

INDIAN CHRONICLE

24 December, 2022|Wednesday | Volume No:10| Issue No: 269 Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

Hyderabad reports decline in fatal road accidents, rise in overall collisions in 2025

Hyderabad: Road safety indicators showed mixed trends in Cyberabad Police Commissionerate in 2025, with fatal road accidents declining but overall accidents and enforcement increasing. Hyderabad city guide

According to the official data, fatal road accidents dropped from 856 in 2024 to 803 in 2025, a reduction of over six per cent. However, non-fatal accidents rose sharply from 2,281 to 2,827, while non-injury accidents increased from 692 to 978, indicating higher traffic density and minor crashes.

No Curtailment of Check Powers for Deputy Sarpanches: Telangana Govt Clarifies

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle) “The Telangana government has clarified that



lition arose that their joint cheque powers had been revoked. However, the government clarified that this change

applies only to the management of central funds under the 15th Finance Commission and is purely a technical and procedural reform aimed at streamlining digital payments and improving transparency. According to the Telangana Panchayat Raj Act, 2018, the Deputy Sarpanch continues to hold joint cheque-signing authority for the utilisation of Gram Panchayat general funds, and these powers remain unchanged.

The official memo issued by the state government pertains exclusively to the receipt and expenditure of 15th Finance Commission grants, which are routed directly from the Centre to Gram Panchayats and require compliance with specific digital platforms and software systems prescribed by the Union government. The government emphasised that online transactions with digital signatures enhance transparency, prevent misuse of funds, and ensure direct fund flow from New Delhi to villages. While the Sarpanch-Secretary combination is designated as the primary authority for central grants, the existing financial powers of Deputy Sarpanches related to local revenues, taxes, and other Panchayat income will continue under the existing system. In light of the rumours, several leaders and Deputy Sarpanches had sought clarification from officials. The government's statement has now confirmed that no decision has been taken to abolish the joint cheque powers of Deputy Sarpanches.

India announces \$450-mn package to help cyclone-hit Lanka rebuild itself

New Delhi Dec 23

India has announced a major relief package worth \$450 million to help Sri Lanka rebuild after the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah, reaffirming its role as the island nation's "first responder" in times of crisis.

In a joint press appearance with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath in Colombo on Tuesday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said he had conveyed a message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, outlining India's commitment to supporting the neighbouring country's reconstruction efforts. "The letter from Prime Minister Modi builds on our first responder role and commits a reconstruction package of \$450 million to Sri Lanka. Our talks centred around how expeditiously this commitment can be delivered," Jaishankar said.

Of the total package, \$350 million will be extended as concessional lines of credit, while \$100 million will be provided as grants. The assistance will target sectors most affected by the cyclone, including restoration of roads, railways and bridges; reconstruction of damaged homes; rehabilitation of health and education infrastructure; support for agriculture; and strengthening of disaster preparedness.

Jaishankar recalled that Operation Sagar Bandhu, India's relief and assistance mission, was launched immediately after Cyclone Ditwah made landfall. Indian Navy ships INS Vikrant and INS Udayagiri were among the first to deliver relief material, while Mi-17 helicopters



of the Indian Air Force and an 80-member NDRF contingent conducted rescue operations across affected areas. The Indian Army also established a field hospital near Kandy, treating over 8,000 people, and set up modular emergency care units.

Highlighting India's continued support, Jaishankar said that Army engineers built a Bailey bridge in Killinochchi, with another under construction in Chilaw, to restore vital connectivity. Operation Sagar Bandhu, he added, delivered over 1,100 tonnes of relief material and 14.5 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies, in addition to 60 tonnes of operational equipment.

Telangana Tightens Financial Discipline No Manual Payments Enforces Digital-Only Fund Flow for Panchayats, Mandal Parishads

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle) “The Telangana Government has issued detailed instructions mandating newly formed Gram Panchayats and Mandal Parishads to open dedicated bank accounts for the utilization of Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) grants and State Matching Grants (SFC).

According to a memo issued by the Office of the Commissioner, Panchayat Raj and Rural Employment, Hyderabad, the guidelines are in line with the directions of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, to ensure transparent and efficient fund management for rural local bodies. The government stated that all Fifteenth Finance Commission grants must be routed strictly through the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and the e-Gram Swaraj portal. Manual payments have been completely prohibited, and all financial transactions must follow a digital workflow. As per the instructions, newly formed Gram Panchayats and Mandal Parishads must pass formal resolutions in Gram Sabha or General Body meetings to open dedicated bank accounts exclusively for Fifteenth Finance Commission grants. These accounts must be opened in the name of the respective Gram Panchayat or Mandal Parishad and mapped with the Local Government Directory (LGD). Registration on the e-Gram Swaraj portal has also been made mandatory to enable fund mapping. The government clarified that each Gram Panchayat or Mandal Parishad must maintain only one dedicated bank account for FFC grants, and funds from other schemes such as MGNREGA or State grants should not be mixed with these accounts. While any scheduled commercial bank is permitted, states may designate a Single Nodal Agency bank for easier tracking. The or-



Telangana Panchayat Raj Department

der further specifies that the accounts will function as Zero Balance Subsidiary Accounts under the fund flow model, with funds retained in the State Nodal Account and drawn only when digital payments are initiated. All vendors, including contractors and suppliers, must be registered on the PFMS portal. Payments will require a two-level digital approval system using Digital Signature Certificates. The Panchayat Secretary or Mandal Parishad Development Officer will act as the "Maker," while the Sarpanch, Special Officer, or Mandal Praja Parishad President will serve as the "Checker/Approver." Similar procedures have also been prescribed for State Matching Grants, with separate resolutions and exclusive bank accounts mandated for their utilization. The government said these measures are aimed at strengthening financial discipline, ensuring transparency, and preventing misuse of public funds in rural local bodies across Telangana.

Telangana govt turns to Central Sponsored Schemes, focus on urban schools

Hyderabad: The cash-strapped Telangana government is now laying more focus on Central Sponsored Schemes (CSS) for implementation of different welfare and development programmes. Instructions have been issued to different departments to make optimum use of funds granted under CSS. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy held a nearly three-hour review meeting with Secretaries of all departments here on Tuesday. Hyderabad city guide During the meeting, he reminded the officials that under CSS the State governments must allot 40 percent funds as their shares and the balance 60 percent would be released by the Union government.

Quality and Skill-Oriented Education Is the Cornerstone of Student Success:Duddilla Sridhar Babu



“ P . S . A S H O K A N “ K A R I M N G A R BUREAU. “ Manthani | Tuesday “ The 29th Annual Day Celebrations and Pre-Christmas Festivities of Mary Mediatrix School, located at Surayyapalli village in Manthani Mandal, were celebrated in a grand and colourful manner, captivating the audience with vibrant and colourful performances presented by the students. “ The programme was graced by the Hon'ble State IT Minister, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, as the Chief Guest. Addressing parents and students, he emphasised that in today's highly competitive global environment, students must acquire quality education enriched with practical skills and competencies. He urged learners to balance academics with sports and co-curricular activities to ensure holistic development and lifelong success. “ The event was further dignified by the presence of distinguished guests Ram Reddy, DCP, and M Ramesh, ACP. They motivated students to set clear goals and pursue them with determination and discipline. They also advised parents to guide their children wisely by limiting excessive exposure to social media and mobile phones,

Uppal MLA Attends Ambedkar Tribute, Calendar Release Programme



“ NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE) “ Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy paid floral tributes to the statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and Bharat Ratna awardee. The event was organised under the aegis of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC), Kushtaguda Depot SC & ST Employees Welfare Association, marking the 8th anniversary of the New Year 2026 calendar release. The calendar was formally unveiled by former corporator Golluri Anjaiah in the presence of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, the association members highlighted that they regularly offer floral tributes to Dr. Ambedkar's statue every Tuesday, observed as part of Ambedkar Jayanti week. The association president, Golluri Anjaiah, expressed gratitude to the members for continuing the tradition and felicitated them during the programme. Members of the TGSRTC All Depot SC & ST Employees Association, ECIL and NFC SC & ST Employees, along with others, participated in the event.

VHP and Bajrang Dal Hold Dharna in Secunderabad Demanding Protection for Bangladesh



“ Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, December 23 “ As part of a nationwide protest the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal organised a padayatra and dharna in Mahankali Jilla (Secunderabad District) on Monday to highlight the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh. The protest was held to draw attention to the increasing attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh where houses and shops are being looted and the lives and dignity of women are under constant threat. The organisers referred to a recent incident on December 18 in which Dipu Chandra Das (25), a Hindu garment factory worker was allegedly lynched by a mob and his body set on fire at Baluka in Mymensingh district. People from all walks of life participated in the programme. The padayatra began at Chikalguda X Road and concluded at Sangeet X Road, where protesters raised slogans demanding protection for Hindus from extremist forces in Bangladesh. The protesters urged the State and Cen-

tral Governments of India to put pressure on the Bangladesh Interim Government to ensure the safety of Hindus bring the culprits to justice, and take strict action against those responsible for the violence.

LOSS OF PASSPORT

I, AGARWAL YASH S/O AGARWAL SANJAY age 23 Years R/O H.No. 4-3-61/8/1 Bhuktapur Hammedpura, Adilabad 504001 Lost my original Passport No. V8188430 Issued on 25-02-2022 during travel on 06-12-2025 from home (Bhuktapur) to old bus stand for taking x-rox copies. If anybody found my said passport, please contact me on 9440125451.

DECLARANT.
AGARWAL YASH
S/O AGARWAL SANJAY

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Testing time for Indian diplomacy

With the civil unrest in Bangladesh, fuelled by political vacuum, anti-Indian sentiments and the rise of radical Islamic forces, spilling across the border, it is a testing time for New Delhi's diplomacy. There is a need to navigate the current turbulence with utmost caution and pragmatism. An already-strained bilateral ties took a further hit after the killing of youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi in Dhaka, a key face of last year's July uprising against Sheikh Hasina that led to her ouster and installation of an interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. The widespread violence that followed appears to be spinning out of control. The lynching of a Hindu worker, Dipu Chandra Das, in Mymensingh has raised serious concerns over the safety of minorities in the country. Amid mounting protests, Bangladesh suspended visa services at its High Commission in New Delhi and missions in Tripura and Siliguri, citing unavoidable circumstances. India has suspended visa services at its Chittagong mission after protesters attempted to storm the compound. The systematic attacks on minorities are a grim indicator of how rapidly the country is sliding into mob rule under the watch of an unelected interim dispensation. India, with its strategic commitment to a stable South Asia, must tread carefully. Dhaka must recognise that India's concerns about minority safety and political stability are not merely rhetorical but reflect broader regional stability imperatives. Political history books

The rapidly deteriorating situation in Bangladesh poses multiple challenges to India, including growing insecurity and infiltration along the 4,000-kilometre border, the rising threat of anti-Indian forces establishing cross-border bases, and the exploitation of the bilateral friction by Islamabad and Beijing at a time when Bangladesh actively pivots towards a Pakistan-China axis in the region. India would closely watch the outcome of national elections, scheduled in February, and calibrate its diplomatic approach towards the new regime. Dhaka's demand for the extradition of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina could be a major sticking point in the relationship. For India, extraditing Hasina to her home country to face the gallows is simply not an option.



(MSDE) and NCVET. Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and Chairperson, NCVET, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, alongside Mr. Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group; Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Gaba, Executive Member, NCVET and Lt. Col. Vikram Singh Bhati, Director, NCVET were present amongst dignitaries.

Established under the aegis of MSDE, NCVET plays a critical role in regulating and ensuring quality across India's vocational education, training, and skilling ecosystem. Its mandate focuses on creating nationally benchmarked standards that strengthen workforce employability and contribute to sustained economic growth.

Through this collaboration, Flipkart is building the capability to become the first organisation in India's e-commerce sector to receive NCVET recognition as an Awarding Body (Dual) for Training, Assessment and Certification enabling industry-designed skilling programs to be formally benchmarked, portable, and nationally

recognised. This milestone will enable Flipkart to design and deliver training programs aligned with National Skills Qualification Frameworks (NSQF), ensuring consistent quality and industry relevance. This partnership will also help Flipkart develop standardized, high-quality training and certification programs that enhance employability, particularly for individuals from underprivileged backgrounds.

Speaking about the partnership, Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group, said, "At Flipkart, skilling is not a peripheral effort, it is core to how we build India's digital commerce infrastructure. As one of the country's largest employers and enablers in the e-commerce and logistics ecosystem, we see it as our responsibility to help create standardized, nationally recognised skilling pathways that are industry-led and outcome-oriented. This collaboration with NCVET allows us to bring real operational insight from the shopfloor into formal training, assessment and certification frameworks. Our intent is to help build a large pool of job-ready talent that can grow with India's digital economy, while supporting the Skill India Mission in a meaningful, long-term way."

Speaking on the occasion, Debasree Mukherjee, Secretary, MSDE & Chairperson, NCVET, said, "NCVET's partnership with Flipkart reinforces our ongoing effort to make India's skilling architecture more industry-responsive, credible and outcomes-driven. By aligning training and certification closely with real operational needs, we are strengthening pathways for quality jobs, mobility and long-term career growth."

For trainees, the initiative will offer standardized program delivery, rigorous assessment processes, and prestigious certifications with strong market recognition, both nationally and internationally. These credentials can be securely stored on DigiLocker, with academic credits accumulated and verified through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), further strengthening career mobility and long-term employability. Beyond workforce development, the partnership is expected to enhance Flipkart's role as a responsible industry leader by contributing to national skilling priorities, strengthening government partnerships, and building long-term brand equity rooted in social impact.

ASBL Hosts Family Day 2025, Celebrating Community, Trust, and Shared Growth

Hyderabad: ASBL, one of India's fastest-growing real estate companies, hosted ASBL Family Day 2025 on December 20 at Anvaya Conventions in Hyderabad's Financial District, bringing together customers and their families for an evening dedicated to community, connection, and shared success.

Conceived as an exclusive celebration for ASBL homeowners, Family Day 2025 reflected the company's belief that relationships with customers extend far beyond transactions or possession milestones. By opening its doors to families, ASBL reinforced its commitment to building long-term communities anchored in trust, engagement, and shared values.

The evening commenced with a ceremonial Diya Pradipanam, setting a warm and celebratory tone. The programme featured a thoughtfully curated mix of cultural and contemporary performances, including a classical dance presentation by Nritya Priya, a Ramayana skit by the Sravya Manasa Dance Ensemble, an energetic performance by the all-female dance crew Yo Highness, and a live musical showcase by Niraval – The Band. Interactive activities, refreshments, a musical open mic, and a DJ night ensured entertainment for guests across age groups, culminating in a community dinner.

A key highlight of the evening was the keynote address by Ajitesh Korupolu, Founder and CEO of ASBL, who reflected on the company's journey and the pivotal role customers have played in its growth. Addressing the gathering, Korupolu said, "Family Day reflects what ASBL truly stands for. Homes are not just structures we deliver; they are ecosystems where families grow, connect, and build their lives. The trust our customers place in us has been the foundation of ASBL's growth, and this evening



is our way of acknowledging that partnership."

In his address, Korupolu also spoke about Hyderabad's rapid emergence as a leading technology and infrastructure hub, citing indicators that position the city as India's largest tech employment centre and a key destination for Global Capability Centres and data centre investments. He highlighted the challenges that accompany rapid urbanisation, including longer commutes, reduced walkability, and pressure on open spaces, emphasising the need for more human-centric urban design.

"As cities like Hyderabad grow rapidly, our responsibility goes beyond building efficiently. It is about designing communities that are walkable, inclusive, and built for long-term living. Every decision we take, whether in design, planning, or engagement, is guided by one simple belief: people come first," he added.

Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Attends Christmas Celebrations



Hyderabad: Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy attended the Christmas celebrations held at Shantinagar, Uppal, as the chief guest. The celebrations were organized under the guidance of Christian Gospel Pastors Ravikumar and Tikka Sushiraj. On the occasion, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy conveyed Christmas greetings to the Christian brothers and sisters. Along with the pastors and residents of Shantinagar Colony, she participated in the semi-Christmas cake cutting ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, she extended advance Christmas wishes to everyone and said that the



message of Jesus Christ teaches humanity to practice forgiveness, even towards enemies. Several residents of Shantinagar Colony and members of the Christian community participated in the programme, including Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Gattu Indira, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Gundelli Anita, Jangam Ramakrishna, Alugula Anil Kumar, Pastors Ravikumar and Tikka Sushiraj, N. Isaac, David, Tikka Prakash, Alwala Bhaskar, Alwala Jairaj, D. Pushpamma, K. Prakash, Dani, Alwala Ashok, Bharat, Navaneeth, Madhavi, Swapna, Lavanya, Tikka Shobha Rani, Tikka Parmila, N. Mounika, Jyothi, Rabbika, Satya, and others.

Mayabrahma Narasimha Appointed as Special Judicial Magistrate

Hyderabad: Mayabrahma Narasimha has been appointed as a Second Class Special Judicial Magistrate at the Vikarabad District Court. The appointment orders were issued by M. Venkateswarlu, District Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Senior Civil Judge. The appointment was made under Section 11 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) Act, 2023. He will serve in this position for one year from the date of assuming charge or until he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. A resident of Secunderabad, Mayabrahma Narasimha has been practising as an advocate for several years. Along with his legal practice, he has been actively involved in social service activities and family counselling, providing free and selfless legal guidance to the public. Expressing happiness over his appointment, he said that he would perform his duties with sincerity and ensure speedy justice for the people. He officially assumed charge as a Judicial Magistrate at the Vikarabad District Court on Monday.



Hyderabad's Sudipta Dash Secures National Runner-Up Title at Mrs India 2025

Hyderabad: What the audience witnessed on the national stage was a powerful moment—but the journey behind it was built through six months of disciplined preparation and five days of intense pan-India competition. Hyderabad-based Sudipta Dash, a resident of Gachibowli, brought pride to Telangana by securing the Runner-Up title at Mrs India 2025, held on 21st December 2025 in Jaipur.

The prestigious national pageant tested participants across multiple challenging rounds, including storytelling, talent presentations, corporate rounds, interviews, national costume, lehenga round, and more. Each segment demanded far more than surface-level perfection—it required emotional resilience, authenticity, grace under



pressure, and confidence. Competing with accomplished women from across the country, Sudipta's clarity of purpose and inner strength stood out.

"Standing on that stage was about much more than a title," said Sudipta Dash. "This journey tested my discipline, mindset, and courage. Being crowned Runner-Up at Mrs India 2025 reminds me that crowns aren't just worn—they're built through consistency, self-belief, and showing up even when it's uncomfortable."

An XLRI Jamshedpur alumna, Sudipta brings nearly a decade of experience as an HR professional across Indian and multinational organisations. She later transitioned into the fitness and wellness industry, driven by a desire to create meaningful and sustainable impact in people's lives.

Currently based in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, she is a certified fitness coach and clinical nutritionist who has coached over 2,200 individuals globally, guiding them toward holistic health and long-term wellbeing. A strong advocate of discipline and balance, Sudipta is also a martial arts practitioner, dancer, and performer, while balancing her professional journey with motherhood.

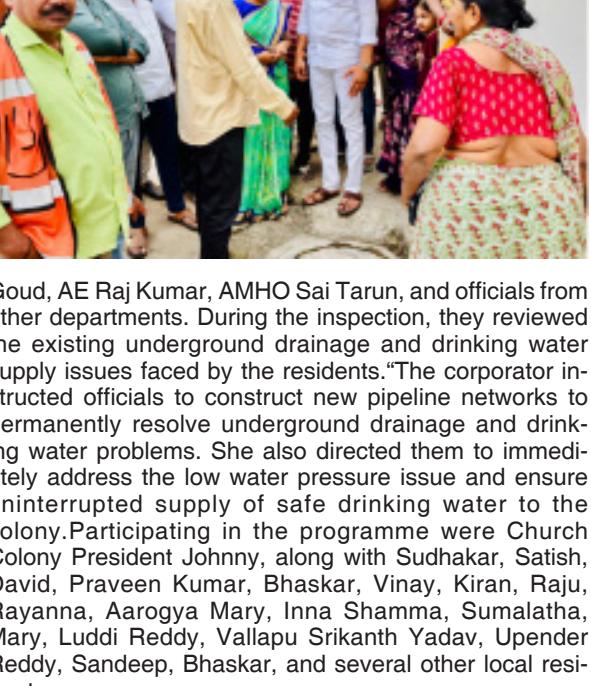
Her national recognition follows her earlier achievement as Mrs India Telangana, which earned her the opportunity to represent the state at the national pageant. For Sudipta, the Runner-Up title is not merely an accolade, but a platform to advocate physical health, mental wellbeing, and women empowerment.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Distributes Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak Cheques

Hyderabad: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy participated as the chief guest in the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheque distribution programme held at the Uppal Municipal Office. On this occasion, cheques were distributed to 113 beneficiaries belonging to Uppal



Mandal. Speaking at the event, the MLA stated that the cheque distribution process should be conducted in a transparent manner, in accordance with the assurance given by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He said that assistance of ₹1,16,000 along with gold equivalent to one tola would be provided to the beneficiaries. He also instructed officials to take necessary steps to ensure speedy sanction and distribution of cheques to all eligible applicants under the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes. Uppal Tahsildar Pool Singh Chauhan, Nacharam Corporator Shanti Sai Jen Shekhar, Meerpur Corporator Jeripothula Prabhudas, Mallapur Corporator Devender, Ramanthapur Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkat Rao, officials from the MRO office, BRS party leaders, party workers, and others attended the programme.



Naresh Kumar Narsingozu Appointed as Additional Standing Counsel of Government of India

Hyderabad: Naresh Kumar Narsingozu has been appointed as an Additional Standing Counsel of the Government of India. In this regard, officials of the Union Ministry of Law and Justice have issued formal orders. Expressing his happiness over the appointment, Naresh Kumar stated that it is an honour to be appointed as a member of the Standing Counsel panel by the Central Government and assured that he would discharge his responsibilities with utmost sincerity and dedication. He also conveyed his gratitude to the Central Government for entrusting him with the position and thanked the senior advocates who supported and guided him during the process.



Steps Must Be Taken to Prevent Contamination of Drinking Water Supplied to the Public: BJP Leader Gone Srikanth

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):”Residents of several colonies and slum areas under the Chilka Nagar Division complained that drainage water is mixing with the drinking water supply, local women informed BJP leaders Gone Srikanth and Division President Dappu Dattasai. Responding immediately, the BJP leaders brought the issue to the notice of senior officials of the Water Board and submitted a representation, urging them to resolve the problem without delay. “Speaking on the occasion, BJP leader Gone Srikanth said that the supply of contaminated drinking water is not only causing severe inconvenience to the public but is also posing a serious threat to their health. He urged Water Board General Manager Santosh to immediately inspect the drinking water pipelines and drainage lines, rectify the faults, and ensure the supply of safe and clean drinking water to the residents. The General Manager assured the leaders that necessary steps would be taken to address the issue at the earliest. Women residents including Donthi Prabhavath, Madhavani Mamatha, Venkata Lakshmi, Shyamala, Sunitha, Rambai, Sandhya, and Kavitha participated in the programme. BJP senior leaders Gone Anjaiah, Vaidyulu Veerareddy, Tanneeru Kondal Rao, Pitla Srinivas, Parupati Ram Reddy, Araganti Rajesh, Venugopal Reddy, Ganji



Srikanth, Srinivas Chary, Ramakrishna Goud, Sunil Naik, Vamsi Deva, Sai Mudhiraj, and others were also present.

National Farmers' Day Celebrated with Grand Felicitation in Manthani



“P.S.ASHOKAN”KARIMNGAR BUREAU.”On the occasion of National Farmers' Day, a grand felicitation ceremony was held today in Manthani town under the leadership of student leader Bejjanki Digambar. As part of the programme, eminent farmer leader and progressive farmer Moola Purushottam Reddy was honoured with a traditional shawl in recognition of his outstanding services to the farming community. “Addressing the gathering, Bejjanki Digambar emphatically stated that there can be no State without farmers and that the nation prospers only when farmers prosper. He stressed that safeguarding farmers is a collective responsibility of society as well as governments. He called upon everyone to uphold the dignity of farmers, describing them as “annadatas” — the providers of food, and urged people

ACB searches the house of Deputy Commissioner of Transport



“Secunderabad Cantonment, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):”ACB officials conducted searches on Tuesday at the house of Transport Department Deputy Commissioner Kishan Naik, who resides in Old Bowenpally Yunder Bowenpally police station in the case of disproportionate assets. They conducted these

TS UTF Calls for Grand Success of State Education Conference

“Kagaznagar | K. B Asifabad Dist”Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle)”The Telangana State United Teachers' Federation (TS UTF)

headquarters. Speaking at the programme held under the chairmanship of Pulluri Balakrishna, the leaders said that the state-level conference in Jangaon would deliberate and pass key resolutions on crucial issues such as:

“Protection of the government education system”

“Resolution of problems faced by teachers and employees”

“Immediate implementation of Pay Revision Commission (PRC) recommendations and Dearness Allowances (DAs)”

“They announced that a massive teachers' rally would be organised in Jangaon town prior to the inaugural session. The opening session will be presided over by TS UTF State President Chava Ravi.”

“Several prominent leaders are expected to attend the conference, including State Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy,

Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka), Konda Surekha, Education Secretary Navin Nicholas, former MLCs Prof. K. Nageshwar, Alugubelli Narsireddy, Madabhusi Sridharacharyulu, CTU leader Veeriah, TS UTF State General Secretary Adimulam Venkat, and other state-level leaders.”

“The TS UTF leadership urged teachers from across Telangana to attend the state-level extended

meetings in large numbers and ensure their success.”

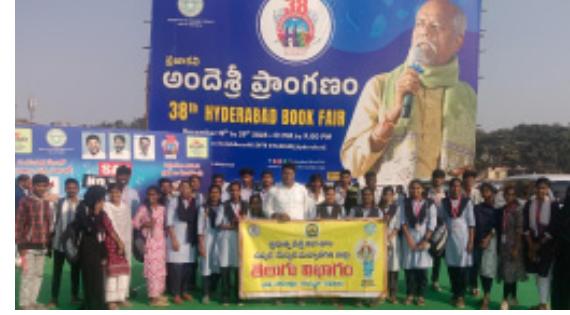
has called upon teachers across the state to make the State Education Conference and Extended State Committee Meetings, scheduled to be held on March 28 and 29 at Jangaon town, a grand success. “TS UTF District Secretary Juttu Mahipal, along with Mandal President Pulluri Balakrishna and District General Secretary Panithi Mahesh, appealed to teachers to participate in large numbers. “As part of the campaign, TS UTF leaders unveiled the State Education Conference poster at the Government High School (Old) in Kagaznagar, the mandal

KCR Creating False Propaganda on Godavari Waters: TDP Leader Vallurupu Srinivas

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, December 23:”Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Secunderabad In-charge Vallurupu Srinivas Kumar strongly criticised BRS president and former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) for making misleading statements on Godavari river waters and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. In a press statement, Srinivas said KCR is trying to confuse people by spreading false allegations of water misuse and is attempting to create regional divisions between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for political gain. “He said KCR came to power earlier by spreading false propaganda against Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP, and is now once again trying to provoke Telangana sentiment by repeating the same allegations. “KCR wants to create disputes between the two Telugu states he alleged. “Referring to the skill development case, Srinivas said Chandrababu Naidu was wrongly arrested even though no corruption was proven. He said the large-scale protests by IT employees across the country showed the public's trust in Chandrababu Naidu's honesty and leadership. “Srinivas also said KCR was unable to accept the support received by the Telugu Desam Party in many places during the recent Gram Panchayat elections in Telangana. “He questioned why several irrigation projects in Mahabubnagar were not completed during KCR's ten-year rule and said it was unfair to make new promises after losing power. “The TDP leader further stated that allegations of corruption during the BRS rule were raised even by KCR's own daughter and asked why KCR avoids answering those issues while blaming Chandrababu Naidu for events that happened many years ago. “Srinivas said that after losing power, KCR remained inactive for nearly two years and has now returned to politics only to create emotional issues and regain attention. He added that people of Telangana are no longer ready to believe KCR's statements.



Uppal Government Degree College Telugu Students Participate in 38th Hyderabad Book Fair



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):”Students of the Telugu Department from Uppal Government Degree College actively participated in the 38th Hyderabad Book Fair, which is being held grandly in Hyderabad. During the book exhibition, the students explored a wide range of books related to Telugu literature and interacted with several renowned writers. By selecting books according to their interests, the students further enhanced their enthusiasm for literature. “On this occasion, the students also took part in literary discussions, poetry sessions, and story forums organized at the book fair, where they showcased their talents. They described the book fair as an inspiring platform that strengthens their commitment to the growth and promotion of Telugu literature. College Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar stated that book fairs are not merely exhibitions of books but knowledge festivals that cultivate a strong reading habit among students. Vice Principal Dr. C.H. Satyanarayana and Telugu Department Head Jalda Vishwanath Kumar inaugurated the educational field visit program. The students expressed that meeting eminent literary personalities such as Telangana Sahitya Academy Secretary Dr. Balachari, historian Dr. Sangisetti Srinivas, Telangana Writers' Association President Naleshwaran Shankaram, and Telugu Bhasha Chaitanya Samithi representative Badesaheb infused new enthusiasm among them towards the study of Telugu literature. “Telugu Assistant Professor Jalda Vishwanath Kumar informed that stalls such as Telugu Wikipedia, Anti-Drug Soldier, Achchamga Telugu, Vedic Mathematics, Visalandhra Book House, and various newspaper stalls attracted the students greatly.

Who Gave the Green Signal? Scrap Yards Operate Illegally in Habitation Zone“Rules Ignored, Lives at Risk: Illegal Scrap Yards Thrive in Kagaznagar



“Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):”Illegal scrap yards are proliferating like mushrooms across Kagaznagar town, with no inspections, blatant violations of norms, and serious threats to public safety. A key question troubling residents is: Which official granted permission for scrap yards to operate in densely populated residential areas? As per government regulations, scrap yards must be located far away from human settlements. However, in Kagaznagar, permissions appear to have been granted allowing scrap yards to function right in the heart of residential colonies, causing severe inconvenience and danger to the public. “Residents report major traffic obstructions due to scrap yards operating within colonies. Alarmingly, a scrap yard located between two hostels has allegedly caused serious health issues among hostel students, raising concerns over toxic exposure and unhygienic conditions. “Despite several accidents reported in scrap yards across multiple localities, resulting in property damage and loss of lives, scrap yard operators continue to flout safety and licensing norms with impunity. “Locals

allege that: “Scrap yard owners are running illegal operations under the protection of certain officials. By operating scrap yards within residential zones, operators are playing with the lives of citizens. These illegal activities are causing a significant loss of government revenue, while authorities allegedly “see and ignore” the violations. Shockingly, many scrap yards are operating without basic fire safety measures, such as water storage, oxygen cylinders, sand buckets, or emergency equipment. This gross negligence poses a serious risk of large-scale disasters. “Adding to public concern, several scrap yards are functioning without name boards or licenses, and with zero inspections, residents claim theft cases have increased in the town. The presence of stolen cars, bikes, government machinery, and electronic equipment in scrap yards has raised serious suspicion. “Citizens are now urging the authorities to act immediately and ensure that all scrap yards strictly comply with government regulations, including valid licenses, fire safety norms, and proper inspections, before irreparable damage to life and property occurs.

Everyone should participate in the construction of Hindu temples

“Secunderabad Cantonment, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):”Jampana Pratap, Vice President of All

India Cantonment Board Vice President Jampana Pratap and famous builder Malyadri came to this temple premises on Tuesday and visited Swamyambhu and Ayyappa Swami and worshiped the temple premises which is still under construction. They visited and inquired about the details of the construction. In this context, Malyadri said that he was a devotee of Ayyappa and donated 51 thousands rupees for the construction of the temple. On this occasion they thanked him, Jampana Pratap said. Everyone can participate in the construction of Hindu temples, it is not just a matter of giving funds, said Hindu tradition, people can participate through donations, service, etc., especially in the restoration of dilapidated ancient temples, everyone's participation is necessary, which preserves the Hindu dharma. He said It is not just building a building, it is a sacred work to establish human relationship with God. Everyone's participation earns merit and preserves our ancient tradition. Kapil Barabari, Srinivas, Sanjay, Vicky, Raju and others participated in the program.



India Cantonment Boards said that everyone should participate in the construction of Hindu temples. The construction of temples is also a part of preserving orthodoxy. Ayyappa Sabari Tirtha Kshetra Temple in the Royal Enclave Bowenpally in the sixth ward of the cantonment is being built in the presence of Ayyappa's devotee Guruswami Kapil Barabari. Nityannadanam alms to Ayyappa Swami have been flowing in the premises of

Appointment of High Court Advocate Bhaskar Giri to the Standing Council of the Central government



" Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, December 23 :"" A.S. Bashkar Giri, a prominent High Court lawyer and social worker from Secunderabad constituency, has been appointed as the Central Government Standing Council of the Telangana High Court. The Central Government Law Department said in a statement. The tenure will be for three years. Bhaskar Giri, who is well-known locally, is continuing his profession as a High Court lawyer and is involved in social service programs, family counseling, free legal advice and sensitizing people about the law. The Central Law Department has expressed its happiness over his services. He said that the responsibility of the Law Department as a Standing Council has increased with the appointment of the Central Government and that he will do his best to ensure speedy justice to the people. Meanwhile, lawyers congratulated Bhaskar Giri, who was appointed as the Central Government Standing Council, in the Secunderabad court premises. They expressed their happiness over his appointment

Complete the construction of Indiramma houses quickly and hold housewarming ceremonies:

- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 23): Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that the construction of Indiramma houses should be completed quickly and housewarming ceremonies should be held. On Tuesday, the District Collector inspected the construction work of Indiramma houses in Datar Palli and Ralla Janagam villages of Yadagirigutta mandal. On this occasion, the District Collector inspected the Indiramma houses under construction and inquired about how many days it had been since the construction work started. He asked about the rate agreed upon with the mason, and the price at which bricks, cement, and other necessary materials were purchased from the shops. He said that since the shop owners have fixed a lower price for the materials required for the construction work, the construc-



tion should be completed quickly. He inquired whether the bills for the work completed so far had been received. He said that if the remaining work is also completed quickly, the bill will be processed, and the housewarming ceremony can be held soon after. The concerned officials participated in this program.

Mock exercise on disaster management successfully concluded; rescue teams instilled confidence in the public:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



"(Mandava Srisailam, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau, Indian Chronicle, December 23): Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao stated that the district administration is prepared to effectively manage disasters with the cooperation of all departments to prevent extensive loss of life and property. A mock exercise conducted on Monday at Divi's Lab in Choutuppal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, was successfully completed. The mock exercise vividly demonstrated the immediate actions to be taken during disasters, and the measures to be implemented to prevent significant loss of life and property in the event of incidents such as chemical leaks, gas leaks, and fires at the factory. The mock exercise demonstrated scenarios such as fire accidents and explosions, and how to effectively handle such critical situations with the cooperation of all departments, including rescuing people, shifting the injured to hospitals, and transferring those with serious

injuries to higher-level hospitals. The exercise also explained the precautionary measures that various organizations and factories should take in case of disasters at workplaces, and how to respond in unexpected situations. A mock exercise was conducted on a gas leakage incident in a laboratory, a fire, and how to respond based on instructions from the State Command Control. It was stated that all departments performed their duties effectively in this mock exercise, demonstrating how to handle all kinds of situations, including the precautions to be taken if chemicals are released from a factory. They stated that they are prepared to face such situations through collective effort and the cooperation of all departments, and to protect people's lives, as demonstrated through the mock exercise. The relief measures undertaken through the mock exercise to prevent loss of life and property were so realistic that they seemed like a real-life situation. All departments acted with mutual coordination, practically demonstrating how to act during disasters. The relief operations, carried out using drones, ambulances, fire tenders, and other state-of-the-art technology, demonstrated preparedness in disaster management and instilled confidence in the public. A mock exercise on disaster management was conducted with officials from various departments. Collector Hanumanta Rao personally supervised the exercise. The relief efforts, including medical personnel providing first aid and transporting the injured to the hospital in ambulances, proved the preparedness of the administrative machinery. The police, fire, revenue, health, transport, and all other departments worked with excellent coordination and planning, making the mock exercise a success. Observer Keshavulu, Choutuppal Revenue Divisional Officer Shekhar Reddy, District Fire Officer Madhusudan Rao, District Industries Officer Ravinder, DMHO Manohar, and other concerned officials participated in the program.

Consumer Rights Awareness Programme at Uppal Government Degree College

"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):""A Consumer Rights Awareness Programme was organised with great enthusiasm at Uppal Government Degree College on the occasion of National Consumer Rights Day. Captain Dr. N. Srinivas, Commerce Lecturer from Government Degree College, Khairatabad, attended the programme as the chief guest and delivered a keynote address. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Srinivas advised consumers to remain vigilant in the present era of rapidly growing online buying and selling, so as to avoid fraud. He explained the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the amended Act of 2019 in detail with the help of PPT presentations. He also cited several real-life instances where awareness of consumer rights helped people overcome fraud and unfair trade practices. On this occasion, prizes were distributed to students who emerged as winners in essay writing and elocution competitions conducted on consumer rights. The programme was presided over by College Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar. The event was coordinated by the Department of Commerce along with the Consumer Club, under the guidance of Consumer Club Coordinator Dr. Chindam Satyanarayana. Addressing the gathering, Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar urged students and consumers to stay alert against adulteration and to ensure they receive quality goods and services. Vice Principal Dr. C.H. Satyanarayana, NSS Programme Officer J. Vishwanath



Kumar, P. Vijay Kumar, Dr. S. Yamuna Rani, Dr. V. Srinivas Rao, Dr. R. Chandrasagar, Sravanti, NSS volunteers, Consumer Club members, faculty members and students participated in the programme. The college faculty felicitated the chief guest on the occasion.

ASHA Workers Protest Demanding Immediate Payment of Leprosy Survey Bills and Minimum Wage

"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):""ASHA workers staged a protest on Tuesday in front of the Uppal Primary Health Centre, demanding the immediate payment of pending leprosy survey bills and the payment of a minimum wage of ₹18,000. The protest was supported by the CITU. Speaking on the occasion, ASHA workers Shobharani, Shivarajani, Revathi and Kalyani, along with CITU leader J. Venkanna, demanded that the government immediately ensure a minimum monthly wage of ₹18,000 for ASHA workers. They also urged the government to provide ESI and PF facilities and extend adequate support to ASHA workers. The speakers further demanded that ASHA workers should not be burdened with online work. They



warned that protests would continue until all the issues faced by ASHA workers are resolved. ASHA workers Devika, Swaroopa, Swapna, Lakshmi Sunitha, Yadamma, Aruna and others participated in the protest.

Voter mapping process should be expedited and completed quickly: State Chief Electoral Officer Sudarshan Reddy



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 23): State Chief Electoral Officer Sudarshan Reddy said that the voter mapping process in the state should be expedited and completed quickly. On Monday, he held a review meeting on the voter mapping process with all district election officers, collectors, EROs, and AEROs through a video conference from Hyderabad, along with other election officials. On this occasion, the State Chief Electoral Officer said that special attention should be paid to completing the voter mapping process quickly. He stated that in view of the Special Intensive Revision, the voter mapping process should be accelerated, and in urban areas,

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy condoles Niranjan Chari's Family

"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 23 (Indian Chronicle):""Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited the residence of senior BRS Party Uppal Division leader Niranjan Chari on Tuesday to offer condolences following the recent demise of his father, Nagabhushanam Chari. The MLA paid floral tributes to the portrait of the departed soul and expressed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family members. He also offered words of comfort and support during this difficult time. Several BRS Party leaders and party workers were present during the condolence visit.



Photo caption only: ""(Mandava Srisailam, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau, Indian Chronicle, December 23):""On the occasion of Kalvakuntla Kavitha's visit to the Sri Renuka Yellamma temple in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, she was felicitated with a shawl and honored with a garland of flowers. Sri Yellamma temple committee chairman Thotakura Venkatesh Yadav, Mekala Bhanu, Udutha Amarender, Mekala Lingaswamy, and others participated in this program.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Jayanti Celebrations Held in Medipally



"(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):""As part of the nationwide Sri Sathya Sai Rath Yatra marking the birth anniversary of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, grand celebrations were organized in Medipally of Medchal - Malkajgiri district, Telangana. The Sri Sathya Sai Prema Pravahini Rath, which arrived in Telangana as part of the all-India Rath Yatra, was brought from Shiva to the Medipally Samithi on Monday. The Rath halted for the night near Dharmaraju's residence in Medipally. On Tuesday at 5:20 a.m., the day began with Omkara Suprabhatam, followed by Nagar Sankirtan and special puja rituals. After completion of the rituals, the Rath procession was taken through Shankar Nagar Viharika Enclave, Medipally, Kamalanagar and surrounding localities. The procession concluded at the Ganesh Mandapam in Kamalanagar, where various devotional programs were conducted. Naivedyam and harati were offered to



Dharmaraju, Anji Reddy, Bal Vikas in-charges, Bal Vikas children, volunteers and other activists. The event concluded successfully with collective prayers and service activities, spreading the message of love, service and unity among the people.

Former Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav receives a grand welcome at the Bhuvanagiri Yellamma Temple: Yellamma Temple Committee Chairman Thotakura Venkatesh



Bhuvanagiri, they were felicitated with shawls and honored with garlands. Those who participated in this program included Yellamma Temple Committee Chairman Thotakura Venkatesh Yadav, Mekala Lingaswamy, Mekala Bhanu, Udutha Amarender, All India Yadav Association District President Ayodhya Yadav, former MPP Narala Venkat Swamy, Marri Pandu, Rajesh, Anand Yadav, and other Yadav community leaders.

Osmania University Arts College Former Principal Remembered on 21st Death Anniversary



of Osmania University Arts College, tributes were paid at the City Central Library, Chikkadpally, on Tuesday. Floral tributes were offered to his portrait, followed by a large-scale community meal programme for students. The programme was organised by his son, Manoj Reddy, during which food was served to around 700 students as part of a Maha Annadanam initiative. Former Secunderabad Member of Parliament and Congress Working President Anjan Kumar Yadav attended the programme and paid tributes. He appreciated the continued social and educational services being undertaken by Manoj Reddy, particularly his efforts to support students from economically weaker sections. As part of his ongoing commitment to education, Manoj Reddy has been providing essential study material every year to 50 underprivileged students to help them continue their academic pursuits. Several well-wishers and associates, including Rama Rao, Lakshmana Rao, Shiva Goud, Rajasekhar, Vinay, Srinivas Rao, Sudhakar, Chandrateja Reddy and Pranav Reddy, were present at the event.

"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)." "On the occasion of the 21st death anniversary of K. Subhash Chandra Reddy, former Principal

Relatives Block National Highway Seeking Justice for Road Accident Victim



"Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle)." "Relatives of a man who died in a road accident staged a protest on the National Highway, demanding justice for the victim's family." "According to details, a road accident occurred on Tuesday morning near Rebbana in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. A Bolero vehicle collided with a Lahari bus, resulting in severe injuries to the Bolero driver, Vijay. While he was

being shifted to a hospital for treatment, he succumbed to his injuries on the way. In the same incident, two railway loco pilots sustained serious injuries." "Following Vijay's death, his relatives staged a protest in front of the Bellampalli Government Hospital, demanding justice for the deceased. The agitation led to heavy traffic congestion on both sides of the National Highway for several hours.

Rachakonda CP Promoted as Additional Director General of Police



"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)." "The Government of Telangana has promoted Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Sudheer Babu, IPS, to the rank of Additional Director General of Police (ADGP). Orders to this effect were issued by Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao on Tuesday. The promotion comes in recognition of Sudheer Babu's service and administrative experience in the police department. Sudheer Babu has been serving as the Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda Commissionerate, where he played a key role in maintaining law and order and implementing various policing initiatives. Further postings and responsibilities following the promotion are expected to be announced separately.

Police Commissioner Goush Alam Inaugurates New Two Town Police Station Building in Karimnagar



mises, and the Commissioner inspected the newly developed sections of the building." "Earlier, the CCS (CCS) Police Station, which was functioning on the upper floor of this building, was shifted to the premises of the Rural ACP Office. As a result, the entire building has now been exclusively allocated to meet the operational requirements of the Two Town Police Station." "With an increase in police personnel—especially the growing number of women police officers—special facilities have been created, including a dedicated rest room and other essential amenities for women staff." "Speaking on the occasion, Police Commissioner Goush Alam stated that providing a better work environment for police officers and staff would motivate them to serve the public more efficiently. He expressed confidence that the modern facilities at the newly upgraded police station would help in addressing public grievances swiftly. He also said it was gratifying to construct a separate barrack for women personnel as part of infrastructure development." "Additional DCPs Venkataramana, ACPs Srinivas, Venkataswamy, Vijay Kumar, Two Town Inspector Srujan Reddy, along with other inspectors, police officers, and staff members, were present at the inauguration ceremony.

Chittimalla Mahendar, Karimnagar Bureau" "With the objective of providing better and more efficient services to the people of Karimnagar city, Police Commissioner Mr. Goush Alam, IPS, on Tuesday formally inaugurated the newly renovated and modernized Two Town Police Station building. On the occasion, special prayers were performed at the pre-

SSC Jobs Awareness Seminar Held at Government Degree College, Kagaznagar



"Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle)." "An awareness seminar on employment opportunities through the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) was organized on Tuesday at the Government Degree College, Kagaznagar, under the aegis of the

College Career Guidance and Placement Cell." "The seminar focused on the recently released SSC notification for recruitment into various Central Government Armed Forces. Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, G. Praveen Kumar, Director of the Combined Adilabad District BC Study Circle, emphasized that students should develop awareness of Central Government job opportunities from their degree level itself. He advised students that with proper planning and systematic preparation, they can secure prestigious government positions." "College Principal K. Sridevi stated that arrangements are being made to provide free training for college students preparing for various government job examinations." "Later, Dr. D. Lakshminarayam, In-charge of the Career Guidance Cell, gave a detailed presentation on the SSC General Duty Constable recruitment notification. He explained the eligibility criteria, selection process, and effective preparation strategies, providing comprehensive guidance to the students.

VHP, Bajrang Dal Condemn Attacks on Hindu Minorities in Bangladesh



"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)." "The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal strongly condemned the recent attacks, killings, lootings, and destruction of temples targeting minority Hindus in Bangladesh. Leaders alleged that miscreants were selectively targeting Hindus under the pretext of their alleged support for the Awami League and were indulging in large-scale violence. They expressed

serious concern over the destruction of several temples that represent Bangladesh's historical and cultural heritage, stating that such acts were deeply alarming and unacceptable. In protest against these incidents, the VHP and Bajrang Dal organised a demonstration on Tuesday at the ECIL crossroads. As part of the protest, activists burnt an effigy symbolising jihadist forces in Bangladesh and raised slogans expressing their anger. Speakers at the protest asserted that India must respond whenever Hindus face injustice anywhere in the world. They demanded international attention and firm action to ensure the safety and rights of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh. The protest was attended by Bajrang Dal State Co-Convenor Srikanth, BJP leaders Challa Prabhakar, Karthik, Sumanth, Ganesh Mudraj, Sandhya Reddy, Venkata Chalam, Sampath Rao, Rajanikant Reddy, Prabhakar, Srikanth, Saketh Arun, Sridhar, Sandeep, Vishal, along with members of the Vishva Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, various Hindu organisations, and BJP leaders in large numbers.

Defeated by Toss, Candidate Gets Moral Boost from Koneru Konappa



"Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle)." "Former MLA Koneru Konappa extended moral support to a candidate who lost the Sarpanch election due to a toss, in Veeravelli village of Koutala mandal." "Rajinikanth, who contested the Panchayat elections as an independent candidate, was defeated after officials resorted to a toss when both he and his rival, Kaveri, secured an equal number of votes. Each candidate received 204 votes, following which the election authorities conducted a toss, in which luck favoured Kaveri." "After the result, Koneru Konappa met Rajinikanth and encouraged him, appreciating his efforts and commitment. Rajinikanth later announced that he would continue his political journey under the leadership of Koneru Konappa." "Welcoming him into the party, Koneru Konappa draped the party scarf around Rajinikanth, formally inducting him into the party fold." "BRS leaders were present on the occasion.

VHP and Hindu Organisations Hold Protest in Uppal Against Atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 23 (Indian Chronicle)." "Under the leadership of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) Uppal District and various Hindu organisations, a protest was organised on Tuesday at Uppal Ring Road against the alleged atrocities being committed against Hindus in Bangladesh." "Addressing the gathering, Uppal District President Mukta Naga Ramesh Naidu stated that Hindus should not lose courage under any circumstances and emphasised that every Hindu has a responsibility to work towards the protection of the nation. He expressed deep concern that even governments are failing to provide moral support to Hindus living in Bangladesh, calling it highly unfortunate. He further alleged that certain anti-Hindu forces are making derogatory and irresponsible remarks against Hindus in Bangladesh. The VHP warned such elements to exercise restraint and reminded that Hindus must stand united and take responsibility for the protection of fellow Hindus anywhere in the world. He also urged political leaders to focus more responsibly on national security instead of what he termed as appeasement politics, and appealed that minorities living in India should abide by the laws, rules, and traditions of the country." "Strong warnings were issued against those making offensive remarks, and the speakers called upon everyone to respect and uphold India's culture, traditions, and values. The programme

Congress Protests Move to Drop Gandhi's Name from MGNREGS in Asifabad

the people, adding that Mahatma Gandhi's name is immortal in the nation's collective memory." "She recalled that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was introduced during the tenure of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, providing 100 days of guaranteed employment to rural households. She accused the BJP government of systematically weakening the scheme by reducing allocations after coming to power in 2014, and alleged that the Centre is now attempting to shift 40 per cent of the financial burden onto the states." "Stating that Mahatma Gandhi's name cannot be erased from public consciousness, she accused the BJP of conspiring to amend the Constitution and impose Manusmriti. She said attempts to undermine secularism and politicize caste and religion would not succeed." "Suguna asserted that the Congress party would return to power at the Centre in the upcoming elections and that Rahul Gandhi would become the Prime Minister. She also claimed that the BJP had suffered setbacks in recent Panchayat elections." "Warning of intensified agitation, she said the Congress would launch state-wide protests if the Centre failed to reconsider its decision to rename the employment guarantee scheme.

Collector Directs Officials to Ensure Comprehensive Arrangements for Jangubai Festival

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 23 (Indian Chronicle)“Asifabad, December 23, 2025:“District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre has directed officials to make comprehensive arrangements to ensure that devotees face no inconvenience during the Jangubai Festival, scheduled to be held until January 17, 2026, in Kerameri mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. The Collector conducted a review meeting on Tuesday at the Hatti Tribal Ashram School in Kerameri mandal, along with Uttoor Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Project Officer Yuvaraj Marmat, Additional Superintendent of Police Chittaranjan, District Congress Committee President Atram Suguna, members of the Jangubai Devasthanam Committee, and village Sarpanch Atram Laxman. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector emphasized that all arrangements should be made meticulously so that devotees do not face any difficulties during the festival. He said the Jangubai festival, revered by the tribal community, should be conducted in a traditional manner. Noting that a large number of devotees are expected from December 22 to January 17, he instructed officials to ensure continuous sanitation measures, including regular spraying of hypochlorite solution. He further directed that round-the-clock medical camps be set up, ambulances kept on standby, and uninterrupted medical services provided throughout the festival period. ITDA Project Officer Yuvaraj Marmat stressed the need to ensure adequate drinking water supply and sufficient toilet facilities. He also instructed officials to make proper arrangements for vehicle parking and to clear roadside vegetation to facilitate smooth traffic movement. Officials were directed to ensure tight security arrangements to



prevent any untoward incidents. Continuous power supply, necessary pooja materials, and proper electrification of the festival area should be ensured through coordinated efforts of all departments, he said. Temple committee members requested the construction of two sheds to accommodate devotees during the month-long festival. The Collector assured them that necessary steps would be taken at the earliest. Later, Project Officer Yuvaraj Marmat visited the Jangubai temple at Kotaparandoli, reviewed the on-ground arrangements, interacted with devotees, committee members, and local leaders, and instructed officials to complete all works without causing any inconvenience to pilgrims. Concerned officials and staff were present during the programme. Issued by the District Public Relations Officer / Additional Public Relations Officer, Uttoor, Komaram Bheem Asifabad District.

Supreme Court stays former NCP minister Manikrao Kokate's conviction in 1995 fraud case, grants temporary relief from disqualification as MLA

year sentence or jail term imposed by a Nashik sessions court on Kokate. The HC temporarily halted the execution of the jail term until further orders and granted him bail on a Rs 1 lakh surety. However, it refused to stay the conviction, noting that it could not accede to submissions by Kokate that the case fell under “exceptional” category. The case against Kokate brothers The Nashik police had registered a case against the Kokate brothers- Manikrao and Sunil- for allegedly fraudulently acquiring flats for the low-income group. They alleged that the brothers submitted false income affidavits, bogus ration card documents, other false and fabricated documents and applied for flats under the said scheme and falsely showed their annual income below Rs 30,000 to become eligible as members of the low-income group. The flats were in the building constructed by Nirman builders at Vise Mala, College Road, in Nashik. Kokate claimed that the prosecution failed to show that the income eligibility limit of Rs 30,000 per annum for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) flat allotment applied on the date of allotment in 1994, and not when he applied in 1989.

Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi for Kokate told the Supreme Court bench that the HC had erred in refusing to stay the conviction and said that Kokate was not the holder of any post in 1989. However, Senior Advocate Maninder Singh, for the intervenor, claimed that the HC had found that he had not declared his agricultural income at the relevant time. Singh said the HC had observed he was under a “legal and moral obligation to disclose the said income ab initio and, at the very least, prior to the finalisation of the allotment”. The Supreme Court judges orally remarked, “False declaration does not make document forgery. But there is a fundamental error in the conviction itself. We will hear you (complainant/intervenor) also before we take a final view. This is a tentative view we have taken.”

Navjot Sidhu's aide Gulzar Chahal appointed Vice-Chairperson of Punjab Planning Board

GNS News Agency, Dec 23

The Punjab Government has appointed former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) treasurer Gulzar Inder Singh Chahal as the Vice-Chairperson (Cabinet rank) of the state Economic Policy and Planning Board. Considered to be close to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Chahal is also known for his proximity to Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu. When the former cricketer was appointed the Punjab PCC chief in 2021, he had handpicked Chahal as the treasurer.

Chahal will replace industrialist Rajinder Gupta, who had resigned from the planning board after he was nominated to Rajya Sabha by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Gupta was nominated to the Upper House of Parliament after the berth was vacated by Sanjeev Arora, following his election as a legislator from Ludhiana. Arora is now a minister in Mann's Cabinet. In September 2021, Chahal resigned from the post of PCC treasurer in solidarity with Sidhu who had quit as its chief in protest against the appointment of the then Advocate General A P S Deol. Sidhu had argued that Deol was the counsel for Dera Sacha Sauda chief Ram Rahim Singh who is currently serving a jail term for raping two of his disciples. Chahal has also served as the presi-

dent of the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA). He, however, had to step down from the post following a controversy after his father and retired Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Harinder Singh Chahal was accused of using a cricket ground unauthorisedly for a morning walk. Chahal is also an actor, producer, and entrepreneur. As part of his new appointment, he will be entitled to an office, official bungalow, and a vehicle, besides emoluments and perks. The Terms of Reference of his appointment have not been issued yet. His predecessor Gupta did not draw a salary while holding the post.

Kolkata to touch 13°C, Darjeeling 5°C this Christmas week: Know the coldest spots in Bengal



The IMD said winter is likely to intensify after Christmas, with night temperatures expected to dip by one to two degrees Celsius. Dense fog disrupted visibility across several districts of Bengal, while temperatures remained slightly above normal, especially in South Bengal. Even as temperatures across Bengal fluctuated over the past day, dense fog affected visibility in several districts. In South Bengal, Bardhaman recorded the lowest minimum at 10.8 degrees Celsius, while in the North Bengal plains, Alipurduar registered 9 degrees Celsius. The hill regions saw the sharpest drop, with Darjeeling dipping to 4.8 degrees Celsius. Kolkata (Alipore) logged a minimum temperature of 15.2 degrees Celsius — 0.7 degrees Celsius above normal.

“Visibility was impacted by fog across several districts: moderate fog (200m–500m) was reported in Purba

Medinipur, South 24 Parganas, Paschim Bardhaman, Malda and Jalpaiguri. Shallow fog (500m–1,000m) was observed in Coochbehar, Kolkata, Purba Medinipur, North 24 Parganas, Birbhum and Bankura,” the weather office stated. Despite expectations of a harsher winter due to La Niña and northerly winds, November remained unusually warm. A brief cold spell early in December faded quickly. A western disturbance has now slowed the advance of winter, but the IMD indicates a fresh dip in temperature from Christmas week onwards. Night temperatures in Kolkata and parts of South Bengal remain slightly above normal. For the next five days, no significant change is expected. Post-December 25, minimum temperatures in South Bengal are likely to fall by one to two degrees Celsius. Weather across the state will remain dry on Monday, with a slight rise in daytime temperatures over the coming weekend, making mornings and evenings feel less chilly. Maximum and minimum temperatures are most likely to be around 23 degrees Celsius and 15 degrees Celsius respectively.

Early morning fog has made its presence. The IMD has issued warnings for Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Malda, and Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur. In Western districts and parts of North Bengal, visibility may drop below 200 meters due to dense fog. Experts advise caution for early morning commuters. While South Bengal continues with a milder winter, North Bengal remains firmly in the grip of colder conditions. “The winter will gradually intensify across the southern districts after Christmas Day,” said an official.

From idea in 1986 to first flight in 2025: the long wait for Navi Mumbai International Airport

GNS News Agency, Dec 23

When IndiGo flight 6E460 from Bengaluru lands at Navi Mumbai International Airport at 8 am on Thursday, it will mark the end of a long wait for an idea first discussed nearly four decades ago.

The need for a second airport for Mumbai was formally identified in 1986, when a committee headed by J R D Tata warned that the city's only airport, constrained by surrounding development, would not be able to handle rising air traffic in the long run. Even then, planners recognised that Mumbai's growth would eventually outstrip the capacity of a single airport. What followed was not swift execution but years of studies, revised plans, and regulatory hurdles stretching the project far beyond its original timelines.

Mumbai's aviation infrastructure has expanded largely in response to mounting pressure rather than advance planning. The Juhu aerodrome served as the city's main airport until the Santa Cruz airport opened in 1942, initially han-

ding just six flights a day. As passenger traffic increased, expansions followed, including a new terminal at Sahar in the late 1970s and the opening of a revamped and privatised Mumbai airport with an integrated terminal in 2014. Each expansion provided temporary relief, but demand continued to rise, reinforcing the need for an additional airport outside the city. The first concrete step towards a new airport was taken in 1996, when a pre-feasibility study examined the Panvel region as a viable location. In 2001, the Maharashtra Government submitted a formal proposal to the Centre. At the same time, the Ministry of Civil Aviation examined several sites in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, including Mandwa Rewas. Navi Mumbai was initially considered suitable only for domestic operations because of runway constraints, prompting the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) to later revise the plan to include two parallel runways.

108 Staff Saves Mother And Baby In Time After Delivery In 108 Ambulance

“Indian Chronicle“ kumram bheem, Asifabad, District Report, Jade Srinivas, December, 23.

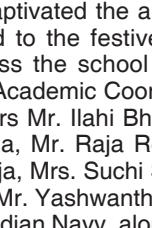
“Wankidi Mandal to Indani village Gurnule Renuka, husband Ramachandran was rushed to Wankidi Government Hospital by 108 ambulance as his second labour pains started. However, before reaching the hospital, the delivery had to be done midway. In this difficult time, 108 EMT Praveen Yadav performed the delivery successfully with utmost skill and courage without any worry. 108 pilot Bhimrao played a key role in ensuring the ambulance was delivered safely and with full cooperation. After the delivery, the mother and the newborn were immediately

rushed to Wankidi Government Hospital, where the doctors there examined them and found that both were completely healthy. This was a joyous event for a family due to the timely response of 108 ambulance services. The villagers praised the services of 108 ambulance staff and said that their dedication in saving lives in emergency situations is commendable.

Pre-Christmas Celebrations Held with Grandeur in Sarapaka Festive Programs at Bhadrachalam Public School

“Kranthi Kumar Dasari | December 23 | Pinapaka Constituency | Indian Chronicle : Pre-Christmas celebrations were held with great enthusiasm on Tuesday at Bhadrachalam Public School in Sarapaka town of Burgampadu mandal. The programme, conducted on the school premises, was attended by the school Principal, Mr. Prashanth Kitukule, as the chief guest. Addressing the students on the occasion, the Principal explained the significance of Christmas. He stated that Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, showed the world the path of peace, love, compassion, and goodwill. He emphasized that the teachings of Jesus Christ continue to serve as a guiding light for leading a righteous and meaningful life. As part of the celebrations, cultural programmes presented by the

students captivated the audience. Carols, dances, and skits added to the festive spirit, spreading Christmas cheer across the school campus. The event was attended by Academic Coordinator Mrs. Suma Bindu, senior teachers Mr. Ilai Bhakshi, Mr. Padmanabha Rao, Mrs. Victoria, Mr. Raja Reddy, Mr. K. V. Ramesh, Mr. Sireesh Raja, Mrs. Suchi Smitha, and former student of the school Mr. Yashwanth Reddy, who is currently serving in the Indian Navy, along with other faculty members and staff, contributing to the success of the programme.



'Strain entirely of Yunus' making': Sheikh Hasina blames interim government for stressed relations with India



The spiral of violence in Bangladesh which included the lynching of a Hindu man has elicited deep concern from India, especially in the light of recent threats by radical groups to Indian missions in the country. Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believes that the stressed relations between India and her country are completely of the making of the interim government headed by Mohammad Yunus. The former Bangladesh PM accused the Yunus government of issuing hostile statements against India and failing to protect religious minorities.

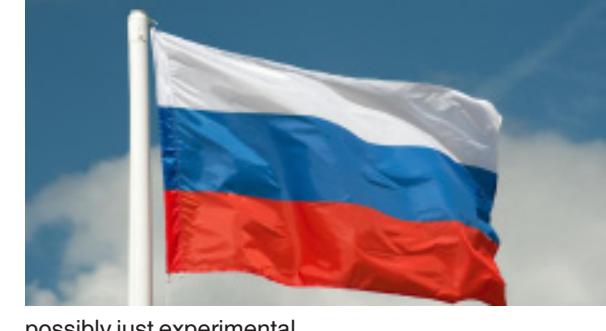
"The strain you are witnessing is entirely of Yunus' making. His government issues hostile statements against India, fails to protect religious minorities, and allows extremists to dictate foreign policy, then expresses surprise when tensions rise. India has been Bangladesh's most steadfast friend and partner for decades. The ties between our nations are deep and fundamental; they will outlast any temporary government. I am confident that once legitimate governance is restored, Bangladesh will return to the sensible partnership we cultivated over fifteen years," she said. "This hostility is being manufactured by extremists who have been emboldened by the Yunus regime. These are the same actors who marched on the Indian Embassy and attacked our media offices, who attack minorities with impunity, and who forced me and my family to flee for our lives. Yunus has placed such figures in positions of power and released convicted terrorists from prison. India's concerns about the safety of its personnel are justified, I am sorry to say. A responsible government would protect diplomatic missions and prosecute those who threaten them. Instead, Yunus grants immunity to hooligans and calls them warriors," she added. Hasina's remarks come days after India's Ministry of External Affairs summoned the Bangladeshi envoy in New Delhi over security concerns linked to protests outside Indian High Commissions in Bangladesh. Dhaka, in

turn, had earlier summoned India's High Commissioner to convey its objections over what it called "anti-election activities" linked to Bangladeshi political figures staying in India. Hasina, who has been staying in India since her government was ousted last year following mass protests, defended New Delhi's long-standing ties with Dhaka. "India has been Bangladesh's most steadfast friend and partner for decades. The ties between our nations are deep and fundamental; they will outlast any temporary government," she said.

She added that once "legitimate governance is restored", Bangladesh would return to the "sensible partnership" cultivated during her 15-year tenure. The diplomatic back-and-forth intensified after Bangladesh on December 14 summoned India's High Commissioner Pranay Verma, alleging that "fugitive political figures", including Hasina, were engaging in activities from Indian soil aimed at influencing Bangladesh's upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for February next year.

New Delhi rejected the accusations, reiterating that India has never allowed its territory to be used for activities harmful to the interests of the people of Bangladesh. India's Ministry of External Affairs underlined that it remains committed to a stable and democratic Bangladesh. Tensions further escalated following the killing of Inqilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Hadi, who was shot at close range in Dhaka on December 12 and later died in Singapore on December 18. His death triggered widespread protests across Bangladesh, including demonstrations outside Indian diplomatic missions. Following reports of security threats to the Indian High Commission and inflammatory anti-India statements from Bangladesh's student leaders, during these protests, India summoned the Bangladeshi envoy in New Delhi. On the death of Osman Hadi, Sheikh Hasina alleged that "lawlessness" that uprooted her regime has multiplied under Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus. The former PM also flagged the persecution of minorities in the country, saying that India "sees the chaos." "This tragic killing reflects the lawlessness that uprooted my government and has multiplied under Yunus. Violence has become the norm while the interim government either denies it or is powerless to stop it. Such incidents destabilise Bangladesh internally but also our relationships with neighbours who are watching with justified alarm. India sees the chaos, the persecution of minorities, and the erosion of everything we built together. When you cannot maintain basic order within your borders, your credibility on the international stage collapses. This is the reality of Yunus' Bangladesh," Sheikh Hasina said.

Western intelligence suspects Russia is developing new weapon to target Elon Musk's Starlink satellites



possibly just experimental

The findings seen by the AP didn't say when Russia might be capable of deploying such a system, nor detail whether it has been tested or how far along research is believed to be. The system is in active development, and information about the timing of an expected deployment is too sensitive to share, according to an official familiar with the findings and other related intelligence that the AP did not see. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the nonpublic findings. Such Russian research could be simply experimental, Samson said. "I wouldn't put it past some scientists ... to build out something like this because it's an interesting thought-experiment and they think, you know, maybe at some point we can get our government to pay for it," she said. Samson suggested the spectre of a supposed new Russian threat may also be an effort to elicit an international response.

"Oftentimes, people pushing these ideas are doing it because they want the US side to build something like that or ... to justify increased spending on counterspace capabilities or using it for a more hawkish approach on Russia," she said. "I'm not saying that this is what's happening with this," Samson added. "But it has been known to happen that people take these crazy arguments and use them." Tiny pellets could remain undetected.

The intelligence findings say the pellets would be so small — just millimetres across — that they would evade detection by ground- and space-based systems that scan for space objects, which could make it hard to pin blame for any attack on Moscow. Clayton Swope, who specialises in space security and weaponry at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington, D.C.-based security and policy think tank, said if "the pellets are not trackable, that complicates things, but people would figure it out." "If satellites start winking out with damage, I guess you could put two and two together," he said. Exactly how much destruction tiny pellets could do isn't clear. In November, a suspected impact by a small piece of debris was sufficient to damage a Chinese spacecraft that was meant to bring three astronauts back to Earth. "Most damage would probably be done to the solar panels because they're probably the most fragile part" of satellites, Swope said. "That'd be enough, though, to damage a satellite and probably bring it offline."

Weapon of fear' could threaten chaos After such an attack, pellets and debris would over time fall back toward Earth, possibly damaging other orbiting systems on their way down, analysts say. Starlink's orbits are about 550 kilometres (340 miles) above the planet. China's Tiangong space station and the International Space Station operate at lower orbits, "so both would face risks," according to Swope. The space chaos that such a weapon could cause might enable Moscow to threaten its adversaries without actually having to use it, Swope said. "It definitely feels like a weapon of fear, looking for some kind of deterrence or something," he said. Samson said the drawbacks of an indiscriminate pellet weapon could steer Russia off such a path. "They've invested a huge amount of time and money and human power into being, you know, a space power," she said. Using such a weapon "would effectively cut off space for them as well," Samson said. "I don't know that they would be willing to give up that much."

Russian General killed in car bomb in Moscow, investigators say



GNS News Agency, Dec 23

A Russian General was killed in a car bomb in Moscow on Monday, Russia's investigative committee said. Lt. Gen. Fanil Sarvarov, head of the Operational Training Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, died from his injuries, Svetlana Petrenko, official spokes-

person for Russia's Investigative Committee said. "Investigators are pursuing numerous lines of enquiry regarding the murder. One of these is that the crime was orchestrated by Ukrainian intelligence services," Mr. Petrenko said. The committee said that one of the versions being investigated is that the bomb was planted by Ukrainian special services. Since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022, Kyiv has been blamed for several attacks targeting Russian military officials and pro-Kremlin personalities in Russia and in Russian-controlled Ukrainian regions. General Yaroslav Moskalik, a Deputy of the General Staff, was killed in a car blast near Moscow in April. In December 2024, Igor Kirillov, the head of the Russian radiological, chemical and biological defence forces, was killed when a booby-trapped electric scooter exploded in Moscow, an attack claimed by Ukraine's SBU security service. A Russian military blogger, Maxim Fomin, was killed when a statue exploded in a Saint Petersburg cafe in April 2023. And in August 2022, a car bomb killed Daria Dugina, the daughter of ultranationalist ideologue Alexander Dugin.

U.S. Justice Department restores Trump photo to public database of files



GNS News Agency, Dec 23

A photo of U.S. President Donald Trump that had been removed from the cache of Jeffrey Epstein files released by the U.S. Department of Justice was restored on Sunday after officials determined none of Epstein's victims were in the image, the department said. The photo showing a desk with an open drawer containing a photo of Mr. Trump with various women was flagged by the Southern District of New York for review to protect potential victims. "After the review, it was determined there is no evidence that any Epstein victims are depicted in the photograph, and it

has been reposted without any alteration or redaction," the Justice Department said on X on Sunday. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said earlier on Sunday his office removed the photo because of concerns about women in the photo. "It has nothing to do with President Trump," Mr. Blanche said during a Sunday morning appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker."

The Justice Department released thousands of documents on Friday related to Jeffrey Epstein, a convicted sex offender who committed suicide in 2019. But it has drawn criticism, including from some Republicans, over extensive redactions and few documents mentioning Mr. Trump despite his well-publicised friendship with Epstein. During an ABC News interview on Sunday, Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries called for a "full and complete investigation as to why the document production has fallen short of what the law clearly required." Up to 16 photos, including the desk drawer Trump image, were removed on Saturday from the Justice Department website, according to The New York Times, NPR and the Associated Press, although Reuters could not independently confirm the removals. The Justice Department said on Sunday it acted with an abundance of caution after receiving requests from alleged victims and their lawyers to remove information.

When 'misvestment' has more facets than is known

A week ago, my friend Rathi called and asked for suggestions on investment avenues. When I asked her about her goal, she said, "I have three more months before the financial year ends. I want to save on taxes." The urgency to reduce tax had already defined the decision. Often, misvestment wears disguises. Last week, we examined a few investor archetypes. Now, let us unpack the rest. The Taxvestor/Taxvestors' investment choices begin with options of reducing Tax Deducted at Source (TDS). As a result, they choose tax-saving instruments without examining returns, lock-in period or long-term impact. Most of the traditional tax-saving options struggle to deliver returns beyond 6-8%, barely keeping pace with inflation, leave alone real wealth creation.

Misvestment occurs when tax relief is mistaken for wealth (value) creation. Tax-saving instruments offer some immediate and tangible benefit but, in the process, you incur an opportunity cost (cost of missing an opportunity) by locking hard-earned money into such low-return-investing financial instruments that may quietly erode long-term growth. Imagine locking 1,50,000 a year at just 7.1% interest rate per annum in PPF for 15 years. While it satisfies tax-saving needs in the short term, the returns may barely outpace inflation, limiting real wealth creation. Over time, what feels like a prudent year-end tax-saving decision can turn into wealth destroyer. This is not because tax planning is wrong, but because it is misunderstood as investing. The Fomovestor

Now imagine this. A large land-promotion event is held on the city outskirts. Your favourite celebrities associated with the developer participate in the event, adding credibility and excitement. The promoter announces "most plots are already booked" and only a few remain. Buyers are told the current price is valid only for three days and rates will be revised shortly. The promoter also adds sweeteners: "If you book a plot today, you will get one gram of gold coin; and if you book five plots, you will get an electric scooter for free. Further, an extra discount of 50 per square foot will be offered for the early birds." Such cues are enough for Fomovestors to jump onto the bandwagon. They watch others rushing to book and simply follow suit driven by the Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO). What convinces them is the urgency created around it. For a Fomovestor, this opportunity feels rare and hesitation like a loss. They perceive speed as security and evaluation as risk. Misvestment occurs



when the fear of missing out overrides patience, due diligence and timing.

The Trendvestor A Trendvestor chases trends and follows the market's flavour of the moment. If meme coins are flying off the shelves today, Trendvestors join the wave until something else captures their attention. EV stocks one year, defence shares the next, meme coins when social media buzz peaks and so on. The trend itself becomes the signal to buy. Misvestment occurs when momentum is mistaken for merit. By the time most Trendvestors enter, the trend is often mature. They end up buying at peak or near-peak prices rather than buy on the dips. The Hotvestor/Hotvestors 'invest' in moments of excitement. A sudden price spike, buzzing IPO day or a viral tip is enough to trigger action. The decision is impulsive. At first glance, Trendvestors and Hotvestors may look similar, but they are not. Trendvestors buy because something has been rising for a while and the trend is visible over time and Hotvestors buy as it feels suddenly exciting at that moment. The Greenvestor/Greenvestors 'invest' to align money with ethical values. Environmental impact, social cause or ethical intent becomes the primary filter, often outweighing returns, valuation or risk. For instance, a Greenvestor invests in ESG or the so-called "ethical" or "green" options, even if returns take a back seat. Real investment/Real investing begins where misvestment ends. It starts with clarity of goal, a focus on intrinsic value creation and the patience to let compounding work over time. When wealth generation becomes the objective and decisions are aligned with goals, risk and time horizon, investing moves away from reacting to noise and towards building lasting value.

62 pc Indians use GenAI at work; AI seen boosting productivity: EY survey

New Delhi: Around 62 per cent Indians are using GenAI at work regularly, whereas 90 per cent employers and 86 per cent employees believe that AI impacts productivity positively, a report showed on Monday.

Also, 75 per cent employees and 72 per cent employers believe that GenAI enhances decision making, 82 per cent employees and 92 per cent employers believe it positively impacts quality of work, said the 'EY 2025 Work Reimagined Survey'. The report shows that India is among the highest AI adopters globally, and leads with 53 points on the 'AI Advantage' score, developed to quantify the real impact of AI at work by measuring how much time employees save, while the global average score sits at 34 points. The survey, now in its sixth edition, draws insights from 15,000 employees and 1,500 employers across 29 markets globally. In India, where 800 employees and 50 employers were surveyed, a strong environment supports employee engagement and resilience in the changing AI landscape, according to the report. India also holds a 'Talent Health' score of 82, the highest among all geographies assessed. This score measures employee sentiment re-

garding culture, rewards, and development, areas that collectively form the foundation of Talent Health.

The global average 'Talent Health' score stands at 65 out of 100, with culture accounting for 44 per cent, rewards 32 per cent and development 24 per cent, the report mentioned. "India has made strong strides in AI adoption, and organizations are taking a more intentional approach to balancing productivity, skills, and employee experience. Technology, including AI, is increasingly shaping how work gets done, but the real impact comes from how employers are using it to strengthen talent health, capability, and workforce resilience," said Anurag Malik, Partner and National Leader – People Consulting, EY India. The findings also reveal how employers and employees view AI governance. Around 94 per cent employers and 89 per cent employees consistently report higher levels of confidence across ethical and responsible AI. While both 87 per cent employees and 90 per cent employers in India say learning new skills is essential — actual learning hours remain limited. Most employees globally report spending fewer than 40 hours a year on AI learning.

How Tamil sci-fi writers are bringing science closer to children



When Tamil-medium schoolchildren are intrigued by science and wish to pick up a few novels to quench that curiosity, they come across many English titles translated into Tamil. But a sci-fi novel written in Tamil, whose plot is set in familiar neighbourhoods and features futuristic inventions in towns the student recognises, fills a much larger gap. This is exactly what some new-age Tamil authors writing for children have been working towards. "Tamil science fiction written exclusively for children is a niche, but it has been steadily growing compared to previous decades," says Kamalalayan of Bharathi Puthakalayam, a Chennai-based publishing house that has brought out over a hundred Tamil sci-fi titles for children. "We make sure our science fiction books are available at book fairs. When Tamil-medium students show an interest in reading science, English sci-fi titles are often expensive and harder to comprehend."

Writer Era Natarasan, popularly known as 'Ayisha' Natarasan, consciously chooses to write Tamil sci-fi so that students interested in science have accessible reading avenues. He adds that some non-profit organisations now bring government schoolchildren to book fairs, where his books are sold for as little as five to 10 rupees. "Many Tamil-medium students who come from underprivileged back-

grounds may be the first graduates in their families. When they pick up a Tamil sci-fi title, it can transform their lives," says Mr. Natarasan, who also won the 2014 Bala Sahitya Akademi Award for Best Children's Literature for his Tamil sci-fi work *Vingyan Vikramadithan Kathaigal*.

Tamil sci-fi authors in the State have been writing about ecological awareness, technology, and environmental protection through fiction, says writer Komakal Elango. "Reading itself has become a long-lost habit, so new-age writers are trying to make Tamil sci-fi more interesting by combining science with fantasy," says Mr. Elango, who writes stories about earthworms, milk packets, technology, and medical sciences. Retired zoology professor Mohana S. writes stories set in familiar towns such as Sivakasi, making sci-fi not-so-intimidating for children. She says the genre is still a niche because adding science to fiction requires careful thought and research.

Journalist Adhi Valliappan, who predominantly writes science non-fiction alongside some sci-fi, spoke about initiatives such as the Ilanthalir Ilakkira Thittam and Vaasippu lyakkam schemes by the State government, which ensure that science and environment books are more accessible to children. "If English-medium students can enjoy reading sci-fi in English, Tamil-medium students from underprivileged backgrounds deserve the same exposure," says the writer, who also talks about climate change in his children's sci-fi novels. Adding to these efforts are government-run fortnightly children's Tamil magazines like Thenchittu for classes 6 to 9 and Puthuonjal for classes 4 and 5, circulated across Tamil Nadu's government schools. "Among other subjects, we also talk about everyday science through fiction and comics in an easy-to-understand format. Compared to previous years, science-related work for children is not limited anymore," shares Bala Bharathi, its editor-in-chief.

Your appendix plays a bigger role in your health than you may think



For decades, the human appendix was casually dismissed as a "useless" vestige. Modern research and clinical experience, however, suggest that this small, narrow pouch, attached to the cecum in the lower right abdomen, has a more nuanced role than once believed. "The appendix is like a safe house for good bacteria, supporting the digestive system after illness," says Sugun Subramanian, senior consultant, surgical gastroenterology at SRM Global Hospitals, Chennai. Beyond this, it may influence the immune system, especially early in life, by exposing white blood cells to antigens in the digestive tract, he notes. Arunmozh Varman, consultant for laparoscopic and robotic hernia surgery, Rela Hospitals, Chennai describes it as a lymphoid organ that helps the gut recover post-infection.

"Our ancestors may have needed the appendix more, when food cleanliness was uncertain, but even today, it quietly supports immunity. It's a small, silent job, but not the appendix is not a piece of waste as we once assumed," stresses J. Saravanan, senior consultant surgical gastroenterologist & robotic surgeon, VS Hospitals, Chennai. Typically 7-10 cm long, the appendix varies in position and size, sometimes ranging from 2 cm to 20 cm. Gautham Krishnamurthy, senior consultant, surgical gastroenterologist, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, adds that the appendix has historically been important for digesting raw, plant-based food. Today, it functions mainly as beneficial gut bacteria, protecting and aiding replenishment after disturbances such as diarrhoeal illnesses.

The appendix can become inflamed, causing appendicitis—a common surgical emergency. Classic symptoms include abdominal pain beginning near the belly button and shifting to the lower right side, accompanied by fever, nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite. Siddharth D., consultant, minimally invasive surgery at SIMS Hospital, notes that acute appendicitis affects around 9% of the population, most commonly in their twenties and thirties. Appendicitis is caused by an obstruction from hardened stools (faecolith), an infection, or rarely, tumors. Myths—such as fruit seeds

causing appendicitis, or the condition resolving spontaneously—are incorrect. "Delay can lead to rupture, which is life-threatening," warns Dr. Varman.

Appendectomy is the definitive treatment. Minimally invasive options include laparoscopic or robotic surgery. "Most patients walk the same day and go home in a day or two," Dr. Saravanan says. The procedure involves small keyhole incisions and camera guidance, though open surgery remains important for complicated cases. In some cases, uncomplicated appendicitis can be managed with antibiotics. Dr. Subramanian explains, "Non-surgical methods work initially, but there is a greater risk of recurrence. Surgery remains the standard, long-term solution." Studies show about 70% of uncomplicated cases respond to antibiotics, but recurrence can reach 40% within a year, particularly in patients with appendicoliths or limited healthcare access, says Dr. Krishnamurthy. Doctors often encounter several misconceptions about the appendix. Many believe it is completely useless, but while not essential for survival, the appendix does house beneficial bacteria and supports immunity. Another common myth is that removal of the appendix harms long-term health; in reality, most patients live normal lives without any dietary restrictions. As Dr. Arunmozh Varman points out, "You can still enjoy pizza and biryani!" Some people think appendicitis affects only young adults, but it can occur at any age, though early adulthood is most common. There is also a dangerous belief that home remedies or ignoring the pain will help; untreated appendicitis can rupture, leading to serious complications. Dr. J. Saravanan emphasises, "If your body sends a strong signal, listen. Come early. We'll fix it before it becomes trouble."

Post-surgery recovery is usually smooth. Patients may rest a few days, avoid heavy lifting for several weeks, and start with light meals. Long-term lifestyle or health impacts are minimal. Short-term changes, such as minor bowel adjustments, may occur, but minimally invasive techniques reduce the risk of adhesions or complications. Dr. Krishnamurthy recalls cases during a recent Diwali weekend where a patient delayed surgery, resulting in an emergency laparoscopic procedure due to severe infection. Such cases highlight the importance of timely intervention. It's there for a reason. The appendix, though small, plays a supporting role in immunity and gut health. Acute appendicitis remains the most common abdominal surgical emergency. Early recognition, proper medical evaluation, and timely treatment, preferably via minimally invasive surgery, ensure safe recovery and minimal long-term impact. "Life after an appendix removal is completely normal, except in rare cases of complications," notes Dr. Saravanan. "For most patients, it becomes something they barely remember and that's the best outcome we can hope for."

Bangladesh burns again

A year and a half since the students' uprising in Bangladesh, which ousted former President Sheikh Hasina, the country faces more uncertainty, as the latest round of violence unfolding on the streets makes clear.

The pent-up resistance, widespread disillusionment, and frustration among scores of young citizens is manifesting in varied, dangerous forms, even as Chief Administrator Muhammad Yunus struggles to respond to the agitations and rein in hardline elements. Last week, angry mobs set fire to offices of Prothom Alo and Daily Star—the country's best-known Bengali and English newspapers—signalling that more turbulence is in store. Bangladesh is on the edge yet again. On December 11, 2025, Mr. Yunus announced that elections—there is serious concern over credibility of polls—would be held on February 12, 2026. Ms. Hasina's Awami League has been banned from the contest, and Khaleda Zia's (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) self-exiled son Tarique Rahman has announced plans return to Bangladesh after 17 years, as Kallol Bhattacharjee reported. The Jamaat-e-Islami party, too, is preparing to run. However, no political party is favoured, nor is any under pressure. Mr. Yunus's press adviser Shafiqul Alam told Kallol Bhattacharjee. In an another, unexpected escalation days after the polls were announced, Bangladesh youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, who played a key role in turning the July 2024 uprising into a movement against what he called 'cultural fascism', was shot by unknown assailants. Days later, he passed away in Singapore. Read Kallol Bhattacharjee's profile of the youth leader, whose killing has set off violent reactions. India on Sunday described the killing of a minority Hindu youth in Bangladesh as a "horrendous act" and expressed "strong concern" about the safety

of minority communities in the neighbouring country. Soon after the return of the mortal remains of Sharif Osman Hadi, UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk called for a "transparent investigation" into the killing and urged "everyone to refrain from violence". Don't miss the latest episode of *Worldview*, in which our Diplomatic Affairs Editor Suhasini Haidar breaks down what led to the current turmoil, that will not only impact Bangladesh's immediate political trajectory significantly, but also further affect the country's India ties, already under enormous strain. Last week, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and discussed ways to enhance cooperation in technology, economy, connectivity and security, expressing confidence that the bilateral strategic partnership will "grow from strength to strength". Valued his perspectives on regional and global developments. Confident that our Strategic Partnership will grow from strength to strength," he added. While some foreign policy wonks see it as "strategic autonomy" and "realpolitik", the pressing moral questions that arise on India's questionable position on Gaza remain. The death toll in Gaza has gone past 70,000, as Israeli aggression continues despite a "ceasefire".

Top 5 stories

1. Cyclone Ditwah | Sri Lanka's long path from wreckage to recovery – Ground Zero feature
2. Interview | India should reassess resilience of its air defence systems purchased from Russia: U.K. weapons and military expert Jack Watling tells Sriram Lakshman
3. The Pinochet fan - Sruthi Darbhamulla profiles Chile's next President, its most right-wing leader since the Pinochet era and an admirer of the dictator

Flosdorf, Mudd, and a way to handle blood



Does the sight, or even the thought, of blood scare you? In that case, this one might not be for you. If it doesn't or if you wish to brave on, you'll find out more about blood and the means to handle it by the end of this one.

Components of blood Human blood takes up the role of transporting oxygen and nutrients in the body and helps fight infections and regulate our temperature. Making up 7-8% of a person's body weight, an average adult carries approximately 5 to 6 litres of blood in their body. It has four main components: plasma, which is the liquid part; red blood cells, which carries nutrients; white blood cells, which fights infection; and platelets, which helps clotting. When blood is spun in a centrifuge, it separates into three distinct layers based on density: Plasma (lightest, top yellow liquid), the thin Buffy Coat (middle layer of white blood cells and platelets), and dense Red Blood Cells (heaviest, bottom layer).

If there's someone in your circle who donates blood, or any of its components for that matter, they might have told you what the shelf life which varies by component. While red blood cells last up to 42 days when refrigerated, plasma can be stored for up to a year, or even longer. Platelets, however, are stored at room temperature and have to be used within 5-7 days, hence requiring frequent donations from willing volunteers. If not for the research of biochemists Stuart Mudd and Earl Flosdorf, the science surrounding blood transfusion—the medical procedure wherein blood or its components are given directly into a patient's bloodstream—might not be where it is today. For it was their efforts that resulted in a process to produce dried human blood serum—a technique that was first exhaustively used during World War II. Their collaboration

A native of Pennsylvania, U.S., Mudd hailed from a medical family. His father was a surgeon and he earned his M.D. from Harvard Medical School in 1920. Having joined the University of Pennsylvania faculty in 1929, he founded and chaired the Department of Microbiology from 1931 up until his retirement in 1959. Flosdorf, meanwhile, was a skilled research assistant and refrigeration engineer. In his collaboration with Mudd, Flosdorf brought his practical technical expertise to the table. The duo got to work on the problem of handling blood more effectively. Up until the 1930s, there was no efficient commercial drying techniques available for blood. As blood is composed of a number of proteins, they break down under normal environmental conditions. Outside living organisms, biological proteins aggregate and become insoluble through a sequence of events known as denaturation, which is influenced both by time and temperature. The commercial drying methods of the time depended on heat, thereby destroying crucial proteins in blood.

Removing water Flosdorf and Mudd came up with a method that relied on removing nearly 99.9% of the water content in blood. They achieved this by high speed vertical spin freezing, drying by sublimation, followed by a secondary dessication. In simpler terms, their process involved separating the blood into its components, before they were frozen and dried twice such that the resultant sample had less than 0.5% of water in it. On December 21, 1933, the duo succeeded in preparing dried human blood serum for the first time in the U.S. at the school of Medicine, University

of Pennsylvania. As it didn't involve multiple transitions in temperature, degradation to the proteins in blood were kept to a minimum. On March 28, 1934, Flosdorf reported their results, reading out their paper before the division of biological chemistry of the American Chemical Society. In addition to Flosdorf and Mudd, Dr. John Reichel and Dr. Harry Eagle also contributed to the process. When it was time to use the dried human blood serum, all that was needed was to inject sterile, distilled water through the rubber stopper with a needle and syringe. Once the serum dissolves rapidly, it can then be drawn back into the syringe, ready for injection into a body.

War-time push Despite their breakthrough, their process remained merely a curiosity in the years that followed. It was only the advent of World War II that hastened their push for their process to become a workable procedure. When the war broke out in 1939, it was obvious to everyone involved that blood transfusion would be playing a crucial role in the treatment of countless casualties. Whole blood had to be refrigerated unless given freshly, and even when refrigerated had a limited shelf life. Add to this the necessity of cold storage in a war-field, and the use of whole blood for transfusion was limited. Suddenly, the method that Mudd and Flosdorf had come up with became all the more relevant. It was soon perfected with two stages involved in the technique to carry out the high vacuum drying by sublimation, with two common methods employed for the first stage. Blood testing tube with separated blood serum (yellow) and erythrocytes (dark red). Blood testing tube with separated blood serum (yellow) and erythrocytes (dark red). | Photo Credit: Spiritia / Wikimedia Commons

Not the only ones While Mudd and Flosdorf made important contributions to this process, they weren't the only ones working on it. In the Blood Drying Unit in Cambridge, England, physician Ronald Greaves was also working tirelessly to perfect the process of blood drying. While his basic methods were nearly identical to that of Mudd and Flosdorf, there were some differences. One of the minor differences factored in costs, using an alcohol bath rather than dry ice for the sake of chilling the condenser. The bigger difference lay in the emphasis of centrifugal vacuum spin-freezing that had been developed by Greaves along with his colleagues. This involved freezing the plasma by spinning bottles at high speed in sub-freezing condition, thereby ensuring that the plasma on the inner walls of the container spreads evenly until frozen, a technique that has since gone on to become the industry standard. The standards for freeze drying methods that were crucial for the blood and transfusion programmes during the war rested on the work done by these three men. While the method championed by Greaves was widely used in Canada and England, the process that Mudd and Flosdorf came up with was used largely by the Americans. Part of 5,000 and 8,000 blood serum, fecal, urine, viral and respiratory samples that arrive six days a week for analysis at the Epidemiology Laboratory Service. Part of 5,000 and 8,000 blood serum, fecal, urine, viral and respiratory samples that arrive six days a week for analysis at the Epidemiology Laboratory Service. | Photo Credit: Defense Visual Information Distribution Service / NARA

Study of blood In addition to these techniques themselves being useful, they also paved the way for further understanding of the subject when it was put into action. For one, when some blood transfusions led to rejections in soldiers, the problem was found to be in the blood typing. Research that followed enabled us to better understand the components of blood and also how different bodies might react when a transfusion is performed. What started in the battlefields eventually seeped into civilian society as well and blood transfusions have saved millions of lives worldwide in the decades since. Even though Mudd and Flosdorf might not have thought of it themselves, the development of drying blood has led to this process being employed to preserve a range of biological products. These include live viruses in use for vaccines, living bacteria, hormones, antibiotics, and even cancer therapy drugs. The techniques are not only limited to this field, but are also used in the food industry, mainly for fruits, vegetables, milk, meat and eggs.

Beyond right answers: Rethinking how Maths is taught in classrooms

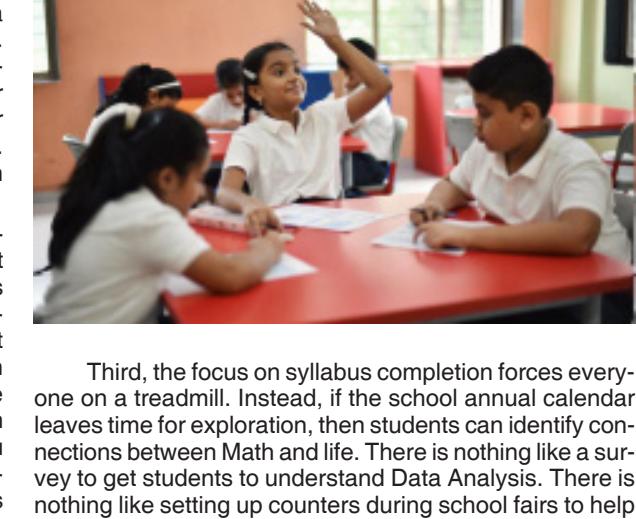
Visit any Math classroom in India, and you are sure to see a teacher scribbling hard on their blackboard, solving a Math problem, and students copying the steps religiously. There is very little discussion on making their thinking visible, on exploring alternate ways of solving a problem, or articulating connections to life. Class after class, chapter after chapter, this is repeated across most Indian schools. No wonder mathematical thinking is absent in Indian schools.

Mathematical thinking emphasizes reasoning, structure, patterns, and logical justification. At its core, it is about how you think, not just what answer you get. When Math is taught right, it can build a child's sense of logic and reasoning, it can help them discern patterns and structures, and it can help them become great problem solvers in life. But when syllabus completion is prioritised, when the pursuit of the right answer drowns out the whys and the what-ifs, when formulae and steps overshadow reasoning and logic, you get students who might score high in exams but do not develop mathematical thinking. In that situation, Math becomes a drudgery for students. And a lot of students begin fearing Maths or actively resisting it.

No place for mathematical thinking?

So why does Mathematical thinking struggle to survive in Indian classrooms? Here are five reasons and ideas on what we can do about it?

First, there has been no incentive for schools and teachers to build mathematical thinking because board exams and college admissions depend on speed and accuracy. NCF 2023 aims to change this by asking for reforms in examination to introduce more competence based exams. When students have to reason and apply logic in solving real-world problems, they'll continue to memorise steps and procedures to solve abstract problems. Second, teacher skill is an issue. Most Math teachers use traditional textbooks to teach Math. So, teachers end up just teaching abstract Math problems without building any concrete sense of Math. Moving to pedagogies like concrete-pictorial-abstract can help students see the quantities and operations behind mathematical symbols. For this, using mathematical tools such as number blocks, fraction kits, and algebra kits can help these teachers make Math concrete. And teachers need to be trained on building mathematical thinking vs. only solving Math problems.



Third, the focus on syllabus completion forces everyone on a treadmill. Instead, if the school annual calendar leaves time for exploration, then students can identify connections between Math and life. There is nothing like a survey to get students to understand Data Analysis. There is nothing like setting up counters during school fairs to help students understand mathematical operations, profit and loss. There is nothing like a school bank to help them understand interest and principal. Making Math real builds mathematical thinking. Fourth, books and study material need to have more open-ended questions. Having multiple methods, challenges, mathematical debates, asking students to create problems, or doing worked example analysis are easy and effective ways to build mathematical ability among students. Fifth and last, since Math as a skill is spiral in nature, a lot of students who do not build a strong foundation of number sense, mathematical operations and coordinates, often struggle with more abstract concepts such as integers, algebra and statistics.

And we don't do spaced repetition or remedials in our schools. We conduct exams, award marks and move on to the next topic. And the foundational gaps of students keep on compounding thus exacerbating the problem. Technology can help in this regard via AI tutors or remedial systems to personalise learning for students to help with their learning gaps. India is the land of shunyata. The place where great mathematical thinkers like Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, Bhaskara, Ramanujan and Manjul Bhargava were born. It is high time that we regain our leadership in the world and it begins by instilling mathematical thinking in our classrooms.



The Kamalesan case and its simple lesson



Every democracy faces moments when two values, both legitimate and which are deeply held, collide. The case of Lieutenant Samuel Kamalesan, dismissed from the Indian Army for refusing to enter the sanctum of his regiment's temple or gurdwara during mandatory parades, is one such clash. The Delhi High Court upheld the dismissal (Samuel Kamalesan vs Union of India), and the Supreme Court of India declined to interfere. The legal result is clear. The moral unease remains. The Court relied on military necessity, discipline and the power given by the Constitution under Article 33. The judgment places his refusal within the frame of disobedience of a lawful command rather than the practice of personal faith. Seen through that narrow lens, the courts acted exactly as they believe they should in military matters: defer to the generals. But that deference should not end the national conversation. When two legitimate values collide — conscience and cohesion — the tragedy is not simply that one side must lose. The tragedy is when institutions forget that accommodation is often possible, and often wise.

No one can dismiss what the Indian Army told the Court. A commanding officer in a fixed-class regiment must be accepted by the men he leads into war. Ritual and ceremony, though rooted in faith, serve as instruments of morale. Officers are expected to participate fully to strengthen their bond with the troops. The Indian Army saw the officer's stance as distancing, even if he meant it respectfully. The Court accepted this view. Military ethos demands unity. And no institution in India has preserved unity more honourably than the Indian Army. Whether in Kashmir or in Ladakh, whether rescuing civilians in floods or leading missions of the United Nations, the Indian Army has had a proud record of respecting diversity while building common purpose. A recent example bears repeating. Colonel Sofiya Qureshi was projected by the Indian Army as the face of Operation Sindoora during press briefings. Her leadership, confidence and professionalism were celebrated nationally. It was a reminder that the Indian Army has often been ahead of civilian society in giving space, honour and responsibility to women and to officers from every faith and region. That inclusive spirit is one of the Indian Army's strengths, and the country takes pride in it. Which is why the Kamalesan case stings. One cannot read the facts without seeing sincerity in his stance. He attended the parades. He respected the customs. He removed his shoes, tied the turban and stood with his troops. His only request was not to enter the sanctum during ritual worship, a core doctrinal issue for many Protestant Christians. The situation brings to mind Chariots of Fire, the story of Eric Liddell, who would not race on a Sunday. Instead of punishing him, the British Olympic team reorganized its entire plan. He competed on a different day. He won gold. The world did not fall apart. A small accommodation upheld both conscience and team spirit. If an Olympic team could bend, even slightly, to preserve a sincere belief, could the Army top brass not have done so here?

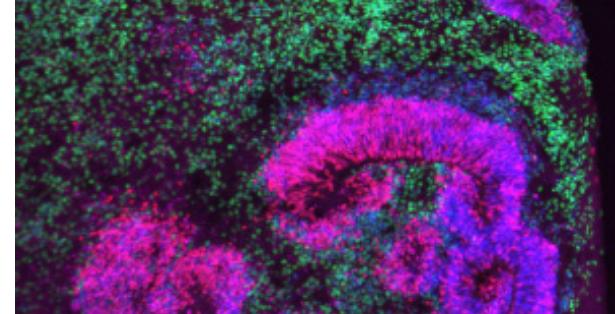
A lost officer and a lost signal. The loss in this case is larger than one career. The Indian armed forces may have

lost a potentially fine officer. But, more importantly, the message the decision sends to minority soldiers is unsettling: that even when you attend the parade, stand with the unit, and show respect, your personal limit of conscience counts for nothing. India's military unity has never been built on majoritarian comfort. It has been built on trust. Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Christian soldiers fought as one in 1965 and 1971, stood together in Kargil, and serve together today across insurgency zones. Soldiers from minority faiths should never have reason to wonder whether they will be asked to cross a line that their beliefs prohibit. The courts may not have intended this message. The Indian Army may not have intended it either. But messages do not depend solely on intention. The judiciary's instinct to defer to the military is understandable. Courts lack the tools, experience and institutional knowledge to second-guess tactical or disciplinary decisions. Yet, it is not correct to say that courts have always stayed away. In the cases of women officers, the Supreme Court forced a fundamental rethink of long-standing military practice. It has intervened in recruitment rules, pension rules and promotion policies. Courts have reshaped the Indian Army before, when equality demanded it.

In this case, the issue was modest: a sincere religious objection to entering a sanctum during worship. The officer did not refuse duty, did not leave his post, and did not weaken the chain of command. He stood respectfully outside, visible to the men he led. The Court could have asked whether the Indian Army's approach satisfied the test of proportionality, or whether a lighter touch could achieve the same purpose while respecting conscience. The judiciary had room, if it had chosen to use it. The principle in *Bijoe Emmanuel and Ors. vs State Of Kerala and Ors.*, where children who would not sing the national anthem were still protected because they stood respectfully, comes to mind. Justice Chinnappa Reddy reminded the nation: "our tradition teaches tolerance, our philosophy preaches tolerance, and our Constitution practises tolerance." It is difficult not to hear those words echo in this case. A lesson from Dreyfus. The parallel to the Dreyfus affair is not exact, nor should it be. But the warning it carries is real. France's military, proud and strong, allowed itself to drift into prejudice one small step at a time. Victor Hugo warned that armies lose their edge when they lose their sense of justice. Even the strongest institution can fall into a pattern where ritual becomes rigidity and rigidity becomes exclusion. India must guard against that drift. The Indian Army is respected because it rises above communal and political divides, because its officers lead by example, and because it has never demanded that faith be abandoned at the barracks gate. The most troubling part of this entire episode is not the Court's judgment, but that the matter reached a court at all. This was a problem that the senior leadership could have solved with one conversation, one directive, or one thoughtful accommodation. Instead, the issue hardened. Positions froze. And the court became the battleground for something that should have been resolved within the walls of the regiment. The Indian Army's greatness has always come from its ability to blend tradition with modernity, discipline with empathy, authority with fairness. In this case, that balance slipped. The Kamalesan case offers a simple lesson. When duty meets conscience, the real test is not choosing one over the other but finding a way for both to coexist. The Court stayed within its lane. But the Indian Army, which has often shown large-heartedness and flexibility, could have shown it again here. A small accommodation would have strengthened trust, preserved discipline, and affirmed the message that every soldier, of every faith, stands equal in the uniform of India. Justice Reddy said that "our Constitution practises tolerance". We honour that practice not by forcing uniformity, but by understanding when uniformity need not be forced.

— A lost officer and a lost signal. The loss in this case is larger than one career. The Indian armed forces may have

How groundbreaking new brain atlases capture development in motion



Imagine watching the brain not as a finished organ but as a city under construction, where every neuron is a worker changing jobs as the skyline rises. A series of papers in *Nature* published on November 5 has captured exactly that. Led by researchers at the Allen Institute for Brain Science in the USA, together with partners across the US BRAIN Initiative, scientists have charted how the brain's main cells — neurons and their supporting glia — form, migrate, and specialize across species from mouse to human. Instead of treating the brain as a fixed catalogue of parts, the new maps portray it as a living continuum, a time-lapse of genetic patterns flickering on and off as cells mature, connect, and build networks.

For the first time these studies offer a unified view of brain development across time and species. Previous efforts were hard to compare because labs used different methods, sampled different stages or focused on separate regions. The BRAIN Initiative teams solved this by standardizing protocols, building new sequencing and imaging tools, and creating shared computational pipelines to align data from mouse, marmoset, and human tissue. Together, they now provide a common reference for how neurons and glia emerge and assemble into circuits. Hongkui Zeng, director of the Allen Institute, described it as ushering in a "new era of developmental neuroscience", one that unifies data across space, time, and species. The six coordinated studies offer what she calls a "common reference" for how genes assemble the brain's intricate circuitry, a guide likely to steer neuroscience for years to come.

Where old maps fell short

For decades, brain atlases treated neurons as if they came in fixed categories. The new datasets have overturned this view by showing that developing cells move through gradual transitions, with gene-activity patterns that change step by step rather than in sharp jumps. In one of Dr. Zeng's studies, her team found that as the mouse brain matured, young neurons passed through intermediate stages where they showed a mix of features from both earlier and forthcoming cell types. "The boundaries are never clear-cut," Dr. Zeng said. Tomasz Nowakowski, an associate professor at the University of California, San Francisco, showed in his human lineage atlas that human brain development followed a similar path. By tracing the descendants of individual stem cells in cultured human foetal brain tissue, his team found that radial glia, the brain's builder cells, first produced neurons that activate signals, then those that quiet them. This gradual shift — which previous single-timepoint maps couldn't see — confirmed that neurons don't acquire their adult identity all at once. Specifically, the two studies together showed that developing neurons don't hold a single, stable identity. Their gene activity shifts gradually as they mature, passing through intermediate stages rather than jumping from one defined type to another.

Cells' journeys Dr. Nowakowski used viral barcoding to trace cell lineages in cultured human foetal brain tissue. The technique relies on harmless viruses that tag each stem cell with a unique genetic label, allowing researchers to fol-

low all of its descendants. His team then applied single-cell RNA sequencing to measure which genes were active in each developing neuron. The team also used spatial profiling to place those gene readouts back into their exact locations within the tissue, almost like returning pins to a 3D map. Together, these methods created a time-resolved record showing how individual cells divided, differentiated and settled into their developmental paths. Each of these steps began to show how one cell becomes many. Dr. Nowakowski said DNA analyses from postmortem human brains showed the same developmental shift his team observed in the culture, confirming that the pattern was not an artefact of the laboratory system.

Dr. Zeng's computational atlas added a way to define developmental transitions more precisely. Her team used algorithms to detect when a neuron's gene-activity profile had changed enough to qualify as a different cell stage, replacing earlier subjective judgments with quantitative criteria. Finally, Yale University professor Rong Fan's team added the missing dimension: place. In their spatial tri-omics atlas, the researchers measured three kinds of molecular information in thin, preserved slices of developing brain tissue: which genes were active, how accessible the surrounding DNA was, and which proteins each cell produced. Then they linked each measurement to the exact location of the cell within the tissue. This made it possible to see where different molecular patterns appeared and how neighbouring cells changed together over time. Taken together, these approaches allowed the researchers to follow developing cells across both time and space, rather than capturing them at isolated moments. Reading the new atlas

Together, these atlases have opened the door to understanding how billions of individual cell decisions shape the brain's extraordinary diversity. Cindy van Velthoven, an investigator at the Allen Institute, was part of a mouse study that tracked how inhibitory neurons, the cells that calm or balance brain activity, diversify and migrate as the forebrain forms. The team found inhibitory lineages that diversified at different times, some appeared later and were distributed across several regions, suggesting late-acting roles. Building on his work, Dr. Nowakowski's human atlas traced the complementary side of this circuitry: excitatory neurons, which increase neural activity.

How can teacher-BLOs decide citizenship, petitioners ask SC



Petitioners in the Supreme Court on Thursday (November 27, 2025) flagged the Election Commission (EC)'s "dangerous and unreasonable" move to have schoolteachers, deployed as booth-level officers (BLOs) in the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise, determine the citizenship of voters. Appearing before a Bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi, senior advocates Kapil Sibal and A.M. Singhvi said the court had spent the past months of SIR hearings giving the "healing touch", while in the process relegating to the background the law that intensive revisions ought to be limited to a constituency or a small group, and not done en masse, State after State, across the country.

Mr. Sibal submitted that the Representation of the People Act (ROPA), 1950, required a person to be 18 years of age and be ordinarily resident in a constituency to be eligible for registration in the electoral roll. He said Aadhaar could very well be used to verify both these details. The se-

nior lawyer said a BLO had no authority to determine citizenship. "Whether a person is an Indian citizen or not is decided by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Whether a person is of unsound mind is decided by the competent court. Laws like Prevention of Corruption Act and the Representation of the People Act would form the statutory basis for disqualifying a person from the electoral roll. You cannot ask the BLO to ascertain all this," Mr. Sibal said. He accused the Election Commission (EC) of supplanting the entire procedure for the revision of electoral roll. "Introduction of enumeration forms and shifting of burden of proof of citizenship... It is like the burden of proof placed on a foreigner. The conditions exclusionary which were existing before Independence is now existing after Independence," Mr. Sibal submitted. "Beyond its domain" Mr. Singhvi called the SIR an en masse exercise devised by the EC imagining there was a "huge, marauding influx" of illegal immigrants into India. He said in the bargain, "crores and crores of people, State after State, are being asked to prove their citizenship. Where is the EC's jurisdiction to do this? Article 324 [power of the EC to conduct elections] cannot be used to plug holes in the EC's jurisdiction...

Is the EC saying that an elector's presence in the 2024 and 2025 rolls is as a presumptive guest?" he asked. The senior counsel pointed out that the power of EC under Section 21(3) of ROPA to "direct a special revision of the electoral roll for any constituency or part of a constituency in such manner as it may think fit" cannot be interpreted as an en masse exercise. He argued that, even if the EC had to assess citizenship for the purpose of voting, it could only be done if someone raised an objection. Otherwise, there were two laws, the Foreigners Act and the Citizenship Act, which governed illegal immigrants.

Why are Srinagar's traditional livelihoods struggling to survive? | Explained



"If paradise is to be found on earth, Kashmir is it." Yet today, Kashmir's paradise is fraying — and in Srinagar, we find the fault-lines of a regional economy at a crossroads: between beauty and breakdown; between traditional livelihoods and externally imposed growth models. Srinagar is facing mounting ecological stress, weakening traditional sectors, and the after-effects of governance disruptions since the dilution of Article 370. Wetland loss, supply-chain breakdowns, urban sprawl, and joblessness have intensified economic fragility.

Why is Srinagar ecologically fragile? Srinagar, nestled in a Himalayan valley, carries deep ecological vulnerabilities. Wetlands, lakes, and mountains have kept the city alive — as a horticultural belt, tourist beacon, and artisan hub. But unchecked urban expansion, sprawl, flood risk, and infrastructure stress are now compromising that fragile base. A local report notes that formerly natural sponges have been overtaken by construction; "encroached wetlands and choked drains... amplify flood damage, while unchecked sprawl hikes living costs." Meanwhile, the horticulture sector — once a pillar of Kashmir's rural-urban interface — has been hammered. One study points out that despite the abrogation of special status, the annual growth rate slumped, supply chains broke down, and the backbone of thousands of livelihoods cracked.

What changed after the dilution of Article 370?

Since the dilution of Article 370 in August 2019, the region has experienced a dramatic governance shift. The dissolution of the Statehood status, communication blackouts and prolonged curfews have disrupted not only everyday life but also economic institutions. For instance, a qualitative study of women entrepreneurs in Srinagar and Ganderbal shows how the communication blackout, network restrictions and lockdowns crushed their ability to market crafts, connect with customers, and sustain a business. In Srinagar, the private sector has remained stunted, while over 32,000 government posts remain unfilled as of March 2025. Urban unemployment stands at 11.8%, youth unemployment at 32%, and women's unemployment at 53.6%. Then came the collapse of the three pillars: tourism, horticulture, and artisan trades. Tourism is projected as the engine of revival, yet it remains highly seasonal and vulnerable. A recent article reports that in 2025 alone, landslides and highway closures stranded 800+ fruit trucks, resulting in over 200 crore losses in a few days — demonstrating the fragility of the entire local supply chain.

Supply disruptions, climate risk, poor market access, and policy neglect have reduced horticulture's share in GDP and hampered its role as a stable driver. Artisan trades are similarly suffering. A qualitative study found that women artisans in the handicraft industry face exploitation, lack of access to markets, scarcity of raw materials, and breakdown in supply chains. Many street vendors and women workers in informal markets earn as little as ₹250–300 a day. Economic disruptions have pushed certain marginalized and transgender communities into sex work, as other income sources disappear. Why does the metropolitan capital infusion model fall short? Many growth plans for Srinagar treat it as a recipient of large capital flows — real estate, tourism mega-projects, urban infrastructure — on the assumption that spending automatically leads to upliftment. But when local governance is weak, traditional livelihoods are ignored, and the ecological base is compromised, this model fails. In Srinagar's "smart city" push, for example, artisan spaces and vendors are often squeezed out while the facade beautifies; green spaces vanish, older trees are removed; livelihoods are disrupted. Hence, unless growth anchors itself in the local economy, the "integration into a metropolitan capital" approach risks increasing fragility rather than alleviating it.

What are the plausible directions for sustainable growth? Horticulture requires reliable cold-chain infrastructure, climate-adapted crops, and farmer cooperatives. Wetlands, floodplains, and lake systems must be protected and integrated into urban planning. Instead of sprawl, we should invest in green infrastructure. Tourism can grow through community-led, heritage-based, and ecologically sensitive models that place artisans and local hosts at the centre.

Srinagar's artisan and craft-based economy needs in-

stitutional support that values its cultural depth. Traditional clusters of weavers, shawl-makers, wood-craft workers, papier-mâché artists and brassware makers require design assistance, accessible digital marketing channels and systems that reduce dependence on exploitative intermediaries. The State must also facilitate micro-finance, raw-material common-pools, craft-export linkages, and protection of workshop spaces rather than treating artisan neighbourhoods as "peripheral" to modern development. Urban planning should integrate artisan quarters, preserve workshops, not criminalise street vendors or force them into oblivion. What Srinagar needs is a managed transition rather than displacing them. Restoring meaningful local governance is essential for any sustainable economic revival. Without a local voice, top-down capital flows will only deepen alienation. State policy should ensure reliable connectivity, functional marketing platforms, skill upgrades, and helplines for women entrepreneurs. The growth slump and joblessness have pushed vulnerable groups into the margins. A coordinated social protection, vocational training and livelihood diversification strategy is needed. Most importantly, Srinagar's future depends on building a balanced economic base rather than relying on tourism or real estate alone. Horticulture, craftsmanship, small-scale manufacturing, niche tourism and services must grow together to reduce vulnerability. For example, horticulture alone engages more than three million people in the region, and ignoring it weakens the entire economic foundation. Tourism, meanwhile, should be made resilient to frequent disruptions through stronger links with local crafts, digital outreach, homestays, and off-season offerings. Urban job creation should focus not just on high-capital projects but on upgrading the informal economy and creating linkages with village-town interactions.

What does all this mean for Srinagar's future?

Srinagar is at an inflection point. It strains under the weight of ecological, economic and governance vulnerabilities. To restore its promise, growth cannot simply mean "capital inflow and smart city facade". It calls for reviving the soils, the workshops, the crafts homes of Srinagar, listening to its women entrepreneurs, artisans, and small farmers; empowering them through connectivity, governance, market access, and ecological protection. In doing so, we shift from fragility to resilience — from a "metropolitan cash-influx" model to a locally rooted, sustainably scaled economy. The question for policymakers, for civil society, for the local economy is: Will we walk that path — or will Srinagar's paradise slip through our fingers? Tikender Singh Panwar is a former Deputy Mayor of Shimla and currently a member of the Kerala Urban Commission

Troll who abused singer Mangli, apologises after police complaint

EMS News Agency, Nov 28

Hyderabad: Social media trolls in the city are learning the hard way that online abuse has real-world consequences. A man who posted vulgar, unbridled comments against popular folk singer Mangli has now backtracked, posting a video in which he retracts his remarks and apologises to her.

The climbdown came after a fan of the singer lodged a complaint with the SR Nagar police, urging them to act on the abusive posts. Once news of the complaint began doing the rounds, the abuser hurriedly released an online apology, this time pleading for forgiveness and admitting he had crossed the line.

Though it is not yet clear whether a formal case has been registered, the episode signals a shift — habitual abusers who once treated social media as a free-for-all space are beginning to realize that their words can invite police action and public backlash.

The development also follows an earlier representation by a group of women journalists and YouTubers, who submitted a memorandum to

Police Commissioner Vishwanath Chengappa Sajjanar highlighting the surge in online abuse and trolling. With Sajjanar's reputation as a no-nonsense officer, his tough image appears to be nudging trolls to think twice before they type, and many see this emerging deterrence as a welcome change in Hyderabad's online culture.



India-New Zealand conclude FTA talks amid continuing high US tariffs



New Zealand has "committed" \$20 billion investments into India over the next fifteen years in exchange for receiving market access in a high-tariff India on Monday concluded free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with New Zealand amid high US tariffs that have caused investment uncertainty and resulted in cancelled orders from India's largest export destination. The New Zealand deal, when signed, would be India's second FTA after the Oman, coming in the backdrop of 50 per cent US tariffs and is the third deal this year as India pushes for export diversification.

Details released by the government showed that while India has agreed to reduce tariffs on 95 per cent of the exports from New Zealand, Wellington would eliminate tariffs on 100 per cent of its tariff lines for all Indian exports. However, average tariffs in New Zealand are one of the lowest in the world, in the range of 2-3 per cent, and elimination alone may not result in immediate export growth. Bringing some parity into the deal, New Zealand has "committed" \$20 billion investments into India over the next fifteen years in exchange for receiving market access in a high-tariff (over 15 per cent) and fast-growing Indian consumer market. The lopsided nature of the tariff rates could result in higher gains for New Zealand than for India in goods trade.

India and New Zealand have little bilateral trade, standing barely at \$1.3 billion in 2024-25. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said: "This FTA opens doors for Indian businesses in the region through well-integrated directional exports and gives our youth choices to learn, work and grow on a global stage". Commerce Secretary, Rajesh Agrawal,

said: "India's strengths are expanding exports, supporting labour-intensive growth and power services. New Zealand gains deeper, more predictable access to India's large and growing economy. The movement of people, students, professionals, and skilled workers converges these strengths. The Commerce and Industry Ministry said that apart from tariff liberalisation, the FTA includes provisions to address non-tariff barriers through enhanced regulatory cooperation, transparency, and streamlined customs, Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures and Technical Barriers to Trade disciplines. "All systemic facilitations and fast-track mechanisms for imports that serve as inputs for our manufactured exports ensure that tariff concessions translate into effective and meaningful market access," the Ministry said.

The ministry said that cooperation has been agreed in AYUSH, culture, fisheries, tourism, forestry, horticulture and traditional knowledge systems. The FTA promotes India's AYUSH systems internationally, encourages medical value travel, and positions India as a global wellness hub, it added. "Tariff asymmetry has shaped the deal. New Zealand's average import tariff is just 2.3 per cent, compared with India's 16.2 per cent, and 58.3 per cent of New Zealand's tariff lines are already duty-free. As a result, Indian exporters already enjoy wide access in New Zealand markets," former trade officer and founder of think tank GTRI, Ajay Srivastava said.

Srivastava said that an FTA alone is unlikely to unlock the full potential of India-New Zealand economic ties, as trade volumes remain modest. Business groups on both sides say the pact must be backed by practical steps to deepen commercial links. New Zealand could expand dairy and horticulture exports to India even at MFN tariffs, while India could scale up exports of pharmaceuticals, textiles and IT services to New Zealand, he said. "For India, the agreement strengthens access to a high-income, rules-based Pacific market and supports its broader Indo-Pacific economic strategy. For New Zealand, the deal offers more secure entry into one of the world's fastest-growing large economies at a time of rising global trade uncertainty. New Zealand could expand dairy and horticulture exports to India even at MFN tariffs, while India could scale up exports of pharmaceuticals, textiles and IT services to New Zealand. Wellington could also diversify by growing education, tourism and aviation training services for Indian students and professionals," Srivastava said.

Global AI models don't customise enough; India has a big opportunity: Professor Susan Athey



Historically, global technology providers don't customise as per domestic requirements of a country. It is in this context that India has a lot of opportunity in the need for customisation for language, local services, local data context, as the global models for Artificial Intelligence (AI) are often not providing that, Susan Athey, Professor of Economics of Technology, Stanford Graduate School of Business said.

In an interaction with Aanchal Magazine on the sidelines of Delhi School of Economics' workshop on AI, jobs and growth, Athey also said that any law for usage of copyright materials by AI apps needs to strike a balance as these startups don't have a lot of revenue but there is also a need to pay news organisations. "...it has to balance the ability of startups to get started, when they don't have a lot of revenue to be able to use data, with the fact that things like the news industry need to get paid or they won't produce news. So news involves research and development every day. It involves innovation every day. You are doing reporting, that's innovation. And so your innovation is important. Just like the AI company's innovation is also important and those have to be balanced. Edited excerpts:

The discussions on AI across the world often feature the word disruption. For a country like India, which is an emerging economy and is still in a nascent stage in the AI ecosystem, there are concerns about its potential to disrupt the labour market. The big concern is that it may result in loss of jobs. Where do you see India featuring in the entire global AI ecosystem? On this trip, I became more optimistic about India's ability to participate. It's a large country and we've seen historically that global technology providers don't customise enough. And there's so much opportunity and need for customisation in India for language, for local services, local data context, and the global models are often not providing that. So that creates an opportunity for India.

The second point is that for AI, it's not just a consumer product, it's not just ChatGPT and the web browser. It's a product that serves the government, the defence sector, and businesses. With such a diversity of customers, there's more room for a diversity of suppliers. And if the global companies are caught up in a race to the top in the general purpose thing, they don't have the time and resources to serve all of these customers in India, then that creates room for the local providers to come in. So, I think for many countries, there's room for the application layer to be domestic because the application layer has to do implementation. Like AI is not useful unless it's actually solving the problem to the finish line and to solve the problem to the finish line, you need to work with the implementing partners. Like if you're delivering it in healthcare, you have to work with the hospitals, you have to work with the hospital data. So some products you can just adopt off the web and then maybe the US company serves that, but the beauty of AI products is that they can be customised and specialised directly for the customer and that will be provided by local players. In addition, a big part of the customer demand is government-led, which gives an opportunity to promote domestic companies. It's so existential, you're using AI in infrastructure in payments and so on, there'll be a need for domestic. So, I think there's a lot of opportunity for India to participate and then once it's participating, you develop expertise and capability. Do developing economies face the risk of becoming net importers of AI and how do you balance this with growth and sovereignty?

I'm very concerned about that. I recently wrote some economics papers, where I argued that the right macroeconomic model should be one where your AI is an import and there may be markups on that. That's a simple proxy for the fact that you might not get the quality you want. So, I think there are many issues. One concern is that if smaller countries impose complicated legislation or regulation, that might help them in the short term but they might not get as many technology providers. So, countries have to recognise how important it is to have multiple vendors because you don't want to scare away the competition. In the long run, if the economy becomes dependent on one foreign company, you don't have any leverage. I do think, as I mentioned earlier, that AI has no value unless it's implemented.

To reach its potential, it needs to interact with payment systems, health and other things, where countries control the data, they control access. So those are leverage points. It's unlike just a service that you get in a web browser. The foreign vendors are going to realise that they need to co-operate because they're key complements to the technology that are controlled domestically.

From a specific, individual country's perspective, it's natural to be concerned about sovereignty. If you are going to use it in mission critical systems, it can't be something that can just be turned off. So, if you don't have some local control then you can't use it in payment systems or infrastructure or electricity or any place else. If you're going to integrate it into essential services and infrastructure, then you need some local control. Or else you're taking a risk. That's a really tough thing because some small countries won't have options, but if a country is big enough, it makes sense for them to have a strategy for local control of something, whether it's inference for open models or something else, where they know they can control, and it can't be turned off. Or the price can't be raised, they can't be exploited.

Can stronger privacy rules coexist with innovation in AI and digital services?

I think they can and it just needs to be done carefully. We've had a hard time getting the regulation right in the past. And our regulators should be very careful about capture from powerful incumbents because privacy regulation can favour incumbents because they already have the data internally. India has come out with a draft working paper on copyright and AI data. It recommends a blanket licensing regime and AI developers will have to pay royalty for using copyrighted works... I'm not familiar with the details of the law, but I would say that it has to balance the ability of startups to get started, when they don't have a lot of revenue to be able to use data, with the fact that things like the news industry need to get paid or they won't produce news. So news involves research and development every day. It involves innovation every day. You are doing reporting, that's innovation. And so your innovation is important. Just like the AI company's innovation is also important and those have to be balanced. How disruptive is China's AI model? This year we saw the DeepSeek challenge the US dominance over AI.

One thing that's really important about DeepSeek is it shuts down a kind of silly debate, which is the idea that it was possible to keep this technology secret in some way. And, as soon as DeepSeek came out, that debate ended, which is great. Open models are really important because you can download them and keep them forever and so nobody can raise the price on you later. That's really useful and they can be customised and fine-tuned with your local language and so on. I personally think that open source is really important from a competition perspective and from a sovereignty perspective.

Now, you don't have to create the open model yourself. Because once you have it, you can keep it. But if you want to ensure in the future that you'll have the latest and greatest technology, that's where the real question is. Because it doesn't matter if it's a Chinese model or a US model, you can take it and customise it and keep it forever and you continue to use it. But you may not get the latest, the next thing, if you'll be dependent on them for having the next thing. There are many use cases that have simple needs and the existing models are already good enough. They don't need to be any better than they are today.

Why 2025 was the year we finally talked honestly about ageing



Ageing has been treated in public conversation as something to delay, deny or disguise. Wrinkles, grey hair, sagging skin and slow joints have often been discussed as aesthetic problems to be fixed. But in 2025, the narrative shifted toward a more honest, holistic and practical conversation about ageing: one that acknowledges both the realities of growing older and the power of lifestyle choices to shape how we age. Ageing stopped being about fear and fantasy and started becoming about health span, function, dignity and resilience. Here's how that conversation matured and why 2025 may be remembered as a turning point. Understanding ageing beyond wrinkles

One of the most critical shifts this year has been how ageing is understood not just as an inevitable biological decline, but as something profoundly influenced by behavioural choices throughout life. From actor Bhagyashree's recommended step-up exercise to Namita Thapar's mindful approach to diet and health during her perimenopause journey, factors such as nutrition, physical activity, mental health, social connection and stress management play a significant role in how health evolves with age, and often more than genetics alone. This perspective moves the discourse beyond cosmetic concerns to functional ageing, how well a person moves, thinks, feels and lives as they grow older, and it resonated widely with those looking for practical, empowering approaches to ageing well. What accelerates ageing, and what slows it down

In 2025, we increasingly grappled with the factors that genuinely accelerate biological ageing, from processed foods and chronic stress to a sedentary lifestyle and poor sleep. Practical, evidence-based breakdowns of everyday habits, such as foods that can speed up ageing, helped ground the discussion in real choices that matter. Dr Somnath Gupta, consultant physician & diabetologist, Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad, mentioned that caffeine and

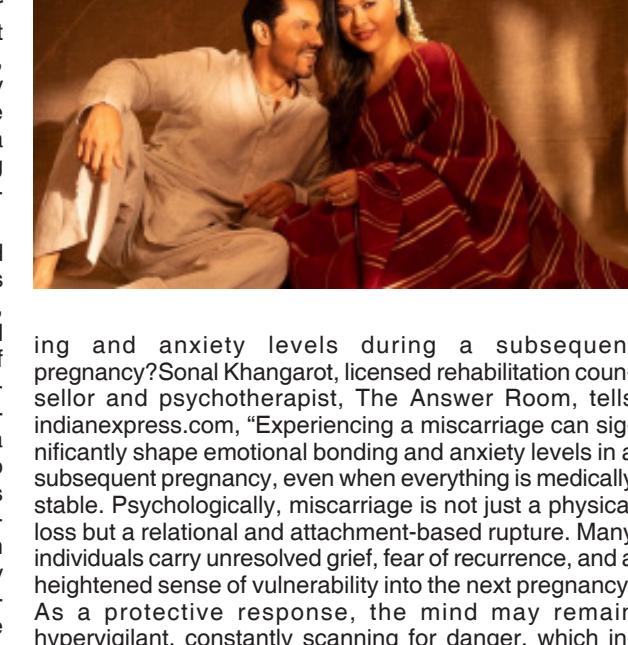
alcohol consumption, excessive sugar, processed carbs and sun exposure after consuming citrus fruits can speed up ageing. This kind of straight-talk content helped shift attention from superficial anti-ageing fixes to meaningful health decisions that actually affect metabolism, immunity, inflammation and cellular health.

Honest, inspiring and accessible role models of ageing Another key development was the rise of ageing role models whose stories were neither polished nor overly inspirational in a hollow way, but realistic and relatable. For example, we profiled a 97-year-old professor whose disciplined daily routine, purposeful lifestyle and emphasis on stress management helped him preserve strength and health far beyond what many expect of someone his age. "I may have inherited my parents' genes (My father lived till the age of 96 and my mother till 91), but there are several factors that can hasten premature ageing. Among them, stress is one of the greatest contributors, and hence it is necessary to develop a sense of purpose in life," he said. Such stories shifted the frame from 'anti-ageing' to 'healthy ageing,' showing that longevity and vitality are achievable through consistent habits rather than quick fixes. The myth of anti-ageing medicines

Another significant discussion this year came in the wake of Shefali Jariwala's death, when her husband Parag Tyagi publicly dismissed rumours that she had been taking anti-ageing medicines. Instead, he highlighted that her youthful appearance was the result of consistent discipline with diet and lifestyle, not quick fixes or medications.

He said, "Shefali didn't want to take multivitamins daily as she would forget them, so she took them through an IV drip once a month. These included multivitamins, Vitamin C, collagen, and glutathione, which is one of the best anti-oxidants (sic)," he explained in Hindi, in a recent interaction posted on their YouTube channel. "Dr Jagadish Hirmath, a public health intellectual, stressed, "It is important that such treatments are undertaken only under the supervision of a qualified healthcare professional." These shifts reflect a broader cultural moment: ageing is no longer a taboo or a cosmetic problem to be hidden, but a shared human experience with meaningful, evidence-based ways to approach it intelligently. As we move into 2026, the hope is that these frank conversations lead to deeper awareness, better policies and healthier, more fulfilling lives for people at every stage of adulthood.

'No space for anything other than...': Lin Laishram on expecting her first child with Randeep Hooda and healing after miscarriage



On November 29 this year, actor Randeep Hooda and his wife Lin Laishram marked their second wedding anniversary by sharing the news that they are expecting their first child. In a recent conversation, Lin spoke candidly about this phase of life, touching upon excitement, vulnerability, and how pregnancy can reshape a relationship in deeply personal ways. Describing her husband's response to the news, Lin shared, "Oh, he's loving every moment! It took a bit for it to sink in for both of us, but he's been amazing prepping himself, supporting me, and being there for everything I need."

She reflected on how pregnancy is often experienced differently by mothers and fathers, adding, "We mothers somehow prepare ourselves because we feel the changes, but for fathers, they go through it all as an observer—and Randeep really has been prioritising 'US' in the midst of everything. It's great to see him in this space." Her observations resonate with many couples navigating new emotional roles during pregnancy. Lin also opened up about a more difficult chapter that preceded this pregnancy. "To accept things as they are. After a miscarriage earlier this year, it was a tough space for us both," she shared, highlighting the emotional impact pregnancy loss can have on both partners. She told ETimes, "However, we're just deeply grateful and keeping our fingers crossed—and this is nothing short of a beautiful gift!" Such experiences often leave lasting psychological impressions, even when a subsequent pregnancy is progressing well.

Speaking about the present, Lin noted that her pregnancy has been smooth so far, with minimal morning sickness, and revealed that the baby is due in March 2026. She also spoke about how anticipation has become a shared space of joy, saying, "We've talked about names, but nothing serious yet. The baby's room is definitely our favourite topic though." Reflecting on their growing excitement and preparation, she added, "Randeep keeps sending me articles and ideas he thinks will help us prepare. We are really enjoying this since it's our first... There is no space for anything else other than happiness, joy and the anticipation of the biggest delight of our lives."

How experiencing a miscarriage affect emotional bond-

ing and anxiety levels during a subsequent pregnancy? Sonal Khangarot, licensed rehabilitation counsellor and psychotherapist, The Answer Room, tells indianexpress.com, "Experiencing a miscarriage can significantly shape emotional bonding and anxiety levels in a subsequent pregnancy, even when everything is medically stable. Psychologically, miscarriage is not just a physical loss but a relational and attachment-based rupture. Many individuals carry unresolved grief, fear of recurrence, and a heightened sense of vulnerability into the next pregnancy. As a protective response, the mind may remain hypervigilant, constantly scanning for danger, which increases anxiety despite reassuring medical reports."

Role that partner involvement plays in helping pregnant women feel emotionally secure. Partner involvement plays a crucial role in helping pregnant women feel emotionally secure after a previous pregnancy loss, especially in the Indian context, where women often carry silent emotional burdens. Khangarot states, "When a partner actively listens, attends medical appointments, checks in emotionally, and validates fears instead of dismissing them with 'everything will be fine,' it helps regulate anxiety." She adds, "Research shows that supportive partner behaviour reduces antenatal anxiety and improves emotional bonding. Healing happens not through fixing emotions, but through consistent presence and reassurance that she is supported, regardless of outcomes."

If you fall asleep within 15 vs in 2-3 minutes of lying down, here's what it indicates



Falling asleep in about 10 to 20 minutes is generally seen as 'normal'. If you often drift off in this time frame, it usually indicates that your sleep routine, internal clock, and sleep pressure are working well together, said Dr Amit Saraf, Director- Internal Medicine, Jupiter Hospital, Thane. It shows that your body is winding down naturally and your brain is shifting smoothly from being awake to resting. For many people, it's simply a sign that their habits—like eating at regular times, avoiding late caffeine, and sticking to a consistent sleep schedule are beneficial.

But what if you fall asleep almost instantly within 2 to 5 minutes?

This can be a warning sign, remarked Dr Saraf. "When someone sleeps the moment their head hits the pillow, it often suggests sleep deprivation. The body is trying to 'catch up' on lost sleep. This quick sleep onset is commonly seen in students, shift workers, or adults with demanding jobs," said Dr Saraf. Sometimes, it can indicate conditions like sleep apnea, restless sleep patterns, or excessive daytime tiredness. If you wake up feeling unrefreshed despite falling asleep quickly, it's worth looking into further, said Dr Saraf. sleep Do you suffer from headaches? (Photo: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

What health issues can be associated with speedy sleep onset?

– Chronic sleep debt: The brain is tired and shuts down

quickly. – Poor sleep quality: Frequent nighttime awakenings can lead to falling asleep faster the next night. – Sleep apnea: Interrupted breathing disturbs deep sleep and increases daytime sleepiness. – Mood disorders: Low mood and anxiety can disrupt sleep patterns, causing the body to shut down when you finally rest rapidly. – High stress: Changes in cortisol levels can affect how alert you feel.

When should someone seek medical advice?

If you fall asleep too fast and feel tired during the day, wake up with headaches, or if your partner notices loud snoring or pauses in breathing, it's time to seek evaluation, said Dr Saraf.

Suryakumar Yadav, Shivam Dube set to play two Vijay Hazare Trophy matches for Mumbai



GNS News Agency, Dec 23

India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav and allrounder Shivam Dube have informed the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) that they will play two Vijay Hazare Trophy games on January 6 and 8 for Mumbai. Mumbai will be playing their 50-over league games in Jaipur starting from December 24 and will start their campaign against Sikkim on Wednesday. Surya and Dube have confirmed their availability for the matches against Himachal Pradesh and Punjab on January 6 and 8, respectively.

"Surya and Dube have informed us that they will be playing two Vijay Hazare Trophy games on January 6th and 8th. Their names will be added in the Mumbai squad.

'Of all the away Ashes defeats this century, this one is lamest': Former England players, journalists slam players and management for losing urn after 11 days

GNS News Agency, Dec 23

What was billed as a bold challenge to Australia's dominance has unravelled into one of the most chastising tours in recent memory after Ben Stokes and his England side lost the third Ashes Test at Adelaide by 82 runs on Sunday to go 3-0 down in the five Test series and lose the urn in a mere 11 days. The defeat prompted criticism from former England captains, senior journalists and broadcasters alike. From questions over preparation and professionalism to doubts about leadership and ideology, the verdict has been brutal and near-unanimous. Here are some scathing yet honest reactions:

"England have had a cockiness about them for three years and the entire cricketing world has wanted to shut them up as a result. This tour has been humbling for them and the 'RonBall' T-shirts that the Aussies wore on the Adelaide Oval pitch after winning were the perfect example of that. I don't think they have been ready for Australia full stop. Scrutiny. It's your technique, mentality, and you as a person. Any fragility is exposed in Australia. I don't know how seriously England took that stuff – being ready for an unfair front page, having a camera shoved in your face in an airport, doing an awkward press conference after a bad day." – Michael Vaughan, The Telegraph.

"To paraphrase the legendary investor Sir John Templeton, the four most dangerous words in English cricket could be: 'This time it's different.' England hoped that a different way of preparing and playing would lead to a different outcome from the last three Ashes tours, but they have imploded as badly as those before them, and as dramatically as any of the frothy market bubbles Templeton was warning about. With two matches to go, this has been just as disappointing as any of those tours, maybe more so simply because expectations were realistically high and Australia were a team with flaws to exploit." – Michael Atherton, The Times. "Stokes and McCullum are like men digging a hole to nowhere. If what you are doing isn't working then stop digging. Change is absolutely necessary to step up to the next level. What would I do? Change the coach. We are tired of this duo talking a good game but not delivering against the best teams so Rob Key, it is time for you to assert yourself. I would also sit down with Stokes and find out if he will compromise on his approach to batting and be prepared to embrace new ideas. If he doesn't see that a change of attitude is needed then you have to find a new captain." – Sir Geoffrey Boycott, The Telegraph. "The most frustrating thing about an Ashes challenge that has ended in just 11 days is that England came up against an Australian side missing, at various times, some of their best players. Mistakes have clearly been made. There has been too much focus on 'how' England are going to do things rather than 'how many'. By that I mean they have focused on how they are all going to bat to put pressure on the opposition bowlers rather than how many runs they are actually going to score. The best sides I have seen have had individual

As far as Rohit Sharma is concerned, he will be playing two league games at the moment," a MCA official confirmed. It is learnt that all T20I players who featured in the recent 3-1 series win over South Africa have been asked to play at least two Vijay Hazare Trophy games. The BCCI has informed all contracted players about the same. A few months ago, Ajit Agarkar, the chairman of the selection committee, had conveyed the need for players to turn out in domestic cricket whenever they were available. "I think we made it clear a year or a couple of years back that whenever players are available, they should be playing domestic cricket. I mean, that's the only way you'll keep yourself sharp and playing cricket, if you've got a long enough break. Whether that's possible with the international cricket you're playing or not, that only time will tell, but if the guys are free, they should be playing domestic cricket," he said. The T20I side will get just less than a month's break before they arrive in Nagpur to play New Zealand in the first of five T20Is on January 21. The series will be their last assignment before they begin their T20 World Cup title defence against the USA at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on February 7. Meanwhile, Rohit Sharma, along with Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur are expected to reach Jaipur on Monday and will take part in Mumbai's practice session on Tuesday. Mumbai will be playing their first two games against Sikkim on December 24 and Uttarakhand on December 26 in Jaipur.

'The way Yashasvi plays, logically, he should come in the team first': Aakash Chopra



GNS News Agency, Dec 23

Former Indian cricketer Aakash Chopra said that Yashasvi Jaiswal could have been included in the 2026 T20 World Cup squad. He also reminded that the southpaw was part of the side for the 2024 T20 World Cup when India won; however, later Shubman Gill came into the side has become a regular member. However, with Shubman being axed for the upcoming showpiece event starting on February 7, Chopra opined that Jaiswal should have been the first guy that had to return to the side logically.

"The way Yashasvi plays, logically, he should come in the team first, and he was there. He was part of the team in the 2024 T20 World Cup. He didn't get a chance to play for a simple reason that there was no place. He even scored

a century when he played before that. His name is there among the six Indians to have scored centuries in all formats," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. "However, there were a lot of Tests after that and he wasn't picked for T20s. It was believed that Yashasvi was ahead in the pecking order. In the interim, Abhishek and Sanju opened and did well, and suddenly you realize there is no place. After that, when the opening comes, India goes with Shubman Gill," he added.

"They not only went with him, but they also made him the vice-captain, which means he cannot be dropped. I had picked Yashasvi in the Asia Cup team I had picked. However, Shubman became the vice-captain, and the rest, as they say, is history. So Yashasvi, who was actually a frontrunner, was forgotten," Chopra observed.

"Now when they left Shubman out, could Yashasvi have been there? He couldn't have been there because the opener is Sanju Samson. So you will have to keep a wicketkeeper-opener as a backup. If we don't do that, assuming Sanju has a stomach upset or has a fever before the game, what will you do?" he reasoned. "It seemed like Yash would 100 percent be part of the team, especially once Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma had taken retirement. He will have to still wait. This IPL will be important for him, but it's very hard not to feel for Yashasvi because he has been scoring runs since 2023 and it's 2025 now," Chopra observed.

'Abhishek Nayar knows every player on the planet': Shane Watson hails KKR head coach's 'intel' after IPL 2026 Auction



batters who have all played in slightly different ways, whether that is the West Indies in the 1980s or the great Australian teams. There has never been just one way to play." – Nasser Hussain, The Athletic. "It has taken 11 days of active Test cricket for this powerfully resourced England and Wales Cricket Board machine to collapse like a castle of dust. Losing not just quickly but sloppily, losing in a way that speaks to a basic lack of tension and discipline, a refusal not just to do your homework, but to recognise that homework exists at all. The age of McCullum feels like a trick of the light – life-hack cricket ... the sporting equivalent of influencer Ashton Hall doing a five-hour morning routine to look good for a busy day doing nothing. Players can be blamed for not being curious ... England have deliberately taken away the outside noise, lessened the cognitive load." – Barney Ronay, The Guardian.

"England's latest humiliation down under will be remembered as their worst in recent times. This was supposed to be an opportunity to regain the Ashes from a weakened Australia. England so badly wanted pace on this tour, then managed to injure their fastest bowler in a tournament they were never going to win. The failings of this tour began long ago. Assistant coach Paul Collingwood disappeared at the beginning of the home summer and has not been replaced and there was no clarity on the identity of England's fast-bowling coach for this tour right up to the last minute. England showed some overdue fight... but the Ashes were lost in 11 days of cricket. It doesn't feel like the squad will fall apart, even if 5-0 seems inevitable." – Stephan Shemilt, BBC. "The grey, murky clouds that shrouded the Adelaide Oval on Sunday morning provided an appropriate setting for a day when England's Ashes dream died. A campaign that promised so much ended as a contest after just 11 days of action. Of all the away Ashes defeats this century, this one is the lamest. England had the talent to win and a method they believed in. This has been a failure of planning and professionalism, not talent. They have to own this one. The lackadaisical approach to warm-up matches and general preparation meant England were just not ready for the harshness of Test cricket in Australia." – Nick Hoult, The Telegraph.

Former Australian all-rounder and Kolkata Knight Riders assistant coach Shane Watson recently left stunned by the level of preparation by KKR head coach Abhishek Nayar for the IPL 2026 auction that concluded in Abu Dhabi and lavished praise on the Mumbaikar's depth of knowledge about every player in the world. KKR had entered the IPL 2026 auction with the biggest purse, over 60 crore rupees, with a heavy rebuilding act to be carried out.

Knight Riders made a big splash in the IPL mini auction in Abu Dhabi when they snapped up the highly-sought after Cameron Green for a whopping Rs 25.20 crore. The three-time champions, who last won the title in 2024 also snapped up New Zealand's Finn Allen for Rs 2 crore and express pacer Matheesha Pathirana for Rs 18 crore. The Knights also signed up a bunch of unheralded uncapped talent, involving a mixture of strengths. Watson commended Nayar's impressive scouting range and said: "I'll say this straight away, I think Abhishek Nayar knows just about every cricketer on the planet. His understanding of Indian domestic players, their stats, where they're at, what they've been doing recently, the depth of his intel – it's extraordinary. I'm not sure I've come across anyone with that level of knowledge across Indian cricket."

"Going into the auction, I had complete confidence that even if we missed out on any domestic player we were targeting, Abhishek would already have had two or three alternatives lined up, with clear insight into their strengths. He was regularly sending me videos, breaking down each

player's performances across every possible scenario. That level of preparation gave us enormous confidence. "Leaning on Abhishek's intel, we knew things were going to work out well for us in the auction. When you have someone like Abhishek leading that process, you know you're always going to build a squad filled with some serious domestic talent and quality," Watson added. Kolkata Knight Riders Full IPL 2026 squad: Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Ajinkya Rahane, Manish Pandey, Rovman Powell, Sunil Narine, Ramandeep Singh, Anukul Roy, Varun Chakravarthy, Harshit Rana, Vaibhav Arora, Umran Malik, Cameron Green, Finn Allen, Matheesha Pathirana, Tejasvi Singh, Kartik Tyagi, Prashant Solanki, Rahul Tripathi, Tim Seifert, Mustafizur Rahman, Sarthak Ranjan, Daksh Kamra, Rachin Ravindra, Akash Deep

'Do I regret saying that? No:' Stuart Broad on worst Australian side in 15 years' comments

England are 3-0 down against Australia after the first three Tests in the ongoing Ashes. Ahead of the series, former England cricketer Stuart Broad called this iteration of the Australian side the worst in the last 15 years. However, despite England taking a hammering yet again, Broad stuck to his stance that this Australian side being worst.

Do I regret saying that? No," Broad said on his For The Love of Cricket podcast. "I did say Australia would have to play very badly and England would have to play very well. Australia haven't played very badly and England haven't played very well." "From England's point of view, what would they have liked coming into this series?" he said. "A lot of things have gone England's way. But England haven't been good enough ultimately. Australia have been relentless in what they've done." "Do I think the 2013-14 [Australian team] man for man was a better side? Yes, probably still. I don't think individually they are better than any other team since 2010-11, but they've been relentless in the pressure they've managed to put on England."

What did Ben Stokes say?

"The dream that we came here with is now over, which is obviously incredibly disappointing. Everyone's hurting and quite emotional about it. We've got two more games to go and that's where the focus needs to switch to now. We came here with a goal in mind and we haven't been able to achieve that. It hurts and it sucks, but we're not going to stop," said



Ben Stokes said after the loss in Adelaide to the broadcasters. "Australia have been able to execute things on a much more consistent basis than us with the ball, with the bat, and in the field. This game is based on how you bat, how you bowl, and how you field, and they've outdone us on a much higher level," he observed. "We've got two more games. We've got so much to play for. We're not going to roll over and let this series drift. We're going to leave absolutely everything out there in these last two games. We've got people travelling over to watch, we've got pride, and we're going to give absolutely everything," Stokes concluded.

'I'm happy to perform any role': Australia's Cooper Connolly ready to bat at any position for Punjab Kings

Australia's Cooper Connolly who was snapped up by the Punjab Kings in the recent IPL mini auction said that he is willing to bat at any position that will suit the team when he makes his maiden Indian Premier League appearance next year. "I like to model my game on being able to be versatile in any position. So whether that's at three, whether that's in the middle, I'm happy to perform any role," Connolly said at a virtual media interaction on Monday.

"I feel like I'm still learning the role at number three for the (Perth) Scorchers. It's a role I enjoy. But if the role in the IPL is different, that's totally understandable because it's a world class team. To just be in the middle order would be sort of a nice opportunity just to sort of knuckle down and get to work in the middle order," he added.

The 22-year-old has scored two fifties from the No.3 position for the Scorchers and is one of the most promising young players from Australia, having made his T20I and ODI debuts in September last year before earning his Baggie Green in January. "I think over the last three years, it's been about understanding how different the international level is. It's about adjusting to that, understanding how bowlers are trying to get me out more and how I can counter that. I've had to earn the right to be in the Australian set-up. So it's about learning from guys like Travis Head, Steve Smith, how they go about it and how they sort of train to all those



standards." "I'm just trying to tweak my game slowly and add more strings to it as I move forward," he said.

The player who was bought by the Kings for 3 crore also said that he was looking forward to working with Australia legend Ricky Ponting. "I've heard a lot of good things about him. I haven't done a lot of work with him just yet. So, I'm looking forward to spending some time with him and sort of doing some tweaks to my batting and seeing what his thoughts are on it," he said.

Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma and Arshdeep Singh named in Punjab squad for Vijay Hazare Trophy



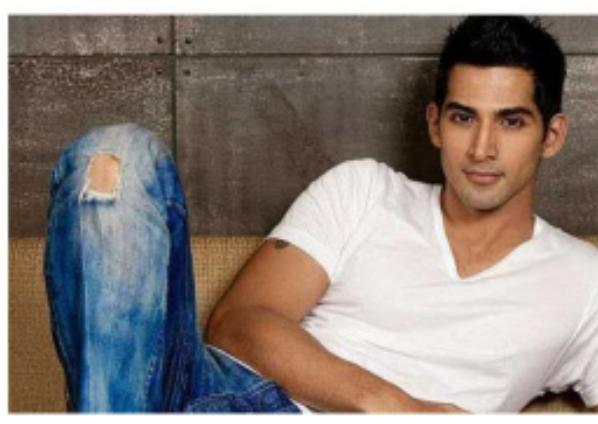
GNS News Agency, Dec 23

India's ODI skipper Shubman Gill and T20 World Cup-bound Abhishek Sharma and Arshdeep Singh were named in Punjab's squad for the Vijay Hazare Trophy on Monday. This is because of BCCI's dictat of mandatory participation in the National One-Day Championship when no India games are on. However, with the New Zealand white ball series starting on January 11 with 3 ODIs and 5 T20Is, Gill and Arshdeep might just be available for 2 to 3 games. Abhishek, who is a T20I regular might be available for more games with the NZ T20Is starting from January 21, 3 days after the end of the VHT tournament on January 18.

Punjab will play their first two games against Maharashtra (December 24) and Chhattisgarh (December 26). They are in the same group as Mumbai, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Chhattisgarh and Sikkim. Meanwhile, India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav and allrounder Shivam Dube have also informed the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) that they will play two Vijay Hazare Trophy games on January 6 and 8 for Mumbai. Mumbai will be playing their 50-over league games in Jaipur starting from December 24 and will start their campaign against Sikkim on Wednesday. Surya and Dube have confirmed their availability for the matches against Himachal Pradesh and Punjab on January 6 and 8, respectively. Also, the tournament will be witnessing the participation of Indian icons Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, set to play 2 early round matches for Delhi and Mumbai respectively. Apart from Kohli, the Delhi team for the first two games includes

wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant and fast bowlers Ishant Sharma, Navdeep Saini and Harshit Rana. Pant has been named captain of the squad with Ayush Badoni as deputy. Rana, who played the five-match T20 series against South Africa, hasn't confirmed to the selectors when he will join the squad. Meanwhile, Rohit Sharma, along with Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur are expected to reach Jaipur on Monday and will take part in Mumbai's practice session on Tuesday.

'I own 2 Bandra houses due to TV': Vivaan Bhatena quit TV at the peak of his popularity after being humiliated, had no money for food



Vivaan Bhatena, once among Indian television's most popular faces, was recently spotted in Razneesh Ghai's period military drama 120 Bahadur alongside Farhan Akhtar. The Shararat actor, who quit television at the peak of his career, revealed how his financial situation was once so dire that he could barely make his ends meet. "I used to get all NRI roles. But nobody would believe I didn't even have the money to pay for food. We used to put it together somehow. I wouldn't say we were very poor, but we were literally just borderline making it happen," confesses Vivaan on a new podcast. He recalled how he had to become a VJ (Video Jockey) for sustenance months after quitting television at the peak of his career. "I got a little bored of TV. I kept doing the same thing for seven to eight years," recalled Vivaan on Digital Commentary. He revealed he'd do two shows at a time back then. He'd hit the gym as soon as he woke up, reach the set by 9 am, shoot for the first show till 2 pm, reach the other set and shoot till 10 pm or even 2 am, whichever was required. "It took an incredible toll on my health. But I needed that. I had to settle myself in life. I was married. I had domestic responsibilities," said Vivaan. He's grateful to television for being able to clear his entire home

loan in just one year. "Today, I have two houses in Bandra because of television. I love TV. People say it's lesser form. It's looked down upon. But that's not the case anymore," claimed Vivaan. He recalled his Judwaa 2 director David Dhawan confessing to him that he'd never cast TV actors earlier, but that has changed now. "They just don't get the right chances. There are so many actors who've come from television now, whether it's Mona Singh or Smriti Irani. Look where all of these people have reached," said Vivaan, who shared screen space with Smriti in the seminal daily soap, Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi.

He recalled the exact point when he quit television was when he didn't want to do a show in which he was offered the big brother's role. "I went to their office. The director wasn't there, but the accountant was. When I asked him for the contract, he took it out of the drawer and threw it in front of me. Then I realized I have no value. If I don't do this, someone would replace me. I was stuck at the same money for years. Even after you've proved yourself, people are bargaining with you to give you less and less money," said Vivaan. He then revealed he tore the contract and threw it on the accountant's face. When he got calls from the producer, Vivaan said, "You're lucky I didn't slap your guy because this is insulting to another degree. I wouldn't even do this to my staff or labour. I'm a human being. You don't do this no matter what the price. I came back from the middle of a holiday for that. So, I told my wife I wanted to quit TV. She asked me to reconsider because I was one of the top faces after Ronit Roy," recalled Vivaan. He ended up quitting television and struggled for five years before taking up a job as a VJ. However, now, he feels the age of stars is now a thing of the past, including in films. "The differentiation between stars and actors is no longer there. That's why Shah Rukh Khan says he's the last star. Now, actors are only trying to become stars, but they were the stars. They've seen that golden period. There's so much accessibility now. Ranbir Kapoor is the last one who has the potential to get there," added Vivaan.

Gauri Khan's mother reacts to grandson Aryan Khan's success; he says next award will be 'dedicated to you'.



At a time when "nepo kids" are often bashed by a large section of the audience for their poor movie choices and even poorer work, Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan's son, Aryan Khan, made what can arguably be seen as one of the most impactful debuts by a star kid. His satirical action drama series, The Ba***ds of Bollywood, not only became a massive success but also earned positive responses. While his decision not to follow in his superstar father's footsteps had already earned Aryan praise, public opinion of him improved further when he impressed the masses with his debut work itself. Now, a new video has surfaced online showing Gauri Khan's mother, Savita Chhibber, expressing her happiness over her grandson's strides and growth in his dream field. "I'm very happy. May he be very successful. My blessings to him. I love you the most. I'm so proud. At this age, I'm just hearing that my grandson and his achievement have been honoured by the whole country," she said while taking part in the NDTV Indian of the Year event held in New Delhi, where Aryan won the Best Debutant Director award.

Elated and smiling cheerfully, Aryan replied, "I love you, naani, and I promise you that my next award will be dedicated to you. I promise," which made Savita laugh. He also immediately got off the stage and went up to her to give her a lovely kiss, as the crowd reacted with an "aww" to their adorable bond. The eldest of Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan's three children, Aryan, 28, is a graduate of the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California (USC). Although he previously worked as a voice actor in Hindi versions of a few mov-

ies, such as The Lion King (2019) and Mufasa: The Lion King (2024), The Ba***ds of Bollywood marked his proper debut. Starring Bobby Deol, Lakshya Lalwani, Raghav Juyal, Saher Bambba, and Anya Singh in key roles, the show was produced by Aryan's mother, Gauri, under the banner of their Red Chillies Entertainment. The series is now streaming on Netflix. In her review of the show, SCREEN's Shubhra Gupta wrote, "Aryan Khan's debut as a director is a mixed bag — while it entertains in parts, it deflates into seen-before ordinariness when it segues into showing us 'the other side' of the film industry."

'People today only know Ranbir Kapoor, not Raj Kapoor': Vivek Oberoi revisits 'people will ask who is Shah Rukh Khan in 2050' comment



Vivek Oberoi recently sparked a debate online with his remark about Shah Rukh Khan not being relevant by 2050. The actor's statements went viral on the internet, with many fans defending their superstar's stardom. Now, in a recent interview, Vivek clarified the context of his comment, while calling himself a big fan of SRK. While citing an example of Raj Kapoor and Ranbir Kapoor, he explained the transient nature of fame. Vivek mentioned that while massive popularity fades over time, its the good deeds of an individual that reside in our hearts forever.

During a podcast with Dr Vivek Bindra and Sharan Hegde, he said that his context wasn't explained properly, along with the statement. "I would like to say that whoever spread this statement, I would give them 100 points for volume, because they did a great job and that too, very quickly. But for context, I would give zero..minus hundred points. Content was delivered, but context wasn't."

The actor further added, "For example, there was a king, he sent a message to his advisor that 'Don't kill him, let him go'. But, the minister was a scoundrel, he changed his context and told the king's soldiers to hit him and let him die. The poor man died. So, this is the problem."

Vivek revealed that he is a huge fan of Shah Rukh and has had a decades-long association with him. "I am a big fan of Shah bhai. And, not only as an actor, but also personal life. He has been there for me. He has given me so much love. Even today, he gives me love, blessings, and so much support. When we meet, he meets happily. He shares the joy in my success, I share the joy in Aaryan's (Shah Rukh Khan's son Aaryan Khan) success. So, that is the relationship we have, since decades," he expressed. He gave examples of legendary superstars and explained how today's generation doesn't know much about them. The 49-year-old shared that its the good deeds of a person that people will remember forever. "I just said that one should

do good work in life. Superstardom, money, all these things are transient. Today, Jeff Bezos was the world's billionaire, but suddenly Elon Musk came in the picture and became the richest man on the planet. Tomorrow, it will be someone else. Once upon a time, Dilip Kumar sahab and Raj Kapoor sahab were superstars, legends, but today's generation knows Ranbir Kapoor. They don't have Raj Kapoor's context," he stated.

He continued, "So, I said that Shah bhai is a superstar, legend for our generation... for me. We are such big fans, have been watching his films since college days. But, after 25 years, will people remember him as a superstar? I don't know. But will people remember his good deeds? He did good deeds, people remember that generationally. Even today, Jamshedji Tata is remembered for his good work. So, even 100 years ago, someone did a good job and left a legacy. That legacy lives longer. That was the context of my statement." Earlier, during an interview with Pinkvilla, Vivek had questioned the existence of SRK's stardom by 2050 and said,

From Amitabh Bachchan to Dharmendra, AI reimagines Bollywood legends as Gen Z; fans say, 'This actor is most handsome'



interesting reactions from fans who got to see their favorite stars in a completely modern avatar.

The reel recreates AI reimagined, modern-day versions of Manoj Kumar, Shammi Kapoor, Rajendra Kumar, Raj Babbar, Shatrughan Sinha, Raj Kumar, Rakesh Roshan, NT Rama Rao, Ashok Kumar, Dev Anand, Jackie Shroff, Mehmood, Sunil Dutt, Anil Kapoor, Kader Khan, Rajesh Khanna, Mithun Chakraborty, Rishi Kapoor, Sanjeev Kumar, Prithviraj Kapoor, Feroz Khan, Sanjay Dutt, Nana Patekar, Shashi Kapoor, Amjad Khan, Naseeruddin Shah, Jitendra, Vinod Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Dilip Kumar, and Dharmendra.

Reacting to these AI renditions, fans have been sharing their honest feedback. While some feel AI hasn't done justice in reimagining the legendary Dharmendra, others feel it managed to make some stars look almost real. Sharing their thoughts, a fan wrote, "Shri Dharmendra Sahab Ji iss AI pic se bhi ijada Handsome the (Shri Dharmendra Sahab Ji was more handsome compared to this AI pic)." Another user wrote, "Raj Babbar and Feroz Khan looked almost the same as reality!" A third fan commented, "Rishi Kapoor, Vinod Khanna & Dharmendra were the most handsome guys of their times." One of the users also said, "God has stopped creating such handsome men now." Another one wrote, "Feroze Khan was like this only, the Rockstar of his time." While creative use of AI is always welcomed by fans, many actors in recent times have also been victims of the misuse of AI. As a precautionary measure for the same, lots of celebrities, namely, Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan, Karan Johar, Suniel Shetty, Arijit Singh, etc have now started opting for legally protecting their personality rights, which bars anyone from using their face, name, or voice without their consent, a punishable offence.

Babul Supriyo was 'bullied' after he couldn't get his kids into MS Dhoni's Jharkhand farmhouse: 'Was called a dumbo'

Singer-turned-politician Babul Supriyo recently gave the internet a wholesome laugh after sharing a video of his kids attempting what many adults still dream of—meeting MS Dhoni at his farmhouse in Ranchi. Unsurprisingly, the attempt failed, but not without drama, name-dropping, and a lot of comedy. "I was trolled," said the minister. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Babul shared the clip with the caption, "Once upon a time in front of MS Dhoni's house gate in Ranchi." The video features his daughter Naina and her cousin Golu, who were visiting Ranchi with their grandparents and stumbled upon the holy gates of Thala's farmhouse.

Introducing the tiny duo, Babul wrote, "This is my little one Naina and her cousin brother Golu... and this is the GATE of Thala." What followed next was a masterclass in desperate fandom. According to Babul, the kids first tried sweet-talking the watchman. When that didn't work, they pulled out the ultimate weapon—his visiting card. "Spoke to the watchman, gave him my card, said I am also a minister... blah blah blah," he confessed, adding that the strategy failed miserably.

The kids then called him for backup, hilariously name-dropping every person they could think of to somehow get Dhoni's number. Babul had to break the hard truth: "Very few people have his number and he seldom uses a phone." That's when things turned ugly—for

him. "Result: I was brutally bullied and trolled with messages and voice notes for being 'A DUMBO,'" he joked, adding that the incident only highlighted Dhoni's cross-generational stardom. Currently, Babul Supriyo serves as West Bengal's Minister for Information Technology & Electronics, Public Enterprises, and Industrial Reconstruction under the Mamata Banerjee-led government.

Prithviraj's wife Supriya slams media coverage of Sreenivasan's funeral: 'Don't the dead, living deserve better?'

Supriya Menon slams the manner in which Sreenivasan's funeral and the visuals of his bereaved family members were filmed, which she felt was tasteless. Journalist-turned-film producer Supriya Menon reacts to the manner in which Sreenivasan's funeral was filmed. (Credit: Instagram/@supriyamenonprithviraj, Facebook/@PinarayiVijayan) Malayalees worldwide bid a tearful farewell to one of their most celebrated actor-filmmakers, Sreenivasan, on Sunday, December 21, as he was cremated at his home in Kandananadu, near Tripunithura, in Ernakulam district. Known for his sharp wit and social commentary, both in cinema and real life, Sreenivasan is widely regarded as one of the most influential screenwriters in the history of Malayalam cinema. Hence, hundreds of people, including industry professionals, made a beeline to his home yesterday to pay their final respects.

Meanwhile, journalist-turned-film producer Supriya Menon, wife of actor-director Prithviraj Sukumaran, has now stepped forward to slam the manner in which Sreenivasan's funeral and the visuals of his bereaved family members were filmed, which she felt was tasteless and a blatant invasion of the privacy of both the deceased and the living. Supriya began a long note on her Instagram story, noting that grief is an immensely personal emotion. "To see a grieving family not have any space to mourn their beloved is so tragic. Multitudes of cameras/mobile phones everywhere. Self-takers in the corners, people pointing to the actors walking in. Many of whom are mourning their beloved colleague. Don't the dead and the living they leave behind deserve better?" Although she did not explicitly mention that she was referring to Sreenivasan's funeral, Supriya's incisive words conveyed a clear picture. Mentioning that every moment in life has become some spectacle, she added, "[I] cannot imagine the pain of the family who are in the midst of this tragedy. Shouldn't we self-reflect and course correct? How much coverage is too much? Do we need to crowd around the last rites, beaming it for everyone to see... a broken down family trying to say goodbye to their beloved." Supriya Menon on Sreenivasan's funeral. Supriya Menon began a long note on her Instagram story, noting that grief is an immensely personal emotion. Sreenivasan, 69, passed away on December 24 at a government hospital on Saturday morning, December



Meanwhile, journalist-turned-film producer Supriya Menon, wife of actor-director Prithviraj Sukumaran, has now stepped forward to slam the manner in which Sreenivasan's funeral and the visuals of his bereaved family members were filmed, which she felt was tasteless and a blatant invasion of the privacy of both the deceased and the living.

20. quite some time and had undergone heart surgery in 2022, news agency PTI reported. On Saturday, he was travelling to a private hospital for dialysis when he developed breathing difficulties and was immediately shifted to the Tripunithura Government Taluk Hospital, where he breathed his last. Sreenivasan is survived by his wife, Vimala, and their sons, Vineeth and Dhyan, along with their families.