

Newly raised Bhairav Battalion set for historic Republic Day debut

New Delhi: New Delhi is set to witness a powerful display of India's military might this Republic Day, as fighter jets that played a key role in 'Operation Sindoor' will roar across Kartavya Path. The spectacle will capture the global attention, say defence experts.Operation Sindoor, which was launched in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, highlighted a decisive response by the Indian armed forces. This military operation by India targeted terrorist hideouts and key locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). When Pakistan tried to carry out retaliatory strikes, India responded with double the force. This showcased the Indian Air Force's operational dominance to the world.

ED raids: I-PAC issues guarded statement, pledges full cooperation

Kolkata: Amid Trinamool Congress' hyper-reactions over the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) simultaneous raid and search operations on Thursday at the office of the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) at Salt Lake on the northern outskirts of Kolkata and at the residence of I-PAC co-founder Pratik Jain at Loudon Street in central Kolkata, I-PAC on Friday issued an extremely guarded statement in the matter.



Telangana Stringent medical measures imposed for Medaram Jathara

Hyderabad, Jan 10

Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha has urged health department officials to implement stringent measures to ensure the wellbeing of the millions of devotees attending the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jathara. Emphasising the need for vigilance, the Minister insisted that the system must be prepared to respond promptly to any health issues, no matter how minor.

During a video conference held on Saturday, the Minister reviewed a plan prepared by the Public Health Director regarding arrangements for the event. Officials informed him that, with lakhs of devotees already en route to the Jathara, three medical camps have been established near the

main shrines, at Jampanna stream, and the RTC bus stand.

As the number of devotees continues to rise, the Minister directed officials to set up additional medical camps in and around the Jathara area well ahead of time. He stressed that medical services should be accessible from the moment devotees embark on their journey to Medaram until they return home safely after their visit to the goddesses. Moreover, he ordered the establishment of medical camps along all routes leading to Medaram, ensuring comprehensive health support for attendees.

Telangana Poised to Become a Global Innovation Capital: IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu



“P. S. ASHOKAN”KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. “Ad-dressing the BITS Alumni Association Global Meet 2026 at BITS Pilani – Hyderabad Campus, Hon'ble IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu asserted that Telangana is steadily emerging as a global hub for innovation, driven by artificial intelligence, research-led development, and ethical technology practices.”“The Minister stated that the Telangana government is focused on building a robust global innovation ecosystem with AI at its core. He highlighted pioneering initiatives such as TGDeX, India's first AI-enabled data exchange platform, along with proposals for an AI Innovation Hub and a dedicated AI University, aimed at nurturing cutting-edge research and future-ready talent.”“Emphasising the impor-

ance of responsible AI, Shri Sridhar Babu called for stronger investments in research and development, robust data privacy frameworks, and inclusive technological solutions that address real-world challenges, particularly in rural and underserved sectors. He noted that innovation must go beyond commercial success and contribute meaningfully to social progress and sustainable development.”“Inviting alumni of the BITS Alumni Association to actively collaborate with the state, the Minister urged them to partner in the Telangana Rising vision. He underlined that technology and innovation should play a pivotal role in national development and in strengthening the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, ensuring that growth is inclusive, ethical, and globally competitive

SCR announces ten special trains from Hyderabad to Vijayawada amid Sankranti

Hyderabad, Jan 10

In anticipation of the heavy travel demand during Sankranti this year (2026), the South Central Railway has announced the operation of additional special trains. The newly introduced special trains will run between Hyderabad and Vijayawada, with details of ten services released by the railway recently. These trains will be equipped with chair cars and general compartments.

Advance reservations are available for the chair car coaches, while over half of the coaches will be general compartments for those travelling without reservations. The special trains will facilitate travel on various routes before and after the festival.

Special Train Details:

- Special trains will depart from Hyderabad to Vijayawada on the 11th, 12th, 13th, 18th, and 19th of this month at 6:10 AM.

- Special trains will run from Vijayawada to Hyderabad on the 10th, 11th, 12th, 17th, and 19th at 2:40 PM.

These additional services come on top of over 150 extra trains already running for the festival season. However, the newly announced services will only operate to Vijayawada. In contrast, existing Sankranti



special trains are servicing routes to Narsapur, Kakinada, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam, and Nanded.

The South Central Railway has also implemented measures for the efficient management of special trains, ensuring many depart from Charalapalli to avoid straining the ongoing renovation at the Secunderabad railway station. Some trains will also be scheduled to board from Begumpet, Hi-Tech City, and Lingampally.

Meanwhile, city residents are flocking to their hometowns to celebrate the Sankranti festival, resulting in heavy traffic congestion at toll plazas and on routes leading to Vijayawada.

GHMC to launch special e-waste collection drive in Greater Hyderabad on Jan 12, 13

Hyderabad: The GHMC is launching a special drive on 'E-waste' on January 12 and 13 across all 300 wards, aiming to remove accumulated E-waste from houses, offices and public areas to maintain cleanliness standards in the city.

GHMC Commissioner R V Karnan released an awareness handout regarding the list of E-waste materials to be collected.

The items include large appliances such as fridges, washing machines and air conditioning sets;

small appliances such as mixers, iron boxes, and hair dryers; IT and telecom equipment such as computers, mobiles, and chargers; consumer electronics such as TVs, music systems and cameras; batteries; and other electrical items including UPS, inverters, and batteries.

The GHMC deployed dedicated collection vehicles in every circle, covering a total of 30 GHMC circles, to collect E-waste material. All collected E-waste material will be processed at authorised processing centres through a scientific process.

the highway to alleviate congestion.

In a bid to maintain order, authorities in Suryapet are utilising drone cameras to monitor traffic conditions closely. This technology allows for real-time assessments of vehicle flow, helping to ensure smooth movement along the busy route.

The police remain on high alert and are prepared to take immediate action should any disruptions occur, striving to maintain an orderly flow of traffic during this peak travel period.

Police use drones to monitor traffic on Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway in Suryapet



Hyderabad, Jan 10

The Hyderabad-Vijayawada National Highway is currently experiencing heavy traffic as people embark on journeys to their hometowns for the Sankranti festival. In response to the surge in vehicles, police have implemented measures at various points along

Pistols, grenade recovered after suspected drone drop in Jammu

Jammu, Jan 10: An arms consignment, apparently dropped by a drone from Pakistan, was recovered from a forward area near the International Border in the Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Saturday.

The recovery of the consignment, including two pistols, three magazines, 16 rounds and a grenade, was made amid heightened security to thwart any attempt by terrorists to disrupt the upcoming Republic Day celebrations, the officials said.

They said a joint team of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Special Operations Group (SOG) of J&K Police launched a search operation in the Paloora village of Ghagwal late Friday night following information about suspected movement of a drone from across the border.



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)““Fake Job Racket Using CSR Funds Uncovered; Three Arrested.“Adilabad: In a major breakthrough, the Adilabad One Town Police have busted a large-scale job fraud

racket that cheated hundreds of unemployed youth across the erstwhile Adilabad, Warangal and Khammam districts.“Addressing a press conference, District Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan said the prime accused, Jettaboyina Madhu Kiran (45), was arrested after evading police for several months. Two other accused — Madasi Sudhakar (48) and Nammini Satish — were also taken into custody. A case has been registered against five persons at Adilabad One Town Police Station, and three arrests have been made so far.“According to the police, the prime accused had floated a company named “Ananth E Solutions” in 2013, claiming to provide outsourced jobs. In 2023, along with Sujatha Thakur, Nammini Satish and Lavanya, he registered a society named “Vidyadaan Organisers” with the intention of siphoning off Central government CSR and Vidyanjali 2.0

scheme funds.“By falsely claiming government authorisation, the accused lured unemployed youth with promises of jobs in government schools and colleges. Through a network of agents, they collected amounts ranging from ?1 lakh to ?2.5 lakh per candidate, issued fake appointment orders, and placed victims in schools and junior colleges across Adilabad, Nirmal, Asifabad, Mancherla, Warangal and Khammam districts.“Police revealed that nearly 240 candidates were cheated across the State. To maintain credibility, the accused paid salaries to the victims for the first three months. When payments stopped, victims realised the fraud and lodged complaints at various police stations.“Earlier, agents Rahul, Kova Vithal (Principal of Bodh Government Junior College), and Varalakshmi were arrested and remanded in related cases. During the current operation, police seized mobile phones, fake appointment

orders, and other incriminating material from the accused.“SP Akhil Mahajan stated that the accused would be taken into police custody for further interrogation to identify additional persons involved in the racket.“Public Advisory“The SP cautioned the public against falling prey to job scams and urged unemployed youth not to pay money for employment. “Government jobs cannot be obtained by paying money. Employment should be secured only through proper examinations and official recruitment processes,” he said, warning of strict action against those involved in fake job rackets.“The SP commended One Town Inspector Sunil Kumar, IT Core RSSI B. Gopikrishna, and their teams for their efforts in cracking the case. Present at the press meet were Adilabad DSP L. Jeevan Reddy, Inspector B. Sunil Kumar, Sub-Inspectors Gopikrishna, Naganath, Ashok, and other staff.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India's fading Red terror

The killing of the top Maoist commander Madvi Hidma in a recent police encounter came as the most decisive breakthrough in the decades-long fight against the Left Wing Extremism. Already on the last leg of survival, the Maoist movement received a series of major blows in recent times, with the killing or surrender of a large number of its senior leaders. Leading security experts believe that the latest turn of events may well signal the end of Maoism in the country. While the security operations have been successful in breaking the back of the extremist movement, the government should now focus its attention on addressing the grievances of the tribal communities, especially in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region. The fight against naxalism has to be on both ideological, and security and development fronts. It would not be won unless good quality governance is provided. The tactical victory achieved by the security forces must be turned into a durable peace. For this, the authorities must focus on building roads, infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and ensuring the rights and livelihoods of the forest communities of Bastar. Much of Bastar continues to suffer from chronic underdevelopment, and an enduring trust deficit between tribal communities and the State. Access to healthcare, quality schools, land records, and functioning welfare delivery remains patchy.

Toopran DSP Narender Goud Unveils Praja Jyothi calendar

“Ind,jan10,medak incharge nr goud.”“At the Toopran DSP Office, the Praja Jyothi Calendar was ceremoniously unveiled by DSP Narender Goud under the leadership of Praja Jyothi reporter Suresh Goud, representing the combined mandals of Tupran and Veldurthi. “Speaking on the occasion, DSP Narender Goud appreciated the responsible role played by Praja Jyothi in highlighting public issues and bringing people's problems to light. He lauded the services and values upheld by Praja Jyothi and extended his congratulations. “DSP Narender Goud further stated that the role of the media is crucial in providing truthful and impartial information to society, and commended Praja Jyothi for consistently responding to public concerns and serving the community with integrity.



FDP & STTP on 3D Printing Successfully Conducted



“Ind,jan10,medak incharge nr goud.”“The Departments of Pharmaceutical Engineering (PHE) and Biomedical Engineering (BME) successfully organized a Faculty Development Program (FDP) and Short-Term Training Program (STTP) titled “3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing: Applications in Engineering and Healthcare” from 05 to 10 January 2026. “The five-day program witnessed the participation of 90 faculty members and students from various institutions including JNTU Hyderabad, Adhityamaan College of Engineering (Autonomous), Government Institute of Electronics, East Marredpally (054), Sri Indu Institute of Pharmacy, Shree Saraswati Institute of Pharmacy (Tondavali), along with VIPER. Participants represented diverse disciplines such as Pharmaceutical, Biomedical, Chemical, Mechanical Engineering, and Pharmacy. “The program was enriched by expert talks and sessions delivered by resource persons from IIT Hyderabad (IITH), NIPER Hyderabad, NIPER Kolkata, Osmania University, and North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU). The sessions highlighted the latest advancements and applications of 3D printing and additive manufacturing in engineering and healthcare sectors. “The program aimed to enhance technical knowledge, promote interdisciplinary learning, and encourage

research collaborations. The FDP & STTP received an enthusiastic response with active participation and meaningful interactions throughout. “The organizers expressed their sincere gratitude to the Management, Director Dr. Lakshmi Prasad, Principal Dr. Sanjay Dubey, HOD—Pharmaceutical Engineering Dr. P. Vishnu, HOD—Biomedical Engineering Dr. H. Sujana, Sri. Bapiraju, and extended thanks to all the resource persons, coordinators, organizing committee members, and the support team for their valuable guidance and continuous support, which contributed to the successful conduct of the FDP & STTP. “Principal, “Dr. Sanjay Dubey

Excel in Sports Along with Academics Srikari Mahasana Annual Sports Meet Celebrated Grandly



“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, January 10: “Emphasizing that students should strive for excellence not only in academics but also in sports, Srikari Mahasana High School Chairman N. Saibaba and motivational speaker Fakhruddin Ahmed Ali encouraged students to adopt a holistic approach to education. They stated that physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship developed through sports play a vital role in shaping students' overall personality and future success. “The



Srikari Mahasana Annual Sports Meet was held in a grand and enthusiastic manner on Friday at the school premises. The event witnessed vibrant participation from students and staff, creating a festive atmosphere. The program was inaugurated in the presence of the chief guests—school Chairman and Sai Garden proprietor N. Saibaba, and motivational speaker Fakhruddin Ahmed Ali. “On this occasion, students enthusiastically participated in various sports and games, showcasing their skills.

Grand Birthday Celebrations of Mynampally Hanumantha Rao Under the Leadership of Congress Leader Gaddam Ravi Kumar



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 10 (Indian Chronicle): ““Grand birthday celebrations of former MLA and senior Congress leader Mynampally Hanumantha Rao were held on Saturday at Old Ramanthapur in the Uppal constituency, under the leadership of senior Congress leader Gaddam Ravi Kumar. On the occasion, the leaders celebrated by cutting a

cake along with sanitation work-



ers, marking the event in a meaningful and inclusive manner. Speaking at the gathering, Gaddam Ravi Kumar extended heartfelt wishes to Mynampally Hanumantha Rao, expressing hope that he would celebrate many more birthdays, lead a long life of good health, and attain higher positions in politics with the blessings of God. Senior Congress leaders Janampally Venkateshwar Reddy, Survi Murali Goud, Thavida Boyina Giribabu, and others participated in the programme and conveyed their birthday greetings to Mynampally Hanumantha Rao.

Corporator BANNALA GEETHA PRAVEEN Unveils Prashanth Nagar Welfare Association New Year-2026 Diary

----Prashanth Nagar Welfare Association Receives ‘Best Colony Award’: Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen

“Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, January 10 (Indian Chronicle): ““The New Year-2026 Diary of the Prashanth Nagar Welfare Association, located in Chilkana Nagar Division, was formally unveiled by GHMC Corporator and former Standing Committee Member Ms. Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj as the chief guest. The programme was organised under the leadership of Prashanth Nagar Welfare Association President Dr. S. Vijaya Mohan along with committee members. “Speaking on the occasion, Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen stated that the Prashanth Nagar Welfare Association, established in 2005, has received several awards and recognitions from GHMC. She highlighted that Prashanth Nagar is the only colony to receive the Best Colony Award along with a cash prize of ₹10 lakh, presented by the GHMC Commis-



sioner. She also recalled the invaluable services of the founder president, late Sudini Ramalinga Reddy, whose contributions to the development of the colony remain unforgettable. The Corporator assured continued support for the development of basic infrastructure in the colony and informed that two additional CC roads have been sanctioned, which will be taken up after the Sankranti festival. Addressing the gathering, Welfare Association President Dr. S. Vijaya Mohan said that this year marks the 10th consecutive year of the colony diary release. He informed that diaries are distributed to every household annually and include details of development works, important contact numbers of government officials, and phone numbers of colony residents for public convenience. “He expressed special gratitude to Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy for allocating funds for developmental works in the colony and to Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen for being readily accessible to residents at all times. “The programme was attended by BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj; Association office bearers including Secretary Krishnaswamy, Vice President Muthyam Reddy, Joint Secretaries Sambireddy and Subbareddy, Treasurer Praveen, Joint Treasurer Nageswara Rao, Executive Members Lakshmi Bhoomesh, Vijayalakshmi Srikanth; along with Welfare Association members and BRS leaders Edula Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Masa Shekhar, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Ramanjaneyulu, Marka Seenu, Balakrishna Goud, and others.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Presents Prizes to Rangoli Competition Winners

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 10 (Indian Chronicle): ““The SSV Sweet Ladies Rangoli Competitions-2026 were held in a grand manner on Saturday at the basketball court in Sai Suka Vista, under the Habsiguda Division limits. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the competitions. He later presented



prizes to the winners. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that such programmes, which bring out creativity among women, send a positive message to society. He appreciated the organisers for encouraging traditional art forms and for providing a platform to women to showcase their talent. A large number of women enthusiastically participated in the rangoli competitions and impressed everyone with their colourful and creative designs. Cash prizes were awarded to the winners. The event was organised under the leadership of Habsiguda BRS leader Rajitha Reddy. Medchal-Malkajigiri Parliament In-charge Ragidi Lakshma Reddy, BRS state leaders Prabhakar Reddy, party leaders and local leaders including Dr. B. V. Chary and Kaleru Jai Naveen, along with women participants and party workers, attended the programme in large numbers.

BJP Leaders Offer Special Prayers at Sri Shiva Shankara Mahamayi Temple

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 10 (Indian Chronicle): ““On the occasion of completing 75 years since the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple, special prayers were performed at the Sri Shiva Shankara Mahamayi Temple in Uppal Division on Saturday, following the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi,



who is also the Chairman of the Somnath Temple Trust. The programme was held under the leadership of Uppal Division BJP President Marineni Phanindra, along with senior leader Balavanth Chary and other committee members, who jointly participated in the special poojas. “Speaking on the occasion, President Phanindra said that the Somnath Temple was destroyed nearly 1,000 years ago during the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni. The temple was reconstructed in 1951 and inaugurated by the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He stated that on the auspicious occasion of completing 75 years of the reconstruction, BJP Telangana State President Ramachandra Rao had called for special prayers to be conducted in Shiva temples across the state. “Participating in the programme were Division General Secretary Teega Vithal Rao Mudiraj, Vice Presidents Anji Reddy, senior leaders Shamirpet Hanumanth Reddy, Juluri Sridhar Gupta, Thallapalli Srinivas Goud, Adepu Ramesh, Maddela Padma, Menaka, Uppaji Raju, Ramaiah, Guruvaiah, Aruri Kishore, Abhiram, Swami Kiran, and several others.

Gaddam Saikiran Encourages Women by Distributing Prizes at Rangoli Programme

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 10 (Indian Chronicle): ““A rangoli (muggulu) competition organised on the occasion of the Sankranti festival was held in a grand manner at Ramireddy Nagar, Vasavi Nagar and Srinagar colonies under the Habsiguda Division. A large number of women from the colonies enthusiastically participated in the programme and showcased



their artistic talent. BJP senior leader Gaddam Saikiran attended the event as the chief guest and encouraged the women by distributing prizes to every participant. Speaking on the occasion, he said that culture and traditions become stronger in society with active participation of women. He appreciated the women for preserving traditional art forms and passing them on to future generations. Residents stated that the programme created a festive atmosphere in the colonies and helped strengthen unity and enthusiasm among women. The organisers expressed their intention to continue organising such cultural programmes in the future with the cooperation of local residents. “Women leaders Jayamma, Nirmala, Prabhavathi, Lakshmi, Jyothi and others participated in the programme.

75 Years of Somnath Temple Reconstruction Special Shiva Abhishekam Held in Kushaiguda



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Marking the completion of 75 years since the reconstruction of the historic Somnath Temple, special prayer programmes were held in prominent Shiva temples across the country on Saturday, following a call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. As part of these nationwide celebrations, a special Shiva Abhishekam and prayers were conducted with religious fervour at the Sri Shivanjaneya Swamy Temple in Kushayiguda. The programme was organised under the leadership of Cherlapally Division President Challa Prabhakar, in accordance with the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who also serves as the Chairman of the Somnath Temple Trust. Several senior BJP leaders and party workers participated in the religious ceremony. Former Cherlapally Division President D. Nadam, Talla Anand Goud, Machha Laxman Goud, Islavath Harinayak,

Sahadev Goud, Bolla Srinivas, Machha Laxminarayana Goud, Pawan, Nandu, Janardhan, Pitala Raju, Anjaneyulu, Srinivas and others were present on the occasion. Speaking at the event, Challa Prabhakar recalled that the Somnath Temple was destroyed nearly a thousand years ago during the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni and was later reconstructed in 1951. He noted that the temple was inaugurated by the then President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad. He described the Somnath Temple as a symbol of Indian culture and spiritual heritage and said that such programmes help promote religious awareness, especially among the youth. He further stated that on the occasion of completing 75 years of the temple's reconstruction, special pujas are being organised in Shiva temples across Telangana as per the call of the BJP Central Committee, under the supervision of the state party president Ramchandra Rao.

Cherlapally Lake Development: Special Initiative by Bonthu Sridevi



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Cherlapally Lake, a vital source of livelihood and environmental balance for the local Mudiraj community, is set to undergo major development following a special initiative taken by Bonthu Sridevi. She personally visited the lake to inspect the pending works and reviewed the current condition of the site. During the inspection, clear instructions were given to concerned officials to completely stop the inflow of sewage water into the lake, ensure filling of the lake only with clean water, and create a hygienic and pollution-free environment in and around the lake. Earlier, a budget of Rs. 12 crore was sanctioned by the government for the development of Cherlapally Lake, with efforts initiated during the tenure of Dr. Bonthu Rammoan. The sanctioned funds are planned to be utilized for comprehensive lake development works, which include: Permanent diversion of sewage water away from the lake Desilting and increasing

the water-holding capacity Development of green parks around the lake Construction of walking tracks Children's play areas Installation of lighting and safety infrastructure Overall beautification of the lake surroundings The development project aims to improve public health, protect the local environment, and ensure sustainable water resources for future generations in the Cherlapally area. Local residents and members of the Mudiraj community expressed their appreciation for the initiative, stating that the lake development is a significant step towards environmental conservation and regional development. The inspection and review programme was attended by Pandu Mudiraj, Babu Mudiraj, Vijay Mudiraj, Bhupal Mudiraj, and Kumar Mudiraj. Local leaders Raju Goud, Bhanu Chander, and Venkat Reddy were also present. The Cherlapally Lake development is being seen as a proud milestone for the area and an important move towards long-term urban and environmental improvement.

Grand Inauguration of Karate Classes at Chinna Cherlapally



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“The grand opening of newly launched karate classes under the Vijay Shotokan Karate Association of India was held at Tirumala Banquet Hall, Chinna Cherlapally. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the karate classes. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that self-defence disciplines like karate play a vital role in the physical and mental development of youth. He emphasized that karate helps inculcate discipline, self-confidence, and a healthy lifestyle, which are essential qualities for the younger generation. He congratulated the karate trainers and organisers for their initiative and expressed hope that the academy would nurture talented sportspersons capable of representing the state and the country at national and international levels. Karate Master Rangu Mallikarjun Goud, Karate Coach N. Pawan Kumar, BRS Party Division President Mahesh



Goud, association representatives, players, students, and local residents participated in the programme in large numbers.

Govt to Soon Resolve Teachers' Issues, Says MLC Dande Vithal



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)“Revanth Reddy Shows Sincere Commitment to Resolving Employees' Issues MLC Dande Vithal, Member of the Legislative Council, stated that employees and teachers play a crucial role in the development of the state and that their contribution to improving educational standards and safeguarding government schools is highly commendable. “He was speaking on Friday at his residence in Kagaznagar during the unveiling of the Progressive Recognised Teachers' Union (PRTU), Telangana State Diary. Addressing the gathering, MLC

Dande Vithal urged teachers to strive towards achieving 100 percent results in the Class 10 examinations, emphasizing the importance of quality education. “He further stated that the Hon'ble Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is making sincere and determined efforts to resolve long-pending issues faced by teachers and employees, including pay revision, dearness allowance, and clearance of pending bills. He assured that the state government would take concrete steps soon to address these concerns. “Several union leaders and members attended the programme.

Removal of Mahatma Gandhi's Name from MGNREGA Is an Insult to the Nation's History Congress Leaders Express Outrage



“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 10:“Congress leaders strongly criticised the removal of Mahatma Gandhi's name from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), calling it an inhuman act and a deliberate political decision taken by the BJP government. “Speaking at a media conference held t Saturday at Seethaphalmandi in the Secunderabad Assembly constituency, Congress leaders Deepak John, Adam Santosh Kumar, Kota Neelima and others said that Mahatma Gandhi's name is not only a symbol for India but also represents non-violence, truth and dignity of labour across the world. By removing the name of such a great leader from the employment guarantee scheme, the BJP government has once again exposed its anti-Gandhi ideology, they alleged. “The leaders recalled that there was a deep philosophy behind attaching Mahatma Gandhi's name to a scheme that provides employment to the poor, labourers and rural workers of the country. They stated that the concept of respect for labour and the right to employment for every family originated from Gandhian ideals. Removing his name from such a scheme amounts to disrespecting the spirit of the Indian Constitution and the values of the freedom struggle, they said. “The Congress leaders

criticised the BJP government for consistently distorting the history of freedom fighters and neglecting Gandhian principles since coming to power. They stated that the removal of Gandhi's name from the employment guarantee scheme has hurt the sentiments of the people and is unacceptable in a democratic country. “They pointed out that the scheme has been providing employment to crores of poor families and has become the backbone of the rural economy. Altering such a people-oriented welfare scheme out of political hatred is unjust, they said, adding that it is nothing but an attack on the rights of the poor. “The Congress leaders demanded that the BJP government immediately withdraw its decision to remove Mahatma Gandhi's name from the scheme. They warned that the Congress party would continue agitations and protests across the country on this issue and asserted that the struggle on behalf of the people would not stop. “They appealed to the people to take note of the issue and emphasised that protecting Gandhian ideals is the responsibility of every Indian citizen. “Those who participated in the programme included Dadiga Sandeep Raj, Suresh Lal, Jaggu, Jangir, Anil, Chakradhar, Kalpana, Shilpa Chari, Shakeel Khan, Amar, Isaac, Satish, Shyam, Jai Kumar, Srinivas, Venkatesh and others.

Sudden Inspections Conducted at Old Vegetable Market in Kushaiguda



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Members of the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Agricultural Market Committee conducted sudden inspections at the old vegetable market in Kushaiguda on Friday. The inspection was led by District Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Bommala Palli Narsimha Yadav, Vice Chairman Vithal Naik, Director Poorna Yadav, and JMS Karthik. The team reviewed wholesale and retail vegetable shops operating in the market. During the inspection, officials instructed traders that all wholesale and retail shops must possess valid licenses. Unlicensed traders were directed to obtain licenses immediately. The committee also warned traders not to encroach upon the main road in Kushaiguda and to conduct business strictly within the designated market premises. Representatives of the Kushaiguda Old Vegetable Market Wholesale and Retail Traders' Association felicitated the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Director, and JMS members. They submitted a memorandum stat-

ing that the market is currently located on TGPIIC land and requested the government to allot a permanent and suitable place to continue their business activities smoothly. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chairman Vithal Naik stated that the issues raised by the traders would be brought to the notice of Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and, through him, to the government for necessary action and resolution. He also advised traders to sell quality vegetables at government-approved prices. The inspection programme was attended by Old Vegetable Market Traders' Association Vice President Raghavender Goud, Secretary Chethurla Devender Goud, and members including Ganesh



Mudiraj, Korella Raghavender Goud, Seelam Tilak Yadav, Seelam Sunny Yadav, Doosari Venkatesh, Akkamaneni Anjaneyulu, Ragiri Saketh Goud, Bheem Raj Chari, and others.

“Gambling, Cockfighting to Invite Strict Action: SP Pant

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)““Crackdown on Cockfighting, Gambling and other anti-social activities.; Strict Legal Action Warned District Superintendent of Police Nitika Pant.“In an official statement released from the District Police Office on Saturday, the SP said that intensified surveillance has been put in place across the district, particularly in inter-state border police station limits. She stated that continuous vehicle checks and intensified patrolling are being carried out to curb unlawful activities.“Special instructions have been issued to police officers working in stations located along the Maharashtra border, directing them to maintain heightened vigilance. The SP made it clear that criminal cases will be registered against offenders, and stringent action will be initiated without leniency.“Urging public cooperation, SP Nitika Pant appealed to citizens to immediately report information related to gambling, cockfighting, or any other anti-social activities to the nearest police station or by dialling 100. She assured that the identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential.



Students Celebrate Sankranti in Advance at Areguda School



““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)““Pre-Sankranti celebrations were held at Zilla Parishad High School (ZPHS), Areguda, in Kagaznagar mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district on Thursday.“The programme was organised with the support of the Prajanatya Mandal and AIDWA, under the leadership of the school Headmaster Parsa Chandrasekhar. As part of the celebrations, Bhogi bonfire rituals and rangoli competitions were conducted on the school premises.“The festivities were formally inaugurated by Sarpanch of Mosam Gram Panchayat, who lit the Bhogi bonfire. Rangoli competitions were later organised for students, and prizes were distributed to the winners. Several dignitaries and guests participated in the event. Students, village elders and others also took part in the celebrations, making the event vibrant and culturally enriching.

Excise Department to Auction Seized Vehicles on Jan 12

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)““The Prohibition and Excise Department will conduct an auction of vehicles seized in various illegal transportation cases on January 12 (Monday) at 12 noon at the Excise Station, Kagaznagar.“The auction will be held in the presence of B. Jyoti Kiran, District Excise Officer, Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district. Vehicles seized in connection with different prohibition and excise cases will be put up for auction, and interested persons are eligible to participate.“Participants have been advised to contact the Excise Station, Kagaznagar, for further details and complete information before taking part in the auction.“The announcement was issued by V. Ravi, Prohibition and Excise Inspector, Kagaznagar.



Engaging Thematic Exhibition; Kuchipudi Dance Performances Enthrall at Uppal Mini Shilparamam



““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)““The ongoing “Thematic Exhibition” at Uppal Mini Shilparamam is drawing large crowds with its vibrant display of traditional handicrafts and cultural performances. The exhibition is jointly organised by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and the Andhra Pradesh Productivity Council.“A wide range of handcrafted products on display has been captivating visitors. Items such as bangles, jewellery, sarees, bed sheets, carpets, handbags, terracotta articles, bamboo crafts and bamboo-based products are available at affordable prices, making the exhibition a major attraction for art and craft lovers.“As part of the cultural programmes held on Saturday, a Kuchipudi dance performance by the disciples of Kunkuntla Soundarya enthralled the au-

dience. The dancers presented various classical pieces including Mooshika Vahana, Mahalakshmi Ashtakam, Pushpanjali, Marakata Manimaya, Neelamegha Shareera, Annamacharya Keertanas, Mahishasura Mardini, Bho Shambho, Govardhana Giridhara, and Gandhamu Pooyaruga.“The performances were gracefully rendered by Nirvigna, Aaradhya, Sahasra, Komali, Tanvika, Havisha, Greeshma, Lahari, Sanjana, Deekshith, Bhavya Sri, Nandita, Priya, Divya, Vedam Sahasra, among others, earning hearty applause from the audience.“The thematic exhibition continues to serve as a vibrant platform promoting traditional handicrafts and classical dance, offering visitors a rich cultural experience.

TWJF Asifabad District Unit Condoles Death of Senior Journalist T.K. Lakshman Rao

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 10 (Indian Chronicle)““The Asifabad district unit of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) expressed deep condolence over the death of senior journalist T.K. Lakshman Rao, who passed away due to illness on December 31.“Following the directions of the State Committee, the district unit organised a condolence meeting at Kagaznagar town in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district on Saturday. Members paid floral tributes to the portrait of the departed journalist and observed silence as a mark of respect.“Speaking on the occasion, District President Vadrnala Venkanna recalled that T.K. Lakshman Rao had served the journalism profession for over four decades, working with leading newspapers. He said the veteran journalist had rendered invaluable services to the media fraternity and played a significant role in addressing journalists’ issues, besides contributing to the establishment of the Andhra Pradesh Working Journalists Federation. His demise, he said, is an irreparable loss to his family and the journalistic community.“Among those



present were District Secretary Vangari Praveen, National Council Member Eerla Sunil Kumar, State Council Member Taj Khan, Treasurer Anna Boyina Raju, Executive Member Pradeep, and other members.

Gold Chain Snatcher Arrested After Intensive CCTV Analysis

““NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)““Medipally Police successfully arrested a gold chain snatcher involved in multiple robbery cases after an extensive investigation using CCTV footage and technical analysis. The incident occurred on January 3, 2026, at around 4:30 PM, when Renuka Dagula (60) was returning home along with her husband on a Honda Activa after visiting SBI Bank, Korremula. Near Nalla Malla Reddy Engineering College, Narapally, an unidentified person approached from behind on a motorcycle and forcibly snatched a three-tola gold mangalsutra from her neck before fleeing the scene. Following the incident, Inspector Govinda Reddy of Medipally Police Station formed four special teams to investigate the case. The teams continuously tracked the entry and exit routes for four days and examined nearly 300 CCTV cameras from the crime location and surrounding areas. Through technical surveillance and field investigation, the suspect was identified and taken into custody. During interrogation, the accused confessed to the crime. Police recovered the stolen gold mangalsutra and seized the Honda Shine motorcycle (Registration No. TG-29-A-4487) used in the offense. To evade identification, the accused had removed both front and rear number plates of the motorcycle, wore a full-face helmet, avoided wearing footwear, layered shirts, and discarded the outer shirt shortly after the crime. He later handed over the motorcycle to another person at LB Nagar, travelled by auto to Vanasthalipuram, boarded a bus from there, and returned to his residence in Kodad. Further investigation revealed that the accused was pre-



viously involved in eight robbery and chain-snatching cases under the limits of Chilkur, Garudapally, Vattivayi, Kodad, Nandigama, Gurazala, Piduguralla, and Sattenapally police stations. Inspector Govinda Reddy appreciated the efforts of the crime team members who played a key role in solving the case, including DSI D. Yakan, ASI K. Balsingh, HC-53 M. Sunil Kumar, HC-4041 D. Ramu, PC-7743 V. Mahipal, PC-8786 K. Vinod, PC-10180 V. Haribabu, PC-4315 B. Shiva Kumar, and WPC-9989 J. Vishali.

TPCC Spokesperson Palle Ram Chander Goud visited Vice MP Sudhakar Goud

““ TPCC Spokesperson Palle Ram Chander Goud, who visited the grieving family members after the death of Elender Goud, son of Vice MP P Sudhakar Goud, in Veldurthi mandal center of Medak district, along with Vice MP Sudhakar Goud, expressed courage and comforted the family members. In this sad event participated Sivakrishna Goud, Nalacheruvu Narendar Goud, in-charge of Narsapur BC Sangam participated.



Corporator Inspects Ganesh Nagar in Kushaiguda Division



““NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 10, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)““Standing Committee Member of GHMC

and Cherlapally Division Corporator B. Sridevi Yadav conducted an inspection visit to Ganesh Nagar under the Kushaiguda Division on Friday. During the visit, local colony president Balakrishna brought several civic issues faced by residents to the notice of the corporator. She personally inspected the area and reviewed the ground situation. Key concerns included the construction of a small CC road, provision of wiring for street lights, and other basic infrastructure problems. The corporator directed the concerned GHMC officials to take up the works on a priority basis and ensure early resolution of the issues to improve living conditions in the colony. The inspection was attended by colony president Balakrishna, former president Banku Srinu, Sirisha, Tirupatamma, division-level leaders, and local residents.



THE BJP STATE LEADER CHIEF GUEST RAMCHANDER GUPTA ATTENDED KONTAN PALLI ANJNJNEYULU GOUD CERMENY

NIRUDI PRABAKAR CONTEST ZPTC IN THE VELDURTHY MANDAL



““Ind,jan 10. Medak incharge nr goud.““nirudi prabakar will be conducting up coming zptc elactoin with support of the congress party prabakar the man of human beeing helping nature person and one of the education person in the sc community,he his the rmp doctor helps to the poor people, he has work tirelessly for the devlopement of infrastructure in mandal the problems of

poor people,and will serve the public beyond the parties prabakar informed that the will work hard to get ration cards and double bed rooms to the poor people he will take prompt action on drainage problems and drinking water problems in the mandal he will do justice to the poor people of all sections.

Why Yeti & The Monk’s dumplings keep Pune waiting



GNS News Agency, Jan 10

At Yeti & The Monk, patience is part of the experience. Shoes are left outside, Tibetan music hums softly through polished wooden interiors, and a familiar wait of 30 to 45 minutes sets in. Regulars arrive knowing this rhythm well. “I definitely don’t mind the wait because I really like the dumplings here, and I think it’s worth it,” says Carlyne, who visits often.on April 24, 2019, in Khadki, an unlikely location for a Tibetan and East Asian restaurant. Yeti & The Monk was founded by Biki Gurung, Saurabh Mane, and Prasad Jadhav. The idea was simple but ambitious: to present Himalayan comfort food with the discipline of a professional kitchen, without diluting its soul. In 2024, the restaurant expanded to Viman Nagar, drawn by what the founders describe as Pune’s openness to eating out and experimenting with food. “Pune’s weather complements this cuisine, and people here almost always step out to eat on weekends,” says Prasad Jadhav, co-owner.

All three founders had backgrounds in hospitality before Yeti & The Monk. Biki Gurung, who grew up around the food of Darjeeling and the eastern Himalayas, brought an instinctive understanding of Tibetan flavours shaped by home cooking rather than trends. Saurabh Mane and Prasad Jadhav came from professional kitchens, where consistency, hygiene and process were non-negotiable. In the early days, with no staff, they cooked, cleaned, shopped and served on their own.Yeti & The Monk, Tibetan food, East Asian food, comfort food The menu focuses on Tibetan and East Asian comfort food, with dishes that have quietly become cult favourites. That early discipline still defines the restaurant. Every dish is cooked to order, contributing to the waiting period but ensuring freshness. The kitchen serves close to 3,000 customers a month, maintaining strict cleanliness standards, a detail that many diners notice as soon as they enter. The menu focuses on Tibetan and East Asian comfort food, with dishes that have quietly become cult favourites. The Darjeeling-style chicken

and pork dumplings are among the most ordered items, their thin skins and juicy fillings drawing comparisons even from travellers who have eaten across the Himalayas. Thukpa, the warming noodle soup, anchors the menu as a year-round staple.For some regulars, the food goes beyond taste. “When it’s raining or I’m feeling under the weather, I like to have thukpa,” says Tripti Singh, who has been visiting Yeti & The Monk since its early days. She begins most visits with pork or chicken dumplings, followed by either thukpa or pork chops, and says she has tried nearly every dish on the menu.“I recommend the dumplings to everyone,” she says. “The last time I was here, I met Prasad after I’d just travelled to Sikkim. Even there, I couldn’t find dumplings this good. Now I’m going to Bhutan, and I’ve told him I’ll come back and give him a review.”Innovation at Yeti & The Monk often comes from accident rather than planning. The now-popular chicken buns at the Viman Nagar outlet were born when pork buns were accidentally flattened under a heavy tray. Instead of discarding them, the staff steamed and pan-seared the buns, a version that eventually outshone the original and earned a permanent place on the menu.Another dish emerged from staff meals. A simple chicken scramble prepared for the kitchen team caught the attention of a regular diner. It was served as a one-day special, with customers invited to name it. The dish stayed as Le Monk though as a special one, off the menu.

While the food draws first-timers, it is the relationships that turn them into regulars. Customers send the founders wedding invitations and birthday messages. Some plan their visits around quieter hours to avoid queues.“This is kind of like a regular spot for us,” says Carlyne. “We mainly come here for the dumplings.” She recalls bringing her aunt once. “She really liked the Vietnamese coffee and then got her daughters to come too now they’re all big fans.”For Sanika Mate, Yeti & The Monk has long been a constant. “If my friends come from Mumbai, this is the place I bring them,” she says.Tripti Singh echoes that loyalty. A long-time fan of South Asian cuisine, she says the restaurant filled a gap Pune didn’t earlier offer. “They’re like a family,” she says. “In the beginning, when the kitchen was very small, they would customise dishes for me. I’m allergic to eggs, and they always make sure that’s taken care of. That really matters to me.”Her order rarely changes. “I start with dumplings, pork or chicken and then it’s a tie between thukpa and pork chops,” she says. Even while following a quantified diet, she returns. “If I’m cheating, I only come here.”Over time, Yeti & The Monk has built its reputation quietly not through trends or reinvention, but through consistency. Tibetan and East Asian comfort food is served warm, patiently, and without shortcuts. In a city that moves fast, the restaurant asks its diners to slow down and keeps them coming back when they do.

Truck driver, who ‘boasted of social media following’, allegedly attacks cop at inter-state check post in Gujarat

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

A truck driver was arrested in Gujarat’s Dahod district on Friday for attempting to murder a police inspector while trying to flee an inter-state check post.Dahod district police said the incident occurred around 1 am at the Khangela inter-state check post, which is a key entry point into Gujarat used to check smuggling, particularly of liquor. When a team from Katvara police station signalled a truck to stop, the driver allegedly ignored the signal and sped away, prompting a police chase.The police chased the truck for nearly two kilometres before intercepting it. According to officials, the driver initially got into a verbal argument with the police and repeatedly boasted about his large social media following.

When the police attempted to search the vehicle, he allegedly tried to flee on foot and attacked Katvara Police Inspector Umesh Gavit with a stone, causing serious injury to his right eye.Deputy Superintendent of Police (Dahod Division) Jagdish Bhandari told The Indian Express, “When the driver tried to escape from the Khangela check post, which is a crucial point of vigilance for entry into Gujarat, the police patrol team suspected he was carrying contraband. They chased the truck as per instinct and intercepted it. Initially, the driver began arguing, citing his huge social media following. When the police sought to search the truck, he darted away to escape.”

Bhandari said that as Inspector Gavit chased the accused along with four other personnel, the driver turned back and allegedly pelted a stone at him. “The stone hit him in the eye. There has been injury and primary damage to the right eye. Only after the swelling subsides in a couple of days will it be possible to ascertain whether his vision is intact,” he said.Police said the truck was found to be carry-



ing only vegetables and no contraband.Following the attack, the Dahod police launched a night-long combing operation. Teams from the Local Crime Branch and the Special Operations Group (SOG) arrested the accused from a nearby field where he had been “hiding overnight”.The accused has been identified as Ankush Hemraj Damor, a native of Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh. Police said Damor is active on social media and frequently uploads reels showing stunts and issuing challenges.“In primary questioning, he admitted his mistake but did not explain why he tried to flee,” an officer said. “We checked his social media profile... In one reel, he claims he can drive while drinking. However, in this case, nothing except vegetables was found in the truck. Our preliminary checks also show that he is not wanted in any other criminal case. Further probe is on.”Damor has been booked for attempt to murder under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and will be produced before a court on Saturday.Inspector Gavit, a 2013-batch officer of the Gujarat Police, was promoted to the rank of Police Inspector a few years ago and has been posted as in-charge of Katvara police station for over a year.

Shimla doctor’s dismissal sparks mass leave protest; IGMC services hit

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

Patients at the Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital (IGMC), Shimla, faced significant inconvenience on Friday as resident doctors proceeded on mass casual leave across the city and other parts of Himachal Pradesh, affecting routine healthcare services. The leave was in protest against the termination of Senior Resident Dr Raghav Narula, who was dismissed from service for allegedly assaulting a patient at IGMC earlier this week.

According to sources, nearly 2,800 doctors, including junior residents and senior residents, went on one-day casual leave across the state.Dr Narula was terminated from his senior residency following an alleged altercation with a 36-year-old patient, Arjun Singh, in the pulmonary ward of IGMC on December 22. The state government ordered a departmental inquiry, which was completed within 24 hours, following which his services were terminated on Wednesday.A faculty member at IGMC Shimla, speaking on condition of anonymity, said medical services were adversely impacted not only at IGMC but also at other government hospitals across the state. “Medical services were affected today as many doctors were already on leave due to winter vacations. Though senior faculty members, including professors and assistant professors, attended outpatient departments (OPDs), the functioning was limited to barely 20 to 30 per cent. Several scheduled surgeries had to be postponed,” the faculty member said, maintaining that the emergency services were functioning.At IGMC, around 450 doctors were on leave simultaneously, while nearly 50 per cent of doctors had already been on leave since December 22 due to winter vacations. As a result, many OPDs either had no doctors or were attended by only one or two



doctors, leading to long waiting hours and distress among patients.Several patients complained that they had travelled from distant areas a day earlier for treatment, only to find doctors unavailable. “Doctors’ problems should not be made our problems. We came here for treatment, but there is no one to attend to us,” said a patient. Others said they were unaware that doctors were on leave and questioned the hospital administration over the absence of prior notice.Meanwhile, a delegation of the Resident Doctors’ Association (RDA), IGMC Shimla, met Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Friday, pressing for the reinstatement of Dr Narula, strengthening of security arrangements in government hospitals, and legal action against individuals who allegedly entered the hospital premises and threatened doctors after the December 22 incident.Dr Vikas Thakur, General Secretary, Himachal Medical Officers’ Association (HMOA), said resident doctors had proceeded on leave in almost all government hospitals in the state. “A delegation met the chief minister today.

Centre allocating funds for Harappan site of Rakhigarhi to transform it into global landmark: Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini



The Central Government has allocated Rs 500 crore in the Union Budget for the development of Rakhigarhi, a site of the ancient Harappan civilisation, with an aim of elevating it “into a global landmark of historical and cultural importance”, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said on Thursday.He was addressing the gathering at the second state-level Rakhigarhi Mahotsav.

Government officers said that the initiative is expected to place Rakhigarhi prominently on the national and international tourism map while strengthening India’s archaeological presence worldwide.Saini said, “It stands as a living symbol of India’s ancient and glorious civilization. The site represents one of the largest and most advanced urban centres of the Harappan civilization, which flourished thousands of years ago. Both the Central and State governments are working in close coordination to transform Rakhigarhi into a prestigious global landmark of historical and cultural significance”.During the event, CM Saini mentioned that all 13 demands put forward by the Rakhigarhi panchayat and five demands raised by the Rakhi Shahpur panchayat would be forwarded to the departments concerned for prompt action. He also declared a grant of Rs 21 lakh each for the development of Rakhigarhi and Rakhi Shahpur villages.Saini also inaugurated the Harappan Knowledge Centre, aimed at deepening public understanding of the Indus-Saraswati civilisation.“Excavations have revealed evidence of advanced town planning, sophisticated sanitation systems, water management techniques, and thriving industrial and commercial activities. The presence

of such a prominent civilization center in Haryana is a matter of immense pride for the state and the nation,” he said.The Chief Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is moving forward with confidence while embracing its cultural roots. He cited major heritage-focused initiatives such as the Kashi Vishwanath Dham, Mahakal Lok, the Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya, and archaeological sites like Rakhigarhi as symbols of India’s renewed emphasis on its civilizational legacy.“This is a new India that draws inspiration from its past to build a prosperous future,” he said.Saini reaffirmed the state government’s commitment to developing Rakhigarhi as an international tourism and research center. “Plans include a world-class archaeological museum, a dedicated research institute, improved tourist facilities, and enhanced infrastructure. These initiatives are expected not only to attract visitors from across the globe but also create employment opportunities for local youth and boost the regional economy,” he said.The chief minister also highlighted social insights gained from excavations, noting that archaeological findings suggest women in ancient Harappan society enjoyed respect and equal opportunities.Drawing a parallel with the present, he said, “the daughters of Haryana continue this legacy by excelling in sports, education, science, administration, and the armed forces”.He reiterated the government’s focus on women’s empowerment through various education, safety, and self-reliance schemes. The Chief Minister said, “Haryana is home to nearly 100 historically significant archaeological sites, including Farmana, Mitathal, Balu, and Banawali. Special conservation and development projects are underway for these locations, with efforts also being made to include Rakhigarhi in the Unesco World Heritage List. A modern museum has already been constructed at Rakhigarhi for Rs 22 crore, while several other monuments across the state have been declared protected”.Heritage and Tourism Minister Dr Arvind Sharma said the nearly 7,000-year-old Rakhigarhi civilization showcased principles of urban planning that continue to inspire the modern world. “Cultural programmes held during the Mahotsav reflected the site’s enduring legacy,” Sharma said.Several ministers, MLAs, senior officers, and dignitaries attended the event, underscoring the importance of Rakhigarhi as a cornerstone of India’s ancient heritage and its growing global recognition.

Amritsar’s walled city meat vendors face uncertain future after Holy City tag

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

The December 15 notification of the Punjab government declaring the Amritsar walled city area as ‘holy city’ and banning the sale of non-vegetarian items there has cast a shadow on the future of around 100-150 meat and fish shops, and around 150 outlets selling non-veg items.The affected meat and fish shopkeepers gathered in the Golbagh area of Amritsar on Tuesday to voice fears over losing their livelihoods.

Talking to The Indian Express, Surinder Singh, a meat vendor near Hathi Gate, said, “Our ancestors came from Pakistan in 1948, and since then we have been running this meat shop near Hathigate. We do not know any other business, any other work.”“Most meat stalls in the walled city are run by middle-class and poor people. So far, no one has come to us to shut our shop, but... the administration has started objecting to the outlets in the walled city,” Singh added. He clarified that of roughly 100 meat shops, only 20 sell halal meat, while 80 offer jhatka meat as per the Sikh code of conduct.Fish vendors echoed similar pleas. Makhan Singh, owner of Makhan Fish near Hall Gate, said, “We have talked to the mayor about relocating the fish market to an appropriate place, and we are hopeful that the administration will help us. There are around 20 meat and fish shops near the Hall Gate.”

The ‘ban’ has also ignited Sikh doctrinal debates. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) member Kiranjot Kaur objected sharply, terming the ban a “Brahmanical imposition”. “Jhatka meat is our right,” she asserted, citing Guru Nanak Dev cooking meat in Kurukshetra and the 1935 Jhatka Conference.“Tobacco and kutha (halal) remain prohibited in Sikhism, but jhatka aligns



with the Gurus’ hunting traditions. So there shouldn’t be any ban on meat shops,” she said in a Facebook post.Meat vendors have formed a committee to meet the deputy commissioner and mayor, seeking to limit bans so as not to affect their meat shops, which are largely near the outer edge of the walled city.

The fresh restriction echoes demands dating back to the 1980s, when Sikh bodies like the SGPC and All India Sikh Students Federation pushed for tobacco and liquor bans around the Darbar Sahib. In 1980, SGPC president Gurcharan Singh Tohra urged prime minister Indira Gandhi to prohibit the sale of these items.Demand to ban meat sales, however, emerged when the then Amritsar deputy commissioner S M S Chahal called a joint meeting of the city’s Hindu and Sikh leaders in 1981. Hindu bodies raised a demand for a ban on meat shops during the meeting, to which Sikh bodies didn’t object.

Vardhman Group chairman digital arrest: Key accused arrested after ED conducts multi-state searches

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

According to official sources, Kalita’s arrest came after the ED conducted searches on December 22 at 11 locations across the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Assam under PMLA provisions.According to official sources, Kalita’s arrest came after the ED conducted searches on December 22 at 11 locations across the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Assam under PMLA provisions.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested a key accused in the high-profile ‘digital arrest’ cyber fraud case involving eminent Ludhiana-based industrialist and Vardhman Group chairman S P Oswal earlier this week, after it carried out extensive search operations in connection with its money laundering investigation.Rumi Kalita was arrested under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, on December 23. Her transit remand for four days was granted by the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in Kamrup, Guwahati, following which she was produced before a special court in Jalandhar. The court granted the ED custody of the accused for 10 days, up to January 2.

According to official sources, Kalita’s arrest came after the ED conducted searches on December 22 at 11 locations across the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Assam under PMLA provisions. During the search operations, various incriminating documents and digital devices were allegedly recovered and seized.The investigation was initiated on the basis of a First Information Report (FIR) registered by the Cyber Crime police station in Ludhiana under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. Subsequently, nine more FIRs registered by different police authorities across the country, pertaining to cybercrime and digital arrest cases involving the same group of criminals, were also taken up as part of the investigation.According to the ED, its probe revealed that during the ‘digital arrest’, fraudsters impersonating officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) used forged official and judicial documents to coerce him into transferring 77 crore into various bank ac-



counts. Of this amount, 75.24 crore was traced, recovered from the accounts, and transferred back.The remaining amount was transferred into multiple mule accounts held in the names of various entities and individuals, including labourers and delivery boys, the ED said. These funds were either further diverted through layered transactions or withdrawn in cash immediately.Kalita accused of using banking credentials of mule accountsThe investigation allegedly uncovered that amounts cheated from various victims were swiftly routed through mule accounts operated by a group of individuals. The banking credentials of these mule accounts were allegedly being used by Kalita, who, in return, was to receive a percentage of the money, as her share. Evidence gathered during the searches indicated that she was deeply involved in the diversion and layering of the proceeds of crime, the ED said.Officials also stated that earlier searches conducted on January 31 in the same case had resulted in the recovery and seizure of incriminating documents.Providing further details, the Ludhiana police stated that on August 29 and 30, 2023, the accused contacted Oswal on his personal phone number while posing as CBI officials. They claimed that a Malaysia-bound parcel, allegedly sent by his company, had been confiscated by Mumbai Customs and was found to contain 58 passports and 16 ATM cards. The accused further told him that arrest warrants had been issued against him by the Supreme Court.

Maharashtra govt allots Sion plot to VHP for 30 years for medical, educational activities



GNS News Agency, Jan 10

In addition, the organisation must pay a one-time premium of Rs 9.72 crore, calculated at 25 per cent of the usual rate applicable to such long-term occupancy. The civic body will set the payment schedule for both the annual rent and the premium. In addition, the organisation must pay a one-time premium of Rs 9.72 crore, calculated at 25 per cent of the usual rate applicable to such long-term occupancy. The civic body will set the payment schedule for both the annual rent and the premium. The Maharashtra government Thursday approved the allotment of a 7,658.33-square-metre plot in Sion to the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) for 30 years, converting the land from a leasehold plot into makta (occupancy) tenure. The decision follows a proposal from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) Improvements Department ad has been cleared under provisions of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act.

In October, the BMC submitted a proposal to the Urban Development Department (UDD), led by Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, seeking approval to allot the plot to the VHP for medical or educational purposes. On December 4, the UDD approved the proposal and clarified that occupancy will officially begin on June 25, 2025, the date the civic body granted its approval for a 30-year period. The government has fixed an annual ground rent of Rs 10,186, payable by the VHP for the entire 30-year period beginning June 25, 2025. In addition, the organisation must pay a one-time premium of Rs 9.72 crore, calculated at 25 per cent of the usual rate applicable to such long-term occupancy. The civic body will set the payment schedule for both the annual rent and the premium. As per the Development Control and Promotion Regulations (DCPR), 2034, the plot is subject to various reservations. Only medical or educational activities are allowed on this land. The responsibility of ensuring that the land is used strictly as permitted and that all reservations are followed lies with the BMC commissioner. This condition means that any construction or activity on the plot must fall within these two categories, and the civic body must verify that the rules are not violated. The plot, located in F/ North ward, was earlier on leasehold. The BMC's Improvements Department forwarded a proposal to the state government recommending that it be converted into makta land and granted to the VHP for institutional work. After examining the proposal, the state approved it and issued its sanction through an official government resolution.

How parents can spot early signs of stress in kids — and what to do about it

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

Counsellors in schools across Delhi are reporting heightened levels of stress and earlier onset of anxiety among students. An eminent senior clinical and child psychologist, Dr Bhavna Barni, also the founder of Happiness Studio, analysed the patterns of behaviour that are visible across age groups, and listed the steps families can take to build emotional safety at home. What emotional and behavioural issues are most commonly seen among primary and senior school children these days? In primary school children aged 6-11, increased anxiety (separation, school performance), somatic complaints (stomach/headaches), temper/ defiant outbursts, sleep problems, toileting/ regression (in younger children), and attention/ peer problems are the most common.



Among secondary students aged 12-18, the concerns often include social anxiety, depressive symptoms, self-critical/ perfectionistic behaviour, academic stress, risky online behaviours, impulsive conduct and occasional self-harm ideation or attempts. All these issues have evolved — and we now see faster escalation and earlier onset of anxiety/ depression, more school-related performance and humiliation stress, and digital-fuelled peer comparison. The problems are often amplified by continuous social media exposure and reduced unstructured peer play. Why do children appear more sensitive or fragile today compared to a few years ago? Several forces shape this. Intense academic pressure and high-stakes testing, ubiquitous social media, constant comparisons, curated lives, and cyberbullying. Also, reduced free and unstructured play, and less face-to-face coping practice. Parenting styles matter: both overprotection and performance-focus can limit resilience development among children.

There is the issue of stigma and low mental-health literacy in some schools and communities, so problems go unnoticed until they have worsened significantly. As clinicians, we emphasise early, low-stigma conversations and routine emotional check-ins — small, steady parental curiosity and validation protect children more than grand interventions done too late. In what specific ways can parents monitor children's digital lives without becoming controlling? Parents should co-create digital rules: negotiate screen times, public vs private content, and 'no-phone' zones (meals/ bedtime). The focus should be on behaviour

and well being, not spying. They should ask about online experiences and friends; show interest in what the children enjoy. Use collaborative monitoring — agree on apps/ devices that allow parental oversight transparently. Teach children privacy, critical thinking, and online safety skills rather than only forbidding platforms.

Intervene when online interactions cause distress. Remove or restrict access temporarily while discussing alternatives. What harm can overprotective or 'helicopter' parenting cause to children, and how can parents find a balance? Such parenting reduces children's problem-solving practice, fosters dependence, increases anxiety when facing failure, and can diminish self-efficacy. The balance comes when parents support and scaffold rather than solve. Give graded responsibilities, allow safe failures, and celebrate effort over outcomes. Step in more for safety risks, step back for manageable everyday problems. After a distressing school incident, what should parents do at home to create safety and openness? Parents must pause media exposure of the incident, and protect children from graphic details. Provide the child reassurance with words like 'You might be worried... What's on your mind?', and validate their emotions and normalise seeking help from a school counsellor or a therapist. What are the early-warning signs that parents should never ignore? Red flags could include talk of hopelessness, 'I wish I weren't here', etc. A sudden, sustained withdrawal from family or friends, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, are signs. Watch out for significant changes in sleep, appetite, academic performance, or marked mood swings. Also, increased substance use, aggressive outbursts, or giving away prized possessions.

Opposition ‘directionless’, LoP decision rests with presiding officers: Fadnavis



GNS News Agency, Jan 10

Terming the Maharashtra opposition “directionless”, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said the decision to appoint the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and the Council falls under the jurisdiction of the respective presiding officers and the government has nothing to do with it. “The state government has no say in it. Whatever decision is taken by the presiding officers of both Houses is acceptable to his government,” the CM said, addressing a press conference on the eve of the winter session of the state legislature. The opposition had earlier slammed the government for not appointing the LoP and had boycotted the customary government tea party over the issue. “The opposition's press conference appeared full of frustration and theatrics. It is not the government's role to announce the Leader of Opposition. Only the Speaker and the Council Chairman have the authority to do so,” Fadnavis said. The CM also claimed the opposition had submitted a representation regarding their boycott but it was without signatures from the NCP (SP) leader. Fadnavis said the session will last for a week as the model code of conduct is in place for the local body polls. “Despite the short duration, we plan to do maximum business and take decisions in the interest of Vidarbha and Marathwada,” he said. On farmer issues, Fadnavis said 92 per cent of rain-affected farmers have received financial aid, while the remaining will get it after their Know Your Customer (KYC) details are updated. “The Opposition is making accusations without studying the issue. My government is ready to debate on any issue raised in the legislature,” he said. He also informed reporters that

Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, who was in Bahrain for his son's wedding, has landed in Pune and will arrive in Nagpur by tonight. Deputy CM Eknath Shinde said the delay in counting of votes for the local body polls held on December 2 had saved the opposition from loss of face in the session. “The Mahayuti contested together in some places. In some other places we had friendly fights. We will win more than 70 per cent seats,” Shinde said. Responding to Congress Legislature Party leader Vijay Wadettiwar's remarks that he should focus on the development of Vidarbha, Fadnavis said the government had already prioritised regional issues. “Wadettiwar has made comments without any study. He seems eager to project Maharashtra as a financially mismanaged state, but that is far from reality,” he said. Fadnavis said Maharashtra was among the top states adhering to Union government fiscal norms despite financial stress. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde also criticised the opposition for “lacking seriousness” about Vidarbha's concerns. “The opposition seems more interested in creating spectacles outside Vidhan Bhavan than raising real issues inside it,” he said.

Three Hyderabad-bound flights receive bomb threats; all found to be hoax

Hyderabad: Yet again, tension prevailed at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport after authorities received bomb threat emails targeting three incoming flights on Sunday. The flights that received the threat include IndiGo flight 6E-7178 from Kannur, Kerala to Hyderabad, Lufthansa flight LH-752 from Frankfurt to Hyderabad and the British Airways flight from London to Hyderabad. As per information available, all three aircraft were allowed to make safe landings at Shamshabad airport.

Following standard protocol, airport officials immediately evacuated the passengers and shifted them to isolation areas for safety checks.

Telangana government to name Hyderabad roads after Ratan Tata, Donald Trump



GNS News Agency, Jan 10

Telangana is set to name several roads in Hyderabad after prominent personalities and global corporations. Telangana is set to name several roads in Hyderabad after prominent personalities and global corporations. The Telangana government on Sunday announced that it will name several roads in Hyderabad after prominent personalities and global corporations. The upcoming greenfield radial road at the proposed RRR will be named after the late industrialist Ratan Tata, whereas a high-profile road along the United States Consulate General in Hyderabad will be named 'Donald Trump Avenue', the government said in its release. The state government will inform the Union Ministry of External Affairs and the US Embassy about these plans.

“Doing everything except teaching”: Schools go empty as hundreds of Punjab teachers put on zila parishad poll duty; women sent to far flung stations

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

Punjab's government schools are set to be adversely impacted this week as hundreds of teachers have been pulled out for zila parishad and panchayat samiti election duty, prompting protests from staff. The Democratic Teachers Front (DTF), in a statement issued late on Sunday, said they will meet deputy commissioners in several districts to protest what they called “unjustified” deputing of women teachers to far flung polling stations. Some teachers also said they might “boycott” duties if the orders were not corrected by Monday.



Rehearsals begin Monday and polling is on December 14. Lists from several districts show 30 to 40 teachers from a single school have been assigned duty, including those teaching math, science and commerce. Women teachers have been posted 70 to 100 km from their stations, with no clarity on where they will stay overnight or how they will return after polling concludes. This comes barely two months after education minister and senior AAP leader Harjot Singh Bains wrote to the chief secretary asking to “stop deployment of teachers for non-academic works,” saying their presence in classrooms was “non-negotiable.” Pulling them out as an “easily available tail-end workforce,” he said, compromised children's Right to Education. Dapinder Singh Virk, Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Bains told The Indian Express: “Several times we have raised this matter with the district administrations and other departments that teachers should not be put on non-academic duties as they are already overburdened. The minister has also written to the chief secretary previously to raise it. We are not in favor of such duties for our teachers.” Many of those now on poll duty are already on SIR duty. “Why should we do double election duty including on Sundays,” asked a teacher from Ludhiana.

Several women teachers said the issue was not the duty but the distances they must travel. Even widows with no one to accompany them have been posted far from home. Teachers in Jagraon have been sent to Khanna; those in Khanna to Raikot. Teachers must report for rehearsals on December 8 and 11, then again on December 13 for dispatch and on December 14 for polling. Many will have to stay overnight. “Earlier women teachers were at least given duties within their own block but now we have been asked

to report 80 km away,” said a teacher from Khanna deputed to Jagraon. A political science lecturer from Ropar, posted nearly 100 km away in Raikot, said: “Has the government made any arrangement for my safety? Will any vehicle drop me home in Morinda on the night of December 14 when work ends after 9 pm? My husband is also on poll duty and cannot pick or drop me. The local administration is not ready to listen to us.” A widow from Khanna posted in Jagraon said: “My children are abroad. Who will pick or drop me at night? Where will I stay on December 13?”

Thirty-one teachers from Government Senior Secondary School, Basti Jodhewal alone, and 34 from PM-SHRI Government Senior Secondary School, Dehlon, have been deputed. An English lecturer from Raikot said: “My duty is in Khanna. We are doing everything except teaching. Padhaan taan ditte hi nahi jaanda (We are just not allowed to teach).” Another teacher posted 80 km away in Machhiwara said she is arranging a taxi from her own pocket. “This is punishment in the name of poll duty.” School khaali ho gaya hai (Our school has gone empty),” said a teacher from Ludhiana's Haibowal, posted 60 km away in Malaud. “All teachers including history, Punjabi, commerce, political science and science are on duty.” Dharamjit Singh, finance secretary, Lecture Cadre Union, said “women staff were being mentally harassed” and that such distant postings were unprecedented. Punjab, secretary, education Anindita Mitra said: “I have already contacted various district administrations where certain issues have been flagged.” Asked why teachers are still being put on non-academic duties despite the minister's instructions, she said: “I will not be the right person to comment on it.”

BMC aims for a climate-resilient Mumbai by setting up bioswales

GNS News Agency, Jan 10

To mitigate Mumbai's flooding woes, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to construct a series of bioswales in Mumbai, as part of its Rs 12,705-crore proposal submitted to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to re-engineer city's aging drainage infrastructure and enhance its climate resilience. A bioswale is a vegetated shallow areas or ditch designed to naturally filter and treat accumulated rainwater or stormwater by removing pollutants such as silt, oil or construction debris. These bioswales comprise a sunken base with slopes through which the accumulated rainwater gets collected in the base and seeps underneath, recharging the ground water levels. Beside bioswales, the amount will be utilised for construction of a sponge park for Rs 200 crore, setting up of sluice gates at Rs 2,000 crore, construction of permeable pavements at Rs 120 crore, as well as construction of pumping stations at Rs 700 crore.

The move comes as Mumbai continues to grapple with increasingly incidents of intense rainfall. According to BMC data, the city has seen a sharp rise in downpours with the average very heavy rainfall within a 24-hour period climbing from 132 mm to 182 mm over the past six years. This surge in precipitation has led to frequent flash floods, disrupting life and transport across the city. Between March and August this year alone, Mumbai was repeatedly brought to a halt due to relentless rain. Being an island city, Mumbai has an array of chronic flooding spots. Speaking to The Indian Express, Abhijit Bangar, additional municipal commissioner (projects), said the idea behind the project is that if surface water during heavy rainfall reduced, it will reduce waterlogging in low-lying areas.

“Slow rainfall creates maximum percolation, but high rainfall doesn't allow smooth percolation of water because the surface of Mumbai has become so impervious with time. The rainwater that doesn't percolate get accumulated and create waterlogging. Therefore, our target is to increase Mumbai's percolation capacity,” Bangar said. “Creation of bioswales is a cost-effective measure. Once they become operational, the percolation capacity of Mumbai's surface

will increase. Even if we are able to increase the percolation by 10 per cent, then it will reduce the overall waterlogging in Mumbai by a significant margin,” he added. In total, the BMC intends to set up 800 bioswales in Mumbai's sparks and open spaces, however, initially they will be set up in chronic flooding areas like Dadar, Matunga, Santacruz, Andheri and Vakola where more waterlogging is reported. “Our initial plan is to set up the bioswales in traditional flooding spots or low lying areas. We are setting them up in gardens, because in Mumbai there is a scarcity of open land. The idea is to earmark a portion of land in a civic garden and then to modify it to a bioswale so that it increases percolation of water, in a way that the intensity of waterlogging in a given area is reduced or brought under control,” said Bangar. He added that the overall project will be funded by the Union Home ministry — the parent department of the NDMA. Bangar said that earlier this week, BMC officials had a meeting with the department officials and early next year, a team is likely to visit Mumbai to verify the plan. Following the visit, a detailed project report for executing the plan would be made. Speaking to The Indian Express, civic officials said that initially Rs 100 crore has been earmarked for this project with the construction of each bioswale costing Rs 12-15 lakh.

“Patches of bioswales will also be created along the roads and traffic medians. This will slow down the rainfall stormwater and direct it into the drains after filtration,” an official said, adding each pit will comprise native vegetation and layered filtration comprising sand, gravel and geotextile. Civic officials said the bioswales would reduce micro-flooding or waterlogging in a given natural area, increase ground water retention capacity, improve biodiversity pockets, act as natural dust suppression mechanism as well as lead to cleaner footpaths and pedestrian zones. “Once an interconnected network of bioswale is activated, the city will start seeing bigger results. Firstly, due to improved percolation of ground water, the intensity of waterlogging will reduce, secondly due to improved ground water level the surface temperature may become cooler,” a civic official said.

Diversity on the small screen: when Doordarshan stitched together a nation



Reading Sheila Chaman's Doordarshan Diaries: The Golden Era of Television (Om Books International) is like rediscovering the magic of the public broadcaster. From the silent generation to the boomers who witnessed the birth and growth of Indian television, from Gen X and the millennials often described as the Doordarshan generation to Gen Z and Alpha who perhaps do not connect with its content, this book is a reminder of the uncomplicated times long before algorithms dictated our remote-controlled lives.

It is almost impossible today to gather around the television like we did for broadcasts on a single channel at a fixed time. Those intense emotions and feelings TV viewing evoked have diminished. From shared cultural ritual in front of the television, for limited news to entertainment, sports or education, everything is now available on an industrial scale with 918 private satellite channels.

Conversation starterThat is why Sheila Chaman's book compels you to pause and understand how the daily four hours of broadcast, unified the country, inspiring conversations and shaping opinions.The veteran broadcaster, who grew with the medium over a span of three decades, does not state the obvious decline, but through her vivid recollection writes about several untold behind-the-scenes anecdotes that bring alive the pioneering spirit of the people behind popular and iconic programmes who transformed Doordarshan into a national memory.

It is important to realise that Doordarshan was not just a channel disseminating tailored information but also upheld constitutional values promoting national integration and social development.Chaman's is an insider's perspective on the early days of the organisation, its transition and transformation. She captures the nostalgia of unfettered journalism. Reading her is like reconnecting with the older and quieter version of a tolerant India. She highlights the challenges of producing content in those days and reflects on discipline and creativity that helped programmes resonate with diverse audiences.Challenging a monopoly

It may be prudent not to indict current television programmes, but the advent of cable TV did challenge Doordarshan's monopoly. The saturated media landscape today says something forlorn about DD, a foundational pillar of national media history that began as a modest experiment in public service telecasting.Once Upon a Prime Time by Ananth Mahadevan (Embassy Books) is partially autobiographical giving an interesting insight into the first-hand experience of those who performed for television audiences and were not part of any consumer-driven shows. It is a

throwback for those connected with the medium and its services, past and present.Public Service Broadcasting in India: A Study of Doordarshan by Rommani Sen Shitak (Bluerose Publishers) reflects on the journey of television in India from its humble beginnings in 1959 to a flourishing sector; how Doordarshan started off with socio-educational experiments, and became a multi-channel network catering to diverse linguistic and ethnic groups. Shitak takes stock of changes that took place in terms of policies, financing and programming over the years. There is a detailed analysis of the strategies implemented by Doordarshan when it was faced with competition from private networks.

The Ramayana effectIAS officer Bhaskar Ghose who was appointed director-general of Doordarshan by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, has authored Doordarshan Days (Penguin India), talking about his seminal role in the organisation's development. This included the airing of popular serials such as Ramayana and Mahabharata; the first live broadcast of the cricket World Cup; the advent of satellite transmission; the first live election coverage; building Doordarshan's international presence; and the onslaught of private networks.Ghose's attempts at reforming Doordarshan put him in conflict with the murky underside of public broadcasting and he candidly recounts with his characteristic humour the struggle to bring about change.

In another memoir by the same name (Doordarshan Days), Manna Bahadur, remembers the days when TV news did not sound like a screamathon and its programmes were a treat for the entire family. He talks about the iconic presenters who became fashion trendsetters for the nation. The memoir treads on DD's anxious birth, teething pains, its golden period to its expansion.Many books on Doordarshan cover television history and its connection to All India Radio (AIR), as both were part of the same public broadcasting system.For instance, how many know that Rabindranath Tagore dedicated a poem to AIR called Akashvani, which was adopted as the broadcaster's Hindi name; that an AIR producer was the first civilian allowed inside the Golden Temple after Operation Blue Star; or that noted Pakistani ghazal singer Ghulam Ali made his disciples listen to AIR's Urdu service to correct Urdu pronunciation.These and many other tales make up Akashvani: A Century of Stories from All India Radio by Neelesh Kulkarni and Vikrant Pande (HarperCollins Publishers India). With anecdotes from producers, broadcasters, radio jockeys and listeners, the book reveals the pivotal role of the mass media in an average Indian's life.

Vinod Kapoor in Radio Cavalcade: Indian Broadcasting ...A Look Back (Notion Press) writes about the day when India gained independence, the scene at AIR during Gandhi's assassination, the way soap operas gained prominence, and how Hindi cinema provided a stream of artists it nurtured. The author critically discusses the clipped freedom of professionals under the Prasar Bharati Act and how it led to the downfall of public broadcasting.Viewers of a certain vintage will understand better that Doordarshan mirrors India's growth from a young republic to a global player, and fundamentally shaped every Indian's consumption of news, education and entertainment.It should continue to fulfil its public service mandate, reflecting diversity and inclusivity.

Study links weaker internal body clock with higher dementia risk

A study suggests that a person's internal body clock may influence dementia risk, with weaker circadian rhythms -- characterised by greater disruption and irregularity -- being associated with a higher likelihood of developing the condition.Circadian rhythms peaking later in the day, such as post-afternoon, instead of earlier, were linked to a 45 per cent higher risk of dementia."Disruptions in circadian rhythms may alter body processes like inflammation, and may interfere with sleep, possibly increasing amyloid plaques linked to dementia, or reducing amyloid clearance from the brain," study author Wendy Wang, from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, said.An amyloid plaque is a clump of proteins in the brain, commonly seen in patients of Alzheimer's disease and contribute to dementia by causing cell death.

The researchers analysed data of over 2,100 older adults with an average age of 79 who did not have dementia at the study's start. The participants wore chest monitors to measure rest and activity for an average of 12 days.The study, published in the journal Neurology, followed the participants for three years, during which time, 176 of them were diagnosed with dementia.

A strong circadian rhythm, in which the body clock aligns well with the 24-hour day, sends clear signals for body functions -- people tend to follow regular times for sleeping and activity, despite changes in schedule or season, the researchers said.People with a weak circadian rhythm -- more likely to be disrupted by light and schedule changes -- are at a higher chance of shifting sleep and activity times with season or schedule changes.

The participants with a low, weaker circadian rhythm



had nearly 2.5 times the risk of dementia, compared to those with a high, strong rhythm, the study found."Changes in circadian rhythms happen with ageing, and evidence suggests that circadian rhythm disturbances may be a risk factor for neurodegenerative diseases like dementia," Wang said."Our study measured these rest-activity rhythms and found people with weaker and more fragmented rhythms, and people with activity levels that peaked later in the day, had an elevated risk of dementia," Wang said.The researchers also found that people who experienced a peak of body clock activity later in the afternoon -- 2:15 pm or later -- compared to earlier in the afternoon, 1:11 pm-2:14 pm, had a 45 per cent increased risk of dementia.Seven per cent of those whose circadian rhythms peaked early in the day developed dementia, compared to 10 per cent of those with a high, strong circadian rhythm.Having a later peak of activity means there could be a difference between the body clock and environmental cues such as later hours and darkness, the team said.

Prayagraj Magh Mela: Devotees throng Sangam ghats in large numbers for holy dip

Prayagraj: On the third day of the ongoing Magh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, devotees have been arriving at the Sangam ghats since early morning to take a holy dip at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers.

The 44-day-long Magh Mela began on January 3 at the Sangam in Prayagraj with the auspicious bath on Paus Purnima. IANS spoke to several devotees who expressed their spiritual enthusiasm and appreciation for the arrangements made by the administration.A devotee from Hyderabad said, "We have come here from Hyderabad. Earlier, we had visited the Mahakumbh, and now we have come to take a holy dip during the Magh Mela. After the sacred bath, with the blessings of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, we will visit the Kashi Vishwanath temple tonight. Tomorrow, we plan to go to Ayodhya for darshan at the Ram Mandir and then return to Hyderabad.Another devotee highlighted the unique spiritual atmosphere of the event, saying, "The Magh Mela has a distinct charm of its own, and we truly enjoy coming here. The administration had made good arrangements last time as well, and they have done the same this year, too."Praising the crowd management and logistical planning, a third devotee said, "The government has managed the crowd very efficiently. The traffic and vehicle arrangements are truly commendable. I would

like to assure and encourage people to visit. There is no inconvenience here, and all arrangements are excellent."Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place across the Mela area to ensure the safety and convenience of pilgrims. The administration has made extensive preparations, with the Mela area spread across nearly 800 hectares and divided into seven sectors.Parking facilities have been arranged at 42 designated locations to manage the large influx of vehicles. The entire Mela area is secured with 17 police stations, 42 police outposts, and a dedicated police control room.Additionally, around 400 CCTV cameras have been installed to monitor activities. Prayagraj District Magistrate Manish Verma said that officials are maintaining constant vigilance to ensure smooth conduct of the event.To facilitate transportation, around 3,800 buses of the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation have been deployed. There will be six major bathing occasions during the Magh Mela, which will conclude with the holy bath on Mahashivratri.Uttar Pradesh's Minister for Culture and Tourism, Jaiveer Singh, said that the Magh Mela is not just a religious gathering but a living expression of Indian culture and ethos.The important bathing dates this year include Makar Sankranti on January 14, Mauni Amavasya on January 18, Basant Panchami on January 23, Maghi Purnima on February 1, and Mahashivratri on February 15.

Russia says any troops sent to Ukraine by 'coalition of the willing' would be targets



Russia said on Thursday (January 8, 2026) that any troops sent to Ukraine by Western governments would be "legitimate combat targets", after Britain and France announced plans to deploy a multinational force there in the event of a ceasefire.A Russian Foreign Ministry statement said "militaristic declarations" by a coalition of pro-Ukraine Western governments were becoming increasingly dangerous.

Russia was responding for the first time to a meeting of the "coalition of the willing" in Paris on Tuesday (January 6, 2026) at which Britain and France signed a declaration of intent on the future deployment.French President Emmanuel Macron said it could involve sending thousands of French troops. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said it paved the way for a legal framework whereby "British, French and partner forces could operate on Ukrainian soil, secur-

Not just forests: why grasslands also belong in national climate plans

In 2022, a group of scientists from institutions in Tanzania, Zambia, the U.K., the U.S., Germany and Canada wrote an open letter urging the parties of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) to broaden their goals to be inclusive of all biomes on earth, but especially grasslands and savannahs. Their letter, published in Science, asserted that even though savannahs are potentially better carbon sinks, forests have hogged the limelight in global climate negotiations. Unfortunately, three years since the letter was written, the UNFCCC climate summits have continued to fall short of addressing this key issue.

The UNFCCC COP30 climate talks took place over the course of 10 days in the city of Belém in North Brazil, and it had a major focus on forests. Hosting the bulk of the Amazon river, Brazil had an opportunity to place forests at the centre of its agenda. Early on at the conference, the announcement of the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) was exciting to most attendees. With commitments of multi-million-dollar funds from different countries, the TFFF was established to fund countries to keep tropical forests intact. COP30, which ended with a lack of any concrete roadmap to protect the climate, also signalled a glaring disparity in a global climate action agenda that has continued to favour forests alone. Much like forests, other major biomes the world over are also facing the consequences of climate change and biodiversity loss — and protecting them can also aid climate action.

"Everyone is facing the effects of climate change, but the desert people are facing some of the harshest effects," said Samantha Murray, an Ilka/Wongutha/Nyoongar indigenous person and the CEO of Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA). "It is getting hotter and it is getting harder to live here"The IDA is a network of indigenous community rangers that works to protect and manage the vast desert grasslands that make up more than a third of Australia's land-mass.

Grasslands are one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world. The biome has suffered rapid habitat loss due to agriculture, conversion to forests and plantations, spread of invasive species, and due to the extraction of fossil fuels. In addition, many governments have suppressed indigenous and local land management techniques such as controlled fires and grazing, leaving forest land to burn during wildfires with greater intensity and to release more carbon into the atmosphere as forests degrade.Today, the desert grasslands of Australia are reeling under the effects of dry spells and flash floods induced by climate change. These consequences are playing out in tandem with those of the buffel grass (Cenchrus ciliaris), an invasive species of grass that hasn't only replaced native grass but which also burns with higher intensity.Organisations like the IDA have been at the forefront of bringing more attention to the desert grasslands of Australia. Stewarded by indigenous communities, the IDA has been working on the ground to protect their grasslands through culturally appropriate burning regimes, round-the-clock monitoring by indigenous rangers, and invasive species management. "I still think that in my lifetime, there won't be a chance for me to walk up to someone in Melbourne and ask them about climate change, for them to say, 'yes, it is affecting the deserts of our country'," Samatha said, further highlighting that the grasslands are often seen as nothing more than empty spaces and is thus also insufficiently funded by the government.No cerrado, no Amazon

The same situation in Australia is echoed around the world. Brazil is home to one of the world's most biodiverse savannahs, called the Cerrado. Home to eight of the 12 water systems of Brazil, including major river systems like the Sao Francisco and the Tocantins, the cerrado is stressed; in fact the cerrado grasslands face twice as much range loss due to human activities as well as climate change compared to the Amazon rainforests in the country.Of late, small-scale efforts have been bringing forth the importance of grasslands at the COP summits. Scientists, members of indigenous and local communities, and policymakers have been coming together to advocate for this imperilled biome. At the COP30 itself, big billboards at the central hall of the venue; public demonstrations by indigenous communities living in the cerrado; and special youth groups formed by the Brazilian ministry with representatives from each of the six biomes in the country all brought issues related to grasslands to the participants' attention, even if these efforts were scattered.Several side events also highlighted grasslands. In one event called 'Cerrado e Amazonia; Conectados Pelas Aguas', Dandara Tonantzin, a federal congresswoman from the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil and coordinator of the Cerrado Defense Group of the Environmental Parliamentary Front highlighted the crucial role of the cerrado grasslands. In her words: "The Cerrado and the Amazon are two biomes, and brothers, that are connected ecologically. It is important to understand that without the cerrado, there is no Amazon."A social justice issue

The cerrado today faces multiple pressures from growing agricultural expansion, mining, fire suppression, disen-

ing Ukraine's skies and seas and regenerating Ukraine's armed forces for the future".Russia "warns that the deployment of Western military units, military facilities, depots and other infrastructure on Ukrainian territory will be classified as foreign intervention, posing a direct threat to the security of not only Russia but also other European countries," the statement from Moscow ?said.It added: "The fresh militaristic declarations of the so-called coalition of the willing and the Kyiv regime constitute a veritable 'axis of war'."The plans of these participants are becoming increasingly dangerous and destructive for the future of the European continent ?and its inhabitants, who are also being forced by Western politicians to finance these aspirations out of their own pockets."

Russia, which staged a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, says it was forced to intervene in order to prevent Ukraine from being absorbed into NATO and used as a launchpad to threaten Russia. It has consistently said it will never accept the stationing of Western forces there.Ukraine and its allies ?accuse Moscow of waging an imperial-style war aimed at seizing the territory of its neighbour, of which it now ?holds nearly 20%. They say Ukraine needs firm security guarantees as part of ?any peace settlement in order to prevent another Russian invasion in future.The United States has ruled out sending its own troops to Ukraine, but its special envoy Steve Witkoff said at Tuesday's meeting in Paris that President Donald Trump "strongly stands behind" security ?protocols aimed at deterring future attacks on Ukraine.



franchisement of communities' rights to their land, and public policies that protect agribusiness over ecosystems. In addition, 70% of Brazil's agricultural toxic wastes are dumped in this biome, endangering the ecology as well as the people that live there."We can still choose another path. First, by officially recognising territorial rights and secure demarcations for Indigenous peoples and Quilombolas (Afro-descendant communities in Brazil), Dandara said, highlighting that protecting the cerrado is also a social justice issue. "We need to ensure the implementation of inclusive public policies that integrate the participation of traditional communities in the management of natural resources."Bridging these narratives from the side events to the negotiating rooms of the COP is a long road. By design, the UNFCCC COP focuses almost exclusively on conversations around managing carbon, while biodiversity and land degradation largely remain the talking points for the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). To their credit, however, the CBD and the CCD have made better efforts to recognise grasslands in their programmes.For example, at the UNCCD COP16 conference in Saudi Arabia, there were efforts to highlight the importance of grasslands and rangelands in achieving land degradation neutrality. Through resolution L15, the UNCCD COP officially recognised that rangelands are complex socio-ecological systems and called on its parties to "prioritise policies and investments" and to "improve tenure security in rangelands".

Building bridgesProtecting a biome like grasslands can't happen in isolation but must come about through goals shared by the various U.N. bodies. Unfortunately, there are still debates ongoing about whether biodiversity and climate goals align and how institutions can build synergies. In 1992, the formation of the three Rio Conventions marked a historic first step in bridging the gap between the UNCBD, the UNFCCC, and the UNCCD — and from there a mechanism to cooperate on goals to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation together.COP30 also saw the active participation of organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature on the matter of these overlooked biomes. In a report jointly released during the conference, titled "Protecting the overlooked carbon sink", authors from these organisations highlighted a growing need to integrate grasslands in climate negotiations. In its policy recommendation, the report stated that grasslands should be considered in "an integrated manner across all three Rio Conventions to break silos and maximise effectiveness".The report also stated that grasslands must be recognised in the country-specific nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which are national climate action plans that outline a country's commitment to reducing emissions under the Paris Agreement.Small step for IndiaLaying bridges between the U.N. bodies is in fact the best way to protect the world's grasslands, and a similar exercise between various branches of the Indian government could benefit the country's grasslands as well. According to a white paper released by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru, at the UNFCCC COP16 in Saudi Arabia, grasslands in India come under the purview of 18 Ministries, each with competing interests and policy goals. While the Union Environment Ministry considers grasslands for afforestation purposes, say, the Ministry of Rural Development publishes the "wasteland atlas of India" that often includes grasslands the atlas deems available for conversion to other uses.If the governing bodies are unified from the national to the multilateral levels, however, the benefits could trickle down through mechanisms such as the country-specific NDCs. In fact, one of India's eight NDCs is "to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030." By recognising grasslands as a crucial carbon sink, the Indian government can easily encompass this biome, move away from forest-focused carbon sequestration schemes, and give its own climate mitigation efforts a boost.In similar vein, a policy brief shared by a group of researchers from Brazil urged the UNFCCC to "adopt the Ecosystem-Based Approach as an immediate pathway" to conserve and sustainably manage "open ecosystems as adaptation actions, enabling their inclusion in Brazil's NDCs".Recognising the importance of grasslands as unique ecosystems worthy of attention, valuing their potential for carbon sequestration .

Home interiors and real estate in 2025: India’s transformative year



lines softened in 2025 as curves dominated furniture, architecture, and décor. “Arched doorways, rounded sofas, sculptural coffee tables, and fluid silhouettes took over the interior world. These forms add a sense of calm, movement, and approachability while still feeling refined,” states Nookula. According to Danggu, more homeowners were open to having unique furniture shapes in their houses, creating a space filled with fluidity, comfort, and spatial harmony. The year saw the ample use of handcrafted ceramics, carved wood, woven textiles and lime-plastered walls. “Our interest in micro concrete and limewash comes less from their popularity and more from their discipline. It is robust, economical, and quietly expressive,” says Aditya Tognatta, co-founder of Custom Design Stories in Gurugram. Stone has been featured as a focal point. “Whether it is statement island countertops, floor-to-ceiling fireplace walls, or richly veined coffee tables, stones bring a dramatic and luxurious feel to the interiors. This is because the variations in veining and tone make each application feel unique,” adds Subramaniam. Retro patterns such as geometrics, psychedelic prints, and classic motifs like paisley and florals made a comeback. “Woven rugs, embroidered fabrics, and vintage quilts are being used to add texture, while reclaimed wood, distressed finishes, and classic designs add character to modern spaces, says Poonam Mehta, co-founder of Pune-based Poonam Akash (formerly known as AMPM Designs). “Further, vintage lighting like mid-century modern chandeliers and antique lanterns were popular statement piece ideas. “Maximalism with intention was another key trend of 2025. “There was a conscious move away from greys and beige towards layered, expressive spaces that are curated and not overwhelming,” says Pratyusha Kethinedi, principal designer and founder of Bengaluru-based House of Katha. “There is a clear demand for integrated study units, flexible storage, reading corners and layouts that can adapt as children grow. Safety and comfort also play a larger role, with preferences for softer finishes, rounded edges and practical materials that are easy to maintain,” says Viswanathan. “At the same time, these spaces are being designed to blend seamlessly with the overall aesthetic of the home rather than feeling separate or overly themed. This reflects a more mindful approach to family living, where children’s needs are addressed without compromising on design quality or longevity.”

As 2025 draws to a close and we enter 2026, it is significant to note that the housing and real estate sector has been one of the most standout and transformative sectors of the past year. From a burgeoning growth in the luxury housing segment and Tier 2 cities such as Lucknow and Indore displaying record growth to an increased focus on sustainable and innovative building materials, 2025 was definitely the year when the real estate sector showed unprecedented investment. The interior design space too witnessed the emergence of trends such as colour drenching, flexible layouts, as well as vintage and retro influences. “Premiumisation is one of the strongest trends we have observed, but it is no longer about opulence for the sake of it,” says Ganesen Viswanathan, vice president of Bengaluru-based MagickHome India. “Homeowners are choosing premium where it adds real value. Think better finishes, smarter storage, superior hardware and cleaner detailing. Interiors are increasingly being planned around individual needs and routines rather than following a fixed or generic design template. The focus is on longevity and performance rather than visual drama alone. This reflects a maturing market where customers understand the difference between surface-level luxury and well-designed, high-performing homes that age gracefully.” India’s luxury housing segment is experiencing a notable boom, with branded residences growing rapidly, outpacing the other luxury formats. “According to Knight Frank’s Residence Report, India ranks sixth globally in ongoing branded residential projects, contributing about 4% of the world’s supply. The number of branded residential developments is forecast to increase by nearly 60% by 2027, reflecting rising demand from affluent buyers seeking curated, experience-led homes that blend convenience with quality living,” says Mitu Mathur, director of New Delhi-based GPM Architects and Planners. “These residences also emphasise thoughtful design that embodies brand values and creates spaces fostering community and shared experiences. This shift marks a broader change in India’s urban housing market, where luxury is increasingly defined by experience, service, design, and a sense of belonging.” Purchases are being driven by high net-worth individual (HNWIs), ultra-HNWIs, and non-resident Indian (NRIs). “Even as some phases saw moderation in volumes, value growth remained strong, supported by demand for larger, lifestyle-enhancing homes. Mumbai also reflected robust market health with a 20% year-on-year rise in property registrations in November 2025,” adds Manan Shah, managing director, MICL Group, based in Mumbai. There has been a growing preference for integrated townships, which mirrors a broader desire for certainty in Indian cities. “Buyers are increasingly choosing environments where infrastructure, mobility, green spaces, and daily conveniences are planned as a whole,” says Monika Choudhary, co-founder and chief development officer of Habitat Architects, based in New Delhi and Ludhiana. “Large township developments across Pune, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, and Hyderabad underscore this shift. The home’s value is no longer contained within its walls; it is reinforced by the ecosystem around it. Community is

essential infrastructure.” Such townships are an opportunity for architecture to operate at an urban scale. “We have introduced elements like large ‘urban windows’, shared courtyards, and intergenerational parks that allow residents to balance privacy with vibrant community life. The approach is all about designing spaces where a sense of belonging and resilience can flourish,” says Khushboo Bansal, principal architect of Sthapati, based in Lucknow and New Delhi. While traditional materials such as cement, steel, and bricks remained essential, there was a clear move towards low-carbon, high-efficiency systems like precast construction, AAC blocks, fly ash bricks, and green cement alternatives. India’s green building materials sector is projected to grow at over 10% compound annual growth rate, reflecting a market-wide transition rather than a niche preference. “Sustainable construction has moved into the mainstream in 2025. Low-carbon cement alternatives, carbon-reduced concrete, and recycled materials are being adopted at scale to meet cost and environmental objectives,” says S.B. Sarveshaa, chairman and MD of Bengaluru-based Bhadra Group. Industrialised building systems are also gaining momentum, improving speed, precision, and quality control. “Prefabricated and modular components accelerated construction, reduced waste, and improved precision. Enhanced materials for waterproofing, insulation, and energy efficiency became mainstream, reflecting the growing demand for durable, comfortable, and green buildings,” says C. Rakesh Reddy, director of Hyderabad-based Aparna Constructions. “This includes the use of heavy thermal curtains, strategic placement of reflective surfaces to bounce natural light deeper into rooms, and zoned ventilation,” adds Mueen Haris, founder of DS2 Architecture, a multi-disciplinary practice based in Bengaluru, Kochi and Mangaluru. “A major trend is the return of natural stone and terracotta floors for their ‘thermal mass’ properties, absorbing heat during the day and releasing it at night to stabilise indoor temperatures.” Material choices in 2025 were driven by performance and not novelty. “Natural stone, due to its inherent beauty, durability and versatility, has remained a go-to material. From statement marble countertops to understated limestone flooring, this versatile material works across styles, blending seamlessly into both traditional and modern homes. It is also an ideal choice for outdoor spaces, including pool decks, patios, terraces, and balconies,” says Harkaran Singh Boparai, founder and principal architect of Harkaran Boparai Studio (HBS), located in New Delhi. “While access to international styles and materials has expanded, it is essential to design in a way that responds to place through materiality, craft, and narrative, without becoming pastiche. The use of stone helps in balancing these layers while still creating something emotionally compelling and functionally seamless.” Real estate, by definition, is always racing against the clock — with deadlines, approvals, handovers, and more. This year saw technology and AI begin to meaningfully compress those timelines. “The more transformative change is inside the delivery pipeline. From feasibility to floor area ra-

tio (FAR) modelling, test-fits, and massing options, to coordinated building information modelling (BIM), automated checks, clash detection, documentation, and finally the last-mile detailing that used to consume weeks of human bandwidth, AI is accelerating the entire arc,” says Manish Gulati, principal architect and founder of MOFA Studio. GST rationalisation in 2025 addressed long-standing concerns around the inverted tax structure in real estate, where input taxes were higher than output taxes. “Rates on essential materials such as cement were rationalised from 28% to 18%, while tiles, bricks, and several construction inputs were aligned to a 5% slab, thus simplifying the tax structure,” shares Reddy. “This correction improved input tax credit efficiency, reduced working-capital blockages, and enhanced cash-flow predictability for developers.” Equally important is the alignment of GST rates for government and private contracts. “Simplified registrations, faster refunds and clearer rate structures also reduce working capital stress and planning ambiguities,” says Bharat Bahl, joint managing director of New-Delhi based Krishna Build Estate Pvt. Ltd. Speaking of home décor and interior design, 2025 has been a year of experimentation and bold choices. “Homeowners have become far more open to exploring new ideas; they are more intentional and deeply personal about what they want in their homes. At the same time, they have been open to understanding what design can offer beyond the obvious,” says Disha Subramaniam, founder and principal designer of New Delhi-based Design by Disha Subramaniam. Here’s what ruled in 2025. The year definitely brought in the use of bold colours and colour-drenched spaces. “2025 embraced emotion-driven colour stories, where entire rooms were drenched in one dominant hue, including walls, furniture, ceilings, and décor. From deep plums and forest greens to burnt oranges and midnight blues, saturated palettes were used to evoke mood and identity,” says Harshita Nookula, lead-visual merchandising of Bengaluru-based Livspace India. “This trend worked especially well in bedrooms, lounges, and powder rooms, turning spaces into immersive, sensorial experiences rather than neutral backdrops.” The focus on muted, dusty shades akin to colourful extensions of neutrals was also popular. “Sage green, soft grey, and light coral colours that evoke a sense of calm were favourites. Sage green, in particular, has emerged as a go-to for cabinetry and walls, providing a soothing link to the outdoors without overwhelming the senses,” says Smita Vijaykumar, founder of ReNNovate Interiors, Mumbai. The year saw an increasing number of homeowners gravitating towards wooden floors. “Walnut, mahogany, and dark oak are being used to add warmth, depth, and a sense of quiet luxury to interiors. What stands out this year is the mixing of multiple wood tones within the same space, combining light and dark finishes to create visual balance and character. Wood is no longer limited to one element; it appears across cabinetry, wall panelling, flooring, ceilings, and custom furniture, giving spaces a cohesive yet layered look,” says Manav Danggu, founder and principal designer at Studiio Danggu, New Delhi. Hard

The long road to a water-secure future in Hyderabad



Every January, just after the Sankranti cheer ebbs, residents of the Czech Colony in Sanathnagar, Hyderabad, brace for an annual test, watching their water taps a little more closely. The borewell serving their 40-flat apartment still runs twice a day, but not for long. Its yield starts thinning, and within a month, there is nothing left to draw. What follows is a familiar routine: they must depend on water tankers, repeatedly checking the HMWS&SB app, tracking a slow crawl up the waiting list. That ritual, however, has quietly ended. T. Srinivas, a member of the apartment association, says the turning point came with the construction of an injection borewell. The change was immediate. “Our borewell improved and a few nearby apartments that opted for percolation pits saw a difference too.” He details the consultations that went into the project, the pit collection system, annual rainwater estimates and how the intervention eased everyday life in the building. Experiences such as this are shaping a broader rethink of water use and conservation across Hyderabad. At Kavuri Hills, in the upscale Kakatiya Hills residential colony, a 16-flat apartment complex built on a 1,000-square yard plot also constructed an injection borewell with technical assistance from the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) and WaterAid, an NGO facilitating such projects through corporate social responsibility funds in select localities. Suneel, an IT professional and resident of the apartment, recalls how the building’s mandated rainwater harvesting structure was once ignored. “We were blessed with water. During monsoon, the borewell would overflow, and we would flush excess water out of the cellar through a hose,” he says. That sense of abundance, however, faded rapidly as construction activity surged in the neighbourhood. Between January and May this year, the apartment complex purchased two 10-kilolitre water tankers a day for the first time, paying about ₹1,000 per load, often with some waiting period. “We got about 100 tankers,” says Suneel, his eyebrows raised. The response came in the form of a 200-foot injection borewell. Built with a contribution of just ₹20,000 from residents, it has the capacity to harvest around 509 cubic metres, or 5.09 lakh litres, of rainwater annually. According to HMWS&SB managing director K. Ashok Reddy, building injection borewells and harvesting pits is a key focus area for the Board. He recently grabbed headlines by stating, “If every house has a rainwater harvesting (RWH) pit, the city may not even need Krishna Phase IV for the 5 tmcft additional water supply.” Yet, success stories like Czech Colony and Kavuri Hills remain exceptions in a city as large as Hyderabad. They offer a glimpse of the possibilities but do not capture the full picture. A city that cannot hold its rain Hyderabad receives an annual rainfall of 700-900 mm. But in 2025, it recorded around 1,060 mm between June and December alone, nearly 40% above normal, according to the Telangana State Development Planning Society. But the city sits on crystalline formations such as granite, gneiss and compact basalt, which have very low permeability. As a result, groundwater storage depends entirely on fractures, joints, and weathered zones within these rocks. Even in a year of excess rainfall, Hyderabad failed to retain much of it. The absence of harvesting pits and collection systems meant runoff

rushed into drains, flowed into the Musi river, and eventually discharged into the Krishna river via Nalgonda district. The result? Growing dependence on water tankers and deep borewells. Hyderabad is now the most groundwater-extracting district in the State. With extraction exceeding 100% of recharge, the city is classified as both ‘over-exploited’ and ‘critical’. The pressure extends to Rangareddy and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts, which together form the contiguous Greater Hyderabad region, as well as neighbouring Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri. By contrast, Telangana as a whole is in a relatively better position, with an annual groundwater recharge of 20.4 billion cubic metres and average extraction of 45.91%, according to the Central Ground Water Board’s Groundwater Resource Assessment 2024. To understand why only 42,784 residents in Hyderabad, those in households measuring more than 300 sq. metres, frequently book water tankers, HMWS&SB conducted a citywide survey in 2024. It found that 17,382 of these households either lacked an RWH pit or had borewells that had dried up. Others had pits but did not use them. Advisory notices were issued, but compliance remained limited. Broadly, Hyderabad’s water stress can be traced to these tens of thousands of properties, compounded by rapid urban expansion that stretches the Board’s reach. Parallely, HMWS&SB launched another survey of borewells installed by the Board and other civic authorities in public offices and community spaces. Eighteen NGOs advocating water conservation were roped in for the exercise. So far, 3,435 surveys have identified 8,285 borewells, of which 4,569 are non-functional. These would now be converted into injection borewells. Separately, a survey under Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, an initiative aimed at constructing one million recharge structures nationwide, began on December 7 this year. Preliminary findings show 7,043 users already have rainwater harvesting structures. These will be linked to the Board’s unique Customer Account Number (CAN). The survey is ongoing. When water becomes a commodity If sustainability is a long-term pursuit, tanker supply is an immediate race against time. From February to May, the gap between booking and delivery often determines whether Hyderabad edges towards a water emergency. The summer of 2024 was a turning point. HMWS&SB expanded its tanker fleet from 604 to 1,000 almost overnight as bookings surged to an average of 2,000 a day. Demand was concentrated in western and north-western growth corridors — Manikonda, Gachibowli, Kondapur, Madhapur, Kukatpally, Jubilee Hills and Banjara Hills. In April 2024, Principal Secretary (Municipal Administration and Urban Development) M. Dana Kishore acknowledged a sudden drying up of borewells in western Hyderabad and a shortage of tankers, drivers and filling points, while maintaining that the city was not in the grip of a water crisis. Under the Board’s service level agreement, tankers are to be delivered within 24 hours. But in peak summers, the target was reduced to 12 hours or less, with round-the-clock deliveries. Filling stations and points were expanded, and even tanker-filling designs were improvised such as single filler-to-T-joint pipes that could load two tankers simultaneously. Currently, the Board operates 1,150 tankers, supported by 90 filling stations and 150 filling points across the city. Data on tanker deliveries between January and July over five years, from 2021 to 2025, shows a steady year-on-year increase, mirroring falling groundwater levels and the pace of Hyderabad’s urban expansion. The escalation is stark. Peak deliveries in April rose from 85,880 tanker trips in 2021 to 2,90,180 in 2025, an exponential 238% jump. Even January, once considered a relatively stable month, saw a 127% rise, from 52,778 trips in 2021 to 1,19,752 this year. The contrast is visible year-on-year. Between 2024 and 2025, tanker trips in February and March climbed by a steady 58%. April registered a further 22% increase, marking the highest monthly tanker movement in the Board’s history — 2,90,180 trips — followed by 2,77,415 in June. In this context, HMWS&SB’s recent announcement marks a decisive

shift in Hyderabad’s groundwater conservation strategy. As part of its 100-day action plan, the Board plans to construct 15,000 RWH pits across Greater Hyderabad, extending up to the Outer Ring Road. While rainwater harvesting structures are mandated for all houses measuring 200 square yards, the requirement will now be enforced strictly for properties of 300 square yards and above. The Board has also secured approval from the School Education Department to build rainwater harvesting structures in 1,200 government school premises across Hyderabad and neighbouring districts. Reiterating the larger ambition, Mr. Ashok Reddy says the city could do without Krishna Phase IV if it creates 50,000 rainwater harvesting structures over the next three years. “Yes, that’s my slogan. Why should Hyderabad’s water flood into the Musi and Krishna rivers, only to be pumped back into the city,” he argues. He explains that the proposed project would require an outlay of ₹3,000 crore, with recurring annual operations and maintenance expenses of ₹20 crore. By comparison, investing ₹100 crore in rainwater harvesting structures would be far more efficient and sustainable, and could even help check urban flooding. A key component of the plan is converting dried-up borewells in public spaces across the city into injection borewells. For the immediate construction of 700 RWH pits, the Board has already floated a tender. HMWS&SB’s push for rainwater conservation is not new. Over the past decade, it has taken multiple forms, with mixed outcomes. A similar 100-day action plan was rolled out in May 2016, during which 2,200 rainwater harvesting structures were built in common public spaces. The effort, however, fell short over time as resident welfare associations failed to maintain the structures. This was followed by the launch of Jalabhagyam in 2017 and Jala Jeevam in 2018. These programmes empanelled NGOs to educate residents on rainwater harvesting, maintenance practices and technical aspects. Jala Jeevam went further by making RWH structures mandatory for all households, expanding NGO involvement and constituting an expert committee on rainwater conservation. Moreover, 1,600 Jalavaarasathvam clubs were formed, involving grandparents and children, along with resident welfare associations and self-help groups, to revive a culture of water conservation. That same year, the Board developed a Rainwater Harvesting Theme Park on Road No. 51 in Jubilee Hills, showcasing around 40 water conservation interventions. The facility remains operational and is free for public use. Another initiative, Water Leadership and Conservation, was launched

in 2019 as a Sanathnagar-specific programme aimed at driving behavioural change and reducing water wastage. Government policy and intent, however, have not fully translated into active public participation. The data reflects this gap. In 2025, average demand for water tankers rose by 36.37% over 2024, while year-on-year projections estimate a further 22% increase. On rainwater harvesting, the Board continues to issue advisory notices to non-compliant properties under provisions of the Water, Land and Trees (WALTA) Act. The missing link? What stands in the way, officials argue, is mindset. “The attitude is: I can pay for water, use influence to get a tanker even in summer, and wash my luxury car with piped water. This is 100% literacy with ignorance and lack of common sense to use a limited resource wisely,” says T. Sharath Reddy, Deputy General Manager (Engineering), HMWS&SB, one of the two senior officers supervising Durgam Cheruvu, a high water tanker-dependent division. Jala Satyanarayana, Assistant Director (Rainwater Harvesting), HMWS&SB, whose phone number features on notices issued to households without RWH structures, recounts the responses he receives. “Some even threatened me, thinking it was a legal notice. I explain, visit their premises, and help design the structure. They do understand and want to build one. But, in general, people value water only when they experience scarcity.” For Kalpana Ramesh, designer-environmentalist and founder of The Rainwater Project, the missing piece is community ownership. Even well-crafted policies, she argues, fail without local engagement and upkeep. “How many can say they collect rainwater and are not contributing to urban flooding? How many would prioritise an RWH pit over interior design? How many speak of duties, not just rights? The key is collective stewardship, where everyone is responsible and collaborative,” she says. According to officials, where resident welfare associations and NGOs are active, a mix of awareness, community involvement, and what Kalpana Ramesh calls “penalties and harsher action” can act as effective deterrents. However, social fault lines complicate conservation efforts. In Malkajgiri, V. Sushmitha, a schoolteacher living in a 16-unit apartment complex, points to a common obstacle. “There is a lack of unity among residents,” she says. “Tenants don’t want to get involved, owners live elsewhere and nobody wants to bother. The space meant for RWH gets converted to parking. Any discussion leads to petty quarrels — and personal egos.” Tokyo: Japan’s space agency said its H3 rocket carrying a navigation satellite failed to put the payload into a planned orbit, a setback for the country’s new flagship rocket and its space launch program. Monday’s failure is the second for Japan’s new flagship rocket after its botched 2023 debut flight and six successful flights. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said the H3 rocket carrying the Michibiki 5 satellite took off from the Tanegashima Space Center on a southwestern Japanese island Monday as part of Japan’s plans to have a more precise location positioning system of its own. The rocket’s second-stage engine burn unexpectedly had a premature cutoff and a subsequent separation of the satellite from the rocket could not be confirmed, Masashi Okada, a JAXA executive and launch director, told a news conference. Whether the satellite was released into space or where it ended up is unknown, and that JAXA is investigating the data to determine the cause and other details, Okada said. Jun Kondo, an official at the Ministry of Educa-

Japan’s new flagship H3 rocket fails to put geolocation satellite into orbit

tion, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, told reporters that the failure was “extremely regrettable” and that the government set up a task force to investigate the cause and take necessary measures as soon as possible to “regain credibility.” Monday’s failure is a setback for Japan’s new flagship that replaced the earlier mainstay H-2A which had near-perfect success record. It also delays Japan’s satellite launch plans, including one to have a more independent geolocation system for smartphones, maritime navigation and drones without relying on the U.S.

The H3 rocket is designed to be more cost-competitive in the global space market. Japan sees a stable, commercially competitive space transport capability as key to its space program and national security. JAXA’s H3 project manager, Makoto Arita, said the new flagship is still in the early stages of operation but can be globally competitive. “We will pull ourselves together so that we won’t fall behind rivals. We’ll fully investigate the cause and put H3 back on track.”

Adani Group, Embraer plan regional jet assembly facility in India



New Delhi: Adani Group has inked an initial pact with Brazilian aerospace major Embraer for setting up a final assembly line for its regional jets in India, according to sources. To tap the “huge opportunities” in India, Embraer had set up its office in the national capital in October 2025. At present, Embraer, whose E-Jets began operations in India in 2005, has nearly 50 aircraft in the country serving the Indian Air Force, government agencies, business jet operators and commercial airline Star Air.

Adani Group, which already has good presence in the fast-growing Indian aviation space, will be making its foray into building aircraft in India in association with Embraer. The sources said Adani Defence and Aerospace recently signed

a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Embraer for setting up the Final Assembly Line (FAL) in India. Further details could not be ascertained. There were no comments from Adani Group and Embraer.

The development also comes against the backdrop of the government pushing for ‘Make In India’ activities in the high-growth civil aviation space. Currently, there are no FALs for civilian aircraft in India. Last year, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoohan Naidu had said the government was in the process of setting up a special purpose vehicle for making regional transport aircraft and added that necessary policies are in place for India to manufacture planes and its components. In November 2025, a senior Embraer official said in Bangkok that the aircraft maker is targeting the Indian market because it is an untapped market in Asia. “India is a market with lowest yields worldwide... if you don’t have seat cost that is competitive, then it is very difficult to make it work. With E195-E2 (aircraft) and high density seat configuration, the seat cost is very competitive,” Raul Villaron, Senior Vice President – Head of Region for Asia Pacific at Embraer, had said. The company is looking to strengthen its presence in the country’s commercial aviation, defence, business aviation, services and support, and urban air mobility segments. In 2024, Embraer Defense & Security and Mahindra Defence Systems inked an MoU to evaluate the opportunity to jointly pursue the Indian Air Force’s Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) programme with the C-390 Millennium.

Tata Power to set up India’s largest ingot, wafer plant in AP’s Nellore

Amaravati: Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd will set up a 10 GW greenfield ingot and wafer manufacturing facility in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh at an outlay of over Rs 6,600 crore. The decision was cleared by the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB), which also approved an allotment of 200 acres at the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) Kisan Special Economic Zone for this project.

“Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL) will set up a greenfield 10 GW ingot and wafer manufacturing facility at Nellore district with an investment of Rs 6,675 crore. The project will be the largest ingot and wafer manufacturing facility in the country,” said an official press release on Wednesday.

The project will be developed in two phases, with 120 acres earmarked for the initial phase and 80 acres for future expansion, said the release. The facility will manufacture ingots and wafers, which are critical inputs for solar cells, modules, and semiconductor applications, aligning with the Centre’s push to strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependence. The project is expected to generate around 1,000 direct jobs, besides indirect employment during construction and allied activities. As part of its clean energy commitment, TPREL will also establish a 200 MW captive green power plant to supply renewable energy to the manufacturing facility.

According to the government, Andhra Pradesh’s ready



industrial land, robust infrastructure, port connectivity, and assured access to green power were key factors in attracting the investment. Nellore district is emerging as a solar manufacturing hub, with several renewable energy companies planning or executing large-scale projects in the region. Welcoming the investment, State IT Minister Nara Lokesh said the project reflected investor confidence in Andhra Pradesh. “This investment is a strong vote of confidence in the state’s policy stability, infrastructure readiness, and commitment to clean energy manufacturing,” he said. The project would create high-quality jobs, strengthen the solar manufacturing ecosystem, and contribute to India’s energy transition, he added.

Pandorum teams up with Bharat Biotech subsidiary

Hyderabad: Pandorum Technologies, a clinical-stage regenerative medicine company building a next-generation platform for programmable tissue regeneration, on Tuesday announced a strategic collaboration with Nucelion Therapeutics, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bharat Biotech that specialises in contract research, development and manufacturing organisation (CRDMO), to expand manufacturing capabilities for Pandorum’s exosome-based therapeutic platform across Asia-Pacific (APAC) region.

By leveraging Nucelion Therapeutics’ manufacturing capabilities, the partnership supports regional supply and regulatory readiness, marking a strategic step forward. Furthermore, it reaffirms India’s growing capability to develop and manufacture cutting-edge biologic therapies for the world, Pandorum Technologies in a statement on Tuesday said. “Nucelion Therapeutics brings strong expertise in advanced biologics manufacturing and a high-quality operational environment that aligns well with our long-term



vision of delivering programmable exosome therapies to patients worldwide,” says Dr Tuhin Bhowmick, PhD, Co-Founder and CEO, Pandorum Technologies.

Nestle recalls infant formula batches globally over toxin risk; company says Indian products unaffected

Nestle has recalled batches of its key infant nutrition products, including SMA, BEBA and NAN infant and follow-on formulas in dozens of countries across Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia due to potential contamination with a toxin that could cause nausea and vomiting. The product recall, which began on a smaller scale in December, is another challenge for new Nestle CEO Philipp Navratil, who is trying to kickstart growth with a portfolio review after a period of management turmoil.

The company said late on Monday (January 5, 2025) that no illnesses or symptoms have been confirmed that were tied to any of the recalled products. After a quality issue was detected in an ingredient from a leading supplier, “Nestle has undertaken testing of all arachidonic acid oil and corresponding oil mixes used in the production of its potentially impacted infant nutrition products,” a company spokesperson said. At least 37 countries, including most European states, as well as Australia, Brazil, China, Mexico and South Africa have issued health warnings over the infant formulas possibly being contaminated.

On Wednesday, the United Arab Emirates’ drug regulator also recalled certain Nestle infant formula products, the state news agency (WAM) reported. The Emirates Drug Establishment said no illness or adverse events linked to the affected batches have been reported or confirmed, WAM added. The Qatari Ministry of Public Health has also warned consumers against using specific batches of Nestle infant formula products over suspected contamination with cereulide toxin, the Qatari state news agency reported. Nestle India denies selling recalled or withdrawn baby formula products. Nestle confirmed that it does not import or sell any of their recently globally recalled products involved to date, they clarified.



ucts in India, as they manufacture everything locally, ANI reported.

“Nestle India does not import or sell any of the affected products or batches that have been withdrawn or recalled. All infant formula brands sold in India are manufactured locally. We have conducted thorough testing on these products and can confirm that they meet all FSSAI and applicable rules and regulations,” the company told ANI. Nestle India has further stated that recalls have been initiated as a precautionary measure, but no illnesses have been reported so far. “At Nestle India, the safety and well-being of our consumers is our top priority. All our products are in full compliance with FSSAI and applicable rules and regulations. Following the detection of a quality issue with an ingredient provided by a leading supplier, Nestle has initiated a precautionary recall/withdrawal in some countries for certain infant formula product batches produced in Europe. No illnesses have been confirmed in connection with the products involved to date,” they clarified.

India defends antitrust penalty law in Apple fight



A law used to calculate fines on the basis of a company’s global turnover will discourage breaches by multinationals, India’s antitrust watchdog told a court in opposing Apple’s high-profile challenge to the measure. In November, Apple asked New Delhi judges to strike down the 2024 law, which could also have implications for global giants such as Pernod Ricard, Publicis, Amazon and other foreign companies facing antitrust scrutiny.

The law “aligns Indian competition law enforcement with established international practice,” the Competition Commission of India (CCI) said in a December 15 court filing, which is not public, as it laid out a detailed rationale for the first time. Weighing only India-specific turnover as the basis for the calculation of penalties, especially in the

case of global digital firms, fails to deter the impugned behaviour, the regulator added. “This approach ensures that penalties retain real deterrent value in complex, digital and cross-border markets, rather than becoming nominal or easily absorbable for large multinational players,” the CCI said in the filing seen by Reuters. Apple and the CCI did not respond to Reuters’ request for comment on the filing. In its lawsuit, Apple said the law, which reflects practice in the European Union, could lead to disproportionate fines for breaches that happened only in India. The company fears it could be fined up to \$38 billion if the global turnover calculation is used, after a CCI investigation found it had abused its position on its app store. Apple denies the accusations. Apple accuses the competition body of illegally applying the new law retrospectively in another case.

The CCI denied this, saying it always had powers to impose a fine as high as a tenth of a company’s turnover and the law changes merely clarified how it defines turnover. “Clarificatory provisions operate retrospectively as they explain the true intent of the legislature,” the CCI said. In its own filing, the CCI accused Apple of trying to misguide the court, saying that despite its power to calculate penalties on the basis of global turnover, it had sought only “India-specific financial details” from Apple. Apple disagrees, saying the turnover details sought by the watchdog in line with the new law could expose it to a much higher penalty, its court filing shows.

‘She scolded him’: Actor Ranjeet recalls Nargis staying up till 2 am to host Sunil Dutt’s friends; what such unspoken labour costs relationships

Late-night gatherings often come with unspoken expectations about hospitality, patience, and who quietly keeps things running while conversations stretch on. A story shared by veteran actor Ranjeet from his early days in Mumbai offers a glimpse into this dynamic. Recalling just his second day in the city, Ranjeet described finding himself at Sunil Dutt’s home, where a small group of friends were drinking late into the night. “We went to his house and saw Mother India. His house had dim, romantic mood lighting. A few of Dutt sahab’s friends were also there,” he said. He remembered that Sunil Dutt’s wife, Nargis Dutt, cooked a special dish herself. “Mrs Dutt (Nargis Dutt) used to make a dish on her own, called Matka Gosht. She used to cook mutton in an earthen pot; she had a recipe. So, it was for 7-8 of Dutt sahab’s friends (sic).”

As the night wore on, food kept getting delayed. “The servant came once to tell that the food had been served,” Ranjeet recalled, but Sunil Dutt reportedly asked him to wait. “He told him, ‘We will eat later, let Ronnie have 1-2 more drinks, go heat it up again.’” The delay stretched well past midnight. “So, time passed, and it was already 1:30-2:00 am, food had already been reheated thrice,” he said. What followed stayed with Ranjeet decades later. “Then, a thin voice came from behind; we couldn’t see (her) due to the dim light. She said, ‘Dutt sahab’, he stood up, and we all stood up. It was Nargis.” She scolded her husband for keeping the food waiting. “She scolded him, ‘How much will you drink? Do it fast, we have heated the food so many times.’” Dinner finally began, with everyone praising the dish. “Dutt sahab mixed up the food; it had such a good smell, everyone started praising it.”

What struck Ranjeet most was not the food itself but the effort behind it. “I was extremely impressed. She is such a big heroine and is awake till 2 am to serve the guests. Any servant could have done the same, so I was really impressed.” Beyond nostalgia, the story raises questions about social roles, emotional labour, and expectations around hosting that many people still recognise in everyday life.



How unspoken expectations around hosting and caretaking falling on one person affects emotional well-being and relationships. Counselling psychologist Athul Raj tells indianexpress.com, “When hosting extends without discussion, one person often becomes responsible for holding the entire atmosphere together. They regulate timing, comfort, and emotion, while others remain unaware of the effort involved. What begins as courtesy slowly turns into duty. The emotional cost lies in the absence of choice and acknowledgement.” Over time, he notes, this creates an internal split: warmth is offered outwardly, while fatigue and irritation are contained inwardly. Relationships don’t fracture over such moments, but they subtly recalibrate. The caretaker learns that their needs are negotiable, while others’ comfort is not. That understanding stays. How families and social groups can balance hospitality and warmth with boundaries. By refusing to confuse generosity with self-erasure. Hospitality becomes sustainable when effort is shared, named, and allowed to stop. Setting limits around time, energy, and responsibility does not dilute warmth—it preserves it. “Resentment grows when care is expected to be endless and unspoken. It softens when people feel permitted to step back without guilt. Healthy families are not the ones who stretch the most, but the ones who recognise when stretching has gone far enough,” concludes Raj.

Why dogs often choose to sleep near doors instead of their beds

If you live with a dog, you may have noticed a curious pattern at bedtime. Even when a soft bed, couch, or cosy corner is available, some dogs consistently choose to sleep near doors, entryways, or thresholds. It can look uncomfortable or puzzling to humans, especially when the bed is just a few steps away. This behaviour is often mistaken for restlessness or a lack of attachment, but it usually has deeper roots.

For many dogs, sleep is not a fully switched-off state. It is a light, alert rest where the body relaxes but the senses remain tuned to what is happening around them. Choosing a spot near the door can reflect how dogs perceive their role within a household, how they manage anxiety, or how they respond to routine and space. Understanding why dogs gravitate towards doors rather than beds can offer insight into their emotional needs, comfort levels, and natural behaviours.

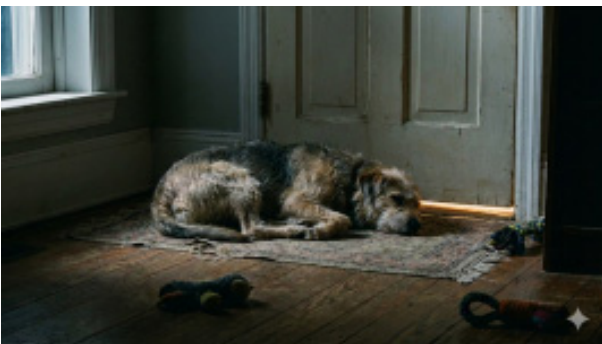
So what instinctive or evolutionary factors drive dogs to sleep near doors or entry points?

Dr Deepraj Prajapati, senior veterinarian at RD Pet Hospital, Ambekar Nagar, tells indianexpress.com, “Dogs are instinctively wired to monitor entry and exit points of their environment. This behaviour traces back to their wild ancestors, who positioned themselves at den entrances to detect threats, protect the group, and control access to resources.” Sleeping near doors allows dogs to remain alert to sounds, movement, and changes in their surroundings. For many dogs, Dr Prajapati says, it offers a strategic vantage point that satisfies their natural drive to observe, protect, and respond quickly if needed.

Indication of anxiety, guarding behaviour, or a strong sense of responsibility. “Yes, it can reflect a range of emotional states,” notes Dr Prajapati, adding that in confident, well-adjusted dogs, sleeping near doors often indicates a calm guarding instinct or a self-assigned role of watching over the household. “However, in some cases, it may also be linked to anxiety, hyper-vigilance, or separation-related stress, especially if the dog appears restless, reactive to sounds, or unable to relax fully. Context matters, including the dog’s overall behaviour, body language, and daily routine,” he informs.

When should pet parents encourage a dog to sleep elsewhere?

According to Dr Prajapati, pet parents should consider intervention if signs of anxiety, excessive alertness, sleep



disruption, or territorial aggression accompany the behaviour. Encouraging a dog to sleep elsewhere should be gradual and positive. “Providing a comfortable bed in a quiet yet socially connected area, using familiar scents, and reinforcing calm behaviour with praise or treats can help. Forced relocation or punishment should be avoided, as it can increase stress and undermine the dog’s sense of security,” concludes the expert.

Sensex, Nifty slip in early trade amid FII selling, US tariff worries

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Thursday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and concerns about potential US tariff hikes.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 255.86 points to 84,705.28 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty went down by 65.9 points to 26,074.85. From the 30-Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, Asian Paints, Maruti, Tech Mahindra, Infosys and UltraTech Cement were among the biggest laggards. However, ICICI Bank, Adani Ports, Bharat Electronics and Hindustan Unilever were among the gainers.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 1,527.71 crore on Wednesday, while domestic institutional investors bought stocks worth Rs 2,889.32 crore, according to exchange data. “From the fundamental perspective, there is good news for the economy and markets. Advanced estimates project the FY26 GDP growth at an impressive 7.4%. This reflects the underlying resilience of the economy despite Trump tariffs

As Yash Raj Films lauds Aditya Dhar, what is the future of the Spy Universe in a post-Dhurandhar world?

A month ago, anticipation hung thick in the air. Aditya Dhar was preparing for the release of his gangster actioner Dhurandhar, led by Ranveer Singh. The odds seemed stacked against the film. Fresh controversies surrounding Ranveer Singh and Kantara: A Legend – Chapter 1, only amplified the apprehension. Last-minute cancellations of press shows and reports of full prints failing to reach theaters deepened the uncertainty. Then came December 5th. The film premiered, and from that moment, it never seemed to pause for breath. It shattered historic records, emerging as the highest-grossing Hindi film of all time. On one hand, the box office tells a story of unrelenting success; on the other, the film continues to dominate online conversations. Akshaye Khanna has become a national heartthrob, Rakesh Bedi has rediscovered his groove, and Shashwat Sachdev is now hailed as the next big talent.

Yet amid all this, it is Dhar who remains the center of discourse. Despite his contentious politics, he has earned accolades from filmmakers such as Ram Gopal Varma, Anurag Kashyap, Sandeep Reddy Vanga, and Karan Johar for his audacious vision. Now, Aditya Chopra's Yash Raj Films has joined this chorus of praise. On Wednesday morning, YRF took to social media to laud Dhar and his team. Their statement read: "Dhurandhar is not merely a film... it is a milestone in Indian cinema that will be remembered forever. Congratulations to Aditya Dhar and Jio Studios for creating the highest-grossing Indian film of all time (in a single language). As the captain of this journey, Aditya Dhar's clarity of purpose, fearless storytelling, and unwavering commitment to excellence have set a new benchmark. We also congratulate every cast member and technician of this brilliant film for giving their all. You are the Dhurandhars who brought this story to life with such explosive brilliance on the big screen. Thank you for giving us cinema that inspires us to reach further in the pursuit of creative excellence."

Recognition from India's most iconic legacy studio is a triumph for the Dhurandhar team. Yet it is also a bold move by YRF. Since the film's release, Dhurandhar has consistently outshone the studio's own Spy Universe. The film's repeated comparisons to the universe, along with the overwhelmingly high bar it has set in the public imagination, pose a fascinating question for the studio itself: What does the future hold for the Spy Universe?Raw, Earthly Sensibilities versus Westernized AestheticsOne of the most persistent discussions online since Dhurandhar's release has been its raw sensibility. Gritty, visceral, and deeply grounded, juxtaposed against the highly Westernized, glossy aesthetics of the Spy Universe: War, Pathaan, Tiger 3, and more recently, War 2. A sentiment has emerged among audiences: the Spy Universe, once a harbinger of spectacle, now runs largely on inertia: recycling familiar templates, leaning on clichés, and pitting ISI against RAW, without ever truly innovating the narrative or emotional core. This is not to say Dhurandhar forgoes such a central conflict. It indeed contains a similar espionage core. But Dhar, with his mastery of manipulation and camouflage, reframes familiar tropes into a fresh, kinetic experience.Dhurandhar Dhurandhar became a rage because of its raw, gory, and inventive sensibilities.

Consider what Dhar achieved with Dhurandhar. A routine espionage story was reimagined as a gangster actioner, subverting genre expectations. The film's terrain, Karachi, was unfamiliar to most audiences, lending a sense of immediacy and unpredictability. In contrast, a film like Tiger 3, which similarly situates much of its story in Pakistan, struggled to resonate. Why? Because, after a while, it seemed weighed down by its own reputation, unable to confound, elude and, moreover, rivet the audience in a meaningful way. In this sense, the success of Dhurandhar feels

Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone attend wedding in New York; fans say ‘Stop serving you guys’



Actors Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone started 2026 in style by celebrating the New Year in New York City. The New York vacation, however, did not end with just a New Year's party, as the celebrity couple were seen attending a wedding in the city. In the pictures, which have been going around the internet, both the actors can be seen posing with a friend. Ranveer can be seen channeling his inner Rocky Randhawa, sporting a bright blue suit paired

Priyanka Chopra turns pirate in swashbuckling action thriller ‘The Bluff’

Mumbai: Global sensation Priyanka Chopra will be seen exploring a new territory with her forthcoming swashbuckler action thriller "The Bluff", where she will essay the role of Erceall Bodden, a fierce pirate.As the project gears up to premiere on the OTT platform Prime Video from February 25, PeeCee decided to treat the netizens with a few glimpses from her much-awaited next.

Posting a couple of stills from "The Bluff", Priyanka wrote on her Instagram handle, "Mother. Protector. Pirate. Meet Bloody Mary .PeeCee was seen battle-ready in these pictures with a blood-soaked and fierce avatar as a once-feared pirate. However, now, her personality has gained a softer dimension, that of a mother.From fighting Keith Urban in the battleground to spending time with her family, PeeCee's character in "The Bluff" looks both physically and emotionally challenging.

Reacting to the first look of the diva from the action entertainer, her singer and actor husband, Nick Jonas, wrote



almost inevitable. Audiences will always be drawn to a "rooted" actioner led by a formidable ensemble, filled with inventive set pieces, over a universe that depends solely on star power, flashy CGI, and formulaic, Mission Impossible-esque template.However, for all it's creative bankruptcy, and narrative limitations, the Spy Universe rests on a foundation of sensible, secular, and harmonious politics. It never ventures into divisiveness; it never frames itself through a bigoted lens. Even when its stories hinge on the familiar "we must save Pakistan" trope, they never lose sight of the shared humanity that transcends borders. These films find their strength in their moral spine, in an era, where subservience is the cornerstone of storytelling.Much of this credit belongs to Kabir Khan, who, beginning with Ek Tha Tiger in 2012, laid the groundwork for a politically conscious approach to the genre. And to Chopra, who, like his father Yash Chopra, understands that love, remains transformative, seminal, especially in a world replete with polarization. So, if Dhurandhar imagines a new India, the Spy Universe reflects the ideals of a gentler, older era, in the hope of a better, calmer future.Sensible politics alone, however, cannot sustain an audience, or a franchise. At best, and of course, at worst, it only attracts trolls and abuse. And, to complicate matters, the last few releases in the Spy Universe, War 2, and before that Tiger 3, performed underwhelmingly at the box office, revealing the universe's struggle to keep pace with expectations. Now, after Dhurandhar, the bar has been raised. Audiences have seen what is possible within the espionage genre. Against this backdrop, the future of the Spy Universe appears bleak. Their next outing, Alpha, already draws attention due to shifting release dates and delays. So unless it ventures beyond familiar tropes, the trajectory seems clear: diminishing returns.There is, however, another path. The obsession with action spectacle, though dominant, need not define the studio's future. Major production houses are already producing the same high-octane fare. If YRF seeks to stand out, as it once did in the 2000s with its fresh, innovative storytelling, it must traverse new genres. Or if not, then stick to their guns. The success of last year's romantic musical Saiyaara, a surprising hit, proves that audiences are ready for stories beyond action. It is only a matter of choice, of conscious courage, and of timing before Chopra embraces that risk, offering a path that can lead us out of these dark ages.

with a matching shirt and sunglasses. Deepika, on the other hand, opted for a traditional look, wearing a glamorous saree complemented by a choker set.Their fans on the internet reacted to the pictures and their outfits quite positively. One user on Reddit commented, "Ranveer is looking like a Russian mob mafia," while another user complimented Deepika and wrote, "Loved the whole choker and outfit combo. Need a full picture." Another user appreciated the two as a couple and wrote, "Stop serving you guys; I'm so full."

During their time in New York, Ranveer and Deepika also attended an NBA game between the New York Knicks and the Atlanta Hawks. Many fans recognised the couple and clicked pictures to post on social media.

On the work front, Ranveer Singh is waiting for the release of Dhurandhar 2. After the massive success that came the way of the Dhurandhar, the actor will be hoping to up the ante with the sequel. Deepika Padukone, who has exited two major films in the past few months, will be next seen in King. Directed by Sidharth Anand, the cast of the film also includes Shah Rukh Khan, Abhay Verma, Arshad Warsi, Abhishek Bachchan, Jaideep Ahlawat, and Raghav Juyal. Shah Rukh's daughter Suhana Khan will be making her theatrical debut with the movie.

on his Instagram Stories, "Can't wait for the world to see how absalutly incredible @priyankachopra is in this movie.(sic)".

Set in the late 1800s, "The Bluff" shares the journey of Erceall Bodden (Played by Priyanka Chopra), a former pirate known by the name of "Bloody Mary." As she successfully builds a different life for herself after fleeing her ruthless crew, predominantly taking the role of a mother living in the Cayman Islands, her past returns to haunt her.

Her former crew tracks her down, forcing her to face the violent world she was once a part of.

Backed by the Russo Brothers' AGBO Studios in association with Amazon MGM Studios, "The Bluff" also stars Temuera Morrison as Quartermaster Lee, Captain Connor's gold-hungry consigliere, along with Ismael Cruz Córdova, Safia Oakley-Green, Zach Morris, David Field, and Vedanten Naidoo in crucial roles.

The Copenhagen Test review: Simu Liu channels his inner James Bond, just more vulnerable and betrayed

Spy thrillers are always a tricky game to play, maybe because it has been played more times than football at Wembley Stadium and Sooryavansham on Set Max. It is also difficult for the creator to set themselves apart, because James Bond is an incredibly high standard to match up to, even though Spectre and Licence to Kill exist. But sometimes, people get it right, and while it is no Skyfall, Thomas Brandon's The Copenhagen Test comes close to reaching that level of brilliance.From the get-go, the premise of the entire series is quite interesting. An ex-Special Forces soldier, Alexander Hale, works as an analyst for the organisation called The Orphanage. It's basically an oversight programme built to keep all of America's clandestine organisations in check, because let's be honest, they need one. Now, like Jack Ryan, Hale too suffers from PTSD from his army days, and memories of a particular mission keep haunting his days and nights, causing panic attacks on the regular.

The series opens with Hale trying to secure a job in the Upstairs department of the Orphanage, the section which deals with field assignments, filled with people who actually face the fire, rather than write about it in an expense report. From the answers in his interview, you realise that Hale has a chip on his shoulder. See, Hale is a first-generation immigrant, and Chinese too. He reveals that his parents have worked extremely hard so that their son fits into this new country, not as an outsider, but as an American. They even change the family name to sound more like their neighbours and colleagues, and Alexander just wants to prove that he is an asset to his country.The Army seems like the perfect place to do so, but this is where he faces his first loyalty test, something that becomes the root of all his problems. During an operation, Hale is ordered to get some hostages out, but he can only choose one. He is also told to prioritise Americans, but Hale comes across a scared kid in the forest and decides to save him instead of the American woman who is begging him to take her. Now a veteran, Hale is still haunted by that decision, but he doesn't know that all of this was just a test, aptly called the Copenhagen Test.That isn't all, though. Hale soon discovers that his brain has been hacked, and some kind of surveillance technology has been embedded into it. This allows the hacker to see what Hale sees and hears, making him the perfect little cog in The Orphanage's system. Hale's predicament of being hacked works perfectly with his inherent sense of patriotism, because the fact that he has been spying on his country shatters his soul. Nothing else would have made quite the same impact; threats or extortion wouldn't have worked because his love for his country is greater than anything else.

To render a patriotic man useless to his own country makes for a brilliant storyline, one that makes you understand what identity and autonomy truly mean. After finding a way to fool his hacker, Hale goes on an incredibly painful journey, both mentally and physically. The Orphanage builds



a fake world around him in order to feed the hacker the wrong information. But every now and then, they have to give out real data, which puts Hale in an even worse ethical situation. He witnesses his country being attacked and his men being slaughtered without being able to do anything about it, and the series makes you feel his helplessness.

As Hale peels off the layers of this diabolical plan, he starts discovering the true depths of the lies that have been fed to him. Everything from his ex-wife to his oldest friend, his purpose and his identity are under the gun, because Hale isn't the man he thought he was — he is just a player in this game, and just like the wooden men attached to a foosball table, he has no control over how the game gets played.Also, Sinclair Daniel (Parker) and Brian d'Arcy James (Peter Moira) deliver an exquisite performance. The mentor-mentee relationship between the two portrays their flaws and strengths in the most honest way. Their insecurities and fears come to light at the worst possible time for the characters but at the most optimal time for the viewers. The game of cloak and daggers that they play with Hale, knowing that at any point this could all blow up in their face and get them thrown off their jobs or, worse, get them thrown in jail — is all very well paced.Nothing is revealed to you before time, and even though some of you might see a lot of things coming, you are never disappointed when it does come to light. It's like knowing your destination perfectly but still being glad about the road you took there. Simu Liu seems well on his way to establishing himself as a serious and dramatic actor who has the ability to make the odd joke here and there and still make it feel natural. It isn't perfect, and the cinematography of the series could have been more outside of the box, but it sticks to its purpose. It doesn't try too hard and stays within the bounds of the narrative, and that is probably the best decision the creators could ever make.

Geethu Mohandas' film makes RGV question male directors; Sandeep Reddy Vanga gets ‘knocked out’



On Yash's 40th birthday, filmmaker Geethu Mohandas dropped one of the boldest teasers of the year for the actor's upcoming film Toxic. While the teaser carefully avoids re-

vealing the plot, it unmistakably establishes that the film is set in a foreign locale and presents Yash in a far more stylish, daring, and provocative avatar than his KGF persona. Notably, a brief intimate moment in the teaser was enough to leave filmmakers Ram Gopal Varma and Sandeep Reddy Vanga visibly impressed.Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Ram Gopal Varma made a striking statement—one that doubled as a sharp dig at male directors across the industry.

He wrote, "After seeing the Yash-starring trailer of #Toxic, I have no doubt that Geethu Mohandas is the ultimate symbol of women empowerment."He added, "No male director is man enough in comparison to this woman... I still can't believe she shot this."The teaser also caught the attention of actor Alia Bhatt, who shared it on her Instagram Stories with a single-word reaction: "Dynamite."The teaser of Yash's Toxic opens with a somber funeral scene, only to be disrupted by the arrival of a car. As tension builds, an intimate moment inside the vehicle heightens the unsettling atmosphere, offering glimpses into Yash's character before the sequence culminates in a sudden explosion—perfectly setting the tone for the film's dark, chaotic world.Since its release earlier today, the teaser has amassed close to 9 million views on YouTube, underlining the massive anticipation surrounding the project.Toxic is scheduled to hit theatres on March 19, clashing with the sequel to Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar.Beyond Toxic, Yash will also be seen in Nitesh Tiwari's ambitious Ramayana, where he essays the role of Ravana. Notably, the actor is also co-producing the mythological epic.

‘A strong woman is not marriage material’: Neena Gupta reveals that 95% of men want women who are helpless

Neena Gupta has never shied away from speaking her mind, even when her views challenge deeply inherent social norms. Her personal life, particularly her decision to become a mother out of wedlock in the late 1980s, has long been the subject of intense public scrutiny. Decades later, that chapter of her life continues to dominate conversations around her, reflecting society's enduring discomfort with women who choose to live on their own terms. Staying true to her outspoken nature, Neena recently made a bold observation about marriage and gender dynamics. In a conversation with Humans of Bombay, she shared her belief that strong, independent women are often seen as undesirable in traditional marriages, especially in patriarchal setups.

"A strong woman is not marriage material. Men don't like strong women, most of them," she said, adding, "They like helpless women. They hate strong women, or women who have their own thoughts, women who work, who are committed to their own careers. They hate that. They want power over women. I'm speaking in general terms, not about everyone. But it's true about 95% of our population. I'm not saying this to make a controversial statement, but it's something I have observed in my own household and in society."

Earlier in the same conversation, Neena Gupta also opened up about a painful episode from her personal life. She revealed that she was engaged to a man who called off the wedding at the last minute, leaving her devastated. "I was engaged to a guy who ditched me at the last minute. In



my mind, I was set to have a child, and the ring ceremony had already happened. I had gone to Delhi to buy my clothes and jewellery, and suddenly I got a call from him saying that we aren't getting married right now. I asked what happened, and he said he needed to get a sinus operation."She added that she never received clarity about what truly went wrong. "

To this day, I don't know the reason behind the wedding being called off. I kept asking his parents what had happened, but they never told me. Then he came back after six months or so and said he wanted to marry me. I said, "F**k off. Now, I don't want to marry you."

From confrontation to cooperation, how FIDE and Freestyle Chess ended their feud



GNS News Agency, Jan 10

The differences between the two parties were public, and despite multiple attempts, ending the dispute and finding a middle ground proved difficult for both. In February 2025, The Indian Express reported that FIDE and Freestyle Chess had been very close to an amicable agreement before talks broke down. Jan Henric Buettner, the German billionaire entrepreneur behind the ambitious Freestyle Grand Slam Tour, revealed to this newspaper how the months-long feud was finally resolved. "With Arkady (Dvorkovich, FIDE President), I had a very good understanding. We nearly had an agreement a year ago. We were actually finalising the wording of a press release. And then, at the very last moment, it somehow fell apart. I don't know how. I don't want to speculate, but it was kind of very weird," he told The Indian Express. "And so the whole thing turned from cooperation into confrontation. Then we focused on our own tour and didn't really bother with it anymore," he explained. "I think time did its work... We basically reconnected. I took the time to fly to Qatar (during the World Rapid & Blitz Championship) two weeks ago, where we sat down, hammered out our differences, and basically said, 'Okay, let's move forward and do what's beneficial for the players, for FIDE, and also for us and everyone.' That's how we agreed, and now we are all friends." A joint statement released by Freestyle Chess and FIDE on Wednesday revealed that both parties have signed a cooperation agreement. Buettner believes that with FIDE now as a partner, players no longer have to worry about choosing a particular side. However, he clarified that the deal is only a short-term one. "This means that together with FIDE, we will determine the qualification process for the 2027 World Championship. Ultimately, this is a short-term deal that benefits everyone," he said. Meanwhile, the governing body also clarified that the new FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship will be a continuation of FIDE's previous events in the Fischer Random format, held in 2019 and 2022. The February event will feature eight players. Six have qualified based on their results during the 2025 Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour: Magnus Carlsen, Levon Aronian, Fabiano Caruana, Vincent Keymer, Arjun Erigaisi, and Javokhir Sindarov. Two additional partici-

pants will be selected separately, one by FIDE and one by Freestyle Chess. Freestyle Chess have already nominated Hans Niemann based on his performance in the Grand Slam Tour in Las Vegas. To determine the eighth player, FIDE will hold an Online Qualification Tournament on Chess.com later this month. Interestingly, defending FIDE Fischer Random World Champion, Wesley So, didn't find a spot in the upcoming FIDE Freestyle World Championship. In essence this will be the fifth world championship in the sport besides the classical World Chess Championship (which is the most prestigious and held every two years), the World Rapid Championship and the World Blitz Championship (which are held together at the end of each year) and the newly-announced Total Chess World Championship, which will go live from 2027 after a pilot event this year. Fitting into what already seems to be an increasingly confusing schedule of chess world championships, the arrival of Freestyle chess appears to add only more complications. Buettner believes otherwise. "We increasingly see and conduct ourselves as the Formula One of chess. There are many car races around the world and many world championships for all kinds of motorsport, but there's only one Formula One." The man behind Freestyle Chess, Jan Henric Buettner, speaks in a press conference. (Lennart Ootes/Freestyle Chess) The man behind Freestyle Chess, Jan Henric Buettner, speaks in a press conference. (Lennart Ootes/Freestyle Chess)

"It's up to FIDE how many championships they want to organise. They have Classical, Rapid and Blitz. As for the question of the one Total Chess World Championship, I don't even want to enter that discussion, because I don't like others talking down what we do, and I don't want to talk down what others do. But I saw a very funny video by Vedit (Gujrathi – a satirical sketch explaining the confusion around so many world championships). So there's a lot of confusion about what counts and how it works. And I believe we have managed to create the least confusion. It's very simple, very clear: you have to be one of the top players. There are only eight spots, and they are extremely difficult to earn," he explained. While India was originally part of the Grand Slam Tour, it was eventually dropped due to a lack of interest from local sponsors, which Buettner identified as a key factor for holding events. This decision sparked some criticism, with fans on social media even referring to the tour as a sinking ship. Buettner strongly refuted these claims. "We are clearly the elite players' professional organisation. We have all the best players. There's no player we wanted that didn't join us. We didn't do anyone harm. We didn't take advantage of anyone. We spent our own money, about \$23 million on this," Buettner said. The Grand Slam Tour began in 2025 at Weissenhaus, then moved to Paris and Las Vegas, and concluded in Cape Town. According to Buettner, the upcoming Freestyle World Championship will not mark the start of a new season, but rather the culmination of the previous one. The new season will then commence in April at the Grenke Open in Karlsruhe, Germany.

What makes KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer a force: Contrast in strokes and styles, approach and attitudes

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The poster boys of Indian cricket were always the top-three batsmen; but behind every meaningful title conquest has been a firing middle order. Kapil Dev's "devils" had Yashpal Sharma and Sandeep Patil at four and five; MS Dhoni's champions could slot anyone, from himself and Yuvraj Singh to Suresh Raina and Virat Kohli. Similarly, ending years of combustible middle-order combinations, India have found the ideal 4-5 tango in KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer. Since joining forces in the post-2019 World Cup rebuilding phase, a tournament where a flimsy middle-order hampered India, they have plundered 823 runs at an average of 64 in 14 instances. One in every third association has produced more than 100 runs.

They are a fascinating study of contrasts, in attitude, temperament, approach and strokes. Shreyas seeks risks, he shifts between three different stands in a game, altering it to suit the conditions and bowlers. He counterpunches in a crisis, demoralises bowlers and is arguably the most ruthless destroyer of spin bowling, by using his feet and strong wrists to disrupt their lengths, in the world. His was the wicket Australia craved and planned the most in the 2023 World Cup final. He relishes clutch situations, which former India coach Rahul Dravid has dwelled on. "You just look at some of his knocks under pressure, how he's able to actually bring the best out of himself under those pressure situations," Dravid once reflected.

If Shreyas is a thrilling watch, Rahul is a compelling one. He has an equally rich repertoire of attacking strokes, but does it more classically. Their contrasting responses to a short ball captures the essence of the contrast. Shreyas slashes it, often in front of square, sometimes drags it to the leg-side. But Rahul cuts it fine, mostly through the first slip region. He approaches a collapse differently, conforming to the old-fashioned way of weathering the storm before accelerating. He brings adaptability, and could play the aggressor, accumulator, or the enforcer role. Since 2020, nobody has a higher average than his 61.72 at No 5 (a minimum of 20 innings). "I think it's (batting at 5) really helped me understand my game a lot more, in terms of understanding my boundary-hitting range," Rahul had said. Both are expert field manipulators, versed in run accumulation. Both are exceptionally strong through the leg-side. Together, they bring a variety of skills that could confound most captains and bowlers. Their strengths are so varied that their opposition has to constantly alter the field. Bowlers have to revise lengths. The short ball could test Shreyas Iyer, but Rahul could fetch them to the fence. They are similar to Yuvraj (Rahul) and Raina (Shreyas) in many ways. They debunk the myth that a dangerous pair need not always be a left-right combination. They are utterly different batsmen to bowl at, and traversed different paths to reach their destination. Shreyas was always tipped to bat in the middle order—55 of Shreyas's 67 innings have come in the middle order. Rahul, an opener by trade, has yo-yoed up and down the order because the top-order was crowded. That contrast has allowed flexibility. If early wickets fall, Rahul can anchor while Shreyas rebuilds momentum. If the top order provides a platform, Shreyas can press the accelerator while Rahul plays the role of stabiliser. Their complementary strike-rate patterns have often ensured India does not stall in the middle overs. Yet, they are not miles apart in their strike rate. Shreyas, obviously, has a better hitting rate (99.07) when batting from 4 to 7. Rahul has mustered 94.72. Shreyas hits every ninth ball he faces to the fence; Rahul does so every 11th ball. Their importance to the cause of



making India an ODI superpower cannot be emphasised more. They provide muscle and momentum, stability and speed or scoring. Style is just a pleasing bonus. They have been the centre that has held India together through top-order wobbles and Powerplay collapses. Among several instances of their double act, the 136 (101 balls) they stitched in Hamilton in 2020 stands out. On that occasion, they swapped roles. When they joined in the 29th over (the score at 156 for 3), the base was set. They steadily accelerated the speed of scoring and set the base for India's 347 for 4). They stung again with a 100-run stand in the same stand. New Zealand, thus, would be aware of the havoc they could wreak this series. It might not always be 100-run stands, but one of 60 or 70 would suffice. Behind the all-out aggressive approach of Rohit Sharma and Co at the top is the guarantee Rahul and Shreyas offer. Once Hardik Pandya too returns, India's top six could become an intimidating proposition that could land the World Cup that eluded them at home in 2023. They might not be the poster boys, but tournaments are won on the muscle and momentum they furnish, the control they exert in the middle and death overs.

PV Sindhu storms into Malaysia Open quarterfinals

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HYDERABAD: Double Olympic medalist and former World champion PV Sindhu outplayed eighth seed Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan to book her place in the quarterfinals of Malaysia Open, a BWF Super 1000 event.

The Hyderabad shuttler dominated the opening game 21-8 and maintained the momentum to seal the match 21-13 in the second game. Sindhu will next face the winner of the clash between China's Gao Fang Jie and third seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the quarterfinals.

In men's doubles, third seeds Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy also advanced after securing a 21-18, 21-11 win over Malaysia's Junaidi Arif and Roy King Yap in 39 minutes.

With the victory, the Indians extended their head-to-head record against the Malaysian pair to 4-0. They will next face the winners of the clash between Chinese Taipei's Chen Zhi Ray/Lin Yu Chieh and sixth seeds Fajar Alfian/Fikri Muhammad of Indonesia.

Rio Ferdinand on who he picks among Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo 'I would take...'



GNS News Agency, Jan 10

The comparison between Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo is a never-ending debate. Both the stars for their clubs and countries have achieved remarkable things, and along the way have set some high standards. Former Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand said he will pick Ronaldo over Messi for one game. "It depends on the team, but for one game, I would take Cristiano," Ferdinand said in an interview with Saudi outlet Thamanya.

Earlier in 2021, Ferdinand spoke on TNT Sports about both players said: "We should just enjoy them." However, he made a clear distinction between the two: "I

Michael Vaughan on Harry Brook nightclub incident: 'Doesn't surprise me... England have been quite loose for a while'

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England's Harry Brook reacts after he was dismissed during play on day four of the fifth and final Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Sydney. England's Harry Brook reacts after he was dismissed during play on day four of the fifth and final Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Sydney. Former England captain Michael Vaughan has said that he was not surprised after learning that England's white-ball captain and Test vice captain Harry Brook was involved in a late-night fight with a nightclub bouncer during the tour of New Zealand, where England lost 3-0. The incident, which happened before the Ashes, was reported by The Daily Telegraph right when England lost the series to Australia by a 1-4 margin. Brook, who was struck by the club's bouncer after being refused entry to the club, apologised for "bringing embarrassment" on his team with the incident in New Zealand.

According to the report, Brook was fined 30,000 pounds (\$40,300) and given a final warning for his future conduct. Brook was not stripped of the white-ball captaincy, in fact, just hours after the incident Brook led England in the third ODI the next afternoon at 2 p.m. He was dismissed for six runs in that game which New Zealand won by two wickets to sweep the series 3-0. Brook also continued to be the vice captain of the England team in the recently-concluded Ashes tour. England's disastrous Ashes series against Australia has also been under the lens for incidents of players over-indulging in alcohol at the resort town of Noosa. These much-criticised drinking sessions happened during the days between the second and third Ashes Tests, both of which England lost.

"The incident doesn't surprise me. They've (England team) been quite loose for a while. And I guess, you know, whether it's consequences with shots that have been played over the course of the last three years, there hasn't been one," Michael Vaughan told BBC. "And now obviously the loose nature of this environment. The Noosa trip was fine for me, but the Noosa trip on the back of what we now know went on in New Zealand. You have to point the finger at the leadership group or the ECB, because if they knew, and then we had this incident, and then he played the next day as England captain," he added. England's Harry Brook reacts during play on day two of the fifth and final Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Sydney. (AP Photo) England's Harry Brook reacts during play on day two of the fifth and final Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Sydney. (AP Photo) Vaughan slammed England and

think Messi is the one who likes to get involved in the game and can play the final pass, but also his numbers in terms of goals are ridiculous. And Cristiano is just obsessed with scoring goals and being the person who decides the match. "Not exactly friends

Messi said that while he had a tremendous amount of respect for eternal rival Ronaldo, the two superstars were not exactly friends. Messi said that this was not due to some kind of personal animosity but was down to the simple fact that the two superstars don't spend time together with their paths rarely crossing. "I have a lot of respect and admiration for Cristiano Ronaldo and for the career he's had and continues to have, because he's still competing at the highest level," Messi told DSports. "The competition with him was on the pitch. Each of us wanted to do the best for our team. Obviously, as always, everything stayed on the field. Off the pitch, we are two normal people. We're not friends obviously because we don't spend time together, but we've always treated each other with a lot of respect," he added. A few weeks ago, Ronaldo had also said that he had nothing but respect for Messi. "I have affection for Messi, although we have been rivals for many years. As I have said in several interviews, we were on stage for 15 years. I translated for him at the galas. I have affection for him because he always respected me a lot," Ronaldo had said ahead of Portugal's game against Spain in the Nations League final.



Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) senior leadership and demanded that they take responsibility. "You have to say that the highest level of management of the ECB have to look at themselves in the mirror, because they were clearly trying to brush that under the carpet because the Ashes were coming up. If they dealt with it there and then, it would have been a big story... but out the way," Vaughan stated. "For it now to have broken on the back of losing 4-1 in Australia, on the back of what happened in Noosa, on the looseness of the players in terms of their discipline with some of their strokes. The whole culture around the team, the group, and the ECB as well needs to change." Brook has come under fire from many England legends like Michael Atherton and Geoffrey Boycott for his batting. Boycott, in fact, bashed Brook as a "waste of talent" during the Ashes.

Brook's apology "I want to apologise for my actions. I fully accept that my behaviour was wrong and brought embarrassment to both myself and the England team," Brook was quoted as saying in a statement by the BBC. "Representing England is the greatest honour of all, which I take seriously and I am deeply sorry for letting down my teammates, coaches and supporters. I have reflected on the lessons it has taught me about responsibility, professionalism and the standards expected of those representing your country. I am determined to learn from this mistake and to rebuild trust through my future actions, both on and off the field. I apologise unreservedly and will work hard to ensure this does not happen again." A statement from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said: "We are aware of this incident and it has been dealt with through a formal and confidential ECB disciplinary process. The player involved has apologised and acknowledged their conduct fell below expectations on this occasion."

World no 1 tennis ace Aryna Sabalenka expected to skip events in an 'insane' season to prioritise health



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World number one women's tennis player Aryna Sabalenka is expected to skip events again this year in order to not risk her health over the course of an 'insane' season. Sabalenka will likely be sanctioned by the WTA tour for skipping events. "The season is definitely insane, and that's not good for all of us, as you see so many players getting injured. The rules are quite tricky with mandatory events, but I'm still skipping a couple events in order to protect my body, because I struggled a lot last season," the Belarusian said after beating Sorana Cirstea at the Brisbane International. Top players are obliged to compete in all four Grand Slams, 10 WTA 1000 tournaments and six WTA 500 events under WTA rules, with the punishment for missing them ranging from rankings points deductions to fines. In 2025, Sabalenka competed in just three WTA 500 events – Brisbane, Stuttgart and Berlin – making her one of a number of high-ranked players, including world number two Iga Swiatek, to be docked ranking points.

"Even though the results were really consistent, some of the tournaments I had been playing completely sick or I've been really exhausted from overplaying. This season

we will try to manage it a little bit better, even though they are going to fine me by the end of the season. "But it's tricky to do that. You cannot skip 1000 events. It's really tricky, and I think that's insane what they do. I think they just follow their interests, but they're not focusing on protecting all of us." The men's and women's circuits have faced criticism due to their 11-month seasons, and both tours came under fresh scrutiny during the "Asian swing" towards the end of last year with injuries piling up. In September, the WTA told Reuters that athlete welfare is a top priority and that it had listened to views on the calendar, both through the players' council and their representatives on the WTA board, to improve the circuit structure in 2024 and boost compensation.

India's star batter Tilak Verma undergoes surgery for a groin issue

Hyderabad: India's star batter Tilak Varma, who is leading Hyderabad in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, complained of acute pain and was taken to a hospital in Rajkot where he underwent surgery for testicular torsion on Wednesday. Tilak has already started recovering and is expected to be back in action soon. He may even be fit for the upcoming New Zealand T20 series. The Hyderabad cricket team management informed Telangana Today that the surgery lasted about 30 minutes and was a routine procedure, though doctors advised two weeks of rest as a precaution. "Tilak is with the team and will be flying back home along with us," the management said.