

INDIAN CHRONICLE

21 January, 2026 | Wednesday | Volume No:10 | Issue No: 296 | Pages: 12+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State) ₹ 3

Chain Snatching Prevention Drive in Shamirpet Police Station Limits

NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 20, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of measures to prevent the recent incidents of chain snatching, police personnel from Shamirpet Police Station under the Malkajgiri Commissionerate conducted foot patrolling in the Tumkunta Colony area. The patrolling was carried out by SHO Srinath, DI Raju, SI Sashivardhan Reddy, along with other police staff. During the patrol, the police interacted with local residents and created awareness about safety precautions, with special focus on women's safety. Residents were advised to remain alert, avoid unnecessary travel during late-night hours, and immediately inform the police if any suspicious persons or activities are noticed in the area. The public was also requested to cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order. Police appealed to citizens to promptly report any suspicious movements or incidents to the nearest police station or by dialing Dial 100, stating that public cooperation is crucial in preventing crime and ensuring community safety.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Unveils Prajvardhi Daily 2026 Calendar; Says Role of Newspapers Is Crucial in Society

KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 20 (Indian Chronicle): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy on Monday unveiled the Prajvardhi Daily New Year-2026 calendar. Speaking on the occasion, he said the role of newspapers in society is extremely crucial. He stated that newspapers play a key role in bringing public issues to light in an impartial manner and emphasized that they must act responsibly while standing as the voice of the people. He expressed that Prajvardhi Daily should continue to move forward by providing useful information to the public and offering clarity on contemporary issues. The MLA further opined that Prajvardhi Daily should remain committed to the people, deliver news in the public interest, and continue its journey by upholding democratic values. He extended his New Year greetings to the Prajvardhi team on the occasion of the calendar launch. Prajvardhi Editor Gyarampalli Shivaji, senior journalist of Uppal constituency Vaddepalli Kishore, Narasimha Reddy, and others attended the programme and made the event a success.

Global majors Google, Philips, Unilever eye Telangana investments at Davos

Davos, Jan 20: The "Telangana Rising" delegation, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, engaged with major companies like Google, Philips and Unilever at the World Economic Forum at Davos on Tuesday, January 20, securing their interest in investing in the state's development, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

The vice-president of Royal Phillips, Jan Willem-Scheijgrond, expressed interest in partnering with the Telangana government for artificial intelligence (AI)-led healthcare. The Telangana delegation explained to Willem-Scheijgrond about the newly launched Telangana life sciences policy that aims to build a USD 250 billion life sciences economy by 2030, the CMO said.

Revanth Reddy also mentioned that the state is building a world-class, sustainable industrial cluster to transform pharmaceutical manufacturing and research and development (R&D).

"As part of the state's new economic development strategy under Telangana Rising 2047 vision, the PURE (Peri-Urban Region Economy) between the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and the Regional Ring Road (RRR) is being developed for manufacturing and logistics," the CM said.

Minister for IT and Industries D Sridhar Babu also explained that Telangana has a mature ecosystem of over 2,000 life sciences companies, a strong IT-life sci-



ences—healthcare talent base, Genome Valley and the 300-plus-acre Medical Devices and Medical Electronics Park. The Telangana delegation also met Chief Supply Chain and Operations Officer of Unilever, Willem Uijen, who said that the company would be happy to explore setting up a Global Capacity Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad. Sridhar Babu highlighted that Hyderabad is already home to GCCs of several fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies like McDonald's, Heineken and Costco, and invited the company to explore manufacturing in Telangana's industrial parks, the CMO said.

The struggle will not stop until the Cantonment Board is merged with GHMC: MLA Sriganesh



Secunderabad Cantonment, January 20 (Indian Chronicle): Protesting against the autocratic attitude of the BJP government at the Centre, which has been exercising control over the people of the Cantonment area through a nominated system since 2020, without merging the Cantonment Board with the state government's municipal corporation or conducting elections, thus murdering democracy and trampling on the rights of the Cantonment residents, Cantonment MLA Sriganesh launched a relay hunger strike on Tuesday at the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar statue in Karkhana, demanding the merger of the Cantonment Board with the state government's municipal corporation. At 10 AM, after interfaith prayers, MLA Sri Ganesh, along with leaders, intellectuals, and well-wishers of the Cantonment area, commenced a relay hunger strike at the protest site. On the first day, former Congress PCC President V. Hanumantha Rao, senior state Congress party leader Mynampally Hanumantha Rao, and Telangana movement activist and singer Yepuri Somanna, Board Ex Vice President Jampa Jampa Pratap visited the protest site, expressed their solidarity, and stated that they would provide their full support to Sri Ganesh's struggle until the Cantonment Board is merged. Sri Ganesh thanked the leaders who ex-

pressed their solidarity on behalf of the constituency's people. Later, addressing the gathering, MLA Sri Ganesh said that the only way for the Cantonment area to develop is for the Cantonment Board to be merged into the state government's municipal corporation. He questioned the need for a Cantonment Board that lacks funds, stating that while the entire city is developing, the Cantonment area, being under the central government's control, has lagged behind by 30 years and suffered significant losses. He urged MP Etela and central ministers to put pressure on the central government to immediately initiate the merger process. He criticized the fact that elections have not been held for 6 years, and that the nominated system is being continued every year through a gazette notification. He asserted that development would be zero if the Cantonment remains under the central government's control. He declared that his struggle would not stop until the Cantonment Board is merged, and that his fight would continue on behalf of the people of the Cantonment area and with their blessings. Key leaders from the constituency participated in this relay hunger strike. Intellectuals, caste associations, and activists participated and expressed their solidarity.

Inter-district gang arrested for targeting innocent women and stealing gold in Vikarabad district

District SP Sneha Mehra



The district CCS police have cleverly arrested an inter-district gang of three old offenders who were targeting innocent women across Vikarabad district, distracting them, and stealing gold. District SP Sneha Mehra stated that the accused were involved in a series of incidents of cheating and stealing gold from women in Dharmavaram, Vikarabad town, and Parigi police station areas. Taking the cases seriously, the SP instructed the district CCS police officers to immediately catch the culprits. Following the SP's orders, a special team led by CCS Inspector Bala Ray swung into action. Analyzing CCTV footage, technical evidence, and the modus operandi, the team arrested three women accused with concrete evidence. The arrested accused are: 1. Vemula Laxmi (A1) from Borabanda 2. Chella Narsamma (A2) from Rajendra Nagar 3. Bandari Anita (A3) from Fateh Nagar. The police revealed that besides Vikarabad district, cases are also registered against them in Narayanapet district's Maddur, Kosgi, and Narasannapet police stations. The accused have been involved in around 28 cases in Cyberabad, Hyderabad, Nizamabad, Rachakonda, and Jagityal districts.

The police seized 8 tolas and 8 grams of gold, 50 tolas of silver, and 3 cell phones from the accused. Main incidents in the district: - Dharmavaram (22.11.2025): A woman named Kandi Lakshamma was cheated and robbed of 1.8 tolas of gold (chain, bangles, and mattels) at the vegetable market. - Vikarabad (30.11.2025): Basupalli Satyamma was taken to a deserted area in Subash Nagar, where she was given a stupefying drug and robbed of 2 tolas of gold chain. - Parigi (05.01.2026): Pomala Eswaramma was cheated by showing her a fake gold biscuit and robbed of 1 tola of gold chain and 3 grams of bangles. Modus Operandi: The gang targets elderly and innocent women who are alone. They use fake gold biscuits, rods, or stones to deceive the victims. They either drop these items in front of the victims or pretend to have found them. They then convince the victims to share the "found" gold and steal their real gold jewelry. In some cases, they use stupefying drugs to rob the victims. The district SP appreciated the police team for apprehending the gang.

Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Government Whip Beerla Ailaiah performed special prayers at Yadagirigutta



Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20:- Telangana State Minister for Roads and Buildings and Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, and Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ailaiah visited Yadagirigutta on Tuesday to participate in various development programs in Yadagirigutta town, Motakonduru, and Aleru town within the Aleru constituency. On this occasion, they visited the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Yadagirigutta and performed special prayers. Afterwards, the temple priests offered blessings, and the temple authorities presented them with laddu prasad and a picture of the deity. Temple officials, public representatives, party leaders, and a large number of devotees participated in this program.

Interest-free loans for Self-Help Group members with the aim of making one crore women millionaires: - State Roads and Buildings, Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- State Roads and Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that interest-free loans have been sanctioned to members of self-help groups with the intention of making one crore women millionaires. On Tuesday, as part of the India

Municipality limits. Later, he distributed Indiramma sarees to the self-help group members. Speaking on this occasion, the Minister said that the government introduced many welfare schemes for women immediately after coming to power. He stated that the government introduced free travel for women in RTC buses, and that 265 crore women have availed free bus travel in the state, for which the government is spending Rs. 10,000 crore. He said that with the aim of ensuring that every poor person can eat a full meal of the same fine rice that members of wealthy families consume, they are providing six kilograms of fine rice per person. He stated that new ration cards have been sanctioned for 16,152 eligible people in Yadagirigutta Municipality. He mentioned that they are providing 200 units of free electricity. He said that to empower women economically in every constituency, petrol pumps are also being given in the names of women. He stated that with the great goal of every poor person owning their own home, Indiramma houses have been sanctioned for every poor family. He said that Indiramma houses will be given to all the homeless poor. He added that Yadagirigutta and Yadagirigutta town will also be developed. For this pur-

pose, underground drainage works will soon be undertaken in Yadagirigutta with a cost of 100 crores. He suggested forming new self-help groups. He said that since the pipeline works undertaken in Yadagirigutta at a cost of 210 crores are nearing completion, Godavari waters will be supplied to every household. He stated that once the Gandhamalla reservoir project is completed, irrigation water will be provided to the surrounding areas and to farmers for one lakh acres. Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ailaiah said that the objective of the people's administration and the people's government is to empower women economically, and as part of this, interest-free loans have been sanctioned. He said that Indiramma sarees will be distributed to every woman as a gift from her maternal home. He stated that Indiramma sarees will be given to every woman between the ages of 18 and 100 years. He also said that Indiramma houses will soon be sanctioned for the homeless poor, and that Yadagirigutta should be at the forefront of development. Later, for the current financial year, various banks, in collaboration with Sreenidhi, handed over a bank linkage cheque for Rs. 12,73,00,000 to the mem-

bers of 87 self-help groups. Market Committee Chairman Chaitanya Mahender Reddy, public representatives, members of self-help groups, MEPMA and municipal staff, among others, participated in this program.



Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Course correcting India's gig economy anomalies

The decision to nudge the quick-commerce platforms to withdraw the promise of '10-minute delivery' is a welcome move that represents an inflection point in India's gig economy and a successful course correction of a toxic model that has normalised risk for convenience. The regulatory challenge now is to reconcile two truths: quick commerce has created jobs and convenience while, at the same time, compromising on the safety of the delivery workers. The answer lies not in stifling innovation but in civilising it. Following the recent strike call by gig workers' unions, superfast commerce platforms came under renewed scrutiny. While the strikes caused limited disruption, they brought longstanding concerns — harsh working conditions, stiff targets, and a lack of job or income security — into sharper public focus. The labour ministry's intervention on the '10-minute delivery' branding was widely seen as an acknowledgement of these issues. The discontinuation of 10-minute delivery promises was among the key demands raised by gig workers' unions, primarily on safety grounds. The problem with this model is that algorithms reward haste and penalise delay, putting the lives of delivery executives at risk. While velocity is monetised, safety is externalised. India's gig workforce is expanding rapidly, and for a large section of riders, this is not pocket money but primary income. Tight delivery windows, opaque ratings and income volatility create a constant pressure loop. Even a minor traffic snag becomes a financial threat. In such a system, accidents are not aberrations; they are predictable outcomes.

Quick commerce rests on a single pillar: algorithmic optimisation. Algorithms do not see potholes, traffic signals, sudden rain or broken lifts. They see only distance, time, and conversion rates. Every delay becomes a penalty. Every red light becomes a financial risk. Every pause becomes a potential downgrade in ratings. Gig workers repeatedly report that even minor delays reduce incentives, throttle future order allocation, or trigger account suspensions. Many delivery workers put in 10 to 12 hours a day and earn Rs 15,000–20,000 a month.

Congress Party candidate Anji Reddy for Bommayipally Municipality Councilor

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy announced on Tuesday that Ganji Anji Reddy will be the



Congress Party's candidate for the local Bommayipally municipal councilor position in Bhuvanagiri town. On this occasion, they felicitated MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy and expressed their special gratitude. Former ward councilor Jitta Venugopal Reddy, Baddam Buchireddy, Parvati, Mallesham, and others participated in this program.

BC Welfare Association President Jinnah Mallesh respectfully met with MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy at his residence

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- On Tuesday, BC Welfare Association President Jinnah Mallesh respectfully met with Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy at his residence. They discussed various issues,

including problems in the new village, the road in Sector 1, the crematorium issue in Sector 5, problems in Sector 4, and water supply issues. They also requested that compensation for damaged houses be provided immediately. They discussed these and other issues with the MLA, urging him to resolve them as quickly as possible and provide relief to the people. The MLA responded positively to these issues, stating that he would ensure that all problems are resolved as soon as possible. Those present at the meeting included Jinnah Mallesh (BC Welfare Association President), Pinnem Srisailam (Deputy Sarpanch, Bhuvanagiri Mandal), Pinnem Latha Raju (former Sarpanch), Thotakuri Ramesh Yadav (5th Ward Member), Thotakuri Pandu Yadav (8th Ward Member), Ravula Srinivas (BNT Sports President), Lingala Naresh, and others.

Demand to Register SC/ST Atrocities Case Against ABN Andhra Jyothy Chairman

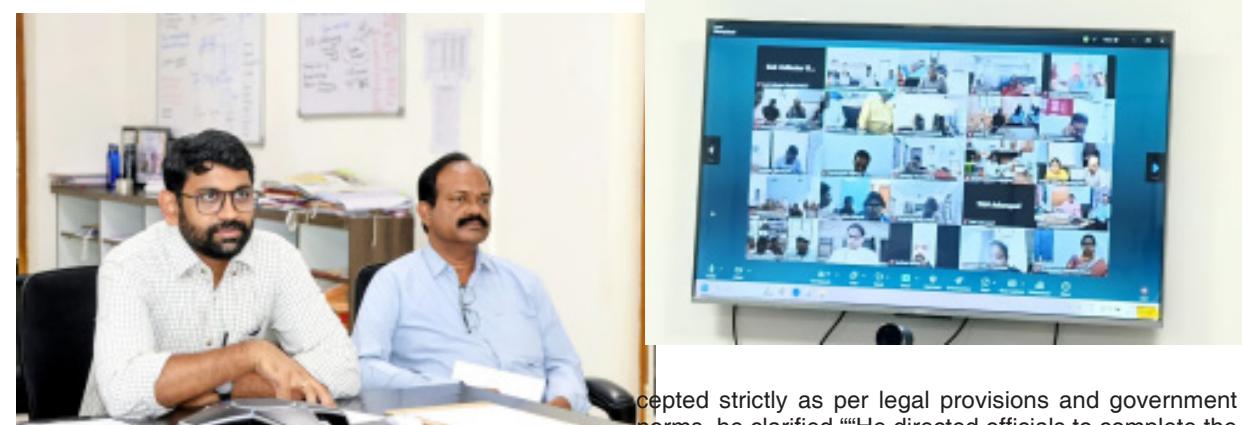
"(Bhukya RanjithNaik, Bhadrakot Kothagudem District Bureau, January 20, Indian Chronicle):- Bhadrakot Kothagudem District SC Cell Chairman Chinthirela Ravikumar has demanded that a case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act be registered against ABN Andhra Jyothy Chairman Radhakrishna for publishing



false and baseless news against Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka. Addressing the media, Ravikumar said that writing speculative and imaginary reports targeting political leaders and government officials causes severe mental distress to them and their family members. He stated that the media has the right to report fearlessly if leaders or officials are involved in corruption, misuse of power or wrongdoing, but publishing unverified and unfounded stories is unacceptable. He emphasized that media management have the responsibility to ensure that reports are based on facts and supported by evi-

dence. Ravikumar warned that false reporting against Dalit leaders would not be strongly opposed. Referring to the recent report titled "Kotha Paluku" published in Andhra Jyothy, he said the story on Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka was far from the truth. He termed it unjust to level allegations against a leader who has maintained an unblemished political career for over four decades and demanded an unconditional apology from the newspaper. Ravikumar said Bhatti Vikramarka entered politics inspired by the Gandhi family and has been working relentlessly for the development of all sections of society for the past 40 years. He recalled that Bhatti was a trusted associate of late Dr Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, served as Deputy Speaker in the united Andhra Pradesh and played a crucial role in the Telangana statehood movement. He alleged that the media house was deliberately attempting to create differences within the State Cabinet and destabilize the government by publishing baseless stories. Writing fabricated reports on the Singareni issue without verifying facts amounts to undermining Telangana society, he said. Ravikumar reminded that when the KCR government had banned the newspaper earlier, the Congress party had stood by the media house. He questioned why the same party was now being targeted and accused of internal issues within media organizations. He warned that personal disputes within media circles should not be passed on to political parties and cautioned against misleading the public through irresponsible reporting. He added that Congress workers across the state were closely monitoring such narratives. Ravikumar cautioned that if false and baseless reporting continues, the SC Cell would launch statewide protests. The meeting was attended by TPCC member JB Shauri, Sujathanagar Mandal Congress President Chinthalapudi Rajashekhar, Chunchupalli Mandal President Paul, Kothagudem Town Convener MD Ghouseuddin and other party leaders

District-Level Review on Buildings Construction, Land Issues to Strengthen Women SHGs and Rural Livelihoods: Collector Jitesh V Patil



"(Bhukya RanjithNaik, Bhadrakot Kothagudem District Bureau, January 20, Indian Chronicle):- District Collector Jitesh V Patil on Tuesday conducted a district-level review meeting on the construction of various buildings, land identification, land acquisition and land administration issues aimed at strengthening women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and expanding rural livelihood opportunities. The review meeting was held through video conference from the Collector's Camp Office at the IDOC complex. The meeting was attended by Additional Collector Venugopal, Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Vidya Chandana, Bhadrachalam Sub-Collector Mrunal Shresth, Tahsildars, MPDOs, SERP DPMs, APMs and officials of concerned departments. Addressing the officials, the Collector directed them to identify suitable government land measuring 200 square yards in every Gram Panchayat for the construction of SHG Federation buildings. He said these buildings would be used to provide livelihood opportunities and conduct training programmes for poor women. If required, additional land should also be identified for future construction, he added. He instructed officials to identify land measuring 400 square yards for the construction of Mandal Samakhya buildings in Allapalli, Annapureddypalli, Chunchupalli, Lakshmidipalli and Karakagudem mandals. MPDOs were directed to submit proposals immediately to Tahsildars for land allocation. He also instructed officials to expedite land acquisition for the construction of food grain storage godowns on 450 square yards of land in Chandrugonda, Illandu, Mulakalapalli, Allapalli, Annapureddypalli, Aswaraopeta and other mandals. These godowns would help in the safe storage of food grains during the monsoon season, he said. The Collector directed officials to identify suitable land near women federation buildings for the construction of livelihood work sheds measuring 200 square yards at every mandal headquarters to generate employment for women SHGs. He instructed them to ensure that land acquisition is free from disputes and to prepare necessary sketches and estimates. Lands donated by donors should be accepted strictly as per legal provisions and government norms, he clarified. He directed officials to complete the land identification and acquisition process within two days and asked Panchayat Secretaries and GPOs to work in coordination. He also instructed officials to submit regularisation estimates immediately for already identified lands. Regarding land administration, the Collector directed Tahsildars to clear applications pending for more than 60 days on the Bhu Bharati portal within a week. He also instructed officials to expedite Special Intensive Revision (SIR) mapping and to take immediate action through BLOs in areas where mapping is below 70 percent. The Collector instructed officials to accelerate land survey works related to land acquisition and complete surveys for prestigious projects such as National Highways and the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project at the earliest. He also directed them to complete land acquisition for Young India Residential Schools and Navodaya Schools. Stating that the re-survey proposed in seven mandals of the district is a prestigious programme of the government, the Collector said it would provide a permanent solution to land-related issues. As part of G-Survey, he instructed officials to create awareness among the public through village-level announcements and publicity so that people keep relevant land documents ready for verification. He directed officials to identify lands where the extent exceeds RSR records, prepare reports based on online pahani data and resolve issues in coordination with village administration officers. Major land-related issues in each mandal should be identified and resolved on priority, he added. The Collector instructed officials to identify flood-prone areas in the district and prepare advance action plans for areas affected by floods every year. He also directed officials to assess the requirements of government offices and buildings and complete land allocations at the earliest. He said that identifying land and establishing Plastic Waste Management plants would help generate additional income for villages. Referring to the national-level Minor Irrigation Tanks Census Survey, the Collector instructed officials to collect details of minor irrigation water bodies and upload them on the online application. He directed that the survey be completed by January 25.

Anganwadi centers serve as the foundation for the health, nutrition, and education of young children:

- State Roads, Buildings, and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- State Roads, Buildings, and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that Anganwadi centers serve as the foundation for the health, nutrition, and education of young children, and for this purpose, the state government has established new Anganwadi buildings. On Tuesday, the Minister, along with Government Whip Beerla Ailaiah and District Collector Hanumantha Rao, inaugurated the Anganwadi center buildings in Saidapuram village of Yadagirigutta mandal. The Saidapuram 1 and Saidapuram 2 Anganwadi centers were constructed with SDF and DMF funds, at a cost of Rs. 15 lakhs each. On this occasion, the Minister said that through these new buildings, constructed with modern facilities, better services will be available to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and young children. He said that the government has established these buildings with the aim of developing basic infrastructure. He stated that strengthening the Anganwadi system is the government's resolve. Later, the Minister interacted with the children in the newly constructed building. Market Committee Chairman Chaitanya Mahender Reddy, other public representatives, Anganwadi staff, and others participated in this program.

Chilkanagar Munnuru Kapu Association Unveils New Year-2026 Calendar with Grandeur

"(Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, January 20, Indian Chronicle):- The New Year-2026 calendar of the Chilkanagar Munnuru Kapu Association was unveiled in a grand ceremony held on Monday evening at the Kalyanpuri Community Hall. The event was organized under the leadership of Chilkanagar Munnuru Kapu Association President Palugula Yadagiri, Medchal District Munnuru Kapu Association Vice President Puppala Venkateshwarlu, and Chilkanagar Association Advisor Jalli Mohan. A large number of members of the Chilkanagar Munnuru Kapu community participated in



the program, making it a memorable and successful event. The calendar unveiling ceremony was attended by several prominent leaders and representatives of the Munnuru Kapu Association, including State Munnuru Kapu Association President Sardar Puttam Purushottam Rao Patel, State Vice President Guja Ramesh Patel, State Women's President Bandi Padma, Medchal District President Velpula Srinivas Patel, Ramanthapur Corporator Bandari Srivani Venkatrao Patel, State General Secretary Indrala Tirupati Patel, State Secretary Karla Venkateshwarlu Patel, State Joint Secretary Pothamsetti Patel, State Secretary Gone Srinivas Patel, Secretary Akula Mallesh Patel, Nacharam Division President Yadagiri Patel, Padam Venkatesh Patel, Ramanthapur President Jagadeesh Patel, Mallapur Women's President Kokala Nirmala, Chilkanagar Vice Presidents Nagu Narasimha Patel and Dubbani Naveen Patel, General Secretary Parvatham Raju Patel, Treasurer Palugula Naresh Kumar Patel, along with other executive committee members and representatives.

Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy and Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in several development programs in Saidapur village.

"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- Telangana State Roads, Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy and Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in several development programs in Saidapur village of Yadagirigutta mandal. They inaugurated two Anganwadi buildings in Saidapur village and performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the



construction of a new power substation. Speaking on the occasion, they stated that power supply is the main basis for the comprehensive development of rural areas. They said that with the inauguration of the new substation, farmers will have access to uninterrupted power supply, and the problems of inadequate voltage for agricultural motors will be resolved. They also said that providing quality power supply to houses, small industries, and commercial establishments is the goal of the state government. They stated that the government is giving priority to the development of villages and is extensively providing basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, drinking water, and education. They added that, especially keeping in mind the welfare of farmers, the government is spending crores of rupees on the power sector, undertaking the strengthening of substations and power lines.

Fighting for journalists' issues is the only solution. Press freedom is on the brink of danger...

TWJF is the only organization fighting for these issues.

Let's work collectively to strengthen the organization:

- Call by Federation Founder President Mamidi Somaiah

"(Mandava Srisailam, Hyderabad Indian Chronicle,



federation's leadership to achieve demands such as houses and house plots for journalists, a pension scheme, health cards, special committees to prevent attacks, and a special law for the protection of journalists. He noted the lack of unity in Hyderabad district, which has a large number of media organizations and journalists, and called for strengthening the unity of journalists through the federation. Federation state co-conveners Pulipalupula Anandam, Bandi Vijay Kumar, Tanniru Srinivas, and senior members Bollam Srinivas, CH Veera Reddy, and others appealed to all the founding members of the federation in Hyderabad to come together and participate in the movements that will be organized in the coming days to address the problems of journalists. In this meeting, Federation state leaders K. Panduranga Rao, Nagaraju, Yerramilli Ramarao, HUJ leaders Varkala Krishna, Gajjal

January 20):-Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) founder president and state convener Mamidi Somaiah said that there is a need to fight for the rights of journalists and the

resolution of their problems, and that these issues can only be resolved through struggles. He called upon journalists to be vigilant as they will face more difficult situations in the coming days, and to prepare to fight under the leadership of the Federation. A TWJF Hyderabad district preparatory meeting was held on Tuesday at the Raj Function Hall in Ramnagar, Hyderabad. Speaking at the meeting, Mamidi Somaiah strongly criticized the rulers, stating that the rights of journalists are on the brink of danger and that the rulers are evading the resolution of any of their problems. He condemned the previous government, which was in power twice after the formation of Telangana state, for completely neglecting journalists and doing them irreparable injustice, and criticized the current government for following the same path. He said that even after two years in power, the Congress government has failed to provide journalists with even new accreditation cards and health cards, and after delaying the process under the pretext of a review committee, it finally issued GO 252, which is causing concern among journalists. He stated that the next one or two months are crucial for journalists, as there are rumors that the number of accreditation cards will be significantly reduced. He warned that they would not tolerate any reduction in accreditations and would launch a statewide protest. Mamidi Somaiah called for a strong struggle under the



Viresham, NCH Rangayya and others participated. On this occasion, Mamidi Somaiah granted Federation Hyderabad district membership to several new journalists. "TWJF District Ad Hoc Committee Formed" An ad hoc committee was formed at the Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) Hyderabad district preparatory meeting. V. Ravikumar (BJ TV) was appointed as the committee convener, and Gajjal Viresham (Sakshi), B. Gopal (Andhra Jyothi), Varkala Krishnaiah (Namaste Telangana), K. Narsing Rao (Surya), R. Venkateshwarlu (Andhra Prabha), V. Srinivas (Manam Bureau), Rajesh Goud (Vaarthaa), B. Srinivas (Praja Jyothi), M. Srisailam (Voice Today), R. Srinivas Goud (Sakshi Digital News), Venkat (Yams News English Daily), CH Brahmann (AB News), Venugopal (HDS), P. Santosh (TR9 News) and others are members of the ad hoc committee.

Review Meeting with GHMC Engineering Officials: Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen

Additional Rs 4.67 Crore Sanctioned for Chilkanagar Development



"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):"Chilkanagar Division Corporator and former GHMC Standing Committee member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudraj held a review meeting with officials of the GHMC Engineering Department at her corporator office. She directed the officials to closely monitor the ongoing development works worth ₹5.50 crore in the division and to ensure that contractors complete the works on a fast-track basis. She also instructed that works for

which foundation stones have already been laid should be started immediately. It was informed that an additional ₹4.67 crore has been sanctioned, and officials were instructed to complete the tender process for these works at the earliest. Further, she requested that new proposals be prepared for SWD (storm water drain) works and CC roads in areas where they are still required. GHMC Deputy Engineer Vennel Goud, Assistant Engineer Raj Kumar, and Work Inspector Kedar participated in the meeting.

Mahaveer Co-operative Urban Bank Opens 11th Branch at Himayatnagar

NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-

in large numbers. Speaking on the occasion, Bank Chairman Ashok Kothari stated that the

launch of the Himayatnagar branch represents a significant step in the bank's growth journey. He emphasized that the bank remains committed to transparency, trust, and customer-centric banking services. Senior Vice Chairman Harinarayan Vyas said that the new branch will provide modern and convenient banking facilities to local residents and business communities. He added that the branch is expected to contribute positively to the economic development of the Himayatnagar area. The Himayatnagar branch will offer a wide range of services, including savings and current accounts, fixed deposits, and various loan products. In addition, customers will have access to digital banking facilities such as mobile banking, UPI services, and QR code-based digital payment systems. With the opening of this new branch, Mahaveer Co-operative Urban Bank has further strengthened its service network and reinforced its commitment to community-based banking, the bank officials stated.

Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 20, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Mahaveer Co-operative Urban Bank inaugurated its 11th branch at Himayatnagar on Tuesday, marking another milestone in the bank's expansion. The new branch was inaugurated by Motilal Bhalgat, while Kant Lal Nahar attended the event as the chief guest. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Sushil Kapadia, Uday More, Hanuman Das Malu, Kailash Sharma, Sohan Singh, along with members of the bank's board of directors, management, officials, customers, and well-wishers



Thousands of women should attend the public meeting being held in Hyderabad on January 25th as part of the AIDWA National Conference:

- AIDWA Mandal Secretary Kondamadugu Nagamani's call



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- AIDWA Mandal Secretary Kondamadugu Nagamani called upon women to participate in large numbers and make the public meeting, being held on January 25th as part of the 14th National Conference of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) from January 25th to 28th in Hyderabad, a grand success. On Monday, in Anajipuram village of Bhuvanagiri mandal, a poster was unveiled along with women, urging them to make the public meeting in Hyderabad on January 25th a success. Speaking on this occasion, Nagamani said that under the BJP's Manuvadi rule, attacks, murders, and rapes against women are continuing unabated. She stated that social media platforms promoting alcohol and obscenity are the cause of these attacks on women. She alleged that the governments have failed to curb these issues and demanded that strong measures be taken immediately. She said that many laws and rights for women have been achieved as a result of AIDWA's struggles. How-

ever, she commented that the fact that crimes are not decreasing is a matter of serious concern. She stated that the Domestic Violence Act, the Property Rights Act, and reservations for women are all the result of AIDWA's movements. However, she criticized the BJP-led central government for its abject failure to implement the 33% women's reservation law even to this day. She demanded that reservations for women in legislative bodies be implemented immediately. Nagamani urged a large number of women to participate in and make the public meeting, scheduled for the 25th as part of the national conference being held for the advancement of women and future movements, a grand success. AIDWA leaders Bollepalli Leela, Yedunuri Kalyani, Nomula Jyothi, Akula Hemalatha, MD. Nazima, Bollepalli Srilatha, Naragoni Sanjana, Devarapalli Lakshmi, Vanjari Vanaja, Kothapalli Anitha, Gogu Nagalakshmi, Naragoni Thulasamma, Kadamanchi Lakshmi, Manupati Sattamma, and others participated in the program.

Administrative Machinery Moves for Development Works in Bhagayat: Action Initiated After Parameshwar Reddy Meets HMDA Commissioner

Proposals for Rs 10 Crore Sports Complex, Rs 3 Crore Community Hall, and Road Construction Officials Inspect Layout Along with Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy



"(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):"Long-pending problems in Uppal Bhagayat, which had remained unresolved for years, are set to be addressed, bringing long-awaited relief and development to the area. Several major development works that residents have been waiting for over many years are now moving forward. On Tuesday, officials from HMDA, Water Works, and GHMC jointly inspected the HMDA layout in Uppal Bhagayat along with Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy. The team extensively toured the streets within the layout and interacted with local residents. This swift administrative action followed a meeting held on Monday between Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and HMDA Commissioner Sarfaraz Ahmed, during which Parameshwar Reddy explained the existing problems in the layout, the need for development works, road repairs, and other civic issues. Responding to this, officials from HMDA, Water Works, and GHMC coordinated efforts and conducted a comprehensive field inspection in

Interest-free loan cheques distributed to women of self-help groups to provide financial security in Bhongir:

State Minister for Roads, Buildings and Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhongir District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 20):- State Minister for Roads, Buildings and Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that interest-free loans have been sanctioned to women of self-help groups to provide them with financial security. On Tuesday, at Y.S.N. Gardens in Aleru mandal headquarters, State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ilaiyah, along with District Collector Hanumantha Rao, distributed interest-free loan checks to members of self-help groups. Speaking on the occa-

sion, the MLA said that the state government is implementing many welfare schemes for women, and as part of this, interest-free loans have been sanctioned to members of self-help groups. With a firm resolve to make one crore women millionaires, the government has been working through MEPMA for the past two years to empower women and strengthen their financial position. As part of the Indira Mahila Shakti celebrations, interest-free loan checks worth Rs. 78,87,160/- were handed over to 375 women's self-help groups. In the current financial year, with the cooperation of various banks and Stree Nidhi, bank linkage checks worth Rs. 15,29,00,000/- were distributed to 179 self-help groups. He also stated that Indira Amma houses have been sanctioned for 176 people in Aleru municipality. He added that 1065 street vendors in the town have been identified and loans have been sanctioned to them. Therefore, he urged the members of the women's self-help groups to utilize the loans provided by the government effectively and move forward on the path of development. Market Committee Chairman Chaitanya Mahender Reddy, other public representatives, members of self-help groups, and others participated in this program.



Uppal Constituency Congress In-Charge Parameshwar Reddy Attends Sri Veerabrahmendra Swamy Third Anniversary Celebrations

““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):”“Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-Charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy attended the Sri Veerabrahmendra Swamy third anniversary celebrations and the Kalyana Mahotsavam held at Brahmangari Gutta in the Chilkannagar Division of the Uppal constituency. Parameshwar Reddy participated in the Kalyana Mahotsavam on Tuesday and witnessed the rituals along with devotees. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Kalagnanam authored by Sri Veerabrahmendra Swamy is widely known as a great scripture that explains the difference between good and bad, and between righteousness and unrighteousness. He emphasized that Sri Veerabrahmendra Swamy was not merely a foreteller of the future but a great guide who led people on the path of righteousness. His teachings, Parameshwar Reddy said, continue to guide people even today. He further stated that living an honest life, helping others, and following devotion and discipline were the key principles shown by the Swamy. The programme was attended by Kompalli Balaraj, Agam Reddy, President Mulakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj, General Secretary Nallavelli Mahender Mudiraj, Naraju



Radhakrishna, Working President Manchala Raghu, Vice Presidents Gandikota Ganesh, BC Cell President Dandugula Shankar, Soudarapu Shiva, Jagadeesh Mudiraj, David, Kiran, Faheem, and other committee members.

Additional Commissioner Reviews Sanitation and Entomology Operations in Kapra



““NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 20, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The GHMC Additional Commissioner of Malkajgiri-Uppal and LB Nagar zones, Vinay Krishna Reddy, conducted a review meeting on Tuesday with officials of the Sanitation and Entomology departments related to Kapra and Nacharam circles.”“During the meeting, the Additional Commissioner reviewed issues related to door-to-door garbage collection, waste collection from commercial establishments, supervision of Swachh Autos, green waste lifting, and other sanitation-related activities. He instructed officials to ensure effective monitoring and efficient implementation of solid waste management practices. Emphasizing the need to

strengthen the Entomology wing, he advised officials to enhance technical skills to provide better public services. He stressed the importance of following a proper fogging schedule for mosquito control and ensuring that the schedule is communicated effectively to the public. Officials were directed to carry out their respective duties with dedication and accountability. Kapra Circle Deputy Commissioner Srihari, Nacharam Circle Deputy Commissioner Nithyanand, Deputy Engineer (Solid Waste Management) Balakrishna Ravi, Assistant Engineer (SWM) Vennela, Sanitary Supervisor Sudarshan, Assistant Engineer (Entomology) Ramesh, sanitation staff, SFA personnel, and Entomology supervisors participated in the meeting.

Insult to Dalit leader and former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram

““Secunderabad Cantonment, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):”“Cantonment MLA Sri Ganesh is displaying discrimination against the Madiga community. Cantonment MRPS leader Sri Kishan Madiga stated that not including Babu Jagjivan Ram’s photo in the flex banners for the MLA’s protest is an insult to the Madiga community. He said this during a relay hunger strike launched with the demand to merge the Cantonment area into the GHMC. He protested that the Dalit community was insulted by not including the photo of the Dalit leader and former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram in the flex banners erected on this occasion. Speaking at a meeting held on this occasion, he said:”“Babu Jagjivan Ram was a great leader, a freedom fighter and a social activist who constantly worked for the upliftment of Dalits and sacrificed his life for them.”“He was a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee and a leader who fought for Dalit rights. After India gained independence, he served as a minister in Jawaharlal Nehru’s cabinet and holds the record for being a long-serving parliamentarian and cabinet minister. He was an exemplary leader.”“He was a social activist who awakened the Dalit community and worked for their progress. We appeal to the Congress party president, senior party leaders, and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy



to conduct an inquiry and take action against MLA Sri Ganesh for insulting such a great personality,” he said. He warned that otherwise, the MRPS leadership is ready to announce a plan of action for further protests. Ajith Kalyan, Anand, Madhukar, Babedar, Praveen, Rakesh, and others participated in the program.

Protests Against The Extension Of The Nominated Post

All Hindus should remain united and instill devotion in their children



““Secunderabad Cantonment, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):”“Sri Abhinavodanda Vidyashankara Bharati Swamy, the current pontiff of the Sri Jagadguru Pushpagiri Shankaracharya Mahasamsthana Peetham, was present. On this occasion, after performing special prayers at the temple, he enlightened the devotees on philosophical texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Bhagavata Purana. He guided them on Dharma, culture, spiritual practices, and the paths to be followed in daily life. He also gave discourses on the procedures to be followed during visits to various temples, puja ceremonies, and yajnas (fire rituals). Afterwards, he performed the Ashtottara Shata Kalashabhishekam (consecration with 108 pots of water) and Mangala Harati (waving of lamps) and blessed everyone. In the evening, the temple committee members conducted devotional bhajans and cultural programs as part of the celebrations. The celebrations will conclude on Wednesday with the Ganesha procession, Bali Pradhanam (offering of sacrifices), Purnahuti (final offering), and the grand wedding ceremony of Shiva and Parvati, followed by a community meal. Jitender Sarin, Sampath Raj Jain, Narasimha Rao, Sattaya, Durga Reddy, and other devotees participated in the event.

second day of the celebrations, Tuesday, Sri Abhinavodanda Vidyashankara Bharati Swamy, the current pontiff of the Sri Jagadguru Pushpagiri Shankaracharya Mahasamsthana Peetham, was present. On this occasion, after performing special prayers at the temple, he enlightened the devotees on philosophical texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Bhagavata Purana. He guided them on Dharma, culture, spiritual practices, and the paths to be followed in daily life. He also gave discourses on the procedures to be followed during visits to various temples, puja ceremonies, and yajnas (fire rituals). Afterwards, he performed the Ashtottara Shata Kalashabhishekam (consecration with 108 pots of water) and Mangala Harati (waving of lamps) and blessed everyone. In the evening, the temple committee members conducted devotional bhajans and cultural programs as part of the celebrations. The celebrations will conclude on Wednesday with the Ganesha procession, Bali Pradhanam (offering of sacrifices), Purnahuti (final offering), and the grand wedding ceremony of Shiva and Parvati, followed by a community meal. Jitender Sarin, Sampath Raj Jain, Narasimha Rao, Sattaya, Durga Reddy, and other devotees participated in the event.

Actor Naresh Vijaykrishna Celebrates Birthday as 'Crazy Kalyanam' Gathers Momentum

““Hyderabad, [Date]: Celebrated actor Naresh Vijaykrishna marks his birthday on a special note this year as he gears up for the release of ‘Crazy Kalyanam’, the second production venture of Arrow Cinemas. Known for his versatility, impeccable comic timing, and ability to connect effortlessly with audiences across generations, Naresh’s association with the film has added significant excitement and credibility to the project.”“‘Crazy Kalyanam’ promises to be an entertaining family entertainer, and Naresh Vijaykrishna’s role is said to be one of the film’s key highlights. With a career spanning decades and an enviable filmography that blends comedy, drama, and strong character-driven performances, Naresh continues to remain a favourite among audiences and filmmakers alike. His presence in Arrow Cinemas’ second production reinforces the banner’s commitment to meaningful, entertaining, and audience-centric cinema.”“On the occasion of his birthday, the team of Arrow Cinemas extended warm wishes to the actor, expressing gratitude for his dedication, professionalism, and creative contribution to ‘Crazy Kalyanam’. The makers shared that working with Naresh Vijaykrishna has been a rewarding experience, with his experience and screen presence elevating the narrative and performances on set.”“As Arrow Cinemas builds on the success and vision of its film



venture, ‘Crazy Kalyanam’ stands as a promising step forward, powered by a strong ensemble and seasoned performers like Naresh Vijaykrishna. Fans and well-wishers eagerly await more updates from the film, making this birthday celebration all the more special for the actor and the team.”“The entire unit of ‘Crazy Kalyanam’ led by Producer Boosam Jagan Mohan Reddy, MD, Arrow Advertising and Arrow Cinemas joins in wishing Naresh Vijaykrishna a very happy birthday and continued success in his remarkable cinematic journey.

Municipal Polls: SEC Orders Officials to Ensure Complete Preparedness



““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):”“State Election Commissioner Rani Kumudini has directed officials to be fully prepared with comprehensive arrangements for the smooth conduct of the upcoming municipal elections.”“On Tuesday, from the State Election Commission office in Hyderabad, the Commissioner held a review meeting along with Municipal Administration Secretary T. K. Sridevi. The meeting was attended via video conference by District Election Officers—Collectors, Additional Collectors, and Municipal Commissioners from across the state—to assess the preparedness for election management.”“Addressing the officials, the State Election Commissioner emphasized the need to complete all essential arrangements well in advance. She instructed officials to ensure the availability of election materials, ballot boxes, ballot paper printing, and proper facilities at nomination reception centers. She also stressed the importance of training Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers, appointing Nodal and Zonal Officers, and deploying Flying Squads and Static Surveillance Teams.”“Further directions included training for Presiding Officers and Polling Officers, webcasting at sensitive polling stations, establishment of material distribution and reception centers, counting centers, and strong rooms, as well as preparation of the re-

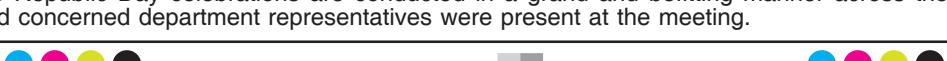
New Collector Commits to Strengthening Tribal Welfare in the District



““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):”“District Collector K. Haritha on Tuesday said that coordinated efforts would be undertaken to ensure the welfare and overall development of tribal communities in the district.”“Soon after assuming charge as the district’s first woman Collector, Ms. Haritha visited Jodenghat in Kerameri mandal, where she offered special prayers at the memorial of tribal leader Komaram Bheem. She paid floral tributes to the statue as a mark of respect.”“Later, the Collector visited the museum at Jodenghat and closely observed the exhibits, paintings, and displays depicting tribal culture and history. She interacted with tribal leaders and officials to gain insights

Republic Day to Be Celebrated in a Grand Manner, Says Collector

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 20 (Indian Chronicle):”“District Collector K. Haritha has called upon officials to ensure the grand and coordinated conduct of Republic Day celebrations scheduled to be held on January 26.”“A coordination meeting was held on Tuesday at the conference hall of the Integrated District Collectorate Complex, where the Collector reviewed arrangements with district officials. The meeting was attended by Additional Collectors Deepak Tiwari and M. David, Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Shraddha Shukla, Asifabad Revenue Divisional Officer Lokeshwar Rao, and other senior officials.”“Addressing the meeting, the Collector stressed the need for inter-departmental coordination to conduct the celebrations in a dignified and smooth manner. She said the Additional Collector (Revenue) would act as the overall supervisor for the event. Responsibilities related to protocol, dignitaries, stage, and podium arrangements were entrusted to the Revenue Divisional Officer and the local Tahsildar.”“The District Horticulture Officer was asked to oversee stage and podium decoration, while minute-to-minute programme coordination would be supervised by the District Superintendent of Police. Arrangements for seating, drinking water, and refreshments for guests were directed to be ensured.”“Videoography and the press gallery will be supervised by the District Public Relations Officer. The Town Planning Officer and the Public Relations Officer were instructed to coordinate in preparing the official speech text. Officials were also directed to ensure cleanliness at the venue and uninterrupted power supply during the celebrations.”“The Collector instructed departments to submit the list of employees who have rendered outstanding services to the Collectorate Administration Officer by January 24. She also directed that stalls showcasing government welfare and development programmes be set up at the venue and that cultural programmes featuring patriotic songs by students be included.”“Emphasising collective responsibility, the Collector urged all officials to work in close coordination to ensure the Republic Day celebrations are conducted in a grand and befitting manner across the district.”“District officials and concerned department representatives were present at the meeting.



Congress ousted from Kolhapur too as Mahayuti storms to power for the first time in KMC history



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

THE Congress suffered a setback in Kolhapur as the BJP-led Mahayuti stormed to power for the first time in the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation. The Congress though emerged as the biggest party in the KMC bagging 35 seats while the BJP was the second with 25 seats. "We put up a strong fight but could not succeed. A little more effort and I think we would have easily returned to power. I want to thank the people of Kolhapur for reposing their faith in us in the manner they did. We emerged as the single largest party and reflected the confidence people have in the Congress," Congress MLA Satej Patil who led the party's campaign in Kolhapur, told this paper. The Congress had ruled Kolhapur Municipal Corporation for 25 years. Though the KMC came into being in 1972, the elections were not fought on party symbols. They were sponsored by political parties. It was Congress which had ruled all along.

Out of the 81 seats, the Congress bagged 35, BJP 25, Shiv Sena 15 and NCP. The Mahayuti had jointly fought the elections. In the Western Maharashtra, Kolhapur was the

only city where the Congress was banking heavily to return to power. In Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Ahilyanagar, Satara, the Congress has almost been decimated. Patil said though they lost power, their fight will continue. "We will continue to fight for the people of Kolhapur... We will keep the KMC on its toes and keep raising people's issues from time to time. We will continue to stand by the people of Kolhapur. Our fight will continue," he said.

Patil said at least in two prabhags, they made a mistake while allotting seat to their alliance partner, Shiv Sena (UBT). "I think we made some mistakes. Otherwise, we would have returned to power..." he said. After the results, there were speculations that NCP and Congress would come together. However, NCP Minister Hassan Mushrif discounted any such possibility. "We will remain with the Mahayuti," he told reporters. BJP MP Dhananjay Mahadik said, "In the past, BJP used to have only one corporator. This success is a big one for the party. We will have our own mayor..."

I had said the Congress will sit at home after January 15. My words have come true... Whatever is happening in Delhi is happening at the local level as well," he said. Among the winners in KMC poll include Rajesh Latkar, Ruturaj Kshirsagar, son of MLA Rajesh Kshirsagar, Satyajit Jadhav, son of MLA Jayshree Jadhav, Ashkin Aajrekar, won of former mayor Nilofer Aajrekar and NCP city chief Aadil Faras. The big losers include former BJP city chief Rahul Chikode, Prakash Naiknaware and Ajit More. In Ichalkaranji Municipal Corporation, the Mahayuti secured majority by winning 47 seats. BJP emerged as the single largest party with 43 seats. The Shiv Shahu Vikas Aghadi secured 17 votes while Shinde Sena won 3 and NCP won only one seat. The IMC had 16 prabhags and as many as 230 candidates were in fray.

Mahayuti ends Congress's 25-year rule at Kolhapur Municipal Corporation

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

The Congress suffered a setback in Kolhapur on Friday as the BJP-led Mahayuti stormed to power for the first time in the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation (KMC). However, the party emerged as the largest party in the KMC, bagging 35 seats, while the BJP came second with 25. "We put up a strong fight, but could not succeed. A little more effort, and I think we would have easily returned to power. I want to thank the people of Kolhapur for reposing their faith in us in the manner they did. We emerged as the single largest party and reflected the confidence people have in the Congress," Congress MLA Satej Patil, who led the party's campaign in Kolhapur, told The Indian Express.

Out of 81 seats, while the Congress and BJP bagged 35 and 25 seats, respectively, the Shiv Sena won 15 and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) 4. The Shiv Sena (UBT) and an Independent won a seat each. The Mahayuti had jointly contested the KMC elections. The verdict comes as a blow to the Congress, which has ruled the KMC for 25 years. Though the civic body was established in 1972, the elections were not fought on party symbols but were sponsored by political parties. In western Maharashtra, Kolhapur was the only city where the Congress was banking heavily on a return to power. In Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Ahilyanagar, and Satara, the Congress has been almost decimated. Patil said that although they lost power, their fight would continue. "We will continue to fight for the people of Kolhapur. We will keep the KMC on its toes and keep raising people's issues. We will continue to stand by the people of Kolhapur. Our fight will continue," he said. Patil admitted that in at least two prabhags, the party made a mistake while allotting seats to their alliance partner, Shiv Sena (UBT). "I think we made some mistakes. Otherwise, we would have returned to power..." he said. After the results, there was speculation that the NCP and the Congress would come



together. However, NCP minister Hassan Mushrif dismissed any such possibility. "We will remain with the Mahayuti," he told reporters. "In the past, the BJP used to have only one corporator. This success is a big one for the party. We will have our own mayor... I had said the Congress would sit at home after January 15. My words have come true. Whatever is happening in Delhi is happening at the local level as well," BJP MP Dhananjay Mahadik said. Among the winners in the KMC elections are Rajesh Latkar; Ruturaj Kshirsagar, son of MLA Rajesh Kshirsagar; Satyajit Jadhav, son of MLA Jayshree Jadhav; Ashkin Aajrekar, son of former mayor Nilofer Aajrekar; and NCP city chief Aadil Faras.

The big losers include former BJP city chief Rahul Chikode, Prakash Naiknaware, and Ajit More. In Ichalkaranji Municipal Corporation (IMC), the Mahayuti secured a majority by winning 47 seats, with the BJP emerging as the single largest party with 43 seats. The Shiv Shahu Vikas Aghadi secured 17 votes, while the Shiv Sena, led by Eknath Shinde, won three. The NCP won just one seat. The IMC had 16 prabhags and 230 candidates were in the fray.

Legacies kept alive as youngsters of political families make it to PMC



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Standing true to the choice of their party, youngsters Kunal Tilak, Swarada Bapat, Surendra Pathare and Aishwarya Pathare have made it to the elected body of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), keeping their family legacy alive in the city's politics. Kunal, is son of former mayor Mukta Tilak – descendent of the Lokmanya Tilak family. He had sought the party's candidature in the state assembly election after the demise of his mother, who was then a sitting BJP legislator. Swarada Bapat – daughter in law of late BJP MP Girish Bapat, too made her entry into PMC. She had earlier tried her luck in the past in the Sangli Municipal Corporation. "We gave candidature to all category of citizens. There were newcomers, youths and experienced politicians as well. The voters showed confidence in them," said Union minister Murlidhar Mohol of BJP.

Raghvendra Mankar, son of NCP leader Deepak Mankar, got elected as BJP candidate, while his step brother, Harshvardhan Mankar, has made it to PMC as NCP candidate. Their father Deepak Mankar is with NCP and was former deputy mayor of Pune city. "I was confident that both my sons contesting from different political parties will win the PMC elections. They have been working for the welfare of citizens in their respective wards," said Deepak Mankar while celebrating victory of his sons in PMC election. NCP (SP) legislator Bapu Pathare's son Surendra Pathare and daughter-in-law Aishwarya Pathare were elected corporators in PMC on BJP tickets. Surendra's cousin Trupti Bharane too has been elected as BJP corporator in the civic body. For BJP, Nivedita Ebkote – daughter of former BJP corporator Jyotsana Ebkote, makes it to the elected body from the family that has been known as a staunch follower of Hindutva ideology. Also, Apporva Khade, son of former BJP corporators Neelima Khade and Datta Khade, has become corporator in PMC to carry forward

his parents legacy in city politics. Former legislator Ravindra Dhangekar failed at a continuation to his political legacy in PMC after his son Pranav and wife Pratibha lost the election contesting on Shiv Sena tickets. The performances of Vasant More and his son Rupesh of Shiv Sena (UBT) in the PMC elections brought to an end the family's presence in the civic body, where Vasant More had been a long time member as MNS corporator. Congress candidate Avinash Bagwe had taken the reins over from his father and former Congress minister Ramesh Bagwe in PMC. He had been elected to the civic body in the past but this time he and his wife Indra Bagwe lost the elections.

Three members of a gang that stole four-wheelers across states were arrested after a stolen SUV bearing a fake number plate attempted to run over a police team in West Delhi, injuring two personnel, officers said.

The accused were apprehended on the intervening night of January 15 and 16, near Vivek Vihar ITI underpass, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Darade Sharad Bhaskar. The accused, residents of Uttar Pradesh, were identified as Mashrur (56) from Sultanpur, Asif (42) from Meerut, and Aqeel (40) from Muzaffarnagar, the DCP added. According to police, the Anti-Theft Squat (AATS) West District intercepted a white Kia Seltos on the intervening night of January 15 and 16. "It was revealed that the intercepted SUV was stolen last September and was involved in multiple incidents of vehicle theft, including that of Hyundai Creta, Kia Seltos and Toyota Fortuner. The SUV was being operated with a fake number plate to evade police detection," officers said. CCTV footage of the incident showed that the Seltos first zoomed past a police vehicle, before ramming into a tow-truck blocking the road. The vehicle then reversed and hit the police SUV – white Bolero – chasing it from behind. When police officers came out of their vehicle and surrounded the Seltos, the vehicle moved towards them in an attempt to escape, and then hit the divider. The officers then broke open the window panes of the vehicle to get the accused out, police said. "During interception, the driver, Mashrur, made a deliberate and life-threatening attempt to run over the police team."

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Earlier this month, a Special Staff team, acting on a tip-off on January 4, laid a trap near Rajokri T-Point in Southwest Delhi's Kapashera, where they made the first arrest in the case – Bharat (35), a resident of Palam. A country-made pistol and a live cartridge were recovered from his possession, following which a case under the Arms Act was registered at Kapashera police station. "During sustained questioning, he told the police about an illegal firearms manufacturing syndicate and revealed the involvement of Ashraf Ali, a resident of Kaili village in Meerut, who was actively engaged in manufacturing illegal firearms. He further revealed that Ashraf, along with his associates, was running an illegal firearms factory and supplying weapons to deraed criminals and gangsters operating in Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. At his instance, raids were conducted at Kaili, where an illegal firearms manufacturing

unit was busted. Accused persons namely Ashraf Ali, Upender and Satish were arrested from the spot. The manufacturing unit was found to be fully operational and equipped for large-scale production of illegal firearms," said DCP South West Amit Goel.

Further investigation led to the arrest of Imteyaz (28) from Delhi's Dwarka, who allegedly played a role in procuring and supplying the weapons to criminal networks. According to the police, the syndicate manufactured firearms on demand, using heavy machinery and raw materials. The accused are alleged to have resumed illegal activities after being released on bail in previous cases, supplying weapons for monetary gain. Police said the arrested men have a long criminal history, with several cases of murder, attempt to murder, robbery, snatching and violations of the Arms Act registered against them. Apart from firearms and cartridges, police recovered iron barrels, shaping machines, grinders, welding rods, springs, chisels, sanding tools and other equipment used in weapon manufacturing. Further investigation is underway to identify the syndicate's clients and trace the supply chain.

New entry rule for drone show in Hyd

Hyderabad: People who registered online for the grand Drone show scheduled to be held at Gachibowli Stadium here on Saturday will only be allowed to attend the event.

The Telangana Tourism department took this decision keeping in view of the stadium's capacity. The department, which made elaborate arrangements for the show, said the event received an overwhelming response from Hyderabadi, and all registrations have already been booked. The department made it clear that no entry will be allowed for unregistered visitors and appealed to people to extend their cooperation. Those who could not register for the show can watch it through the live link, it added.

Elderly woman duped in digital arrest fraud: Defrauded amount moved to 3 accounts; more than Rs 2.89 cr frozen, say Delhi Police



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Elderly Greater Kailash couple duped of Rs 14 crore by callers posing as TRAI officials, police say. Delhi Police trace three bank accounts after 70-year-old Greater Kailash woman loses Rs 6.9 crore in digital arrest fraud. Two days after a 70-year-old woman allegedly lost Rs 6.9 crore in a week-long digital arrest in South Delhi's Greater Kailash – the second such incident from the plush locality in a week – police have recognised three primary accounts used to move the defrauded amount, Delhi Police said.

The bank accounts, police said, have been traced to Kolkata, Delhi and Chhattisgarh. Over Rs 2.89 crore in them have been frozen, officers said. "The remaining amount has already been moved to over 1,000 different mule accounts across the country," an officer investigating the case said. Meenakshi Ahuja, a resident of W block of GK 1, was first contacted by fraudsters on January 6, and was under digital arrest until January 12. The fraudsters, who posed as Mumbai Police and Enforcement Directorate officers, told her that a mobile number registered in her name had been used to obtain SIM cards for illegal activities. Police said that after the first transaction was made by Meenakshi on January 9, worth Rs 4 crore, the money was transferred to the Chhattisgarh account. The subsequent two transactions – Rs 1.3 crore and Rs 1.16 crore – reached Kolkata

and Delhi accounts. Earlier, an elderly couple from GK was allegedly duped of around Rs 14.85 crore in a similar scam. The matter had come to light on January 9. Om Taneja (81) and Indira Taneja (77), residents of GK 2, were duped by scammers posing as Mumbai Police officers in a two-week-long digital arrest, during which eight RTGS transfers were made. Senior officers involved in the probe believe that no more than Rs 2 crore to Rs 2.5 crore of the defrauded amount remains within the formal banking network. "The frozen amount has largely been sent to two bank accounts traced so far, one in Vadodara and the other in Uttarakhand," an officer involved in the probe said. "We suspect that most of the money has been moved out of the country through crypto channels or hawala networks. So far, we have traced about Rs 1.9 crore across multiple mule account chains used to move the money," the officer added.

"The money was moved into multiple accounts across the country as soon as the fraudsters received it. Banks can only freeze funds that are still within their systems. Since digital arrests continue for several days and victims transfer money in multiple instalments before realising it is a scam, the initial amounts are usually already out of the banking system by the time the probe begins," said a Cyber Crime officer. Police said wallets, cryptocurrency platforms, and hawala networks are among the primary channels used to move money out of the country. In recent cases, these have included Cambodia and Dubai," an officer said. "Tracking the money becomes even more difficult because even when mule account holders or the immediate operators are arrested, they often do not know who is running the operation or where the money ultimately goes." "Mule account holders are typically unaware of the larger operation. The system runs on commissions. The fraudsters making calls to victims are contacted through foreign Telegram accounts and are instructed to move the money for a cut. They usually have no idea who is behind these accounts," said a senior officer.

Azadpur, New Delhi, and Lajpat Nagar Metro stations to be triple-interchange hubs: DMRC

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

From having just one triple-interchange station for nearly two decades, the Delhi Metro is now set to add three more such stations under Phase IV of the project, a move officials expect will significantly improve cross-city connectivity and reduce travel time. At present, Kashmere Gate is the only station where the three corridors intersect, linking the Red, Yellow and Violet lines. Soon, Azadpur, New Delhi and Lajpat Nagar Metro stations will also function as triple-interchange hubs, DMRC officials said.

This comes after the Delhi government recently approved Phase V (A) of Delhi Metro, under which Central Secretariat will also become a triple-interchange station. Once completed, the network will have five stations where passengers can switch between three lines at a single location, DMRC officials said. At present, the Delhi Metro has 29 interchange stations across its network. Kashmere Gate, in North Delhi, has been a key junction, handling heavy daily footfall, as it connects residential areas in the North and Northwest with Central and South Delhi. Until now, it remained the only station offering three-line interchange, even as the Metro network expanded rapidly across the National Capital Region. Under Phase IV, Azadpur station will connect Yellow Line, Pink Line and Magenta Line, improving direct movement between North, West and South Delhi without requiring multiple transfers. It will become operational as a triple interchange by the end of 2026, said officials.

The New Delhi Metro station will emerge as another major interchange, linking Yellow Line, Airport Express Line and Green Line, offering smoother connectivity between the airport, Central Delhi and western parts of the city, officials added. Construction of the extension of Green Line – a part



of the three non-priority corridors under Phase IV – has not begun yet. It is expected to take at least a couple of years to become operational, said officials. The Lajpat Nagar Metro station, meanwhile, will connect Violet Line, Pink Line and the upcoming Golden Line, strengthening east-west and north-south links in South Delhi, said officials. The expansion will continue under Phase V (A), with the Central Secretariat set to connect Yellow, Violet and Magenta Lines on the proposed Ramakrishna Ashram Marg-Indraprastha corridor, said officials. This is expected to improve access to central Delhi and key government districts, including the Central Vista area. "Triple-interchange stations offer seamless connectivity by allowing passengers to switch between three corridors at one location, helping reduce travel time and making cross-city journeys faster and more convenient." As more people opt for the Metro, these triple interchange stations will play a key role in reducing road traffic and pollution. They will also improve accessibility to residential areas, business hubs, and major institutions," a DMRC official said.

Illegal arms factory, syndicate supplying weapons to gangsters in Delhi-NCR, UP, Haryana busted; 5 arrested



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

With the arrest of five people, the Delhi Police has busted an illegal firearms manufacturing in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut and a syndicate that allegedly supplied weapons to gangsters and deraed criminals operating across Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, officers said on Friday. Police said the arrests followed a special drive launched ahead of Republic Day to curb the circulation of illegal firearms. During the operation, 20 country-made pistols, 12 live cartridges and heavy machinery used to manufacture weapons were recovered, said officers.

Earlier this month, a Special Staff team, acting on a tip-off on January 4, laid a trap near Rajokri T-Point in Southwest Delhi's Kapashera, where they made the first arrest in the case – Bharat (35), a resident of Palam. A country-made pistol and a live cartridge were recovered from his possession, following which a case under the Arms Act was registered at Kapashera police station. "During sustained questioning, he told the police about an illegal firearms manufacturing syndicate and revealed the involvement of Ashraf Ali, a resident of Kaili village in Meerut, who was actively engaged in manufacturing illegal firearms. He further revealed that Ashraf, along with his associates, was running an illegal firearms factory and supplying weapons to deraed criminals and gangsters operating in Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. At his instance, raids were conducted at Kaili, where an illegal firearms manufacturing

unit was busted. Accused persons namely Ashraf Ali, Upender and Satish were arrested from the spot. The manufacturing unit was found to be fully operational and equipped for large-scale production of illegal firearms," said DCP South West Amit Goel.

Further investigation led to the arrest of Imteyaz (28) from Delhi's Dwarka, who allegedly played a role in procuring and supplying the weapons to criminal networks. According to the police, the syndicate manufactured firearms on demand, using heavy machinery and raw materials. The accused are alleged to have resumed illegal activities after being released on bail in previous cases, supplying weapons for monetary gain. Police said the arrested men have a long criminal history, with several cases of murder, attempt to murder, robbery, snatching and violations of the Arms Act registered against them. Apart from firearms and cartridges, police recovered iron barrels, shaping machines, grinders, welding rods, springs, chisels, sanding tools and other equipment used in weapon manufacturing. Further investigation is underway to identify the syndicate's clients and trace the supply chain.

Hyderabad: People who registered online for the grand Drone show scheduled to be held at Gachibowli Stadium here on Saturday will only be allowed to attend the event.

The Telangana Tourism department took this decision keeping in view of the stadium's capacity. The department, which made elaborate arrangements for the show, said the event received an overwhelming response from Hyderabadi, and all registrations have already been booked. The department made it clear that no entry will be allowed for unregistered visitors and appealed to people to extend their cooperation. Those who could not register for the show can watch it through the live link, it added.

ED attaches Rs 140-cr assets at Al Falah, files chargesheet against univ chairman



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has attached immovable properties valued at Rs 139.97 crore of Faridabad-based Al Falah University, and filed a chargesheet against its founder-chairman Jawad Ahmed Siddiqui before a Delhi court. The ED has attached 54-acres of the university campus and the buildings on it. Siddiqui was arrested on November 18 last year on charge of money laundering after the university came under the radar of the security agencies following the November 10 Red Fort area blast as three doctors working there emerged as suspects in a terror module probe. The Centre subsequently asked for a forensic audit of all records at the university.

"The ED has filed a prosecution complaint before the competent PMLA Court against Siddiqui and others in connection with the alleged generation and laundering of proceeds of crime (POC) linked to Al-Falah Charitable Trust/Al-Falah University and allied institutions/entities," an ED spokesperson said in a statement.

"Siddiqui was found to have layered POC through family-controlled entities. Institutional funds were routed through family-owned entities including Amla Enterprises LLP, Karkun Construction & Developers, Diyalia Construction and Developers Pvt. Ltd., etc. The ED has also found outward foreign remittances of over Rs three crore favouring his wife

and around Rs one crore favouring his son in their investigation. Investigation has found that charitable/educational institutions were used as instruments for personal/family/commercial benefit," the statement said. Till now, proceeds of crime have been quantified at Rs 493.24 crore. The ED initiated investigation against the Al Falah group on the basis of two FIRs registered by the Delhi Police Crime Branch. "As of now, it has been found that the Trust generated POC amounting to Rs 493.24 crore arising from scheduled offences linked to FIRs."

The Trust displayed/allowed false projections of NAAC 'A' grade accreditation after expiry and false projection of UGC Section 12(B) status, and deceived medical education regulators (NMC and DMER, Haryana). The Trust routed over Rs 110 crore to family-controlled firms," the spokesperson alleged. During investigation, the ED has found the active role of Siddiqui. "It came to fore during investigation that he exercised dominant control over Al-Falah Charitable Trust, Al-Falah University (including Al-Falah School of Medical Sciences and Research Centre) and related entities, and is found a key beneficiary of the unlawful proceeds," the spokesperson alleged. According to the ED, as Managing Trustee and Chancellor, Siddiqui exercised complete administrative, financial and operational control, with other office-bearers functioning as nominal/proxy persons. "One of the key violations committed by him is misrepresentation of NAAC status... The University was projected as recognised under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956 despite being only under Section 2(f) and not declared eligible under 12(B). Also, the establishment/functioning of the medical college involved violations of NMC norms and procurement of approvals/certifications through misrepresentation and suppression of material facts," the spokesperson said. According to the ED, Al Falah Charitable Trust was constituted by a public charitable trust deed dated September 8, 1995, with Siddiqui as one of the first trustees, who was designated as the Managing Trustee. "All the educational institutions (university and colleges) are ultimately owned and financially consolidated under this trust, which is effectively controlled by Siddiqui," the spokesperson said.

Will build 3,000-bed rest house; offered land to DUSIB to set up 80 tents, AIIMS tells HC

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

AIIMS tells Delhi High Court it will build 3,000 bed Vishram Sadan to house patients and attendants sleeping outside hospital during winter. AIIMS tells Delhi High Court it will build 3,000 bed Vishram Sadan to house patients and attendants sleeping outside hospital during winter. The AIIMS on Friday informed the Delhi High Court that it will undertake the construction of a 3,000-bed Vishram Sadan (rest house) to accommodate patients awaiting treatment and their attendants, who sleep on the streets during winter. It added that it has also offered a "suitable parcel of land" to the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to erect around 80 pagoda tents for the same purpose.

Acting on reports on packed night shelters forcing patients awaiting treatment and their attendants to sleep in the open in the cold, the HC had on Wednesday directed DUSIB to temporarily take over subways around major hospitals and make arrangements, including setting up beds. According to AIIMS, the proposed rest house — to come up on around 2 acres of land at Ansari Nagar (West) — is intended to replace its existing 300-bed Vishram Sadan. The Sevadaan Arogya Foundation, a non-profit organisation in Ahmedabad, has expressed its willingness to develop the rest house, which is expected to be completed in around two years, the AIIMS said in a report — filed through its counsel Satya Ranjan Swain — submitted before the court. The bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya



and Justice Tejas Karia recorded that the proposal of AIIMS to set up the 3,000-bed rest house "shall go a long way in meeting the problem of homeless attendants and patients". "We expect that the said facility shall come up in the minimum possible time," it added. The counsel for DUSIB said 20 new pagodas have been set up near AIIMS and Safdarjung Hospital and more would be erected by the evening. "Twenty tents each have also been erected near RML Hospital and Lady Hardinge Hospital," he added. Meanwhile, the court allowed an individual, Dushyant Semwal — represented by his advocates Simran Chawdhary and Shambhavi Singh — to intervene in the case and assist the court with suggestions from time to time.

'Don't know if he's safe': Merchant Navy engineer missing after Iran seizes tanker; family appeals to PM



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Family of merchant navy officer Ketan Mehta waits for word after Iran's Revolutionary Guard seized tanker M T Valiant Roar in Gulf waters. Family of merchant navy officer Ketan Mehta waits for word after Iran's Revolutionary Guard seized tanker M T Valiant Roar in Gulf waters. For more than a month now, his mobile phone has been Mukesh Mehta's closest companion, and his fondest hope has been for it to ring with news of his only son. Mukesh's 27-year-old son Ketan Mehta, a third engineer in the Merchant Navy, was on board the tanker M T Valiant Roar that was seized by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on December 8. The IRGC, which intercepted the Valiant Roar in international waters off the port of Dibba, UAE, has alleged that the vessel was being used to smuggle 6,000 tonnes of fuel, news agency ANI reported on Thursday. Ketan's parents, who live in DLF Colony in Ghaziabad, said on Friday that they had heard of the seizure of the ship on December 9, but had not so far received any information through official channels on Ketan's whereabouts or condition.

Ketan has been part of the commercial shipping industry for the past eight years, and is on contract with a company based in Dubai, the family said. They said they spoke to him last on November 31, before he set sail. "He told us he would be back in two or three days. He always called before leaving and after returning," Mukesh Mehta told ANI. The family had received a call on December 9 from an individual who had identified himself as Captain Vinod Parmar, the brother of the Valiant Roar's captain Vijay Parmar. This person told them that Ketan had been arrested along with the other officers of the ship. "We were shattered... So far, we haven't heard anything directly about our son," Mukesh Mehta said.

According to the Mehtas, Ketan's tanker was transporting diesel between Iran and Dubai when it was intercepted. "It seems the Iranians picked them up, but it could also be someone else. We have been told that those waters are under heavy surveillance because of restrictions on the transport of oil," Mukesh Mehta said. Mehta said the family believed that some of the ship's crew had been released, but around 10 crew members, including Ketan, remained in custody. "We have no information — whether he is safe, where he is being kept, if he is being fed, what condition he is in," he said. Ketan was contracted through Elysian Wave Marine Private Limited, a Navi Mumbai-based shipping services provider, the family said.

They said he had left India on June 29 after renewing his passport, and his six-month contract was due to end on December 31. "Every six months, he would come back home," Mehta said. Ketan's mother, Rajni Mehta, who suffers from a heart condition, has had to be admitted to hospital, Mehta said.

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

With the rise in the footfall of tourists in Ayodhya, the state government has shifted its focus on training boatmen operating on the Sarayu river to narrate the history of ancient local sites to tourists under its 'Smarck Naviks' training programme. At least 60 local boatmen are undergoing a three-day training programme with the focus to train them as "service providers, who can ensure safety, guide visitors and share the cultural memory of the river they have navigated for generations." The training programme started on January 15. "We have been rowing boats here since our fathers' time, but no one has ever called us guides. Now we are learning how to explain Ayodhya's stories and keep tourists safe. It gives us respect," said Moolchandra, one of the participants. Another trainee Jagaram said that the training has changed his point of view towards his work.

"People come here from Delhi, Lucknow and even from the South... Earlier we just took them across. Now, we can tell them why the Sarayu is sacred and how Ram Katha is linked to these ghats," he said. Officials informed that these boatmen are largely from the Kevat, Mallah and

First land registry completed for Banke Bihari Temple Corridor in Vrindavan



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

The first land registry for the proposed Shri Banke Bihari Temple Corridor in Vrindavan was completed by the Supreme Court-constituted high-powered management committee on Friday, officials said. The property measuring 69.26 square metres in the Biharpura area was registered in favour of the tehsildar (sadar) for the construction of the corridor, a statement issued by the government spokesperson said. The sale deed was executed by the members of the Goswami family — Yati Goswami, Abhilash Goswami and Aniket Goswami. Mathura District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh and Additional District Magistrate Pankaj Kumar Verma also played key roles in completing the registry. The project is expected to make 'darshan' more convenient for the devotees and contribute to the overall development of the Braj region, it added. The committee,

chaired by retired judge Ashok Kumar, includes representatives from the administration, police, the Archaeological Survey of India and the Goswami community. The government release said the committee has held continuous consultations with the Goswamis, sevayats, traders and locals to incorporate their suggestions into the corridor plan. According to the government statement, the corridor will cater to modern needs while preserving the sanctity of Vrindavan. The proposed corridor will provide safer access, seating arrangements, drinking water facilities and improved entry and exit points to ease congestion in the temple's narrow lanes. The corridor is also expected to boost religious tourism in Vrindavan, leading to increased economic activity and employment opportunities through hotels, restaurants and other services. The district administration has appealed to the public to extend full cooperation in this endeavour so that the glory of Braj shines even brighter on the global stage. Notably, members of the high-powered management committee include Justice (Retd) Ashok Kumar, former judge, Allahabad High Court as chairperson, District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh as Member Secretary, along with members Mukesh Mishra (Retd District & Sessions Judge), Vikas Kumar, District & Sessions Judge, Mathura and Shipra Dubey, Munsif/Civil Judge, Mathura, SSP Mathura Shlok Kumar, Jag Pravesh, Municipal Commissioner, Mathura-Vrindavan Municipal Corporation, Laxmi N. G., Vice-Chairperson, Mathura Vrindavan Development Authority, Dr. Smita S. Kumar, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Agra.

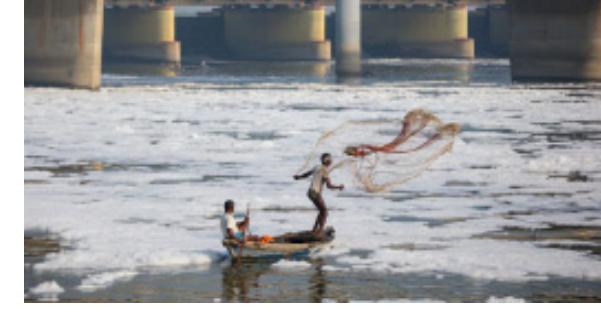
Imported Rs 8-crore dredger begins work to clean Yamuna

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Yamuna A giant dredger imported from Finland began work at the Najafgarh Drain on Friday, targeting the source of what Minister for Irrigation and Flood Control Parvesh Sahib Singh said was "the biggest contributor to Yamuna pollution". The minister launched the multipurpose Watermaster Amphibious Multipurpose Dredger along with three 'hopper' barges at the Najafgarh Drain, which accounts for nearly 70% of the total pollution load entering the Yamuna. Officials said the machine, which is equipped with four stabilizers, a flexible excavator arm that moves 180 degrees, and a 600-litre backhoe bucket, can move seamlessly between land and water. It has a sludge-pumping capacity of 600 cubic metres per hour, and a discharge distance of up to 1.5 km.

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8 crore, and the three self-propelled and self-unloading hopper barges have been deployed at a total cost of Rs 5.25 crore. The barges will assist in dredging and the removal of hyacinth and floating materials. Each barge has a capacity of 12 cubic metres, officials said. "Najafgarh Drain is the biggest contributor to Yamuna pollution. If we are serious about cleaning the river, this drain has to be treated with the best available technology and continuous monitoring," Parvesh Sahib Singh said. After assessing the performance of the dredger, more such advanced machines would be deployed at locations along the Yamuna and the drains that fall into the river, he said. "Cleaning the Yamuna is not only about making announcements; it is about sustained action on the ground. The commissioning of this machine reflects our resolve to address pollution, improve drainage capacity, and prevent flooding with permanent and scientific solutions," he said.

More buses, upgrading roads: Govt plan to curb pollution in four years in Delhi



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta chairs high level review on air pollution as government outlines plans to cut PM2.5 levels and expand public transport. The Delhi government is working 24x7 to ensure PM2.5 levels in the Capital are reduced within four years, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said Friday. The remarks came after she chaired a high-level review meeting at the Delhi Secretariat on air pollution control. The expansion of the bus fleet in the Capital, a new electric vehicle policy that will incentivise switching to EVs, a boost in traffic force, and a large-scale road development to cut down dust pollution — these are among the steps that the government will focus on to improve Delhi's air quality, Gupta said, as per a statement issued by CMO.

She added that the government plans to increase its bus fleet to 6,000 by the end of this year and 7,500 December 2027, 10,400 by March 2028 and 14,000 by March 2029. Of the planned 14,000 buses, 500 will be 7-m-long buses to strengthen last-mile connectivity. Gupta also said that the government is working on EV Policy 2.0, which will provide subsidies. Also, to strengthen traffic management, the government has deployed 1,200 additional personnel from DTC to assist the Delhi Traffic Police. Further, the CM said the need of the hour was large-scale road redevelopment. Around 3,300 km of roads require reconstruction or upgradation, including 800 km of roads under PWD, 1,200 km under MCD and 1,000 km in unauthorised colonies. Gupta said the plan includes complete paving of road shoulders and central verges, along with landscaping. To prevent repeated road cutting, underground utility ducts will be provided. Tenders will be issued within two months, with a target to complete works within one year, said officials. The government is also planning to control road dust through mechanical road sweeping machines, water sprinklers and mist sprays. The CMO said that to manage the rising number of vehicles, a smart parking management system has been made a key component of the pollution control strategy. A large-scale expansion of parking infrastructure is planned, with the introduction of smart pricing being planned, said officials.

Sacred Sarayu to Ram Katha: Ayodhya's boatmen turn storytellers, bring history alive

Nishad communities and have traditionally ferried devotees across the Sarayu. According to officials, the idea is to formally recognise the role of these boatmen and equip them for a changing tourism landscape.

"Ayodhya's story cannot be told without the Sarayu and those who live by it. By training boatmen in safety, communication and storytelling, we are preparing them to serve visitors from across India and abroad while preserving their traditional occupation," explained Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh. Officials informed that under the programme, boatmen will be trained in storytelling, understanding visitor behaviour etc, along with use of digital payment systems, basic English and Hindi communication for interacting with visitors from states such as West Bengal, Odisha and Kerala, as well as foreign tourists. Sessions on disaster management, CPR and first aid are also being conducted by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). Manyavar Kanshiram Institute of Tourism Management (MKITM) is leading modules on storytelling, visitor behaviour and responsible tourism.

From being referred to as 'Navik', these boatmen are



being introduced to the concept of the 'Navik Guide', where they narrate Ram Katha and local legends linked to Ayodhya's ghats during boat rides. At the end of the programme, trained boatmen will be issued official identity cards, with the idea to formalise their role within Ayodhya's tourism ecosystem. Ayodhya is not the first such initiative. Similar training programmes have been organised across the state in recent weeks.

Donald Trump claims Pakistan PM said he saved lives of 10 million by stopping India-Pakistan conflict



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

U.S. President Donald Trump has again claimed that he stopped the fighting between India and Pakistan and saved millions of lives, describing it as an "honour". Addressing an event in Florida on Friday (January 16, 2026), Mr. Trump claimed the U.S. had brokered multiple peace deals in less than a year and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has credited him with saving at

least 10 million lives by stopping the Indo-Pak conflict. "In less than a year, we made eight peace deals and ended the war in Gaza. We have peace in the Middle East. Nobody thought that was going to be possible," he said. Mr. Trump also asserted that Washington helped defuse tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, India and Pakistan.

"We stopped India and Pakistan from fighting, two nuclear nations... The Pakistani Prime Minister said 'Donald Trump saved at least 10 million people'. And it was amazing, and it's an honour," he said. Mr. Trump has repeatedly asserted that he played a role in halting tensions between India and Pakistan last year. He has made the claim around 80 times since May 10 last year, when he announced on social media that the two countries had agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after a "long night" of talks allegedly mediated by Washington. India has consistently rejected any third-party intervention in its dealings with Pakistan. Mr. Trump has also said on several occasions that Sharif, who visited the White House last year, credited him with saving millions of lives by stopping the conflict between India and Pakistan.

Nobel Peace Prize inseparable from laureate, award body says after Trump gets medal from Machado

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

The Nobel Peace Prize remains inseparably linked to the person or organisation designated as the laureate, the Norwegian Nobel Committee said on Friday (January 16, 2026), one day after last year's winner gave part of her award to U.S. President Donald Trump.

The 2025 laureate, Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, on Thursday gave her Nobel Peace Prize medal to Mr. Trump, who thanked her for it. The White House posted a photo of Trump and Machado with the president holding up a large, gold-coloured frame displaying the medal, and a White House official confirmed that the president intends to keep it. In addition to the gold medal, Ms. Machado's award also consisted of a diploma and 11 million Swedish crowns (\$1.19 million). "Regardless of what may happen to the medal, the diploma, or the prize money, it is and remains the original laureate who is recorded in history as the recipient of the prize," the award body said in a statement. "There are no restrictions in the statutes of the Nobel Foundation on what a laureate may do with the medal, the diploma, or the prize money. This means that a laureate is free to keep, give away, sell, or donate these items," it added.



No sign of new protests in Iran as a hard-line cleric calls for executions, threatens Trump



Harsh repression that has left several thousand people dead appears to have succeeded in stifling demonstrations that began December 28 over Iran's ailing economy and morphed into protests directly challenging the country's theocracy

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

As Iran returned to uneasy calm after a wave of protests that drew a bloody crackdown, a senior hard-line cleric called on Friday (January 16, 2026) for the death penalty for detained demonstrators and directly threatened U.S. President Donald Trump — evidence of the rage gripping authorities in the Islamic Republic. Mr. Trump, though, struck a conciliatory note, thanking Iran's leaders for not executing hundreds of detained protesters, in a further sign he may be backing away from a military strike. Executions, as well as the killing of peaceful protesters, are two of the red lines laid down by Mr. Trump for possible action against Iran.

Harsh repression that has left several thousand people dead appears to have succeeded in stifling demonstrations that began December 28 over Iran's ailing economy and morphed into protests directly challenging the country's theocracy. There have been no signs of protests for days in Tehran, where shopping and street life have returned to outward normality, though a week-old internet blackout continued. Authorities have not reported any unrest elsewhere in the country. "Iran cancelled the hanging of over 800 people," Mr. Trump told reporters in Washington, adding that "I greatly respect the fact that they cancelled." Mr. Trump did not clarify who he spoke to in Iran to confirm the state of any planned executions. The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency on Friday put the death toll at 3,090. The number, which exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the 1979 revolution, continues to rise. The agency has been accurate throughout the years of demonstrations, relying on a network of activists inside Iran that confirms all reported fatalities. The AP has been unable to independently confirm the toll. Iran's government has not provided casualty figures. Hard-line cleric's fiery sermon

Israel's Netanyahu, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Russia had previously kept largely quiet about the protests. Moscow has watched several key allies suffer blows as its resources and focus are consumed by its 4-year-old war against Ukraine, including the downfall of Syria's former President Bashar Assad in 2024, last year's US and Israeli attacks on Iran and the US seizure of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro this month. Exiled Iranian royal calls for fight to continue

Days after Mr. Trump pledged "help is on its way" for the protesters, both the demonstrations and the prospect of imminent U.S. retaliation appeared to have receded. One diplomat told The Associated Press that top officials from Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar had raised concerns with Mr. Trump that a U.S. military intervention would shake the global economy and destabilise an already volatile region. Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi urged the U.S. to make good on its pledge to intervene. Pahlavi, whose father was overthrown by Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, said he still believes the president's promise of assistance. "I believe the president is a man of his word," Pahlavi told reporters in Washington. He added that "regardless of whether action is taken or not, we as Iranians have no choice to carry on the fight." "I will return to Iran," he vowed. Hours later, he urged protesters to take to the streets again from Saturday to Monday. Despite support by diehard monarchists in the diaspora, Pahlavi has struggled to gain wider appeal within Iran. But that has not stopped him from presenting himself as the transitional leader of Iran if the regime were to fall.

Iran authorities list protest damage. Khatami, the hard-line cleric, also provided the first overall statistics on damage from the protests, claiming 350 mosques, 126 prayer halls and 20 other holy places had sustained damage. Another 80 homes of Friday prayer leaders — an important position within Iran's theocracy — were also damaged, likely underlining the anger demonstrators felt toward symbols of the government.

He said 400 hospitals, 106 ambulances, 71 fire department vehicles, and another 50 emergency vehicles also sustained damage. Even as protests appeared to have been smothered inside Iran, thousands of exiled Iranians and their supporters have taken to the streets in cities across Europe to shout out their rage at the government of the Islamic Republic. Amid the continuing internet shutdown, some Iranians crossed borders to communicate with the outside world. At a border crossing in Turkey's eastern province of Van, a trickle of Iranians crossing on Friday said they were traveling to get around the communications blackout. "I will go back to Iran after they open the internet," said a traveler who gave only his first name, Mehdi, out of security concerns.

Also crossing the border were some Turkish citizens escaping the unrest in Iran. Mehmet Önder, 47, was in Tehran for his textiles business when the protests erupted. He said he laid low in his hotel until it was shut for security reasons, then stayed with one of his customers until he was able to return to Turkey. Although he did not venture into the streets, Önder said he heard heavy gunfire. "I understand guns, because I served in the military in the southeast of Turkey," he said. "The guns they were firing were not simple weapons. They were machine-guns." In a sign of the conflict's potential to spill over borders, a Kurdish separatist group in Iraq said it has launched attacks on Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in recent days in retaliation for Tehran's crackdown on protests. A representative of the Kurdistan Freedom Party, or PAK, said its members have "played a role in the protests through both financial support and armed operations to defend protesters when needed." The group said the attacks were launched by members of its military wing based inside Iran.

Trump says working well with Venezuela's new leaders, open to meeting



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

U.S. President Donald Trump said his administration was working well with Venezuela's interim leader Delcy Rodriguez — and that he would be open to meeting with her. Mr. Trump's upbeat remarks came just over a week after Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro was seized in a U.S. special forces raid and brought to New York to face drug trafficking charges. Mr. Trump has said that the United States now has de facto control of Venezuela, as it enforces a naval blockade of the South American nation's vital oil exports.

Ms. Rodriguez, despite being a close Maduro ally, has indicated a willingness to work with the United States, saying she is open to cooperate on Mr. Trump's demands for access to Venezuelan oil. Her government has also vowed to release political prisoners and begin talks on reestablishing diplomatic ties with Washington. U.S. envoys visited Caracas on Friday (January 9, 2026) to discuss reopening Washington's embassy there. "Venezuela is really working out well. We're working along really well with the leadership," Mr. Trump told reporters Sunday (January 11, 2026) aboard Air Force One. Asked if he planned to meet with Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Trump said: "At some point I'll be."

He also said he expected to meet with Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado on Tuesday (January 13, 2026) or Wednesday (January 14, 2026). Many were stunned when Mr. Trump dismissed the possibility of Ms. Machado serving as Venezuela's interim leader following the toppling of Mr. Maduro, and instead accepted Ms. Rodriguez's ascent. Ms. Machado was given the Nobel Peace Prize last year and dedicated it to Mr. Trump, though he has made no secret of his frustration at being passed over for the award.

Maduro loyalists stage rally as Venezuelan government courts U.S.



GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Several hundred supporters of deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro staged protests in the capital on Saturday (January 10, 2026), a week after his capture by U.S. forces, as the interim government moved to revive ties with Washington and slowly released some prisoners. Waving flags and placards with the face of the moustachioed ex-leader and his wife Cilia, around 1,000 protesters rallied in the west of Caracas and a few hundred in the eastern Petare district — far smaller than demonstrations Mr. Maduro's camp has mustered in the past.

"I'll march as often as I have to until Nicolas and Cilia come back," demonstrator Soledad Rodriguez, 69, said of the Presidential couple who were taken by U.S. forces to New York to face trial on drug-trafficking charges. "I trust blindly that they will come back — they have been kidnapped." Notably absent from the rallies were top government figures, who have said they are reviving diplomatic contact with Washington and discussing possible cooperation with U.S. President Donald Trump's oil demands. Interim president Delcy Rodriguez instead attended an agricultural fair, where she vowed in televised comments she would "not rest for a minute until we have our president back." The other two hardline powers in the government, Interior Minister and street enforcer Diosdado Cabello, and Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez, were also not seen at the demo diplomatic maneuvers.

Mr. Maduro claimed he was "doing well" in jail, his son Nicolas Maduro Guerra said in a video released on Saturday (Jan 10, 2026) by his party. Despite the shock of his capture during deadly nighttime raids on January 3, signs emerged Friday of cooperation with Washington after Trump's claim to be "in charge" of the South American country. Ms. Rodriguez said Venezuela would deal with the

Political prisoners The Venezuelan government began to release prisoners jailed under Mr. Maduro on Thursday (January 8, 2026), saying a "large" number would be released — but rights groups and the opposition say only about 20 have walked free so far, including several prominent opposition figures. Relatives have gathered outside prisons believed to be holding political detainees, to await their loved ones' release, sometimes even camping outside. Rights groups estimate there are 800 to 1,200 political prisoners currently being held in Venezuela. "Venezuela has started the process, in a BIG WAY, of releasing their political prisoners. Thank you!" Mr. Trump said in a post late Saturday (January 10, 2026) on his Truth Social platform. "I hope those prisoners will remember how lucky they got that the USA came along and did what had to be done." Meanwhile, a detained police officer accused of "treason" against Venezuela died in state custody after a stroke and heart attack, the state prosecution service confirmed Sunday (January 11, 2026). Opposition groups said the 52-year-old man, Edison Jose Torres Fernandez, had shared messages critical of Mr. Maduro's government.

"We directly hold the regime of Delcy Rodriguez responsible for this death," Justice First, part of the Venezuelan opposition alliance, said on X. Late Saturday (January 10, 2026), families held candlelight vigils outside El Rodeo prison east of Caracas and El Helicoide, a notorious jail run by the intelligence services, holding signs with the names of their imprisoned relatives.

Prisoners include Freddy Superlano, a close ally of Ms. Machado who was jailed after challenging Maduro's widely contested reelection in 2024. "He is alive — that was what I was most afraid about," Mr. Superlano's wife Aurora Silva told reporters. "He is standing strong and I am sure he is going to come out soon." Mr. Maduro's supporters rallied in Caracas on Saturday but the demonstrations were far smaller than his camp had mustered in the past, and top figures from his government were notably absent. Mr. Trump pressed top oil executives at a White House meeting on Friday to invest in Venezuela, but was met with a cautious reception. ExxonMobil's chief executive Darren Woods notably dismissed the country as "uninvestable" without sweeping reforms — earning a rebuke from Mr. Trump. "I didn't like Exxon's response. You know, we have so many that want it, I'd probably be inclined to keep Exxon out. I didn't like their response. They're playing too cute," Mr. Trump said Sunday (January 11, 2026). Experts say Venezuela's oil infrastructure is creaky after years of mismanagement and sanctions.

Breaking with U.S., Canada agrees to cut tariff on Chinese EVs in return for lower tariffs on its farm products



United States through "the diplomatic route," and Washington said U.S. envoys visited Caracas on Friday (January 9) to discuss reopening their embassy.

The Venezuelan government did not respond when asked by AFP whether the U.S. officials had met with Rodriguez. She has pledged to cooperate with Trump over his demands for access to Venezuela's huge oil reserves. But she also moved to placate the powerful pro-Maduro base by insisting Venezuela is not "subordinate" to Washington. The U.S. Embassy in Colombia warned Saturday that "the security situation in Venezuela remains fluid" and advised Americans to leave the country "immediately" as commercial flights become available. Anxiety over prisoners Anxious relatives meanwhile camped outside jails, awaiting the promised release of political prisoners. Ms. Rodriguez's camp on Thursday began freeing prisoners jailed under Mr. Maduro, saying a "large" number would be released in a gesture of appeasement that Washington took credit for. "Venezuela has started the process, in a BIG WAY, of releasing their political prisoners. Thank you! I hope those prisoners will remember how lucky they got that the USA came along and did what had to be done," Mr. Trump posted on Saturday night on his Truth Social platform.

However, prisoners' rights groups and the opposition said only 21 people had been released by Saturday evening, including several prominent opposition figures. Rights groups estimate there are 800 to 1,200 political prisoners in Venezuela. Families held candlelight vigils outside El Rodeo prison east of Caracas, and El Helicoide, a notorious prison run by the intelligence services, displaying signs with the names of their imprisoned relatives. "I am tired and angry," Nebraska Rivas, 57, told AFP, as she waited for her son to be released from El Rodeo. "But I have faith that they will hand him over to us soon," she said, after sleeping on the pavement outside the prison for two nights.

Oil talks Following Mr. Maduro's capture, Mr. Trump vowed to secure U.S. access to Venezuela's vast oil reserves. The White House said Mr. Trump has signed an emergency order protecting U.S.-held revenues derived from sales of Venezuelan oil, preventing them from being seized by courts or creditors. Chevron is currently the only U.S. firm licensed to operate in Venezuela, through a sanctions exemption. At a White House meeting on Friday, he pressed top oil executives to invest in Venezuela's reserves, but was met with a cautious reception. Experts say Venezuela's oil infrastructure is creaky after years of mismanagement and sanctions.

Breaking with U.S., Canada agrees to cut tariff on Chinese EVs in return for lower tariffs on its farm products

PM Carney made the announcement after two days of meetings with Chinese leaders. He said there would be an initial cap of 49,000 vehicles on Chinese EV exports to Canada, growing to 70,000 over five years. China will reduce its tariff on canola seeds, a major Canadian export, from about 84% to about 15%, he told reporters.

"It has been a historic and productive two days," Mr. Carney said, speaking outside against the backdrop of a traditional pavilion and a frozen pond at a Beijing park. "We have to understand the differences between Canada and other countries, and focus our efforts to work together where we're aligned." Earlier Friday (January 16, 2026), he and Chinese leader Xi Jinping pledged to improve relations between their two nations after years of acrimony. Mr. Xi told Mr. Carney in a meeting at the Great Hall of the People that he is willing to continue working to improve ties, noting that talks have been underway on restoring and restarting cooperation since the two held an initial meeting in October on the sidelines of a regional economic conference in South Korea. "It can be said that our meeting last year opened a new chapter in turning China-Canada relations toward im-

provement," China's top leader said. Carney looks to improve global governance. Mr. Carney, the first Canadian prime minister to visit China in eight years, said better relations would help improve a global governance system that he described as "under great strain." He called for a new relationship "adapted to new global realities" and cooperation in agriculture, energy and finance. Those new realities reflect in large part the so-called America-first approach of U.S. President Donald Trump. The tariffs he has imposed have hit both the Canadian and Chinese economies.

Carney, who has met with several leading Chinese companies in Beijing, said ahead of his trip that his government is focused on building an economy less reliant on the U.S. at what he called "a time of global trade disruption." A Canadian business owner in China called Carney's visit game-changing, saying it re-establishes dialogue, respect and a framework between the two nations. "These three things we didn't have," said Jacob Cooke, the CEO of WPIC Marketing + Technologies, which helps exporters navigate the Chinese market. "The parties were not talking for years."

How a 1965 war veteran started Cannon, Mumbai's beloved pav bhaji spot near CST station



During the war, Parshuram Dandekar suffered serious head injuries that later triggered epileptic seizures, along with a compound fracture in his right leg. A few years later, when the District Soldier Board invited applications from injured servicemen, he applied and was allotted a 120-square-metre plot opposite Victoria Terminus (now CST) station. There was no financial assistance. "I spent my own money, turned the plot into a small eatery, and decided to name it Cannonball," said the now 87-year-old.

Yes, the eatery was originally meant to be called Cannonball. But the painter missed the memo, and wrote Cannon instead. "My friends insisted we keep it," he smiled, adding, "Do you know that a cannon is used by all three defence forces — the Army, Navy and Air Force?"

Although age has slowed him down, Dandekar recalls details from the 1970s as if they were yesterday. He remembers how the stall was inaugurated by then Mumbai police commissioner M G Mugwe. "He said that on behalf of the Mumbai police department, he was very pleased to see that Army discipline had started flowing into business," Dandekar recalled.

Lieutenant General M L Naidu, however, refused to inaugurate it, telling him he must learn to live among civilians. Still, Naidu turned up that day. "He told me, 'Dandy, do you understand what the commissioner said?' He was pointing to corruption in the civilian and municipal system. We are Army people, we must protect our reputation and discipline."

Those words stayed with him, and perhaps explain why Dandekar insisted on collecting payment even from policemen. He also shared that even though the eatery began in 1975, it received its food licence only in 2023, after a long legal battle. Mumbai Only Amul butter is used, and pav is sourced exclusively from Yazdani and UP Bakery. (Express photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee)

How Cannon became the pav bhaji destination

When he started the eatery, Dandekar had no background in food or hospitality. On the day of the inauguration, he stocked large quantities of cold

drinks after being persuaded by a major beverage company, which also signed him to an exclusive contract. Today, he no longer sells any aerated drinks. "It's only lassi, buttermilk and water," he said.

For food, Dandekar turned to his mother, Kamla Bai, who suggested batata vada. "But I told her I wanted the

vadas to be bigger than a table tennis ball and smaller than a tennis ball," he recalled. "The batter had to be thin and crisp so it could hold more filling." His mother explained the process, and Dandekar wrote down the recipe. The vadas were served piping hot with coconut and pudina chutney. For several years, batata vada was the only item on the menu. Samosas were introduced in 1982, and it was only in 1985 that pav bhaji made its debut. "We were catering mainly to the lunch crowd," Dandekar said. "Back then, we would display all the boiled vegetables, and customers would choose what they wanted. The staff would prepare a bhaji accordingly. It took at least five minutes per order." One day, he asked his staff which vegetables were ordered most frequently and decided to combine them into a single bhaji. To popularise it, he devised a plan. "I am a chalu (shrewd) man," he said, laughing. During a Test match at Wankhede Stadium, he installed a television at the stall. As crowds gathered, he melted a 500-gram pack of Amul butter on the tawa, then another, and another, until the surface was swimming in butter. He sliced pav, soaked it in butter, and laid it out. "People had already eaten with their eyes," he said. "Now they wanted to taste it." Mumbai For several years, batata vada was the only item on the menu. Samosas were introduced in 1982, and it was only in 1985 that pav bhaji made its debut. (Express photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee)

The pav bhaji became an instant hit and soon Cannon's defining dish. Decades later, the eatery still has no chairs or tables. Customers line up along a four-foot peripheral wall topped with a marble slab that doubles as a standing counter. Service is quick and choreographed. Two older women clear plates and wipe surfaces, while a young staffer, Pooja, takes orders and assembles plates. Kuldeep Singh, a trusted hand, prepares the bhaji, creating an aromatic pool of Amul butter at the centre of a warm tawa and lining butter-soaked pav around it — an image unchanged from Cannon's early days.

Dandekar is emphatic about ingredients. Cannon uses no artificial colours or flavours. "We are hardcore pav bhaji walas," he said. Masalas come from APMC Vashi, potatoes from Indore or Uttar Pradesh — never Gujarat or Maharashtra, which he says are too sweet. Only Amul butter is used, and pav is sourced exclusively from Yazdani and UP Bakery. Today, the menu is deliberately limited: pav bhaji, dahi vada, sabudana khichdi, halwa (sheera), rabdi, gulab jamun, sattu ladoo, peanut ladoo, lassi and buttermilk. Pointing to the gulab jamuns, priced at Rs 30 each, Dandekar said, "Look at the size of them. All our ladoos are made with jaggery. I want everything to be healthy." Many of the vegetables now come from a horticulture farm in Talegaon. Dandekar still visits Cannon daily, as does his wife Manisha, 78, who is also a co-owner. They usually spend a couple of hours at the eatery each day. When asked about the future, Dandekar is uncertain. "There is good money here, I won't deny that, but you need that drive," he said. "My son isn't interested, my daughters are well settled. Kuldeep is eligible to retain it — his father served in the Navy — but let's see what happens."

For food, Dandekar turned to his mother, Kamla Bai, who suggested batata vada. "But I told her I wanted the

Venezuela's Machado says she presented her Nobel Peace Prize to Trump during their meeting

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado said she presented her Nobel Peace Prize medal to President Donald Trump at the White House on Thursday (January 16, 2026) even as he has questioned her credibility to take over her country after the U.S. ousted then-President Nicolás Maduro. The Nobel Institute has said Ms. Machado could not give her prize to Mr. Trump, an honor that he has coveted. Even if the gesture proves to be purely symbolic, it was extraordinary given that Mr. Trump has effectively sidelined Ms. Machado, who has long been the face of resistance in Venezuela. He has signaled his willingness to work with acting President Delcy Rodríguez, who had been Mr. Maduro's second in command.

"I presented the President of the United States the medal, the Nobel Peace Prize," Ms. Machado told reporters after leaving the White House and heading to Capitol Hill. She said she had done so "as a recognition for his unique commitment with our freedom." Mr. Trump confirmed later on social media that Ms. Machado had left the medal for him to keep, and he said it was an honor to meet her. "She is a wonderful woman who has been through so much. María presented me with her Nobel Peace Prize for the work I have done," Mr. Trump said in his post. "Such a wonderful gesture of mutual respect. Thank you María!" Mr. Trump has raised doubts about his stated commitment to backing democratic rule in Venezuela, giving no timetable on when elections might be held. Ms. Machado indicated that he had provided few specifics on that front during their discussion. She did not provide more information on what was said.

We can count on President Trump. After the closed-door meeting, Ms. Machado greeted dozens of cheering supporters waiting for her near the White House gates, stopping to hug many. "We can count on President Trump," she told them without elaborating, prompting some to briefly chant, "Thank you, Trump." Before her visit to Washington, Ms. Machado had not been seen in public since she traveled last month to Norway, where her daughter received the peace prize on her behalf. She had spent 11 months in hiding in Venezuela before she appeared in Norway after the ceremony. The jubilant scene after her meeting with Mr. Trump stood in contrast to political realities in Venezuela. Ms. Rodríguez remains in charge of day-to-day government operations, along with others in Mr. Maduro's inner circle. In her first state of the union speech Thursday, the interim President promoted the resumption of diplomatic ties between the historic adversaries and advocated for opening the state-run oil industry to more foreign investment after Mr. Trump pledged to seize control of Venezuelan crude sales. Mr. Trump has said it would be difficult for Ms. Machado to lead because she "doesn't have the support within or the respect within the country." Her party is widely believed to have won 2024 elections rejected by Mr. Maduro. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt called Ms. Machado "a remarkable and brave voice" but also said the meeting didn't mean Mr. Trump's opinion of her changed, calling it "a realistic assessment." Ms. Leavitt told reporters that Mr. Trump supported new Venezuelan elections "when the time is right" but did not say when he thought that might be.

A frank and positive discussion' about Venezuela Ms. Leavitt said Ms. Machado had sought the face-to-face meeting without setting expectations for what would occur. She spent about two and a half hours at the White House. "I don't think he needs to hear anything from Ms. Machado," the



Press Secretary said while the meeting was still going on, other than to have a "frank and positive discussion about what's taking place in Venezuela." After leaving the White House, Ms. Machado went on to a closed-door meeting with a bipartisan group of senators. Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said Machado told them that "if there's not some progress, real progress towards a transition in power, and/or elections in the next several months, we should all be worried." "She reminded us that Delcy Rodríguez is, in many ways, worse than Mr. Maduro," he added.

Asked if Mr. Machado had heard any commitment from the White House on holding elections in Venezuela, Murphy said, "No, I don't think she got any commitment from them." Sen. Bernie Moreno, an Ohio Republican, was exultant following the meeting, saying Mr. Machado "delivered a message that loud and clear: What President Trump did was the most important, significant event in Latin America. That getting rid of Maduro was absolutely essential." Mr. Machado's Washington stop coincided with U.S. forces in the Caribbean Sea seizing another sanctioned oil tanker that the Trump administration says had ties to Venezuela. It is part of a broader U.S. effort to take control of the South American country's oil after U.S. forces captured Maduro and his wife less than two weeks ago at a heavily guarded compound in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas and brought them to New York to stand trial on drug trafficking charges. Ms. Leavitt said Venezuela's interim authorities have been fully cooperating with the Trump administration and noted that Rodríguez's government said it planned to release more prisoners detained under Mr. Maduro. Among those released were five Americans this week.

Mr. Trump said on Wednesday (January 14, 2026) that he had a "great conversation" with Ms. Rodríguez, their first since Mr. Maduro was ousted. Ms. Machado doesn't get the nod from Mr. Trump. Just hours after Mr. Maduro's capture, Mr. Trump said of Ms. Machado that "it would be very tough for her to be the leader." Ms. Machado had steered a careful course to avoid offending Mr. Trump, notably after winning the peace prize, and had sought to cultivate relationships with him and key administration voices like Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The industrial engineer and daughter of a steel magnate, Ms. Machado began challenging the ruling party in 2004, when the nongovernmental organization she co-founded, Súmate, promoted a referendum to recall then-President Hugo Chávez. The initiative failed, and Ms. Machado and other Súmate executives were charged with conspiracy. A year later, she drew the anger of Chávez and his allies again for traveling to Washington to meet President George W Bush, whom Chávez considered an adversary. Almost two decades later, she marshaled millions of Venezuelans to reject Chávez's successor, Mr. Maduro, for another term in the 2024 election.

China's trade surplus hits record \$1.2 trillion amid rising exports



China's trade surplus surged to a record of almost \$1.2 trillion in 2025, the government said Wednesday (January 14, 2026), as exports to other countries made up for slowing shipments to the United States. China's exports rose 5.5% for the whole of last year to \$3.77 trillion, customs data showed, while imports flatlined at \$2.58 trillion. The 2024 trade surplus was \$992 billion. Opinion | Hubris and caution — China's posture as 2026 begins

In December, China's exports climbed 6.6% from the year before in dollar terms, better than economists' estimates and higher than November's 5.9% year-on-year increase. Imports in December were up 5.7% year-on-year, compared to November's 1.9%. China's trade surplus surpassed the \$1 trillion mark for the first time in November, when the trade surplus reached \$1.08 trillion in the first 11 months of last year. Economists expect exports will continue to support China's economy this year, despite trade friction and geopolitical tensions. "We continue to expect exports to act as a big growth driver in 2026," said Jacqueline Rong, chief China economist at BNP Paribas. While China's exports to the U.S. have fallen sharply for most of last year since President Donald Trump returned to office and escalated his trade war with the world's sec-

ond-largest economy, that decline has been largely offset by shipments to other markets in South America, Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe.

Strong global demand for computer chips and other devices and the materials needed to make them were among categories that supported China's exports, analysts said. China's strong exports have helped keep its economy growing at an annual rate close to its official target of about 5%. But that has triggered alarm in countries that fear a flood of cheap imports are damaging local industries. China faces a "severe and complex" external trade environment in 2026, Wang Jun, Vice-Minister of China's customs administration, told reporters in Beijing. But he said China's "foreign trade fundamentals remain solid." The head of the International Monetary Fund last month called for China to fix its economic imbalances and speed up its shift from reliance on exports by boosting domestic demand and investment.

A prolonged property downturn in China after the authorities cracked down on excessive borrowing, triggering defaults by many developers, is still weighing on consumer confidence and domestic demand. China's leaders have made increasing spending by consumers and businesses a focus of economic policy, but actions taken so far have had a limited impact. One of its main strategies has been to pay subsidies to encourage people to discard old appliances and vehicles and replace them with newer, more energy efficient models. "We expect domestic demand growth to stay tepid," said Ms. Rong of BNP Paribas. "In fact, the policy boost to domestic demand looks weaker than last year — in particular the fiscal subsidy program for consumer goods." Gary Ng, a senior economist at French investment bank Natixis, forecasts that China's exports will grow about 3% in 2026, less than the 5.5% growth in 2025. With slow import growth, he expects China's trade surplus to remain above \$1 trillion this year.

US allows Nvidia to send advanced AI chips to China with restrictions



The US Commerce Department on Tuesday opened the door for Nvidia to sell advanced artificial intelligence chips in China with restrictions, following through on a policy shift announced last month by US President Donald Trump. The change would permit Nvidia to sell its powerful H200 chip to Chinese buyers if certain conditions are met, including proof of "sufficient" US supply, while sales of its most advanced processors would still be blocked.

However, uncertainty has grown over how much demand there will be from Chinese companies, as Beijing has reportedly been encouraging tech companies to use home-grown chips. Chinese officials have informed some tech companies they would only approve buying H200 chips under special circumstances, such as development labs or university research, news website The Information reported on Tuesday, citing people with knowledge of the situation. The Information had previously reported that Chi-

nese officials were calling on companies there to pause H200 purchases while they deliberated requiring them to buy a certain ratio of AI chips made by Nvidia rivals in China. In its official update on Tuesday, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) said it had changed the licensing review policy for H200 and similar chips from a presumption of denial to handling applications case by case.

Trump announced on December 9, 2025 that he had reached an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping to allow Nvidia to export its H200 chips to China, with the US government getting a 25-percent cut of sales. The move marked a significant shift in US export policy for advanced AI chips, which Joe Biden's administration had heavily restricted over national security concerns about Chinese military applications. Democrats in Congress have criticised the shift as a huge mistake that will help the Chinese military and economy. Nvidia chief executive Jensen Huang has advocated for the company to be allowed to sell some of its more advanced chips in China, arguing the importance of AI systems around the world being built on US technology. The chips, graphic processing units or GPUs, are used to train the AI models that are the bedrock of the generative AI revolution launched with the release of ChatGPT in 2022. The GPU sector is dominated by Nvidia, now the world's most valuable company thanks to frenzied global demand and optimism for AI. China and the United States are competing for dominance in AI. H200s are roughly 18 months behind the US company's most state-of-the-art offerings, which will still be off-limits to China.

OpenAI introducing ads to ChatGPT



OpenAI announced Friday it will begin testing advertisements on ChatGPT in the coming weeks, as the wildly popular artificial intelligence chatbot seeks to increase revenue to cover its soaring costs. The ads will initially appear in the United States for free and lower-tier subscribers, the company said in a blog post outlining its long-anticipated move. Premium Pro and Enterprise subscribers will remain ad-free.

The integration of advertising has been a key question for generative AI chatbots, with companies largely reluctant to interrupt the user experience with ads. But the exorbitant costs of running AI services may have forced OpenAI's hand. Only a small percentage of its nearly one billion users pay for subscription services, putting pressure on the company to find new revenue sources. Since ChatGPT's launch in 2022, OpenAI's valuation has soared to \$500 billion in funding rounds; higher than any other private company. Some expect it could go public with a trillion-dollar valuation. But the ChatGPT maker burns through cash at a furious rate, mostly on the powerful computing required to deliver its services. With its move, OpenAI brings its business model closer to tech giants Google and Meta, which have built advertising empires on the back of their free-to-use services.

Unlike OpenAI, those companies have massive advertising revenue to fund AI innovation, with Amazon also building a solid ad business on its shopping and video streaming platforms. "Ads aren't a distraction from the gen AI race; they're how OpenAI stays in it," said Jeremy Goldman, an analyst at Emarketer. "If ChatGPT turns on ads, OpenAI is admitting something simple and consequential: the race isn't just about model quality anymore; it's about monetizing attention without poisoning trust," he added. OpenAI's pivot comes as Google gains ground in the generative AI race, infusing services including Gmail, Maps and YouTube with AI features that-in addition to its Gemini chatbot-compete directly with ChatGPT. OpenAI Chief Executive Officer Sam Altman has long expressed his dislike for advertising, citing concerns that ads could

create distrust about ChatGPT's content. To address these concerns, OpenAI pledged that ads would never influence ChatGPT's answers and that user conversations would remain private from advertisers. "Ads do not influence the answers ChatGPT gives you," the company stated. "Answers are optimized based on what's most helpful to you. Ads are always separate and clearly labeled." The release was announced by Fidji Simo, OpenAI's CEO of applications, a former Meta executive who oversaw the social media giant's advertising business before leaving for Instacart. "As we introduce ads, it's crucial we preserve what makes ChatGPT valuable in the first place," Simo said in a blog post. "That means you need to trust that ChatGPT's responses are driven by what's objectively useful, never by advertising." In an apparent reference to Meta, TikTok and Google's YouTube platforms accused of maximizing user engagement to boost ad views - OpenAI said it would "not optimize for time spent in ChatGPT." "We prioritize user trust and user experience over revenue," it added. The commitment to user well-being is a sensitive issue for OpenAI, which has faced accusations of allowing ChatGPT to privilege emotional engagement over safety, allegedly contributing to mental distress among some users. The move comes as ChatGPT Go, the company's \$8 monthly subscription tier, becomes available in the United States and all markets where the service operates.

AI will define next phase of India's digital growth: DoT Secretary

New Delhi: As India moves from connectivity to an era of intelligence, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a defining force, according to a senior government official. India is approaching AI with a clear conviction and innovation must be aligned with responsibility, transparency and public trust, said Amit Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications. Addressing the annual forum of telecom and digital ministers from the 11 ASEAN Member States, he reaffirmed India's strong commitment to ASEAN-India digital cooperation. Agrawal said they have collectively worked to narrow digital divides, strengthen infrastructure and ensure that digital transformation serves as a force for inclusion, resilience, and economic growth. The government official stressed upon India's rapid digital transformation, including 4G coverage, the world's fastest 5G rollout, expanded rural broadband connectivity through BharatNet and India's emergence as a major manufacturing hub.

Install sensors, LED indicators at construction sites within 15 days: PMC to builders



taken at the site. "If the directions of PMC are not followed, then the builder will be issued a showcase notice or stop work order, along with all possible legal action, including penalty," he said.

The Indian Express, through its 'Breathtaking Pune' series on rising air pollution in the city, highlighted the causes of air pollution and its impact on the health of citizens. The rise in PM2.5 and PM10 particles is leading to an increase in air pollution everywhere, with PM10 making up around 23 per cent of the dust particles. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) has issued directions to take steps to control the dust emerging from construction activities. The PMC had asked Pashan-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) to conduct a co-location study for the civic body and recommend appropriate air pollution sensors to be installed at construction sites across the city. "The list of manufacturers, along with air pollution sensors available with them, have been finalised and made public. The builders should install only those sensors recommended in the list. The list of manufacturers will be updated and intimated by PMC, whenever required," said Prithviraj. The LED indicator installed at the construction site will display real-time air quality and help the engineers on site to take steps to reduce pollution. The PMC order states that all project proponents are mandated to strictly comply with the Mitigation checklist as it forms the first and essential stage of reducing dust and air pollution at construction sites. The action guidance is intended to help on-site personnel take immediate actions, based on the indicative dust severity levels displayed through the LED signal system.

With strict guidelines in place to bring a check on the growing air pollution in the city, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has directed builders undertaking ongoing and new constructions—residential or commercial—having built up area of 5,000 square metre or more to install air pollution sensors at the construction sites and connect it to a real-time dashboard of the civic body. Those failing to do so will have to stop work and would also be penalised.

In an order issued by the PMC on Monday, Additional Municipal Commissioner Prithviraj B P said, "All the ongoing and upcoming construction activities in the city having a built up area of 5,000 sq metre or more should install air pollution monitoring system and LED signal indicators at the construction site within 15 days. The deadline will be applicable for all new upcoming sites for any work under-

Why SpaceX's IPO plan is generating so much buzz



More than 20 years after founding SpaceX, the record-breaking company that transformed the global space industry, Elon Musk is planning to take the enterprise public. Here is a look at what is expected to be the largest IPO in history.

What's at stake?

SpaceX is owned by Elon Musk alongside several investment funds. Tech giant Alphabet, Google's parent company, is also among the space company's shareholders. A public listing would open SpaceX to a broader and more diverse pool of investors, including individual buyers, while giving existing shareholders an easier path to cash out and realise substantial capital gains. "This is a capital intensive business," Matthew Kennedy of Renaissance Capital investment management firm told AFP. "SpaceX has never had any difficulty raising funds in the private market, but public markets are undoubtedly larger. Liquidity is important as well, it can help with making acquisitions." According to Bloomberg and the financial data platform PitchBook, the IPO could raise more than \$30 billion, an unprecedented sum for a deal of this kind and far more than the \$10 billion the company has raised since its inception.

Why so much money?

The IPO comes amid a boom in the space industry. Worth \$630 billion in 2023, the sector is expected to triple in size by 2035, according to the consulting firm McKinsey and the World Economic Forum. And SpaceX, which dominates the space launch market with its reusable rockets and owns the largest satellite constellation through Starlink, has a unique appeal. It's "kind of a black swan event and unique so that we can't draw too many parallels across the whole space economy," Clayton Swope of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) told AFP. Its unique status is also tied to its CEO Musk, the world's richest person, who is also the CEO of Tesla and xAI. Musk has already pushed Tesla's valuation far beyond that of Toyota and Volkswagen despite selling five to six times fewer vehicles.

What next?

This is the question on everyone's mind, as the billion-

aire had long dismissed such a possibility. Since its founding in 2002, SpaceX has held a special place for the billionaire, given his ambition to colonise Mars. This goal reflects the company's priorities, which include developing Starship, the largest rocket ever built for missions to the Moon and Mars, as well as plans to build space-based data centers for artificial intelligence (AI). A stock market listing could provide new liquidity that would support all of these projects. "The answer is pretty straightforward," said Swope. "He wants to accelerate the flywheel for his vision of humanity on Mars."

What next?

The influx of capital from an IPO will come at a price: going public will require SpaceX and Elon Musk to maintain greater transparency, particularly about its revenues, and could increase pressure to deliver profits. "I speculate that would ground SpaceX somewhat in the near term," said Mason Peck, an astronautical engineering professor at Cornell University. The company's risk-taking approach of experimenting with unproven technologies and frequent prototype launches to learn from mistakes could be constrained by the expectations of new shareholders. "Will they become the same as any other aerospace company and ultimately mired in conservatism and legacy solutions?" Peck said. "That's entirely possible. I hope it doesn't happen." "I think they are willing to take that risk and willing to let Elon Musk and SpaceX have this vision, because that is integral to what makes SpaceX also a successful business," he said.

U.S. officials say Washington has agreed to give Ukraine security guarantees in peace talks



The U.S. has agreed to provide unspecified security guarantees to Ukraine as part of a peace deal to end Russia's nearly four-year war, and more talks are likely this weekend, U.S. officials said on Monday (December 15, 2025) following the latest discussions with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Berlin. The officials said talks with President Donald Trump's envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, led to narrowing differences on security guarantees that Kyiv said must be provided, as well as on Moscow's demand that Ukraine concede land in the Donbas region in the country's east.

Mr. Trump dialled into a dinner on Monday evening with negotiators and European leaders, and more talks are expected this weekend in Miami or elsewhere in the United States, according to the U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment publicly by the White House. "I think we're closer now than we have been, ever," Mr. Trump told reporters at an unrelated White House event. He added, "We're having tremendous support from European leaders. They want to get it ended, also." The U.S. officials said the offer of security guarantees won't be on the table "forever." They said the Trump administration plans to put forward the agreement on guarantees for Senate approval, although they didn't specify whether it would be ratified like a treaty, which needs the chamber's two-thirds approval. In a statement, European leaders in Berlin said they and the U.S. committed to work together to provide "robust security guarantees," including a European-led "multinational force Ukraine" supported by the U.S. They said the force's work would include "operating inside Ukraine" as well as assisting in rebuilding Ukraine's forces, securing its skies and supporting safer seas. They said Ukrainian forces should remain at a peace-time level of 800,000. Mr. Witkoff and Mr. Kushner were accompanied by U.S. Air Force Gen Alexus Grynkovich, who heads NATO's military operations and the US European Command, as talks honed in on the particulars of what the U.S. officials described as an "Article 5-like" security agreement. Article Five in the NATO treaty is the collective defence clause stating that an attack on one member is an attack on all. The U.S. side presented the Ukrainians a document that spelled out in greater specificity aspects of the proposed U.S. security guarantees—something that Ukrainian officials said was missing from earlier iterations of the U.S. peace proposal, according to U.S. officials.

Ukraine's postwar security German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called it a "truly far-reaching, substantial

agreement that we did not have before, namely that both Europe and the U.S. are jointly prepared to do this." Questions over Ukraine's postwar security and the fate of occupied territories have been the main obstacles in talks. Mr. Zelenskyy has emphasised that any Western security assurances would need to be legally binding and supported by the U.S. Congress. Meanwhile, Russia has said it will not accept any troops from NATO countries being based on Ukrainian soil. Mr. Zelenskyy on Monday called the talks "substantial" and noted that differences remain on the issue of territory. Mr. Zelenskyy has expressed readiness to drop Ukraine's bid to join NATO if the U.S. and other Western nations give Kyiv security guarantees similar to those offered to NATO members. But Ukraine's preference remains NATO membership as the best security guarantee to prevent further Russian aggression. Ukraine has continued to reject the U.S. push for ceding territory to Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw its forces from the part of the Donetsk region still under its control as a key condition for peace.

The U.S. officials on Monday said there is consensus on about 90% of the U.S.-authored peace plan, and that Russia has indicated it is open to Ukraine joining the European Union, something it previously said it did not object to. The Russian President has cast Ukraine's bid to join NATO, however, as a major threat to Moscow's security and a reason for launching the full-scale invasion in February 2022. The Kremlin has demanded that Ukraine renounce the bid for alliance membership as part of any prospective peace settlement. Asked whether the negotiations could be over by Christmas, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said trying to predict a potential time frame for a peace deal was a "thankless task."

Humanoid robots take center stage at Silicon Valley summit, but skepticism remains



Chinese firms dominated the expo section of this week's summit, held Thursday and Friday. The conference's most prevalent humanoids were those made by China's Unitree, in part because researchers in the U.S. buy the relatively cheap model to test their own software. In the U.S., the advent of generative AI chatbots like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini has jolted the decades-old robotics industry in different ways. Investor excitement has poured money into ambitious startups aiming to build hardware that will bring a physical presence to the latest AI.

But it's not just crossover hype—the same technical advances that made AI chatbots so good at language have played a role in teaching robots how to get better at performing tasks. Paired with computer vision, robots powered by "visual-language" models are trained to learn about their surroundings. One of the most prominent skeptics is robotics pioneer Rodney Brooks, a co-founder of Roomba vacuum maker iRobot who wrote in September that "today's humanoid robots will not learn how to be dexterous despite the hundreds of millions, or perhaps many billions of dollars, being donated by VCs and major tech companies to pay for their training." Brooks didn't attend but his essay was frequently mentioned. Also missing was anyone speaking for Tesla CEO Elon Musk's development of a humanoid called Optimus, a project that the billionaire is designing to be "extremely capable" and sold in high volumes. Musk said three years ago that people can probably buy an Optimus "within three to five years." The conference's organizer, Alaoui, founder and general partner of ALM Ventures, previously worked on driver attention systems for the automotive industry and sees parallels between humanoids and the early years of self-driving cars. Near the entrance to the summit venue, just blocks from Google's headquarters, is a museum exhibit showing Google's bubble-shaped 2014 prototype of a self-driving car. Eleven years later, robotaxis operated by Google affiliate Waymo are constantly plying the streets nearby. Some robots with human elements are already being tested in workplaces. Oregon-based Agility Robotics announced shortly before the conference that it is bringing its tote-carrying warehouse robot Digit to a Texas distribution facility run by Mercado Libre, the Latin American e-commerce giant. Much like the Olaf robot, it has inverted legs that are more birdlike than human. Industrial robots performing single tasks are already commonplace in car assembly and other manufacturing. They work with a level of speed and precision that's difficult for today's humanoids—or humans themselves—to match. The head of a robotics trade group founded in 1974 is now lobbying the U.S. government to develop a stronger national strategy to advance the development of homegrown robots, be they humanoids or otherwise. We have a lot of strong technology, we have the AI expertise here in the U.S.," said Jeff Burnstein, president of the Association for Advancing Automation, after touring the expo. "So I think it remains to be seen who is the ultimate leader in this. But right now, China has certainly a lot more momentum on humanoids."

Disney's contribution to the field, a walking robotic version of "Frozen" character Olaf, will be roaming on its own through Disneyland theme parks in Hong Kong and Paris early next year. Entertaining and highly complex robots that resemble a human—or a snowman—are already here, but the timeline for "general purpose" robots that are a productive member of a workplace or household is farther away. Even at a conference designed to build enthusiasm for the technology, held at a Computer History Museum that's a temple to Silicon Valley's previous breakthroughs, skepticism remained high that truly humanlike robots will take root anytime soon. "The humanoid space has a very, very big hill to climb," said Cosima du Pasquier, founder and CEO of Haptica Robotics, which works to give robots a sense of touch. "There's a lot of research that still needs to be solved." The Stanford University postdoctoral researcher came to the conference in Mountain View, California, just a week after incorporating her startup. "The first customers are really the people here," she said. Researchers at the consultancy McKinsey & Company have counted about 50 companies around the world that have raised at least \$100 million to develop humanoids, led by about 20 in China and 15 in North America.

China is leading in part due to government incentives for component production and robot adoption and a mandate last year "to have a humanoid ecosystem established by 2025," said McKinsey partner Ani Kelkar. Displays by

Pollution woes: Delhi government directs schools to shift from hybrid to online mode up to Class-5

Amid the ongoing spell of hazardous air in the national capital, the Delhi government on Monday (December 15, 2025) directed schools to shift classes up to Grade 5 to the online mode. The Delhi High Court, meanwhile, advised advocates and parties-in-person to appear through videoconferencing in matters listed before it and the district courts "in view of the prevailing weather conditions". The city logged an air quality index (AQI) of 427 ('severe') on Monday, marginally lower than the season's highest reading of 461 ('severe plus') recorded a day earlier, as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Delhi is likely to breathe 'very poor' category air on Tuesday (December 16), as per official data.

Several other cities in the National Capital Region (NCR), including Ghaziabad, Noida, and Greater Noida, also recorded 'severe' category pollution during the day.

Education Minister Ashish Sood termed the decision to suspend physical classes for younger students as a "preventative and necessary step" to protect them from the "adverse effects of air pollution". In a circular, the Directorate of Education (DoE) directed the heads of government, government-aided and private schools to adhere to the guidelines and disseminate the information immediately. By evening, parents were informed through WhatsApp groups, the principals said. Classes for other students, except for those in Grades 10 and 12, will continue to be conducted in the hybrid mode, combining in-person and online teaching, as per the December 13 circular, the DoE order said. Students in these grades have been exempt in view of the approaching board examinations, said an official. For grades where hybrid mode has been made available, the option to choose between online and in-person teaching rests with the students. 'Very poor' days ahead in a statement, the Centre's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the city's AQI is likely to remain in the 'very poor' category



over the coming week.

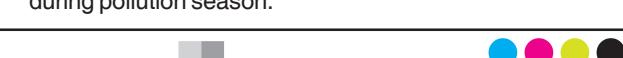
As per the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas, the major factor behind the spike in air pollution is not emissions but a feeble western disturbance across north-west India. "This prevailing meteorological condition has marked reduction in wind speed, at times becoming calm, a shift in wind direction from westerly to easterly, and an increase in moisture content in the lower atmosphere," it said in a statement on December 13. AQI is a measurement of air pollution on a scale of 0-500. A higher value suggests an increase in toxicity. An AQI reading between 201 and 300 is considered 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', 401 and 450 'severe', and 451 and 500 'severe plus'. Every winter, air pollution spikes in Delhi-NCR and many parts of the larger Indo-Gangetic Plains, mainly due to meteorological factors such as lower wind speeds and a drop in temperature. Pollution from stubble burning during October and November and bursting of firecrackers during the festive season worsen air quality and add to the emissions from vehicles and dust.

Surge in patients with respiratory issues in past two days, say doctors

With Delhi grappling with the season's worst air quality, there has been a surge in the number of patients with respiratory issues at city hospitals in the past two days, according to doctors. Resurgence of health issues has been noticed in patients whose conditions had stabilised, they added.

Doctors pointed out that persistent dry cough, fatigue, and difficulty in breathing were common issues facing people of all ages. These were particularly severe in the elderly, children, and those with comorbidities, they said. There has been an increase in patient footfall by 25% in the last couple of days, according to Dr. Neeraj Gupta, a pulmonologist at Safdarjung Hospital.

"Majority of the patients have existing respiratory issues. In the last two days, symptoms have resurfaced even in those who had been stabilised in the past few days," Mr. Gupta said. He said majority of patients are those with issues such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma. Elderly patients and children have been frequenting the out-patient department, he added. Doctors have advised patients to stay indoors, wear masks, and, in some cases, prescribed steroids to ease symptoms. This spike in patients comes within a week after the Union Health Ministry informed the Rajya Sabha that there is no conclusive data to establish a direct correlation to death or disease due to pollution. 'Conclusive evidence' Doctors, however, said



India-EU pact to be 'mother of all trade deals', no member state opposed: Goyal



Piyush Goyal, India-EU trade deal, India-EU free trade agreement, India-EU fta, European Council, Narendra Modi, carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), Indian express news, current affairsPrime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister Piyush Goyal at an event to mark a decade of Startup India in New Delhi, Friday.Describing the upcoming India-EU trade agreement as the "mother of all trade deals", Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said none of the 27 European Union (EU) members are opposed to it. The deal, which is expected to be signed on January 26, will be "comprehensive" in nature and will take care of interests and sensitivities on both sides.

"None of the EU states, in various high-level meetings, has opposed the trade agreement with India. The deal would be the mother of all deals, most comprehensive and mutually advantageous for both parties involved," Goyal told reporters here. An official said, "New Delhi has got a good deal in sectors that we are interested in, and we have also given the EU a good deal in the sectors they are interested in. India and the EU are not in competition as we share complementarities, which makes the partnership win-win." To a question on differences between India and the EU over the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), the official said that national interest has been taken care of during the negotiations and that includes the interests of farmers. In June 2025, reported that India was also working on a "new chapter" aimed at extending long-term regula-

tory certainty in the domestic manufacturing sector to attract investment from the EU. New Delhi has been working on the chapter to decide where India will allow 100 per cent FDI. The conditions, such as 'local employment', 'local value addition', and 'use of local raw materials', were also being negotiated. India had allowed 100 per cent FDI in telecom for the UK under the trade deal. In the insurance sector, the FDI ceiling was kept at 74 per cent, providing investment certainty for UK insurers. A similar strategy was followed in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) deal. Investments have been a key feature in trade deals with Western trade partners. In exchange for lowering tariffs, India has been seeking investment commitments. India and the four-nation EFTA – an intergovernmental grouping comprising Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland – signed a trade pact in March 2024, under which EFTA countries have committed to invest \$100 billion in India over 15 years. New Zealand has also committed \$20 billion in investments. The India-EU trade agreement has been decades in the making. Both have finally come close to signing the agreement after talks were relaunched in July 2022. Negotiations were abandoned in 2013 after it was launched first in 2007. However, the talks seem to have gathered urgency after the Trump administration drastically changed its trade policies, ramping up protectionist measures, forcing trade partners to explore newer markets. India is aiming to gain market access in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery and the EU is expected to get market access for its automobiles and beverages. A key driver of the trade deal has also been the shared challenge of China. Indian industry has been encountering pricing challenges, especially while trying to scale up the solar energy sector. The EU is concerned about China's dominance in critical technologies since China holds a leading global manufacturing position in several areas, exposing the EU to potential risks. Breaking away from the trade deal signed earlier, the NDA government has had a Look West trade policy that entailed signing trade agreements with developed countries where traders from both countries were not competing in similar sectors. While the US trade deal continues to be stuck, India has sealed trade agreements with Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

When markets wobbled, diversification paid: multi-asset funds lead the returns race



markets wobbled, diversification paid, multi-asset funds, Sensex, Sensex closes at, Domestic stock markets, global stock markets, foreign portfolio investment, BSE benchmark Sensex, Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Indian express business, business news, business articles, business news storiesFor those favouring no risk: the interest rate on State Bank of India's one-year term deposit is currently 6.25 per cent, with the Reserve Bank of India having slashed the repo rate by 125 basis points to 5.25 per cent in 2025. As markets swung between optimism and uncertainty over the past year, mutual fund strategies that spread bets across asset classes emerged clear winners. Multi-asset mutual fund schemes delivered superior returns compared with both equity-focused and balanced funds, benefiting significantly from robust gains in commodity prices, particularly those of gold and silver.

By design, multi-asset schemes invest across a minimum of three asset classes — typically equity, debt, and commodities — with at least 10 per cent allocated to each. The 10 top-performing multi-asset funds have grown, on average, at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.26 per cent over the past year and 21.01 per cent over a three-year period, data compiled by The Indian Express showed. In comparison, the top 10 equity-focused funds have grown at a CAGR of 16.62 per cent over the past year, with only seven of them posting double-digit returns and four providing a return higher than the average of the 10 multi-asset funds considered. This is at a time when the volatile Sensex rose 9 per cent in 2025.

markets wobbled, diversification paid, multi-asset funds, Sensex, Sensex closes at, Domestic stock markets, global stock markets, foreign portfolio investment, BSE benchmark Sensex, Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), Indian express business, business news, business articles, business news storiesOn the other hand, the top 10 hybrid or more balanced funds which have provided the highest return over a three-year period delivered a return of just around 9 per cent CAGR over the past year, with only two of them giving double-digit returns and only one outperforming any of the multi-asset funds considered (ICICI Prudential Equity & Debt Fund Direct Growth returned 14.96 per cent, outpacing UTI Multi Asset Allocation Fund Direct Growth's return of 14.54 per cent).

For those favouring no risk: the interest rate on State Bank of India's one-year term deposit is currently 6.25 per cent, with the Reserve Bank of India having slashed the repo rate by 125 basis points to 5.25 per cent in 2025. The diversified structure of multi-asset funds allows fund managers to rebalance portfolios in response to changing market conditions, helping smooth returns and reduce overall risk. As a result, multi-asset funds have been better positioned to capture upside opportunities across asset classes while cushioning portfolios against downturns in any single segment. The rally in precious metals offered a crucial diversification advantage to multi-asset funds at a time when equity markets were volatile and debt returns remained relatively modest. The popularity of multi-asset funds is also visible in data provided by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), where these funds saw among the highest net inflows in December (Rs 7,425.98 crore), with only schemes focusing on exchange-traded funds (ETFs) beating them (Rs 24,846.18 crore). A similar trend was also seen in November. In December 2024, multi-asset funds had seen net inflows of just Rs 2,574.72 crore, outpaced by mid-, small-cap, sectoral, and flexi-cap funds, among others.

The outperformance of multi-asset funds is primarily due to their investments in gold and silver, which have been the most in-demand assets over the past year. Gold surged nearly 76 per cent in that period, while silver skyrocketed 168 per cent, according to Multi Commodity Exchange of

India (MCX) data. This rise was led by safe-haven demand amid uncertain global geopolitical conditions and weakening of the US dollar. In comparison, the benchmark Nifty 50 and Sensex rose only around 8-10 per cent in that time. Of the top 10 multi-asset funds, the best performers have a significant portion allocated to commodities. For example, the Nippon India Multi Asset Allocation Fund Direct Growth fund, which delivered an over 25 per cent return over a year, has 17 per cent of its portfolio allocated to commodities. The Aditya Birla Sun Life Multi Asset Omni FoF Direct Growth scheme has provided 24 per cent returns over the past year, and has 22 per cent of its assets in commodities. While the schemes do not disclose the exact breakdown of their commodity investments, both heavily invest in "gold ETFs and any other mode of investment in commodities", according to their websites. "People should look at multi-asset funds as an avenue to maximise their risk-adjusted returns," said Devender Singh, fund manager at Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company. "Having multiple asset classes reduces your market risk substantially. The recent global volatility on both political and economic front has led to sharp outperformance of precious metals, thus helping multi-asset funds outperform the equity market last year." "...they (multi-asset funds) may have another good year, but outperformance to equity depends on factors such as a US trade deal, monsoons, and corporate earnings. If all these are lacklustre, multi asset funds might outperform again," he added.

Among the 10 equity-focused funds referred to, the four that have delivered an over 20.26 per cent return (average return of the 10 multi-asset funds) over the past year are Edelweiss US Technology Equity FoF Direct Growth (24 per cent), Motilal Oswal BSE Enhanced Value Index Fund Direct Growth (27 per cent), ICICI Prudential Transportation and Logistics Fund Direct Growth (22 per cent), and ICICI Prudential Nifty Auto Index Fund Direct Growth (21 per cent). Of these, the scheme by Edelweiss is based on a US-based JP Morgan fund and thus does not depend on the domestic equity market. Out of 10 hybrid funds, only ICICI Prudential Equity & Debt Fund Direct Growth fund (15 per cent) and SBI Balanced Advantage Fund Direct Growth fund (11 per cent) have delivered double-digit returns over the past year. The 10 hybrid funds considered have delivered a return of 16.45 per cent CAGR in the three-year period.

Challenges galore for Nirmala Sitharaman ahead of Union Budget

As the Budget Day draws closer, there are several challenges, both internal and external, that need to be addressed head-on to make the Indian economy truly resilient and robust. For Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who is preparing to present the Union Budget for a record ninth consecutive time, it is a defining fiscal moment amid external headwinds and internal tests. The key challenge is to balance growth with fiscal discipline and provide momentum for fiscal, labour and tax reforms. Though India has been the fastest-growing major economy for several years now, it needs to step up further to escape the middle-income trap and become a developed nation by 2047. The Budget 2026-27 provides an opportunity to bring about greater ease of doing business in the economy. Reforms, especially in terms of eliminating the regulatory excesses in the system, need to be carried out much more quickly compared to the GST restructuring and implementation of the labour codes. Only then will it be possible to push growth to the levels needed to become a developed economy. On the one hand, India's real GDP growth is projected in the range of 7% to 7.5%, in contrast to a slowing global economy. On the other hand, the eroding value of the Indian rupee — predicted to touch the 100- mark against the US dollar in the months ahead — poses a complex policy trade-off. A stronger dollar, coupled with tariff-induced capital flows, would increase import bills, exert upward pressure on inflation and complicate fiscal planning. The government will have to weigh exchange rate realities into Budget forecasts, potentially conservatively estimating both revenue and subsidy costs.

The outperformance of multi-asset funds is primarily due to their investments in gold and silver, which have been the most in-demand assets over the past year. Gold surged

Soha Ali Khan shares how her and Kunal Kemmu's love languages differ: 'He said, I don't think we can be friends'



Soha Ali Khan and Kunal Kemmu's love story started in the most unexpected ways. From casual messages that went nowhere, to an ice-cream plan that almost didn't happen, their journey began with a funny clash of food choices. In conversation with Her Circle, the Bollywood actor revealed how two very different love languages worked out perfectly in the end. Talking about who asked whom out first, Soha shared, "Kunal would send me messages saying, 'So, what are you doing tonight?' and I'd be like, 'Nothing', and then he would say nothing, and I'd be like, 'What a weirdo, what does this mean?' Surely, you should follow up'. But he never followed up. And then once he said, 'Do you want to go out for ice cream?' and I said, 'I don't eat ice cream. I eat fat-free sorbet.' to which he said, 'I don't think we can be friends', because how can you not eat?"

Further elaborating how their love languages differ, she added, "His love language is food. So that was a big hurdle in our relationship. He likes to cook, and he likes to feed people. And for me, loving someone is not feeding them. It's probably conversing, looking into their eyes, something like that." Reflecting on this, Tanni Choudhury, a faculty member at Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences, shared that there are five love languages through which people express their love and affection to their partners. "While you and your partner don't need to have the same love language, it is important to communicate in their respective love language to make them feel most loved," she told indianexpress.com.

Words of affirmationWords of Affirmation refer to verbal compliments or words of appreciation that are best ex-

pressed in simple, straightforward statements such as: "You look radiant in that dress," or "I really appreciate your washing the dishes tonight." Use encouraging, kind, and humble words, and keep in mind the manner in which you speak to your partner when expressing these words of affirmation. Writing a love letter or setting a goal to compliment your partner every day for a month are other novel ways. Soha and Kunal have different love languages. In a time of crisis, physical touch is a powerful way to communicate love, when we need to feel loved more than anything. (Source: Instagram/@sakpataudi) Quality time means undivided attention, togetherness, and quality conversation as central aspects of this love language. When two individuals share their needs, feelings, and desires in a sympathetic, friendly, and uninterrupted way, they are expressing this powerful love language. Some quality activities that you can include are taking a walk together and making a lunch/dinner appointment for your partner. The key is to create memories of love.

Receiving giftsReceiving gifts as a primary love language symbolises thoughtfulness that speaks more loudly than a gift you hold in your hands. This set of people shows their love and affection, and they feel loved when they are given gifts. The idea is the thought expressed in securing the gift and giving it as an expression of love. Making a DIY gift for your partner or trying a parade of gifts are examples that you can incorporate into your romantic lives. Acts of Service, as a love language, centres around the willingness to do activities that help share the responsibilities of everyday life with your partner. These are individual actions you perform to express affection. One way you can include this if this is your partner's love language is by making a list of requests your partner has made and selecting one each week as an expression of love. Physical touch includes hand-holding, embracing, and kissing as ways of communicating emotional love to your partner. It could consist of simple, implicit touches of love, such as putting your hand on your partner's shoulder as you pour a cup of tea. In a time of crisis, physical touch is a powerful way to communicate love, when we need to feel loved more than anything. It indicates that you care and offers a unique opportunity to express love. Reaching out to hold your partner's hand and give a hug when they arrive home are ways to incorporate this love language.

What celebrity nutritionist Pooja Makhija has to say about gluten consumption: 'A regular slice of bread has about 14000 microorganism parts...'

Strolling along the bread aisle in a supermarket can leave you a little too confused. Between focaccia, garlic and rye, the options seem endless. But multiple visits to the washroom after scarfing down a delicious sandwich is on no one's to-do list. As such, choosing the right kind of bread that supports your gut health is key to a good diet. In a conversation with Masoom Minawala on her podcast, celebrity nutritionist Pooja Makhija discussed the differences between regular and sourdough bread and what makes the latter superior.

"Sourdough, I love. Sourdough can be rye, can be anything. We are just using the sourdough culture and vastly reducing the gluten. Most breads are yeast-fermented; sourdough has a microbial culture that digests the gluten, the protein in the carb. It fluffs it up, and therefore, we get bread. Because of this culture that we use, we reduce the gluten content vastly. A regular slice of bread has about 14000 microorganism parts of gluten. A sourdough bread has only 200. It's not gluten-free, but it has less gluten," she shared with the host. According to Deepika Sharma, personal fitness expert with a focus on functional nutrition, rye and rye bread are both naturally high in fibre. Rich in slow-digesting carbs that help keep your blood sugar steady, it also contains arabinoxylans, "basically food for your good gut bacteria". So it's not just about sugar spikes, it's also about how your gut holds up over time, said Sharma. Sourdough, on the other hand, is more of a technique. According to her, like Makhija also mentioned, it can be made with rye, wheat, spelt, whatever flour you choose.

"What makes it different is the wild fermentation. Instead of commercial yeast, it uses natural bacteria and yeast (mostly lactobacilli) that slowly break things down, including carbs and gluten," she explained, adding that the process is what makes it easier to digest, lowers the glycemic load, and even reduces compounds that block mineral absorption. "If you're eating rye sourdough, that's the sweet spot, you get both the grain and the fermentation benefits," said Sharma. If it's a basic rye vs a good white sourdough, then the sourdough often comes out ahead, especially if it's slow-fermented and made with whole grains, she added. Dr Samuel Ayofemi Olalekan Adeyeye, Department of Food Technology, Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science, Chennai, added that what makes sourdough so popular



among gut health fanatics is the fact that its natural fermentation process makes it healthier for the heart compared to regular white or whole-wheat bread. Fermentation, he added, also produces prebiotics, probiotics, and short-chain fatty acids that improve gut health, reduce inflammation, and help regulate blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

"By slowing carbohydrate digestion and enhancing insulin sensitivity, sourdough and other fermented foods can lower fasting glucose and HbA1c levels. Additionally, their bioactive compounds contribute to reduced LDL cholesterol and anti-inflammatory effects, promoting overall metabolic and heart health," he elaborated. And like Sharma previously mentioned, choosing whole-grain sourdough further boosts fibre intake, aiding digestion and maintaining healthy blood pressure. Sourdough's fermentation, driven by lactic acid bacteria and yeasts, also enhances heart and gut health through complex biochemical interactions. These microbes pre-digest carbohydrates and proteins, improve mineral absorption, and produce bioactive compounds such as short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), antioxidants, and peptides that support gut integrity and reduce inflammation, he added. To sum it all up, whole-grain sourdough is what you should pick from supermarket shelves, as its soluble fibre helps lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol, while its lower glycemic index supports steady blood sugar and insulin levels. The fermentation also enhances the absorption of minerals like magnesium and potassium, which are vital for maintaining a healthy heart rhythm and blood pressure, and increases the antioxidant content that protects cells from oxidative damage.

Rujuta Diwekar shares 3 tips for working women '...so that you sleep like a princess'

Celebrity nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar recently shared three 'small' tips for working women to keep them active. "It's always the small stuff that wins. If you haven't begun or stopped midway, start now," she wrote on Threads. Here's what she listed:

*The date for working women who always work as an evening snack*Break your sitting with 5 squats. Once in the morning and once in the evening*A couple of cashews to end your dinner with so that you sleep like a princessHaving a date in the evening serves as a natural, nutrient-dense snack that helps prevent late-evening sugar cravings, said consultant dietitian Garima Goyal. "Dates are rich in natural sugars like glucose and fructose, providing a quick energy boost without processed additives. They also offer fibre, magnesium and B vitamins that help stabilise blood sugar while curbing the urge to binge on biscuits, coffee or packaged snacks after work. For women who experience energy dips around 4-6 pm, this can be a simple and wholesome fix that prevents overeating at dinner," said Goyal.

Long hours of sitting can reduce blood circulation, slow metabolism, and impair insulin sensitivity. According to Goyal, short bouts of movement, like squats, activate large muscle groups, boost blood flow, and help keep joints and the lower back flexible. "It is a practical and realistic way for



women with desk jobs to add micro-movements into their day, which in turn improves posture, focus, and energy levels," said Goyal.

Ending dinner with a couple of cashews supports better sleep and recovery. Cashews are a source of tryptophan, magnesium, and healthy fats that can help relax the nervous system and stabilise blood sugar through the night. "Eating a small portion of healthy fats at the end of a meal slows digestion slightly, preventing sharp glucose drops that can interfere with sleep. The phrase 'sleep like a princess' isn't just poetic; it captures the importance of good sleep for hormonal balance, skin health, and morning energy," shared Goyal.

Sachin Tendulkar & Roger Federer: The Gods of Small Things



Roger Federer has checked in at the Australian Open, bringing with him hope and humility. In Melbourne to play an exhibition doubles game at the year's first Grand Slam, he coaxed the world to watch 19-year-old Brazilian Joao Fonseca, an exciting prospect that he thought had it in him to disrupt the overwhelming Jannik Sinner-Carlos Alcaraz duopoly. "I think he's a little bit like me," he would add and the world would collectively google "Joao Fonseca".

Federer didn't sound convincing. He was just being nice, a trait common to true greats. The "little bit like me" that he mentioned was a sky-high bar that a majority of pros can just stare at but never clear. Many media-created Baby Federers failed to reach that level of greatness, lazily thrust on them. But Federer hyping up a teen with just two ATP titles came with an assurance – retirement hadn't dimmed the grace and modesty of the understated Swiss. Like was the case all through his career, when the 20-Slam legend speaks, it's rarely about himself. Not the kind to bore the world with nostalgic tales of his glory days when he was in the thick of things, he talks about tennis' present and future, when he is a mere bystander. The same can be said about Sachin Tendulkar. A few weeks back, Tendulkar was seen with India's other national icon – Amitabh Bachchan. Both were promoting a high-profile tennis-ball tournament. The over-excited anchor would come up with cheesy shayari, call them nation's "priceless jewels" and also use popular honorifics – Mahanayak and God. It was when the 'God' reference didn't stop that Tendulkar intervened. "So how does the God of cricket feel when he has descended to the ground?" the over-eager host would ask. Tendulkar would cut him short. "God gave me an opportunity to play cricket, I am not The God of cricket. God ensured that I crossed the boundary line holding a cricket bat. I gave my best and He (God) has been kind to me." Unlike Federer, a star from a nation of about 9 million known to mind its own business, Tendulkar has to deal with a nosy and noisy billion-plus strong fandom. He has to be guarded, restrained and ultra-cautious.

Like Federer, he can't even talk up a player. If Tendulkar says he saw "a little bit of him" in a batsman, Indian cricket would go into a tizzy. There would be pressure on the 'chosen one', he would get fast-tracked, rise in the ranks and be an overnight celebrity. Even when he offers career-changing tips to a batsman, read Virat Kohli, it needs to be a secret. Kohli has spoken about Tendulkar helping him and mentioned specific tweaks he suggested. But it is never the other way round. It's the modesty, and the respectful denials that they aren't celestial avatars, that give Federer and Tendulkar the GOAT status despite others breaking their records. (X) It's the modesty, and the respectful denials that they aren't celestial avatars, that give Federer

and Tendulkar the GOAT status despite others breaking their records. (X) With Tendulkar, like Federer, it is never about him. Those with God-like status long to be treated as mortals. And it is their poise and grace that makes them stay grounded and deal with the heady feeling of fame, the opium that most fail to handle. And also their upbringing.

Federer and Tendulkar weren't born like they are now. The tennis prodigy had heavy metal on headphones at full blast and once even dyed his hair peroxide-blond. Tendulkar wasn't that wild. He was a regular naughty kid but there was one red flag – he loved John McEnroe, wore a red headband when playing tennis. Both would turn up to be ideal role models – champions who weren't arrogant or threw tantrums. Swiss psychologist Christian Marcolli, who worked with a young Federer, always tells his one-time ward one thing – "What you do on the court is extraordinary, but how you handle your life to me is out of this world".

His friends vouch that those around Federer, with wife Mirka in the starring role, deserve a Nobel prize for sculpting the champ. On his 50th birthday, Tendulkar had told this newspaper a similar story. "The atmosphere at home helped – they never made me feel like a superstar. It was normal. Once I walked into home, they would be happy but it was a balanced celebration. At the most, mother would cook something. Our way of showing appreciation, love – and that's bigger than anything." Down to earth

It's the modesty, and the respectful denials that they aren't celestial avatars, that give them the GOAT status despite others breaking their records. Retired American player Sam Querrey, as guest on Patrick McEnroe's pre-Australian Open podcast TennisWorthy, speaks about booking his tickets for the Federer exhibition game in Melbourne. He played the Big Three but never beat the Swiss champ. "One win over Rafa, two over Novak, zero over Roger. ... You're always a little more nervous ... crowd was always behind him. That was part of his superpower."

Patrick acknowledges that Djokovic and Nadal are "unbelievable players" but Federer has "a kind of mystique about him." It's the mystic Federer tries hard to wipe out. Querrey, in his first season on tour, had his first Federer sighting in a lift. And it was the superstar who broke the ice. "Welcome to the tour, Sam," Federer said. Decades later, Sam can't forget the warmth. Patrick also has a story. In his first year as a TV commentator, he went to interview Federer. Still a sideline TV pundit unsure about his broadcasting skills, a nervous Patrick walked up to the man who had just won a stunning match. Again it was Iceman who broke the ice. Before the interview began, Federer told Patrick that years back in the final of an ATP event in Basel, Switzerland, he had "ball-boycied" for him. Patrick, still obliged, says, "That's him ... he made it about me, this little guy who was a scrub on the tour". Both knew they were not bigger than the game they played. Federer in his prime, even in Switzerland, would sweep the clay court, level it by dragging the net on it, so that the next to come would have the surface play-worthy. Tendulkar's last action on the cricket field as an international cricketer was a bow to the pitch. That day Tendulkar was telling the world, he is no God, he is someone who worshiped his sport.

'Was given 50-50 chance of surviving': Damien Martyn back home after returning from induced coma



In his note, Martyn also thanked the paramedics and the Gold Coast University hospital. "There are so many wonderful people in this world ... from paramedics (at Mermaid Waters Ambulance), doctors & nurses (at Gold Coast University Hospital) ... to family, friends and people I didn't even know. I feel like I met all these fantastic people in the past 3 weeks, or they reached out to me through messages of love and support." When the news of his meningitis had broken, many of his Australian teammates and Cricket Australia came out in his support. Adam Gilchrist had spoken on behalf of the Martyn family and said, "He is getting the best of treatment and [Martyn's partner] Amanda and his family know that a lot of people are sending their prayers and best wishes."

Roger Federer opens up on becoming Carlos Alcaraz's full-time coach: 'Maybe I could give him some advice'



20-time Grand Slam champion and tennis legend Roger Federer has ruled out taking over as a full-time coach to Carlos Alcaraz, citing family commitments, adding that he would, however, be open to helping him out with some suggestions that may improve his game.

The 44-year-old admitted that the Spaniard may not even need a coach to win the 2026 Australian Open, considering the way he was playing right now, but did add that he would have to identify the right person in the future. "I'm out, I'm definitely out. Maybe I could give him some advice on the periphery but everybody knows I'm too busy with my children and my life at the minute".

"I think he can get [the career Grand Slam] with a coach or without a coach, he is that good obviously. A good coach definitely will be helping. I don't know if he has already done

press here and talked about his Ferrero situation a little bit, which is obviously going to be a little bit uncomfortable but it's something you just have to do as a pro," Federer told TNT Sports. "But it is definitely going to be very important to him to find the right person in his corner and to be able to get the career Grand Slam at such a young age is incredible to be honest," he added.

The six-time Australian Open champion said that Jannik Sinner was the other favourite to win the title and

also named 10-time champion at Rod Laver Arena Novak Djokovic as the other contender. "[Jannik] Sinner is obviously the other big, big favourite and I believe Novak [Djokovic] will have a good shot as well," he said. Federer had compared Alcaraz's quest to winning his maiden Australian Open title to Rory McIlroy winning the Masters, adding that he hoped he would go on to win the tournament since he felt that would be "an unbelievable, special moment".

Outsider to crowd-puller: How Hans Niemann, once accused of cheating by Magnus Carlsen, has retraced the steps to credibility



American Grandmaster Hans Niemann is one of the most polarising figures in chess. His persona, of a master of the oxygen-consuming headline who turns stubbornness into a shield, makes him easy to detest, equally tough to idolise, and almost impossible to ignore.

He feels lost and confused when asked about his current standing in his career. "I'm at a point in my career where I'm honestly a bit lost. I feel like I'm just in a phase of confusion. Sometimes things go your way, sometimes they don't," Niemann tells . Much of that uncertainty comes from his inconsistent results in recent tournaments, especially in shorter time controls, where he has fluctuated from brilliant to average in a short span. Yet, he can take solace that the discourse around him centres on his play rather than his past. This return to normalcy shows how far he has come since the controversies that threatened to stall his career.

The global firestorm of Magnus Carlsen's cheating allegations once turned Niemann into an outsider. He was exposed to a level of online vitriol and isolation that would have broken many players, yet he seems to draw a strange energy from the same friction. He has his own way of tackling situations. Niemann teamed up with Vladimir Kramnik, the same former world champion who, like Carlsen, had once accused him of cheating and forfeited an online game in protest. Niemann reached out to Kramnik, and within a few months, he convinced him that he was worthy of the Russian's time, eventually training with him in Switzerland. He also filed a \$100 million lawsuit against Chess.com, Carlsen, and Hikaru Nakamura, whom he calls the "chess mafia," for tarnishing his image without proof, even forcing a settlement outside of court. Niemann likes to wage a war of personality against an establishment he claims is rigged

against him. That same "chess mafia" also indirectly spurred his project, Endgame.AI.

Opportunity in adversity Niemann has promoted Endgame.AI, an online chess platform that bills itself as a global, accessible alternative to giants like Chess.com. "For too long, chess has been controlled by insiders. That changes now. Endgame is breaking down barriers. No more gatekeepers, no more hidden deals," claims the website.

Business and politics have always attracted the young American. He says entrepreneurship has helped him build a support system without needing to depend on anyone. "I was always interested in the things that are happening in the world. I had a lot of friends who had started companies and were experienced in the Venture Capital world, or were entrepreneurs," he says. "The way the company started was a series of coincidences, just meeting people who had invested in my friends. And then I was surprised at how quickly the company took off. Obviously, my absolute focus is on becoming the best chess player I can be and maximizing my potential. But I also find it interesting to be, let's say, an entrepreneur or a CEO. I don't think it detracts too much from my chess. If anything, it's emboldening to have my own company and a team behind me. It gives you confidence and helps you weather certain storms," he adds. He leverages his own platforms to host one-on-one showdowns against top players, generating significant interest from both viewers and sponsors. In Kolkata, during the Tata Steel chess tournament, Niemann wore a serious look. He attributes this to the fatigue of playing so many tournaments back-to-back. Yet, when a fan held up a poster reading, "We love you Hans Niemann," he broke the mould and acknowledged the affection. He appreciated the huge crowd for the event. "It's a great step for chess to have so many spectators. To have that type of enthusiasm is really important. I think (with) this many fans... I've never really experienced (anything like it) outside of India. In Goa, it was similar, but honestly, we should play in a bigger ballroom next time. We can fit more people. So I would love to see chess in a stadium or the largest possible venue," he says. Now, Niemann is set to feature in the Tata Steel Masters event in Wijk aan Zee and has also been nominated by the organisers of Freestyle Chess as a contender for the upcoming FIDE Freestyle World Championship. As new opportunities arise, Niemann understands that in the digital age, being hated can be as powerful as being liked, so long as you are not forgotten.

Ajinkya Rahane opts out of Mumbai's remaining Ranji Trophy matches

GNS News Agency, Jan 20

Veteran Mumbai batter Ajinkya Rahane has informed the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) that he won't be taking part in the rest of the red-ball season due to 'personal reasons'. Mumbai will play the first of their remaining two Ranji Trophy matches against Hyderabad away from home from January 22-25 before returning to their home turf to play their last league phase match against Delhi at the MCA-BKC ground from January 29-February 1.

The Mumbai team for the Hyderabad match is scheduled to be picked on January 17th. "We will be picking the Mumbai team for their second stage of league game, Rahane won't be taking part as he has informed MCA that he won't be available for the remaining two red ball games," a source in the MCA told

The 37-year-old has been playing for Mumbai for the past two seasons and has been out of favour for national selection since last playing for India in July 2023. He is part of the IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders and will be playing in the upcoming season. For a batsman of his calibre, Rahane has had an ordinary season, having made only one hundred in four Ranji Trophy matches so far. It was before the current season that Rahane had announced that he would be stepping down as captain of the Mumbai cricket team. The Indian cricketer had announced his decision on social media, writing that it was time to groom a youngster for the role. Shardul Thakur took over from him as the new



captain of the state side. Mumbai went on to win the 2023-24 Ranji Trophy title, ending a seven-year drought, as well as the 2024-25 Irani Cup under his leadership. Rahane had said that he would continue to serve Mumbai cricket as a player after relinquishing the captaincy. "Captaining and winning championships with the Mumbai team has been an absolute honour. With a new domestic season ahead, I believe it's the right time to groom a new leader, and hence I've decided not to continue in the captaincy role," Rahane posted on X. He added, "I remain fully committed to giving my best as a player and will continue my journey with @MumbaiCricAssoc to help us win more trophies. Looking forward to the season." Mumbai enter the last two league phase matches on top of the Group D points table, with 24 points in five matches with three wins and two draws.

'Not even 5% of Rohit Sharma's achievements': Manoj Tiwary blasts India assistant coach Ten Doeschate for 'demoralising' comment

GNS News Agency, Jan 20 Former India batter Manoj Tiwary has lambasted the national team's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate for his comments on senior opener Rohit Sharma's lack of preparedness after the second ODI against New Zealand in Rajkot.

The 38-year-old Rohit, who had entered the 2026 calendar year as the No. 1 ODI batter, could not convert his starts in both innings in the series, falling for scores of 26 and 24, respectively. Shortly after the Kiwis levelled the series with a thumping win in the second ODI, Doeschate had reflected on Rohit being short on match time as a reason why he could not convert his starts after seeing off the new ball. Speaking at a recent event, Tiwary slammed his former IPL teammate for his comments in the press conference, affirming that the statements did not bode well when it came from within the dressing room.

"With a lot of respect, I would like to tell Ryan Ten Doeschate that he was with me for four years at KKR. No doubt he is a very good person, but the kind of comment he has made, I think, he should have thought about it. He has also played international cricket for the Netherlands. If you look at his performance in international cricket, I am saying this with all due respect, it is not even 5% of what Rohit has achieved in his career, not just as a batter but also as a captain," Tiwary told PTI.

VIDEO | Former India cricketer and politician Manoj Tiwary came out strongly in defence of Rohit Sharma, saying recent comments by assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate could dent the Indian captain's confidence and undermine his immense contribution to Indian cricket. On Bangladesh... pic.twitter.com/slpzEnx4hJWhen asked about Rohit's shifting batting style on Wednesday night, Doeschate told reporters: "I don't think it's a conscious approach. He's such a brutal player, but he's actually a touch player at the end of the day. He times the ball... so as soon as the wickets aren't very good, it's going to be difficult for



him to look in fluent mode like he normally is. "He's definitely not the sort of guy to play for himself. It's just a combination of the wickets being slightly difficult and maybe just being a little bit short on cricket leading into the series," he added.

The Dutchman would also go on to say that all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy invariably did not contribute on days where he was expected to fire when presented with an opportunity. Tiwary said it was demoralising for the players involved to come across such comments from their immediate backroom staff. "He has given the nation so much happiness by winning the Champions Trophy also and after that, talking like this, that too when he is in the team, not like he is sitting at home and commenting, he is a part of the management, and telling like this about your player is demoralising. I don't know why he said that. He has to reflect on this. I feel he must not make such comments," Tiwary added. Rohit had cracked his 33rd ODI century in Sydney against Australia in October 2025 and later backed it up with two fifties in the 2-1 series win against South Africa last month. He later turned up for Mumbai in two rounds of the Vijay Hazare Trophy, slamming a century and a duck in Jaipur.

'Devastated' Shammi Kapoor yelled when he heard of my wedding; married Neila Devi in the same temple we were to wed: Bina Ramani



Shammi Kapoor was just 24 when he married his first wife, actress Geeta Bali. Her untimely death due to smallpox in 1965 left the actor shattered and deeply lonely. Though Shammi was at the peak of his career, his personal life was marked by grief and emotional turmoil. Open to love again, his name was linked to two women between 1965 and 1969—actress Mumtaz and fashion designer Bina Ramani.

While Mumtaz reportedly declined his proposal as he expected her to give up her career, his equation with Bina was far more layered and complicated. In 2013, two years after Shammi Kapoor passed away at the age of 79, Bina Ramani released her memoir *Bird in a Banyan Tree: My Story*, where she candidly wrote about her turbulent relationship with the actor, before she unexpectedly married Andy Ramani. In a recent interview with ANI, Bina revisited the memories of meeting Shammi Kapoor for the first time. She recalled being introduced to him by Krishna Kapoor, Raj Kapoor's wife, whom she fondly addressed as Bhabhi ji. Despite Krishna Kapoor's subtle matchmaking efforts, Bina admitted she had already decided to keep her distance. Raj Kapoor, however, was against this matchmaking effort even though Bina was his 'rakhi sister'.

"I never allowed myself to fall in love with him," Bina said, explaining that she was conscious of not upsetting her family and was never immediately drawn to him. She described her first encounter with Shammi at Raj Kapoor's traditional Christmas Eve dinner, where Shammi silently tried to communicate his feelings through his eyes—something she deliberately ignored. She also listed why she was against this matchmaking effort—he was a widower with two small children, was a movie star with quite a reputation and was known for his love for alcohol and smoking. "Raj ji

had told bhabhi ji to not bring me there, yet she did and had warned Shammi about my presence. I met Raj ji and then was introduced to other members. When I met Shammi Kapoor, he looked straight into my eyes... I instantly looked away. I knew he was trying to talk to me through his eyes." Despite her resistance, Shammi continued to pursue her. At subsequent meetings, he expressed his love repeatedly, even in different languages, but Bina could never reciprocate. "I never fell in love with him," she reiterated—before pausing and adding, "But I began to love him, and I still do. It's a special kind of love. Mine was enduring love." "Shammi went on hunting for seven days, when I was suddenly introduced to this man, who was seven years older to me. I went to San Francisco," she recalled meeting the man she would eventually marry, Andy Ramani on the insistence of her parents. In her book, Bina wrote: "My parents weren't comfortable too as the thought of losing their daughter to a movie star with a terrible reputation for 'drinking' and 'womanising' was alarming. I had plans of eloping with Shammi, when my parents introduced me to Andy while Shammi was away on a seven-day tour."

She added it was her parents who threatened her to take her back to London. "We've shown you many men and you've said no, and Shammi Kapoor is not on, so either marry the next one or we go back to London and you come with us." She added: "I hated the option of London, so the next one who came along I got engaged to. It was Andy Ramani. I had no intention of marrying him, but a week before Shammi and I were to run away, Andy's mother put pressure on my parents to do the marriage before New Year's Eve. On December 31 the marriage took place." She recalled how he was devastated to learn, through a newspaper, about her sudden marriage to Andy Ramani while he was away. Shammi eventually married Neila Devi at the same temple where he had once promised to marry her. "I heard he yelled when he read the news. He had promised to marry me on January 2. He married Neila when he heard I was returning to India." Yet, despite everything, there was no bitterness between them. Shammi remained cordial with Bina and her second husband, even inviting them over. "Shammi got along well with George."

Who is Bina Ramani? Belonging to a rich Sindhi family from Britain, Bina is the sister of Binatone's Gulu Lalvani. A socialite who has set up restaurants, boutiques and was known for hanging with the international jet-set, it was at her restaurant in Delhi's Mehrauli that model Jessica Lal was shot dead by Manu Sharma.

Donald Trump faces backlash after saying Rob Reiner died due to 'incurable Trump derangement syndrome'; Seth Meyers says he 'feared' this

All of Hollywood and the rest of the world are mourning the loss of director Rob Reiner and wife Michele Singer. The couple were murdered in their own home, and their son Nick has been arrested since then. While people were busy sending out tributes and condolences to the Reiner family, US President Donald Trump spoke about Reiner's passing in a post on social media where he said that Reiner had a "mind-crippling disease known as TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME, sometimes referred to as TDS." Trump took to Truth Social and wrote, "A very sad thing happened last night in Hollywood. Rob Reiner, a tortured and struggling but once very talented movie director and comedy star, has passed away, together with his wife, Michele, reportedly due to the anger he caused others through his massive, unyielding, and incurable affliction with a mind-crippling disease known as TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME, sometimes referred to as TDS."

He continued and wrote, "He was known to have driven people crazy by his raging obsession with President Donald J. Trump, with his obvious paranoia reaching new heights as the Trump Administration surpassed all goals and expectations of greatness, and with the Golden Age of America upon us, perhaps like never before. May Rob and Michele rest in peace!" Naturally, these words did not sit right with a lot of people on the internet, who blasted him for his tone-deaf comments. Talk-show host Seth Meyers took it upon himself to talk about Reiner's unfortunate passing and Trump's words around it. He said on his show, "Rob was no fan of the president, and because of that the president was no fan of Rob. This is something everyone knew, but he still wanted to take the opportunity to go on social media and post his thoughts about this tragedy."

Meyers did not hold back and accused the president of not having even a modicum of "humanity". He said, "I feared that he was going to do this, and that it was going to cast a shadow on an already dark day. But it was even worse than I could have imagined. He made it about himself, because he is incapable of making it about anyone else. It was reported that the crime might have been committed by a



troubled family member, which makes it even more of a tragedy. But if you have an ounce of humanity, and you really need at least that amount." Jimmy Kimmel also addressed Trump's comments during the opening monologue of his show. He said, "What we need in a time like this is compassion and leadership. We did not get that from our president because he had none of it to give. Instead, we got a fool rambling about nonsense. Just when you think he can't get any lower, he finds a way to do it. It's so hateful and vile, and when my wife showed it to me for the first time, I thought it was fake. I thought, even for him, this is too much, but nothing is too much for him." Jimmy Fallon didn't talk about Trump's comments, but he did pay a small tribute to Rob. He said, "We're all very sad to hear about the passing of a friend and entertainment legend, Rob Reiner, and his wife, Michele. He was a frequent guest at the show, and everyone here would line up around the dressing room to say 'hi' or tell him something they loved. Everyone felt like they had a personal connection to Rob and his work. He was one of the smartest and most tremendous people that I have ever met. Thank you for being an inspiration to millions of people across the world. In the end, I am going to remember all the laughs that you gave us."

Rishab Shetty avoids naming Ranveer Singh as he says mimicry of Daivas makes him 'uncomfortable': 'It's sensitive, sacred'

Actor and director Rishab Shetty is no stranger to controversy, but recently, he found himself on the other side of the ordeal. The internet went into a frenzy when actor Ranveer Singh mimicked the Daivas while on stage at this year's IFFI in Goa. While the actor was trying to refer to Rishab's film, *Kantara Chapter 1*, the action was perceived as offensive and insensitive. Now, Rishab has addressed the issue, but without naming Ranveer Singh.

While attending the Behindwoods event in Chennai, Rishab said that because *Kantara* tackled a lot of religious aspects, he had consulted many elders and only proceeded with the project after getting their blessings. He also admitted that these kinds of actions make him feel uncomfortable. He insisted that some things are "cinema", but some parts of that cinema are "sensitive, sacred." He said, "That makes me uncomfortable. While much of the film is cin-



ema and performance, the daiva element is sensitive and sacred. Wherever I go, I request people not to perform it on stage or mock it. It is emotionally deeply connected to us." During a previous interaction with India Today,

Saif Ali Khan says he's still 'frightened' by the thought of being 'bedridden forever' after knife attack: 'Had lost feeling in my leg'



Earlier this year, a frightening incident unfolded at Saif Ali Khan's residence when an intruder broke into the house. The situation escalated when the actor confronted the intruder, leading to a violent struggle in which Saif sustained multiple injuries, including wounds to his neck and spine. Fortunately, he survived and made a swift recovery. Now, Saif has opened up about surviving the knife attack in a conversation with The Hollywood Reporter India.

Reflecting on how close the incident came to altering his life permanently, he said, "I feel incredibly lucky and blessed to have gotten away with it the way I did, because it was very close. There was a nick to my spinal cord, and that could have led to paralysis, because I had lost feeling in my leg for a while. And that concept of being bedridden forever, or being paralysed, is frightening, and still frightens

me. So I don't know if that means I've changed, but I'm appreciative that I am healthy, and that keeps me grateful." He further added that he has always viewed his life as a privilege, a belief that the incident may have only reinforced. "I've always kind of been grateful, and I know that every day is a blessing. This might have accentuated it slightly," he said and added, "I think I've always lived a certain way, knowing that it is a privilege, and that we're very lucky to even go through life the way we do."

Maintaining his trademark wit even while addressing the harrowing experience, Saif remarked, "And yeah, I get the feeling I have kind of nine lives. Having said this, I might be gone tomorrow, and then you can say, 'Oh my God, he just said nine lives.' But I've been very close very often." He added that the incident was "quite close, and scary." Previously, during an appearance on the *Twinkle Khanna and Kajol*-hosted chat show *Two Much*, the actor had recounted the terrifying sequence of events from that night. "Kareena had been out (the previous night), and I had just finished watching a movie with the boys (his children Taimur and Jeh). So, we went to sleep quite late, around two in the morning. After Kareena returned, we had a small chat before we turned in. Then, the maid came in and she said, 'Jeh baba ke kamre mein koi hai. Uske haath mein chaaku hai aur bol rahe hai usko paisa chahiye' (There's someone in Jeh's room. He has a knife in his hand, and he says he wants money)." He went on to describe how he reacted instinctively upon hearing the warning. "I kind of heard that and rolled out of bed. I barged into Jeh's room in the dark and I saw this guy standing over his bed with a knife. I tried to remember my training and blocked a couple of them. But then I felt a thump in my back that was really hard. By then, everyone was out of their rooms. Gita, our domestic help, aided me in this struggle and pushed the guy off me. She saved my life at that point because he had cut me everywhere. Then we locked him in a room."

Zaira Wasim demands 'unconditional apology' from Bihar CM after he removes a woman's hijab: 'Infuriating'

Former actor Zaira Wasim is "infuriated" by the recent action of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, where the latter pulled off a woman's hijab on the stage at a public event in Patna. She demanded "unconditional apology" from Kumar, and claimed that a woman's modesty and dignity are not "props to toy with." "A woman's dignity and modesty are not props to toy with. Least of all on a public stage. As a Muslim woman, watching another woman's niqab being pulled at so casually, accompanied by that nonchalant smile, was so infuriating." Zaira wrote on X on Monday night. "Power does not grant permission to violate boundaries. @NitishKumar owes that woman an unconditional apology," she added. A woman's dignity and modesty are not props to toy with. Least of all on a public stage. As a Muslim woman, watching another woman's niqab being pulled at so casually, accompanied by that nonchalant smile, was so infuriating. Power does not grant permission to violate... — Zaira Wasim (@ZairaWasimmm) December 15, 2025 A newly recruited AYUSH doctor in Patna was taken aback on Monday when Chief Minister Nitish Kumar pulled the hijab (veil) off her face, while she was receiving her letter of appointment. The incident, a video clip of which has gone viral on social media, took place at 'Samvad', the CM's secretariat, where appointment letters were given away to more than 1,000 AYUSH doctors. When it was the turn of Nusrat Parveen, who had turned up wearing a hijab across her face, the 75-year-old CM frowned and exclaimed, "What is this?" The chief minister, who stood atop a raised platform, then bent down and pulled the hijab down. The flustered appointee was, thereafter, hastily pulled aside by an official present on the occasion, while Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary, who stood beside Kumar, was seen tugging at the latter's sleeve, in an apparent bid to restrain him. Meanwhile, opposition parties like the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress shared the video clip on their social media accounts, and claimed that the incident was the latest proof of the JD(U) supremo's "unstable mental health". Defending the CM, JD(U) chief spokesperson Neeraj Kumar told The Indian Express, "One should look at the larger picture of what Nitish Kumar has done for women empowerment and minority welfare. A stray visual image should not be played up unnecessarily by the Opposition." Meanwhile, Zaira made her acting debut with Nitesh Tiwari's 2016 blockbuster sports drama *Dangal*. She also played the lead in Adyav Chandan's 2017 hit coming-of-age musical *Secret Superstar*. However, she quit the film industry and returned to her hometown in Kashmir before the release of her last film, Shonali Bose's 2019 family drama *The Sky Is Pink*. Also Read -- 25 years of Indian Cinema: 2016 was the year of *Dangal*, *Fan*, *Udta Punjab* and *Pink* Zaira cited the reason behind quitting films as the profession's interference in her faith. Earlier this year, Zaira tied the knot and shared pictures from her nikah on X with the caption, "Qubool hai." Zaira, 24, often keeps speaking out on social injustices against Muslims through her social media. Zaira slams Nitish Kumar for pulling a woman's hijab.

Former actor Zaira Wasim recently took to social media to express that she was "infuriated" by the actions of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, where the latter pulled



off a woman's hijab on the stage at a public event in Patna. She demanded an "unconditional apology" from Kumar, and claimed that a woman's modesty and dignity are not "props to toy with." "A woman's dignity and modesty are not props to toy with. Least of all on a public stage. As a Muslim woman, watching another woman's niqab being pulled at so casually, accompanied by that nonchalant smile, was so infuriating." Zaira wrote on X on Monday night. "Power does not grant permission to violate boundaries. @NitishKumar owes that woman an unconditional apology," she added. A woman's dignity and modesty are not props to toy with. Least of all on a public stage. As a Muslim woman, watching another woman's niqab being pulled at so casually, accompanied by that nonchalant smile, was so infuriating. A newly recruited AYUSH doctor in Patna was taken aback on Monday when Chief Minister Nitish Kumar pulled the hijab (veil) off her face, while she was receiving her letter of appointment. The incident, a video clip of which has gone viral on social media, took place at 'Samvad', the CM's secretariat, where appointment letters were given away to more than 1,000 AYUSH doctors. When it was the turn of Nusrat Parveen, who had turned up wearing a hijab across her face, the 75-year-old CM frowned and exclaimed, "What is this?" The chief minister, who stood atop a raised platform, then bent down and pulled the hijab down. The flustered appointee was, thereafter, hastily pulled aside by an official present on the occasion, while Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary, who stood beside Kumar, was seen tugging at the latter's sleeve, in an apparent bid to restrain him. Zaira was last seen in the movies in Shonali Bose's 2019 family drama *The Sky Is Pink*. She then quit the film business saying that the profession interfered with her faith.

Shruti Haasan switches to 'vacay mode' after months of work

Mumbai: Actress Shruti Haasan has finally carved out some time for herself after months of work, as she heads off on a long-overdue vacation. Shruti took to Instagram stories, where she shared a selfie onboard a flight. The actress looks every inch happy in the picture, which she captioned: "Vacay time after ages and ages."

The actress did not reveal where she was off to or when she would be back. Talking about Shruti, she was last seen in "Coolie," where she essayed the role of Preeti Rajasekar in the film, which also starred the titans of Indian cinema like Rajinikanth, Nagarjuna Akkineni, Malayalam actor Soubin Shahir, and Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan in a cameo appearance. "Coolie" follows the story of a former coolie union leader, who investigates the death of his friend which leads him to a crime syndicate.

