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## Cyberabad traffic police nab 137 for drunken driving

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad traffic police, during the weekend drunken driving checks, caught 137 persons and booked cases against them.

Among those caught were 92 – two wheeler riders, 5 – three wheeler drivers, 39 – four wheeler riders and a heavy vehicle driver. The highest number of people caught by the Raidurgam police – 36, followed by Madhapur – 25 and Gachibowli – 23.

## Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy Reviews SLBC Progress

Hyderabad Jan 11

Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy convened a review meeting at the Secretariat to assess the progress of the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) works. He held discussions with Government Advisor Adityanath Das, Engineer-in-Chief Amjad Hussain, and other officials.

The Minister directed that work should be resumed immediately and on a war footing. He emphasised the use of modern technology to ensure smooth tunnel excavation. Tunneling will now employ state-of-the-art methods, replacing the previously used Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM).

Officials reported that an electromagnetic survey, providing data on the remaining 9.8 kilometres of tunnel, has been completed. A support system has also been established to monitor underground conditions continuously.

Uttam Kumar Reddy highlighted that the Congress government considers the completion of the SLBC, the world's longest tunnel, a matter of great pride. He an-

nounced that field staff working on the project would



receive a 25 per cent increase in salary.

The Minister attributed delays to the ten-year rule of the Bharat Rashtri Samithi (BRS) and pledged that completing the project would make Nalgonda fertile and help eradicate fluorosis permanently.

## Panthangi toll plaza sees massive congestion ahead of Pongal and Sankranti

Hyderabad: With just a few days left for Sankranti festival, for the second consecutive day, the Panthangi toll plaza at Choutuppal, which is the first major toll plaza on the route to Vijayawada from Hyderabad on NH-65, faced a massive surge in traffic.

An estimated one lakh vehicles crossed Choutuppal toll plaza on Saturday, January 10 and are expected to further increase in the upcoming days. A similar rush was witnessed at the remaining three ORR toll plazas.

## Municipal Poll Schedule Likely Before Sankranti

Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 11 (Indian Chronicle)

The schedule for municipal elections in the State is likely to be announced by the State Election Commission (SEC) three days ahead of the Sankranti festival, sources indicated. As part of the preparatory exercise, ward-wise voter lists are being finalised for 117 municipalities and six municipal corporations in accordance with the prescribed schedule. The final ward-wise electoral rolls for all municipalities and corporations across the State are set to be published on January 12. In this connection, State Election Commissioner Rani Kumudini and Secretary Mand Makarand held a video conference from Hyderabad on Wednesday with

district collectors, additional collectors, and commissioners of municipalities and municipal corporations. The Commissioner directed officials to complete all election-related arrangements in a meticulous and time-bound manner. Officials were instructed to publish the final electoral rolls within municipal and corporation limits on January 12, followed by the publication of the draft list of poll-



ing stations on January 13. The polling station data is to be uploaded immediately onto the 'T-Poll' software. Further, the Commissioner directed that the final photo electoral rolls, arranged polling-station-wise, should be published on January 16, ensuring readiness for the conduct of municipal elections.

## We will stand by journalists who bring glory to journalism

- The propaganda that the number of accreditation cards will decrease is not true
- More accreditations will be granted than in the past“All benefits will apply to every card
- We will take the suggestions of journalists' associations into consideration
- We will make changes and additions to GO 252“We will formulate a policy for journalists' house plots that is free from court obstacles
- Meeting held with 14 journalists' associations..
- State Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy

“(Manduva Srisailam..Hyderabad.. Indian Chronicle January 11):- State Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said that the people's government under the leadership of Honorable Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will provide all kinds of support to all journalists who uphold the dignity of journalism and bring glory to the profession. He clarified that it is not the intention of their government to diminish or belittle anyone's dignity. On Saturday, a meeting was held at his office in the Secretariat with representatives from 14 journalists' associations regarding GO 252. Speaking on this occasion, the minister stated that the representatives of the journalists' associations had given valuable suggestions and advice during the meeting. He assured them that their points and requests would be considered, and a positive decision would be taken, promising that changes and amendments would be made to GO 252. He clarified that the ongoing rumors about a reduction in the number of accreditation cards were baseless. He revealed that the number of cards issued this time would be higher than the approximately 23,000 cards issued previously. He stated that Telangana state is at the forefront in the country in the issuance of accreditation cards. He said that with the good intention of providing accreditation cards to all eligible journalists, a scientific study was conducted, and several meetings were held. Furthermore, he mentioned that the rules and regulations across the country were examined, which resulted

in some delay in the issuance of new cards. He reiterated that there is no difference between a media card and an accreditation card, and that all the benefits provided by the government to accreditation cardholders would also be extended to media cardholders, leaving no room for any doubts. He stated that they are not showing any bias in the matter of issuing accreditation cards, but to streamline the system, they will definitely collect circulation and other relevant details

from the government side, and will also verify the Chartered Accountant certificates. This, he said, would ensure justice for genuine newspapers and journalists. He added that they would also consider the possibility of granting accreditations based on population rather than one journalist per mandal in the state, and urged journalists' associations to respond on this matter. He assured that opportunities would be provided to Urdu journalists in the accreditation committees and that accreditation facilities would definitely be available for journalists from sports,



cultural, crime, cable TV, and other sectors. Responding to the request of women journalists, he promised to allocate a special quota in the issuance of accreditation cards. He informed that Telangana is the first state in the country to issue digital media cards. During the meeting, several representatives of journalists' associations raised issues such as house plots, pensions, bus passes, and insurance for journalists, to which Minister Ponguleti responded attentively. We will formulate a policy for journalists' housing plots that is free from court obstacles“Responding to



questions from some representatives regarding the issue of housing plots for journalists, the minister said that immediately after their government came to power, they resolved the issue of housing plots for journalists, which had been pending for decades, and handed over the land to the Jawaharlal Nehru Housing Society. He added that the problem reverted to its original state after the Supreme Court struck down the decision, but assured that their government would always be supportive regarding the housing plots issue. He stated that, as per the suggestion of the Honorable Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, they would formulate a policy that is free from any court obstacles. Telangana Media Academy Chairman K. Srinivas Reddy, I&PR Commissioner Ch. Priyanka, CPRO G. Malsur, and others participated in the meeting.

## Congress Mega Padayatra Held in Mettuguda, GHMC Victory the Target: Adam Santosh Kumar



“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 11:“A massive Congress Maha Padayatra was organised in Mettuguda Division of the Secunderabad Assembly Constituency under the leadership of Congress contesting MLA and constituency in-charge Adam Santosh Kumar. The padayatra was conducted with the primary objective of achieving victory in the upcoming GHMC elections, energising party cadre, spreading awareness about government welfare schemes, and ensuring early resolution of long-pending civic issues in the division. Speaking on the occasion, Adam Santosh Kumar said that Congress government welfare schemes are directly reaching the people. He criticised the previ-

ous government for failing to issue even a single ration card and alleged that the non-local MLA had neglected public concerns, calling it a disgrace. The padayatra gained special attention with the participation of Rajender Yadav, the second son of late former Mettuguda Corporator Adavayya. Rajender Yadav, who earlier played a significant role in the BRS party, has earned goodwill among the people of Mettuguda, following his father's legacy. Political observers opined that his participation has further strengthened the Congress party's position in the Mettuguda division. The padayatra clearly showcased the Congress party's expanding grassroots presence in the Secunderabad constituency. With a clear strategy and firm determination, Adam Santosh Kumar is moving ahead with the goal of winning all divisions in the constituency in the forthcoming GHMC elections. Several Congress leaders and party workers including Shilpachari, Rajender Yadav, Benna, Sriniv Reddy, Jayaraj, Elizabeth Rani, Ravi, Madhavi, Dilip, Deepu, Dheer Singh, Prithviraj, Venkat, Raghupati, Rekha, Savitri, and others took part in the programme.



## Harish Rao demands Governor's probe into secret GOs hiking movie ticket prices

Hyderabad Jan 11

BRS deputy floor leader T Harish Rao on Sunday said the Congress government was running a shadow administration, after Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy publicly distanced himself from government orders (GOs) hiking movie ticket prices. Hyderabad city guide

He demanded that the Governor order an investigation into the racket of commissions linked to ticket price hike approvals. In a statement, Harish Rao said administrative chaos in Telangana had reached a point where a bigger suspense thriller was unfolding in the Secretariat than in movie theatres. The GO increasing ticket prices was issued without the Minister's knowledge.

“When a Cabinet Minister admits that he is unaware of decisions in his own department, what does it say about this government? Who is running the show?“ he asked, liken-

ing the Revanth Reddy administration to a circus rather than a functioning government.

The BRS leader pointed out that the Chief Minister had earlier assured the Assembly that there would be no ticket hikes, no benefit shows and no preferential treatment by his government.

Even after the High Court remanded the government, Harish Rao said, GOs continued to be issued overnight, allowing price hikes for three films, with another approval expected soon. The government was misleading both the legislature and the public, he said, adding that Minister Venkat Reddy's denial effectively suggested that the Chief Minister was overriding departmental authority.

Questioning the presence of certain “extra-constitutional forces“ at the Secretariat and influencing deci-

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## The return of imperial bullying in a multipolar world

The United States' military operation in Venezuela on January 3, 2026, marks a brazen violation of international law and serves as a stark reminder of unchecked power in global affairs. This audacious move, executed without United Nations sanction or consultation with regional allies, harks back to an era when great powers imposed their will on weaker nations with impunity.

President Donald Trump's declaration that the US would "run" Venezuela until a "safe, proper and judicious transition", coupled with repeated references to the country's vast oil reserves, underscores the economic motives behind the intervention. This is not mere regime change; it is a revival of 19th-century imperialism, repackaged in the contemporary language of counter-narcotics, hemispheric security, and democratic restoration. The pretext — allegations of Maduro heading a "narco-terrorist" cartel — lacks publicly substantiated evidence from independent sources. By bypassing the United Nations Security Council and flouting Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, Washington has positioned itself as the self-appointed arbiter of global norms, eroding the post-World War II order designed to protect weaker states from great-power predation.

Yet, this is not an isolated American aberration in an otherwise rule-bound world. Great powers across the board have increasingly resorted to coercive tactics, exploiting asymmetries in military, economic, and technological strength to bend smaller nations to their will. Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, justified under the dubious guise of "denazification", devastated a sovereign neighbour, while China's assertive territorial claims in the South China Sea have openly defied the 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling in favour of the Philippines, underscoring Beijing's disregard for international maritime law. Economic coercion — from China's trade pressure on Lithuania and Australia to Russia's energy cutoffs to Moldova — further illustrates how power asymmetries are weaponised.

In South Asia, border disputes and economic leverage have strained relations between rising powers and their neighbours. India's 2020 border clashes with Nepal over territorial maps and its influence over Bhutan's foreign policy amid the Doklam standoff with China illustrate how regional giants can pressure smaller states. Even in Africa, the landscape is marred by proxy influences: Russia's Wagner Group (now rebranded as Africa Corps) has meddled in Mali, the Central African Republic, and Sudan through private military operations, providing security in exchange for resource concessions, while China's Belt and Road Initiative has ensnared countries like Sri Lanka and Zambia in debt traps, leading to the handover of strategic assets such as ports and mines. These parallels highlight a troubling convergence: a "three-bully world" dominated by the US, China, and Russia, where multilateral institutions like the UN are sidelined, and might dictate right over international law. For smaller and weaker nations — from Latin America to Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Global South — the threats are multifaceted and existential.

## Minister Ponnam Prabhakar and MLA Kumbham launch Sankranthi gift kit

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 11): On Sunday, State Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar and Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy launched the Sankranthi festival essential goods kit, which is being distributed to the villagers of Kondamadu village in BB



Nagar mandal under the auspices of the Survi Ramachander Goud Memorial (SRG) Foundation, in commemoration of Survi Ramachander Goud. Former Sarpanch Venu Goud stated that as a tribute to his father, a gift kit containing 7 types of food items and groceries necessary for preparing dishes during the Sankranthi festival will be given to every villager. In this program, leaders Erukala Srinivas Goud, and the defeated ward members of the Congress party, under the leadership of Survi Venu Goud, respectively met with the State Transport Minister and the Bhuvanagiri MLA. Bhuvanagiri Ramesh, Dusari Mahesh Goud, Meesala Narasimha, and Rock Babu were also present. Leaders Gundla Karunakar, Vanandas Sai, Chinagalla Ramu, Tummala Bhanu, and village women participated in this program.

## Rangoli Competition Organised Under the Leadership of BRS Leaders in Uppal

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Attends as Chief Guest and Presents Prizes



"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 11 (Indian Chronicle):"A Rangoli competition was organised at the Uppal South Swaroopa Rishi School Ground under the leadership of senior BRS leaders Puduri Jithender Reddy and Pilli Nagaraju. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and distributed prizes to the winners. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that such programmes help bring out the creative talents of women and convey a positive message to society. He appreciated the organisers for encouraging traditional art forms and providing a platform for women to showcase their skills. A large number of women enthusiastically participated in the Rangoli competition, impressing the audience with their colourful and artistic designs. Cash prizes were presented to the winners. BRS party leaders Aratikayala Bhaskar, Mekala Madhusudan Reddy,



Anya Balakrishna, Panga Mahender Reddy, along with local leaders, women, and party workers, participated in large numbers and made the event a grand success.

## Victory belongs to the Congress Party in every election

Large-scale joining into the party..

Tandur MLA Buyyani Manohar Reddy welcomed them into the party by draping the Congress scarf.



"(Vikarabad, Tandur news (Indian Chronicle, 11 Jan):"Victory belongs to the Congress Party in every election" MLA Manohar Reddy said in joining meeting of workers and leaders in Kokat village. Former Sarpanch of Kokat village in Yalal Mandal, Vijaya Lakshmi Venkatappa, along with nearly 100 supporters and party workers, joined the Congress Party under the leadership of Tandur MLA Manohar Reddy. MLA welcomed them into the party by draping the Congress scarf. In the occasion of joining, MLA said that Kokat village gave him a huge majority in the last Assembly elections. He stated that he would never forget the love and support shown to him on that day. He expressed confidence that the Con-

gress Party should win in Kokat village in every election. He assured that the village would be made free from water problems and that Indiramma houses would be provided to all the poor. He also said that approval for a Kokat bridge would be obtained and the foundation stone would be laid by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He mentioned that a road to the Sangam Temple is being constructed and will be completed by Shivaratri. He advised that everyone in the village should work together without any discrimination between old and new members. Finally, he extended his best wishes and congratulations to all those who joined the party today.

## New Committee to Be Formed Soon in Uppal Bhagyaith Association

Allegations of Illegal Collections Under the Guise of Welfare – Resolution Passed to Dissolve Old Committee

"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 11 (Indian Chronicle):"The original farmers and displaced families of the Uppal Bhagyaith HMDA Layout have resolved to form a new association committee soon to address long-pending civic issues and alleged irregularities by the existing committee. A meeting of farmers, residents, and

unauthorised association committee, which was never elected by residents, of functioning for the past eight years without undertaking any development works and instead engaging in illegal collections in the name of welfare. The meeting was convened to discuss the formation of a new committee, resolution of civic issues, and overall development of the HMDA layout. Residents also

raised concerns over the presence of wine shops, gas storage facilities, and OYO rooms within the residential area. Due to inadequate street lighting and lack of regular police patrolling, the locality has reportedly become vulnerable to anti-social activities during nighttime, causing distress to families living in the area. Addressing the gathering, Eega Santhosh Mudiraj stated that the existing committee would be dissolved and a new democratically elected committee would be constituted soon to ensure transparency and development. He asserted that collective efforts would be made to take all issues to the notice of concerned authorities and secure permanent solutions. The farmers unanimously passed a resolution demanding the removal of Mekala Madhusudan Reddy, who they alleged has been acting as association president without the consent of residents for the past eight years. Santhosh Mudiraj appealed to landowners, homeowners, builders, and plot owners in the Uppal Bhagyaith HMDA Layout to unite and work together for the comprehensive development of the colony. He also urged residents to extend cooperation in approaching government officials to resolve the long-standing civic problems. The meeting concluded with an announcement that the new committee will be formed and announced shortly.

apartment dwellers was held on Sunday at the association-designated land within the Uppal Bhagyaith HMDA Layout. The meeting was presided over by Eega Santhosh Mudiraj, a farmer and resident of Bhagyaith. Speaking as chief guests, Gope Arjun Reddy, Mekala Hanumanth Reddy, Nayab Venkatesh, and Bommala Sudhakar (Nidana Kavi) stated that after handing over their lands to the government, farmers faced severe hardships due to delays in compensation. After prolonged struggles and protests, they were finally allotted plots, on which they have built homes and are currently residing in the Uppal Bhagyaith HMDA Layout. They alleged that despite residing in the layout for years, the area continues to lack basic infrastructure such as drainage systems, drinking water supply, streetlights, and proper roads, causing immense hardship to residents. The speakers accused an

The services of the brave warrior Ode Obanna, who stood as a symbol of social justice and courage, are unforgettable: - Additional Collector of Local Bodies and Additional Revenue Collector Bhaskar Rao

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 11): Additional Col-



lector of Local Bodies and Additional Revenue Collector Bhaskar Rao said that the services of the brave warrior Ode Obanna, who stood as a symbol of social justice and courage, are unforgettable. On Sunday, he participated in the Ode Obanna birth anniversary celebrations organized by the BC Welfare Department at the Collectorate meeting hall and paid rich tributes by garlanding the portrait of Ode Obanna. "District Backward Classes Welfare Officer Sahithi, district officials, BC caste association leaders, and staff participated in this program.

## Congress Has Destroyed Hyderabad in Two Years: Talsani Srinivas Yadav

"(Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 11):"Former Minister and Sanathnagar MLA Talsani Srinivas Yadav stated that Cyberabad and Shamshabad were once small villages and gradually expanded over time. He questioned whether any real development had taken place during the two years of Congress rule. He challenged the government to name even a single project constructed during this period. Talsani said Hyderabad has been developing since the Nizam era and that under KCR's leadership, the city transformed into a global city. However, he expressed anguish that Hyderabad has been pushed towards ruin in the last two years. "Talsani Srinivas Yadav was speaking at a meeting organised by the Lashkar District Sadhana Samiti at Balam Raile Palace in Secunderabad on Sunday. He alleged that Chief Minister



Revanth Reddy was obsessed with changing names. He criticised the proposal to increase divisions from 150 to 300 and questioned whether there was any need to consult the people or their elected representatives. He asked whether the state was being run according to the Chief Minister's personal whims and called for a legal battle against the Congress government. He alleged that the GHMC delimitation was carried out in a haphazard and erroneous manner. He questioned whether even the GHMC Commissioner and Mayor were informed about the reorganisation process. Warning the government, he said that if their self-respect was attacked, the ruling establishment would be shaken. He cautioned the government against playing with people's sentiments. Talsani announced that an action plan would be revealed after Sankranti. He said a peaceful march would be taken out on the 17th of this month from Secunderabad Railway Station. He called for a non-violent struggle to protect people's rights and announced that thousands would participate in the march with black flags. He said Secunderabad Railway Station and JBS would be laid siege to, followed by a bandh call. He also announced relay hunger strikes and, if necessary, an indefinite hunger strike. He demanded that Secunderabad be declared a separate district and called for the formation of the Greater Secunderabad Municipal Corporation. He said the movement would be beyond politics and open to everyone. Stressing that self-respect comes before politics, he said the struggle would continue without compromise. He questioned whether people would remain silent if their parents' names were changed and asked who had given the authority to change the name of their region. He warned that governance based on personal decisions would not be tolerated and questioned whether delimitation was being done using Google Maps. He called upon every person born in Secunderabad to participate in the rally.

# Tribute to senior journalist Fazul Rahman sir

“K Sadanand “Husnabad January 11:”“Muhammad Fazul Rahman (66), a writer, teacher and editor of ‘Pratipksham Dinapatrika’ from Husnabad area of Karimnagar District, is no more. “He passed away at seven o’clock on Friday evening while remaining unconscious in the hospital. “This is a very sad and painful event. “In this context”“Mohammad Fazul Rahman belongs to Husnabad, present-day Siddipet district of Karimnagar district. He was born in Antakapet in 1960. He started his career as a journalist for Andhra Prabha in Husnabad around 1980. “Worked in it for many years. “After that he worked in Andhra Jyoti in Hyderabad. “Later he worked in the magazine ‘Disha’ from its inception. “After that, he worked for some time in the magazine ‘Mudra’ and two years ago he started his own daily newspaper ‘Pratipaksam’ and worked as an editor. “Around 1990, Husnabad Public School started the school and trained many students. “Press Club in Husnabad came into being. “He is affiliated with Husnabad Youth Association in the formation of Journalists’ Association and in Spirit Association. Fazul Rahman has three cousins.



**Misusing technology to avoid paying the amount due to the government during land registrations is illegal: Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao**



“(Mandava Srisailam...Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle...January 11):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District (Voice Today Correspondent):- District Collector Hanumantha Rao expressed anger over the misuse of technology to avoid paying the full amount due to the government during land registrations and depositing a lesser amount. He stated that all the files in the district where the amount deposited to the government treasury was reduced will be thoroughly examined, those responsible will be identified, and appropriate action will be taken. The RDOs of Bhuvanagiri and Choutuppal have been appointed as inquiry officers. “The Collector warned that there would be no leniency in this matter and severe action would be taken, including money recovery, criminal cases, and invoking the PD Act. He stated that in addition to recovering the money from those responsible, PD Act and criminal cases would be registered against them.



(Mandava Srisailam...Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle...January 11):- In Bhuvanagiri town, Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy distributed checks to 67 beneficiaries under the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme for underprivileged girls. As part of the distribution of Kalyana Lakshmi checks, Chobe Sunita from Pahadinagar, Ward No. 30, received her check from Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy. Former Municipal Chairman Barre Jangir, former DCC General Secretary Md. Mazhar, former Councilor Layak Ahmed, Town Congress Party President Koora Venkatesh, and others participated in this program.

**Telangana Sampath Meets MP Etela Rajender Seeking Solution to Kummar Kunta Residents’ Problems**



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 11 (Indian Chronicle):”“Bharatiya Jan Yuva Morcha (BJYM) State leader Telangana Sampath, along with local residents, paid a courtesy visit to Malkajgiri Member of Parliament Etela Rajender on Sunday. “Residents of Road No. 5, Kummar Kunta Colony under the Chiluka Nagar Division submitted a memorandum to the MP, requesting the sanction of a proper road and drainage line for their locality. Responding positively, MP Etela Rajender as-

sured them that the road and drainage works would be sanctioned. Speaking on the occasion, Telangana Sampath stated that he would extend his full support for resolving the issues faced by residents of the Chiluka Nagar Division. He also urged the people of Kummar Kunta to bring their problems to his notice so that he could take them to the attention of the MP. Residents of Kummar Kunta Colony participated in the meeting.

**Some Andhra Pradesh-based TV channels are deliberately spreading false information to tarnish the image of Telangana ministers and the government**

“Vikarabad district (Indian Chronicle, 11 Jan)“Vikarabad District Congress Party President Dhara Singh and Tandur MLA Manohar Reddy condemned this, stating it’s not journalism but political propaganda. They’re presenting lies as news to boost ratings, which is harmful to democracy and creates unnecessary suspicion among the public. The channel should withdraw the false news and apologize, or face legal action.



**Seeing the development works being carried out by Revanth Reddy, we must win the maximum number of seats in the upcoming municipal, ZPTC, MPTC, and municipal corporation elections:**

- Md. Mazhar, former DCC General Secretary, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 11):- Former DCC General Secretary of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Md. Mazhar, said that under the dynamic leadership of Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the state of Telangana is progressing towards further development, and he wished that Telangana would prosper with abundant wealth. He expressed happiness that the people, attracted by the development works being carried out by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy under the Congress government in Telangana state, have crowned the Congress party with victory and given it a huge majority of seats in the Gram Panchayat elections. In the same vein, he appealed to the people to ensure the victory of Congress party candidates with a huge majority in the upcoming municipal, ZPTC, MPTC, municipal council, and city corporation elections. Md. Mazhar, the former DCC General Secretary of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the Congress government has made public development its motto and public welfare its goal, giving high priority to women. He added that the credit for providing free bus travel to all women in the state and ration cards to every eligible person goes to the Congress government. Former DCC General Secretary of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Md. Mazhar, stated that ration cards are essential for every poor person, and that the BRS party did not issue a single new ration card in ten years. He said that it was only after the Congress party came to power in the state that the government earned the credit for implementing the promises made to the people during the elections in a phased manner. As part of this, he mentioned the implementation of schemes such as free bus travel for all women under the Mahalakshmi scheme, ration cards for all eligible people, old-age pensions, Indiramma houses, loan waivers for farmers, and the Rythu Bandhu scheme. He further stated that the Congress government is giving top priority to welfare schemes that enhance the self-respect



of women, and that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is providing interest-free loans with the aim of making all women millionaires, and is also creating employment opportunities for the unemployed. He said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Telangana state is moving forward on the path of development, and the government is working in accordance with the aspirations of the people. He urged every Congress worker to work like a soldier to take the development and welfare schemes being implemented by the Congress government to every village, and to ensure the victory of Congress candidates in the upcoming municipal council, ZPTC, MPTC, and city corporation elections, thereby completely eliminating the BRS and BJP parties.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal is the comprehensive development of women: Bharat Goud**



“ Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 11 :“Mahankali Secunderabad District President Bharat Goud said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal is to take women forward in all fields in India. On behalf of Sankranthi festival He attended the Muggu competition organized by the contested corporator Mekala Kirti Harsha Kiran in Secunderabad constituency Boudha Nagar Division New Ashok Nagar on Sunday as the chief guest and presented prizes to the women who won the competition. Speaking on the occasion, he said that BJP is the only party in the country that gives the highest priority to women. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is implementing many schemes with the

aim of developing women in all fields. He said that women who show their talent by putting on good mugu competitions and showing patriotism and devotion to God will be encouraged. He presented prizes to the winners of the mugu competition.” including Mekala Sarangapani, Rachamalla Krishnamurthy, Sarada Mallesh, Ajay Naidu Shyamsunder, Nagavani, Shobha, Anusha, Bhagyamma, Sai Dattu Hanumanthu, Laddu, Bair Suresh and others participated. He congratulated main cal Kirti Harsha Kiran . Speaking to the winners, he said that job opportunities are being provided through skill Development Centers. He said that only BJP is there for women.

**I will strive to resolve the problems of journalists: Gadwal MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy**

**TWJF is an organization that fights for the issues of journalists....Founding President Mamidi Somaiah**



“(Mandava Srisailam... Hyderabad Indian Chronicle... January 11): Gadwal MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan said that he will strive to resolve the problems of journalists. He urged journalists to work honestly for the protection of democracy and the resolution of people's problems. He participated as the chief guest in the third general meeting of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) Jogulamba Gadwal district held at Anantha Function Hall in Gadwal town on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that journalists should expose the corruption and irregularities happening in society and work for the welfare of society. He assured that he would resolve the problems of journalists within his constituency and provide assistance and cooperation. “TWJF is an organization that fights for the issues of journalists”-Founding President Mamidi Somaiah “He said that the state government's delay in resolving the problems of journalists is unacceptable and demanded that the problems be resolved immediately. He expressed concern that even though the Congress government has been in power for two years, it has not yet been able to issue even new accreditation cards to journalists. He said that after two years, the state government recently issued GO 252 instead of GO 239 for accreditations, and the new rules have confused and worried the journalists. Mamidi Somaiah demanded that this flawed GO be amended immediately. Mamidi Somaiah said that TWJF is the only organization that sincerely fights for the problems of journalists, and that this organization will stand by the journalists. He called upon them to

strengthen the organization and prepare to fight against the problems. Federation state co-conveners Pulipulupula Anandam, Vallala Jagan, Bandi Vijay Kumar, Tanniru Srinivas, Kudithadu Bapura and others addressed the general body meeting. Federation national executive committee member Akbar Basha, Wanaparty district secretary Ramakrishna Reddy, and others participated in the general body meeting, which was presided over by the district ad-hoc committee convener Giribabu. “TWJF District Committee Election” The new executive committee of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) Jogulamba Gadwal district has been elected. B. Giribabu was unanimously elected as the district president, Srinivasulu, Suresh, K. Venkatesh, KB Thimmappa, and Mahboob as vice-presidents, G. Nagaraju as secretary, Moiz, Raviprakash, and Sirigiri Krishna as joint secretaries, Beesanna as treasurer, and Ibrahim, M. Narasimhulu, Raghavender, Narasimha, Naresh, Devender Reddy, B. Venkatesh, Bheemudu, Gidda Reddy, Prabhakar, Kishtanna, Ramakrishna, Devaraju, Vishnuvardhan Goud and others as executive committee members. Along with them, state executive committee members Akbar Basha and Venkat Rao, and national council member M. Narasimhulu were elected. The MLA, along with former market chairman Pacharla Sridhar Goud, Patel Prabhakar Reddy, former ZPTC Prabhakar Reddy, Bijaram Sarpanchi's husband Srinivas Reddy, former ZPTC Satya Reddy, and leaders and journalists from various regions participated.

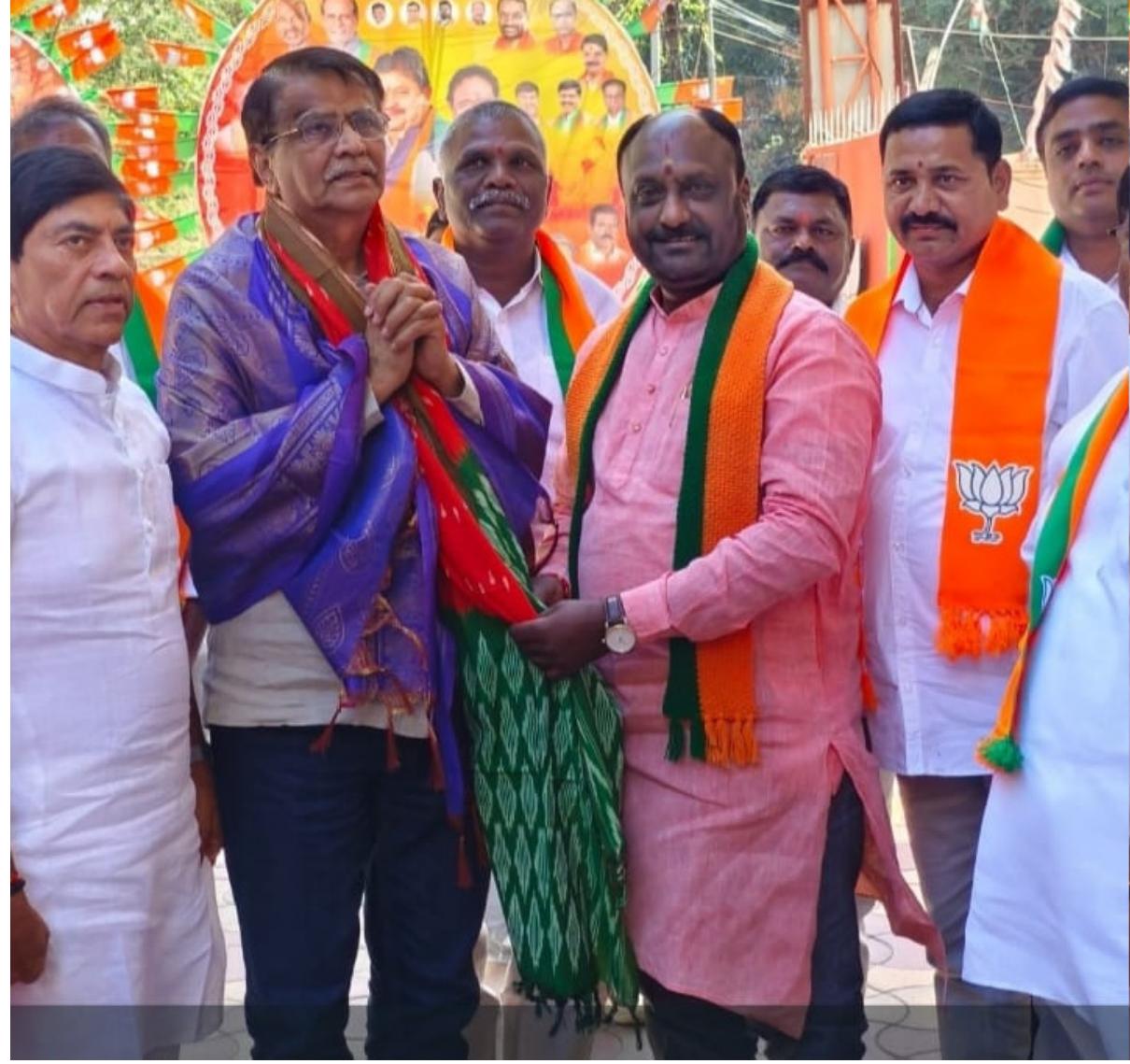
## We will take forward the Venkatadri Township layout in a transparent manner

If MP Etela Rajender gives time, he will reveal everything.  
Venkatadri Township owner A. Venkatesh Yadav



"Indian Chronicle OU January 09: Tensions between Ekasila Venture and Venkatadri Venture under Ghatkesar Revenue limits as both groups clashed... Venkatadri Township owner Venkateshwari spoke to the media at

his office in Tarnaka. He said that the Venkatadri Township layout has been taken forward transparently but some neighboring venturers are creating unnecessary chaos. They were furious. They said they had all the correct documents. They expressed their concern that they were entering Venkatadri Township without checking the boundaries related to the adjoining land."If MP Etela Rajender gives time" I will tell you everything" Even the documents he has He said he would show it. Venture Attack on security personnel" They said they came to do this. They approached them next door They said they came in support. Attack" Told the police that it will happen Security for not responding When the locals were informed about the matter, they came and stopped them, he said. He said he did not know who beat whom. He alleged that some people from Amberpet were brought and instead of their survey numbers, they came to the survey numbers of Venkatadri Township and created chaos and incited attacks.



"Munduva Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... (Indian Chronicle January 11):- A scene of Kisan Morcha State General Secretary and former corporator Padamati Jagmohan Reddy felicitating BJP National Secretary Om Prakash Dhankar, who attended an awareness workshop on the G. Ramji scheme as the chief guest, with a shawl at the BJP state office in Hyderabad, in the presence of Kishore Morcha state leaders.

## Tributes Paid to Dr Count Cesare Mattei on 217th Birth Anniversary

"Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 11: "The Telangana Electro Homeopathy Doctors Association (TEDA) organised the 217th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr Count Cesare Mattei on Sunday. The programme was held at the Ashritha Voluntary Organisation Orphanage in Secunderabad, where floral tributes were paid to the portrait of Dr Mattei." Speaking on the occasion, TEDA President Dr Gangadhar said that the Electro Homeopathy system of medicine offers remarkable treatment for several chronic diseases without any side effects. He highlighted the growing relevance and effectiveness of this alternative medical system in treating long-standing ailments." As part of the programme, food was distributed to children at the orphanage." TEDA General Secretary Dr Subhash Babu, Core Committee members Dr Vijay Kumar, Dr Srinivasa Rao, Dr Eswar Kumar, Dr S.M. Rabbani, Dr Venu Chari, Dr Imam, Dr Waseeyuddin, Dr Ashwini, Dr Latheefuddin, along with Ashritha Voluntary Organisation Secretary Nagaraju and Shekhar, participated in the event.



## BRS Leader Rajitha Reddy Distributes Kites to Children in Gandhi Girijan Colony, Habsiguda



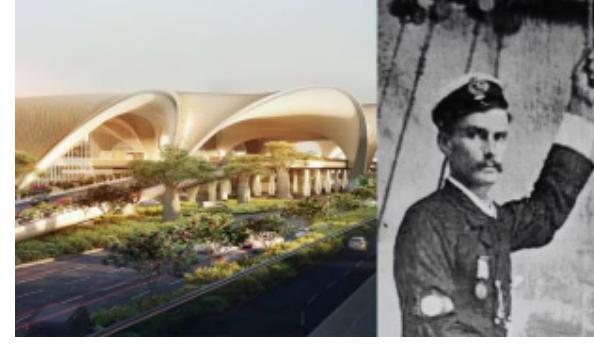
"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 11 (Indian Chronicle): "On the occasion of the Sankranti festival, BRS State Leader and Habsiguda Division In-charge Rajitha Reddy organized a kite distribution programme for children at Gandhi Girijan Colony in Habsiguda Division. Addressing the gathering, Rajitha Reddy stated that the programme was conducted with the objective of passing on Indian culture and traditions to future generations, in line with the vision of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR). She expressed happiness over distributing kites free of cost to young children and seeing their joy during



the festive season. She also advised children to avoid using Chinese manja, which poses serious risks to human life and birds, and instead encouraged the use of safe, traditional cotton thread.

Several BRS leaders and party members participated in the programme, including Gandhi Girijan Colony BRS senior leaders Ravi Naik, Narender Naik, Linga Naik, Kishore Naik, Mahender Naik, Minority leaders Nawab Faisal Babu and Nani, and women leaders Suguna and Lakshmi, along with others."

## From Spencer Perceval's balloon in 1889 to Navi Mumbai airport, here's how Mumbai learned to fly



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

As Navi Mumbai International Airport prepares to begin flight operations on December 25, it adds a new chapter to Mumbai's long history of aviation. The city's engagement with air travel began in the late 19th century with balloon ascents, followed by early and often unsuccessful aeroplane experiments, the establishment of civil aviation at Juhu, and the gradual expansion of Santacruz into the country's busiest airport. The opening of Navi Mumbai airport now extends that evolution, reflecting how Mumbai's relationship with flying has developed over more than a century. The first recorded aerial ascent in the city took place in 1889, when British pioneering balloonist Spencer Perceval, who had made over 700 balloon ascents, took off from the grounds of the old Government House in Parel, where the Haffkine Institute now stands. At the time, hydrogen gas balloon ascents were used for scientific experiments, adventure and commercial entertainment, with people paying gate money to witness the spectacle. Perceval further thrilled the massive crowd by descending with the help of a parachute.

The next major balloon ascent that Bombay witnessed came in 1891. Crowds turned out in large numbers to watch Jeanette Van Tassell, described by newspapers as "big, young, handsome and blonde", take off along with her husband P A Van Tassell from an unnamed ground in the city. The performance, however, did not go entirely to plan, with Jeanette suffering a minor parachute malfunction, according to Stephen Meredith Edwardes, a chronicler of the time. The accident that ended aerial ascents What finally brought an end to ballooning as public entertainment in Bombay was the tragic accident of December 10, 1891, involving 26-year-old Lieutenant R N Mansfield of the Royal Naval Reserve. Days earlier, on November 13, Mansfield had successfully descended by parachute from more than 11,000 feet in his balloon Wanderer and promised to repeat the feat. The second ascent was staged at the erstwhile Victoria Gardens in Byculla, now Veermata Jijabai Udyan, and drew a large gathering that included George Robert Canning Harris, the Governor of Bombay, and senior civil and military officials. While the take-off was smooth, disaster struck when the balloon reached an altitude of about 400 feet. It burst with a loud explosion and began to fall rapidly. "Mansfield made the most desperate efforts to disengage the parachute from the collapsed balloon, but it had become entangled in the ropes and the unfortunate man was soon forced to release his hold. The spectators uttered cries of dismay as they saw his body come twirling towards them and some of the ladies fainted at the sight," a report published in The New York Times stated. An inquiry later found that the balloon had been damaged in an earlier accident and had not been prop-

erly repaired. The incident sent shockwaves across India and abroad, and for years Bombay authorities refused to grant permission for any flying or floating objects over Mumbai's skies. From balloons to airplanes The first powered flight that attempted to take off from Bombay was before the First World War and was unsuccessful. "Since that date and up to the outbreak of the War in 1914, the only aerial spectacle offered to the Bombay public was a much advertised aeroplane flight from the Oval. This venture was a fiasco. The aeroplane would only rise a few feet from the ground and at that elevation collided violently with the iron railing," wrote Stephen Meredith Edwardes, a chronicler of those times. Ballooning faded from public memory with the arrival of powered flight. During the First World War, an airstrip at Kalyan was used for military purposes, with aircraft typically operating from grass fields.

A turning point came with the setting up of the Juhu Aerodrome, initially during the war years, which later became the home of the Bombay Flying Club, India's first club for flying enthusiasts. By 1930, according to Flight International, the world's oldest aviation news magazine, the club had 161 members. It operated four aircraft of its own, including one provided by the government, while five others were privately owned by members. Patrons who paid a membership fee of Rs 50 flew sorties to Ahmedabad, Poona, Deolali, and Porbandar from the strip, which often flooded during the monsoon. The same airstrip went on to become Bombay's primary airport and was the site of J R D Tata's historic first flight on October 15, 1932. Flying from Karachi via Ahmedabad, Tata landed at Juhu with 25 kg of airmail, marking the birth of India's civil aviation industry and Tata Airlines, later Air India. Juhu Aerodrome remained the city's main airport until Santa Cruz airport opened in 1942, initially handling six flights a day. As air traffic grew, the need for expansion became evident. A committee headed by Tata had recommended a new terminal as early as 1967. Construction began in November 1977 to build a new terminal at Sahar, across the runway from Santa Cruz, with the first phase opening in 1980. The terminal had 42 check-in counters, 18 more than Santa Cruz's international section. In comparison, the new Navi Mumbai airport will have 88 check-in counters. The expansion was not without setbacks. On September 21, 1979, Bombay's Santa Cruz airport shut down for the first time in its 20-year history after a fire gutted the international terminal, killing a family of three passengers in transit. Firefighters battled the blaze for nearly 30 hours. Domestic and international flights were paralysed, and special rail services were arranged to move stranded passengers. Temporary facilities and round the clock repairs allowed services to resume. In January 2009, the international Terminal 2A was demolished to make way for a new integrated terminal, which opened in January 2014. Even that expansion proved insufficient, leading to the decision to build a second airport. In August 2007, the Union Cabinet approved a greenfield airport at Navi Mumbai under a public private partnership model. After multiple delays and changes in developers, the Adani Group took over the project in 2021 through Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited, a joint venture with the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO). With flight operations now set to begin on December 25 in a phased manner, Navi Mumbai International Airport marks the latest chapter in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region's long aviation history, a journey that began with hydrogen balloons and peril, long before concrete runways reshaped the city's skies.

## Inside one of India's largest tech incubators, a thriving Pune public library fuels science entrepreneurship



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

The strange clock seems to think that it is always the right time to read. It occupies an entire wall and appears to glow as people stop to admire its curious features. The hours on the clock face are not numbers, letters or symbols but models of famous books. The Power of 2 sits at 2 o'clock, The Five Biggest Ideas in Science at 5 o'clock, and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People at 7 o'clock. The books hold a clue that the clock ticks in a space where a reader seeks out a certain kind of knowledge—about science, entrepreneurship, financial economics, product design, emerging science, business planning, inspiration and some Sudha Murthy (whose book is at 3 o'clock)—that will give them a competitive advantage. This is the Venture Centre Library, tucked away in the premises of one of India's largest technology incubators, Venture Centre in Pune, which was set up by the National Chemical Laboratory in 2006. A separate non-profit at present, the centre has supported more than 750 science-based startups since its inception. The courtyard is buzzing with innovators as they think, innovate and plan the next big disruption. The library, which contains 3,500 books, as well as magazines and journals, offers a glimpse into what such entrepreneurs read as they navigate challenges in the life cycle of a product. The cosy, warmly lit space overlooks the greenery and activity outside its glass windows and houses 21 sections—ranging from Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Startups to Motivation, Personality Development, Skill Development, Marketing, Management, Biographies, Popular Science, and Science and Technology. One rack is stocked with market research reports and studies that may be difficult to find. There are shelves with magazines that business leaders swear by—Harvard Business Review, Forbes and Entrepreneur, among other international and Indian titles. Inside one of India's largest tech incubators, a thriving Pune public library fuels science entrepreneurship. As the clock on the wall reminds visitors, there is always some knowledge to be gained every hour. Among the regulars is Kishor Harale, an accomplished scientist who is moving into entrepreneurship. "We get the latest magazines and a very good collection of books here," he says. Yet, while the library is popular with startup founders and budding business minds, it has escaped the attention of almost everyone else in Pune. This, despite the annual membership being an affordable Rs 1,000. Dr V Premanath, advisor, Venture Centre,

emphasises that the library is open to the public. "We are eager for more people, including children, to use the library. We do a lot of gaming-based learning for children and have a collection of games, such as Battleship and Othello," he says. Premanath adds that a Marathi collection and a selection of books from the library are also available online.

Rohit Joshi, head, People and Community Development, at Venture Centre, says, "While we have books on Intellectual Property, such as for software patents, which are generally not easily available, you also have many books on Mahatma Gandhi." He points to one of the sought-after books, Angel Financing for Entrepreneurs. "This is for any entrepreneur who is looking to raise angel investment," he says. Leading the way to the reference section, he points out titles that are a little more expensive than the others.

Ideas and some fun! Shelke, a med-tech entrepreneur, comes here every fortnight. "When you look at the mainstream library or resources present online, you find that these are not curated for, let's say, entrepreneurship in the Indian context. If you were to look for books on 'technology and Indian market', you would find very limited literature out there. This is where the Venture Centre Library becomes an important resource," he says. Events organised by the library have been rewarding experiences, he adds. These have included sessions on Artificial Intelligence, Intellectual Property and a Toastmaster series which trains people for better communication. "We organise a lot of knowledge transfer events, where people from different startups come together and discuss issues, from research papers to idea formations.

## Regency Culinary students host vintage-themed French Gourmet Gala

Hyderabad: The final-year culinary students of Regency College of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management, Irramanzil, organised a vintage-themed French Gourmet Gala Lunch at the Radiance Restaurant.

The event featured an elegant seven-course pre-plated Table d'Hôte (TDH) menu, inspired by classical European cuisine and executed to professional fine-dining standards. It had an elaborate culinary spread, including over 50 varieties of charcuterie and cured meats, a refined cheese display, a visually distinctive Smörgåstårta (Scandinavian savoury cake), an artisan bread counter, and thoughtfully curated salads and hors d'oeuvres. A signature highlight of the event was the Butter Swan Sculpture, intricately carved from 10 kg of butter, showcasing precision, creativity, and aesthetic sensibility under the guidance of Chef Naga Manikanta. The event was attended by Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commission, Chef Naveen Nagaraj, Corporate Chef, Tatva & General Secretary, Telangana Chefs Association and Chef Rizwan Abdul Khader,

## India, China, Brazil among countries targeted as Trump 'greenlights' Russia sanctions bill



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

U.S. President Donald Trump is now on board with a hard-hitting sanctions package meant to economically cripple Moscow as his administration continues to negotiate a deal to end the war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Senator Lindsey Graham said he met with Mr. Trump at the White House earlier on Wednesday (January 7, 2025), during which the President "greenlit" the Russia sanctions bill that has been in the works for months. "This bill will allow President Trump to punish those countries who buy cheap Russian oil fueling Putin's war machine," Graham said, citing China, India and Brazil as potential targets of the legislation.

Mr. Graham had signaled previously that Mr. Trump has blessed the bill, only for it to encounter additional obstacles. But a White House official confirmed to The Associated Press on Wednesday that the President supports the sanctions legislation. "This will be well-timed, as Ukraine is making concessions for peace and Mr. Putin is all talk,"

continuing to kill the innocent," Mr. Graham said in a statement, referring to the Russian President Vladimir Putin. Leaders in the Senate and House of Representatives have held off bringing the legislation to a vote as Mr. Trump has preferred to impose tariffs on goods imported from India, the world's second-leading buyer of Russian oil after China. A U.S. official told Reuters in November that Mr. Trump would sign the legislation if it passed, but would insist on specific language ensuring he remained in control of the sanctions. Cutting financial source of Russia's actions. The bill, chiefly written by Mr. Graham and Senator Richard Blumenthal, allows the administration to impose tariffs and secondary sanctions on countries that purchase Russia's oil, gas, uranium and other exports. Doing so is meant to cut off the source of financing for much of Russia's military actions.

The White House has previously insisted on some revisions and flexibility for Mr. Trump in the sanctions package, but the White House official on Wednesday did not elaborate on whether any changes were secured. The legislation has dozens of co-sponsors in the Senate, as well as a companion bill in the House, drafted by Representative Brian Fitzpatrick. Mr. Graham said there could be a vote as early as next week, although it's unclear how likely that will be. The Senate is poised to take up a scaled-back government funding package next week that the House is currently considering, if the House passes it. The following week is a Senate recess timed to Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The Trump administration is currently trying to finalise a peace deal to end the war in Ukraine, now nearly four years old, with special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law, as the U.S. President's chief negotiators.

## 2020 Delhi riots case: Gulfisha Fatima walks out of Tihar jail



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Gulfisha Fatima, one of the accused in the 2020 northeast Delhi riots conspiracy case, walked out of Tihar Jail on Wednesday (January 7, 2026), hours after a Delhi court issued her release orders following bail from the Supreme Court, jail sources said. The remaining three accused, for whom the release orders were issued early Wednesday (January 7), are also expected to be freed once all procedural formalities are completed.

Earlier in the day, a Delhi court issued release orders for the four accused after they furnished bail bonds of ₹2 lakh each with two local sureties, as directed by the Supreme Court. The fifth accused, who was also granted bail by the apex court on Monday (January 5), did not appear before the court to furnish bail bonds. The court noted that all bail conditions had been complied with and passed the orders for their release after Delhi Police submitted verification reports of the sureties and documents.

The Supreme Court had on Monday (January 5) denied relief to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, observing that a prima facie case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was made out against them, but granted bail to the five accused, citing a hierarchy of participation. With regard to Ms. Fatima's case, the top court said she did not exercise independent command, resource control, or strategic oversight over multiple protest sites during the agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

"The allegation that Gulfisha Fatima mobilised local women and coordinated protest-site logistics, though relevant to the prosecution's case, does not presently disclose that she exercised independent command, resource control,

or strategic oversight over multiple protest sites," the bench said. The prosecution itself asserts that directions were conveyed to her by others higher in the asserted hierarchy. In these circumstances, this court finds that the level of attributed agency and control does not justify continued incarceration once the investigative purpose stands substantially fulfilled," the bench said. Directing the trial court to expedite the process of bail, the bench had imposed 11 conditions and said the misuse of liberty would attract the cancellation of the bail. The February 2020 riots in northeast Delhi broke out during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), leaving 53 people dead and more than 700 injured. Of the 20 accused named in the case, two are still absconding and the remaining 18 had applied for bail in the case in the past. Out of 18, seven are still in prison – Salim Malik, Sharjeel Imam, Umar Khalid, former Aam Aadmi Party leader Tahir Hussain, Athar Khan, Tasleem Ahmed and Khalid Saifi.

## France working with allies on plan should U.S. move on Greenland



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

France is working with partners on a plan on how to respond should the United States act on its threat to take over Greenland, a Minister said on Wednesday (January 7, 2026), as Europe sought to address U.S. President Donald Trump's ambitions in the region. A U.S. military seizure of Greenland from a longtime ally, Denmark, would send shock waves through the NATO alliance and deepen the divide between Mr. Trump and European leaders.

Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said the subject would be raised at a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Germany and Poland later in the day. "We want to take action, but we want to do so together with our European partners," he said on France Inter radio. Leaders from major European powers and Canada have rallied behind Greenland this week, saying the Arctic island belongs to its people, following a renewed threat by Mr. Trump to take over the territory. Trump renews Greenland ambitions. Mr. Trump has in recent days repeated that he wants to gain control of Greenland, an idea first voiced in 2019 during his first presidency. He argues the island is key for U.S. military strategy and claims Denmark has not done enough to protect it. The White House said on Tuesday (January 7, 2026) that Mr. Trump was discussing options for acquiring Greenland, including potential use of the U.S. military, in a revival of his ambition to control the strategic island, despite European objections. Mr. Barrot suggested a U.S. military operation had been ruled out by Washington's top diplomat. "I myself was on the phone yesterday with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio (...) who confirmed that this was not the approach taken ... he ruled out the possibility of an invasion (of Greenland)," he said. A U.S. military operation over the weekend that seized the leader of Venezuela had already rekindled concerns that Greenland might face a similar scenario. A senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said this week that Mr. Trump and his advisers were discussing a variety of ways to acquire Greenland, including a purchase. Greenland and Denmark have said the island is not for sale. Denmark's Foreign Min-

ister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart, Vivian Motzfeldt, have requested an urgent meeting with Mr. Rubio to discuss the situation. "We would like to add some nuance to the conversation," Mr. Rasmussen wrote in a social media post. "The shouting match must be replaced by a more sensible dialogue. Now, Denmark rejects claim Russian, Chinese ships stalk Greenland. The world's largest island but with a population of just 57,000 people, Greenland is not an independent member of NATO but is covered by Denmark's membership of the Western alliance. The island is strategically located between Europe and North America, making it a critical site for the U.S. ballistic missile defense system for decades. Its mineral wealth also aligns with Washington's ambition to reduce reliance on China. Mr. Trump has repeatedly said Russian and Chinese vessels are stalking waters around Greenland, which Denmark disputes. "The image that's being painted of Russian and Chinese ships right inside the Nuuk fjord and massive Chinese investments being made is not correct," Mr. Rasmussen told reporters late on Tuesday (January 6, 2026). Vessel tracking data from MarineTraffic and LSEG show no presence of Chinese or Russian ships near Greenland.

## Trump invited to give State of the Union address on Feb. 24

Speaker Mike Johnson has invited President Donald Trump to give the first State of the Union address of his second term on February 24. The invitation sent on Wednesday (January 7, 2026) notes that the nation is marking the 250th anniversary of American independence. The invitation touted the work of Mr. Trump and a Republican-led Congress in 2025 and pointed to the year ahead. "We look forward to advancing the important work ahead of us in 2026, serving the American people, defending liberty, and preserving this grand experiment in self-governance," Mr. Johnson wrote. The address will give Mr. Trump the chance to shape the GOP's message to voters going into a midterm election that will determine whether Republicans maintain control of Congress, or if Democrats can win one or both chambers and gain the ability to better confront Mr. Trump's legislative agenda during his final two years in office. Mr. Trump has addressed Congress once before in his second term, delivering a speech to a joint session in March.

## Denmark, Greenland seek talks with Rubio after White House repeats it wants the island



Denmark and Greenland are seeking a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio after the Trump administration doubled down on its intention to take over the strategic Arctic island, a Danish territory. Tensions escalated after the White House said on Tuesday that the U.S. military is always an option, even as a series of European leaders rejected President Donald Trump's renewed calls for the U.S. to take over Greenland, citing strategic reasons. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen warned earlier this week that a U.S. takeover would amount to the end of the NATO military alliance. "The Nordics do not lightly make statements like this," Maria Martisius, a defence analyst at the European Policy Centre think tank, told The Associated Press on Wednesday (January 7, 2026).

"But it is Trump, whose very bombastic language bordering on direct threats and intimidation, is threatening the fact to another ally by saying 'I will control or annex the territory.' The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the U.K. joined Mr. Frederiksen in a statement Tuesday reaffirming that the mineral-rich island "belongs to its people". Their statement defended the sovereignty of Greenland, which is a self-governing territory of Denmark,

and thus part of NATO. Mr. Trump has floated since his first term the idea of acquiring Greenland, arguing that the U.S. needs to control the world's largest island to ensure its own security in the face of rising threats from China and Russia in the Arctic. This weekend's U.S. military action in Venezuela has heightened fears across Europe, and Mr. Trump and his advisers in recent days have reiterated the U.S. leader's desire to take over the island, which guards the Arctic and North Atlantic approaches to North America. Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart, Vivian Motzfeldt, have requested a meeting with Mr. Rubio in the near future, according to a statement posted on Tuesday (January 6) to Greenland's government website. Previous requests for a sit-down were not successful, the statement said. While most U.S. Republicans have supported Mr. Trump's statement, Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Thom Tillis, the Democratic and Republican co-chairs of the bipartisan Senate NATO Observer Group, blasted Mr. Trump's rhetoric in a statement on Tuesday. "When Denmark and Greenland make it clear that Greenland is not for sale, the United States must honour its treaty obligations and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark," the statement said. "Any suggestion that our nation would subject a fellow NATO ally to coercion or external pressure undermines the very principles of self-determination that our Alliance exists to defend." French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said he spoke by phone on Tuesday with Mr. Rubio, who dismissed the idea of a Venezuela-style operation in Greenland. "In the United States, there is massive support for the country belonging to NATO – a membership that, from one day to the next, would be compromised by any form of aggressiveness toward another member of NATO," Mr. Barrot told France Inter radio Wednesday. Asked if he has a plan in case Trump does claim Greenland, Mr. Barrot said he won't engage in "fiction diplomacy".

## China asks tech firms to halt orders for Nvidia's H200 chips: Report

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Beijing has asked some Chinese tech companies to halt orders for Nvidia's H200 chips this week, and is expected to mandate domestic artificial intelligence chip purchases, the Information reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter. Nvidia has been caught between Washington and Beijing, as the United States tightens controls on exports of advanced semiconductors used in AI, while Chinese companies seek to reduce reliance on U.S.-designed chips. Tensions over technology trade have been a central feature of broader U.S.-China conflicts, with semiconductors emerging as a strategic flashpoint.

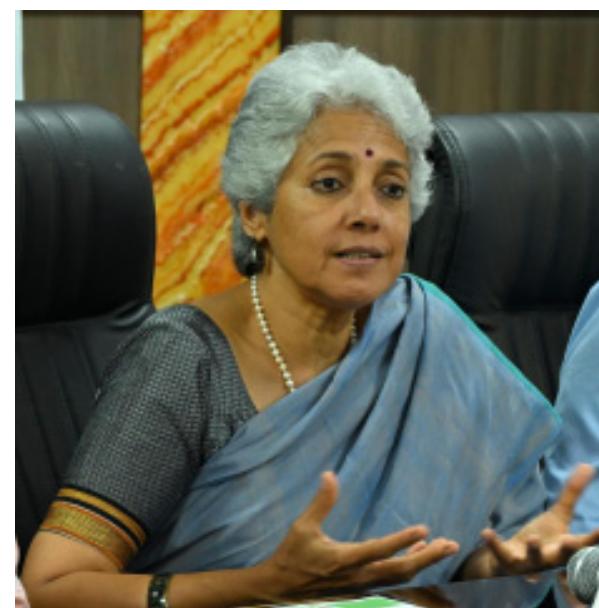
China's directive to suspend orders was issued as the government considers whether, and under what conditions, to allow access to Nvidia's high-performance chips. Beijing is aiming to discourage local technology companies from rushing to stockpile U.S. chips before a decision is reached, the report said.

"China is committed to basing its national development on its own strengths, and is also willing to maintain dialogue and cooperation with all parties to safeguard the stability of global industrial and supply chains," said Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in the U.S. Nvidia did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment and China's Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Industry and Information Technology did not



immediately return calls outside business hours. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said at the Consumer Electronics Show this week that demand in China for its H200 chip was strong and the company is viewing purchase orders as a signal of approval rather than expecting any formal announcement from Beijing. U.S. export licenses for the chips are still being processed, with no set timeline. Late last year, U.S. President Donald Trump's administration approved the export of H200 chips to China, a significant reversal of previous bans on advanced AI hardware. The approval was based on a condition that the company pay a unique 25% revenue-sharing tax to the U.S. government.

## Origins of COVID still unclear, but climate is driving new viral threats, says top scientist Soumya Swaminathan



changes and strong implementation to address the threats of air pollution, extreme heat and climate change – challenges that disproportionately affect poor and middle-income countries such as India. "We are already experiencing the health impacts of heat and air pollution. Thankfully, there are solutions. China has done it and so has London, by transitioning to renewable energy, improving public transport, strengthening waste management through segregation, diversifying agriculture, and promoting energy-efficient buildings. There is no doubt that human activities are the main drivers," she said. Ms. Swaminathan warned that biodiversity loss continues largely unrecognised, with "a million species at risk of extinction" and unpredictable consequences for ecosystems and human health. The 1.5°C temperature limit has already been breached, and the world may be heading toward 2.5-3°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, she observed. Extreme climate events – heatwaves, landslides, droughts, floods, and cyclones – have increased in frequency and intensity, causing internal and cross-border migration. Diseases, too, have shown a rise, affecting life expectancy. "Mitigation and adaptation are both critical," she stressed. Climate change and COVID-19, she said, share one important similarity: they do not respect borders. That is why collaboration, solidarity and the sharing of scientific knowledge – even among groups that may disagree politically – are essential for addressing global challenges, she concluded.

## MANUU to hold two-day national workshop for distance education officials

Hyderabad: The Centre for Distance and Online Education, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, is organising a two-day national workshop-cum-orientation programme for its Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors and Learner Support Centre Coordinators on January 12 and 13. Prof Syed Ainal Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, MANUU, will preside over the inaugural session. According to Prof Mohd Razaullah Khan, Director, CDOE, the programme is expected to play a significant role in capacity building, fostering institutional coordination and ensuring smoother implementation of policy reforms in distance and online education. The workshop aims to deliberate on key issues, emerging challenges and best practices in the field of Distance and Online Education, with a special focus on the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 in the Open and Distance Learning framework.

# Trump is pulling the U.S. out of the UNFCCC. What does it mean?



EMS News Agency, Jan 10

The UN FCCC is the global treaty under which the UN conducts the annual Conference of Parties (COP) climate talks and under which the Paris Agreement exists. Virtually all countries that are UN members are also party to the UN FCCC, meaning Trump's withdrawal will make the US the first country to pull out of it. On February 4, 2025, he had issued an executive order requiring the government "to determine which organisations, conventions, and treaties [to which the US is party] are contrary" to its interests. His decision to exit the FCCC and the IPCC are based on this review.

Other similar entities he's exiting include the International Solar Alliance, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals, and Sustainable Development (which works closely with the UN), UN Population Fund, UN Energy, and the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries. While pulling out of the Paris Agreement already signalled Trump's intentions and set the world on a difficult path to negotiate climate funding and emissions control without the world's wealthiest country and one of its top emitters at the table, exiting the UN FCCC will remove the US from the international climate governance architecture altogether. The U.S. as an emitter The U.S. ranks at the top of the lists of the countries with the highest current annual emissions and per-capita emissions as well as countries with the most historical responsibility. According to the Global Carbon Project and other sources, US territorial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2024 were about 4.9 billion tonnes, roughly 12.7% of the global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that year. On per-capita emissions as well, for 2024 in the US they were about 14.6 tonnes per person, much higher than the global average.

It's also the largest cumulative emitter for CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuels and industry in most mainstream carbon accounting. According to the same data, the country's share of global cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> is around 24%. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has also estimated that the country's greenhouse gas emissions in 2022 amounted to 6.3 billion metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent and that US land use and forests offset about 13% as a net sink. These emissions come mainly from burning fossil fuels for transport, electricity, and heating; in recent years transportation has emerged as the largest source of direct emissions. Pulling out of the FCCC The numbers don't bode well for a country whose president has been calling climate change a "hoax". To be sure, pulling out of the UN FCCC won't be "just another" exit after the Paris Agreement. In doing so the US will be excluded from the core framework that organises almost all multilateral climate diplomacy. For instance, the US won't have to participate in the FCCC reporting system, which records countries' greenhouse gas emissions and progress towards their commitments, and thus allows nations to monitor their collective efforts and hold each other accountable.

Legally the FCCC itself provides a way for countries to withdraw should they see fit. After three years of being a Party, a Party may withdraw by written notice, and the withdrawal will take effect a year after the Depositary receives the notice. The FCCC also says that withdrawing from it is treated as withdrawing from any protocol to which the Party belongs. In practical terms, this means the US will cease to be a Party inside the system that runs the annual COP negotiations and the processes by which the rules are drafted for transparency, carbon markets, financial architecture, etc. The country will also lose its ability to negotiate from inside the room at COPs even if it can still attend some meetings as an observer. However it won't have the legal standing to bargain as a Party. Further, the Paris Agreement sits under the UN FCCC. And the Agreement's text is clear that any Party that withdraws from the UNFCCC "shall be considered" to have withdrawn from the Paris Agreement as well. Climate finance The exit could also reshape the politics

of climate finance. The UN FCCC has established a financial mechanism with operating entities including the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, and the COP oversees the arrangements of that mechanism. If the US isn't a Party, it will lose its leverage inside the COP over how that financial architecture evolves while also making it politically easier for a US administration to justify withholding contributions as part of a broader retreat. For economically developing countries like India, this could render financing less predictable.

Conversely, the exit will also raise the "cost of doing climate business" for US companies. Many private sector enterprises, investors, insurers, and subnational governments currently plan around the expectation that global climate rules will become tighter over time, so the US's decision to exit the UN FCCC could signal more policy volatility, in turn increasing risk premiums and leaving US exporters more exposed to foreign climate-linked trade measures, since now the US will be less able to shape the underlying norms. Moreover for many partner countries climate cooperation has become tied up with broader negotiations on energy security, critical minerals, industrial policy, and development finance. The potential implication here is that countries may now become more unwilling to cut side deals with Washington in adjacent domains because they'll have to account for the durability of the US's commitments. Out of the IPCC The IPCC assesses scientific research on climate change, compiling reports that synthesise the current understanding of climate science, the consequences, and potential strategies policymakers everywhere can implement. Pulling out of the IPCC could thus weaken the US's role in owning the shared scientific references climate negotiations rely on. This doesn't automatically mean "American scientists will no longer be involved in climate reports" but it likely will reduce US involvement. The IPCC's authors are put together by a process in which governments and observer organisations nominate experts and the IPCC Bureau creates teams. If the US stops nominating, an important pipeline for US-based expertise — which is considerable — becomes narrower.

This said, the IPCC explicitly encourages experts who are nominated but not selected to contribute as expert reviewers. This role is open and large in scope and US researchers could still participate if their government steps back. US scientists can also still be nominated via non-government routes, e.g. by observer organisations, nationality no bar. However, in practice, government membership affects scientists' power to coordinate. Global repercussions The global repercussions are likely to be most pronounced on bargaining power and finance, and therefore on climate action momentum. The climate talks run on reciprocity. When a very wealthy country with high emissions decides to quit, it weakens the expectation that other major players will also play by the same shared rules. That in turn can harden poor countries' positions; these countries already believe their rich counterparts promise more than they deliver. It can also give cover to other reluctant governments to delay or dilute action.

The timing is also unfortunate because the extant conversation on climate finance has shifted from the older \$100 billion goal towards much larger needs and newer targets. According to the OECD, economically developed countries mobilised \$115.9 billion in climate finance in 2022, the first time it exceeded \$100 billion. However adaptation finance remains far below the need: the UN Adaptation Gap Report 2025 estimated it to be \$310–365 billion per year by 2035 while international public adaptation finance flows were about \$26 billion in 2023 (down from \$28 billion in 2022). At the COP29 summit in Azerbaijan in 2024, governments agreed to a new collective quantified goal of at least \$300 billion per year by 2035 plus a wider mobilisation agenda. The US exiting the world's core climate action bodies makes it harder to make credible deals to reach these numbers because other countries will ask why they should pay more when a major historical emitter is stepping away. The UNFCCC and IPCC are together excellent coordinators as well. The IPCC synthesises evidence and creates common benchmarks and the UNFCCC turns those benchmarks into rules for reporting emission cuts and to progressive increases in national ambitions. Axiomatically, the US's exit from this system could risk more climate action shifting into 'smaller' instruments, like trade measures, bilateral deals, and so on, rather than universal rules, resulting in uneven standards and more conflict over carbon border measures and access to technologies. Ultimately, for poorer countries, the near-term risk is slower global mitigation as well as a reduced ability to secure predictable support for adaptation and for loss 'and damage' — at the very time when the quantified needs being discussed are expanding and the consequences of climate change are intensifying.

## Shadow library search engine Anna's Archive goes down

The shadow library search engine and catalogue Anna's Archive has gone down, as users discovered that they could no longer access the platform to pirate content through its [URL](https://annas-archive.org/). The organisation stated on Reddit that it was "fine" but that its .org domain appeared to have been suspended.

Anna's Archive is a platform that preserves books, comics, magazines, and other forms of media by sourcing and compiling them from libraries (both legal and illegal) so that they can be tracked, copied, and downloaded by people worldwide. According to a message posted on Reddit and shared by media outlets, Anna's Archive reassured users and encouraged them to donate. "The .org domain apparently has been suspended. Our other domains work fine, and we've added some more. We recommend checking our Wikipedia page for the latest domains. This unfortunately happens to shadow libraries on a regular basis. We don't believe this has to do with our Spotify backup," stated Anna's Archive on Reddit earlier this week.

While other shadow libraries such as Sci-Hub and LibGen also continue to function outside legal limits, Anna's Archive focuses on bulk distribution of materials by bringing together the contents of multiple such shadow libraries. "This wide distribution, combined with open-source code, makes our website resilient to takedowns, and ensures the long-term preservation of humanity's knowledge and culture," said the organisation in its FAQ section.

Anna's Archive claims that as a search engine, it does not host any copyrighted materials and only indexes metadata that is already publicly available, and focuses on "preservation." However, Anna's Archive was accused of music piracy after announcing in December that it had "backed up" Spotify and distributed about 300TB of content in the form of metadata and music files via bulk torrents. Users of Anna's Archive could search for books and find a variety



of download links with their own specifications, allowing them to pirate content from the source of their choice. Anna's Archive identified itself as a non-profit and cited the late American technologist Aaron Swartz, who advocated for open access to information through both legal and illegal means, as a source of inspiration. Swartz, 26, died by suicide in 2013 while facing a trial over allegations that he downloaded huge volumes of content from the JSTOR digital library. Anna's Archive donors can avail benefits such as faster download speeds, while non-members can access slower downloads. Supporters of shadow libraries and the Open Access movement often cite global wealth disparity and expensive paywalls as justification for downloading books, academic literature, and other copyrighted media for free through piracy databases. Others claim that no original works are being stolen because only copies are being made, and that authors should be compensated through alternative means. However, both trade and academic publishers have worked to take down such shadow libraries through lawsuits in multiple countries. They often cite the loss of revenue for authors and creatives in the form of unpaid royalties when readers download publications without payment.

## Who pays starting salary of over 2 crores per year to fresh graduates? And why?



As phase one of campus placement season for 2025-26 at the IITs concludes, all the eyes are on the big-ticket job offers made to the fresh B Tech students. A recent news report about the ₹2.5 crore per year offer by Optiver, a Netherlands-based global trading company to a B.Tech (Computer Science) student of IIT, Hyderabad created waves of excitement among the students and the parents. This offer, however, did not come as a surprise to many. Around the same time, last year, a student at IIT Madras received a record-breaking offer of ₹4.3 crore per year, for the role of Quantitative Trader from Jane Street, a Wall Street trading firm from the U.S. This article analyses the ultra-high-paying recruiters, job roles offered, skills expected and how students can prepare for such dream jobs and how the institutions can support them.

What is behind the rise of ₹2 crore recruiter club?

The competitive landscape of campus placements of over ₹1 crore per year is estimated to have tripled from about 60 offers in 2021 to 180 in 2025. The share of ₹2 crore offers, though still small, has been growing steeply. This phenomenon is not a blip any longer. The large-ticket "Day-1" financial trading recruiters of the current placement season at IIT Bombay are reported to have offered salaries ranging from ₹2.2 crores to ₹3.6 crores per year. It clearly shows that the trend will continue, despite the impact of AI. In the last five years, the "₹2 Crore Club" has grown to be a robust technology-driven financial stock trading ecosystem. It is helmed by Quantitative Trading (QT) firms, who leverage technology for quick trades, in fraction of seconds. High Frequency Traders (HFT) further automate the trades, without any need for human intervention, using the power of efficient algorithms. Jane Street and Optiver are not alone. Hudson River Trading (HRT) offered over ₹2.2 crores for Algorithmic Developer, whereas Da Vinci Derivatives offered salary packages exceeding ₹2 crore for the role of Quant Researcher. NK Securities follows with around ₹1.65 crores while Rubrik has extended ₹1.49 crore offers. Other firms in this league include Citadel Securities, IMC Trading, Graviton Research, APT Portfolio, Atlas Research, Quadeye, Quantbox, The Trade Desk, and others. Around 70% of them have been repeat recruiters, who view the IITs as their primary talent pipeline globally. A few years back, the hunting ground for these recruiters was limited to first generation IITs, but recent years have seen entry of second generation IITs like Hyderabad, IIT(BHU) and the IITs like Allahabad and Raipur.

How can they afford to pay such high salaries?

In order to understand why and how these firms pay such high salaries, one must look at their business model, particularly, of how they make money. Most of them are medium-sized proprietary financial trading houses and earn profits by leveraging price arbitrage, buying and selling the stocks between two stock exchanges like NASDAQ and New York Stock Exchange, for a tiny profit of as low as \$0.01 per share. By executing millions of such trades in seconds they make massive profits.

A software developer at an HFT firm, who can reduce even a few microseconds in execution of a program can generate extra profit of millions of dollars in a month. As the intellectual efforts of the developer are directly and quickly translated into profit, it is not difficult for the firm to share a part of the profit. That is why these firms hire the best of engineers to optimize every line of the program. These firms are lean with low overheads with only 200–500 employees, which allows them to distribute a significant portion of their trading profit, as bonus to the employees. A significant portion of the "₹2 crore" packages, going up to 40%, is the performance bonus.

What are the roles offered and skills needed?

A quantitative trader takes trading decisions in a live trading desk, using game theory and probability. A quantita-

tive researcher analyzes historical data to find patterns or "signals" that predict future price movements and devise trading strategies using advanced Statistics, Stochastic Calculus, and Machine Learning. A low-latency developer builds the ultra-fast engines that execute the trades, leveraging the mastery of low-latency expertise in areas like memory management and concurrency. Typically, these firms look for people with deep knowledge of algorithms, low level systems and mastery in mathematics in areas like probability, linear algebra, and game theory. While financial literacy is not always mandatory, an understanding of financial market microstructure and derivatives is an advantage. Prior work experience is not essential for these roles, as the firms look for youngsters with exceptional quantitative aptitude, deep conceptual understanding of Mathematics, proficiency in programming, and smart problem-solving abilities. Most firms prefer fresh graduates for their innovative and out-of-the-box thinking ability. In terms of behavioural traits, they look for people that can work under pressure, without losing balance of mind. Generally, the aspirants go through multiple rounds of rigorous interviews, involving "Brainteaser" rounds, probability puzzles and low-latency C++ coding skills. Most of the Quant and HFTs have been preferring the Pre-Placement Offer (PPO) route for recruitment, wherein students are selected after a rigorous internship for eight weeks. In such cases, the selection process for the internships is very rigorous.

Salary comparison: Foreign and Indian offers Total compensation called Cost-To-Company (CTC) often includes base salary, guaranteed/target bonus, relocation/sign-on bonus, and Restricted Stock Units (RSUs) as employee stock options, and profit-sharing bonus. Because most of the roles are based abroad, in locations like Amsterdam, Dublin, Hong Kong, London and New York, the salary packages convert into Indian Rupees of 2 crores or more. Some companies offer domestic postings, with salaries ranging from ₹60 Lakhs to ₹1.2 crores. A ₹2 crore international offer (based in Europe) is roughly equal to 60 Lakhs offer in India in terms of lifestyle and savings, considering the cost of living and taxes. Students need to keep this in mind, while comparing international offers with domestic offers.

Career growth and risk factors Such jobs offer exciting career opportunities both in terms of money and job satisfaction, particularly for the students that are strong in mathematics and enjoy solving probability brainteasers. However, there will be intense day-to-day job pressure, due to the live trading environment, which does not tolerate even a small mistake. Besides burn-out, career growth may be limited to the financial technology sector.

How can students prepare for such dream jobs? Students aspiring for such jobs need to plan and start preparing themselves right from first year by building a foundation in Data Structures and Algorithms. They should participate in global hackathons and competitive programming contests, and build expertise in Machine Learning. Going beyond regular curriculum, they can take inter-disciplinary electives like financial technology. They also need to focus on securing internships from Quant and HFT companies, as converting an internship into a PPO is relatively easier than cracking a day one campus interview.

How can institutions support aspiring students?

Institutions can offer inter-disciplinary courses that blend Mathematics, Statistics, and Finance with Computer Science. They may also set up FinTech trading labs in association with HFT firms, where the students can practice algorithmic trading in a simulated environment. Institutions should also facilitate direct interactions with alumni working in Quant Trading firms.

Conclusion: Navigating the paradox of talent with resilience We are currently witnessing a Talent Paradox. While the volume of entry-level roles in traditional IT services is shrinking, due to AI-driven automation, the demand for specialised talent is scaling new heights. The Quant and High-Frequency Trading sector is just one example of competitive bidding for the scarce natural human intelligence to solve the problems that Artificial Intelligence is yet to master. This trend of paying such premium salaries for natural talent is likely to accentuate in the days to come, as AI develops further. This underlines the imperative to cultivate native human skills like creative thinking and problem solving to beat the adverse impact of AI on entry level jobs. While the ₹2 crore salaried dream jobs are exciting, they come with a psychological price tag of high-stakes, high pressure work environment, wherein resilience and work-life balance will be essential for survival and sustained professional growth.

## Jabarkhet: can private reserves restore wildlife and keep tourism gentle?

A bird with a rufous body and a mohawk sings sweetly, the sound wafting over us. Its head is black, its body orange, but despite the colours, it merges seamlessly into the leaves around it. That is because the leaves are thick, their diversity giving them different colours. There are oaks, deodars, rhododendrons, and walnut trees, and on the ground, where the rufous sibia dives after finishing its warbles, there are nodding ferns and thick inches of leaf litter which no one has swept up. Above our heads, there are scythes in the sky: Himalayan griffon vultures soaring slowly, with all the time in the world.

When you think of wildlife tourism in India, the options are pre-determined. There are safaris inside tiger reserves or there are National Parks, where you enter in Gypsy cars, at stipulated times, and never get off. These are the most well-known kinds of wildlife tourism, but crowding of the star animal — such as a tiger or elephant — is not unheard of. Then there are trails and hides where you can walk as part of other guided tours, usually on community land. This is usually for the hardcore wildlife-lover, out for a particular sighting of a rare bird. Could there also be a third option, where you can amble at your own pace, in restored woodland, and where wildlife always gets the first right of way, away from mass tourism? Could there, in essence, be picnics without trash, and could this be achieved without emptying one's pockets?

In 2025, the Jabarkhet Nature Reserve (JNR), near Mussoorie, turned ten years old. This is Uttarakhand's first privately owned and operated nature reserve, meant to conserve wildlife and habitat as a primary goal. The 1907 Guide to Mussoorie describes the hills around Dehradun as abounding with wildlife:

"These hills are clad with thick forest composed chiefly of Sal [Shorea robusta] and Sain [this could potentially refer to the crocodile bark tree or the Terminalia tomentosa]. The pine grows on the higher crests, and they were the home of many wild animals: tigers, leopards, sloth-bears, hyenas, deer, pig and porcupine used to abound in the jungles." In JNR, similar sightings are possible today: leopard, barking

deer, goral, yellow-throated marten, leopard cat, jungle cat, black bear, porcupine, wild boar, red fox, jackal, black-naped hare, civet, and sambar. But this was not an easy journey. Private reserves are popular in Africa. In India, however, with 'eco-tourism' labels being used in arbitrary ways, perhaps responsible private reserves are more about potential than reality. In dissecting how wildlife returned to JNR and how it has balanced tourism needs with conservation, it is possible to trace a model for private reserves in India.

More than 40 years ago, alarmed by massive deforestation in the hills, the government called for a ban on tree-cutting above 1,000 metres in (then) Uttar Pradesh. In the 1960s, the Jain family, owners of the Jabarkhet Estate, created a working plan for the area with the forest department. The forest was divided into compartments, dead trees were logged, and new ones were planted. Over the years, even this was discontinued and the Estate lay unused and largely unmanaged. In the intervening areas, Jabarkhet, once described as a 'picnic' spot by Northam in 1889, became more and more crowded. Many different people used the Jabarkhet Estate then, to collect forest produce, as a recreational site, and also to hunt. In 2010, it was evident the area needed stewardship. "We removed 500 kg of garbage from the slopes. Three tonnes of the weed Eupatorium were removed," JNR co-founder Sejal Worah said. "Before we did this, in the intervening years, the forest was badly overused with little management. I was so saddened to see the place which I grew up visiting strewn with rubbish." If JNR's fortunes had to be turned around, it would both benefit as well as suffer from its proximity to tourism-glutted Mussoorie. Mussoorie is so stuffed with hotels and 'getaways' that it's easy to forget its name comes from its natural beauty, the red-berried masuri bush. The challenge then was to create a kind of tourism that didn't further take from the mountain, that didn't promise helipads, fake fountains and adventure sports, but a slower form of taking in the Himalayas. And it was to be eco-tourism, the benefits had to accrue to the local population. But this wasn't easy because of the locals' suspicion: they were used to seeing outsiders coming in and 'developing' one natural area after another.

## U.S. to exit 66 international organisations as Trump further retreats from global cooperation



The Trump administration will withdraw from dozens of international organisations, including the UN's population agency and the UN treaty that establishes international climate negotiations, as the U.S. further retreats from global cooperation. President Donald Trump on Wednesday (January 7, 2026) signed an executive order suspending U.S. support for 66 organisations, agencies and commissions following his instructions for his administration to review participation in and funding for all international organisations, including those affiliated with the United Nations, according to a U.S. official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a presidential decision that had not yet been publicly announced. Most of the targets are UN-related agencies, commissions and advisory panels that focus on climate, labour and other issues that the Trump administration has categorized as catering to diversity and "woke" initiatives.

The Trump Administration has found these institutions to be redundant in their scope, mismanaged, unnecessary, wasteful, poorly run, captured by the interests of actors advancing their own agendas contrary to our own, or a threat to our nation's sovereignty, freedoms, and general prosperity," the State Department said in a statement. The U.S. has also walked out of the India-France-led International Solar Alliance — unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then French President Francois Hollande at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris on November 30, 2015. Mr. Trump's decision to withdraw from organisations that foster cooperation among nations to address global challenges comes as his administration has launched military efforts or issued threats that have rattled allies and adversaries alike, including capturing autocratic Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and indicating an intention to take over Greenland. The administration previously suspended support from agencies like the World Health Organization, the UN for Palestinian refugees known as UNRWA, the UN Human Rights Council and the UN cultural agency UNESCO as it has taken a larger, a-la-carte approach to paying its dues to the world body, picking which operations and agencies they believe align with Mr. Trump's agenda and those which no longer serve U.S. interests. It has marked a major shift from how previous administrations — both

## Maharashtra civic polls: 12 suspended Congress councillors in Ambarnath join BJP

Twelve newly elected councillors in the Ambarnath Municipal Council, suspended by the Congress for aligning with the BJP after the polls, have formally joined the saffron party. Maharashtra Bharatiya Janata Party president Ravindra Chavan announced the development at the BJP office here late on Wednesday (January 7, 2026) night, asserting the move was not motivated by power but driven by a shared commitment to development.

"The people elected these councillors and they had promised development to the citizens. They have come with us because the government is working in a dynamic manner and is capable of delivering justice and development to the people," he said. Following the local polls held on December 20, the BJP joined hands with its arch-rival, Congress, under the banner of 'Ambarnath Vikas Aghadi' (AVA) to form the Ambarnath Municipal Council (in Thane district) leadership, sidelining ally Shiv Sena, which emerged as the single largest party. The Aghadi also includes Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

The AVA secured a majority of 31 seats in the 60-member local body. In recent elections, Shiv Sena won 27 seats, falling just four short of a majority. The BJP secured 14 seats, Congress 12, NCP 4, while 2 independents were also elected. With the support of one independent, the three-party coalition's strength has risen to 32 councillors, crossing the majority mark of 30. Left red-faced with the awkward arrangement, the Congress on Wednesday suspended its 12 newly elected councillors along with the block president. The move by the 12 suspended councillors to join the BJP has significantly altered the political equations in the municipality. "They believe that only through the BJP can the promises made to the people be fulfilled effectively," he said, adding that the party would continue to focus on governance and development at the local body level. Mahayati ally Shiv Sena has called the development a betrayal of "coalition dharma" as the arrangement in Ambarnath was aimed at keeping the Eknath Shinde-led party from holding

## Canada's Indigenous governor general to visit Greenland as Trump renews talk of annexing it

Canada's Indigenous Governor General and its foreign minister will visit Greenland in early February, Prime Minister Mark Carney said. The visit comes as U.S. President Donald Trump renewed his call for the U.S. to take control of Greenland, the Inuit self-governing territory of the kingdom of Denmark. Mr. Trump has also previously talked about making Canada the 51st State.

Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand and Governor General Mary Simon, who is of Inuit descent, are expected to open a consulate in Nuuk, Greenland. "The future of Greenland and Denmark are decided solely by the people of Denmark," Mr. Carney said while meeting with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen at Canada's embassy in Paris. The island of Greenland, 80% of which lies above the Arctic Circle, is home to about 56,000 mostly Inuit people.

Mr. Simon became Canada's first Indigenous Governor General in 2021 and previously served as Canada's ambassador to Denmark. The governor general is the representative of Britain's King Charles as head of state. The King is the head of state in Canada, which is a member of the Commonwealth of former colonies. The leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom joined Denmark's Frederiksen on Tuesday (January 6) in defending Greenland's sovereignty in

the wake of Mr. Trump's comments about Greenland, which is part of the NATO military alliance. The leaders issued a statement reaffirming the strategic, mineral-rich Arctic island "belongs to its people." Ms. Frederiksen and Mr. Carney are in Paris for the Coalition of the Willing talks on Ukraine but Mr. Carney made a point of meeting with Ms. Frederiksen and NATO's secretary general ahead of those meetings. "You have been very clear in your statement when it comes to the respect for national sovereignty," Ms. Frederiksen said to Mr. Carney. "We are both into securing the Arctic region and together with all our NATO allies we can secure the region, so hopefully everybody is willing to work together." Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff, said Monday (January 5) that Greenland should be part of the United States in spite of a warning by Frederiksen that a U.S. takeover of Greenland would amount to the end of NATO. Mr. Trump has argued the U.S. needs to control Greenland to ensure the security of the NATO territory in the face of rising threats from China and Russia in the Arctic. "It's so strategic right now," he told reporters Sunday (January 4). "We are making progress within NATO but we have to do more," Mr. Carney said at an earlier press conference in Paris. Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal, said it's important at this point for Canada to show solidarity with the people of Greenland.

Republican and Democratic — have dealt with the UN, and it has forced the world body, already undergoing its own internal reckoning, to respond with a series of staffing and programme cuts. Many independent nongovernmental agencies — some that work with the United Nations — have cited many project closures because of the U.S. administration's decision last year to slash foreign assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID. Despite the massive shift, the U.S. officials, including Mr. Trump himself, say they have seen the potential of the UN and want to instead focus taxpayer money to expand American influence in many of the standard-setting UN initiatives where there is competition with China, like the International Telecommunications Union, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labor Organization. The withdrawal from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC, is the latest effort by Mr. Trump and his allies to distance the U.S. from international organisations focused on climate and addressing climate change.

UNFCCC, the 1992 agreement between 198 countries to financially support climate change activities in developing countries, is the underlying treaty for the landmark Paris climate agreement. Mr. Trump — who calls climate change a hoax — withdrew from that agreement soon after reclaiming the White House. Mainstream scientists say climate change is behind increasing instances of deadly and costly extreme weather, including flooding, droughts, wildfires, intense rainfall events and dangerous heat.

The U.S. withdrawal could hinder global efforts to curb greenhouse gases because it "gives other nations the excuse to delay their own actions and commitments," said Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson, who chairs the Global Carbon Project, a group of scientists that tracks countries' carbon dioxide emissions. It also will be difficult to achieve meaningful progress on climate change without cooperation from the U.S., one of the world's largest emitters and economies, experts said. The UN's population agency, which provides sexual and reproductive health across the world, has long been a lightning rod for Republican opposition and Mr. Trump himself cut funding for the agency during his first term in office. He and other GOP officials have accused the agency of participating in "coercive abortion practices" in countries like China. When President Joe Biden took office in January 2021, he restored funding for the agency. A State Department review conducted the following year found no evidence to support these claims. Other organisations and agencies that the U.S. will quit include the Carbon Free Energy Compact, the United Nations University, the International Cotton Advisory Committee, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation, the Pan-American Institute for Geography and History, the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies and the International Lead and Zinc Study Group.



reins of the local body. On the BJP joining hands with the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM in the Akot Municipal Council in Akola district, Mr. Chavan said a show-cause notice has been issued to their Akot MLA, Prakash Bharsakale. Mr. Chavan noted that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has expressed strong displeasure over the role of local BJP leaders in the matter and made it clear that the party would not tolerate actions that go against its stated policies. Frowning upon the alliances between ideological rivals, CM Fadnavis on Wednesday said such arrangements were not approved by the BJP leadership and violated discipline.

## Trump weighs military option to acquire Greenland



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Mr. Trump has stepped up his designs on the mineral-rich, self-governing Danish territory in the arctic since the U.S. military seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro last weekend. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that "acquiring Greenland is a national security priority" for Mr. Trump to deter U.S. adversaries like Russia and China.

"The President and his team are discussing a range of options to pursue this important foreign policy goal, and of course, utilizing the U.S. military is always an option at the commander in chief's disposal," she said in a statement to AFP. The Wall Street Journal reported Secretary of State Marco Rubio told lawmakers that Mr. Trump's preferred option is to buy Greenland from Denmark, adding the threats did not signal an imminent invasion. Denmark has warned any move to take Greenland by force would mean "everything would stop," including NATO and 80 years of close transatlantic security links. Any U.S. military action against Greenland would effectively collapse NATO, since the alliance's Article Five pledges that member states will defend any of their number that come under attack. Greenland's Foreign Minister Vivian Motzfeldt wrote on social media that they'd sought a meeting with Mr. Rubio throughout 2025 but "it has so far not been possible." Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said meeting Mr. Rubio should "clear up certain misunderstandings." And Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen insisted that the island was not for sale, and only its 57,000 people should decide its future. Allies have rallied around Denmark and Greenland while simultaneously trying not to antagonise Mr. Trump.

## U.S. unveils plans to control Venezuela's oil sales 'indefinitely'

The U.S. Department of Energy said on Wednesday (January 7, 2026) it has begun marketing Venezuelan crude in the global market and plans to control the sales of the South American country's oil "indefinitely", a day after President Donald Trump claimed that Caracas would "turn over" up to 50 million barrels of oil to the United States. "We have engaged the world's leading commodity marketers and key banks to execute and provide financial support for these crude oil and crude products sales," the Department said in a fact sheet.

The U.S. attacked Venezuela on January 3 and captured its President Nicolas Maduro, who is currently in the U.S. facing charges of narcoterrorism. Mr. Trump claimed on Tuesday that 30 to 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil would be taken by storage ships, and brought directly to unloading docks in the U.S. He said he has authorised Energy Secretary Chris Wright to execute the plan. "We're going to market the crude coming out of Venezuela — first this backed up, stored oil, and then indefinitely, going forward, we will sell the production that comes out of Venezuela into the marketplace," Mr. Wright said at a Goldman Sachs conference in Miami.

According to the fact sheet, Mr. Wright and the Department of Energy are "working with the Interim Venezuelan Authorities and private industry to execute this deal". It said proceeds from the sale of Venezuelan crude oil and oil products would initially be kept in U.S.-controlled accounts before being disbursed "for the benefit of the American people and the Venezuelan people at the discretion of the U.S. government." "These oil sales begin immediately with the anticipated sale of approximately 30-50 million barrels. They will continue indefinitely," added the Department. Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves. The country, under tight American sanctions, is currently producing less than 1 million barrels of oil a day. The U.S. has also imposed a naval quarantine on Venezuela, squeezing the country's ability to ship oil out using shadow tankers. In a social media post on Wednesday (January 7, 2026), Mr. Trump said Venezuela will purchase "only American made products" with the money the country receives from oil sales by the U.S. "These purchases will include American Agricultural Products, and American Made Medicines, Medical Devices, and Equipment to improve Venezuela's Electric Grid and Energy Facilities. In other words, Venezuela is committing to doing business with the United States of America as their principal partner — a wise choice," wrote Mr. Trump.



Venezuela's interim government, led by former Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez, has sought cooperation with the U.S., without responding directly to Mr. Trump's claims over Caracas sending oil to the U.S. Venezuela's state-run oil company PDVSA said in a statement that it is in talks with the U.S. for the sale of oil "within the framework of the commercial relations" that exist between the two countries.

"This process is being carried out under schemes similar to those in place with international companies such as Chevron, and is based on a strictly commercial transaction, with criteria of legality, transparency, and mutual benefit for both parties," said the company in the statement issued in Spanish, which has no reference to Mr. Maduro or U.S. sanctions. The Department of Energy said the U.S. government "is selectively rolling back sanctions to enable the transport and sale of Venezuelan crude and oil products to global markets". It also said the U.S. will authorise the import of oil field equipment to Venezuela to drive production growth. "This will involve technology, expertise, and investment from American and other international energy partners." Meanwhile, the U.S. has escalated its pressure campaign on Venezuela by capturing two more tankers, which it said were linked to the country. The European Command of the U.S. said on social media that the vessel Bella 1 was seized in the North Atlantic for "violations of U.S. sanctions". The U.S. had been pursuing the tanker, which according to American media reports was being escorted by the Russian Navy, since last month. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem announced via social media that U.S. forces also took control of the M Sophia in the Caribbean Sea. Both ships were "either last docked in Venezuela or en route to it," Ms. Noem said.

## Vitamin B12 deficiency is more than just a nutrition problem: experts

Vitamin B12 deficiency is widespread in India and often goes undiagnosed despite its effects on long term neurological, cognitive, and physical health. Experts say its subtle symptoms: persistent fatigue, numbness, or poor concentration are frequently misattributed to stress, ageing or other conditions, delaying diagnosis and treatment. Studies suggest that while this is often viewed purely as a nutritional problem, it goes beyond inadequate intake alone.

Experts emphasise that diet remains the primary driver of B12 deficiency in India due to a complex interplay of cultural habits, socio-economic factors, and lifestyle choices.

S. Krishnamoorthy, senior consultant, Kauvery Hospital, Chennai, explains, "B12 is naturally found almost exclusively in animal-based foods, which makes vegetarians and near-vegetarians particularly vulnerable." Vijayashree?N., chief dietitian at MGM Healthcare, Chennai, elaborates, "Limited access to animal-source food can compound the problem". Even when these foods are available, certain traditional cooking methods such as prolonged heating can reduce the already small amounts of B12 present, leaving many individuals at risk without realising it. The impact of these dietary patterns is not uniform across the population. Vinitha?Krishnan, chief clinical dietitian, SIMS Hospital, Chennai, points out that children, young adults, pregnant women, and older adults are par-

ticularly susceptible, as their bodies require higher levels of the vitamin to support growth, reproduction, and neurological health. Vishnu?Abishek?Raju, medical gastroenterologist at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, notes a paradox: while middle-class vegans may unknowingly avoid fortified foods and face higher deficiency risk, some low-income groups may inadvertently receive trace amounts of B12 from naturally occurring bacterial flora in traditional diets; socio-economic contexts can therefore shape outcomes. Beyond individual dietary choices, broader socio-cultural practices and urban lifestyle changes influence intake. Nanda Kumar R., senior consultant, general medicine, SRM Global Hospital, Chennai, points out that the increasing reliance on processed foods and plant-based diets pursued for weight management or lifestyle reasons can unintentionally reduce B12 intake, particularly in urban households where professional dietary guidance is limited. Absorption is an equally crucial factor. Dr. Krishnamoorthy explains that conditions such as chronic gastritis, Helicobacter pylori infection, celiac disease and other intestinal disorders can impair B12 uptake. Dr. Krishnamoorthy notes 'functional absorption issues,' where standard blood tests may show adequate B12 even when the body is not properly utilising it. Certain medications can exacerbate the problem. Long-term use of metformin for diabetes and acid-suppressing drugs can deplete B12 stores over time, Dr. Kumar says.

## Trump administration could strip some naturalised Americans of their citizenship: Report



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

New York/Washington: The Trump administration is looking at plans to strip some naturalised Americans of their citizenship, the latest in a series of efforts undertaken by President Donald Trump to crack down on immigration. A report in the New York Times cited new internal guidance issued on Tuesday to US Citizenship and Immigration Services field offices, asking them to "supply Office of Immigration Litigation with 100-200 denaturalisation cases per month" in fiscal year 2026.

While federal law provides for stripping naturalised Americans of their citizenship if they committed fraud while applying for citizenship or in a handful of other situations, the new guidance "would represent a massive escalation of denaturalisation in the modern era," said the report. It added that such a move could impact people who had made honest mistakes on their citizenship paperwork and "sow fear among law-abiding Americans." The guidance is the latest in a series of measures announced by Trump in his second term in the White House as part of an intensified crackdown on immigration, both illegal and legal. The NYT report added

that there are about 26 million naturalised Americans in the country, citing Census Bureau data. USCIS estimates show that more than 800,000 new citizens were sworn in last year, most of whom were born in Mexico, India, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic or Vietnam. "It's no secret that US Citizenship and Immigration Services' war on fraud includes prioritising those who've unlawfully obtained US citizenship — especially under the previous administration," USCIS spokesman Matthew Tragesser said in the NYT report. "We will pursue denaturalisation proceedings for those individuals lying or misrepresenting themselves during the naturalisation process. We look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Justice to restore integrity to America's immigration system." Former agency officials have voiced concern over such a guideline. "Imposing arbitrary numerical targets on denaturalisation cases risks politicising citizenship revocation," former USCIS official Sarah Pierce said. "And requiring monthly quotas that are 10 times higher than the total annual number of denaturalisations in recent years turns a serious and rare tool into a blunt instrument and fuels unnecessary fear and uncertainty for the millions of naturalised Americans." The NYT report said the new guidance was part of a document outlining USCIS priorities for the 2026 fiscal year, which began in October and listed goals such as "provide employee feedback opportunities", "strengthen management of high-risk cases" and "pursue denaturalisation."

The Justice Department has also said it would make denaturalisation a priority this year. In a memo earlier this year, officials said they would target individuals in an array of categories beyond committing fraud in obtaining citizenship. "Categories of eligible people include gang members, those who committed financial fraud, individuals connected to drug cartels and violent criminals," the NYT report said.

## Trump suspends green card lottery programme that let Brown University, MIT shootings suspect into US

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Washington: President Donald Trump suspended the green card lottery programme on Thursday that allowed the suspect in the Brown University and MIT shootings to come to the United States. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in a post on the social platform X that, at Trump's direction, she is ordering the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to pause the programme.

"This heinous individual should never have been allowed in our country," she said of the suspect, Portuguese national Claudio Neves Valente. Neves Valente, 48, is suspected in the shootings at Brown University that killed two students and wounded nine others, and the killing of an MIT professor. He was found dead Thursday evening from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, officials said. Neves Valente had studied at Brown on a student visa beginning in 2000, according to an affidavit from a Providence police detective. In 2017, he was issued a diversity immigrant visa and months later obtained legal permanent residence status, according to the affidavit. It was not immediately clear where he was between taking a leave of absence from the school in 2001 and getting the visa in 2017. The diversity visa programme makes up to 50,000 green cards available each year by lottery to people from countries that are little represented in the US, many of them in Africa. The lottery was created by Congress, and the move is almost certain to invite legal challenges. Nearly 20 million people applied for the 2025 visa lottery, with more than 131,000 selected when including spouses with the winners. After winning, they must



undergo vetting to win admission to the United States. Portuguese citizens won only 38 slots. Lottery winners are invited to apply for a green card. They are interviewed at consulates and subject to the same requirements and vetting as other green-card applicants. Trump has long opposed the diversity visa lottery. Noem's announcement is the latest example of using tragedy to advance immigration policy goals. After an Afghan man was identified as the gunman in a fatal attack on National Guard members in November, Trump's administration imposed sweeping rules against immigration from Afghanistan and other countries. While pursuing mass deportation, Trump has sought to limit or eliminate avenues to legal immigration. He has not been deterred if they are enshrined in law, like the diversity visa lottery, or the Constitution, as with a right to citizenship for anyone born on US soil. The Supreme Court recently agreed to hear his challenge to birthright citizenship.

## Mallika Sherawat calls White House Christmas dinner invite 'completely surreal'

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Mumbai: Actress Mallika Sherawat shared her excitement after receiving an invitation to the White House Christmas dinner. Describing the experience as completely surreal, she expressed her gratitude for the honor, marking a special moment in her illustrious career. On Friday, the Murder actress took to Instagram to share a series of photos from the White House Christmas dinner.

In the pictures, Mallika could be seen posing amid the festive décor, with sparkling lights and beautifully adorned Christmas trees. She also posted a video capturing US President Donald Trump delivering his Christmas and New Year wishes to the audience, with Mallika visible in the crowd. Additionally, she shared a glimpse of the lavish Christmas meal served at the White House. Sharing her photos, she wrote, "Being invited to the White House Christmas dinner feels completely surreal — Grateful #whitehouse #xmasdinner." The Christmas reception was held at the White House on December 18. Interestingly, this isn't Mallika Sherawat's first White House invitation. Back in April 2011, she attended the White House Correspondents' Dinner during the Obama administration in connection with her role in Politics of Love, a film centered on the 2008 US elections. She was celebrated



for her performance as an Obama volunteer and even had the opportunity to interact with President Barack Obama, despite her film facing distribution challenges. On the professional front, Mallika Sherawat was last seen on screen in Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video alongside Rajkumar Rao and Tripti Dimri. She made her film debut in 2002 with Jeena Sirf Merre Liye, where she was credited as Reema Lamba. Her rise to fame began in 2004 with the Emraan Hashmi-starrer Murder. Mallika later ventured into international cinema and featured in films like Hisss and Politics of Love.

## Flights cancelled, roads flooded as rare storm soaks Dubai, Sharjah, Qatar

UAE airport authorities cancelled or delayed dozens of flights and roads were flooded in major cities as the heaviest rainstorm in months lashed the desert nation on Friday (December 19, 2025). Dubai's Emirates airline axed 13 flights on Friday (December 19, 2025) and there were also delays and cancellations at neighbouring Sharjah's airport after the overnight downpour, which woke residents with lightning flashes and loud cracks of thunder.

Sharjah's main street was completely flooded early on Friday (December 19, 2025), with residents seen wading through it in bare feet. One man rode his bicycle through the water, which reached the top of its wheels. The scenes evoked memories of April 2024, when record rains caused widespread flooding and forced the cancellation of more than 2,000 flights at Dubai's major international air hub. On Thursday (December 18, 2025), Dubai police had urged residents

to stay in unless "absolutely necessary" as the rainstorm approached. Early on Friday (December 19, 2025), water-pumping trucks were seen around Dubai clearing blocked roads and large puddles in the streets. The Dubai Airports website showed dozens of flights had been delayed on Friday, and some cancelled.

"Some flights... are cancelled or delayed due to adverse weather," a Dubai Airports spokesperson said. The National Center of Meteorology had warned of rainfall across the country from Thursday to Friday, including in Dubai and the capital Abu Dhabi. Other Gulf states also experienced heavy rain, including Qatar where the Arab Cup football's third-place play-off between Saudi Arabia and UAE was cancelled on Thursday. Last year's downpours in the UAE, the heaviest since records began 76 years ago, killed at least four people and brought Dubai to a standstill for days.

## Over two million Afghans forcibly deported from Iran and Pakistan: UN



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Kabul: As many as 2.17 million Afghans have been forcibly deported from Iran and Pakistan, with children comprising more than 60 per cent of returnees, according to the United Nations. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Afghanistan has been facing one of the world's largest displacement and returnee crises as Iran and Pakistan have been forcibly deporting Afghans. By October 9, approximately 2.17 million Afghan nationals have been deported from Pakistan and Iran, with more than 60 per cent of them being children, placing a burden on child protection systems, education, and healthcare. Afghanistan's news agency Khaama Press reported. The UNDP emphasised that the young and rural population in Afghanistan is facing overlapping crises. Economic restrictions, poverty, gender inequality, and deportation of refugees from neighbouring nations have increased Afghanistan's vulnerability and risk of long-term stability.

It warned that the deportation of returnees has placed pressure on fragile infrastructure and essential services of Afghanistan, which include housing, water, sanitation, healthcare, and food security, sectors already weakened by years of conflict and economic collapse. The UNDP has urged the international community to support returnees, rebuild damaged infrastructure, and strengthen livelihoods, warning that failure to act risks deepening poverty, instability, and humanitarian suffering in Afghanistan. Earlier in No-

vember, several Afghan refugees in Pakistan said that they had been overwhelmed by continuous pressure from the country's police, which, apart from conducting searches, was arresting people and exploiting their vulnerable situation as a source of income.

A report in an Afghan newspaper, '8AM Media', also known as Hasht-e-Sabz Daily, highlighted that Afghan refugees in Pakistan do not have basic human rights and live in constant fear and anxiety. Human rights groups and refugee-support groups have remained silent regarding the uncertainty and the government's failure to fulfil its commitment to human rights and the protection of refugees. Over the past few months, as tensions between the Taliban and Pakistan continue, Islamabad has increased its pressure on Afghan refugees, with the Pakistani forces conducting widespread harassment of migrants each day in various areas, including Islamabad.

Apart from official operations involving the arrest of Afghan refugees without visas, people in plain clothes extort money from migrants in residential areas. Afghan people have said that they live in inhumane conditions filled with fear and anxiety, and their refugee rights are not respected. "The situation is extremely distressing. I wish the official operations team would simply arrest and take people away. This method is not right; the police know no one will report them, so they come individually for searches. Several men in plain clothes lie in wait in the neighbourhood, grab someone, and take them away. It is unclear whether they are police, thieves, or cooperating with the police. Now, even if an ordinary person commits theft or kidnapping under the name of the police, people assume he is a police officer," the report quoted an Afghan national as saying. "These individuals detain migrants in their personal vehicles; some are released on the spot after paying money, while others are taken to police posts. They are probably police themselves or collaborating with the police. The level of theft and robbery is extremely high, and no institution hears the people's voices. The situation is deeply painful; a country that has no defender and whose citizens have no protection or credibility anywhere in the world," the refugee added.

## Retired NASCAR driver Greg Biffle, family among 7 killed in North Carolina plane crash

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Statesville: A business jet crashed on Thursday while trying to return to a North Carolina airport shortly after take-off, killing all seven people aboard, including retired NASCAR driver Greg Biffle and his family, authorities said.

The Cessna C550 erupted into a large fire when it hit the ground. It had departed Statesville Regional Airport, about 72 kilometres north of Charlotte, but soon crashed while trying to return and land, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol said. Flight records show the plane was registered to a company run by Biffle. The cause of the crash wasn't immediately known, nor was the reason for the plane's return to the airport in drizzle and cloudy conditions. Federal Aviation Administration records show Biffle was rated to fly helicopters and single and multi-engine planes. It wasn't clear if Biffle was piloting the plane at the time of the crash. Biffle was on the plane with his wife, Cristina, and children Ryder, 5, and Emma, 14, according to the highway patrol and a family statement. Others on the plane were identified as Dennis Dutton, his son Jack, and Craig Wadsworth. "Each of them meant everything to us, and their absence leaves an immeasurable void in our lives," the joint family statement said. Biffle, 55, won more than 50 races across NASCAR's three circuits, including 19 at the Cup Series level. He also won the Trucks Series championship in 2000 and the Xfinity Series title in 2002.

NASCAR said it was devastated by the news. "Greg was more than a champion driver; he was a beloved member of the NASCAR community, a fierce competitor, and a friend to so many," NASCAR said. "His passion for racing, his integrity, and his commitment to fans and fellow competitors alike made a lasting impact on the sport." The plane, bound for Florida, took off from the Statesville airport shortly after 10 am, according to tracking data posted by FlightAware.com. Golfers playing next to the airport were shocked as they witnessed the disaster, even dropping to the ground at the Lakewood Golf Club while the plane was overhead. The ninth hole was covered with debris.

"We were like, Oh my gosh! That's way too low," said Joshua Green of Mooresville. "It was scary." The National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration were investigating. The Cessna plane, built in



1981, is a popular mid-sized business jet with an excellent reputation, aviation safety expert Jeff Guzzetti said. It has two engines and typically seats six to eight passengers and two pilots. In 2024, Biffle was honoured for his humanitarian efforts after Hurricane Helene struck the US, even using his personal helicopter to deliver aid to flooded, remote western North Carolina.

"The last time I spoke with Cristina, just a couple of weeks ago, she reached out to ask how she could help with relief efforts in Jamaica. That's who the Biffles were," US Rep. Richard Hudson, a Republican from North Carolina, said. Wadsworth was Biffle's friend and helped him with odd jobs, including delivering supplies to places hit by Hurricane Helene, roommate Benito Howell said. "He didn't know how to say no," Howell said of Wadsworth, who had worked for several NASCAR teams. "He loved everybody. He always tried to help everybody." The joint family statement also spoke about Dutton and his son Jack, saying they were "deeply loved as well, and their loss is felt by all who knew them." With 2025 almost over, there have been 1,331 US crashes this year investigated by the NTSB, from two-seat planes to commercial aircraft, compared to a total of 1,482 in 2024. Major air disasters around the world in 2025 include the plane-helicopter collision that killed 67 in Washington, the Air India crash that killed 260 in India, and a crash in Russia's Far East that claimed 48 lives. Fourteen people, including 11 on the ground, died in a UPS cargo plane crash in Kentucky.

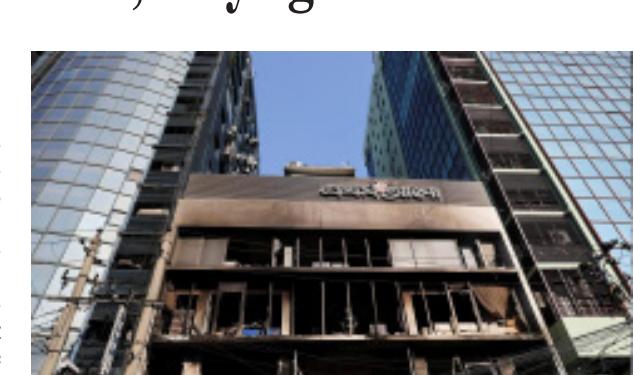
## Bangladesh violence: 'Standing with journalists, deeply sorry for the violence,' says government

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

The Bangladesh Intern government led by Nobel laureate Prof. Dr Yunus on Friday (December 19, 2025) strongly condemned the recent wave of violence and attacks on journalists, urging citizens to resist what it described as mob actions carried out by a handful of fringe elements seeking to destabilise the country at a critical political moment. In a statement issued on Friday (December 19, 2025) noon, the government said it "strongly and unequivocally" condemns all acts of violence, intimidation, arson, and destruction of property, stressing that Bangladesh is currently undergoing a historic democratic transition that must not be derailed by chaos or hatred.

Referring to the upcoming elections and referendum, the government said these were not merely political exercises but a "solemn national commitment," closely tied to the ideals for which Inqilab Mancha spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi was killed. Honouring his sacrifice, the statement said, requires restraint, responsibility, and a collective rejection of violence. Expressing solidarity with the media, the government said it stood firmly with journalists from The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, and New Age, whose offices and staff were targeted during the unrest.

"We are deeply sorry for the terror and violence you have endured," the statement said, adding that attacks on journalists are attacks on truth itself. The government pledged full justice for those responsible. The statement also condemned the lynching of a Hindu man in Mymensingh, calling it a heinous crime and asserting that there is "no space for such violence in the new Bangladesh." It said those responsible would not be spared. Calling for calm, the government urged citizens to honour Hadi's memory by rejecting violence, incitement, and hatred, and by standing in defence of peace, democracy, and the rule of law. Earlier, Chief



The government said it "strongly and unequivocally" condemns all acts of violence, intimidation, arson, and destruction of property

Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus spoke by telephone with the editors of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star following the barbaric attacks on the offices of the two newspapers. Expressing his deep sympathy to Prothom Alo editor Matiur Rahman and The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam, the Chief Adviser said: "This unexpected and disgraceful attack on your institutions and journalists has deeply pained me. In this difficult time, the government stands firmly by your side."

## From the food of soldiers to the taste of Pune, why 'pithla-bhakri' atop the iconic Sinhagad fort is an unmissable experience



After the mist clears and the sun reaches the fort walls, Sinhagad is filled with the aroma of garlic, chillies, and besan. At the top, small eateries come alive, with bhakris (a kind of bread) puffing on tava, pithla bubbling, and the hiss of oil mingling with the sound of laughter. Plates clatter, butter-milk froths, and the fort hums with the flavours. Once, these hills had echoed with the clash of swords when Tanaji Malusare, the military commander of the erstwhile Maratha kingdom, fought bravely to win the fort for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Centuries later, it continues to be the most popular spot in Pune, where hundreds come to feel the valour and savour the spirit of traditional Maharashtrian dishes from the eateries. At Sinhagad, pithla-bhakri isn't just a meal, it is its soul. Every morning, women climb its slopes, carrying baskets of flour, curd, and vegetables on their heads to feed people with love and turn the fort's legacy of strength into one of nourishment and warmth.

Sinhagad fort Laughter, chatter, and the clatter of steel plates. Each bite of pithla bhakri carries the fort's warmth, its history, and the love of those who make it. (Express Photo) "So many people come here just to have food, pithla-bhakri, matki usal, bhakri, thecha, they love it all," says Vandana Shinde, who has been cooking at the fort for over 25 years. "Earlier, we made everything on wood fires. Now we use stoves, but the love and taste remain the same." The

thali that arrives at your table is a mound of golden pithla, soft yet spicy, sitting beside a perfectly charred bhakri. A smoky vangyache bhakri — mashed brinjal tempered with onion and spices — and at its side lies a handful of zanzanit matki usal; along with it, you are served a fiery red thecha that demands courage, and a bowl of cool, thick curd to balance it all. If you're lucky, a glass of Maharashtrian butter milk called tak follows — light, salty, and perfect after the climb.

"Sinhagad Pithla Bhakri", the term itself comprises everything, the love that these people put in their food, it is so simple and authentic, I think that is what makes it so special. We come here for our daughter, she loves the food here," says Archana Navathe, who's been visiting for 34 years. Her daughter Yadnya, visiting from Italy, laughs, "If I could, I would eat this food every day. So much love, and on top of that, the dahi and tak! I make it a point to have at least three to four matkis of dahi sakhar." And when you just want a quick bite, the hot and fresh bhajis with onion and potato, dipped in gram flour batter and fried golden, will be ready in an instant. "The bhajis here are a delight, crispy, flavourful, and best enjoyed with the view and friends," says Nandakishore Parikh, a regular visitor from Rajasthan. The dish itself tells the story of endurance. Pithla-bhakri was once a soldier's food, quick to cook, rich in protein, made from simple ingredients that lasted through long campaigns. "It reminds me of the time when our Mavalas, Shivaji Maharaj's soldiers, survived on this same meal," says Nilesh Bhosale, a Pune businessman. "It's simple but full of strength." Every serving here carries a history of its own. "My mother used to serve food straight on the hand, a hot bhakri with pithla on top," recalls Ganga Waghmare, whose family has fed visitors for four decades. "Even at midnight, trekkers would come hungry, and we'd serve them by the fire." The fort stands as a monument to courage, its strength now lying in the hands of the ones who cook, serve, and feed. At Sinhagad, history is not just remembered; it's eaten, shared, and savoured, one plate of pithla bhakri at a time.

## The women who fought their way into the Afghan Embassy



The team of the visiting Taliban Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, which used the premises to hold a press conference, did not think it necessary to invite a single woman. The Ministry of External Affairs did not think it was necessary either. Earlier that day, Mr. Muttaqi was hosted at the grand official venue, Hyderabad House, without a woman, official or otherwise, in sight. Whether this was mandated by the Taliban leader, a former Minister of Education for a regime that doesn't allow girls in school beyond Class 6; or a genuine oversight; or a "technical error", as he termed it, it wasn't allowed to pass.

Reportage of the 'men only' press meet, followed by public outrage, forced the government to distance itself from the event and the Taliban delegation to rethink. Two days later, I received a call, inviting me to another press conference. Everyone was invited, with no conditions laid on attire, as they may have been in Kabul. Inside the briefing hall, male journalists, who had attended the previous press conference, had cleared the front row for female journalists, to ensure that Mr. Muttaqi would have no choice but to see them and take their questions. "This is your day," said one of my male colleagues. "We will not be asking any questions, so as to ensure you will all be able to." I smiled, protesting that we should behave as we normally do, sitting together without any gender distinction, and compete for the official's attention, but I was also touched by the

gesture. That day, as Mr. Muttaqi faced a fusillade of questions about the Taliban's denial of basic rights to women in the country, the solidarity of journalists against the prior injustice, however small, sent a powerful message: women cannot and should not be left out of the room.

The truth is, most journalists see their profession as gender-neutral, although there are circumstances and countries where they face different impediments to doing their jobs. In the heat of a conflict, or a riot, or even during a raucous election rally, women will often find that they are not assigned the "tough" stories; discouraged from the front-lines and trenches in a war; or face sexual harassment in the newsroom or in the field. During the protests in the capital against the brutal rape of "Nirbhaya" in 2012, I remember young female colleagues returning ashen-faced from India Gate with horrifying stories of being manhandled or groped by the protesters themselves. On assignment in wars,

I have often been told, "this is no place for women", or been asked to stay back. These are all battles women face in every field, not just in journalism, and learn to fight them. I will also admit that women journalists are sometimes treated more politely and with more consideration than their male counterparts. I once fought my way onto an Indian warship going on an evacuation mission. As the only woman onboard, I got my own cabin, while five colleagues were crammed into one room on hard bunks. Let us be clear, though: the fight that day in the briefing hall of the Afghanistan Embassy was not primarily for gender justice or equality, but for media access. It is a fight that journalists wage on a daily basis, and increasingly in democracies such as India and the U.S., where leaders shy away from press conferences, or restrict the media that can attend or the questions they can ask. That battle for access may have been won on that day, in that hall, but the fight continues. Sadly, the much larger, and in some ways, more vital battle for millions of Afghan women to go to school, college, or work, and even gyms and public parks has not even begun to be fought.

## Growing up with Kali in Kolkata

While the rest of India celebrates Diwali, West Bengal worships Kali. Yes, Durga Puja — the 10-day festival that precedes Kali Puja by a few weeks — has UNESCO's intangible heritage status; it gets international attention; it is bigger, glitzier and grander than any other festival in Kolkata. But this is the goddess Kali's stomping ground. English historian H.E.A. Cotton wrote "Kali, the patron saint of the city, is at Kalighat." Kali has the city's heart. In fact, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who lives a stone's throw from the Kalighat temple, is a renowned devotee of the goddess. Kali is the goddess of deserted areas. She is worshipped in the dead of night. She appears naked and unashamed, unconcerned about what she is wearing. She fits no definition of a "good girl". And that is why, at a time when Kolkata is gearing up for Kali Puja, the Chief Minister's comments following the rape of a medical student in the State are especially galling. "How did she come out [of the hostel] at 12:30 a.m.?" Banerjee said, according to media reports. She said while it was everyone's right to go out, "when and wherever they want to", she cautioned private institutions like medical colleges to be careful. "Especially when it's a girl child, they should not be allowed to go out at night."

Her remarks have ignited a political firestorm. The opposition has accused her of victim blaming. Sadly, almost no political party can claim moral high ground when it comes to blaming the victim of assault. Good girls don't stay out that late. Good girls don't dress like that. Good girls don't go around alone in deserted areas. We have heard that refrain over and over again. When journalist Soumya Viswanathan was murdered in Delhi in 2008, then chief minister Sheila Dikshit said, "All by herself till 3 a.m. at night... you should not be so adventurous." After a rape case in Gurugram in 2012, the city bosses said women should not work after 8 p.m. If they had to, they needed to tell the labour department in advance.

At one time, Kali embarrassed me. I was then living and working in California, where Diwali usually meant good desi food and a few sparklers in the backyard at some Indian friend's house party. When culturally conscious Ameri-



can friends would wish me Happy Diwali, I wanted to tell them that I had really grown up with Kali Puja, not Diwali, in Kolkata. Our local Kali Puja pandal came up every year outside our bedroom window. One year, an errant firework set ablaze and I remember the flames leaving our house blackened and sooty. Next day, the goddess stood exposed amidst the charred remains of the pandal. She didn't look too out of place. This, after all, is a goddess who is as much at home in a crematorium as she is in the house of a devotee. But Kali, blue or black, naked and fierce, tongue dripping blood, is much harder to explain to westerners than the more motherly Durga, a far more conventional deity. So, I would just smile and nod when people wished me Happy Diwali. Today, in Kolkata, I see Kali being slowly domesticated in our bhadralok neighbourhoods. She is often not naked anymore. She wears a white sari with a red border. White shola (pith) jewellery covers her nakedness. She is becoming more family-friendly. And it is true, Kali is also a mother goddess. She has a whole genre of songs dedicated to her, Shyamasee, that imagines her as the mother who is as dark as the night. It's a rare adoration in India of something that's not "fair and lovely". But Kali is a different kind of mother figure than Durga who arrives with her family in tow. Kali, kinetic and ecstatic, is awe-inspiring in the ferocity of her love.

## How the pre-primary education system reinforces inequality from the start



Are we orienting our students towards accepting different standards of living that an unequal society imposes on them? Does pre-primary schooling teach children from rural and deprived classes to set their aspirations according to their present conditions? A household is forced to make the first school choice of their children. Discrimination starts at this level and sets a potentially inequitable trajectory for the entire life of the child. The 2025 Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education (NSS 80th Round) by the National Statistical Office (MoSPI) reveals deep-rooted disparities driven by type of schools, geography and household income.

At 10.4%, pre-primary has the lowest enrollment compared to other levels. Students in primary education constitute 41.6%. Pre-primary is not a substantial proportion when compared to the total enrolled students in school education. The UNESCO, the UNICEF, and the National Education Policy 2020 all agree that pre-primary orients children to the schooling process, improves school readiness, and thereby reduces chances of dropout. Yet, pre-primary remains the lowest proportion of the student population of the school system.

Is there any gender discrimination at this level? Data from the Comprehensive Modular Survey says there is not much difference in terms of gender distribution with pre-primary students comprising 10.3% of all enrolled males and 10.6% of all enrolled females. A deeper look, however, exposes the emergence of rural vs urban as a new discriminator for these young learners. Nearly two-thirds (65.6%) of pre-primary children in rural areas are enrolled in government institutions. Conversely, 62.9% students enrolled in urban sectors have enrolled in private unaided schools. The reasons could be willingness to spend more money, size of family (with grandparents to look after children at home), occupied parents, and, of course, most importantly a trust deficit among urban households about the quality of pre-primary education offered by government schools. The surging enrollment in private schools in urban sectors indicates de-facto privatization of foundational education in urban India. This rising privatization in pre-primary education raises questions of equitable access to education at the early stages of learning.

Parents in urban sectors would be willing to spend more money for buying better quality pre-primary education for their children. But the financial burden of pre-primary edu-

cation on parents from the rural and urban sectors lays the foundations for two different expenditure patterns. Urban parents take up more financial responsibility, compared to their rural counterpart. The difference in the expenditure gap between rural and urban households is substantial. In rural sector, the average expenditure for educating a pre-primary student is ₹6,059. The average expenditure per student in urban areas is ₹18,943. Urban families spend over three times more than their rural counterparts. One could attribute this to higher costs in urban areas. That is justifiable too, because there is difference in the expenditure for pre-primary education in government schools in rural and urban sectors. For pre-primary education in rural government schools, a household has to spend ₹557 in an year while it is ₹1,094 in urban areas. The difference is almost double. The difference in the expenditure between rural government school and private un-aided school is enormous though. For a rural family, the choice of a private unaided school comes at an average cost of ₹17,986. This means a rural family has to spend more than 32 times the expenditure required for a government institution. Comparing ₹557 and ₹17,986 shows that the natural choice of a rural household is a government school.

In addition the survey has reported that urban parents spend ₹783 per student for private coaching and tuition at pre-primary level. Is this expenditure gap, among sectors, justifiable in terms of quality of education? The expenditure gaps between government schools in rural and urban, between government schools in rural and private schools in urban are alarming. But more serious is the systematic consent-making regarding this structural inequity as neutral and natural, through this differential pricing of pre-primary education. Sabotaging the idea of equity. How does a nation attain its dream of equity in education when there is a deep divide between households falling into various sectors? The survey indicates that the idea of equity in education is sabotaged at the very foundational level of pre-primary stage. Households that can afford to buy more expensive education at pre-primary level upends any attempt to create a level playing field when children begin their education. Parents who understand this huge expenditure gap between rural/urban sectors and government/private sectors orient themselves towards a thinking that the variable pricing in education as natural. It sets them up to accepting structural inequalities that will plague their children's education in future. Students are systematically accustomed to educational "goods and services" that fit their standards in government schools and accept, in future, the differences between theirs and their private school counterparts as genuine and natural. This also orients them to accepting any such unequal treatments in their future, not just in school days, but in adult life as well, as natural and non-political. Hence, the deep sectoral divide exposed by the "Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education" (NSS 80th Round) is a serious indicator of perpetuating inequality with the consent of the socially and economically disadvantaged. Pre-primary is foundational. But, foundation for what? Normalising inequity or better education? The pre-primary schooling system needs to be redesigned from being institutions that manufacture consent to ones that present a level playing field to all children. This will create the foundation of equity in the education system.

## Is landlockedness the reason for Bihar's underdevelopment?



It is election season in Bihar. While the Opposition speaks about the lack of development and industrialisation in the State, in its campaigns, the National Democratic Alliance, which is in power, argues that a change of government will bring back the 'Jungle Raj' of the earlier decade. What makes Bihar one of India's most underdeveloped States? Is landlockedness a reason for its underdevelopment, as some argue? R. Nagaraj and Manindra Nath Thakur discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Saptaparno Ghosh. Edited excerpts: It is often argued that Bihar is disadvantaged because it is a landlocked State. Punjab and Telangana are landlocked as well, and they are doing relatively well. So how is being landlocked a constraint for Bihar?

R. Nagaraj: If you look at the success of Telangana, especially Hyderabad, it is mostly because of the tertiary sector; it has nothing to do with geography. If a State has an educated workforce and good infrastructure, being landlocked will not be an issue. Punjab, too, has a developed network of railways and roads, and has FCI (Food Corporation of India) godowns across the country to help with export of crops. Manindra Nath Thakur: Let us look at Bihar's prominent exports: makhana, litchi, and corn. It has been difficult for Bihar to transport these items from Patna to West Bengal or to any port. These, alongside the vegetables Bihar exports, are perishable. Moreover, significant costs are incurred due to road transport; time and distance are crucial factors in agrarian exports. One way Bihar is attempting to resolve this issue is by launching projects along the Ganga. So, it is not that concerns about being landlocked are not genuine, but they cannot be cited as a major reason for the State's economic backwardness. Prof. Nagaraj spoke of the tertiary sector; you spoke of agrarian exports. Bihar has been assessed as an agrarian economy. What should be its imperative going forward: industrialisation or agriculture?

Manindra Nath Thakur: In the last 10 years, the Chief Minister has tried to engage with industrialists. However, industrialists have often raised concerns about access to ports, citing the need to spend more on transportation. Having said that, I do think that in this modern capitalist system, no society can think of surviving with just agricultural products. While Bihar should capitalise on its potential in terms of agricultural production and processing, it must ultimately transition to industry. Without that, there is no future. R. Nagaraj: Before we think of high-technology and/or manufacturing industries, we should consider where the comparative advantage lies. Four-fifth of Bihar's labour force is in agriculture. But despite Bihar having fertile land and irrigation facilities, agricultural productivity is mostly less than the

national average. Why is agriculture not picking up? That is the big question. In the 1970s or 80s, a committee set up under the agricultural economist, S.R. Sen, was figuring out how to take the Green Revolution to the Indo-Gangetic belt. It came up with a plan for massive State investments in infrastructure and electrification to ensure that States have abundant water for the cultivation of wheat and rice. Surprisingly, the Green Revolution spread to the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh rather than the Indo-Gangetic belt. We must understand what went wrong. I think it will be both in Bihar's interest and the national interest to get basic wheat, rice, and sugarcane cultivation going. This way, western India will be burdened less; it can conserve more water and move to value-added crops. Manindra Nath Thakur: On the agrarian front, I don't think Bihar should repeat the mistake that Punjab made during the Green Revolution, which produced a water crisis. Although Bihar has abundant water, it may face the same consequences as Punjab if water is overused. Moreover, increasing agricultural production is linked with the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides, creating a health crisis. Therefore, I don't support the shifting of agriculture to eastern India. Agriculture is not profitable anywhere in the world unless it is heavily supported by the State. R. Nagaraj: Madhya Pradesh was also seen as a backward State. It does not have the same water resources as Bihar, yet the Green Revolution expanded there. Prosperity in the Malwa region is amazing. Therefore, I am sceptical about the idea that agriculture has no potential.

So what do you think are the factors that contributed to Bihar's underdevelopment?

Manindra Nath Thakur: Apart from what I have said, there are also notions that the Centre is not interested in Bihar's growth. The State, I think, is frozen in its transition from feudalism to capitalism. One of the reasons for this is the internal colonisation of the State. Earlier, Bihar supplied raw materials, but due to policies such as freight equalisation, it suffered significantly, and industries didn't develop locally, despite having the advantage of raw material availability. Bihar ultimately lost revenues and its natural advantage. Now, with a supply of labour from Bihar, nobody is interested in developing the State. R. Nagaraj: A commodity where freight equalisation was done and which benefited eastern India was cement. Steel did not accrue the same advantage. Cement has heavy transport costs compared to steel so the freight equalisation policy for it helped eastern India. Furthermore, why Biharis are leaving Bihar has no element of capitalist conspiracy. In fact, when investments in agriculture were made in Bihar, migration to Punjab declined. It is clear that if people have more options at home, they will not move out. Literature often suggests that Bihar has a 'socialist hangover', and that entrepreneurship does not draw confidence. R. Nagaraj:

The socialist ideology in Bihar is often equated with caste politics and caste in general — basically, distributing limited resources across various castes. If the focus shifts to productive investment, it will do a lot of good for Bihar. Policy must focus on how to augment production rather than looking at redistributing the limited resources more equitably or in a manner that helps people stay in power. Manindra Nath Thakur: Bihar has never really followed the socialist model. It also failed to understand the logic behind India's shift to capitalism.

## RRP Semiconductor's stock price surges 55,000 per cent, triggering regulatory concerns



RRP Semiconductor's stock has recorded a sharp surge of more than 55,000 per cent over the past year, despite the company having no operating semiconductor business. The rally has placed the scrip firmly under the regulatory lens, with both the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the BSE closely monitoring trading activity. The latter has put a trading restriction of once-a-week trading with 1 per cent price band on the company's shares. RRP Semiconductor's stock was trading at around Rs 20 in April 2024. It has since jumped to Rs 11,094, catapulting the company's market capitalisation to about Rs 15,114 crore. To be sure, the company has not commenced any semiconductor manufacturing. It has reported negative revenues, and continues to post losses. This has prompted questions about price discovery, market integrity, and investor protection.

The BSE has put RRP Semiconductor under the Additional Surveillance Measure (ASM) framework. Jointly implemented by the SEBI, the BSE and the NSE, it is used to flag stocks that exhibit abnormal price movements, extreme volatility or a sharp disconnect between market valuation and underlying fundamentals. To be sure, trading in the stock has not yet been frozen by the exchanges. Repeated attempts by The Indian Express through emails and telephone calls to seek clarification from the company did not elicit any response.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the BSE said, "in the context of RRP, the company was placed under enhanced surveillance measures in a phased manner. Initial actions included tighter price bands and trade-to-trade settlement, followed by periodic call auctions. The exchange also issued cautionary public advertisements urging investors to exercise due diligence." Further tightening was introduced for companies exhibiting abnormal trading patterns, such

as consistent upper circuit hits or extreme valuations, resulting in RRP and other identified entities being moved to once-a-week trading with a one per cent price band effective November 2025," the BSE said. These measures were widely communicated through investor advisories and market circulars, reflecting the BSE's proactive approach to investor protection and market integrity, it said. In an exchange filing dated November 3, the company sought to distance itself from several claims circulating in the public domain. "Our company is engaged in the business of semiconductors. The company has yet to start any sort of semiconductor manufacturing activities," RRP Semiconductor said. The company has not applied under any government semiconductor policy and has no celebrity association whatsoever, it added. RRP Semiconductor has categorically denied reports suggesting export activity or marquee endorsements. "The company is not exporting ASIC chips and has not done business of Rs 6.15 crore by export. The company has no relation with legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and he is not a shareholder of the company," it said. The firm also flagged the circulation of misinformation on social media, where stock recommendations and exaggerated claims were allegedly being spread "illegally and without any basis", potentially misleading retail investors. For the latest reporting period, the company disclosed negative revenue of Rs 6.82 crore and a net loss of Rs 7.16 crore for the September 2025 quarter. However, the market has priced RRP Semiconductor at a valuation comparable to established industrial players. RRP Semiconductor's promoter shareholding stands at just 1.27 per cent. Shareholder Rajendra K Chodankar holds 73.96 per cent of the company's equity. Such concentration, coupled with thin public float, often amplifies volatility and makes stocks vulnerable to sharp price swings, speculative trading, and manipulation.

In a media release earlier, the BSE said the company, through a letter dated November 5, had informed that its board of directors proposes to consider the withdrawal of a preferential allotment of shares earlier issued to promoters and non-promoters. This move has added to uncertainty around the stock. "In view of the apparent misinformation in the public domain and the uncertainty attached to various events associated with the company, investors are urged to exercise extreme care and caution while transacting in the securities of the said company," the BSE cautioned. Market participants say this episode underscores a broader concern confronting regulators.

## RBI MPC Minutes: Considering benign inflation outlook real interest rates need to be lower, says Governor Sanjay Malhotra

Given the benign outlook for both headline and core inflation, real interest rates need to be lower, Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra wrote in the minutes of the December Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, where he voted for a 25-basis-point repo rate cut. The MPC members unanimously lowered the repo rate by 25 bps to 5.25 per cent, marking a cumulative reduction of 125 bps in the key policy rate since February 2025. The six-member rate-setting panel, by a 5:1 majority, also decided to maintain the neutral stance, with one member voting for a shift to an accommodative stance. "...demand pressures, as evident from low core inflation (excluding precious metals), are minimal and projected to remain low in the next three quarters. Considering the benign inflation outlook — headline as well as core — real interest rates need to be lower," Malhotra wrote in the minutes of the MPC meeting, held from December 3 to 5. The country's CPI inflation, or retail inflation, rose to 0.71 per cent in November from a record low of 0.25 per cent in October.

Malhotra added that although domestic economic activity remains resilient in Q3, weakness in some leading high-frequency indicators is suggestive of a deceleration in the growth momentum in the second half (H2) of FY25 compared with the first half (H1). The country's GDP expanded by a better than expected 8.2 per cent in Q2. Overall, real GDP growth is poised to exceed 7 per cent, much above the RBI's expectation of 6.5 per cent at the beginning of the year, as healthy domestic prospects outweigh the concerns on the external front, he said. "Going forward in H1 next year, domestic growth is projected to remain strong, though moderate to 6.7-6.8 per cent," Malhotra said. He favoured retaining the neutral stance as it gives the requisite flexibility to remain data-dependent and act according to the evolving macroeconomic conditions and outlook. RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta said that the faster than anticipated moderation in CPI headline inflation has been the most crucial recent development from the perspective of monetary policy. "Even if the MPC members traditionally consider a whole host of factors in their decisions, but when the prevailing inflation and its forecast is as low as it is currently — it



alone ought to get a larger weight in the monetary policy deliberations," Gupta, who voted for a 25 bps cut, wrote in the minutes. One of the external MPC members, Saugata Bhattacharya, said the cumulative policy rate cuts and liquidity infusions will now have moved the orientation of monetary policy from mildly restrictive to balanced. "Pending incoming data, I believe the policy interest rate is now consistent with macroeconomic stability," he wrote in the minutes. MPC member and RBI Executive Director Indranil Bhattacharya, who voted for a 25 bps reduction in the repo rate and a neutral stance, said, "when muted inflation outlook, both in terms of the trajectory of headline and core (excluding precious metals), suggests absence of demand pressures, the MPC ought to support growth, particularly when it is projected to decelerate going ahead."

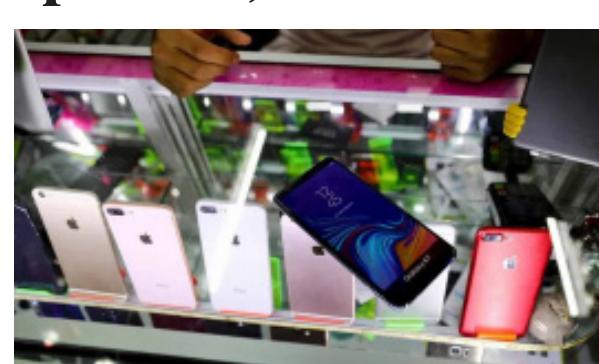
The neutral stance preserves the flexibility to respond judiciously to the evolving situation by remaining data dependent while avoiding the pitfalls of precommitment in an uncertain environment, he wrote in the minutes. MPC member Ram Singh said given the uncertainty on the external front, it seems prudent to go for only a 25-bps cut at this point. "In view of the dormancy in the price momentum underlying headline CPI and CPI core, and the case for supporting growth momentum, the rate cut should be accompanied by a change in stance to 'accommodative,'" Singh said. mpc

## Delhi Police busts racket selling fake premium mobile phones, 4 held

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has busted a racket involved in the illegal assembly and sale of fake premium mobile phones in the Karol Bagh area and arrested four people, an official said on Sunday. As many as 512 fake premium smartphones of a brand, including fold and flip models, along with a large quantity of mobile parts and fake IMEI stickers, were recovered during the operation, police said.

Police said the accused were illegally assembling high-end phones using spare parts imported from China and pasted fake IMEI numbers marked "Made in Vietnam". They then sold them in the open market as genuine branded handsets at prices ranging between Rs 35,000 and Rs 40,000 per unit, cheating customers, he said. Following a tip-off, a police team was constituted, and a raid was conducted at the identified premises, where four men were apprehended red-handed while assembling mobile phones on the intervening night of December 13 and 14 at a shop located in Karol Bagh.

The accused have been identified as Hakim (36), the alleged mastermind of the racket, Mehtab Ahmad Ansari (36), Ravi Ahuja (36), and Rahul (33). During the raid, police recovered 512 assembled and semi-assembled premium mobile phones, 124 motherboards, 138 mobile batteries, 459 fake IMEI printed stickers, besides a large quantity of mobile accessories and specialised assembling tools. All the accused failed to produce any valid documents or satisfactory explanation regarding the possession of the recovered articles, following which they were arrested and a case was



Delhi Police busted a fake premium mobile phone racket in Karol Bagh, arresting four men and recovering 512 counterfeit phones, fake IMEI stickers, and spare parts.

registered. During interrogation, Hakim disclosed that despite being only an eighth-class pass with no formal technical qualification, he was operating the racket by importing mobile spare parts such as motherboards, cameras, speakers, back glass, body frames and fake IMEI stickers from China. "With the help of his associates, he assembled new-looking premium ultra, fold and flip models due to their high market demand and sold them as genuine new phones to unsuspecting customers.

## Mira Kapoor invests her money in these 3 things: 'Not just because they are lovely to wear...'



investing in other companies. "What does Mira Kapoor invest in? How do Mira and Shahid's investing styles differ? (Source: Instagram/@mira.kapoor) A beginner's guide to investing

Rohit Mahajan, Founder and Managing Partner at Plutos ONE, says that for beginners, the right investment journey starts with building strong financial habits rather than chasing returns. "Creating a basic emergency fund covering at least six months of expenses and securing adequate health insurance should be the first priorities before investing," he told [indianexpress.com](http://indianexpress.com). Sharing a warning note, he added that new investors must stay away from Ponzi schemes or unregulated products that promise extraordinary or guaranteed returns, as these are financial traps. According to him, a sensible starting point includes simple and transparent instruments such as fixed deposits (FDs), recurring deposits (RDs), digital gold, or systematic investment plans (SIPs). Mukesh Pandey, Director of Rupyaa Paisa added that it is important for beginner investors to have complete clarity regarding their investment goals (including how long to hold an investment) and their individual risk tolerance before they invest any money. "The best place to start investing would be in regulated and transparent investment instruments such as mutual funds and Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs)," he suggested, adding that government-backed schemes or funds should also be considered, and lastly, equity funds diversified over time that have long-term compounding returns will help to build wealth over time. Wealth creation is a gradual process—protect first, save consistently, and then invest for the long term with discipline and patience.

## The world's first Harry Potter-themed hotel is all set to open in Europe



The first ever Harry Potter-themed hotel is coming to life just a few hours from Luxembourg, and fans of the Wizarding World are already buzzing. Located inside LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort in Günzburg, Germany, this groundbreaking project will let visitors step into a fully immersive magical stay without crossing the Atlantic. From rooms styled in the colours of the four Hogwarts houses to beds inspired by Ron Weasley's, every detail is designed to evoke the charm and wonder of Harry Potter's universe. Unlike anything built before, the hotel will be the world's first entirely dedicated to the popular fictional series, blending the creative spirit of LEGO with the magic of the Wizarding World.

The hotel will be located at LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort in Günzburg, Bavaria, roughly halfway between

Munich and Stuttgart. For fans in Luxembourg, France, and Belgium, this means a real Hogwarts-style escape is within easy reach by train or car, a dream weekend trip for Potterheads without the need for long flights. While an official opening date hasn't been announced yet, excitement is building as more details about the expansion at LEGOLAND Deutschland are expected soon in 2026. Till then, if you want to immerse yourself in the wizarding world, here are some Harry Potter-inspired stays to scratch that itch: The Ground Keeper's Cottage, North Yorkshire. Looking for a family getaway? This stone-built cottage with an open fireplace, timber beams and cozy nooks is perfect to curl up with your favourite holiday read and soak in the festive spirit. If you are visiting York in England, don't miss out on this enchanting stay with a double floored bunker bed, large fireplace and fairy lights at night for a cozy night. A short ride from London's Victoria station, this inn features gothic four poster beds and hidden nooks and crannies. Find bubbling cauldrons and antique hardbounds scattered all over the chambers for a realistic look and feel a la Defence of the Dark Arts classrooms. Considered one of Scotland's rustic and iconic landmarks, this suite was where the very last book in the Harry Potter series, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, was completed. Plush sofas and knicks and bobs referencing the fictional wizard world, the suite blends traditional elegance with modern sensibilities to cater to a wide range of audiences. Whether you are a dedicated fan for years, or someone just getting into this fascinating fictional world, these magical stays promise to leave you spellbound.

## 'Burger from outside and salad from inside': Psychologist explains why clean version of junk food gives satisfaction to many, including Kartik Aaryan and Ananya Panday



the brain values recognition and ritual as much as it values the food itself.

The naming also plays a big role in satiety. "Calling something a burger or pizza creates emotional familiarity and a sense of a 'proper meal,'" Ms. Dordi explains. "The brain doesn't just eat nutrients—it eats stories, memories, and symbols." Which is why, even without the bun, the burger still satisfies. For many people, healthier versions also reduce deprivation, which is a major driver of binge restrict cycles. "When the brain doesn't feel 'denied,' self-control becomes easier and more sustainable." However, the psychologist cautions against rigid rules or moral labels, e.g. "real burgers are bad, this is the only allowed version". Over time, this can create mental restriction, where the desire for the "forbidden" food increases, often leading to guilt or overeating later.

## Indian visa applications suspended indefinitely in Bangladesh's Chittagong

Dhaka: India on Sunday suspended visa operations at the Indian Visa Application Centre in the Bangladeshi's second-largest city Chittagong until further notice in the wake of heightened tensions following the death of prominent youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, local media reported. Hadi, a prominent leader of the student-led protests last year that led to the ouster of the prime minister Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government, was a candidate for the scheduled February 12 general elections. He was shot in the head on December 12 by masked gunmen at an election campaign in central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area. He died while undergoing treatment in Singapore on Thursday. His death triggered attacks and vandalism across Bangladesh, including stone-hurling at the Assistant Indian High Commissioner's residence in Chittagong on Thursday. Indian visa applications in Chittagong have been suspended indefinitely, the Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) was quoted as saying by The Dhaka Tribune newspaper on Sunday. The decision came into effect on Sunday following a recent security incident at the Assistant High Commission of India in Chittagong. According to the IVAC, all Indian visa-related services in the port city will remain closed from December 21 until further notice. The statement added that a further announcement will be made regarding the reopening of the visa application centre after a review of the security situation.

## How Ayush Shetty fared against World No 1 Shi Yuqi; Lakshya Sen fritters a 20-16 lead to go down against Lee Cheuk Yiu



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

Twenty-year-old Ayush Shetty might've lost to Chinese World No 1 and World champion Shi Yuqi at the Malaysian Open, 21-18, 18-21, 21-12. But the young Indian gave enough glimpses of an ability to trouble the absolute top hierarchy of men's singles badminton in the 70 minutes wringer he put the Chinese through to start the 2026 season. A word of appreciation from Shi Yuqi post the match and getting the Malaysian home crowd behind him, as the Chinese "Jiayou" chants peaked sensing trouble for their champ, hinted at Ayush's steadily rising acknowledgment by fans.

The areas of improvement are fairly clear: finishing – those last 5 points to wrap up a set after being even till 16; transitioning from defense to offense in longish rallies after he's done the retrieving hardwork; and most importantly, body language, when a top opponent wrests back advantage as he would be expected to. But those could be remedied in the course of time. It was in what the World No 32 did right that raised hopes of an exciting season ahead. For one, the Indian stayed in the game for the first two sets, keeping the Chinese guessing, hopping and forced to catch his breath, gather his wits. This, he did by dispersing the shuttle with a mix of length variations and yo-yoing the masterful Chinese back and forth by lobbing the shuttle to the back lines and leaving Yuqi short while scrambling to the net. Plenty of short, aggressive downs gave Ayush the 9-6 lead, after the Indian set the early terms by aiming for the corners. The Chinese was left gritting and chattering his teeth, as Ayush's natural deception literally managed to wrong foot the top-ranked shuttler, who fell back 8-11. Where Ayush left the door ajar for the Chinese to stomp right back was whenever he went parking himself at midcourt, feet wide apart in a squat, that made him a humongous target for Yuqi to go body-smashing, restricting his easy movement on the court. Ayush has a diligent defense, and even for his 6'4' frame, can dive about and chase the shuttle around to diagonal corners. What he perhaps lacked was in switching from defense to offense mid-rally, allowing Yuqi to dominate those positions.

But there was little doubt the Chinese wasn't exactly reading Ayush straightaway, or taking his time, at the least. It meant Yuqi levelled at 12-12 in the opener, and even if a wee bit rattled enough to fault on his serve, was in the hunt at 17-17. The rally for 17-18 saw Ayush defend stoutly, keep-

ing a low centre of gravity while picking shuttles from inches off the floor, but all that perseverance didn't amount to a point as the Chinese regained the lead. Ayush, after having Yuqi on the tenterhooks, had to cede the opening set lead. But he stayed undaunted in the second. The big Ayush-smash, a down the line ripper, fetched up only at 9-9 in the second, to equalise where he caught up after being two points adrift. Ayush stepped up a gear with a signature net followup attack. Taking the mid-set lead, the Indian seized the net control and twice left Yuqi clasping for air as he was in two minds of where to head, in the aftermath of that big smash to the back. He built up a nice 15-11 lead, and kept Yuqi at bay till the world champion reduced the gap to 16-15. Ayush showed great temperament to pull away again to 19-15, by finding the blend to accuracy and aggression. He pushed a decider with a classic 'jhatka shot', a Bangalore-Hyderabad net trick where the racquet was pulled back and the shuttle dropped way shorter than where the Chinese thought it would fly.

His diving about also cost him a few sore nicks as he was landing awkwardly on the flanks, but it earned him medical breaks to patch up the wounds. However, his third set fitness clearly wasn't up to scratch, and he fell back 7-13 pretty quickly, turning the decider into an inevitable fading off. Yuqi who started floating and hopping around the court, attacking the shuttle early. What kept jarring was his body-language, whenever the Chinese visibly amped up his effectiveness. A No 1 will do No 1 things, and increasing pace and intensity to finish off sets, is to be expected. Ayush will need to learn pretty early that a face that doesn't betray emotions and non-wringing hands (he kept tapping the racquet against the ground after missing to reach a return narrowly) are massively prized in badminton, and top names set a lot of store on not giving away emotions and letting opponents know you are fraying. By the third set, it was apparent Ayush had lost steam, and the game was coming apart, in the mind and the limbs. But the towering youngster did enough to sound out a warning of his ability to faze the big names, if not entirely rattle them.

Lakshya fritters a 20-16 lead Lakshya Sen, playing the dangerous Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong, botched a well-earned 20-16 lead, as he imploded to lose the opener 22-20, and went on to exit the match after a 22-20, 21-15 loss. It was a clear case of impetuosity getting the better of him as what needed a cool, clinical stabbing off the circuit's most combustible shuttler, ended with Sen finding 6 different ways to lose points. While the priority remains next week's India Open, Sen had a good grip on the opener that could've given him a Super 1000 quarterfinal. But Lee is masterful in counterpunching and used unalloyed attack with speed to hassle the Indian at the crunch. In the battle of tattoos (both sport inked sleeved arms and play with as much adventure), the Hong Kong player upended the 8-11 trailing score in the second, at will, to race to a finish after his heist in the opener. There's not much of a ranking difference in the two, Sen at 13, Lee at 18. But the 29-year-old can create a ruckus with his fast movements and prickly attacks, and ensured he crowded Sen into submission.

## ICC WTC Points Table 2025-27 update: Australia dominate standings with 4-1 Ashes win, England slump to sixth defeat

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

ICC WTC 2025-2027 Updated Standings: Former champions Australia took a commanding lead at the top of the ICC World Test Championship standings after annihilating England 4-1 in the Ashes 2025-26 series that concluded at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Thursday. Chasing a 160-run target on the final day, Australia scraped home after England triggered a scare with a flurry of wickets. Led by wicket-keeper Alex Carey and all-rounder Cameron Green, Australia saw off the target with five wickets to spare post lunch.

England were able to push the game to a fifth day, thanks to the rearguard fight from No. 3 Jacob Bethell who cracked his maiden Test century on Wednesday. The left-hander became the second youngest batter to record a century in the Ashes in the 21st century, following Alastair Cook in 2006. Bethell eventually fell on the final day morning with Mitchell Starc wrapping up the England innings with a three-wicket haul. Australia improved their points percentage (PCT) from 85.71 to 87.50 following their seventh in the ongoing cycle. The Aussies suffered their only defeat thus far in a



two-day finish during the Boxing Day Test against England last month. The defeat meant Ben Stokes' men slumped to their sixth loss in 10 games, reducing their PCT to 31.66. England remain seventh on the table, marginally ahead of Bangladesh and the West Indies. Inaugural winners New Zealand remain second on the table at the end of three games, with a PCT of 77.78. They are followed by South Africa (75.00) and Sri Lanka (66.67) in the top four.

## 'I don't like the India-Pakistan beef': Jason Holder wants Asian rivals to unite, 'We're talking of world peace'

GNS News Agency, Jan 11

West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder said the visuals of India not accepting the Asia Cup 2025 trophy following their win over Pakistan in Dubai last September, did not bode well in the sporting arena. The former Windies captain belongs to a rare group of cricketers who have continuously featured in the Indian Premier League and Pakistan Super League over the years, maintaining warm relationships with both nations.

Relations between India and Pakistan, already historically fraught, reached a new low following the Pahalgam attacks in April 2025. Although bilateral cricket has been suspended since 2012, the two nations consistently lock horns in ICC tournaments. However, post the Pahalgam tragedy in May 2025, India adopted a stricter diplomatic line even in the sporting realm, casting doubt on whether the scheduled Asia Cup matches would proceed. While all three encounters during the tournament in the United Arab Emirates eventually took place, the Indian team notably refused to interact or exchange traditional post-match handshakes with the Pakistani players.

Not accepting Asia Cup trophy was too much "I don't like this India-Pakistan beef that goes or stems a long way beyond the cricket field. It is really sad," said Holder in a chat with Grace Hayden on her show 'Game On with Grace'. "They are two powerhouses in world cricket and to see how things have transpired; I saw India win the Asia Cup and they didn't go to accept the trophy. I think it's too



much. These things shouldn't be in our game, especially if we are ambassadors of the world. We're talking of world peace, making the world a better place, then that's not what you want." Holder said the move for a change needed to come from the top, urging both Asian giants to unite. "I think if it has to change, it has to come from people who are influential. They are both influential teams on the cricket field. Yes, a lot maybe happening off the field but on the field, India and Pakistan can maybe join forces in the sport.

That would huge for the context of everything." "If they can do it on the cricket field, the two countries may be like 'Look, it's done on a sporting level, maybe we can do it on an everyday level. Stop this fight, stop this war.'" The archrivals are next slated to meet in the group stage of the T20 World Cup 2026, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka in Colombo on February 15.

## Tilak Varma suffers abdomen injury; could undergo surgery and miss New Zealand T20I series



GNS News Agency, Jan 11

opening game, against the USA, is scheduled the same day. Who the board picks as his replacement would be interesting. Gill, snubbed for the series against Kiwis and World Cup, is an unlikely prospect. It is learned that the selection committee and team management would not be keen on recalling him. The contention is that it would be odd to make him, India's captain in Tests and ODIs, warm the bench or ferry the drinks. Moreover, it would be awkward to drop him if Tilak makes a speedy recovery and returns to the side towards the later stages of the series. A likelier candidate could be Assam's Riyan Parag, if he fully recovers from a shoulder injury.

India's ODI vice-captain and middle order bulwark Shreyas Iyer has been declared match fit by the Centre of Excellence (COE), Bengaluru, medical team. Shreyas played for Mumbai against Himachal Pradesh in a league game of Vijay Hazare Trophy in Jaipur, where he scored 82 off 53 balls. He batted without any visible discomfort from the spleen laceration he suffered during the Australia tour. Afterwards, he underwent a minor procedure too. The Mumbai batsman was picked for the Indian ODI side, even though the senior national selection committee noted that his availability was subject to fitness clearance from COE. He has cleared the hurdle and will feature in his first ODI since the one against Australia at the SCG in August. His Mumbai and national teammate Yashasvi Jaiswal would skip his team's last league game in the Vijay Hazare Trophy to join the Indian team in Vadodara. Hardik Pandya, though, will feature in Baroda's final league encounter against Chandigarh on Thursday. The all-rounder, who smoked a sensational 133 against Vidarbha, was not ignored for the New Zealand series to manage his workload and keep him fresh for the World Cup. Besides, the COE had not cleared him to bowl 10 overs in a match.

## Harmanpreet Kaur's record as captain untouchable, she has another 4-5 years to offer: Jhulan Goswami



fourth edition of the WPL but with one significant change to otherwise a similar-looking squad, with Australia's Lisa Keightley replacing England's Charlotte Edwards as their head coach. Jhulan said Lisa, along with imbibing and continuing the philosophy of the team, brings the idea of playing fearless cricket.

"That's the thing Charlotte started and now Lisa has come, she also brings that kind of mindset that we need to play fearless cricket," she said. Jhulan said being able to retain most of their players makes Mumbai Indians such a strong franchise. "If you go through the last year final, I think mostly out of the (playing) eleven, we were able to bring back nine," she said. "That was a huge challenge for us, having our own setup, own core players. And why we're supporting our own players? Because they have done so well, they have performed well for our franchise, they bring a lot of values."

"Having Haley Matthews, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Harmanpreet, Amelia Kerr, Shabnim Ismail, Amanjot Kaur... those all are very exciting international cricketers, and they have been performing so well throughout the year," Jhulan added.

Jhulan backed MI spinner Saika Ishaque, who claimed 15 wickets in their maiden title win in 2023, to come good after going through her share of struggles. "(In) the first season she was unbelievable and (she had) a dream run but after that, I think she was a little bit struggling with her fitness," Jhulan replied when asked why Saika was not able to build on her impressive debut season. "These things happen. She had a little bit of niggles over here and there, and those are the things that happen. In the first year, probably people were not aware of her (bowling style) much, and (in) the second they planned well and played against her in a better way." Jhulan agreed with the assessment of Australia players Meg Lanning and Ashleigh Gardner, who will lead UP Warriorz and Gujarat Giants respectively, that Indian domestic players are giving a strong competition to the seasoned pros. "It was going to happen. First season, they were not aware of those things, like how to approach a WPL tournament. They had never been in those kind of situations and had never played in front of big crowds, or seen the kind of glamour things," Jhulan said. "The amount of fitness (work) those international girls were doing, our domestic girls was not prepared that much." "But over the period of time, our girls have been improved, and they have come a long way to minimise that gap with international players and the domestic players."

Arguably India's finest pacer said the team's gesture of celebrating the World Cup win with former players including herself, Mithali Raj, Anjum Chopra and Reema Malhotra was something that was not planned. "I don't think anyone can touch her record in near future because being a first World Cup winning captain, having two WPL titles and hopefully many more will come, I don't think so." "The only thing I can say is what legacy she would leave in future will be very difficult to describe at this moment, because I still believe she has another 4-5 years of cricket with her," Jhulan added.

What she has done for Indian cricket, what she has done for Mumbai Indians and franchisee cricket, it is phenomenal," Jhulan, MI's bowling coach and team mentor, told PTI here on Wednesday. "I don't think anyone can touch her record in near future because being a first World Cup winning captain, having two WPL titles and hopefully many more will come, I don't think so." "The only thing I can say is what legacy she would leave in future will be very difficult to describe at this moment, because I still believe she has another 4-5 years of cricket with her," Jhulan added.

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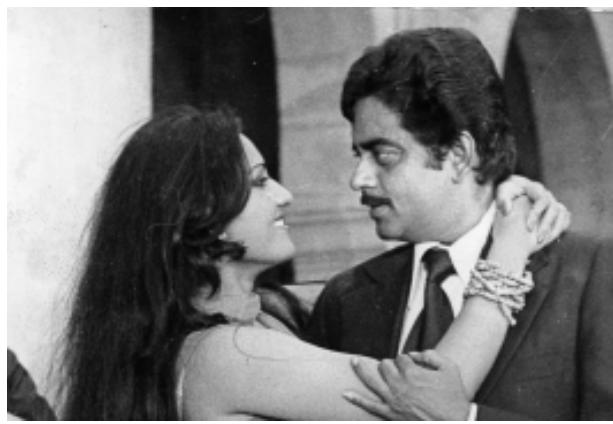
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Arguably India's finest pacer said the team

## Shatrughan Sinha wishes ex-girlfriend Reena Roy on birthday, calls her 'best actress': 'Loving wishes'



Bollywood veteran star Shatrughan Sinha has wished Reena Roy on her birthday. The actor shared stills from the films they worked on together and extended his birthday wishes to her. His post caught the attention of fans as Shatrughan Sinha was involved in a romantic relationship with Reena for several years before he tied the knot with his now wife, Poonam Sinha. Sharing the photos, Shatrughan wrote, "Loving birthday wishes for a very dear friend, one of the best actresses ever, ever charming star, a great human being, wonderful personality in totality #ReenaRoy. May you stay abundantly blessed always."

Shatrughan and Reena shared screen space in Subhash Ghai's 1976 film *Kalicharan*, which marked the actor's first breakthrough role and made him a star over-

night. They were also paired in several other hit films like *Milap*, *Sangram*, *Sat Sri Akal*, and *Chor Ho To Aisa*. Their onscreen chemistry fuelled a romantic connection in real life, and fans were rooting for them to tie the knot. However, at the peak of his affair with Reena, Shatrughan surprised everyone by marrying Poonam Chandiramani, his co-star from *Sabak* and someone he had met years earlier during a train journey. Years later, in an old interview with Rajiv Shukla, Shatrughan explained the reason behind not marrying Reena. He said, "Hota hai kabhi jeevan mein, Insaan kabhi aise mod pe aake khada ho jata hai jaha faisala karna bahut mushkil hota hai. Par jab faisala kar lia jata hai toh shayad woh sabke haq mein nahi nata hai (Sometimes in life, one reaches a juncture where making a decision becomes very difficult. But once the decision is made, it may not always be in everyone's favour)." But marrying Poonam was a decision that Shatrughan mulled over even at the last minute, and he also had thoughts of remaining a bachelor throughout his life. He told *Stardust* magazine, "My strongest emotion at that time was fear. I was very scared. I was happy being a bachelor, but I had reached a point where I was compelled to make the decision. Till the last moment, I wanted to back out. The wedding was in Bombay, and I was in London. I caught the last flight which just about brought me in time for the wedding. Poonam was in a state — she thought I was backing out. Poonam has been good to me. If there are any flaws in this marriage, then the drawbacks are mine, not hers." After facing heartbreak, Reena took three years to recover and moved on by marrying former Pakistani cricketer Mohsin Khan in 1983. However, their marriage ended in separation in 1992, and Reena had to fight a long battle for custody of her daughter after the divorce.

## 'Daddy's back': Yash's 2.5-minute Toxic teaser packs more action than an average potboiler; film to clash with Dhurandhar 2

The makers of Yash film *Toxic* came out on the star's birthday and before you watch it, take a deep breath and settle down comfortably because Rocky Bhai's comeback after almost three years packs more action — pun intended — than an average masala potboiler. *Toxic* teaser came out on lead star Yash's 40th birthday and after a gamut of first looks. But trust us, you are not prepared for the mix of bursting bombs, flailing limbs, burning flesh and sighing maidens that *Toxic* teaser introduces us to. Almost 3-minute teaser introduces the actor's character, Raya.

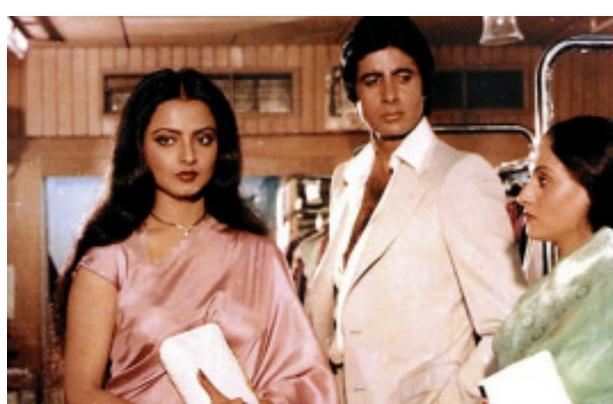
The official handle of the film's production house KVN Productions shared the video on social media and wrote, "Get a good look at your danger — Introducing RAYA. *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups* in cinemas worldwide on 19-03-2026." A teaser of the movie was released last year on Yash's birthday, showing him smoking a cigar and stepping out of a black car, while the latest teaser is an extended version of the same. The teaser also reiterated that *Toxic* will go head to head with *Dhurandhar* on March 19 this year. The teaser shows a cemetery setting, where a man, likely a criminal leader, gathered with his gang to bury his son. The mafia burial has all-white cast who are awaiting what promises to be their nemesis. He arrives in a burial van, with a rather drunk driver who soon sets about getting a bomb ready. Yash, meanwhile, is getting hot and busy with a heaving maiden in the back. Bombs go off, Yash steps out, guns are fired, human limbs go flying. He then emerges, coolly smoking a cigar, telling us, 'Daddy is back'.

*Toxic*'s teaser has gotten fans excited, especially after watching Yash's character reveal. "Ab hoga clash... Pure hollywood vibes," a comment read. "World is Yash Boss



Territory," another fan wrote. "Rip dhurandhar. Daddy is coming," a user commented, taking a dig at Ranveer Singh's latest blockbuster *Dhurandhar*, which has been unbeatable since its release on December 5. Previously, the makers of *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups* had unveiled first-look posters of Kiara Advani as Nadia, Huma Qureshi as Elizabeth and Tara Sutaria as Rebecca. Produced by Venkat K Narayana and Yash under KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations, the film also features Nayanthara and Akshay Oberoi. *Toxic* is set to release in theatres on 19 March 2026. It will clash at the theatres with *Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar 2*. Yash will be wearing many hats, including an actor, co-writer and co-producer of the film. It is his first project after the release of *KGF: Chapter 2*, in 2022.

## 'Unlike Jaya Bachchan, Rekha courts the paparazzi,' says veteran journalist: 'She can be Amitabh Bachchan if she wants'



Amitabh Bachchan's wife Jaya Bachchan's rude behaviour towards the paparazzi to Rekha's sweet gestures towards them, she said, "Rekha is never boring, so I enjoy every time I see a reel of hers. I like to see what she is gonna do for the benefit of the paparazzi. Unlike Jaya Bachchan, she courts the paps. That contrast in itself is very interesting for me." Lauding Rekha's talent and highlighting how she can be Amitabh Bachchan if she wants to be, Shobhaa said, "Every bit of her is a construct, and I love that because she works really hard to create that persona. It takes a lot of work to be Rekha. She can be anyone she wants, she can be Amitabh Bachchan if she wants. She can switch genders if she wants, she is that talented."

## Telangana HC grants relief to Prabhas and Chiranjeevi films on ticket price issue

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Wednesday granted relief to producers of 'The Raja Saab' starring Prabhas and 'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu', featuring Chiranjeevi, in connection with the issue of ticket price enhancement. A Division Bench comprising Justice Moushumi Bhattacharya and Justice Gadi Praveen Kumar clarified that an earlier order passed by a single judge on December 9, which restrained any increase in ticket prices, was limited in its application.

The Bench observed that the said restriction was applicable only to certain big-ticket films such as *Pushpa 2*, *Game Changer*, *OG* and *Akhand 2*, and not to the films presently before the court. As for 'The Raja Saab' and 'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu', the court left the issue of ticket price enhancement to the discretion of the State government.

## Jennifer Garner says breaking up of her family with Ben Affleck was 'hard': 'Losing a true partnership and friendship...'



Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck split up after a marriage of 13 years, but they continue to be friendly and co-parent their three kids — Violet, Fin, and Samuel. That equation stood the test of time and even survived their individual relationships with businessman John C Miller and actor-singer Jennifer Lopez respectively. "You have to be smart about what you can and can't handle, and I could not handle what was out there," confessed Garner in a new interview, referring to her very publicised split with Affleck back in 2015. "The fact of it is what was hard. The actual breaking up of a family is what was hard. Losing a true partnership and friendship is what was hard," she added.

In the interview with *Marie Claire UK*, Garner also opened up on her co-parenting their kids with Affleck. "I'm able to co-parent at this point in time with peace and equa-

nimity and a partnership that I didn't know I would ever get back to. I think it's important for women to know, when they think, 'Oh, I'll never see that, I'll never have that feeling, I'll never be friends with this person again' — time is the opportunity. Time is the opportunity to heal. Time is the opportunity to forgive, to move on and to find a new way to be friends," she said. Garner didn't open up about relationship with Miller but just cryptically said, "I have so much love in my life." Affleck has been in many relationships since their divorce in 2018. He even tied the knot again with his fiancée Jennifer Lopez, only to split up a couple of years later in 2025.

"It doesn't serve me to take in gossip about myself or anyone else, much less my kids, so I don't do it," said Garner, who even famously lent a shoulder to Affleck after his divorce with Lopez. While the public scrutiny on their lives has taken a toll on their marriages, Garner maintains that remains "the hardest thing" even now.

"Not hard in the grand scheme of what is hard in the world, but tricky for me and tricky for my family," she said. Having said that, Garner chose her and Affleck's kids as her proudest achievement, which is why she took a break from her career after having kids. "It never felt like a sacrifice. It was really hard to go to work and it definitely shaped the jobs I chose, in a big way," said Garner. Garner last appeared reprising her role of Elektra in *Shawn Levy's 2023 blockbuster buddy Marvel movie Deadpool & Wolverine*. She'll be next seen reprising her role of Hannah Hall in *season 2 of Apple TV's thriller show The Last Thing He Told Me* and will also headline another book adaptation series, *The Five-Star Weekend* this year.

## Vijay's Jana Nayagan postponed: Ajay Gnanamuthu calls it 'absolute misuse of power', Rathna Kumar says 'Tamil film industry is in grave danger'

The release of the much-awaited *Vijay-starrer Jana Nayagan* has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, producer of the big budget movie announced on Wednesday night. The development took place hours after Madras High Court reserved its order on a petition seeking a direction to the CBFC to give a censor certificate under 'U/A 16+' category to *Jana Nayagan*.

How Tamil film industry reacted Filmmaker Ajay Gnanamuthu, best known for the *Demonte Colony* franchise, took to X on Wednesday and wrote, "Absolute misuse of power. Any film is not just about one person, it has hundreds and hundreds of peoples' efforts, and money involved for a film to reach the screens. All strength to the team. It's a *Thalapathy* film and his farewell film and we will celebrate it like never before whenever it releases!! *Thalaivan Padam eppo release oh appo theatre Pakkam porenn!!*" Filmmaker and screenwriter John, best known for writing the dialogues of *Rajinikanth-starrer Darbar* (2020), also posted on X in *Jana Nayagan's* support. "You will rise more stronger @actorvijay," he wrote along with a picture of him with Vijay. Actor Sibi Sathyaraj also lent his support to the film on X, writing, "All the events happening around #JanaNayagan release is setting the perfect stage for a massive success! Confident @Irunga, nallathe nadakkum! Veti Nichayam! (folded hands emoji) @actorvijay."

*Meyaada Maan* (2017) director Rathna Kumar also showed his solidarity with Vijay on X. "It's painful to see big films getting postponed time and again for the past few months (heartbreak emoji). Tamil film industry is in grave danger. Stay Strong @actorvijay sir and Team #JanaNayagan. You have revived Tamil cinema during covid times. We know you will do it for the One Last time (teary-eyed emoji). Padam enniki release aagutho anniki thaan



FESTIVAL." On Wednesday night, KVN Productions shared a note saying they understood the anticipation, excitement, and emotions surrounding the film. However, "it is with a heavy heart that we share this update with our valued stakeholders and audiences. The release of *Jana Nayagan*, eagerly awaited on January 9 has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances beyond our control." The production house said in a statement that the decision of postponement has not been an easy one. "The new release date will be announced at the earliest," it added. KVN Productions requested patience and love from people and said: "Your unwavering support is our greatest strength and means everything to the entire *Jana Nayagan* team." Vijay, who heads the *Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam* (TVK) political party, has announced contesting the coming Assembly polls in the state, due in March-April. *Jana Nayagan* was being touted as the actor's final film.

## Priyanka Chopra is a mother fighting to protect her family in The Bluff, shares first look; Nick Jonas 'can't wait' for the world to see it



Priyanka Chopra has finally unveiled the first look of her much-awaited film *The Bluff*. The film will also star The Boys actor Karl Urban. Priyanka shared stills from the film on social media which showed her performing some action as she plays the role of Ercell Bodden, a former pirate, also known as Bloody Mary. The film is a pirate adventure set in the late 1800s. The stills shared by Priyanka show her engaged in a sword fight with Karl Urban. Another scene features her sitting with her family and speaking into a mic at a gathering. The following photos show her as a pirate on a ship, while one striking visual shows her bloodied and aiming a pistol at someone. Priyanka captioned the post, "Mother. Protector. Pirate. Meet Bloody Mary #TheBluff February 25, 2026 Only on @primevideo."

Nick reshared the post and gave a shout out to Priyanka. He wrote, "Can't wait the world to see how absolutely incredible Priyanka is in this movie." According to Esquire, Priyanka plays the character of an ex-pirate known as Bloody Mary, who has escaped her violent past and settled on an island, becoming a prominent member of the community and building a family. However, her past life comes knocking when her former crew seeks revenge against her for stealing their

## Prabhu Deva celebrates A R Rahman's birthday at 'Moonwalk' audio launch

Chennai: The unit of director Manoj N S's upcoming film 'Moonwalk', featuring actor Prabhu Deva in the lead, chose to celebrate Oscar winner A R Rahman's birthday at the grand audio launch event of the film by getting the ace musician to cut a cake on stage.