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## Tender cancellations routine, says Ponguleti; defends son's presence at Davos

Hyderabad: Amid the ongoing controversy over the Naini coal block tenders, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Saturday said cancellation of tenders was a routine process and challenged the Opposition to point out any mistakes, if present. He said tenders were cancelled when there was no proper response from bidders and described it as a regular practice. Since Union Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy was in Kothagudem, he should explain the alleged lapses, the Minister said during an informal interaction with media persons here.

## Bike rally held in Karimnagar to spread road safety awareness

Karimnagar: On the occasion of the 37th National Road Safety Month, a bike rally was organised in Karimnagar town on Saturday to create awareness about road safety.

As part of the 'Arrive Alive' awareness programme, Karimnagar Commissionerate police took out the rally. Collector Pamela Satpathy and Commissioner of Police Gautham participated in the rally and travelled together on a motorcycle, drawing attention from the public.

## Fire breaks out in furniture warehouse in Nampally area

Hyderabad, Jan 24

A massive fire broke out on Saturday at a furniture warehouse in the Nampally area, triggering panic among residents living nearby.

The blaze is believed to have started on the ground floor of the warehouse before spreading rapidly through the building. Within a short time, flames had engulfed the entire four-storey structure, sending thick smoke into the surrounding area.

Firefighters were alerted immediately and rushed to the scene. At least four fire engines have been deployed, with crews working intensively to bring the towering flames under control.

No casualties have been reported so far. Authorities are continuing firefighting operations, while the cause of the fire is yet to be determined.



## Dy CM Bhatti Vikramarka dismisses false propaganda against Singareni



Hyderabad, Jan 24

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Saturday strongly condemned what he described as a malicious propaganda campaign against Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), alleging that deliberate misinformation was being spread to tarnish the reputation of the public sector undertaking and the state government.

Speaking to the media, Bhatti expressed anger over what he termed as fabricated stories and slogans aimed at damaging Singareni's self-respect. He questioned whose interests were behind the writings and campaigns that, he said, were undermining the morale of workers at one of the country's largest public sector companies.

Referring to the recent developments, the Deputy Chief Minister asked, "One person wrote an article, another wrote a letter, and yet another ordered an inquiry. What is the connection between these three?" He reiterated that Singareni is an autonomous organisation and that all decisions are taken by its management.

Bhatti said the state government welcomes Union Minister G Kishan Reddy's visit and the decision to order an inquiry. He rejected claims that the site visit rule in tenders was introduced only after he assumed office, asserting that the facts would prove otherwise and should be made known to the public.

Calling the allegations "completely false", Bhatti

pointed out that Coal India introduced the site visit rule as early as 2018, while NMDC implemented it in 2021. He said Singareni adopted the rule in 2023, in line with CMPDI guidelines, which clearly mandate site visits.

He further noted that neither he nor the Congress party was in power when similar rules were introduced elsewhere. Several central and state organisations, including the Railways, Hindustan Copper, Gujarat Industries Power Company and the Maharashtra government, follow the same procedure, he said.

Bhatti accused certain sections of spreading a false narrative that the site visit clause does not exist anywhere else, and asserted that the inquiry would expose the truth.



## US hints at lifting 25 per cent tariff imposed on India for buying Russian oil

New York, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said there is a "path" to remove the 25 per cent tariffs imposed on India for buying Russian oil, noting that such purchases by Delhi from Moscow have "collapsed".

US President Donald Trump has imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, including 25 per cent for its purchases of Russian oil, leading to a strain in the bilateral ties between the two countries.

Bessent on Friday defined the sanctions imposed on India as a "success".

"We put 25 per cent tariffs on India for buying Russian oil. And the Indian purchases by their refineries of Russian oil have collapsed. So that is a success. The tariffs are still on. The 25 per cent Russian oil tariffs are still on," Bessent said in an interview with Politico.

"I would imagine that there is a path to take them off. So that's a check and a huge success," he added.

Bessent also criticised Europe for not imposing tariffs on India.

"Our virtue-signalling European allies refused to do it (impose tariffs) because they wanted to sign this big trade deal with India," he said.

Bessent accused India of importing and refining more oil from Russia after the invasion of Ukraine.

"Before the Ukraine invasion, approximately 2 per cent or 3 per cent of Indian oil that went into their refineries came from Russia. The oil was sanctioned. It got deeply discounted and moved up into the high teens — 17, 18, 19 per cent was being refined. Huge profits from the refiners," he said.

He accused Europe of funding Russia's war by purchasing the oil refined in India.

"But in the ultimate act of irony and stupidity, guess who was buying the refined products from the Indian refineries made from Russian oil, the Europeans. They are financing the war against themselves," he added.

When asked if he called the Europeans "stupid", Bessent said, "I said there was an act of stupidity."

India and the EU are likely to announce the closure of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) soon.

India had described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable" while maintaining that its energy policy is guided by its own national interest.

India fell to third place among buyers of Russian fossil fuels in December, after Reliance Industries and state-owned refiners sharply reduced their crude oil imports, according to Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

## India focusing on jobs through trade and mobility deals: PM

New Delhi, Jan 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is entering into trade and mobility agreements with various nations to create new opportunities for the youth both within the country and abroad.

Modi made these remarks at the 18th Rozgar Mela where he handed over 61,000 appointment letters for various government jobs electronically.

"India is signing trade and mobility agreements with several countries. These trade agreements are bringing new opportunities for the youth of the nation," Modi said, addressing the job fair at 45 locations across the country through video conferencing.

Modi said India has the maximum number of youngsters in the world and his government is making efforts to create new opportunities for the youth within the country and abroad.

The prime minister urged the new appointees to consider the appointment letters as an invitation to join nation building and a pledge to work for creating a developed India.

He asked the youth to recall their experiences at government offices in previous years and urged them to resolve to not let such hardships affect citizens during their tenure.

Modi also urged the youth to work with the motto 'Nagrik Devo Bhava' (citizen is akin to God) while discharging their duties.

The prime minister said in recent times, the government has made unprecedented investments in modern infrastructure, leading to increased employment across construction-related sectors.

He said that India's startup ecosystem is expanding rapidly, with nearly two lakh registered startups employing over 21 lakh youth.

Modi said 'Digital India' has expanded a new economy, with India emerging as a global hub in animation, digital media and several other sectors.

"Today, the nation has embarked on the reform express, aimed at making both life and business easier," he said. The prime minister said that next-generation reforms in GST have benefitted youth entrepreneurs and MSMEs, while historic labour reforms have strengthened social security for workers and employees, benefiting businesses as well.

Modi stressed that the new labour codes have expanded and empowered the scope of social security.



## KTR, Harish Rao served notices as witnesses, not accused, says Jupally

Hyderabad, Jan 24

Giving a new twist to the ongoing political controversy over the phone tapping issue, Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Saturday said the Special Investigation Team probing the case had served notices to former Ministers K T Rama Rao and T Harish Rao only as witnesses and not as accused.

"The notices were served under Section 160 of the CrPC. The SIT did not consider Rama Rao and Harish Rao as criminals but called them as witnesses to verify the facts related to the phone tapping issue. This is being done only to seek information from them," Krishna Rao said at a press conference here.

Ruling out political vendetta, as alleged by Bharat Rashtira Samithi leaders, the Minister said that if there had been any such intent, the investigating officers could have served notices under different sections of law. There were allegations that the phones of several prominent individuals and leaders were tapped and that the government was conducting an inquiry into the matter. However, BRS leaders were making false allegations against the Congress government, he claimed.

"All this is being done with an eye on the ensuing municipal elections. By making false charges, the BRS wants to derive political mileage," Krishna Rao alleged.

# 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.

## On Khelo India Winter Games debut, Kerala's Abhijith Amal Raj returns to ice and brings more than winning gold



Hyderabad:When figure skating made its debut at the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 in Ladakh, it was more than the introduction of a new discipline, it was the arrival of a long-missing national platform. Standing at the centre of that moment was Abhijith Amal Raj from Kerala, who went on to win gold in figure skating-men's advance category, marking a personal milestone.

Abhijith's presence in Ladakh carried weight far beyond a single competition. He is already one of India's most accomplished artistic figure skaters—a world champion in artistic roller skating, having won gold at the World Roller Skating Championship in 2019, along with Gold at the Asian Roller Skating Championships in 2023 and 2025, and the World Skate Oceania and Pacific Cup in 2023. Yet his appearance at Khelo India Winter Games

2026 represented something different, a return to figure skating on ice, and the chance to compete on a serious national stage at home. Abhijith's journey began almost as soon as he could walk. He wore skates before he could properly speak, starting formal training at the age of three. But in coastal Kerala, ice skating was neither common nor accessible. The cost of equipment, coaching, and infrastructure quickly turned talent into a test of endurance and financial requirements. His father chose to invest everything into his training.

By the age of nine, Abhijith already had an Arjuna awardee Anup Kumar Yama training him and later was trained by 11 times Artistic Roller Skating World Champion and international coach, Luca d'Alisera for which we had to go to Italy. That coaching costed 100 Euros an hour, four hours a day with expenses running into lakhs for just a month.

To sustain this, his family sold property and moved into rented accommodation. Government support came later, but the foundation of Abhijith's career was built on years of financial strain and personal sacrifice. Before his rise as an artistic roller skating world champion, Abhijith had already built a strong record in ice figure skating. In 2014, he won gold at the Asian Open Figure Skating Trophy in Taiwan, the Dubai Golden Cup, and the Malaysian Open National Championship, along with national titles in 2013 and 2014. He added another international gold in Malaysia in 2016 before shifting his primary focus to roller skating, where he eventually reached the top of the world podium. His figure skating gold at the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 marked a comeback to ice skating after nearly a decade.

## Chinmaya Mission Inaugurates 'Chinmaya Experience' – AI-Enabled Spirituality Stalls in Hyd



Hyderabad: As part of the Amrit Mahotsav celebrations marking the 75th Anniversary of Chinmaya Mission, Chinmaya Mission Greater Hyderabad today inaugurated "Chinmaya Experience", a unique, new-age AI and VR technology-enabled spiritual experience zone, at NTR Stadium, Hyderabad. The inauguration was graced by Pujya Swami Swaroopananda Ji, Global Head of Chinmaya Mission, along with Swami Bodhamayananda Ji, Director, Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence, Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad.

The event commenced with traditional invocations and the ceremonial Purna Kumbham, followed by the inauguration of key stalls including the Chinmaya Vani

Book Store, Chinmaya Uphaar Merchandise Stall, and the Chinmaya Mission Grassroots Activities Stall. The dignitaries also undertook a walkthrough of the stalls, experiencing the immersive and interactive exhibits. A key highlight of the inauguration was the AR and VR-based Experience Stall, a cutting-edge, new-age technology centre offering visitors an immersive spiritual journey. The stall showcases Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's life and teachings, along with a specially curated Chinmaya Mission 75-year timeline, blending advanced technology with timeless Vedantic wisdom. Visitors can experience four major stalls at NTR Stadium across both days of the celebrations, including an AR and VR Experience Stall offering immersive spiritual learning, a Chinmaya Book Stall featuring devotional literature, Vedantic texts, and books for children, a Chinmaya Uphaar Merchandise Stall, and additional stalls highlighting Chinmaya Mission's grassroots and outreach activities. Addressing the gathering and the media, Pujya Swami Swaroopananda Ji spoke about Chinmaya Mission's inspiring 75-year journey, its unwavering commitment to spiritual education rooted in Vedanta, and its relevance in contemporary society through innovative initiatives such as Chinmaya Experience. Swami Bodhamayananda Ji also addressed the gathering, appreciating Chinmaya Mission's significant contribution to nation-building through value-based education, spiritual empowerment, and selfless service.

## Funds of ₹53 lakh Sanctioned to 144 Churches Due to the Efforts of CM Revanth Reddy

Uppal Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 24 (Indian Chronicle): "Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that funds were sanctioned to churches for Christmas celebrations solely due to the dedicated efforts of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He informed that a total of ₹53 lakh was sanctioned to 144 churches in the Uppal Assembly Constituency. On Saturday in Uppal, representatives of various churches felicitated Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for his role in securing the funds. "He further explained that ₹1 lakh each was sanctioned to 14 churches, while ₹30,000 each was allocated to another 130 churches. Several leaders and pastors participated in the programme, including Ezekiel, Sadguna Rao, Trimurthulu, Prabhakar Agam Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Luther, Pushpa Raju, Varaprasad Rao, Manohar, and other pastors.



## BLR Cricket Tournament Inaugurated by BRS Malkajgiri Parliament In-charge Ragidi Laxma Reddy



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 24 (Indian Chronicle): "The BLR Cricket Tournament was inaugurated at the Ramanthapur Chinna Cheruvu Grounds under the leadership of former Corporator Gandham Jyothsna Nageshwar Rao. BRS Malkajgiri Parliament In-charge Ragidi Laxma Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the tournament. Speaking on the occasion,

Ragidi Laxma Reddy expressed his desire that youth should actively participate in sports and grow strong both physically and mentally. He stated that such sports tournaments not only promote sportsmanship among youth but also help strengthen unity in society. Local public representatives, players, and a large number of youth participated in the event.

## Former Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav Pays Tribute to Late Palakursi Ramesh



"Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, January 24 (Indian Chronicle): "Former Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav paid floral tributes to the mortal remains of senior BRS party leader Palakursi Ramesh at his residence in Uppal, expressing deep condolences over his untimely demise. "Former Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav, along with BRS state leaders Bannala Praveen Mudiraj and Mandal Radhakrishna, and other BRS party leaders, offered garlands and paid their respects. They stated that the death of Palakursi Ramesh is an irreparable loss to his family. Leaders from various political parties, including Bazaar Jagannath Goud and Akula Mahender, participated in the programme and paid their tributes.

## Mohammed Harshad Haimad wins Goods Transport Association election in Tandur

"Indian Chronicle, Tandur (January, 24) "Mohammed Harshad Haimad won the Goods Transport Association election in Tandur, Vikarabad district. The election, held every two years, saw 80 out of 84 members cast their votes in a tense contest. "Harshad Haimad secured 48 votes, followed by Mohammed Firoz Khan with 18 and K Venkateshwar Rao with 14. The newly elected president was felicitated by members with garlands and shawls. "Lawyer Gopal, who oversaw the election, urged the association to work towards development and requested MLA Manohar Reddy to help establish a transport office and shops in the allocated land at Antharam village. "Harshad Haimad pledged to work with members to develop the association and resolve their issues. The event concluded with celebrations, crackers, and sweets. "End



## Shaik Chand Pasha met with TGSB 8th Battalion Commandant M. Ramakrishna

"Indian Chronicle: Congress party senior leader Shaik Chand Pasha paid a courtesy visit to M. Ramakrishna, Commandant of the TGSB 8th Battalion in Kondapur, Kondapur division. Suryanarayana, Prasad, and others participated in this program.



## The Survival of Creation Depends on the Girl Child

Save the Girl Child Observes National Girl Child Day



Hyderabad: Dr. Sravanthi, Ragi Swapna and Sunitha said that the main objective of National Girl Child Day is to create awareness about girls' education, health, safety and rights. On the occasion of National Girl Child Day, a programme was organised under the aegis of Save the Girl Child at Somajiguda. They emphasized that society can progress only when equal opportunities are provided to every girl child and stated that the empowerment of girls forms the foundation for national development.

Representatives of the organisation said that Save the Girl Child continues to conduct awareness programmes for school and college students on social issues affecting girls. They added that the support and cooperation of all sections of society are essential for the growth and development of girls. Describing the girl child as a divine blessing, the speakers said that the survival of creation itself depends on girls. Supriya, Lakshmi and others participated in the programme.

## Kuchipudi Dance Performance Enthralls at Uppal Mini Shilparamam



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 24 (Indian Chronicle): "As part of the weekend cultural programs at Uppal Mini Shilparamam, a captivating Kuchipudi dance performance was presented on Saturday evening by the disciples of Sridevi Prashanth. The performance mesmerized the audience with its grace and traditional excellence. "The dancers presented various classical items including Vachenu Alivelu Manga, Jagadapu Chanuvu, Ashta Lakshmi, Garuda Gamana, Ananda Nartana Ganapatim, Swagatham Krishna, Dashavatara Shabdham, Trishakti, and Devadevam Bhaje. The performances by Pranathi, Poojitha, Adithiri, Nandini, Lakshmi, Navyatha, Yashwanthi, Aadya, Vishnupriya, Akshaya, and Deepanvitha were highly appreciated by the audience.

### GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA Revenue (LA) Department FORM VII

(See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and section -19(1) of the Act, 30/2013) PUBLICATION OF DECLARATION  
G1/4759/2025 Dated: 12-01-2026  
No.C/17/2023 Dated: -12-2025

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/ District Collector, Nalgonda required an extent of **Ac. 1.03 1/2 gts** Patta land in **Kakula Kondaram Village of Nalgonda** Mandal of Nalgonda District required for Public Purpose, namely for Udaya Samudram Lift Irrigation Scheme 20R minor on D-1 LMC from Km.0.000 to Km.0.171 in Sy.No.58, 59 & 61. Therefore, declaration is made for the above said project in **Kakula Kondaram Village of Nalgonda** Mandal of Nalgonda District a piece of land measuring more or less **Ac. 1.03 1/2 gts** standard measurement, whose detailed description is as mentioned below, is under acquisition.

**SCHEDULE**  
Village: Kakula Kondaram  
Mandal: Nalgonda District: Nalgonda

Sl.No.	Classification, Description of land i.e. Patta/ Inam/ Govt	Extent	Name of the Pattadar/Enjoyer and S/o or W/o	Details of Structures, trees, etc., on the field
1	58 Patta/Dry 0.06	0.06	Sanda Komalatha W/o Narsimha	-
2	59 Patta/Dry 0.26 1/2	0.24 1/2 0.2 1/2	Sanda Komalatha W/o Narsimha Varikuppala Rajaiah, Eddaiah, Narimha	-
3	61 Patta/Dry 0.11	0.11	Varikuppala Rajaiah, Eddaiah, Narimha	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.03 1/2</b>		

The declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested and due enquiry as provided U/s 15 of the Act. No.30/2013. The area for acquisition would have no displacement of people and no disturbance to the infrastructure in the vicinity, ecology and minimum adverse impact is foreseen on the effected individual's livelihood. Hence, there is no need to pass a separate R&R award in terms of Section 31 and schedule of the RFCT LA RR Act, 2013 (Act 30 of 2013). Mines of coal, iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed. A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Deputy Collector, R&R & LA, Unit-II, Nalgonda on any working day.

Sd/- Special Dy. Collector R&R & LA, Unit-II, Nalgonda  
Sd/- Additional Collector, (Rev.) Nalgonda  
Sd/- District Collector, Nalgonda

DIPR Ro.No.1068/LA/PP/Adv/Pub/2025-26

## Only education can lead to greater heights, says DSP Waheeduddin



Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, January 24 (Indian Chronicle) "Education forms the foundation for a bright future, and only through education can one reach greater heights, said Kagaznagar DSP Waheeduddin. "On Saturday, under the aegis of the Abid Ali Khan Trust, free

Siasat Question Banks and exam pads were distributed to Urdu-medium Class 10 students at the local Anwar Urdu School in Kagaznagar town. The study materials were formally handed over by the DSP. "Addressing the students on the occasion, DSP Waheeduddin urged them to work hard, achieve good results, and bring pride to their parents and teachers through their success. He assured that talented and deserving students would be encouraged and supported to the best of his ability. "The DSP also appreciated the initiative of the Abid Ali Khan Trust for previously distributing Siasat Question Banks to students who had emerged as toppers in the Class 10 Urdu-medium examinations, terming the effort commendable. "The programme was attended by Rural CI Kumaraswamy, Mandal Education Officer Vasala Prabhakar, Anwar School Headmaster Arif Uddin, Trust District In-charge Abdul Jameel, along with teachers and students. "end

## Demand for Basic Facilities at Muslim Graveyard — Appeal by Uppal Congress Senior Leader Irshad Khan

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 24 (Indian Chronicle) "Senior Congress leader Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) has urged the authorities to improve basic infrastructure at the Uppal Muslim graveyard, which falls under the Uppal Circle limits. He stated that, in view of the holy month of Ramzan and the observance of Shab-e-Barat night vigil, it is essential to make adequate arrangements at the Uppal graveyard for Muslim devotees. "On this occasion, Irshad Khan met Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy and Uppal Deputy Commissioner G. Raju and submitted a memorandum requesting the installation of temporary electric lighting and IMAX lights at the graveyard during nighttime. "Responding positively, Parameshwar Reddy assured that all necessary basic facilities would be provided immediately. The Muslim minority community expressed special gratitude to Parameshwar Reddy and the Deputy Commissioner for their prompt and supportive response. Members of the Beerappagadda Muslim



Committee, including Mohsin, Anwar, Faizi, Noor, Ibrahim, Asif, Waheed, and others, participated in the program.

## BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj Inspects Drainage Issues with Water Works Officials in Chilkanagar



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 24 (Indian Chronicle) "BRS Party State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj conducted an extensive inspection on Saturday along with Water Works officials in the Chilkanagar Bodrai and Shivalayam Street areas, including the surroundings of Krishnaveni Talent School. "Residents of the Chilkanagar Bodrai Shivalayam back lanes and the Krishnaveni Talent School locality brought to the notice of Corporator Bannala Praveen Mudiraj the problems caused by the overflow of damaged drainage pipelines, which have been troubling the local basti residents. Responding immediately, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, along with Water Works Department officials DGM Rajanikant, Manager Satyanarayana, and their staff, inspected the severely damaged drainage pipelines in the area. He directed the Water Works officials to prepare proposals for installing new drainage pipelines at the earli-



est. Addressing the residents, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj assured that, with the support of MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and Corporator Geetha Praveen Mudiraj, approvals would be obtained and new drainage pipelines would be laid promptly to ensure that the public does not face any inconvenience. Following complaints by local leaders Railway Anjaiah and Motte Ramesh regarding sewage water entering cellars through the drainage near the Krishnaveni Talent School back lanes, the old damaged drainage pipeline was immediately removed and replaced with a new pipeline.

The basti residents expressed their gratitude to the Corporator and Water Works officials for their swift response and immediate action. BRS Party senior leaders Yeddula Kondal Reddy, Ashok Chari, Sundar, Ravinder Goud, Shafi, Hanif, Balender, Water Works staff Shekhar and Upender, Railway Anjaiah, and local residents participated in the program.

## Festivals are a confluence of devotion, tradition, and culture.



"Secunderabad Cantonment, January 24 (Indian Chronicle) "Former Cantonment Board Vice-Chairman Jampana Pratap said that Indian culture and traditions hold immense importance, and it is everyone's responsibility to protect them, adding that festivals are a blend of devotion, tradition, and culture. The 24th Brahmotsavams of the renowned Venkateswara Swamy Temple in New City Colony, Bowenpally area, will be celebrated grandly from the 30th of this month. In this context, the Brahmotsavam pamphlets and invitation cards were released on Saturday at the Bowenpally Venkateswara Swamy Temple by the temple chairman and former Cantonment Board Vice-Chairman Jampana Pratap, along with the temple committee members. On this occasion, he said that thousands of devotees are expected to attend these Brahmotsavams this year, and arrangements are being made to ensure they do not face any inconvenience. He said that the Swami's Kalyanam (celestial wedding) on February 1st and the chariot procession with a new chariot in the streets of Bowenpally on the evening of the 3rd will be special attractions. He called upon devotees to participate in large numbers in this chariot procession to showcase Hindu unity. Lord Venkateswara, the grantor of wishes, resides in Boyinapally. The temple of Lord Venkateswara is renowned not only for its worship but also for its magnificent festivals. A festival is born when devotion, reverence, joy, and enthusiasm come together. Among such festivals, the Brahmotsavam of Lord Venkateswara at Bowenpally is considered para-

mount, said the speakers at the event. Temple committee members Narayana, Lakshman, Yadaiya, Sambasiva Rao, Narsing Rao, and temple priests Tirumala Pawan, Sridhar, Deepak, and others participated in the program. "Deputy Mayor Inspects Civic Issues in OU Police Station Limits... "Indian Chronicle OU January 24: Greater Hyderabad Deputy Mayor Smt. Mothe Sripatha Shobhan Reddy conducted an inspection on Saturday to review various civic issues within the Osmania University Police Station (OU PS) limits, including sanitation deficiencies, non-functional streetlights, poor road conditions, and other maintenance-related problems. TTUC State President Shri Mothe Shobhan Reddy accompanied her during the inspection.

## 'Arrive Alive' Drive Held at Kagaznagar Paper Mill to Prevent Road Accidents

"Taj Khan, Kagaznagar, January 24 (Indian Chronicle) "Road safety equals life safety; workers must follow rules: Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla "Helmet and seatbelt mandatory; negligence leads to fatal mishaps: SP Nitika Pant "Strict action against drunken and rash driving, warns police "As part of efforts to prevent road accidents, the Telangana State Police organised its prestigious "Arrive Alive" road safety awareness programme at the Paper Mill in Kagaznagar town on Thursday. The programme was conducted under the supervision of Kagaznagar Police. "District Superintendent of Police Nitika Pant attended the event as the chief guest, along with Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla. "Addressing paper mill workers, SP Nitika Pant stressed that motorists must strictly adhere to road safety norms and compulsorily wear helmets and seatbelts. She noted with concern that over 1.07 lakh people lost their lives in road accidents across the country last year, while nearly 8,000 fatalities were reported from Telangana

## MLA Manohar Reddy lays foundation for development works in Peddemul mandal



"Indian Chronicle, Tandur (January, 24) "Vikarabad district's Peddemul mandal saw the laying of foundation

stones for various development works by MLA Manohar Reddy. As per his election promises, he inaugurated a women's association building and panchayat building in Gotlapalli village, and a new panchayat building in Bandapalli village and also kotepalli village. "Speaking on the occasion, MLA Manohar Reddy said the Congress government is prioritizing women's empowerment, evident from the allocation of purchase centers to women's associations, making them stronger. "He mentioned that hostel facilities have been provided at Gotlapalli Medel School, and an anganwadi and Dwakra building have been sanctioned for Bandapalli village. He also stated that funds have been allocated to villages in the constituency within a month of the new sarpanches taking office. "The event was attended by DCC president Dharasingh, Market Committee chairman Anjayya, Gotlapalli sarpanch MD Salam, and other officials and leaders.

## Government Colleges Must Be Effectively Utilised: Principal (FAC) Usha.

"P. S. ASHOKAN "KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. "Manthani" "Principal (FAC) Usha has appealed to parents and students to make optimum use of government colleges, emphasising that they are now on par with private and corporate institutions in terms of quality education and facilities. "She was speaking on Friday at the Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting organised at the Manthani Government Girls' Junior College. Addressing the gathering, she stated that government colleges today offer robust infrastructure, modern amenities, and student-centric academic support comparable to reputed private colleges. "She highlighted that the college provides digital teaching methods, special coaching for competitive examinations, and co-curricular programmes such as Yoga and NSS, aimed at the holistic development of students. To further enhance academic performance, morning and evening study hours are also being conducted to strengthen students' learning capabilities. "Principal Usha urged parents to consider the immense benefits of government education instead of spending lakhs of rupees on private institutions. She proudly mentioned that Gundodju Sreeja, a student of the college, secured first position in the district, demonstrating the academic excellence of the institution. "She stressed that such



achievements are possible only with the active cooperation of parents and encouraged students to take full advantage of the guidance provided by the highly experienced and dedicated faculty to realise their true potential. "The meeting was attended by lecturers Jhansi, Sridhar Rao, Tirupati, Tirumal, Shashank, Nagesh, LRK Reddy, Sridevi, Sabita, Mounika, Suresh, and Deeparani, along with non-teaching staff Anasuya and Prabhakar. "The programme concluded on a positive note, reaffirming the institution's commitment to academic excellence and student empowerment through quality public education.

## Floral Tributes Paid to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on His Birth Anniversary at Manthani Shishu Mandir

"Manthani" "On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, floral tributes were paid to his statue at Manthani Shishu Mandir School in the presence of Shishu Mandir office-bearers and dignitaries. "P. S. ASHOKAN "KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. "Speaking on the occasion, Viswa Hindu Parishad District Vice-President Kotha Srinivas described Subhas Chandra Bose as one of the foremost leaders who adopted a revolutionary approach to India's freedom struggle. He recalled that Netaji firmly believed that independence could not be achieved solely through non-violence, especially in the face of the brutal and oppressive rule of the British, and that armed resistance was inevitable. "He highlighted that Netaji founded the Azad Hind Fauj with the vision of transforming every Indian into a soldier of the nation. With his clarion call, "Give me your blood, and I will give you freedom," Bose ignited unparalleled patriotism among the youth and inspired countless individuals to dedicate their lives to the cause of national liberation. "Kotha Srinivas further remarked that the circumstances surrounding Netaji's death continue to remain a mystery, adding to his legendary stat-



ure. He expressed concern that Manthani still does not have a statue of Subhas Chandra Bose, terming it a matter of deep regret. He assured that if the government allocates suitable land, the Viswa Hindu Parishad, under its aegis, would take the initiative to establish a statue of Netaji in Manthani. "The programme witnessed the participation of Shishu Mandir President Karne Prasuna, Madishetty Surender, Ratnaprabha, Renuka, Gobboori Ramudu, Harish, Kiran, Rangikamala, and several others, who joined in paying homage to the great patriot. "The event concluded with renewed resolve to uphold the ideals of courage, sacrifice, and unwavering nationalism exemplified by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

## Three Indian Teams Win Gold at International Roller Handball Skating Championship



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Hyderabad, January, (Indian Chronicle) "Four teams from India participated in the 1st International Roller Handball Skating Championship held in Nepal on January 23 and 24 under the aegis of the Roller Handball Skating Federation of India. Teams from various countries competed in the Under-9, Under-12, Under-14, and Under-17 categories. The championship was organized by the South Asia Federation of Sports for All in association with the Roller Handball Federation of India. India participated with four teams across four categories and achieved an impressive performance by winning three gold medals. "Indian Secretary T.K. Thombure, team coaches Syed Mukhtar, Syed Azar Ali, and Syed Nayeb, along with team manager Durga, were present at the event and supported the teams throughout the tournament.



# Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah, Whip of the Telangana State Government, distributed handloom loan waiver cheques in Aleru town

# Lorry Owners Welfare Association felicitates new Goods Transport Association president



“Indian Chronicle, Tandur(January,24)“The executive members of Vikarabad district's Tandur Lorry Owners Welfare Association felicitated Mohammed Harshad Haimad, the newly elected president of the Goods Transport Association, at their office. The association's president, Abdul Ghani, and executive members emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation between the two organizations, stating that they are like two eyes for commerce. The event was attended by Lorry Owners Welfare Association members Shivakumar, Narimulu, Afroz Khan, Saikumar, Vijay bhasker, mahemud,Nasar, Sayyad Bond and other union representatives.



“(Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle..January 24):- A handloom loan waiver cheque distribution programme was organized in Aleru town of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district to provide relief to handloom professionals. “Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah participated as the chief guest in this programme and distributed loan waiver cheques to eligible handloom workers. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Ayilaiah said that handloom workers are an important strength of the state economy and their welfare is the government's goal. He said that the Telangana government is implementing many welfare schemes to promote the handloom profession. He said that by freeing them from debt, handloom workers can move forward with confidence. Proposals of Rs. 2.69 crore have been submitted to (362) handloom workers under the Netanna Loan Waiver Scheme in Aleru

constituency. As part of this, the Telangana government has released funds of Rs. 1.18 crore to (164) handloom workers in Aleru town and Yadagirigutta town in the first tranche. He said that funds of Rs. 1.10 crore will be released to (151) handloom workers in Aleru town and Rs. 0.83 crore to (13) handloom workers in Yadagirigutta town. (1607) handloom workers have registered under the Netanna Savings Scheme in Aleru constituency. He said that funds of Rs. 32.00 lakh per month have been released to them so far. Also, as part of this scheme, funds of Rs. 18.60 crore have been released to (1862) handloom workers in Aleru constituency for the period (2021-24). These funds have been deposited in the accounts. So far, (2257) workers in the handloom weaving mills have been registered in Aleru constituency under the Netannaku Bhima Scheme. So far, (52) workers who have died have been released to their nominees with a sum of Rs. 1.60 crore.

# Robust Security Arrangements for Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara

### No Room for Untoward Incidents: Police Commissioner Amber Kishore Jha.



“P. S. ASHOKAN. “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. “The Ramagundam Police Commissionerate has put in place comprehensive security measures to ensure that the Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara is conducted peacefully and without any untoward incidents, stated Police Commissioner Amber Kishore Jha. “On Sunday evening, the Police Commissioner, along with senior police officials, inspected the Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara sites near the Godavari Bridge. He toured the entire Jatara premises and surrounding areas, closely reviewing and supervising the security and administrative arrangements. The Commissioner also visited the Sammakka–Saralamma gaddelu, offered prayers, and interacted with local residents to gather firsthand information about the Jatara arrangements and related issues. “Emphasizing the paramount importance of devotees' safety, the Commissioner issued several instructions regarding enhanced security measures and effective traffic management. He enquired about the expected influx of devotees

and reviewed the arrangements accordingly. The newly installed barricades at the Jatara venue were inspected, and officials were directed to recheck them thoroughly to ensure there is no inconvenience to devotees. “He further instructed officials to ensure proper installation and monitoring of CCTV cameras and to take special precautions for the safety and protection of devotees, particularly women. Devotees were advised to strictly follow police instructions for their own safety and convenience. The Commissioner also appealed to the public to park their vehicles only in designated parking areas identified by the police during the Jatara period. “Accompanying the Commissioner were Godavarikhani ACP M. Ramesh, Godavarikhani 2-Town Inspector Prasad Rao, Godavarikhani 1-Town Inspector Indrasena Reddy, Ramagundam Traffic Inspector Rajeshwar Rao, Special Branch Inspector Bhimesh, Jatara Committee Chairman Srinivas Reddy, Temple AO Kantha Reddy, Foundation representative Bangari Rajayya, Singareni Srinivas, committee members, and other officials.

# Legal Awareness Programme on Girls' Rights Marks National Girl Child Day in Manthani.



“P. S. ASHOKAN“KARIMNAGAR BUREAU“As part of the National Girl Child Day celebrations, a Legal Awareness and Literacy Programme focusing on Girls' Rights was organized with great significance at the Zilla Parishad Girls High School, Manthani, under the auspices of the Manthani Mandal Legal Services Authority. “Addressing the students, Ms. A. Sudharani, Additional Junior Civil Judge, Manthani, underscored the importance of legal awareness among girls and asserted that knowledge of constitutional rights is the foundation of empowerment. She urged the students to pursue their education with discipline, confidence, and caution, while remaining alert to prevailing social challenges. Emphasizing the spirit of the Constitution, she stated that it confers rights coupled with responsibilities, and called upon students to uphold

both with integrity for personal excellence and societal progress. “Speaking on the occasion, Mr. K. Raghobham Reddy, Vice-President of the Bar Association, elaborated on vital legal aspects including gender equality, the Right to Education Act, and various statutory provisions enacted to protect the dignity, safety, and future of the girl child. He encouraged students to develop self-respect and legal consciousness to confront injustice. “The programme witnessed the presence of Headmistress Ms. S. Sumalatha, advocates Shashibhushan Kache, U. Subhash, M. Srinivas, and Siri Vennela, along with teaching staff and a large number of girl students, who actively engaged in the interactive session. “The event served as a significant platform to educate, inspire, and empower young girls, reinforcing their confidence and guiding them towards becoming aware, responsible, and self-reliant citizens of the nation.

# District Welfare Officer Narasimha Rao participated in the International and National Girl Child Day program at Rayagiri Zilla Parishad High School.

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“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 24):- Under the auspices of the Women, Child, Disabled, and Senior Citizens Welfare Department of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, District Welfare Officer Narasimha Rao participated as the chief guest in the International and National Girl Child Day program at Rayagiri Zilla Parishad High School. He advised the children to move forward with the slogan of protecting the rights, safety, and education of girls, and understanding good touch and bad touch, emphasizing "Let's allow girls to be born, let's protect them, let's educate them, and let's let them grow." Later, pens were distributed to all the children in the school. CDPO Shailaja, BRB Coordinator Ananthalakshmi, the school headmistress Andal, district welfare office staff, supervisors, school teachers, children, Anganwadi teachers, the women's empowerment team, and others participated in this program.



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## How 2 brothers turned a sluggish steel supply chain around



country produces enough steel. The shortcoming is, possibly, reliability. Steel arrives late or is the wrong specification or with unfair pricing. At the origin of Enlight law Vedant's deep disappointment with how inefficient the industry was. He had a long experience working in the steel sector. "If steel is delayed, there is a ripple effect. The labor cost rises, there is an interest cost and deadlines are missed," he says. His brother, Dhananjay Goel, the tech brain of the family, would hear him out. It was a matter of time before the two decided to work on solving the issue. Dhananjay is also Founder-Director of the company.

In 2024, they set up Enlight Metals, a Swiggy or Zomato for manufacturers who are looking for products, such as Cold Rolled and Hot Rolled steel coils, Mild Steel Round Bars, pipes, beams, joists, plates and channels. At that time, it would take three to four days to get deliveries. Enlight harnessed Artificial Intelligence and other technologies and logistics to bring in the concept of 24-hour delivery. Not many people, initially, thought the idea would work. The steel trade is based on personal engagement and agreements and there was uncertainty about booking steel online. The brothers persisted in overcoming the scepticism — they would come to work at 9 am and stay there till 3 am — and it paid off. "We have two dark stores currently — in the MIDC areas of Pune and Mumbai. And we are soon setting up 10 dark stores," says Vedant. "Wherever we have a good pocket of industrial areas, we are going to set up dark stores so that the regular items can be delivered within 24 to our customers," says Dhananjay. He adds that the current government is pushing Digital India a lot, which is giving them a boost. The visitor count to the platform, enquiries and orders are steadily increasing. In the next financial year, Enlight is targeting to triple its business. "From 500 manufacturers, we want to scale it up to 1,500. Our plans are to start going pan-India very soon," says Vedant.

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

The Navi Mumbai airport, which was inaugurated in October 2025 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was still under construction when they needed a specialised grade metal part that was not available in the market. A call went out to a Pune-based company, Enlight Metals, which was disrupting the steel supply chain. "They gave us a timeline to deliver the material. This was a challenge but we were able to successfully procure the raw material from a mill and deliver it," says Vedant Goel, Founder-Director of Enlight Metals. In the Financial Year 2025-26, the company had delivered 75,000 tonne of metals at the end of the third quarter. By the end of this quarter, they are targeting 1.25 lakh tonne. There are more than 500 customers, including Tata Motors, Mahindra, Pune Metro and the airports in Pune, Udaipur, Ratnagiri and Navi Mumbai. Most people don't think about steel, except when something goes wrong. When a metro line is delayed or a car launch pushed by months. The official cause given is "raw material unavailability" which, in many cases, means a problem with steel. But, the issue is not that there is a shortage of steel in India. The

## From Lahore to Patiala, a shared classroom legacy endures



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

As the Partition forced thousands of young students to migrate between India and Pakistan, Lahore's iconic Aitchison College was effectively replicated in India. This led to the establishment of Yadavindra Public School (YPS), Patiala, in 1948. The founder of YPS was Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, the last ruler of the Patiala princely state, who wanted a school on the Indian side on the lines of his own and his father's alma mater in Lahore. Both Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh were alumni of Aitchison College, Lahore. YPS also served as an alternative to Aitchison, and many students who were abruptly uprooted from Lahore continued their education at YPS Patiala. Yadavindra Public School (YPS), Patiala (Source: School's official Facebook page) Yadavindra Public School (YPS), Patiala

Seventy-eight years after Partition, the two iconic educational institutions in India and Pakistan, bound by a shared history, legacy, and heritage, are set to celebrate their "old boys" and their cherished memories. However, given the strained relations between the neighbouring countries and no immediate signs of a thaw, the celebrations will be held separately, without any formal collaboration. Founded in 1886, Aitchison College, Lahore, will celebrate its 140th Foundation Day, with events at its colonial-era campus scheduled from February 13 to 15. Aitchison is currently a semi-private school for boys, though it uses the term "College" in the traditional British sense to denote a prestigious secondary institution. Meanwhile, YPS Patiala will hold its celebrations on February 2 and 3 to mark its 78th Foundation Day since its establishment in 1948. The Special Assembly on February 3 at YPS Patiala will witness a particularly memorable moment. Indian alumni who once studied at Aitchison and later moved to YPS after Partition will be invited and honoured.

Alumni of Aitchison College in 1890 photograph (Special arrangement) Alumni of Aitchison College in 1890 photograph "We have managed to contact at least 15 such alumni who will be invited and honoured at the Special Assembly on February 3. They studied at Aitchison and later moved to YPS after Partition. Very few of them are alive now, but we are trying to get in touch with as many as we can," said Navin Kumar Dixit, headmaster, YPS Patiala.

## 'To ensure smoother traffic, resolve waterlogging': Govt clears 3 major projects to ease bottlenecks in Delhi

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

In a bid to ease bottlenecks on several arterial roads in the Capital, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh on Tuesday approved three major projects. The government is set to construct a flyover on the Janakpuri-Pankha Road that connects West Delhi to Central and South Delhi; and repair the Zakhira and Seelampur flyovers, which connect North East Delhi to Central Delhi and are infamous for traffic jams, said officials. "The Delhi government aims to ensure safer roads, smoother traffic movement and stronger infrastructure and resolve waterlogging issues across the Capital," the Minister said. On the new flyover set to come up at Janakpuri's Pankha Road from DESU Colony to Janakpuri D-Block, an official said, "The government has approved the engagement of a consultant to conduct a feasibility study and prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for a proposed flyover... The consultant will also study if the proposed section on Pankha Road and Mayapuri can be merged till Delhi Cantonment to make the entire stretch signal-free and smooth connectivity." The DPR will help examine traffic volume, road geometry, land availability, engineering feasibility and future mobility requirements. The exercise is aimed at ensuring that the proposed flyover is need-based, technically sound and future-ready, rather than a short-term traffic management measure, said officials. Apart from this,



PWD has sanctioned Rs 20.18 crore for the repair and rehabilitation of Zakira Flyover, one of Delhi's most critical junctions and a waterlogging hotspot during the monsoon season. Zakira Flyover carries heavy daily traffic and has faced structural stress over the years. Under the upgradation work, repair of spalled and honeycomb concrete, replacement of expansion joints, elastomeric bearings will be done. The objective is to address both structural safety and long-term resilience, particularly in view of repeated waterlogging and traffic disruptions at the location, said officials. Further, the government has approved Rs 17.85 crore for comprehensive repair and rehabilitation of Seelampur Flyover, another vital route in East Delhi. "Delhi's flyovers must be safe not just today, but for decades ahead.

## In Gurgaon Metro push, Haryana says can seize land if owner won't sell



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

The Haryana government has notified a new policy allowing Gurugram Metro Rail Limited (GMRL) to directly purchase private land for the upcoming Metro corridor through negotiated settlements — warning that if a landowner "refuses to sell, raises objections... or declines to participate", it could result in compulsory acquisition under a central law. The Town and Country Planning department issued the notification on January 8. The policy applies to land required for the 29.05 km Millennium City Centre-Cyber City Metro corridor — a critical mass transit project under Gurugram'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 requires a small but crucial patch of private land. Even minor delays in acquiring these parcels could derail the entire project schedule," an official, privy to the developments, told. The land acquisition under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013, the official said, "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. "Landowners are being offered compensation

that is 25% higher than what they would ordinarily receive under the 2013 Act, with rehabilitation and resettlement benefits deemed to be included in this enhanced 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," another official said.

The policy, however, also makes it 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", an official explained. A high-powered land purchase committee headed by the deputy commissioner of Gurugram will oversee the process — from identifying land parcels to fixing compensation and conducting negotiations.

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. Urban planners say the policy could mark a turning point for Gurugram'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.

## Chandigarh pharmacy firing: 2 accused shooters injured in gunfight with cops



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Two shooters, allegedly involved in the firing incident at a Chandigarh pharmacy last week, sustained injuries in an exchange of fire with the police near Ziri Mandi Chowk in Sector-39 Wednesday morning. The accused were identified as Rahul and Rocky, said Dhiraj Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Crime Branch. The incident took place around 6 am, during which both the shooters sustained bullet injuries, police sources said. They were

rushed to a government hospital in Sector-16 for treatment.

On January 15, two masked men had allegedly fired gunshots at Sewak Pharmacy in Sector-32. The shop owner's son, Tanish Luthra, 23, who was sitting at the counter, narrowly escaped bullet injuries. Soon, the shop owner Jagdish Luthra, a resident of Sector-32, informed the police about the incident. Police teams rushed to the location and forensic officials recovered an empty cartridge from the spot. During the subsequent investigation, CCTV footage showed two youths arriving on an Activa scooter, opening fire and fleeing the scene.

On Monday, the police said they arrested Rahul Bisht, a private laboratory owner and a resident of Sector-46, for allegedly playing a key role in planning the attack, even as efforts were on to trace the shooters. Once the shooters were found to be travelling in a vehicle on Wednesday morning, a Crime Branch team caught up to them and signalled the accused to stop. However, the situation escalated, following which the police opened fire in retaliation. Officers also seized the vehicle used by the accused. The police said interrogation of the accused is underway and added that more arrests in the case are likely soon.

## TET must for teachers' promotion: Govt amid confusion over implementation



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

The decision has disappointed many teachers awaiting promotion and drawn criticism from teachers' organisations. The Maharashtra government has clarified that only teachers who have cleared TET will be eligible for promotions in primary schools. Teachers in Maharashtra who have not passed Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) will not be eligible for promotions, a letter by the school education department stated. This is the first letter in this regard by the state government, amid confusion over its intentions on implementation of the Supreme Court ruling which made TET mandatory for school teachers.

As per the SC mandate, teachers who are working without TET qualification have two years to obtain it to continue their service. However, as per the state's letter, dated January 19, this relaxation will not be allowed to those seeking promotion in Maharashtra in primary schools. Responding to a query raised by Director Primary Education on seeking clarity in matters of promotion of teachers, at the backdrop of the SC's TET ruling from September 2025, letter by under secretary from school education department Sharad Makane states, "Subject to the condition of passing the TET within period of two years from the date of delivery of the judgement, promotions from teaching cadre to the posts of graduate teacher, headmaster, cluster resource centre coordinator and extension officer (education) cannot, at present, be granted. Only those teachers who have passed the TET and who also possess the other qualifications required for promotion are eligible for promotion."

As per the SC ruling, TET is made mandatory not only for new appointments but also for in-service teachers who have more than five years of service remaining. In regards to the latter, the SC ruling states that they will have to clear the TET within the next two years or accept compulsory retirement. Whereas for those who have less than five years of service, they can continue on the job but will not be eligible for any promotion. The state government letter high-

lights that it has written to the central government and National Council for Teacher Education with queries related to overall implementation of the SC's TET ruling and their response is awaited. According to sources, seniority list for Zilla Parishad (ZP) schools was due and this clarity on TET requirement for promotion was sought for the same.

"Many teachers due for promotion had requested state to continue as per existing practice, which did not include TET qualification in eligibility criteria for promotion, and take an undertaking from them that they will clear TET, within two years. The response, however, has now made it clear that all primary teachers seeking promotion need to have TET qualification and promotion cannot be granted on the condition of the undertaking," said an official from the school education department. This has led to disappointment of many teachers who were now due for promotion after years of waiting, but did not have TET qualification. Furthermore teachers organisations have questioned the haste in which decisions are taken by the state government regarding with TET. Tanaji Kamble from Maharashtra Purogami Shikshak Sanghatana, a teachers' association, said, "When the central government is considering revision in case of TET, it is questionable why the state government is acting in such a haste."

## Speeding car overturns on Begumpet flyover, three injured

Hyderabad: A road accident occurred on the Begumpet flyover, after a speeding car lost control and overturned, causing temporary traffic disruption in the busy route on Wednesday morning.



The incident led to slow-moving traffic for some time as the overturned vehicle blocked a portion of the flyover. On receiving information, local police rushed to the spot and took up traffic clearance measures. Three passengers in the car suffered injuries in the mishap and were shifted to a nearby private hospital for treatment. Their condition is reported to be stable.

The cause of the accident is yet to be ascertained, and police have started an investigation into the incident. A rash and negligent driving is suspected to have led to the crash.

## Decongestion of MB Road on card: Govt nod to double-decker transit corridor set to come by Dec 2027



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

In a major relief to people travelling between South Delhi and Gurgaon, the Delhi government has approved a Rs 1,471-crore double-decker corridor to decongest Mehrauli-Badarpur (MB) Road. While the upper deck will be designed for the Metro line, a six-lane flyover below will allow vehicular movement. This is among the first few double-decker transit corridor projects in the Capital, which are designed to optimise the urban space.

Expected to be completed by December 2027, the project will be executed by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). Under this Integrated Corridor Redevelopment project, which integrates diverse transport modes, a 5-km long stretch will be developed in two parts — a 2.42-km long six-lane elevated road from Saket G Block to Sangam Vihar and a 2.42-km long stretch from Ma Anandmai Marg to Pul Prahladpur. The proposal submitted by the Public Works Department (PWD) was cleared in the Finance department's Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday.

"This project will prove to be a major step towards making the traffic network of South Delhi more streamlined... It will be developed along the Delhi Metro line to ensure optimal coordination between road and Metro in-

frastructure. The integrated structure will feature a double-decker system, with the Metro operating on the upper deck and a six-lane elevated road corridor below," the CM said. "Chronic congestion on MB Road will be eased, average vehicle speeds will increase, and millions of commuters will save valuable time," the CM said.

However, as the proposed project route alignment falls within the jurisdiction of Tughlaqabad Fort, the Delhi government will need permission from Centre and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The CM's Office, in a statement, said, "The Delhi government has given in principle approval and the proposal is being forwarded to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, as the proposed alignment falls within the jurisdiction of Tughlaqabad Fort." The project also includes the construction of two underpasses at Saket G-Block and along the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. This design will enable higher traffic volume within a limited space and significantly improve vehicular movement in densely populated areas such as Saket G-Block, Ambedkar Nagar, Khanpur and Sangam Vihar.

MB Road is one of the key stretches that provides connectivity to upscale South Delhi areas like Saket, Chhatrapur, Sainik Farms, Mehrauli and others. The stretch is an arterial road for the people living in the area around as it connects Gurgaon. According to officials, due to uneven road alignments, poor drainage system and huge encroachment on both sides of the road, the stretch sees heavy traffic jams during both peak and non peak hours. The situation gets worse during the monsoon season due to waterlogging. The project is expected to decongest key areas of South Delhi like Chirag Dilli, Greater Kailash, Nehru Place, Chhattarpur, Pushpa Vihar, Vasant Kunj, Saket, Okhla, Kalkaji and other areas. More than one lakh vehicles use this stretch daily on average, said officials. Further, the CM said that the Delhi government also has plans to construct an additional 2.5-km long stretch from Sangam Vihar to Maa Anandmayee Marg.

## Anti-encroachment drive in Mohali faces resistance; protests halt action for two hours

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

As part of its ongoing campaign against illegal encroachments, the Mohali Municipal Corporation (MC) on Tuesday carried out an enforcement drive in Phase 3B1 and Phase 3B2, removing unauthorized structures from multiple locations. However, stiff resistance from residents led to protests that stalled the operation for nearly two hours. A joint team of GMADA and the Municipal Corporation (MC) said that during today's anti-encroachment drive, officials removed illegal encroachments outside the residences of a serving ADGP of Punjab, a serving SP, a Judge, as well as several leaders and other influential persons. "No one was spared during the drive, and action was taken uniformly wherever violations were found," officials said.

According to officials, after completing action in Phase 3B1 around 2:30 pm, the MC team moved to Phase 3B2. The drive ran into trouble when the owner of House No. 1763 strongly objected to the demolition. Within minutes, local residents gathered at the site, escalating tensions and forcing the civic authorities to temporarily halt the operation. In view of the situation, MC officials immediately sought police assistance. The Station House Officer (SHO) of Matour police station, along with police personnel, reached the spot and cautioned the protesting home owner that obstructing government work is a punishable offence and could invite legal action. Following deliberations between the police and civic officials, it was decided that two houses 1763 and 1762 would be given time until Wednesday to voluntarily remove their encroachments. Thereafter, the MC team resumed action at other locations.

Resistance was also reported earlier in Phase 3B1, particularly in the canal housing area, where some residents opposed the removal of encroachments. The situation nearly escalated into physical altercations. Despite the opposition, the MC continued the drive under police protection and cleared several illegal structures. Some residents also raised objections, alleging that even when certain people were removing the encroachments on their own after calling in labour and dismantling the structures themselves the GMADA team deployed a JCB and demolished the entire structure, causing additional damage, without issuing any warning.

JCB Machines The Municipal Corporation has urged residents to voluntarily remove illegal encroachments, stating that such obstructions hinder traffic movement, pose



safety risks, and cause inconvenience to the public. (Express photo by Jasbir Malhi) At the same time, residents alleged that at other locations, several people were instructed repeatedly up to 10 times on how to remove the encroachments, and were also given time to dismantle the structures on their own. "There was discrimination in the manner of action during the drive," the residents alleged. Notably, residences of some senior Punjab government officials are also located in Phase 3B1. Encroachments outside these houses were also removed. MC officials maintained that the action was carried out "without any discrimination."

MC's Appeal The Municipal Corporation has urged residents to voluntarily remove illegal encroachments, stating that such obstructions hinder traffic movement, pose safety risks, and cause inconvenience to the public. Officials warned that future enforcement action may be carried out even without prior notice.

Allegations of Bias Over Granting Time Following the decision to grant time to two homeowners in Phase 3B2, resentment was observed among other residents, who questioned why some were given relief while others faced immediate action. Alleging discrimination, they demanded equal treatment. MC officials, however, clarified that the drive was being conducted strictly in accordance with rules and assured that "everyone will be treated equally." Mohali Municipal Corporation Commissioner Parminder Pal Singh said that during the operation, certain individuals attempted to obstruct official work and even issued threats to MC employees and officers. "Such elements are being identified, and police cases will be registered against them," the Commissioner said.

## In first 19 days of January, Panchkula police issued challans to 523 drivers

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

During the first 19 days of January, the Panchkula police issued challans to 523 drivers found driving under the influence of alcohol, while 38 vehicles were impounded for serious traffic violations. As per the police, the action is part of an intensified enforcement drive aimed at improving road safety and reducing accidents across the city.

A police official said that the Panchkula police has launched a campaign against drunken driving this year, following the pattern adopted last year. The main objective of the department is to curb road accidents and ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property. As part of the drive, traffic police teams are carrying out regular checking at major roads, accident-prone zones and sensitive locations across the city using alco-sensors. According to official data, the checking operations were conducted with special focus on busy intersections, main thoroughfares and areas with heavy traffic movement. Drivers found violating traffic rules, especially those driving under the influence of alcohol, were challaned on the spot. In cases of serious violations, vehicles were also impounded to ensure strict enforcement of the law. ACP (Traffic) Surendra Singh said that drunken driving remains one of the leading causes of road accidents. He explained that alcohol affects a driver's balance, reaction time and decision-making ability, which increases the risk of fatal accidents. "Keeping public safety in mind, Panchkula police is maintaining zero tolerance towards drunken driving. This campaign will continue with the same strictness in the coming days," he said. DCP (Crime and Traffic) Manpreet Singh Sudan stated that road safety is a shared responsibility and ensuring it is a key duty of the police department. He added that all necessary measures to prevent road accidents will be implemented with seriousness and consistency. "We appeal to citizens to strictly



follow traffic rules, avoid driving after consuming alcohol and make safe driving a habit," he said.

## Finalise movie ticket prices 90 days before release of film, says Telangana HC

Hyderabad: Justice NV Shruvan Kumar of the Telangana High Court on Tuesday directed that any revision of movie ticket prices in the State must be finalised and made public at least 90 days prior to the release of the film. The direction was issued while hearing a writ petition challenging the recent approval of enhanced ticket rates for the Telugu film 'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu', starring Chiranjeevi.

## Shalimar Bagh RWA president's murder: Cops went looking for pillion rider, found man absconding in murder of Rachna's husband

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Investigators say Bharat plotted the killing to eliminate the prime witness in his earlier murder case. Delhi Police arrested absconding accused Bharat Yadav in Bihar while tracking Nikhil, the alleged shooter in Rachna Yadav's murder. On Monday, when a police team searched a farmland in Bihar looking for Nikhil — an accused in the murder of 52-year-old RWA president Rachna Yadav, who was shot dead near her residence in Shalimar Bagh on January 10 — the officers were in for a surprise. They came face to face with Bharat Yadav, who had been absconding for the last two years and eight months after being identified as the prime accused in the murder of Rachna's husband Bijender Yadav (50) in 2023. Bijender, a property dealer and a history-sheeter from Jahangirpur, was gunned down on May 22, 2023, while attending a community langar near his office at Bhalswa in Delhi.

Since then, police said, Bharat had been absconding while five of his associates were arrested. He had also been unsuccessfully trying to get anticipatory bail from courts. When all efforts failed, Bharat — who had been declared a proclaimed offender — allegedly plotted the murder of Rachna, the prime witness in Bijender's murder case. On Monday, while Bharat and Nikhil were arrested from a hut in the farmland, another accused in Rachna's murder, Sumit, was arrested from Panipat. Two assailants were involved in Rachna's murder — while one shot at her, the other waited on a bike to help them escape. The incident was captured on CCTV cameras. Police used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and facial recognition software to recreate the pillion rider's face, who shot at Rachna. He was not wearing a helmet. One match was Nikhil, whose address was listed in Panipat. During the probe, police learnt that he was staying with his aunt at Karala village in Delhi.

"We scanned his call data records (CDR) and found he was present at the crime scene on January 9 and 10... we became sure that he had killed Rachna," said Additional Commissioner of Police (Northwest) Bhisham Singh. "We started checking his CDRs and the people he was in touch with. We found that he had taken a train to Kathiyar in Bihar on January 12," he added. A police team

was sent to Bihar. With the help of a local farmer, police said they located a hut on farmland where Nikhil was hiding. During a raid on Monday morning, officers were surprised to find Bharat hiding alongside him. Police said the hut was owned by Bharat's distant relative. Bharat had also allegedly travelled to Nepal while he was absconding, and had returned to Delhi in between. An i10 car was seized from him during his arrest.

During questioning, Nikhil allegedly disclosed the role of his associate Sumit, who was arrested from Panipat on Monday. While Sumit worked at a refinery, Nikhil was unemployed, the DCP said. Police said Bharat had been planning Rachna's murder since late 2024. He had travelled to Delhi and met Nikhil at a farmhouse in Outer Delhi through a common acquaintance. "Bharat claimed he saw potential in Nikhil and roped him in. He told him he will give him Rs 5 lakh, a motorcycle and firearms to execute the crime. The responsibility of arranging a rider for the motorcycle was Nikhil's," an officer said. Police said Bharat used his contacts in Bihar to deliver a stolen motorcycle and two country-made pistols to Nikhil last November. "When Bharat was asked why he waited before killing Rachna, he said that was hopeful he would get bail. When it did not happen, he got Rachna killed," said the officer. Police said that after the murder, Nikhil and Sumit abandoned the motorcycle near the Rohini helipad. Nikhil shaved his beard in Jain Nagar and stayed back in Delhi, while Sumit returned to Panipat via a Gramin Sewa vehicle.

How did the rivalry begin?

Police said the rivalry started after Bharat's brother Suraj purchased a plot from Bijendra. Despite selling the land, Bijender allegedly refused to let go of the ownership of the land. "Both families were well-off and associated with AAP, and both were reportedly vying for a councillor ticket," an officer said. In April 2023, Suraj was shot at in Jahangirpur's K Block. "Bharat thought Bijender would get Suraj killed, so he asked his associate Amit Kala (in jail now) to arrange for firearms to eliminate him. In May 2023, Bijender was sitting inside a tent in the neighbourhood when they barged in and shot him dead," the officer added.

## Delhi govt likely to launch free LPG cylinder scheme for EWS this Holi

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Under the plan, beneficiaries will receive the cost of cylinders through direct benefit transfer to ensure transparency. The BJP-led Delhi government has approved a scheme to provide free LPG cylinders to EWS ration card holders, likely to be launched from Holi. The BJP-led government is likely to launch a scheme under which free LPG cylinders will be provided to households belonging to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), starting this Holi. The scheme was among the promises made by the party during the run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections.

According to sources, the Delhi government gave a nod for the scheme at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday. A budgetary allocation of Rs 300 crore has also been approved, sources said. In the run up to the Assembly elections 2020, the BJP, in its manifesto, had promised one free cylinder each on Holi and Diwali to EWS households. After coming to power, the government included the scheme in its 100-day priority project. Sources said that the government will announce and launch the scheme this Holi. Speaking about the eligibility criteria, a senior government official said, "All ration card holders belonging to the EWS category will be eligible for availing the benefits of the scheme." There are 17.18 lakh registered ration card holders in Delhi, according to officials. Officials said that under the scheme, eligible candidates can purchase cylinders and



"the government will refund the money directly to their Aadhaar-linked bank accounts through direct benefit transfer". Officials also said that through this method, the government will maintain transparency and ensure that the people buy cylinders from the regular, government-approved LPG distributors. "Several people sell free cylinders in black. This (scheme) will ensure that only eligible people are availing the scheme," said officials. Meanwhile, the government is yet to fulfil its poll promise of providing LPG cylinders at a subsidised rate of Rs 500 to women from poor families. "For this, we need updated data of eligible candidates and set an eligibility criteria. Work is underway. It (scheme) will soon be implemented," a source said.

## Congress OBC Bahujan Aghadi ally to woo Dhangar voters ahead of ZP polls

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

The Congress has announced an alliance with Prakash Shendge's OBC Bahujan Aghadi as part of its strategy to regain OBC and Dhangar support ahead of Zilla Parishad polls. Devendra Fadnavis with Rashtriya Samaj Paksha (RSP) Chief Mahadev Jankar. (Express photo) Ahead of the rural Zilla Parishad polls, the Congress on Monday announced an alliance with the Prakash Shendge-led OBC Bahujan Aghadi for the upcoming elections. The Congress, in its attempt to woo Other Backward Class voters, is strategising alliances with OBC groups, and the tie-up with the OBC Bahujan Aghadi is part of this broader effort. Prior to the Municipal Corporation elections, the party had allied with another Dhangar community leader, Mahadev Jankar. Both Shendge and Jankar were earlier aligned with the BJP and have now decided to quit the saffron party, extending support to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's demand for a caste census. The Congress outreach to OBCs comes as Zilla Parishad elections are due in districts including Pune, Satara, Sangli, Solapur, Kolhapur, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Parbhani, Dharsav and Latur.

Among these, the rural areas of Sangli, Satara, Solapur, Pune and Parbhani have a sizable Dhangar population. The Congress hopes the alliances with smaller OBC parties will help it reclaim lost political space in these regions. "I welcome the decision of the OBC Bahujan Aghadi to work with Congress. This alliance is not merely for power but for the broader cause of social justice. After Rahul Gandhi's persistent demand for a caste-based census, the Modi government was forced to take a decision, yet the census has not been conducted. Congress stands by the principle of 'proportional representation based on population.' This stance is receiving support from all sections of society. We will emphasise ensuring proper representation for the Dhangar and OBC communities," said Maharashtra Congress chief Harshavardhan Sapkal.

The Congress move is also seen as an attempt to breach the BJP's OBC vote bank. Maharashtra Chief Minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis had recently said at a programme organised by OBC organisations in Goa that he would continue to work for the welfare of OBCs, irrespective of attacks on him. During the Maratha reservation agitation led by social activist Manoj Jarange-Patil



seeking OBC status, Fadnavis was targeted by Maratha organisations. Former Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Tuesday stepped up the attack on the BJP-led central government over the demolition action on temples built by Rajmata Ahilyadevi Holkar at Varanasi. "Prime minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath have disrespected the Hindus and Dhangars by undertaking demolition drives," said Patole. Prakash Shendge said, "Efforts are being made to chip away at OBC reservations, and even the 27% quota is under threat. While government resolutions (GRs) are being issued one after another, no community is actually benefiting. To ensure justice for the OBC community, we formed an independent party and decided to ally with like-minded parties." He added that his party thanked Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi for his stand on the caste census and believed that the issue of OBC reservation would be resolved under his leadership. The Congress, which has decided to go solo and ally only with the Maha Vikas Aghadi or like-minded parties, has limited stakes in these elections. In the 2017 Zilla Parishad polls, it won 10 of 61 seats in Sangli, 7 of 68 in Solapur, 7 of 64 in Satara, 6 of 54 in Parbhani and 7 of 75 in Pune. By bringing OBC parties on board and targeting a larger share of the Dhangar vote, the Congress hopes to improve its tally. Sapkal further said, "In 2014, Devendra Fadnavis promised in Baramati that his first signature upon coming to power would be for Dhangar reservation, but that promise remains unfulfilled. Fadnavis has deceived the Dhangar, OBC, Maratha, and Tribal communities in the name of reservation. He has worked to incite infighting between castes. These communities have now lost faith in the BJP and Fadnavis."

## WEF 2026: World order in 'midst of a rupture', says Canada PM Carney



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Tuesday (January 20, 2026) that the U.S.-led global system of governance is enduring "a rupture," defined by great power competition and a "fading" rules-based order. Mr. Carney delivered his stirring speech to political and financial elites at the World Economic Forum, a day before U.S. President Donald Trump was set to address the gathering in Davos, Switzerland. Since entering Canadian politics last year, Mr. Carney has repeatedly warned that the world was not going to return to a pre-Trump normal. He reaffirmed that message on Tuesday, in a speech that did not name Mr. Trump but offered an analysis of the president's impact on global affairs. He noted that Canada had benefited from the old "rules-based international order," including from "American hegemony" that "helped provide public goods: open sea lanes, a stable financial system, collective security, and support for frameworks for resolving disputes." A new reality has set in, Mr. Carney said. "Call it what it is: a system of intensifying great power rivalry where the most powerful pursue their interests using economic integration as coercion."

"On the menu" In an apparent warning against efforts to appease major powers, Mr. Carney said countries like Canada can no longer hope that "compliance will buy safety." "It won't," he said. "The question for middle powers, like Canada, is not whether to adapt to this new reality. We must. The question is whether we adapt by simply building higher walls — or whether we can do something more ambitious." "Middle powers must act together, because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu," Mr. Carney said. "Great powers can afford for now to go it alone. They have the market size, the military capacity, and the leverage to dictate terms. Middle powers do not." "Canada military prepares model response to U.S. invasion" Mr. Carney delivered his Davos speech after Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper reported that the Canadian military has developed a model response to a U.S. invasion. Citing two unnamed senior government officials, the paper said the Canadian response model centres on insurgency-style tactics, like those used in Afghanistan by fighters who resisted Soviet and later U.S. forces. After Trump's 2024 election and in the early months of his new term, he repeatedly referred to the U.S.'s northern neighbour as the 51st State and said a merger would benefit Canada.

Mr. Trump's annexation talk has eased in recent months, but overnight, he posted an image on his social media platform of a map showing Canada and Venezuela covered in the U.S. flag, implying a full American takeover of both countries. The Davos meeting has been overshadowed by Mr. Trump's threats to enforce U.S. control over Greenland, with the president vowing that his plan for the autonomous Danish territory was irreversible. "Canada stands firmly with Greenland and Denmark and fully supports their unique right to determine Greenland's future," Mr. Carney said.

## Trump's Air Force One returns to U.S. base due to 'minor electrical issue'

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

U.S. President Donald Trump's plane, Air Force One, on the way to Switzerland for the World Economic Forum had to return to Joint Base Andrews near Washington D.C. after a "minor electrical issue" was detected onboard. After takeoff, the crew of Air Force One identified "a minor electrical issue" and, out of an abundance of caution, the plane was turned around, landing at Joint Base Andrews, according to information provided by reporters onboard the aircraft.

Mr. Trump and his entourage will board a new aircraft, according to White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt. Mr. Trump is set to address the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos on Wednesday (January 21, 2026). He will also participate in a greeting with the forum's leadership, meet foreign leaders and attend a reception with business leaders. On Thursday (January 22, 2026), on the margins of the World Economic Forum, Mr. Trump will participate in the "Board of Peace Charter announcement", where nations would be invited to sign the charter, joining the body aimed for Gaza's redevelopment



under his comprehensive plan to end the conflict. Davos is hosting global leaders and business heavyweights as the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum began January 19 and will run till January 23. Mr. Trump's presence at Davos comes amidst tensions between the U.S. and European nations over his push to acquire Greenland and impose tariffs on countries until "a deal" is reached to purchase Greenland.

## Sunita Williams retires from NASA after 27 years, three missions and record 608 days in space



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

New Delhi: Sunita Williams, one of the most accomplished astronauts in the history of human spaceflight, has retired from the American space agency NASA after an extraordinary 27-year career. Her retirement follows a historic and unexpected nine-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS), marking the conclusion of a journey defined by endurance, leadership, and scientific excellence. According to a statement by NASA, Sunita Williams retired from the agency, effective December 27, 2025. "Sunita Williams has been a trailblazer in human spaceflight, shaping the future of exploration through her leadership aboard the space station and paving the way for commercial missions to low Earth orbit," said NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, announcing the Indian-origin space legend's retirement.

"Her work advancing science and technology has laid the foundation for Artemis missions to the Moon and advancing toward Mars, and her extraordinary achievements will continue to inspire generations to dream big and push the boundaries of what's possible. Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement, and thank you for your service to NASA and our nation." Williams was born in Euclid, Ohio, and considers Needham, Massachusetts, her hometown. Her father, a neuroanatomist, was born in Jhulasan in Gujarat's Mehsana district and later migrated to the United States, where he married Bonnie Pandya, who is of Slovenian origin.

Outside her professional life, Williams and her husband, Michael, enjoy spending time with their dogs, working out, renovating houses, working on cars and aeroplanes, and participating in outdoor activities such as hiking and camping. Her spaceflight career began in December 9, 2006, when she launched aboard Space Shuttle Discovery as part of the STS-116 mission and returned on Space Shuttle Atlantis with the STS-117 crew. During Expeditions 14 and 15, she served as a flight engineer and completed a then-record four spacewalks, demonstrating exceptional technical skill and endurance.

In 2012, Williams launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan for a 127-day mission as part of Expeditions 32 and 33. She later became the commander of Expedition 33, making her one of the few women to lead the ISS. During this mission, she conducted three spacewalks to repair a leaking station radiator and replace a key power distribution component. Her third and longest mission began in June 2024, when she and fellow astro-

## Air Force One carrying Trump to Davos returns to Washington DC due to 'minor electrical issue'

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

New York/Washington: US President Donald Trump's plane, Air Force One, on the way to Switzerland for the World Economic Forum had to return to Joint Base Andrews near Washington DC after a "minor electrical issue" was detected onboard. After takeoff, the crew of Air Force One identified "a minor electrical issue" and, out of an abundance of caution, the plane was turned around, landing at Joint Base Andrews, according to information provided by reporters onboard the aircraft. Trump and his entourage will board a new aircraft, according to White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

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## Mexico sends 37 cartel members to US in latest offer to Trump administration



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Mexico City: Mexico's security minister said Tuesday that it had sent another 37 members of Mexican drug cartels to the United States, as the Trump administration ratchets up pressure on governments to crack down on criminal networks it says are smuggling drugs across the border. Mexican Security Minister Omar Garcia Harfuch wrote in a social media post on X that the people transferred were "high impact criminals" that "represented a real threat to the country's security." It is the third time in less than one year that Mexico has sent detained cartel members to the US as the country attempts to offset mounting threats by U.S. President Donald Trump. Garcia Harfuch said the government has sent 92 people in total.

Video shared by Mexican authorities shows a line of handcuffed prisoners surrounded by heavily armed and masked officers being loaded onto a military jet at an airport on the outskirts of Mexico City. As the pressure increases, as demands from the White House dial up, (Mexico's government) needs to resort to extraordinary measures, such as these transfers," said David Mora, a Mexico analyst at the International Crisis Group. The US State Department and Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tuesday's transfer included a handful of important figures from the Sinaloa Cartel, the Beltran-Leyva cartel, Jalisco New Generation Cartel, the Northeast Cartel, a remnant of the infamous Zetas based in the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas, across from Texas. Mexican authorities said that all had pending U.S. cases. Among those transferred was Maria Del Rosario Navarro Sanchez, the first Mexican citizen to face charges in the US for providing support to a terrorist organization, after being accused of conspiring with a cartel.

Trump has publicly entertained the idea of military action on Mexican cartels, language that has only gotten more combative since a U.S. military operation in Venezuela deposed former President Nicolas Maduro earlier this month. Turning his attention to Mexico shortly after the Venezuela attack, Trump said in an interview with Fox News: "We've knocked out 97% of the drugs coming in by water and we are going to start now hitting land, with regard to the cartels." Last week, Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum spoke with Trump, telling him that US intervention in Mexico was "not necessary," but emphasizing that the two governments would continue to collaborate. Last February, Mexico sent 29 cartel figures to the U.S., including drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero, who was behind the killing of a U.S. DEA agent in 1985. In August, a second round saw 26 Mexican cartel figures sent to the U.S. None had the profile of Caro Quintero, but spanning multiple cartels, the figures could help US prosecutors build cases. After the August transfer, Garcia Harfuch said it was a public safety decision, because Mexico did not want them to continue operating their illicit businesses from inside Mexican prisons. Another transfer of prisoners to the U.S. had been rumored for weeks. Mexico has sought to assure the Trump administration that it continues to be a willing partner in combating drug traffickers. "For the Trump administration and the Trump base, what is going to matter in the end is some wins that Trump can actually bring back and say Look this is what I'm getting out of Mexico," said Mora.

## Brooklyn Beckham accuses David and Victoria of putting branding before family and sabotaging wedding

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Los Angeles: A Beckham family falling-out has spilled further into public view in a series of social media posts from Brooklyn Beckham alleging that his parents David and Victoria Beckham have tried to sabotage his marriage and have always prioritized public branding over their family relationships. "For my entire life, my parents have controlled narratives in the press about our family. The performative social media posts, family events and inauthentic relationships have been a fixture of the life I was born into," Brooklyn Beckham wrote in several pages of text posted via Instagram stories.

At 26, he's the eldest of the four children of the retired English soccer superstar and former Spice Girl-turned-fashion designer and has worked as a model and photographer, even aspiring to be a chef. He married American actor Nicola Peltz, daughter of activist investor Nelson Peltz, in 2022. "Recently, I have seen with my own eyes the lengths that they'll go through to place countless lies in the media, mostly at the expense of innocent people, to preserve their own facade. But I believe the truth always comes out," the posts said.

The posts make public a barely veiled feud that had been brewing in anonymously sourced stories in tabloids for months. Younger brother Cruz Beckham said on Instagram in December that Brooklyn had blocked family members on social media. "I do not want to reconcile with my family," Brooklyn Beckham wrote. "I'm not being controlled, I'm standing up for myself for the first time in my life." Unlike his three younger siblings, Brooklyn Beckham did not appear in his mother's recent Netflix docuseries, "Victoria Beckham", and did not show up at the October premiere as he and Peltz had for the London premiere in 2023 of the one centered on his father, called just "Beckham". Many of the grievances described in the Instagram stories stem from the Peltz-Beckham wedding



in Florida. He accused his mother of bailing at the last minute on designing Peltz's wedding dress, and said she "hijacked" the first dance he was supposed to have with his wife to music performed by Marc Anthony.

"She danced very inappropriately on me in front of everyone," Brooklyn Beckham wrote. "I've never felt more uncomfortable or humiliated in my entire life." Without giving specifics he also wrote that before the wedding his parents "repeatedly pressured and attempted to bribe me into signing away the rights to my name." David and Victoria Beckham did not have an immediate public response to the posts, and messages to representatives from The Associated Press were not immediately answered. In a Tuesday appearance on CNBC, David Beckham, who is at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, did not directly address his son's statements, but said that children make mistakes on social media and should be allowed to. "That's what I try to teach my kids. But you know, you have to sometimes let them make those mistakes as well," he said. Married since 1999, David and Victoria Beckham have three other children, 23-year-old Romeo, 20-year-old Cruz and 14-year-old Harper.

## Iran's top diplomat issues most direct threat yet to US as crackdown over protests squeezes nation



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Dubai: Iran's foreign minister issued the most direct threat yet Wednesday against the United States after Tehran's bloody crackdown on protesters, warning the Islamic Republic will be "firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack."

The comments by Abbas Araghchi, who saw his invitation to the World Economic Forum in Davos rescinded over the killings, comes as an American aircraft carrier group moves westward toward the Middle East from Asia. Meanwhile, American fighter jets and other equipment appears to be moving in the Mideast after a major US military deployment in the Caribbean saw troops seize Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro.

Araghchi made the threat in an opinion article published by The Wall Street Journal. In it, the foreign minister contended "the violent phase of the unrest lasted less than 72 hours" and sought again to blame armed demonstrators for the violence. Videos that have slipped out of Iran despite an internet shutdown appear to show security forces repeatedly using live fire to target apparently unarmed protesters, something unaddressed by Araghchi.

"Unlike the restraint Iran showed in June 2025, our powerful armed forces have no qualms about firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," Araghchi wrote, referring to the 12-day war launched by

Israel on Iran in June. "This isn't a threat, but a reality I feel I need to convey explicitly, because as a diplomat and a veteran, I abhor war."

He added: "An all-out confrontation will certainly be ferocious and drag on far, far longer than the fantasy timelines that Israel and its proxies are trying to peddle to the White House. It will certainly engulf the wider region and have an impact on ordinary people around the globe." Mideast nations, particularly diplomats from Gulf Arab countries, had lobbied Trump not to attack. Last week, Iran shut its airspace, likely in anticipation of a strike. The USS Abraham Lincoln, which had been in the South China Sea in recent days, had passed through the Strait of Malacca, a key waterway connecting the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, by Tuesday, ship-tracking data showed. A US Navy official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the aircraft carrier and three accompanying destroyers were heading west.

While naval and other defence officials stopped short of saying the carrier strike group was headed to the Middle East, its current heading and location in the Indian Ocean means it is only days away from moving into the region. The death toll from the protests has reached at least 4,519 people, the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency said. The agency has been accurate throughout the years on demonstrations and unrest in Iran, relying on a network of activists inside the country that confirms all reported fatalities. The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll.

The death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades, and recalls the chaos surrounding the 1979 revolution that brought the Islamic Republic into being. Although there have been no protests for days, there are fears the death toll could increase significantly as information gradually emerges from a country still under a government-imposed shutdown of the internet since Jan. 8. Khamenei said on Saturday that the protests had left "several thousand" people dead and blamed the United States. It was the first indication from an Iranian leader of the extent of the casualties.

## Donald Trump shares altered image of map showing Greenland, Canada, Venezuela as U.S. territories



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday shared an altered image of a map showing Canada, Greenland and Venezuela as U.S. territories. In the image shared by Mr. Trump on Truth Social, Mr. Trump's own online platform, Mr. Trump was seen showing the altered map to European leaders. The image appears to be an altered version of an actual photograph of the U.S. President discussing the Ukraine war situation with European leaders in August 2025. Mr. Trump met with U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, Finland President Alexander Stubb and Presi-

dent of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen in August 2025, at the White House to discuss the war in Ukraine. A historic day at the White House as European leaders joined President Trump in the Oval Office. In the original image a map of Ukraine could be spotted in the meeting room. However, in the altered image, the Ukrainian map was replaced with a map of North America that showed Canada, Greenland and Venezuela as U.S. territories. Notably, in another follow-up post, Mr. Trump shared another artificial image of him planting the U.S. flag in Greenland, along with U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. An artificial image shows Mr. Trump showing Greenland as U.S. territory. Picture: truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump. Another artificial image shows Mr. Trump showing Greenland as U.S. territory. Picture: truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump

The post comes amid heightened unease between the U.S. and its European allies, over Mr. Trump's insistence that the U.S. control Greenland, citing security concerns from Russia and China. While the European nations have tried to push Mr. Trump's idea back, inviting a 10% sanction from the U.S. administration over the issue and the threat of that being risen to 25% later this year. Recently, U.S. had sent its troops into Venezuela and captured its then President Nicolas Maduro and kidnapped him to the U.S., where he is standing trial for drug charges. Mr. Trump has repeatedly suggested that Canada would be better off if it agreed to become the 51st U.S. State.

## Trump puts next steps on Gaza ceasefire plan at risk by antagonizing Europe over Greenland



U.S. President Donald Trump closed out 2025 with his plan to end the Israel-Hamas war in fine fettle. With an endorsement from the U.N. Security Council to form a "Board of Peace" to oversee Gaza's future, Mr. Trump entered 2026 riding high in his self-described role as a "president of peace" who sought to end conflicts and certainly not create new ones. But after having ordered a military operation to capture then-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in the first days of January and threatened to use force to annex Greenland from fellow NATO member Denmark, the next steps in his Gaza ceasefire plan and his attempt to expand the mandate of the Board of Peace to other global crises appear to be at risk.

Just last week, the Board of Peace seemed set to be formed without much controversy on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, this week with Mr. Trump at the helm of a selection of world leaders focused on Gaza. Then, Mr. Trump upended that scenario with an abrupt threat on Saturday (January 17, 2026) to impose tariffs on European allies that had rallied to the defence of Greenland and Denmark. He followed up with a series of insults and provocative social media posts about seizing Greenland. In one message to Norway's Prime Minister, Mr. Trump accused the Norwegian government of blocking the independent Nobel committee from awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize, suggesting his primary focus would no longer be peace. With more than 60 invitations to the Board of Peace sent out, fewer than 10 have so far been accepted, including from a handful of leaders considered to be anti-democratic authoritarians. And, perhaps more important, several of America's main European partners have declined or been non-committal, including Britain, France and Germany. It marks another potential fracture point for the NATO allies, as Mr. Trump's aggressive foreign policy moves have threatened to alienate even the United States' closest friends and put some of his own priorities at risk, from discussions about halting Russia's war in Ukraine to next steps in the Gaza ceasefire process.

Many skeptics have noted with displeasure that Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko have all been invited to join. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said "no to creating an organization as it has been

presented, which would replace the United Nations." Spokespeople for British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said they were looking over the terms. Starmer has concerns about its makeup, spokesman Tom Wells said. Britain and France are the two other veto-wielding Western powers on the U.N. Security Council, which many believe the Board of Peace has ambitions to rival by working on other global conflicts. Mr. Trump said on Tuesday (January 20, 2026) that "it might" replace the United Nations even as he noted the U.N. has great potential despite what he called years of failure. "I wish we didn't need a Board of Peace," Mr. Trump said at a White House news conference. "The United Nations never helped me on one war." In an apparent attempt to ally some concerns, he added, "I believe you got to let the U.N. continue, because the potential is so great."

In a somewhat more even tone on Greenland, he said, "I think that we will work something out where NATO is going to be very happy and where we're going to be very happy." But amid an outcry in Europe over his designs on the mineral-rich Arctic island, Mr. Trump still has refused to back down. "You'll find out," he said coyly when asked how far he is willing to go to acquire Greenland. The rhetoric has alarmed European and U.S. diplomats, including some charged with implementing Mr. Trump's foreign policy decisions. One U.S. official, who along with others spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss concerns being floated inside the administration, said the White House is eager to avoid a situation in which Mr. Trump might be embarrassed by a lack of acclaim in Davos. That official and others with knowledge of the discussions have floated the idea that Mr. Trump could go ahead with signing the Board of Peace charter — which remains a work in progress as White House aides scramble to make it palatable to the widest array of leaders possible — to give the idea time to settle and allow the furor over Greenland to die down. In such a scenario, Mr. Trump would found the board by signing the charter but leave announcements on the rest of its membership until later in January, the officials said.

While they may be separate subjects in Mr. Trump's mind, his comments about Greenland and NATO are likely to complicate not only the Board of Peace and its initial mandate for Gaza but also any U.S. plan to halt the fighting in Ukraine, according to Matthew Schmidt, a professor and defence expert at the University of New Haven who formerly taught at the Army's Command and General Staff College in Leavenworth, Kansas. "They're not separate issues," Mr. Schmidt said of Greenland and European support for Mr. Trump's other ideas. Instead of one overarching goal for his foreign policy, "Donald Trump works in deals, and each deal is different and separate, and the point of each deal is to produce a win for Donald Trump." The President seems to be driven by a desire to be in control, Mr. Schmidt said. "If he can't run it, then he will look to replace it," Mr. Schmidt said. "Who knows if the Board of Peace was a fever dream. But it's just completely, as we say too often, unprecedented."

## With an eye on Greenland, Trump turns NATO against NATO

For Europe, it was first a surprise and then a shock. During his first term, Donald Trump had shown interest in buying Greenland, an autonomous Arctic island that's part of Denmark. When Mr. Trump, after returning to the White House last year, said "we are going to have Greenland one way or the other", many thought he was not serious.

But after the January 3 U.S. attack on Venezuela and the capture of President Nicolas Maduro, Mr. Trump escalated his claims over Greenland. If the U.S. doesn't take control of the island, Russia or China will, he said. Mr. Trump's repeated statements have thrown transatlantic cooperation into disarray. Tensions reached a new peak on January 17, when Mr. Trump imposed a 10% tariff on eight European countries, including Denmark, Germany, France and the U.K. He said the tariffs would be raised to 25% on June 1 and would remain in place until the U.S. "complete and total purchase of Greenland". While there were tensions in transatlantic relations in the past — notably during the Suez crisis of 1956 or the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 — this is the first time tensions have reached the level of open hostility. Here what makes the current crisis more severe is that it was triggered by a push from the U.S., a country that has been Europe's primary security guarantor since the end of the Second World War, to take control of a European territory.

Threat from within To place the crisis in context: Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark, which is one of the founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO, arguably the world's most powerful military alliance, is built on the principle of collective defence — that an attack against one member would be considered an attack against all. This framework functioned effectively during the Cold War as a deterrent against the Soviet Union. European countries have also presented NATO as a bulwark against Vladimir Putin's Russia. But here, the threat to Denmark's sovereignty doesn't come from outside the alliance, but from within it — from NATO's most powerful member, the U.S. On Tuesday (January 20, 2026), Mr. Trump fired off a series of social media posts, ahead of a meeting with European leaders in Davos on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, saying there is no going back on Greenland, which he said is "imperative for national and world security". Greenland's location between North America and the Arctic makes it strategically placed for early warning systems in the event of missile attacks, and for monitoring vessels in the region. The island also has vast untapped resources. Greenland is estimated to have 36 million tonnes of rare earths — an area which is currently dominated by China. The U.S. has a military base on the island, called Pituffik, where more than 100 personnel are permanently stationed. Under existing agreements with Denmark, the U.S. can send as many troops as it wants to Greenland. But Mr. Trump doesn't seem to be happy with the existing agreement. He wants to make the island an American territory. On Tuesday (January 20, 2026), he shared a generated image of himself placing an American flag in Greenland beside a board that reads, "Greenland:



US territory; Est. 2026".

Between Russia and America European leaders have protested Mr. Trump's decision to impose tariffs over Greenland. But it is not clear whether they would retaliate in kind. Europe appears to be in a strategically weakened position, caught between Russia's invasion of Ukraine and America's push to take over Greenland.

For decades, Europe has been heavily dependent on the U.S. for security. The U.S. accounts for roughly two-thirds of NATO's military spending, and provides most of the alliance's missile defence, nuclear umbrella (along with Britain and France) and long-range precision capabilities. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe, the highest military commander in NATO, is always an American General, and many European militaries are interoperable with U.S. systems by design. The U.S. operates at least 37 military bases in Europe, hosting roughly 80,000 soldiers. Most European countries have pledged to increase defence spending, but it will take years before they build the capacity to stand on their own. In the meantime, they need the U.S. and NATO for security. That dependency has only deepened since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Europe has adopted a strong moral and strategic position against Russia, and has, until now, opposed major Ukrainian concessions to Moscow for peace. But if Europe wants Ukraine to continue to fight the invasion, it also needs sustained America's support — what Keir Starmer, the British Prime Minister, described as the "backstop". Mr. Trump, who has always been sceptical of NATO, understands this leverage. Few good options Mr. Trump is not interested in a prolonged confrontation with Russia. His immediate strategic focus, per his National Security Strategy, is on the Western Hemisphere and long-term focus is on China. Europe, in his worldview, is steadily losing its strategic relevance. Mr. Trump says he is committed to NATO. But he wants NATO to help him take over Greenland, violating the sovereignty of a European NATO member. In effect, he is turning NATO against NATO, seeking to extract a major territorial concession from Europe. Unable to secure peace with Russia and increasingly dependent on NATO (U.S.) at a time of war in eastern Europe, European leaders are left with few good options when it comes to dealing with Mr. Trump's threats.

## EU on cusp of historic trade deal with India: Ursula von der Leyen

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The European Union is on the cusp of signing a historic trade agreement with India that is being called "the mother of all deals", European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on Tuesday (January 20, 2026), asserting it will create a market for 2 billion people or about one-fourth of the global GDP. In a special address in Davos at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, she said the deal would crucially provide a first-mover advantage for Europe with one of the world's fastest-growing and most dynamic continents. Follow World Economic Forum 2026 highlights "Right after Davos, I will travel to India. There is still work to do. But we are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement. Some call it the mother of all deals," she said. "Europe wants to do business with the growth centres of today and the economic powerhouses of this century." "From Latin America to the Indo-Pacific and far beyond, Europe will always choose the world. And the world is ready to choose Europe," she said. President of the European Council, Antonio Costa and Ms. von der Leyen will be in India from January 25 to 27 to grace the Republic Day celebrations as chief guests and hold summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two sides are set to announce the conclusion of negotiations on the much-awaited Free Trade Agreement at the India-EU summit on January 27. European Commission President said the EU is also working on a new free trade agreement with Australia. "We are also advancing with the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, the UAE — and more," she added. She also said Europe will always stand with

Ukraine until there is a just and lasting peace. The European Union is India's biggest trade partner, with bilateral trade in goods recording \$135 billion in the financial year 2023-24. The free trade agreement is expected to significantly enhance trade ties. The proposed agreement is expected to bring a qualitative change in deepening the overall bilateral ties in a range of sectors, as well as at a time when the world is witnessing trade disruptions in view of Washington's tariff policy. Besides firming up the free trade agreement, the two sides are likely to unveil a defence framework pact and a strategic agenda at the summit. India and the European Union have been strategic partners since 2004. The ambitious FTA is being firming up at a time amid increasing concerns over Washington's trade and tariff policies, which have impacted both India and the 27-nation EU. India and the EU are also expected to unveil a joint comprehensive strategic vision that will govern their relationship for the period 2026-2030. The EU and India had first launched negotiations for the free trade agreement in 2007, before the talks were suspended in 2013 due to a gap in ambition. The negotiations were relaunched in June 2022. The proposed Security and Defence Partnership (SDP) will facilitate deeper defence and security cooperation between the two sides. The SDP will bring interoperability in the defence domain, and it will open up avenues for Indian firms to participate in the EU's SAFE (Security Action for Europe) programme. The SAFE is the EU's Euro 150 billion financial instrument designed to provide financial support to member states to speed up defence readiness. At the summit,

## Trump again claims credit for ending India-Pakistan conflict, says Norway controls Nobel Prize



U.S. President Donald Trump has again credited himself for ending the conflict between nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan, as he asserted that Norway controls the Nobel Peace Prize, an honour he claims he deserves for ending eight wars and saving millions of lives. He also said that while he may not care about the prize, he does care about saving lives.

"I don't care about the Nobel Prize... A very fine woman felt that I deserved it and really wanted me to have the Nobel Prize. And I appreciate that. If anybody thinks that Norway doesn't control the Nobel Prize, they're just kidding. They have a board, but it's controlled by Norway, and I don't care what Norway says," Mr. Trump told reporters after attending a college football championship game in Miami on Monday (January 19, 2026). Last week, Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado presented her 2025 Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Trump at the White House, which he described as a "wonderful gesture of mutual respect". The President also said that he has "saved tens of millions of lives". "If you look at India, Pakistan... two nuclear powers. You look at so many of the countries that were in a 30, in some cases a 35-year-war, I got it done. We stopped eight

wars, and maybe we'll be stopping the ninth very soon," he said. Mr. Trump has repeatedly claimed credit for stopping the India-Pakistan conflict, a claim he has now made about 80 times since May 10 last year, when he announced on social media that the two nations had agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after talks mediated by Washington. India has consistently denied any third-party intervention. Mr. Trump has also said that no one in history is more deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize than him, and has criticised former U.S. President Barack Obama for receiving the award in 2009 shortly after assuming office, even though he "didn't do anything". The President is scheduled to deliver a special address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos on Wednesday (January 21), where he will also meet foreign leaders and business executives.

On Thursday (January 22), on the margins of the World Economic Forum, Mr. Trump will participate in the "Board of Peace Charter announcement", where nations would be invited to sign the charter, joining the body aimed at Gaza's redevelopment under his comprehensive plan to end the conflict. Mr. Trump has invited several global leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to join the Board of Peace, seen as a rival to the United Nations, that will work towards bringing lasting peace to Gaza and embark on a "bold new approach" to resolve "global conflict". Responding to a question that French President Emmanuel Macron has declined to join his Board of Peace, Mr. Trump said, "Well, nobody wants him because he's going to be out of office very soon. So you know, that's all right... I'll put a 200% tariff on his wines and champagnes, and he'll join. But he doesn't have to join if he said that. You're probably giving it to me a little bit differently, but if he actually did say that... he's going to be out of the office in a few months." Mr. Trump said he has also invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to join the Board.

## Mexico sends 37 cartel members to US in latest offer to Trump administration

Mexico City: Mexico's security minister said Tuesday that it had sent another 37 members of Mexican drug cartels to the United States, as the Trump administration ratchets up pressure on governments to crack down on criminal networks it says are smuggling drugs across the border. Mexican Security Minister Omar Garcia Harfuch wrote in a social media post on X that the people transferred were "high impact criminals" that "represented a real threat to the country's security." It is the third time in less than one year that Mexico has sent detained cartel members to the US as the country attempts to offset mounting threats by U.S. President Donald Trump. Garcia Harfuch said the government has sent 92 people in total. Video shared by Mexican authorities shows a line of handcuffed prisoners surrounded by heavily armed and masked officers being loaded onto a military jet at an airport on the outskirts of Mexico City. "As the pressure increases, as demands from the White House dial up, (Mexico's government) needs to resort to extraordinary measures, such as these transfers," said David Mora, a Mexico analyst at the International Crisis Group.

The US State Department and Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Tuesday's transfer included a handful of important figures from the Sinaloa Cartel, the Beltran-Leyva cartel, Jalisco New Generation Cartel, the Northeast Cartel, a remnant of the infamous Zetas based in the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas, across from Texas. Mexican authorities said that all had pending U.S. cases. Among those transferred was Maria Del Rosario Navarro Sanchez, the first Mexican citizen to face charges in the US for providing support to a terrorist organization, after being accused of conspiring with a cartel. Trump has publicly entertained the idea of military action on Mexican cartels, language that has only gotten more combative since a U.S. military operation in Venezuela deposed former President Nicolas Maduro earlier this month. Turning his attention to Mexico shortly after the Venezuela attack, Trump said in an interview with Fox News: "We've knocked out 97% of the drugs coming in by water and we are going to start now hitting land, with regard to the cartels." Last week, Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum spoke with Trump, telling him that US intervention in Mexico was "not necessary."

## Forgotten footprints: the story of Sikhs uprooted from Kashmir post Partition



oir, 'Nangali Sahib and 1947', led me to talk to survivors for their 1947 recollections. In those fading images lived a story history forgot: how J&K, untouched by the Radcliffe Line, was forced into a war when armed tribal militias swept across its borders in October 1947. I then decided to train as an oral historian with The 1947 Partition Archive, to record the voices of people from J&K that history had sidelined.

That work led me to 96-year-old Sardar Dalip Singh Deepak, a retired educator and author from Budgam, Kashmir and one of the last living witnesses.

The last survivor

On October 22, 1947, thousands of tribal fighters backed by Pakistan invaded J&K, swept through Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Baramulla and parts of Poonch and the Valley. Amid the collapse of order, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession acceding J&K to India on October 26, enabling India's military intervention. At dawn on October 27, the 1st Sikh Kumaon Regiment was airlifted to Srinagar, but by then thousands had already suffered irreversible losses, marking the start of the first Indo-Pak war. Born in 1931, Sardar Dalip Singh was just 16 when the 1947 tribal invasion ripped through Kashmir and made him an orphan overnight. In his village, Atina, and nearby Gohlar, 300 Sikhs lost their lives. His mother, Sardarni Mani Kour, was shot dead at their doorstep. His nine-year-old sister, Harbans Kaur disappeared, never to be found. One brother was killed; another died days later from bullet wounds as the family fled Srinagar. When Dalip returned months later, his mother's decomposed body and blood stained clothes still lay where she had fallen. "The world can never understand this grief," he said quietly, "Villages in Muzaffarabad were among the first to be destroyed. Thousands were killed, and thousands displaced, as refugee caravans walked over Dhumel Bridge and fled toward Poonch and Srinagar." Some Sikh villages mounted a defence at Ichahama, Kashmir, using sticks, tools and small arms to delay the Kabaili advance — a resistance that helped buy time for Indian troops to be airlifted to Srinagar and provide a safe passage to refugees. Historians agree that this resistance may well have altered the course of Kashmir's history. Rebuilding from rubble despite receiving only 250 as government compensation, Dalip Singh rebuilt his life from an orphaned teenager to educator and author. From becoming an orphan to rebuilding his life, to discovering the photograph of his martyred brother, S. Joginder Singh, at Piyara Photographs in Lal Chowk, Srinagar — these experiences are not preserved in state archives or history books. They survive in memory and in Dalip Singh Deepak's writings. His books, Hadsian Choun Phutte Akkhar (Words Born out of Tragedies), Lokgeet Prakashan, 2008, Anhad Naad (The Eternal Sound), Deepak Prakashan, 2021, and Sehaj Subhaye (Divine Equanimity), Deepak Prakashan, 2021, are not conventional histories. They are works of reflection shaped by loss, faith, resilience and an effort to anchor trauma within spiritual and historical continuity. What unites Mehta, Saraf, Singh, and Dalip Singh Deepak, is not genre but urgency. Each, in different ways, confronts a history that South Asia has been unwilling to fully face. Together, they remind us that the story of the tribal invasion in J&K is not complete without its witnesses and survivors. As these witnesses age and pass on, the responsibility shifts. Listening, recording, and acknowledging these truths is necessary. Stories like Dalip Singh Deepak's are not historical footnotes; they are testaments to courage, and the human spirit's refusal to let memory fade. For as long as these stories remain marginal, the wounds of 1947 will continue to shape one of the world's most volatile and dangerous borders.

## The future of governance in post-Maoist India



A key element missing in the dominant discourse around the evolution and growth of the Maoist movement is governance. An overwhelming volume of empirical literature accounts the rapid growth of the Maoist movement in the 1990s and early 2000s to underdevelopment, and structural socio-economic issues. This is evident from the scores of official, non-official and scholarly articles which have attempted to study the "root causes" for insurgency in central and eastern India (popularly called the Red Corridor). These articles have argued for an accelerated development push to address the acute material needs of an impoverished population which includes many vulnerable tribes. As a result of these articulations, the Indian state has been relying on a "two-pronged" approach (combining security and development) to counter the Maoist threat.

This does not mean other factors such as governance, justice redressal and other issues have been completely neglected in the official discourse. On several occasions, policy makers and official reports have sought to bring attention to creating good governance frameworks and quicker justice redressal mechanisms to address the long-standing grievances of the affected population. But there has been little effort to understand the governance challenges that intensified the Maoist insurgency in different cycles. Unpacking challenges of governance

While the Maoist insurgency has evolved in different phases since the Naxalbari uprising (1967), the movement in its current avatar has largely been concentrated around the Fifth Schedule areas of central and eastern India — States with substantial tribal populations. The Fifth Schedule was conceptualised and offered as a new social contract to the adivasis in these regions, by the framers of the Constitution, taking into account the special needs of the population. The Schedule provided a legal framework and instrumentality for governance of these tribal homelands. It offered special provisions such as the Tribal Advisory Council with three-fourth of members from the adivasi population and a special financial provision via the tribal sub-plan. Further, the Governor of each State was given discretionary powers to oversee the enforcement of these provisions, particularly with respect to checking land alienation. However, extensive provisions notwithstanding, the local populations were subjected to the severest forms of discrimination and exploitation in everyday life. As recorded in the Planning Commission's Expert Committee Report (2008), a vast region with abundant natural resources was reduced to penury due to state neglect and poor governance. That these special provisions were of little use is evident from tribal populations' persistently low social and economic status compared to other social groups. The Oxford University Multidimensional Poverty Index in 2010 ranked the region worse than Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, for tribal populations, the far bigger challenge was how to exercise their rights over the land and forests. Despite legal safeguards and constitutional protection against arbitrary land acquisition, millions of them were dispossessed to penury. In his seminal study, writer Walter Fernandes found that "more tribals have lost their land since the commencement of economic liberalisation than any time in the post-independent history".

Thus, while the Constitution makers imagined a new lease of life for the adivasis under the Fifth Schedule, successive governments failed to bring up appropriate governance structures to transform this lofty vision into reality. The same colonial structures and administrative forms, rules of business, and justice system were retained for Scheduled Areas, which made tribal groups, with very low literacy, barely able to understand these rules and the modern justice system. A lack of representation that deepened the alienation was the complete absence of locals in the administrative units implementing provisions enumerated in the Fifth Schedule. B.D. Sharma, the then commissioner of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Commission, succinctly put that "the personnel who are overwhelmingly outsiders carried their attitudes, bias and lived experiences while performing day to day tasks". Importantly, apex bodies such as a separate Ministry of Tribal Welfare, and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes created to oversee the

execution of special provisions for the tribal population, as vividly observed by the Mungekar Committee (2009), did very little to stop the exploitation. Moreover, while the Governors are constitutionally assigned to protect the interests of adivasis in Schedule areas, not a single Governor has acted since Independence in these regions. These institutions have been further handicapped by weak and ineffective service delivery institutions such as health, education, revenue, police, and the judiciary. The lone exception was the Panchayat Extension to Schedule Areas Act (PESA), 1996. PESA was enacted to address adivasi underrepresentation and alienation in the form of "self-governance". These democratic forums were envisioned to create space for adivasis to take their own decisions on welfare issues, land, natural resources, livelihood and preservation of culture and their way of life. While PESA made some substantial changes by improving political representation at the lower level of governance, key provisions were routinely violated. The Expert Committee Report (2008) found flagrant violations of PESA by the appointed officials. One of the most abused provisions has been with regards to land acquisition. To sum up, governance maladies and relatively low political priority accorded to the Fifth Schedule in many ways created a fertile ground for the Maoist leadership to mobilise the aggrieved adivasi population against the Indian state. The growing governance deficits which directly impacted development, welfare functions and mitigation of local grievances created an opportunity for the Maoists to spread their ideologies of a people's government (Janatan Sarkar). There is a rich body of evidence that indisputably credits tribal frustrations, anger and low trust in governance institutions as the reasons that drove many adivasis to support Maoist ideology and revolutionary missions. Many relied on the Maoist movement as some sort of instrument to get justice from state agencies such as the police, forest and revenue departments (which they often viewed as corrupt and oppressive). For instance, the entire Dandakaranya region largely characterised by extreme underdevelopment and poor governance was easily captured by the underground Maoists in the 1990s with the promise of providing ownership to adivasis over lands, and the forest (under the broad slogan of Jal, Jungle and Zameen). Persistent governance and development deficits created a space for Maoists to run parallel governments (offering critical services such as paramedics, schools, food rations and speedy justice through kangaroo courts) in many of their strongholds.

Need for a new imagination Going forward, India must pay close attention to governance paradoxes that continue to plague most regions under the Fifth Schedule. In recent years, there has been visible improvement in key service functions, particularly with respect to welfare schemes and critical infrastructure (roads, electricity, telecom) in Maoist affected regions. Both the Centre and affected States have found ways to improve service delivery functions via digital technology and cash transfer. However, critical service delivery institutions such as justice, health, education, policing, and revenue functions remain thin and unsatisfactory. Persistent structural bottlenecks (under-representation of locals) in the existing governance system have a significant bearing in their effectiveness. On the other side, crucial rights-based legislations like the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and PESA need greater political push from the Centre as well affected States. The FRA which remains a key legal tool to protect the rights of adivasis and forest dwellers to access forest resources for their sustenance is battling for its survival today. While many core provisions have been violated by state institutions, there have also been amendments and judicial interventions in recent years which have diluted its original mandate and effectiveness. In addition, the enactment and expansion of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Act, 2016 has grossly diluted legal safeguards, apart from affecting the livelihoods of forest dwellers in India. Similarly, PESA despite initial promises faces growing resistance from the States concerned. Under pressure to unlock huge mineral deposits, most State governments in Fifth Schedule Areas have undermined the powers granted to Gram Sabhas under PESA, particularly on the issues of granting consent for mining/land acquisition. Incidentally, the most widespread violations of PESA has been in the most Maoist-affected State of Chhattisgarh. Thus, going forward priorities must include the reversal of political and administrative under-representation of adivasis. While there are mandatory quotas at the local levels, considering these self-governing bodies lack real autonomy and financial power, representation remains largely performatory. The permanent bureaucracy (overwhelmingly non-tribal) still calls the shots. Given the persistent alienation and trust deficits among the local population, the post-Maoist Fifth Schedule Areas governance vision can benefit by borrowing some features from the Sixth Schedule Areas which are governed by Autonomous Districts/Zonal Councils.

## The reality of invisible illnesses and the challenges of Crohn's disease care in India

For many Indians living with Crohn's disease, the first challenge is the delay in being taken seriously when symptoms initially appear. When Tina Aswani-Omprakash first walked into a doctor's office in the U.S., she carried two things: severe symptoms and a family history of the disease. Yet she had to convince her physician that someone like her — an Indian settled abroad — could even have Crohn's. "He thought it was a Western disease," she says. It was only after she mentioned that her father had died of Crohn's-related cancer that he reluctantly referred her to a specialist. For Madhura Balasubramanian, the journey began earlier, as a child with chronic diarrhoea, vomiting, stunted growth and unexplained rashes. Her tests were incomplete, biopsies misread, and symptoms dismissed. "I was finally diagnosed after more than 20 years," she says. "I had already undergone an appendectomy, lost weight, struggled with joint pain, and spent my teenage years being told this was IBS."

Tina and Madhura describe the quiet, relentless reshaping of everyday decisions: from what to eat and how far to travel from a restroom to which jobs are feasible and whether friendships will survive the unpredictability of symptoms. For Tina, life in the U.S. meant discrimination at work and within her own community: "Many people didn't want to hire me. I couldn't return to Wall Street or pursue a demanding degree. Even in marriage, my husband was told not to be with someone 'as sick as I am.'" Madhura, who worked in qualitative research in remote field sites, found her diagnosis suddenly limiting her world. Fieldwork became impossible. Friends assumed she was exaggerating an illness they couldn't see. Family members pushed alternative systems of medicine, assuming she only needed "more discipline."

This pushed them to spend years modifying diets without the structured, culturally competent guidance they needed. J. Saravanan, senior consultant surgical gastroenterologist at VS Hospitals, Chennai, notes: "Patients who come to us have already tried everything — home food, curd rice, 'avoiding spicy food,' antibiotics from local clinics. Symptoms go away, come back, hit harder. By the time they reach us, they are tired, scared, embarrassed." The diagnostic delay is partly cultural (bowel symptoms are treated as shameful) and partly clinical: Crohn's in India closely mimics intestinal tuberculosis, leading to misdiagnosis and months of ineffective TB treatment. Mohamed Bilal Azam, consultant gastroenterologist at Rela Hospital, Chennai, says, "Crohn's in India walks a confusing path. Many patients first undergo anti-TB therapy before anyone recognises what it really is." Doctors say that colonoscopy remains central, aided by blood tests, stool markers like faecal calprotectin, and increasingly, intestinal ultrasounds. For treatment, steroids are only a temporary relief. Long-term control relies on immune-modifying drugs and, increasingly, biologics, which can be transformative. "I had a young man who wore a jacket to hide how lean he had become," says Dr. Saravanan. "Eight months of biologics later, he walked in confidently after getting a new job."



Beyond medication, patients need a system that can recognise invisible suffering. "The biggest support," Dr. Saravanan explains, is someone not saying: "It's all in your head. Most Indians with Crohn's look outwardly fine, leading to dismissals in workplaces, schools, friend circles and even inside families". Madhura recalls hospital nurses assuming she was dying when she had a feeding tube placed — unaware that it was life-restoring, not terminal care. Tina describes the stigma around ostomy bags: "People think it's disgusting. Emptying the bowels is part of the human experience." Patients often confront misconceptions: that Crohn's is the same as IBS; that diet alone can cure it; that the patient somehow caused the disease. Tina and Madhura's advocacy work, called — Own Your Crohn's, IBDesis, and the South Asian IBD Alliance (SAIA) were born out of this dismissal and isolation.

Crohn's demands long-term treatment: regular blood tests, imaging, colonoscopies, biologics, nutritional support, and sometimes surgery. But for many Indians, the real barrier is money. "Insurance only recognises a hospitalisation cost, not prevention," says Dr. Saravanan. "Biologics cost lakhs. Parents skip their own medicines so their child can get a dose. A groom postponed his wedding because he didn't want to look frail." Madhura, meanwhile, has been rejected repeatedly for personal health insurance. IBD is marked as a permanent exclusion under many policies. She pays out-of-pocket for routine care, even as biologics and nutrition formulas strain her finances. Government schemes such as PMJAY do not yet consistently prioritise IBD. For a lifelong disease, this gap in coverage determines whether patients can work, study, marry or simply survive. While the healthcare system is still catching up, patients are building what they never had: community support. Patients networks are working closely with gastroenterologists, psychologists and dietitians to create culturally relevant education. Doctors, too, note the shift. "We are listening to patients," says Dr. Azam. "Research is focusing on Indian patterns — diet, pollution, antibiotic exposure, stress. Clinical trials are expanding. And awareness is rising, though slowly." As experts highlight, "Crohn's disease does not announce itself. It leaves no cast, no bandage, no external marker that tells the world a person is living with chronic inflammation, malnutrition, pain, and fear but this invisible illness does not mean insignificant illness. continuous care is important here".

## Health Matters newsletter Chronic conditions: what are we learning?

Chronic conditions are increasingly being understood not as isolated diagnoses, but as long-term processes that quietly reshape physical, cognitive, and social health. New research continues to reveal how these conditions unfold across the life course, often intersecting with environment, policy, and access to care in ways that only become visible over time. At the biological level, studies show that chronic illnesses can extend their impact well beyond the affected organ. Chronic kidney disease, for instance, may accelerate cognitive decline in sex-specific ways, while growing evidence links gut microbiome imbalances to memory loss and broader cognitive deterioration. Genetic research adds another dimension, identifying variants that negatively correlate with addiction vulnerability and educational outcomes, highlighting how biology, behaviour, and social context together shape lifelong health. These findings sit alongside shifting disease patterns that demand earlier attention. Reporting by Afshan Yasmeen and Ramya Kannan respectively, on early-onset colorectal cancer in India and gestational diabetes affecting nearly one in five pregnancies, as well as a rise in cancer diagnoses among young women are prompting renewed focus on screening, prevention, and long-term planning. Experts including Dr. Priya Selvaraj stress that cancer care must now integrate fertility preservation and survivorship concerns as part of holistic management, rather than treating them as afterthoughts.

Prevention efforts are also expanding beyond hospitals into communities. Reporting from Kerala by C. Maya illustrates how community-based secondary prevention models can improve outcomes for stroke survivors, while Dr. Vikram Huded outlines practical tools individuals should be aware of to prevent strokes before they occur. These approaches reflect a broader shift toward proactive monitoring. Mental health continues to emerge as inseparable from physical wellbeing. The U.S. FDA's approval of

an at-home device for depression signals a move toward more accessible treatment, while NIMHANS research highlights the potential of digital tools to strengthen campus mental health systems. Similarly, discourse on dignity and patient rights remain central, as Vandana Gopikumar and Lakshmi Narasimhan emphasise in discussions on disability justice. Internationally, adolescent mental health is also drawing policy attention, with Australia enforcing a world-first ban on teenage social media use to address digital wellbeing concerns. At the same time, evidence-driven interventions show what is possible: Rahul Karmakar reports on Assam's Demow Model that has achieved zero snakebite deaths, and expanded specialised care in Tamil Nadu has reduced dengue complications and fatalities despite high case numbers. The enrolment of over 5,000 children in the State's Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus Registry reflects how structured follow-up can improve outcomes in chronic care, reports Serena Josephine M. Public confidence in health systems continues to hinge on clear evidence, safe medicines, and accountability. The WHO has reaffirmed that vaccines do not cause autism, while an AIIMS study reports no link between COVID-19 vaccination and sudden deaths among young adults. Treatment landscapes are also evolving, with Bindu Shajan Perappadan reporting Ozempic becoming available in India. New drugs for gonorrhoea, a common sexually abused infection prone to resistance, were approved in the U.S. At the same time, court rulings, such as a \$40 million talc verdict against Johnson & Johnson highlight the role of continuous legal scrutiny in protecting public health. Policy gaps and governance decisions have far-reaching consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations. The Supreme Court has sought responses on making cancer a notifiable disease, while Krishnadas Rajagopal's reports on how coverage under PMGKY for doctors deputed during COVID-19 duty remains under examination.

## ‘Mother of all deals’: EU chief says ‘historic trade agreement’ with India soon



The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said Tuesday that the European Union (EU) is “on the cusp” of signing a trade deal with India, giving the 27-member bloc the “first mover advantage”. This comes as India’s long-pending trade deal with the US remains uncertain, and in the backdrop of renewed US threats of high tariffs on the EU over Greenland and a 50 per cent duty on Indian goods since August last year.

“Right after Davos, next weekend, I will travel to India. There’s still work to do, but we are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement. Indeed, some call it the mother of all deals. One that would create a market of two billion people, accounting for almost a quarter of global GDP, and crucially, that would provide a first mover advantage for Europe with one of the world’s fastest growing and most dynamic continents,” she said in a speech at Davos. She said Europe wants to do business with the “growth centres” and the economic powerhouses of this century, from Latin America to the Indo-Pacific. “Europe will always choose the world and the India is ready to choose Europe,” she said, while criticising the proposed US tariffs on the EU.

Both Ursula von der Leyen and the President of the European Council, Antonio Luis Santos da Costa, will be the chief guests at the Republic Day celebrations next week. They will also co-chair the 16th India-EU Summit on January 27. Last week, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, too, had termed the upcoming India-EU trade agreement as the “mother of all trade deals”. The deal, which is expected to be signed on January 26, will be “comprehensive” in nature and take care of the interests and sensitivities on both sides, he had said. The India-EU trade agreement has been decades in the making. Both countries have finally come close to signing the agreement after talks were re-launched in July 2022. While negotiations first began in 2007, the talks were abandoned in 2013. However, the talks seem to have gathered urgency after the Trump administration changed its trade policies, ramping up protectionist measures, forcing trade partners to explore newer markets. A key driver of the trade deal has also been the shared challenge of China. Indian industry has been encountering pricing challenges, especially while trying to scale up the solar energy sector. The EU is concerned about China’s dominance in critical technologies, as China holds a leading global manufacturing position in several areas, exposing the EU to potential risks.

While India is aiming to gain market access in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery, the EU is expected to get market access for its automobiles and beverages. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal said last week that India has made considerable progress in its trade deal negotiations with the EU, with the two sides signing as many as 20 of the 24 chapters and aiming to reach a deal before the EU leaders’ visit later this month.

## Pakistan’s ban on Indian airlines, aircraft from its airspace to enter 10th month as closure extended till Feb 24

Pakistan has extended the ban on Indian airlines and aircraft from entering its airspace by another month—till the early morning of February 24—as per a fresh notice to airmen (NOTAM) issued by Pakistan’s aviation authorities. India is also expected to respond soon and extend the closure of its airspace for Pakistani airlines and aircraft for a similar period, taking the neighbouring countries’ reciprocal airspace closures into their tenth month.

The fresh NOTAM issued by Pakistan is similar to the previous ones, except for the effective duration of airspace closure. Islamabad will keep the Pakistani airspace closed to Indian registered aircraft and aircraft operated, owned or leased by Indian airlines and operators, including military flights, till 05:29 AM India time on February 24. With the relations between New Delhi and Islamabad worsening after the Pahalgam terror attack in April last year, Pakistan closed its airspace on April 24. Initially for one month, this ban prohibited Indian aircraft and airlines from overflying Pakistan. India responded on April 30 by closing its airspace to Pakistani aircraft and airlines. Since then, both countries have extended airspace closures one month at a time. Although the neighbours have banned each other’s airlines and aircraft, their respective airspaces remain open for overflying by airlines from other countries.

Pakistan issued its latest NOTAM extending the airspace closure on Tuesday, a few days before the January 24 expiration of the earlier notice. India’s current ban on Pakistani aircraft is also set to expire on January 24, and Indian aviation authorities are expected to issue a new NOTAM to extend the ban by another month before that. Approximately 800 weekly flights operated by Indian airlines have been affected due to the closure of Pakistan’s airspace. These flights, mostly between North India and destinations in regions like West Asia, the Caucasus, Europe, the UK, and eastern North America, are being forced to take longer routes. This leads to several operational challenges like increased flight durations with journeys extended by anywhere from 15 minutes to several hours depending on the distance and location of the destination, in addition to higher fuel consumption and increased complexity in crew and flight scheduling. Ultimately, these increase the operational costs for the airlines. Tata group airline Air India estimates that the Pakistani airspace closure could cost it around Rs 4,000 crore on an annualised basis, it is learnt.

In contrast, the impact of India’s airspace closure has been rather insignificant on Pakistan as Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), the country’s flag carrier, has a limited international presence and is currently struggling, unlike



India’s rapidly expanding aviation sector and airlines. According to data from aviation analytics company Cirium, only about six PIA flights per week—those traveling between Kuala Lumpur and Lahore or Islamabad—routinely flew over India before these airspace closures took effect in April. For Indian airlines, the situation is quite different. All major Indian carriers operate international flights to countries west of India, and many of these previously overflew Pakistan, even though none of them have flights to destinations in Pakistan. Air India serves destinations across West Asia, Europe, the UK, and North America. IndiGo flies to West Asia, Turkey, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and Europe. With the closure of the Pakistani airspace, IndiGo was forced to suspend flights from Delhi to the Central Asian cities of Almaty and Tashkent because these routes were beyond the operational range of its narrow-body aircraft fleet. Air India Express, Akasa Air, and SpiceJet also operate international flights, primarily to West Asia.

The financial implications for Indian airlines are substantial. When Pakistan previously closed its airspace for over four months in 2019, Indian carriers collectively incurred estimated losses of around Rs 700 crore. These costs were primarily due to increased fuel expenses and operational difficulties resulting from the longer routes they were forced to take.

Air India was the most severely affected Indian carrier at that time, as it operated more west-bound international flights and was, and remains, the sole Indian airline with ultra-long-haul services to North America. But in recent years, other Indian airlines, particularly IndiGo, have also expanded their international networks, utilising their existing fleets of narrow-body jets to serve various destinations. Notably, IndiGo is the only Indian airline that operates flights to Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Turkey.

## Are underwhelming Q3 company earnings a warning of what’s to come?

The third quarter (Q3) financial results have not started off on an exciting note. What has clearly stood out is the hit taken by information technology (IT) companies from the Labour Codes. Between the six of them — Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, and LTIMindtree — India’s leading IT firms set aside more than Rs 5,500 crore in the October-December quarter for the implementation of these codes and the higher employee benefits entailed. Index bellwethers, Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank have also posted lower-than-expected earnings numbers.

The IT sector notwithstanding, there are some worrying signs from other sectors. Take the oil-to-data conglomerate Reliance Industries (RIL), whose earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) missed forecasts, primarily because of weak results for consumer-focused Reliance Retail, whose Q3 EBITDA was up just 1.3% year-on-year (y-o-y) — hardly a ringing endorsement for consumption growth. In the financial sector, heavyweights ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank reported a 6-8% rise in Q3 net interest income, lower than the 8-9% growth reported in the year-ago period. This is interesting because in the interim, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sharply lowered the policy repo rate to 5.25% and growth in non-food bank credit has increased to 11.4% as at the end of November. The unimpressive Q3 earnings are noteworthy since they follow the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cuts of September 22. The indirect tax cuts — in conjunction with low inflation — were instrumental to analysts projecting an upbeat 2026. In late September, HSBC even upgraded its view on the Indian stock market to ‘overweight’ from ‘neutral’.

Revenue growth for Indian companies has been a

problem for some time, even though profits have surged — although these trends have been reversing. According to an RBI analysis of more than 3,000 listed private, non-financial companies, July-September 2025 saw sales rise 8% year-on-year, the joint-most since a 12.7% rise seen in October-December 2022. At the same time, net profit growth of these companies fell to 1.5% in the second quarter — the lowest since the last quarter of FY23. Perhaps it’s too early to form a view on Indian companies and 2026 might indeed be better. The foundations seem fairly firm, the US tariff situation notwithstanding. For instance, there is no doubt that India Inc is in a healthy position, with their ability to service debt rather comfortable. Meanwhile, Fitch Ratings’ analysts said on Tuesday that they expect the Indian companies they rate to post an EBITDA margin of around 16% in FY27, up from an estimated 15.3% this year, with the wider margin seen helping offset high capex intensity. Any sign of increased investments should be good news for the economy. The incoming quarterly results also have something to say about the K-shaped economic recovery India has seen after the COVID-19 pandemic. Take luxury hotel company Leela Hotels, for instance, which last week reported a 21% increase in operating revenue, 23% rise in operating EBITDA, and 20% growth in RevPAR in Q3, with the occupancy rate rising to 71%. It reported double-digit growth in RevPAR and EBITDA for the fifth consecutive quarter. On Tuesday, ITC Hotels reported a 13% rise in RevPAR on its way to posting a 21% rise in revenue from operations. And even after taking a Rs 55 crore hit due to the Labour Codes, profit after tax for the reporting quarter was up 10%. According to ITC Hotels, demand particularly in premium and leisure segments is expected to “outpace available inventory” in the medium to long term.

## Katrina Kaif and Deepika Padukone’s nutritionist recommends this remedy to ‘naturally produce collagen’ in the body



Katrina Kaif and Deepika Padukone’s nutritionist, Shweta Shah, recommended having one teaspoon of ghee in one glass of warm water every morning for two months or 8 to 9 weeks instead of resorting to collagen supplements for glowing skin. “You will see that you wouldn’t need any collagen supplements. If you try it, you will notice the difference in the 8th to 9th week. You will not see any difference in just 3-4 weeks because the body is working that way,” Shah said on The Mumta podcast.

She further suggested having soups like pumpkin and carrot soup, which has beta carotene, for good skin. “Then results differ from body to body depending on its nature or

constitution,” Shah added.

Is there any truth to this claim? Ghee, a form of clarified butter, has long been treasured in traditional Indian diets. “Ghee enhances absorption of fat-soluble vitamins like D, A, E, and K. These vitamins maintain bone health, bolster the immune system, and regulate hormonal balance. Ghee’s natural fat content acts as a carrier, ensuring effective vitamin utilisation,” said Bhakti Kapoor, nutritionist, wellness consultant and founder — Vitamins K and A are essential for skin health and are found in ghee. “Vitamin K ensures the hassle-free production of collagen — a protein that keeps the skin intact by avoiding sagging. In short, including ghee in your nutrition plan helps maintain good skin provided other lifestyle measures are in place,” said Jinal Patel, dietitian, Zynova Shalby Hospital, Mumbai.

In clinical research, however, “minimal direct evidence” proves that ghee has measurable effects when consumed on an empty stomach, stressed Dr Birali Swetha, chief dietitian, Gleneagles Aware Hospital, LB Nagar, Hyderabad. Experts urge that moderation is key. “Including ghee as part of a balanced diet, alongside exercise and healthy lifestyle choices, ensures you harness its benefits fully,” said Dr Kapoor. Individuals considering this should do so in moderation and consult a doctor, given their health and skincare goals.

## ‘Pyaar ab popcorn jaisa ho gaya hai; thodi garmi aur log uchhal padte hain’: Expert decodes Ananya Panday’s candid take on modern relationships

Recently on The Kapil Sharma Show, Ananya Panday shared her views on modern-day relationships, describing them as “popcorn” love while assenting to 90s love stories, which, in her opinion, used to be more about “commitment.” Reflecting on the contrast between 90s romance and modern dating, she said, “Mujhe lagta hai, 90s mei jo pyaar tha woh zyada commitment mei believe karta tha, like an insurance policy, jo ek baar commitment kardi toh fir lifelong chalengi, toh fir lifelong chalegi, toh mujhe woh pasand hai. Log live-in relationship ke baare mei baat karte hain, aur kehte hai hum sab share kar rahe hain, kharcha share kar rahe hain, rent share kar rahe hain. Par rent roommates bhi share kar lete hain. Aagar relationship mei ho, password sharlo, ek minute mei breakup ho jaayega. Mujhe lagta hai iski wajah se ab loyalty nahi hai. Like pyaar ab popcorn ki tarah ban gaya hai thodi se garmi aat jaati hai, log uchhalne lagte hain, popcorn ki tarah.”

(I feel that the kind of love people had in the 90s believed much more in commitment — like an insurance policy: once you commit, it’s supposed to last for life, and I like that. These days, people talk about live-in relationships and say, “We’re sharing everything — expenses, rent.” But even roommates share rent. If you’re in a relationship, share your passwords — and the breakup can happen in a minute. I think that’s why there’s no loyalty anymore. It feels like love has become like popcorn now — a little heat and people start jumping, just like popcorn.) Ananya’s “popcorn love” analogy hits a nerve, triggering a discussion on the digital nature and fragility of present-day relationships. To gain a deeper understanding, we spoke with Dr Pavitra Shankar, Associate Consultant — Psychiatry, Aakash Healthcare, who explained that digital life has subtly rewired how people view commitment.

She elaborates: Dating apps and social media create an illusion of endless options. When choices feel limitless, people hesitate to commit—wondering, “Maybe someone



better is out there? A single dull moment or disagreement can trigger doubts, leading individuals to mentally “browse” for alternatives. Social media normalises receiving attention from multiple people simultaneously, making it difficult to maintain emotional focus. The result, Dr Shankar adds, is that commitment still exists, but it comes with conditions, timelines, and very convenient exit routes. “What the 90s offered as permanence, today is treated more like a subscription. Instant gratification: From reels to food delivery, everything arrives instantly. The brain gets addicted to quick rewards. Low distress tolerance: Many young adults struggle to sit with emotional discomfort. Overstimulation: Continuous content, notifications, and validation make real-life relationships feel “slow.”

Fear of missing out: People fear staying in a relationship that feels imperfect when something “better” might be available. This leads to quicker exits. She explains, “Instead of working through conflict, many interpret discomfort as incompatibility. Breakups become impulsive—mirroring Ananya’s ‘popcorn’ visual: hot, fast, and scattered.” Ananya suggests that sharing expenses doesn’t guarantee emotional intimacy. What factors truly determine emotional commitment in modern relationships?

## Shahid Kapoor gives a peek into his morning routine, sleep schedule, clean eating habits: ‘If I’m working, I train early...on an empty stomach’

Despite having numerous hit films under his belt, Shahid Kapoor admits that he has also overcome his share of downs and celebrated the ups. But the Haider actor is quick to add that each phase has taught him something new, and each project has helped him hone his skills. Known not only for his films, but also for his commitment to fitness and love for fashion, Shahid Kapoor believes in giving each role he essays — whether at home or on set — “the attention it deserves”. In this exclusive email interview with indianexpress.com, the father of two talks about his journey, being a style icon, eating clean, and why he is a stickler for routines. Read the edited excerpts below:

From Ishq Vishk to Deva, you have come a long way. How do you describe your journey?

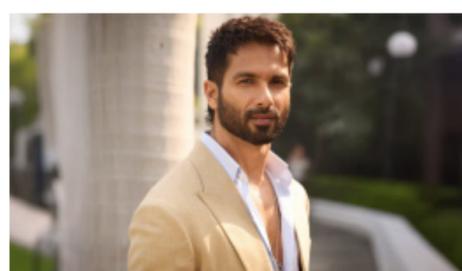
Shahid Kapoor: It has been a steady process of learning, unlearning, and growing. I started young, and over the years, I have had the chance to explore very different kinds of characters and filmmaking styles. Each phase has taught me something new — about the craft, about the industry, and about myself. I don’t see it as a destination reached, but as a continuous journey where every project adds another layer to who I am as an actor.

Over the last 22 years, you have experienced both exhilarating highs and challenging lows. How have these moments shaped you?

Shahid Kapoor: Every career comes with its share of highs and lows, and mine has been no different. The successful phases gave me confidence and clarity, while the challenging ones grounded me and pushed me to work hard. Both have been equally important in helping me grow. They taught me patience, resilience, and the value of staying true to my craft. Over time, I have learned to approach each new phase with a sense of perspective and gratitude, because every experience, good or difficult, has contributed to who I am today.

Apart from your stupendous on-screen persona, you are also a fitness and fashion icon. What does your daily workout involve?

Shahid Kapoor: For me, fitness is about consistency rather than intensity. My routine usually includes a mix of functional training, strength work, and mobility exercises to keep me agile and injury-free. I prefer training in the morning, which gives me a good head start to the day. I also try to add some cardio or a sport whenever possible just to keep things interesting. Overall, it is about maintaining a



balanced routine that supports my energy, my work, and my overall well-being.

Do you also only eat healthy foods, avoid certain foods, and probably even weigh them?

Shahid Kapoor: I try to eat clean and stay disciplined, but I am not extreme about it. I have been a vegetarian, so my meals naturally stay balanced — plenty of greens, vegetables, and pulses. I avoid heavy, unhealthy foods and don’t eat late at night, as it really affects my energy. Instead of weighing everything I eat, I prefer smaller, frequent meals that keep me feeling light and steady. That said, I am human — I enjoy comfort food once in a while, especially simple home-cooked meals. For me, it is about mindful eating rather than strict restriction.

You have experimented a lot with fashion. What is your style mantra?

Shahid Kapoor: Style is deeply personal. For me, it always begins with expressing who you are—there has to be a part of you in the way you dress. I like staying aware of global trends, but I only pick what genuinely resonates with my mood and personality. And honestly, comfort comes before anything else. If I don’t feel at ease in what I am wearing, it never works. Some phases last a day, some last for years — that is the fluid nature of fashion. As an artist, your moods and creative states evolve, and fashion is a great way to reflect different facets of yourself. Sometimes it is for the world to see, and sometimes it is just for your own sense of expression. Tell us what you are wearing today and how it aligns with your idea of fashion.

Shahid Kapoor: I wore Falguni Shane Peacock at the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour, and the look fit perfectly with the “Futureverse of Fashion” theme.

## Daniel Naroditsky had multiple drugs in system at time of death, toxicology report says



chess community as Danya, the American GM was a chess prodigy who became a Grandmaster at the age of 18. He was particularly good when it came to playing in the faster time controls like blitz. After Naroditsky's death, there had been a public outcry on social media with many in the chess world turning on former world champion Vladimir Kramnik who had repeatedly accused Naroditsky of cheating in online games, allegations that were never substantiated and that Naroditsky consistently denied. Close friends of Naroditsky had also spoken out and revealed that the popular streamer had been deeply distressed in the days before his death due to the allegations from Kramnik, whom Naroditsky had once admired.

In an interview with The Indian Express, Indian grandmaster Nihal Sarin had accused Kramnik of "taking a life". The legendary Levon Aronian had told The Indian Express that Kramnik needed professional help because he had a saviour complex. There was also a petition against the Russian former world champion on the online platform Change.org, which got over 15,000 people to sign in less than three days, demanding that FIDE remove all of Kramnik's titles and norms and hand him a ban. The International Chess Federation (FIDE) had also announced plans for a memorial award in Naroditsky's name. His death had led to an outpouring of emotions, with former world champion Magnus Carlsen describing him as "a resource to the chess community". Hikaru Nakamura had called him "the best of us".

American chess grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky had multiple drugs in his system when he died last year at the age of 29, according to media reports that accessed a toxicology report into the popular chess streamer's death. Naroditsky was found dead at his home in Charlotte in October 2025. His body had methamphetamine, amphetamine, 7-hydroxymitragynine and mitragynine in the system at the time of death, according to a toxicology report provided to NBC News by the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

While methamphetamine and amphetamine are synthetic stimulants, 7-hydroxymitragynine and mitragynine are major psychoactive ingredients found in kratom, a supplement that can be used as a stimulant. A report in The Guardian noted that Kratom is legal in much of the United States but it's a substance that is unregulated at the federal level and has been linked by the American Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to dependency, psychosis and withdrawal symptoms. The American GM was discovered unconscious in October last year by two of his closest friends, Oleksandr Bortnyk and Peter Giannatos, founder of the Charlotte Chess Center, where Naroditsky served as head coach and grandmaster-in-residence. Fondly known in the

## With 100 match wins at three Slams – and approaching the mark at the fourth – Novak Djokovic sets another marker for greatness and longevity



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Timeless greatness on the tennis court requires a combination of success and longevity. In a sport where the narrative is largely set by the four Grand Slam tournaments, the number of titles at these high-profile events is generally considered the yardstick for greatness. In that regard, Novak Djokovic – with 24 Grand Slam singles titles – is the most successful (or greatest, take your pick). This haul has been achieved over a career spanning more than two decades and sustained excellence on a variety of surfaces and in different conditions.

On Monday in Melbourne, the Serb became the first male player to have at least 100 match wins at three of the four Grand Slams, and he isn't too far from doing it at the fourth – the US Open.

What was the unique achievement for Djokovic in Melbourne on Monday?

The Serb's first-round win over Spain's Pedro Martinez, in straight sets, was his 100th at the Australian Open. The landmark is hardly surprising as Djokovic is a 10-time champion at Melbourne Park and has been playing in the senior draw there since 2005.

Has he done so at the other Grand Slams also?

Yes. Djokovic has 101 match wins at Roland Garros, where he's a three-time champion. At Wimbledon, where the Serb has lifted the trophy seven times, he has 102 match wins.

How many matches has Djokovic won at the US Open?

Djokovic has 95 wins at Flushing Meadows in New York, and can reach a century there if he reaches the semifinals there this year.

Who are the others to have won 100 matches at a

single Grand Slam?

The only other players, apart from Djokovic, to have won a century of matches at one or more Grand Slams are Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, which lends credibility to their period of dominance. Federer won a record 102 matches at the Australian Open, where he clinched the title six times, and a record 105 at Wimbledon, where he is a record eight-time champion. Nadal, who ruled the Roland Garros clay during his time, taking the trophy no less than 14 times, won an astonishing 112 matches there.

Why is the century of matches at one particular tournament so special?

Grand Slam tournaments are the pinnacle of the sport, held over two weeks and considered to have the toughest competition in the sport. A player needs to navigate seven matches to win the title, so they need to play, at the very least, 15 editions of an event to reach 100. But even the greatest of players are vulnerable to upsets; Federer, Nadal, and Djokovic had to sustain their excellence for two decades or more to get there. Novak Djokovic 100 wins AUS open Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates after defeating Pedro Martinez of Spain in their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Jan. 19, 2026. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila) That explains why Federer won 'only' 73 matches at French Open and 89 at the US Open. Nadal had 77 match wins at the Australian Open, and is not among the top five for Wimbledon and the US Open, where he had a combined haul of six titles.

Apart from the 'Big Three', who has the most match wins at individual Grand Slams?

Jimmy Connors still holds the record for the most match wins at the US Open – 98 – which may fall to Djokovic later this year. He has 84 match wins at Wimbledon. Guillermo Vilas has 58 wins at Roland Garros – Bjorn Borg, who won the title six times, is not in the top five as he retired prematurely. Stefan Edberg won 56 matches at the Australian Open. But there's a caveat: a lot of American and European players didn't turn up for the Australian Open for a long time because of the long distance.

Has any woman won 100 or more matches at a single Grand Slam?

Martina Navratilova won an incredible 120 singles matches at Wimbledon. Serena Williams (108) and Chris Evert (101) have done so at the US Open.

## Amitabh Bachchan's VHS tapes of Ali, Pele made son Abhishek a sports buff

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Abhishek Bachchan ETPLThe Bachchans are also deeply involved in the ongoing tennis-ball cricket tournament the Indian Street Premier League where they own the current champion Majhi Mumbai. Actor Abhishek Bachchan spent his childhood in a home that had a study filled with VHS tapes of Muhammad Ali and Pele. It was his father, superstar Amitabh Bachchan, who had compiled this extensive sports library. If not Ali and Pele, there would always be cricket on television. It was that sporty study that turned Abhishek into a life-long sports buff, owner of franchise teams and now a co-founder of Europe's T20 venture. To explain the birth of his passion, Abhishek strolls down the memory lane to track back to the time when Bachchan Sr was the 'angry young man', did back-to-back shifts and was on road for weeks. "The few times that we got to spend a day with him, I have vivid memories of him sitting in a chair in front of a television watching Test cricket," he says. There was a reason, those long-awaited days stayed embedded in his mind. "Some of my earliest memories of my father at home are very far and few, because when I was growing up, he was always working. I mean, we used to sleep under the same roof, but I used to not see him for weeks because he'd come home from shooting after I'd gone to sleep and he'd leave before I woke up," he says. Age or time hasn't weakened the pull of sports. "Till date, my father's capacity to watch highlights and re-runs of all these sporting events is immense," he says. As



for him, someone who played sports in school and college, he was "trying to live vicariously". He further goes on to say, "I have an unbelievably supportive father. And my love for sport and my education in sport has been through my father." The Bachchans are also deeply involved in the ongoing tennis-ball cricket tournament the Indian Street Premier League where they own the current champion Majhi Mumbai. Abhishek calls it an eye-opening experience that has proved very gratifying when one of its players got picked to be a net ball bowler for IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders. "To see and give an opportunity to somebody to go from street all the way to stadium and to see the aspiration and the hard work that they put into achieving those dreams and being given the opportunity to play amongst the best of the best is something that was very inspiring."

## 'Most exciting format': Praggnanandhaa set for epic Oslo rematch with Magnus Carlsen at Norway Chess



GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Two years after he first defeated Magnus Carlsen in a classical game, R Praggnanandhaa will return to the Norway Chess this year. And while the event will be hosted in the Norwegian capital of Oslo this year instead of the traditional host city of Stavanger, Carlsen has also confirmed

his participation at Norway Chess, which will possibly be his only foray into classical chess this year. Praggnanandhaa was not in action at Norway Chess last year with organisers extending invites to newly-minted world champion Gukesh Dommaraju and Arjun Erigaisi for the 2025 edition.

"Looking forward to be back in Norway Chess, I enjoyed playing in 2024. Most exciting format I have played!" Praggnanandhaa was quoted as saying in the press release by the organisers on Tuesday. Pragg was handed an invitation to the 2026 tournament—which has a reputation for assembling one of the strongest line-ups year after year—after a highflying 2025, where he won multiple events like Tata Steel Masters, the Superbet Chess Classic Romania, and the Uzchess Cup, besides ending with a joint-first finish at the Stepan Avagyan Memorial and the Sinquefield Cup.

Praggnandhaa is currently competing at the Tata Steel Chess tournament in Wijk aan Zee, where he has started without a win in four rounds, with two defeats and two draws. This will be the third time Praggnanandhaa will compete at Norway Chess. In 2022, he won the Norway Chess Open event, rather than the elite event which features six of the top players in the world. So far, the Norway Chess organisers have confirmed only two of the players that will take part in the six-player event. Meanwhile, Bibisara Assaubayeva will make her debut this year in the Norway Chess Women event that is held along side the open event.

## Delhi Capitals defeat Mumbai Indians in Women's Premier League clash

GNS News Agency, Jan 24

Vadodara: Jemimah Rodrigues led from the front to anchor Delhi Capitals' tense run chase with a gritty fifty, guiding her team to a much-needed seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League here on Tuesday. Put in to bat on a slow surface, Mumbai Indians' struggles in the powerplay continued before Nat Sciver-Brunt played another blinder (66 not out off 45) to take her team to 154 for 5. After a productive start provided by Lizelle Lee (46 off 28) and Shafali Verma (29 off 24), Delhi Capitals lost their way in the middle overs before Jemimah (51 not out off 37) calmed nerves in the dressing room by completing the chase in 19 overs.

Veteran Marizanne Kapp (10 not out off 6) provided the support Jemimah needed at the other end and closed out the match with a six. It was Delhi Capitals' second win in five games while Mumbai Indians suffered their fourth loss in six matches. "We really need to push when we are batting and bowling in the powerplay," said Mumbai Indians captain Harmanpreet Kaur after the loss. In the powerplay, Shafali missed connecting a flatter one down the leg side from left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma and saw her stumps rattled. South African Lee, who is in red hot form, was disappointed after being adjudged stumped off Amanjot Kaur in the 11th over. The umpire took time in making the call after Lee slightly lost her balance off another one down the leg side.

Despite Hayley Matthews' return from injury, Mumbai Indians have not been able to get going in the powerplay. It



was no different on Tuesday as the West Indian and her opening partner Sajeevan Sajana fell cheaply, both bowled. For Delhi Capitals, Marizanne Kapp was accurate as ever and conceded only eight runs in four overs besides casting Matthews. The onus was again on the seasoned duo of Sciver-Brunt and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (41 off 33) to steer the team to a competitive total. Sciver-Brunt remained unbeaten on 66 off 45 balls in a fluent knock including two sixes and six fours. It was her third fifty-plus score of the season. Besides the Sciver-Brunt show, the batting performance once again left a lot to be desired. It was only the second game of the season at this venue, with batting proving to be more challenging compared to Navi Mumbai.

## Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff both reach third round at the Australian Open



Melbourne: Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff, two of the top three women's seeds at the Australian Open, both reached the third round on Wednesday. And the top-seeded man, Carlos Alcaraz, joined them. Top-seeded Sabalenka defeated Bai Zhouxuan of China 6-3 6-1 at Rod Laver Arena, and No. 3 Gauff won over left-hander Olga Danilovic 6-2 6-2 at Margaret Court Arena. Alcaraz defeated Germany's Yannick Hanfmann in a tough match for the Spaniard, who prevailed 7-6(4) 6-3 6-2. "I knew he (Hanfmann) was going to play great," Alcaraz said. "I knew his level. We'd played a few times already. But to be honest, it was tougher than I thought." "The ball was coming as a bomb – forehand, backhand, so I had to be ready for that," Alcaraz added of Hanfmann's shot making. Alcaraz, 22, is trying to win his first title at Melbourne Park to become the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam.

Sabalenka won the Australian Open in 2023 and 2024 and was the runner-up a year ago against Madison Keys. She is after her fifth Grand Slam title and has two trophies at the US Open. Gauff has never advanced past the semifinals in Australia and has Grand Slam titles from the French

Open and US Open.

Sabalenka raced to a 5-0 lead in the first set but then needed seven set points at Rod Laver Arena to take the set against the defensive-minded Chinese player, who used clever drop shots to help her stay in the match. Sabalenka will next face Anastasia Popov, who defeated 28th-seeded and former US Open champion Emma Raducanu 7-6(3) 6-2. "I was happy to get this win, a tricky opponent," Sabalenka said. "She really stepped in in the first set." Sabalenka led 4-0 in the second set and overpowered the smaller Bai. Sabalenka even tried a bit of serve-and-volley in the match, trying to diversify her game. You saw serve-and-volley today," Sabalenka said. "It didn't really work well, but I did one." Bai was making her second appearance in the Australian Open and reached the second round for the first time. In another women's match, 12th-seeded Elna Svitolina of Ukraine defeated Linda Klimovicova of Poland 7-5 6-1. Gael Monfils, a popular 39-year-old Frenchman and Svitolina's husband, said goodbye at Melbourne Park in his retirement year, losing on Tuesday in a first-round match to qualifier Dane Sweeny. In another women's match, Zeynep Sonmez okay, who was highly praised during her first-round match Sunday for assisting an ill ballkid, advanced to the third round after beating Anna Bondar 6-2 6-4. Sonmez played at one of Melbourne Park's outside courts and the stands were crammed with members of Melbourne's Turkish community. "I really appreciated there were many Turkish people, and I felt like I was at home," she said. "At first I couldn't even hear my own thoughts. It was very, very loud." In men's results, 2021 US Open winner and 11th-seeded Daniil Medvedev beat Quentin Halys 6-7(9) 6-3 6-4 6-2, 13th-seeded Andrey Rublev beat Jaime Faria 6-4 6-3 4-6 7-5 and 19th-seeded Tommy Paul defeated Thiago Agustín Tirante 6-3 6-4 6-2.

## National record holder pole vaulter stopped at railway station over equipment

New Delhi: India's national record holder in pole vault Dev Kumar Meena and his coach Ghanshyam faced a humiliating experience at Panvel Railway Station as they were forced to deboard a train after being denied permission to carry their sports equipment. Initially asked to leave their equipment behind by the Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE), they were allowed entry only after prolonged pleading and payment of a fine, the incident triggering outrage on social media.

The 20-year-old Dev, who broke his own national record for the third time at the World University Games in Germany in July 2025 with a jump of 5.40 metres, was returning from the All India Inter-University Championship in Mangaluru along with fellow athlete Kuldeep — who set a meet record — and other teammates. "We were returning

from Mangaluru and had to take a train from Panvel to Bhopal. I went out to have some food while some of the players were sitting near the poles outside the station when the ticket collector asked them to remove the equipment," coach Ghanshyam told PTI Bhasha on Tuesday. "I went and explained that these were pole vault poles, showed him our participation proof and medals, but he said the equipment should have been sent in the luggage compartment," he said. Meanwhile, the Central Railway CPRO said there was never any intention by railway personnel to hurt the sentiments of any player. "We respect players. We had requested them to book the pole in the luggage section from Panvel as the dimensions were larger than the permissible limit," the official told PTI. "Contrary to the allegations made in social media posts.

## Shark Tank India pitcher loses out on funding on his fifth attempt, Aman Gupta calls him 'pagal aadmi'



As Shark Tank India 5 enters its third week, the total investments committed on the show have been worth Rs 32.90 crores. Out of the 30 pitches, 18 founders have bagged a deal, while 12 have not succeeded. Amongst the 12 to lose out on investment is Wrestlefanent founder Nikunj Walia from Delhi. 32-year-old Nikunj has been a crazy wrestling fan all his life, and he converted his passion into a business. However, his idea didn't seem to appeal to the Sharks, while Aman Gupta declared him mad right as he entered the tank. Vineeta Singh also highlighted a huge gap in the founder accepting the reality of his business. Kunal Bahl also reminisced about his fondness towards WWE; however, all the Sharks declared the business as 'not investible'.

What is Wrestlefanent?

Founded by Delhi's Nikunj Walia, Wrestlefanent is a fan engagement platform that helps wrestling lovers to become an active and engaged community. They conduct fan festivals, gaming leagues, celebrity meets, and more. They also make B2B content. Bringing this passionate business onto the tank, Nikunj demanded an investment of Rs 75 lakhs for 10 percent equity, placing the company's valuation at Rs 7.5 crores. Talking about his journey, the founder also shared that he had been applying to the show for four years and kept getting rejected. Nikunj entered the tank like wrestlers do, as he walked to his spot, he announced himself as a 'legend who turned rejection into hustle.' Seeing his over-the-top entry into the Tank, Aman Gupta called him a "Pagal aadmi (mad man)." When the founder revealed he was from Delhi, Kunal Bahl said, "Nahi bhi batate toh pata chalta (We would have figured even if you didn't tell us)."

The founder was rejected from Shark Tank India four times. During his pitch, Nikunj revealed that he had been applying to be on the show since 2021; however, the idea and concept kept getting rejected. Further in his pitch, Nikunj asked Aman if he wanted to try the wrestler's belt. Aman jokingly asked, "Aise toh hai nahi ki tu belt bech raha hai. (I hope you are not selling belts)." Further in the pitch, the

founder revealed that they made a revenue of Rs 13 lakhs in 2024-25, with a profit of Rs 6.3 lakhs last year. However, 90 percent of the revenue came from the B2B content they made. He also pointed out that live events since 2022 have seen growth, but also made losses for him. When Kunal asked the founder about the size of the fan community, an unsure Nikunj ended up talking about the market size; he even fumbled when Namita asked him for some statistics on others who conduct live events. Later, Aman Gupta questioned the founder, "You are 32, at this age, if you were working, your salary would have been more than this, so sometimes do you feel that what you are doing is wrong?"

Nikunj responds, "Everyone feels dejected. I also thought I might not be able to do it. But I am happy making less money, rather than sitting in someone's office." Namita also backed Aman's point and said, "It's not about not following your passion, but when you decide to do so, then there should also be a seriousness about depth."

Vineeta Singh calls the business 'non-investible'. Unfortunately, Nikunj did not bag a deal in his fifth attempt on the show. Giving their verdict, the Sharks wished Nikunj well and advised him to focus more on live events rather than content production. Sharing his views, Aman Gupta said, "I always recommend people to stay happy. It's important to convert this passion into a business, but you need to do something to make this investible. As of now, it lacks this, so unfortunately, I am out."

Namita Thapar also opts out and says, "Nikunj, you have childlike zest which is contagious, never lose that, but you also need balance. As of now, there is no visibility in terms of which direction this is headed. We will see you in the future again, but for today, I am out." Kunal went on to revisit his childhood and shared that he has been a die-hard fan of wrestling. "My elder brother and my entire childhood have been about giving chokeslams on the bed to one another. Amazing memories came back." He later appreciated the live events bit and said, "I think this is yet to become a business, your passion and energy are amazing though." Kunal also opted out. Sharing her views, Vineeta Singh said, "Numbers don't lie, and if you draw a salary, the profits you have shown won't remain. There is a huge gap between your reality and imagination. It's important not to make Khayali pulao and do something where people want to give money. It's not at all invisible today." Ritesh Agarwal also added, "What lacks the most is your inability to say no to your content business. You need to let that go; until you focus completely on live events, you will be called an outsourced content shop. Once you make live events bigger, I would love to meet you again, we are of the same age, so I hope to do something exciting ahead." So far on Shark Tank India 5, Kunal Bahl has committed the maximum investments worth Rs 10.31 crores, followed by Anupam Mittal, Namita Thapar, and Aman Gupta. Shark Tank India 5 airs on Sony TV and Sony Liv every Monday to Friday at 10 pm.

## 'Tum jo chale gaye': Heartbreaking last video of Dharmendra and Hema Malini singing together months before his death goes viral



Veteran actor Dharmendra, who passed away on November 24 at the age of 89, continues to live on in the hearts of his fans through cherished memories and rare throwback moments. While his demise came as a shock, admirers have been revisiting old photos and videos of the legendary star, recalling his timeless charm. His wife Hema Malini and children Sunny Deol, Bobby Deol and Esha Deol have already shared heartfelt tributes, and now, another emotional clip of the iconic couple has resurfaced online.

In the video, Dharmendra and Hema Malini are seen softly humming 'Dariya Mein Phenk Do Chabi' from their 1981 film Aas Paas, instantly evoking nostalgia. The clip was shot in July 2025, just four months before Dharmendra's passing, and was recently shared by RJ Anirudh Chawla on Instagram.

Sharing the video, the RJ described the moment as part of the "Dream Girl's Dream Run Concert" tour. He also recalled seeking Dharmendra's blessings for his Canada concert and book project, calling the interaction unforgettable. The clip has since gained emotional significance, as it stands among the last recorded moments of the beloved

screen couple together, leaving fans deeply moved. Sharing the post, the RJ wrote, "Hello hi aay haay ?? Diaries of the Dream Girl's Dream Run Concert! ??? Tum jo chale gaye to hogi badi kharabi. ??? Kitne sahi alfaz Dharamji ke liye ??? Unforgettable moments with Hema Malini ji and Dharmendra ji, as we sang their superhit song, Dariya Mein Phenk Do Chabi, from Aas Paas together! ????? This emotional musical meeting happened 4 months before Dharamji passed away, when I met him to take his blessings for my Canada concert tour and book with Hemaji in July 2025! Tab kya pata tha, unse aakhir mulaqat hogi! ?? Hemaji will share beautiful anecdotes of all her blockbuster films with Dharamji, including, ?? Sholay, Seeta Aur Geeta, The Burning Train, Alibaba Aur 40 Chor, Raja Jani and Naya Zamana."

He added, "So so honored to co-produce, host, write, and direct a historic concert tour with the Dream Girl, Hema Malini ji ?? The Dream Girl's Dream Run Concert with @dreamgirlhemamalini #hemamalini! ??? Hema Malini ki kahani Hema Malini ki zubaani ?? With a special tribute to the legendary Dharmendra ji ??? In March, starting with Canada! 21st March at Toronto. 29th March at Vancouver! Biggg thnx to my national Canada partners @kvpkamal @kvpentertainers @gursharan8471 ??." Many fans responded with nostalgia and affection. A few left comments such as "Beautiful memories" and "Miss you, Dharmendra ji," while some praised the iconic pair's chemistry, calling Aas Paas a favourite movie and celebrating the couple's joyful expressions in the clip. Dharmendra and Hema Malini's partnership was one of Hindi cinema's most cherished — both on-screen in hits like Sholay, Seeta Aur Geeta and The Burning Train, and off-screen as a real-life couple whose legacy continues to resonate with audiences. Hema Malini, in her first interview after Dharmendra's demise, said that she misses Dharmendra every minute. She also dismisses speculation that she and Prakash Kaur's family are not on good terms.

## 'Pray for me': Hrithik Roshan reveals his obsession with 'Bollywood biceps' as he shares 2016 throwback with a twist

Hrithik Roshan never fails to impress fans. The actor recently joined the 2016 photo-sharing trend. Bollywood's 'Greek God' shared a post that is equal parts humorous and honest, marked by sharp self-awareness and some self-deprecating humour. Hrithik shared a series of photos from the last decade, which clearly reflected his love for fitness. Hrithik Roshan's tongue-in-cheek post is all about poking fun at himself, fully aware that fitness is his lifelong passion. Sharing the series of photos, Hrithik Roshan admits that he still has a deep, almost instinctive obsession with building a strong, muscular physique — what he calls "Bollywood biceps." By calling it "hardwired," he's saying this obsession feels ingrained in him. "2016, 1984, 2019, 2022 and yesterday. .No matter how many books I read or how

evolved and nuanced my understanding of life gets , this hardwired obsession with "Bollywood Biceps" just doesn't seem to end. I hope I get over it eventually. Pray for me," read Hrithik Roshan's post caption. A fan wrote in the comment section, "So you're saying one of the pic is from Yesterday ?! ?? man I swear these pics look alike that you're still in your 30s ????" while another fan added, "reading this felt personal???? No matter how much we grow mentally, the body still demands discipline and honesty, watching your journey pushed me to finally start mine and I am very excited to see what Krish 4 brings????." Another fan asked, "Really, you are 52?" On the work front, Krish 4 is officially happening, with Hrithik Roshan taking over directing duties from his father,

## 'Happy Patel budget equal to Border 2's catering budget': Vir Das reveals Aamir Khan did 28 focus screenings to test the film



Vir Das has officially made his directorial debut with Happy Patel: Khatarnak Jasoos, which he co-directed with Kavi Shastri. The film finally hit theatres last week. While it has struggled at the box office, earning only Rs 5.07 crore so far, it has garnered positive responses from audiences, particularly fans of Vir's stand-up brain. What's also being appreciated is that a film as whacky and wild as this was greenlit by a mainstream production house in today's climate. Unsurprisingly, the man behind the film is Aamir Khan, a producer known for backing unconventional subjects. In a recent conversation with Cinema Express, Vir revealed that when he first narrated the script to Aamir, the superstar asked for rewrites. "He called me and Kavi for a narration. Then he sat with us for about five to six rewrites. He is a great lighthouse for story and is always concerned with character motivations and whether the script is tying up."

Vir also shared that after hearing the script, Aamir conducted a "director audition" for both him and Kavi, (a practice the superstar has previously followed with directors like Kiran Rao and Advait Chandan when they were making their first films under his banner). "He asked us to shoot five scenes of the film, not at the production level, of course. He just wanted to see how we moved the camera. He saw the 14-minute clip we came up with and greenlit the project." Aamir also conducted focus group screenings, or "test screenings," to gauge audience reactions. Vir described it as a real gruesome test: "We had 28 of them. And these were not for industry people. They were with a normal audience and each time of different demographics. At the end of every screening, Aamir came and told everybody, 'If you like the film, we are happy. But for the next two hours no praise. Tell us, what's wrong.' And from the feedback we received, we made our third and final cut."

When asked about the film's budget, Vir was candid: "Our film's cost might be equal to the catering budget of Border 2." He also addressed the viral AI-generated image circulating on social media, which features his spy character alongside other iconic Hindi film spies such as Ranveer Singh from Dhurandhar, Tiger, Pathaan, and Kabir from Spy Universe. Reacting humorously, he said: "I think every joint family dinner table needs an idiot. You should imagine Tiger, Pathaan, Kabir and Ranveer's Hamza from Dhurandhar all sitting together and I am the fool who also gets a seat." Previously, while speaking at the Jaipur Literature Festival about the current climate for comedians in India, Vir Das was unequivocal. "My jokes are very much the same abroad as they are in India," he said. "I do exactly the same show, no matter where, Mars, Pluto, Bhopal or New York."

## Bhumi Pednekar's Mumbai top cop goes on a hunt for Aditya Rawal's serial killer in Suresh Triveni's gritty cat-and-mouse tale



glimpses of the suspected serial killer Sajid, played by Aditya Rawal, who's suspected to be "at the intersection of drug addiction and crime" and "can kill anyone for merely Rs 50 to Rs 500". We're also introduced to Samara Tijori's character Anita Acharya, a rookie reporter, who's at odds with Rita. When the DCP asks her, "Who do you think murdered him?", Anita just smiles slyly and responds, "This is your job, ma'am." As Anita continues to probe Rita, who claims she can't discuss "sensitive" information, Anita reminds her it's also the journalist's job to ask questions. We also see Rita become too personally invested in the case, taking law into her own hands by even slapping a suspect in police custody and slamming the car door on another. "There's a reason Rita madam was interested in the case, sir," claims her colleague. Lata Mangeshkar's gem "Gumnaam Hai Koi" from Manoj Kumar and Nanda-starrer 1965 thriller Gumnaam plays in the background, adding another layer of intrigue and foreboding to the proceedings.

The official synopsis of Daldal states: "Rita Ferreira, the newly appointed DCP of the Mumbai Crime Branch, wears her crown like a curse. Introverted and plagued by impostor syndrome, Rita is shaken by the brutal murder of — an innocent good Samaritan whose death eerily mirrors a violent thought Rita had about him, just hours earlier. Wracked with guilt, Rita is drawn to the case and, against all odds, takes it upon herself to find the killer while battling resistance from her colleagues, a deeply patriarchal system, and her unravelling personal life." The investigation pits her against Anita Acharya, a rookie reporter, whose dual existence is a scary contrast. But their true conflict isn't with each other — it's with the ghosts of their pasts. What follows is a cat-and-mouse game between two women forged in trauma, set against the gritty backdrop of Mumbai and its crime branch. Only one will emerge redeemed," adds the synopsis. Also starring Ananth Narayan Mahadevan and Rahul Bhat, Daldal is created by Suresh Triveni of Tumhari Sulu (2017) and Jalsa (2021)-fame. It's directed by Amrit Raj Gupta, best known for helming the inaugural season of Gullak, Operation MBBS (2020), and Tribhuvan Mishra CA Topper (2024). Daldal will premiere on Prime Video India on January 30.

## T20's gets two new thinkers: Steve Waugh, hockey GOAT Jamie Dwyer

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Cricket's most disruptive format T20, the perpetual playground of innovators and the enterprising, has lured two exceptional sporting intellects. Steve Waugh, Australia's former World Cup-winning captain, and Jamie Dwyer, the hockey great who led the Kookaburras to global dominance, have come together as co-owners of the Amsterdam franchise in the European T20 Premier League (ETPL), an ICC-approved competition set to begin in August.

The league, backed by the cricket boards of Scotland, Ireland and the Netherlands, marks a significant push to grow the game in Europe—and a notable shift for Waugh, who has largely kept his distance from T20 cricket since retiring. Waugh, at 60, has taken a full-committed plunge in the sport's youngest format. Giving him company is Dwyer, who played cricket as a child before taking the path that made him a hockey GOAT. This meeting of cricket's time-tested wisdom and an outsider's perspective promises the birth of fresh ideas and also lends to the format the gravitas it so longs for. In his playing days, India, for Waugh, was the "final frontier". Now as a T20 owner, the Aussie says, Europe was the "last frontier" to cricket's journey to go global. With cricket now an Olympic sport and Europe always eager to swell its medals tally at Summer Games, ETPL is an idea whose time has come. For Waugh, this was also a "chance to leave a legacy for cricket". In Dwyer, he has help. Cricket and hockey, in Australia, share a close bond. The most-committed intermediary of this association is the hockey great Ric Charlesworth. A first-class cricketer and a well-decorated hockey player and coach, Charlesworth's voice carries weight. The Kookaburras dominated world hockey when he was the coach and Dwyer as captain. Charlesworth once told this paper that cricket hasn't



moved with time. He could never understand why batsmen fussed over their position. Like in hockey, he wanted cricketers to be multi-skilled and be more rigid about their roles. Dwyer too has heard that from his coach. "He always spoke about cricket and how they don't challenge themselves more with being more versatile and learning new skills. Like the reverse sweep, obviously it's come into T20 cricket. We've been doing that in hockey for a very long time," he says. "Hockey has to be very versatile. You have to be able to attack, defend, play on the left, play on the right. And Ric was a big advocate for that ... this is what makes it more fluid, more entertaining to watch. I agree in T20 you should be able to play in the opening batsman or three or four or be a closer and smash some runs at the end. So I think you should be able to adapt your game and be able to be versatile." But aren't T20 leagues diluting cricket, spoiling the technique of young batsmen and killing Tests? And does the world really need another league? Waugh offers a counter by giving the example of English