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Telangana: Police warns over sale of China manja in Secunderabad

Secunderabad Zone DCP Rakshita Krishnamurthy has issued a stern warning to kite shop owners, emphasising that severe repercussions will follow if they are found selling Chinese kite strings (manja) that pose risks to both people and wildlife. On Tuesday, she carried out surprise inspections at various kite shops in Warasiguda, accompanied by Additional DCP Narasayya and ACP Shashank Reddy, focusing on the areas covered by Chilakalaguda and Warasiguda police stations. During the inspections, DCP Krishnamurthy evaluated the kite strings offered in the shops and cautioned the proprietors about legal action should any harmful products be discovered. She reported that, to date, no Chinese kite strings have been identified in the shops inspected. Furthermore, she highlighted the ongoing efforts to raise awareness among the youth and the general public regarding the dangers associated with these strings, advising youngsters against their use.

Preparations Underway for Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Mahajatara

Ministers Adluri Laxman Kumar and Dhanasari Seethakka have announced comprehensive arrangements to ensure that the anticipated 3 crore devotees attending the Sammakka-Saralamma Mahajatara, scheduled from 28th to 31st this month in Medaram, Tadwai mandal of Mulugu district, face no difficulties. Speaking at a high-level meeting at the BR Ambedkar Secretariat in Hyderabad, the ministers outlined the significant investment of over Rs. 250 crores in development works for the event.

Frame rules to enforce 25% EWS quota in private schools, says SC

New Delhi, Jan 14

Emphasising that granting admission to poor children in educational institutions "must be a national mission", the Supreme Court has directed government authorities to frame rules to ensure effective implementation of the 25 per cent reservation for children from economically and socially weaker sections (EWS) in private unaided non-minority schools under the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

"...we direct the appropriate authorities to prepare and issue, in consultation with the NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights) and SCPCRs (State Commissions), as the case may be, as well as the national and state advisory councils, necessary rules and regulations under Section 38 of the RTE Act for implementing the mandate of Section 12(1)(c) of the Act," a Bench of Justice P S Narasimha and Justice Atul S Chandarkar said.

The order came on a petition filed by a man whose



children were denied admission in 2016 to a neighbourhood school for free and compulsory elementary education despite the availability of seats. The

Bombay High Court had rejected his plea on the ground that he had failed to apply in accordance with the prescribed online procedure for filling the reserved seats.

The apex court said the grant of admission to children from the EWS category under the RTE Act was "an obligation of the appropriate government and the local authority". "Equally, courts, be it constitutional or civil, must walk that extra mile to provide easy access and efficient relief to parents who complain of denial of the right," it said.

Noting that, "unfortunately", the petition against the high court's order had remained pending for a long period, the Bench said that to ensure such a situation did not recur, it had chosen to treat the case as precedent-setting. It examined the efficiency and effectiveness of existing procedures for complying with Section 12 of the RTE Act, which defines the extent of a school's responsibility for free and compulsory education.

"We are of the opinion that it is necessary and compelling to formulate subordinate legislation by issuing necessary rules and regulations, prescribing the method and manner by which children of weaker and disadvantaged sections are to be admitted in neighbourhood schools," the Bench said.

It underlined that in the absence of enforceable rules and regulations, the constitutional mandate under Article 21A (right to education) and the statutory policy under Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act would be rendered "a dead letter".

The amicus curiae pointed out several reasons for the inaccessibility of reserved seats to weaker and disadvantaged groups, including digital illiteracy, language barriers, lack of facilitation help desks, inadequate information on seat availability, absence of transparency in admissions and uncertainty over grievance redressal mechanisms.

Cabinet to discuss Nallamala Sagar

Hyderabad, Jan 14

The state government is likely to take a call on its next course of action on the Polavaram-Nallamala Sagar project at a Cabinet meeting on January 18, following the apex court's dismissal of a related petition filed by the Telangana government against the project envisaged by Andhra Pradesh.

According to official sources, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has sought a detailed report on the state government's efforts to halt the project through the courts and the complaints lodged with the Union government against the project of AP. The Chief Minister has already held a meeting with top Irrigation wing officials in this regard. According to the sources, the state government is planning to mount pressure on the Union government to halt the project and simultaneously seek the support of the affected states mainly Maharashtra, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh, in the fight against the Polavaram-Nallamala Sagar project.

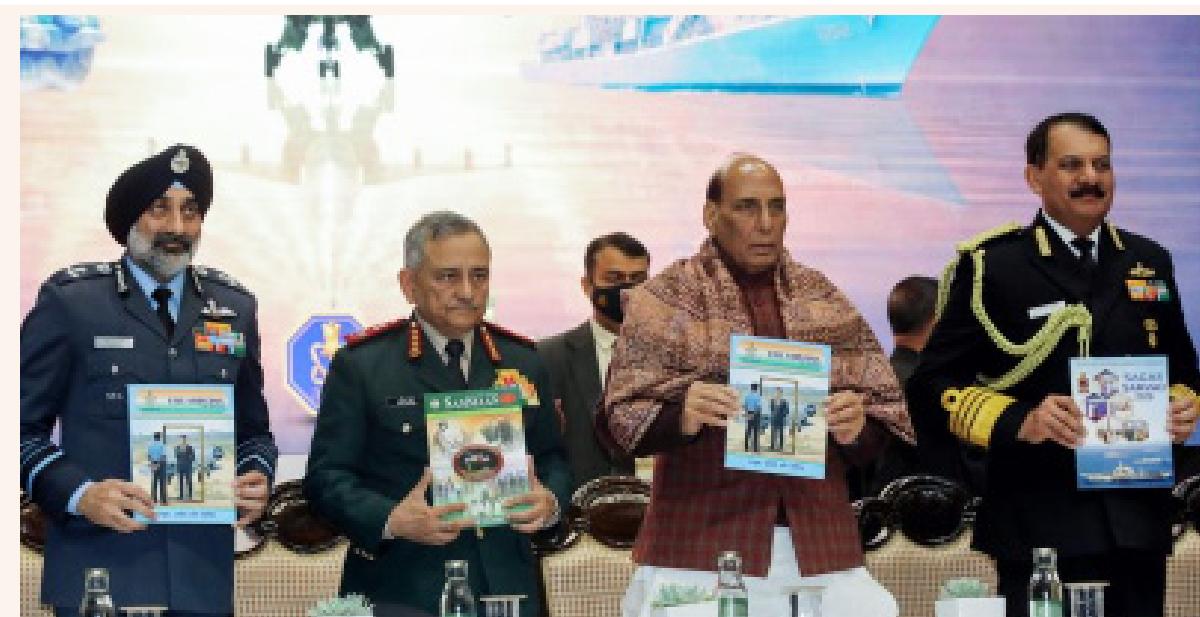
"The Cabinet will discuss the issue threadbare with the Chief Minister seeking the suggestions of his colleagues in the meeting organized in Medaram on Sunday", the sources said. The government wants to highlight the impact of the project on the utilisation of the Godavari waters by the Telangana state in the future. For this, the Cabinet will chalk out an action plan in the meeting.



Fund crunch to complete the projects and mobilisation of requisite funds through external sources would also be discussed in the meeting.

The implementation of welfare and developmental programmes in the last quarter of the financial year of 2025-2026 and the release of funds to complete all developmental works, apart from a few other key decisions, will be taken in the meeting, officials said.

The Ministers will arrive in Medaram in the early hours and perform special puja at the famous Medaram temple ahead of the Cabinet meeting.



On Veterans' Day, Rajnath hails sacrifices of Op Pawan soldiers

New Delhi, Jan 14

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday reminded retired soldiers that it was the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that had openly acknowledged the contribution of personnel who participated in Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka in the late 1980s.

Addressing the 10th Defence Forces Veterans' Day event here, the minister referred to the long-standing lack of official recognition for soldiers deployed as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka.

Two months ago, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi ended more than 35 years of ambiguity by leading the armed forces in the first-ever official commemoration for soldiers who laid down their lives during Operation Pawan. In November last year, General Dwivedi laid a wreath at the National War Memorial in a gesture widely seen as long-awaited recognition and closure for the families of those who served in the

operation.

A total of 1,171 soldiers made the supreme sacrifice during the IPKF deployment, while over 3,500 were injured in the line of duty.

Recalling the operation, Rajnath said, "During the operation, the Indian forces displayed extraordinary courage. Many soldiers laid down their lives. Their valour, sacrifices and struggles did not receive the respect they deserved."

As part of the Veterans' Day observances, the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (ESW) under the Ministry of Defence organised rallies for ex-servicemen and conducted wreath-laying ceremonies. Grievance redressal counters and facilitation help desks were also set up.

Secretary, ESW, Sukriti Likhi said that Veterans' Day was "not merely a ceremonial event, but a day to rekindle the collective consciousness of the nation".

Hyderabad CP condemns verbal attacks on women officers

Hyderabad, Jan 14

Police Commissioner Sajjanar has strongly condemned attempts to damage the reputation of women through media attacks, emphasising the need for a collective societal response to such behaviour. Speaking out on the alarming trend of deliberate attacks on women officers, he described the humiliation of women in public life as a form of cruelty. "Personal attacks on women employees are wholly unacceptable," Sajjanar remarked. "An attack on their character is an attack on their progress. A society that does not respect women jeopardises its own future. The future belongs to women," he asserted, highlighting the imperative for respect and dignity in the workplace and beyond.



Telangana ministers lays stone for development projects in Bhutpur of Mahbubnagar

Mahbubnagar, Jan 14

Ministers Komatireddy Venkata Reddy and Vakati Srihari are continuing their tour of Mahbubnagar district, where they recently laid foundation stones and inaugurated various development projects in Bhutpur. Minister Komatireddy emphasised that Mahbubnagar and Nalgonda, once considered backward districts, are now making significant strides in development under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, a local representative.

During the event, Komatireddy announced that development works worth ₹60 crore are being undertaken across three municipalities. Additionally, he revealed that ₹140 crore has been allocated for a ghat road leading to the Kurumurthy Swamy temple.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India's move to make roads safer must go beyond identification

Despite occasional policy interventions and public awareness campaigns, road safety in India remains a cause for concern. With over 1.6 lakh deaths annually, road accidents kill more people in the country than many public health emergencies combined. No wonder India has earned the dubious distinction of being the road accident capital of the world, reporting more than 20 deaths every hour. Against this grim backdrop, the Centre's recent decision to identify 18 high-risk highway corridors and focus on 100 accident-prone districts to bring down the number of mishaps is a welcome move. Badly designed curves, poor lighting, missing signage, lax enforcement or reckless driving habits are common factors that contribute to the alarming rise in fatal accidents. Nearly two-thirds of road crash fatalities occur outside National Highways — on State highways, district roads, and local streets. This demands a shift in how we act: from isolated interventions to district-level action, where engineering, enforcement, trauma care, and community action converge. Mapping corridors with high fatalities allows authorities to deploy engineering fixes, enforcement and emergency response where they are most needed. Evidence suggests that focused enforcement delivers results. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, in collaboration with the NGO Save Life Foundation, has identified 100 districts, spread over 15 States, with the highest number of road crashes, to launch a data-driven zero-fatalities programme, in line with the government's target to reduce road fatalities by 50% by 2030. An analysis across the 100 identified districts recorded nearly 89,000 road deaths in 2023 and 2024. Over 17,000 critical crash locations, which together accounted for 58% of total fatalities, have been mapped. The high-risk time windows during which most crashes occurred have also been identified, enabling law enforcement agencies to better target resource deployment.

Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkatarao Participates in Godadevi Kalyana Mahotsavam

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): “The Godadevi Kalyana Mahotsavam was celebrated in a grand manner on Wednesday at the



Sri Rama Sahitha Satyanarayana Swamy Temple located in Indira Nagar, Ramanthapur. The divine wedding of Goddess Godadevi was conducted amid much devotion and festivity, captivating the devotees. The idols of Goddess Godadevi and Lord Rama were beautifully decorated with flowers and silk garments. Special prayers were performed in the early hours of the morning. Later, the celestial wedding ceremony was held in a specially arranged mandapam with Vedic chants, adding spiritual grandeur to the event. Ramanthapur Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkatarao participated in the Kalyana Mahotsavam and offered prayers on the occasion. Temple Executive Officer Vijayabharathi, Temple Chairman, BJP leaders Padigam Nagesh, Ambati Bhagyalakshmi, Alladi Nirjan Goud, and several devotees were present and took part in the celebrations.



BJP OBC State Leader BOMMA GONI RAGHUPATHI GOUD Distributes Kites in Habsiguda Division



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): “On the occasion of the Sankranti festival, BJP State OBC leader Bomma Goni Raghupathi Goud distributed kites in Habsiguda Division under his leadership. The programme was held in PNT Colony, Street No. 1, and Habsiguda Gandhi Tribal Basti. Speaking on the occasion, Raghupathi Goud said that it is the responsibility of everyone to preserve Indian culture and traditions. He advised children to take necessary precautions while flying kites and to celebrate the festival joyfully and safely. He cautioned children to stay away from electric wires, buildings, and roads while flying kites, and stressed that kite flying should be done only under the supervision of elders. He also explained to the children that the use of Chinese manja is a punishable offence under the law and poses a serious threat to human lives. Several BJP leaders and party workers participated in the programme, including Habsiguda Division



BJP General Secretary Chellozu Ellachari, Chinthakindi Praveen, OBC Morcha Division President Alkapuri Suresh, Dalit Morcha Vice President Katta Bhaskar, Tribal Morcha Assembly Convenor Banothu Ramesh Naik, Vemulakonda Venkanna Goud, Konderu Savanti, and others

Grand Celebration of Sri Goda Devi Kalyanam at Sri Lakshmi Narayana Swamy Temple



“P. S. ASHOKAN “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. “The sacred Sri Goda Devi Kalyanam was celebrated with great splendour and devotional fervour on Wednesday, on the auspicious occasion of Ekadashi, at the Sri Lakshmi Narayana Swamy Temple in Manthani. The celestial wedding ceremony was solemnly conducted by Brahmarsi Duddilla Maruthi Sharma, who performed the rituals in accordance with Vedic traditions, filling the temple premises with spiritual sanctity and devotion. As part of the highly revered Dhanurmasam, a month-long bhajan programme was organised at the temple, recognising the belief that offering devotional hymns in the divine presence during this sacred period brings immense spiritual merit. On the concluding day, an Ekkaham Bhajan was held, with bhajan groups from all local wards participating collectively and rendering de-



votional songs with deep reverence. The temple management committee members Achalapuram Srinivas, Tallam Srinivas Sharma, Nalgonda Srinivas, along with temple priest Varaprasad, stated that this programme has been conducted traditionally at the Sri Lakshmi Narayana Swamy Temple from time immemorial to mark the significance of Dhanurmasam. On the final day, the Goda Devi Kalyanam was performed in an exceptionally grand and festive manner, drawing large numbers of devotees. In addition, an Annadanam (free community meal) was organised at the temple on Tuesday, reflecting the spirit of service and devotion associated with the celebrations. The event stood as a testimony to the town's rich spiritual heritage and the unwavering faith of the devotees, making the occasion truly memorable and spiritually uplifting.

Grand Sankranti Celebrations Begin at Uppal Mini Shilparamam Mesmerising Gangireddulu Performances, Haridasu Keerthanas and Cultural Programmes Enthrall Visitors



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): “The Sankranti festivities commenced in a grand and colourful manner at Uppal Mini Shilparamam, drawing large crowds of visitors. The venue came alive with vibrant folk art forms and cultural performances that reflected the rich traditions of Telangana and Andhra regions. Traditional attractions such as Gangireddulu (decorated bulls) performances, Haridasu devotional songs, Budabukkala, Jangam Devarulu, Erukala, Pittaladora and other folk artists were showcased, captivating the audience. Visitors enthusiastically enjoyed the programmes, clicking selfies, photographs



and videos while appreciating the cultural splendour. On the occasion of Bhogi festival, a special Bhogi Pallu ceremony was organised for young children, adding festive joy and traditional charm to the celebrations. Adding grace to the event, Kuchipudi dance artists from Warangal, led by Kumari Himanshi Katragadda along with her disciples, presented an impressive classical dance recital. The performances included items such as Swagatham Krishna, Meenakshi Kalyanam, Ramayana Shabdham, Tarangam and Tillana. The dancers — Sanjana, Yajnasi, Tripura, Hanvika, Srinidhi, Aaradhya, Satyakrushi, Harshitha, Gayathri and others — mesmerised the audience with their expressions, rhythm and elegance, earning loud applause. The Sankranti celebrations at Uppal Mini Shilparamam continue to attract visitors, offering a delightful blend of tradition, devotion and culture.

Nadiminti Srinivas extends Sankranthi greetings to the people of Telangana state.

“Nadiminti Srinivas (National President of Rajaka National Dhobi Reservation Sangh) said that he hopes this Sankranthi and Kanuma festival will bring all kinds of wealth and prosperity, burning away difficulties like the Bhogi bonfires, and coinciding with the harvest reaching every doorstep. In this context, Nadiminti Srinivas said that this is the time to bid farewell to dark days with the light of the Bhogi bonfires and welcome new hopes.

This festival, which begins with the feeling of letting go of the old and welcoming the new, fills the hearts of farmers with joy. When the crops are harvested from the fields, the hustle and bustle of auspicious events in every home, the laughter of children, and the blessings of elders all combine to make Bhogi not just a festival, but an experience. The blessings of the Goddess amidst the rangoli designs, and the respect for the village amidst the Gobemma decorations — this is the beauty of our Sankranthi. Sankranthi and Kanuma, which follow Bhogi, stand as a true jewel in the crown of Telugu culture. From the worship of cows on Kanuma to the reunion of relatives, Sankranthi reminds us of our roots with its earthy scent, village beauty, and traditional dishes. This three-day festival, from Bhogi to Kanuma, is not just a celebration, but a reflection of the Telugu way of life, said Nadiminti Srinivas (National President of Rajaka National Dhobi Reservation Sangh).

Sripada Colony Comes Alive with Colourful Rangoli Festivities to Mark Makara Sankranti in Manthani

“P. S. Ashokan “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. “On the auspicious occasion of Makara Sankranti, vibrant Rangoli (Muggu) competitions were conducted with great enthusiasm on Wednesday at Sripada Colony, under the limits of Manthani Municipality. The event was graciously organised by Moola Sarojana Purushottam Reddy, former ZPTC member, with active coordination under the leadership of Bejjanki Digambar, Manthani JAC leader. The celebrations witnessed enthusiastic participation from women of the locality, reflecting the rich cultural heritage associated with the Sankranti festival. A total of 25 women participants took part in the competition, adorning the colony with beautifully designed, colourful rangolis that captivated onlookers and added festive charm to the



surroundings. Prizes were distributed to the winners by the chief guests Moola Sarojana Purushottam Reddy (former ZPTC) and Odhnala Pravalika Srinivas, former MPTC. First Prize: Komuroju Saritha. Second Prize: Chemanthala Srivani. Third Prize: S. Manasvi. In addition, consolation prizes were presented to all participating women in appreciation of their creativity and involvement. Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries highlighted the cultural and traditional significance of Sankranti, stating that rangolis are an inseparable part of the festival and symbolise joy, prosperity, and togetherness. They emphasised that Sankranti brings life and colour to every household, with people of all ages enthusiastically decorating their doorsteps with vibrant designs. The chief guests extended Bhogi and Sankranti greetings to all participants and residents and warmly congratulated the winners for their artistic excellence, appreciating the collective effort in preserving and celebrating traditional customs.

Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Distributes Prizes to Rangoli Competition Winners — Women Should Excel in All Fields: Corporator Bannala Geetha

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): “GHMC Chilkalguda Division Corporator and former Standing Committee member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj participated as the chief guest at the Rangoli (Muggula) competitions organized at Kalyanpuri Indiranagar Colony in the Chilkalguda Division and distributed prizes to the winners. Speaking on the occasion, Corporator Geetha Praveen appreciated the organizers — Kalyanpuri Indiranagar Colony President and Secretary Muddham Srinivas Yadav and Mallikarjun, along with Balakrishna Goud — for conducting the Rangoli competitions in a grand and well-organized manner. She



said the Rangolis drawn by residents, especially women and children, reflected rich tradition and cultural values. She noted that such programs help bring out creativity among women, send a positive message to society, promote traditional art forms, and provide a platform for women to showcase their talents. She congratulated the organizers for encouraging cultural activities in the locality. The corporator said many women participated enthusiastically in the competitions and captivated everyone with colorful and creative Rangolis. She expressed happiness in presenting cash prizes to the winners and extended advance Sankranti greetings to the residents of the area. The program was attended by BRS Party state leaders Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, Eddula Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Muddham Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna Goud, Srinivas Reddy, Rafi, Sanjeev Shyam, Balu, along with local residents Srikanth, Balayya, Madhu, and a large number of women and residents.

Star Director Trinadha Rao Nakkina Participates in Sankranti Celebrations



tions were organized, in which writer Vikrant Srinivas, actor Manik Reddy, Rajesh, Venkat Reddy, and others took part. The participants explained the cultural and traditional significance of the festival to the public. "Speaking on the occasion, director Trinadha Rao Nakkina said that celebrating festivals filled with culture, tradition, and enthusiasm along with the people was a memorable experience. He emphasized that it is everyone's responsibility to preserve Telugu traditions and celebrate festivals with unity. He extended heartfelt Bhogi greetings to all. Congress youth leader Gaddam Ravi expressed happiness over celebrating Sankranti in Andhra Pradesh after coming from Telangana, stating that the festival symbolizes unity, traditions, and cultural values.

"Kishore Vaddepalli, Hyderabad, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): "Star film director Trinadha Rao Nakkina participated in the Sankranti celebrations held in East Godavari district, along with State Congress Youth leader Gaddam Ravi. As part of the festivities, Bhogi celebra-



Sheikh Chand Pasha extends Sankranti festival greetings

"Indian Chronicle: Congress party senior leader Sheikh Chand Pasha extended Sankranti festival greetings to the people of the Telugu states. Speaking on the occasion, he said that Makar Sankranti is one of the major festivals in India, and this day, when the sun enters the Capricorn zodiac sign, is celebrated as Sankranti. "He said that it is a festival that recognizes the hard work of farmers and expresses gratitude to nature. This festival is mainly celebrated for three days: Bhogi, Sankranti, and Kanuma. He added that during these three days, people celebrate the festival happily with their family members and relatives.

Sirpur MLA Felicitates Newly Promoted Deputy Collector

"Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): "Sirpur MLA Dr. Palvi Harish Babu on Tuesday felicitated Venkateshwar Rao, Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) of Chintalamanepalli mandal, who was recently promoted as Deputy Collector. The felicitation programme was held at the MLA's residence in Kaghaznagar, where Dr. Harish Babu congratulated Venkateshwar Rao and conveyed his best wishes for a successful and distinguished tenure in his new role. The MLA appreciated the officer's dedication and service, expressing confidence that he would continue to serve the public with commitment and integrity in his elevated position.



Sankranti Turns Tragic as Youth Dies, Another Injured Road Mishap at Bejjur

"Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): "Festive Cheer Turns into Family Tragedy, one person was killed and another seriously injured in a road accident on the outskirts of Kuntalamanepalli village in Bejjur Mandal on Wednesday. The accident occurred on Sankranti day when Dongri Rajashekhar was returning to Bejjur along with his uncle, Borkut Shankar. Their two-wheeler reportedly lost control and crashed into a bridge on the outskirts of Kuntalamanepalli, causing the vehicle to plunge down. Rajashekhar died on the spot, while Shankar sustained severe injuries. The injured was shifted in a 108 government ambulance to Kaghaznagar for advanced medical treatment. The deceased, Dongri Rajashekhar, hailed from Muthampet village. Police reached the scene, collected preliminary details, and have registered a case. Further investigation is underway.

Former MLA Konappa Flags Off Sankranti Cricket Tournament in Koutala



"Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 14 (Indian Chronicle): "Former MLA Koneru Konappa congratulated cricket players at a Sankranti festival cricket tournament held at Pardi Village in Koutala Mandal. Marking the festive occasion, Mr. Konappa formally inaugurated the tournament by tossing the coin and commencing the match. He interacted with the players, appreciated their sporting

spirit, and extended Sankranti greetings to the villagers. The programme was attended by Adilabad District Cooperative Central Bank former Vice-Chairman Komuram Manthaiah, sarpanches Madavi Chandu and Nakka Shankar, former sarpanch Ade Srinivas, along with Nazim, Madhukar, and others.

Bhogi Festival: A Sacred Symbol of Prosperity, Renewal, and Auspicious Beginnings.

"P. S. ASHOKAN

"KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. "The festive splendour of Sankranti graces Telugu households as Bhogi, the first day of the three-day harvest festival, is celebrated with deep devotion and vibrant traditions across South India. From lighting the sacred Bhogi bonfire to showering children with Bhogi Pallu, every ritual reflects profound symbolism rooted in ancient wisdom and lived experience. "The term Bhogi is derived from the Sanskrit word "Bhug", meaning enjoyment or bliss. The festival marks the



lieved to welcome the benevolent return of King Bali. "Another sacred association recalls the day Krishna lifted the Govardhan Hill, humbling Indra and teaching humanity the power of humility, devotion, and righteous action. "Additionally, folklore narrates that due to a divine curse, Basavanna, the sacred bull and vehicle of Parameshwara, descended to Earth on this day to serve as a guardian deity of farmers—further strengthening Bhogi's deep agricultural and rural significance. "Bhogi Pallu: Blessings for Children" One of the most cherished traditions of Bhogi is Bhogi Pallu, where elders shower young children with a mixture of Indian jujube fruits, sugarcane pieces, coins, flowers, and rice. This ritual symbolises blessings for longevity, good health, intelligence, and prosperity, reinforcing the festival's life-affirming spirit. "Tradition as a Living Guide" Every custom associated with Bhogi carries layered meanings and timeless wisdom. Dismissing age-old traditions as mere superstition without understanding their depth is a grave misjudgment. When embraced with awareness and reverence, these practices serve as guiding lights—connecting humanity with nature, cosmic rhythms, and ethical living. "Bhogi, therefore, is not merely a festival—it is a profound celebration of renewal, gratitude, hope, and the eternal promise of prosperity.

Organizing rangoli competitions and distributing kites to children on the occasion of the Bhogi Sankranti festival is a joyous event:

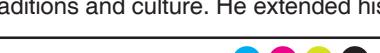
Former Bhongir Municipal Chairman Barre Jahangir



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhongir District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 14): On the occasion of the Sankranti festival, Congress party leaders and 9th ward members Mylaram Nagma and Venkatesh grandly organized rangoli and kite competitions in Anajipuram village of Bhongir mandal. Former Bhongir Municipal Chairman Barre Jahangir, who attended the event as the chief guest, enthusiastically appreciated the participants of the rangoli competition and the children, and distributed kites. A large number of women, young men and women, and children attended the event. The women, who turned out in large numbers, enthusiastically drew rangolis, while the youth excitedly flew kites. Speaking on the occasion, former Bhongir Municipal Chairman Barre Jahangir said that the kite competitions instilled enthusiasm among the youth and children, and the rangoli competitions, with women drawing rangolis with great zeal, brought a new vibrancy and festive atmosphere to the village. He stated that to encourage the youth, and on the occasion of Bhogi, Sankranti, and Makar Sankranti festivals, which are among the most significant festivals of the Telugu people, the Telangana state government is implementing several reforms for the development of the agricultural sector, with the welfare of farmers as its primary objective, and is taking measures to ensure that farmers celebrate the Sankranti festival happily. He called upon everyone to celebrate the Sankranti festival joyfully with family members and relatives, preserving traditions and culture. He extended his best wishes to



all the people, hoping that the lives of the poor, farmers, and laborers would be filled with happiness and prosperity, and that the festivals of Bhogi, Sankranti, and Makar Sankranti would fill every home with joy, unity, and well-being. Former Deputy Sarpanch Mylaram Venkatesh said that they organized these competitions. Sarpanch Rayapuram Suresh, Deputy Sarpanch Velishala Murali, Village Congress President Gogu Srinivas, former Sarpanch and MPTC Gunaganta Kalpana Srinivas, ward members Bollapalli Ashok, Nomula Jyothi Venkatesh, Gadugu Naresh, Enagandla Sudhakar, State Youth Congress leader MD Karim, and others participated in the program and extended their greetings.



Central and State Governments Must Provide Protection to Women: AIDWA District General Secretary Battupalli Anuradha



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 14):- (Under the auspices of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) town committee, a rangoli competition was organized in Bahar Pet in memory of Comrades Battupalli Srinivas, former councilor and town secretary, and Udayagiri Srinivas, former AILU district leader. AIDWA District General Secretary Battupalli Anuradha attended the event as the chief guest and stated that numerous attacks are being perpetrated against women, and the central and state governments have failed to curb them. She said that Sankranthi is a festival that symbolizes Telangana's culture and traditions, and rangoli competitions help bring out the creativity of women. She further stated that after the BJP government came to power at the center, attacks and murders against women have increased nationwide, and the governments have failed

to strengthen the laws that were achieved through struggles. She said that at a time when women are progressing in all fields, the Manusmriti ideology is being promoted to confine women to the kitchen, and this ideology suppresses women's rights, and it must be countered. The judges for this program included District Treasurer Kalluri Nagamani, Town Committee member Gadde Latha, District Committee member and Town President Maya Rani, Town Treasurer Gandhamalla Balamani, NPPRD's Kotha Lalitha, and Dandu Swaroopa.) After the program, prizes were awarded to all the participants in the competition. The first prize went to Bandaru Kavitha, the second prize to Adap Chandana, and the third prize to Sadhika. Bandaru Yadamma, Battupalli Jayashree, Shyamala, Anjali Sunitha, Swapna, and others participated in this program.

Are Journalists Terrorists? Harish Rao Slams Revanth Govt



“(Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 14 (Indian Chronicle))“Former minister T. Harish Rao strongly criticised the Revanth Reddy-led government, alleging a deliberate crackdown on journalists during the festive season and calling it a “shameful act of political vendetta.”“Addressing a press conference on Wednesday, Harish Rao questioned the need to arrest NTV journalists in the middle of the night. “Have journalists become terrorists?” he asked, condemning the practice of midnight arrests by entering homes. He alleged that journalists who were part of the Telangana movement were being targeted and sacrificed for political motives.”Harish Rao accused the government of attempting to intimidate the entire media by “placing a gun on NTV's shoulder” and said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was trying to bring media houses under his control. He remarked that the Chief Minister appeared to harbour anger towards the media and was venting his frustration openly.”He warned that if the media stopped questioning those in power, democracy would be seriously undermined and people would be left voiceless. The former minister compared the government's actions to those during the Emergency,

Town CI Ramesh and former councilor Pramod Kumar presented a prize of ten thousand rupees to Ramya, the first-place winner in the rangoli competition.



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 14):- T. Ramya, who secured first place in the rangoli competition, was awarded a prize of ten thousand rupees by Congress party state leader and former councilor Pothnak Pramod Kumar and Town Circle Inspector Ramesh, who attended as chief guests. As in previous years, a rangoli competition was organized this year as well, under the auspices of the Housing Board Bhakta Bhajana Mandali, for all the women of wards 10 and 26 in Bhongir town. Telangana State Congress Party General Secretary Pothnak Pramod Kumar and Bhongir Town Circle Inspector Ramesh attended the event as chief guests. The first prize of ten thousand rupees was awarded to T. Ramya, the second prize of 5000 rupees to Pujitha, the third prize of 3500 rupees to D. Geetha, the fourth prize of 3000 rupees to Krithika, and the fifth prize of 2500 rupees to G. Kavitha. In addition, consolation prizes of three thousand rupees each were given to Yadamma, Bhanushree, and Likhita, courtesy of Congress party leader Bingi Naresh. Approximately 135 women participated in the rangoli competition, and 8 of them were selected for special prizes, while the rest received a consolation prize of a saree each as a festive gift.”Former Municipal Chairpersons Barre Jahangir and Donakonda Vanitha, former Councilor Erapaka Narasimha, Congress leaders Bingi Bhikshapathi, ward president Anamullah, Seelam Kranti Reddy, Chenna Srinivas, Hirekar Shiva, Chenna Sandeep, Nitin Bhupal Reddy, Kavitha, and others participated in this program.



Birthday wishes to the people's leader



“(Indian Chronicle: Congress Party leaders, workers, and association members extended heartfelt birthday wishes to Sherilingampally Congress Party senior leader, Sheikh Chand Pasha. Several leaders expressed their hope that he would celebrate many more such birthdays and enjoy good health and longevity.

It is gratifying to organize rangoli competitions as a symbol of traditional culture for the past ten years:

Padamati Jaganmohan Reddy, President of Janani Foundation



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 14):- As every year, rangoli competitions were organized on the occasion of Sankranthi under the chairmanship of Janani Foundation President Padamati Jaganmohan Reddy.”BJP state leader Gudoor Narayana Reddy participated as the chief guest for this program, and town general secretary Uduka Bhaskar organized the event. Addressing the gathering, Padamati Jaganmohan Reddy said that rangoli competitions are being organized every year as part of their service activities, and he expressed his great happiness in conducting this program as a symbol of traditional culture for the past ten years. He also stated that he will continue to serve the public in the same way in the coming days.”In this program, Dikshita won the first prize, Harika the second prize, and Likhita the third prize. Prizes were given to every woman who participated. The program was attended by Rotary Club President Ageswar, senior BJP leaders Chandupatla Venkateshwar Rao, Karipe Narasing Rao, District General Secretary Chanda Mahender Gupta, Town President Ratnapuram Balarao, Satyanarayana Reddy, Gnana Prakash Reddy, Baleshwar, and BJP leaders Bandarlapu Lingaswamy, Vaijayanthi, Nalla Masa Venkateshwarlu, Ratnapuram Srisailam, Patnam Kapil, Malyala Venumadhav, Kolloju Satish, Venumadhav Mallareddy, Kamuni Veeranna, Bandaru Karthik, Kalluri Jangir, Kavitha, Shamaantha, Kalabhairava, Srinivas, Jabbar Bhai, Tummal Nagesh, Usha Kiran, and others.

Goda Ranganatha Swamy Kalyanam Celebrated with Grandeur



“(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 14, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of the ongoing Dhanurmasam festivities, the Goda Ranganatha Swamy Kalyanam was performed in a grand manner on Wednesday at Seetharama Nilayam, PS Rao Nagar, Ayyappa Colony, and Bhojanpally under the Dammaiguda Division.

The ceremony was conducted under the guidance of Bhojanpally Srinivasacharya and Sundaracharya, following traditional Vedic rituals and customs. The celebrations began with the Edurkolu ritual, performed amid Vedic chants, setting a devotional atmosphere for the wedding ceremony. Devotees gathered in large numbers from the early hours of the morning to witness the celestial wedding. Many participated in special prayers and fulfilled their vows.

During the main kalyanam ritual, the temple premises were filled with devotees, creating a spiritually vibrant atmosphere.

Devotees from Dammaiguda, Cheeriyal, Keesar, and surrounding areas participated in large numbers, adding to the grandeur of the event. Speaking on the occasion, Sundaracharya stated that Dhanurmasam is a sacred period that enhances devotion and spiritual awareness. He explained that the rituals performed during this month, symbolizing Goda Devi's divine union with Ranganatha Swamy, are believed to fulfill the wishes of devotees.

He added that witnessing the Goda Ranganatha Swamy Kalyanam brings peace and happiness to families and strengthens religious values in society. He also encouraged people to actively participate in Dhanurmasam celebrations.

I-PAC raids: BJP demands arrest of Mamata, DGP Rajeev Kumar



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Demanding the arrest of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and DGP Rajeev Kumar for allegedly "obstructing" the ED raids on I-PAC premises in Kolkata, the BJP on Sunday held a protest march in Kolkata. Leader of Opposition in Assembly Suvendu Adhikari, later in a post on social media, named 11 Kolkata Police officers and demanded their suspension for allegedly accompanying the CM during her visit to the I-PAC office in Salt Lake and director Pratik Jain's home in Kolkata during ED raids.

"Here are the names of some of these shameless culprits who betrayed their oath: Priyabrata Roy IPS, Shantanu Sinha Biswas, Inspector Ayan Bhoumik, Inspector Bijitawala Rout, S-I Ruhul Amin Ali Sha, S-I Sudip Banerjee, S-I Leena Bhattacharya, ASI Mrityunjay Roy, ASI Saikat Biswas, ASI Mahadeb Kabiraj, ASI Soumen Biswas. They are a disgrace to their uniform and have turned the police force into Mamata Banerjee's personal goon squad. Terrified of facing the ED and CBI's wrath, these

cowards are slinking around like shadows, guarding CM and her nephew's residences morning, noon, and night. They're even sneaking out files to cover up more crimes," he alleged.

The BJP leader also asserted that he would defeat Mamata Banerjee from her seat, Bhawanipur, in south Kolkata. "It is my responsibility to defeat her politically," Adhikari said. Adhikari, who is the TMC supreme's protege-turned-adversary, defeated Mamata Banerjee in the 2021 Assembly elections from Nandigram by 1,956 votes. Later, in a by-poll, she won by a margin of over 56,000 votes in the Bhawanipur seat. Meanwhile, the BJP alleged that the manner in which TMC chief "forcibly" took away files from the premises of the I-PAC during the ED's raids in Kolkata two days ago raises the question that whether it is a political-consultancy firm or the TMC's slush-money front.

Addressing a press conference in Delhi, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad also raised questions on the presence of the state police chief during the incident, alleging that the entire police infrastructure in West Bengal has become a "weapon" in the hands of Banerjee for all her "shameful, unconstitutional and undemocratic" activities. "You (Banerjee) are saying that I-PAC is your political-consultancy firm. But the suspicious circumstances around it raise many questions as to whether it is your political-consultancy firm or the TMC's front to park unaccounted money and pass slush money," Prasad told reporters. "All of us consult and engage consultancy firms. If you are going to name someone as your party's candidate, you will announce it. It is very simple. Your meeting schedules are also a matter of public knowledge. Then what kind of a secret was there? What secret strategy was being made there? What are you hiding Mamata?" he asked.

In Ludhiana for religious visit, Saini takes dig at AAP: reject politics of lies

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, during a visit to Punjab on Sunday, combined a spiritual outreach with a strong political message. After paying obeisance at prominent religious sites in Ludhiana district, Saini launched a scathing attack on ruling AAP and asked the people to reject "politics of lies" and "vote out the Bhagwan Mann dispensation in next year's assembly polls. Saini also claimed that the AAP government had done no work even though four years passed. "Jokes cannot fill stomachs," he said while taking a veiled dig at the CM.

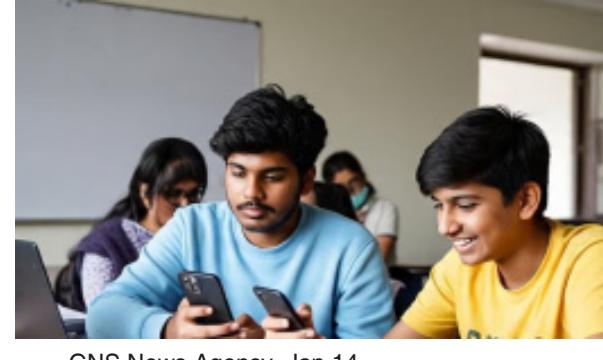
His visit underscored both reverence for Sikh and Hindu traditions and an appeal to voters ahead of the evolving political landscape in the state. The Haryana CM Saini began his visit at the historic Gurudwara Charan Kanwal Sahib in Machhiwara. He said, "The Sikh Gurus made immense sacrifices not for any single community, but for the entire nation. The society must move forward by imbibing their teachings." Responding to questions from the media, he said that "without the sacrifices of the Gurus, the course of Indian history would have been very different", and condemned what he described as "irresponsible and condemnable remarks made by some opposition leaders about the Gurus for political gain". Following his visit to the Gurdwara, Saini offered prayers and performed Jalabhishek at the ancient Shri Mukteshwar Shiv Temple (Muktidham) in Chehlan, seeking peace, prosperity and happiness for the people of Haryana, Punjab and the country.

Later in the day, addressing a public meeting in Samrala, he turned his focus squarely on politics, launching a sustained attack on the AAP government in Punjab. He said, "Governance should be rooted in service, honesty



and public welfare", but alleged that "the current Punjab government had reduced politics to the mere pursuit of power". Saini claimed that "both the previous Congress government and the present AAP government had failed to fulfil promises made to the people, contrasting this with what he described as the performance of the double engine BJP government in Haryana". He cited compensation to farmers for crop damage and livestock loss, direct benefit transfers under various schemes, and welfare measures for senior citizens, women and labourers as examples of Haryana's governance model. Taking repeated jibes at the Punjab leadership, he said "jokes cannot fill stomachs" and alleged that four years had passed without meaningful work on the ground. He questioned Punjab government's stand on issues such as minimum support price procurement, labour welfare, unemployment and drug abuse. He accused the AAP government of indulging in politics instead of addressing problems faced by youth and farmers, and challenged it to provide concrete data on employment generation, compensation and action against corruption.

1,651 to compete in Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission competition



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

The Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission will organise a state-level competition beginning Monday. The competition will feature 20 skill disciplines and bring together over 1,651 participants selected from all 75 districts of the state.

Minister of State for Vocational Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship (Independent Charge), Kapil Dev Agarwal, stated that the CM Adityanath Yogi-led government is committed towards developing a technically skilled, innovative, and globally competitive workforce. The state-level skill competition serves as a vital platform for identifying and nurturing talent, providing youth with expo-

sure at national and international forums, Dev added.

He noted that the competition is a key stage in the selection process for the India Skills Competition-2026, through which Uttar Pradesh's top performers will be chosen to represent the state nationally. The competition will be conducted in three phases and will conclude on January 23, followed by an awards and certificate distribution ceremony on January 24. Skill Development Mission Director Pulkit Khare, informed that "approximately 570 participants from all 75 districts will participate in the first phase, scheduled for January 12-13, 2026". Participants will compete in six trades: additive manufacturing, welding, electronics, fashion technology, CNC milling, and CNC turning. On the first day, experts will provide technical orientation, insights into the world skills competition framework, and hands-on training on advanced machinery, said Khare. The competitive assessments will take place on Tuesday. He added that the first phase will be hosted across several institutions in Lucknow, including ITI Aliganj, ITI Mohanlalganj, IOT, Raymond Centre, Government Polytechnic, ITI Charbagh, Women's Polytechnic, and CIPET. The participants will be evaluated through a transparent and rigorous process based on technical proficiency, innovation, creativity, and overall performance, he said. The most promising talents will earn the opportunity to compete at the national level and represent India at the World Skills Competition in Shanghai, China.

20 Maharashtra civic bodies missed out on Rs 1,415 cr central funds for pollution control

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Even as major cities across the country are fighting air pollution, data received from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) show that while Rs 2,981 crore was earmarked for Maharashtra civic bodies between FY 2021 and FY 2026, as many as 20 civic bodies, including BMC and five other large municipal corporations, missed out on receiving at least Rs 1,415 crore monetary grant for air quality management after 2022, owing to delay in civic body elections in the state. The grants were to be given by the Union Finance Ministry as part of the Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) based on the recommendations made by the MoEFCC. As per the RTI data sourced from the BMC, total Rs 2,981 crore was allocated to Maharashtra by the MoEFCC and were to be released to six major urban agglomerations (UAs), including the BMC, between 2020-21 and 2025-26, while only Rs 1,555.34 crore got released. An overall deficit of Rs 1,415.66 crore was created for the primary municipal corporations of Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nashik, Vasai-Virar and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar. The funds were supposed to be spent in implementing measures that would curb vehicular and industrial emission, as well as reduce road dust displacement — factors that contribute to air pollution.

For every UA, the FFC made individual allocations with Rs 1,832 crore for Mumbai UA or BMC, Rs 504 crore for Pune, Rs 239 crore for Nagpur, Rs 156 crore for Nashik, Rs 121 crore for Vasai Virar and Rs 119 crore for Aurangabad. The data also shows that the civic bodies haven't received any funds after 2022. While only Rs 929 crore or 50 per cent of the funds were received by Mumbai UA till 2022, the balance Rs 844 crore, which was to be released between 2023 and 2026 did not get disbursed. Similarly, Pune UA received Rs 261.85 crore till 2022, and the balance fund of Rs 232 crore since 2023 is awaiting disbursement. Nagpur UA received Rs 132.6 crore till 2022, while the balance Rs 115 crore is awaited; and Nashik UA received Rs 91.35 crore till 2022, while the balance Rs 72 crore is still on hold. FFC is a constitutional body that was established to recommend revenue sharing between the Union ministry and state governments.

The key features of the commission included improvement of public spending and issuing grants to urban local bodies for strengthening civic infrastructure. One such component of the grants included issuance of funds for strengthening infrastructures to tackle air pollution and improve air quality index (AQI) of the cities. As per the RTI response from MoEFCC, in total, 49 different cities from 15 different states in the country were recommended by the MoEFCC for the FFC's AQI grant for which a total fund of Rs 16,539 crore was earmarked. The highest allocation of Rs 2,981 crore or 18 per cent of the total earmarked fund was made for Maharashtra, followed by Rs 2,684 crore for Uttar Pradesh which was 16 per cent of the total allocation, and Rs 1,574 crore for West Bengal, which was 9.5 per cent of the total allocation. These funds were to be released to the municipal corporations or ULBs in the states between 2020 and 2026. However, the records show that the ULBs in Maharashtra stopped receiving these funds from 2022 — the year when the elected body of public representatives started getting dissolved in various municipalities.

While a detailed questionnaire sent by The Indian Express to the MoEFCC inquiring the reasons for halt on funds since 2023 did not elicit any response, senior government officials, including IAS officers from several municipal corporations in Maharashtra, confirmed that the funds have not been received as the corporations do not have elected body. According to a 2023 letter issued to the secretary of MoEFCC by the deputy secretary to the government of India, the funds are disbursed only to the ULBs that have a duly constituted local body. "The FFC in its final report for the period 2020-21 to 2025-26 has recommended the grants for duly constituted local governments. A duly constituted ULB means an ULB where elections have been held and an elected body is in place as provided in Part-IXA of the constitution of India," stated the letter undersigned by Anil Gairola, deputy secretary to the government of India.

"Therefore, million plus cities and UAs shall be deemed to be eligible for the release of FFC recommended air quality grants if duly elected body in ULB/Statutory towns are in place as per the provisions of articles 243Q and 243R of the Constitution of India," the letter stated. Nearly 20 different civic bodies missed out on funds that included municipal corporations, councils and cantonment boards in Maharashtra. While funds are initially allocated to the six large UAs, these larger UAs would disburse a portion of the funds to smaller municipal corporations, municipal councils or cantonment boards. For example, the BMC, which is the nodal agency of Mumbai UA, would disburse funds to the municipal corporations at Navi Mumbai (NMMC), Thane (TMC), Kalyan Dombivali (KDMC), Mira Bhayander (MBMC), Ulhasnagar, and the nagar parishes at Ambernath and Badlapur. The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) which is the nodal agency for Pune UA would disburse a portion of the funds that it had received to municipal corporation at Pimpri Chinchwad (PCMC), and the cantonment boards at Dehu Road, and Khadki. The Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) would disburse a portion of the



funds it has received further to the municipal council at Bhagur and cantonment board at Deolali.

In Maharashtra, the civic elections, which were to be held in 2020 got deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Later, the civic elections that were to be held during March 2022 also got deferred following the Supreme Court's (SC) decision of allowing the Other Backward Class (OBC) quota in local body elections only after conducting a rigorous empirical inquiry (or triple test). In Mumbai, there was also an additional issue of reorganisation of the municipal ward boundaries that led to the deferment of the civic polls. On August 4, 2025, the SC directed the State Election Commission (SEC) to conduct local body polls in Maharashtra by January 2026 as per new ward reservation and 27 per cent of OBC reservation. The apex court also pulled up the SEC for the delay in holding the elections. However, the municipal corporations of Aurangabad and Vasai Virar continued to receive funds till 2022, even though their body of elected representatives got over in April and June, 2020. An official from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) stated, "The elected body in the municipal corporations of Vasai Virar and Aurangabad got lapsed during the pandemic-induced lockdown in 2020. The funds for that year were released knowing that the elections couldn't be held. In 2021 also, the same protocol was followed during the second wave of the pandemic. The release of funds was stopped after 2022 when the term of several elected bodies of corporations got over."

Senior administration officials stated that the stoppage of funds resulted in a huge loss to the state. Mumbai, along with the satellite districts of Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), have been grappling under poor AQI since 2022, largely due to manmade factors such as vehicular emission, dust mitigation and open burning of solid waste.

In 2023, the BMC came up with the Mumbai Air Pollution Mitigation Action Plan (MAPMP), which was adapted as the blueprint for tackling air pollution in several other municipalities. In the MAPMP, the civic body identified vehicular emission as one of the main contributing factors behind poor AQI. "Stopping the funds suddenly appeared to be a huge loss not just for BMC, but also for all municipal corporations. Our main target was to utilise this money for acquiring electric vehicles (EV) and add to the fleet of our BEST buses, as our primary agenda was to have electric vehicles for public transport," said Bhushan Gagrani, Mumbai municipal commissioner and state appointed administrator. "In the long run, we would also be able to use the funds to provide some kind of subsidies or facilities to private EV car owners. This would encourage a large number of citizens to switch to e-mobility, collectively resulting in bringing down emissions," he added.

Senior IAS officer Avinash Dhakane, who served as the member-secretary in the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and is currently the additional municipal commissioner in BMC, heading the environment department said that between 2023 and 2025, he had made multiple attempts in requesting the Union ministry to release the funds so that it could be put to use. "In the MMR region, there is a need to augment the AQI monitoring system. Therefore, when I was heading the MPCB, my objective was to acquire more AQI monitors. This would have given us a chance to understand why certain areas were recording bad AQI and the interventions that would be needed to mitigate it," Dhakane said. According to the government data, out of the Rs 1,555.34 crore disbursed to various municipal corporations in the state, around Rs 1,162.67 crore or 74.75 per cent have been utilised so far, with a large proportion for acquiring EV buses. Solid waste management (SWM) and dust displacement eradication measure, which were also identified as primary contributors behind plummeting AQI levels, saw comparatively lesser proportion in expenditure. The Mumbai civic body received Rs 620.11 crore of the Rs 929 crore that was released for Mumbai UA. Civic officials said that the remaining Rs 309 crore was distributed among the other municipal corporations and Nagar Parishads in the MMR, including NMMC, TMC, KDMC and MBMC.

The RTI data shows that out of the Rs 620.11 crore, the BMC had given a lion's share of Rs 573.88 crore to the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking for acquiring EV buses. When contacted, BEST officials said that the amount was being used to acquire 2,100 EV buses that will be deployed in Mumbai. They said that of the total consignment, only 305 buses have been received so far.

Second disruption attempt in 3 weeks raises concern as Sikh religious procession ends calmly in New Zealand



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

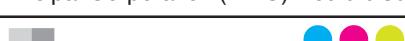
For the second time in less than three weeks, a Sikh religious procession in New Zealand has taken place under heightened police vigilance, following protest activity by a small nationalist group, raising growing concern among community leaders about repeated attempts to challenge public faith gatherings. The latest incident in Tauranga on Sunday, during a Sikh Nagar Kirtan held to mark the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, was organised by Gurdwara Sikh Sangat and another gurdwara. Hundreds of devotees participated in the event, which involved prayers, hymn singing and community engagement, and had been formally approved by local authorities well in advance.

According to reports from Tauanga, police confirmed that a group associated with earlier disruptions in the country gathered separately during the event and staged a demonstration involving haka performance and slogans asserting cultural ownership of public streets. Although the protest did not physically obstruct the procession, officers opted to modify the return path of the religious march to prevent any potential confrontation. Gurdwara representatives stressed that the demonstrators were not close to the main body of participants. "It was a bit far," Puran Singh, one of the organisers and president of the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat, established in 2012, was quoted by the India Weekender. According to the reports of Indian Weekender.CO.NZ, Singh said the programme proceeded smoothly once the protest activity concluded. "This was the twelfth annual Sikh Parade in Tauranga, and it takes place on a very large scale," he said. Singh said, "The nagar kirtan serves broader community purposes beyond religious observance." As per a Weekender report, "These parades are not just a celebration, but also a time for the community to be more aware, as immigration advisers, health camps, and even other benefits are shared with those attending the

Woman stabbed and bludgeoned to death in Borabanda

Hyderabad: A young woman was found murdered in Borabanda triggering shock among local residents on Sunday night. According to preliminary reports, the crime was allegedly committed by a man who was known to the victim.

The victim and suspect identified as Fathima and Zaheer had met earlier at a pub in Banjara Hills. Police suspect that differences arose after the woman recently changed her workplace, following which communication between them reportedly reduced. Angered by this, the suspect allegedly called her to meet under the guise of holding a discussion and later attacked her with a knife and stone stabbing and bludgeoning her to death. The suspect has been detained by Borabanda police, who have registered a case and are examining all angles related to the incident.



1,651 to compete in Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission competition



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

UP minister Kapil Dev Agarwal speaks on state skill competition as government pushes vocational training and youth talent development. UP minister Kapil Dev Agarwal speaks on state skill competition as government pushes vocational training and youth talent development. UP minister Kapil Dev Agarwal speaks on state skill competition as government pushes vocational training and youth talent development. (Source: Kapil Dev Agarwal)

The Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission will organise a state-level competition beginning Monday. The competition will feature 20 skill disciplines and bring together over 1,651 participants selected from all 75 districts of the state. Minister of State for Vocational Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship (Independent Charge), Kapil Dev Agarwal, stated that the CM Adityanath Yogi-led government is committed towards developing a technically

I-PAC searches: ED moves SC for CBI probe into 'interference' by Mamata

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

The agency claims its officers were obstructed and documents and devices were forcibly removed during the searches. The Enforcement Directorate has moved the Supreme Court seeking a CBI probe into alleged interference by Mamata Banerjee and her administration during raids on I-PAC in Kolkata. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday moved the Supreme Court seeking a CBI probe into alleged interference by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her administration during its searches on political consultancy firm I-PAC in Kolkata. The agency is likely to mention (request for urgent hearing) it before the Chief Justice of India on Monday.

The West Bengal government, on its part, has already filed a caveat before the top court, seeking that no order be passed in the matter without hearing it. A caveat is a precautionary measure in anticipation of a case, and ensures that no ex parte order is passed. Both the ED and the Trinamool Congress have already filed petitions in the Calcutta High Court. On Friday, Justice Suvarna Ghosh of the Calcutta High Court adjourned hearing on the petitions to January 14 after chaos erupted in the courtroom as soon as proceedings began. On Thursday, the ED conducted searches at 10 locations linked to I-PAC, which is managing the TMC's poll campaign. The searches were held in connection with an alleged coal smuggling and money laundering case, the ED said. While the searches were underway, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee arrived at the residence of I-PAC director Pratik Jain, and later came out of his apartment with a laptop and a green folder. She also went to I-PAC's office and brought out several files. In their petitions, both the ED and the TMC sought the High Court's directions for returning all documents. Sources said the ED's

“Duped, sent to blacklisted Moscow college:” 4 Punjab men land in Russian jail, deported; 2 agents booked



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Punjab youths deported from Russia after being jailed and allegedly pressured to join army as Ludhiana police book immigration agents for cheating (Image Generated by Gemini) Punjab youths deported from Russia after being jailed and allegedly pressured to join army as Ludhiana police book immigration agents for cheating (Image Generated by Gemini) At least four Punjab men, sent to an alleged blacklisted college in Russia's Moscow by a Ludhiana agent in October last, were detained by Russian Police, lodged in jail for over a week and then deported back to India. “Russian jail authorities forcibly tried to recruit us in their army to fight Ukraine, and we were forced to eat beef,” they alleged in their complaint to police in Ludhiana.

Based on their complaint lodged in November last, Ludhiana police registered an FIR on January 8 against two agents, Gurpreet Singh and Sandeep Singh, owners of Urban Khalsa Immigration and Education Consultants at GTB Nagar. “The FIR was registered under the sections 318 (4) (cheating), 61 (2) (criminal conspiracy) of BNS and 24 of the Immigration Act at the Jamalpur police station after the preliminary investigation by Additional DCP (investigation),” investigating officer ASI Sahib Singh said. According to the FIR, the complainants paid Rs 3-4 lakh each to the agents to reach Russia on a study visa, but upon reaching Moscow, they were detained by the Russian Police and had to spend at least seven days in jail. Speaking to The Indian Express, one of the complainants, Rawat Bhatti, 28, a resident of Ferozepur, said that they had stumbled upon an advertisement by the agents on Instagram. “We were given letters for MIK College in Moscow, where the agents claimed to have got our admissions done in a Russian language learning course. However, upon reaching Russia, we found police waiting for us. Police said the college was blacklisted and took us into custody on November 6. There were at least 30-35 other students from Punjab and Haryana, and all of us were lodged in jail for over a week, forced to eat beef, and made to sleep on the cold floor without blankets.

skilled, innovative, and globally competitive workforce. The state-level skill competition serves as a vital platform for identifying and nurturing talent, providing youth with exposure at national and international forums, Dev added.

He noted that the competition is a key stage in the selection process for the India Skills Competition-2026, through which Uttar Pradesh's top performers will be chosen to represent the state nationally. The competition will be conducted in three phases and will conclude on January 23, followed by an awards and certificate distribution ceremony on January 24. Skill Development Mission Director Pulkit Khare, informed that “approximately 570 participants from all 75 districts will participate in the first phase, scheduled for January 12-13, 2026”. Participants will compete in six trades: additive manufacturing, welding, electronics, fashion technology, CNC milling, and CNC turning. On the first day, experts will provide technical orientation, insights into the world skills competition framework, and hands-on training on advanced machinery, said Khare. The competitive assessments will take place on Tuesday. He added that the first phase will be hosted across several institutions in Lucknow, including ITI Aliganj, ITI Mohanlalganj, ITOT, Raymond Centre, Government Polytechnic, ITI Charbagh, Women's Polytechnic, and CIPET. The participants will be evaluated through a transparent and rigorous process based on technical proficiency, innovation, creativity, and overall performance, he said. The most promising talents will earn the opportunity to compete at the national level and represent India at the World Skills Competition in Shanghai, China.

Fake Mumbai cop, a bogus Supreme Court hearing: How a digital arrest scam cost Delhi couple Rs 14.8 crore



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

An elderly couple at a plush first-floor apartment in South Delhi's Greater Kailash, one of the Capital's most affluent localities, was getting ready to attend a charitable event at a school. Om Taneja (81) and his wife, Dr Indira Taneja (77), had attended many such events in the past, especially since 2015 when they moved back to Delhi after spending 45 years in the United States. “Both my son and daughter are settled in the US. My husband worked with the United Nations, and I was a practising dentist. Since he studied at IIT Delhi and I at Lady Hardinge, we decided that after retirement we should come back and give back to our country,” Indira told The Indian Express Sunday as she revisited a two-week-long ordeal.

Recounting the events of the fateful afternoon, she said that she was just about to call their driver when she received a call — one that eventually turned out to be an alleged ‘digital arrest’ trap that made the elderly couple lose Rs 14.8 crore to fraudsters. On the other side, a man, claiming to be from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), said a number registered in her name had surfaced in a money-laundering case in Mumbai. “They told me they were disconnecting my number. I said it wasn’t even mine. The caller said he was connecting me to the Colaba police station in Mumbai,” Indira recalled. The couple, who had travelled across the world and lived a distinguished life, was left shocked and confused as they stared at the possibility of getting entangled in a criminal investigation.

“I then got a video call. The caller, who identified himself as Vikrant Singh Rajput, claimed to be a police officer from the Colaba Police station. He had a police emblem behind him and was wearing a uniform. He told me that a man named Naresh Goyal had duped the Defence Ministry of Rs 500 crore, and that he had used a Canara Bank account registered in my name to launder the money,” Indira said. “I was then told that a warrant had been issued against me as a key associate of Goyal, and against my husband as a co-accused. He asked me to come to Mumbai.” Om Taneja, placing his walking stick by his side before taking a seat in the living room, recollects that they realised the trouble had got deeper. “I had just undergone surgery, and my treatment was ongoing at AIIMS. They then made us write 15 letters to different authorities explaining why we could not appear,” he said.

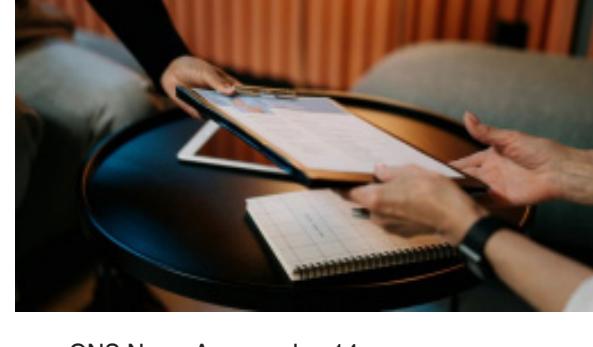
The next day, Indira was allegedly summoned for a fake online Supreme Court hearing over a video call. Under the guise of a “verification process”, the fraudsters allegedly told the couple they needed to transfer money to accounts provided by the “police”, which would then be sent to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for assessment.

“A man named DK Gupta joined the call, claiming to be an IPS officer. He said they had an RBI number, which I could submit to the police to get my money back after verification,” Indira said. Then came the first demand: transfer Rs 1.99 crore via the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) payment system. Indira was instructed to go alone to the bank carrying her husband’s phone, while Om retained hers at home. Similar demands followed — December 29 (Rs 2 crore), December 30 (Rs 2 crore), January 2 (Rs 2.05 crore), January 5 (Rs 2.5052 crore), January 6 (Rs 2.10 crore), January 8 (Rs 2.20 crore), and January 9 (Rs 50 lakh). When questioned by bank officials, the couple were told to claim the transfers were donations to charitable trusts. “My husband was kept on a call at home and constantly monitored. I was told my life was in danger and that Goyal’s men were watching us. I couldn’t tell anyone what was happening or why I was withdrawing the money,” Indira said.

Even as their children called from the US and Indira’s sister — who lives just four blocks away in Greater Kailash — checked on them, the couple kept lying, hoping the ordeal would get over. “My daughter even asked me why I looked so stressed. I told her it was nothing,” Indira said. By January 9, Indira had made eight RTGS transfers, amounting to Rs 14.85 crore. That morning, around 10 am, the moment the couple had been waiting for arrived. “They said the verification was complete. They gave me the RBI number and asked me to go to the nearest police station, submit it, and collect my money. But DK Gupta stayed on the call,” Indira said, nearly out of breath as she remembered what followed. She reached the CR Park police station. The accused were brazen enough to confront the SHO, she said. “When the SHO saw the RBI number, she looked confused and asked what it meant. Hearing this, DK Gupta told someone on the call to explain it to her. I put the phone on speaker, and a man started shouting at the inspector, asking what kind of SHO she was,” Indira said. Amid the heated exchange, Indira asked about DK Gupta. “He died,” the caller quipped. “That’s when the SHO realised it was a digital arrest scam and disconnected the call,” Indira said.

Om Taneja said that throughout his digital confinement at home, it was not possible to tell from the callers’ voices that they were imposters. “I spoke to them at length. We discussed everything—from engineering and the environment to religion,” he said. Indira too, is yet to overcome her disbelief about what happened. “We live alone, but we are educated. They showed images of my Aadhaar card and PAN card. It all felt too real,” she said. The couple reported the matter to the National Cyber Crime Helpline 1930, and an e-FIR was lodged Saturday. The Cybercrime unit of Delhi Police has initiated an investigation.

UP tightens scholarship rules: Management quota, on-spot admission students no longer eligible



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

The Uttar Pradesh government has amended the eligibility rules for its Post-Matric Scholarship and Fee Reimbursement Scheme by excluding students taking admission through management quota, spot admissions, or any other “non-transparent” process. The amendments, which will apply equally to students from Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes as well as the general category, have been made

to bring transparency to the admission processes in private educational institutions while safeguarding the interests of genuinely eligible students, the government said.

Under the amended rules, SC and ST students studying in vocational or technical courses in private educational institutions will be eligible for the scheme’s benefits only if their admission was through a fully transparent process, which includes the institution issuing public advertisements to invite applications, preparing a rank list, and publishing a selection list, all of which are now mandatory. Additionally, fees collected from students must be only those approved by the competent authority or the fee regulatory committee. Under the amended rules, general category students will also receive fee reimbursement benefits, provided their admission was through a transparent process and only approved fees were charged to them. “Students admitted through management quota, spot admissions, or any other non-transparent process will not be eligible for the scheme’s benefits. Similarly, no benefits will be provided if the institution charges fees exceeding the prescribed amount,” Deputy Director Anand Kumar Singh said.

‘They first killed my father and then my mother...’: Family of Delhi woman shot dead near Shalimar Bagh home

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Rachna Yadav, 44, was scheduled to record her statement as a witness in her husband’s murder case. But her battle to seek justice came to an abrupt end when she was shot dead near her home in Northwest Delhi’s Shalimar Bagh on Saturday morning. On Sunday, relatives gathered for a hawan at the house where grief was palpable in the air. Upon entering the living room, one could spot a picture of her husband, Vijendra Yadav, on the right side and to the left a family photo — of Vijendra, Rachna and their daughters Kanika and Vrinda. Kanika, with her toddler by her side, said she was worried about her and Vrinda’s safety.

Rachna was aware that the legal battle after Vijendra was shot dead in 2023 would be a long one, but was keen on pursuing it, according to the family. She was the prime witness in her husband’s murder case and was to depose before the court after she missed the first hearing in the first week of January. Police said the killers had been waiting for around an hour to strike, on a motorcycle which was later recovered. It was stolen from the Netaji Subhash Place police station area in September last year. The accused, said officers, abandoned the bike near Rohini Heliport, suggesting that they were either living in Begumpur or they might have fled using public transport. Prima facie, it seems they were young men, were new to such a task, officers said, adding that CCTV footage showed they were in the area since 8 am on the day of the incident. The brazen way in which they first murdered my father and then my mother sends a wrong message to society. It is a way of showing that no one can do anything to them. After my father’s murder the accused had once followed her and tried to attack her. An FIR was also registered in this regard. My mother did not take the security offered by the police as she be-



lieved in the justice system,” said Kanika. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she said her sister was alone at home when her mother was killed and they have been scared since.

Tears rolled down her cheeks as she said her sister was alone at home when her mother was killed and they have been scared since. Speaking about the police protection her mother refused to take, Kanika said, “My dad used to say: ‘Kisiki maut jab aayegi tab koi nahi rok payega (Death will arrive when it has to, nobody can stop it).’ We want the killers to be shot dead the same way they killed our parents. My father was shot dead and now my mother”. On Saturday, Rachna was returning home after attending a neighbour’s funeral procession. She washed her hands near a water pot and started walking when she was shot dead at point blank range by a man, said officers. The accomplice was waiting on the motorcycle and the duo fled soon after, police said. Their images have been captured in a CCTV footage. Police said raids are being carried out to nab them. The incident took place close to CM Rekha Gupta’s residence and a police post.

Hyderabad Police intensify crackdown on banned Chinese manja

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Police have intensified a citywide special enforcement drive against the sale and use of prohibited Chinese manja, citing serious risks to public safety, birds and the environment. During a focused four-day operation from January 8 to 11, police seized a total of 2,150 bobbins of the banned kite thread, estimated to be worth Rs 43 lakh. In connection with these seizures, 29 cases were registered and 57 persons were arrested for illegally selling the hazardous material. The ongoing campaign has yielded significant results over the past month as well. Police registered 132 cases, confiscated 8,376 bobbins valued at Rs 1.68 crore, and arrested 200 people involved in the illegal trade. Police officials warned that possession, sale, or purchase of Chinese manja is a punishable offence and will lead to imprisonment.



Danish PM says Greenland showdown at 'decisive moment' after new Trump threats



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Denmark's Prime Minister on Sunday (January 11, 2026) said her country faces a "decisive moment" in its diplomatic battle with the United States over Greenland, after President Donald Trump again suggested using force to seize the Arctic territory. Ahead of meetings in Washington from Monday (January 12, 2026) on the global scramble for key raw materials, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said that "there is a conflict over Greenland". This is a "decisive moment" with stakes that go beyond the immediate issue of Greenland's future, she added in a debate with other Danish political leaders. Ms. Frederiksen posted on Facebook that "we are ready to defend our values — whenever it is necessary — also in the Arctic. We believe in international law and in peoples' right to self-determination." Germany and Sweden backed Denmark against Mr. Trump's latest claims to the self-governing Danish territory.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson condemned U.S. "threatening rhetoric" after Mr. Trump repeated that Washington was "going to do something on Greenland, whether they like it or not". "Sweden, the Nordic countries, the Baltic states, and several major European countries stand together with our Danish friends," he told a defence conference in Salen where the U.S. general in charge of NATO took part. Mr. Kristersson said a U.S. takeover of mineral-rich Greenland would be "a violation of international law and risks encouraging other countries to act in exactly the same way". Germany reiterated its support for Denmark and Greenland ahead of the Washington discussions. Before meeting U.S. counterpart Marco Rubio on Monday (January 12, 2026), German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul held talks in Iceland to address the "strategic challenges of

the Far North", according to a Foreign Ministry statement. "Security in the arctic is becoming more and more important" and "is part of our common interest in NATO", he said at a joint news conference with Icelandic Foreign Minister Thorgerdur Katrin Gunnarsdottir. "If the American President is looking at what threats might come from Russian or Chinese ships or submarines in the region, we can of course find answers to that together," he added.

But "the future of Greenland must be decided by the people of Greenland" and Denmark, he said. Asked about a possible strengthening of NATO's commitment in the Arctic, Mr. Wadephul said Germany was "ready to assume greater responsibilities". Earlier Sunday (January 11, 2026), German Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil said: "We are strengthening security in the Arctic together, as NATO allies, and not against one another." He was speaking ahead of an international meeting on critical raw materials in Washington.

European nations have scrambled to coordinate a response after the White House said this week that Mr. Trump wanted to buy Greenland and refused to rule out military action. On Tuesday (January 5, 2026), leaders of seven European countries including France, Britain, Germany and Italy signed a letter saying it is "only" for Denmark and Greenland to decide the territory's future. Mr. Trump says controlling the island is crucial for U.S. national security because of the rising Russian and Chinese military activity in the Arctic. NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Alexus Grynkewich told the Swedish conference that alliance members were discussing Greenland's status. While there was "no immediate threat" to NATO territory, the Arctic's strategic importance was fast growing, the U.S. General added. Gen. Grynkewich said he would not comment on "the political dimensions of recent rhetoric", but talks on Greenland were being held at the North Atlantic Council. "Those dialogues continue in Brussels. They have been healthy dialogues from what I've heard," the General said. A Danish colony until 1953, Greenland gained home rule 26 years later and is contemplating eventually loosening its ties with Denmark. Polls indicate that Greenland's population strongly oppose a U.S. takeover. "I don't think there's an immediate threat to NATO territory right now," Mr. Grynkewich told the conference. But he said Russian and Chinese vessels had been seen patrolling together on Russia's northern coast and near Alaska and Canada, working together to get greater access to the Arctic as ice recedes due to global warming.

NATO talks on deterring Russian activity around Greenland 'business as usual', says U.K.

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Britain said on Sunday (January 11, 2026) that discussions with other NATO members on deterring Russian activity in the Arctic were "business as usual", after media reports the U.K. was in talks with its European allies about deploying a military force to Greenland. The Telegraph reported on Saturday that military chiefs from Britain and other European countries were drawing up plans for a possible NATO mission in Greenland, which U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he wanted to acquire.

The newspaper said British officials had begun early-stage talks with Germany, France and others on plans that could involve deploying British troops, warships and aircraft to protect Greenland from Russia and China. Bloomberg News, citing people familiar with the plans, reported separately on Sunday that Germany, whose foreign and finance ministers are in Washington on Monday, will propose setting up a joint NATO mission to protect the Arctic region. British transport minister Heidi Alexander told Sky News that talks on how to deter Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Arctic were "business as usual". "It's becoming an increasingly contested geopolitical region, with Russia and China... you would expect us to be talking to all our allies in NATO about what we can do to deter Russian aggression in the Arctic Circle," Alexander said. Britain was "committed to working with NATO allies to strengthen NATO's Arctic deterrence and defence," said a government spokesperson when asked about the Telegraph report.



Doubts on U.S. claims on Arctic vessels. Mr. Trump has said the U.S. must own Greenland, an autonomous part of the Kingdom of Denmark, to prevent Russia or China occupying the strategically located and minerals-rich territory in the future, arguing U.S. military presence there was not enough. German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul, who will meet with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday, said that a solution to U.S. concerns over Russian or Chinese vessels needed to be found within the framework of the NATO alliance. "If it comes to questions of territorial sovereignty, we are absolutely clear: The future of Greenland has to be decided by the people of Greenland," said Mr. Wadephul on Sunday. Mr. Trump has not provided any evidence to back up his claims of Russian and Chinese vessels operating near Greenland, which Denmark disputes.

Truck drives through anti-Iran protest in Los Angeles



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Los Angeles police responded on Sunday (January 11, 2026) after somebody drove a U-Haul box truck down a street crowded with marchers demonstrating in support of the Iranian people, causing protesters to scramble out of the way and then run after the speeding vehicle to try to attack the driver. The U-Haul truck, with a window and side mirrors shattered, was stopped several blocks away and surrounded by police cars. ABC7 news helicopter footage showed officers keeping the crowd at bay as demonstrators swarmed the truck, throwing punches at the driver and thrusting flagpoles through the driver's side window.

The driver, a man who was not identified, was detained "pending further investigation," police said in a statement on Sunday (January 11, 2026) evening. The police statement said one person was hit by the truck but nobody was seriously hurt. Two people were evaluated by paramedics and both declined treatment, the Los Angeles Fire Department said. Several hundred people, some waving the flag of Iran, had gathered on Sunday (January 11, 2026) afternoon along Veteran Avenue in LA's Westwood neighbourhood to protest against the Iranian theocracy. Police eventually issued a dispersal order, and by 5 p.m. only about a hundred protesters were still in the area, ABC7 reported.

Activists say a crackdown on nationwide protests in Iran has killed more than 530 people. Protesters flooded the streets in Iran's capital of Tehran and its second-largest city again on Sunday (January 11, 2026). A banner attached

to the truck said "No Shah. No Regime. USA: Don't Repeat 1953. No Mullah," an apparent reference to a U.S.-backed coup that year that toppled then Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. The August 1953 coup stemmed from U.S. fears over the Soviet Union increasingly wanting a piece of Iran as Communists agitated within the country. The ground had been laid partially by the British, who wanted to wrest back access to the Iranian oil industry, which had been nationalised earlier by Mossadegh. The coup toppled Mossadegh and cemented the power of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It also lit the fuse for the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which saw the fatally ill Shah flee Iran and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini usher in the theocracy that still governs the country.

Suspected Pakistan drones seen hovering over areas along LoC, IB; search ops launched in three J&K districts

Security forces picked up movement of suspected drones in several forward areas along the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) in Samba, Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday (January 11, 2026) evening, officials said. All the flying objects came from the Pakistan side, and returned after hovering over Indian territory for few minutes, they said.

According to officials, security forces have launched a search operation on the ground after noticing the suspected drone activity in the forward areas. Army troops guarding the Nowshera sector along the LoC in Rajouri, fired from medium and light machine guns on observing drone movement over Gania-Kalsian village around 6.35 pm, they said. Another drone was spotted at Khabbar village in Teryath, Rajouri district, at 6.35 p.m.

Donald Trump declares himself as 'Acting President of Venezuela' in his viral Truth Social post



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

U.S. President Donald Trump has posted a photo of himself on his social media site Truth Social with his designation listed as "Acting President of Venezuela." The post on Truth Social on Sunday (January 11, 2026) has Mr. Trump's official portrait and then the designation "Acting President of Venezuela, 'Incumbent January 2026.' It also has his designation as the 45th and 47th President of the United States, who assumed office on January 20, 2025.

On January 3, 2026, United States captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and took him out of the coun-

try after an extraordinary nighttime operation that was accompanied by a flurry of strikes following months of escalating pressure on the oil-rich South American nation. Claiming that U.S. presence was already in place in Venezuela, President Donald Trump said hours after the attack that his government would run Caracas, at least temporarily, and would tap its vast oil reserves to sell "large amounts" to other countries. "We are going to run the country until such time as we can do a safe, proper, and judicious transition," Mr. Trump said at a news conference.

Hours after the capture of Nicolas Maduro, U.S. President Donald Trump said that the United States will "run" Venezuela and tap its huge oil reserves. He was speaking at a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida after what he claimed was "one of the most stunning, effective and powerful displays of American might and confidence". On January 3, 2026, in Venezuela, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court ordered that Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez assume the role of Acting President in the absence of Mr. Maduro. While the court ruling said Ms. Rodriguez would assume "the office of President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in order to guarantee administrative continuity and the comprehensive defense of the Nation", the acting leader demanded that the U.S. free Mr. Maduro and called him the country's rightful leader.

Venezuelans in U.S. are torn between joy, worry after ousting of Nicolas Maduro



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

In the days since the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump ousted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in a late-night military raid, Alejandra Salima has spoken to fellow Venezuelan migrants in her role as an advocate. She said that like her, most voice feelings that see-saw between joy and trepidation. The removal of Mr. Maduro is "a first step, but we're nervous," said Ms. Salima, who fled to the U.S. three years ago with her seven-year-old son and assists other Venezuelans at the Miami office of the National TPS Alliance. With the regime that Mr. Maduro led still in place, "at this moment, returning would put me and my son at risk," she said. Maduro loyalists stage rally as Venezuelan government courts U.S.

For more than 7,70,000 Venezuelans living in the U.S., reactions to Mr. Trump's forceful moves in the country they left behind — and the one that has taken them in — are as intense as they are complicated. Many are thrilled by the removal of Mr. Maduro, who harassed and jailed political opponents while presiding over an economic collapse, driving millions of Venezuelans from the country. But as they try to figure out what's next for them and for families and friends still in Venezuela, many share Ms. Salima's conflicted feelings. The Trump administration's move to deport Venezuelans without permanent residency has increased worry. Many were allowed to stay in the U.S. after they were granted Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, a designation Mr. Trump revoked after taking office. At the same time, the fear instilled by the government Mr. Maduro left behind makes many wary of returning. "First, they grabbed Maduro, and I feel happy, grateful to the Trump administration," said Manuel Coronel, a lawyer who left Venezuela in 2017 and now lives just north of Salt Lake City. But he worries the change will be too limited. "They got him, but the criminals are still there," said Mr. Coronel, who is 54 and works at an immigration law practice. "There's no new government. Everything's exactly the same."

The tensions belie assurances by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who asserted that "overwhelmingly the Venezuelans that I've heard from or talked to are excited about the changes." "They have more opportunities to go back to their country and have it be more successful and provide for their families today than they did a week ago when Mr. Maduro was still in charge," Ms. Noem said last week. But in interviews with Venezuelans who live in communities around the U.S. there was little indication of a rush to return. "Thank God we're here," said Jose Luis Rojas, who ended up in New York City after fleeing the Venezuela capital of Caracas in 2018. Mr. Rojas (31) recounted how Venezuela's hyperinflation, which topped one million percent the year he fled, made it impossible to buy essentials such as diapers after his partner became pregnant. They went first to Ecuador then Peru, but left to escape crime, joining thousands of Venezuelans who migrated on foot through the jungle of Panama's Darien Gap.

Since the couple and their son arrived in the U.S., Mr. Rojas has obtained political asylum, a work permit and a

driver's license. In an interview this week at a Venezuelan restaurant on a New York City street lined with immigrant-run businesses, Mr. Rojas welcomed the toppling of Mr. Maduro "so there can be change in Venezuela, because many people are struggling." But he expressed doubt about the Trump administration's tightened policies on Venezuelans in the U.S. that have already pushed a number of his friends to leave for countries in South America and elsewhere. For Venezuelans in the U.S., Mr. Trump has "done good things and he's done bad things," said Mr. Rojas. New lives in the U.S.

About eight million Venezuelans have fled the country over the past decade, with the great majority landing elsewhere in Latin America. Hundreds of thousands have made their way to the U.S., with large numbers settling in suburban communities like Kissimmee, Florida, outside Orlando, and Herriman, Utah, outside Salt Lake City. Venezuelans quickly became among the largest nationalities to immigrate to the U.S. after COVID-19, lured in part by job prospects. The Biden administration offered new or expanded temporary legal protections, largely ended by Mr. Trump after he took office. Hundreds of thousands more were released in the United States after entering illegally from Mexico to pursue asylum or other forms of relief in immigration court. For people like Jesus Martinez, who fled to the U.S. in 2021 after facing physical threats and persecution, "life in Venezuela is behind us." Mr. Martinez, who now lives with his wife and children in Orem, Utah, and has applied for political asylum, recalled how life in Venezuela had become intolerable. While it is a relief that Mr. Maduro has been removed, he said, the Trump administration's push to send Venezuelans back to a country whose government they still deeply distrust presents a paradox. "It's obviously a contradictory situation," said Mr. Martinez, 50. He noted that it will take considerable time before loyalists to Mr. Maduro are rooted out and Venezuelans can make a transition to a stable democracy. Reservations about going back

Salima, 48, who works in the Miami advocacy office, was active in Opposition politics in Venezuela, where she trained as a lawyer and marched in peaceful protests. She came to the U.S. legally with her son, who is now 10 years old, on a temporary permit for humanitarian reasons, which Mr. Trump has revoked. She is elated by Mr. Maduro's ouster. But those feelings are tempered by her unease over Venezuela's future while his allies are still in power. "Her mother remains in Venezuela and, even with Mr. Maduro gone, she refuses to discuss politics during chats on an encrypted app, fearful that government authorities who remain in power will find out," Ms. Salima said. With that reality still in place, the pending end of Temporary Protected Status for Venezuelans makes her feel "very unstable," Ms. Salima said. Asking for a choice

Rallying with other Venezuelans this week in Doral, Florida, to celebrate Mr. Maduro's ouster, Jorge Galicia recounted fleeing in 2018 after a fellow student activist was arrested during a wave of demonstrations against the regime. After settling in the Miami area, Mr. Galicia said he joined Charlie Kirk's conservative Turning Point USA movement, whose politics closely align with Mr. Trump's. But Mr. Galicia, 30, said his support for the Trump administration began to waver as the White House's crackdown on immigrants intensified, breaking up families. Now, with Mr. Maduro gone, he expects many of the Venezuelans who fled to neighbouring countries and the U.S. to start returning home. But he hopes Mr. Trump will reconsider his decision to deport Venezuelans like himself who have built new lives in the U.S. but still lack permanent status. "The reason we're here is because there was a horrible regime that forced millions of us to leave," said Mr. Galicia, wrapped in a Venezuelan flag. But, he said, "everyone deserves to have the choice of returning home."

Sadaf Choudhary's Jeddah posting reflects India's support for Saudi reforms



Jeddah: Saudi Arabia in recent years has made significant strides in empowering women as part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030, which aims to enhance their position and ensure equal opportunities. With changing gender dynamics, even the traditional space of diplomacy is being reshaped.

Hyderabad's proud son scripts maritime history: Commander Hemanth leads INSV Kaundinya to Oman. India has aligned with these changes by posting women diplomats to key assignments in the Kingdom. The latest is Sadaf Choudhary, who has been appointed to a crucial position in the Indian Mission in Jeddah. A career diplomat of the 2021 batch, Choudhary has been posted to the Haj section and assumed charge immediately, holding bilateral meetings with her Saudi counterparts to prepare for the pilgrimage season.

She is responsible for managing arrangements for around 1.75 lakh Indian Haj pilgrims every year. India sends the largest number of Haj pilgrims outside the Arab world and ranks third globally. The present quota is based on the 2011 census and New Delhi is seeking to raise it to 2.5 lakh

in line with population growth.

Managing Indian pilgrims is a complex task, as they come from across the country with diverse languages, cultures and food habits. Ensuring logistics, compliance with Saudi regulations and coordination with local authorities, while also addressing complaints ranging from food quality to transport delays and sanitation, makes the assignment both demanding and high-profile.

Hamas says it will dissolve its Gaza government when new Palestinian body takes over



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Hamas said Sunday (January 11, 2026) it will dissolve its existing government in Gaza once a Palestinian technocratic leadership committee takes over the territory, as mandated under the U.S.-brokered peace plan. But the group gave no specifics on when the change will occur. Hamas and the rival Palestinian Authority, the Palestinians' internationally recognized representative, have not announced the names of the technocrats, who are not supposed to be politically affiliated, and it remains unclear if they will be cleared by Israel and the U.S.

The "Board of Peace," an international body led by Mr. Trump, is supposed to oversee the government and other aspects of the ceasefire that took effect on October 10, including disarming Hamas and deploying an international security force. The board's members have not been announced. Meanwhile, the post-ceasefire death toll continued to rise in Gaza, with Israeli gunfire killing three Palestinians, according to Palestinian hospital officials.

The ceasefire began with a halt in fighting and the release of hostages held in Gaza in exchange for thousands of Palestinians held by Israel. The deal is still in its first phase as efforts continue to recover the remains of the final hostage left in Gaza. An Egyptian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door information, said Hamas was sending a delegation to talks with Egyptian, Qatari and Turkish officials about moving to the second phase. In comments posted on his Telegram channel Sunday (January 11, 2026), Hazem Kassem, a Hamas spokesperson, called for speeding up the establishment of the technocratic committee. The Egyptian official said Hamas will meet with other Palestinian factions this week to finalise the committee's formation. The Hamas delegation will be chaired by top negotiator Khalil al-Hayya, the official said.

Mr. Trump has said the "Board of Peace" will monitor the committee and handle the disarmament of Hamas, the deployment of an international security force, additional pullbacks of Israeli troops and Gaza's reconstruction. The U.S. has reported little progress on any of these fronts, though the members of the board are expected to be announced this week. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday (January 8, 2026) that Bulgarian

diplomat Nickolay Mladenov has been selected as the board's director-general. Mladenov is a former Bulgarian defense and Foreign Minister who served as U.N. envoy to Iraq before being appointed as the U.N. Mideast peace envoy from 2015 to 2020. During that time, he had good working relations with Israel and frequently worked to ease Israel-Hamas tensions. Also Sunday (January 11, 2026), Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar met in Jerusalem with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi. Mr. Saar said Israel was committed to enforcing Mr. Trump's plan, while Mr. Motegi expressed Japan's willingness to play an active role in the ceasefire.

According to Japan's Foreign Ministry, Mr. Motegi visited the Civil-Military Coordination Center, where the ceasefire is being monitored. He was also set to meet Mr. Netanyahu and Palestinian officials in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. In Gaza, two men were shot dead in the southern town of Bani Suhaila, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies. Earlier Sunday (January 11, 2026), a man was killed by Israeli gunfire in the Tuffah neighborhood of Gaza City, according to Al-Ahly hospital, which received the body. In response to questions about the Tuffah incident, Israel's military said it had fired at and hit a "terrorist" in northern Gaza who had approached troops. In a later statement, the military said it had killed a "terrorist" in southern Gaza who approached troops. Israel and Hamas have accused each other of violating the ceasefire. Continued Israeli strikes in Gaza have killed more than 400 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

The Israeli military says any actions since the ceasefire began have been in response to violations of the agreement. Israeli police said Sunday (January 11, 2026) they were questioning a top official from Mr. Netanyahu's office over possible obstruction of an investigation into last year's leak of classified military information to a German tabloid. Israeli media identified the official as Tzachi Braverman, Netanyahu's chief of staff, who is expected to start as the next ambassador to the United Kingdom in the coming months. He's the latest official to be caught up in the scandal, in which Mr. Netanyahu's inner circle is accused of leaking confidential information to German tabloid Bild to improve public perception of the prime minister following the killing of six hostages in Gaza in 2024. It comes after an explosive interview by Kan News with former Mr. Netanyahu spokesperson Eli Feldstein, who described a clandestine meeting with Braverman in an underground parking lot in the middle of the night in connection with the leak. Mr. Feldstein, who has been indicted, said Mr. Braverman offered to "shut down" the probe into the leaked information. Opposition leader Yair Lapid immediately called for the suspension of Braverman as ambassador. "It is unacceptable that a person suspected of involvement in obstructing a serious security investigation should be the face of Israel in one of Europe's most important countries," Mr. Lapid wrote on X. In response, Mr. Saar defended Braverman's appointment and said he would not be removed from it until formally charged or tried.

U.S. may lift more Venezuela sanctions soon: Bessent



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has told Reuters that additional U.S. sanctions on Venezuela could be lifted as soon as next week to facilitate oil sales, and that he will also meet next week with the heads of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank on their re-engagement with Venezuela. Mr. Bessent said in an interview late on Friday (January 9, 2026) that almost \$5 billion worth of Venezuela's currently frozen IMF Special Drawing Rights monetary assets could be deployed to help rebuild the country's economy.

"We're de-sanctioning the oil that's going to be sold," Mr. Bessent said during a visit to a Winnebago Industries engineering facility. The Treasury was examining changes that would facilitate the repatriation of sale proceeds of the oil stored largely on ships back to Venezuela. "How can we help that get back into Venezuela, to run the government, run the security services and get it to the Venezuelan people?" he said of the Treasury's sanctions analysis. Asked when more sanctions could be removed from Venezuela, Mr. Bessent said, "It could be as soon as next week," but did not identify which ones. The moves are part of the Trump administration's effort to stabilize Venezuela and encourage the return of U.S. oil producers to the country a week after U.S. forces captured Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro in Caracas and brought him to New York to face drug trafficking charges.

U.S. sanctions have banned international banks and other creditors from engaging with the Venezuelan government without a license. The institutions have cited this as an impediment to a complex \$150 billion debt restructuring widely viewed as a key to the return of private capital to Venezuela. On Friday (January 9) evening, President Donald Trump signed an executive order blocking courts or creditors from impounding Venezuelan oil revenue held in U.S. Treasury accounts, declaring that these funds should be safeguarded to help Venezuela create "peace, prosperity and stability."

IMF, World Bank re-engagement Mr. Bessent, who controls the dominant U.S. shareholding in the IMF and World Bank, said that the two institutions had already reached out to him about Venezuela. The Treasury chief said that the U.S. Treasury would be willing to convert Venezuela's IMF Special Drawing Rights held at the Fund to dollars for use in rebuilding Venezuela.

Venezuela currently has about 3.59 billion SDRs, which are worth about \$4.9 billion at Friday's exchange rate, but it cannot currently access them. SDRs are made up of dollars, euros, yen, sterling and Chinese yuan. The Treasury last year agreed to back a \$20 billion swap line for Argentina partly with that South American country's SDRs in an effort to stabilize the peso and help Argentine President Javier Milei's party win in parliamentary elections.

An IMF spokesperson said that the Fund was closely monitoring developments in Venezuela and declined comment on Mr. Bessent's mention of a meeting next week.

The IMF has not engaged with Venezuela for more than two decades, with the last formal IMF assessment of Venezuela's economy completed in 2004. Venezuela paid off its last World Bank loan in 2007, when Mr. Maduro's predecessor, the late Hugo Chavez declared that Venezuela "will no longer have to go to Washington" for funding. A source familiar with the World Bank's internal discussions on Venezuela said that the development lender was in the early stages of exploring how it could be helpful to Venezuela, noting that the bank moved in quickly with assistance to Afghanistan and Syria after regime changes and provided early support to Gaza and Ukraine.

Fast movers Mr. Bessent said that he believed that smaller, privately held companies would move swiftly back into Venezuela's oil sector, despite reluctance voiced by some oil majors including Exxon Mobil, whose past Venezuelan assets were nationalized twice. "I think it's going to be the typical progression where the private companies can move quickly and will come in very quickly. They haven't talked about financing at all," Mr. Bessent said. "Chevron has been there a long time and will continue to be there, so I believe that their commitment will greatly increase." Mr. Bessent added that he believed there was a role for the U.S. Export-Import Bank in guaranteeing financing for Venezuela's oil sector, echoing previous comments from U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright.

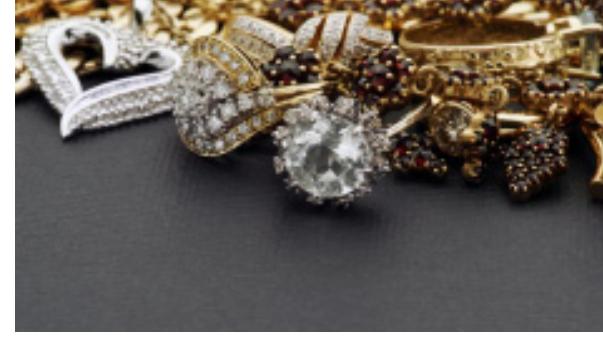
Rice exports surge to near record in 2025 as curbs lifted

India's rice exports jumped 19.4% last year to the second-highest on record after the centre lifted all export curbs, making shipments more competitive, government and industry officials told Reuters on Saturday (January 10, 2026). An improved flow of rice from the world's largest exporter of the grain curbed shipments from rivals Thailand and Vietnam and drove prices in Asia to their lowest in nearly a decade, easing costs for poor consumers in Africa and other regions.

"Indian shipments rebounded quickly after the government lifted export restrictions" in March, said a government official, who asked not to be named as he was not authorised to speak to the media. As supplies improved with record production, the country removed the last of the export curbs imposed in 2022 and 2023. Exports rose to 21.55 million metric tons from 18.05 million in 2024, near the 2022 record of 22.3 million tons, the official said. Non-basmati rice shipments jumped 25% to 15.15 million tons, while basmati exports increased 8% to a record 6.4 million tons, he said. Non-basmati rice shipments rose sharply to Bangladesh, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Djibouti, while Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Britain increased purchases of premium basmati rice during the year, said another government official. India usually exports more rice than the combined shipments of the world's next three largest exporters: Thailand, Vietnam and Pakistan. "Indian rice is very competitive compared with supplies from other exporting countries, with lower prices helping India regain lost market share," Nitin Gupta, senior vice president at Olam Agri India, said on the sidelines of the India International Rice Summit.

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Gold, silver futures hit fresh records on Federal probe, geopolitical tensions



Gold and silver futures surged to fresh peaks in domestic and international markets on Monday (January 12, 2026), after investors flocked towards safe-haven assets amid rising geopolitical tensions, as well as the U.S. Federal Reserve and its chair facing a probe. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said, "The Department of Justice has served the central bank with subpoenas and threatened it with a criminal indictment over his June testimony about the Fed's \$2.5-billion renovation of two office buildings, a project that President Donald Trump criticised as excessive."

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures for February delivery jumped by 2,431, or 1.8%, to hit a record of 21,412.50 per 10 grams. Also Read | Gold prices, silver futures extend record rally on rate-cut hopes

The yellow metal has climbed by 2,058, or 2.25%, over the past week. Silver futures also rallied, with the March

contract surging by 11,271, or 4.46%, to reach a lifetime high of 22,63,996 per kilogram. The white metal zoomed by 16,409, or 6.94%, last week. In the global markets, gold for February delivery on the Comex appreciated by \$111.8, or 2.5%, to hit a fresh peak of \$4,612.7 per ounce, while silver for the March contract soared by \$4.56, or 5.8%, to touch a historic level of \$83.90 per ounce. According to market experts, the rally in gold and silver prices was driven by deepening unease surrounding the Federal Reserve after the U.S. Federal prosecutors launched a criminal investigation into Chair Powell over the Central bank's renovation of its Washington headquarters. The move came amid rising tensions between the White House and the Fed, an institution Mr. Trump has repeatedly criticised for not cutting interest rates as sharply as he prefers. Analysts said the probe has intensified concerns over the Fed's independence, raising doubts about the stability of U.S. monetary policy and fueling a rush into safe-haven assets such as gold and silver.

The dollar index, which measures the strength of the greenback against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower at 99.03, lending support to the bullion prices in the global markets. Adding to the uncertainty, President Trump is considering military action against Iran following violent anti-government protests, saying Tehran had crossed a "red line," analysts said. Meanwhile, the United Nations has called an emergency meeting after Russia allegedly deployed a new ballistic missile in a large-scale strike on Ukraine. These developments have combined to fuel uncertainty across global markets, weakening the dollar and pushing investors towards safe-haven assets.

Realty sector seeks revision of affordable housing price cap ahead of Budget 2026



Ahead of the Union Budget 2026, the real estate fraternity has appealed to the Union Government for significant policy interventions to rejuvenate housing demand and address the challenges of stalled projects. Industry bodies have highlighted that escalating land acquisition costs and construction overheads have rendered the current tax thresholds obsolete, particularly in rapidly expanding urban corridors. A primary contention remains the definition of 'affordable housing.' Stakeholders argue that the existing 745 lakh price ceiling no longer aligns with the market realities of major cities, making several projects financially unviable for developers and inaccessible for intended beneficiaries.

Speaking to The Hindu on Monday (January 12), E. Ashok Kumar, president of the Confederation of Real Es-

tate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI), Visakhapatnam Chapter, noted that the current limit acts as a deterrent to growth. "The 745 lakh ceiling and the associated 1% GST benefit are outdated. They do not account for the prevailing land and material costs in most development zones. We propose that the government increase this limit to 80-90 lakh," Mr. Kumar said.

He further advocated for a reduction in GST on works contracts from 18% to 12% to improve project viability and bolster supply. The sector has also sought enhanced incentives for first-time homebuyers, particularly in the mid-income bracket. Mr. Kumar pointed out that a significant portion of buyers in this segment currently falls outside the ambit of affordable housing benefits due to the restrictive price cap, thereby missing out on the 1% GST rate and other tax concessions. The industry's wishlist includes the restoration of the additional interest deduction under Section 80EEA and smoother credit flow for developers — measures that are expected to lower the overall cost of housing and reduce the burden of Equated Monthly Instalments (EMIs) for consumers. The CREDAI president further urged the Centre to accord 'infrastructure status' to the housing sector rather than treating it merely as an asset class. While acknowledging the positive intent behind initiatives like PMAY-Urban 2.0, Mr. Kumar stressed that further refinements are essential to translate policy into tangible housing supply in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, including Visakhapatnam.

Tribal organisations urge Chief Minister to pay attention to 'neglected' Adivasi communities of the State



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Tribal organisations have urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to pay attention to the development of the 'neglected' Adivasi communities in Karnataka by announcing special schemes in the upcoming State budget. Extending their congratulations to Mr. Siddaramaiah for becoming the longest-serving Chief Minister of the State, the leaders of a group of tribal organisations from the region have issued a joint appeal to him to prioritise empowering the "deprived and voiceless Adivasi communities." About 90,000 families, belonging to 12 forest-dwelling tribal communities comprising a total population of around six lakh, reside in nearly 1,500 hamlets across 38 talukas in nine districts along the Western Ghats in the State. "They live in and around forests, enduring harassment from the Forest Department and surviving on daily wage labour. They are forest-dispossessed communities," said the appeal, issued jointly by Harsha of Adivasi Jana Parliament, Jayappa of Tribal Farmers' Association, Lakshmi of Adivasi Women's Association, Shivanna, president of Federation of Haadi Forest Right Committee, Hunsur, B.S. Vithal Nanachi, former member of Legal Services Commission, and S. Shrikant, director of Development through Education (DEED), Hunsur.

"That nothing constructive has been done for the tribal communities over the 2,794 plus days in office is seen as a blemish on the distinction of having led Karnataka for the longest period," the Adivasi organisations stated. Apart from seeking a special scheme in the upcoming State budget to enable Adivasis to tread the path of development, the organisations urged Mr. Siddaramaiah to provide rehabilitation to the 3,418 Adivasi families as directed by the High Court. "We urge that, in this year's budget, 21 lakh per family and five acres of land be earmarked and the development of these 3,418 families be taken up," the appeal added.

Other demands include steps to recognise forest rights under the Forest Rights Act and issue title deeds to all the 90,000 Adivasi families living in 1,500 hamlets across the State, besides encouragement for the active functioning of the Haadi Forest Rights committees. The tribal organisations also sought funds for growing biofuel trees like honge (pongamia) and neem in degraded forest areas, farmers' lands, public spaces, and government lands. Arrangements should be made to collect seeds of biofuel trees so that the foundation for fuel self-reliance can be laid.

They have also requested special grants to ensure

quality education in government schools and residential (ashram) schools in Adivasi hamlets and for skill development of the youth. "This year, funds should be earmarked to build at least 20,000 houses and to encourage agriculture," the organisations said, while demanding that the government constitute an Adivasi Development Board and an Adivasi Corporation.

The organisations also sought separate funds specifically for forest-dwelling tribes within the Scheduled Tribes category and determination of internal reservation within the Scheduled Tribes, government jobs for educated Adivasi youth, and political reservation to Adivasis in the Panchayat Raj system. "Allocate funds to provide monthly honorarium to haadi, devara gudda custodians, and traditional herbal experts in recognition of their community service," they demanded, while urging the government to declare the 1,500 Adivasi haadis and their traditional forest areas as Fifth Schedule Areas and take steps to implement the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.

New plaza at city airport ready, but wait for second cab pick-up point extends

Chennai airport's plaza, which will house the second cab pick-up point has been built and ready, but much to their dismay, air passengers will have to wait till early March to access it.

In 2023, the work to beautify the space opposite the T1 domestic terminal at Chennai airport and to develop it as a plaza commenced with October 2024 as the deadline. But the project was marred by numerous delays due to various reasons and has finally been finished.

In July 2024, when the designated location for boarding cabs changed from the erstwhile flagpole point near the T1 domestic terminal to the multi-level car parking space, air passengers were irked and exasperated.

Many often point out on social media platforms about the cumbersome process of taking a buggy vehicle, then queuing up to board an elevator at the multi-level car parking lot, and finally hopping on to their cabs.

To provide some respite to this problem, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) decided to establish a second cab pick-up point for air passengers at the plaza (where the flagpole point existed back then). All these months, the construction was delayed. But now, though the construction of the plaza is over, air passengers have to wait longer for an easily accessible cab pick-up point.

Sources at AAI said though they want to launch the second cab pick-up point at the earliest, there has been a hitch.

Government proposes to send VBSA Bill to JPC



EMS News Agency, Dec 16

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday (December 15, 2025) afternoon tabled the Bill even as MPs from across Opposition parties opposed it, arguing that the Bill represented "executive overreach", subjected higher educational institutes to "pervasive executive control, graded autonomy, intrusive compliance requirements, severe penalties, and closure powers", and went against the principles of federalism. Opposition MPs from Kerala and Tamil Nadu objected to the nomenclature of the legislation, arguing that by choosing to name the Bill and the new authorities proposed in it in Hindi, the Union government was "imposing Hindi" on non-Hindi-speaking States. Trinamool Congress MP Sougata Ray questioned the functioning of the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry, asking why the copy of this Bill was circulated to MPs late on Sunday night, and why it was not in the Parliament's list of business for Monday till afternoon. After hearing the objections to the introduction of the Bill – which will subsume the functions of the UGC, the All India Council for Technical Education, and the National Council for Teacher Education – Mr. Pradhan moved to introduce the Bill amid uproar. Following this, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju rose and said the government had decided to propose that this Bill be sent to a joint committee constituted by the Speaker.

Mr. Rijiju said that in the meeting of the Lok Sabha's Business Advisory Committee, "Many members have requested that this is an extensive Bill and we need further deliberation on it." The Coordination Committee Against HECI (VBSA) on Monday (December 15, 2025) afternoon held a press conference in New Delhi, insisting that the Bill was a "revived" version of the 2018 Higher Education Commission of India Bill, which had received thousands of adverse reactions and was subsequently put on hold. The committee, a coalition of over 30 teacher and student associations and unions across the country, argued that this Bill was a "structural shift to dismantle public-funded higher education in India".

The Bill provides for the establishment of a 12-member VBSA umbrella commission as a regulatory body, under which the regulatory, accreditation, and standards coun-

cils will function. It notably divorces the UGC's grants-disbursal power from the regulatory body, handing this funding power over to "mechanisms devised by the Ministry of Education". In their objections to the VBSA Bill, 2025, the coordination committee said that de-linking funding from regulation would end up making grant allocation "more bureaucratic, arbitrary, and subject to political considerations", and said that provisions allowing institutes the power to raise their own finances would naturally lead to many institutes doubling down on profit as a motivation. The coalition of associations added that the composition of the VBSA was completely in the hands of the Union government under the new Bill, adding that it provides for only two teacher representatives from State institutes, who will also be nominated by the Centre. Opposing the introduction of the Bill, Congress MP Manish Tewari said that while Parliament had the mandate to legislate on the determination of standards, this power is limited, adding, "The Bill goes far beyond standards and intrudes into administration, affiliation, establishment, and closure of university campuses, their institutional autonomy." "Vast and substantive matters" from accreditation frameworks, degree-granting powers, penalties, and institutional autonomy, Mr. Tewari said, "are left to be determined by rules, regulations, and executive direction". He added that it undermined the autonomy of statutory regulatory bodies, and also opposed the overriding powers granted in the Bill to supersede any other laws and existing regulatory structures.

N.K. Premachandran, RSP MP from Kerala, spoke about how the naming of the Bill will be a difficulty in many States where Hindi is not spoken. "I cannot even pronounce the name of the Bill, and cannot understand what Adhishthan means," he said, further speaking to how this Bill proposes to take over the regulation of even universities set up under State laws. Mr. Ray argued that Governors in West Bengal and Kerala were "already interfering with the functioning" of State universities, adding that the VBSA Bill now "give legitimate power to the Centre to control the functioning of higher educational institutes and universities". Congress MP S. Jothimani said there was no "technical reason" to name the legislation in Hindi. "Fifty-three times, Hindi words have been used in this Bill," Ms. Jothimani said, trying to read the Hindi names of the councils, before breaking out in Tamil, "This is not something that I, we will be able to understand. Just like you do not understand what I am saying when I switch to Tamil, we will not be able to understand when you try to push Hindi onto us. This is just another way to impose Hindi." At a press conference, Rashtriya Janata Dal Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Kumar Jha cautioned everyone to be prepared for "a difficult battle ahead", adding that the government's wish to refer the Bill to a joint committee was a sign of the government merely postponing the inevitable. Mr. Jha, an academic himself, said that while India's higher education system had a lot of problems before, this Bill, if passed, will not leave stakeholders in a position to even talk about the problems in the system.

Why were IndiGo operations disrupted? | Explained



The story so far: In the first few days of December, IndiGo saw a near-total meltdown of its operations, with over 5,000 flights cancelled in the first 10 days, carrying on from delays and nearly 900 flights cancelled in November.

What happened?

The flight disruption at IndiGo was so severe that crew ended up at the wrong stations, passengers' bags reached destinations even after their flights were cancelled, pilots waited at airports without duty assignments, call centres crashed, and tempers flared at boarding gates as passengers shouted slogans against IndiGo and even held protest marches inside terminals. The airline informed India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), that there were "planning gaps" in rostering pilots and misjudgement in assessing pilot availability, as per the new DGCA rules for pilot rest and duty hours that came into effect from November 1. In fact, things were so bad that the airline pleaded with pilots to return from their sick leave and even offered 1.5 times their daily allowance if they cancelled their privilege leave. These issues combined with minor technical glitches, winter schedule changes, adverse weather, and aviation system congestion. The airline informed the regulator that they were short of 65 pilots in command and requested for exemptions from the new rules to restore flight operations. Given the massive flight disruptions affecting lakhs of passengers, the DGCA granted exemptions until February 10 for the new rules. As many as 12.5 lakh passengers were impacted due to the cancellations until December 9, with the airline releasing ₹1,100 crore in refunds. It has also offered ₹10k vouchers to severely impacted passengers from December 3 to 5.

What was the backdrop of new rules?

IndiGo's recent meltdown revives a decades-old clash between airlines and pilots over Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) that govern their rest and duty hours. This latest tiff goes back to April 2019, when the DGCA brought new rules that reversed some of the pilot-friendly provisions in the 2011 rules, especially those governing night duties. The 2011 rules followed the May 22, 2010 Mangalore crash, where the probe report cited cockpit snoring and deep breathing for 1h40m of the 2h5m flight and noted that the pilot-in-command would have been affected due to flying in the "Window of Circadian Low" or the period between 2 am to 6 am when the ability to stay awake reduces. The flight took off from Dubai at 2.30 am IST. They were also an outcome of the 2011 report of the Nasim Zaidi Committee on

FTL, which was necessitated as Air India for the first time started non-stop services in August 1, 2007 from Mumbai to New York. The report cited evidence from a NASA study and delved in great detail into the impact of fatigue and night flying on one's body and how sleep debt accumulates and impacts fatigue levels. The 2011 rules specifically barred utilising pilots for night duties on consecutive nights as well as stated in unambiguous language that night landings were capped at 2 hours and that maximum duty hours (which is flight duty combined with pre and post flight duties) could not exceed nine hours. But these were reversed in the 2019 rules, which allowed upto two consecutive nights of duty, and used vague language to define maximum flying hours and duty hours for night shift. After pilot bodies went to Delhi High Court, DGCA notified revised norms in January 2024. These were widely welcomed as it raised weekly rest from 36 to 48 hours, and restricted night flying by capping landings to two hours, as well as maximum flying time to eight hours and duty time to 10 hours. But their rollout was paused amid airline warnings of cancellations and the need to recruit more pilots. Pilot bodies once again returned to the Delhi High Court, which in April 2025 ordered phased enforcement from July 1 for most clauses, while those governing night duties were to be implemented from November 1. It is the latter that IndiGo has obtained exemptions on. The 2019 reversal aligned with the boom in short-haul international flying by airlines, which were adding destinations like Dubai, Jeddah, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and wanted to maximize crew use via quick turnarounds without overseas hotels.

Airlines like Air India, Akasa, and SpiceJet didn't face cancellations due to excess pilots as a result of groundings, delayed aircraft deliveries or unavailability of aircraft. IndiGo's tight cost controls and hyper-efficiency squeeze their pilots the hardest — leaving razor-thin margins.

What next?

Data indicates that though IndiGo's market share has consistently increased from 47% pre pandemic to 65% now, its employee cost have dropped from 11% to 8%. So, bridging the leadership-employee disconnect and rebuilding employee morale is crucial, not just with pilots but also cabin crew and ground staff that faced angry passengers. From the regulator's side there is a need to expand the understanding of human factors responsible for aviation safety and not dismiss labour issues as employee-employer issues. A deeper malaise is pilot training, where the training programmes of IndiGo and Air India which cost ₹1.2 crore and ₹1.5 crore respectively — 50% higher than market prices and often on par with fees at foreign schools — trap young pilots in decade-long debt bondage often pressuring them to skip incident reports or give up rest for duty. The government must seize this crisis to strengthen the Passenger Charter of Rights on entitlements for air travellers during flight cancellations and delays. The regulator's website should transparently list delay, cancellation, and baggage policies in simple formats — like the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's airline-specific tables — for informed booking. Finally, fostering market competition and tackling drivers of operational costs for airlines is essential.

Zelenskyy offers to drop NATO bid for security guarantees but rejects US push to cede territory

EMS News Agency, Dec 16

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Zelenskyy voiced readiness to drop his country's bid to join NATO in exchange for Western security guarantees, but rejected the U.S. push for ceding territory to Russia as he arrived in Berlin for talks with U.S. envoys on ending the war. Mr. Zelenskyy arrived at the Chancellery ahead of the expected talks with U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, part of a series of meetings in Berlin between Ukrainian, U.S. and European officials.

Responding to journalists' questions in audio clips on a WhatsApp group chat before the talks, Mr. Zelenskyy said that since the U.S. and some European nations had rejected Ukraine's push to join NATO, Kyiv expects the West to offer a set of guarantees similar to those offered to the alliance members. "These security guarantees are an opportunity to prevent another wave of Russian aggression," he said. "And this is already a compromise on our part." Mr. Zelenskyy emphasised that any security assurances would need to be legally binding and supported by the U.S. Congress, adding that he expected an update from his team following a meeting between Ukrainian and US military officials in Stuttgart, Germany. He said that he will meet separately with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and, possibly, other European leaders later in the evening. Washington has tried for months to navigate the demands of each side as Mr. Trump presses for a swift end to Russia's war and grows increasingly exasperated by delays. The search for possible compromises has run into major obstacles, including control of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, which is mostly occupied by Russian forces. Tough obstacles remain.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw its forces from the part of the Donetsk region still under its control among the key conditions for peace, a demand rejected by Kyiv. Mr. Zelenskyy said that the U.S. had floated an idea for Ukraine to withdraw from the Donetsk and create a demilitarised free economic zone there, a proposal he rejected as unworkable.

when Witkoff and Kushner met with Mr. Putin earlier this month. "The Americans know and understand our position," he said. Mr. Merz, who has spearheaded European efforts to support Ukraine alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, said Saturday that "the decades of the Pax Americana" are largely over for us in Europe and for us in Germany as well." He warned that Putin's aim is "a fundamental change to the borders in Europe, the restoration of the old Soviet Union within its borders." "If Ukraine falls, he won't stop," Merz warned on Saturday during a party conference in Munich. Putin has denied plans to restore the Soviet Union or attack any European allies. Russia and Ukraine exchange aerial attacks

Ukraine's air force said that Russia overnight launched ballistic missiles and 138 attack drones at Ukraine. The air force said 110 had been intercepted or downed, but missile and drone hits were recorded at six locations. Zelenskyy said Sunday that hundreds of thousands of families were still without power in the south, east and northeast regions and work was continuing to restore electricity, heat and water to multiple regions following a large-scale attack the previous night.

The Ukrainian President said that in the past week, Russia had launched over 1,500 strike drones, nearly 900 guided aerial bombs and 46 missiles of various types at Ukraine. "Ukraine needs peace on decent terms, and we are ready to work as constructively as possible. These days will be filled with diplomacy. It's very important that it brings results," Mr. Zelenskyy said. Russia's Defence Ministry said that air defences downed 235 Ukrainian drones late Saturday and early Sunday. In the Belgorod region, a drone injured a man and set his house ablaze in the village of Yasny Zori, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Ukrainian drones struck an oil depot in Uryupinsk in the Volgograd region, triggering a fire, according to regional Gov. Andrei Bocharov. In the Krasnodar region, the Ukrainian drones attacked the town of Afipsky, where an oil refinery is located. Authorities said that explosions shattered windows in residential buildings, but didn't report any damage to the refinery.

Why full audio clip on Manipur violence was not sent to forensics, asks SC



The Supreme Court on Monday (December 15, 2025) asked the government why the entire leaked audio clip, allegedly pointing to the role of former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in the 2023 ethnic violence, was not sent to Gujarat's National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) for examination. The top court said it was a "little disturbed" by the affidavit filed on behalf of the petitioners on November 20 that "states to the effect that only select clippings were sent" for forensics. The NFSU had virtually given a clean chit, saying the leaked audio clip was "tampered with". Mr. Singh resigned as the Chief Minister of Manipur on February 9.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners, said that probably all the audio clips filed by them were not sent to the NFSU. He said the tapes were roughly 56-minute long and the petitioners had filed 48 minutes in the court. He said the remaining part identified the person who made the recording, and if his identity was disclosed, his life could be in danger. Additional Solicitor General

Aishwarya Bhati, who appeared in the matter, sought a week's time to respond to the affidavit. The court fixed the case for further hearing on January 7. The apex court was hearing a petition filed by the Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust, which has sought an independent SIT probe into the contents of the audio clip.

Young gated community in Chennai bags composting project



Sometimes, work is rewarded with more work. Clover By The River (CBTR), a gated community in Kotturpuram, is the recipient of such a reward. It considers itself to be in an enviable situation, because 12 other communities were seeking that increase in their daily workload. The seeds of this competition, certainly not a no-holds-barred one, but one involving like-minded green souls and therefore one assumes it to have been more of "cooperation" (competition ruled by a spirit of cooperation), was scattered when the brains behind "We Segregate Stewardship Program" wanted to take it beyond Kasturba Nagar. In Kasturba Nagar, the visible sign of the initiative is three lane composters, and bagfulls of compost every three months. The idea behind the contest was to have lane composters parked in at least one more community in Chennai.

(We Segregate project is funded by the Urban Ocean program and nurtured by Okapi Research & Advisory, ROKA and Chennai Resilience Centre with the support of on-ground partners which include Greater Chennai Corpo-

ration and Urbaser Sumeet). The exercise to find a new community that could be "saddled" with the responsibility of lane-composting in its environs, had 13 contestants. In the first round, the contestants were quizzed by a panel, says Ayesha A., research associate, Okapi Research and Advisory. Their SWM journeys were being tracked to see if the additional responsibility would have their current SWM programme enhanced or have it broken down the back.

Based on the study, three made it to the shortlist — ROK Nagara from Mandaveli, SIMPLE from Thalambur and Clover By The River from Kotturpuram. "All the three were strong contestants, each of them having an unique and inspiring SWM track record," says Ayesha. "The winner was collectively chosen by Okapi Research and Advisory, ROKA, Chennai Resilience Center and Urban Ocean teams." Clover By The River will find two lane composters parked in its neck of the woods in January 2026, after Pongal, says Ayesha. Here is a glimpse of the SWM ethos at this gated community in Kotturpuram through the eyes of inside volunteer. This is based on a document a resident-volunteer of the Green Team in the community shared with The Hindu Downtown. "We are a young, three year old, 300 apartment, gated community in Kotturpuram. Once residents started moving in during 2022, we realised that we had a group of like-minded residents interested in activities relating to sustainable living. The Green Team was formed when barely 30 residents had moved in. Being a 300 apartment community we were categorised as bulk waste generators by the Greater Corporation of Chennai. We also understood that proper waste segregation was not just important for the community and the environment but also mandated by the GCC. After much discussion, observation, monitoring, testing and consulting subject matter experts we realised that the in-house composter we were using, produced output that was potentially harmful to the soil and plants in the long run. With the support of our Association we were able to come up with an alternative method of green waste handling that was also acceptable to the GCC. We now have a GCC empanelled vendor who picks up our green waste and reject waste. Our recyclable plastics are collected by Bisleri as part of their CSR initiative."



Russia's President Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw its forces from the part of the Donetsk region still under its control among the key conditions for peace, a demand rejected by Kyiv. Mr. Zelenskyy said that the U.S. had floated an idea for Ukraine to withdraw from the Donetsk and create a demilitarised free economic zone there, a proposal he rejected as unworkable

when Witkoff and Kushner met with Mr. Putin earlier this month. "The Americans know and understand our position," he said. Mr. Merz, who has spearheaded European efforts to support Ukraine alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, said Saturday that "the decades of the Pax Americana" are largely over for us in Europe and for us in Germany as well." He warned that Putin's aim is "a fundamental change to the borders in Europe, the restoration of the old Soviet Union within its borders." "If Ukraine falls, he won't stop," Merz warned on Saturday during a party conference in Munich. Putin has denied plans to restore the Soviet Union or attack any European allies. Russia and Ukraine exchange aerial attacks

Ukraine's air force said that Russia overnight launched ballistic missiles and 138 attack drones at Ukraine. The air force said 110 had been intercepted or downed, but missile and drone hits were recorded at six locations. Zelenskyy said Sunday that hundreds of thousands of families were still without power in the south, east and northeast regions and work was continuing to restore electricity, heat and water to multiple regions following a large-scale attack the previous night.

The Ukrainian President said that in the past week, Russia had launched over 1,500 strike drones, nearly 900 guided aerial bombs and 46 missiles of various types at Ukraine. "Ukraine needs peace on decent terms, and we are ready to work as constructively as possible. These days will be filled with diplomacy. It's very important that it brings results," Mr. Zelenskyy said. Russia's Defence Ministry said that air defences downed 235 Ukrainian drones late Saturday and early Sunday. In the Belgorod region, a drone injured a man and set his house ablaze in the village of Yasny Zori, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Ukrainian drones struck an oil depot in Uryupinsk in the Volgograd region, triggering a fire, according to regional Gov. Andrei Bocharov. In the Krasnodar region, the Ukrainian drones attacked the town of Afipsky, where an oil refinery is located. Authorities said that explosions shattered windows in residential buildings, but didn't report any damage to the refinery.

X admits Grok AI objectionable image issues, blocks 600 offending accounts: Sources



After the government's stern notice over Grok AI generating objectionable images of women without consent, Elon Musk-owned social media platform X has removed 3,500 pieces of content and blocked 600 accounts. X has admitted its mistake, government sources said, adding that X will not allow obscene imagery going forward. This action comes after the government had earlier expressed dissatisfaction over X's response to its January 2 notice for the platform's failure to observe statutory due diligence obligations under the Information Technology Act, 2000 and associated rules.

As reported by The Indian Express last week, the social media platform had told the IT Ministry that it was open to permanently disabling accounts which engaged in such activity on the platform and committed to taking action against accounts creating such inappropriate prompts on its artificial intelligence platform. The platform had already blocked pieces of such content that were flagged by the government. The government, though, was unconvinced by the company's response, owing to a lack of any technical explanation behind the issue, and any steps to prevent Grok from generating such images in the first place, The Indian Express had learnt.

In its formal response, sent on Wednesday, X had acknowledged the severity of the issue and had committed

to taking action against accounts creating such inappropriate prompts on its artificial intelligence platform. The company had assured the government that it will strictly comply with India's Information Technology Act, 2000 and associated rules governing digital content. On January 2, the IT Ministry had taken note of Grok being abused to generate objectionable pictures and videos of women, without their consent, while increasing the risk of exposure and harm, and had sent a missive to the company saying that it was not adhering to the country's laws, raising red flags over "serious failure" of safeguards enforcement. The issue became a global concern, with regulators in the European Union, United Kingdom and Malaysia also scrutinising the social media company.

The notice said that due to Grok's actions, X was not adequately adhering to provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, particularly in relation to obscene, indecent, vulgar, pornographic, paedophilic, or otherwise unlawful or harmful content which are potentially violative of current laws. Users on X were increasingly tagging Musk's AI chatbot Grok to generate sexualised and objectionable images of women without their consent, raising fresh concerns over AI misuse and platform safeguards. In several instances, users replied to photos of women, often taken from public posts, and prompted Grok to alter their appearance by adding revealing clothing or creating suggestive visuals, which the AI-bot promptly did. The AI-generated images appear publicly in the same threads, exposing the women to harassment without their approval or knowledge. The government had also directed the company to undertake a comprehensive technical, procedural and governance-level review of Grok AI, including its prompt-processing, output generation, and image handling and safety guardrails, "to ensure that the application does not generate, promote or facilitate content which contains nudity, sexualisation, sexually explicit or otherwise unlawful content".

In Pre-budget meet with Union Finance Minister: States flag revenue loss after GST cuts, erosion of fiscal powers



Revenue losses due to implementation of mid-year GST rationalisation, erosion of fiscal powers, more equitable Centre-state funding pattern in centrally sponsored schemes (CSS), including the recently-amended rural employment guarantee scheme — these were some of the key issues raised by states and Union territories in the pre-Budget meeting chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday. The meeting was attended Governor of Manipur; CMs of Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya, and Sikkim; Deputy CMs of Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana; the Finance Ministers of 17 states/UTs, and representative officers of two states, along with officials from Ministry of Finance's Departments of Economic Affairs, Expenditure, and Revenue.

States also sought simplified conditions for capital spending and 50-year loans, renewed focus on investment promotion, developmental priorities while flagging certain borrowing curbs. Revenue loss accruing to states on account of sweeping rate cuts under the GST regime, effective September 22 last year, is learnt to have featured prominently in the discussion by many states including West Bengal, Telangana, Punjab, Kerala and Karnataka. Goa pointed out the need to focus on sustaining momentum in critical infrastructure projects, seeking a more equitable Centre-state funding pattern under CSS.

The shrinking fiscal space, especially after the GST cuts, was a major concern raised by states. While states reiterated their support for GST rate cuts as a pro-people measure, it is learnt that several of them asked for revenue sharing from the collections of excise duty on tobacco and cess on paan masala that have come in lieu of the GST compensation cess. West Bengal's Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said the impact of GST rationalisation was discussed in detail by many states in the meeting, where she posed the question: why are states being treated as step-children? "States emphasised that they had supported the rate cuts in the GST Council meeting as a pro-people measure, but it has resulted in decline in revenues of states. Many states asked for inclusion of the cess and surcharge in the divisible pool, the collection from cess on paan masala should also be shared with states. After all, it is the states which are collecting these levies, but these are being taken away from them," Bhattacharya told The Indian Express. Karnataka's Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda in his speech said his state is facing shrinking fiscal space amid GST changes, rising social commitments, climate shocks, and rapid urbanisation. "Post-GST rate rationalisation, Karnataka's GST growth has fallen from 12 per cent to 5 per cent, resulting in a Rs 5,000 crore shortfall this year and Rs 9,000 crore annually. While the Centre has offset its loss through cess on paan masala and excise on tobacco, states lack similar flexibility," he said, requesting for a 50:50 sharing of excise duty on tobacco and cess on paan masala to restore fiscal equity and cooperative federalism.

Kerala's Finance Minister KN Balagopal said state governments are facing significant challenges in financing growth and development as their fiscal powers continue to erode. "The immature implementation of GST, cessation of GST compensation and RD grants, conditions attached to the CSS, newer restrictions in borrowing, and reduction in the inter se share from the divisible pool are major concerns to the fiscal space of the state governments especially Kerala," he said in his speech. Kerala asked for a special fiscal correction package to rectify a severe resource gap of over Rs 21,000 crore arising from the current year's borrowing constraints. "This shortfall is a direct result of about Rs 17,000 crore cut in the borrowing limit, compounded by a loss of Rs 4,250 crore due to GSDP estimation methodologies that deviate from the accepted recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission (FC)... by requesting this special package, the state aims to restore the fiscal space necessary to align with national growth objectives while upholding the principles of equitable fed-

eralism," he said.

Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, in a post on social media platform X, said he put forth his state's perspectives, demands, and developmental requirements, with a focus on sustaining momentum in critical infrastructure projects, strengthening social welfare schemes, ensuring continued support for capital investment, carrying forward state-specific FC recommendations, and seeking a more equitable Centre-state funding pattern under CSS, taking into account Goa's coastal challenges, Western Ghats ecology, and national tourism responsibilities. The Union Finance Ministry said many participants highlighted that the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) be continued with higher allocations as it helps in fast-tracking asset creation and supports capital investments in states and UTs with legislature. Since 2020-21, the Union Government has released over Rs 4.25 lakh crore as 50-year interest free loans to the states under SASCI, it said.

States also flagged concerns about funding pattern of Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) that has replaced the demand-driven Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Unlike the MGNREGA, which was primarily funded by the Centre, the VB—G RAM G proposes states to bear 40 per cent of the financial burden, a deviation from the existing arrangement where the Centre takes care of 100 per cent of the labour cost and 75 per cent of the material cost.

"Shift from demand-driven MGNREGA to allocation-based G—RAM G has reduced effective employment days. In order to continue to provide livelihood security to the tune of 13 crore person-days, Karnataka would require approximately Rs 2,000 crore that is fiscally unsustainable. New cost-sharing has increased state burden. It is requested for reconsideration of scheme design, restoration of demand-driven employment, and adequate uncapped Central funding," Karnataka's Minister Byre Gowda said. He also asked for revision of Centre's contribution to Anganwadi and Asha (accredited social health activist) workers. "Many states asked for revision of pay to Anganwadi, Asha workers. They are our frontline workers and they have to be remunerated well," Bhattacharya said, who also spoke in Bengali about Vande Mataram, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore at the end of her speech in the meeting. West Bengal also sought release of pending amount of Rs 1.97 lakh crore on account of several schemes related to food distribution, panchayat, and housing, among others, she said. Bhattacharya also suggested an amendment of Constitution for inclusion of climate as a subject under state list or Centre list. At present, it is not mentioned explicitly in either state list or Centre list or the concurrent list.

India's rice exports rise sharply after curbs lifted

New Delhi: India's rice exports rose sharply by 19.4 per cent last year to reach the second-highest level on record, after the government lifted all export curbs. The removal of restrictions made Indian rice more competitive in global markets and helped the country strengthen its position as the world's largest exporter of the staple grain, as per reports.

The strong return of Indian rice to international markets led to a steady flow of supplies, which in turn reduced exports from rival producers such as Thailand and Vietnam. This surge in availability pushed rice prices in Asia to their lowest levels in nearly a decade. Lower prices have brought relief to poorer consumers, especially in Africa and other importing regions that depend heavily on affordable rice supplies. India's growing role in the global rice trade is also reflected in its push towards value-added and nutrition-focused exports.

In a recent example, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) facilitated the export of 20 metric tonnes of fortified rice from Chhattisgarh to Papua New Guinea. The consignment marked another step in India's efforts to diversify its agricultural exports and expand its footprint in overseas markets. Fortified rice is produced by blending rice flour with essential micronutrients such as iron, folic acid and vitamin B12. This blend is processed to resemble regular rice grains and then mixed with ordinary rice to improve its nutritional value. Officials said such exports highlight India's technological capabilities in food fortification and its contribution to global food and nutritional security.

No more mealtime pricks: Inhaled insulin arrives in India to tackle 'needle phobia'



be done. The insulin molecule is the same as that of traditional insulin. The key difference lies in the route of administration, said Dr Negalur. So, the insulin is not new; the delivery method is different, clarified Dr Negalur. Once inhaled, insulin is absorbed through the lungs. It then enters the bloodstream and helps control the rise in blood sugar after eating. "Inhaled insulin primarily helps in controlling post-meal blood sugar levels. It is a rapid-acting insulin and is used before meals. For patients who require multiple short-acting insulin doses each day, inhaled insulin can significantly reduce the number of injections," said Dr Patil. Patients can take it three times a day before breakfast, lunch, and dinner, said Dr Negalur.

Is inhaled insulin better than injectable insulin?

In terms of effectiveness, inhaled insulin is almost similar to injectable insulin, said Dr Negalur. It is not superior, but is said to offer: "Better acceptance in patients who want to avoid multiple injections" "More convenient for travel and holidays" "Easy to use at the workplace" "No need to carry needles or syringes" "Ease of use and convenience" The main advantage is comfort and convenience, not stronger action, said Dr Negalur.

Its ultra-rapid absorption through lungs provides earlier postprandial glucose lowering, mimicking natural beta-cell response, "though dosing may require 1.5 times more units than injectable ones for equivalent effect due to bioavailability differences," remarked Dr Gondaliya. Can inhaled insulin completely replace injections? No, experts affirmed. In Type 1 diabetes, patients still need basal insulin, which is only available as an injection. Adults aged 18 years and older with type 1 (must pair with basal insulin) or type 2 diabetes are eligible to use inhaled insulin for prandial glucose coverage, said Dr Gondaliya.

Is inhaled insulin suitable for all diabetic patients?

However, inhaled insulin is not suitable for everyone. It should not be used in patients with lung diseases such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and it is also contraindicated in smokers. Lung function tests are required before starting therapy and during follow-up. "If there is worsening of lung function while using inhaled insulin, the medicine has to be stopped," added Dr Ghodiy. In cases of Type-1 diabetes, Dr Rajiv Kovil, head of diabetology and weight loss expert, Zandria Healthcare, and co-founder of Rang De Neela Initiative, said, "Fixed cartridge dosing limits the flexibility of small dose titrations that subcutaneous insulin easily allows, especially for variable meals. Moreover, neither the lungs nor the subcutaneous tissue is a physiological route for insulin delivery. So, clinical nuance and patient selection remain critical," said Dr Kovil. It is contraindicated in active smokers, recent ex-smokers (<6 months quit), COPD or hypersensitivity to human insulin, said Dr Gondaliya. "The data and science of Afrezza is good, but in India it can be challenging to monitor progress because patients are often lost to follow-up and a yearly Pulmonary Function Test is mandatory," contended Dr Kovil. Inhaled insulin is not a replacement for all insulin injections, but it represents a meaningful step toward more patient-friendly diabetes care. "When prescribed carefully and used appropriately, it can help bridge the gap between medical necessity and patient acceptance of insulin therapy," said Dr Patil.

How is it used?

Unlike conventional insulin, which is injected under the skin, inhaled insulin is absorbed through the lung epithelium, which acts as an interface for absorption into the bloodstream. "It works like a fast-acting insulin but starts working faster than the conventional insulin and also leaves the body much faster," said Dr Pranav Ghodiy, consultant endocrinologist and diabetologist, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central. The dry powder, approved by the FDA for adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes to reduce mealtime glucose spikes, is delivered via a small, discreet inhaler using single-use cartridges (4, 8, and 12 units). "It reaches the bloodstream faster than injectable rapid-acting insulins like lispro or aspart," said Dr Hetashvi Gondaliya, diabetes and endocrinology, CK Birla Hospitals, Jaipur.

How does it work?

Before starting inhaled insulin, lung function tests must

Archana Puran Singh gets emotional as son Ayushmaan Sethi reveals mother's 'rare condition': 'Her hand is never going to be the same again'



Archana Puran Singh, 63, got emotional as her son Ayushmaan Sethi praised her resilience after being diagnosed with a painful condition called CRPS following a wrist injury in 2025. Speaking about Archana's ordeal in an Instagram Reel, Ayushmaan said, "I am proud of my mom. She has had the hardest year, guys. She broke her hand, and she developed a rare condition called CRPS (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome), which means her hand is never going to be the same again. She has shot for 2-3 movies and a web series. One month, she shot during all 30 days, and she didn't complain. She has shown me the resilience that it takes to be amazing. At 60-something years old, she has started a YouTube channel and all these cool new things, and that's just incredible."

Ayushmaan also expressed gratitude to the family, including his father, Parmeet Sethi, and their pet dogs. "Before the year ended, I just wanted to tell my family how proud I am of them. I think we all need to do more of that. Happy New Year!" he captioned the video. Feeling deeply touched by the tribute on social media, Archana, in her YouTube family vlog, said: "It's such a beautiful reel. These are happy tears. I don't think anybody has made such a reel. I am so proud of you. Proud of you for being able to conceptualise something like this. You are showing gratitude at the end of the year for the people around you. But tumne apni reel me khud ka naam nahi daala. (You have not mentioned your own name). All of us are so proud of you," expressed Archana as the mother-son duo embraced each other. Dr Swapnil Zambare, consultant arthroscopy at KIMS Hospitals, Thane, said that Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, or CRPS, is a chronic pain condition that can develop after an injury, fracture, or surgery. "It most commonly affects the arm or leg. The unique aspect of this condition is that the pain is often much more intense and longer-lasting than what we would expect from the original injury," said Dr Zambare. CRPS usually starts after trauma, like a wrist fracture, which is quite common. "In some people, the nervous system reacts abnormally during the healing process. Instead of calming down, pain signals become exaggerated, causing ongoing pain, swelling, stiffness, and changes in skin colour or temperature. This is not due to poor healing of the bone but is linked to altered nerve signalling," said Dr Zambare.

Is CRPS considered an orthopaedic condition or a neurological one?

CRPS lies at the intersection of both. "While the trigger is often orthopaedic, such as a fracture or surgery, the condition also involves the nervous system. Orthopaedic

surgeons typically identify it first because patients report disproportionate pain and stiffness long after the injury should have healed. Early referral and teamwork in care are vital," explained Dr Zambare.

Can CRPS be cured, or is it permanent, as suggested in some cases?

CRPS is not life-threatening, but it can significantly change a person's life if left untreated early, said Dr Zambare. "There is no single 'cure', but many patients see substantial improvement with timely treatment. Recovery depends on how quickly the condition is recognised and how consistently treatment is followed. A delayed diagnosis can result in ongoing stiffness and reduced function."

What does treatment typically involve?

Treatment focuses on controlling pain and restoring movement. According to Dr Zambare, this includes physiotherapy, medications to ease nerve pain, and sometimes pain interventions. "Gentle but regular movement is crucial; prolonged immobilisation can worsen symptoms. Psychological support also plays an important role, as chronic pain can be emotionally draining."

What to note?

Persistent pain after a fracture should never be ignored. If pain seems excessive, worsens, or is accompanied by stiffness and swelling weeks after an injury, seek medical attention. Awareness is key; early diagnosis can significantly impact long-term recovery.

Elon Musk says X will open its algorithm to public in seven days

New Delhi: Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has said that he will open the new X algorithm to the public in seven days. It will include all code for organic and advertising post recommendations. "We will publish the full algorithm in a week. Still much to improve. It's just trying to show you what you are most likely to find interesting. The goal is to maximise unregretted user-seconds," Musk said. "This will be repeated every 4 weeks, with comprehensive developer notes, to help you understand what changed," he posted on X. The world's richest man didn't say why X was making its algorithm open source. He and the company have clashed several times with regulators over content being shown to users. The decision comes as the European Commission has decided to extend a retention order sent to X last year, which related to algorithms and dissemination of illegal content. Some X users had previously complained that they were receiving fewer posts on the social media platform from people they follow. In October, Musk confirmed in a post on X that the company had found a "significant bug" in the platform's "For You" algorithm and pledged a fix. The company has also been working to incorporate more artificial intelligence into its recommendation algorithm for X, using Grok. Meanwhile, Musk's artificial intelligence startup, xAI, has announced the completion of a \$20 billion funding round from investors including Nvidia, Valor Equity Partners and the Qatar Investment Authority.

How Virat Kohli's faith in old methods has stood him in good stead in his revival



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

When Virat Kohli fell for twin ducks on his return to international cricket against Australia in October last year, it felt like an ageing star fast losing his grip over his art. But the assumptions of Kohli's decline in ODIs are grossly exaggerated, he would prove in subsequent outings. Those failures seem to have lit a fire within him that continues to shine brightly.

The century-record holder in this format, fell seven runs shy of another three-figure mark, but the 91-ball knock was another sumptuous effort and played a central role in India's four-wicket win over New Zealand in the first of the three-match series, at the BCA stadium. Needing 301 for win, he entered in the ninth over of India's chase, with the score on 39 for 1. When he departed 30 overs later, India could see the finish line in the Vadodara skies. India nearly made a meal out of it, losing three wickets for eight runs. But the platform Kohli had erected sufficed for India to surpass the total in the 49th over. It was a classical Kohli knock, vibrant and untruffled, seizing the drift of the game and scoring runs without fuss or taking risks. It was as though he was on cruise mode, comfortably riding the waves on a surface where the odd ball gripped. With Rohit Sharma having set the early tone, there wasn't a desperate need to reenergise the innings.

Yet, he set a scorching pace. The methods stood out. He batted serenely, keeping desperate slogs and premeditated risks asunder, reverting to modes that had stood by him over the years of constructing one of the greatest 50-over careers in the sport. Such was his confidence and authority that he batted with emphatic precision. A sublime on-drive, a carpet-burning cover drive and an imperious pull shot over fine leg regaled the audience. Even when Kohli took the aerial route, it felt calculated—a deliberate choice to disrupt lengths, to surprise the bowler into retreat. Other-

wise, it was all along the ground, all classical riffs, all very Kohli. After the game, he explained his approach to the broadcasters. "If we were batting first, I'd have gone harder. The experience does kick in, but the main thing was to get the team ahead and to a winning position. The basic idea is I bat at No. 3 and if the situation is tricky, I try to counter-attack without playing outrageous shots. I felt today, we can string in a quick partnership in the first 20 balls," he said.

The bowlers were forced into reactive mode. Lengths were readjusted, but with little effect. Fields were shuffled in a mild panic. He even met good balls with such decisiveness that they disappeared into the fence. Anything fractionally short was punished; anything over-pitched was driven with authority. The pressure he exerted was not just through scoring, but the inevitability that he would run away with the game. His aura. The difference was not the aggression. Since the South Africa ODIs, he has batted with a newfound freedom. But the timing, a friend that temporarily kept away. Noticeable is a slight change in approach too, precisely in taking half-risks. These days, he chooses the moments to take risks early, rather than wait for the innings to unfold. In doing so, he flipped the usual script. The powerplay and the early overs, the supposedly cautious phase, especially at the start of the innings, have become a platform to dominate. He completed his fifty of 44 balls in the 22nd overs. By then, he had also helped Shubman Gill prosper after a sluggish start. The captain played second fiddle, first to Rohit and then to Kohli. But one shot turbocharged his innings. In the fourth ball of the 160th over, bowled by debutant Kristian Clarke, he strode his front foot to the pitch of a full delivery and finessed it down the ground, between Kohli's legs. However, just when he was shifting through the gears he handed Adithya Ashok his first wicket. Walked in Shreyas Iyer, another batsman on comeback trail. He last played for India in October but was given the perfect platform to bat, with the pressure of the chase eased by Gill and Kohli's 118-run stand. Sensing that Kohli was in the zone, Iyer paced his innings smartly, rotating the strike and combining them with the odd big six to keep the New Zealand bowling on its toes. Kohli looked set to get to his 54th ODI ton, but then he failed to a familiar red-ball nemesis of his, the beanpole Kyle Jamieson. In his attempt to loft a ball past cover, he mistimed the ball to mid-off. A stutter ensued, but KL Rahul kept his cool and saw the hosts home, with a little help from Harshit Rana's cameo. But it was yet another night of Kohli. Brief Scores: India 306 for 6 (Kohli 93, Gill 56, Iyer 49, Jamieson 4-41) beat New Zealand 300 for 8 (Mitchell 84, Nicholls 62, Conway 56, Siraj 2-40, Prasidh 2-60, Rana 2-65) by four wickets.

Injured Washington Sundar ruled out of New Zealand ODIs, Delhi's Ayush Badoni receives maiden call-up

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

India all-rounder Washington Sundar has been ruled out for remaining two one day international games against New Zealand. During the first ODI at Vadodara on Sunday, Washington suffered a side strain which meant he bowled only five overs. He came out to bat at No 8 and struggled to run towards the later part of India's innings before KL Rahul took India home with an over to spare after a mini-collapse in the middle overs. He scored seven runs from seven deliveries. "I didn't know he (Washington) couldn't run. I knew he had a bit of an injury in the first innings, but I wasn't aware of the extent. That said, he was striking the ball really well. When he came in, we were already going at about a run-a-ball, so there was no need to take unnecessary risks. There wasn't too much pressure on him. He rotated the strike, and did his job," Rahul said. It is understood that Washington was taken for scans immediately and the reports have suggested that he needs few weeks' rest and as a result he would return home before heading to the Centre of Excellence. The all-rounder is part of the India team for the upcoming T20 World Cup, and it remains to be seen if he features in the T20 series against New Zealand. Despite making his international debut in 2017, Washington has yet to make a T20 World Cup appearance. Due to different injuries, he missed the 2021 and 2022 T20 World Cups.

India pacer Harshit Rana was asked about Washington's injury after the game and he stated, "Washington Sundar

has a side strain. He was in pain while batting. Our medical team will assess and will update." This is second injury to Indian player in span of two days. On eve of the game India wicket-keeper-batter Rishabh Pant was hit just above his waist from one of the deliveries bowled by a throwdown specialist late in his long batting session in Vadodara on Saturday. The 28-year-old was attended by the support staff members, including head coach Gautam Gambhir, and left the BCA B ground after receiving treatment, grimacing in pain. Later, Pant was ruled out for entire series. The BCCI announced Delhi all-rounder Ayush Badoni as Sundar's replacement on Monday, handing him his maiden national call-up. The 26-year-old has played 27 List A games, aggregating 693 runs with a century and five fifties, besides chipping in with 18 wickets.



'People often ask why is he batting so low': KL Rahul's unique ability helps him don ODI No. 6 role, says Irfan Pathan



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Whether KL Rahul is batting too low in India's batting ODI order has been a question that has crept up often since head coach Gautam Gambhir took over the side in mid-2024. However, the Karnataka wicket-keeper-batter isn't complaining and is continuing to do a stellar job while at it. Rahul is being entrusted with the tricky No. 5/6 floating role simply because, well, he is good at it too. Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan also heaped praise on Rahul's composure under the pressure of the death-overs of an ODI, which has begun to play tricks on the batters' with the new rule allowing the use of only one ball post the 34th over.

In a 301-run chase that seemed to fritter with a flurry of wickets against New Zealand in Vadodara on Sunday, Rahul took his time to settle in but eventually quelled the nerves by sealing a four-wicket win for India. He got them across the line with some flair too, smashing the winning six for the sixth time in his career. Only the legendary MS Dhoni has done it on more counts (9) for India in one-dayers. "When KL Rahul bats, people often ask why he is batting so low. But we need to keep in mind that the rule has now changed because the ball reverses slightly after the 34th over. If the ball doesn't reverse, it is slow. In those situations, a technically correct batter makes a difference. Other batters were getting slightly troubled in the first ODI

but Rahul was well in control," said Pathan on his YouTube channel. Rahul has relished a superb run ever since taking over the role intently during the previous ODI World Cup year in 2023. With a near-60 average between the positions, he has emerged among the most dependable players in the slot in world cricket. It is exemplified further by the stat that India have won all 13 chases that Rahul has remained unbeaten in. Rahul showed what his approach was when he kept taking singles. It was predicted he would target the 49th over and sealed the game with two fours, followed by a six," Pathan added.

'I send my awards to my mum in Gurgaon': Virat Kohli after match-winning 93 in IND-NZ Vadodara ODI

GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Virat Kohli fell short of a stupendous third century in four successive outings for India during the first ODI against New Zealand in Vadodara, but his stellar 93 just about did the job for the team as they scraped through to a four-wicket win with an over to spare. Kohli's 93 sparked the 301-run chase after the early dismissal of Rohit Sharma.

The former India captain was uncharacteristically aggressive from the outset, but eventually fell in the nineties for the seventh time in his ODI career. The 37-year-old, however, walked away with the Player-of-the-Match for the 45th time in his career. The Delhi stalwart has admittedly lost count of the overflowing trophies, but has found a secure place to frame them all.

Most Man of the Match awards: Virat Kohli bags 71st PoTM in Vadodara, nears Sachin Tendulkar's all-time record



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

Virat Kohli's super form surge has marked his dominant return to seemingly his old ways in the ODI format where centuries and fifties pinged off his bat at breakneck pace. Ever since falling for successive ducks in Australia in his first two matches for India after a break of seven months, the former India captain was primed to endure a struggle to get back to his form.

Still, Kohli bounced back in his inimitable way, carving

centuries, winning games and walking away with the Player of the Match awards for his efforts. On Sunday, the 37-year-old bagged the 71st Player of the Match award of his epochal 558-match international career. Spanning 18 years of representing India across formats, it can be said that Kohli towers above the rest distinctly in the ODI format which has contributed well over 50 per cent of his PoTM awards. Registering a match-winning 93 in Vadodara against New Zealand in the series opener, Kohli was awarded his 45th ODI Man of the Match award across 309 appearances. Kohli is second on the overall list, only behind the legendary Sachin Tendulkar's 76 awards during his career. Tendulkar, however, maintains a healthy lead when it comes to the ODI format which has contributed 62 of his total awards in international cricket. Sri Lanka legend Sanath Jayasuriya ranks second with 48 awards, three ahead of Kohli. Kohli also delved into what he does with the brimming collection of trophies, revealing that he sends them home to his mother in Gurugram. Player of the Match awards have been officially instituted in international cricket since the 1980s and does not officially account for nearly a century of games before that era.

Dark art or tactics, why time wasting is getting ugly in football



GNS News Agency, Jan 14

The clock, the visionary Johan Cruyff would sigh, is never your friend. When a team is losing, it goes against them; it sprints. When a team is winning, the hands of the clock limp. Time is constant and uniform, can be measured in seconds, minutes and hours, but the impressions it leaves on men are different, and bendable on the mood. Minutes could stagger like hours; hours could blur like minutes. Time is the cancer that is eating the soul of football, too.

It dictates games and destinies; 93:20 minutes is etched in the mind of every Manchester City supporter, or any football romantic. It was the exact moment City when Sergio Aguero's stroke of thunder nestled in the QPR net, giving them the first taste of glory in the Premier League era, the moment a footballing giant was born. It dictates human behaviours too, and turn grown-up, mild-mannered men into irascible rogues. Like Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli. The Brazilian is a friendly young man who seldom finds himself in the referee's book or the dark side of law. He is part of his club's "Bible Brothers".

Yet in the sheer heat of the moment, in the rush for a statement win over champions Liverpool, in the frustration of being denied three points in an intense title race, or the disappointment that they were utterly impotent in breaking down Liverpool's defence, he turned into another man. He shoved Liverpool's Conor Bradley, writhing in pain on the touchline, past the touchline so that the game could resume and the league leaders could press for the winning goal. The Liverpool right back, he assumed, was feigning the injury, misconstrued as an act to eat time. Except that he was genuinely injured, was stretchered off the park and was spotted walking in crutches to the team bus. He could spend months on the rehab bed. The Brazilian winger apologised publicly and personally messaged him.

Not to absolve Martinelli of his hare-brained logic, his act was both wild and dangerous, but an argument could be raised that how Martinelli would have known that Bradley was genuinely injured or if he were feigning. That his silliness was a product of his times; the ethos of cynicism and distrust of the era he is playing football. Wasting time, and the attendant play acting, has been nearly normalised, managers have long stopped carping or brooding over them. Every one resorts to some extent of wasting time, it has almost become a tactic. Everything, though, is context and perception. The winning (or something drawing) teams call it clever; others call it dirty. The Martinelli shove was a symptom and not the disease. The dignified Liverpool manager

Arne Slot admitted as much. "The problem for him is — and it's a problem in general in football — that there is so much time-wasting and players pretending that they are injured in the final parts of the game, or during the game, that you can then sometimes be annoyed if you want to score a goal, you think that player is time-wasting," he observed.

Trainers check on Liverpool's Conor Bradley after he was injured and an ensuing altercation with Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli, during the Premier League match between on Thursday. (AP Photo) Trainers check on Liverpool's Conor Bradley after he was injured and an ensuing altercation with Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli, during the Premier League match between on Thursday. (AP Photo) The unblemished truth is that wasting time has reached an ugly and maddening level that the lawmakers could control by instructing referees to be harsher on the violations. It is too complex an element to control because the passing of time itself is a perception. For referees themselves are humans who make judgements based on the incident that has just unfolded in front of them, the fleeting time to re-run the event and arrive at a verdict. It could be shaped by his mood, homework and experience. Players, in desperate quest for points, would willingly suffer the yellow card for their club, just like the tactical fouls they make.

The stoppage time has been extended but so have the breaks. Players, depending on the circumstances, spent more time on goal-kicks, corner kicks, throw-in, free-kicks, goal celebrations and injury-tending. So much so that despite longer stoppage times, matches in the premier league have become shorter. For instance, the last EPL season, games lasted an average of 100 minutes, yet ball-in-play time was 56 minutes and 59 seconds. This season, it has slumped to 55 minutes and five seconds. Two games this season lasted a fringe above 45 minutes, that is barely a half (Aston Villa and Bournemouth had effectively 45 minutes and 48 seconds, Newcastle-Liverpool only 45 minutes and 55 seconds). The Champions League tie between Arsenal and Slavia Prague featured only 41 minutes and 39 seconds. Goal kicks and throw-ins are the biggest culprits. The average time lost in a match for goal-kicks in the Premier League is seven minutes and 42 seconds, or 30.4 seconds for each one. For the throw-in, it is 11 minutes and 20 seconds a game. Naturally, the flow of play is disrupted (that then is the defiant purpose of time-wasting too, to alter the balance of energy). Free-flowing football is a throwback, or an anachronism. It has, inadvertently, become a sophisticated art. There were ample instances in the very match that would be remembered for Martinelli's petulance. A few minutes ago, Milos Kerkez, the Liverpool left-back, was booed for spending an eternity over a throw-in. Receiving the ball, he walked backwards and sideways, looked around aimlessly, mimicked a couple of throws before actually firing the throw. It gave Liverpool ample time to realign the team's shape. Arsenal fans soundly booed. Damningly for the sport, time-wasting is as old as itself. No method has been found, and no cure would be discovered. Time, as Cruyff had said, is not a footballer's friend. But the ability to waste time, slyly and artfully, is seen as a virtue in the game, fostering a win at all costs mentality than ever before.

14-year-old Hyderabad sailor wins bronze at international regatta

Hyderabad: Ravi Kumar Bonnelu, at just 14, has made Hyderabad proud by winning a bronze medal in the recently-concluded International Sailing Regatta in Chennai, featuring seven countries and 48 sailors from Sweden, Ireland, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Mauritius besides hosts India. Ravi, a student of Udbhav School having moved over from Nallakunta Government School, was amongst the lightest and physically diminutive and at just 34 kgs blasted thru the fleet in 15-20 knots of breeze and despite being a lake sailor for the most part battled the two-metre monsoon waves in Chennai to claim the boys bronze, says Suheim Sheikh, President of Yacht Club of Secunderabad and head coach.

"The hallmark of Ravi Kumar's sailing is consistency and while clinching multiple 2nd's and 3rd's he remained above fifth across the regatta and powered the boat despite the rough conditions and his light weight to clinch his first International medal," says Suheim. Ravi's father Bimesh Bonnelu is a skilled construction worker and mother Maheshwari is a domestic worker at three houses. Originally from Narayanpet (Mahabubnagar) the family now lives near Paradise Secunderabad and also serve as caretakers of the buildings they are housed in.

"I have no words to express my gratitude and it's God's grace that connected us to the Yacht Club of Hyderabad and now our Ravi is an International medalist. We are eagerly awaiting his return to Hyderabad tomorrow and we have multiple celebrations at the school, at the Yacht Club and at home for him. We are thankful for the able guidance of our Udbhav School and Suheim Sheikh his coach", said a beaming Bimesh and Maheshwari in a video conference. "Nobody in our entire village or neighbourhood has represented India and Ravi at just 14 has already vis-



ited 6 countries. With our background we did not ever imagine this kind of life for him. With the help of Udbhav School we now want him to study and become a big officer", says a proud Bimesh. "Ravi Kumar has another year in the under 15 and is likely to be selected to multiple internationals including the Asian Beach games at Sanya China in April. Ravi has already travelled to Oman for the Asians, Malaysia and Singapore for Internationals but this is by far the cherry on the cake of his international participation," says Suheim. "I was placed 4th till the last race and had to beat only one sailor by 2 positions to get a medal and I beat him by 6 positions in the last race to get bronze. I would like to thank my coach Suheim Sheikh for having trusted that I will do well despite my weight disadvantage in these heavy winds", said a proud Ravi Kumar. Ravi is a veteran of multiple internationals having already represented the Indian National squad at 6 countries Oman twice, Langkawi twice, Singapore and the Czech Republic. Another star from

'After 57 years together, can't imagine life without Dharamendra': Hema Malini opens up, dismisses rift rumours with Deols



two more years, definitely.

So how did this happen?

During the treatment, everything started becoming... I mean, we can't blame anybody. I don't know, he was fine. He was not alright, that's why he went to the hospital. He was admitted to the hospital many times, and would always come back healthy and smiling. That's what we were hoping this time also. He had a wonderful life. Yeah, that I will always say. He had the best of life. Whatever he desired, he had it. Such a sweet person he was. And I feel proud that so many people love him and that person who was loved by everyone so much.

Did you see his last film, *Ekkis*?

I came to Mathura when it was released. I have to do my work here. Also, I can't see it now, it will be too overwhelming. That's what my daughters are also saying. Maybe I will watch it later when the wounds start healing.

There was a lot of speculation after Dharmendra's death. How is your relationship with Sunny Deol and Bobby Deol?

It has always been very nice and cordial. Even today it is very nice. I don't know why people think something is wrong with us. It is because people want gossip. Why should I answer them? Is it necessary for me to give an explanation? Why should I? It's my life. My personal life, our personal life. We are absolutely happy and very close to each other. That's it. I don't have anything more to say about this. I don't know what stories people are making up. So sad that people use other's grief to write a few articles. That is why I don't answer (such speculation).

There will be a museum for Dharamji?

That's what Sunny is planning. So he will do it. We will consult and do it. He will tell me whatever he does, he tells me.

Are you healing properly?

We were together for 57 years. I can't imagine a life without him; I miss him every minute. It's not that we were together all the time. He would always ask, 'Where are you? When are you coming? Are you coming back? Then, I am also coming back from Lonavala.' He would come and be here with me and the family. I feel sad without him. When will I meet him again?

Dhurandhar Worldwide Box Office Collection Day 38: Ranveer Singh's film mints Rs 1,255 crore globally, beats Prabhas' *The Raja Saab*

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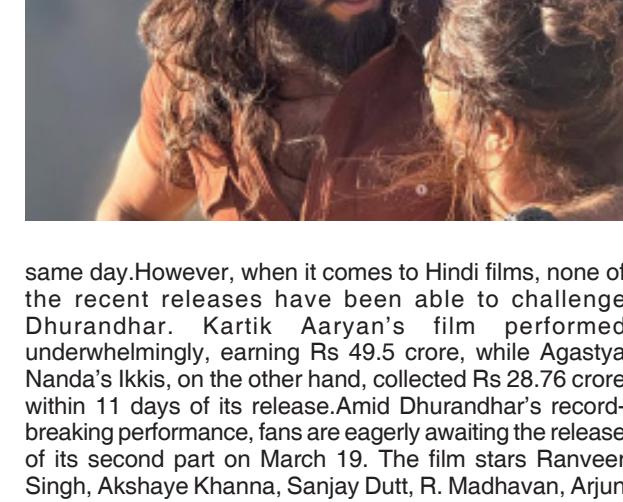
hurandhar Box Office Collection Worldwide Day 38: Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar is continuing to mint moolah at the box office even in its 6th week. While the film's earnings have dropped to single digits and have slowed down, it is still managing to perform better than recent Hindi releases. According to Sacnilk, the film raked in Rs 6.15 crore on its 6th Sunday. This takes the film's total domestic collection to Rs 805.65 crore. The film registered an overall 31.79% Hindi occupancy on Sunday, with the maximum occupancy of 45% recorded during afternoon shows. Its total gross collection now stands at Rs 966.65 crore, while its global box office has crossed Rs 1254.9 crore.

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hurandhar has become the highest-grossing Hindi film of all time. The film is also the fourth highest-grossing Indian film ever, trailing only *Pushpa 2* (Rs 1742.1 crore), *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* (Rs 1788.06 crore) and *Dangal* (Rs 2122.3 crore). Dhurandhar has also surpassed several blockbusters such as *RRR* (Rs 1230 crore), *KGF: Chapter 2* (Rs 1215 crore), *Jawan* (Rs 1160 crore) and more.

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hile Dhurandhar has enjoyed clean dominance at the box office, the film is currently facing competition from Prabhas' Telugu release *The Raja Saab*. The film has minted Rs 109.02 crore within three days of its release. On Sunday, it collected Rs 20.12 crore across all languages, out of which Rs 4.54 crore came from its Hindi version, which is less than what Ranveer Singh's film earned on the



same day. However, when it comes to Hindi films, none of the recent releases have been able to challenge Dhurandhar. Kartik Aaryan's film performed underwhelmingly, earning Rs 49.5 crore, while Agastya Nanda's *Ikisis*, on the other hand, collected Rs 28.76 crore within 11 days of its release. Amid Dhurandhar's record-breaking performance, fans are eagerly awaiting the release of its second part on March 19. The film stars Ranveer Singh, Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, R. Madhavan, Arjun Rampal and other in pivotal roles. It is directed by Aditya Dhar.

Golden Globes 2026: Priyanka Chopra presents Best Actor award with Blackpink's Lisa after turning heads on red carpet with Nick Jonas



him with the award, after which the two presenters walked off the stage together.

The Pitt is an American medical procedural drama television series created by R. Scott Gemmill. Apart from playing the lead role, Noah Wyle also serves as the executive producer of the show. The series also stars Tracy Ifeachor, Patrick Ball, Katherine LaNasa, Supriya Ganesh, Fiona Dourif, Taylor Dearden, Isa Briones, Gerran Howell, and Shabana Azeez in pivotal roles. The show premiered on

Upside-down fight sequence added to Prabhas' *The Raja Saab*

Hyderabad: The makers of director Maruthi's horror comedy 'The Raja Saab', featuring actor Prabhas in the lead, on Sunday announced that the eagerly awaited 'Upside down' fight sequence had now been included in the version of the film that was being screened in all theatres.

It may be recalled that the makers had disclosed last year that they had erected two giant sets to shoot the film. While one was of the royal mansion in which most of the story takes place, the other set was that of the royal mansion in an inverted format to shoot certain significant scenes in which the characters appear upside down.

In fact, in the trailer that the makers released, there is a scene in which Prabhas appears as a demon. "What's your problem? Am I an ant to sting you when you reach into the anthill? I'm the demon," he says even as he stylishly smokes a cigar, seated upside down on a throne that appears to be hanging from the ceiling.

Aamir Khan cut short Vir Das' song in *Delhi Belly* out of jealousy, says Farah Khan: 'Vir is a great dancer, Aamir's song was coming next...'



film like *Tees Maar Khan*. "Vir Das went on to say that he places Happy Patel in the same space as the cult classic *Andaz Apna Apna*, featuring Salman Khan and Aamir Khan. Hearing this, Farah surprised him by saying, "When I watched *Andaz Apna Apna* back in the day, I knew it would be a huge flop—and it actually was."

A visibly shocked Vir responded, "Andaz Apna Apna was a flop? Aamir never disclosed this to me." He then quipped, "He only slaps. And he slaps hard," referring to their playful banter in promotional videos for *Happy Patel*. Farah laughed and replied, "Obviously, because you often hurt him with your words." She then added, "I am going to spill another secret," before calling Vir's wife, Shivani, and asking, "Did you know I was the choreographer of Vir's item song *Jaa Chudail* in *Delhi Belly*?" Shivani quickly confirmed, saying it was "too much fun." Farah agreed, adding, "It was too good, but Aamir Khan cut it short out of jealousy because his song was coming next." Vir recalled, "But I was told there were pacing issues," to which Farah replied sarcastically, "Yeah, sure." Vir Das also shared his experience of working with Farah Khan's team, saying, "Farah Khan's team scares artistes a lot. They're like, 'This isn't good enough for ma'am.' But when Farah comes in, it's completely the opposite. She's the sweetest. She even sat and ate peanut butter with me." Farah added, "We had great fun shooting that song, and Vir is such a great dancer."

Recalling another moment from the "Jaa Chudail" shoot, Vir said, "You put me in leather pants." Farah laughed and agreed, "Yes—and that curly hair wig!" Vir then revealed, "And those were Aamir's pants." A shocked Farah asked, "But how did you fit into Aamir's pants?" Vir replied with a laugh, "I had to wear something extra..."

Mardaani 3 trailer: Rani Mukerji vows to cut down brutal child trafficker Amma, rescues young girls



The makers of Rani Mukerji's popular film franchise *Mardaani* have released the trailer of the third instalment of the series. The trailer sees Rani reprising her role as the fearless and uncompromising cop Shivani Shivaji Roy. This time, Shivani joins the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and is tasked with investigating the kidnapping of two young girls.

However, as Shivani digs deeper into the case, she uncovers a massive human trafficking racket run by an elderly woman known as Amma, played by Mallika Prasad. The trailer reveals that Amma has been buying girls from across the country for Rs 10 lakh each and injecting them with a substance that puts them to sleep. The video then shows Rani's character stating that the case goes beyond trafficking and is linked to a larger beggar mafia. In one of the disturbing moments, a rescued girl is shown coughing up blood at a hospital, underscoring the brutality of the crime. While confronting Amma, Shivani declares, "I am a cop who won't take cuts from people like you but will cut you." The subsequent scenes show Rani's character racing against time to save several girls trapped in the horrifying racket.

The official Twitter handle of Yash Raj Films shared the trailer and wrote, "It is a race against time & there will be no mercy. Shivani Shivaji Roy is back to rescue girls who go missing without a trace. #Mardaani3Trailer out now."

Will Smith asks Shah Rukh Khan to cast him; admits he was in talks with Salman Khan and Amitabh Bachchan for film: 'Put me in something'



walking up and down the mountain," Smith recalled. Talking about the lesson he learned during this extreme experience, Will added, "The major takeaway for me was how fear destroys your possibility to experience beauty. If you're scared in a relationship, you can't really experience the best of that person. If you're scared in nature, you can't take those extra couple of steps into where the most beautiful part of it is. Fear really destroys your ability to be happy."

Sobhita Dhulipala calls playing Sandhya in 'Cheekatilo' a superb experience

Mumbai: Actress Sobhita Dhulipala, who will soon be seen playing the character of Sandhya in her forthcoming crime suspense drama "Cheekatilo", shed light on her character. Sobhita called playing Sandhya a "superb experience." Describing Sandhya in her own words, she said in a statement, "She's a front-footed young woman who is an independent thinker, deeply committed to standing by her belief system no matter the resistance. Her choices are shaped by a unique stubbornness that has a history of its own." Sobhita added that playing a character rooted in the by-lanes of Hyderabad and other Telugu localities and coming from a cultural background like hers made the integration between the character and her own expression seamless and utterly enjoyable.

She shared, "Grateful for this wonderful experience and our exceptional cast and crew – everyone brought their heart to the set every single day. Being part of a Prime Original project is special in many ways." Looking back on her OTT journey from "Made in Heaven" to "Cheekatilo", she called the trajectory inspiring.

"From Made in Heaven to now Cheekatilo, it has been an intentional and inspiring journey—our shared growth, commitment towards entertaining storytelling, as well as the keenness to push the envelope each time, is a rare joy. Looking forward for the audiences to see a different side of me as Sandhya when the movie premieres exclusively on Prime Video on January 23," added Sobhita. Set in Hyderabad, the show will share the tale of Sandhya, a true crime podcaster, who ends up coming face-to-face with some of the most brutal and darkest secrets of the city in her quest for truth.