


SIT issues notice to former Ex chief minister Kcr
BRS youth leader MTech Mahinder Condemns the
govt diversion politics



“Yellandu, January 29 (Indiyan chronicle): B.R.S youth and social media leader M.Tech Mahinder said that the SIT notice to former Ex Chief Minister of Telangana K.C.R. in the name of phone tapping case is a proof of the most vicious act of vendetta. The state government on Thursday. He said such actions against a leader who has led the state on the path of development is a blot on democracy. Such acts will not be tolerated.

Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao Inspects CC
Road Works at Indiranagar

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):”Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao on Thursday inspected the ongoing CC road construction works at Indiranagar, VMH School Line, under the limits of Ramanthapur Division, along with officials. She instructed the officials to ensure that the works are carried out strictly in accordance with quality standards.”Speaking on the occasion, the Corporator stated that her primary objective is to develop Ramanthapur Division as a model division in all sectors.Assistant Engineer Swetha, HMWSSB Supervisor Jangaiah, Mahender, BJP leaders Konda Krishnamurthy, Sankoori Kumaraswamy, Seelam Somasekhar, Masireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Baburao, and others participated in the program.





From Our Staff Reporter
New Delhi, Jan 29

India’s economy is projected to grow 7.4 per cent in FY26 and between 6.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent in FY27, reaffirming its position as the fastest-growing major economy for the fourth consecutive year, according to the Economic Survey 2025-26.

The pre-Budget guidance document, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament today, attributed the growth

outlook to regulatory reforms, a strong macroeconomic base, renewed call for private sector investment and robust domestic demand.

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran, author of the survey, said, “Given the good growth performance and the kind of foundation laid for sustained growth into the second half of this decade, we are now projecting FY27 growth between 6.8 per cent and 7.2

per cent... notwithstanding the global situation, on the back of domestic reforms and accomplishments.”

The survey highlighted policy reforms in recent years as key drivers lifting the economy.

“Medium-term growth potential is closer to 7 per cent. With domestic drivers playing a dominant role and macroeconomic stability well anchored, the balance of risks around growth remains broadly even...

India set to log 7.4% growth
in FY26, maintain lead among
top economies

The survey projects real GDP growth in the financial year 2027 in the range of 6.8 per cent to 7.2 per cent. The outlook is one of steady growth amid global uncertainty requiring caution, but not pessimism,” it said.

Calling FY26 an unusually challenging year on the external front due to high penal tariffs by the US, the survey said GST rationalisation, faster deregulation and simplification of compliance requirements supported the economy. “FY27 is expected to be a year of adjustment as firms and households adapt to changes, with domestic demand and investment gaining strength,” it added.

While noting that the external environment remains uncertain, the survey said risks for India would remain manageable. It pinned hopes on an early conclusion of the trade deal with the US, stating, “Slow growth in India’s key trading partners, tariff-induced disruptions to trade and volatility in capital flows could intermittently weigh on exports and investor sentiment at home. At the same time, ongoing trade negotiations with the US are expected to conclude during the year, which could help reduce pressures on the external front.”

The survey said external factors were expected to remain stable for India and exports resilient. It noted that despite global trade uncertainty, India’s merchandise and services exports reached a record \$825.3 billion in FY25, with momentum continuing in FY26. “Despite heightened tariffs imposed by the US, merchandise exports grew by 2.4 per cent from April to December 2025, and services exports increased by 6.5 per cent. Merchandise imports for April to December 2025 rose by 5.9 per cent,” the Survey said, adding that strong remittance inflows continued to anchor external stability.

It noted that remittances had surpassed gross FDI inflows in most years, underscoring their importance as a key source of external funding. The current account deficit remained moderate at 0.8% of GDP in H1 FY26.

The survey said the domestic economy remained on a stable footing and inflation had moderated to historically low levels. “Balance sheets across households, firms and banks are healthier and public investment continues to support activity. Consumption demand is resilient and private investment intentions are improving. These conditions provide resilience against external shocks and support continuation of growth momentum,” it said, explaining the basis for its FY27 projection.

It added that India’s current account structure showed a high net inflow of intangible assets, driven by growing surpluses in services and private transfers, helping offset the trade deficit.

The current account deficit declined from \$25.3 billion in the first half of FY25 to \$15 billion in the first half of FY26.

India is better positioned than high-deficit peers such as New Zealand, Brazil, Australia, the UK and Canada in Q2 FY26. Service exports touched an all-time high of \$387.6 billion in FY25, growing 13.6 percent. Foreign exchange reserves rose to \$701.4 billion as of 16 January 2026, up from \$668 billion at the end of March 2025.

Headline CPI inflation declined to 1.7 per cent, driven mainly by corrections in vegetable and pulse prices, supported by favourable farm conditions, supply-side measures and a strong base effect. The survey noted that India remained the world’s largest recipient of remittances, with inflows reaching \$135.4 billion in FY25, supporting external stability.

India emerging as ray of hope for world: PM Modi

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted that the country was emerging as a “ray of hope” for the world and pointed to the free trade pact with the European Union, saying it is for an “ambitious India” and manufacturers should seize this opportunity to enhance capacities.


Addressing the media at the beginning of the Budget session of Parliament, Modi said India was moving rapidly on the Reform Express and thanked parliamentarians for contributing their positive energies to the unveiling of reforms.

Modi said even his critics acknowledge the government’s focus on last-mile delivery and this tradition will continue with the next generation of reforms.

India’s democracy and demography, he said, offer great hope for the world.

“In this temple of democracy, India has the opportunity to send a message of strength, commitment to democracy, and respect for decisions taken through democratic processes, messages welcomed and accepted globally,” Modi said.

He asserted that the present time is not for disruption but for solutions, not for obstacles but for resolution.



The prime minister said the Budget session marked the culmination of the first quarter of the 21st century and the beginning of the next quarter.

“The year has begun on a very positive note, with a confident India emerging as a ray of hope and a centre of attraction for the world,” he said.

Modi said the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union at the start of this quarter reflected the bright future of India’s youth and the promising direction ahead.

“This agreement is free trade for an ambitious India, for aspirational youth, and for an Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India),” he said.

The prime minister expressed firm belief that India’s manufacturers will seize this opportunity to enhance their capacities.

Modi said the “mother of all deals” with the European Union has opened up a vast market and Indian goods will reach there at lower costs.

He asked industry leaders and manufacturers to guard against complacency and instead focus on quality.

Entering this open market with the best quality products will not only earn profits from buyers across 27 European Union countries but also win their hearts, creating a long-lasting impact for decades, the prime minister said.

Chandrashekar
Rao Requests
Postponement
of SIT Inquiry
Pavan Bandari



Hyderabad, Jan 29

Former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, also known as KCR, responded to SIT notices on Thursday by writing a letter to officials. In the letter, he stated he would not be able to attend the inquiry scheduled for the next day, citing the ongoing municipal elections. KCR explained, “I am busy with the nomination process for the municipal elections. Tomorrow is the last day for filing nominations. I have to issue B-forms to several candidates.” He added that he would attend the inquiry on another day if summoned, saying, “I will definitely attend the inquiry if summoned on another day.”

Min unveils tech-driven plan to make Telangana a disaster-ready state

Hyderabad, Jan 29

Minister for Revenue, Housing and Information & Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Wednesday announced a comprehensive plan to strengthen Telangana’s disaster management system, with a strong focus on technology, early warning mechanisms and specialised training. He said advanced weather stations would be established up to the mandal level, taking local climatic conditions into account, to deliver timely and accurate weather updates to people on the ground.

Chairing a high-level review meeting at the Secretariat with officials from the Disaster Management, Fire Services, SDRF, Hydr and Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC),

the Minister said the objective is to minimise loss of life and property during natural calamities and position Telangana as a role model for the rest of the country.

Airlift rescue and heavy-lift drones

Recalling flood-related incidents in his Palair constituency in 2024, Ponguleti expressed regret over the absence of an effective airlift system at that time. He said a dedicated airlift rescue mechanism would now be developed to evacuate people trapped in streams, rivulets and lakes during heavy rains and floods. He also suggested procuring drones capable of lifting 70 to 80 kilograms to assist in rescuing accident victims from inaccessible locations.

Rs 100 crore for disaster preparedness

The Minister revealed that the government has decided to purchase state-of-the-art disaster response equipment worth Rs 100 crore. These include early warning systems, real-time monitoring tools, satellite-based communication facilities, drones, modern rescue equipment and advanced fire-fighting technologies to ensure swift response during floods, fires and other emergencies.

Training, communication and fire safety

Ponguleti announced that a state-level advanced training centre would be set up under the Disaster Management Department to provide regular and specialised training to personnel. He also directed



that SIM-based VHF radio communication systems be extended from the Integrated Command and Control Centre in Hyderabad to the remotest parts of the State.

The Minister instructed the Hyderabad Commissioner to procure specialised equipment to handle fire accidents in high-rise buildings and suggested the purchase of 77 high-speed boats to strengthen flood rescue operations. He noted that the State has 12 SDRF teams, each comprising up to 1,000 members, and emphasised the need for continuous training.

Telangana Governor
praises North East
Connect sports initiative



Hyderabad: Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma lauded the Telangana–North East Connect initiative to promote sports across the two regions in a big way.Releasing a special report on Thursday in the presence of Sports Authority of Telangana chairman K Shiva Sena Reddy and VC & MD Sonibala Devi, Varma said that continuous sports and cultural programmes were essential to further strengthen relations between Telangana and the North-Eastern states.The Governor emphasised that organising such programmes on a large scale would help build strong ties between the North-Eastern states, which have rich sports and cultural traditions, and Hyderabad city and Telangana state, which offer numerous opportunities.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Chinese military purge signals Xi Jinping’s firm grip on power

Inscrutable are the ways of the communist dictatorships. The actions of such regimes appear particularly intriguing if they are driven by territorial ambitions and a desire to reshape the global order. A series of shocking military purges in China makes one wonder if there is anything more to it than meets the eye. While the outside world has no means to get a full picture of what is happening inside the tightly controlled regime, the information that has been trickling in speaks of a swift operation of summary dismissals of some top-ranking military officials on charges of corruption, political activity, and insubordination to President Xi Jinping. A brief official announcement recently said that two top army generals were being investigated for suspected serious violations of discipline and law, without giving details. The sudden ouster of Zhang Youxia, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and widely seen as a close lieutenant of the all-powerful president, has raised many eyebrows in diplomatic circles. Facing the axe along with him was Liu Zhenli, the head of the joint operations of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Following the latest purge, the CMC is now effectively down to two members – Xi himself, who is the chairman, and Zhang Shengmin, PLA’s anti-corruption head. The latest military shake-up is the biggest in recent history, reminiscent of the infamous clean-ups of the Mao Zedong era. These purges are apparently designed to reform the military and ensure loyalty to Xi. They are part of a broader anti-corruption drive that has resulted in punishment for more than two lakh officials since the Chinese leader came to power in 2012. At least 17 Generals from the PLA have been removed so far. The latest purge can have repercussions on Taiwan, which China considers its own territory and has threatened to take control of the island by force. China also has increased military pressure and, last month, launched large-scale military drills around Taiwan for two days after the United States announced major arms sales to Taiwan. General Zhang, a celebrated war veteran, was made the vice-chairman of the CMC, an institution seen as Xi’s eyes and ears in running the PLA’s forces day to day.

Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Conducts Extensive Tour in KTR Nagar Colony

Uppal Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy — Development Works to Resolve Colony Issues

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):““Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that issues in the colonies under the Uppal Division are being resolved through systematic development works. She said that development activities are being undertaken on a priority basis to address long-standing problems faced by residents.“On Thursday, Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, along with Uppal Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy and representatives of the KTR Nagar Colony Welfare Association, conducted an extensive tour of KTR Nagar Colony in Uppal Division and reviewed the local issues. During the visit, welfare association representatives brought key problems faced by the colony residents to the attention of Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy and Parameshwar Reddy. Residents requested the construc-



tion of CC (cement concrete) roads in the colony. Responding positively, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy instructed officials to prepare proposals for a permanent solution to the CC road issue. She assured the residents that necessary steps would be taken soon to permanently resolve the CC road problem in KTR Nagar Colony. The programme was attended by DE Venil Goud, AE Raj Kumar, KTR Colony President Hanumanth Reddy, Narasimha, Kantharao Tikka Reddy, Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Upender Reddy, Sandeep, Bhaskar, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Narasimha Prasad, Jagan Pawan, MD Nazeer, Har Janardhan Reddy, Radhamma, Satyamma, Renuka, Padma, Sharada, Shivakumar, Balu, Nagaraju, Kantharao, Lakshman, Nagaraju, Bakayya, Malleshu, Aidaru Gouse Bhai, Ayya Pawan, Narasimha, and others.

Tarnaka Thunders win big at Gymkhana Ground.

Captain Raj (Raj News) scored a brilliant 81 runs and laid a strong foundation for the team's victory.



“Indian Chronicle OU January 29: The Tarnaka Thunders team enthusiastically participated in the PM Sansad Khel Mahotsav 2026, which is being organized by Minister Narendra Modi as part of the Sansad Khel Mahotsav 2025-26 with the aim of promoting sports culture and the importance of fitness across the country. ABV Foundation is successfully organizing the PM Sansad Khel Mahotsav 2026 in Secunderabad Parliament constituency under the auspices of Union Minister Kishan Reddy. “As part of this, the Media Cricket League will be held at the Gymkhana Ground. Tarnaka Thunders... vs. Central Zone Warriors: Tarnaka Thunders achieved a huge victory by smashing a score of 128 in the cricket match. Captain Raju (Raj News) scored a brilliant 81 runs and laid a strong foundation for the team’s victory. The Tarnaka Thunders players received praise from the fans for playing in coordination in all departments at crucial times. The team’s captain Raju (Raj News), Narasimha Raju (Sakshi TV), Shiva (Jai Bheem), Tirumal Reddy (NTV), Ganesh (ETV), (NTV), Venkat (99TV), Phani (ABN), Kiran (TV9), Harish (HM TV), Zafar (1 TV), Jeevan Reddy



(Metro TV), Vishwam Goud (Q News), Vijay (Maha News), Dinesh (Big TV), Ravi (Jai Bheem) were congratulated by the organizers.

Integrated Development of Colonies Merged into GHMC: Uppal Corporator MANDUMULA RAJITHA PARAMESHWAR REDDY



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):““Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that efforts are being made for the integrated development of colonies located in the suburban municipalities that have been merged into the GHMC. She said the objective is to provide CC roads, drainage systems, drinking water, and other basic infrastructure facilities in every colony.“On Thursday, Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, along with Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and GHMC officials, conducted an extensive tour of SN Colony and Srisakthi Colonies. On this occasion, residents of SN Colony, which falls under the former Peerzadiguda Corporation limits, brought several issues and required development works to the notice of Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy. “She stated that, in line with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy’s vision, development works will be taken up in suburban areas on the lines of GHMC, ensuring parallel and balanced development.“The programme was attended by SS Colony Welfare Association members Yerra Mallesh, Yerra Bal Raj, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Gajjala Venkat Reddy, Yerra Satyanarayana, Ganesh, Satish, Nagaraju, Naga Srinivas, Ram Reddy, Maheshwar Reddy,



Satyanarayana, Pradhan, Santosh, Srinivas, and Sudarshan Reddy. Residents of Srisakthi Nagar Colony including Bikku Malla Ramesh Gupta, Srinivas Reddy, Shankaraya, Narasimha Reddy, Shankar, Mallesh, Dr. Raj, Gajjala Venkat Reddy, Barla Krishna, Venkateshwarlu, Pratap Reddy, Ram Reddy, Narayana, Basi Reddy, Vinod, Harish Reddy, Bhasha, Naresh, Shankar, Praveen, Raju, and others also participated.

TUWJF Announces Ad-Hoc Committee for KB Asifabad After Term Ends

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 28 (Indian Chronicle):““The Telangana Urdu Working Journalists Federation (TUWJF) has officially dissolved its KB Asifabad district committee following the completion of its two-year term and has appointed a temporary ad-hoc committee to function until a new body is constituted.“In a joint press statement, State President M.A. Majid, State General Secretary Ghaus Mohiuddin, and State Vice President Ejaz Ahmed Khan announced the dissolution of the existing district committee. “As part of the interim arrangement, the federation appointed a district-level ad-hoc committee to oversee organizational affairs until the formation of a full-fledged committee.“From the Asifabad Assembly constituency, senior journalist Abdul Hanan has been appointed as Convener, while senior journalist Syed Sujaar has been named Coordinator. “Additionally, senior journalists Mohammed Majid Iqbal and Naseer Ahmed Khan, both from Kaghaznagar in the Sirpur Town Assembly constituency, have been nominated as Conveners.“The TUWJF state leadership clarified that the ad-hoc committee will continue to function and provide services until a permanent district committee of the Telangana Urdu Working Journalists Federation is formally constituted.



Kodakanchi Sudarshan Goud was the first person who stood by the Congress party in Shivampet mandal during the difficult period



“Jan29.indian chronicle.medak““ Medak District Sivampet Congress Party Mandal President Kodakanchi Sudarshan Goud, the first person who gave life to the Congress party when the Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi was in power, Kodakanchi Sudarshan Goud, who was known as a non-controversial and mild-mannered person, worked tirelessly for the party. He expressed confidence that the Congress Party flag will be hoisted in all the villages of Shivampeta mandal in the upcoming MPTC ZPTC elections.

Construction of Link Road from Amberpet Ali Café to Uppal Nalla Cheruvu at a Cost of Rs 160 Crore: GHMC Standing Committee Approval

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):““A new road is set to be constructed connecting Amberpet Ali Café to Uppal Nalla Cheruvu, linking it to the Warangal National Highway. “Under Phase-1, this link road will be built at an estimated cost of ?160 crore, passing through Patel Nagar STP and D-Mart, up to Uppal Nalla Cheruvu.“The GHMC Standing Committee has approved the proposal, and it has been forwarded to the State Government for further action. Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, as well as to other senior government officials, for their efforts in sanctioning this major infrastructure project with a substantial budget.



Road Safety Awareness Programme Conducted as Part of Road Safety Month Celebrations.

“P. S. ASHOKAN “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. ““As part of the Road Safety Month initiatives, a road safety awareness programme was successfully conducted at Zilla Parishad Girls High School, Manthani. “On this occasion, Sri C. H. Nikhil Reddy, Assistant Motor Vehicle Inspector, Peddapalli, addressed the students and delivered an insightful and impactful speech on the importance of road safety. He emphasized that students should not only strictly follow road safety rules themselves but also actively motivate their parents and peers to adhere to these regulations. “During his address, he highlighted the following key road safety norms: ““Pedestrians must use zebra crossings while crossing roads. ““Wearing a helmet is mandatory while travelling on two-wheelers. ““Vehicles should be driven within the pre-



scribed speed limits. ““Traffic signals must be strictly obeyed and should never be violated. ““Triple riding on two-wheelers is prohibited. ““Wearing seat belts is compulsory while travelling in cars. ““All road users must travel in accordance with road safety signs and regulations to ensure their own safety and that of others. ““He urged the students to become responsible citizens and ambassadors of road safety in society. ““The programme witnessed the active participation of the school faculty members, including “G. Bharat Reddy, SA (Mathematics), “C. H. SA (Social Studies), “G. SA (Social Studies), “S. SA (English), and “T. SA (Telugu). ““The event concluded with a strong message on the collective responsibility of ensuring safer roads through awareness, discipline, and adherence to traffic rules.

BRS Leader Pooduri Jitender Reddy Prints Calendar Showcasing Uppal’s History

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):““Uppal BRS leader Pooduri Jitender Reddy (Uppal PJR) has come up with an innovative idea by printing a calendar that vividly reflects the history and heritage of Uppal. Expressing his deep love for Uppal as a local resident, he presented the region’s uniqueness to the public in the form of a calendar. The calendar has been designed to highlight Uppal’s prominent temples, landmarks, structures, and historical significance. It was formally unveiled on Thursday by Uppal



MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that the calendar designed by BRS leader Jitender Reddy provides valuable information about Uppal and is especially helpful for those who are not familiar with the area. While most people usually print routine New Year calendars, he appreciated Jitender Reddy for uniquely expressing his love for Uppal by showcasing details of the region’s famous temples and structures. He termed the initiative commendable. Later, BRS leader Pooduri Jitender Reddy stated that the idea behind printing the calendar was to express his affection for Uppal and to create awareness about the history of its renowned ancient temples and structures. Several BRS leaders from Uppal participated in the programme.



Kenada country new brunvikh university professors visited bvrit collage narsapur center medak district

The nomination process must be conducted efficiently

- District Collector and Election Officer Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- District Collector and Election Officer Hanumantha Rao said that the nomination process must be conducted efficiently.”On Thursday, the District Election Officer and Collector inspected the nomination process on the second day at the Choutuppal and Pochampally municipal offices. He conducted a field inspection of the nomination acceptance process. He inquired about details such as the number of nominations filed for the ward seats. He verified whether the acceptance process was being carried out in accordance with the rules. He inspected the facilities and help desks available at the nomination centers. He inquired whether the acceptance of nomination papers was completed in accordance with the rules. He thoroughly examined the nomination papers submitted by the candidates and the relevant registers. He instructed the officials to ensure that there are no errors during the submission of nominations. He also said that the documents attached to the nomination papers should be checked for accuracy. He directed the officials, giving them several



suggestions and instructions, emphasizing that the nomination process should proceed smoothly and that they should be careful during the acceptance of nominations. He said that election reports should be uploaded to the T-Poll app. Municipal Commissioners and other concerned officials participated in this program.

The municipal election nomination process must be conducted efficiently:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri Election Officer Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- District Collector and Election Officer Hanumantha Rao said that the nomination process should be conducted efficiently. On Thursday, the District Election Officer and Collector inspected the nomination process on the second day at the Choutuppal Municipal office. He conducted a field inspection of the nomination acceptance process. He inquired about the details, including the number of nominations filed for the ward seats. He verified whether the acceptance process was being conducted in accordance with the rules. He inspected the facilities and help desks available at the nomination centers. He inquired whether

the acceptance of nomination papers was completed in accordance with the rules. He thoroughly examined the nomination papers submitted by the candidates and the related registers. He instructed the officials to ensure that there are no errors during the submission of nominations. He also said that they should check whether the certificates to be attached to the nomination papers are correct. He directed the officials, giving them advice and instructions, to ensure that the nomination process proceeds smoothly and that they handle the acceptance of nominations carefully. He also instructed them to upload the election reports on the T.Poll app. The Municipal Commissioner and other concerned officials participated in this program.

In the wake of the municipal elections, officials must take precautions to ensure the smooth conduct of the nomination process: Additional Collector for Local Bodies, Bhaskar Rao

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- Additional Collector for Local Bodies, Bhaskar Rao, said that the concerned officials should take precautions to ensure the smooth conduct of the nomination process in the wake of the municipal elections. On Thursday, the Additional Collector inspected the nomination center at the Choutuppal Municipality office. Speaking on this occasion, the Additional Collector stated that the nomination process will continue until January 30th. He inspected the counters, security arrangements, drinking water, and other basic facilities set up at the nomination center.”He instructed the officials to work in coordination to ensure that candidates filing nominations do not face any inconvenience. He advised them to conduct the nomination process transparently, strictly adhering to the election rules. He said that candidates should be made aware that they can clarify any doubts they may have during the nomination filing process through the help desk. He also said that care



should be taken to prevent crowds from forming in the vicinity of the nomination center.”The Municipal Commissioner, concerned officials, staff, and others participated in this program.

Strongly condemn issuance of SIT notices to Telangana's first Chief Minister KCR: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):-“Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has strongly condemned the issuance of SIT notices to Telangana's first Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), stating that the move is driven purely by political vendetta.He alleged that issuing notices to KCR without any concrete evidence in the possession of police officials is unethical and reflects the deteriorating state of governance in Telangana. He criticized the Congress government for failing to implement the promises made in its manifesto and instead targeting the opposition through harassment.”Terming the move as shameful, Lakshma Reddy said that issuing notices to a great leader who played a pivotal role in achieving statehood for Telangana and who delivered a decade of exemplary governance is unacceptable. He further stated that harassing the opposition during the time of municipal elections is highly inappropriate.He accused the Congress party of being mired in scams and engaging in intimidation tactics, including mortgaging university lands. He asserted that the SIT notices are part of a larger conspiracy to divert public and media attention from the Congress party's failures and misdeeds.



Vikarabad Collector Inspects Nomination Process for Tandur Municipal Elections



“Indian Chronicle Vikarabad,Tandur (Jan, 29)“Vikarabad District Collector inspected the nomination process for the Tandur municipal elections at the municipal office. He instructed officials to conduct the process efficiently, ensuring no discrepancies.”“The Collector emphasized that candidates should be clearly informed about the required documents and clarified that officials should consult senior officers if any doubts arise.”“He reviewed the setup of the nomination centers, noting that 12 counters and 12 Returning Officers (ROs)



would receive nominations for 36 wards. The Collector directed staff to provide necessary assistance to candidates and maintain strict police bandobast at the centers.”“Speaking to the media, the Collector said that the district has 100 wards and 261 polling stations, with 54 sensitive locations identified and adequate police arrangements made. He announced that 20% additional staff would be deployed as ROs and Assistant ROs to ensure smooth elections.”“The Collector assured that the election code of conduct would be strictly enforced. Municipal Commissioner Madhusudan Reddy, CI Santosh Kumar, and other officials participated in the inspection.

Madhu is the BSP candidate from ward number 23

“Yellandu, January 29 (Indiyan chronicle):-“Senior journalist Mateti Madhu on Thursday filed his nomination from the BSP in the ongoing municipal elections in the municipality. Aware of the problems of the people, having good relations with the people of the local 23rd ward, he is contesting on behalf of this party with the slogan of Bahujan. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has promised to provide 42 per cent reservation to the BCs. Meanwhile, BSP district president Shiva and constituency in-charge Pratap said that with the help of the state party leadership, he is contesting from the 23rd ward of the municipality.



Ensure the victory of Congress party candidates with a huge majority in all 12 seats in the Aleru constituency municipal elections: - Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District DCC President, Aleru MLA and Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- In the context of the municipal elections, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District DCC President, Aleru MLA and Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah held a press conference. On this occasion, he appealed to the people to ensure the victory of the candidates supported by the Congress-CPI alliance in all 12 wards of Yadagirigutta Municipality and all 12 wards of Aleru Municipality. He stated that urban development is progressing rapidly under the Congress party's rule and emphasized the need for collective efforts to develop Yadagirigutta and the Aleru constituency. He said, “The Congress government is not just making promises, but delivering results. It is governing with every section of society in mind, from farmers and women to youth and the poor.” He expressed confidence that the Congress party would achieve a resounding victory in the municipal elections. He called upon party cadres to work together to ensure that the Congress flag flies high in all six municipalities of the district. He stated that since coming to power, the Congress government has been governing with the sole aim of public welfare and development.”He said that welfare schemes such as interest-free loans for women, Rythu Bharosa for farmers, and employment opportunities for the youth have further increased people's trust in the Congress.”He instructed every party worker to work in coordination from the booth level in the upcoming elections and to widely publicize the government's welfare schemes among the people. He made it clear



that if the leaders and workers move forward with unity, no one can stop their victory.”Several leaders and workers from the Congress and CPI parties participated in this press conference.

Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in several development programs in Turkpally mandal.



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- A housewarming ceremony was grandly held for the houses constructed under the Indiramma scheme in Dharmaram Pedda Thanda of Turkpally mandal. Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in the program, formally inaugurating the houses for the beneficiaries and presenting them with traditional silk clothes and a ram. On this occasion, he spoke with the beneficiaries and inquired about their needs and problems. Later, MLA Beerla Ailaiah laid the foundation stone for the Anganwadi building, CC road, and underground drainage works in Chinna Lakshmapur village of Turkpally mandal. He stated that the government is implementing schemes aimed at village development in a way that benefits everyone. Local public representatives, Congress party leaders, officials, and a large number of villagers participated in these programs.

Government Whip and MLA Beerla Ailayya performs special prayers at Chinna Medaram



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA, Sri Beerla Ailayya, participated in the Sammakka Saralamma Jathara (festival) held in Chinna Medaram village of Kurraram gram panchayat in Rajapet mandal. On this



occasion, he performed special prayers to Sammakka and Saralamma, and prayed for the welfare of the devotees and the development of the village.“The temple premises resonated with devotion and reverence as a large number of devotees flocked to the festival. Local public representatives, Congress party leaders, activists, village elders, and a large number of devotees participated in this program.

Collector Calls for Strict Adherence to Nomination Procedures for Municipal Elections



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 28 (Indian Chronicle)““District Election Officer and Collector K. Hariha on Thursday directed officials to conduct the nomination acceptance process in a meticulous and transparent manner in view of the Second General Municipal Elections.“Accompanied by Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla, the Collector inspected the nomination reception centre set up at the Kagaznagar Municipal Office and reviewed the ongoing arrangements.“Speaking on the occasion, the Collector stated that comprehensive

measures are being taken to conduct elections in all 30 wards of the Kagaznagar Municipality. She said nominations are being received through 15 designated counters and emphasized that stringent security arrangements have been put in place around the nomination centres to prevent any untoward incidents.“Later, the Collector visited the election material distribution centre, strong room, and vote counting centre established at DAV Lakshmi Path Singhania Public School in the town and instructed officials to ensure completion of all arrangements well in advance.

Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in the Chulluru Sammakka Saralamma Jathara



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 29):- Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in the Sammakka Saralamma Jathara festival held in Chulluru village of Rajapet mandal. On this occasion, he visited the goddess, performed special prayers, and prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the villagers. Later, he participated in the festival celebrations along with the devotees and inquired about their problems and requests. Local public representatives, Congress party leaders, workers, and a large number of devotees participated in this program.



Tandur Municipal Elections: 97 Nominations Filed on Second Day

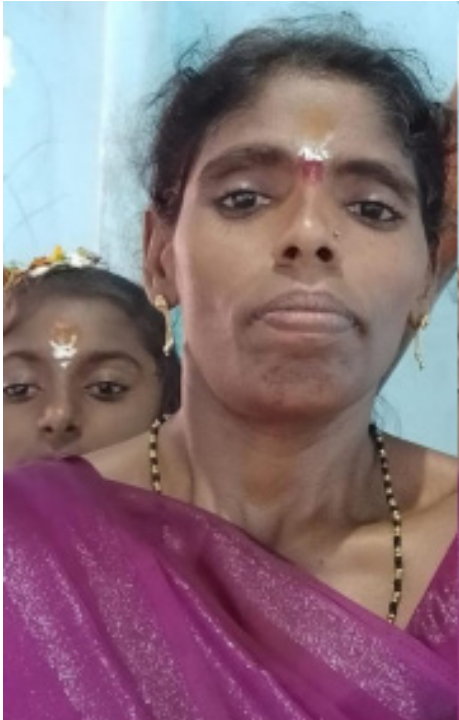


“Indian chronicle, Tandur(Jan, 29)““The second day of nominations for the Tandur municipal elections saw a flurry of activity at the municipal office, with candidates from various parties filing their nomination papers.““Municipal Commissioner Madhusudan Reddy announced that a record 97 nominations were filed on the second day, taking the total to 108 so far.““With to-

morrow being the last day for nominations, the Commissioner urged candidates to submit their papers by 5 pm. Candidates arrived at the office accompanied by supporters, party leaders, and enthusiastic fans, creating a lively atmosphere.““The Commissioner advised candidates to reach the office on time to avoid any last-minute rush.

Woman Found Dead Under Suspicious Circumstances, Family Alleges Murder

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 28 (Indian Chronicle)““A woman was found dead under suspicious circumstances in Ralla Guda village limits of Dahegaon mandal in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, triggering allegations of murder by unidentified persons, according to her family members.“The deceased has been identified as Atmakuri Kalavathi (35), wife of Santosh, a resident of Ralla Guda. She was working as an agricultural labourer to support her family. The couple has two children — a son, Anjan, and a daughter, Akshitha.“Family members suspect that unknown individuals may have murdered Kalavathi, possibly due to personal enmity. They ruled out a natural death and demanded a thorough investigation into the incident.“The children and relatives of the deceased have appealed to the authorities to identify and punish those responsible and to ensure justice for the bereaved family.



Madharam Chiru Charan Selected for National-Level Boxing Championships



“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, January 29: ““Madharam Chiru Charan has been officially selected to compete in boxing at the upcoming 69th National School Games in Bengaluru. The event is being organized under the School Games Federation of India (SGFI), and Chiru Charan will represent the CISCE unit in the Boys U-19, 60–64 KG category.“With this achievement,

Chiru Charan becomes the sole representative from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in the boxing category at the national level. The games are scheduled to take place from February 5 to 9, 2026, in Bengaluru, bringing together the best young athletes from across the country.“Hailing from Mallapur and born to Madharam Manoj and Rajyalakshmi, Chiru Charan has demonstrated remarkable talent and dedication to boxing from a young age. Over the years, he has competed in four international tournaments, including events in Bangkok (Thailand), Thailand, and Kazakhstan, showcasing his skills on the global stage. Additionally, he has achieved the prestigious title of 19-time National Champion, making him one of the most promising young boxers in the region.“Speaking on the occasion, school authorities and sports officials praised Chiru Charan for his perseverance, discipline, and consistent performance. They highlighted that his selection for the national-level competition is a matter of pride for Mallapur, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, and serves as an inspiration for other young athletes.“The management of St. Joseph’s College, along with teachers, students, and local sports enthusiasts, felicitated Chiru Charan for his exceptional achievement. They lauded his commitment to the sport and encouraged him to continue striving for excellence, wishing him success in the upcoming national competition.“Chiru Charan’s journey is a testament to hard work, determination, and talent. With his national-level selection, he is poised to further elevate his profile in Indian boxing and inspire a new generation of athletes to pursue their dreams with dedication and passion.



On the run after abusing municipal commissioner, Karnataka Congress leader Rajeev Gowda arrested



GNS News Jan 29

The Karnataka Police on Monday arrested suspended Congress leader Rajeev Gowda for allegedly abusing and threatening the Shidlaghatta municipal council commissioner over the phone for removing “unauthorised” banners put up in the town in Chikkaballapur district.A police officer said that Rajeev Gowda had gone to Mangaluru in his car and boarded a train to Kerala after his conduct triggered outrage. But he was arrested while travelling to Goa and is now being brought to Chikkaballapur, the officer added.

An FIR against Rajeev Gowda was registered after Amrutha Gowda, the municipal council commissioner, filed a police complaint. She alleged that on January 12, Rajeev Gowda called her, used abusive language, demanded the

banners be reinstalled immediately, and threatened civic staff. She added that he warned that he would mobilise people from multiple wards, incite unrest, damage public property, and obstruct city council functions. She said the call caused severe mental distress to her and her staff.

The FIR was registered under sections 132 (assaulting or using criminal force against a public servant), 224 (threat of injury to a public servant), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), 351(3) (criminal intimidation), and 56 (abetment) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

A second FIR was registered against the Congress leader after N C Srinivasa Gowda, a farmer and the JD(S) taluk vice-president, complained that during the same call, Rajeev Gowda made provocative statements, abused Shidlaghatta MLA B N Ravikumar, and falsely blamed him for the removal of the banners. The complaint also stated that Rajeev Gowda had threatened to mobilise people from 31 wards, damage government offices, and incite violence, while making indecent remarks against women government officials. A purported audio of the call circulated widely on social media.This FIR was registered under BNS sections 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) and 353(2) (offences related to public mischief from false statements).On January 22, the Karnataka High Court refused to quash the FIR when Rajeev Gowda approached it. The ruling Congress suspended him after facing the ire of the public as well as the Opposition over the incident.

2,500 artists dance on Vande Mataram embodying India’s spirit of unity in diversity

GNS News Jan 29

As around 2,500 artistes from different parts of India — donning traditional costumes representing different states — came together on Monday during the 77th Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path in Delhi to perform on ‘Vande Mataram’, which is also this year’s theme, their presentation embodied the spirit of India’s unity in diversity. Different groups presented different classical and folk dance forms on the national song during the performance.The annual parade and the days they spent in Delhi in the run up to the Republic Day celebrations gave them memories they would cherish for a long time. Performing in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, foreign dignitaries and many other key personalities was a dream come true for many.

Around 10 students of Maharaja Sayajirao University in Gujarat’s Vadodara practiced for 25 days prior to the event. While all of them are undergraduate students in performing arts, learning Bharatanatyam, a classical dance form most of them have been practicing for at least a couple of years, they said they were a little anxious for this performance and wanted to put in extra efforts.“We practised for a long time even though it was a small performance,” said Divya Patel, Assistant Professor in the Performing Arts department at the university.

Many student performers were delighted to catch glimpses of sorties by fighter jets during rehearsals. “While we couldn’t see the parade today, we have been in awe of these formations by the jets during the practice sessions,” a student said.Disha Handique, 20, who along with her group of six performed Sattriya, a classical dance form from Assam, said, “The other performances were so beautiful that I can’t even express it in words.” The group comprises of students of the Srimanta Sankaradeva University in Guwahati and have been practicing for 12 days now.However, Handique added, “I really enjoyed the entire experience of performing in front of so many dignitaries,



but the air in Delhi is very bad. Ever since we landed here, the air smells different and makes us feel a little nauseous.”Meanwhile, for artists from Chhattisgarh, presenting their folk dance, ‘Gedi’ or bamboo dance, has been a reassurance that the art is still alive and thriving. In the group of 35 dancers from Bilaspur, which also had fresh entrants, few have been practicing since decades. They began their practice sessions on January 6. The sessions used to start at 7:30 am. “The last three days were the most exciting when rehearsed at the Kartavya Path. This is the best experience of my life... my parents are very proud of me,” said Priyanshu Bhaskar (20).Another group member said, “This is a very great platform to showcase our folk dance... This costume is also fully handmade and takes around 12 days to make. This gives us visibility.”There was a group from Manipur too. “This has been our first time performing in Delhi and that too on Republic Day. I’m seeing the Capital for the first time,” said Paolam Janet (23, pursuing diploma in dance like others in her group.However for Elina, 24, another group member, the most treasured memory she is taking home is the group’s visit to Sarojini Nagar, the hub of flea shopping. “We used to get a window of a few hours from 11 am till 3 pm... we used to rush there. We have brought lots of clothes.”

‘Wanted to teach her a lesson’: 16-year-old girl strangled to death in Lucknow, 4 men arrested



GNS News Jan 29

To teach a 16-year-old girl “a lesson for playing them”, two men allegedly strangled her and placed her body on a railway track, where it was run over by a passing train, said the Lucknow Police. Her head was severed from the body in the impact, they said.The two accused, along with two of their aides, were arrested on Republic Day, said police.According to police, the duo — Anshu Gautam alias Lucky (20) and Ashiq Yadav (20) — are close friends. Police said the accused killed the girl, suspecting she was allegedly in a relationship with both of them.

Suresh Singh, in-charge of the police station concerned, said Anshu, Ashiq and the other accused — Rinshu Yadav (20) and Vaibhav Singh Rajput (23) — are local residents and work in a private factory in the city.According to police, the victim’s mother approached them on January 16 and filed a complaint, alleging that Anshu had eloped with her daughter. Police immediately registered a case and launched an investigation to trace the two.After gathering technical and local intelligence inputs, officers said a police team traced and arrested Anshu from Para.Police said during questioning, Anshu admitted that he had been in a relationship with the victim and would speak to her frequently over the phone and social media platforms.

He said a few months ago, the victim allegedly became friends with Ashiq and spoke to him regularly.According to police, Anshu claimed the victim was unaware that he and Ashiq were close friends. A few days ago, he had told Ashiq about his relationship with the girl and it came to light that she was allegedly seeing Ashiq too.Police said angered by this revelation, the duo decided to “teach the girl a lesson” and hatched a plan to harm her.On January 13, Anshu reportedly called the girl and asked her to meet him. When she arrived at the meeting spot, Ashiq and the two other accused, who were waiting in an SUV, forcibly dragged her inside the vehicle.Police said the group

Congress to hold Raj Bhavan Chalo rally in Bengaluru

GNS News Jan 29

Speaking to reporters at the party’s state headquarters Monday, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Chief D K Shivakumar said that though the Congress had plans to gherao the BJP party office, it decided to carry out Raj Bhavan Chalo instead. “All (Congress) legislators must participate in this mandatorily,” he added.“We are ready to take a decision about MGNREGA repeal in the Assembly as well. We will continue our protest under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi until the scheme is reintroduced,” the Karnataka deputy chief minister further said.

On the resolution proposed to be passed in the Assembly, he said that the Karnataka government will urge the Centre to withdraw VB G RAM G, which replaced MGNREGA. “It should be withdrawn in the same manner in which farm laws were withdrawn. BJP-ruled states are not saying anything about it, but it is impossible to implement the new scheme,” he said, noting the financial burden imposed on states under it.On allegations of irregularities in MGNREGA, Shivakumar challenged those accusing the Congress of the same to come for a debate. “If that is the case, why did they give the award to Kanakapura taluk (for MGNREGA implementation)? If there is irregularity, let them take action,” he added.A protest will also be held at Freedom Park after the Raj Bhavan Chalo rally. Apart from this, the Congress also announced that it will hold a five-kilometre padayatra in each of the Assembly constituencies in the state Tuesday as part of its campaign.

Class 8 girl dies after falling out of moving auto, family accuses Telangana residential school of negligence

GNS News Jan 29

The girl was a class 8 student from Kodicherla village in Madnoor mandal.The girl was a class 8 student from Kodicherla village in Madnoor mandal.A 13-year-old student of a Telangana Social Welfare Residential School at Banswada in Kamareddy district died on Sunday night after she fell out of a moving auto. Her family has accused the school of negligence in connection with the matter, and a police case has been filed.The girl was a class 8 student from Kodicherla village in Madnoor mandal. The incident occurred around 7.40 pm at the girls’ residential school in Borlam village.An autorickshaw had entered the campus carrying plastic chairs for Monday’s Republic Day event, and students helped unload the chairs, officials said. After unloading, four girls reportedly boarded the auto for a short ride up to the school gate.

Banswada police said the driver slowed near the gate to allow the girls to get down. While three students alighted without incident, the victim purportedly jumped from the moving vehicle and fell onto the cement road and suffered a severe head injury, officials said. School staff rushed her to the government hospital in Banswada, where doctors declared her dead.The school principal, Sunitha, said she was not present at the time of the incident and that staff had not noticed the students boarding the auto. Based on a complaint from the father of the victim, police registered a case under BNS section 106(1) for causing death due to negligence. The auto driver and the school principal were booked.The girl’s father has accused the school management of negligence. He also told police that the autorickshaw driver was driving rashly and caused the accident.

Rs 400 crore heist at Chorla Ghat, an abduction and threats: Karnataka Police join Maharashtra and Goa probe teams



GNS News Jan 29

The Karnataka Police have joined their counterparts in Goa and Maharashtra in the investigation into the alleged Rs 400 crore demonetised cash heist last year at Chorla Ghat, located at the intersection of the three states.Belagavi SP K Ramarajan said Sunday a team from the district have been coordinating with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Maharashtra Government to probe what is being described as one of the biggest robberies in the country. The Belagavi police team is in Nashik to get more details, Ramarajan added. The case stems from a complaint filed at a Nashik police station in December last year by Maharashtra-based businessman Sandeep Dutta Patil, who alleged that two container trucks carrying demonetised ₹2,000 notes worth 7400 crore belonging to Thane-based realtor Kishor Sawla were stolen in October last year.According to a police officer in Belagavi, the Maharashtra Police have arrested five people, Jayesh Kadam, Vishal Naidu, Sunil Dhumal, Virat Gandhi, and Janardhan Dhaigude, in connection with the alleged Chorla Ghat heist.“They suspect that there are more people behind the crime. They have not allowed us to question the arrested due to investigation reasons. We are waiting for their permission to allow us to question them,” said the officer.However, SP Ramarajan said that no case has been registered in Karnataka so far, as there is no concrete evidence to substantiate the claims.

“We are ready to register an FIR only if there is evidence, an eyewitness, or if the victim approaches us. We cannot register an FIR based on hearsay,” he said, adding that formal communication has been sent to the Nashik Rural police seeking specific details and supporting evidence.Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said Sunday the probe is still at a preliminary stage and that the government would comment only after receiving concrete

information.Patil, who filed the complaint at the Ghoti Police Station in Maharashtra’s Nashik in December 2025, also alleged repeated harassment, abduction, and threats to his life following the reported heist.Speaking to The Indian Express, Patil said he received a WhatsApp call at around 12.30 am on October 20, 2025, from a man identifying himself as Jayesh Kadam, who claimed to be a police officer.

“Kadam inquired about where I lived and whether there were police complaints against me. In the call that lasted around 27 minutes, he told me that Rs 400 crore was robbed at the Karnataka section of Chorla Ghat and I was behind it,” he said.Patil alleged that Kadam threatened to pick him up from his house near Ghoti if he failed to cooperate. As Diwali celebrations were underway, Patil agreed to meet him on October 22.“Around noon, I was taken away by Kadam and three others. They physically assaulted and abused me. One man kept a gun next to my ear, and threatened to shoot me dead,” he claimed.Patil said he denied any involvement, stating that he was a real estate businessman; however, his abductors told him that they had credible information about his role. After several hours of interrogation, he was allegedly abandoned near Vadiwada.

He claimed that he and a friend were later picked up again near Nashik Road, and taken to meet realtor Sawla. “The realtor then realised that people behind the heist were someone else as he received a call from the person behind the robbery,” Patil said.Before being released, Kadam, whom Patil claimed was accompanied by “another cop and two gangsters”, allegedly asked him to stay in touch, suspecting that someone known to him was involved in the Chorla Ghat robbery.Patil further alleged that over the next one-and-a-half to two months, Kadam remained in contact with him, during which they concluded that Virat Gandhi, a manager employed by Sawla, was behind the robbery. Patil said he was asked to meet Sawla again in early December.“I told Sawla I would file a complaint against Gandhi, but I was asked to wait, saying that Mumbai police were searching for Gandhi and would soon reveal why the robbers tried to frame me in the case. When I said my reputation was affected, he asked me to keep quiet and showed his photograph with senior politicians and IPS officers,” Patil alleged. He added that Sawla claimed to have influence even abroad, citing the alleged framing of one Anirjit, who had asked Gandhi to carry out the heist, in a case in Dubai.Fearing further trouble, Patil said he delayed approaching the police. He eventually submitted a petition to the Nashik superintendent of police on December 17, following which an FIR was registered at the Ghoti police station.

How thieves who broke into a govt strong room ‘for cash’ ended up walking out with an EVM

GNS News Jan 29

Nearly two years ago, an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was stolen from the tehsildar’s office in Pune’s Purandar taluka ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. A team of Pune Rural police swung into action, arresting the thieves and recovering the stolen EVM from them. But the incident, the first of its kind in Maharashtra, turned out to be an eye-opener for the government and police machinery.

The weekend theftAs per the First Information Report (FIR) filed at Saswad police station by Santosh Sanap, Naib Tehsildar, Purandar, the EVM worth Rs 18,500 was stolen on February 5, 2024. The complaint stated that the lock of the strong room at the tehsildar’s office was found to be broken that morning. When government officials checked the strong room, one of the EVMs secured in it was missing.

CCTV cameras at the tehsildar’s office had allegedly captured footage of three men committing the theft on the night of February 3, Saturday. It was also learnt that a policeman and a home guard deployed on guard duty were absent from the spot when the theft took place.Soon after the theft came to light, top police and government officials in Pune visited the crime scene and a search was launched.Police teams led by Inspector Avinash Shilimkar of the Local Crime Branch (LCB) scanned CCTV cameras installed over a 27-km area and found that the accused had gone to the Saswad-Malshiras area on a motorcycle.

Arrests and the surprising findFollowing the lead, the officers initially arrested two men – Shivaji Bandgar alias Bhaiyya and Ajinkya Salunkhe, both from Purandar – and recovered the stolen EVM from them. Later, one more accused was arrested in this case, the police said, adding that the EVM was not damaged. Investigators believe that the accused had no intention to steal the voting machine.

Vinod Mahangade, who was then the Assistant Police Inspector at Saswad station, said the probe revealed that the accused wanted to steal money from the treasury room of the tehsildar’s office. “Instead, they broke into the strong room and made away with an EVM. Stealing an EVM from a government office was certainly a serious offence. The police arrested them quickly and solved the case,” he added.A police officer said the accused claimed to have stolen the briefcase-like box containing the voting machine thinking that it contained money. The police also suspected that the accused were drunk at the time of committing the crime.



The first of its kind theft from a tehsildar’s office in Maharashtra ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls left the police and the government machinery in Pune shaken.

‘Grave fraud on voters’: EC’s citizenship verification in Bihar roll revision defies past SC judgments, says ADR The EVMs were at the tehsildar’s office from December 2023 for training and voter awareness sessions before the Lok Sabha elections. (Representational image)Denied bail, all three accused arrested in the case continue to remain in jail. “A chargesheet has been filed against them. The matter is before a court in Pune,” said Inspector Shilimkar, who was nominated for the President’s Medal for Distinguished Service, ahead of the 77th Republic Day celebrations.

Gaping holes in security arrangementsMeanwhile, it was learnt that the EVMs were with the tehsildar’s office from December 2023 for training and voter awareness sessions before the Lok Sabha elections. A total of 40 EVMs were placed in the strong room. Government officials and police officers were expected to follow strict security protocols at the spot.However, the EVM theft exposed gaping holes in the security arrangements at the tehsildar’s office. A subsequent probe led to the suspension of a police guard over negligence.Taking serious note of the incident, the Election Commission of India (ECI) directed the Maharashtra Chief Secretary to seek an explanation from the district collector and the Superintendent of Police (SP) for failing to maintain security protocols at the strongroom where the EVMs were stored.Following a communication from the ECI, a sub-divisional officer, a tehsildar and a sub-divisional police officer from Purandar were also placed under suspension, which was later quashed by the Maharashtra Administrative Tribunal (MAT).

Foggy conditions in Punjab likely over next few days: Met



The Meteorological Department, Chandigarh, has issued a dense to very dense fog warning for the city, cautioning that foggy conditions are likely to continue over the next few days, affecting visibility during late night and early morning hours. The warning comes amid forecasts of a western disturbance likely to affect northern parts of India from December 20, under whose influence light rainfall is expected at isolated places between December 20 and 22. Thereafter, weather conditions are expected to turn largely dry, though fog may still linger during night and morning hours, mentioned the Met Department, Chandigarh.

According to the Met Department's latest assessment, dense to very dense fog has been observed in Chandigarh, including at the Chandigarh airport area, with humidity levels remaining high — conditions that are conducive to the persistence of thick fog. On Thursday, several parts of the city witnessed extremely low visibility, disrupting smooth vehicular movement and causing delays for office-goers and inter-city commuters travelling towards Panchkula, Mohali and Zirakpur. As per official observations recorded at the Chandigarh Weather Observatory, the maximum temperature in the city stood at 21.9 degrees Celsius while the minimum temperature was recorded at 9.9 degrees Celsius, both marginally above normal. The maximum relative humidity touched 95 per cent while minimum humidity was around 53 per cent. The five-day forecast for the Chandigarh region indicates partly cloudy skies till December 21, followed by mainly clear conditions thereafter. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 22 degrees Cel-

sus and 23 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures may fluctuate between 8 degrees Celsius and 11 degrees Celsius. Despite stable temperatures, meteorologists have cautioned that fog intensity may remain high during night and early morning hours, particularly on December 19, with dense fog at isolated places likely on December 20 as well. The dense fog on Thursday posed considerable challenges to motorists. "I was driving into Chandigarh from Ambala early in the morning, and visibility was hardly a few metres on some stretches. Even with fog lights on, it was difficult to judge the distance of the vehicle ahead," said Rishi Sharma, a private employee who commutes daily to the city.

Another commuter, Anas Ahmed, who was travelling from Mohali to Sector 43, said the fog made driving stressful and time-consuming. "The entire drive felt risky because cyclists and pedestrians were barely visible. I had to slow down significantly, and it took me much longer than usual to reach my destination," she said. In response to the prevailing conditions, the Chandigarh Traffic Police has issued a detailed advisory, urging the public to remain cautious while driving during foggy conditions.

Motorists have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel during dense fog, drive at reduced speeds, maintain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead, and strictly avoid lane jumping. The use of headlights and fog lights has been strongly recommended, while parking vehicles on roadsides has been discouraged due to the heightened risk of accidents in low visibility. A senior traffic police official said that traffic police personnel have been deployed at vulnerable and high-traffic stretches to manage traffic flow and assist commuters. "Dense fog significantly reduces reaction time and visibility. We urge drivers to strictly follow traffic rules, use fog lights properly, and stay alert for pedestrians and cyclists. Our teams are on the ground to ensure smoother traffic movement and to respond quickly to any emergencies," the official said. The Met Department has also highlighted potential impacts of dense fog on transport and aviation, warning of slower journey times and the possibility of traffic collisions. Citizens have been advised to limit outdoor exposure unless necessary and to cover their face when stepping out during peak fog hours.

PGIMER awarded India's Best Health Technology Assessment Institute for the 2nd consecutive year

The award highlights PGI's key role in strengthening evidence-based health policy, cost-effective care, and equitable resource allocation in India. PGIMER Chandigarh has bagged the Best Health Technology Assessment Institute title for the second consecutive year at the ARISE 2025 conclave organised by the Health Ministry. The PGIMER, Chandigarh, has been conferred the title of Best Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Institute in the country for the second consecutive year by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The award was presented at a national conclave entitled ARISE 2025, held at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi, and organised by Health Technology Assessment in India (HTAI) — the central HTA body under the MoHFW.

The honour was jointly conferred by Prof V K Paul, member (health), NITI Aayog, and Dr Rajiv Bahl, director-general, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and secretary, Department of Health Research (DHR). This marks the second time the PGIMER has received this national recognition, having earlier been adjudged the best HTA institute at the ICMR–DHR Health Summit held in New Delhi last year. PGI's leadership in the field of HTA is anchored in the HTA Resource Hub established by the Department of Health Research at the Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGIMER. The Hub is led by Prof Shankar Prinja, Professor of Health Economics, who has played a pivotal role in building national capacity for evidence-informed health decision-making. The ARISE 2025 ceremony witnessed participation from over 35 premier medical colleges and ICMR institutes engaged in HTA activities across the country. Addressing the gathering, Prof Paul underlined that the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' can be realised only through strong, credible institutions, and emphasised that the role of Health Technology Assessment is quintessential for ensuring that public money is allocated to interventions that deliver the greatest health gains equi-



tably and efficiently. Reflecting on India's HTA journey over the past eight years, Dr Bahl noted that HTA has emerged as a powerful policy tool for the Government of India, enabling more rational and transparent resource allocation. He highlighted its role in designing reimbursement rates under Ayushman Bharat–PMJAY, facilitating procurement of high-value medical devices at value-based prices, and supporting evidence-based coverage decisions. Dr Bahl commended Prof Prinja and the PGI team on their sustained efforts in strengthening HTA capacity nationwide, while also stressing the need to expand institutional and human resource capacity to keep pace with rapid advances in medical science. PGIMER Director Prof Vivek Lal lauded the institute's contribution to policy-relevant research and noted that PGIMER will continue to strengthen the efforts in building more capacity in this field in the entire country. Speaking at the ceremony, Prof Prinja talked about the challenges faced by institutions in conducting and applying HTA for policy use. He outlined a clear roadmap for advancing HTA in India, emphasising that closer and more sustained engagement with policy makers and key health system stakeholders, along with continuous improvement in the way studies are designed and evidence is generated, is essential to ensure that findings meaningfully inform decisions and translate into real-world impact.

Fake Air India website, ads on Instagram: How a man duped job seekers single-handedly



It all started in June this year. Ritu Singh (26), a resident of Geeta Colony in Shahdara area of Delhi, was allegedly looking for a job. She was scrolling down her Instagram feed on June 6 when she saw an advertisement — a job posting for an airline. "She clicked on the link and a Google form opened. She filled it and sent her resume to the email mentioned in the form" a police officer said. The next day, Singh got a WhatsApp message. The display picture allegedly bore the logo of Air India. "She was asked to pay Rs 945 for processing fees for application, and she did that. After that, she said she was sent an offer letter from Vistara (which is now a part of Air India)," the police officer said.

In the coming months, by November, Singh had allegedly spent Rs 3 lakh for uniform, document processing, transportation and similar expenses. Clueless about her joining date, she finally saw red when the messages and emails stopped. She realised that she was scammed. Rohit Mishra (35), who allegedly conned Singh and many other job seekers like her, was arrested on Thursday from Ghaziabad, said police.

With the help of fake email IDs, forged documents, WhatsApp profiles with airline logos, and a domain name used to create a fake Air India website, he was allegedly

running a one-man show, said police. According to the police, Mishra, a resident of Ghaziabad, also created Google forms and posted ads on social media. "The investigation revealed that the fraudster sent emails and subsequent messages from a mobile number, through which he gained the complainant's confidence and induced her to make payment for various job-related formalities," DCP (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said. A cyber police team led by Inspector Vijay Kumar found a mobile phone, multiple QR codes, fake offer letters and other forged documents used for job fraud from his possession. "From his possession, the mobile phone which was used for the bank account linked to the fraud was recovered. The accused had saved his

Non-compliant with BS-VI norms in Delhi: 2,768 vehicles checked at borders, 460 ordered to return, 289 challans issued



With the Delhi government on Thursday stepping up checks for BS-VI compliance, 289 challans were issued to vehicles at the city's borders by the Delhi Traffic Police for flouting norms. The traffic police said that 2,768 vehicles were checked at the borders, including Kapashera in Southwest Delhi, Badarpur, and entry points from Noida and Gurgaon. Overall, 460 vehicles were ordered to return from the borders after being found non-compliant with BS-VI norms.

On Wednesday, the traffic police had issued 363 challans against light motor vehicles for flouting BS-VI norms, while Delhi Transport department issued an additional 34 challans in such cases, taking the total to 397. The traffic police has deployed 210 enforcement teams for the drive, along with 84 teams of the Transport department, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement. A senior police officer said no vehicle was seized during Thursday drive at the borders. Environment Minister Manjinder Singh

Ghaziabad landlady killed by tenants over rent dispute: 'Hit on head with pressure cooker, strangled'

Couple kill landlady in Ghaziabad when she visits them to collect rent. The couple, Ajay Gupta and Akriti Gupta, were arrested on Thursday. A couple was arrested in Ghaziabad for allegedly killing their landlady when she visited them to collect rent and hiding the body in a red bag inside their flat at Raj Nagar Extension on Wednesday night, police said on Thursday. Police identified the deceased as Deepshikha Sharma (48). She was allegedly first hit on the head with a pressure cooker and then strangled with a dupatta, police said. The couple, Ajay Gupta and Akriti Gupta, were arrested on Thursday. Assistant Commissioner of Police (Nandgram) Upasna Pandey said police received information about the murder through the Police Control Room (PCR) around 11.15 pm on Wednesday. "The Nandgram police station received information that a murder had occurred in Aura Chimera residential complex at Rajnagar Extension. When a police team reached the complex, they found Deepshikha's body hidden in a red bag," Pandey added. Police said Deepshikha and Umesh Sharma owned two flats in Aura Chimera. While they lived in one, they had rented out the other. Couple kill landlady in Ghaziabad when she visits them to collect rent. Landlady Deepshikha Sharma. The tenants had not paid rent for about four months.



Deepshikha, a teacher by profession, decided to confront them. On Wednesday, when her husband was not at home, she went to collect rent. When she did not return for hours, her domestic help, Meena, started looking for her," said an officer. Police said when Meena went to the flat to look for her, the couple told her that Deepshikha had not visited them. Suspicious, Meena told the police that she then checked CCTV camera footage around the flat. "When she checked CCTV footage, she found that

UP Assembly session kicks off: Five-hour Vande Mataram debate on agenda for Monday



After a marathon debate in Parliament, the Uttar Pradesh Assembly is now scheduled to hold a five-hour long special discussion on Vande Mataram, to mark 150 years of the national song, during its Winter Session starting December 19. The decision was taken during a business advisory meeting followed by an all-party meeting at the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Thursday in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Speaker Satish Mahana, and representatives of all political parties. Initially, a four-hour debate was decided on but was later slated for five hours.

The special debate is likely to be held on December 22. This comes close on the heels of the government mandating singing Vande Mataram at all schools and colleges, a move slammed by the Opposition, which targeted the chief minister for adopting a "communal route" to skirt other issues in the state. On Friday, before the start of the session, the CM said: "This Winter Session would be very important... On the occasion of the completion of 150 years of Vande Mataram, and to express gratitude to the one who wrote [it], we are going to hold a significant discussion on Vande Mataram... The foundation day of Uttar Pradesh and the day of notification recognising Vande Mataram as the National Song are on the same day, thus, a discussion on [it] is significant."

The Opposition is preparing to counter the government on the issues of Booth-Level Officer (BLO) deaths during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and the cough syrup syndicate during the Winter Session. The Opposition has also demanded that the duration of the session, from December 19-24, be increased as there would hardly be any time left for discussion on supplementary demands for grants. Bills and ordinances would be taken up for discussion on December 22 and then at 12.20 pm, the supplementary demands for grants are to be tabled. Later in the day, the discussion on Vande Mataram is proposed to take place, people aware of the matter said, adding while other official discussions would be taken up on December 23, the issue of Supplementary budget would be taken up on December 24. "We have urged the government to increase the duration of the session as there is hardly any time for proper discussion on significant issues. Then there would also be a special discussion on Vande Mataram, which leaves discussion on the Supplementary Budget and eight bills to practically just three days," said Congress leader Aradhana Mishra, adding that the party is also preparing to

raise the issues of anomalies in the SIR process and the BLO deaths as well as cough syrup syndicate, unemployment, farmers plight.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav alleged that a massive scam involving the illegal supply of codeine-based cough syrups running into thousands of crores originated in Uttar Pradesh and accused the BJP government of shielding those involved. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters in Lucknow after a meeting of the party MLAs, Yadav added that the racket started from the "area of Pradhan Sansad" (Varanasi MP), targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said several important issues to be raised in the upcoming session of the assembly were discussed, with the alleged codeine and cough syrup racket being a major concern. "The concern over codeine and cough syrup is not limited to the common people of Uttar Pradesh. It is a matter of concern across the country. This racket started from the area of a Pradhan Sansad (Varanasi MP), and its links extend not just across the country but also abroad," news agency PTI quoted him as saying. SP MLA Ravidas Mehrotra said that the party has also raised the issue of short duration of the assembly session. On Friday, Adityanath also said leaders of political parties were informed during Thursday's all-party meeting that the government is ready to hold discussions on all issues. "The government has a positive outlook towards all issues related to development and we expect support of all parties for proper functioning of [the House]." On the demand by Opposition parties that the duration of the Assembly session be increased, considering that the Supplementary Budget is to be tabled, Adityanath clarified that most members are busy with the SIR exercise and had requested time to participate in the process. He said it has been decided to run the session till December 24 only after taking supplementary demands, some significant parliamentary work and discussion on Vande Mataram.

Intermediate students allegedly assault Class IX students at tribal welfare school in Narsampet

Warangal: An incident of intermediate first-year students allegedly beating ninth-class students took place at Tribal Welfare Residential School and College (Boys) at Narsampet in the district. In the incident which was said to have taken place on Thursday night, a ninth-grade student Deepak fell unconscious. His fellow students rushed him to the government hospital at Narsampet for treatment. Two other ninth-grade students also sustained serious injuries in the attack. According to sources, an argument between the students suddenly turned violent, creating panic in the hostel. When the incident took place the warden and teachers were absent. Parents were expressing concern over the lack of supervision regarding the safety of students in the hostel.

UN elects former Iraqi President Barham Salih as head of refugee agency



GNS News Jan 29

The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday (December 18, 2025) approved former Iraqi President Barham Salih as the next head of the U.N. refugee agency, its first from the Middle East since the late 1970s. The 193-member world body elected the 65-year-old Kurdish politician as the U.N. high commissioner for refugees by consensus and a bang of the gavel by Assembly President Annalena Baerbock. Diplomats in the assembly chamber burst into applause as Mr. Salih's election became official.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, a former refugee chief who recommended Mr. Salih for the post, said he brings "senior diplomatic, political and administrative leadership experience" to the job, including as "a refugee, crisis

negotiator and architect of national reforms."At the age of 19 in 1979, Mr. Salih was reportedly arrested twice by Saddam Hussein's Baath Party on charges of involvement in the Kurdish national movement and spent 43 days in detention. When he was released, he finished high school and fled to the United Kingdom to avoid further persecution.After Saddam was ousted by a U.S.-led coalition in 2003, Mr. Salih returned to Iraq and held various posts in the government. He became Iraq's president in 2018, in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic State group's rampage across Iraq and the battle to take back the territory seized by the extremist group. He served until 2022.

Mr. Salih succeeds longtime agency veteran Filippo Grandi, whose second five-year term expires Dec. 31. Salih's five-year term starts Jan. 1.Mr. Salih will take the reins of the Geneva-based UNHCR at the end of a devastating year for many U.N. organizations, including the refugee agency. The U.N. has cut spending and thousands of jobs in the wake of sharply reduced foreign aid contributions by the United States — traditionally its top donor — and other Western countries.In a statement after his election, Mr. Salih said his experience as a refugee "will inform a leadership approach grounded in empathy, pragmatism, and a principled commitment to international law."With record displacement and severe funding shortages for humanitarian operations, he said, helping the world's refugees requires "a renewed focus on impact, accountability and efficiency."

Japan reaffirms no-nukes pledge after senior official suggests acquiring weapons

GNS News Jan 29

Japan reaffirmed its decades-old pledge never to possess nuclear weapons on Friday (December 19, 2025) after local media reported that a senior security official suggested the country should acquire them to deter potential aggressors.The unnamed official said Japan needed nuclear weapons because of a worsening security environment but acknowledged that such a move would be politically difficult, public broadcaster NHK and other outlets reported, describing the official as being from Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's office.At a regular press briefing in Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Japan's nuclear policy had not changed, but declined to comment on the remarks or to say whether the person would remain in government. There is a growing political and public willingness in Japan to loosen its three non-nuclear principles not to possess, develop or allow nuclear weapons, a Reuters investigation published in August found.

This is driven in part by doubts over the reliability of U.S. security guarantees under President Donald Trump and growing threats from nuclear-armed China, Russia and North Korea.Japan hosts the largest overseas concentration of U.S. military forces and has maintained a security alliance with Washington for decades.Some lawmakers within Ms. Takaichi's ruling Liberal Democratic Party have said the United States should be allowed to bring nuclear weapons into Japan on submarines or other platforms to reinforce deterrence.Ms. Takaichi, last month, stirred debate on her own stance by declining to say whether there would be any changes to the three principles



when her administration formulates a new defence strategy next year."Putting these trial balloons out creates an opportunity to start to build consensus around the direction to move on changes in security policy," said Stephen Nagy, professor at the department of politics and international studies at the International Christian University in Tokyo.Beiing's assertiveness and growing missile cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang are "creating the momentum to really change Japan's thinking about security," he added.Discussions about acquiring or hosting nuclear weapons are highly sensitive in the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, and risk unsettling neighbouring countries, including China.Ties between Tokyo and Beijing worsened last month after Ms. Takaichi said a Chinese attack on Taiwan that also threatened Japan could constitute a "survival-threatening situation" and trigger a military response.

U.S. Energy Department signs AI collaboration deals with Big Tech for Genesis Mission



GNS News Jan 29

The U.S. Department of Energy said on Thursday it has signed agreements with 24 organisations, including tech giants such as Microsoft, Google and Nvidia, to advance the Genesis Mission.The mission is a national programme aimed at using artificial intelligence to accelerate scientific research and strengthen U.S. energy and security capabilities.The department said the program is designed to boost scientific productivity and reduce reliance on foreign technology.Participants include major cloud and chip providers such as AWS, Oracle, IBM, Intel, AMD and

Hewlett Packard Enterprise, alongside AI specialists OpenAI, Anthropic and xAI.Nvidia will provide accelerated computing platforms and AI models for scientific simulations, while Microsoft and Google will contribute cloud infrastructure and AI tools to support large-scale research.

Oracle is expected to assist in building high-performance computing systems, and Palantir will offer data integration and analytics capabilities. Startups Cerebras and Groq will supply advanced AI chips optimised for scientific workloads.OpenAI signed a memorandum of understanding under its "OpenAI for Science" initiative, deploying frontier AI models in national lab research environments and providing its tools and workflows to DOE scientists. Anthropic will supply its Claude models and offer a dedicated engineering team to DOE to develop AI agents, model context protocols, or MCPs, and specialised Claude "skills" for national labs.The partnerships will focus on AI models for applications ranging from nuclear energy and quantum computing to robotics and supply chain optimisation.The Genesis Mission builds on earlier collaborations between the DOE and the booming industry to deploy high-performance computing systems at Argonne and Los Alamos National Laboratories.The department said it expects the effort to significantly accelerate scientific discovery, as it plans to expand partnerships with academia and non-profits.

Mamata criticises VB-G RAM G Bill, says WB govt's employment scheme to be named after Mahatma

Coming down heavily on the Union government for passing VB-G RAM G Bill replacing MGNREGA Bill West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday (December 18, 2025) her government would rename State's rural job guarantee scheme after the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi.The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed the Viksit Bharat-Guaranteee For Rozgar And Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill that seeks to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA).

Speaking at a business conclave in Kolkata's Dhana Dhanya auditorium the Chief Minister said, "I feel ashamed that they have decided to remove Mahatma Gandhi's name from the NREGA programme, because I too belong to this country. Are we now forgetting even the Father of the Nation?".Ms. Banerjee said that her government will "re-name the Karmashree scheme of our State after Mahatma Gandhi, because if they can't show respect to our national heroes, we will". The Chief Minister said that her government will honour national icons like Mahatma Gandhi and others like Netaji, Tagore, Nazrul, Ambedkar, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad.

The Trinamool Congress lauded the initiative of Chief Minister and party chairperson and added "this step reflects



a commitment to Gandhian values in practice, where work is respected, labour is honoured, and public policy remains people-centric".Karmashree Prakalpa was announced in the State's 2024-25 Budget, aiming to guarantee 50 days of wage employment annually for rural unskilled workers with MGNREGA Job Cards.

The agricultural unions of West Bengal, however, claim that they see no implementation of the scheme on the ground.Funds to the MGNREGA scheme have been suspended since April 2022 on account of corruption in the implementation of the scheme by the West Bengal government.

U.S. launches review of advanced Nvidia AI chip sales to China, sources say



GNS News Jan 29

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has launched a review that could result in the first shipments to China of Nvidia's second-most powerful AI chips, five sources said, making good on his pledge to allow the controversial sales.Trump this month said he would allow sales of Nvidia's H200 chips to China, with the U.S. government collecting a 25% fee, and that the sales would help keep U.S. firms ahead of Chinese chipmakers by cutting demand for Chinese chips.The move drew fire from China hawks across the U.S. political spectrum over concerns the chips would supercharge Beijing's military and erode the U.S. advantage in artificial intelligence.

But questions have remained about how quickly the U.S. might approve such sales and whether Beijing would allow Chinese firms to purchase the Nvidia chips.The U.S. Commerce Department, which oversees export policy, has sent license applications for the chip sales to the State, Energy and Defense Departments for review, the sources said on condition of anonymity because the process is not public.Those agencies have 30 days to weigh in, according to export regulations.One of the sources, an administration official, emphasised the review would be thorough and "not some perfunctory box we are checking."But under the regulations, the final decision rests with Trump.The start of the inter-agency licensing review has not been reported

U.S. FTC probes Instacart's AI pricing tool, source says; shares drop

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission is probing Instacart, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters, as the retail platform faces criticism over its artificial intelligence-driven pricing tool.Instacart shares were down about 10% in after-hours trading.The agency has sent the company a civil investigative demand, the sources said. The FTC is seeking information about Instacart's Eversight pricing tool, one of the sources said.The software, which allows retailers on Instacart to experiment with different prices using AI, drew criticism after a recent study showed different shoppers got different prices for the same groceries on Instacart."The Federal Trade Commission has a longstanding policy of not commenting on any potential or ongoing investigations. But, like so many Americans, we are disturbed by what we have read in the press about Instacart's alleged pricing practices," the FTC said in a statement.The opening of a probe does not prove wrongdoing and not all FTC investigations result in lawsuits.The FTC is taking on the issue of a company's use of technology to set prices at a time when the high cost of living in the U.S. has been a top daily concern for Americans. The issue of affordability helped Democrats win several state and local elections in November, becoming a major political headwind for U.S. President Donald Trump and his Republican party.

A study involving 437 shoppers viewing Instacart prices in four cities saw wildly different prices for the same items sourced at the same stores. On average, there was a 7% difference in the total cost for the same grocery list at the same store, according to the study conducted by non-profit groups Groundwork Collaborative, Consumer Reports, and More Perfect Union."Some shoppers found grocery prices that were up to 23% higher than prices available to other shoppers for the exact same items, in the exact same store, at the exact same time," the study's authors wrote.Instacart's Eversight allows retailers to run price tests to gauge shoppers' reactions to higher or lower prices across different categories of items. Grocers who use Eversight see revenue growth of 1-3%, according to Instacart's website.The pricing tests carried out through Eversight were randomized, unlike pricing practices based on fluctuating demand or a user's individual data and behaviors, Instacart said last week."This year, we've focused heavily on en-

viously. The Commerce Department and Nvidia did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

A White House spokesperson did not comment on the review, but said "the Trump administration is committed to ensuring the dominance of the American tech stack – without compromising on national security."The Biden administration had imposed a raft of restrictions on advanced AI chip sales to China and countries it feared could become conduits for smuggling into the rival nation, citing national security fears.Trump's move represents a departure from that policy and a dramatic reversal from his first term, when he drew international attention by cracking down on Chinese access to U.S. technology. Back then, he cited claims that Beijing steals American intellectual property and harnesses commercially obtained technology to bolster its military, which Beijing denies.

Exporting large numbers of the chips to China would be "a significant strategic mistake," said Chris McGuire, a former White House National Security Council official under President Joe Biden and senior fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations.McGuire described the chips as "the one thing holding China back in AI."I cannot possibly fathom how the departments of Commerce, State, Energy, and Defense could certify that exporting these chips to China is in the U.S. national security interest," he said.Led by White House AI czar David Sacks, several members of the Trump administration now argue that shipping advanced AI chips to China discourages Chinese competitors like Huawei from redoubling efforts to catch up with Nvidia's and AMD's most-advanced chip designs.Reuters reported last week that Nvidia was considering an increase in production of the H200, the immediate predecessor to its current flagship Blackwell chips, after initial orders from China outstripped the current capacity.While the H200 chips are slower than Nvidia's Blackwell chips at many AI tasks, they remain in wide use in the industry and have never been allowed for sale in China.Trump had previously opened the door to sales of a less-advanced version of Nvidia's Blackwell chips, its cutting-edge offering, but backed away from the move and approved sales of the H200 instead.



couraging more retailers to move toward in-store and online price parity, working closely with partners to remove mark-ups and align online prices with in-store," the company said in a blog post.Instacart does not set prices for the items available on its platform, the company said at the time. With the exception of Target, retailers set the prices shoppers encounter, and Instacart provides the tools to do so.Target is not affiliated with Instacart and does not control the prices it sets, a spokesperson for the big box retailer said. Instead, Instacart scrapes publicly available Target prices and adds margin to cover its costs.Some members of Congress criticised Instacart in the wake of the study."Consumers deserve to know when they are being placed into pricing tests. The FTC should require a prominent on-screen label," U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer, a Democrat from New York, said in a letter to the agency on Sunday.

The probe is not the first time for the FTC to delve into AI and data-driven pricing practices. Last year, the FTC under Chair Lina Khan demanded information from Mastercard, JPMorgan Chase, Accenture, McKinsey & Co., and four other companies about tools they sell to other businesses to analyse data and set prices or tailor discounts.Some of the tools help companies gauge what shoppers are willing to pay based on past purchases, location, and other data about online activity, the FTC staff wrote in a preliminary report in January.The preliminary report led to concern among state lawmakers about how companies use technology to set prices, and some have sought to restrict practices they call unfair.

Trump administration could strip some naturalised Americans of their citizenship: Report

New York/Washington: The Trump administration is looking at plans to strip some naturalised Americans of their citizenship, the latest in a series of efforts undertaken by President Donald Trump to crack down on immigration.A report in the New York Times cited new internal guidance issued on Tuesday to US Citizenship and Immigration Services field offices, asking them to "supply Office of Immigration Litigation with 100-200 denaturalisation cases per month" in fiscal year 2026.While federal law provides for stripping naturalised Americans of their citizenship if they committed fraud while applying for citizenship or in a handful of other situations, the new guidance "would represent a massive escalation of denaturalisation in the modern era," said the report.It added that such a move could impact people who had made honest mistakes on their citizenship paperwork and "sow fear among law-abiding Americans."The guidance is the latest in a series of measures announced by Trump in his second term in the White House as part of an intensified crackdown on immigration, both illegal and legal.

The NYT report added that there are about 26 million naturalised Americans in the country, citing Census Bureau data. USCIS estimates show that more than 800,000 new citizens were sworn in last year, most of whom were born in Mexico, India, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic or Vietnam."It's no secret that US Citizenship and Immigration Services' war on fraud includes prioritising those who've unlawfully obtained US citizenship — especially under the previous administration," USCIS spokesman Matthew Tragesser said in the NYT report."We will pursue denaturalisation proceedings for those individuals lying or misrepresenting themselves during the naturalisation pro-



cess. We look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Justice to restore integrity to America's immigration system." Former agency officials have voiced concern over such a guideline."Imposing arbitrary numerical targets on denaturalisation cases risks politicising citizenship revocation," former USCIS official Sarah Pierce said.And requiring monthly quotas that are 10 times higher than the total annual number of denaturalisations in recent years turns a serious and rare tool into a blunt instrument and fuels unnecessary fear and uncertainty for the millions of naturalised Americans."The NYT report said the new guidance was part of a document outlining USCIS priorities for the 2026 fiscal year, which began in October and listed goals such as "provide employee feedback opportunities", "strengthen management of high-risk cases" and "pursue denaturalisation."The Justice Department has also said it would make denaturalisation a priority this year.

The Donroe Doctrine, Venezuela’s fragile pragmatism



Statecraft often rides on contradictions. None is more evident than in the aftermath of the U.S. military intervention in Venezuela and its abduction of sitting President Nicolás Maduro. On January 15, as Venezuela’s opposition leader María Corina Machado met U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House and handed over the Nobel Peace Prize she had won in 2025 for leading Venezuela’s movement against “autocracy”, CIA Director John Ratcliffe was in Caracas meeting with Delcy Rodríguez, Mr. Maduro’s former Vice-President and now the interim President of the beleaguered country. On January 14, Mr. Trump had described Ms Rodríguez as “a terrific person” with whom the U.S. was “getting along very well.”

This spectacle, where the architect of an invasion is embracing a key figure from the regime whose leader he had just abducted, captures the essence of what might be called the “Donroe Doctrine”: an extension of the Monroe Doctrine that represents a departure from earlier forms of U.S. imperialism. Unlike the neocon interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which sought not only resource extraction but also “nation-building” and the installation of ideologically aligned regimes, the Venezuela operation is more nakedly transactional. Mr. Trump’s emphasis is on securing imperial control in order to maximise resource extraction, even while leaving in place a governing apparatus that is led by the very Bolivarians whose leader was snatched as “the head of the snake”, as long as it proves compliant.

Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, writing in 1965, defined this arrangement presciently: “The essence of neo-colonialism is that the [s]tate which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”Venezuela today in a way fits this description. On January 15, Ms. Rodríguez delivered defiant rhetoric in her State of the Union address even as she had to negotiate the terms of her country’s economic subordination with the CIA director.

A case of ‘regime management’The Trump administration’s preference for “regime management” over “regime change” is not out of any respect for Venezuelan sovereignty. The New York Times reported that senior policymakers explicitly discussed how removing the Bolivarian government would risk replicating the disastrous dissolution of Iraq’s army and bureaucracy. Mr. Trump has long criticised the military escalation in Iraq. Besides, his ‘Make America Great Again’ (MAGA) base, large sections of which opposed the interventions under the Bush, Clinton, and Obama administrations, do not want another quagmire.

In Ms. Rodríguez, Washington sees someone who can maintain equilibrium with the powerful armed forces led by Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino López and the ruling party’s ideologues such as Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello, who controls the PSUV party and the militant colectivos of the Bolivarian movement. The opposition, with its leadership having been driven underground and lacking institutional continuity, cannot offer this. Ms. Machado’s obsequious approval of Mr. Trump’s actions, including absurd claims about Mr. Maduro’s intervention in the 2020 U.S. elections, has so far earned her little. There has been considerable speculation about why the Bolivarians provided so little resistance to the U.S. actions, and why Ms. Rodríguez’s responses since the invasion have seemed like capitulation. Left-wing activist Tariq Ali, has in an interview put it bluntly: “I think Delcy has capitulated completely.” He concluded that “important sections of the Bolivarian state apparatus were prepared to let Maduro go”. While this account is outlandish, the current choices for Ms. Rodríguez are limited. The country has been under crushing U.S. sanctions since the late 2010s, targeting its oil sector — the lifeblood of its economy — and brought hyperinflation and economic collapse.

When can courts interfere in an ongoing investigation? | Explained

The story so far: The Supreme Court recently in State of U.P. & Anr versus Mohd Arshad Khan & Anr (December 2025) set aside the Allahabad High Court’s order and held that “directing a time-bound investigation must remain the exception rather than the norm”. The Court said that High Courts should intervene only “where delay itself begins to cause prejudice”. The Court also did not find any justification for granting protection from arrest (or coercive action) without granting the relief actually prayed for — quashing the First Information Report (FIR). Earlier in November 2025, the Delhi High Court in Satya Prakash Bagla versus State & Ors. held that the phrase “coercive measures” did not apply to freezing of bank accounts by the police during investigation. It said that the intent of the phrase “coercive measures” was not to restrain further investigation by the police, but was used in the context of only the petitioner’s personal liberty.

When can courts interfere?

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in Neeharika Infrastructure (P) Ltd. versus State of Maharashtra (2021) discussed the scope of the High Court’s powers to quash an investigation or pass interim orders staying an investigation. The Supreme Court said that the police have the statutory right and duty under the relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to investigate into a cognisable offence. The courts should not thwart any investigation into such offences. It is only in cases where no cognisable offence, or offence of any kind, is disclosed in the FIR, that the Court can stop an investigation. Thus, the power of quashing should be exercised sparingly with circumspection. Courts are barred from usurping the jurisdiction of the police, since the two organs of the state operate in two specific spheres of activity and one must not tread over the other, save in exceptional cases where non-interference would result in a miscarriage of justice.

What about using the phrase ‘coercive measures’?

The Supreme Court in Neeharika Infrastructure (supra) observed that the High Courts had passed interim orders to stay arrest and said that “no coercive steps [should]

To circumvent these sanctions, Venezuela redirected crude exports to China and other countries through a “shadow fleet” of aging tankers. It relied on Russia and Cuba. But now, with a naval blockade in place, ships carrying Venezuelan crude to Cuba and China have been seized and Chinese tankers have been denied access to Venezuelan waters. Neither China nor Russia has shown any willingness to confront the U.S. in its self-declared backyard. In this context, the regime’s adoption of pragmatism, negotiating with Washington to ease sanctions, even while the blockade remains, in order to keep the economy afloat and preserve what remains of the welfare state, appears less like capitulation than the only available strategy for survival. From all accounts, this has been a consensus among the different wings of the Bolivarian state.

The Bolivarians were never opposed to economic partnership with U.S. companies. They were opposed to the terms of partnership which led to the late Hugo Chávez’s 2001 Hydrocarbon Law allowing foreign companies to participate only as minority stakeholders in joint ventures with the state oil company, PDVSA, and ensuring that Venezuela received the lion’s share of profits. Those terms are now being rewritten under duress. But the alternative, attempting to maintain the old model in a sanctioned environment, with no access to world markets and no great-power protection, is equally untenable. The pragmatic calculation is to secure whatever economic breathing room is possible and wait for the geopolitical situation to turn.

As Vice-President overseeing the economy under U.S. sanctions, Ms. Rodríguez managed to bring down hyperinflation and achieve modest GDP growth from a low base. Oil production, which had collapsed below 4,00,000 barrels a day, recovered to 9,00,000 barrels under arrangements she promoted, including the 2020 Anti-Blockade Law that allowed greater private investment and ownership in the oil sector, effectively trading some sovereign control for economic survival. In her State of the Union address, she spoke of the U.S. crossing “red lines” and Venezuela’s willingness to “confront them diplomatically” while attacking the opposition for “[competing] to see who could grovel the most.” But in talks with Washington, she has sought to negotiate economic survival through the country’s key leverage: its oil. Under the Biden administration, companies such as Chevron enjoyed limited licences allowing them to export Venezuelan crude while depositing proceeds in private Venezuelan banks — an indirect way for the government to earn foreign exchange. The Trump administration halted this before the invasion and oil revenues now flow through accounts in Qatar, accessible to the Venezuelan state only with American approval. Imports from these proceeds must be from American manufacturers. Reports indicate that despite the blockade, commodities traders Vitol and Trafigura have received licences to move Venezuelan crude, with initial sales reportedly worth \$500 million. In essence, Mr. Trump is reversing the sanctions he initiated, but on his own terms. The country is being offered what it was denied under sanctions — U.S. investment and participation in oil extraction — but now as a subordinate partner.

Lessons beyond bordersYet, Washington’s leverage faces its own constraints. Venezuelan crude is predominantly heavy and extra-heavy oil, expensive to extract and refine. ExxonMobil’s chief executive publicly called Venezuela “uninvestable”. With oil prices relatively low, the profit margins that would justify such investments remain uncertain. This economic reality may ultimately require the administration to allow broader market access for Venezuelan crude including sales to China and India through licensed intermediaries and more favourable revenue-sharing terms. The present situation is neither the regime change that Ms. Machado and her supporters in the West champion nor the sovereign resource control that the Bolivarian project promised when Mr. Chávez first came to power. Ms. Rodríguez will seek to preserve what she can of the welfare state. But she will remain constrained. Venezuela’s travails offer a lesson for the developing world. Economic diversification could have mattered, but that alone is insufficient when a hegemon intervenes. The warning is about the limits of the emerging multipolar order: when the Trump regime moved against Venezuela, neither China nor Russia, for all their rhetoric about a post-American world, was willing to confront Washington in its declared sphere of influence. An alternative may only emerge if the Global South acts in concert rather than waiting for great-power rivalries to provide shelter.



be taken against the accused” without assigning any reasons. The Supreme Court held that the High Court is not justified in passing such orders either during the investigation or till the investigation is completed. It also dismissed the quashing of the petition under Section 482 CrPC (Section 528 BNSS) and Article 226 of the Constitution.

Whenever an interim order is passed by the High Court of “no coercive steps to be adopted”, the High Court must clarify what it means by that phrase as the term is too vague and broad, and can be easily misunderstood or misapplied. Therefore, while passing a ‘no coercive steps’ order, if the High Court intends to stay the investigation, it must specifically state so and must assign reasons thereof. Such reasons, however brief, must disclose an application of mind.

However, the Delhi High Court in Satya Prakash Bagla (supra) said that the expressions ‘coercive measure’ and ‘coercive steps’ derive their meaning, import and significance from the context and the nature of the proceedings in which they are used.

To ascertain the court’s intention in employing these expressions in a given order, it is necessary to examine the nature of the relief or protection that was sought, and what the court intended to grant to a party at the relevant stage of the proceedings. It would, therefore, be neither appropriate nor judicious for a court to attribute to these expressions any inflexible, or predetermined meaning.

The ‘f’ word



This was his reaction to the news of Kozhikode-native U. Deepak’s suicide after a video shot by Shimjitha Musthafa, a co-passenger, accusing Deepak of sexual harassment during a bus journey, went viral on social media. Since the news of Deepak’s death, people on social media seem to be baying for blood. Men are now walking out of houses wearing cardboard boxes covering their bodies. Much of this discussion, however, risks flattening a complex issue into a binary of victim and villain. A feminist lens urges us to resist this simplification — not to deny the devastating loss of life, but to ask harder questions about why social media became the site of justice in the first place, and whose voices are routinely ignored. For decades, women in India have navigated public spaces that are anything but safe. When I first began taking the bus by myself to school and sports meets, my mother asked me to hold onto a safety pin in order to poke those who chose to come too close. Sexual harassment on buses, trains, and streets is a daily reality, often minimised as misunderstanding or brushed aside as inconvenience. Police stations remain intimidating spaces where survivors are often questioned insensitively or shamed. It is why social media has emerged, although imperfectly, as an alternative forum for solidarity.

When a woman records or posts an allegation online, it is often not an attempt to become judge or jury, but a desperate act of being heard. To frame the Kerala case solely as reckless online behaviour risks obscuring this

Who was Alex Pretti? What we know about the ICU nurse killed by federal agents at Minneapolis protest



Alex Jeffrey Pretti, born in Illinois, was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed going on adventures with Joule, his beloved Catahoula Leopard dog, who also recently passed away. He worked for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and participated in protests following the January 7, 2026, killing of Renee Good by an Immigration and Customs officer. A sign for 37-year-old Alex Pretti, who was fatally shot by a U.S. Border Patrol officer earlier in the day, is displayed during a vigil on January 24, 2026, in Minneapolis. Alex Pretti grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he played football and baseball and ran track for Preble High School. He was a Boy Scout and sang in the Green Bay Boy Choir. After graduation, he attended the University of Minnesota, graduating in 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in biology, society, and the environment, according to the family. He worked as a research scientist before returning to school to become a registered nurse.

What do we know about the shooting?

Videos from the scene verified and reviewed by Reuters showed Pretti holding a phone in his hand, not a gun, as he tries to help other protesters who had been pushed to the ground by agents. As the videos begin, Pretti can be seen filming while a Federal agent pushes away one woman and shoves another woman to the ground. Pretti moves between the agent and the women, then raises his left arm to shield himself as the agent pepper sprays him. Several agents then take hold of Pretti — who struggles with them — and force him onto his hands and knees. As the agents pin Pretti down, someone shouts what sounds like a warning about the presence of a gun.

A screengrab from a video shows law enforcement officers kneeling next to the body of a man who was shot when Federal agents were trying to detain him in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S., on January 24, 2026. A screengrab from a video shows law enforcement officers kneeling next to the body of a man who was shot when Federal agents were trying to detain him in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S., on January 24, 2026. | Photo Credit: Bring Me The News via Reuters Video footage then appears to show one of the agents removing a gun from Pretti and stepping away from the group with it. Moments later, an officer with a handgun points at Pretti’s back and fires four shots in quick succession. Several more shots can then be heard as another agent appears to fire at Pretti. Minneapolis shooting narrative and contradicting video evidence Following Alex Pretti’s death, contradicting accounts have emerged regarding what transpired before his death. In a bystander video verified by Reuters, multiple agents struggle on the ground with Pretti and appear to strike him before a shot is fired. Pretti falls down, after which multiple additional shots can be heard. However, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security stated that a Border Patrol agent fired at the man, who resisted the agents’ attempts to disarm him, but local leaders challenged that account.

Statements by President Donald Trump’s administration said agents fired “defensively” against Pretti as he approached them. Pretti can be seen with only a phone in his hand as he steps between an immigration agent and a woman on the street. No footage appears to show him with a weapon. A Federal Judge has already issued an order blocking the Trump administration from “destroying or altering evidence” related to the shooting, after state and county officials sued. Pretti’s death at the hands of Federal agents took place less than three weeks another Minne-

deeper truth: women turn to digital platforms because institutions meant to protect them repeatedly fail to do so. This is what the #MeToo movement was. During a time when ‘feminism’ has become the big bad ‘f’ word, it is important to note that the movement does not celebrate public shaming or mob justice. Deepak’s death is a tragedy — and feminist ethics demand that we hold space for that loss without weaponising it against women’s speech. This incident in Kerala should not be used to discipline women into quietness or absolve institutions of their failures. Instead, it should let it force us to confront an uncomfortable reality: when systems fail everyone, social media fills the vacuum, often with irreversible consequences. The task ahead is not to mute voices, but to build structures where speaking out does not come at the cost of another life.

WordsworthSon Meta-Preference Although frankly self-explanatory, son meta-preference refers to the number of married people up to 49, who want more sons than daughters versus the other way round according to the National Family Health Survey of 2022. This article in The Hindu speaks about how there were exuberant festivities when a 37-year-old woman gave birth to a boy after 18 years and 10 daughters in Haryana’s Dhani Bhojraj village.

Toolkit Women of Mathematics From Around the World’ is an exhibition showcasing 20 extraordinary mathematicians from various countries — from Congo to India — against a blackboard filled end-to-end with equations. Women in most parts of the world, particularly in STEM, are up against a formidable glass ceiling in the form of social pressure to have children or due to institutional apathy. This exhibition at Bengaluru’s International Centre for Theoretical Sciences, and the Raman Research Institute also features Neela Nataraj, the institute chair professor at the department of mathematics, IIT Bombay. She is now working on mathematical problems related to liquid crystals. The exhibit which opens a window into the lives of these famed mathematicians is on till March 15 and is open to the public. Ouch! Average Indian feminist girls: Won’t pay equal bills. Won’t marry a guy who earns the same. Won’t marry a guy who is unemployed. Cooking and household chores are slavery. Want a rich man with high income. Also want him to cook and do chores. Where is the equality?

apolis resident, Renee Good, was shot and killed by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent — on a street about 2 km (1.25 miles) away. Brian O’Hara, the Minneapolis police chief, told the CBS “Face the Nation” programme that “the ?videos speak for themselves,” calling the Trump administration’s version of events deeply disturbing. He said he had seen no evidence that Pretti brandished a gun. Federal authorities have refused to allow local officials to participate in their investigation of the incident.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz called on Mr. Trump to pull Federal agents out of the state while Border Patrol Commander Greg Bovino accused Good and Pretti of creating the situations that led to their ?deaths. The civilian’s death has triggered outrage against U.S. President Donald Trump’s immigration policies. As a result, thousands of protesters have poured into the streets, demanding stringent action against errant officials.

“He cared about people deeply, and he was very upset with what was happening in Minneapolis and throughout the United States with Federal agents, as millions of other people are upset,” said Michael Pretti, Alex’s father. “He thought it was terrible, you know, kidnapping children, just grabbing people off the street. He cared about those people, and he knew it was wrong, so he did participate in protests.” “We had this discussion with him two weeks ago or so, you know, that go ahead and protest, but do not engage, do not do anything stupid, basically,” Michael Pretti said. A screengrab from a video obtained by Reuters shows a man identified as Alex Pretti walking backwards on the street while holding a mobile phone near a law enforcement officer, moments before he was fatally shot when federal agents were trying to detain him, as seen through the windshield of a vehicle, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S. on January 24, 2026.

A screengrab from a video obtained by Reuters shows a man identified as Alex Pretti walking backwards on the street while holding a mobile phone near a law enforcement officer, moments before he was fatally shot when federal agents were trying to detain him, as seen through the windshield of a vehicle, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S. on January Family members said Pretti owned a handgun and had a permit to carry a concealed handgun in Minnesota. They stated that they had never known him to carry it.

“The sickening lies told about our son by the administration are reprehensible and disgusting,” the family’s statement said. They added that videos showed Pretti was not holding a gun when he was tackled by Federal agents, but holding his phone with one hand and using the other to shield a woman who was being pepper-sprayed.

Demands for justice grow louder Taking a sharp dig at Donald Trump administration, former U.S. President Barack Obama said the killing of Alex Pretti is a heartbreaking tragedy. “It should also be a wake-up call to every American, regardless of party, that many of our core values as a nation are increasingly under assault,” Mr. Obama’s post on X read. In his page-long statement, the Democratic leader stated that people across the country have been rightly outraged by the spectacle of masked ICE recruits and other Federal agents acting with impunity and engaging in tactics that appear to be designed to intimidate, harass, provoke, and endanger the residents of a major American city. This has to stop. I would hope that after this most recent tragedy, administration officials will reconsider their approach, and start finding ways to work constructively with Governor Walz and Mayor Frey as well as state and local police to avert more chaos and achieve legitimate law enforcement goals”, it mentioned. The fate of the enforcements led by U.S. Federal agents in Minnesoata which has claimed the life of two officials would be decided by a Federal Judge on Monday (January 4) makeshift memorial at the site where a man identified as Alex Pretti was fatally shot by Federal immigration agents trying to detain him, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S. The state of Minnesota and the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul sued the Department of Homeland Security earlier this month, five days after protester Renee Good was shot by an Immigration and Customs officer. Meanwhile, U.S. Justice Department attorneys have called the lawsuit “legally frivolous” and stated that “Minnesota wants a veto over Federal law enforcement.”

US halts all visa issuance to Afghan citizens



Washington: The United States has paused Afghan visas, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, two days after a man from Afghanistan shot and killed one National Guard soldier and critically injured another near the White House. “President (Donald) Trump’s State Department has paused visa issuance for all individuals travelling on Afghan passports,” Rubio wrote on the social platform X. “The United States has no higher priority than protecting our nation and our people.” “The Department of State has immediately paused visa issuance for individuals travelling on Afghan passports,” the agency said in a statement.

Rahmanullah Lakanwal, the 29-year-old suspected shooter, entered the United States in 2021 under the (Joe) Biden administration’s Operation Allies Welcome program. He applied for asylum last year, and it was granted earlier this year, reports Xinhua news agency. Lakanwal was “clean on all checks” before working with the CIA in his home country and again before coming to the United States, local media reported. The FBI is now investigating the shooting as an act of terrorism. Lakanwal had previously served alongside US forces in Afghanistan. According to NBC News, the suspect, identified as 29-year-old Rahmanullah Lakanwal, arrived in the United States in September 2021 after spending a decade in the Afghan army, where he supported US Special Forces. He has been living in Washington state, NBC News reported, citing senior law enforcement sources. Fox News reported that the suspect worked with various US government entities while in Afghanistan, including the Central Intelligence Agency, as a member of a partner force. The attack took place at around 14:15 local time (1915 GMT) near the Farragut Square Metro Station, said a statement from Joint Task Force DC, which oversees the National Guard deployments to Washington. The suspect was shot by another Guard member and taken into custody, officials said. Authorities are still working to confirm all details about the individual, who is currently hospitalised.

Thai Prime Minister acknowledges flood response failures as death toll rises to 162

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul on Saturday (November 29, 2025) outlined recovery and compensation plans for the southern part of the country, where severe flooding has killed at least 162 people. More than 1.4 million households and 3.8 million people have been affected by floods triggered by heavy rains in 12 southern provinces, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said on Saturday. Government Spokesperson Siripong Angkasakulkiat said in a news conference in Bangkok that 162 deaths have been confirmed in eight provinces, particularly in Songkhla province, which recorded at least 126 deaths. The scale of the flooding and the high number of casualties have sparked widespread criticism of the government. Mr. Charnvikaikul told reporters on Saturday (November 29, 2025) that he acknowledged the government’s shortcomings in flood management, and said that when he visited the affected areas, he had apologised to the people “that the government was unable to take care of and protect them.” Mr. Charnvikaikul said the government would begin distributing compensation payments to those affected by the floods next week. He also outlined additional relief measures, including debt suspension and short-term, interest-free loans for businesses and home repairs. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation reported that water levels began to recede across all affected provinces on Saturday (November 29, 2025) morning. Video footage showed local residents returning to their homes, which had previously been submerged, to inspect the dam-



age. Furniture and personal belongings were seen scattered across the floors.

The flooding, which began last weekend, caused severe disruptions, leaving thousands of people stranded, rendering streets impassable and submerging low-rise buildings and vehicles. The death toll in Songkhla province, particularly in its largest city, Hat Yai, continued to rise as rescuers gained access to residential areas that had been previously submerged. More bodies were recovered as rescue operations progressed. Government Spokesperson Angkasakulkiat said King Maha Vajiralongkorn would donate 100 million baht (\$3.11 million) to Hat Yai Hospital, which suffered extensive damage from flooding, and that the King would grant royal support for the funerals of all victims who died from the flooding.

U.S. halts asylum decisions as troop killing sparks migrant crackdown

The United States is freezing all asylum decisions, officials said Friday (November 28, 2025), as President Donald Trump hardens his anti-migrant stance after an Afghan national allegedly shot two National Guard members this week in Washington. Wednesday’s (November 26, 2025) attack on the soldiers — one of whom died from her injuries — has ignited a fresh crackdown on foreigners in the United States, with Mr. Trump also pledging to suspend migration from “third world countries.” Joseph Etlow, director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), said his agency has “halted all asylum decisions until we can ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible.” That followed Mr. Trump’s announcement late Thursday (November 27, 2025) of plans to “permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the U.S. system to fully recover.”

Asked which nationalities would be affected, the Department of Homeland Security pointed AFP to a list of 19 countries — including Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Iran and Myanmar — already facing U.S. travel restrictions since June. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Friday (November 28, 2025) that the U.S. had temporarily stopped issuing visas to all individuals traveling on Afghan passports. “The United States has no higher priority than protecting our nation and our people,” he said. The shooting has brought together three politically explosive issues: Mr. Trump’s controversial use of the military on American soil, immigration, and the lingering legacy of the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan. Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, who allegedly opened fire on the guardsmen just a few blocks from the White House, had been part of a CIA-backed “partner force” fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. He entered the United States as part of a resettlement program following the American military withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. Jeanine Pirro, the U.S. attorney for Washington DC, said Friday (November 28, 2025) that Lakanwal would be charged with murder over the attack. Sarah Beckstrom, a 20-year-old West Virginia National Guard member deployed in the US capital as part of what Mr. Trump called a crackdown on crime, died from her wounds.

The second injured soldier, 24-year-old Andrew Wolfe, was “fighting for his life,” Ms. Pirro told the Fox News program Fox & Friends. Attorney General Pam Bondi has pledged to seek the death penalty against Lakanwal, describing him as a “monster.” In his social media post Thursday (November 27, 2025), Mr. Trump also threatened to reverse “millions” of admissions granted under his predecessor Joe Biden, in a new escalation of his anti-immigration stance.

Separately, the USCIS said it would re-examine the green cards — permanent residency cards — issued to individuals who had migrated to the U.S. from the same 19 countries also cited by the Department of Homeland Security. More than 1.6 million green card holders, roughly 12% of the total permanent resident population, were born in the countries listed, according to U.S. immigration data analysed by AFP. Afghanistan has over 116,000 green card holders. Shawn VanDiver, president of AfghanEvac, a group that helped resettle Afghans in the country after the military



withdrawal, blasted Mr. Rubio’s move to halt all visa issuances. “They are using a single violent individual as cover for a policy they have long planned,” he said in a statement. Lakanwal had been living in the western state of Washington with his family and drove across the country to the capital before Wednesday’s (November 26, 2025) shooting, officials said. Mr. Trump has insisted that Lakanwal had been granted unvetted access to the United States because of lax asylum policies after the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan under former President Biden. However, AfghanEvac said the Afghans had undergone “some of the most extensive security vetting” of any migrants. It added that Lakanwal applied for asylum under Mr. Biden but received it later, under Mr. Trump.

Kidambi Srikanth, Treesa-Gayatri enter Syed Modi finals in Lucknow

Hyderabad: Former World No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth reached his second final on the BWF World Tour in 2025 on Saturday after defeating compatriot Mithun Manjunath in a hard-fought semifinal, while the women’s doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly also advanced to the summit clash of the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament at Lucknow.

Srikanth defeated Mithun 21-15, 19-21, 21-13 in 59 minutes and will now face Hong Kong’s Jason Gunawan, who advanced to the final after Minoru Koga of Japan retired with the score reading 12-21, 21-8, 11-0 in his opponent’s favour. In the women’s doubles semifinal, top seeds and defending champions Gayatri and Treesa defeated seventh seeds Ong Xin Yee and Carmen Ting of Malaysia 21-11, 21-15 to set up a final clash against Japan’s Kaho Osawa and Mai Tanabe. India’s campaign in women’s singles, however, came to an end after top seed Unnati Hooda and giant-killer Tanvi Sharma lost in the semifinals. Unnati went down to fourth seed Neslihan Arin of Turkey 15-21, 10-21, while Tanvi’s run was halted by Japanese fifth seed Hina Akechi with a 21-17, 21-16 victory.

Looking back at Bawaria dacoity along Tamil Nadu highways



In the early hours of January 8, 2005, at around 2 a.m., darkness engulfed the narrow stretch branching off from the Grand Northern Trunk (GNT) Road, also known as the Kolkata–Chennai National Highway. The villagers of Thanakulam near Periyapalayam, about 60 kilometres from Chennai, were fast asleep, unaware of the danger approaching. A fully-covered goods carrier — HR 38 J 5249 — rolled quietly along the deserted road and halted about half a kilometre from the village. Six to eight men climbed down silently from the lorry and moved toward the house at the village entrance — the residence of K. Sudarsanam, at that point of time, a sitting AIADMK MLA and former Minister. At exactly 2.15 a.m., with the swing of an axe, the stillness was shattered. The armed gang smashed the wooden front door, storming inside. Their leader stood guard outside, gripping a gun.

The gang quickly climbed the staircase to the first floor. They bolted the room of Sudarsanam’s elder son, Vijayakumar, who was sleeping inside. They then broke open the door to the room in which his second son, K. S. Sathish Kumar was asleep. They shattered the glass of a window, and through that gap, the intruders rained blows on Sathish Kumar with blunt iron rods, leaving him bleeding. Members of Bawaria gang are being escorted by the police to a Sessions Court in Singaravelar Maligai. When his wife, Geetha, rushed forward, one of the men twisted her left arm until she cried out in pain. Their eight-year-old daughter clung to the attackers’ legs, begging them not to hurt her father. But the gang ignored her pleas, continued assaulting Sathish Kumar and Geetha, and ripped jewellery off Geetha’s body at knifepoint.

Woken the commotion, Sudarsanam who was sleeping with his wife in a room on the ground floor — stepped out carrying a sickle. The moment the assailants saw the weapon, they fired a .12-bore round into the right side of his chest. He collapsed and died instantly. The gang then entered his bedroom, the pooja room and the room next to the kitchen. They tore open almiraahs, overturned beds and looted nearly sixty sovereigns of gold jewellery. Three women — Jayamal, Sudarsanam’s wife; Thatchayani, his mother-in-law; and Neela, the household maid — were unharmed but absolutely terrified. Recalling the incident, Sathish Kumar said: “Hearing the sound of my room door being hit multiple times, I looked through the window and saw six or seven people trying to break it. I held the door tightly from behind but couldn’t stop them. They broke the window next to the door and attacked me with an iron rod through the opening. A blow to my left shoulder forced me aside. They then entered the room. I fainted. After 10–15 days of treatment, I was told that my father had been shot dead.”

Hearing the family’s screams, villagers gathered outside the compound wall and hurled stones at the dacoits. The gang fired a round toward them, dispersing the crowd, and escaped into the darkness, with valuables looted from the house, boarding their lorry parked half a kilometre away. The then Tiruvallur Superintendent of Police V. Vardharaju rushed to the scene, cordoned off the area and summoned his team. “The public had gathered in large numbers by them. The crime scene was calamitous, with bloodstains everywhere. Our job was to protect the integrity of the scene. A pair of chappals used by the accused and an empty bullet shell were recovered,” he said.

The dacoity and murder shook the entire State. Special teams were formed under the then Inspector-General of Police (North), S. R. Jangid. Deputy Superintendents of Police V. Jayakumar (Thirukoilur), M. Sudhakar (Madhavaram), C. Vijay Kumar (Tiruvallur), and Ara. Arul Arasu (Hosur) joined the investigation. Mr. Vardharaju said as soon as they began investigation, they started noticing a similar pattern in several other highway dacoities in the State. Working with then Cuddalore SP Davidson Devasirvatham, they mapped the crimes.

Decade of dacoity For nearly 10 years, a string of dacoities involving murders and grievous assaults — all with similar a modus operandi — had been reported across Tamil Nadu. Between 1995 and 2005, 24 such incidents occurred along the National Highway from the Tiruvallur–Andhra border to the Krishnagiri–Karnataka border, resulting in 13 deaths and 63 serious injuries. Chance fingerprints were lifted at many scenes but there were no matches in police records. Similar offences in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka also remained unsolved.

“The gang used only to speak only in Hindi during the crimes. Words like ‘Chabi doh’ (give the key) and ‘Chup raho’ (keep quiet) were used. It was clear that this bunch were from North India,” said Thillai Natarajan, former investigation officer in the Periyapalayam case. The gang first struck Tamil Nadu on June 7, 1995, at the house of M. Mohan Kumar in Walajapet, then part of Vellore district. They killed him, seriously injured his wife and two children, and stole jewellery and cash worth over ₹50,000. The case was closed as undetectable three years later. The following year, they struck again in the same town in another house. After a five-year gap, the gang resurfaced in 2001, committing a major dacoity in Avinashi, followed by three more robberies in Dharmapuri and Salem districts. Their crimes surged in 2002, with eight dacoities reported in Salem, Avinashi, Kangeyam, Gummidipoondi, Athur, Kariamangalam, Burgur and Sriperumbudur. The most sensational was in Salem on September 12, 2002, in which they killed Congress functionary Thalamuthu Natarajan and his watchman Gopal and injured six others. A sub-inspector reportedly saw the gang walking away but failed to act. They walked two kilometres, boarded a lorry and vanished. In 2003, they struck four locations — Sholavaram, Walajapet and Natrampalli — committing murders at three of them. In 2004, they targeted Thiruverkadu, Vellavedu, Sriperumbudur and Thiruvallam. In Thiruverkadu, they shot house owner Gajendran dead, killed his watchman and injured two others. In Sriperumbudur, they slammed a 14-year-old girl against a wall. Mr. Jangid said that based on the modus operandi, investigators suspected North Indian criminal gangs but could not identify any one gang in particular. Teams visited Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, ruling out criminal tribes in those regions. They then focused on Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Punjab, as their investigation had shown similarities with the Bawaria gang’s modus operandi.

Former Director General of Police S.R. Jangid, who as IG (North) led the special teams that cracked the case. Former Director General of Police S.R. Jangid, who as IG (North) led the special teams that cracked the case. Photo Credit: M. Srinath “Initially, it was virtually a wild goose chase. Every lead was pursued. Fingerprint experts travelled with the teams carrying the chance prints lifted from scenes. Police records in these States were checked,” Mr. Jangid said. A major challenge was that police forces in UP, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan did not regularly preserve fingerprints or maintain detailed records of hardened criminals.

The breakthrough came on February 1, 2005, when Inspector of Police (Fingerprints) Dhanancheliyan, who was part of the Uttar Pradesh team, found that four chance prints matched a thumb impression recorded in 1996 in the “register of transit prisoners” at Agra Central Jail. The print belonged to Laxman alias Ashok, a Bawaria criminal from Chandanpura village in Bharatpur district, Rajasthan. He was linked to six dacoities in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu police teams camped in the region for days, arresting the criminals. They seized a sheet from a schoolgirl’s notebook containing phone numbers of gang members. Call records and a confession from an accused in Rajasthan confirmed the involvement of the Bawaria gang from Haryana and Rajasthan. Who were the Bawarias

The Bawarias were among the most violent criminal groups, operating mainly at night along highways. Their lorries had secret chambers for hiding weapons and iron rods. They parked near roadside eateries and walked up to four or five kilometres to targeted homes, smashing doors with stones or steel rods and unleashing brutal, unprovoked violence. 13 persons were eventually arrested, including Oma alias Omprakash Bawaria, 55, of Ghargot village in Faridabad district, the gang leader; his brother Jagadish; Ashok alias Laxman; Rakesh alias Kuttu; Anguri; Jaildar Singh; and three women. Two gang members were killed in an encounter near Meerut.

Courts later convicted several of them, including Oma and Ashok, in four cases — for the Walajapet doctor’s murder and for the murder of MLA Sudarsanam in Periyapalayam. In 2006, Oma and Laxman initially received the death penalty in the Walajapet case while others were given life imprisonment. The High Court later commuted the death sentences. Oma died in Vellore Central Prison, and three others continue to serve life terms.

The Sudarsanam Case In the Sudarsanam murder case, 32 persons were named in the charge sheet filed by Periyapalayam Police on September 18, 2006. Of them, 22 remained absconding. Two — Oma and Boora — died during trial, and one was treated as a juvenile. Seven were tried, but the case was later split after three women jumped bail. The trial ultimately proceeded against Jagadish, Rakesh alias Guddu, Ashok alias Laxman, and Jaildar Singh alias Lali Master, a schoolteacher. Additional Public Prosecutor D. Maharajan said the prosecution examined 66 witnesses and produced 52 exhibits and material objects, including two country-made guns and two lorries used by the accused. The four men were brought to the XV Additional Sessions Court at Singaravelar Maligai under tight security on Monday, November 24, Judge L. Abraham Lincoln held that the eight-year-old child, who had held the attackers’ legs and pleaded with them not to harm her father, had clearly seen their faces and credibly identified them. He noted that the fingerprint expert’s evidence strongly corroborated the eyewitnesses and supported the prosecution’s version. “The prosecution has produced unassailable evidence against the accused, and the defence has not raised any serious doubt regarding the credibility of the witnesses,” he said. However, the court found that the prosecution had “miserably failed” to prove the involvement of Jaildar Singh or link him to the gang through admissible evidence. He was acquitted. The remaining three were sentenced to four to five life terms under Sections 397 (robbery or dacoity with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt), 396 (dacoity with murder), and for illegal possession of arms and ammunition. They will remain in prison for the rest of their natural life. The grave dacoities committed by the Bawaria gang, which once terrorised the State, came to an end a few years ago, but justice, even if limited, has been served. However, several gang members remain absconding and continue to evade trial in pending cases.

Hyderabad’s Anaya Sharma wins gold at Commonwealth Chess Championship 2025

Hyderabad: Anaya Sharma of Hyderabad can well be the next big thing to happen in the world of chess from Telangana. The eight-year-old Anaya, whose parents Gaurav Sharma and Aarti Bolaki are going all out to support her passion given the abundance of promise she has shown, won the gold medal in the Commonwealth Chess Championship 2025 held at Kuala Lumpur recently. Anaya dominated the girls’ under-8 category, outwitting strong opponents. She finished with an impressive score to clinch the honours, outsmarting higher-rated players along the way. The young chess talent began her journey at the age of five at the Kalpataru Summer Camp, Ekagra, and is now training at the Maestro Chess Academy at Attapur in the city. Anaya puts in a lot of effort to keep improving, training six to eight hours daily under the mentorship of Amitpal Singh.

“After proving her acumen at the State and National level, Anaya moved to the international arena representing India at the Under-8 World Cup held in Batumi, Georgia, in July 2025. Out of 200 participants, she finished seventh in her age group,” the proud parents recalled. Anaya, now an ELO 1600+ player, is also keen to make a mark in academics and is one of the favourites of her school teaching staff. A fourth-standard student at Hyderabad Public School (Begumpet), she excels both on the 64 squares and in studies. Like all chess players, Anaya is targeting to be a Grandmaster soon and is confident of achieving that landmark. “I am grateful to my coach Amitpal Sir and fellow chess players for



‘Indian industry exploring different paths to conform with EU carbon tax norms’: Secy of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy



Even as the US has announced its decision to withdraw from the India-France-led International Solar Alliance (ISA), SANTOSH KUMAR SARANGI, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), said the alliance’s future is bright irrespective of who is part of it. In an interview with The Indian Express, Sarangi said India and other like-minded countries will continue efforts to expand footprint in countries where solar deployment remains limited. Edited excerpts:

The upcoming data center boom is expected to increa-se the power demand. How much of this additional requirement would be met by renewable energy (RE) sources?Most of them want RE sources. But probably they will use a combination of conventional power and RE till they get their full requirement from RE. To begin with, they will use a combination. For data centers, there is no mandatory requirement to use RE. They can run with conventional power entirely. But from a cost-economic perspective as well as decarbonisation perspective, they want to source more and more RE power. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) estimates that by 2030, about 12 GW will be demanded by data centers. But that will actually depend on how many data centers are coming and what is the kind of power they are looking at. So, this is only a rough projection.

Amid the US withdrawal from the International Solar Alliance, how does the government view its future?

The future of the ISA is bright because the Solar Alliance targets countries that receive maximum sunshine. In this zone, the entire Middle East and Africa fall within this category. Therefore, India’s cooperation and engagement with Middle Eastern countries and Africa continue to remain strong. In terms of footprint, the ISA is also seeking to increase its interventions in regions where solar power has not been able to scale — largely in Africa. Therefore, irrespective of who is part of the ISA, India and other like-minded countries will continue their efforts to expand their footprint in countries where solar deployment remains limited.

China’s chokehold on rare earth elements is a global concern. RE projects need them. Are there plans to resolve these concerns?

If you are looking at some very core critical minerals which are used in advanced technology, advanced manufacturing including permanent magnets, then, renewable enrgy is not exactly dependent on those kinds of elements. Crystalline polysilicon is something that is available in other parts of the world also. Maybe at a slightly higher cost, but it is available. So, that way, that chokehold is not something that will impede the growth of manufacturing within the country.

What is India’s roadmap as the West starts imposing carbon tax?

Decarbonisation initiative, not only for the European market, but for our own sake also, is required. You have seen the Emission Trading System (ETS) regulation, which has come up in the recent past, where they have added a few more sectors into the ET mechanism within our country. So, the decarbonisation initiative is something which most of the hard-to-abate sectors will have to initiate.

The pathway can vary from one industry to another. For example, if they do it through an electric arc furnace, the emission there is much lower and probably will come within the EU norms. But if somebody is using a blast furnace or a Direct Reduced Iron (DRI), then currently we are doing a pilot with a few steel industries to see if green hydrogen could also be utilised in their processes so that it decarbonizes.JSW, for example, is putting up a 7,200 tonnes per annum hydrogen manufacturing capacity beside their Vijayanagara steel plant. And the effort is to decarbonise by directly using hydrogen in their processes.

So, that’s one pathway. Similarly, aluminum industries are trying to source more and more RE power because they are highly electricity intensive. So, if they source more and more RE power, then in a way they are trying to decarbonise their aluminum manufacturing. Whether it is cement, steel, aluminum, they are adopting different paths of decarbonisation.

Some are trying out carbon capture and storage mechanisms. But through different mechanisms, if they are able to fulfill the norm which is required by the EU, then I don’t think export will be an issue.

Power-intensive industries require uninterrupted supply. RE intermittency is a key challenge in the transition to green product-i-on. How does India plan to ensure reliable clean power for such industries?

The RE sector is no longer restricted to limited hours and is now capable of supplying round-the-clock (RTC) power through a combination of solar, wind and battery enrgy storage systems. With battery prices declining sharply over the last one to one-and-a-half years, RE-based RTC power is increasingly becoming cheaper than coal-based generation. If you look at the bids done by SECI, it discovered a tariff of Rs 3.12 per unit for solar power bundled with six hours of storage, while Indian Railways awarded a 1 GW RE-RTC tender at Rs 4.35 per unit, inclusive of battery storage. Several SECI RE-RTC bids have since been discovered in the Rs 5.06–5.30 range, compared to Rs 6.50–7 per unit for new coal-based power plants.

In addition, pumped storage projects (PSPs) are gaining traction, using surplus solar power during the day to pump water to upper reservoirs and generate electricity during peak evening hours. So, a combination of PSPs, solar, wind and base should be able to address their concerns. India’s battery storage capacity remains limited, emerging as a key bottleneck in integrating large volumes of renewable energy But recently, the Ministry of Power has come up with a VGF scheme, where they have tendered it out for 43 gigawatts. So, there is going to be a very rapid deployment of battery energy storage in our country.India achieved its target of sourcing 50% of cumulative installed power capacity from non-fossil fuels in June 2025 — five years ahead of its global commitment — and now has 266 GW of RE capacity. But thermal power still accounts for over 70% of generation. How can India meaningfully increase the share of renewables in actual power generation?In several recorded months, RE has accounted for over 30 per cent of total electricity generation. While variable renewables such as solar and wind alone contribute around 14 per cent, their share rises to nearly 30 per cent when hydro and other non-fossil sources are included. On average, non-fossil fuel sources — covering solar, wind, large hydro and around 8 GW of nuclear capacity — currently meet about 25-26 per cent of India’s power generation, with the remainder coming largely from coal-based plants.

However, deeper integration of RE requires addressing its inherent variability and intermittency. This necessitates a significant scale-up of battery energy storage systems (BESS), pumped storage projects (PSPs), and grid-supporting technologies such as grid-forming inverters, synchronous condensers andThe transition is already underway, with the Ministry of Power floating tenders for 43 GWh of battery energy storage capacity. As storage deployment expands and advanced grid technologies are adopted at scale, the grid’s ability to absorb higher shares of RE will improve. So, we are hopeful that by 2030, our grid will also be ready to absorb more and more RE. There has been discussion, including in a recent staff paper, on making signed PPAs a precondition for granting transmission connectivity to renewable projects.

What is MNRE’s view on this proposal, and do you see it benefiting the sector or creating challenges for project developers?

There are pros and cons. If you have a prior PPA, then that gives you certainty that off-take is there. And therefore, this transmission line will be done. But even if there is no PPA, the people who are applying through bank guarantee (BG) or land route, they are giving a bank guarantee. And in case of their default, they will be penalised. And that penalty is quite heavy. It’s about 10 lakhs per MW which they are collecting as BG. So, I don’t think any non-serious player will just take connectivity by giving this kind of BG with the risk of foregoing and forfeiting that BG.

‘Ulte haath ka thappad apne bachche ne maar diya’: When Kajol’s son Yug called her out for scolding Nysa; why kids sometimes make the best teachers



Speaking on Kareena Kapoor’s show What Women Want, Kajol recalled an incident during a Mata Ki Chowki (Hindu Goddess prayer) at home. “I was firing Nysa for not sitting with us. There was a Mata Ki Chowki at home, and I was like, ‘Nysa, come and sit with us. We are sitting here, why are you sitting at the table?’ She said, ‘Mumma, I really don’t want to.’ I really got angry and I said, ‘Come here and sit down!’” After Nysa reluctantly complied, Kajol’s younger child stepped in with surprising maturity. “So, after she came, sat and left, my son turned around, sat in my lap quietly and told me, ‘You know, mom, you shouldn’t fire her for telling the truth.’” Reflecting on the moment, Kajol admitted, “I felt like, oh my God, that was such a... ulte haath ka thappad apne bachche ne maar diya mujhe (My child gave me a backhanded slap). It was amazing advice.”Parenting is often seen as a one-way street — parents teaching, guiding, and correcting their children. But sometimes, the children hold up a mirror to the adults, offering quiet wisdom when it’s least expected.

How can parents learn to recognise the difference between defiance and honest self-expression in children?

Psychologist Rasshi Gurnani explains that one of the most valuable lessons for parents is learning to differentiate between defiance and genuine self-expression in chil-

Kareena Kapoor reveals what her ‘signature’ Punjabi-style salad includes: ‘Thoda mooli hoga usme’



In a recent interview, actor Kareena Kapoor Khan casually revealed what her “signature salad” would look like, and the details struck a chord because they mirror how many Indian households actually eat. Describing it with characteristic honesty, she told CNBC-TV18 YT, “Oh my god, there would definitely be kakri (cucumber), gajar (carrot), because the whole family loves it. Throw in some fresh lettuce.” The combination instantly feels familiar: crunchy, raw vegetables that often appear on everyday plates rather than curated diet plans.

She went on to add, “Mooli (radish), I’m a Punjabi. Toh thoda mooli hoga usme. And then you know that thoda nimbu (a little bit of lemon) and I like it a little chatpata (tangy).” Summing it up in her own way, Kareena joked, “Like the way I am, people would expect that also.” Raw vegetables, citrus, and chatpata elements are common staples, but how do they actually affect digestion, nutrient absorption, and overall health when eaten regularly?

Digestive benefits and potential downsides of eating raw salads frequentlyNutritionist Aditi Prabhu, founder at NutroDynamix, tells indianexpress.com, “A salad made with cucumber, carrots, lettuce, and radish is refreshing, crunchy, hydrating, colourful, and rich in fibre and micronutrients. So

dren—especially during emotionally charged moments. “Children are often mislabelled as being difficult or disrespectful when they’re trying to communicate their needs or discomforts,” she shares. For instance, a child choosing not to sit with everyone during religious or family gatherings could respond to overstimulation, exhaustion, or simply needing personal space. Instead of assuming disobedience, parents should pause and ask themselves what their child might be feeling. Creating a habit of asking, not accusing, builds a healthier emotional connection and helps decode the real reason behind a behavior.

Steps parents can take to repair trust and validate a child’s honesty after reacting harshlyGurnani emphasises that parental regret can be an opportunity for growth rather than shame. “When a parent reacts harshly, it’s crucial to circle back and repair,” she says. “This means acknowledging your mistake, apologizing sincerely, and affirming the child’s right to express themselves.”

Validating a child’s honesty, even if it’s uncomfortable, sends a powerful message: that their voice matters. Rebuilding trust doesn’t require grand gestures—it often begins with a simple conversation in which the parent listens without defensiveness and shows emotional vulnerability. This not only heals the moment but strengthens the long-term bond.

Why is it important to create a home environment where children feel safe to express their true feelings?

Creating a home environment where children feel emotionally safe is essential for their mental well-being. Gurnani believes that discipline and emotional openness can and should coexist. “Boundaries are important, but they shouldn’t come at the cost of a child’s emotional freedom,” she says. Encouraging kids to share their thoughts without fear of judgement fosters resilience, honesty, and empathy. When children feel heard, they’re more likely to cooperate and less likely to rebel. Emotional safety doesn’t mean there are no rules—it means those rules are enforced with respect, understanding, and flexibility.

for people with a good digestive system, these raw salads can be good for the gut, provide satiety, aid regular bowel movements and could be a great way to easily add that extra dose of fibre to your daily routine.”But the fact is, she states, raw salads are not for everyone. “For people with a sensitive gut or those with major gut health issues like GERD, IBS, etc, raw salad can trigger gases, bloating, constipation or discomfort; hence, they are best avoided.”In such cases, steamed, sautéed or properly cooked salads/soups could be better tolerated and therefore a better choice.

How do acidity and spice affect nutrient absorption, gut health, and blood sugar response?

According to Prabhu, adding lemon and chatpata elements, such as spices and herbs, “not only makes it appealing but, if used in the right combination, can aid digestion and absorption.” For example, adding lemon not only adds tang but also provides some vitamin C and helps soften the raw fibre, making it easier on the gut. Similarly, the addition of spices like jeera, pudina, pepper, or herbs enhances flavour, makes raw salads easier to digest, and aids nutrient absorption.“When it comes to people with a sensitive gut, along with the type and timing of the salad consumed, one needs to be very careful about the additional elements added, particularly the type and quantities of both acid and spice/herbs used, as they can easily lead to gut discomfort. Whereas when it comes to blood sugar, it’s not just the lemon and spices/ herbs in the salad that matter. The addition of fat and some protein to the salad helps manage blood sugar better,” asserts Prabhu.

Simple tweaks can make such combinations more balanced and sustainable for long-term healthFor people who culturally enjoy such salads, Prabhu informs that some simple tweaks that can make them more balanced and sustainable for long-term health without compromising taste would include:

‘Have you ever experienced beard burn?’: Doctor explains why a kiss can cause redness and itching; a dermatologist verifies

A kiss is supposed to be intimate and comforting, but for some people, it can end with unexpected redness, itching, and irritation on the face. This uncomfortable reaction, often brushed off as ‘sensitive skin,’ has a name — and it’s more common than many realise. Explaining the phenomenon, Dr Kunal Sood, a Maryland-based physician, shared in an Instagram post that the condition is called ‘beard burn.’ Describing how suddenly it can strike, he said, “One moment you are sharing a kiss, the next, you have a burning, itchy rash on your face.” Beard burn typically occurs when coarse facial hair repeatedly rubs against the skin, leaving it “red, dry and painfully irritated.”

beard burn may seem like a minor annoyance, it isn’t always harmless. In some cases, the friction can cause tiny breaks in the skin. According to Dr Sood, this increases the risk of infections such as impetigo, a highly contagious bacterial condition that spreads easily. The issue isn’t just the hair itself, but also hygiene, skin barrier health, and how often irritation is repeated.Offering solutions to the problem, Dr Sood wrote in the caption: “Have you ever experienced beard burn?” He went on to mention that moisturising, hydrating the beard, trimming, and keeping it clean can significantly help prevent beard burn.

But what exactly happens to the skin during beard burn?

Dr Swetha Sridhar, medical director, Dr Swetha’s Skin Sutra Clinic, tells indianexpress.com, “Beard burn occurs when coarse facial hair repeatedly rubs against delicate areas of the skin, most commonly the cheeks, chin, neck or around the lips. This friction disrupts the outermost skin barrier, known as the stratum corneum, creating microscopic abrasions. Once this protective layer is compromised, the skin loses moisture more rapidly and becomes vulnerable to irritation and inflammation.”



The intensity of the reaction varies from person to person because skin sensitivity is influenced by several factors. “People with naturally sensitive skin, eczema-prone skin, rosacea, or an already weakened skin barrier tend to react more strongly. Beard texture also plays a role. Thicker, curlier, or freshly trimmed stubble has sharper edges, causing more mechanical irritation. Environmental factors such as dry weather, existing acne, or use of harsh skincare products can further amplify the inflammatory response,” states Dr Sridhar.Managing beard-related skin irritation long-termLong-term management starts with reducing friction rather than masking irritation with multiple products. Dr Sridhar suggests, “Keeping facial hair slightly longer and well-conditioned helps soften the beard and reduce its abrasive effect. Regularly using a mild beard conditioner or oil can significantly improve hair texture. Avoiding very close trimming before intimate contact also helps, as freshly cut stubble is usually the most irritating.”For the partner with sensitive skin, she says, maintaining a strong skin barrier is key. A simple routine using a gentle cleanser and a fragrance-free moisturiser with barrier-repair ingredients such as ceramides is often sufficient.

TikTok survives in the US, thanks to a new corporate structure. Could India have taken the same road?

Arguably the most popular short video app, TikTok, has new owners in the United States, after its Chinese parent company ByteDance agreed to spin off a specific US entity to run the platform. A new joint venture – called TikTok USDS – has been formed, and under the new corporate structure, non-Chinese investors will own about 80% of the app in America, with ByteDance’s share falling down to less than 20%.This marks the end of a topsy turvy ride for the short video platform in the US where TikTok had found itself caught in the crosshairs of lawmakers over concerns surrounding data security of over 200 million American users of the app, red flags that largely emanated from TikTok’s Chinese ownership.

The US had in fact passed a Bill that could have led to a shutdown of TikTok in the country in 2024, underscoring the continuing tensions between Washington and Beijing amid backchannel parleys to mend diplomatic ties at the time. Months after US President Donald Trump assumed office for his second term, in September 2025 he signed an executive order titled ‘Saving TikTok While Protecting National Security’ which delayed a potential ban and allowed ByteDance to figure out a new corporate structure for TikTok in the country.The development also raises a key question: when India swiftly banned TikTok in 2020 amid strained ties with China over border clashes at the time, could the country have explored a similar path?On Thursday, TikTok announced that the new American entity was established to secure US user data, apps and the algorithm through comprehensive data privacy and cybersecurity measures. “It will safeguard the US content ecosystem through robust trust and safety policies and content moderation while ensuring continuous accountability through transparency reporting and third-party certifications,” it said in a statement.TikTok USDS Joint Venture has three managing investors, the software giant Oracle, investment firm Silver Lake and MGX, an Emirate-investment fund, each holding 15%. Other investors in the new venture include Dell Family Office, the investment firm of Michael Dell, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Dell Technologies;



Vastmere Strategic Investments, LLC, an affiliate of Susquehanna International Group, LLP; Alpha Wave Partners; Revolution; Merritt Way, LLC controlled and managed by partners of Dragoneer; Via Nova, an affiliate of General Atlantic; Virgo LI, Inc., investment arm of a foundation established by Yuri and Julia Milner in support of science; and NJJ Capital, the family office of Xavier Niel, a French entrepreneur and pioneer in telecommunications. ByteDance retains 19.9% of the Joint Venture.Oracle will provide the cloud services that will host the new venture’s US user data. The joint venture will operate a comprehensive data privacy and cybersecurity programme that is audited and certified by third party cybersecurity experts, to ally data security concerns.

The Jasprit Bumrah effect: India’s ultimate trump card at T20 World Cup



GNS News Jan 29

Jasprit Bumrah is not just a bowler who executes plans—he’s the plan itself. As teams prepare their strategies for the T20 world cup, they’ll face an unsolvable riddle: How do you plan for a bowler who can bowl anywhere, anytime, and deliver magic with every ball? Like a couple of Kiwis found out on Monday. Tim Seifert stood at the crease, his reputation as one of T20 cricket’s most explosive openers—boasting a strike rate of 142.66—preceding him. The New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman wasn’t attempting anything reckless. He was simply playing the line. Then Jasprit Bumrah happened.

One delivery. That’s all it took. The ball landed on a good length just outside off-stump at 137 kmph, swung in 0.3 degrees with the angle, prompting Seifert to commit. Then it seamed away 0.8 degrees—a subtle but devastating deviation that sent the off-stump cartwheeling. Seifert hurried back to the pavilion, another victim of Bumrah’s extraordinary craft.

To the naked eye, the delivery that dismissed Seifert in the third T20I at Guwahati didn’t appear extraordinary at first glance. But television replays revealed the brutal truth: Seifert had been completely outfoxed. He isn’t alone. Babar Azam and Muhammad Rizwan have found their defenses breached in similarly spectacular fashion by Bumrah. The dismissal evoked memories of Wasim Akram’s magic against Rahul Dravid at the famous Chennai Test in 1999. But Bumrah is conjuring this wizardry in T20 cricket—a format where margins are razor-thin and batsmen are supposed to dominate. While India’s breathtaking acceleration with the bat has reinforced why they’re top favourites to defend their T20 World Cup title, their bowling unit—despite rotation—has been equally impressive. They defended totals at Nagpur despite dew, limited New Zealand to 208/6 on a flat Raipur deck, and delivered another clinical performance at Guwahati. The damage started by Harshit Rana was completed by Bumrah, returning figures of 4-0-17-3. What makes Bumrah invaluable is his unparalleled versatility. He can bowl with the new ball, in the second half of the powerplay, through the middle overs, and definitively at the death. In an era obsessed with match-ups, Bumrah’s

entry point keeps opponents perpetually guessing.

“I’m happy as far as I’m able to contribute,” Bumrah reflected after receiving the Man of the Match award. “If the team wants me to bowl with the new ball, I’m more than happy. If they want me to bowl in the end, I’m happy to do that. I did that in the Asia Cup as well. That was a new role for me—bowling three overs in the powerplay. But as a team, we have to be flexible. So I’m flexible as well.”

That flexibility is a luxury most teams can only dream of. While captains typically seek versatility in their batting ranks, Bumrah’s sensational form offers India a unique tactical advantage. At Guwahati, he entered as second change in the sixth over—the second half of the powerplay when batsmen are desperate to maximize field restrictions. His impact was immediate and devastating.

Bumrah’s liberation stems from the strength around him. With Arshdeep Singh exploiting the new ball, Hardik Pandya fit and firing, the skiddy Harshit Rana providing backup, and the spin duo of Varun Chakravarthy and Kuldeep Yadav dominating the middle overs, captain Suryakumar Yadav can deploy Bumrah’s four overs wherever the game demands. And when Bumrah takes the ball, he possesses enough variations to adapt to any situation. While his yorker remains his most lethal weapon, his good-length delivery is equally poisonous—particularly in sub-continental conditions with dew factored in. Bumrah’s unique bowling action, featuring hyperextension of the elbow, means his good-length deliveries naturally skid through—arriving quicker than they appear. Add even slight seam movement or swing, and what looks driveable at release becomes a delivery with the batsman’s name written on it. Seifert perhaps paid the price by standing rooted to the crease, but with that pacy skidding weapon trailing in, he can’t be blamed. Later, Kyle Jamieson attempted to play off the back foot and lost his leg stump. In the dressing room afterward, both would have realized the cruel truth: those deliveries offered no correct response—neither forward nor back.

That length, when dragged slightly back, becomes the hardest for batsmen to clear the boundary. And even when batsmen believe they’ve adapted, Bumrah produces another trick from his sleeve—a well-disguised slower ball that’s almost impossible to pick. While spinners Varun Chakravarthy and Kuldeep Yadav provide X-factor options, Bumrah offers something even rarer in modern T20 cricket: complete control across all phases of the game, regardless of match situation. His ability to swing momentum, break partnerships, and deliver in pressure moments makes him India’s ultimate trump card. In the format that supposedly belongs to batsmen, one man is rewriting the rules with a cricket ball in hand—proving that even in the most explosive era of the game, quality will always trump power. In a team brimming with match-winners, Bumrah could well be the one that wins them the T20 World Cup.

‘I don’t believe he is the man to get them winning league titles’: Roy Keane on Michael Carrick after Manchester United beat Arsenal

GNS News Jan 29

Manchester United’s interim manager Michael Carrick pulled off two wins over the top two teams in the league, defeating leaders Arsenal 3-2 on Sunday, following up with their 2-0 win vs Manchester City last week. But according to former United player Roy Keane, he is still not convincing enough to bag the United job on a permanent basis.

“Two great performances but anyone can win two games. If United win every game until the end of the season, I still wouldn’t be giving him the job. I still would not be convinced he’s the man for the job. Absolutely not,” Keane said on Sky Sports. “They need a bigger and better manager. The size of the club and the challenges they face over the next few years, you want a manager you feel can get them winning league titles. Are we going to sit here and believe Michael Carrick can get United winning league titles? It’s not enough for me. I don’t believe he is the man to get them winning league titles,” he added.

On Sunday, Matheus Cunha blew the Premier League title race wide open with a stunning winner as Manchester United beat Arsenal. The Brazil international curled a long-range shot past goalkeeper David Raya in the 87th minute to decide a thrilling game at the Emirates Stadium that



leaves Arsenal just four points clear of Manchester City and Aston Villa at the top of the standings. United is up to fourth after back-to-back wins under head coach Carrick, who is increasingly strengthening his case to be given the job on a long-term basis, having beaten City last week. “I’m enjoying it. It’s a fantastic position to be in,” Carrick said. “What happens next? I’m not going to be answering it every week. I’m enjoying it and I’ll continue to do what I can.” Two games in, Carrick has beaten the top two in England’s top flight.

Australian Open 2026: Darren Cahill reveals how Jannik Sinner survived extreme heat to reach 4th round

GNS News Jan 29 With the mercury touching 40 degrees at the Australian Open on Saturday, world No. 4 Jannik Sinner was visibly struggling through the middle stages of his third-round match, cramping and conserving energy as the Melbourne heat took its toll. The soaring Melbourne heat was meant to test bodies and resolve at the Australian Open. On Saturday, it nearly broke him. Sinner appeared physically compromised through the middle phases of his match against American Eliot Spizzirri, battling cramps and shortening points. Yet, as coach Darren Cahill later revealed, there was a clear plan in place – survive long enough.

“It’s clear that Jannik was very lucky with the timing of the roof closure,” Cahill said on Monday. “Everyone on the team knew that, at some point, the match would be paused to deploy the retractable roof. Our goal was for him to hold on as best as he could until the end of the third set.” That moment arrived just in time. With the third set delicately poised, the tournament’s extreme heat policy kicked in, forcing a suspension of play as the retractable roof was closed. The extended break allowed Sinner to recover physically and reset mentally – a turning point Cahill believes highlighted one of the Italian’s most underrated strengths.

“I’ve been working with him for a long time, and what he did the other day was one of the most impressive performances I’ve seen in terms of self-management,” Cahill said.

Before the contest, Cahill had cautioned Sinner against underestimating Spizzirri, insisting the match be approached with the same seriousness as a top-10 clash. “We approached it as if we were facing a top-10 opponent,” Cahill said. “I’ve been following this guy for a while, and his progress is impressive. I believe he has a great future



ahead.” Once conditions became manageable under the closed roof, Sinner responded decisively, overturning a deficit to take the third set 6-4 before sealing the fourth by the same margin to advance to the fourth round.

The episode once again highlighted Sinner’s ongoing struggles in extreme heat – an issue that has surfaced previously, most notably at the Shanghai Masters – though Cahill remains confident that steps are being taken to address it. Tournament organisers later offered Sinner the option of moving his next match against compatriot Luciano Darderi to Rod Laver Arena. The Italian, however, chose not to disrupt his routine. “When it was known that Mensik would not play, they offered Jannik the chance to switch to the last session at Rod Laver Arena,” Cahill revealed. “But he preferred not to change anything. He recovered well and was happy to play at Margaret Court Arena. He has no problem playing there.” Sinner defeated Darderi in straight sets, 6-1 6-3 7-6 on Monday and will face Ben Shelton in the quarter-final on Wednesday.

Don Bradman’s 78-year-old Baggy Green, which was gifted to a young Indian player, auctioned for \$460,000



GNS News Jan 29

The legendary Don Bradman’s “Baggy Green” cap, which he wore in the first Test series that India played in the country’s independent history, was on Monday sold for \$460,000 at a Gold Coast auction, fetching the highest price for a cap sported by the great Australian batsman. Bradman had gifted the cap to Ranga Sohoni, who had played one of the five Tests that India played on the tour. “That’s over three generations under lock and key. If you were a family member you were only allowed to look at it when you were 16 years old for five minutes,” Lee Hames, the chief operating

officer of Lloyds Auctioneers and Valuers, is quoted as saying by Reuters.

The cap was sold to an anonymous bidder and will be kept on display at an Australian museum, local media reported. The cap, which has the names “D.G. Bradman” and “S.W. Sohoni” inscribed on the inside, is in good condition. Another cap worn by Bradman was sun-faded and insect-damaged when it fetched \$311,000 at auction in 2024. Widely regarded as the greatest batsman in history, Bradman played 52 tests with a batting average of 99.94, nearly 40 runs higher than any other player. Sohoni, on the other hand, didn’t have much of a Test career, playing just four matches and taking just two wickets and scoring 83 runs. However, he went on to have a successful first class career overall. Having made his Ranji Trophy debut at the age of 17, Sohoni went on to captain Maharashtra and Bombay in a career that stretched nearly three decades. Australia had won that series 4-0, with Bradman finishing as the highest run scorer. He led the Australians while India were led by Lala Amarnath. Bradman had 715 runs to his name at the end of the series in six innings at an average of 178.55. Vijay Hazare was the highest scorer from among the Indians and the second highest overall in the series, having made 429 runs in 10 innings at an average of 47.66.

‘This time he didn’t even need luck’: Sunil Gavaskar weighs in on Suryakumar Yadav’s return to form



GNS News Jan 29

Worries over Suryakumar Yadav’s form was a major talking point before the start of India’s ongoing T20I series against New Zealand. Three matches into it, the Indian captain seems to have shown that fans will probably get to see the best of him in the upcoming T20 World Cup, with Suryakumar playing a major role in India’s daunting batting displays thus far in the series. Former India captain and batting great Sunil Gavaskar has said that the innings in the first T20I is what Suryakumar needed. “His knock the other

day in Raipur gave him exactly the confidence he needed. He hasn’t been short of form; he’s been short of runs,” said Gavaskar on Star Sports.

Suryakumar scored a 22-ball 32 in the first match as India won by 48 runs. He has gone on to finish unbeaten on 82 off 37 in the second T20I and on 57 off 26 in the third. India won those two matches comfortably as well and have thus already confirmed victory in the five-match series. “He has been batting very well in the nets. He’s not struggling there, he’s hitting the ball cleanly and all around the ground. It just wasn’t working for him in matches. Sometimes, all it takes is a bit of luck to get going. This time, he didn’t even need luck. That innings was exactly what he needed,” said Gavaskar. Suryakumar endured the worst year of his career last year. He scored just 218 runs in 19 T20I innings at a strike rate of 123.16 and average of just 13.62. It was the first time in his career that he struck at less than 150 in a calendar year. His form had been on the wane before that as well, with Suryakumar never quite hitting the highs that made him the best T20 batter in the world after taking over captaincy post India’s successful campaign in the 2024 T20 World Cup.

‘He is showing that he is a big-match player’: Rohit Sharma on Tilak Varma

GNS News Jan 29

In just a few short years, Tilak Varma has established himself as an important player in the India T20I setup with the Men in Blue sweating over his fitness ahead of the T20 World Cup in February. Rohit Sharma, who was Tilak’s captain in the Mumbai Indians as well as the national team, said that when he met Varma in the MI set up, he could sense there was something different about him.

“The first time Tilak Varma came into our Mumbai Indians setup, I could sense that there was something different about him. What attracted me was his constant conversation that came from a very innocent place, but it made a lot of sense. Whenever he spoke to me, he would just say, ‘I’ll do it. Please send me up the order, I’ll do the job.’ I’m talking about the 2022 and 2023 seasons, when I was captain. He has that mindset and attitude, which is superb, and he is mad about cricket.” Rohit said on JioHotstar’s ‘Captain Rohit Sharma’s Roadmap for T20 World Cup’ show.

While Tilak had played a fair few knocks in India colours, his real coming out party was in the Asia Cup final against Pakistan last year when he slammed an unbeaten 69 runs to help his team win the trophy. Rohit also made a special mention about that innings, reflecting on the 23-year-old’s mindset. “And most importantly, his temperament, that knock in the Asia Cup against Pakistan was unbelievable.



So much pressure, wickets falling at the other end, so much noise in the stadium, a tournament final no less. I know it’s still early days, but he is showing that he is a big-match player. Whenever the team is in trouble, not just once, he has gotten them out of trouble a few times now,” Rohit said. Varma, who suffered an abdomen injury while playing the Vijay Hazare trophy, hasn’t taken part in the ongoing India vs New Zealand series and is now slated to join the team only before India’s warm-up match for the 2026 T20 World Cup. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said that Varma is making steady progress with his rehabilitation at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

‘Extremely difficult to bowl to him’: Yuzvendra Chahal describes why this Indian batter is tough to crack

GNS News Jan 29

India bowler Yuzvendra Chahal has described what makes Suryakumar Yadav such a dangerous proposition to bowl to, as a wrist spinner. The Indian skipper, who was struggling for form before the start of the T20I series, has found himself back among the runs again after two back-to-back fifties. The vein of form that SKY finds himself in is a welcome proposition for an Indian team that is looking ominous in their batting department right as the ICC T20 World Cup at home beckons. Chahal spoke about trying to plan for Suryakumar and setting a field for him. “When he is in form, it’s extremely difficult to bowl to him. I will talk as a wrist-spinner. When he plays the sweep and you keep the deep fielder towards square leg, the midwicket is empty, he can hit in the gap when you bowl the googly, and he gets a



boundary there,” he said.

Chahal then spoke about how his sweeping and his ability to hit over cover meant that he was always happy to allow Surya to rotate strike and bowl to his partner during the IPL. “When you move the fielder towards midwicket, he hits straight and over cover. It’s said that it’s most difficult to bowl to a

batter who sweeps and plays over cover well, and he is that batter. Many times when I used to bowl to him, I felt I should give him a single and attack the other batter,” Chahal observed. In the Star Sports studio after the game, former India wicketkeeper and batter Parthiv Patel also spoke about Surya getting his confidence back because of how he was play-

ing a certain shot. “The Supla shot we talk about, he is playing that shot naturally now.

Earlier, he was going in search of that shot because he didn’t have runs behind him. If he had to hit the same ball over cover, he can do that as well. However, if he hit a six over fine leg, it means instinct took over.” Parthiv observed.

Waheeda Rehman reacts to AR Rahman's Bollywood is 'communal' comment: 'Yeh mulk hamara hai, shanti se raho'



AR Rahman has been facing a backlash ever since he suggested that he has lost work in the Hindi film industry due to a communal bias and a power shift in the last eight years. While the music composer clarified his intention on social media later, several celebs including Javed Akhtar, Shaan, Shankar Mahadevan and Kangana Ranaut reacted to his controversial statement. Now, in an exclusive interview with SCREEN, veteran actor Waheeda Rehman opened up about the ongoing row in the industry. She claimed that the reason behind his claims might be time.

When asked to address Rahman's comments about getting less work due to a power shift and a perceived communal bias in the industry, she replied, "Yes, I read about it, but I try to dig less into it. I prefer not to pay attention to it,

when everything is going fine. These small things happen in every country."

The 87-year-old further added, "So, what to believe and how much to believe? If it's even true or not. Why should we get involved? At least at my age, I don't want to get involved with anything or anybody. Apni shaanti se raho, yeh mulk hai humaara, bas khush raho, that's what I can say (this is our country, live in peace and stay happy)." Waheeda further elaborated that the music-composer might be getting less work as times are changing, rather than due to his religion. "Kaam toh upar neeche hota hi rehta hai. Ek umar ke baad, log kehte hain ki bring something new or different (your ability to get work changes after a certain age). All this can lead to a few people staying behind," she expressed. "Agar vo bahut oonchaai par pahuche hain aur vo vahin rahenge, unhi ko lenge, aisa bhi toh nahi hota na. Upar neeche hota hi rehta hai, aisi koi nayi baat nahi hai (It is nothing new, this fluctuation keeps happening)," she concluded.

AR Rahman's 'communal' remarks Earlier, during an interview with BBC Asian Network, Rahman was asked about facing prejudice in the Hindi film industry as a Tamilian. "Maybe I never get to know of this, maybe it was concealed but I didn't feel any of this. Maybe in the past eight years because a power shift has happened and people who are not creative have the power now. It might be a communal thing also... but it is not in my face. It comes to me as Chinese whispers that they booked you but the music company went ahead and hired their 5 composers. I say good, I have more time to chill with my family. I am not in search for work. I don't want to go in search for work. I want work to come to me; my sincerity to earn work. Whatever I deserve, I get," the composer replied. After receiving a lot of backlash for his remarks, Rahman shared a video post on social media and clarified his stance. "India is my inspiration, my teacher and my home. I understand that intentions can sometimes be misunderstood. But my purpose has always been to uplift, honour and serve through music. I have never wished to cause pain, and I hope my sincerity is felt," he said in the clip.

'I cried in front of 100 people': Vikrant Massey recalls being shouted at by director, says he felt humiliated

Vikrant Massey was humiliated on first day on film set when director shouted at him. Vikrant Massey cried in front of 100 people as the director shouted at him. Vikrant Massey's journey as an actor started quite early, and it was not out of choice. He was a 16-year-old, working as a barista at a Mumbai restaurant, trying to pay for his education when a TV producer spotted him and offered him the lead role in a show. Vikrant who was pulled 16-hour days as he juggled two jobs besides studies jumped at the offer. The show never telecast at the time but Vikrant, the actor, was born.

"I always wanted to be an actor, but obviously no 16 year old wants to be an actor. I thought I'll finish my graduation, and then I will go to NSD or FTII and then maybe, when I am 24-25, I'll act professionally," Vikrant recalled about his journey in an interview to Republic. The actor said he was raw and untrained when he faced the camera, simply attracted by the promise of the fee that could help him pay for education. "I still remember the date, it was December 19, 2024. Prior to that, I was working as a barista. I did that job because I had to support my own education. I am not going to get into that sob story or my struggle. I used to also work as an assistant instructor in Shiamak Davar's troupe and at a restaurant in Mumbai," Vikrant recalled.

However, his experience of facing the camera was not memorable. "It was at a studio at the Madh Island where I now reside. I was 16 and facing the camera for the first time. I was horrible at what I was doing and the director was a very experienced film director of that time. Earlier, people would get film directors to set up your show because they would have more money at the beginning. I was so bad. I remember very, very clearly my director yelled at me and I started crying. I was so naive. I was mouthing my lines and he was not happy with the way I was doing it, of course. He lost his patience and yelled at me on the mic. He got personal. He said a few things... I remember me breaking down. I started crying because I felt so humiliated," Vikrant said.

The producer of the show, who had offered her the role, tried to calm down the teenager. "The producer of the show came to me and I just said one thing to her, 'yaar sabke samne aisa kyu bola?' And that was it. I took it on the chin. That's always been my nature, I am always willing to learn, always wanting to sort of unlearn as well at the



same time. And I'm glad that experience happened." He said the filmmaker later came and apologised to him. "He was generous enough. That very evening, he came up to me and he said, 'I'm really sorry and I shouldn't have spoken to you that way.' But that one moment, the first day of shoot, you're yelled at in front of 100 people... I tend to forgive, but I don't forget." He, however, said he doesn't hold it against the director. "The experience was not severe enough for me to sort of want a payback for it. There have been certain experiences that I have held very close to my heart, especially with many casting directors when I was breaking through from television to movies. And unfortunately, there was this preconceived notion about television actors not being good at what they do. That they're not good actors. And there was this disparity between film actors and TV actors. So there were a few people, like producers and casting directors who very openly told me that you know that you're a TV actor and we'll never work with you because you're a TV actor." Vikrant named multiple talented people who transitioned from TV and have made cinema better by being a part of it. "Some of the finest actors you see now, especially in the last 10 years, are TV actors, whether it is Yami Gautam or Mrunal Thakur. Aryan Khan stole the show making Ba***ds of Bollywood. Directors such as Anurag Basu, Anurag Kashyap, they've worked in television."



rience that, eventually, things do get better. Tanishk, when everything in life is weighing on you, immerse yourself in your passion. Hold on to what you love, it will get you through."

In an earlier interview, Namita spoke about facing intense trolling for her appearance on Shark Tank India. She shared how she had long been concerned with external validation, her public image, and what people thought of her. "I wanted all the labels and cared so much about them," Namita revealed.

Badshah calls his Rs 12.45 cr Rolls Royce Cullinan an impulsive buy: 'The high of buying it lasted for 10-15 minutes'



Last year, Badshah became the first India-born musician to own a Rolls-Royce Cullinan Series II. With this purchase, he joined Mukesh Ambani, Shah Rukh Khan, and Ajay Devgn, an elite club of people who own the vehicle. In a recent interaction, Badshah admitted that buying the car, whose on-road price in Mumbai starts at approximately Rs 12.45 crore, was an impulsive decision and that the high of owning such a luxury vehicle lasted for only 10-15 minutes.

Badshah on buying Rolls-Royce Cullinan Series IISpeaking to Curly Tales, he said, "I think buying the car was very impulsive. Jaldi se decide kar liya ki aaj lena hai (I decided quickly that I will buy it today). Badshah Wali feeling hai. Its a good car. 10-15 minute raha tha uska high (The high of buying the car lasted for 10-15 minutes) and then you are like what next?" Badshah shared that he wishes to do and buy everything that is on his bucket list, just like the Rolls-Royce. He said, "Mera mann karta hai ki jo bhi best hai technologically wo mere paas ho (I wish to have all best things technologically). Log kehte hai naa ki best gadi hai (When people say it is the best car). So I want to have all those things." When asked which luxury item he would

first grab if his house caught fire, Badshah replied, "I would save the car. I will have to live in the car then." He was also asked to choose between Rs 5 crore and limited edition of watches and rapper, without hesitating chose watches. "Every limited watch would be worth more than Rs 5 crore."

Despite spending crores on luxury items, the rapper admitted that he still checks the price tag before making any purchase. "I have to see the price tag first. I hope it never comes to the point that I don't check the price tag." Badshah is often tagged as a materialist. Defending himself, he said, "I don't feel anything when people say I am a materialist. What is being materialistic? It is that you love things. I value my relationships more than I value material things. But I love my material things too. I love wearing good clothes, driving good cars, wearing good shoes... I like it." However, he explained that material possessions would never overpower his real relationships. "Agar koi mera bahut achchha dost hai, usne meri gaadi thok di to main pehle poochunga if he is fine (If my good friend ever hits my car, I will first ask if he is okay). Only when I am sure of his well-being then I will take his class." Badshah admits hiding cost of watches from parents

Badshah also admitted that even though he spends heavily on luxury items, he hides their costs from his parents. He said, "I never tell my parents how much my watches cost. I don't think they will even believe that a watch can cost this much." Before gaining fame as a rapper, Badshah worked as a civil engineer. During the interaction, he shared an incident from his earlier job when he asked a question to an IAS officer that shocked his colleagues. "The social ecosystem is like the wealthy people are not nice. When I was working as a government officer. I was posted at Mount Sundar Nagar in Himachal Pradesh. There the financial commissioner is the basically the administrative head and he/she is an IAS officer. So, he was retiring and he asked if we have any questions for him. I asked him, 'When businessman or athlete drive Mercedes then people credit their hard work, but when a government employee does that, they call him a thief.' To which he replied very beautifully. He said it depends what your Mercedes is in your life. Matlab aapki life mein aapki Mercedes kya hai. Everyone around me asked me to sit down, saying what type of question you are asking, I was very young. I remember I was 23."

Varun Dhawan's pull-up video inside a Mumbai Metro coach lands him in trouble, authorities issue safety warning: 'Video should have come with disclaimer...'

Varun Dhawan, who is currently basking in the success of his latest release Border 2, has once again made headlines. The actor landed in trouble after videos of him performing pull-ups inside a Mumbai Metro coach surfaced online. The incident occurred on Saturday, when Varun opted to travel by metro for a surprise visit to a theatre to avoid Mumbai's heavy traffic. However, on Monday, metro authorities issued a safety advisory and reportedly asked the actor to include a disclaimer in such situations.

Earlier, Varun had shared a clip of himself inside the metro, asking fans to guess which cinema hall he was heading to. Soon after, videos began circulating on social media showing him hanging from a metal rod and performing pull-ups, while several other passengers stood nearby.

Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Limited (MMMOCL) later shared the video on its Instagram handle, along with a safety message in the caption. It read, "This video should have come with a disclaimer like the ones in your action movies, @Varun_dvn. Do Not Try This On Maha Mumbai Metro. We get it, it is cool to hang out with friends inside our metros but those grab handles are not for hanging."

The caption further read, "Acts like these are punishable under the sections relating to causing nuisance and/or damage to property given in the The Metro Railways (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2002; attracting penalties



and even imprisonment depending on the gravity of the offence. So folks, hang out, but don't hang in there. Travel responsibly on Maha Mumbai Metro. #MahaMumbaiMetro #CivicResponsibility #TravelSafe #RebootingMumbai #ReshapingMMR @Dev_Fadnavis @mieknathshinde @MMRDAOfficial @DrSanMukherjee @IAS_Rubal." Several social media users praised the authorities for being unbiased in correcting a celebrity, about the unlawful actions in a public transport. Meanwhile, Varun Dhawan's war drama Border 2, which hit theatres on January 23, has already crossed Rs 140 crore at the box office. Besides Varun, Border 2 also stars Sunny Deol, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty, with Mona Singh, Sonam Bajwa, Anya Singh, and Medha Rana. Directed by Anurag Singh, the film is a sequel to J.P. Dutta's iconic 1997 war drama Border.

Shah Rukh Khan was being harassed, was detained for 2 hours at Newark airport, recalls Rajeev Shukla: 'Within 15 minutes, he was let go'

Despite being one of the most popular and celebrated film stars in the world, Shah Rukh Khan has often faced in/direct attacks for his Muslim identity, the most notable being his detention at airports in the US on more than one occasion. Recently, Congress Rajya Sabha MP and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) vice-president Rajeev Shukla commented on the same, revealing how he helped Bollywood's 'Baadshah' when he was detained at Newark airport in the aftermath of 9/11.

Revealing that he was the one whom Shah Rukh Khan contacted when the incident happened, Shukla said during a conversation with news agency ANI, "Unhone phone isliye kiya tha ki random vo chal raha tha ki naam ko dekhkar kisi ka bhi baggage rok lete the (He called because at that time, random checks were going on, where they would stop anyone's baggage just by looking at the name). They used to stop anyone and make them sit... After 9/11, you could not question security people at the airport."

He continued, "Their laws were so strict... toh unko (SRK) bhi harassment ho raha tha... Us din Janmashtami thi toj phone aayaa... aur vo keh raha ki 'aise aise ye ye hua hai... Do ghante se baithaya hua hai' (So Shah Rukh was also facing harassment. That day was Janmashtami when I got the call. He said that this and that had happened and that he had been made to sit there for two hours). I won't disclose who I contacted or what actually happened, but... 15 minute mein Shah Rukh ka phone aa gaya hai ki unhe nikal diya hai aur sab saman nikal gaya (Within 15 minutes, Shah Rukh called back saying that he has been let go and baggage has been released)."

Following the 2009 incident, Shah Rukh had described the experience as "embarrassing." Years later, he spoke about it in depth, maintaining that it was an uncomfortable situation. "It just was very uncomfortable. To land up some-



where and getting stuck in an airport for 2-3 hours for no reason at all," news agency PTI quoted him as saying. "God forbid if there was a problem in India, I would be the first to say that we have to strengthen our security. One has to see it in a larger context, it's a sign of the times. The world is that kind of place... you cannot hold grudges against people. We have to live with it and and just be prepared for some of this stuff," he added.