

INDIAN CHRONICLE

PRTU-TS 2026 Diary Launched

““Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, January 23, Indian Chronicle: The PRTU-TS 2026 Diary was formally launched by ITDA Project Officer Mr. Rahul. The programme was attended by PRTU-TS Bhadradi Kothagudem District President Mr. P. Narasiah, District General Secretary Mr. Ch. Prabhakar Rao, State Associate President Mr. K. Dasham Babu, State Secretary Mr. Tanneeru Srinivasa Rao, along with Mr. Y. Srinivasa Rao, Mr. Mangayya, Mr. T. V. Suresh Babu, Mr. Saidulu, District Associate President Mr. B. Bhaskar, Mr. Mohan, Mr. D. Srinivasa Rao, Mr. T. Ramakrishna and other members.”” Speaking on the occasion, the leaders said that the diary would be very useful for teachers and would help in the effective organisation of union activities



New Municipal Commissioner Honoured by Golden Bird Real Estate

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 23 (Indian Chronicle)”” The office-bearers of Golden Bird Real Estate, a well-known establishment in Kagaznagar, organised a grand felicitation programme in honour of the newly appointed Municipal Commissioner. “Expressing confidence in the new leadership, the representatives stated that the Commissioner’s appointment would help resolve long-pending civic issues and ensure efficient, people-friendly municipal services. They highlighted their expectations regarding urban cleanliness, improvement of basic infrastructure, and transparent governance.”



PM Modi remembers Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, hails his legacy on Parakram Diwas

New Delhi, Jan 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the Parakram Diwas event in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands through video link on Friday. In his address, PM Modi noted that January 23 marks the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose bravery continues to motivate people and evoke deep respect.

The Prime Minister said Parakram Diwas has evolved into a major celebration of national pride in recent years. He described Netaji not only as a freedom icon but also as a forward-thinking leader who envisioned a modern India rooted in its civilisational wisdom.

PM Modi said it is essential to introduce Netaji’s ideals to the youth. He noted that initiatives such as a museum at the Red Fort, a statue near India Gate, tributes to the Indian National Army (INA) in Republic Day parades, and disaster management awards in Netaji’s name were aimed at honouring his legacy and inspiring young people.

The Prime Minister said Netaji believed the nation must be strong, as weakness hinders progress.

“In this century, India is emerging as a determined power,” he said, citing Operation Sindoor as an example of India responding decisively against threats.

He said defence self-reliance is advancing and that the country is moving from dependence on imports to increasing exports, which have crossed Rs 23,000 crore.

The Prime Minister also referred to indigenous missiles such as BrahMos gaining international recognition and said the armed forces are being strengthened through domestic capabilities.

PM Modi said that with 1.4 billion people united, India is pursuing self-reliance through Atmanirbhar Bharat and Swadeshi principles.

He also referred to the sequence of key national dates -- Parakram Diwas on the 23rd, National Voters’ Day on the 25th, Republic Day on the 26th, Beating Retreat on the 29th, and Mahatma Gandhi’s death anniversary on the 30th -- calling it a new tradition of honouring the Republic’s spirit.

The Prime Minister also conveyed greetings to people on the occasion.

Noting that the main Parakram Diwas celebrations in 2026 were being held in the Andaman and Nicobar



Islands, PM Modi underlined the islands’ legacy of heroism, sacrifice and determination.

He recalled freedom fighters such as Veer Savarkar enduring hardships in the Cellular Jail and highlighted the islands’ links with Netaji. Andaman, he said, represents the enduring spirit of freedom, and despite oppression faced by many revolutionaries, the resolve for independence only grew stronger.

PM Modi said the tricolour was raised on December 30, 1943, much before 1947. He recalled hoisting the flag at the same spot in 2018 during the 75th anniversary, saying the national anthem and the fluttering tricolour by the sea felt like the fulfilment of countless patriots’ aspirations.

He alleged that after Independence, the islands’ rich history was neglected due to political insecurities. He further claimed that attempts to attribute the freedom struggle to one family led to historical neglect.

PM Modi pointed out that even after seven decades of Independence, many places in the islands carried colonial-era names linked to British officials.

The Prime Minister said his government corrected this by renaming Port Blair as Vijaypuram and renaming islands as Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Subhash Dweep. He added that in 2023, a total of 21 islands were named after Param Vir Chakra recipients. Among those present at the event were Andaman and Nicobar’s Lieutenant Governor Admiral D.K. Joshi (Retd.), Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose INA Trust Chairman Brigadier (Retd.) R.S. Chikara, and freedom struggle veteran Lieutenant R. Madhavan.

TPCC Chief says no political veneagance in phone tapping case

Hyderabad, Jan 23

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president Mahesh Kumar Goud on Tuesday said the state government was functioning strictly in accordance with the Constitution and that ongoing investigations into the previous regime were not driven by political vendetta.

Speaking during an informal interaction, Goud said the government was examining all actions taken during the earlier administration. He argued that had the intention been political revenge, arrests would have been made immediately after the formation of the present government.

Goud also announced that Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan would undertake a padayatra from March 28 to April 1 in connection with the renaming of the MNREGA scheme. He added that the AICC Telangana in-charge would participate in village-level meetings being organised across the state.



Awareness session for students on future plans

““Secunderabad Cantonment, January 23 (Indian Chronicle):”” As part of the Power Talks by Industry Experts and Academics series at St. Peter’s High School in Bowenpally seetharampuram, an awareness program was conducted on Friday for students, focusing on global career opportunities beyond the confines of the classroom. During this program, prominent experts, including Development Professional and Technical Advisor Vijay Raghavan, engaged in interactive discussions with 10th and Intermediate students on topics such as Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning, SDGs in Action, and Careers that Put People First. On this occasion, students gained valuable insights into careers in fields such as social development, public policy, and humanitarian action. It was emphasized that education should prepare students not only for livelihood but also to bring about change, and that when learning is connected with purpose, young minds naturally grow into nation builders, and school correspondent TA reddy speaking on this occasion education must not prepare students to earn a living but to make a difference. When



learning connects with purpose, young minds naturally grow into responsible nation builders. Director Aruna Reddy, Principal Suvarna, and students participated in the program.

Shankar Reddy sworn in as ATMA Committee Chairman



““Indian Chronicle, Tander (January, 23)”” Shankar Reddy was sworn in as the ATMA Committee Chairman of the constituency, along with 20 directors, at Gurrula Anantamma Gardens in Bashirabad mandal, Vikarabad district, on Friday. ““MLA Manohar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and congratulated Shankar Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Manohar Reddy said he would take responsibility for encouraging farmers and providing them with new technology equipment at subsidized rates.”” The event was attended by Agriculture Market Committee Chairman Madhav Reddy, DCC president Dharasingh, former DCCB vice-president Ravi Goud, leaders Uttam Chand, Satyanarayana Reddy, former PACS chairman Venkatarami Reddy, former PACS vice-chairman Ajay Prasad, AMC vice-chairman Chandra Nayak, former ZPTC Srinivas Reddy, and ATMA Committee directors from various villages.

Wow Women's Salon inaugurated in Tandur, Vikarabad district



““Indian Chronicle, Tandur (January, 23)”” Congress party senior leader Musthafa Patel, former councillor Alim, Shakeel Molisab, and Advocate Matin inaugurated the Wow Women’s Salon in Tandur, Vikarabad district. They praised the efforts of Mohammed Wasim for setting up the salon, catering to the growing population and youth of Tandur. ““The guests urged locals to utilize this opportunity and make the most of the salon’s services.””

Tandur MLA distributes subsidized agricultural tools to farmers



““Indian Chronicle, Tandur (January, 23)”” Vikarabad district’s Tandur MLA Manohar Reddy distributed agricultural tools to farmers under subsidy at the Mandal Office. Speaking at the event, he criticized the previous government’s neglect of agriculture, saying the then CM KCR treated farming as a burden. ““The Congress government has changed this, and we’re working for farmers’ welfare,” Reddy said. He urged farmers to adopt new technologies and thanked the Congress government for providing subsidies. ““The event was attended by former DCCB vice-president Ravi



Goud, Congress party district president Dhara Singh, FM Dealer Anand, Agricultural officials, and farmers. The MLA handed over subsidized tools to farmers.



Collector Venkatesh Dhotre Secures National Recognition for District

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 23 (Indian Chronicle)”” District Collector K. Haritha on Friday said that former District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre not only steered the district on a path of development but also brought national-level recognition to Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district through NITI Aayog rankings. ““She was speaking at a farewell programme organised at the Integrated District Collectorate Conference Hall on the occasion of Venkatesh Dhotre’s promotion as Special Secretary in the Education Department. On the occasion, Collector K. Haritha, along with District Superintendent of Police Nitika Pant, Additional Collectors Deepak Tiwari and M. David, District Forest Officer Neeraj Kumar, Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla, Additional SP Chittaranjan, and Asifabad Revenue Divisional Officer Lokeswar Rao, felicitated Venkatesh Dhotre with shawls and presented him a memento. ““Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that during his tenure, Venkatesh Dhotre effectively implemented NITI Aayog programmes through coordinated efforts of all departments, enabling the district to achieve a commendable national ranking and gain wider recognition. She called upon officials to continue working with the same spirit to place the district at the forefront of development across all sectors. ““District SP Nitika Pant said that Venkatesh Dhotre played a crucial



role in maintaining law and order and worked in close coordination to ensure the peaceful conduct of Sarpanch elections. ““Addressing the gathering, Venkatesh Dhotre said that during his 23-month tenure as District Collector, with the cooperation of officials, the administration successfully conducted Parliamentary, Legislative Council, and Sarpanch elections, undertook public safety measures during heavy rains, and effectively managed various challenging situations. He emphasised that officials should continue to stand firmly in support of tribal communities, adding that the name Asifabad would remain etched in his memory forever

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Trump's Gaza 'Board of Peace' undermines the UN

United States President Donald Trump is bent upon resetting the world order to establish America's hegemony and replacing multilateralism with transactional deal-making. Bullying, weaponising tariff systems, and coercive diplomacy are the strategic tools he uses to achieve his stated goals. His impulsive ways have pretty much become the new normal in international diplomacy. The latest in a series of shenanigans that have come to define Trump's persona is the idea of the Gaza 'Board of Peace'. The proposal is a mockery of the United Nations and the time-tested instruments of multilateralism. The maverick move is in sync with Trump's propensity for deal-making outside traditional multilateral frameworks. Projected as a pragmatic, business-like mechanism to stabilise Gaza, the concept implicitly challenges the relevance of international institutions in managing one of the world's most intractable conflicts. At its core, the proposal demonstrates Trump's scepticism about the UN, which he has repeatedly criticised as inefficient, biased, and overly bureaucratic. The 'Board of Peace', especially if it is dominated by select regional powers or US-aligned actors, would signal a shift from universal multilateralism to ad hoc governance. A swift pushback to this preposterous idea is a welcome development. Two permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) — China and France — have rejected Trump's invitation to be on the Board of Peace. They have rightly pledged their continued allegiance to the spirit of multilateralism and the principles of the UN Charter. India too had received an invitation from Trump but is yet to respond. India should outright reject the idea instead of taking cover under diplomatic niceties. On the other hand, Pakistan, which loses no opportunity to display its obsequiousness to please the Trump administration, has accepted the invitation to join the board. Any credible peace effort in the war-ravaged Gaza must grapple with realities Trump often sidesteps: international law, civilian protection, and the need for inclusive governance. If the Gaza initiative prioritises optics over substance, it risks becoming another plan that collapses under the weight of ground reality. Peace imposed without legitimacy, consent, and accountability rarely survives. Traditionally, New Delhi has supported a two-state solution while balancing strong ties with Israel and the Arab world. A weakened UN system complicates India's diplomatic calculus, as New Delhi often relies on multilateral forums to promote stability without direct intervention.

Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkatrao Participates in Saraswati Devi Puja and Aksharabhyasam Program

On the occasion of Vasantha Panchami, the Ramanthapur Saraswati Puja Committee organized Saraswati Devi Puja along with an



Aksharabhyasam (initiation into learning) program for children on Friday at the Chinna Cheruvu premises. Ramanthapur Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkatrao attended the program as the chief guest, participated in the special pujas, and personally performed Aksharabhyasam for the children. Later, the Corporator also took part in the Annadanam (community feast) organized on the occasion. Speaking at the event, the Corporator expressed her wishes that, with the grace and blessings of Goddess Saraswati, the embodiment of knowledge, everyone should achieve excellence in education and scale greater heights in life. The program was attended by organizers Arpi Gupta, Suresh Singh, Bhagavan Singh, Sunil Singh, Pawan Nivas, Suresh, and others.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is an inspiration to today's youth



Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Inaugurates BLR Cricket Tournament

Tournament Organized Under the Leadership of Former Corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageswara Rao



Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle): The BLR Cricket Tournament was inaugurated on Friday at the Ramantapur Chinna Cheruvu Grounds by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, who attended the event as the chief guest. The tournament was organized under the leadership of former corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageswara Rao. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA expressed his desire that youth should be attracted towards sports and grow strong both physically and mentally. He stated that such sports tournaments not only promote sportsmanship among the youth



but also strengthen unity in society. He appreciated the efforts of former corporator Gandham Jyotsna Nageswara Rao for encouraging youth through sports activities. The MLA opined that such tournaments help bring out the hidden talent among young players. He also mentioned that several programs are being undertaken under the BLR Trust to encourage and support sportspersons. The event was attended by BRS Party State leaders Soma Shekhar Reddy and Pasula Prabhakar Reddy, former Division General Secretary Dr. B.V. Chary, local public representatives, players, and a large number of youth.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti Celebrated Grandly under the Leadership of BJP Senior Leader Puppala Venkateshwarlu



Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle): Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti was celebrated with great fervor on Friday in the Chiluka Nagar Division under the leadership of BJP senior leader Puppala Venkateshwarlu. On this occasion, floral tributes were offered to the portrait of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Addressing the gathering, Puppala Venkateshwarlu said that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

was a great leader who played a crucial role in India's freedom struggle. He recalled that Netaji believed freedom could be achieved only through armed struggle and gave the powerful slogan "Jai Hind." He formed the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) and chose a path different from Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence, making his life and struggle a symbol of patriotism. He described Netaji as a brilliant student and a life filled with intense nationalism. He reminded that Netaji joined the Indian National Congress and was elected as its President twice. Due to ideological differences with Mahatma Gandhi, he later resigned from the Congress and, with faith in armed struggle, founded the All India Forward Bloc. He noted that the slogan "Jai Hind" originated from Netaji. During World War II, with the support of Germany and Japan, Netaji formed the Indian National Army and fought bravely against British rule. His inspiring slogans like "Give me your blood, and I will give you freedom" and "March to Delhi" ignited patriotism among the masses. He also stated that Netaji's death remains a mystery even today. Former Councillor Srinivas Sharma, BJP State Councillor Member Satish, senior leaders Ramaraju Yadav, Telangana Sampath, Palugula Yadagiri, Ajay Gupta, Nallu Purushottam Reddy, Ashok Reddy, Lakshminarayana, Narasimha, Motkupalli Rajesh, Shukruth, Naveen Yadav, and others participated in the program.

Flood Problem to Be Solved with Rs 3 Crore Works – Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy

Works Inspected by Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy



Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle): Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that continuous efforts are being made to resolve the floodwater problem in Uppal. She informed that a CC road is being constructed at a cost of ₹1.75 crore from Sallolabavi via Mahadev Motors to Kaveri Nagar Nala, and a storm water drain with a large pipeline is being built at a cost of ₹1.25 crore. On Friday, Uppal Assembly Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, along with municipal officials, inspected the ongoing large pipeline construction works from Sallolabavi via Mahadev Motors to Kaveri Nagar Nala, along with Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy said that large pipeline storm water drains are being constructed to permanently resolve flooding and waterlogging issues in Uppal Division ar-



ea including Hanuman Nagar, New Bharat Nagar, Srinagar Colony, and Bharat Nagar colonies. She instructed municipal officials to ensure that the works are completed within the stipulated time. Those present at the program included DE Venal Goud, AE Raj Kumar, New Bharat Nagar Colony President Jajula Nagesh Goud, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Busam Raghunath Reddy, Poosa Mallesh, Mettu Karmakar Reddy, Vemula Durga Reddy, Pamperi Shankar, Naveen Goud, M. Krishna, Srinivas, Mallesh Goud, Annappu Reddy Venkat Reddy, Hanuman Nagar Colony President Komati Reddy Krishna Reddy, Ganta Ravinder Reddy, Tholupu Noori, Naveen Kumar Goud, Kanike Sriramulu Mudiraj, Srinagar Colony residents Ram Reddy, Bala Reddy, Nagaraju Yadaya, Pochayya, Goriga Ailayya, Balayya, Chari, Mallareddy, Narsing, Srikanth, Shraavan, Venugopal Reddy, and others.

Grand Celebrations Mark Nara Lokesh's Birthday

NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): On the occasion of the birthday of Telugu Desam Party National General Secretary and Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh, grand celebrations were held at Pedda Charlapalli Crossroads under the Charlapalli Division. The programme was organized



under the leadership of Charlapalli contestant corporator and senior TDP leader Rudragoni Ramchander Goud. As part of the celebrations, a cake-cutting ceremony was conducted amid enthusiastic participation from party members and supporters. Senior leaders Raguru Satyanarayana Goud, Keesara Prem Kumar, Satyam Yadav, Kasula Nandam Goud, Suresh Gupta, Balakrishna Goud, Thaidala Beerappa, Auto Giri, and others took part in the event. The gathering highlighted unity and commitment among party leaders and workers, reflecting their continued support for the party's leadership and vision.

Parakram Diwas at Kendriya Vidyalaya

Secunderabad Cantonment, January 23 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary, Kendriya Vidyalaya Bowenally, Secunderabad, grandly celebrated Parakram Diwas. As



part of the celebrations, a Parakram Diwas-themed quiz and other activities were conducted. Students from government schools in and around Bowenally participated in these competitions. The quiz focused on Parakram Diwas, and through it, students learned how to be real-life heroes. The school principal, Smt. Kusum Lata, who inaugurated the competitions, said that the quiz helped students face life's challenges positively and guided them to confront real-life situations with positivity, courage, and resilience. She then congratulated Kendriya Vidyalaya AFS Hakimpet and Kendriya Vidyalaya Chandulal Bollaram schools for winning the competitions, making the celebrations a resounding success. Students, teachers, and parents from various schools participated in the event.

Vasant Panchami celebrations held grandly

Secunderabad Cantonment, January 23 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of Vasant Panchami, grand celebrations were held on Friday at the Siddhidatri temple in Bowenally Kadakpur and the Muthyalamma temple in Bapuji Nagar, under the supervision of committee member Durgaiha. Former board vice-chairman Jampana Pratap attended the celebrations as the chief guest and



prayers at the temples. Later, notebooks were distributed to children at the Siddhidatri temple. During this time, the goddess in the temple was adorned as Goddess Saraswati, attracting a large number of devotees who came to seek the blessings of the goddess of learning. From morning onwards, the temple premises were bustling with devotees and children brought for the Aksharabhyasam (initiation into learning) ceremony. Later, Jampana Pratap and Durgayya inaugurated the food distribution program at the Muthyalamma temple. B. Lakshman, Komaraiah, Nagesh, Narsing Rao, Mallesh, Srikanth, Ajith, Prem Kumar, Karan Singh, and Krishna participated in this program.

Kukatpally Zonal Engineering Officials Accused of Irregularities in GHMC Works



for CC and BT roads and a carting lead of only 10 kilometres. He alleged that manual cutting of CC and BT roads was practically impossible and that no GHMC or private dumping land was available within a 10-kilometre radius. He requested that estimates be revised to include machine cutting and a 25-kilometre lead and asked for work slips accordingly. Officials reportedly assured him that work slips would be issued after he obtained the work order. Based on these assurances, he obtained the work order on November 14, 2025, and began the work, including BT cutting, CC cutting, earthwork, carting, dumping, wet mix stacking, and spreading. However, after the work commenced, officials allegedly refused to issue work slips or record the completed work, stating that no work would be recorded unless money was paid. He further alleged that two completed works were not marked out, recorded, or processed and that officials openly demanded money, stating that work recording and allotment of new sites would be done only after payment. The matter was brought to the notice of Superintending Engineer Chinna Reddy, who allegedly asked the contractor to complete the road work and assured him that the issue would be resolved. Ravinder Sagar claimed that the entire system was designed to manipulate estimates by showing nonexistent work as existing and inflating measurements. He alleged that if contractors paid money, measurements such as six inches were recorded as twelve inches, and twelve inches as eighteen inches, with deviation approvals granted to facilitate corruption. He accused Executive Engineer Lakshmi Ganesh, Deputy Executive Engineer Papamma, and Superintending Engineer Chinna Reddy of acting in collusion, resulting in large-scale losses to the GHMC treasury. He stated that he invested approximately Rs. 1.5 crore, including Rs. 20 lakh for RMC, Rs. 1 crore for WBM mix, and additional expenses, and was cheated due to the officials' actions. Demanding action, the contractor urged higher authorities to order a vigilance inquiry, conduct physical site inspections, verify past road conditions against approved estimates, and take strict action against the officials involved. He appealed for justice, stating that contractors were being exploited through illegal commissions. When contacted for clarification, Executive Engineer Lakshmi Ganesh stated that he had been transferred and that only three trips of work had been carried out at the site, advising that the present officials should record the work and submit it to the section.

NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Serious allegations have been raised against engineering officials of the Kukatpally Zone under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), accusing them of causing heavy financial loss to the GHMC treasury through irregularities in development tenders. Contractor Sangishetty Ravinder Sagar alleged that Kukatpally Zone engineering officials manipulated estimates in CC road works under the Quthbullapur Circle to favour certain officials and extract large sums of money from contractors. Speaking to the media, Ravinder Sagar stated that tenders for three CC road works were awarded to him, and a joint site inspection was conducted on October 27, 2025, by the Deputy Executive Engineer Papamma, Assistant Engineer, and Executive Engineer Lakshmi Ganesh. During the inspection, estimates were prepared showing manual cutting

National Road Safety Mahotsav Conducted at Kushaiguda Depot



“?”“?”NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“?”“?”As part of the National Road Safety Mahotsav, an awareness programme was conducted at the Kushaiguda RTC Depot with the objective of reducing road accidents. The programme focused on educating RTC staff about road safety measures and the importance of responsible driving. RTC employees actively participated in the awareness session, during which detailed discussions were held on accident prevention, safe driving practices, and adherence to traffic rules. To make the session more impactful, family members of those who lost their lives in recent road accidents, along with accident survivors, were invited to share their personal experiences. Their emotional accounts left a strong impression on the participants and reinforced the need for greater

caution and responsibility on the roads. As part of the programme, safe drivers from the depot who have been providing accident-free services were felicitated in recognition of their commitment to road safety. Drivers Srihari, K. V. Sagar, M. Buchchi Reddy, and others were honoured for their exemplary service. Officials from the Uppal Transport Department, including Ravinder (MVI), Uma (MVA), Srinivasulu (AMVI), Raj Kumar (Constable), and Chandramouli (Assistant Manager), participated in the programme. Also present were Chandram (MF), Vyas (Welfare Member), Ramulu, Mahender Reddy, Bhagavantham (SBI), Yugandhar Reddy (Safety Warden), Ramulu (Controller), along with RTC supervisors, drivers, conductors, and mechanics. The programme concluded with a collective pledge by the participants to strictly follow traffic rules and contribute towards making roads safer for everyone.

Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti Celebrated at Cherlapally

NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“?”“?”The birth anniversary of freedom fighter and Azad Hind Fauj founder Subhas Chandra Bose was celebrated with enthusiasm at Cherlapally. On this occasion, floral tributes were offered at the statue of Subhas Chandra Bose located at the Pedda Cherlapally crossroads in the Cherlapally Division. Cherlapally contestant corporator Rudragoni Ramchander Goud, along with party leaders and supporters, participated in the programme and paid homage by garlanding the statue. The leaders recalled the sacrifices and revolutionary contributions of Subhas Chandra Bose to India's freedom struggle and highlighted his role in inspiring generations with his ideals of patriotism, courage, and selfless service to the nation. Speakers emphasized that the life and vision of Subhas Chandra Bose continue to motivate the youth to work for national unity, discipline, and social responsibility. They called upon the public to uphold the values for which he fought and to contribute positively towards the development of society. Senior leaders Ragiru Satyanarayana Goud, Keesara Prem Kumar, Satyam Yadav, Kasula Nandam Goud, Suresh Gupta, Balakrishna Goud, Taidal Beerappa, Auto Giri, and others participated in the programme and made the event a success.



MGNREGA changes Funds cut, workdays talk hollow: Congress

“”Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 23 (Indian Chronicle)“”Modi Government ‘Robbing MGNREGA

“cheating rural labourers.”“He accused the Narendra Modi government of imposing an additional financial burden on States by curtailing Central funds, withholding payments in the name of technology, and weakening the scheme through frequent administrative changes. He objected to provisions in the proposed framework that dilute the demand-driven nature of the programme, allow officials to dictate works in villages, and convert MGNREGA into a centrally sponsored scheme, enabling unilateral changes without parliamentary oversight. He demanded that these provisions be withdrawn immediately.“Chanti further alleged that attempts to remove the name of Mahatma Gandhi from the employment guarantee law were driven by political malice and reflected what he termed a “dangerous ideological agenda.” He warned that undermining the rights of the poor, marginalised, and vulnerable sections in the name of political ideology was unacceptable.“He cautioned that unless the MGNREGA Act is restored to its original form and implemented under the old system, the Congress party would intensify protests in the coming days.“MGNREGA workers and senior Congress leaders participated in the programme.



Workers of Livelihood’: Congress Leader“Asifabad: The Narendra Modi-led Central government is “snatching the livelihood of MGNREGA workers by cutting funds while talking about increasing workdays,” alleged Pasula Chanti, District Official Spokesperson of the Indian National Congress.“Addressing a meeting of MGNREGA workers at Kandigutta under Dhannur-B Gram Panchayat in Both mandal, Chanti criticised the Centre for reducing allocations to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme while claiming to expand employment days. He said increasing workdays without adequate funding was impossible and amounted to

National Voters’ Day Observed at Boduppall Circle Office



NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“?”“?”To create public awareness on the importance of voting rights and the democratic system, the 16th National Voters’ Day was observed at the Boduppall Circle Office. The programme was organised as part of efforts to encourage greater participation of citizens in the electoral process. This year’s National Voters’ Day was celebrated with the theme “My Bharat, My Vote.” The event was conducted under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner A. Shailaja at the Boduppall Circle Office. During the programme, speakers highlighted the significance of voting as a fundamental demo-

cratic right and stressed the responsibility of every eligible citizen to actively participate in elections. They emphasized that a strong democracy can be achieved only through informed and responsible voting. Following the programme, municipal officials and staff members collectively took the Voters’ Pledge, reaffirming their commitment to uphold democratic values and to motivate citizens to exercise their franchise without fear or influence. The programme concluded with a call to increase voter awareness and participation, especially among first-time voters, to strengthen the democratic foundation of the country.

Special Prayers by TDP Leaders at Mahankali Ammavari Temple on the Occasion of Minister Nara Lokesh’s Birthday



“”KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle):“”On the occasion of the 43rd birthday of Telugu Desam Party National General Secretary and Andhra Pradesh State Minister Nara Lokesh, special prayers were performed on Friday at the Sri Mahankali Ammavari Temple located in the Uppal Division of the Uppal Constituency.“The programme was attended by TDP senior leaders Pabbathi Shekhar Reddy, Krishna

Reddy, Satyanarayana, and Janga Reddy, along with Telugu Yuvatha leaders Bazaru Hemanth Goud and Nagaraju.“Speaking on the occasion, TDP senior leader Pabbathi Shekhar Reddy expressed his wishes that, with the blessings of the Tridevatas, Nara Lokesh would continue his service to the people and be blessed with long life, good health, and prosperity.

Nara Lokesh Birthday Celebrations Held at Kushaiguda

“?”“?”NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“?”“?”On the occasion of the birthday of Telugu Desam Party national general secretary and Andhra Pradesh minister Nara Lokesh, birthday celebrations were organised under the leadership of Sai Nagarajuna, President of Telugu Yuvatha, Malkajgiri Parliament.“The programme was conducted at Dr. A.S. Rao Nagar Division, Kushayiguda Industrial Area, where a large-scale annadanam (free food distribution) programme was organised. As part of the event, food was distributed to around 2,500 people. Several leaders participated in the programme, including former MLC T.D. Janardhan, former MLA Bakkani Narasimhaulu, Indrakeeladri Devasthanam Trust Board member Thalikota Harikrishna, TDP Telangana State vice president TJK Murthy, and party leaders Nagabhairava Sambasiva Rao, Prasad, Dandamudi, Devineni and Rammoan. Telugu Yuvatha leaders Hemanth, Vijay, Venkat and Manoj, along with industrialists Kondal Rao, Naga Murali, Paparao and Vasu, also took part in the celebrations. Speakers highlighted Lokesh’s role in party activities and youth engagement, stating that the annadanam programme reflected the organisation’s focus on public service. Party workers, youth leaders and local residents participated in large numbers, making the event successful.



Netaji Nagar Association Celebrates 130th Birth Anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose

“?”“?”NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“?”“?”Netaji Nagar Association commemorated the 130th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose with patriotic fervor at Netaji Nagar Cross Road on Tuesday. The event witnessed active participation from association members and local residents, who gathered to pay homage to one of India’s most influential leaders of the independence movement. As part of the program, floral tributes were offered to the portrait of Subhas Chandra Bose, followed by a brief remembrance of his decisive role in India’s freedom struggle. Speakers highlighted Netaji’s unwavering commitment to the nation, his leadership of the Indian National Army, and his call for discipline, unity, and self-sacrifice. Participants emphasized that Netaji’s ideals continue to inspire generations and remain relevant in building a strong, united, and progressive India. The gathering reiterated the need for citizens, especially youth, to imbibe values of nationalism, integrity, and social responsibility as envisioned by Bose.“The program concluded with slogans and messages promoting national unity and collective responsibility towards the country’s development. The Netaji Nagar Association stated that such commemorative events aim to keep the legacy of freedom fighters alive and inspire society to work towards national progress. Netaji Nagar Association.



Arrive Alive' Road Safety Awareness Program Held in Medipally Police Station Limits



By NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 23, (INDIAN CHRONICLE). As part of the Arrive Alive road safety campaign under the National Road Safety Month-2026, extensive awareness programs are being conducted across the Medipally Police Station limits. The initiative is part of the Telangana State Government's road safety drive aimed at reducing road accidents and promoting responsible driving habits. Under the theme "Arrive Alive", road safety awareness programs are being organized across the state from January 13 to January 27. As part of these efforts, on the eighth day of the campaign, January 23, 2026, an awareness program focusing on industrial and transport sector road safety was conducted at The View Function Hall, located opposite Uppal Depot in Peerzadiguda. The program was attended by nearly 100 participants, including owners and drivers of Boduppal

Common Sand Yard lorries, drivers from Siddhartha School, Pallavi School, Meridian School, and other transport drivers operating in the area. The session focused on educating drivers about traffic rules, road discipline, safe driving practices, and the importance of preventing accidents through responsible behavior. Police officers addressed the gathering and highlighted key issues such as speeding, drunk driving, overloading, lane discipline, helmet and seatbelt usage, and pedestrian safety. Participants were urged to follow traffic regulations strictly and contribute to safer roads for themselves and the public. The organizers stated that such awareness programs play a crucial role in minimizing road accidents and fostering a culture of safety among transport and industrial sector drivers. The Arrive Alive campaign will continue with similar activities across the region as part of National Road Safety Month-2026.

Sir Mount School Celebrates Vasantha Panchami with Grandeur and Vedic Rituals



By KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle). Vasantha Panchami celebrations were conducted with great devotion and traditional splendor at Sir Mount School. On this auspicious occasion, Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge, was worshipped in a scripturally prescribed manner by Vedic scholars. As part of the celebrations, Aksharabhyasam (initiation into learning) was performed for newly admitted students. Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, she stated that she had never witnessed Vasantha Panchami

celebrations conducted with such grandeur in any school before. She praised the Sir Mount School teaching staff for their exceptional talent and said she personally observed their dedication and capabilities. During the event, the Sir Mount School calendar was formally unveiled, and the date of the Annual Day celebrations was also announced. Guests who attended the program included Telangana Sports Secretary Ramireddy, Srinivas Goud, Sridhar Gupta, Banala Vijayender Reddy, Director Shrivya, and Principal Chaitanya Murali. Parents, teachers, and students participated enthusiastically, making the event a grand success.

BJP Ramanthapur Division President Vangala Santosh Gupta Participates in Vasantha Panchami Celebrations



By KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle). On the occasion of Vasantha Panchami, celebrations were organized on Friday by the Saraswati Puja Committee at Ramanthapur, Indira Nagar, near Chinna Cheruvu. Ramanthapur Division BJP President Vangala Santosh Gupta attended the event as the chief guest. During the program, Santosh Gupta offered special prayers after having darshan of Goddess Saraswati. Speaking on the occasion, he said that Vasantha Panchami is one of the most sacred days dedicated to

the worship of Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge and wisdom. He noted that the day is considered highly auspicious for beginning education and starting new ventures. He expressed his wishes that everyone's lives be filled with the light of knowledge, happiness, and progress, and extended Vasantha Panchami greetings to all. The event was attended by BJP leaders Kompalli Upender, Darsanala Sudhakar, Palugula Anjaiah Patel, Pentam Shailender, along with members of the Saraswati Puja Committee, devotees, and local residents.

Right to Vote Is Priceless; Every Citizen Must Register as a Voter: Uppal Tahsildar Pool Singh Chauhan



described voting as a powerful weapon in a democracy. He made these remarks while administering the voters' pledge at the Tahsildar Office in Uppal on Friday, marking National Voters' Day. Speaking on the occasion, he urged all citizens who have attained 18 years of age to mandatorily register their names as voters. He emphasized that the right to vote gives every citizen the opportunity to elect the right leader and plays a crucial role in strengthening democracy. He also called upon citizens to gain complete awareness about the voter registration process. The programme was attended by Uppal Deputy Tahsildar D. Sunil Kumar, Rafi, Uppal RIs M. Ashwini Goud and A. Veerendra Sai, Senior Assistants Sridevi and Swarnalatha, Surveyor Venkanna, Junior Assistants M. Anantha Ramulu, Sainath Reddy, Anji Reddy, P. Venkanna, M. Alivelu Vanitha, Swathi, Operator Sunitha, Attenders Satyanarayana and Sanjeev, along with other revenue staff.

By KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle). Uppal Tahsildar Pool Singh Chauhan stated that the right to vote is extremely valuable and

Outlet to Be Constructed Soon from Uppal Major Nala to Musi; Flood Threat to Uppal Colonies to Be Eliminated

Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy inspects Rs 90 lakh culvert works



By KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 23 (Indian Chronicle). Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy has announced that outlet construction works will be taken up soon from the Uppal Major Nala to the Musi River via the HMDA layout at Bhagayath. With the completion of this outlet, flood threats to colonies such as Shanti Nagar, New Shanti Nagar, Satya Nagar, New Vijayapuri Colony and other surrounding areas in Uppal will be completely eliminated, she said. On Thursday, Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, along with Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, inspected the culvert construction works being undertaken at a cost of ₹90 lakh near the Uppal Pochamma Temple area. Speaking on the occasion, the Corporator stated

that development works in Uppal Division are progressing at a rapid pace. She assured that necessary steps will be taken to complete the culvert construction works at the earliest. AE Raj Kumar, Eega Anjaiah, Lingampally Ramakrishna, Thummala Devi Reddy, Bhoosam Raghunatha Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Varkala Madan Goud, Alugula Anil Kumar, Thummala Rajender Reddy, Alwala Bhaskar, Manda Murali Krishna Reddy, CS Naresh, Nomula Suresh, Sunku Shekhar Reddy, Katepalli Vijay Kumar, Sridhar Reddy, Kasagoni Satish Kumar, A. Sridhar, Kumar Swamy, M. Panduranga, D. Chandu, Kushangala Satish, Eega Rajesh, Venkatesh Set, Mekala Raju, Sonaila Balraju, Manne Bheem Sen, Mohan Naik, Nagu Naik, Nagoor Bhasha, Afzal, Naveen Goud and others participated in the programme.

From Security Tool to Political Weapon?

By Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 23 (Indian Chronicle). Dr R.S. Praveen Kumar says lawful surveillance has been turned into a political tool, warning that public disclosure of intelligence matters threatens national security. Hyderabad, Telangana Bhavan: Dr. R. S. Praveen Kumar, State General Secretary of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), strongly criticised the Telangana government over the ongoing phone-tapping controversy, stating that lawful phone interception is not a crime and accusing the present government of trivialising a sensi-

ficer Sajjanar and the State DGP were unaware that political leaders have no operational role in phone tapping, and questioned why notices were not issued to the then DGP, Home Secretary, Chief Secretary, and Intelligence Chief, who were directly responsible for such matters. Dr. Praveen Kumar stated that he had personally filed a complaint alleging that ministers' phones were tapped, and questioned why Revanth Reddy himself was not served any notice. He recalled that Sajjanar was also an officer at the time of Revanth Reddy's arrest in the 2018 vote-



for-note case, asking whether the SIT chief was unaware of the legal procedures governing phone interception. He said the first SIT had examined nearly 350 individuals, and not a single political leader was named, despite allegations that some constables were pressured to implicate politicians. "If nothing emerged then, why was a second SIT constituted?" he asked. Dr. Praveen Kumar asserted that Sajjanar lacks moral authority to continue as SIT chief, alleging that seven cases were earlier registered against him over phone tapping, with one case still pending. "How can a person facing such allegations be entrusted with this investigation?" he questioned. He emphasised that phone tapping has existed since the British era, well before Independence, and is a legally sanctioned mechanism to prevent terrorist attacks, Maoist violence, and threats to internal security. "Accusing the Congress government of making false election promises, coming to power through deception, and now targeting opposition leaders who question governance failures, he alleged that notices were being issued to those questioning the diversion of Telangana's resources to other states. He described the government's actions as a series of diversionary tactics—from the Kaleshwaram controversy and the P.C. Ghosh Commission to the Formula E case—and said the phone-tapping issue was now being dragged on like a daily soap opera. Dr. Praveen Kumar clarified that neither the identity of tapped phones nor the intercepted data is disclosed, and that the law even permits destruction of such data after six months. Yet, he alleged that leaks from the Chief Minister's Office falsely claimed that KTR had tapped film celebrities' phones, only for the police later to deny the existence of such numbers—amounting to deliberate character assassination and misinformation. He said that instead of political witch-hunts, SITs should be constituted to probe the coal scam, Rohin Reddy, the Srujan Reddy scam, HILTS land irregularities, and the destruction of check dams. "Reiterating that all BRS leaders will cooperate with investigations despite any number of notices, he said former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) had always instructed the party to respect the Constitution and the rule of law. He warned that police officers acting on illegal orders or showing undue zeal to please political masters will face action under a future BRS government. Dr. Praveen Kumar highlighted that under KCR's leadership, leaders like KTR, Harish Rao, and BRS MLAs worked relentlessly to make Telangana one of India's leading states in development and welfare. "BRS is a party of struggle and movements. Notices and arrests cannot silence us," he asserted. He concluded by stating that the party would continue questioning government failures, Congress scams, and the six guarantees, adding that the people are watching and will deliver an appropriate response. He alleged that the Congress and BJP governments are acting in collusion, pointing out that an officer who once received the Best Intelligence Award from Union Home Minister Amit Shah is now branded an accused by the Telangana government. "The press meet was attended by former MLA Balka Suman, MLAs Padi Kaushik Reddy and Kalvakuntla Sanjay, MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, and senior leaders Gellu Srinivas Yadav, Kuruva Vijay, Abhilash, Vasudeva Reddy, and Chintha Prabhakar, among others.

tive national security issue for political vendetta. Addressing the media at Telangana Bhavan, Dr. Praveen Kumar recalled that on December 14, 2010, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had clearly stated in Parliament that phone tapping is a legal tool used by police and intelligence agencies to safeguard national security, curb tax evasion, and prevent terrorist activities. He noted that when industrialist Ratan Tata had raised concerns about phone surveillance, the then Prime Minister disclosed that around 9,000 phones were being tapped and nearly 500 emails monitored regularly for security purposes. Dr. Praveen Kumar further reminded that Revanth Reddy himself had earlier stated that phone tapping carried out from Delhi was not illegal, adding that all governments resort to such surveillance as a routine security measure. He alleged that matters relating to phone interception, which are meant to remain highly confidential in the interest of national security and public safety, have been recklessly dragged into the public domain by the Revanth Reddy-led government, thereby putting the state and the nation at risk. "Today, phone tapping is being openly discussed on streets, near hotels, at Charminar, Risala Bazaar, Puranapul junctions, and public centres. This is an unprecedented degradation of a serious security subject," he said. He pointed out that while the Centre has several intelligence and surveillance agencies, such issues are never publicly debated, and although phone tapping takes place in all states, only in Telangana has it been turned into a public spectacle. He accused the Chief Minister of openly discussing confidential matters related to the Intelligence and Special Branch departments, which traditionally operate under strict secrecy. Dr. Praveen Kumar alleged that BRS leaders are being harassed with notices purely out of political vendetta, claiming that Revanth Reddy is driven by a mindset of sending others to jail simply because he himself had once been imprisoned. He stated that notices were being issued to leaders like Harish Rao and K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) merely for explaining issues such as the alleged scam involving the Chief Minister's brother-in-law in the Naini coal block, land irregularities exceeding 9,000 acres under the HILTS policy, and internal conflicts among ministers. "Despite the Supreme Court quashing Case No. 243/2024 registered at Panjagutta, he said leaders were again being summoned under the pretext of reinvestigation. He questioned why Harish Rao and KTR—who never served as Home Ministers nor had any role in police administration—were being called for questioning. He asked whether SIT of-

Several cyclists injured in crash during Stage 1 of Pune Grand Tour, race resumes after medical response



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

A crash involving multiple cyclists at Pune Grand Tour was reported Tuesday afternoon, after which the race was paused for a while and resumed after medical response, officials said. There was no official comment on the number of injured cyclists in the incident. Stage 1 of the Pune Grand Tour witnessed the crash involving multiple cyclists within an hour of the race beginning on January 20.

"The race was paused near the point of the crash near Kolvan village, around the quarter-way mark of the 91-km

route. Multiple cyclists involved in the crash were tended to by the accompanying ambulances. The race was resumed with all cyclists having to begin afresh from that point," an official said. A statement from the Pune Grand Tour organisers read, "During Stage 1 of the Pune Grand Tour, there was an on-road incident involving riders in the second group of the peloton. As a precautionary measure and in line with Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) safety protocols, the race was temporarily neutralised."

"UCI officials and the event medical team responded immediately. All affected riders are currently receiving the necessary medical checks, and technical teams are attending to the bicycles involved. Rider safety remains the highest priority for the organisers, officials, and the UCI. Further updates will be shared as appropriate," it added. The race is the biggest UCI 2.2-level race in the world. A 2.2-level UCI race is the entry-level race organised by the UCI, the global body that governs cycling. Points participants earn here count towards Olympic qualification. The Pune edition, with 171 participants and 29 teams from 35 countries, not only surpasses the general average of 125 participants for a UCI 2.2 race but also breaks the earlier record of 144 participants.

Central Vista project moves ahead: Bids invited to demolish Krishi Bhawan, Shastri Bhawan

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The government has kicked off the process of demolishing Krishi Bhawan and Shastri Bhawan and constructing new Common Central Secretariat (CCS) buildings in their place as part of the Central Vista redevelopment plan. The Central Public Works Department on Monday floated a tender for the construction of CCS 4 and 5 at Dr Rajendra Prasad Road, referring to the plots of land where Shastri Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan are located. The complex is a part of a 10-building CCS that is being constructed under the Central Vista plan that began in 2019.

As per the tender document, the estimated cost of the two buildings is Rs 3,006.07 crore, and the duration for the project is 24 months. The last date for submitting bids is February 13. The two new buildings will have seven floors each, as well as a basement level, covering 3.04 lakh square metres of area. "The work shall be carried out within a designated land parcel currently housing the buildings of Shastri Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan, located at plot No.120, Dr Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi, after dismantling the existing buildings," the tender document said.

With the latest tender, work has commenced on all 10



proposed CCS buildings. The first three, CCS 1, 2 and 3, were inaugurated last year and named Kartavya Bhawan 1, 2 and 3. The remaining buildings are either under construction or at the tendering stage. The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry had announced the Central Vista redevelopment plan in 2019. It included the construction of the new Parliament building, which was completed in 2023, the Vice-President's Enclave that was completed in 2024, 10 CCS buildings to house all Union ministries, and a new office and residence for the Prime Minister.

Real estate developer arrested, day after SIT formed to probe incident

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The police arrested a real estate developer on Tuesday in connection with a Noida techie's death, PTI reported. Yuvraj Mehta, 27, had died on Saturday after his car plunged into a 70-foot-deep drain in Noida's Sector 150. The incident had occurred around 12.30 am. The visibility was extremely low due to fog, and the boundary wall near the drain was already broken," Yuvraj's father Raj Mehta alleged in a police complaint.

On Monday, the Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M was removed and put on a "waitlist". Separately, the UP government had also instituted a 3-member SIT to probe the incident. What happened? According to sources, Mehta's car is believed to have veered off the road in poor visibility, crossed a low and partially broken boundary wall, and plunged into an adjacent vacant plot. The plot contained a deep pit excavated years ago for a stalled construction project, which had since filled with water.

A post-mortem report reportedly stated that Mehta died due to asphyxia caused by ante-mortem drowning, followed by cardiac arrest. The local police made attempts to reach Mehta on their own, including arranging mobile cranes and searching for divers in nearby villages. However, a friend of Yuvraj alleged that the police were reluctant to enter the



water themselves. A passerby, Moninder, who stepped into the swamp but could not reach Yuvraj, claimed that policemen cited the cold water and the possible presence of submerged iron rods in the foundation pit of the construction site as reasons for staying out. Officials said the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were alerted between 1.02 am and 1.10 am. Both units are based in Ghaziabad; the SDRF arrived at the spot around 3.45 am, followed by the NDRF at about 4.15 am. Officials believe Mehta drowned around 2.30 am.

What Channi waived off, AAP demands: Punjab government seeks Rs 1,246 crore as power dues



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Five years after the previous Punjab government, headed by Charanjit Singh Channi, announced to settle the outstanding power bill arrears of Rural Water Supply (RWS) schemes to the tune of Rs 1,246 crore, the current funds-crunched Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has asked the department of rural development and panchayats to clear the outstanding dues. The decision to waive off the power bill on tubewells supplying potable water to village residents was taken by the Cabinet led by Channi in November 2020. It had reduced the water supply bill from Rs 166 to Rs 50 per month per household and stated that the pending dues would be cleared by the state government.

The AAP government has, however, asked the panchayats department to clear the frozen amount of Rs 1,246 crore on priority. The decision was announced to the officials from the rural development department in a meeting by the power department. Power Minister Sanjeev Arora was not available for comment. Subsequently, a communication was sent to the rural development and panchayats department on Monday, stating that Rs 1,246 crore on account of electricity dues is pending as of December 31, 2025, from the department of rural development and panchayats. Out of this, an amount of Rs 705 crore per-

tains to the frozen amount of RWS connections in billing. The communication further states, "The current monthly electricity bills of RWS connections are being paid regularly by the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS), the frozen amount of RWS connections continues to remain unpaid. There has been a persistent delay in the clearance of these electricity dues." The letter adds, "The substantial unpaid amount is a severe cause of concern for PSPCL [Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd], particularly under the RDSS scheme of the Ministry of Power/Government of India, GOI, where compliance with the terms outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures and Additional Prudential Norms for Borrowings is crucial, and the non-payment of electricity bills constitutes a serious breach of these terms. This default is not only hindering PSPCL to secure funds from financial institutions (including funds for capital expenditures), but it is also hampering day-to-day operations." PSPCL has asked the department to direct the concerned offices or sections of the department to prioritise the clearance of pending electricity bills and ensure prompt payment of current bills regularly. "This huge amount will be passed on to the panchayats now," said an official, adding, "Where will the panchayats get the money from? Let us see what happens next." The AAP government has provided free power supply of up to 300 units per month to all households in the state, and has a burgeoning power subsidy bill of over Rs 22,000 crore annually. What Channi had promised Channi had stated that his government would provide free power to all rural water supply schemes, and reduce the service charges on all such schemes by 70 per cent from Rs 166 to Rs 50 per household every month in the villages. He had also burnt copies of power bills in Punjab's Chamkaur Sahib on the same day in a symbolic gesture to announce the waiver. The notification after the Cabinet decision had stated, "The Government of Punjab will provide funds to settle the outstanding arrears of power bills of Rural Water Supply (RWS) schemes managed by department of water supply & sanitation

'Sell land now or face acquisition': Haryana unveils hardline policy to fast-track Gurgaon Metro



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

In a move that could reshape land ownership dynamics along Gurgaon's upcoming Metro corridor, the Haryana government has formally notified a new policy allowing Gurugram Metro Rail Limited (GMRL) to directly purchase private land through negotiated settlements—clearly warning that if a landowner "refuses to sell, raises objections...or declines to participate", it could result in compulsory acquisition under a central land acquisition law. While the move is being seen as a clear signal that the state is not willing to let infrastructure timelines be dictated by prolonged land disputes, it is likely to spark debate among landowners and rights activists, particularly over the implicit pressure created by the threat of compulsory acquisition.

The notification was issued on January 8 by the town and country planning department. The policy applies to land required for the 29.05 km Millennium City Centre-Cyber City Metro corridor, one of the most critical mass transit projects under Gurgaon's Comprehensive Mobility Plan, which targets nearly 200 km of Metro and mass transport networks by 2041. While most of the Metro alignment passes through government land, officials admit that several strategically unavoidable stretches cut through private properties. "These include viaduct sections passing close to existing buildings, properties that need demolition, and a Metro depot that—despite being planned on public land—still requires a small but crucial patch of private land. Even minor delays in acquiring these parcels could derail the entire project schedule," an official told. At the heart of the new policy is the acknowledgement of a problem that has long plagued infrastructure projects across India: land acquisition under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013, is legally robust but painfully slow. The law mandates multiple notifications, social impact assessments, hearings, objections, and statutory waiting periods, often stretching land acquisition timelines into years.

To bypass this bottleneck, Haryana has introduced the 'Direct Purchase through Mutual Negotiation' model, but with a sharp edge. "Landowners are being offered compensation that is 25 per cent higher than what they would ordinarily receive under the 2013 Act, with rehabilitation and resettlement benefits deemed to be included in this en-

anced amount. Payments will be made directly to bank accounts through electronic transfer, stamp duty on land registration will be waived, and the entire cost will be borne by GMRL," an official said. However, the policy makes it equally clear that this is not an open-ended negotiation. "If a landowner refuses to sell, raises objections that cannot be resolved, or declines to participate in the negotiated settlement process, the government reserves the right to initiate compulsory acquisition proceedings" under the 2013 Act, as per the policy. Once this is done, landowners, most likely, will lose the option of negotiated pricing, face longer timelines, and be bound by statutory compensation mechanisms decided by the authorities. Officials familiar with the policy say this dual-track approach is deliberate. "By offering higher-than-normal compensation upfront, the government is incentivising voluntary cooperation. At the same time, by explicitly retaining the power of compulsory acquisition, it is sending a message that holding out indefinitely will not stop the Metro project", officials explained.

A high-powered land purchase committee headed by the deputy commissioner of Gurgaon will oversee the process—from identifying land parcels to fixing compensation and conducting negotiations. The committee includes senior officials from Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority, Municipal Corporation Gurugram, public works department, revenue department, and top executives from GMRL, ensuring that valuation and decision-making remain under strict administrative supervision. Before any land is purchased, joint inspections will be carried out, ownership records will be verified from revenue documents, and public notices will be published in newspapers, giving landowners 30 days to raise objections related to ownership or interest. Only after this window closes will negotiations begin, and once an agreement is signed, landowners will be required to give a written undertaking that they will not seek higher compensation in any court or legal forum in the future. After the agreement, GMRL will deposit the negotiated amount with the deputy commissioner, who will pass a formal award and ensure the land is registered and physically handed over to the metro authority. For non-titleholders affected by the project, rehabilitation and resettlement will be handled separately under the project's Resettlement Action Plan.

Urban planners say the policy could mark a turning point for Gurgaon's long-delayed Metro expansion. "With traffic congestion worsening and daily commute times rising sharply, any further delays could have economic and social costs for the city. By compressing land acquisition timelines from years to months, the government hopes to keep construction on track and restore investor confidence in large urban infrastructure projects," an official said. The policy is also likely to draw criticism as the "negotiate or be acquired" approach leaves limited room for genuine refusal. "For now, the message from Chandigarh is unmistakable: the Gurgaon Metro will move forward, negotiated or not," a senior official said.

Pens over power: 49th International Kolkata Book Fair to bring Russia, Ukraine 'together'; Argentina named theme nation

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

As the four-year-old conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues to draw worldwide attention, the 49th International Kolkata Book Fair (IKBF) is set to offer a rare, peaceful intersection for the two warring nations. From Thursday, the Salt Lake Central Park ground will witness a historic first: Ukraine making its debut at the world's largest non-trade book fair, alongside regular participant Russia. "Books are, after all, the world's most genuine friend," one of the event's organisers said. The fair will host literature from 20 countries, inviting readers to explore Ukrainian art and culture for the very first time in the city.

This year's theme country is Argentina, the land of football icons Lionel Messi and Diego Maradona. Given Bengal's legendary passion for the sport, the theme pavilion is being designed in a vibrant blue-and-white palette. Two of the fair's nine gates are being modelled after ancient Argentine architecture. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will inaugurate the event, likely in the presence of Mariano Caucino, Argentina's Ambassador to India, and renowned literary figure Gustavo Canzobre. However, like last time, there will be no Bangladesh pavilion, nor will there be one for America, which is usually a very popular pavilion at the Kolkata Book Fair. In 2011, the theme country was the US. A host of other



countries, including Germany, the UK, France, Australia, Peru, Nepal, and several Latin American nations will be present at the fair which will last till February 3. Australia, which was absent at the last fair, will be present this year. The fair ground is expected to be dominated by various hues of blue, with the national flags of Argentina, Russia and Ukraine prominently bearing the colour. One of the organisers of the fair said, "We want all the countries to mingle at the book fair, increasing the exchange of books, culture, and pictures."

Digital eyes, no phones: How Mysuru police tracked gang involved in Rs 10 crore Hunsur heist to Bihar



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The police in Karnataka's Mysuru said Monday they tracked the accused in the heist at a jewellery shop in Hunsur last month to Bihar, where they travelled recently, and arrested two key members of the gang, adding that more arrests are underway, indicating the involvement of a larger network. According to the Mysuru police, they identified and arrested the accused using facial recognition technology and internal criminal databases, even though they made concerted efforts to evade detection by completely avoiding mobile phones during the crime.

After being arrested on Monday, the police said, the accused are being brought to Bengaluru on a transit warrant. So far, the police have recovered 12.5 grams of gold, Rs 92,000 in cash, a jewellery box bearing the 'Sky Gold' logo, and a Royal Enfield motorcycle. Nearly 50 police personnel worked continuously for over two weeks to crack the Sky Gold and Diamond Jewellery Store heist case, officers said. Addressing a press conference on Monday, Mallikarjuna Baladandi, District Superintendent of Police,

said the robbery was the handiwork of an inter-state gang, with more than 10 suspects believed to be involved. The five men were seen executing the robbery on CCTV footage, and the faces of three of the accused were clearly visible, which proved crucial to the investigation.

Since the accused did not use mobile phones, digital tracking was not possible, which posed a major challenge. However, we relied on facial recognition technology and existing records to trace them to Bihar," Baladandi said, while speaking to . Describing the gang as "professional dacoits", the SP said this was their first known operation in Karnataka. Before the Hunsur robbery, the gang reportedly conducted reconnaissance in the Kodagu, Hassan, and Mysuru districts, and finalised the Sky Gold and Diamond Jewellery Store on the Hunsur bypass road. Five special police teams were constituted and dispatched to different locations. The teams, with assistance from the Bihar Police, arrested Rishikesh Kumar Singh (Chotu), a native of Delhi, and Pankaj Kumar, a resident of Bhagalpur district, Bihar, from Darbhanga in the state.

The police said Singh is involved in four murder and robbery cases, while Kumar has a criminal history spanning 27 cases. Investigators identified Kumar as the mastermind, who allegedly recruited young members into the gang and arranged logistics. According to the police, the accused are believed to have met in various jails across the country, where they formed a network and later began operating as a professional gang.

They said no residents from Mysuru district were involved in the Hunsur heist. In the days leading up to the heist, the accused stayed in lodges at Hunsur and Periyapatna, allegedly using fake Aadhaar cards and mobile numbers belonging to unsuspecting individuals.

Nigerian man arrested with MDMA and ecstasy pills worth Rs 5 crore in Bengaluru: police



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The Anti-Narcotics Wing of the Central Crime Branch of the Bengaluru city police has busted a major drug peddling racket and arrested a foreign national, recovering MDMA and ecstasy pills worth Rs 5.15 crore in the international market, officials said on Tuesday. The police identified the arrested accused as Ernest Onyekachi Ugah, 45, who hails from Nigeria and was allegedly operating from a rented house in the Munnekolalu area under the Marathahalli police station limits.

Acting on intelligence inputs, the Anti-Narcotics Wing arrested the accused on Monday night while he was allegedly involved in peddling narcotic substances. The police

said they seized 2.5 kg of MDMA and 300 ecstasy pills from his possession. According to the police, Ugah has two previous cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act against him at the Hennur police station and the Kadugodi police station, both in Bengaluru city. He had been recently released from jail. Officers of the Anti-Narcotics Wing had been closely monitoring his movements before arresting him. "The accused had come to the city around five years ago for medical treatment, but overstayed and remained involved in unlawful activities. His visa has expired, yet he continued to stay in the country and was repeatedly found involved in criminal activities," a police officer said. A case has been registered against Ugah under the NDPS Act. Further investigation is underway to trace the source of the contraband, identify backward and forward linkages, and uncover other individuals involved in the drug network, the police said. Police officers also stressed the need for fast-track trials in cases involving repeat offenders and foreign nationals, noting that delays in the judicial process enable accused persons to secure bail and continue committing offences. "If fast-track trials are conducted, such accused can be deported to their home country at the earliest. In the absence of fast-track proceedings, they keep getting bail and continue with the same offences," the officer said, adding that bail conditions need to be made more stringent for accused involved in drug cases, especially repeated offenders.

'Bohot badi galti ho gayi': Cryptic voice note at 3 am. Hours later, five of family found dead in UP's Saharanpur

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Around 3 am on Tuesday, 40-year-old Ashok Rathi sent a voice note to a relative. He sounded distressed. "Mere se bohot badi galti ho gayi hai, me kya karu (I've made a big mistake, what do I do)," he is purportedly heard saying, said police. Hours later, around 7 am, Ashok and four of his relatives — including his wife and two young children — were found dead with bullet injuries at their house in Sarsava town, in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur, said police. According to officers, the incident came to light when a relative living nearby knocked on their door multiple times. No one responded. The relative then attempted to enter the house by climbing the building but was unable to gain access.

Alarmed, he informed the police. A police team rushed to the spot, broke open the door, and found five bodies lying in a pool of blood in a single room. Police said Ashok worked as an amin (land surveyor) in the district administration department. The other victims were his wife, Anjita (35), their two sons, Kartik (16) and Dev (14), and mother Vidhyawati (70). Police said their preliminary investigation showed that Ashok was reportedly undergoing treatment for depression and suspect that he may have allegedly shot his family members before turning the gun on himself. Prima facie, police said, the deaths appear to have been caused by gunshot wounds. Blackening was found around the wounds, indicating that the firing was carried out from close range, they said.

Police also said they found no signs of forced entry into the house or any evidence of a struggle, suggesting



external involvement was unlikely. They also suspect the victims were sedated before their deaths. Officers said they have recovered several voice notes sent by Ashok to his relatives before the incident and are examining them. Ashish Tiwari, holding the charge of Senior Superintendent of Police, Saharanpur, said the case is being examined from all possible angles. The SSP said so far, no formal complaint has been filed by the family of the deceased. Police further said Ashok had reportedly been keen on shifting to his ancestral house in the village, a move which other family members were opposed to. This issue is also being examined as part of the investigation, along with a thorough review of Ashok's medical history, they said. A forensic team and a dog squad were called to the scene to collect evidence; the bodies were sent for a post-mortem examination and the reports are awaited. Further investigation is underway to ascertain the exact sequence of events, police said.

Maharashtra CET Cell launches district outreach to boost awareness of entrance exams



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The outreach programme will be conducted in phases ahead of CETs for the 2026-27 academic year and is designed to address this gap through direct engagement. The outreach programme will be conducted in phases ahead of CETs for the 2026-27 academic year and is designed to address this gap through direct engagement. For the first time, the Maharashtra Common Entrance Test CET Cell has launched a series of outreach programmes to create awareness about various CET examinations and higher education options available after them, particularly in districts that consistently record low registration numbers.

The initiative is aimed at reaching students in districts such as Dhule Nandurbar and Nanded among others where low participation in CETs has pointed to gaps in awareness about professional education pathways. Every year over 10 lakh candidates register for various CETs conducted by the state CET Cell for admission to professional courses under faculties such as engineering pharmacy agriculture and fine arts. Despite the large numbers, the CET Cell has observed significant lack of awareness about the range of CETs and post exam admission options among eligible students especially in underdeveloped districts and rural areas.

The outreach programme will be conducted in phases ahead of CETs for the 2026-27 academic year and is designed to address this gap through direct engagement. Unlike previous years where guidance was largely limited to online information, the CET Cell is now focusing on in person interactions. Expert officers from the CET Cell across multiple domains will interact with students and parents to explain entrance examinations the CET registration process the admission system and the centralised admission process.

Phase one of the outreach programme began on Sunday with the first session held in Dhule. The remaining districts to be covered in this phase are Akola Nanded and Wardha with sessions scheduled between January 18 and January 25. Explaining the structure of the programme, Commissioner of the Maharashtra CET Cell Dilip Sardesai said, "These are sessions held in-person where students and parents can interact with different faculty-experts from the CET Cell. They will not only educate students on pro-

cess of the CET followed by Common Admission Process (CAP) but also provide broad-information on course-wise future prospects available for students. The idea is to boost the representation of students from underdeveloped districts of Maharashtra in professional courses." Sardesai said that the Dhule session was live streamed on the CET Cell's social media platforms to ensure wider access. "Other students might have similar doubts as raised by those who attended the sessions. Considering this, recordings of these sessions will be available for students to view at any time," he said.

Woman says she was drugged, gang-raped in Gurgaon spa; accused on run after threatening her with video of act

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Indian express The survivor alleged that the accused offered her sedative-laced snacks and soft drinks, following which she lost consciousness. The two men then raped her, recorded videos of the act. The Gurgaon police registered a case Monday after a 29-year-old woman alleged that she was drugged and gang-raped by two men, including her partner, inside a spa centre on January 13.

Police sources said both the accused are natives of West Bengal and one of them works as the manager of the spa. The two have been booked under Section 70(1) (gang rape) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). They are currently on the run.

Investigators said the woman, who hails from West Delhi, had been in a relationship with one of the accused for the past three months. As per the woman's complaint, the accused picked her up from her residence on a motorcycle around 11 pm on January 13 and took her to the spa, which was closed for the day. The second accused was already present at the location. The complainant stated that the men had keys to the premises. She alleged that they offered her snacks and soft drinks, which she suspects were laced with sedatives, following which she felt drowsy and lost consciousness. The two men then raped her, recorded videos of the act, and threatened to make the footage viral if she reported the matter. The victim's medical examination is underway, after which her statement will be recorded before a judicial magistrate, the police said. CCTV footage from the area has been seized and forensic analysis of the collected evidence is in progress. Further investigation is underway to trace the accused, officers added.

Karnataka HC decision to quash KCOCA against MLA Byrathi Basavaraj won't apply to all organised crime cases: SC



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The apex court passed the interim order following a special leave petition filed by the Karnataka Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID). On January 3, the CID had challenged the high court's December 19, 2025, order that set aside the invocation of the stringent Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act (KCOCA) against K R Pura MLA Basavaraj in the murder of realtor Bikla Shiva. The CID had also sought a stay on the ruling, saying that it had created confusion over the application of the Act. Setting aside the invocation of KCOCA in the July 15, 2025, murder case, a single-judge bench of the Karnataka High Court had said it was invoked in the absence of evidence of continuing criminal activity by an organised gang—in the form of multiple chargesheets against at least one member for offences punishable with three years or more of imprisonment.

The high court order scrapping the invocation of KCOCA against Basavaraj also extended to the KCOCA charges against the 20 others who were arrested and accused of being part of an organised gang that carried out Shiva's murder in Bengaluru. The confusion over the high court order arose following the high court's interpretation that an attempt to murder case that attracts a punishment of up to 10 years (under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code) would not apply as an instance of a prior crime for invoking the KCOCA, as it does not specifically prescribe a three-year sentence as mentioned in the Act. Section 2 (1)(d) of KCOCA defines continuing organised crime as "an activity prohibited by law for the time being in force, which is a cognisable offence punishable with imprisonment of three years or more, undertaken either singly or jointly, as a member of an organised crime syndicate or on behalf of such syndicate in respect of which more than one charge-sheet have been filed before a competent Court within the preceding period of ten years and that Court has taken cognizance of such offence".

What the Karnataka HC ruling said On December 19, 2025, the Karnataka High Court ruled that KCOCA was wrongly invoked in the Bikla Shiva murder case by the police despite one of the accused having two pending cases in the trial stage involving the attempt to murder charge under IPC Section 307, which is punishable by a jail term of 10 years. "A holistic reading of Section 2(1)(d) and 2(1)(e) of KCOCA would indicate that as regards a member of the organised crime syndicate, there must be involvement of such member individually or jointly in cognisable offence punishable with imprisonment of three years or more with respect to at least more than one charge sheet having been filed in that regard before a competent Court," the high court

'She was playing when they dragged her away': Three-year-old girl killed by stray dogs in UP village



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

On January 13, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria said authorities had not done anything for 75 years. It also said it may order "heavy compensation" to be paid by authorities in case of deaths due to stray dog bites. (File Photo) On January 13, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria said authorities had not done anything for 75 years. It also said it may order "heavy compensation" to be paid by authorities in case of deaths due to stray dog bites. A two-week holiday to their hometown in Moradabad took a tragic turn for a family when their youngest, a three-year-old girl, was mauled to death allegedly by a pack of stray dogs in Kazipur village on Monday night.

According to police, the child went outside to play with other children in the neighbourhood. But when she didn't return home for nearly an hour, her family grew worried and started searching for her. About two hours later, local residents who had joined the search found her near a pond — with stray dogs gathered around her. They drove them away. By then, the family came rushing and saw their child lying motionless on the ground. Police were subsequently informed about the incident. Station Officer of Dilari police station, Krishna Kumar, said the children had gone to the pond to play. Seeing them, he said, a group of stray dogs in

observed. "This aspect, having been overlooked by the approval authority, would reflect non-application of mind," the Karnataka High Court said. The arguments before the SC

Senior counsel Siddharth Luthra on Tuesday sought a stay on the Karnataka High Court order, saying that its interpretation of a "mandatory minimum" sentence of three years for invoking KCOCA would be chaotic. "The biggest problem with the interpretation of this law would be what about 307 (IPC) which is punishable with life but not minimum of three years," a Supreme Court bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul M Panchal pointed out. Mukul Rohatgi, the senior counsel for Basavaraj, argued that the Supreme Court has said that a punishment of three years or more implies a minimum of three years. The bench, however, pointed out that the word punishable under KCOCA means a punishment that may be imposed and not mandatorily imposed. The word "punishable" is not alien since the Criminal Procedure Code says that offences punishable with three years or more are cognisable offences and less than three years are non-cognisable offences. "What happens when a special law imposes a minimum punishment of five years? Will it become a non-cognisable offence? This is the only part we want to clarify," Justice Bagchi said in oral observations.

The counsel for Basavaraj argued that a stay on the high court order would have the effect of cancellation of anticipatory bail granted by the Karnataka High Court, as the stringent KCOCA law does not have a provision for granting anticipatory bail. The Supreme Court adjourned the matter for a final hearing with the observation that "meanwhile the implied judgement of the high court shall not be relied upon as a binding precedent". Under KCOCA, investigating agencies have a 180-day time limit for filing chargesheets against arrested people, and there is no provision for anticipatory bail for the accused. It also allows 30 days of police custody for the accused during the investigation period instead of the regular 15 days of custody. The Bikla Shiva murder

Realtor V G Shivaprakash alias Bikla Shiva, 44, was killed outside his house on a public street near the Halasuru Lake in Bengaluru on the evening of July 15 last year by a gang of armed assailants. The murder is alleged to be linked to a property dispute dating back to February 2025 between two groups staking claim to a property in the Kithaganur area of east Bengaluru. BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj is alleged to be closely linked to a gang that operates in the real estate sector in his constituency. Members of the gang are accused in the Shiva murder case. The murder victim had also filed police complaints about threats from the MLA. Earlier in September 2025, a special court for cases involving elected representatives had rejected a plea of six people arrested in the case who had claimed that the provisions of the KCOCA were wrongly invoked against them since they were not involved in continuing criminal activities as described by the law. The special court pointed out that the involvement of any one of the accused in multiple serious crimes where charge sheets are filed and taken cognizance by the courts is sufficient to bring all other accused in a case under the purview of KCOCA. Under KCOCA, "continuing unlawful activity" means involvement of at least one person named in a gang crime in more than one serious crime in the last 10 years—where the punishment is a prison term of over three years, and where the courts have taken cognizance of the chargesheet in the case. This is a prerequisite to invoking KCOCA charges.

the vicinity became aggressive and started barking. While the other children managed to flee, the three-year-old girl was unable to escape. The dogs then attacked her, causing fatal injuries that led to her death, the officer added.

He said no case has been registered in the matter so far. The family has not filed a complaint. The child's father, Naushad Ahmed (35), said the dogs had dragged his daughter some distance away from the house while she was playing and killed her. "I came to Moradabad and lost my child..." He said they live in Delhi, where he works with a private firm. His younger brother, Irshad Hussain, lives in Moradabad and runs the family jewellery shop. "We have complained to the district administration so that such an incident does not happen to any other child," the grieving father said. The incident comes even as the Supreme Court is hearing a suo motu case related to the stray dogs issue. On January 13, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria said authorities had not done anything for 75 years. It also said it may order "heavy compensation" to be paid by authorities in case of deaths due to stray dog bites. "It's clearly a failure on their part, for 75 years... And they have created a worse situation. That's what we want to put to the states to take them to task for this. For every dog bite, and every death or injury caused to a child or old or feeble person, we are likely to fix heavy compensation to be paid by the state, for not having done anything for the last 75 years," said Justice Nath. Mohammad Kallu, former pradhan of Kazipur village, alleged that the stray dog problem in the area has been worsening but neither the district administration nor the municipal corporation has taken effective action to address it. "This is the first time an animal has killed a person in the village. There is widespread anger among residents," he said. Chief Veterinary Officer of Moradabad, Sunil Dutt, said action in cases of animal attacks falls under the jurisdiction of the block development officer concerned and other local authorities. Block Development Officer of Bilari, Prem Singh, said an operation to catch stray animals would be launched soon.

Rift widens between medical fraternity and State government over Medical Council autonomy

Hyderabad: The rift between the State government and medical fraternity in Telangana has widened following the release of Government Order 229, as senior doctors across the State continue to bristle at the prospect of the Telangana State Medical Council (TGMC) being "taken over" by bureaucrats. The government order (Go Ms No 229) proposes the nomination of four additional ex-officio members to the TGMC, in addition to the existing four ex-officio members.

The move by the State government has not gone down well, as health care workers continue to seethe. They have been opposing the move through a series of peaceful protests for the past several weeks across the State. "The

medical fraternity in the entire country has always been proud of its ability to self-regulate. However, this GO is a direct attack on self-regulation. How can the doctors be policed by IAS officers and bureaucrats who don't understand clinical realities and medical ethics," senior TGMC members said. Doctors representing various associations point out that the GO is a clear step by the State government to crack down on anti-quackery inspections that have been carried out by the Medical Council in the last one-year. In the last 18-months or so, the TGMC has filed 500 FIRs against quacks in Hyderabad and districts. However, in the last few months, the inspecting teams of the Medical Council, during the course of conducting raids, have faced considerable hostility."

Islamic State group claims attack on Kabul restaurant that killed 7, including Chinese national



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Kabul: The Islamic State group claimed responsibility overnight for a deadly attack at a restaurant in Afghanistan's capital that killed at least seven people Monday, including a Chinese national, as authorities in Kabul said they were still investigating. The militant group said in a statement posted on its Amaq news agency late Monday that a suicide bomber entered a restaurant frequented by Chinese nationals in the city and detonated an explosive vest during a gathering. It claimed 25 people were killed or wounded in the attack, including Taliban guards. The claim could not be independently verified. Afghan authorities have not officially confirmed the cause of the Monday blast and Interior Ministry spokesman Mufi Abdul Mateen Qani said Tuesday they are still investigating the explosion.

The IS claim corresponded in style to previous ones issued by the group, and supporters of the militants widely shared it early Tuesday. The claim included a further threat against Chinese nationals in Afghanistan, linking the attack to China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims. While nearly all na-

tions pulled out of Afghanistan following the Taliban offensive of 2021 that led to them seizing Kabul, China has maintained a major economic presence in the country. Beijing has yet to diplomatically recognise Afghanistan's Taliban-run government.

The attack happened at a Chinese restaurant in the Shahr-e-Naw district in the city, according to police spokesperson Khalid Zadran. He said Monday the restaurant was jointly owned by an Afghan man, a Chinese national and his wife. Zadran said one Chinese national and six Afghans were killed and several others were wounded. The blast occurred near the restaurant's kitchen, he said. The Italian charity EMERGENCY, which operates a surgical centre near the site, said Monday it received 20 casualties from the blast, including seven people who were already dead. The number of victims remained provisional, the organisation said. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported two Chinese citizens were seriously injured and a security guard was killed. Footage aired by Afghan broadcaster Tolo News showed people running along the street as smoke and dust billowed from the area. Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari condemned the explosion, which he attributed to a bomb, in a statement issued by his office. He accused Afghanistan's Taliban government of failing to uphold ceasefire agreements, particularly commitments to prevent militant groups from using Afghan territory to carry out attacks. His comments followed an announcement by Tajik authorities that border guards killed four gunmen who crossed into the country from Afghanistan overnight. Afghan officials said the men were drug smugglers. Kabul has repeatedly said it does not allow its territory to be used by militant groups. The Islamic State group has been behind some attacks in Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

Surfer bitten in 4th shark attack off Australia's east coast in 3 days

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Melbourne: A surfer had minor injuries from being bitten by a shark Tuesday in the fourth attack off the coast of Australia's most populous state in three days. The shark attacked the man's surfboard at Point Plomer, 460 kilometers (290 miles) north of the New South Wales state capital, around 9 a.m., officials said. The man was lucky to survive with minor cuts, Kempsey-Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club captain Matt Worrall said.

"The board seemed to take most of the impact," Worrall told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "He made his own way into shore where he was assisted by locals." The bystanders drove the 39-year-old man to a hospital and he was later discharged. In the earlier attacks, a man and a boy suffered critical leg wounds and the surfboard of another boy was bitten by sharks at Sydney locations Sunday and Monday.

Beaches along New South Wales' northern coast and northern Sydney were closed Tuesday and local authorities said Sydney's northern beaches would remain closed to swimmers and surfers for 48 hours. Electronic drumlines that alert authorities when a large shark has taken bait were deployed off the Sydney coast. Authorities warned that recent rainfall has left the water off area beaches murky, which increased the risk of bull shark attacks. Bull sharks are responsible for most attacks around Sydney.

"If anyone's thinking of heading into the surf this morning anywhere along the northern beaches, think again. We have such poor water quality that's really conducive to some bull shark activity," Surf Life Saving NSW chief executive Steve Pearce said. "If you're thinking about going for a swim, just go to a local pool because at this stage, we're advising that beaches are unsafe," Pearce added. On Sunday, a 12-year-old boy was attacked after jumping from a 6-meter (20-foot) ledge known as Jump Rock near Shark Beach inside Sydney Harbor. Police have credited the boy's friends with saving his life by jumping from the cliff during the at-



tack and dragging him back to shore. "Those actions of those young men are brave under the circumstances and very confronting injuries for those boys to see," Supt. Joseph McNulty said.

News media have reported that the boy lost both legs in the attack. Around noon on Monday, an 11-year-old boy was on a surfboard that was attacked by a shark at Dee Why Beach, an ocean beach north of Manly. The shark bit off a chunk of the board, but the boy escaped uninjured. A surfer in his 20s was bitten on a leg by a shark off North Steyne Beach on the Pacific Ocean coast in the northern suburb of Manly at 6:20 p.m. Monday, police said. Bystanders pulled him from the water before an ambulance took him to a hospital in a critical condition. All three Sydney beaches have some form of shark protection netting. It was not immediately clear where the attacks occurred in relation to that netting. Pearce said the scene of the latest attack was isolated and did not have shark netting. Dee Why Beach is close to the beach where a 57-year-old surfer was killed by a suspected white shark last September. In November, a 25-year-old Swiss tourist was killed and her partner was seriously injured trying to save her as they swam off a national park north of Sydney.

Indian-origin firms drawn into US debate on silicosis and stone slabs



A US congressional hearing highlighted sharp divisions over worker safety and liability in the stone slab industry, as experts warned of rising silicosis cases while industry representatives urged legal protection for manufacturers and distributors amid mounting lawsuits.

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Washington: Jan 20 (IANS) A sharp debate over worker safety, corporate liability and the future of the US stone slab industry unfolded in Congress last week, drawing in Indian-origin entrepreneurs and raising issues that resonate with Indian businesses and workers operating across global supply chains. Testifying before a House Judiciary subcommittee, former US occupational safety chief David Michaels warned lawmakers that proposed legislation to shield artificial stone manufacturers and distributors from lawsuits would worsen what he described as a growing silicosis epidemic among countertop fabrication workers. "Silicosis is a devastating, deadly, and thoroughly preventable disease," Michaels said, adding that artificial stone fabrication was "one of the most hazardous of all the industries where workers are exposed to silica dust."

Michaels told the panel that hundreds of workers in the United States had already been sickened, with dozens dead, after exposure to silica released while cutting and polishing artificial stone used in kitchen countertops. Citing California health data, he said nearly 500 cases had been identified in that state alone, with 27 deaths and dozens of lung transplants. "Unless something is done to stop exposure, the number of cases, and the number of deaths, will

continue to increase," he said. He strongly opposed H.R. 5437, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Stone Slab Products Act, arguing that lawsuits play a critical role in forcing industries to move to safer substitutes.

Michaels pointed to Australia, which banned high-silica engineered stone rather than restricting litigation, prompting manufacturers to shift to safer alternatives without job losses. "There are safe substitutes that can make equally fashionable countertops," he said, adding that shifting to substitutes would result in "no loss of American jobs." Offering a contrasting view, Gary Talwar, vice president of Natural Stone Resources, an Indian-origin family business based in California, urged Congress to pass the bill. Talwar told lawmakers his parents immigrated legally from India in 1980 and built their enterprise from the ground up, describing it as a story rooted in the American Dream.

"Silicosis is a serious and absolutely preventable disease," Talwar said, but argued that responsibility lies with unsafe fabrication shops rather than distributors like his firm, which does not cut, grind or polish stone. "We do not control whether a shop uses wet cutting, ventilation, or PPE," he said, adding that distributors were increasingly being named in dozens of lawsuits for practices they did not oversee. Talwar said mounting legal costs were placing enormous strain on small, often family-run businesses across the country. He told lawmakers that some firms had already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars defending themselves and were being forced to choose between litigation and running their operations. "Some are seriously considering shutting their doors," he said. Jim Hieb, chief executive of the Natural Stone Institute, echoed those concerns, saying his trade group supported worker safety but opposed what he described as misdirected litigation against companies that sell stone slabs. "Selling stone slabs does not cause silicosis," Hieb said. "It is the disregard for safety compliance when cutting and fabricating stone slabs that creates the risk." Rebecca Shult, chief legal officer of Cambria, a Minnesota-based quartz manufacturer, said her company supported the legislation to protect American manufacturing jobs and domestic producers. Silicosis is caused by inhaling fine silica particles. It has long been a concern in mining, stone cutting, and construction, where regulators have struggled to curb occupational exposure. In the United States, the debate now centers on whether Congress should intervene to limit civil liability or rely on workplace enforcement and market shifts toward safer materials to prevent further disease and deaths.

Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam win double gold in Egypt



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Hyderabad: India's para badminton stars Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam delivered a commanding performance at the SPIRO SPATHIS Egypt Para Badminton International 2026, clinching double gold medals in singles and men's doubles to mark a dream start to the season ahead of next month's World Championships.

Pramod Bhagat showcased grit and experience in the SL3 men's singles final, defeating compatriot Umesh Vikram Kumar in a thrilling three-set encounter. After conceding a closely fought opening game 19-21, Pramod raised his intensity and tactical sharpness to take the next two sets 21-15 and 21-13, sealing victory in a match lasting over an hour. In the SL4 men's singles category, Sukant Kadam underlined his consistency and mental toughness, overcoming India's Surya Kant Yadav in straight sets. Both games went down to the wire, with Sukant prevailing 27-25, 21-18 in a high-quality final.

The Indian duo then combined forces in the SL3-SL4

men's doubles event, where Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam were awarded the gold medal following a walkover in the final against fellow Indians Umesh Vikram Kumar and Surya Kant Yadav, completing a memorable double-gold outing. An elated Pramod Bhagat said, "This tournament was extremely important for me, especially with the World Championships coming up next month. The singles final tested my patience and fitness, and I am really happy with the way I responded after losing the first set. Winning double gold with Sukant makes it even more special. It is a great confidence booster."

An excited Sukant Kadam added, "I am very satisfied with my performance here in Egypt. The singles final was mentally demanding, and I had to stay composed till the very end. Partnering with Pramod in doubles and winning gold together is always special. This is exactly the kind of start we were aiming for this season." India enjoyed a highly successful campaign at the tournament, with gold medals also coming from Nitesh Kumar, Thulasimathi Murugesan, Alpha James, and the women's doubles pair of Manasi Joshi and Thulasimathi Murugesan. Several Indian shuttlers added silver and bronze medals across categories, underlining the depth and strength of the country's para badminton programme. With double gold in Egypt, Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam have set the tone for the year, sending a strong message ahead of the upcoming World Championships as they continue to lead India's charge on the global para badminton stage.

EU leaders take stage in Davos as Donald Trump rocks global order

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

European leaders take the stage on Tuesday (January 20, 2026) ahead of Donald Trump at the gathering of global elites in Davos, as the US president dangles tariff threats in a bid to pressure the EU over Greenland. Mr. Trump is set to dominate the week at the Swiss ski resort, with a U.S. delegation already on the ground to promote an American agenda that has unsettled the global order cherished by the World Economic Forum (WEF). European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen and French President Emmanuel Macron will address the forum on Tuesday (January 20), along with Chinese vice premier He Lifeng and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, whose countries have their own disputes with Trump. Mr. Trump will deliver a speech on Wednesday (January 21) and participate in other events on Thursday. Europe is weighing countermeasures after Mr. Trump threatened to impose tariffs on eight European countries over the Greenland standoff.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who is leading the U.S. contingent in Davos, warned that EU retaliation "would be very unwise". Ms. Von der Leyen met with a bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation in Davos on Monday and said on social media that she had "addressed the need to unequivocally respect the sovereignty of Greenland and of the Kingdom of Denmark". While Mr. Macron will leave on Tuesday (January 20) without seeing Mr. Trump in Davos, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he would seek to meet the U.S. president at the forum on Wednesday (January 21). Mr. Merz said Germany and other European countries agreed "that we want to avoid any escalation in this dispute if at all possible".

Leaders from the 27-nation bloc will hold an emergency summit in Brussels on Thursday to discuss their response to one of the gravest crises in years to hit transatlantic ties. At a news conference in Davos, Finland's President Alexander Stubb said "tariff threats at the allied level are unacceptable. They weaken our transatlantic relationship and, in the



worst case, can lead to a vicious cycle". When asked if the United States might use force, Mr. Stubb said: "I don't believe that the United States will take control of Greenland militarily." Denmark has proposed that NATO start surveillance operations in Greenland to confront security concerns.

'USA House' Other prominent foreign leaders addressing the WEF on Tuesday (January 20) include Mr. Carney, who has sought to reduce his country's reliance on the United States as Trump has raised tariffs on Canadian products. As U.S. ties fray, Mr. Carney turned the page on years of diplomatic tensions with China during a visit to Beijing last week, securing a preliminary trade agreement to reduce tariffs. Chinese vice premier He Lifeng, whose country has had long-running trade spats with Trump, will also address the WEF. Other flashpoints on the WEF agenda include the crises in Venezuela, Gaza, Ukraine and Iran. The United States has sent an unusually large delegation to Davos, in a sign that it wants to make its presence felt at the gathering for global economic and political leaders. Mr. Bessent and other U.S. officials will attend panels at the forum's congress centre but also at the "USA House", a venue inside an old church on the glitzy promenade of the mountain retreat.

ICE broke into Minnesota home, dragged barely clothed man into snow



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

A Minnesota man told Reuters on Monday (January 19, 2026) he felt fear, shame and desperation a day after ICE officers broke down his door with guns drawn, handcuffed him and dragged him into the snow wearing shorts and Crocs. Chongly Thao, 56, a naturalised U.S. citizen who goes by the name Scott, was returned home later on Sunday (January 18) without explanation or apology, he said.

"I was praying. I was like, God, please help me, I didn't do anything wrong. Why do they do this to me? Without my clothes on," Thao, a Hmong man born in Laos, told Reuters from his home on Monday (January 19), while neighbours were at work fixing the broken door. Pictures of the incident showing Mr. Thao barely clothed and covered in a blanket taken by a Reuters photographer and bystanders spread on social media, further fueling concern that federal law enforcement officers were exceeding their authority as part of U.S. President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, which has seen some 3,000 officers deployed in the Minneapolis area. A statement published by the family called the incident "unnecessary, degrading, and deeply traumatizing". The highest temperature in Saint Paul on Sunday was 14 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 10 degrees Celsius).

The Department of Homeland Security said officers were investigating two convicted sex offenders at the address and that a U.S. citizen living there refused to be fingerprinted or facially identified, so he was detained. "He matched the description of the targets. As with any law enforcement agency, it is standard protocol to hold all individuals in a house of an operation for safety of the public and ?law enforcement," DHS spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement.

"Why are we here?" DHS published wanted posters for two men targeted in the investigation who were still at large,

describing each as a "criminal illegal alien" from Laos who is subject to deportation orders. One of the men in the wanted posters previously lived at the house but moved out, according to relatives close to the situation, who described him as the ex-husband of a member of the Thao family. A U.S. District Judge in Minnesota on Friday (January 16) issued an injunction blocking the Trump administration from some aggressive tactics that she said would "chill" an ordinary citizen from engaging in constitutionally protected protest. "That conduct includes the drawing and pointing of weapons; the use of pepper spray and other non-lethal munitions; actual and threatened arrest and detainment of protesters and observers; and other intimidation tactics," Judge Katherine Menendez wrote.

The Trump administration is appealing her injunction. Mr. Thao said his parents brought him from Laos to the United States in 1974 when he was four-years-old and that he became a U.S. citizen in 1991. During the ordeal, he feared being sent back to Laos, where he has no relatives. He said he was singing karaoke when there was a loud noise at the door. He and his family hid in a bedroom, where the federal officers found him. Thao said that he was trying to find his ID as officers escorted him out of the house. Mr. Thao was wearing only boxer shorts and Crocs on his feet when officers denied him the chance to put on more clothes, he said.

Reservation reshuffle hits mayor and corporator hopefuls in Karimnagar

Karimnagar: Municipal reservations have dampened the hopes of several political leaders who had prepared the ground to contest the upcoming municipal elections in the erstwhile Karimnagar district.

As part of the process to conduct elections to municipalities and municipal corporations in the State, the Municipal Administration Department has finalised reservations for chairpersons, divisions, and wards. Reservations of some chairpersons, divisions, and wards were changed due to various reasons. However, this has dashed the hopes of a few leaders who had been preparing to contest as chairpersons, corporators, and ward members. While some aspirants are planning to shift to other areas, others are in a dilemma.

When Brigitte Bardot called Tamils ‘degenerate, savage, cannibalistic’



French actor Brigitte Bardot, who passed away recently, might be remembered for her animal rights advocacy and extreme rightwing ideology, but her racist remarks against Tamils landed her in a judicial trial. In 2019, while commenting on animal sacrifice in temples, she said she was “ashamed of the Tamil population” in Réunion Island, a French department in the Indian Ocean. French dailies reported an open letter by Bardot as saying, “The natives have retained their savage genes... All of this has echoes of cannibalism from centuries past... I am ashamed of this island, of the savagery that still reigns here.” She also wrote, “a degenerate population still steeped in ancestral customs, barbaric traditions that are their roots”, as reported by Le Monde.

Two years after these remarks, in 2021, Bardot was fined ₹25,000 by the judicial court of Saint-Denis de La Réunion. Le Monde reported that the deputy prosecutor had condemned the “unacceptable” writings by Bardot, and fined her for “serious, racist, and repeated insults that attack the citizens of Réunion as a whole.” Actor Brigitte Bardot and an abandoned dog from SPA (society for the prevention of cruelty to animals) attend a SPA Cocktail Party on October 1990 in Paris, France. Animal sacrifice has been intrinsic to Tamil religious life and temple worship over thousands of years. Over the years, however, in a process noted by Indian sociologist M. N. Srinivas as Sanskritisation, some temples, especially those with Brahmin priests, have eschewed the practice. A number of temples, especially in Tamil Nadu villages, continue to practice animal sacrifice and is an occasion for the villagers to partake in a feast. Réunion Island Tamils seem to have carried their worship practices along with them to the French colony, just as the Tamil diaspora did in British-ruled Malaysia and Singapore.

Back in time As per the website of the Consulate General of India, Saint Denis, Reunion Island, between 1829-1848 many came as indentured labourers to the island from Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu. A little over one 1,50,000 Indian indentured labourers were officially registered at the island between 1823 to 1933, as per Portail Esclavage (official portal of slavery and post-slavery history of Réunion) run by the Département de La Réunion. As of 2018, out of 8.5 lakh population, three lakh people are Tamils.

R. Kurinjivendan, Dean, Faculty of Developing Tamil Professor, Department of Tamil Studies in Foreign Countries Tamil University, Thanjavur, says that the colonists took Tamil people from Karaikal, Nagapattinam, Cuddalore back then for sugarcane plantation. “When they left India, they took their own deities from this Tamil land, like Mariamman and Murugan. They built temples for these deities and continued to practice their rituals. The successive generations forgot to speak their mother tongue, but they have continued with all the traditions”, he says.

A green flag to continue tradition Researcher Natalie Lang has chronicled the specific ritual of animal sacrifice on Réunion Island in her book, Religion and Pride: Hindus in Search of Recognition in La Réunion, first published in 2021. She wrote: “I stopped counting. It must have been twenty goats and over two hundred cocks in two hours. Ritually prepared, ritually slaughtered, the bleating and screeching heads thrown onto piles, the jumping and fluttering corpses thrown into large green trash containers. Two men needed to hold these containers tight, as the beheaded bodies violently wriggled inside, until the men rolled them into the temple’s kitchen.”

India-Germany ties can only soar higher

Last week, we witnessed something rather unusual. Television channels, newspapers and social media were full of images/pictures of two very important leaders — Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz flying kites together in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It was quite a contrast to the other images of this very substantial meeting. But I actually think that the kite is the perfect symbol to illustrate where Germany’s partnership with India is going. Germany and India have both experienced strong headwinds in recent months. The eroding international trade system is a challenge for both their economies. They both watch the increasing disregard for international law and the disruption of the rules-based global order with great worry. And they both share concerns on the stability in their neighbourhoods. Both countries want predictable conditions. This is what they need for their people to prosper. Based on hard work, on inventiveness and innovation, on education and on science. But it is only in stormy conditions that a good kite flyer shows you what it is capable of — just like the India-German partnership. Chancellor Merz and Mr. Modi are also the leaders of the third- and fourth-biggest economies, respectively, of the world. We are talking about two economic heavyweights. In a few years, India will overtake Germany, to become the undisputed number three in the world. And let me tell you something: Germany will celebrate the day this happens. The world economy is not a zero-sum game, contrary to what some leaders think. When India profits, Germany also profits. A stronger Indian economy means a bigger market for German products, and a stronger footprint of Indian companies in Germany spells more competitive products and services for German businesses and consumers. One of the central messages of Chancellor Merz in India was that a free-trade agreement between Europe and India is what India and Germany need to propel their economies to the next level. And to become more resilient against unpredictable trade wars and supply chain interruptions. This was Chancellor Merz’s first visit outside the Western Alliance, and his first time in India. The invitation to Ahmedabad, to Mr. Modi’s home State of Gujarat, was a very special gesture of friendship for Germany. There was a lot of substance to discuss and decide upon, but the Chancellor’s personal impressions of this trip are just as significant.

Here is an anecdote of the visit — it might sound like a small detail, but there is much more to it. Chancellor Merz

A Tamil-origin sociolinguist from the island says that many people from the community continue to practice this ritual even today and it is their way of showing devotion and showering offerings to their Gods. In her book, Ms. Lang cites the regulations of the first arrival of indentured laborers from India in 1829, which said that planters had to provide workers with a site to celebrate religious festivals. “Funeral rites and inheritance customs were also to be respected. Laborers were released for four days in January to celebrate Pongal, a Tamil harvest festival. Although, according to historian Claude Prudhomme, Indians—including Catholic Indians—were treated with suspicion, the colonial administration allowed religious processions and, in some cases, the construction of worship sites,” she writes. Talking about the reaction of non-Tamils, Ms. Lang says, “Although some municipalities raised minor complaints about the noise of processions, for example, the general population seemed indifferent toward such practices, with some land owners even encouraging religious practice and donating animals for sacrifice”.

Ms. Lang writes: “Several important factors impacted the development of Hindu practices in La Réunion, including French assimilationist politics, a powerful Catholic Church, the distance from India, métissage (race-mixing), and contact with different religious traditions”. As per Ms. Lang’s account, “More severe opposition to Hindu religion came from the Catholic Church. Several Catholic priests claimed these ceremonies were pagan and even infernal, and such accusations were documented a century later in the 1980s.” But she says that these attempts were neutralised by Tamils using their administrative and negotiating skills. They began to form associations in the 1870s to advocate for celebrating their religious festivals, construction of temples, and more. “The magazine Présence, first issued by Le Club Tamoul in 1980, already featured debates about animal sacrifices. The association president noted that animal sacrifices presented an important social part of the get-togethers of Reunionese Hindus”, writes Ms. Lang.

But the Catholic Church wasn’t the only one at odds with the community’s liberty to practice their rituals. “Toward the turn of the last century, some priests from India visited the island to campaign against the ritual of animal sacrifice”, says Prof. Kurinjivendan. He elaborates that the priests had travelled to all the nearby settlements with a large Tamil population to propagate this message and through these attempts the ritual of animal sacrifice came completely to an end in Mauritius. The Tamil-origin sociolinguist from the island narrates a similar account. She says that after the 1970s and 1980s, some Brahmin priests from India visited the temples at Réunion to stop the practice of animal sacrifice. She, however, says though they now may not do the animal sacrifice ritual for deities like Vishnu, it is still practised in Amman temples.

Fractures within the community Ms. Lang documents that although the Fédération Tamoule is the Hindu organization with the most impact in La Réunion, it also has its opponents. “These include the Fédération Tamoule Populaire (FTP), a federation of ‘small’ temples recently founded by one Reunionese priest in particular and supported by a few others. The FTP objects to the presence of Indian Brahmin priests in ‘big’ temples, and sees the practice of animal sacrifices as threatened. Although the members of the Fédération Tamoule insist that they do not want to abolish animal sacrifices, members of the FTP seem to associate the Fédération Tamoule with the vegetarianism in ‘big’ temples, and thus ultimately with Indian Priests whom they accuse of having oppressed their ancestors and of having sold them as slaves”, she writes. “Most representative members of the Fédération Tamoule are university-educated professionals from middle-class backgrounds with effective social networks. A combination of saving and transmitting the knowledge of their ancestors, as well as developing knowledge from India through the Brahmin priests and other forms of exchange, fits their interests well. By contrast, most members of the FTP present themselves as economically and socially oppressed, which they use to justify why they despise the Brahmin priests and wealthy ‘big’ temples”, writes Ms. Lang.



had a conversation with young Indians who were about to move to Germany. One of these young women had a casual chat with Mr. Merz in German. This young Indian had been learning German for only four months. And I have been struggling with Hindi for four years now. My excuse is usually “Maf kijie, lekin Hindi kafi mushkil hai (Sorry, but Hindi is very difficult)”, but I can tell you that learning German will also feel like a case of brain jogging at times. The chat that Chancellor Merz had with that young lady epitomises what I admire so much about Indians. They are nimble and quick to adapt, they always have a game plan, and they know how to get there — with a mix of perseverance, smartness and sometimes disarming assertiveness. Many well-established professional pathways and educational opportunities around the world are closing up. But Germany continues to welcome smart, skilled and spirited Indians. Its migration partnership with India is built on safe, legal and predictable migration. In 2026, Germany is celebrating 75 years of diplomatic ties with India and I cannot imagine a better start into this year than this visit. Today, India and Germany stand closer together than ever before. Not just because external shocks brought them closer together, but because in the previous years, they set a clear strategic direction for their partnership. In the same sense, I believe that the diplomatic anniversary between Germany and India will set them up for future success. A European Union-India-Free Trade Agreement, a closer defence partnership between Germany and India, and stronger and stronger bonds between their people will be the building blocks for something truly lasting. I am convinced that by the end of this year, when Mr. Modi and his cabinet will travel to Germany for the biennial Intergovernmental Consultations, India and Germany will celebrate a year of significant progress in their bilateral relations, a year that has started with flying their kites in the skies of Ahmedabad.

Why SIR verification needs to be completely digitised



The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2.0 was projected as a technology-driven exercise to clean electoral rolls and include every eligible Indian resident. Instead of inspiring confidence, it has triggered widespread fear and anxiety among voters. The experience has exposed a stark mismatch between the Election Commission’s (EC) digital capacity and its ground-level execution. Despite the ECINet’s (the digital platform of the EC) ability to handle data entry, verification, cross-checks, and audit trails, the process has relied heavily on paper-based forms, summons, and hearings — error-prone methods that impose unnecessary hardship on voters.

As a result, even the most eminent citizens have been summoned. A Nobel laureate and Bharat Ratna awardee in his 90s received a notice over an alleged age mismatch. A former Police Commissioner of Kolkata, under whose jurisdiction SIR 2002 was conducted, was also found non-mapped. MPs, DGPs, senior secretaries, vice chancellors, professors, and other top-ranking public servants have similarly been asked to establish their identity. These are long-standing citizens with decades of documented presence — yet they are being asked to prove their residence. The EC also summoned several monks from the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for hearings because their biological parents’ names — severed upon embracing monastic life — do not match the names of gurus they now regard as parents. Several also found their names missing from the 2002 voter lists. Though these monks do not vote, in keeping with the order’s apolitical principles, they seek inclusion to avoid identity-related hurdles in visa and administrative processes.

Institutions meant to safeguard democracy should honour their contributions, not subject them to procedural indignity. Punishing the voter SIR 2.0’s failures are not rooted in the absence of technology, but in the refusal to deploy it effectively. It was projected as user-friendly and transparent, but has instead produced confusion reminiscent of the 2002-04 SIR, which relied on pen-and-paper processes without third-party checks and left electoral rolls incomplete and inconsistent. Despite these well-known legacy flaws, the same defective rolls were carried forward as the foundation for SIR 2.0 — compounded by a continued reliance on manual filings and hearings rather than ECINet’s digital capabilities.

As a result, draft rolls released across 12 States/Union Territories (UTs) have raised two primary concerns. The first is the alleged deletion of genuine voters from the 2024 final rolls, amounting to nearly 65 million deletions nationwide. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, submissions before the Supreme Court exposed a stark anomaly: the draft SIR roll lists 12.56 crore voters. In comparison, the Panchayat SIR records 12.69 crore voters in rural areas alone — an implausible outcome that highlights serious data inconsistencies and the cost of not adopting a digital-first correction. The second concern is the emergence of a large number of “non-mapped” voters, primarily due to defects in the 2002-04 rolls, where voters missing from legacy lists are now flagged as non-mapped. Many are long-standing,

A Centrist lens on ‘illegal immigration’

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which omitted nearly 6.5 crore electors from draft rolls of nine States and three Union Territories, has triggered widespread procedural disputes. The Opposition appears determined to seize this moment to move forward with its “vote chori” campaign on which its politics has exhaustively relied.

The Opposition’s mistake But it will be naive to mistake the people’s annoyance for anger. Despite the Election Commission of India’s low credibility, and discontent over its shoddy handling of the SIR, few buy the Opposition’s account, which depicts elections as fraudulently manufactured to suit the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the SIR as a tool to perfect that machination.

The overwhelming sense is that a voter list revision is necessary to remove dead, shifted, and duplicate voters. The approval for the SIR also draws from mobilisation of emotion over the vexing question of ‘illegal immigrants’, with verifiable incidents, tendentious assertions, and inflammatory rhetoric creating a tangle that threatens to dominate Indian politics, particularly electoral possibilities in the northern States. When Home Minister Amit Shah said recently in poll-bound West Bengal that “even Kolkata is facing a threat from infiltrators,” it echoed the telling apprehensions of a sizeable section of Bengalis. The Opposition is loath to recognise the potency of the issue, often deploying lacerating wit to evade the question. Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra’s jibe — “who wants to come to India?” — is an example.

This behavioural pattern tinged with sourness — either you agree with me, or you are a bigot — has been counterproductive for liberal parties the world over. It was the European Union’s uncritical support for wide-open borders that precipitated the steady trickle of voters of the centre-left to populist, anti-immigration parties, more notably in Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland. The Opposition’s denial of undocumented immigrants in the face of evidence alienates people. Last November, several hundred Bangladeshi nationals were intercepted by Border Security Force personnel at the Hakimpur check post in West Bengal, while allegedly attempting to return to Bangladesh. In December, 19 Bangladeshis were among the 511 people arrested in Uttarakhand under Operation Kalnemi. The Opposition sees acting on undocumented immigrants as corrosive to universal human rights. But national security concerns are not corrosive; fulminations aimed at hijacking them are. Opposition leaders show proclivity to confuse illegal immigration with immigration, boxing everyone who talks about border security as foot-soldiers of the Right tasked with manufacturing xenophobia. While covering the 2024 U.S. presidential election, I found that in the battleground States, this boxing triggered negative sentiment. The anger was more palpable among immigrants who came to the U.S. legally. Donald Trump’s share of Hispanic votes climbed from 32% in 2020 to 46% in 2024.

The more the Opposition chastises people who talk

law-abiding citizens who have voted in successive elections, yet are being asked to prove their residence under ad hoc SOPs that shift institutional failures onto voters. Nationwide, this category runs into several crores; in Uttar Pradesh alone, over ten million voters — about 8% of Enumeration Forms — were marked as non-mapped. Non-mapped voters are being pulled into short-notice, poorly organised hearings for failures that originate within the EC’s own systems. These hearings impose needless hardship, delay corrections, and spread anxiety. Many of those summoned are veterans, former public servants and professionals now compelled to prove their identity in their own country.

This reversal of accountability turns institutional error into citizen punishment. Voters whose names are accidentally deleted due to institutional flaws are then further trapped by the process. They are forced to seek restoration through Form 6 — meant only for first-time applicants — thereby compelling factually incorrect statements which declare that they have never been enrolled in any constituency. As a result, genuine voters seeking restoration are exposed to potential criminal liability under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. This procedural flaw shifts legal risk onto citizens for errors originating within the system.

The need for digital verification The dignified and effective remedy lies not in multiplying physical hearings, but in fully deploying the EC’s existing digital infrastructure to replace them. A digital-first system — built on online document upload and backend cross-verification — can make voter verification faster, fairer, and far more humane, while sparing citizens the stress of summons and hearings. By reducing manual handling and reliance on flawed legacy rolls, such an approach would significantly improve the accuracy and sanctity of electoral rolls.

As a first step, the EC should notify every applicant of the status of their Enumeration Form (EF) — whether accepted or flagged — via SMS, email, or EPIC-linked accounts. Where discrepancies arise, particularly for non-mapped voters, applicants should be asked to upload identity documents via ECINet and provide the corresponding unique identification numbers. ECINet can automatically verify them via backend interfaces — much like Aadhaar authentication — while issuing acknowledgements at each stage. Issues such as incomplete data or anomalies can be addressed through the same digital workflow, with BLOs or nearby electoral offices assisting voters who are less digitally comfortable.

As verification progresses, the voter’s status on the draft roll can be updated in real time. The entire process would take only minutes — primarily for document upload — while verification remains fully automated. This audit-ready digital workflow offers a level of accuracy, integrity, and trust that no manual hearing, however well intentioned, can realistically achieve. Safeguarding democracy SIR 2.0 has crystallised a fundamental question: is the exercise genuinely intended to clean electoral rolls with dignity, in keeping with the EC’s core mandate to ensure that no eligible voter is denied the franchise, or is it being implemented in a manner that harasses genuine citizens and pushes them toward disengagement? The tools to achieve the former are already available; the distress witnessed so far reflects not technological limits, but choices in enforcement. The real challenge, therefore, is not a lack of technology but the failure to use it wisely. An initiative meant to strengthen electoral integrity has instead fuelled anxiety and distrust by leaning on flawed legacy data and coercive, manual processes. Electoral reform will succeed not through suspicion, but through trust, inclusion, and the responsible use of digital infrastructure — safeguarding not just procedures, but the foundations of public trust and democracy.



about border security, the easier it gets for right wing provocateurs to depict immigration as chaotic, and build consensus for violent crackdown. A June 2025 report by the European Policy Centre emphasised that conspiracy theories, such as those surrounding population replacement, find acceptance as they provide “a sense of control” and “understanding” for individuals who otherwise felt powerless and unheard. A reason why the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was able to monopolise nationalism was because in the decade preceding 2014, the Congress nearly jettisoned expositions of national pride — at least the animating kind invoking India’s spiritual traditions and heritage — as though they were impediments to secularism. That misjudged fear induces its studied silence on the immigration issue. A nuanced conversation In June 2025, Parliament passed the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, to regulate the entry and stay of foreigners in a tech-driven, time-bound manner; the Opposition staged a walkout. A prudent course would have been to build a more nuanced conversation on immigration, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature, delineating both the challenges and the benefits it brings along. It must focus on legal work authorisations, spending versus contributions, and negotiations with allied countries for easing refugee intakes, as Italy’s Georgia Meloni attempted with Albania.

In Europe, the Left drastically reoriented its politics to sync with public attitudes on immigration. In Denmark, Social Democrats led by Mette Frederiksen passed a law allowing asylum claims to be processed and refugees to be resettled in partner countries such as Rwanda. This ebbd the appeal of the anti-migration Danish People’s Party; it plummeted to one seat in the 2024 European Parliament election. The Congress is mistaken that whatever weighs heavily on the minds of its think tankers weighs on the minds of the public. Its preoccupation with “saving” Indian democracy before every election bears that out. It misses the point that the people are divided on where the threat to democracy comes from. People have less anxiety over weakening institutions and “vote chori” and more over the alleged immigrant influx. Centrist politics must reconstruct itself. An aptitude to reckon with people’s emotive issues and give a positive spin to them is imperative to that effort.

Trump's third country deportations pose risk of abuse and incarceration



The Trump administration in the U.S. has struck secretive deals with several countries, mainly African and Central American countries, to accept non-citizen deportees, also known as third-country nationals (TCNs). Mexico, El Salvador, South Sudan, Eswatini, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, and Uganda are among the growing list of countries that have accepted such deportees in exchange for millions of dollars. Human rights organisations and activists have flagged that many of these countries have a long record of committing human rights abuses, trafficking, and corruption. The migrants Trump is deporting

"On day one, I will launch the largest deportation program of criminals in the history of America," Donald Trump said during his Presidential campaign in New York. As of October 2025, more than five lakh migrants have been deported from the U.S. since January. In this mass deportation scheme, Mr. Trump has also escalated third-country deportations, a step that was rarely used in the past. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) says that the deportees chosen for this have been convicted of crimes, including murder. However, the administration has forcibly transferred asylum seekers as well as people with pending immigration cases or those who have received final orders of removal. Third-country deportations are a provision in the Immigration and Nationality Act under which the DHS can send someone to a country to which the person has no ties if the deportation to the country of origin/where they have lived in the past is "impracticable, inadvisable, or impossible," or if the government of the home country is unwilling to accept the deportee. In July 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released a new memorandum that allows immigration officials to deport people to 'third countries' within 24 hours after they have been served a notice or within just six hours in 'exceptional circumstances'. Moreover, in June, the U.S. Supreme Court had lifted a lower court's order limiting such deportations without a screening. This has allowed the administration to ramp up the pace of third-country deportations. Officials say that this approach aims to discourage migration and encourage voluntary self-deportation. Countries that have accepted these migrants

Currently, there are around 12 countries that have agreements with the Trump administration. These include Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Kosovo, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and Uzbekistan. More agreements are expected to be signed during his term. There is no requirement for the country to sign a formal public agreement to accept TCNs. Hence, these deals have ambiguous terms and no data is available on how many migrants are facing such deportations and the conditions of their stay. These countries have agreed to a range of arrangements which include incarceration of the deportees, temporary stay before return to the home country, detention and arrangements for them to remain in the third country. They should also give 'diplomatic assurances' that deportees will not face torture or persecution. Mexico has accepted the largest number of non-resident deportees. The country had earlier accepted TCNs during Mr. Trump's first term. Reportedly, from January 2025 to November 2025, 10,928 non-Mexicans were sent to the country. These deportees mainly come from Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Reason for these countries to enter into these deals

Compensation and political pressure are said to be the main reasons why these countries have accepted deportees. Most of the countries that have accepted the agreements are heavily reliant on U.S. aid, and following

major fund cuts by the Trump administration, accepting deportees has become a way to get humanitarian funding. It has also become a tool for some of these countries to get relief from U.S. sanctions and escape tariffs. For example, Belize's largest trading partner is the U.S., with whom it has a major trade deficit. The country lost a \$125 million development grant owing to a decision by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to shut down the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a major U.S. foreign aid agency. Mr. Trump has also termed Belize as a major drug-producing and transit country. These have become the speculated reasons as to why the country accepted the 'Safe Third Country Agreement.' Similarly, the U.S. sent \$7.5 million to Equatorial Guinea in exchange of accepting TCNs. A senior Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen wrote a letter to Marco Rubio, the U.S. Secretary of State, stating that the payment was 'highly unusual' considering the country's record of corruption among government officials and complicity in human trafficking.

Ghana has accepted at least 60 TCNs, and the Trump administration lifted visa sanctions in exchange. Kosovo, one of the few countries in Europe that have agreed to temporarily host TCNs, is reported to have come to this agreement so that the U.S. can lobby support from other nations to recognise its sovereignty. Mr. Trump has reportedly approached around 58 countries to accept TCNs. Burkina Faso and Nigeria had publicly rejected the deal. "Burkina Faso is not a land of deportation," Foreign Minister Karamoko Jean-Marie Traore said. He called the request to be indecent and unworthy. Nigeria too, citing internal problems and security concerns, did not accept the deal.

The problems flagged by rights activists UN human rights experts have raised alarm over the expeditious removal of deportees to third countries. According to them, removal within 24 hours does not give enough time for the deportees to appear before an immigration judge or express fear of persecution formally. Hence, due process is not followed. In several cases, people who have been deported are reported to have been separated from their children and other family members who remain in the U.S. Pregnant women and people with medical problems and psychological illnesses have also been indiscriminately deported. The lack of common language and familial ties with the third country have put them in a very vulnerable state. They also have no access to legal protection or aid. In some cases, people who have completed their sentence in the U.S. are now indefinitely detained in foreign prisons. Sending migrants to war zones like South Sudan and Libya also poses a major threat to their lives. Enforced disappearances and trafficking are other major risks for these deportees who have no rights in the third country. The government of Ghana has not revealed the whereabouts of 45 deportees who were in the first flight from the U.S. Many of the TCNs have been reported to have been unlawfully detained. In El Salvador, most of the deportees have been kept at the notorious mega prison, Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo (CECOT). Accepting deportees of foreign nations is a violation of immigration laws in many nations. Rights groups have filed suits against the governments of Eswatini, Ghana and Panama, citing the deals as unconstitutional and not receiving approval from Parliament. Human rights activists say that TCNs are subjected to mistreatment despite not committing an offence in the U.S. or in the third country. A total of 300 migrants, including those from Nepal and Afghanistan, were sent to Panama, and pictures of them locked up in a hotel had surfaced on social media. Currently, 60% of them have been repatriated. Others, expressing fear of persecution in their home country, remain there. However, getting asylum in the country is extremely difficult, with application acceptance rates at less than 2%. As per the 1951 Refugee Convention and the U.N. Convention Against Torture, the U.S. can not deport a person to a country where they could face violence or persecution. These conventions also bar the U.S. from sending people to a country which will then send them to a country where the person could be persecuted or tortured. This is known as "chain refoulement." Federal judges have accused the Trump administration of using third country deportations as chain refoulement. As per international law, due process is required to be followed, and the deportees must have access to legal support in a case of third country deportation, which is absent in most of the cases.

Why have Thailand-Cambodia border clashes flared up again? | Explained

The story so far: On December 8, Thailand launched airstrikes into Cambodia after clashes erupted along their disputed border, with both sides accusing each other of breaching the U.S.-brokered ceasefire in October. On December 12, after calls with both leaders, President Trump stated that Thailand and Cambodia had agreed to "cease all shooting". However, Thailand has vowed to continue military actions until threats are neutralised.

What happened early this year?

In May 2025, tensions between the two countries escalated when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a skirmish, leading to troop buildup and diplomatic strains. July witnessed five days of intense fighting involving artillery, rockets, and Thai airstrikes that killed at least 48 people and displaced over 3,00,000. A ceasefire was brokered through U.S. pressure and Malaysian mediation, ending the tensions. The truce was formalised in October with an agreement signed in Kuala Lumpur. However, in November, Thailand suspended its implementation after a landmine injured a soldier. It accused Cambodia of planting new mines. On December 7 and 8, clashes renewed, escalating to Thai airstrikes targeting Cambodian military sites, including advanced rocket positions. As of now, casualties include over 15 Thai soldiers and dozens on the Cambodian side, along with mass civilian evacuations.

What is the border dispute about?

The core issue is sovereignty over un-demarcated sections of the 817-km border, inherited from colonial-era treaties concluded in 1904 and 1907 between France (which ruled Cambodia) and Siam (present-day Thailand) respectively. These agreements planned for the boundary to follow the Dangrek Mountains watershed, but the French-drawn maps placed key ancient Khmer temples, particularly Preah Vihear, on the Cambodian side. The 11th century Hindu temple Preah Vihear has been central to the dispute, with both countries claiming historical ownership. In 1962, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Preah Vihear belonged to Cambodia, although the surrounding promontory remained contested. Later, in 2013, the ICJ clarification affirmed Cambodian sovereignty over most of the area. Nationalist sentiments in both countries compli-



cate the bilateral issue, with temples reflecting historical Khmer glory for Cambodia and territorial integrity for Thailand. Between 2008-2011, deadly clashes occurred after Cambodia tried to list Preah Vihear as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

How have mediation efforts fared?

Since the major clashes in 2008-11, several mediation efforts involving the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ICJ, and external actors, aimed at resolving the dispute, have failed. In 2011, ASEAN, under Indonesia's chairmanship, played a key role. It proposed deploying Indonesian observers to monitor a ceasefire and support troop withdrawals from a demilitarised zone ordered by the ICJ that year. But Thailand resisted any third-party involvement. In 2025, renewed fighting in July led to fresh mediation efforts. President Trump held calls with leaders in Bangkok and Phnom Penh; his threats of 36% tariffs on exports to the U.S., their biggest market, led to an unconditional ceasefire.

What is the way forward?

At the border level, de-escalation should build on measures attempted under the October agreement, including verifiable troop withdrawals, joint de-mining, and direct military communication. At the bilateral level, sustained engagement through joint commissions is necessary for border demarcation; Thailand's preference for bilateral talks must be reconciled with Cambodia's openness to third-party involvement. R. Preetha is pursuing a postgraduate degree at Stella Maris College, Chennai and is currently a Research Assistant at NIAS, Bengaluru.

Super Kings' seismic shift —Dad's Army to T20 babies



When Chennai Super Kings clinched the last of their five Indian Premier League titles in May 2023, the driving forces of their successful campaign were all on the wrong side of 30. Among those who featured in the title clash against Gujarat Titans were Devon Conway (31 at the time), Ajinkya Rahane (34), Ambati Rayudu (37), Ravindra Jadeja (34) and Moeen Ali (35), playing under the able stewardship of Mahendra Singh Dhoni (41).

Before the tournament, CSK were dismissed as 'Dad's Army,' much like in 2021 when too, they cocked a snook at the critics and went all the way. Dad's Army found a way to overcome every obstacle in its path in 2023; their victory in a truncated final that was played out on the reserve day came on the back of a six and a four by Jadeja off the last two balls of the tournament, a fitting finale to a title clash that had until then been played in the shadow of unseasonal precipitation in Ahmedabad. Over the years, CSK have smashed every accepted tenet of 20-over cricket, once naively and erroneously installed as a 'young player's format.' While the rest of the cricketing world invested heavily in young blood, the Chennai-based franchise drew from the traditional flavour of the city, relying heavily on experience and proven pedigree and distancing itself from the temptation of succumbing to the charms of the youth.

For all their stubbornness and steadfast adherence to the 'experience first' philosophy, CSK had the results to support their style. Defying clamour and sticking to their methodology had taken them all the way in 2021, as it did again two years later. In a world constantly in the quest for instant gratification and where the players were getting young and younger — remember, Vaibhav Suryavanshi went for ₹1.1 crore to Rajasthan Royals at the auctions before IPL 2025, when he was only 13 years of age — CSK placed implicit faith in their 'Dad's Army.' It was in the natural order of things therefore that they would stick with that mantra going forward. But what had worked wonders for them until then unravelled spectacularly in 2025. Ageing legs, dimmed reflexes and tired bodies were no longer able to summon the adrenaline that could carry them for eight weeks while going toe-to-toe consistently with much younger and fresher minds and bodies. Dad's Army was shown up for what it was. With their season all but done and only token pride to play for, the multiple-times winners made a strong break from the past, turning their attention to the one commodity they had obdurately chosen to overlook — youth.

And so in their last game of IPL 2025, long after the horse had bolted, CSK's XI contained Ayush Mhatre, the 17-year-old opener, and Deward Brevis, the effervescent 21-year-old from Johannesburg. This was right at the end of a season where they had blooded numerous other young resources, among the 19-year-old Shaik Rasheed and Urvil Patel, who made their debuts. It indicated a tectonic shift in mindset and strategy, brought about by outcomes that needed immediate attention. From exciting and exuberant, CSK had devolved into ponderous and non-reactive. Their campaign was in shambles, a write-off from the halfway stage of the league phase, and while there remained the small matter of pride, the greater requirement was to focus on the future and to identify the personnel that the support staff were convinced would serve the franchise for years to come. Young blood

Any suspicions that what happened in the second half of the last campaign was a mere knee-jerk reaction to recent events were emphatically laid to rest on Tuesday (December 16) at the mini-action in Abu Dhabi. CSK broke the proverbial bank to secure the services of a duo of young men with no more than a handful of senior representative appearances behind them. A week ago, it would have been unimaginable that Chennai, of all teams, would shell out ₹14.2 crore to procure the services of Prashant Veer, a 20-year-old from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh with only nine 20-over games under his belt. Veer thus became the most expensive uncapped India player in the entire history of the tournament. Unassuming and unfussed, Veer etched his

name in the record books. CSK needed a Ravindra Jadeja-like player at the auction after trading out the experienced left-handed all-rounder to Rajasthan Royals. Jadeja is practically irreplaceable even in the T20 format where his best days are clearly behind him, but CSK had to look long and hard, hoping to unearth a special talent for the future, if not necessarily for the immediate now. Veer is an accomplished basher of the cricket ball who, in last season's Uttar Pradesh T20 league, amassed 320 muscular runs and backed it up with eight wickets in 10 matches. In his fledgling senior representative career, 12 wickets at an economy of 6.45 has been complemented by a terrific strike-rate of 167.16. Not too long back, CSK would have looked at these numbers, maybe even have done a 'double take' but nothing more than that. After all, he didn't fit their 'minimum age requirement' nor did he have a pedigreed record in state/franchise cricket. In so many ways, Veer is the very antithesis of the quintessential CSK acquiree.

Not unlike Kartik Sharma, the 19-year-old who isn't an entirely unfamiliar face when it comes to the Chennai franchise. Last season, as an 18-year-old, he trialled with CSK and caught the eye of the management group though at that stage, there was no way to accommodate him in their larger squad. CSK bided their time, then went all out to pick up Kartik, just as they had done minutes previously with Veer.

CSK came into the auction in Abu Dhabi with a purse of ₹43.40 crore, the second most of all the franchises, behind Kolkata Knight Riders (₹64.30 crore), so they had plenty to play with. But even so, no one would have imagined them doling out ₹28.40 crore on just two players, both of them uncapped Indians with a combined age of 39. Veer and Kartik thus became the most expensive uncapped Indian buys ever in IPL history. Kartik, like Veer, has just a few matches under his belt but CSK had had first-hand knowledge of what he brought to the table. Wicketkeeper-batter Kartik is one for the long-term, given that Dhoni isn't going to be around forever — like ever, 'Is this his last season?' debate has already started — and while CSK have brought Sanju Samson in from Rajasthan Royals after letting Jadeja and Sam Curran go in exchange, Kartik is the one they hope will be a bank going forward. In his brief run at the domestic level, the lad has smacked a devastating 28 sixes in 12 matches and is an acknowledged taker-down of quality spin, excellent virtues to possess if one is batting in the second half of the innings.

Stephen Fleming, the head coach who has been exclusively with CSK since the start of the 2008 season except for the two seasons when the franchise was suspended from the IPL, conceded that his side had been forced to revisit its approach in light of the miserable start to its campaign last year, when most of the senior pros came a cropper. "As the game has evolved, we might have been a little bit slow to evolve with it," the former New Zealand skipper said after the auction. "Only halfway through the (2025) tournament, we had a big shift and you saw with the players we got in as reserves, there was a shift in what we needed to do.

"Sometimes, you can hang on to theories and philosophies because of past success but we identified that we needed to shift and partly the work that we did last season halfway through has enabled us to continue that work done. My view used to be that experience was going to win, but now you have this fearless athlete that's been brought up on T20 cricket and has a skillset that's mouthwatering, and they just have no fear about what environment they need to exhibit these skills." The shedding of conservatism and embarking on a bold new tomorrow is a seismic shift in the make-up of CSK's DNA, meaning that how they go in IPL 2026 will be followed with greater interest than normal. Dhoni is at one end of the age and experience spectrum; Veer and Kartik together are five years younger than him and it is clear from what they have said in the last few days that he is more than just a hero to them.

They couldn't have hoped for a better mentor, a more level-headed and qualified life coach than the Jharkhandi who is more than just a player to the denizens of Chennai, and under whom the franchise has gone from strength to strength. Chennai historically has shown great resilience in bouncing back from the disappointment of one season to make a bold statement in the next, as they showed in 2021 and 2023. Now, having brought up the foot of the table for the first time in their proud and glorious history, they will target immediate payback. Armed with a whole new mentality and with resources that they wouldn't have touched with a bargepole even a couple of years back, who is to say that they won't rewrite the record books and become

A summit that rose beyond optics

For the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government, the Telangana Rising Summit earlier this month was the first major ground-up event of its kind since coming to power two years ago. Keenly watched, it was as important for the underlying message it sought to convey as for the optics. Everything about it was new: the ambitious Telangana Vision 2047 document for which it served as a launch vehicle, the wide-ranging discussions, and the choice of the proposed Bharat Future City as the venue. Though Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy sought to avoid any political connotation by declaring in the run-up that the two-day event would be an economic summit and by personally inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the link was not easy to miss. Comments from Opposition leaders in the State only helped generate more public attention.

Neither Mr. Reddy nor his government, however, is new to challenges. It was not just limited to politics; the State administration encountered opposition to land acquisition, was rapped on the knuckles when it tried to dispose of 400 acres of prime land near Hyderabad, and grappled with a resource crunch while trying to move fast on big-ticket projects, be it Metro Rail expansion or the Musi River rejuvenation. A proposal to raise reservations for Backward Castes in local bodies also ran into legal hurdles. The two years were not without their share of highs. The dispensation implemented some of its poll promises, especially the popular free bus scheme for women, even as delegations led by Mr. Reddy to Davos, the U.S., and South Korea helped garner investment commitments for new projects. The Telangana Rising Summit thus provided an opportunity for the Chief Minister to elaborate on his government's plans to make the State a \$1 trillion economy by 2034 and a \$3 trillion economy by 2047. The government made the most by unveiling the Vision document — the pathway with inclusive growth as its core. Ministers spelt out the broad outline, discussing both opportunities and challenges for their departments. While the Chief Minister stressed the larger picture, unveiled the Vision document and presided over MoU signings, the emphasis on team effort also sent a clear message about who was in the driver's seat. The staggering cumulative investment com-



mitments received from a number of companies added value to what might otherwise have been seen as a two-year-in-government celebration. Though it is common knowledge that MoUs and letters of intent take time to fructify, the commitments worth ₹5.75 lakh crore on projects across diverse sectors could not be ignored. The most significant statement the government made through the Summit was by showcasing its proposed Bharat Future City, which is eventually expected to span 30,000 acres and form an integral part of a three-tier development model for Telangana. Many of the projects for which MoUs were signed are to be grounded there. Interestingly, in a State where protests over land acquisition have been common, but where land has yielded manifold returns for speculators and investors in a short span on the back of rapid development and growing demand, the Future City did not find opposition. It is possibly because realty is a common denominator and cuts ice across ideologies, given how the credit for the development of Cyberabad or IT hub of Hyderabad is sought to be cornered by politicians. If there was any opposition, it was nothing beyond murmurs.

While the BJP State leadership described the Summit as an attempt to whitewash the government's failures, a BRS leader dismissed it as a road to a real estate venture, and another from the party used the occasion to recall the its 10-year rule and how it serves as the foundation for the present level of interest. No one, however, opposed the

DAE's nuclear pivot: Light water push to tap global markets, retain heavy water edge



As India opens up its nuclear power sector to private sector participation and eyes a stake in the export market, the need to expedite the fabrication of an Indian Light Water Reactor (LWR) has been flagged as a priority within the nuclear establishment. The Indian Express has learnt. To this effect, there is a concerted push by the Department of Atomic Energy to speed up work on the 900 MWe (megawatt electric) LWR project — design work on this had started in 2015.

Having an indigenous LWR, alongside the existing fleet of pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWR), is expected to boost India's leverage in dealing with foreign vendors to secure better terms in imports, officials said. Significantly, LWRs constitute the bulk of the international reactor market, and without integrating Indian companies into the global supply chain, making a breakthrough in the export segment is likely to be difficult. This is also the backdrop to the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Act, 2025, passed in the winter session of Parliament, which opens up the possibility of more imported LWR-based nuclear projects of the kind being set up by the Russians in Kudankulam. The legal changes are seen within the establishment as necessary to tap the dominant global LWR ecosystem, even as India retains its core strengths in other reactor types. India's civil nuclear programme has deep expertise in manufacturing heavy water reactors from 220 MWe PHWRs to the new 700 MWe units. Based on heavy water (deuterium) and natural uranium, PHWRs are a technology that India's nuclear establishment has mastered. However, these are increasingly out of sync with LWRs, which now dominate the global market.

Light Water Reactors form a mainstay of the global programme; these use light water, enriched uranium, and have simpler design, lower construction cost, economies of scale, and high thermal efficiency. LWRs currently account for over 85% of the civil nuclear reactor capacity in the world. There are at least three reasons for this trend: LWRs entail simpler design and engineering compared to heavy water reactors given that they use normal water as both coolant and moderator and so have some degree of overlap with the technology used by regular thermal power units (coal-

fired and gas-based power plants); they typically entail lower construction cost on account of economies of scale, given that LWRs make up most of the installed nuclear capacity; these reactors are seen as being more thermally efficient. While LWRs use normal water, they need enriched uranium as fuel. Given that access to enriched uranium is not a constraint in much of the western world, LWRs are used extensively by US, Russia and France and now form the backbone of most international reactor fleets.

PHWRs, by contrast, are prized for fuel flexibility and the ability to operate on natural uranium, an advantage in India's resource-constrained context but a relative handicap in export markets shaped and dominated by LWR technology. The import of LWRs at higher cost raises two important issues: one, that these new projects should not come at the expense of indigenous reactor design and PHWR production capacities; and two, that higher capital expenditure also results in higher tariffs, which must be absorbed in Indian market conditions.

The setting up of nuclear reactors at the Jaitapur site in Maharashtra has been in limbo because of high tariff concerns, alongside liability issues earlier flagged by French atomic power major Areva and its own financial troubles. The liability concerns have been addressed in the new nuclear amendments. India's time-tested strength in PHWR technology and a renewed focus on fuel manufacturing, given its vast thorium resources, are being seen as a combination worth prioritising. In this context, proactively moving towards becoming a major supplier of PHWRs fuelled with a mix of thorium and imported low-enriched uranium has been cited by experts as an area of immense potential.

This is particularly relevant as nuclear energy is set to be critical to economic growth across a significant segment of emerging economies — the UAE, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have signalled their intent to embrace nuclear power in a big way. India's domestic programme focused on the eventual harnessing of thorium is designed for a specific national context characterised by modest uranium resources and vast thorium reserves. The use of thorium along with low-enriched uranium in the current generation of Indian reactors could significantly ease existing barriers to scaling up nuclear power. From this perspective, PHWRs are seen as especially attractive — potentially more so than LWRs. India could, therefore, move forward to emerge as a major nuclear supplier of PHWRs fuelled with a mix of thorium and imported low-enriched uranium, sources said. This comes at a time when India is also hoping to pitch itself as a credible destination to manufacture nuclear reactors, especially small modular reactors (SMRs) with capacities between 30 MWe and 300 MWe, cost-effectively and at scale. Beijing, too, is working on an ambitious plan to seize global leadership in the SMR space. Like India, China sees SMRs as a tool of diplomatic outreach in the Global South and as a sector it could disrupt, much as it has done in the electric vehicle industry.

IndiGo expects to maintain current level of operations post Feb 10 after FDTL relaxations lapse, say sources

Even as IndiGo continues to be under the regulatory scanner following the massive network-wide disruption in December, the airline expects to maintain its curtailed flight schedule beyond February 10, when the specific pilot duty and rest duration rules-related exemptions granted to it are set to expire. According to sources in the know, the airline has, on multiple occasions, given the assurance of building sufficient pilot buffers and roster resilience to the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA).

IndiGo is currently operating over 2,200 flights—around 1,900 domestic and the rest international—following a 10% government-mandated curtailment in its approved domestic schedule till March. Aviation authorities have been holding regular consultations with the airline on whether it will be able to maintain its current operational scale once the relaxations are withdrawn, according to sources. The regulator and the government are keeping a close watch, and are prepared to intervene and further rationalise the schedule, if required.

The airline expects to maintain its current schedule for the entire duration of the Winter Schedule, which ends on March 28. According to sources close to IndiGo, pilot hiring and onboarding pipeline at the airline is robust, which they expect will lead to sufficient numbers of pilots being added by early to mid-February. Also, command upgrades—promotions of first officers to captains—in cases where they were already due are being accelerated, which is expected to help the airline cover the shortfall and even increase its pilot buffers, or bench strength to improve its roster resilience.

As the last resort, if these measures are unable to meet the February 10 exemption deadline prescribed by the regulator, IndiGo could look at network adjustments, particularly a rationalisation of its night flights to achieve resilience in its roster, said sources. The airline is unlikely to seek an extension of the exemptions. The new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules stipulate more rest for pilots and rationalization of their flying duties—particularly late night operations—in a bid to better manage pilot fatigue, which is a key risk to aviation safety. These new norms, which were stipulated in January 2024 were delayed in their implementation, and took effect in two phases—from July 1, 2025 and November 1, 2025—with the second phase rollout hitting IndiGo considerably. The new norms meant that airlines either had to have more pilots to maintain their schedule, or shrink the schedule in line with the new requirements. IndiGo, however, was caught unprepared.

IndiGo accounts for a lion's share of domestic flights that land or depart between midnight and 6 am, the new definition of 'night' in the revised FDTL rules; the earlier definition was midnight to 5 am. In that one hour—5-6 am—also, IndiGo is the dominant carrier, shows an analysis of the airlines' schedule. Among other changes, the new rules capped the number of landings for pilots operating flights encroaching upon any part of this six-hour period at two, down from six earlier. This meant that pilots operating any so-called red-eye flight landing or departing in the 12-6 am period could only operate one more flight—before or after the said flight—in their entire duty shift for that day. This hit IndiGo the hardest.

In view of the scale of disruption faced by IndiGo, the DGCA exempted it from the new definition of night as well as the two-landing per crew cap for operations encroaching night till February 10, bringing huge relief, although temporary, to the carrier. The disruption, which began on December 3, peaked on December 5 with over 1,600 of the airline's 2,300-plus daily flights getting cancelled. But with the DGCA granting specific exemptions, the airline was able to swiftly stabilise operations over the course of the next



IndiGo is currently operating over 2,200 flights—around 1,900 domestic and the rest international—following a 10% government-mandated curtailment in its approved domestic schedule till March.

few days. On January 9, IndiGo was ordered to curtail its approved domestic flight schedule by 10%. Given that IndiGo commands a domestic market share of around 65 per cent, the disruption had brought India's civil aviation operations to their knees.

On Saturday, the DGCA imposed financial penalties totalling Rs 22.20 crore on the airline for the operational meltdown, apart from issuing warnings to its top management personnel. The fine is the highest-ever regulatory penalty imposed by the DGCA on an airline, and is slightly higher than IndiGo's average daily net profit for financial year 2024-25. The enforcement actions by the regulator are based on the findings of a four-member DGCA inquiry committee that was tasked with a comprehensive review and assessment of the circumstances that led to the crisis in the first week of December. The inquiry committee had concluded that the primary causes for the disruption were over-optimisation of operations, inadequate preparedness along with deficiencies in system software support for the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) provisions, and shortcomings in IndiGo's management structure and operational control.

"The Committee observed that the airline's management failed to adequately identify planning deficiencies, maintain sufficient operational buffer, and effectively implement the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) provisions. These lapses resulted in widespread flight delays and large-scale cancellations, causing inconvenience to passengers," the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said Saturday. "The Inquiry further noted an overriding focus on maximising utilisation of crew, aircraft, and network resources, which significantly reduced roster buffer margins. Crew rosters were designed to maximise duty periods, with increased reliance on dead-heading, tail swaps, extended duty patterns, and minimal recovery margins. This approach compromised roster integrity and adversely impacted operational resilience. The inquiry also included within its purview long term reform measures addressing systemic issues so that such incidents do not occur in the future and passengers are not put to any inconvenience," it added.

'Tu kitna acha ladka hai, chhod de': When Dev Anand gently asked Shah Rukh Khan to quit a harmful habit; expert on why quiet concern works better than warnings



Stories about gentle advice, concern, and human connection often reveal more about behaviour change than loud warnings or strict rules. One such moment comes from a recollection shared by Mohan Churiwala, a close friend of Dev Anand, who spoke about an interaction between the legendary actor and a much younger Shah Rukh Khan. Despite belonging to different generations, both men were known for their passion for life and their relentless drive. Churiwala recalled an incident from 2009 at a party hosted by businessman Anil Ambani to mark Reliance Entertainment's joint venture with Hollywood filmmaker Steven Spielberg. Dev Anand noticed Shah Rukh Khan sitting nearby, discreetly smoking.

According to Churiwala, Anand leaned in and gently addressed him: "Dev sahab told him, 'Shah Rukh yaar, tu kyun smoke karta hai? Tu kitna acha ladka hai. Chhod de, isko chhod de. (Shah Rukh, why do you smoke so much? You're such a nice boy. Just quit this). So, he smiled and said, 'I will try.' He respected Dev Sahab a lot," Churiwala told Vicky Lalwani on his YouTube channel. The exchange

was brief, non-judgmental, and rooted in care rather than reprimand, something many people struggle to strike when talking to loved ones about harmful habits.

So, when addressing harmful habits, why does gentle concern often create a more meaningful emotional impact?

Counselling psychologist Athul Raj tells indianexpress.com, "Most people already know a habit like smoking is harmful. What keeps it going is not ignorance, but shame and stress. Criticism adds to that shame; fear makes people shut down or rebel. Gentle concern works because it doesn't strip the person of dignity. It keeps the relationship intact. It says, I'm worried about you, not that you're doing something wrong." When concern is personal and warm, Raj states that it reaches the person's sense of self rather than their defences. "Dev Anand wasn't correcting Shah Rukh Khan's behaviour; he was speaking to who he was. That distinction matters. People pause when they feel recognised rather than judged. And that pause—brief, quiet—is often where reflection and change actually begin."

Motivation to consider a change in habits Advice is filtered through a relationship before it reaches reason. Raj notes, "Respect determines whether the listener stays open or shuts down. When advice comes from someone whose life, conduct, or presence feels grounded, it doesn't feel invasive. It feels earned. In India, respect is less about hierarchy and more about consistency — how someone carries power, fame, or age. Defensiveness arises when advice feels like judgment from above." Consideration arises when advice feels like concern from the side. "A respected person doesn't make you feel small; they make you feel capable. That's why their words stay. Even if change doesn't happen immediately, the advice often returns later, quietly, when the person is ready to hear it," concludes Raj.

Dengue vs viral fever: The one test that could save you from serious complications

Fevers are common—but distinguishing a routine viral fever from dengue can be crucial. While both illnesses may begin with similar symptoms, the underlying mechanisms, risks, and diagnostic approaches differ significantly. According to Dr Prateek Kumar, Consultant in Medicine and Critical Care Management at Maccure Hospital, recognising these distinctions early can help prevent complications.

How dengue tests differ from viral fever Most viral fevers are diagnosed clinically and typically resolve without specific testing. "General viral infections usually don't require specialised investigations because they are self-limiting. Dengue, however, requires a targeted diagnostic approach," explains Dr Kumar. He adds, "Dengue has specific markers, which is why we rely on tests like the NS1 antigen in the early phase, and IgM or IgG antibodies later in the illness. These tests help confirm infection and track disease progression." A dengue test becomes necessary when certain red flags appear. "Anyone with a high fever lasting more than two to three days, especially during or after monsoon, should consider dengue testing—particularly if platelets are falling or hematocrit levels are rising," Dr Kumar advises.

Why does dengue carry a higher risk of severe complications?

Unlike common viral fevers, dengue can cause more severe illness. "Dengue virus directly suppresses bone marrow, reducing platelet production, and simultaneously makes blood vessels leaky," Dr Kumar explains. This dual impact is what leads to a significant drop in platelet count, fluid leakage, and potential internal bleeding, he adds. In contrast, most



viral fevers do not cause such deep systemic damage. "Typical viral infections rarely interfere with platelets or blood vessel integrity, which is why they resolve with rest, hydration, and symptomatic treatment," he adds. Early warning signs of dengue "Warning signs such as severe headache, pain behind the eyes, and intense muscle and joint pain are more characteristic of dengue," says Dr Kumar. As the disease progresses, more alarming symptoms may appear. "Persistent vomiting, abdominal pain, gum or nose bleeding, easy bruising, or black stools are danger signs," he cautions. Another overlooked signal is the sudden drop in fever followed by worsening weakness. "A falling platelet count, reduced urine output, or increasing restlessness must never be ignored," Dr Kumar emphasises. Why early detection matters Timely diagnosis can prevent severe complications, especially in high-risk groups such as children, the elderly, or those with underlying health issues. Dr. Kumar stresses, "Early detection allows us to monitor patients closely, manage fluid balance, and intervene before organ involvement or shock develops."

'RIP Vava': Friends and fraternity mourn loss of Italian couturier Valentino Garavani, 'the last of the titans'



Valentino, Italy's legendary couturier, breathed his last on Monday. He was 93 years old, and died peacefully at his Roman residence. Taking to Instagram, the fashion house and foundation shared a statement: "Our founder, Valentino Garavani passed away today at his Roman residence, surrounded by his loved ones. The lying in state will be held at PM23 in Piazza Mignanelli 23 on Wednesday January 21st and Thursday January 22nd, from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm."

Tributes pour in Mourning the death of the icon, friends and colleagues from the industry poured in their heartfelt condolences on Instagram and X. From Anne Hathaway to Sarah Jessica Parker, Gwyneth Paltrow to Cindy Crawford, the fashion fraternity came together to pay tribute to the legend. Fellow designer Donatella Versace too shared a post on Instagram with the caption, "Today, we lost a true maestro who will forever be remembered for his art," she wrote, "My thoughts go to Giancarlo who never left his side for all these years. He will never be forgotten ???"

Paltrow's message especially touched hearts. "I was so lucky to know and love Valentino—to know the real man, in private. The man who was in love with beauty, his family, his muses, his friends. His dogs, his gardens, and a good Hollywood story. I loved him so much. I loved how he always pestered me to 'at least wear a little mascara' when I came to dinner. I loved his naughty laugh," the Iron Man actor shared on her social media, adding, "This feels like the end of an era. He will be deeply missed by me and all who loved him. Rest in peace, Vava." Closer home, Bollywood icon Sonam Kapoor shared a picture of Valentino on her Instagram story with the caption, "The last of the titans. RIP." Valentino became popular for introducing the iconic shade of red named after himself, 'Valentino Red', back in 1959, with a strapless tulle cocktail dress. The colour went on to become a staple in every collection of his since. According to the fashion house's statement, the fu-

neral will take place on Friday, January 23rd at the Basilica Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, in Piazza della Repubblica 8 in Rome, at 11 am.

Satvika Veeravalli introduced as protagonist of Dulquer Salmaan-starrer 'Aakasamlo Oka Tara'

Hyderabad: The makers of director Pavan Sadineni's upcoming Telugu film, 'Aakasamlo Oka Tara', featuring actor Dulquer Salmaan in the lead, on Monday introduced Satvika Veeravalli as the lead of the film, much to the delight of fans and film buffs.

The film, which is being produced by Sandeep Gunnam and Ramya Gunnam under the Light Box Media banner, is being presented by well known production houses Geetha Arts and Swapna Cinema. Geetha Arts, which is one of the firms presenting the film, took to its Instagram page to share the introduction video of the actress.

It wrote, "She carries a dream bigger than the sky. Introducing Satvika Veeravalli — The dreamer who gives wings to #AakasamloOkaTara #AOTMovie." The introduction video begins with a child, pointing to the sky and asking "How do I go to space?" Viewers are then given a glimpse of the heroine. The introduction video shows Satvika Veeravalli as a youngster from the rural parts who is dissuaded from pursuing her dream of going to space. We hear a man's voice saying, "Coming from a village that has no roads, you harbour plans of going to space? First, you show us if you can cross the borders of the village. Then, we'll see."

It is evident that the film will revolve around the character that Satvika Veeravalli plays and that she is actually the protagonist. The film is about a girl from a remote rural region realising her dream of becoming an astronaut and going to space.

The film boasts of a fantastic technical team. It has two-time National Award winner GV Prakash Kumar scoring music for it. Cinematography for the film is by one of the best in business, Sujith Sarang. The film has editing by National Award winning editor KL Praveen. The heroine introduction video also discloses the fact that the film is scheduled to hit screens for summer this year.

Ishan Kishan to play for India in first T20I against New Zealand



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Two years after his total ouster from the India setup across formats, Ishan Kishan is set to make his return with the national team in their first T20I against New Zealand in Nagpur on Wednesday. After spearheading Jharkhand's title run with an impressive showing at the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy last month, Kishan was drafted into India's squad for the T20 World Cup in a surprise decision that saw vice-captain Shubman Gill dropped in pursuit of team balance. With the recent injury to Tilak Varma, skipper Suryakumar Yadav confirmed that Kishan will play his first match in India colours since November 2023 on Wednesday.

"Ishan will play at No.3 tomorrow," Surya confirmed to

reporters here on Tuesday. He went on to explain Kishan's inclusion over that of Shreyas Iyer, who was the squad replacement for Tilak for this series. "We picked him first for the World Cup team, so it's only fair that he gets the chance first. He also has not played for India in a long time. He deserves to play ahead. Unfortunately, Tilak is not in that position, so we feel Ishan is our best bet at No. 3." What that means for the India skipper himself is not so clear. Desperately struggling for form, going 22 innings without a 50+ score for India, Surya may have believed that moving up from No. 4 to No. 3 would be a fruitful call. But he also confirmed that there are no changes for him in the batting order, meaning that only if there is a special need for a right-hander within the context of the match situation will he play at No. 3.

Ahead of the crucial five-match home series against New Zealand, which will act as the final preparation for the T20 World Cup to be held in India and Sri Lanka, the India captain said he spent much of the last month trying to reconcile his own game and the template of the team to try to return to form. "I'm still batting in the nets the way I always have," he said. "I've been out of the runs. But I can't change my identity. I have decided to keep doing what I have been doing in the last three or four years that has given me a lot of success. If the performance comes, I'll take it; if it doesn't, it's back to the drawing board."

Japanese googly: More Queensland-based cricketers than Australia XI

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

When Japan's ninth-wicket pair of Hugo Tani-Kelly and Chihaya Sekine trudged off the field after their innings against Australia in Windhoek, some of Australia's youth cricketers wrapped their arms around Tani-Kelly and spoke to him in English with a distinct Australian roll of the tongue. Tani-Kelly, the innings top-scorer with an unbeaten 79 and his country's first-ever centurion in an U-19 World Cup, spoke back in a similar accent. Little wonder, because he turns up for Northern Suburbs Cricket Club in the outskirts of Brisbane.

Not only Tani-Kelly, who impressed with a typical Australian staple of cuts and pulls, as many as six of the squad turn up for the third and fourth division teams of the Northern Suburbs, including the captain Kazuma Kato-Stafford and three Hara-Hinze brothers. Two others in Japan's squad too are of Australian descent—Taylor Waugh (no relations to the Waugh twins) and Skyler Cook. Few teams in the World Cup have as many cricketers drawn from a single club, let alone a state. Bolstered by deep diplomatic ties, Australia and Japan share a strong sporting bond too. Japan has started a T20 league, which has a substantial sprinkling of cricketers featuring in the Big Bash League.

Kato-Stafford was raised in Australia. "A fair few of us have grown up here. We've been brought up with Australian culture and cricket," he told The Australian. Around 500,000 people of Japanese descent live in Australia and Brisbane has a heavy concentration of 15,000-odd people. Naturally, some of them were drawn to cricket. Harnessing them is Northern Suburbs. "Northern Suburbs has been very supportive. There aren't many clubs around the world that would have guys playing third and fourth grade going away on international duty, and be so understanding and accepting of that," Kato-Stafford added.

The guiding light for them is Norths' first-grade star and Japan U19 assistant coach Kendel Kadowaki-Fleming. He has been coaching and guiding them with a clear line of progression to Japan's youth system. Despite the Australian upbringing, Kato-Stafford insists that they are aspiring



to forge a clean Japanese identity. On the field, they make a conscious effort to speak in only Japanese. They perform a war cry akin to All Blacks' Haka, called Honki Janken (pronounced yakyuken). It means baseball fist, a Japanese game based on rock-paper-scissors. "I think we definitely (value) the ideology of fighting to the end, it began in the Shogun and Samurai era," Kato-Stafford told ICC. "Never giving up under any circumstances. I think that's something that we definitely try and play with. It doesn't matter what the scenario is, whether we're going really well, we're going really poor, making sure we're always giving our best until the very end of the game. That's something that we try to incorporate into our game, and something that is a very big part of Japanese identity," he added. After hitting every boundary, they shout Dosukoi (borrowed from sumo wrestling which is loosely translated as burst of power). The word sliced through the air whenever Tani-Kelly hit a four. He has become Japan's talisman after his century, but Kato-Stafford points out that they have a core of young players that could improve Japanese cricket. "Eight of the 15 players would be eligible to play in the next U-19 World Cup too. We are a young but competitive team. The future looks really bright. Not just for the Under 19s, but for the men's team as well. All of these guys are very skillful and they're only going to get better," the captain added. And behind them is a modest club in Queensland.

Carlos Alcaraz's serve gets a Novak Djokovic upgrade at Melbourne Park



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Looking at three images side-by-side – Djokovic and Alcaraz serving in Melbourne this week, and Alcaraz serving at the US Open – the differences are clear. And so is the inspiration, especially with the curled-up right wrist. Screen-grabs) Looking at three images side-by-side – Djokovic and Alcaraz serving in Melbourne this week, and Alcaraz serving at the US Open – the differences are clear. And so is the inspiration, especially with the curled-up right wrist.

The most eye-catching point of the opening round of the 2026 Australian Open was the subtle change in Carlos Alcaraz's serve. Not just in terms of the evolution of the one stroke that the 26-year-old is yet to perfect in what has rapidly become quite a chink-free tennis armour. But for whom he seems to be emulating. Novak Djokovic has seen the videos. He is seeking compensation. "We have to speak about (getting a) percentage of his winnings," he says. "Every ace, I expect a tribute to me." The 24-time Major winner may not have won a Grand Slam title in over two years, but the fact that the World No. 1 tennis player is still aping elements of his game is surely a confidence booster.

Renewed stance The first hint that Alcaraz is trying to take elements of Djokovic's first strike came during videos of both their training sessions before the start of the tournament. The way he unfurled it during his straight-sets first-round win on Sunday confirmed that the serve has a distinctly new look from the changes he brought to it at last year's US Open, which he won with only one break of serve to his name all tournament. The changes are predominantly in stance and motion. Alcaraz's original service motion had always been too much of a body-jerk; his team had looked to smooth it out all of last year. In doing so, he seems to have taken a leaf out of Djokovic's book.

Looking at three images side-by-side – Djokovic and Alcaraz serving in Melbourne this week, and Alcaraz serv-

ing at the US Open – the differences are clear. And so is the inspiration, especially with the curled-up right wrist. Like Djokovic, Alcaraz's service stance is now tighter, with his feet more closely placed together. He is also using Djokovic's signature, atypical, starting position. The right wrist, holding the racquet, is curled up, with the racquet facing downwards. His shoulders are also not as far apart as they used to be, meaning he does not have to exert as much pressure or jump too high to meet the trajectory of the ball. All this, combined with a higher ball toss, smoothens the motion to ensure power, and the resultant closed racquet face that comes down on the ball ensures control. Ball placement is not sacrificed for power. The Serb has refined his service style to the best it has ever been in his 30s, thanks, in the most part, to a five-year coaching partnership with Goran Ivanisevic. Djokovic did not want to sacrifice accuracy for power; nor did he want to apply more pressure on his body or attempt to bulk up to dominate on serve. So, Ivanisevic worked out a path to make his motion super smooth. Djokovic's serve remains smoother and superior; if not always in execution, then definitely in terms of strategy. That his elbow is straighter and the racquet is pointed all the way to the ground, while Alcaraz is a bit higher, allows Djokovic a more relaxed and accurate swing. In fact, the three images put together look like before-and-after scenarios of turning a good serve into a class-leading one. Perhaps Ivanisevic deserves some royalties too; at the very least, a job application for the open position as Alcaraz's coach.

Amelia Valverde appointed head coach of Indian women's football team

Hyderabad: The All India Football Federation has appointed Amelia Valverde as the coach of the Indian senior women's team. Valverde, 39, from Costa Rica, has joined the Indian camp in Antalya, Türkiye, where the Blue Tigresses are preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026, scheduled for March. A former player who began her coaching career in 2011, Valverde was the longest-serving coach in the history of the Costa Rican women's national team, leading Las Ticas from 2015 to 2023. Under her guidance, Costa Rica participated in the 2015 and 2023 FIFA Women's World Cups, their only two appearances in the showpiece event.

'I still think I'm one of the best, certainly ready to perform at a World Cup': Lockie Ferguson dismisses talks of retirement



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

New Zealand's Lockie Ferguson dismissed talks of himself retiring in the near future, saying he feels that he's still one of the best and is ready to play in the upcoming T20 World Cup. "I still feel fit, I still feel like I'm contributing. If there's ever a day I wake up and I'm not contributing to a win, or if I don't think I'm deserving of playing for the team, then I'll put my boots on the wall," he said. "But at this stage, I still think I'm one of the best, certainly ready to perform at a World Cup," he added. The pacer, who is currently in India to play the 5-match T20I series starting on Wednesday, said that playing here was a perfect preparation opportunity for the Kiwis for the T20 World Cup, set to be co-hosted by

India and Sri Lanka, from February 7.

The Black Caps will start their campaign on February 8 against Afghanistan in Chennai, followed by a match against UAE on February 10, also at Chennai. They will then move to Ahmedabad to play their last 2 group matches against South Africa and Canada on February 14 and 17 respectively. "It's literally perfect prep. I know they're not the grounds potentially we'll play, but just the experience at the time, whether there's dew factor, whether there's condition factor, it's nice to get on the turf and have such a decent build-up into the World Cup," he said.

"India are one of the top teams in the world, and in their own conditions are world-class. Much like the one-day series, the boys will play hard," he added. Ferguson, who is in Punjab Kings' roster for IPL 2026, said he has been bowling full tilt for the last one week after suffering a calf injury earlier this month during an ILT20 match in the UAE. He is also set to take a short paternity break during the T20 World Cup as February 20 is the expected date for his child's birth. "It's not been officially released yet, but it looks like we're tracking all well to definitely be involved in the series (against India)," he said. Ferguson, however, was not named in an updated New Zealand squad list on Tuesday. He is on a comeback trail having not played any cricket for the Kiwis last year due to injury.

'There's more to life than tennis': Casper Ruud ready to leave Australian Open with pregnant wife at home

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Casper Ruud leaves Australian open Casper Ruud of Norway waves after defeating Mattia Bellucci of Italy in their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. Norway's Casper Ruud has said that he would be ready to leave the ongoing 2026 Australian Open to be by the side of his pregnant wife, Maria, if the need arose. The 12th seed said that he was thankful to his wife for letting him travel and compete in the first slam of the year, adding that the ringer was switched on all the time to remain alert regarding any news from back home.

"I have to thank Maria for letting me go in the first place. I know she's at home resting, getting ready. Except for when I'm playing a match, the ringer is on all hours of the day just in case," Ruud said. "There's more to life than just tennis, but I'm going to be here for as long as I can and as long as Maria lets me," he added.

Ruud had defeated Mattia Bellucci of Italy 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 in the opening round on Monday and will take on Jaume Munar of Spain on Wednesday. Prior to the start of the tournament, Ruud had said that he and his wife were really excited to enter a new chapter in his life, admitting that he looked forward to becoming a good parent. "It's really exciting. It's something we've been looking forward to now for



half a year, so time is running and it's going to be a new chapter for us. [It will be] a new way of life on Tour and I very much look forward to it, knowing how close I've been with my own family and my father and also my mother." "I look forward to hopefully becoming a good parent myself. Even though this life requires a lot of time, a lot of energy and a lot of travel and these things, I look forward to trying to be there as much as I can and when I have downtime — time off from the court — I will spend it where I want to go with my future daughter," the Norwegian had told ATPTour.com.

Ajinkya Rahane decodes what Suryakumar Yadav has to do to rediscover form: 'If Surya does well, India will do well'



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The spotlight will be back on captain Suryakumar Yadav when India take on New Zealand in the T20I of the five-match series on Wednesday in Nagpur. Widely regarded as one of the greatest T20I batters to have ever come out of India, Suryakumar has never quite been able to consistently work his magic since the time that he became captain of the team really after their successful 2024 T20 World Cup campaign. Former India Test captain and SKY's longtime domestic teammate Ajinkya Rahane feels that the 35-year-old has been trying to "do too many things" off late and should just keep things simple in order to rediscover his destructive form in what will be the last series for

India before they host the 2026 T20 World Cup. "He has been out of form recently but I am really looking forward to seeing Surya coming back to form just before the World Cup," said Rahane on Cricbuzz. While his initial downturn in late 2024 was followed by some incredible success in the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL), SKY's international form continued sagging in the series that he played after that. In 2025, Suryakumar scored just 218 runs in 19 T20I innings at a strike rate of 123.16 and average of just 13.62. It was the first time in his career that he struck at less than 150 in a calendar year. "For (someone of) Surya's ability, those numbers are pretty low," said Rahane.

"I feel he is putting too much pressure on himself as a batter, trying to do too many things. If he can just keep it simple and just try and back his game. Preparation wise, he has been fantastic. His attitude and intensity on the field has been fantastic. I just want him to keep things simple as a batter. If he bats for long period of time, if Surya does well, India will do well." Suryakumar has himself admitted that the runs aren't quite coming the way they should for him. "I am sure everyone has seen this in their respective careers," Suryakumar told reporters in a press conference in which India revealed their squad for the T20 World Cup last month. "I know what to do. I know where things are going wrong. I have got some time to work on it. We have the New Zealand series coming up and then the important T20 World Cup. You will definitely see Surya the batter," he said.

Vaishnavi Sharma replaces G Kamalini in Mumbai Indians squad for rest of season

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma was drafted into the Mumbai Indians squad for the rest of the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026 season as a replacement for wicketkeeper-batter G Kamalini, who was ruled out due to an injury. A WPL release said that the 20-year-old cricketer, who had gone unsold at the mega auction in November, had been acquired by the franchise for Rs 30 lakh. She made her international debut in the five-match T20I series against Sri Lanka in December, where she claimed five wickets as the hosts won 5-0.

"Mumbai Indians (MI) picked Vaishnavi Sharma as a replacement for G Kamalini for the remainder of the TATA Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026. G Kamalini — the MI wicketkeeper-batter — had played 5 matches in the ongoing edition of the TATA WPL before being ruled out of the season due to an injury." "Vaishnavi Sharma will join MI for INR 30 Lakh. The left-arm spinner, who was a member of India's triumphant ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup squad of 2025, has played 5 T20Is for India, scalping 5 wickets from the same," the league said in a statement.

Prior to her India debut, Vaishnavi had emerged as



the leading wicket-taker in the senior women's T20 tournament, where she claimed 21 wickets in 11 matches at an average of 6.47. Those exploits, however, did not help her find a buyer at the auction, where she was listed for a base price of Rs 10 lakh.

Vaishnavi's father Dr Narendra Sharma had told The Indian Express that they were not disappointed by the auction snub, adding that they tried to put things into perspective for her daughter, which she understood as well.

Debuted at 16, delivered Bollywood's first Rs 100cr hit; top star quit films to marry entrepreneur with Rs 1,300cr net worth



doubtedly among the most sought-after actresses of the 2000s. She went on to work with several A-listers in Hindi cinema. Asin starred opposite Salman Khan in London Dreams and Ready, and was also part of multistarrers like Housefull 2 and Bol Bachchan. She worked with Akshay Kumar in Khiladi 786. Her last film was Abhishek Bachchan and Rishi Kapoor's All Is Well in 2015, after which she bid adieu to the film industry.

Who is Asin's husband and his net worth

A year after her final film, Asin tied the knot with Rahul Sharma, co-founder of Micromax, in 2016. The couple welcomed their daughter, Arin Rayn Sharma, in 2017.

Micromax is among the first Indian multinational manufacturers of consumer electronics and home appliances and is one of the few homegrown affordable mobile brands. As per a report by The Economic Times, Rahul started the company after taking a small loan of Rs 3 lakh from his father in 2000. The company entered the mobile phone business in 2008 and soon became one of the largest Indian manufacturers of low-cost phones. Rahul Sharma is a mechanical engineering graduate from Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University and also holds a commerce degree from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. As per his LinkedIn profile, apart from co-founding Micromax, Rahul has also co-founded two other startups — Bhagwati Products Limited, a manufacturer and assembler of innovative electronic items and telecommunication devices, and MiPhi Semiconductors Private Limited. He has also launched Revolt Intellincorp, India's first AI-based electric motorcycle brand. Rahul recently appeared on Nikhil Kamath's podcast. According to reports by Forbes and GQ India, Rahul Sharma's net worth is reportedly estimated to be around Rs 1,300 crore.

Rahul Sharma's anniversary post Recently, Rahul Sharma shared never-seen-before photos from his and Asin's Christian wedding on the occasion of their 10th anniversary. He also penned a sweet note for Asin, calling her the "co-founder of everything that matters in my life." She's the incredible co-founder of everything that matters in my life, and I'm fortunate to be cast as a co-star in hers! He wrote, "10 blissful years... She's the incredible co-founder of everything that matters in my life, and I'm fortunate to be cast as a co-star in hers! Happy 10th anniversary, my love. May you run our home and my heart like a high-growth startup, and I show up on the set of your life everyday. Here's to an incredible future together."

It is very difficult for an outsider to rise to the rank of an A-lister in the film industry, and while many continue to dream of a successful career in Bollywood, this Bollywood actor chose to walk away from acting at the peak of her career and embrace a quiet life away from the limelight after marrying an entrepreneur. We are talking about Asin Thottumkal. From making her debut as a teenager in South cinema to becoming one of the biggest stars across Tamil, Telugu and Hindi films, here's a closer look at journey.

Asin Thottumkal was born in Kochi, Kerala. Her father is a former CBI officer, while her mother is a doctor. She began her career in modelling and featured in a BPL advertisement before making her debut in the Malayalam film Narendran Makan Jayakanthan Vaka (2001) when she was just 16 years old. She became an instant hit in the South with her second film, Amma Nanna O Tamila Ammayi, a Telugu film released in 2003. After starring in four to five Telugu films, she moved to the Tamil film industry with Ravi Mohan's M. Kumaran Son of Mahalakshmi. She went on to deliver hit after hit in Tamil cinema with films like Ghajini, Ullam Ketkumae, Sivakasi, and several others. Asin soon became one of the most sought-after actresses in the South, working with superstars like Suriya, Vikram, Vijay, Ajith Kumar, and more.

After working extensively with South superstars, Asin made her Bollywood debut opposite one of the industry's biggest stars, Aamir Khan, in the Hindi remake of her Tamil blockbuster Ghajini (2008). The film emerged as a massive box office success and became the first ever Bollywood film to cross Rs 100 crore net domestically. Asin was un-

Brooklyn Beckham's father-in-law built an empire worth \$1.6 billion, more than double of David and Victoria Beckham's net worth

The drama surrounding the Beckhams has reached unprecedented heights, with Brooklyn Beckham's latest statement about his mother, Victoria Beckham, taking the internet by storm. David Beckham's son has now cut all ties with his parents and seems to be enjoying life with his wife, actor Nicola Peltz, and her parents, Nelson Peltz and Claudia Heffner. While the Beckhams are considered one of the most sought-after families in England, Brooklyn's new family and home also have quite a rich history.

Who is Nelson Peltz?

Father of Nicola and two of her siblings, Nelson dropped out of Wharton to become a ski instructor. However, instead of conquering hills, he found himself driving trucks for his father's food distribution company. Along with his brother, Robert Peltz, Nelson expanded the company for the better. During the 70s, the brother acquired several other food companies and soon went public. However, after an industry-wide crash, they had to rebuild their business.

With his partner Peter May and an investment vehicle they owned, the duo acquired new companies such as Tri-angle Industries and Snapple. The latter they bought from Quaker Oats and later sold it to Cadbury. Through their company Trian Partners, Peltz and May also acquired 15% of the fast food brand Wendy's in 2005. Peltz stepped down as the chairman of the corporation in 2024. He also serves as the non-executive director of Unilever. Through all these companies which Peltz bought and sold, he built a billion-dollar empire. According to reports by Forbes, the businessman is worth \$1.6 billion (Rs 14k crore). He has two kids from his first marriage and three from the marriage with Claudia.

Brooklyn has made it clear that he does not want to reconcile with his family and had earlier even sent them a legal notice, which directed them to make contact only through lawyers. However, the Beckhams have three more children: Romeo, Cruz and Harper. According to Celebrity Net Worth, both David and Victoria Beckham are worth \$450



million (Rs 4000 crore) each, and both have built that net worth all by themselves. While Victoria had some backing from her parents, who made it big during the tech boom of the 1980s, she forged her own path as a singer and fashion designer. Her time with the girl group Spice Girls brought her global fame, which helped her transition into designing. David, on the other hand, came from a much more humble background. His mother was a hairdresser, and his father worked as a kitchen fitter. His football career had him playing for teams like Manchester United, Real Madrid, AC Milan, PSG, and LA Galaxy. David established himself as one of the best wingers to ever grace the game, and that skill earned him big and lucrative contracts. He currently owns a sizeable chunk of the Inter Miami football club, which features players like Lionel Messi and Luis Suárez.

Jodie Foster was mauled by a lion as a 9-year-old; recalls camera crew running away: 'It picked me up and...'

The set of a movie can very quickly turn into a dangerous place when there are stunts or difficult physical actions involved. A lot can go wrong, and for actor Jodie Foster, something went terribly wrong on the sets of the Bernard McEveety directorial Napoleon and Samantha. Apart from Foster and Michael Douglas, the 1972 film also starred a lion, which is a pet in the film. However, during the shoot, the lion suddenly decided to take matters into its own hands and attack Foster, scarring her for life.

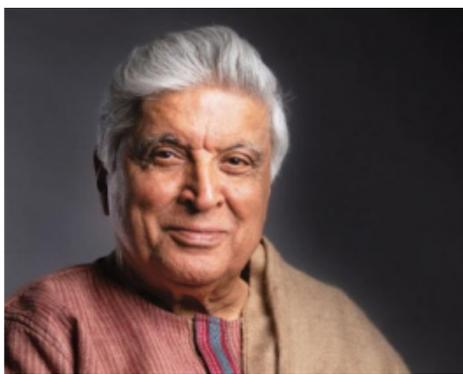
The actor shared this story during an interview with W Magazine. She started reciting the terrible incident and said, "I was mauled by a lion when I was eight and a half or nine. The lion picked me up, shook me around, moved me horizontally, and then dropped me. I had two perfect punctures on one side and then two perfect punctures on the other, on my hip. But as the years have gone on and we get bigger, you know, who even knows where they are anymore? They kind of just move around."

The actor continued and said, "I was in shock, so I



don't really remember that much. I remember the event. I saw his mane come forward, and I had worked with the lions, but when he picked me up, he picked me up and then moved me sideways and shook me around.

'Dhurandhar is a great film': Javed Akhtar heaps praise on Ranveer Singh actioner, says called Aditya Dhar to congratulate him



Javed Akhtar said: "I saw Dhurandhar, it's a great film, very well made. I found the number of the director and I called him, and congratulated that young man who has made this film. It's a good film, a very well-made film." Interestingly, Akhtar has also been making headlines recently for a separate reason. With the release of the war film Border 2 around the corner, the lyricist revealed to India Today that he was approached by the makers to write additional lyrics for the film's songs, including "Ghar Kab Aaoge" and "Jaate Hue Lamho". However, he declined the offer, calling the trend of adding lyrics to existing popular songs an act of "intellectual and creative bankruptcy." "They did ask me to write for the film, but I refused. I really feel this is a kind of intellectual and creative bankruptcy. You have an old song, which did well, and you want to put it out again by adding something? Make new songs or else except that you cannot do the same level of work. Whatever is bygone, let that be. What is the need to recreate it?" Dhurandhar's release was followed by Sriram Raghavan's Ikks, and the two films were frequently compared on social media. While Ikks faced criticism for being "too pacifist" in its intent, Dhurandhar was widely lauded for its bold and unflinching take on the state of affairs with Pakistan. Addressing these comparisons and the online trolling faced by Ikks, writer Pooja Ladha Surti responded in an exclusive conversation with SCREEN. She said, "I wouldn't want to pit one against the other. Both films are wildly different and inhabit complex worlds. In a democracy, there should be room for both Dhurandhar and Ikks to coexist."

Needless to say, Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar has created havoc at the box office. It is equally unsurprising that the film has drawn unanimous praise from across the Hindi film industry. From Ram Gopal Varma and Karan Johar to Aditya Chopra and Anurag Kashyap, there appears to be no major voice left untouched by the impact of the film. Joining this growing list of admirers is veteran screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar, who recently lauded Dhurandhar and revealed that he was so impressed by the film that he personally reached out to director Aditya Dhar to congratulate him.

In a conversation with Zoom, while praising the film,

Vijay Varma poses with golden toilet in Amitabh Bachchan's home Jalsa as he takes part in 2016 Instagram trend

Joining the ongoing viral trend, Vijay Varma also went down the memory lane to share glimpses of his year 2016. In his carousel of pictures, one of the moments caught widespread attention of fans, which was his selfie at veteran superstar Amitabh Bachchan's home Jalsa. The actor's photo with Amitabh's 'golden toilet' has left fans amused and intrigued to see more.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Vijay called 2016 a milestone in his journey. Along with the post, he wrote a description of every picture in the caption. It read, "2016 was sort of a milestone year for me.. I got to work with Big B and Shoojit da on the movie Pink with the lovely cast and crew. Met god @sachintendulkar. Took selfie with a golden toilet at Bachchan's. Made gym buddies @sanyamalhotra_ and @fatimasanaishaikh. Met my hero @irrfan. Worked on Yaara with @tigmanshuldulia sir with @mevidyutjammwal and @theamitsadh. Music video Naina Bawre with my friend @reemsen and overall goofed around with my newfound mini fame."

The post also revealed his special encounters with people from that year, including cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and actor Amitabh Bachchan. He called the cricketer 'God' and shared bonding moments with Sanya Malhotra and Fatima Sana Shaikh during their gym sessions. Another photo also showed him posing with late actor Irrfan. In the series, one of the selfies was with a golden toilet and chair in the background. He had mentioned that it was actually taken in a washroom in the Bachchan's Mumbai house. "That golden toilet," an amused fan wrote. Another commented, "First time Vijay saw a luxury toilet and wanted to take a selfie with that." "Golden toilet is the main character," a comment read. "All of them are fine, but



I don't understand what is the use of the chair beside the toilet yet," another person noted. Meanwhile, on the work front, Vijay Varma was last seen in Gustaakh Ishq, alongside Naseeruddin Shah and Fatima Sana Shaikh. The actor will next feature in Amazon Prime Video web series Matka King. It also stars Kritika Kamra, Sai Tamhankar and Gulshan Grover.

Bridgerton showrunner on casting Banita Sandhu in Season 3: 'Her effervescence and glow came off the screen immediately'

Jess Brownell has been working at Shondaland for 18 years now. She served as the showrunner of Bridgerton Season 3 and the upcoming Season 4, and even relocated from the US to London for that. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, she spills some beans on the next instalment, reacts to criticism towards Season 3, and reveals what she's learnt from visionary creator Shonda Rhimes.

Bridgerton Season 4 is going into the Downton Abbey zone by exploring the dynamics between the elite living upstairs and the working class in the basement. How do you think that'll shake things up? It shakes things up in a major way. We've always had a presence of the downstairs staff, but haven't explored their stories in depth. So, this season broadens their world, and adds a level of depth and texture. And class also provides a major obstacle and stakes to the main romance between Benedict (Luke Thompson) and Sophie (Yerin Ha) this season.

Speaking of romance, there was a bit of criticism towards Season 3 that it wasn't romantic enough. Do you agree with that criticism?

I don't agree with the criticism. Everyone has a different connection with each season. There are people who really see themselves in the relationship in Season 1, in Anthony (Jonathan Bailey) and Kate (Simone Ashley). And there are people who see themselves in the wish fulfillment of the guy you've always had a crush on but has friend-zoned you, finally see you in a romantic way. This season has a different kind of love connection. It's about forbidden romance. I'm excited for even more people to find alignment with what they consider romantic.

Bridgerton has been known widely for colourblind casting. But as a white woman, you've also brought your queer identity to the show in the form of Francesca (Hannah Dodd). How important was that for you?

For me, it has more to do with this being a show where more and more people can see themselves represented. Bridgerton is known, in many ways, for its inclusivity. It felt like queerness was one area where people weren't given enough opportunity to see themselves represented, especially in leading characters. The fact that I'm queer is a plus, like a sprinkle on top, in the way that I do understand how to write those stories. But it's not the main driving reason for that choice.



You've worked all your career at Shondaland. What have you picked up from creator Shonda Rhimes' vision that you've incorporate into your own?

Shonda has a knack for telling unexpected stories. My training in writing has been rooted in structure in a big way, following the beats of a story. But Shonda challenges me to think out of the box. She pushed me to think about what I'd want to see as a viewer rather than just writing what it feels like should happen. That creates many more talk-worthy moments that surprise people and make them swoon. Bridgerton creator Shonda Rhimes and showrunner Jess Brownell. Bridgerton creator Shonda Rhimes and showrunner Jess Brownell.

It was a pleasant surprise to see our very own Banita Sandhu as Sita Malhotra in season 3. How did you cast her?

I remember seeing Banita's tape and her effervescence and glow came off the screen immediately. We were looking for fresh faces for our debutantes and she was someone that captured the screen. She is a wonderful addition to our group of debutantes, and we're so lucky to have her on the show.

You relocated to London to work on the past two seasons of Bridgerton. Has that helped you to know the fragrance and history of the land that Bridgerton belongs to?

I've been in London for four years now. It's funny because Bridgerton is such a fantasy of London.