraj, marking a rare spiritual event held every 144 years. Discover the history, dates, and upcoming Kumbh Mela schedules for Nashik, Ujjain, Haridwar, and Prayagraj.

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, one of Hinduism's most sacred gatherings, concluded yesterday at Prayagraj (Allahabad), where millions of pilgrims converged at the holy Sangam—the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers. This grand spiritual festival follows the ancient Hindu tradition of Kumbh Melas, which occur in a 12-year cycle at four sacred locations across India: Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik, and Ujjain.

When is the next Maha Kumbh Mela?

According to Acharya Lalmani Panday, head priest of Panipat's Devi Mandir, believed to have been built by the Pandavas during the Mahabharata era, the Maha Kumbh Mela is a once-in-a-lifetime event, occurring approximately every 144 years. The Hindu Panchang (astrological calendar) has predicted that the next Maha Kumbh will take place after 144 years in 2169, although future planetary alignments could shift this estimation, Acharya Panday said. The Kumbh Mela's timing is dictated by celestial alignments—specifically, the positioning of Jupiter, the Sun, and the Moon. It is believed that during this period, the waters at these sacred locations are imbued with divine nectar (Amrit), offering



devotees an opportunity to wash away their sins and attain moksha (liberation).

People take a holy dip at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela. People take a holy dip at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh Mela. The Kumbh Mela tradition follows a structured cycle. The Purn Kumbh Mela, held at Prayagraj, is the largest and most significant Kumbh, which occurs every 12 years. The next Purn Kumbh will take place in 2036. The next Maha Kumbh Mela, which takes place every 144 years, will be in 2169. This is the rarest and most sacred of all, with the last one before 2025 held in 1881 at Prayagraj. Upcoming Kumbh Mela locations and dates: For those planning their pilgrimages, here are the upcoming Ardh Kumbh Melas scheduled in the next decade, according to Acharya Panday:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi eats makhana at least 300 days a year, here's how it may affect the body

Following the government's plan to set up a Makhana Board, as announced in Budget 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently disclosed that he loves makhana or foxnuts so much so that he has them "at least 300 out of 365 days". Calling for the production of this traditional crop of Bihar on a global scale, Modi said at a rally in Bhagalpur, "Now, makhana has become a staple part of breakfast in cities across the country. Speaking personally, I eat makhana at least 300 out of 365 days a year. It is a superfood that we must now take to global markets. That's why, in this year's budget, the government has announced the formation of a Makhana Board for the benefit of makhana farmers." Taking a cue from his revelation, let's understand what happens when you have makhana almost every day of the year. Bhavya Munjal, certified nutritionist and dietitian and founder of Bfitworld, said that consuming makhana daily for 300 days a year can have significant effects on the body—both positive and negative—depending on the quantity consumed, preparation method, and overall dietary balance. Heart health and cholesterol regulation: Makhana is rich in flavonoids (like kaempferol) and polyphenols, which have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It reduces bad cholesterol (LDL) and improves good cholesterol (HDL), thereby promoting heart health. "Regular intake may reduce the risk of atherosclerosis and hypertension," said Munjal. Weight management

Low-calorie, high-fibre content helps in satiety and reduces frequent hunger pangs. It supports metabolism boost, helping in weight loss. "It prevents overeating and unhealthy snacking," said Munjal. Low glycemic index (GI) helps in regulating blood sugar levels. "Contains complex carbohydrates, ensuring slow glucose release into the bloodstream," said Munjal. With India becoming the diabetes capital of the world, it's good to be aware of low glycemic foods like makhana, which one can have to keep glucose levels in check and manage sugar spikes effectively, urged Kanika Malhotra, weight loss expert and nutritionist, Health Astronomy. Additionally, makhana is rich in magnesium, which is a perfect mineral known to combat stress levels. It also promotes better sleep, a much-needed remedy in today's fast-paced world, added Malhotra. Improves digestive health: High fibre aids in smooth bowel movement and prevents constipation. "It helps in maintaining a healthy gut microbiome," said Munjal.



Strengthens joints and bone health: Rich in calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus, which strengthen bones and joints. "It is beneficial for elderly individuals prone to osteoporosis," said Munjal. Antioxidants (flavonoids and kaempferol) reduce free radical damage, leading to youthful skin. "It prevents wrinkles, pigmentation, and early signs of ageing," shared Munjal. It contains thiamine (Vitamin B1), supporting cognitive functions and memory. It reduces stress and anxiety, enhancing mental clarity. Natural detoxifying properties help in flushing out toxins. "Reduces the risk of fatty liver disease and kidney stones," said Munjal. Makhana: Do you have makhana everyday?

What to be mindful about?

According to Munjal, excessive fibre intake can lead to bloating, gas, and constipation. While beneficial for diabetics, consuming too much makhana can lead to low blood sugar levels (hypoglycemia), stressed Munjal. When roasted in ghee or butter, calorie count increases significantly, leading to weight gain. "Eating in large quantities without portion control can backfire on weight loss goals," said Munjal. Munjal cautioned that some individuals may have nut allergies that cause rashes, itching, or breathing issues. High potassium levels can be harmful to kidney patients or those with heart conditions. Makhana contains phytic acid, which may interfere with iron absorption, leading to mild anemia if not balanced with iron-rich foods. Like all good things, moderation is key, emphasised Dr. Koral Malik, head — dietician, Asian Hospital, Faridabad. "Most health experts believe that eating more than a "handful" (about 30 grams) of makhana (fox nuts) a day is "too much," since excessive consumption can lead to nutrition imbalance and digestive discomfort," urged Malik.

Salman Khan promises mass popularity can make him a 'neta' sans any qualification.



In the last few years, Salman has appeared in many cameo roles in films like Pathaan, Singham Again and Baby John. Salman Khan was last seen in a leading role in 2023's Tiger 3. While the film did reasonably well, it did not yield the kind of box office collections that one expects out of a Bhai film. Since Pathaan and Jawan got impressive box office results in the same year, Tiger 3's mediocre performance got highlighted even more. Earlier in 2023, Salman was seen in Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan and even that film did not get the expected results.

Salman's last big solo release happened before the pandemic in 2019, Dabangg 3. The film struggled to reach the Rs 150 crore mark, which, for a Salman release, was a concerning sign. Prior to that, his film Bharat, managed to collect around Rs 210 crore during its run but since Rs 180 crore out of that were made in the first week, it was evident that Bharat also did not make a mark with the star's fans. The last big hit from Salman was 2017's Tiger Zinda Hai, which made around Rs 340 crore at the box office. sikandar posters, sikandar teaser, sikandar, salman khan, sikandar salman khan look, sikandar first look Salman Khan in AR Murugadoss' Sikandar. sikandar posters, sikandar teaser, sikandar, salman khan, sikandar salman khan look, sikandar first look Salman Khan-starrer Sikandar releases on Eid 2025. Going by the performance of his last few films, it appears that Salman is in desperate need for a hit. While a few flops won't take anything away from his stardom but more mediocre films won't add anything to his legend as well.

Sikandar teaser: Salman Khan-starrer Sikandar dropped its teaser on Thursday. The 80-second teaser of the film introduces Salman's character as a saviour named Sanjay, who was lovingly called Sikandar by his grandmother. Salman appears to be the kind of hero who is saving the people from injustice but the only way he does it in this teaser is via violence. Salman is just throwing everyone who lands in his reach in the air as he mouths 'paivasaasool' dialogues. The plot of the film isn't evident here but we get to see a glimpse of his on-screen love interest, played by Rashmika Mandanna. There are some dance numbers here as well but the teaser only shows a glimpse of these. Sikandar has been directed by AR Murugadoss.

Who was Betsy Arakawa, wife of Gene Hackman, found dead along with Oscar winner



Academy Award-winning actor Gene Hackman, 95, was found dead along with his wife of 34 years, Betsy Arakawa, 63, at their New Mexico home on Wednesday. Early reports suggested there was no immediate indication of foul play, but the official cause of deaths haven't been revealed.

Who was Betsy Arakawa?

Betsy Arakawa, a classical pianist, married Gene Hackman in 1991, after dating since the 80s. Born in Hawaii, Arakawa met Hackman in a gym in California where she was working part-time even as she was trying to make a career out of her classical music training. Hackman, who retired from his cinema career in the mid 2000s, remained out of the public eye for a few years now, and Arakawa too kept a rather low profile. Gene Hackman was previously married to Faye Maltese for 30 years from 1956 to 1986 before starting a marital life with Betsy Arakawa in 1991. Notably, the legendary actor clarified that he didn't abandon Maltese for Arakawa, and it was just a couple drifting apart. Arakawa was the stepmother to Hackman's three kids: son Christopher Allen and daughters Leslie Anne and Elizabeth Jean, whom he shared with Faye. Although Betsy Arakawa stayed away from the spotlight for as much as possible, she was an integral part of Gene Hackman's tran-

sition from acting to a life without being in front of the camera. After retiring from acting, Hackman wrote three historical fiction novels along with undersea archaeologist Daniel Lenihan. He also wrote two novels on his own, and Arakawa was known to be very objective about his work. While their life together was marked by a measured silence, and more than an arm's length from the prying eyes of mainstream and social media, it is ironic that their lives would be primetime news for a few days, because of the circumstances surrounding their deaths.

Vijay's political speech at TVK's first anniversary celebrations reconfirms Jananayagan is his swansong



In February 2024, actor-politician Vijay revealed something that was doing the speculation rounds. In a statement announcing the launch of his political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, Vijay also shared that he was bidding adieu to his three-decade-old acting career. Many expressed their sadness about this decision, many others were jubilant about the launch of the political outfit, and there were the others who believed it could just be a temporary decision, and not a permanent move. However, time and again, Vijay and his team have confirmed that his upcoming film, Jananayagan, directed by H Vinoth, will be his last film. The film, which is backed by KVN Productions, features a bevy of stars like Pooja Hegde, Bobby Deol, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Prakash Raj, Priyamani, and Mamitha Baiju.

Even as voices grew louder about Vijay's exit from cinema being a temporary one, the actor's recent speech at the first anniversary celebrations of the launch of TVK has made things a lot more clearer on the front. With him not mincing words about his political and ideological opponents in the form of the ruling Tamil Nadu state government and the Union government of India, it is clear that Jananayagan will indeed be his last film. In the speech, Vijay reiterated his understanding that politics is indeed serious business, and he was entering this avenue knowing the groundwork required to have a strong political base, and is working towards the same.

Many netizens, who have enjoyed his career as an actor, shared that the writing on the wall was clear, and Jananayagan would be the last time they see their matinee idol on the big screen. Tamil cinema has seen its share of superstars becoming political bigwigs, and even chief min-

isters of the state, including the likes of late CMs MG Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa. Other actors who became important political leaders of the state include Kamal Haasan, Sarath Kumar, Napoleon, Khusbu Sundar, and Karthik. Incidentally, none of these actors called it quits on their acting careers while taking the political plunge. This is what makes the case of Vijay all the more interesting because he is following in the footsteps of MGR, who started his party in 1972, and won the first-ever elections the party contested in 1977, and became the chief minister. Nevertheless, it is interesting times ahead for not just Vijay and TVK, but for the scores of fans who are now expected to convert themselves into the political cadre of the party, and invariably, the vote bank for his political aspirations.

Saqib Saleem says stereotyping still happens: 'You have to be patient as an actor'



Actor Saqib Saleem has demonstrated his versatility through a diverse range of roles since his debut in 2011. However, he believes that the film industry and audiences often typecast actors based on a single role. In an interview with SCREEN, Saqib spoke about typecasting in the industry, his ZEE5 show Crime Beat, and navigating social media pressure.

Talking about typecasting and how OTT has gradually shifted perceptions, Saqib said, "I am a greedy actor and I want to do all kinds of parts. I don't want to stick to one genre. I have always tried to do different things and I want

to continue doing that. My goal is to do exciting work. I won't say that the stereotyping has stopped happening, but with the advent of OTT, the perspective has changed a little." "Now, to imagine different actors in different parts has become slightly easier than before. But still, stereotyping happens. If you have played a part, people start thinking of you in a particular way. As an actor, you need to be patient," the actor added. When asked about his growing presence in the OTT space with projects like Kakuda, Citadel: Honey Bunny, and more, Saqib Saleem replied, "People like good stories. If we can entertain and engage them, they are ready to watch any story. Because of the format of OTT, it allows you so much more time to get into the character study and subplots of the story. When you are doing a two-hour film, you are restricted. With OTT, you can push that envelope and dive deep into the background. There is more meat to chew!" Saqib is currently basking in the success of his ZEE5 show Crime Beat. Talking about what attracted him to the series, he said, "Sudhir Mishra was on my checklist of directors and that dream got fulfilled through this show. I had already read the book earlier. The story made me say yes to it. It was something that I haven't done before. It was an unconventional role of a journalist indulging in a lot of action. That's what really interested me in the part." Saqib Saleem also opened up about dealing with social media pressure and the importance of detachment. "

Gajraj Rao recalls being conned by 'uneducated, insecure' people in film industry: 'They would hire me for two days, pay me for one'



Actor Gajraj Rao admitted that when he was a youngster, he was taken advantage of by people in the film industry. He said that the biggest culprits were executives and assistants, and the scams normally involved underpaying or disrespecting him. He said that he learned his lessons, and decided to forgive wrongdoers, especially if he was sure that he hadn't made a mistake or stepped out of line himself. Gajraj rose to fame after a starring role in the film Badhaai Ho, although he broke out with a supporting role in Bandit Queen decades earlier. In an interview with Maniesh Paul, the veteran actor said, "In a crowd, the people who misbehave often don't know why they're misbehaving. And who are the sort of people who are likely to be disrespectful? It's the ones who are uneducated. They're the insecure ones, or the ones who aren't confident about their skills, or the ones who lack knowledge. Often, it was the production assistants who would be rude, or other such executives."

He said that differences would usually come up when people failed to honour commitments. "They would promise you a certain amount, but shortchange you. Long ago, I was doing an ad film where it was decided that I would be paid Rs 20,000 per day for two days' work. After the first day, they handed me a cheque for Rs 20,000 and told me that I wouldn't be required any longer. I mentioned that I had been contracted for two days, but they told me that they'd wrapped my portions in one. They don't understand that I had turned down another job to do this one," he said.

Gajraj Rao is an acclaimed actor, who rose to fame after struggling for decades. Asked if he became frustrated by the struggle, he said in a recent interview with Indian Express, No, I was never disappointed, discouraged, or disheartened about not getting author-backed roles. I did not daydream or fantasise about overnight glory either. I firmly believe in the old Sanskrit saying: Karmanyevadhikaraste, ma phaleshu kadachana—focus on your actions without worrying about the results. I approached every small role that came my way with complete dedication while keeping myself engaged in directing ad films. Life can become bleak if we dwell on what we don't have instead of celebrating what we do. My mantra has always been to celebrate what you have while working hard for more, side by side." Appearing on Varun Duggi's podcast, the actor said that he refuses to reduce his fees now, because his success has come at a cost. He said, "The casting director told me to reduce my fees, said it's only 20 days work. I told him I wasn't even charging for those 20 days, I was working for free. I told him that I was charging for all the years of 'homework' that I'd done to get here. This was my fees for all those days when I survived on 20 chais, slept hungry, listened to abuse, I used to walk on foot from Town to Andheri... These 20 days are free."

Superboys of Malegaon movie review: Filmi flourishes of Adarsh Gourav, Vineet Singh movie land it uneasily between fact and fiction



Superboys of Malegaon is inspired by Faiza Ahmad Khan's terrific 2008 documentary 'Supermen of Malegaon', on a subset of residents of Malegaon who had become famous for turning their home-grown spoofs of Bollywood blockbusters into a profitable cottage industry. The filmmakers give credit to the original at the end of their film, which in essence, is a feature film with many elements borrowed from the documentary, which in turn was based on the remarkable enterprise on display in a small Maharashtra town afflicted by communal tensions and poverty, and about the power of dreaming.

Being twice removed from the source creates its own tensions: if that credit slate had been placed at the opening of the film, we would have known the context, and that nagging question—why this film—would have been answered. For those who haven't seen the documentary which actually managed a theatrical release in 2012 (during the sadly short-lived era when there seemed to be hope that releasing non-fiction films would be successful), Reema Kagti's feature introduces us to a group of young men in Malegaon who are mad about movies.

That is in itself a familiar film subset: what sets this bunch apart is that they are able to parlay their avid viewing of Hollywood classics by Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton — we watch them watching an iconic scene from 'The General' — and popular Hindi movies, into the actual making of films, featuring their own people, using their own spots as locations. Malegaon, or at least the largely-Muslim section of Malegaon from which the 'actors' and 'technicians' are drawn, turn up in droves, and help those films earn enough money for 'producer-director' wedding videographer Nasir Shaikh (Adarsh Gourav), and his collaborators, writer Farogh (Vineet Singh), faithful pal-turned-actor Shafique (Shashank Arora), to make more movies. They are supported by a cast, clad mostly in wide collars and flared trousers, which makes no bones about their desire to become stars via a mix of Amitabh's delivery, Mithun's hair-cut, and their local patois. You may be reminded of a few Excel films

in this movie on the making-of-movies and their intrepid makers — Farhan Akhtar's 'Dil Chahta Hai' in which best friends part and regroup, Zoya Akhtar's 'Luck By Chance' on the hardships that confront outsiders, Kagti's own 'Gold' which champions underdogs. There's a Bollywood flavour to the whole thing, which draws attention to itself in both sanitised situations and constructed dialogues: a doctor referencing 'Anand' in his diagnosis of cancer, an idealistic writer declaring 'writer sab ka baap hota hai' — the first could make you smile if it weren't such a self-conscious hark-back, speaking to how even regular people harbour dreams of acting; the second is both meta-and-ironical ('metaronical' could well be a word), as the writer of Superboys of Malegaon is Varun Grover, who has been vocal about the difficulties writers face in the Mumbai film industry. The film brings Muslim characters back on our radar, breaking away from the tropes of evil terrorists and subservient sidekicks, and giving us those who own the story and drive the narrative: in and of itself, especially in these polarised times, that's important.

The men, played by some of the best actors currently working in Bollywood, play their parts well enough. So do the women, even with not as much screen-time: Muskaan Jaferi, as Sheikh's loyal wife, leaves an impact; Manjiri Pupala's Basmati in 'Malegaon Ke Sholay', standing in for the original motormouth Basanti, shows a wonderful understanding of what's real — her sitting on a bench, waiting for a bus to Nashik — and what's not — her as that 'heroine' on the big screen. Now's that a line you can take home. Those moments, including one of which is owned by Shashank Arora's fragile superhero who wants to fly, move you. You wish there were more of these in this fresh iteration of Malegaon's once-were-supermen chapter whose filmi flourishes place it uneasily between fact and fiction. Superboys of Malegaon movie cast: Adarsh Gourav, Vineet Singh, Shashank Arora, Gyanendra Tripathi, Anuj Duhan, Saqib Ayub, Pallav Singh, Manjiri Pupala, Muskaan Jaferi. Superboys of Malegaon movie director: Reema Kagti. Superboys of Malegaon movie rating: 2.5 stars

Pirates of the Caribbean 6: Will Johnny Depp reprise his iconic role?

Hyderabad: Johnny Depp could be making a return after an eight-year break in playing his role of Captain Jack Sparrow in Pirates of the Caribbean 6. Fans have always wondered when he would make his comeback, and recent hints by Geoffrey Rush, who essayed Captain Barbossa, indicate that negotiations were underway.

Rush, who himself had his own courtroom victory, admitted that he had talked to Pirates of the Caribbean producer Jerry Bruckheimer regarding reviving himself and

Depp. Rush had thought his time as Barbossa was done after his on-screen sacrifice in Dead Men Tell No Tales. But Depp's potential comeback might make a difference. There are reports that Disney had initially planned to make two versions of Pirates 6, one with Depp and one without. But since Depp has won his defamation case against Amber Heard, rumors of his return have grown stronger. Depp was dropped from the franchise in 2018, and then he said he wouldn't come back even for "\$300 million and a million alpacas."

'You think we'll come only to play with Maxwell?' – Afghanistan captain Shahidi miffed ahead of Australia Champions Trophy clash



GNS News Agency, March 3

Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi and his team would have taken a while to recover from the Glenn Maxwell hurricane that wreaked havoc over them at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai during the 2023 ODI World Cup. Chasing 292, Australia were starting at a certain defeat after losing seven wickets with less than 100 on the board, but then, Maxwell played one of the greatest knocks in the history of one-day cricket to steer his side into an unbelievable win, and days later, the Aussies won a record-extending sixth World Cup. Dropped on 33, Maxwell finished unbeaten on 201 after battling cramps and unleashing an extraordinary range of shots. Though the Afghans exacted their revenge with a win that shut Australia's knockout

chances at the T20 World Cup last year, Shahidi was posed the Glenn Maxwell question ahead of a virtual knockout clash between Afghanistan and Australia at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Friday. "You think we will come only to play with Maxwell? Do you think it will be like that? We have planned for entire Australian team, and I know that he (Maxwell) played really well in the 2023 World Cup, but that's part of the history," a miffed Shahidi said at the pre-match press conference on Thursday. "After that, we beat them in T20 World Cup, and we think about all opposition team. We are not coming to the ground to plan on individual players. We will try our best to come with the planning, and we are not playing only Maxwell – we are playing Australia," Shahidi said.

The victory against England sparked wild celebrations in the Afghan capital of Kabul where fireworks were lit and streets were filled with jubilant fans. Should Afghanistan get past Australia, it will pave the way for their second successive entry into the semifinals of an ICC event in less than a year, following their inspiring run in the T20 World Cup in the Americas in 2024. "I think it will be a good game for cricket, and our focus will be to keep things simple and don't worry much about playing semifinal. We will try to do our basics well, and we will try to come to the ground with good planning," Shahidi said. "Afghan people always cheer for us, as you saw (against England) in the ground. There were a lot of our Afghan people. So, their support is always with us, and wherever we go, they support us," Shahidi added.

Kevin Pietersen named Delhi Capitals mentor

GNS News Agency, March 3

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen was named the Delhi Capitals mentor for the IPL 2025 season on Thursday. The 44-year-old Pietersen will be seen in a coaching assignment for the first time in the IPL since last featuring as a player in the league in 2016. "It's an exciting opportunity to step into this new role as a mentor for the Capitals," Pietersen said in a DC press release. "And I'm really looking forward to joining the squad, working closely with the boys, and doing everything I can to help us win that ultimate prize." Pietersen played for three IPL teams across five seasons from 2009, including Delhi (then Daredevils). He also led in 17 matches in the IPL. After leading Royal Challengers Bengaluru briefly in IPL 2009, Pietersen captained Daredevils in 2014 when they finished at the bottom of the league table with only two wins. "I'm so excited to come home to Delhi! I have the fondest memories of my time with Delhi.

"I've got incredible memories of representing the Delhi franchise in the IPL, and I've been able to maintain that passion for the team even as a broadcaster over the years. I shared the field with Venu (Venugopal Rao) during the 2012 season, and it's great to be reconnecting with him as we begin a new chapter at this amazing franchise." In a T20 career spanning 200 matches, Pietersen scored 5695 runs at an average of 33.89 and strike rate just below 137.



Pietersen will join Hemang Badani (head coach), Matthew Mott (assistant coach), Munaf Patel (bowling coach) and Venugopal Rao (director of cricket) in the Delhi support staff. DC finished sixth in IPL 2024 and have only reached the final once in 2020 where they lost to the Mumbai Indians. Heading into the IPL 2025 auction with the biggest purse after retaining only Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Tristan Stubbs and Abhishek Porel, Delhi snapped up big signings in KL Rahul, Harry Brook, Faf du Plessis and Mitchell Starc. The team has yet to announce a captain ahead of the IPL season, due to begin on March 22. Delhi play their first league game against Lucknow Super Giants on March 24 in Vizag.

Afghanistan vs Australia, Champions Trophy 2025: Squad, Weather, Pitch Report, Playing XIs Prediction



GNS News Agency, March 3

AUS vs AFG Champions Trophy 2025 Match Schedule, Live Streaming, Date, Head to Head, Playing XI Prediction, Pitch Report, Weather: World champions Australia will square off against a determined Afghanistan outfit in a do-or-die contest in the Champions Trophy. While the Aussies salvaged a point from a washout against South Africa after beating England, Afghanistan bounced back with a resilient eight-run win over the Englishmen, recovering from their heavy defeat against the Proteas. With only a point separating both Australia and Afghanistan, the winner of the contest is ensured of a spot in the semi-finals while the loser could find themselves hanging on the result of South Africa's last game.

Australia will be buoyed by how they have fared under Steve Smith's leadership in the absence of senior quicks,

with Josh Inglis's maiden ODI century setting up a huge chase and victory over England. Meanwhile, they will be wary of the Afghan spin attack that could pose a few problems in Lahore.

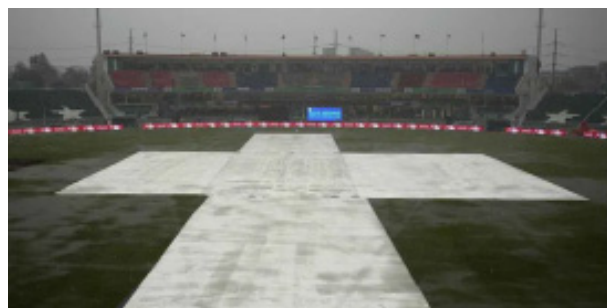
When and where is the AFG vs AUS clash happening?

The AFG vs AUS match will happen on Friday at 2.30 pm with the toss at 2 pm (IST). The match will be played at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The match will be broadcast on TV on Star Sports and Sports 18 channels. You can also livestream the ENG vs AFG match on JioHotstar. Afghanistan: Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Ikram Alikhil, Gulbadin Naib, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Nangyal Kharoti, Noor Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Farid Malik, Naveed Zadran. Reserves: Darwish Rasooli, Bilal Sami. Australia: Matthew Short, Travis Head, Steven Smith (c), Marnus Labuschagne, Josh Inglis (w), Alex Carey, Glenn Maxwell, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Adam Zampa, Spencer Johnson, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Sean Abbott, Tanveer Sangha. Australia predicted XI: Matthew Short, Travis Head, Steven Smith (c), Marnus Labuschagne, Josh Inglis (wk), Alex Carey, Glenn Maxwell, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Adam Zampa, Spencer Johnson. Afghanistan predicted XI: Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Azmatullah Omarzai, Gulbadin Naib, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Noor Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi.

Rain washes out host Pakistan's last Champions Trophy match against Bangladesh

GNS News Agency, March 3

Rawalpindi: Rain forced the abandonment of the Pakistan-Bangladesh game in the Champions Trophy on Thursday. The square remained under covers all day due to persistent rain and the umpires finally called off the game at 3:30 p.m. local time, 1 1/2 hours after its scheduled start. Both teams were already eliminated from semifinals contention after losing to India and New Zealand, and the rainout was a disappointing last tournament appearance for both, especially Pakistan, the host and defending champion. Rain in Rawalpindi also washed out the South Africa-Australia Group B game on Tuesday. New Zealand, which beat Pakistan by 60 runs in the opening match, sealed its playoff spot with a five-wicket win over Bangladesh last Monday at Rawalpindi, which was awarded three Champions Trophy matches. India beat Bangladesh and Pakistan in Dubai to qualify for the semifinal. It's the third successive ICC tournament in which Pakistan didn't go beyond the first



round following the 50-over World Cup in 2023, and the T20 World Cup last year. "It's been shocking for us that we haven't play well in ICC tournaments," Pakistan assistant coach Azhar Mahmood said. Mahmood believed injuries to opening batter Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub affected the team as the batters played 308 dot balls in the completed games against India and New Zealand.

'Never looked at Jos Buttler and thought 'wow what a leader' – Nasser Hussain reckons England captain's time is up



GNS News Agency, March 3

Former England captains Nasser Hussain and Michael Atherton slammed Jos Buttler's leadership after the team's stunning Champions Trophy 2025 exit on Wednesday, following their eight-run defeat to Afghanistan in Lahore. England's string of defeats extended to seven straight matches since the India tour under Buttler's leadership, with the captain himself struggling to contribute with the bat, scoring 23 and 38 in two games against Australia and Afghanistan. In a post-match chat with Atherton, Buttler conceded that he will take time to reflect on his position after heading back home. Meanwhile, Atherton and Hussain remarked that the captaincy tag

never really suited Buttler, who took over from Eoin Morgan in mid-2022.

"I think his time is done as captain," Atherton said on Sky Sports. "I think that's probably right. England do judge themselves on these ICC events, they've made that very clear, that because they come along so frequently now, they build towards these tournaments. But England have had three bad ones in a row now, the disastrous 50-over World Cup in India, a poor T20 World Cup in the Caribbean – where they made the semis but they didn't beat anybody of note through it – and now here, and their cricket is way below the standards which they set themselves. "Sometimes you just have to say it's not working and therefore it's time for a change and time for somebody else, and I think deep down, he probably knows that," Atherton added. Meanwhile, Hussain said that Buttler could not command a persona like Morgan on the field while leading the side. "I've never looked at Buttler and thought 'wow what a leader,' he doesn't have that presence in the field that an Eoin Morgan had," Hussain said. "That's a bad comparison because you're talking about England's greatest-ever white-ball captain, and he was a hard act to follow. "As far as captaincy goes, I don't think Buttler has added that much to this England team, but it's taken away from his batting. And when you add the two together, take away from a great player and you're not gaining with leadership and captaincy, I think it's probably time to move on."

'Am I part of the problem or solution': Jos Buttler on England captaincy future after Champions Trophy exit

GNS News Agency, March 3

Wednesday's Champions Trophy defeat marked England's seventh successive loss under Jos Buttler's captaincy. Wednesday's Champions Trophy defeat marked England's seventh successive loss under Jos Buttler's captaincy. England's eight-run defeat to Afghanistan in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 encounter at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Wednesday has unsettled the former world champions' set-up, with skipper Jos Buttler contemplating his future in the role after another group-stage exit.

In a do-or-die contest, England came up eight runs short as Afghanistan put on an inspired performance to pile on 325 runs on the back of opener Ibrahim Zadran's 177 and held their nerves to see off the 2019 World Cup winners. The defeat marked England's seventh successive loss under Buttler's captaincy starting from last month's tour to India. After being blanked 3-0 in the ODIs in India, England's Champions Trophy got off on a wry note after they failed to defend another 300-plus score against a depleted Australia. The Champions Trophy is the third ICC tournament in as many years where Buttler and Co. have failed to reach the knockouts. While the England captain admitted that he would not take any hasty decisions, Buttler said it might be the right time for introspection. "Yeah, I think the results aren't where they need to be and I need to consider all possibilities. And like I said we need to get us as a team back to where England cricket needs to be in the white ball formats. And I think I've got to work out personally am I part of the problem or am I part of the solution?" "As I said, I'm not going to make any emotional decisions right here, right now. You're probably not the first people I'd discuss that



with. And take a little bit of time to just work out personally what I think is right. And obviously, the guys at the top are in charge and they will have their views as well – so as I said, we need to get the team back to where it needs to be – competing to win these tournaments and as I said I've got to work out – am I part of the solution or not?" Buttler added. With only a solitary hundred to his name in his last 58 white-ball games for England, Buttler was asked whether the leadership tag was taking a toll. "It's had its moments for sure. I know lots of people think it doesn't sit well with me being captain and that kind of thing but I really do enjoy it. I enjoy leading. Even before when I wasn't captain I'd like to think of myself as a leader in the team. But, results are tough and they weigh heavy at times. And, of course, you want to be leading a winning team and we haven't been that for a while now so obviously that brings some difficult moments," said Buttler.

How Joe Root's ramp shot gave Afghanistan a new lease of life and paved the way for their thrilling win

GNS News Agency, March 3

The winning moment for Afghanistan couldn't have been scripted better in Lahore. Azmatullah Omarzai picked up his fifth wicket to go with his crucial 41. The ball went to Ibrahim Zadran at long off who held onto the catch. He had batted from the start of the Afghanistan innings till the last over earlier in the afternoon for a record-breaking 177 off 146 balls, now the highest individual score in Champions Trophy history as well as for Afghanistan in this format. As Adil Rashid was dismissed, Afghanistan made back-to-back wins against England in ICC ODI events, after having defeated the then-reigning World Champions in the 2023 World Cup in Delhi. Chasing 326 to stay alive in the tournament, England fell short by 8 runs at the Gaddafi Stadium and will be exiting another ICC event early.

As long as Joe Root was in the middle, England hoped. Batting on 99, he tapped the ball through square leg and took off, desperately wanting a second run, more than reaching a ton. As he completed the milestone, he stretched his legs before acknowledging the applause briefly, and without any over-the-top celebrations. He knew England were on the brink of losing if he didn't finish the job there. While his strokeplay continued to be impeccable, it was now down to sheer will. After reducing the equation down once more with a boundary in the 46th over, Root put his head down and ran a double. He was gasping for breath at this point, the body was being pushed to the limits. Could he have maybe, for a conservative option, settled for a single that ball? Jamie Overton was proving to be an able partner at the other end after all.

Omarzai read the situation. The allrounder, who was named 2024's ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year, dug in a short ball, Root arched his overloaded body backward and tried to ramp it over the wicketkeeper's head. But the tired limbs meant he could only glove it to wicketkeeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz. In hindsight, that was the clincher for Afghanistan as Root trudged back to the dressing room – at the slowest walking pace one can imagine – out on 120, out of gas. Omarzai kept picking up the crucial wickets all night. He struck early, Phil Salt removed after only sprinkling the match with a couple of boundaries for taste. With the match entering near even territory in the 37th over, Omarzai got rid of the England captain. Jos Buttler too fell to a delivery that was dug into the pitch and the pull shot was miscued, landing straight into the hands of deep square leg. Then, of course, came Root's wicket. Even after that, Overton kept England on course to sneak past the finish line and Omarzai had him caught at long on. The Adil Rashid wicket was the icing on the cake. All's well that ends well for Afghanistan, but they were off to a rough start. At a venue where Australia chased down more than 350, it was a brave call from Hashmatullah Shahidi to bat first. But he was backing what his side were good at. Chasing hasn't been



England's centurion Joe Root had an opportunity to take the team past the finish line but fell to a short ball that banged into his glove; Afghanistan's 8-run win means England have been eliminated from the Champions Trophy

Afghanistan's strong suit, so he stuck to that. But with Jofra Archer moving the ball back in, Mark Wood shaping it away – both men doing it at red-hot speeds – Afghanistan's top order struggled, losing three wickets in the first 10 overs, all to Archer. But up stepped Zadran and how. In Shahidi, he then found a steady hand as Afghanistan rebuilt their innings. With the run rate ticking over 4.0 at the halfway stage, Zadran played one of the shots of the afternoon as he lofted Overton down the ground for a glorious four. The next over from the right-arm pacer went for 16 runs as Ibrahim hit another straight six, this time a power swat off a short ball, then followed it up with two well-timed fours on the leg side. In their 100-run partnership, the first 50 runs came off 80 balls while the next 50 took just 49. After losing Shahidi, Zadran found another able ally in Omarzai who came out with plenty of intent and didn't let the momentum slip. And when he fell at the start of the last 10, Mohammed Nabi didn't waste time to get going as well. The turning point came when England started leaking runs in the death overs, the chaos of losing Wood to an injury in the 43rd, with two overs of his quota still left didn't help Buttler. Zadran recognised the opening and shifted gears once more, plundering 20 runs off the 44th that was bowled by Archer. Root had to bowl the 47th over and Nabi made the most of that too. "England are falling apart in Lahore," said former captain Mike Atherton on air, prophetically as it turned out. In the last 10 overs, Afghanistan scored 113/2 and when even 280+ looked improbable not long back, Zadran and Co had powered them to a winning total.