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ARRIVE - ALIVE Campaign, A Road Safety Month Campaign in Narsingi

“DNV Srikanth,“Manikonda,“Jan 2026,“Indian Chronicle”“As part of Road Safety campaign ARRIVE - ALIVE held by Narsingi Police in Community Hall, DCP Madhapur Traffic Police, ACP Madhapur Traffic Police and other police officials have conducted some awareness programmes and discussed few safety guidelines for better commutation. The officials also educated public regarding traffic rules, safe driving, accident prevention and emergency response. Certain safety tips like 100% helmet and seat belt usage were also stressed more as these would result in prevention of major injuries.”“Police officials also reminded of drunk and drive consequences and also told not to use mobiles while driving. Cops also sensitised the consequences of negligent driving by explaining the real-life victim testimony and concluded the awareness program with Road Safety Pledge.

Traffic home guard injured in Bahadurpura hit-and-run

Hyderabad: A traffic home guard was injured when a motorist rammed into him on Bahadurpura road on Tuesday.The home guard, Jangiah (40), working at Falaknuma traffic police station, was placing barricades on the road to set up a check post when a speeding biker rammed into him and escaped.

The injured policeman was shifted to a hospital for treatment. The Bahadurpura police registered a case and are investigating the incident. Efforts are on to identify and arrest the biker.



Telangana Municipal Elections: Final Voter Count Revealed

Hyderabad, Jan 13

In anticipation of the upcoming municipal elections in Telangana, the State Election Commission has published the final voters' list, which indicates a Hyderabad, Jn 12total of 52,43,023 registered voters in the municipalities and corporations slated for the polls. Among these voters, there are 25,62,369 males, 26,80,014 females, and 640 transgender individuals, highlighting a notable trend with a greater number of female voters compared to their male counterparts in urban local bodies.

The Nizamabad Corporation tops the list with the highest number of voters, totaling 3,48,051, while the Kothagudem Corporation records the lowest with 1,34,775 voters. In municipalities, Adilabad leads with 1,43,655 voters, whereas Amarachinta holds the distinction of the lowest voter count at just 9,147.

Blinkit drops 10-minute delivery claim amid worker welfare concerns; Swiggy, Zepto may follow

New Delhi:, Jan 13 Eternal-owned quick-commerce firm Blinkit has dropped its '10-minute' delivery claim from all platforms amid growing concerns over delivery workers' welfare.

It has revised the tag-line from “10,000+ products delivered in 10 minutes” to “30,000+ products delivered at your doorstep”.

Other quick commerce platforms, such as Swiggy and Zepto, may also follow suit after the intervention by the Union Ministry of Labour, which was concerned about the welfare of the delivery workers trying to meet such tight deadlines.

The move follows discussions the labour ministry held with the quick commerce platforms to ensure greater safety, security and improved working conditions for gig workers.

The promise of 10-minute delivery led to gig workers holding a nationwide strike on New Year's Eve in 2025, drawing attention to workers' health, safety and income.

To be sure, while the 10-minute delivery branding was still visible on the Google Play Store and iOS App store for Zepto, Instamart and BigBasket, there was no such branding for Blinkit.

In a recent post on X, Eternal Group CEO Deepinder Goyal had claimed that the 10-minute delivery promise does not pressure riders or lead to unsafe driving, as they are not shown the 10-minute timer on the app.

“Quick commerce’s 10-minute promise DOES NOT put pressure on gig workers, and it DOESN’T lead to unsafe driving. Why? The most common concern is that faster delivery promises translate into pressure on delivery partners to drive unsafely. That isn’t how the system operates.

“Firstly, delivery partners are not shown customer-facing time promises. There is no ‘10-minute timer’ or countdown in the delivery app. 10-minute or faster deliveries are primarily due to our stores being closer to customers and not by higher speeds on the road,” Goyal had stated in the post.

Eternal owns quick commerce firm Blinkit.

Revanth Reddy faces backlash over traffic challan auto debit proposal

Hyderabad, Jan 13


Hyderabad: A day after Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy suggested auto debit of traffic challan amounts from vehicle owners' bank accounts, people from different sections on Tuesday exposed what they called the Congress government's double standards.

Stating that the Chief Minister's suggestions were deeply concerning and raised serious legal, constitutional and ethical questions, entrepreneur Nayini Anurag Reddy said the proposal directly contradicted the Congress party's election manifesto.

“As PCC president, Revanth Reddy had publicly promised a 50 percent waiver on pending traffic challans. After assuming office, not only has this promise been withdrawn, but citizens are now being spoken to about automatic recovery of penalties. Such a complete reversal exposes the hypocrisy and also reveals the commitment Congress party has on their manifesto,” Anurag Reddy said.

Secondly, the Indian Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to due process. Any penalty or fine must allow scope for explanation, appeal and redress. Automatic deduction from bank accounts, without consent or adjudication, violates this fundamental principle. It was unfortunate that such a suggestion came from the Chief Minister, he stressed.

“Will the government introduce auto-deduction from contractors, whose roads deteriorate within months of construction. Will the officials, who certify substandard works, Ministers overseeing faulty projects and elected representatives be held responsible for government failures?” he asked.



Sharing an old video of Revanth Reddy on X, BharathMBNR, an X user, said “While, in the opposition, Revanth Reddy fumed at drunk driving drives and harassment of motorists. However, after coming to power, he suggested auto debit of traffic challan amount from their bank account.”

Apart from questioning the double standards of the Congress government and raising concerns, many were also taking sarcastic jibes at the Chief Minister over the suggestion.

Welcoming the Chief Minister's plans, @kkkmohan73, an X user, said “If the roads are not good, whose account should be debited with how much amount. If the traffic signals are not working, whose account should be debited with how much amount?”

He also asked from whose account the amount should be deducted for making motorists burn more fuel with ‘U’ turns exceeding distances from 200 metres to a kilometre.


China is a danger Chinamanja is still a Very danger

““Secunderabad Cantonment. January 13 (Indian Chronicle):“Medchal MLA and former minister Mallareddy said that the China is a danger Chinamanja is still a danger telangana government is taking strict measures to ban this china manja and be careful while flying kites. “The celebrations of Sankranti festival are going on in Hyderabad city with grandeur. Sankranti celebrations were celebrated on Tuesday in Bowenpally by Ragiru Team Goud , Medchal MLA and former minister Mallareddy participated as the chief guest and started the Sankranti celebrations by lighting bonfires and distributing kites to children on the occasion. Later, they shared the joy of the festival with the people by participating in the program with the Cockfight and the stunts of Gangireddu. Together with the young women who came to this program, she danced with the children in her own style on the Dj Tillu song and cheered every one up. The area looked like a fair as a large number of young women flocked from Bowenpally



Medchal areas to participate in these celebrations and took selfies with them. “ On this occasion, he said, “Happy Sankranti to all, and it is commendable that Tinku Goud has been distributing kites to children in Bowenpally for the last 18 years. At present many people are in danger of death due to China Manja and everyone is called to work for the ban of such China Manja. He said that this China Manja is very danger. He said that the vehicles should be driven slowly to celebrate the festival peacefully.

Director Sreevani Chowdary an Inspiration to All: Traffic Joint Police Commissioner Joel Davis



Hyderabad Traffic Joint Police Commissioner Joel Davis. He stated that she has been rendering services from the family level to society at large and has emerged as a guiding force for the younger generation.“He especially appreciated the awareness song written by Sreevani Chowdary on traffic rules, calling it excellent and impactful. He said it was a matter of great pride that the song was formally launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, as such creative efforts play a key role in spreading awareness on road safety.“As part of the state police department's “Arrive Alive” programme, launched with the objective of reducing road accidents and loss of lives in the state, a memento was presented to Sreevani Chowdary by Traffic Joint Police Commissioner Joel Davis, in recognition of her contribution to traffic awareness.Speaking on the occasion, Joel Davis said that the role of women like Sreevani Chowdary is crucial in the development of society. He stressed that creating awareness on traffic rules is extremely important and is the responsibility of every

““Kishore Vaddepalli, Hyderabad, January 13 (Indian Chronicle):““Telangana State Women's Wing Director Sreevani Chowdary is a socially responsible woman and a true role model for society, said

Kite And Sweet Festival Started In Secunderabad



“““Secunderabad Cantonment. January 13 (Indian Chronicle):“Telangana Government Celebrate the Sky’ events would roll out on Tuesday today with inauguration of the International Kite and Sweet Festival at Parade Grounds in Secunderabad at 4 p.m. However, people started to visit the venue along with their family members from the early afternoon. The Kite festival would be held from January 13 to 15, open to people from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. A huge kite in the shape of a whale took to the sky drawing the attention of the people who gathered there in the afternoon. With eye-catching kites and mouth-watering sweets, the International Sweets and Kites Festival, which is being held at the Secunderabad Parade Grounds, started grandly on Tuesday. This program is very impressive to the residents of the city. Kite flyers from around 19 countries have attended this grand event organized by the Telangana Tourism Department. Around 50 National Kite Flyers from different cities of the country, youth from twin cities and surrounding areas also participated in this kite flying program From small to huge balloons are being flown from the parade grounds. Stalls were set up with kites from Thai-

land, Indonesia, Australia, Nigeria, Canada, Japan, France, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, Malaysia and other countries. These are impressing everyone. On the other hand, 60 stalls were set up as part of the sweet festival. A strong security has been established with around 200 policemen.“My Biggest Kite at the Kite Festival .. Nicolas France .“Our biggest kite in this kite festival is called Shark Kite We are members of Kite Always on the Sky Association from France We have participated in many competitions I came to Hyderabad for the first time We are a team of 8 We are a team of eight Our specialty is making kites in different shapes like animals, cartoon characters etc.“Hyderabad culture is good in biryani test .Alex Ukraine .“ I am from Ukraine Shranco Cat Flyer Kite Unit We are going to Kite Festivals all over the world, coming to Hyderabad for the third time, Hyderabad Biryani is a bit of a test but the culture here is good, this is the third time I am coming to Hyderabad. We have dozens of kits, mainly flying cat kites is our specialty..

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Battleground West Bengal

Weaponising the central investigating agencies to target political opponents and crush dissent has been a troubling trend over the past decade. The NDA government has been facing allegations of the blatant misuse of probe agencies to target its rivals. The ongoing political drama in poll-bound West Bengal, following multiple raids by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on the offices of a political consultancy firm, I-PAC, is the latest instance of the blurring of the line between criminal investigation and electoral politics. While the timing of the ED's action — coming just a couple of months before the Assembly elections — is very suspicious, the way the Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee is pitting the State police against the central investigating agency and turning the matter into a political stand-off is deeply problematic. Despite occupying a responsible constitutional position, Banerjee often displays a propensity to hit the streets and lead the protest rallies against her political opponents — in this case, the BJP. What should have been a routine legal process has now spiralled into a Centre-State confrontation, raising concerns that go well beyond West Bengal. On January 8, the ED conducted raids on the offices of I-PAC, the political consultancy firm engaged by the TMC since 2019, in Kolkata and Delhi, and also the residence of its director, Pratik Jain. The ED insisted that its searches under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) are part of a probe into an alleged coal smuggling racket.

While I-PAC is suspected of receiving hawala funds, the TMC has, however, accused the central agency of crossing a red line by seizing party campaign material that has nothing incriminating about it. The ruling party has also accused the ED of trying to access confidential documents and data related to its election campaign in the garb of the raids. Going a step further, Banerjee sought to play to the gallery when she landed at the raid sites in a rally and allegedly obstructed the ED probe. In such a surcharged political atmosphere, investigative agencies cannot discharge their duties in a professional manner.

Government Distributes Sankranti Greetings to One Lakh Gruha Jyothi Beneficiaries in Uppal Constituency

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Former AS Rao Nagar Corporator Pajuri Pavani Manipal Reddy stated that the Congress party



has a proven history of fulfilling every promise made to the people. She said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has successfully implemented all assurances given during the elections. Under the Gruha Lakshmi and Gruha Jyothi schemes, nearly one lakh families in the Uppal constituency are receiving benefits, she added. As part of the Sankranti and New Year celebrations, officials visited Kamalanagar and Maheshnagar colonies and personally met beneficiaries at their homes. Electricity Department officials AD Srinivas Reddy and AE Ganga Bhavani, along with Congress leaders, distributed New Year and Sankranti greeting cards sent by Electricity Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to Gruha Jyothi beneficiaries. Pavani Manipal Reddy said the Congress government is providing free electricity with zero bills to poor and middle-class families who consume up to 200 units of power per month under the Gruha Jyothi scheme. She added that this welfare initiative has significantly reduced the financial burden on households. She also highlighted that under the Mahalakshmi scheme, women are being provided free travel facilities on RTC buses across the state. Additionally, she said the Revanth Reddy government has created history by distributing fine rice free of cost to the poor, a welfare measure never implemented on such a large scale before. The programme was attended by Congress leaders Bojja Raghava Reddy, Mada Venkata Reddy, Mahipal Reddy, Kamalanagar Association President Janardhan Goud, Secretary Peddi Naveen, Sudhakar, Jalaja, Padma, Geetha, Electricity Department staff, and others.

Over One Lakh Families Benefit from Gruha Jyothi Scheme in Uppal Constituency: Parameshwar Reddy

Government Distributes Sankranti Greetings to Beneficiaries at Chilukanagar



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 13 (Indian Chronicle):“Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy stated that more than one lakh families in the Uppal Assembly constituency are benefiting from the Gruha Jyothi Scheme. He said the Congress party has a proven history of fulfilling its promises and that the credit for implementing all election assurances goes to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. On Tuesday, at Chilukanagar in Uppal Circle, Parameshwar Reddy distributed New Year and Sankranti greetings sent by Deputy Chief Minister and Power Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to Gruha Jyothi scheme beneficiaries. Speaking on the occasion, he explained that under the Gruha Jyothi Scheme, poor and middle-class families consuming up to 200 units of electricity per month are receiving free power with zero electricity bills. He added that under the Mahalakshmi Scheme, the Revanth Reddy government has also provided free RTC



bus travel for women. Parameshwar Reddy further stated that the Chief Minister has earned special recognition for distributing fine rice free of cost to the poor, a welfare initiative unprecedented in the state's history. The programme was attended by ADE Ravinder Reddy, Chilukanagar Division Congress Party President Rajesh Mudiraj, AE Venugopal, LI Amar Singh, Akiti Agam Reddy, Kompally Balaraj Mudiraj, Mahender Mudiraj, Amareshwari, Sushila, Manchala Raghu, Amar, Radhakrishna, Gandikota Ganesh, Shankar, Jagadeesh Mudiraj, Sonu Goud, Turpati Jangaiah, Kiran, Shiva, Sudarshan, Moinuddin, Gaddam Srinu, Anjaneyulu, Yadagiri Yadav, Vamsi, Satyam, Raviteja, Uday, Eshwari, Sandhya, Shobha Reddy, Samanta, Rangamma, Sumalatha, Santosh, Vijaya, along with Congress leaders and party workers.

Rs 35 Lakh CC Road Works Taken Up at RTC Colony with MP Etela Rajender's Funds

Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao Inspects Works



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 13 (Indian Chronicle):““CC road construction works worth ₹35 lakh are underway at RTC Colony under the Ramanthapur Division. The works are being taken up with funds sanctioned under the quota of Malkajgiri Member of Parliament Etela Rajender. On Tuesday morning, Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao inspected the progress of the CC road works along with local residents. She instructed the concerned officials to ensure that the construction is carried out with high quality standards and without any compromise. The Corporator emphasized that the road works should be completed smoothly without causing inconvenience to the local residents. She also



directed the officials to regularly monitor the curing process after the completion of the road construction to ensure durability. Local residents expressed their gratitude to Malkajgiri MP Etela Rajender for sanctioning the ₹35 lakh funds for the development of RTC Colony roads. AE Swetha, Work Inspector Mahender, TRS senior leader Pasula Prabhakar Reddy, BJP leaders Nasu Satish and Narsing Rao, along with colony residents and others, were present during the inspection.

Government Committed to Resolving Teachers' and Education Sector Issues: Minister Ponnam Prabhakar



“Kishore Vaddepalli, Hyderabad, January 13 (Indian Chronicle):““State Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar stated that the government is firmly committed to resolving issues related to teachers and the education sector in the state. “Speaking on Tuesday after unveiling the 2026 New Year Diary of the TS TU State Association, the Minister responded to various issues raised by the association's State President and General Secretary, Mohammad Abdullah and Chandoori Rajireddy. The Minister assured that the problems of teachers who suffered losses under GO 317, including government and SPAZ teachers who have submitted applications, will be resolved at the earliest. He also stated that once the government's financial position improves, it is sincere about clearing the pending four DA installments



and implementing the PRC. He further informed that the issue of extending the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) to 2003 DSC teachers is currently under the government's consideration. “When TS TU leaders urged an increase in the midday meal cooking charges in line with rising prices, the Minister said that all the issues would be brought to the notice of the Chief Minister. The programme was attended by TS TU State leaders Mohammad Abdullah, Chandoori Rajireddy, State office-bearers Upper Ahmed, H. Srinivas Reddy, Syed Rahamathullah, K. Satyanarayana, Hyderabad district representatives Mohammad Iqbal, Afeez, Javed, Peddapalli district General Secretary Elama Dasari Ravi, and several others.



Venkatapuram division corporater met zc snnchith gangavar

“Ind, jan13. Tue day.“Vekatapuram division corporater sabitha anil kishore met zc sanchith gangavar the support of malkajgiri mila marri rajashekar reddy for requesting subash nagar,kanjiguda graveyards fund will relese, in this program mosin,veeresh sadenandh atended.

Rs 58.38 Lakh Machinery Subsidy Distributed to Farmers Under Yantra Lakshmi Scheme in Manthani Sub-Division.

“P. S. ASHOKAN “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. ““As part of promoting agricultural mechanisation, the Telangana State Department of Agriculture, under the people's government led by Hon'ble Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, has revitalised farmer-centric welfare initiatives after a decade.““On the occasion of Sankranti,



and in line with the vision of Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageswara Rao, agricultural machinery worth ₹58.38 lakh was distributed under the Yantra Lakshmi Scheme to farmers of the Manthani Sub-Division (Manthani, Mutharam, Ramagiri and Kamanpur).“A total of 703 units of farm machinery were formally handed over to the beneficiaries on Monday night at Shivakiran Gardens by Hon'ble Minister for Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu.““The programme witnessed the presence of senior officials and public representatives, including:““Bathini Srinivas, District Agriculture Officer (DAO)““Anjani Mishra, Assistant Director of Agriculture (ADA)““Kududula Venkanna, Chairman, Manthani Agricultural Market Committee““Vainala Raju, Chairman, Kamanpur Agricultural Market Committee““Shashibhushan Kache, Member, TGERC Advisory Committee““Muskula Surender Reddy, District President, Kisan Congress““Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries emphasised that the Yantra Lakshmi Scheme would significantly reduce the financial burden on farmers, enhance productivity, and accelerate the transition towards modern, technology-driven agriculture in the region.““The event reaffirmed the government's commitment to farmer welfare, sustainable agriculture, and inclusive rural development.

Byri Naveen Goud Donates Rs.2 Lakh for Civic Facilities at Sri Ram Nagar 2BHK Colony

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Byri Naveen Goud, President of the BRS Party, Kapra Division, provided financial assistance of Rs.2 lakh to the Sri Ram Nagar 2BHK Housing Dignity Society under the Kapra Division to address key civic issues faced by residents. The funds will be used for the installation of CCTV cameras to enhance security in the colony and for the installation of a water motor to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply. Speaking on the occasion, Byri Naveen Goud stated that strengthening



basic infrastructure in colonies inhabited by poor and



middle-class families remains a priority, in line with the development objectives of local MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. He said that identifying public issues through direct interaction with residents and responding without delay is the guiding principle of the party. He also assured continued support for the future development of the Sri Ram Nagar 2BHK Housing Dignity Society. Residents of the colony said that the demand for CCTV surveillance and a water motor had been pending for a long time. They expressed gratitude to Byri Naveen Goud for addressing the issue promptly by extending financial support. Association members, block supervisors, 2BHK residents, local BRS leaders, and party workers were present at the programme.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy Fulfilling Promises to the People

One Lakh Households Benefiting Under Gruha Jyothi Scheme in Uppal Constituency
Sankranti and New Year Greetings Distributed to Beneficiaries in Kapra ST Colony and Naik Nagar



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that the Congress party has a proven history of fulfilling every promise made to the people. He said that the credit for implementing all election promises goes to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Under the Gruha Lakshmi and Gruha Jyothi schemes, nearly one lakh families in the Uppal constituency are benefiting from welfare measures introduced by the state government. As part of the Sankranti celebrations, Parameshwar Reddy distributed New Year and Sankranti greeting cards sent by Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to Gruha Jyothi beneficiaries in Kapra ST Colony and Naik Nagar under the Kapra Circle. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy explained that eligible poor and middle-class families consuming less than 200 units of electricity per month are receiving zero electricity bills under the Gruha Jyothi scheme, ensuring free power supply. He also highlighted that the state government has already implemented the Mahalaxmi scheme, pro-

viding free RTC bus travel for women across Telangana. Additionally, he said that the government has achieved a historic milestone by distributing fine rice free of cost to the poor, a step never taken by previous governments. Electricity department officials AD Prabhakar Reddy, AE Satyanarayana, and lineman Rehman participated in the program. Several public representatives and party leaders were present, including Kapra Division Corporator Swarna Raj Shiva Mani, Division President Naga Seshu, Medchal-Malkajgiri District Agricultural Market Committee Vice Chairman Vittal Naik, Director Poorna Yadav, and members of ST Naik Nagar Colony—Parvathi Naik, Madhumathi Naik, Valya Naik, Charan, Padma, Anita, Ghama, Shanti, Vimala, Lakshmi, Badri, Tulasi, and Mothi. Congress leaders and party workers including Yadagiri, Mallikarjun, Tillu Yadav, Rakesh Yadav, Pawan, Babu Rao, Malla Reddy, Srihari, Narendra Goud, Jagadeesh, Nagaraj, Satish Yadav, Surender Reddy, Santosh, Somanath, Murtaza, Sai Yadav, Vinod, Ashok, Venkat, Suresh, and others actively participated in the program.

Road Safety Requires Active Participation from Civil Society: Uppal Zone Police & Traffic Officials

Reaching Home Safely Is the Ultimate Goal – Save a Life by Taking an Accident

-Victim to Hospital During the Golden Hour and Receive Rs 25,000



the primary objective of ensuring that every road user reaches home safely. The Arrive Alive awareness campaign will be conducted across the Malkajgiri Commissionerate from January 13 to January 24. Addressing the gathering, the officials stated that the State Government has launched several special initiatives to enhance passenger safety. These programmes aim to create awareness among the public about road safety norms and to encourage strict adherence to traffic rules to prevent accidents. They noted that non-compliance with traffic regulations has led to a high number of road accidents, with youth accounting for a significant proportion of fatalities. Across the state, approximately 7,500 people lost their lives in road accidents over the past year, the officials said. Emphasising the importance of the Golden Hour, they urged the public to immediately shift accident victims to the nearest hospital within the first hour of an incident. They informed that the Central Government provides a reward of ₹25,000 to individuals who help transport road accident victims to hospitals during this crucial period, thereby saving lives. The programme concluded with participants taking a road safety pledge. The event was attended by Uppal CI K. Bhaskar, DI Ramalinga Reddy, Traffic CI Nagaraju, SIs Madhav Reddy, Chiranjeevi, Madhu and Vinay, other police personnel, family members of road accident victims, and a large number of members of the public.

Swami Vivekananda The Visionary Who Introduced Indian Philosophy to the World



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest thinkers who introduced Hindu philosophy to the world. A highly educated visionary and powerful orator, his speeches left audiences across the globe deeply impressed and thoughtful. The ideas he expressed had the power to influence minds and inspire change. Swami Vivekananda was an exceptional speaker whose words carried universal relevance. As an Indian monk, he represented the spiritual and cultural strength of India on international platforms. His historic speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, United States, brought global attention to Indian philosophy and values. When he began his address with the words Sisters and Brothers, the audience responded with admiration and surprise, marking one of the most memorable moments in world history. At a young age, Swami Vivekananda travelled extensively across many countries, spreading messages of unity, tolerance, and self-confidence. His global journeys and impactful speeches made him a respected figure worldwide. Despite his short life, he left a lasting legacy through his thoughts and teachings. Swami Vivekananda passed away at the age of 39, but his influence continues to guide generations. He remains one of the most inspiring personalities India has produced, and the nation takes pride in his contribution to the world.

“ARRIVE ALIVE” Road Safety Awareness Program Held at Uppal Depot Workshop



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of the Telangana State Government's prestigious “ARRIVE ALIVE” initiative aimed at reducing road accidents and creating widespread awareness on road safety, a traffic awareness program was conducted today at the Uppal Depot Zonal Workshop under the supervision of the Medipally Police Station, Malkajgiri Commissionerate. Speaking at the program, Medipally Inspector R. Govind Reddy emphasized the importance of strict adherence to traffic rules by motorists, pedestrians, and the general public. He urged two-wheeler riders, especially youth, to compulsorily wear helmets, follow traffic signals, and avoid overspeeding and negligent driving that could lead to the loss of valuable lives. Zonal Workshop Manager Jagan stated that nearly 80 percent of road accidents involve two-wheelers, highlighting the urgent need for increased awareness and responsible driving practices. Medipally Tahsildar Krishna Chaitanya spoke about the mandatory use of seat belts for car passengers and cautioned against drunk driving and the use of mobile phones while driving, explaining how such actions significantly increase

the risk of accidents. Orthopedic specialist Dr. Rohith addressed the gathering, stating that accidents occur without warning and stressed the importance of safe driving to reach destinations safely. He shared real-life experiences from surgeries performed on road accident victims, explaining the severe physical impact of traffic mishaps. Victims who had suffered serious injuries and individuals who lost family members in road accidents also shared their experiences, explaining the social, economic, and psychological trauma they continue to endure due to such incidents. Speakers collectively emphasized that following traffic rules ensures the safety of individuals and helps them return home safely to their families. Participants were administered an oath on the slogan “Arrive Alive – Reach Your Destination Safely”, pledging to practice road safety in their daily lives. The program witnessed participation from Uppal and Chengicherla depot drivers and staff, auto union representatives, lorry drivers' associations, local public representatives, drivers, and members of the public, with around 200 people attending the event.

‘Arrive Alive Campaign–2026’ Awareness Program Held at ECIL



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of the Telangana State Government's initiative to reduce road accidents, the “Arrive Alive Campaign–2026” was launched across the state. Under this campaign, an awareness program was conducted on January 13, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at ECIL by the Kushaiguda Police Station. The program was attended by DCP Uppal K. Suresh Kumar as the chief guest, who delivered an awareness message on road safety and accident prevention. ACP Y. Venkat Reddy and Kushaiguda Bus Depot Manager Venugopal were also present and addressed the gathering, highlighting the importance of following traffic rules and responsible driving. In a unique initiative, the Kushaiguda Police Station invited family members of road accident victims and individuals who had survived accidents. They shared their personal experiences with the participants, creating strong awareness about the consequences of reckless

driving and negligence on roads. The program witnessed participation from the Kushaiguda Traffic Police Station Inspector, Moulali Police Station Inspector, SIs and staff of Kushaiguda Police Station, road safety personnel, auto union representatives, and senior residents from various colonies under the police station limits. Their collective efforts contributed to the success of the awareness session. The “Arrive Alive Campaign–2026” will be conducted for ten days, from January 13 to January 24, with the objective of reducing road accidents and promoting road safety awareness among the public.

“Do Not Use Chinese Manja, Children’s Safety Is Paramount”: Jalli Mohan

---Free Distribution of Kites, Sugarcane and Kite Strings at Chiluka Nagar Crossroads



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 13 (Indian Chronicle):“On the occasion of the Sankranti festival, free kites, sugarcane and kite strings were distributed to children and elders at Chiluka Nagar Crossroads under the leadership of senior BRS leader Jalli Mohan, following the instructions of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. “Speaking on the occasion, Jalli Mohan stated that while children should celebrate Sankranti joyfully, their safety must be the top priority while flying kites. He strongly cautioned against the use of Chinese manja (nylon kite strings), explaining that it poses serious dangers to children, two-wheeler riders, pedestrians and birds. “He recalled that several accidents and fatalities had occurred in the past due to Chinese manja and emphasized that its usage is a punishable offence under the law. He urged parents to educate children about the dangers of nylon threads and ensure that kites

are flown only under adult supervision. Jalli Mohan advised children to fly kites away from electric wires, buildings and roads to avoid accidents. He stressed that spreading awareness on the message “Say No to Chinese Manja – Children’s Safety Comes First” is the responsibility of everyone. Several BRS leaders participated in the programme, including Ambati Jagadish Mudiraj, Palle Nursing Rao, Pittala Naresh Mudiraj, Mukkala Ramakrishna Mudiraj, Erelli Ravinder Reddy, Kompalli Ravinder Mudiraj, Cheryala Srinivas, Masa Shekhar, Kompalli Rajkumar, Ravinder Goud, Sanigaram Tirumalesh, Kolani Santosh Reddy, Photolu Raju, Sadananda Chary, Ramesh, Prasad Chary, Anjaneyulu Chary, and women leader Anasuya Reddy, among others. The organisers reiterated that the programme aimed to take the message “No Chinese Manja – Safety of Children Is Essential” to the public.



Revanth Reddy Government Implementing Election Promises: Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 13 (Indian Chronicle):“Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government is implementing every promise made during the elections through various welfare schemes. She said that under the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, nearly one lakh families in the Uppal constituency are benefiting. On Tuesday, in Indira Nagar and Kuruma Nagar of Uppal Division, Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy distributed Sankranti greetings sent by Deputy Chief Minister and Power Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to beneficiaries of the Gruha Jyothi Scheme. “Speaking on the occasion, she explained that free electricity is being provided under the zero-bill scheme to poor and middle-class families who consume up to 200 units of power per month. She added that the Revanth Reddy government has also implemented the



Mahalakshmi Scheme, providing free RTC bus travel for women across the state. The programme was attended by AE Nikhil Reddy (Uppal), AE Satyanarayana Reddy (Peerzadiguda), linemen Kishan Naik and Murali, division president Bakaram Laxman, Eega Anjaneyulu, Lingampally Ramakrishna, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Tokata Raju, CD Venkatesh, Prem, Alugula Anil, Durgam Naveen Yadav, Ganjai Narsing Rao, Asura Mahender, Govind Kumar, Rangula Shekhar, Bazaar Naveen Goud, Dappu Raju, Tokata Rahul, Dappu Rahul, Mandal Nagaraju, Maskav Tej, Dappu Nandu, Gunde Venkatesh, Nagole Naveen, P. Ram Chander, Muddam Sudhakar Reddy, Ramesh Yadav, T. Vijay Singh, P. Mahender, Mahesh Goud, G. Komuraiah, Vinod, S. Ramaswamy, Satyanarayana Chary, and several local residents.

The state government is giving top priority to agricultural mechanization with the aim of increasing farmers' income:

Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah, Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhongir District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 13):- Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah and Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy participated in the distribution program of subsidized agricultural machinery. The distribution program of subsidized agricultural mechanization equipment was grandly organized on Monday at



the market yard in Alair town. Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah and Bhongir Member of Parliament Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy participated as chief guests in this program. As part of the agricultural mechanization scheme provided by the government to farmers, subsidized machinery was distributed to the beneficiaries. The leaders who participated in the program interacted with the farmers and inquired about their problems. On this occasion, MLA Beerla Ailaiah said that the state government is giving top priority to agricultural mechanization with the aim of increasing farmers' income. He stated that the use of modern machinery will reduce agricultural costs and increase yields. He clarified that the welfare of farmers is the government's objective. “Agricultural department officials, local public representatives, and a large number of farmers participated in this program.

Government Whip MLA Beerla Ailaiah and Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy inspected the construction works of the Kolanupaka bridge.



“(Mandava Srisailam...Yadadri Bhongir District Bureau...Indian Chronicle...January 13):- Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah and Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy inspected the bridge under construction near Kolanupaka village in Alair mandal, Yadadri Bhongir district on Monday. They inquired about the progress of the bridge construction works from the officials and instructed them to complete the works with quality standards and within the stipulated time. They stated that once the Kolanupaka bridge is completed, transportation facilities will improve for the people of the surrounding villages and for the Kolanupaka Someshwara Temple, and the transportation of agricultural produce will become easier for the farmers. “They stated that this bridge is crucial for the development of the region and ordered the officials to expedite the works so that the public does not face any difficulties. Local public representatives, officials, and party leaders participated in this program.



ticipated in this program.

Sankranti Rangoli Competitions Held at Keesara

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 13, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of Sankranti celebrations, rangoli (muggu) competitions were organized at Keesara village in Medchal district on Tuesday. The event was conducted as per the directions of Medchal MLA Chamakura Malla Reddy under the initiative of the BRS party. The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from women of the village. In the results, CH Pavani secured first prize, followed by Jayanti in second place, K. Jhansi in third place, P. Lavanya in fourth place, and P. Sai Chandana in fifth place. The programme was organized under the leadership of Keesara village BRS president Chiningani Balraj and BRS senior leader Gurram Sridhar Reddy. Several party leaders and local representatives participated in the event, including former sarpanch Nayakapu Madhuri Venkatesh, former PACS chairman Ramidi Prabhakar Reddy, Gurram Malla Reddy, BRS mandal youth president Tatakam Bhanu Sharma, mandal social media president Goranti Praveen, mandal youth vice-president Mittapalli Raghavender Goud, village social media president Mettu Satish Yadav, village general secretary Ragula Ganesh, youth president Mettu Paramesh



Yadav, and general secretary Reddaboyina Mahesh. The event was successfully conducted with the active participation of village women and youth volunteers, reflecting the festive spirit of Sankranti and promoting traditional art forms.

Don't Let Burglars Spoil Your Sankranti: Kagaznagar Police Sound Alert



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 13 (Indian Chronicle)“Kagaznagar (Komaram Bheem Asifabad District): With the Sankranti festival approaching — Bhogi on January 13 and Makar Sankranti on January 14, 2026 — and thousands of residents preparing to travel to their native villages for extended holidays, the police in Kagaznagar have intensified public awareness efforts to prevent housebreakings and thefts. “Acting on the directions of Kumram Bheem Asifabad District Superintendent of Police Nitika Pant, the police department has initiated a mobile announcement campaign using auto-rickshaws to educate the public on essential safety measures. The programme was launched under the supervision of Kagaznagar DSP Wahiduddin. “Addressing the public during the campaign, DSP Wahiduddin urged urban residents traveling to their hometowns, other towns, or distant locations to exercise utmost caution. He emphasized that leaving homes unattended for several days creates opportunities for burglars, and advised citizens to remain vigilant at all times. “Key precautions recommended include: “Secure homes with strong, reliable locks on all doors and windows before departure. “Register travel details at the local police station in advance, enabling officers to include the property in routine patrols for added security. “A void leaving valuables such as cash, gold jewellery, or important documents at home; instead, deposit them in



bank lockers or with trusted individuals. “ I n f o r m neighbours or close relatives about travel plans so they can keep an eye on the property. “ Report any suspicious persons or unusual activity immediately to Dial 100 or the nearest police station. “The DSP appealed to the public to follow these simple yet effective measures to ensure a peaceful and secure celebration of Sankranti. He stressed that collective vigilance and cooperation with law enforcement can significantly reduce the risk of thefts during this festive period. “The awareness drive saw active participation from Kagaznagar Town CI Prem Kumar, SI Sudhakar, Lakshman, and other police personnel. “Police officials reiterated their commitment to enhancing security through increased patrolling and community outreach, urging residents to celebrate the harvest festival safely and joyfully without worry.

Helmet Up, Belt On – Police launch ‘Arrive Alive’ rising road deaths: Strict compliance



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 13 (Indian Chronicle)“Stressing that adherence to road safety rules is non-negotiable for every road user, District Superintendent of Police Nitika Pant IPS today announced the launch of the statewide ‘Arrive Alive’ road safety initiative across Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. “The campaign, being implemented in line with directives from the Director General of Police, will run from January 13 to January 24, 2026. It aims to significantly reduce road accidents — which continue to claim precious lives — through sustained public awareness drives, enforcement checks, and community engagement at every police station jurisdiction. “Addressing the public, SP Nitika Pant said: “The primary objective of the police department is the protection and safety of citizens. Every vehicle driver must strictly follow road safety norms to prevent tragedies. “She particularly urged two-wheeler riders to mandatorily wear helmets and four-wheeler drivers to always use seat belts, explaining that these simple protective measures can prove life-saving during accidents. “The SP highlighted major causes of road crashes, including: “ Overspeeding - Drunken driving “ Use of mobile phones while driving - Violation of traffic regulations “She appealed to all road users to stay away from these dangerous practices. “Under the ‘Arrive Alive’ programme, police teams will conduct awareness programmes, vehicle checks, and spot enforcement actions over the next 12 days to instil greater road safety consciousness among the public. “Everyone should drive responsibly, follow traffic rules diligently, and reach their destinations safely. The safety of the people



remains the top priority of the police force,” SP Nitika Pant emphasised. “Today’s ‘Arrive Alive’ Activities in the District (January 13, 2026): “1. Rebbena (SI) — Gangapur “2. Kagaznagar Rural (SI) — Koyawagu, Bareguda “3. Tiryani (SI) — Sungapur “4. Koutala (CI, SI Koutala) — Koutala, Talodi “5. Sirpur T (SI) — Sirpur T “6. Penchikalpet (SI) — Elloor, Elkapalli, Penchikalpet “7. Chintalamaneapalli (CI Koutala, SI Cmply) — Dabba, Babapur, Balaji Anukoda “8. Kerameri (SI) — Keslaguda, Kothari, Sakad “9. Sirpur U (CI Jainoor, SI Sirpur U) — Sirpur U Mandal Headquarters “10. Kagaznagar Town (DSP Wahiduddin, SI Kzr T) — Telangana State Government Retired Employees Association Building, Kagaznagar Town “11. Asifabad Town , CI — Mothuguda “The district police have appealed to citizens to cooperate fully with the ongoing campaign and make road safety a personal responsibility.

Vadodara police arrest two men for raping 15-year-old girl in a busy neighbourhood



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Jagdish Chavda, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone 1, said they have lodged the FIR under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita sections for rape as well as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act. Jagdish Chavda, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone 1, said they have lodged the FIR under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita sections for rape as well as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso).

The Vadodara police Friday arrested two men who allegedly raped a 15-year-old girl after luring her to a room in a populated neighbourhood in the Gujarat city a day before. In the First Information Report (FIR) lodged at a police station in Vadodara city, the victim's mother said her daughter was locked in the room for more than three hours.

According to the complaint, the victim, a native of Uttar Pradesh, was visiting a relative in Vadodara. Jagdish Chavda, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone 1, said they have lodged the FIR under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita sections for rape as well as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act. "We have assured the family that a thorough and in-depth probe will be conducted to be able to gather as much evidence as possible to file a water-tight chargesheet to seek justice for their daughter... The accused have been formally arrested." As per the complaint, the girl stepped out of her relatives' home to go to a shop in the vicinity when the accused allegedly called out to her and lured her into a room. When neighbours heard the victim calling out for help, they tried to open the room but found it locked. The complainant said the accused ran away from the room, leaving her daughter inside. "We have taken the statements of the relatives and also conducted a medical examination of the victim. The accused are aged about 19 and 20. Their questioning has been initiated, and they will be produced in the court on Saturday," an inspector at the police station where the FIR has been lodged in connection with the case told The Indian Express. The inspector added that police are also questioning the accused to determine whether any others were involved in the crime. Late on Thursday, a large number of people from the victim's community gathered outside the hospital, where the victim had been admitted for treatment. As the family's supporters gathered to seek justice in the case, senior city police officers arrived at the hospital to oversee the investigation.

North: As high-rises soar and air quality dips, a Mumbai ward gasps for breath

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Located at the far northern boundary of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) jurisdiction, R-North ward—predominantly a residential neighbourhood—is in the midst of a redevelopment boom. As the locality undergoes a major shift from old-style residential buildings to high-rise towers, residents say, they are increasingly gasping for clean air, with rising dust levels and pollution leading to various health issues. Despite having natural assets such as rivers, gardens and open spaces, residents allege that neglected citizens' initiatives like the long-pending revival of the Dahisar river, and poor maintenance of gardens and open spaces, have rendered these spaces ineffective as buffers against increasing pollution.

Ahead of the BMC elections on January 15, locals from Dahisar and parts of Borivali, which fall under the R-North ward, are raising concerns over the impact of ill-monitored redevelopment projects and other civic issues such as public space encroachment, missing footpaths, and ill-maintained gardens, among others. Citizen activist Himanshu Mehta, who has been active locally for the cause of the environment, said, "The Air Quality Index (AQI) in this area has gone for a toss. There is absolutely no monitoring on these building redevelopment construction sites. Regulations as basic as using water sprinklers to prevent dust from dispersing into the air are conveniently ignored, while the BMC turns a blind eye. Rising dust and pollution levels are causing health problems, with citizens crowding at local doctors' dispensaries." Mehta also pointed out the poor condition of public gardens, which eroded the green cover that the R-North ward was known for until a few years ago. "We are fortunate to have ample gardens and open spaces. But what's the point of having plenty of garden spaces when trees within are dying due to complete neglect by the civic body," Mehta, a Borivali resident, questioned. Another local, Gopal Zaveri, from Mumbai March, a citizens' movement, highlighted the lack of planning to support the area's rapid vertical growth. He said that the civic administration has failed to prepare for the impending rise in demand for essential resources such as water supply, electricity, roads and parking. "Towers replacing residential buildings of three to four floors certainly means projected occupancy is likely to increase three times the current size. Mumbai has never faced water shortage, but is the existing system of water supply ready to meet the projected increased demand? Are our existing roads prepared to take the load of additional traffic? There are so many such questions that the civic administration has not even begun to address amid rampant redevelopment projects," Zaveri said. He also highlighted that there is



only one civic-run hospital in the ward, Bhagwati Hospital, which is not running at its full capacity to cater to the existing population.

'Nobody has delivered' As the ward is home to sizeable slums, the issue of redevelopment, according to locals, is not limited to middle-class housing societies. According to Sunil Yadav from Sthaniya Samiti, an organisation working for slums in Mumbai, "Civic administration has failed to ensure better organised slums. Even today, residents of the Ganpat Patil Nagar in Borivali, which falls in the R-North ward, are struggling for basic resources such as water and toilets," said Yadav. Locals also expressed how they are frustrated with constant assurances of the revival of the Dahisar River and its beautification. Highlighting that it was pending for over 10 years, Pankaj Trivedi from Mumbai March said, "Each time a new public representative comes with tall promises, but nobody has delivered on those." Noting his observation on the campaigning ahead of civic elections, Trivedi further said, "It is ironic to see candidates seeking votes on the basis of their party's national achievements, while residents here continue to grapple with routine civic issues." Past records show that the political landscape of the area was dominated by the undivided Shiv Sena, which had five out of eight winning corporators from the last civic election. However, shifting political equations in the state are reflected here as well, with four out of those five corporators switching alliances. While three joined the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena, one of the strong candidates, Tejaswi Ghosalkar, joined the BJP and is now contesting in Ward 2 of R-North. Tejaswi is the daughter-in-law of Sena (UBT) stalwart and former MLA Vinod Ghosalkar, who wields considerable political influence in the Dahisar-Borivali belt of the R-North ward. Her decision has resulted in a divided Ghosalkar family, especially with Ghosalkar's younger son, Saurabh, contesting on a Sena (UBT) ticket from the neighbouring ward 7.

Security doubled, Delhi Police & CRPF roped in: JNU preps for Jan 12 convocation amid campus tensions

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Sources in the university administration told The Indian Express on Friday that additional security personnel—double the usual strength—will be deployed at the convocation venue this year. "Typically, we deploy around 10 to 12 security officers at the venue," an official said. "This time, we will deploy close to 30 personnel to ensure no mischief takes place during the convocation. Delhi Police and CRPF personnel will also be present at the venue." On Monday evening, "highly objectionable, provocative, and inflammatory slogans" were allegedly raised during an event, linked to the sixth anniversary of the January 5, 2020, campus violence, organised by "students associated with" the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU).

A purported video appeared to show students raising slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The varsity had asked police to register an FIR and identified nine students by name, including all four JNUSU office-bearers, and said further identification could follow. The university also wants to prevent a repeat of 2019 when protests had broken out over hostel fee hike during the convocation, leaving then Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal trapped inside the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) campus—the venue for the event—for around three hours.

Speaking about arrangements for the convocation this time, the official quoted above said the venue has only a single entry and exit point and access will be strictly regulated. "Only individuals identified and approved by the university will be allowed to enter. No one will be permitted without authorisation," the official said. If students attempt to protest outside the venue, particularly along Nelson Mandela Marg, an open public stretch, the situation will be handled by the Delhi Police, the official added. It is learnt that senior Delhi Police officers and JNU's security officials held a coordination meeting on Friday to review arrange-



ments ahead of the event. Asked if more students had been identified in connection with the slogans raised at the earlier protest, the official said the university's focus was currently on the convocation. "We are all busy with the convocation right now. That process will move forward after the 12th." On Thursday, JNU Vice-Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit said a "lunatic fringe" could not define the university. Addressing a conference on campus, she said JNU had returned to normalcy within 24 hours and remained peaceful. "Every institution has disruptive elements," Pandit said, describing JNU as the "most nationalistic university" in the country. Emphasising the institution's global reputation, she said events on campus resonated far beyond its gates. In 2019, the administration under then Vice-Chancellor M Jagadeesh Kumar had said a large group of students broke open campus gates, crossed police barricades, and marched to the AICTE auditorium. Police eventually used water cannons to disperse them. "It is unfortunate that instead of participating in a constructive dialogue... protesting students are persistently staging strikes, gheraos, and demonstrations... causing administrative shutdown and academic loss," the varsity had said in a statement then. Officials said steps being taken this year are aimed at ensuring that such disruptions are not repeated.

DU's 'walls of democracy' not removed: Varsity after claims by student bodies



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

DU issues statement after claims that its 'walls of democracy' have been removed. The "walls of democracy" are clearly marked boards near locations such as the Faculty of Arts, St Stephen's College and Daulat Ram College. After Delhi University students alleged that the varsity removed the designated "walls of democracy" on campus, the university administration Friday said the spaces remain intact and that more such walls will be created across campuses during the next student election cycle.

DU Registrar Vikas Gupta told The Indian Express that the administration had not dismantled the walls and that a temporary restriction on pasting posters was meant only to allow for cleaning and maintenance. Gupta's statement followed protests by student groups after a video circulating on social media showed security personnel stopping two women students affiliated with the Students' Federation of India (SFI) from pasting posters near St Stephen's College. The students, who were opposing the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, claimed the guards informed them that the "walls of democracy" had been removed.

Registrar Gupta said, "The wall of democracy is going to stay intact. It is not being removed under any circumstances. We've only stopped students from pasting posters for the time being as the wall was getting full and we wanted to clean it." In fact, DU will come up with more walls and create more designated spaces across campus during election time for students to paste posters... and to ensure no defacement happens on campus," he added. Traditionally, the "walls of democracy", clearly marked boards near locations such as the Faculty of Arts, St Stephen's College and Daulat Ram College, have served as physical spaces for political expression on a campus that's otherwise tightly regulated. Outside election periods, students have used these walls to announce protests, meetings and campaigns on academic and social issues. The latest episode triggered sharp criticism from student organisations, which alleged that the boards identifying the walls had been taken down without notice and that the decision marked a shrinking of democratic spaces on campus. The SFI later submitted a written memorandum to the university's proctorial office regarding the matter.

Joint Proctor Manoj Kumar Singh acknowledged confusion surrounding the incident but denied that the university had withdrawn the facility. "There was some miscommunication earlier," Singh said. "The administration has not removed any wall of democracy. It is intact and will be intact." When asked about the conduct of the security staff seen in the video, Gaje Singh Dahiya, Chief Security Officer at DU, said the administration was examining the matter. "We are looking into it and will be taking action against the security officers if they acted in an inappropriate manner," the official said, adding that the complaint submitted by students was also under review. The controversy comes months after the university reiterated guidelines on preventing defacement during the DU Students' Union (DUSU) elections, while simultaneously directing colleges and departments to expand designated poster spaces.

Cops said no one was missing from the MP village but Nagpur social worker's resolve helped reunite mentally ill woman with kin

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

In September 2025, the MIDC police in Nagpur found an 18-year-old mentally ill woman and upon the court's orders, the unidentified woman was admitted to the Regional Mental Hospital. At the time of admission to the hospital, she gave her name as Kalpana. Psychiatric treatment was initiated, and along with it began regular counselling, meetings and efforts to communicate with her and reunite the woman with her family. Meanwhile, over 150 km away in Madhya Pradesh, her brother had been searching for the woman for four months. "When admitted, she hardly spoke, kept to herself and was not aware of her surroundings. She was wearing torn clothes, her hair was in a bad condition and she spoke nothing at all," said Kunda Bidkar Katekhaye, social service superintendent at Regional Mental Hospital, Nagpur. It soon became clear that she had not spoken to anyone in a long time and remained disconnected from human contact. "She remained absorbed in her own thoughts and hardly communicated with the doctors or the staff," Katekhaye said.

The search for her home begins "After the woman got better with treatment and continuous counselling, she slowly began to speak. One day, in a very soft voice, she disclosed her real name, which was very different from the name she told during the admission process," Katekhaye said. It was only after several days, when she became comfortable with the staff members, that the woman revealed the name of her village, though she could not exactly tell in which district or state it was. Taking a hint from the way she spoke, the village name and other basic details, efforts were made to trace her family. Preliminary assessment revealed that the village could be near Parasia in Madhya Pradesh. Katekhaye contacted the concerned police station, shared the information and details with the authorities. A few days later, the police informed her that no such person had gone missing in that village. A renewed hope in Nagpur, the woman's condition began to improve. She began to look at the staff members with hope. "I sat with her again and patiently sought more details. She kept repeating the same name of the village. I was now convinced that she belonged to the same place in Madhya Pradesh. I contacted the same police station again. I felt the authorities were a little irritated with me now, but they assured me that they would verify once again," Katekhaye informed. After calling the authorities concerned a few more times, Katekhaye finally asked them to share the contact details of the village sarpanch. She spoke to the sarpanch, who informed her that there was a woman by the same name who was still residing there. After a lot of persuasion, the sarpanch agreed to visit the family personally. "In about three hours, my phone rang. It was the sarpanch. The patient was from the same village and belonged to the same family. The next day, I spoke to the patient's brother," she said.

The woman lived in the village with her parents and six siblings, five of them brothers. Four of her brothers were addicted to alcohol and hardly interfered in family mat-



ters. The family survived on daily wage work and some farming-related activities. The brother said she had been suffering from mental illness for nearly five years. Some acquaintances convinced the family that she was possessed by an evil spirit and took her to a famous temple. The eldest brother opposed this move, but the mother was insistent. Eventually, the family gave in. The woman stayed at the temple for four long months along with her mother, brother, and his wife, abandoning their livelihood. However, her mental health worsened, until one day she went missing. The woman's elder brother had been running from pillar to post to locate her. "He even filed a missing complaint at the same police station I called. He searched extensively in Chhindwara, Bhopal and even in different parts of Maharashtra, including Nagpur and Ramek. He broke down while narrating his ordeal," Katekhaye recalled. The man even handed over his farmland to someone else and exhausted all his savings in his search. "Madam, I am coming to get her. I will come on my motorcycle," he said, while Katekhaye calmly advised him against it, assuring that the woman was in safe hands and that he could take his time to arrange to come by a bus or a car. But the news that his sister was alive could not keep him in his village for long. After travelling on his bike for 26 hours, the brother reached the regional mental hospital at 12.30 pm on Thursday to take his sister. "His moist eyes and seeing him in person left me emotional. He took out two Rs 500 notes from his pocket, placed them before me, and asked me to accept it as a token of gratitude. I had to explain to him that I am paid by the government to do this work," Katekhaye said. She also requested him to arrange a phone conversation with their mother after returning home, so that counselling could be done for her too. Hospital officials said the effort to help the girl reunite with her family was supported by Medical Superintendent Dr Satish Humane, Deputy Superintendent Dr Mohabey, and senior psychiatrist Dr Pankaj Bagde. They told the woman's brother that mental illness is like any physical illness—just as the body falls ill, the mind can also become ill, and that mental illness can be stabilised with proper treatment. Katekhaye asked them to have faith in God but also seek medical treatment. He promised to take his sister for treatment once every month.

BRS slams Congress over job promises to unemployed youth

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Hyderabad: BRS leader A Rakesh Reddy lambasted the Congress government for betraying unemployed youth after coming to power on what he called false promises of two lakh jobs annually and the Vidya Bharosa card. He condemned the police lathi charge on protesting youth and the abusive language allegedly used by a senior police officer against them. He demanded immediate action against the officials responsible and an apology from the state government. The BRS leader demanded that the government release a job calendar before the municipal elections and stop the crackdown on unemployed youth. He insisted that the Congress must deliver on its promises.

Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, Rakesh Reddy said thousands of aspirants, particularly in areas like Dilsukhnagar, have been waiting for government job notifications for the last two years. He said the youth were losing their savings and avoiding visits to their native villages for Sankranti festivities to save some



money. He stated that the Chief Minister was more focused on applause and slogans than on fulfilling promises. He criticised Congress leaders for defending Rahul Gandhi instead of addressing youth issues, stating that Telangana has become an ATM for the Congress leadership. He also charged the ruling party with turning the Legislative Assembly into an ineffective platform by blocking criticism of the Chief Minister.

Four months of relentless investigation, over 200 km of search operation – Haryana GRP arrest child labour case accused



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

After four months of investigation and technical surveillance, the Haryana Government Railway Police (GRP) recently arrested the absconding accused in a child labour case. According to the First Information Report (FIR), the accused, identified as Anil, forced a minor boy from Bahadurgarh into labour, during which the child's hand was severed in a fodder-cutting machine. The incident came to light in August 2025, when the police received information about the boy's injury and initiated proceedings under the Child Labour Act and other relevant Sections of different laws.

"At the time of the incident, the child was in a state of psychological trauma and unable to provide clear details

about himself or the accused, making the investigation extremely challenging. Considering the seriousness of the case, Nikita Gahlot, Superintendent of Police, Railways Haryana, formed a Special Investigation Team comprising cyber experts and experienced officers from multiple districts," a police spokesperson said. Giving details of the extensive operation that was carried out to trace the absconding accused, the police spokesperson added, "The investigation team conducted an extensive search across more than 200 villages spread over 200 kilometres, covering Kaithal, Jind, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh, Sonapat, Panipat, Nuh, Palwal, and areas of Delhi including Narela, Nangloi, and Shahdara, as well as Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Aligarh, and Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh." During the inquiry, the National Human Rights Commission had also directed that the child's statement be recorded again under the supervision of experts. Based on the available information, the identity of the accused Anil was verified through the Haryana Education Board, Uttar Pradesh Education Board, and Gram Panchayat records. "Explaining how Anil was arrested, the police spokesperson said, "After months of evading arrest by frequently changing locations, Anil was finally tracked down with the help of technical surveillance and ground intelligence. He was arrested from the Gautam Buddh Nagar region of Uttar Pradesh, where he had been working at a dairy. Following his arrest, Anil was produced before the court and subsequently sent to Jhajjar District Jail, today (Friday)."

Chandigarh resident duped of Rs 1.73 lakh in a ‘WhatsApp upgrade’ trap, 3 women arrested from Delhi

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

According to police, the complainant, a resident of Sector-45, Chandigarh, received WhatsApp messages and phone calls from a woman claiming to be the representative of the credit card firm. According to police, the complainant, a resident of Sector-45, Chandigarh, received WhatsApp messages and phone calls from a woman claiming to be the representative of the credit card firm. (Express Photo) A simple offer on WhatsApp to "upgrade" a credit card turned into a costly trap for a Chandigarh resident, who was duped of Rs 1.73 lakh by cyber fraudsters posing as officials of a prominent foreign credit card firm. The Cyber Crime Police of Chandigarh arrested three women from Delhi on December 26 in connection with the case. "A massive cache of incriminating material was recovered from their possession, including 28 mobile phones, 82 SIM cards, 55 ATM cards, two Aadhaar cards, two PAN cards, eight dongles, 27 landline phones, wireless transmitters, pass-books, cheque books, notebooks, and other documents," said A Venkatesh, DSP Cyber Crime, Chandigarh Police. The police said that several seized mobile phones contained extensive customer databases with names, addresses, and mobile numbers. The accused have been identified as Pratima Sharma, Roshni, and Juhi Sethi — all residents of Delhi, the police said.



that the accused were operating from the Ashok Nagar and Uttam Nagar areas of Delhi. Acting on the leads, the police conducted a raid at Tilak Nagar, West Delhi, and arrested all three accused. The police said several seized mobile phones contained extensive customer databases with names, addresses, and mobile numbers. The accused allegedly used this information to impersonate bank and credit card officials to target unsuspecting victims. The phones were also linked to multiple bank accounts used to route the defrauded money, said Inspector Iram Rizvi, Station House Officer, Cyber Crime police station, Chandigarh. During interrogation, the accused admitted to their role in cyber fraud and disclosed the involvement of an associate, said the police. Further investigation is underway to identify more accomplices, verify bank accounts opened using forged documents, and determine the total number of victims cheated by the gang, said an officer. Meanwhile, the Cyber Crime police have issued an advisory urging people not to click on suspicious links received through WhatsApp, SMS, or unknown emails and never share OTPs, CVV numbers, or banking details with anyone. People have been advised to verify callers through official customer care channels before acting on any such requests.

‘India needs manufacturing and services’: EAC-PM chief S Mahendra Dev says Viksit Bharat is about sustainable, inclusive growth



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Speaking during the inaugural keynote session at the 7th Annual Economics Conference organised by Ahmedabad University, he said, "Quality employment is the most important component of inclusive growth. Issues like gig workers, women participation rates, creating employment for youth, technology including AI and employment, and improving education, health, nutrition are also part of efforts in reducing inequalities." Swadeshi doesn't mean going back to the previous import substitution but to improve competitiveness, he added. Two long-term structural issues

Prof Dev said, "There are global and domestic challenges and opportunities for raising higher growth, improving employment and achieving sustainability. Indian economy is resilient because of higher growth in domestic economy but a lot of work needs to be done. (There are) two long-term structural issues – one is structural transformation from agriculture to manufacturing. Labour intensive manufacturing is considered the solution for structural transformation in labour absorption and exports." "Despite global uncertainties, India has emerged as a global bright spot due to its reforms and policies, including structural change in the budget from revenue expenditure to capital expenditure, significant tax reforms (income tax apart from GST reforms), recent income tax abolished more than 280 sections, ease of doing business and deregulations, notification of labour codes, measures on quality control orders, 100 percent FDI in insurance, private sector in nuclear power," said Prof Dev who was the director and vice-chancellor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR) in Mumbai from 2010-2022.

Health, education and skills The second structural issue, he added, is in health, education and skills. "This is another long-term structural problem. The issues of quality and dichotomy in schools and higher education are well known. This is also important for growth. We have very good institutes in higher education but in primary level, learning outcomes are not good. similarly in health. The reasons for India's resilience are three factors—political stability, macroeconomic stability and a large domestic economy. The only concern is global macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty," he added. On the two drivers of growth – investment rate and exports – Prof Dev said that private sector investment is crucial if you need to increase the investment rate (which is currently 31-32%) to 34 to 35 per cent. To increase the investment rate, India Inc has to make new investments instead of keeping the cash, while states have to make more efforts to invite Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and domestic private investment, he stated. Citing exports as one of the main drivers of growth and employment creation, he said that exports, however, constitute only 20 per cent of the GDP as 80 per cent of the Indian economy is based on domestic demand. "Thus, as compared to global headwinds, there are many domestic tailwinds such as low inflation, rate cuts and CRR (Cash Reserve Ratio) cut by RBI (Reserve Bank of India). All the reform measures undertaken will have stimulus. These tailwinds may raise both rural and urban demand, by raising both investment consumption and some push to exports. Speaking about global developments and challenges, Prof Dev listed industrial revolution 4.0, including AI that is automating and disrupting industrial processes; manufacturing becoming capital-intensive and skill-intensive; and global supply chains being restructured and often re-shored as advanced countries incentivise local production. He added that industrial policy has re-emerged globally as a central tool for economic strategy and there is a debate on whether we should have manufacturing or services. "I feel that we need both manufacturing and services as complementary. The manufacturing sector has higher backward and forward linkages and also improves services. Some of the growth in the service sector is due to expanding manufacturing," he added. On reforms in the manufacturing sector, he said the government has so far abolished 40,000 unnecessary compliances and also scrapped over 1,500 obsolete laws.

ED vs Mamata: Central agency, TMC file counter petitions in Calcutta High Court over I-PAC raids. Here's what they claimed



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), in a plea before the Calcutta High Court, has sought a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who stormed into the office of political consultancy firm I-PAC, and the house of its Pratik Jain, where the agency carried out searches in connection with a money laundering case Thursday. Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress has also filed a plea seeking the return of the articles allegedly seized by ED during the I-PAC raids. Meanwhile, Justice Suwra Ghosh rose from her chair as there was chaos in the courtroom before the judge could hear the Enforcement Directorate and the Trinamool Congress petition hearings on the I-PAC raids. Justice Ghosh set the next hearing date for January 14. The ED petition, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, has 12 points which the central agency wants the Calcutta High Court to consider. ED has asked for the "issue a writ of mandamus directing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to register FIR(s) and investigate the entire incident, including the role of the present respondents being the Hon'ble Chief Minister, police officials, and all persons acting in concert".

ED has also sought the immediate seizure, sealing and forensic preservation of all the documents taken from it, and "restoration to lawful custody of the Enforcement Directorate all digital devices, electronic records, storage media, and documents illegally and forcibly taken away from the search premises". "Declare the obstruction of ED pro-

ceedings by the respondents and wrongful confinement of officers as unconstitutional and wholly illegal," the ED plea said. It has also sought the return of the material taken and the preservation of the CCTV footage. "the nature of mandamus commanding the respondents to hand over all documents, materials taken by them, and not to destroy or damage any material whatsoever. Pass interim directions commanding Respondents to preserve and deposit provide the CCTV cameras and devices containing the footage of both the premises and the CCTV cameras and devices containing the footage of nearby areas to this Hon'ble Court." Furthermore, ED has asked the court to pass interim orders restraining any access, deletion, cloning, or tampering with the seized digital devices and electronic records, and to direct the respondent authorities not to take any coercive action against any officers/officials of the agency who were part of the search action. Against harassment of "men, agents and assigns" The TMC's petition, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, states "directing the respondents to return of all articles including but not limited to the private, confidential and sensitive data, information, documents illegally seized in physical as well as electronic form belonging to the petitioner and or in relation to the operation/affairs/business of the petitioner illegally seized during the alleged search operation." "In the nature of Mandamus directing the Respondent Authorities to act strictly in accordance with law and forbear themselves from harassing the petitioner and or its men, agents and assigns in connection with the subject matter investigation and from taking any coercive steps against the petitioner and/ or its men, agents and assigns on the pretext of ongoing investigation". "Declaring all actions taken by the respondent authorities, so far as the petitioner and private, confidential and sensitive data, information, documents of the petitioner, and in relation to the operation/affairs/business of the petitioner, illegally seized in physical as well as electronic form, as void and illegal." While ED alleged that Mamata Banerjee and other leaders of the ruling Trinamool Congress hindered the investigation when it went to the I-PAC office, where they were simultaneously conducting raids, the chief minister has accused the agency of "trying to get details of all our party activities and plans".

Man who killed neighbour's 6-year-old daughter in Bengaluru nabbed from Odisha

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Days after a 6-year-old girl was murdered by her neighbour in Bengaluru's Whitefield, the city police nabbed the accused in Odisha and formally arrested him after bringing him back to the Karnataka capital Friday. The accused has been identified as Yusuf Meer, 35.

"Meer murdered Shanaz Khatau, the daughter of his neighbour, Inzamul Sheikh, on Monday. Both the accused and the victim's families are natives of West Bengal and were residing close to each other in a migrant settlement in Whitefield," a police officer said. The police said that Meer will be produced before the court on Friday, and they will seek his custody. After the crime, the police said, Meer fled Bengaluru. Thereafter, a special team from the Whitefield police tracked his movements and found that he was travelling by train in Odisha. The team detained him when the train halted at Cuttack railway station Wednesday. After securing a transit warrant from a local court, the police brought the accused back to Bengaluru. Due to the absence of direct train services, the team travelled via Hyderabad, arriving in Bengaluru Friday.

Preliminary interrogation revealed that frequent disputes between Meer and the child's mother may have triggered the crime. The arguments reportedly arose over routine issues such as collecting drinking water, use of common space in front of their dwellings, and storage of scrap materials. The police also said that both families were into rag-picking, and professional rivalry between them contributed to ongoing tensions, which culminated in the killing of the child. Officers said no previous criminal cases have been registered against Meer. Further investigation and detailed interrogation are ongoing, they added.



From missing Birs to Gurbani broadcast rights: A CA's arrest puts Sukhbir Singh Badal link under spotlight

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

The controversy surrounding Satinder Singh Kohli has refused to die down, with questions now being raised over how the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) allowed PTC channel to broadcast the Gurbani in Canada through a company allegedly linked to him. BJP leader Sarchand Singh Khiala has now alleged that Kohli is the director of Gurbaz Punjabi Media Inc, a Canada-based media company with exclusive rights to distribute PTC Punjabi—a TV channel associated with the family of Sukhbir Singh Badal—in Canada.

"SGPC House is controlled by Sukhbir Singh Badal. He owns the PTC channel. Kohli was given rights to distribute Gurbani despite knowing that he declined to obey the Sri Akal Takht Sahib directive, which required him to return 75 per cent of what the SGPC paid him," Khiala told The Indian Express. The SGPC had hired Kohli's firm, S S Kohli & Associates, for internal audits in 2009. In 2020, following a probe, the firm was removed as the SGPC's internal auditor on the orders of the Sri Akal Takht Sahib after Kohli's alleged negligence allowed the mishandling of the Birs to go undetected. The SGPC also ordered 75 per cent recovery of payments, amid claims that over Rs 10 crore had been paid to the firm in 11 years. Passing the buck According to the PTC Punjabi Canada website, Gurbaz Punjabi Media Inc has the exclusive rights to distribute PTC Punjabi in Canada "to help reach the globally recognized #1 Punjabi Television Channel to every Punjabi household in Canada". When asked about Sarchand's claim that Kohli was the director of Gurbaz Punjabi Media Inc, SGPC general secretary Sher Singh Mandela said, "I am not aware of such information."

PTC CEO Harpreet Singh Sahni also said he was unaware of the matter, adding, "Our international director Narinder Pal Singh can provide the information." Narinder Pal Singh, however, denied any knowledge. "I am not concerned with this information. I have only editorial responsibilities. Sahni will have this information," he said. Sukhbir Singh Badal has yet to respond to queries on his alleged links with Kohli. Hiring and payment controversies Kohli's January 15, 2009, appointment for SGPC audit computerisation and internal audit—Rs 3.5 lakh monthly—had drawn instant flak as it was seen as being politically motivated due to his links to Badal.

In October 2009, Baldev Singh Sirsa (now an Akali Dal Panj Pardhani member) challenged it before the Sikh

Gurdwara Judicial Commission. "Appointment was illegal as per SGPC rules—posts above Rs 7,000 salary must be advertised. SGPC had three internal auditors and a government auditor already. Commission had sacked Kohli briefly. He was again hired after following the procedure; however, it was a cover-up," Sirsa alleged. "A Rajpura firm offered to train SGPC staff for one year cheaply, but it was ignored. Kohli became a Rs 1 crore annual burden with no result," SGPC member Karnail Singh Panjoli recalled. Tensions peaked on July 11, 2014, when then SGPC president Avtar Singh Makkar sacked Kohli for "misuse of power" and questioned huge payments. However, Kohli was reinstated the next day, allegedly due to Badal's pressure. On July 11, 2018, the Punjab government-hired CA Harpal Singh (H S & Company) wrote to the SGPC president, flagging internal audit flaws. He alleged that the SGPC secretary acted as Kohli's employee, while the staff withheld files and obstructed cooperation. "Many required files were not produced for the external audit, as mandated under the Gurdwara Act," the letter noted. In 2020, Punjab Human Rights Organisation activist Sarabjit Singh Verka alleged that the SGPC had hidden the destruction of 267 Birs in a 2016 fire at its publication department. A subsequent probe found that Kohli's firm allegedly failed to detect ledger tampering and unrecorded sales, and that no audits were held since the 2016 fire—flaws that allowed more 186 Birs to be printed without permission using leftover raw material. The report, submitted on August 23, 2020, slammed Kohli's firm for "great dishonesty and negligence." It noted that uncovering the scandal over the missing Birs would have required nothing more than a routine internal audit. Investigators also allegedly found repeated tampering in the ledgers, which went unchecked by Kohli despite his firm's pre-audit assurances. Of the 328 Birs published with official permission, none could be traced, while 186 were sold without proper billing. The private audit team, the report added, had failed to detect such irregularities for years. Though the SGPC has moved against Kohli on paper, his links with the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal), which has a majority in the SGPC elected House, have led to its intentions being questioned. Allegations of Kohli's close links with Badal came to the fore again after his arrest, with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Balraj Pannu alleging that he was arrested from a room booked in the name of a person connected to a private news channel linked to Badal. SGPC sources said the latest developments were an indication that the government was actually targeting Badal. "

Musk’s Grok chatbot restricts image generation after global backlash to sexualised deepfakes



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

London: Elon Musk’s AI chatbot Grok is preventing most users from generating or editing images after a global backlash erupted over it producing sexualised deepfakes of people. The chatbot, which is accessed through Musk’s social media platform X, has in the past few weeks been granting what researchers say were malicious user requests to modify images, including placing women in bikinis or in sexually explicit positions. Researchers have warned that in a few cases, some images appeared to depict children. Governments around the world have condemned the platform and opened investigations.

On Friday, Grok responded to image-altering requests with the message: “Image generation and editing are currently limited to paying subscribers. You can subscribe to

unlock these features.” While subscriber numbers for Grok are not publicly available, there was a noticeable decline in the number of explicit deepfakes the chatbot was generating compared with days earlier. The European Union has slammed Grok for “illegal” and “appalling” behaviour, while officials in France, India, Malaysia and a Brazilian lawmaker have called for investigations. On Thursday, Britain’s Prime Minister Keir Starmer threatened unspecified action against X.

“This is disgraceful. It’s disgusting. And it’s not to be tolerated,” Starmer said on Greatest Hits radio. “X has got to get a grip of this.” He said media regulator Ofcom “has our full support to take action” and that “all options” are on the table. “It’s disgusting. X needs to get its act together and get this material down. We will take action on this because it’s simply not tolerable.” Ofcom and Britain’s privacy regulator both said this week they have contacted X and Musk’s artificial intelligence company xAI for information on measures taken to comply with British regulations. Grok is free to use for X users, who can ask it questions on the social media platform. Users can either tag it in posts they have directly created or in replies to posts from other users. Grok launched in 2023. Last summer, the company added an image generator feature, Grok Imagine, which included a so-called “spicy mode” that can generate adult content. The problem is amplified because Musk pitches his chatbot as an edgier alternative to rivals with more safeguards, and because Grok’s images are publicly visible and can be easily spread.

Senate advances resolution curbing Trump’s Venezuela military actions

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Washington: The Senate advanced a resolution Thursday that would limit President Donald Trump’s ability to conduct further attacks against Venezuela, sounding a note of disapproval for his expanding ambitions in the Western Hemisphere. Democrats and five Republicans voted to advance the war powers resolution on a 52-47 vote and ensure a later vote for final passage. It has virtually no chance of becoming law because Trump would have to sign it if it were to pass the House. Still, it was a significant gesture that showed unease among some Republicans after the US military seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid.

Trump’s administration is now seeking to control Venezuela’s oil resources and its government, but the war powers resolution would require congressional approval for any further attacks on the South American country. Republican Sens Rand Paul of Kentucky, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Josh Hawley of Missouri, Susan Collins of Maine and Todd Young of Indiana voted in favour of the resolution.

Democrats had failed to pass several such resolutions in the months that Trump escalated his campaign against Venezuela. But lawmakers argued that now that Trump has



captured Maduro and set his sights to other conquests such as Greenland, the vote presents the Republican-controlled Congress with an opportunity. “It’s time for Congress to assert its control over military action of this kind, and it’s time to get this out of secrecy and put it in the light,” said Sen Tim Kaine, D-Va., who forced the vote. Republican leaders have said they had no advance notification of the raid early morning Saturday to seize Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, but mostly expressed satisfaction this week as top administration officials provided classified briefings on the operation.

Russian tanker seized by US with 3 Indian crew members on board

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Moscow: Three Indians are among the crew on board the Russian oil tanker seized by the US, local media reported even as Moscow on Thursday asked Washington to comply with international laws on freedom of maritime navigation while strongly rejecting its ‘neo-colonialist’ tendencies. The Russian Foreign Ministry also said information about the Marinera tanker, previously known as Bella 1, that was seized on Wednesday by the US coastguard in the North Atlantic, was conveyed to America repeatedly. “The Marinera crew consists of 17 Ukrainian citizens, six Georgian citizens, three Indian citizens and two Russian citizens,” Russia Today said, quoting sources. “We call on Washington to resume compliance with the fundamental norms and principles of international maritime navigation and immediately cease its illegal actions against the Marinera tanker and other vessels engaged in law-abiding activities on the high seas,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Moscow said it considers the US references to its national “sanctions legislation” to be unfounded. “The statements by some US officials that the seizure of the Marinera is part of a broader strategy to establish Washington’s unlimited control over Venezuela’s natural resources are extremely cynical. We strongly reject such neo-colonialist tendencies,” the Foreign Ministry underscored. “Unilateral restrictive measures by the US, as well as other Western countries, are illegitimate and cannot justify attempts to establish jurisdiction and, even more so, to seize ships on the high seas,” it said. Demanding humane and dignified treatment of its crew, the statement said: “We reiterate our demand that the US ensure humane and dignified treatment of the Russian citizens comprising the tanker’s crew, strictly observe their rights and interests, and make no obstacles to their prompt return to their homeland.” It also expressed serious concerns of the use of military force



by the US against the oil tanker, full information about which was conveyed to it. “The Marinera, which on December 24 received temporary permission to sail under the Russian flag in accordance with the international law and Russian legislation, was peacefully transiting international waters in the North Atlantic, heading for one of Russia’s ports,” the foreign ministry said. The US government had been repeatedly provided with reliable information, including from the Russian Foreign Ministry, about the ship’s Russian origin and its civilian status, it asserted. “Russia did not give consent to these actions. On the contrary, it lodged an official protest with the US government regarding the pursuit of the Marinera by a US Coast Guard vessel over the past several weeks, insisting on the immediate cessation of these activities and the withdrawal of the unlawful demands made on the Russian ship’s captain,” the ministry said. Under these circumstances, US military personnel boarding a civilian vessel on the high seas and effectively seizing it, as well as capturing its crew, “can only be viewed as a gross violation of the basic principles and norms of international maritime law and freedom of navigation,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

Sabalenka and Rybakina advance to Brisbane International quarter finals

Brisbane: World No 1 Aryna Sabalenka continued her impressive run at the Brisbane International, storming into the quarter-finals with a dominant straight-sets victory over Romania’s Sorana Cirstea on Thursday. From the beginning, the defending champion appeared in full command, breaking Cirstea’s serve three times in the first set. Sabalenka kept up her aggressive strategy throughout and secured a comfortable 6-3, 6-3 win in only 70 minutes. Her performance further underlined her strong record in Australia in recent years. Since the start of 2023, the Belarusian has secured 35 wins on Australian courts with just two losses, including consecutive Australian Open titles. Her only defeats came in the finals of the 2024 Brisbane International and the 2025 Australian Open. Despite her convincing win, Sabalenka admitted there are still areas to improve as she prepares for the Australian Open, which begins in Melbourne on January 18. Meanwhile, World No 5 Elena Rybakina also advanced to the quarter-finals, extending her winning streak to 13 matches. The 26-year-old Kazakh reg-



istered a convincing 6-3, 6-2 victory over World No 25 Paula Badosa in one hour and 25 minutes. Rybakina dominated with her strong serve and solid baseline play, making it difficult for Badosa to find rhythm. Her next opponent will be either Ekaterina Alexandrova or Karolina Muchova. With several top seeds advancing, the Brisbane

Australia secure Ashes triumph over England in Sydney



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Sydney: Australia claimed a 4-1 Ashes series win after securing a five-wicket victory in the fifth Test at the SCG, as Usman Khawaja bowled out a winner in his farewell Test. After bowling England out for 342 early on day five, Australia set themselves a 160-run target. Chasing 160, the hosts made a brisk start, with Travis Head and Jake Weatherald putting on a 62-run opening stand.

The tourists, however, spoiled Khawaja’s hopes of a fairytale finish, as Josh Tongue bowled him for six. A

steady 40-run partnership between Alex Carey (16 not out) and Cameron Green (22 not out) got the hosts over the line despite a brief stutter on a tricky fifth-day pitch. Earlier, Mitchell Starc struck with the second new ball to end England’s innings, dismissing Jacob Bethell soon after the left-hander reached 150. Bethell showed composure while batting with the tail, but Player of the Series Starc eventually found the edge on 154, with Carey completing the catch. Several Australian batters made starts in the chase, but Head (29) and Weatherald (34) were undone by Tongue. A mix-up cost Marnus Labuschagne his wicket on 37, while Steve Smith (12) was beaten by a Will Jacks delivery before Tongue dismissed Khawaja. Carey and Green absorbed the final English push, with Carey sealing the win with a boundary through cover. The victory boosts Australia’s lead at the top of the World Test Championship 2025-2027 standings, now with 87.50 per cent of possible points. New Zealand’s series success against the West Indies keeps them second. England 384 (Joe Root 160; Michael Neser 4/60) & 342 (Jacob Bethell 154; Beau Webster 3/64) lost to Australia 567 (Travis Head 163; Josh Tongue 3/97) & 161/5 (Marnus Labuschagne 37; Josh Tongue 3/42) by 5 wickets.

Maryland murder case: Nikitha Godishala’s family says prime suspect yet to be traced

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Hyderabad: The family of Nikitha Godishala, who was found dead in Maryland, USA on December 31, 2025, said in an official statement on Thursday that the prime suspect is yet to be traced by authorities. The family clarified that law enforcement agencies have clearly indicated no arrest has been made so far, contradicting reports circulating on social media. They also appealed to the media to report responsibly and respect the family’s privacy as they grieve. Coordination is underway with the Indian Embassy in the U.S. and Ministry of External Affairs for further legal and procedural support. The family said future updates will be shared only through official statements and verified channels, it said. Nikitha was found dead on December 31, 2025, at a residence in Columbia, Maryland, where the suspect, Arjun Sharma, was staying. She had suffered multiple stab injuries, and investigators believe the incident occurred on the evening of the same day. Police informed the family that Sharma



filed a missing complaint on January 1 and left the U.S. for India the following day. During the period Nikitha was reported missing, suspicious financial activity was noticed in her bank account. The family also stated that the suspect had contacted her acquaintances seeking money, citing personal difficulties.

Chinese, Russian and Iranian warships arrive in South Africa for naval drills as tensions run high

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Chinese, Russian and Iranian warships arrived in South African waters for a week of naval drills starting on Friday (January 9, 2026) off the coast of Cape Town as geopolitical tensions run high over the United States’ intervention in Venezuela and its move to seize tankers carrying Venezuelan oil. The Chinese-led drills were organized last year under the BRICS bloc of developing nations and South Africa’s armed forces said they will bring members of the bloc together to practice maritime safety and anti-piracy operations and “deepen cooperation.” China, Russia and South Africa are long-time members of BRICS, while Iran joined the group in 2024. The Iranian navy was taking part in the drills while protests grow back home against the Islamic Republic’s leadership. It was not immediately clear if other countries from the BRICS group — which also includes Brazil, India and the United Arab Emirates among others — would take part in the drills. A spokesperson for the South African armed forces said he wasn’t yet able to confirm all the countries participating in the drills, which are due to run until next Friday. Chinese, Russian and Iranian ships have been seen moving into and out of the harbour that serves South Africa’s top naval base in Simon’s Town, south of Cape Town, where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic Ocean. China’s ships include the Tangshan, a 161-meter (528-foot) -long destroyer class vessel. South Africa also hosted Chinese and Russian ships for navy drills in 2023. The latest drills were meant to happen in late November but were delayed for diplomatic reasons because South Africa hosted Western and other world leaders for the Group of 20 summit around the same time. The drills are bound to further strain ties between the U.S. and South Africa, which is the most advanced economy in Africa and a leading voice for the continent but has been especially targeted for criticism by the Trump administration.



Trump on South Africa. U.S. President Donald Trump said in an executive order in February that South Africa supports “bad actors on the world stage” and singled out its ties with Iran as one of the reasons for the U.S. cutting funding to the country. China and Russia have often used BRICS forums to launch criticism of the U.S. and the West. South Africa has long claimed it follows a nonaligned foreign policy and remains neutral, but Russian presence on the southern tip of Africa has strained its relationship with the U.S. before. The Biden administration accused South Africa in 2023 of allowing a sanctioned Russian ship to dock at the Simon’s Town naval base and load weapons to be taken to Russia for the war in Ukraine. South Africa denied the allegation. South Africa’s willingness to host Russian and Iranian warships has also been criticized inside the country. The Democratic Alliance, the second biggest political party in the coalition government, said it was opposed to hosting drills that included “heavily sanctioned” Russia and Iran. “Calling these drills ‘BRICS cooperation’ is a political trick to soften what is really happening: Government is choosing closer military ties with rogue and sanctioned states such as Russia and Iran,” the Democratic Alliance said.

Study finds distinct blood markers for early detection of gallbladder cancer

A team of scientists led by researchers from Assam’s Tezpur University has identified distinct chemical signatures in blood, offering fresh hope in the early detection of one of the deadliest and often undetected cancers in India. The scientists who studied patients from Assam, a part of the North-eastern region with one of the highest rates of gallbladder cancer (GBC), found that simple blood tests may one day help doctors identify the cancer much earlier than is currently possible.

Assistant professor Pankaj Barah and research scholar Cinmoyee Baruah of Tezpur University’s Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology are the lead authors of the study published in the latest issue of the Journal of Proteome Research of the American Chemical Society. The other members of the interdisciplinary team are Amit Rai of Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, the U.S.; Anupam Sarma of Bhubaneswar Barooah Cancer Institute, Guwahati; Gayatri Gogoi, Uttam Konwar, and Utpal Dutta of Assam Medical College and Hospital, Dibrugarh; Subhash Khanna of Swagat Super Speciality and Surgical Hospital, Guwahati; and Sheelendra P. Singh of CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow. High mortality rates GBC, a rare but highly aggressive malignancy, is the sixth-most common hepatobiliary cancer, with high mortality rates and a five-year survival of less than 10%. It shows unusual geographical heterogeneity, with the highest incidences from three countries in South America and four in Asia, including India and Japan. According to the study, GBC is a leading cause of death in these regions, affecting females twice as much as males. It is the third-most common cancer in Northeastern

India. Although gallstone disease is common, only about one in every hundred patients goes on to develop gallbladder cancer. Yet, nearly 90% of cancer patients have a history of gallstones, long confusing doctors. The disease is notorious for its silent progression, and most patients are diagnosed after the disease has spread. The situation is made worse because its symptoms often resemble common gallstone problems, such as stomach pain or indigestion. In the study, the researchers compared blood samples from three groups of people: those with gallbladder cancer without stones, those with cancer along with gallstones, and those who had gallstones but no cancer. They aimed to find chemical ‘fingerprints’ in the blood that could clearly tell these groups apart. “Our findings show that changes in metabolites can clearly distinguish gallbladder cancer cases with and without gallstones. This raises the possibility of developing simple blood-based tests that could help in earlier detection,” Dr. Barah said. “By linking tissue pathology with blood metabolomics, this research bridges the gap between laboratory discoveries and clinical diagnosis,” Dr. Gogoi, a pathologist, said. The researchers found that certain natural substances linked to bile, digestion, and energy use were present in much higher amounts in cancer patients than in those with gallstones alone. Bile helps digest food, but when its balance is disturbed over a long period, it can damage the gallbladder lining and possibly trigger cancer. The study also found changes in substances related to protein breakdown and sugar use, suggesting that cancer cells rewire the body’s normal processes to fuel their growth.

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GNS News Agency, Jan 13

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The Iranian navy was taking part in the drills while protests grow back home against the Islamic Republic's leadership. It was not immediately clear if other countries from the BRICS group — which also includes Brazil, India and the United Arab Emirates among others — would take part in the drills. A spokesperson for the South African armed forces said he wasn't yet able to confirm all the countries participating in the drills, which are due to run until next Friday.

Japan to test deep sea rare earth mining to cut China reliance

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Japan embarks Sunday (January 11, 2026) on what it says is the world's first bid to tap deep sea rare earths at a depth of 6,000 metres — greater than the height of Mount Fuji — to curb dependence on China. A Japanese deep-sea scientific drilling boat called the Chikyu will set sail for the remote island of Minami Torishima in the Pacific, where surrounding waters are believed to contain a rich trove of valuable minerals.

The test cruise comes as China — by far the world's biggest supplier of rare earths — ramps up pressure on its neighbour after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggested in November that Tokyo may react militarily to an attack on Taiwan, which Beijing has vowed to seize control of by force if necessary. Rare earths — 17 metals difficult to extract from the Earth's crust — are used in everything from electric vehicles to hard drives, wind turbines and missiles. The mission by the Chikyu is "a first step toward our country's industrialisation of domestic rare earths", the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) said in a statement last month.

The agency touted the test as the world's first at such depths. The area around Minami Torishima, which is in Japan's economic waters, is estimated to contain more than 16 million tons of rare earths, which the Nikkei business daily says is the third-largest reserve globally. These rich deposits contain an estimated 730 years' worth of dysprosium, used in high-strength magnets in phones and electric cars, and 780 years' worth of yttrium, used in lasers, Nikkei said. "If Japan could successfully extract rare earths around Minami Torishima constantly, it will secure domestic supply chain for key industries," Takahiro Kamisuna, research associate at The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), told AFP. "Likewise, it will be a key strategic asset for Takaichi's government to significantly reduce the supply chain dependence on China." Threat to sea life

Beijing has long used its dominance in rare earths for geopolitical leverage, including in its trade war with U.S. President Donald Trump's administration. China accounts for almost two-thirds of rare earth mining production and 92% of global refined output, according to the International

Protests erupt outside Bengal's health department as ASHA workers demand pay hike, benefits



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Hundreds of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) laid siege to the headquarters of the West Bengal Health Department at Swasthya Bhavan in Kolkata on Wednesday (January 7, 2026), demanding better pay and insurance benefits after a casework protest for the last 15 days. A wave of pink and purple — protesting ASHA workers in uniform — took over Salt Lake Sector V from Wednesday (January 7) morning, and coalesced outside Swasthya Bhavan as the day progressed. They continued their agitation over eight main demands, including raising the monthly honorarium from ₹5,250 to ₹15,000 and for a compensation of ₹5 lakhs in case of death on duty. Protestors sloganereed, blocked roads and traffic, and breached barricades trying to enter Swasthya Bhavan, but failed after the police locked the main gate to stop them from entering. They continued their protest in the form of a sit-in agitation outside Swasthya Bhavan and demanded a team of representatives be allowed to meet Health department officials to discuss their demands.

"We want our monthly honorarium to be increased to Rs 15,000, we want maternity leave, compensation in case of death on duty, we want to be recognised as permanent government employees and not volunteers. We also want the mobile phone costs for digital data entry

day.

Chinese, Russian and Iranian ships have been seen moving into and out of the harbour that serves South Africa's top naval base in Simon's Town, south of Cape Town, where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic Ocean. China's ships include the Tangshan, a 161-meter (528-foot)-long destroyer class vessel. South Africa also hosted Chinese and Russian ships for navy drills in 2023. The latest drills were meant to happen in late November but were delayed for diplomatic reasons because South Africa hosted Western and other world leaders for the Group of 20 summit around the same time. The drills are bound to further strain ties between the U.S. and South Africa, which is the most advanced economy in Africa and a leading voice for the continent but has been especially targeted for criticism by the Trump administration. Trump on South Africa U.S. President Donald Trump said in an executive order in February that South Africa supports "bad actors on the world stage" and singled out its ties with Iran as one of the reasons for the U.S. cutting funding to the country. China and Russia have often used BRICS forums to launch criticism of the U.S. and the West. South Africa has long claimed it follows a nonaligned foreign policy and remains neutral, but Russian presence on the southern tip of Africa has strained its relationship with the U.S. before. The Biden administration accused South Africa in 2023 of allowing a sanctioned Russian ship to dock at the Simon's Town naval base and load weapons to be taken to Russia for the war in Ukraine. South Africa denied the allegation. South Africa's willingness to host Russian and Iranian warships has also been criticized inside the country. The Democratic Alliance, the second biggest political party in the coalition government, said it was opposed to hosting drills that included "heavily sanctioned" Russia and Iran. "Calling these drills 'BRICS cooperation' is a political trick to soften what is really happening: Government is choosing closer military ties with rogue and sanctioned states such as Russia and Iran," the Democratic Alliance said.



Energy Agency. Media reports this week said Beijing was delaying Japanese imports as well as rare-earth exports to Tokyo, as their two-month-old spat escalates.

China on Tuesday (January 6, 2026) blocked exports to Japan of "dual-use" items with potential military uses, fuelling worries in Japan that Beijing could choke supplies of rare earths, some of which are included in China's list of dual-use goods. An earlier spat in 2010 saw Japan move to lessen its dependence on Beijing for rare earths but more than 70% still come from China, according to Tokyo — a stat it is looking to change. During the test mission, the Chikyu will send a pipe beneath the water to ensure a "mining machine" attached to its tip can reach the seabed and retrieve the rare earth-rich muds, JAMSTEC said. The cruise is scheduled to last until February 14. Deep-sea mining has become a geopolitical flashpoint, with anxiety growing over a push by US President Donald Trump to fast-track the practice in international waters. Environmental campaigners warn it threatens marine ecosystems and will disrupt the sea floor. The International Seabed Authority (ISA), which has jurisdiction over the ocean floor outside national waters, is pushing for the adoption of a global code to regulate mining in the ocean depths.

work to be covered, and the disbursal of pending allowances promised earlier," a protesting ASHA worker said. She added that their tasks involve giving a wide range of services for maternity and child care, including rushing to people's homes at very late hours in case of any medical emergency. "Despite helping so many pregnant women and new mothers, we do not have the benefit of maternity leave ourselves," she said. ASHA workers have boycotted work for over two weeks as part of their ongoing agitation, and have claimed to have submitted multiple deputations to the Health department with their demands. According to data provided by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, there are around 70,468 ASHA workers in West Bengal as of September 2024. Their duties include informing communities on nutrition, basic sanitation, and hygienic practices, and counselling women on birth preparedness, safe delivery, breastfeeding, immunisation, contraception and prevention of common infections including sexually transmitted infections, and caring for young children.

South Central Railway steps up measures for Sankranti passenger surge

Hyderabad: In view of the anticipated surge in passenger footfall during the Sankranti festival, the South Central Railway has taken up several measures to mitigate the ensuing passenger rush.

The expected average daily footfall during the festival period is approximately 2.20 lakh passengers at Secunderabad, 50,000 at Lingampalli and 35,000 at Cherlapalli stations. At Secunderabad station, 17 booking counters and 20 Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVM) have been kept operational for the convenience of passengers.

Saudi Arabia alleges UAE smuggled wanted Yemen separatist leader out of country



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Saudi Arabia alleged on Thursday (January 8, 2026) that the United Arab Emirates smuggled a separatist leader in Yemen, wanted for treason out of the country and flew him to Abu Dhabi. The UAE had no immediate reaction to the claim, which further escalates tensions between the neighbouring nations on the Arabian Peninsula as their partnership in the years-long war in Yemen breaks down. A Saudi military statement claimed Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the leader of the Southern Transitional Council, fled Yemen by boat to Somalia. Then, UAE officials flew al-Zubaidi to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Emirates, the statement said. The UAE has been the major supporter of the council, known as the STC, which sparked a confrontation between Saudi Arabia and the Emirates in recent days after STC fighters advanced in two governorates and appeared to be preparing to secede from Yemen. The Saudi statement from Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki included him, naming a major general in the UAE as being involved in al-Zubaidi's alleged escape, along with identifying his nom de guerre — something highly unusual in the typical clubby world of Gulf Arab relations. It also suggested an Ilyushin Il-76 aircraft used in the operation had been used in "conflict zones" like Ethiopia, Libya and Somalia — routes the Emirati military has been accused of funneling weapons through in the past. The UAE has denied running guns into those areas. The Emirati Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

The STC did not immediately acknowledge the allegation either, saying on Wednesday that al-Zubaidi had remained in Aden, where forces allied against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels had congregated for years since the rebels seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa. Saudi Ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed al-Jaber, said on Thursday (January 8) morning that he met with the STC delegation that landed in Riyadh a day earlier. They discussed al-Zubaidi's recent actions, which he said "harm the southern cause and didn't serve it." "We also explored ways to work in the future to address what happened in a manner that serves the Southern cause, the Coalition's efforts to achieve security and stability in Yemen, and we addressed the arrangements for the Southern Cause Conference, which will be

Ahead of U.S. Ambassador arrival, Trump okays 500% tariff Bill on Russian oil; withdraws from India-led ISA

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

India faced double-pressure over energy on Thursday (January 8, 2026) from U.S. President Donald Trump's decisions to back a Bill mandating up to "500% tariffs" on countries buying Russian oil, and to withdraw the U.S. from the India-led International Solar Alliance (ISA) amongst dozens of other international organisations.

The announcements came just ahead of the arrival of U.S. Ambassador-designate Sergio Gor to Delhi this weekend, who said in September that ensuring India ends its import of Russian oil is a "top priority". Mr. Gor, who was confirmed and sworn in to the position months ago will begin his tenure in Delhi as Ambassador to Delhi and "Special envoy to South and Central Asia" on January 12, 2026, and is expected to make a public address. Meanwhile in Paris, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski expressed "satisfaction" that India has reduced its oil imports from Russia, during a joint press appearance with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Foreign Ministers of France and Germany. "Relations between the European Union and strategic partners such as India are very important to us and I express my satisfaction regarding the reduction of import of Russian oil to India because this is financing the war machine of [Russian President] Putin," Mr. Sikorski in remarks Mr. Jaishankar, who spoke directly after him, did not contradict. In a statement, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, a close associate of Mr. Trump, said the U.S. President on Wednesday (January 7, 2026) has "greenlit" the Russia Sanctions Bill, which could be voted in Congress "as early as next week".

"This Bill would give President Trump tremendous leverage against countries such as China, India and Brazil to incentivise them to stop buying the cheap Russian oil that provides the financing for Putin's bloodbath against Ukraine." The Russia Sanctions Act, a bipartisan Bill introduced in the Senate in April has thus far got 84 co-sponsors (out of a total of 100 Senate members), and 151 co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives, suggesting it will be passed smoothly once brought to a vote. Earlier this week Mr. Trump, who had jointly addressed the press along with Mr. Graham, called it a "great legislation" that was coming, as Mr. Graham said the Bill would give the U.S. President discretion to choose the figure of the tariffs over and above 25% penalty tariffs already imposed on India. In September, during his Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearings, Mr. Gor said Mr. Trump had been "crystal clear" on the issue of India's oil purchases. "They [India] must stop buying Russian oil. And I believe almost every single member of this committee has co-sponsored Senator Graham's legislation which has proposed a 500% tariff on secondary purchase and reselling of Russian oil. The President has only imposed a 25% tariff [thus far]," he added referring to the Russia Sanctions Act.

As a result, Mr. Gor's first order of business in Delhi would likely be to push for a full stop to Indian oil imports from Russia, amidst signs that these have been reduced already. This week, Reliance announced that it has not received any cargo of Russian oil at its Jamnagar refinery through most of December, and does not expect any in January, indicating that it has stopped orders of the oil for now. Indian PSUs increased their intake sharply in November 2025, but with Reliance stopping all such imports and Nayara Energy, the other big importer under sanctions from

held in Riyadh soon," he added.

Meanwhile, Mohamed al-Ghaithi, an STC member and head of the negotiation and reconciliation committee supporting the Presidential Leadership Council, called the meeting with al-Jaber "fruitful" and praised the kingdom's initiative to sponsor the conference aimed at finding a resolution in the south. Al-Ghaithi confirmed that the delegation "rejected everything that harms unity." "We have heard clear commitments from our brothers in Riyadh towards our people's cause and ensuring a secure and stable future," he added in a post on X. On Wednesday, the STC had said it lost contact with its delegation after they landed in Riyadh, with a Council representative saying that members' cellphones were either switched off or ringing with no one answering. Southern Yemen had been run under the Presidential Leadership Council, a group including al-Zubaidi and others, since 2022. On Wednesday, the leadership council expelled al-Zubaidi and charged him with treason after he apparently declined to fly to Saudi Arabia for talks. It marked the latest pushback against the STC by Saudi Arabia, which also recently launched airstrikes against the group and an arms shipment the kingdom said came from the UAE. The war in Yemen, on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians. It has created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The Houthis have also launched attacks against shipping over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, disrupting a vital route for global commerce. The U.S., which earlier praised Saudi-Emirati efforts to end the crisis over the separatists, has launched airstrikes against the Houthi rebels under both Presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on Wednesday. This latest accusation will further strain ties between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, OPEC members and neighbours that increasingly have competed over economic issues and regional politics, particularly in the Red Sea area. The Yemen dispute has become their most serious confrontation in decades. The Saudi statement came as part of what appeared to be an organised media push over the incident by Saudi broadcasters and newspapers that offered details that could prove embarrassing for the Emiratis. The Saudi-owned satellite news channel Al Arabiya aired what it described as intercepted telephone calls highlighting al-Zubaidi's alleged escape. Saudi Arabia's English-language newspaper Arab News offered a front-page image of al-Zubaidi under the headline "WANTED" in the style of a poster from the American Old West. A scathing front-page editorial by the state-backed newspaper said the separatist leader's refusal to come to the kingdom was "cementing his image as a traitor to his country." "Al-Zubaidi chose narrow self-interest, aligning with foreign powers at the expense of his homeland and attempting to impose southern secession by force," the editorial said. "His sole aim: to seize power for himself."



western countries unable to import, it is unlikely that India's Russian oil purchases can recover to previous levels. In 2018, under similar pressure from the previous Trump administration, India had "zeroed out" its oil imports from two key suppliers Iran and Venezuela as well. The government did not react to Mr. Trump's other decision, to walk out of ISA, an alliance founded by India and France and headquartered in Delhi that has more than 90 members. The alliance meant to promote solar power technology and adoption was launched in 2015 on the side-lines of the Paris COP Climate summit. When the U.S. joined the alliance in 2021, an official release had called it a "big boost" to the global adoption of solar energy efforts. The U.S. move to withdraw from the ISA, as well as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as more than 60 different UN and non-UN international agencies is being seen as a major blow to multilateralism and particularly to global missions for increasing renewable energy and countering climate change.

Domicile certificates not valid for SIR hearings in Bengal: Official

Domicile certificates submitted as documentary evidence during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) hearings in West Bengal will not be considered valid at present, a senior poll official said on Wednesday (January 7, 2026). Voters who have already submitted the domicile certificates may be summoned again for fresh hearings, he added.

The list of acceptable documents under the SIR include permanent address or residence certificates issued by the State, but domicile certificates do not fall under this category, the official at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said. "Under the SIR framework, only documents notified as proof of permanent residence by the State government are admissible. A domicile certificate does not meet that criterion," he added.

He further pointed out that each state follows specific government orders for issuing domicile certificates. According to the latest guidelines in the State, domicile certificates are mainly issued to certain categories, including non-Bengali candidates applying for jobs in the Army and paramilitary forces.

"There have been complaints that domicile certificates are being issued in violation of the prescribed norms. In such circumstances, the commission cannot rely on these documents as valid documentary proof," he added.

Trump pulls US out of 66 global bodies, opening door for China



President Donald Trump has withdrawn the US from 66 international organisations, including UN bodies and the International Solar Alliance led by India and France, saying these institutions were “redundant” and “contrary” to his country’s interests. Signing a memorandum titled ‘Withdrawing the United States from International Organisations, Conventions, and Treaties that Are Contrary to the Interests of the United States’, Trump directed all executive departments and agencies to take immediate steps to put into effect the US withdrawal from these organisations “as soon as possible”. In Delhi’s assessment, the direct impact of Trump’s decision to withdraw from international organisations — from the World Health Organisation and UNESCO to the latest round of 66 global bodies, will be on the funding and leadership of these groupings. It will likely cast a massive shadow on the leadership vacuum in these organisations, and China is expected to step in given its leverage, resources and influence in terms of capital and capacity.

These are the likely fallout: WHO: The US withdrawal was initiated on January 20, 2025, the first day of the Trump 2.0 administration, and it is set to be fully effective by January 22, 2026. This means significant funding cuts since the US was the largest donor. It is going to impact preparedness for future pandemics and disease surveillance. The funding cut will also impact major health programmes, from HIV/AIDS to malaria, in developing countries, including India. UNESCO: While a formal notice of exit was given in July 2025, it is expected to create a funding gap and a leadership vacuum that countries like China may fill to promote their own agenda. The US withdrawal means less financial support for global heritage and education programmes, impacting sites and initiatives worldwide. UNHRC: With the US withdrawal ordered in early 2025, it reduces Washington’s ability to steer and shape discussions on human rights, international law. It also means that other countries, like China and Russia, and others can ignore the UNHRC mandate and strike at the heart of global guardrails. UNRWA: As the US suspended all funding and support for the Palestinian relief agency in February 2025, it will reduce the organisation’s capacity to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinian people in Gaza. India has been a regular contributor to the funding of UNRWA, and it may need to step up its funding. But that too is fraught with diplomatic challenges since Israel views UNRWA with suspicion and accuses it of collusion with Hamas. Trump’s decision Thursday targeted over 60 organisations, broadly in two major baskets. The first comprises groupings that deal with climate and environment. The US becomes the first country to exit the foundational treaties of global climate action.

While the US withdrew from the Paris Agreement on

Day 1 of Trump’s second term, the withdrawal from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will have a cumulative impact, resulting in a slowdown in global climate efforts. Being a major historical emitter, the US withdrawal is a significant setback to collective global efforts to reduce emissions and limit warming to 1.5°C. It may provide an excuse for other nations to slow their own climate actions. The US will no longer contribute its share to climate finance for developing countries, creating funding gaps for clean energy and adaptation projects. It also means loss of influence as the US cedes its seat at the table in shaping future international climate policies and trade rules, leaving US companies potentially exposed to foreign climate-linked trade measures. Washington’s withdrawal from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is expected to undermine science and lead to data and research gaps. The US exit from the primary scientific body which assesses climate science for policymakers signals a disregard for consensus science and marginalises US scientists from the core global assessment process.

It is likely to hinder collaborative research and the aggregation of data that is vital for accurate climate predictions and national planning in all countries, including India. The impact of the US exiting International Solar Alliance (ISA), the India-headquartered global initiative, is going to have an adverse financial impact, loss of expertise and influence and a symbolic setback for the initiative. It signals loss of potential investment and financial contributions, which were aimed at mobilizing over \$1 trillion for solar energy projects by 2030. For Delhi, it is a diplomatic setback, although the ISA has diversified its membership and funding sources since its inception. The 66 global bodies likely to be impacted by the US exit are in two major baskets: one with the climate and environment groupings, and another of economic and rights bodies. These will now be grappling with funding and leadership challenges. Similar challenges are expected to plague other environment groupings, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and energy groupings — the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), 24/7 Carbon-Free Energy Compact. The other basket impacted by Trump’s latest action has economic and human rights groups, including the OECD Global Tax Deal. By declaring the deal has no force or effect in the US, the Trump administration has created legal and policy uncertainty for the global minimum tax framework. The deal, which aims to stop large corporations from shifting profits to low-tax havens, becomes significantly harder to implement effectively on a global scale without the world’s largest economy on board. Apart from that, it will impact the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the agency focused on reproductive health; UN Women, the entity for gender equality and empowerment; and UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Other notable groupings targeted are for rules-based order: International Law Commission, UN Peacebuilding Commission, Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, Global Counterterrorism Forum. Another prominent one is the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) — Economic Commission for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Western Asia Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict. In Delhi, officials said Beijing will find all these groupings “ripe for picking”. India, officials said, will have to talk to like-minded partners in these groupings to protect and safeguard the rules.

PRAGATI: 43 power sector projects worth Rs 3.02 lakh crore reviewed by PM commissioned so far, say officials



Under the multi-purpose, multi-modal PRAGATI platform, 43 out of the 53 power sector projects worth Rs 3.02 lakh crore reviewed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been commissioned as of December 31, 2025, officials said. The remaining 10 projects, worth about Rs 1.1 lakh crore, are at advanced stages of completion, they added. Overall, the 53 power sector projects, worth Rs 4.12 lakh crore, include 27 transmission projects, 14 thermal power projects, nine hydro projects, and three coal mine projects. State-owned Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCIL) leads the list with 20 projects followed by 14 projects by NTPC. NHPC, NEEPCO, THDC, and Sterlite have commissioned two projects each, while one transmission project in Uttar Pradesh has also been completed.

Of the 10 projects currently in advanced stages, PGCIL, NTPC, NHPC, THDC, and Sterlite account for two

projects each, officials said. Launched in 2015, projects under the Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) framework are monitored at multiple levels, including by the Prime Minister and the Union Cabinet Secretary. Beyond projects reviewed at the PM’s level, the broader PRAGATI ecosystem — which operates through multiple layers of monitoring — has so far reviewed 237 power projects worth Rs 10.53 lakh crore. These projects have already been commissioned. Another 108 power sector projects worth around Rs 6 lakh crore are currently under construction and continue to be monitored under various tiers of the PRAGATI platform. Power sector projects often face delays due to a mix of administrative, technical, regulatory, and natural factors, the official said. Common challenges include land acquisition, environmental and forest clearances, rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) issues, fuel linkages, equipment supply delays, and contractual disputes. In the case of transmission projects, delays frequently arise from right-of-way (RoW) issues, forest and defence clearances, coordination challenges between Central and state agencies, and local law-and-order concerns. Hydropower projects, meanwhile, are often affected by geological surprises, difficult terrain, short working seasons, and resettlement challenges in remote areas. PRAGATI-led monitoring has helped minimise inter-departmental bottlenecks, significantly improving execution of power projects, the officials said. Several long-stalled generation and transmission projects have moved towards completion following interventions under the platform, leading to enhanced power availability, improved grid reliability, and better utilisation of national resources, they added.

India’s office leasing soars 20% in 2025, residential sales remain steady

New Delhi: India’s office market touched record high in 2025, with annual gross leasing surging to 86.4 million sq ft, up 20 per cent (year-on-year) and 43 per cent above the pre-pandemic 2019 peak, a report said on Friday.

Real estate services firm Knight Frank India said that on the residential front, sales across eight major cities held broadly steady at 3,48,204 units in 2025, easing 1 per cent YoY. In the same period, new launches were recorded at 362,184 units across the top markets easing 3 per cent YoY. Mumbai accounted for 29 per cent of sales with 97,188 units. On the office market front, the scale of activity reflected sustained occupier demand and positions India as a global leader among commercial real estate markets, the report said. Strong performance across regions reflected the maturity of India’s office ecosystem, supported by robust talent pools, resilient demand drivers and disciplined supply.

“With annual leasing volumes rising over 20 per cent YoY, the current cycle marks not just a numerical high but a structural shift in how global and domestic enterprises

view India as a long-term business destination,” said Shishir Bajjal, International Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India. Bengaluru led the office market with a historic 28.7 million sq ft of leasing. Delhi-NCR retained its position as India’s second-largest office market in terms of total stock. The residential sector, meanwhile, entered a phase of measured normalisation after three consecutive years of elevated activity, supported by end-user activity and sustained by premiumisation and firm price growth, the report noted.

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) accounted for 38 per cent of total absorption, while third-party IT services rebounded strongly, taking 15.3 million sq ft (20 per cent of transacted area), up 94 per cent YoY.

Flexible workspace operators leased a record 18.6 million sq ft, marking 19 per cent surge YoY. Rents grew between 1 per cent and 16 per cent YoY across all markets in H2 2025, led by Kolkata (16 per cent), with NCR and Hyderabad surging 10 per cent each.

Lifeline to Vodafone Idea: Govt caps annual payout at Rs 124 crore for next 6 years



New Delhi: Offering a lifeline to struggling debt-laden telecom operator Vodafone Idea, the government has capped annual payouts to clear past dues at Rs 124 crore over the next six years, easing near-term cash flows, the company said on Friday. Between March 2032 and March 2035, the yearly outgo will be trimmed to Rs 100 crore, Vodafone Idea said in a stock exchange filing, citing a communication received from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). It went on to state that the remaining adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues shall have to be paid in equal instalments annually over six years, starting in March 2036.

The government had, on December 31, approved a partial moratorium on Vodafone Idea’s past dues, freezing them at Rs 87,695 crore to be cleared from 2031-32 to 2040-41. This amount, too, will be reassessed by a committee based on an audit. The payment schedule details sent Vodafone Idea shares higher by 9 per cent in morning trade, but the stock pared most of its gain by afternoon as analysts remained cautious about upcoming funding needs to support its 5G expansion plans. The stock closed at Rs 11.27, down 2 per cent, on the BSE.

The relief measures approved by the Union Cabinet on December 31 were aimed at protecting the interest of the government (which has about 48.9 per cent stake in the telco), enabling orderly payment of dues to the Centre by way of spectrum auction charges and AGR dues, ensuring competition in the sector and safeguarding the interests of 20 crore consumers of Vodafone Idea. AGR dues refer to payments owed by telecom companies to the government based on adjusted gross revenue (AGR). It is the revenue on which telecom operators must pay licence fees and spectrum usage charges. It is defined to include all revenues, even non-telecom income (like interest, rent, asset sales). Besides these outstanding, the AGR dues for 2017-18 and 2018-19, which were finalised based on the Supreme Court order of September 2020, will now have to be paid over 2025-26 to 2030-31 fiscal years without any change. These, the company said on Friday, work out to a Rs 124 crore payout annually. Vodafone Idea has been battling a prolonged financial crisis, driven by intense price competi-

Meet Aloka, the Indian stray dog winning hearts for its ‘Walk of Peace’



An Indian stray dog is now a global phenomenon. Yes, we are talking about Aloka, the adorable dog that is winning netizens’ hearts with its sacred walk. At first, it walked for nearly 100 days, in every possible nook and cranny of the country, following the monks and matching their pace through towns, forests, and villages. Now, months later, Aloka is walking across the United States on a 3,700 km Walk of Peace alongside 19 monks, embodying the message of peace. That’s not it. The fan following has earned Aloka dedicated social media accounts, where fans are updated about its ongoing journey across the United States.

“His journey is truly special. He was once a stray wandering in India who began following the Venerable Monks. He walked with them for over 100 days across India, much like the #WalkForPeace we are participating in today! Though his exact birthday remains a mystery, his loyalty and peaceful spirit are clear to everyone he meets,” reads a Facebook post on a page titled ‘Aloka The Peace Dog’. Even on Instagram, where Aloka has over one lakh followers, the peace walk with the monks is being tracked with fresh updates. There is a live map for fans to track Aloka’s journey as it progresses. Starting from Fort Worth in October 2025, the 110-day, 10-state journey will culminate in Washington, DC, this February. According to the Facebook page, Aloka is likely to be an Indian Pariah dog. “Many people often ask about Aloka’s breed! While we aren’t exactly sure, we estimate he is about 4 years old and likely an Indian Pariah dog.” Here’s why this Indian pariah dog is not an ordinary canine

EAM Jaishankar visits Paris exhibition showcasing Indian heritage, deep cultural ties

Paris: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar visited an exhibition in Paris titled ‘Ce qui se trame – woven stories between India and France’ which showcased India’s textile heritage, expertise and craftsmanship, underscoring the strong cultural connection between the two nations.

“Visited exposition ‘Ce qui se trame – woven stories between India and France’ in Paris this evening. The exhibition showcases India’s textile heritage, savoir-faire and creativity. It is also a reminder of the strong India-France cultural connect.” EAM posted on X on Monday (Indian time). EAM Jaishankar is on an official visit to France and Luxembourg from January 4-9. During his visit to France, the EAM will meet French leadership and hold talks with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jean Noel Barrot. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, “They will discuss the progress made under the India-France Strategic Partnership and matters of global importance. EAM will also address the 31st edition of the French Ambassador’s Conference as the Guest of Honour.” During his visit to Luxembourg, EAM Jaishankar will hold talks with

tion, high debt, and massive AGR liabilities that arose from a change in the definition of AGR. The company has struggled with persistent losses, a shrinking subscriber base, and limited ability to invest in network expansion, even as rivals accelerated 4G and 5G rollouts.

Repeated rounds of government relief and equity conversion of dues have kept the company afloat, but its long-term viability continues to hinge on sustained policy support, fresh capital infusion, and a turnaround in operating performance. Some had expected that the Cabinet would waive a part, if not all, of the AGR dues. But instead, it decided to give a moratorium, which would allow the company to recover. Vodafone Idea will pay the government Rs 1,144 crore over the next 10 years and the rest of the adjusted gross revenue dues, frozen at Rs 87,695 crore by the Union cabinet, from March 2036 onwards. Vi, however, said the entire AGR dues comprising principal, interest, penalty, and interest on penalty for the period from 2006-07 to 2018-19 as of December 31, shall be frozen and be payable in various tranches. The moves provide a fresh lease of life to the company as the debt-ridden firm had to pay around Rs 18,000 crore by March 2026 and a similar amount every year for the next six years in the absence of relief from the government.

VIL, in a letter to the DoT earlier this year, said its liabilities to the government are about Rs 2 lakh crore, including Rs 1.19 lakh crore towards spectrum dues. The company said in case of no support, the Centre will face significant direct monetary loss with no recovery of spectrum dues, equity value of Rs 53,083 crore becoming nil, and no recovery of AGR dues. The annual liabilities of Vi were more than double its annual operational cash generation — in the range of Rs 8,400-9,200 crore for the last three years. Vi said a committee is to be constituted by the DoT to reassess the AGR dues, whose decision shall be final. “Thereafter, the reassessed amount is to be repaid between March 2036 and March 2041 in equal annual instalments,” the filing said. Analysts expect that the reassessment is likely to reduce Vi’s AGR dues, and the relief given by the government may help it raise Rs 25,000 crore debt that the company has been looking for investment in the networks. “In our view, this could fast-track the completion of Vi’s Rs 250 billion (Rs 25,000 crore) bank debt raise and potentially enable another equity raise down the line. Besides meaningfully lifting concerns on Vi’s ability to service government dues and therefore on its ability to continue as a going concern, these should also enable the company to revive its network investments,” a Citi report said. An Ambit Capital report said decisive government action with possible upside from reassessment would enable Vi to raise bank funding — necessary for carrying out survival capex. The report said a favourable verdict from the Supreme Court has already enabled Vi to raise Rs 3,300 crore through non-convertible debentures recently.

A 15,000-year-old heritage

The Indian Pariah Dog is widely regarded as one of the oldest landrace breeds, believed to have existed in the Indian subcontinent for approximately 15,000 years. Genetic studies place them among the earliest domesticated dogs, resilient, intelligent, and well-adapted to tropical climates. Their lineage predates modern pedigree breeds introduced during the colonial period. Far from being street dwellers, Pariah dogs have traditionally held a quiet but dignified place in Indian society: Village guardians: Traditionally, they guarded settlements, alerted people to danger, and controlled rodent populations. Companions in tribal communities: Many Adivasi groups valued them as hunting companions and protectors. Presence in ancient art: Early cave paintings and terracotta figurines resemble the Pariah Dog’s distinct erect ears and wedge-shaped head. Symbol of loyalty: Indian folklore often depicts stray or native dogs as loyal protectors and spiritual guides. Scientifically, the Indian Pariah dog, or an Indie, is known for friendly qualities exhibited by Aloka, while journeying in India or abroad. Here’s how Remarkable stamina, allowing him to walk thousands of kilometres. High intelligence and emotional sensitivity, enabling him to bond with monks on a spiritual path. Adaptability, thriving in varied climates from Indian villages to American highways. Disease resistance, thanks to their natural evolution rather than human-designed breeding.

What is the Walk of Peace?

The Walk of Peace, organised by the Huong Dao Vipassana Bhavana Centre, is a spiritual pilgrimage across 10 US states. It began in Fort Worth in October 2025 and will conclude in Washington, DC, this February. The monks walk as meditation, taking slow, mindful steps with chants of loving-kindness and pauses to engage with communities along the route. It is a 110–120-day journey built around principles of non-violence, unity, and inner harmony. Aloka has become both participant and mascot of this extraordinary journey. His presence, the monks say, is a reminder that peace is not just a human pursuit. On Instagram, the monks wrote: “He is a constant presence, a true disciple of the path, and a living reminder that all beings walk toward peace.”

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Xavier Bettel and the senior leadership. He will also interact with the members of the Indian community in Luxembourg.

In November last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in South Africa. The two leaders also held a phone conversation in September and August last year, exchanging views on efforts towards bringing an end to the conflict in Ukraine while reiterating India’s consistent support for a peaceful resolution of the issue and early restoration of peace and stability in the entire region.

During their conversations over the past few months, the two leaders have reviewed and positively assessed the developments in bilateral cooperation across different sectors, including economic, defence, science, technology and space. They had reaffirmed their commitment towards further strengthening of the India-France Strategic Partnership, in line with the Horizon 2047 Roadmap, the Indo-Pacific Roadmap and the Defence Industrial Roadmap.

‘My best football is yet to come’: Antoine Semenyo after signing for Manchester City from Bournemouth



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Antoine Semenyo Manchester City transfer Semenyo could make his debut for City against Exeter in the third round of the FA Cup on Saturday and is eligible to play in the English League Cup semifinals, with City playing the first leg at Newcastle on Tuesday. (X/Manchester City) Manchester City on Friday strengthened their team with the signing of Ghana forward Antoine Semenyo from Bournemouth in a 65 million pounds and a 5 and a half year deal. Semenyo, who has scored 10 goals this season, has been one of the brightest spots in Bournemouth's attack this season.

“I am so proud to have joined Manchester City. I have

watched City over the last decade under Pep Guardiola, and they have been the dominant team in the Premier League as well as achieving amazing things in the Champions League, FA Cup and League Cup. They have set the highest of standards and it's a club with world-class players, world-class facilities and one of the greatest managers ever in Pep,” he said in a release by City after joining the club.

“I have so much scope for improvement, so to be at this club, at this stage of my career, is perfect for me. It's a real privilege to be here. My best football is yet to come, I am sure of that. And City are in a great position – still involved in four competitions. I really feel I can help them have a strong second half of the season. The Etihad is my new home. I can't wait to play in front of the fans here and I hope to show everyone what I can do,” he added. City is second in the Premier League, six points behind Arsenal in its bid to regain the title after relinquishing it to Liverpool last season.

Guardiola's team is fourth in the 36-club Champions League standings with two rounds of matches remaining in the league phase. The top eight qualify automatically for the round of 16. Semenyo has never played in the Champions League. He could make his debut for City against Exeter in the third round of the FA Cup on Saturday and is eligible to play in the English League Cup semifinals, with City playing the first leg at Newcastle on Tuesday.

BCB official calling Tamim Iqbal ‘an Indian agent’ invites wrath of Bangladesh players

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Tamim, one of the finest openers to have come out of Bangladesh, had advised the BCB to not be driven by emotion while deciding the way forward on the national team's participation in the T20 World Cup in India. Nazmul, chairman of BCB finance committee, called the left-hander opener “an Indian agent” in a Facebook post.

“This time, the people of Bangladesh witnessed, with their own eyes, the emergence of yet another proven Indian agent,” he wrote. The post received immediate backlash from former and current cricketers, including Taskin Ahmed, Momtasil Haque and Tajul Islam. Even the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) expressed shock at Nazmul's comments. “A comment made by BCB director M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal has come to the attention of the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh. We are stunned, shocked, and outraged by it.” “Such a remark by a board official about the most successful opener in Bangladesh's history, who represented the country for 16 years, is utterly condemnable.” “Not only because it concerns a player like Tamim, but such comments about any cricketer of the country are unacceptable and insulting to the entire cricketing community,” the players' body said in a statement. The 36-year-old Tamim Iqbal has played 70 Tests, 243 ODIs and 78 T20 Internationals for his country in a fairly accomplished career. “We strongly protest against this comment. When a responsible board director makes such remarks on a public platform, it also raises serious questions about the code of conduct of board officials,” it said. “We have already submitted a protest letter to the BCB president, demanding a public apology from the concerned board director and that he be brought under accountability. We hope the BCB president will take appropriate action as soon as possible,” CWAB added. Bangladesh wrote to the International Cricket Council to move their T20 World Cup games out of India after the BCCI instructed IPL franchise KKR to release Mustafizur



Rahman ahead of the 2026 edition without giving a specific reason.

“Cricket is the life of Bangladesh. A recent comment surrounding a former national captain who has made a major contribution to the game has caused many to reflect,” said pacer Taskin. “I believe that such remarks directed at a former cricketer of the country are not helpful in the interest of Bangladesh cricket. I hope the concerned authorities will consider the matter seriously and adopt a more responsible stance in the future,” he said. Mominul added: “The comment made by BCB director M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal is completely unacceptable and insulting to the country's cricketing community. Such behaviour towards a cricketer is in direct conflict with the board's responsibility and ethics,” said Mominul. “A senior cricketer was not given even the minimum respect; instead, he was deliberately humiliated in public. Such remarks show a lack of even basic decorum regarding where and how to speak while holding such a high responsibility.” “I strongly condemn this comment and firmly demand a public apology from the concerned director and that he be brought under accountability. I call upon the BCB to take swift and strict action,” said Mominul.

Virat Kohli eyeing yet another Sachin Tendulkar record in India-New Zealand ODI series

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Virat Kohli will be back in India colours when the side face New Zealand at home. The former India captain had recently donned the navy blue of Delhi in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, playing in the tournament for the first time in over a decade, and seemed to simply carry forward the incredible form that he showed in the ODI series against South Africa before that. One of the most prolific batters of all time, Kohli is at that stage of his career where records fall almost every time he makes a big score. When the first match against New Zealand comes around, however, Kohli may not need to make that big a score to topple a record currently held by the legendary Sachin Tendulkar.

Kohli's career tally of runs in international cricket currently stands at 27,975 and he is hence only 25 runs away from getting to 28,000. If he does it in the series against New Zealand, or even the next series against England which is scheduled to be played in July, Kohli could overtake Tendulkar as the fastest player to get to the mark. Kohli has played 623 innings in international cricket thus far while Tendulkar had got there in 644.

It won't be the first time that Kohli breaks a record held by Tendulkar, particularly in ODI cricket. Most fa-



mously, Kohli overtook Tendulkar's record tally of 49 in ODI cricket during the 2023 World Cup. He now has 53 centuries going into the New Zealand series. While his form in Test cricket dwindled, Kohli has seemingly got a second wind in ODI cricket since 2023. Last year, he only stepped up in the format after retiring from Tests, finishing 2025 with a tally of 651 runs for the calendar year at an average of 65.10 in 13 matches with three centuries and four half-centuries. With the veteran seemingly having his eyes set on winning the 2027 World Cup, Kohli will be looking to continue that form in this series before returning to T20 cricket for RCB in the 2026 IPL.

own time. But I don't think it was natural,” Uthappa said on his YouTube channel in an earlier video.

“When Rohit was not scoring runs in Australia, I felt that he should take a break for six months and work on his fitness. I had no doubt in my mind that he would score runs,” he added. “In both Virat and Rohit, you can see that hunger back in their eyes, which is really cool. It's endearing to see it from a veteran who's been there, done that, and achieved so much in international cricket,” Uthappa said. Age is just a number: Tim Southee on RoKo “Kohli is arguably the best ever one-day batsman and if he's still performing then why not,” Tim Southee, who is leading Sharjah Warriorz, told select media on the sidelines of the fourth season of the ILT20 here. “Rohit (too) had scored 100 some days ago in Australia, so they're still performing. So, as long as they're still performing and still contributing to the side then I believe age is only a number,” he added.

‘England’s three wise men turned out to be the three stooges’: Geoffrey Boycott



GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Although it did seem like the result this time around would be different ahead of the Ashes, in the end, apart from the win in MCG, the script has remained the same for the most part. Australia thrashed England Down Under yet again. Former England cricketer Geoffrey Boycott slammed the Head Coach Brendon McCullum, Director of Cricket Rob Key, and skipper Ben Stokes. “England's three wise men turned out to be the three stooges. Brendon McCullum, Rob Key and Ben Stokes sold a lie for three years. McCullum's philosophy is do your own thing. Play without a care in the world. Nobody tells them off, no accountability, and nobody gets dropped, so they just keep doing the same daft things,” Boycott wrote in his column for the Tele-

graph.

“Why should the players change, adapt, or improve if the coach and captain are okay with it? People are now getting fed up with this way of playing and if Key keeps backing McCullum to allow the players to continue making the same mistakes then his job may be on the line,” he added. “I like McCullum. I don't know anyone who doesn't like him and he has been a breath of fresh air for England cricket which has been exciting and invigorating. But he is a gambler who thinks he is always going to win his money back. That's how casinos always win in the end. How many hopefuls start well but finish in tears? The reason is they don't know when to stop or change their routine,” he wrote.

“This sort of free licence to do whatever you please with no consequence is holding England back. We have some very talented cricketers but that skill is not being harnessed. To get to the next level we need a different discipline and structure to the way the players prepare and think,” wrote Boycott. “If the three wise men stay then the ECB has to make sure there is some sort of change. Key should be told to invite a couple of the past great players like Ian Botham, Graham Gooch and David Gower to sit with him and McCullum, and even the captain, to receive first-hand some fresh and different ideas. The ex-players have been winners in Ashes series so know what they are talking about. How many times can I say we former players want England to win,” he added.

Gabriel Martinelli apologises to Conor Bradley: ‘I really didn’t understand he was seriously injured in heat of the moment’

GNS News Agency, Jan 13

Ugly scenes erupted at the Emirates Stadium as Arsenal winger Gabriel Martinelli kicked the ball against Liverpool's Conor Bradley and shoved him off the pitch. Bradley was lying on the ground, looked like he had sustained a knee injury before Martinelli displayed his frustration. The Liverpool players who saw the contact were furious; however, it was Liverpool defender Ibrahim Konate who ended up picking up the yellow card. Martinelli, after the game, took to the instagram to post his apology. Conor and I have messaged and I've already apologised to him. I really didn't understand he was seriously injured in heat of the moment. I want to say I'm deeply sorry for reacting. Sending Conor all my best again for a quick recovery.”

Reacting to the incident, Liverpool manager Arne Slot said: “I don't know Gabriel Martinelli but he comes across as a nice guy.” “I think the problem for him is, and it's a problem in general in football, that there is so much time-wasting and players pretending they are injured in the final parts of the game, that you can then sometimes be annoyed if you want to score a goal that you think the player is time-wasting.” “I cannot ask of Gabriel Martinelli in the 94th minute when it's so emotional for him to understand he is playing Liverpool – a team when we played Leeds and a player



was held but didn't go to the floor, or played West Ham United and my players try to drag Paqueta out of a situation where he was getting a second yellow card. “I'm 100% sure that if he knew what the injury might be that he would never do (what he did). But it doesn't look great if he (Bradley) has the injury which we fear he might have.” “But time-wasting and diving in football has come to the situation where players think in the 94th minute that it's happening again, because I've seen it happen against us so many times this season.

Robin Uthappa on Ruturaj Gaikwad: ‘In Indian cricket, it is important to strike when the iron is hot’

Ruturaj Gaikwad century Ruturaj Gaikwad of India raises his bat after scoring a hundred during the 2nd ODI match between India and South Africa at Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium, Raipur, India, on December 3, 2025. Ruturaj Gaikwad scored a sublime ton in the second ODI against South Africa in Raipur. His rotation of strike through the middle overs, picking and choosing when to attack, was quite sound. However, the 28-year-old has not been picked up in the squad for the upcoming ODI series against New Zealand. Former Indian cricketer Robin Uthappa noted that Gaikwad tends to lose his form at times.

“I have noticed one thing with Ruturaj. At the right time, he loses his form a bit. In Indian cricket, it is important to strike when the iron is hot. His time came two to three times and his form got slightly off. So for the form to stay, to get the opportunities at the right time, it has to sit properly,” he said on his YouTube channel.

Former Indian cricketer R Ashwin opined that India could have picked Ruturaj Gaikwad over Rishabh Pant. “Could Gaikwad have been kept in the squad? I think that was a real possibility. The only spot of contention is between Pant and Gaikwad. It was a straight decision. Shreyas Iyer deserved to come back after the injury, so no discussion there. It is his rightful position. The debate is over who



goes out. Between a second wicketkeeper and a batter, you can get a keeper from anywhere to cover,” he said on “Ash ki Baat”. “Who will keep a track on Ruturaj Gaikwad's mindset now? At four or five, I am sticking my neck out, his batting against spin and ability to run between wickets and close out an innings is phenomenal. I personally don't think Pant can bat in the middle-order in white-ball cricket at the moment. I think he is a top-three batter,” he added. “Ruturaj will get a long rope only when Rohit and Kohli decide to hang up their boots. Till then, getting a long run for him is going to be hard,” he said.

Stunning Mumbai collapse sets up quarterfinal clash against Karnataka in Vijay Hazare Trophy

Mumbai's Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav and Sarfaraz Khan exchange greetings with Punjab players after the former team won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 cricket match against Punjab, at Jaipuria Vidyalaya Ground, in Jaipur, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. (PTI Photo) Mumbai's Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav and Sarfaraz Khan exchange greetings with Punjab players after the former team won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 cricket match against Punjab, at Jaipuria Vidyalaya Ground, in Jaipur, Thursday,

Mumbai missed a chance to finish top of Group C in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and set up a quarterfinal clash with Madhya Pradesh as they collapsed from 201/5 to 215 against Punjab in the last Group C fixture on Thursday. The defeat meant Punjab took the top spot and would now face Madhya Pradesh, while Mumbai will have to face rivals Karnataka in the quarterfinals to be played in Bengaluru on January 12. Chasing a modest total, Mumbai were in touching distance before the dismissal of captain Shreyas Iyer injected life into the game in Jaipur. Thereafter, Punjab spinners Mayank Markande, Harpreet Brar and Haroon Singh took care of the tail as Mumbai lost their last five wickets for 14 runs. This was after Sarfaraz Khan scored the fastest List A fifty by an Indian, getting to the landmark off just 15 deliveries. Batting at No 3, he made 62 off 20 deliveries in an innings that included seven boundaries and five sixes. The rapid start given by Sarfaraz and by Shreyas, who made 45 off 34 meant Mumbai had enough overs under their belt,

but blew their chances in the most stunning fashion. They were bowled out in 26.2 overs.

Earlier, a 74-ball 72 from Ramandeep Singh and 57 from Anmolpreet Singh had taken Punjab to 216 in 45.1 overs. With Shardul Thakur already ruled out and Shreyas set to join the Indian team for the ODIs against New Zealand, Mumbai will have to do without their star players in the knockouts. Punjab players celebrate the wicket of Mumbai's Onkar Tarmale during the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 cricket match between Mumbai and Punjab, at Jaipuria Vidyalaya Ground, in Jaipur, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. Punjab players celebrate the wicket of Mumbai's Onkar Tarmale during the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 cricket match between Mumbai and Punjab, at Jaipuria Vidyalaya Ground, in Jaipur, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. (In another Group C fixture, dropped from the Indian team, Ruturaj Gaikwad scored 134 off 131 in Maharashtra's total of 249/7. Coming in with his team struggling at 16/4, which soon became 25/5 Gaikwad found support from Vicky Ostwal (53) and Rajvardhan Hangargekar (32 n.o) to lift Maharashtra to a decent total. That proved to be enough as Maharashtra attack defended the total with leg-spinner Prashant Solanki returning with figures of 4/56. But it was seamer Ramakrishna Ghosh who hogged the limelight, bowling a maiden in the last over with six runs to defend. In Group A, with Karnataka already booking their spot, it was battle between Madhya Pradesh and Kerala.

Laalo: A Rs 50 lakh Gujarati film outperforms Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar at box office, earns 23,900% profit



In October, when the much-awaited Kannada epic Kantara: Chapter 1 stormed theatres across India, very few noticed that just a week later, a small Gujarati film quietly made its way to cinemas. With a modest budget of just Rs 50 lakh, Laalo: Krishna Sada Sahaayate appeared to be yet another low-key regional release—unlikely to survive beyond a couple of weeks. Its opening numbers only reinforced that perception. However, by the time it was done with its box office run, the film earned an unbelievable Rs 120.58 crore at the global box office.

Laalo box office collection till now According to Industry tracker Sacnilk, in its first week, Laalo collected Rs 33 lakh, followed by Rs 27 lakh in its second week, pushing the film marginally into profit territory with a surplus of just Rs 10 lakh. Industry observers assumed the film would wrap up its theatrical run soon after. But what followed defied every box-office rulebook.

In its third week, Laalo suddenly picked up momentum, earning Rs 62 lakh. The real turning point came on its fourth Saturday, when the film shocked the trade by collecting Rs 1 crore in a single day. By then, the film had already recovered 200% of its production cost—an achievement few films ever reach. Yet, this was only the beginning. On its fourth Sunday, Laalo earned Rs 1.85 crore

in its original Gujarati version alone. By the end of its fourth week, the film had amassed a staggering Rs 12.08 crore. Riding strong word-of-mouth and repeat audiences, Laalo went on to enjoy an extraordinary theatrical run of nearly three months, ultimately earning Rs 120.58 crore worldwide. The film has officially become the highest-grossing Gujarati film of all time and the first Gujarati film to cross the Rs 100 crore mark globally—a milestone once considered unthinkable for the industry. At a time when big-budget spectacles like Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar dominate headlines for earning five to six times their Rs 250 crore budgets, Laalo stands as a far rarer success story with a profit margin of approximately 23,900%. The film has also outperformed recent sleeper hits like Premalu and Manjummel Boys. While both films created significant box-office waves and broke regional records, they were mounted on comparatively higher budgets of Rs 5 crore and Rs 20 crore, respectively.

What do we know about Laalo?

Laalo tells the story of a rickshaw driver trapped in a secluded farmhouse, forced to confront his inner demons while experiencing divine visions of Lord Krishna, who guides him through a deeply spiritual journey of healing and self-discovery. The film features Reeve Rachh, Shruhad Goswami, Karan Joshi, Mishy Kadecha, and Anshu Joshi, among others, and its unprecedented success has catapulted both the cast and director Ankit Sakhiya into national prominence. Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter, Sakhiya reflected on the film's impact: "This is not just about showing figures. This is about delivering a message. Krishna doesn't belong to us alone—he belongs to the whole world." He added that the team has moved beyond the traditional hit-versus-flop narrative. "We are no longer chasing numbers. The film is already a hit. Our only aim now is to take it to more people. Watch it, celebrate it, and talk about it." The film is now set for a pan-India re-release in the Hindi language on January 9, marking its second theatrical innings and aiming to introduce the phenomenon to an even wider audience.

Shark Tank: Days after Anupam Mittal's jibe at Aman Gupta for 'not having a job', boAt CMO reveals why he quit

Shark Tank India is back with its fifth season and so are the jibes and digs that 'sharks' often take at each other, often leading to much discussion on and off the show. The new season made similar news quite early when Shaadi.com founder Anupam Mittal told boAt co-founder in the tank that he should not question his ventures when he doesn't even have a job anymore. Aman recently stepped down as the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of boAt. In a recent interview, he has opened up about the reasons behind his decision, saying the move had been under discussion for quite some time and that stepping away before the company's IPO was the most ethical choice, primarily keeping investors' trust in mind.

Speaking to Pinkvilla, the boAt co-founder explained that the decision was part of a long-term plan to professionalise the organisation. "It was not a decision which was made today. Today, you see we are professionalising a company. About three years ago, we brought in an external CEO to run the company. Gaurav Nayyar had joined as COO and is now the CEO. We believe it is high time that professionally run management takes over. That's our belief—that the company can now be run much better by professionals than by me, and that's the decision I took," Aman said.

Aman Gupta still holds over 40% of the company shares. He further elaborated that his continued presence in an executive role could create confusion within the organisation. "Another reason is that I am a strong founder. When a strong founder still works in the system, employees feel there are many bosses in the company. I want Gaurav to run the company as if there is only one boss—and that's him. He reports to the board. I am still a board member. Sameer and I still own more than 40% of the company, so we remain large shareholders," he added. Aman noted that over the past years, the founders had taken boAt to a certain level and now believed it was time for professionals to lead the next phase of growth.

Explaining why the move was timed just ahead of the IPO, Aman said, "Imagine if I had stepped down after the IPO. That wouldn't have been fair to retail investors. They would feel cheated if they invested believing that Aman



Gupta was running the company and suddenly someone else took over. That's not fair, and that's not me. Hence, I stepped down first so people invest their hard-earned money knowing the reality." While Aman did not reveal his future plans, his exit from an operational role has already sparked public reactions. Recently, Shark Tank India co-judge Anupam Mittal took a jibe at him during a pitch. When Aman questioned Anupam about some of his ventures shutting down, Anupam retorted, "Bhai teri toh naukri hi nahi bachti year (Brother, you don't even have a job anymore)."

Around 29 days before boAt's public listing, both founders—Aman Gupta and Sameer Mehta—stepped down from their roles. Aman transitioned into a non-executive director role, while Sameer moved into the position of executive director focused on long-term growth. Gaurav Nayyar, who had joined boAt as COO three years ago, was promoted to CEO and Managing Director. With this transition, Aman no longer holds any operational responsibilities at the company. He had served as boAt's Chief Marketing Officer since its early days and played a key role in shaping the brand. In April, electronic brand boAt—best known for its headphones and smartwatches—filed for an IPO, which has since been approved by SEBI. The Warburg Pincus-backed company is targeting a valuation of around Rs 13,000 crore.

Kantara Chapter 1 among Indian films on Oscars 2026 eligibility list

Los Angeles: Four Indian titles, including Kannada blockbuster 'Kantara: A Legend – Chapter 1' and the Hindi film 'Tanvi The Great', are among the 201 feature films eligible to compete for the Best Picture award at Oscars 2026, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced. The Academy on Thursday released the "Reminder List of Productions Eligible for the 98th Academy Awards". The list of films that satisfy the eligibility criteria for consideration in the general categories, including Best Picture, is a step before the nominations, which will be announced on January 22.

Besides Rishabh Shetty's "Kantara" and Anupam Kher's directorial, the other two Indian productions are the multilingual animated film "Mahavatar Narasimha" and the Tamil title "Tourist Family" by first-time filmmaker Abishan Jeevinth.

Radhika Apte-starrer "Sister Midnight", a Hindi language UK-India co-production, has also made it to the list. In all, 317 feature films are eligible for the 98th Academy Awards, the Academy said. Of these, 201 meet the additional eligibility requirements needed for consideration in the Best Picture category. Inclusion in the reminder list does not guarantee a nomination. Films must still undergo the Academy's voting process.

To be eligible for consideration in the general entry categories, feature films must have opened in a commercial motion picture theatre in at least one of six US metropolitan areas, Los Angeles County, New York City, the Bay

Area, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth and Atlanta, between January 1 and December 31, 2025. They must have also completed a minimum qualifying run of seven consecutive days at the same venue, the Academy said.

For Best Picture consideration, films must fulfill the general eligibility criteria and submit a confidential Academy Representation and Inclusion Standards Entry (RAISE) form. They are also required to meet at least two of the four Academy inclusion standards, along with an expanded theatrical eligibility requirement, which includes a seven-day theatrical run, consecutive or non-consecutive, in 10 of the top 50 US markets within 45 days of the film's initial release in 2025. In December 2025, the Academy unveiled its Oscars shortlists for 12 categories, including International Feature Film. Neeraj Ghaywan's "Homebound", India's official entry to the Academy Awards this year, has made it to the list of 15 films shortlisted in the category. A total of 24 categories will be awarded at the 98th Oscars on March 15. Each category has five nominees, except for Best Picture, which has 10. Best Picture nominations are determined by eligible members from all 19 Academy branches. All rounds of Oscars voting are conducted through a secret online ballot. In 2025, the Academy had announced a list of 323 feature films eligible for the 97th Academy Awards, which included 11 Indian titles. Among them were Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light", Shuchi Talati's "Girls Will Be Girls", Kiran Rao's "Laapataa Ladies", and the Randeep Hooda-starrer "Swatantrya Veer Savarkar".

Madras High Court stays order clearing Vijay's Jana Nayagan; reopens censor fight



The Madras High Court on Friday stayed a single judge order that directed the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to immediately grant a U/A certificate to Jana Nayagan, the much-anticipated film starring actor-politician Vijay, reopening a legal battle that now threatens the movie's release schedule. A Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, with Justice G Arul Murugan, passed the interim stay after hearing an urgent writ appeal filed by the CBFC against the order of Justice P T Asha, who earlier in the day ruled that the censor board's decision to refer the film to a revising committee was "without jurisdiction".

The stay means that Justice Asha's direction to issue the certificate cannot be acted upon for now. The Bench posted the matter for further hearing on January 21, after the Pongal holidays. The appeal hearing unfolded with unusual intensity and attention, underscoring the stakes involved in a case that sits at the intersection of law, politics, and cinema.

Opening arguments for the CBFC, Additional Solicitor General ARL Sundaresan urged the Division Bench

to closely examine the single judge's order. He said the writ petition filed by KVN Productions LLP on January 6 had been heard the same afternoon, with records called for the next day. According to him, the judgment was pronounced on January 9 without giving the CBFC an opportunity to file a counter-affidavit. Sundaresan argued that while the production house had only sought a direction to issue a certificate, the single judge had gone further by quashing the CBFC chairperson's January 6 decision to refer the film to a revising committee—despite there being no such prayer in the petition. "This letter itself was never challenged," he said, adding that no writ of certiorari had been sought against the chairperson's decision.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBFC, echoed those concerns, arguing that the principles of natural justice had been compromised. He contended that the chairperson was empowered under the Cinematograph Certification Rules to refer a film to a revising committee, and that the single judge could not have "moulded the relief" in the absence of a specific challenge or without allowing the statutory authority time to respond. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing the production house, questioned how a member of the examining committee could effectively become a complainant after the committee had recommended a U/A 16+ certificate. He submitted that the entire certification process had, in substance, concluded by December 29 after the producers complied with all excisions and modifications. "How can a producer fix a release date without a certificate in hand?" the Chief Justice asked, observing that courts, like administrative authorities, were also bound to ensure fair opportunity.

The Chief Justice questioned whether a "false state of urgency" had been created to pressure the court into granting immediate relief. He also asked how the single judge could have directed the CBFC to produce records and passed final orders without affording time to file a counter-affidavit. Senior advocate Satish Parasaran, appearing for KVN Productions, pointed out that there were communications from the CBFC's regional office in December indicating that certification would follow once cuts were implemented. The Bench remained unconvinced, noting that until a certificate was formally issued, the producer ought to have waited before announcing a release date.

Song Sung Blue movie review: Hugh Jackman charms, but Kate Hudson truly soars

Song Sung Blue movie review: Amidst contemporaries like Bob Dylan, singer-songwriter Neil Diamond was considered by some as unerringly pleasing but not necessarily profound. Like Song Sung Blue, a film trying not too hard but softly leading us to the spot that music touches in our combined hearts. It's a simple story, about un-extraordinary people whose dreams of doing extraordinary things have almost dimmed, and about their uncomplex families and uncomplicated love.

It should not be, but it is amazing how rare this is on the big screen. What is different about Mike Sardina (Jackman) and Claire (Hudson), from all those striving middle-aged people around them, is that they are both "good" singers, not great, but good. They know that—and all they are hoping to do is to be able to sing, entertain and, maybe, make a living of it. A chance but fortuitous encounter where sparks fly has them settle on setting up a Neil Diamond tribute band. They take on names 'Lightning' (Mike) and 'Thunder' (Claire) in this band, with a bunch of loyal friends who have seen Mike put his heart and soul into many off-and-on gigs over the years, holding up the rear (notably Imperio as a Buddy Holly cover singer).

The sincerity and delight of Lightning and Thunder, not to say their singing talents (with Jackman and Hudson doing their own vocals), make them almost instant stars in their native Milwaukee. An opening act they get to play for Pearl Jam is the highlight, before tragedy and heart break strike. Director Brewer (who has also co-adapted with Greg Kohn the latter's documentary on Mike and Claire for the screen) does the music parts better than when song goes out of its stars' lives. The latter passages seem too timid about digging deeper into Mike and Claire's stoicism and pain—though not due to any lapse on Hudson and Jackman's parts. The two charismatic actors shine, whether it is in their characters marvelling at their own good fortune or mourning what can be so easily lost. They complete each other so well that you don't feel the absence of their back stories, or the tension of two "artistic" personalities. Between



them, they have three children from their former spouses (played by Anderson, Hensley, Princess). And Brewer finds a way to make them an intrinsic part of this roller-coaster journey without the children (including two who are teens) feeling like superfluous baggage. Jackman is one of our more underappreciated actors, having carried on his shoulders a range of films, from those dealing with regret, to magic and super powers. But it is Hudson who is an absolute revelation, in one of her best performances since Almost Famous, which she did early on in her career. Like Song Sung Blue, that too was based on lives lived in the reflected glory of a music star. But here, Hudson is more than a fan girl; she is a mother, a woman, fluff around the face, wrinkled around the eyes, her make-up that of a woman with a lot on her hands, her craft a last shot at her dreams, her dreams that she knows will age like her, but her life that she realises is the sum of all things—songs and blues. Song Sung Blue movie director: Craig Brewer. Song Sung Blue movie cast: Hugh Jackman, Kate Hudson, Kella Anderson, Hudson Hensley, King Princess, Michael Imperio. Song Sung Blue movie rating: 3.5 stars

His first five films bombed; but he rose from ashes to become 'Bollywood's richest man' with net worth of Rs 13,314 crore, even more than SRK

Despite facing five consecutive flops, including ones headlined by Shah Rukh Khan and Hrithik Roshan, 'Bollywood's richest man' slowly began making inroads with smaller projects. The Hurun India Rich List 2025 named this film producer as the richest man in Bollywood with a net worth of \$1.5 billion.

Just as impossible as it is to predict a film's box office verdict, so is the fate of film professionals. While the biggest stars can become irrelevant, even those who have faced back-to-back failures can rise to the top, and all it takes for fortunes to change is one Friday. While there are many in Bollywood whose journeys exemplify the industry's uncertain nature, arguably the most notable is producer Ronnie Screwvala of RSVP Movies, who became one of the wealthiest figures in Hindi cinema despite his first few movies bombing.

Recalling his entry into cinema, Ronnie recently revealed that his debut as a producer, Dil Ke Jharoke Main (1997), was a major box office failure. Featuring Manisha Koirala, Mamik Singh, and Vikas Bhalla in lead roles, the movie was produced by Ronnie and his wife Zarina under the banner UTV Motion Pictures. "It was a massive flop. The movie featured a scene in which a cobra had to drink milk. Usually, cobras don't drink milk when we are shooting, but ours did. Seeing this, the director said that the movie would be a superhit because the cobra had drunk the milk. 'Aap befikre (be carefree),' he said. The movie turned out to be my biggest flop," he shared during a session organised by Masters' Union.

When asked how he kept going despite facing five consecutive flops, Ronnie Screwvala said that it was simply because he did not have a "Plan B." He continued, "From following the herd to 'I might as well behave like the outsider' was the learning curve. I didn't have to change. I just had to stop what I was trying to be and embrace what I always wanted to be. When we started the media business and channels, it was in that right spirit of exactly how we saw it. With movies, however, I was out of my depth, and therefore I wanted to follow the herd. Eventually, I decided to go back to my own conviction and self-belief of how I wanted to build the company, the business and the brand." He also cited his lower-middle-class upbringing, his lack of a Plan B, and his father's assertion that he wouldn't be able to financially support him during crises as motivating factors in not giving up. Ronnie and wife Zarina Screwvala made their film debut by producing Dil Ke Jharoke Main. Ronnie and wife Zarina Screwvala at the Colors Screen Awards 2013. (File photo/Ganesh Shirsekar) Ronnie Screwvala greenlit Lakshya, Swades and Rang De Basanti together

He further revealed that UTV greenlit Lakshya, Swades, and Rang De Basanti together without knowing which would work. Ronnie said, "At the heart of it, we wanted to do something disruptive. We wanted to tell stories in a different manner. We wanted younger blood. We wanted to talk to newer directors. We didn't want anyone sitting in the room and saying, 'I know how to do this' or think only about casting. We wanted to prioritise the script and not the casting."