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Bapuji's death anniversary celebrations in Bapuji Nagar

Secunderabad Cantonment, January 30 (Indian Chronicle): "The death anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi were held grandly at the Bapuji statue in Bowenpally, Bapuji Nagar. On this occasion, former Vice Chairman of the Cantonment Board, Jampana Pratap, offered floral tributes to the Gandhi statue. Others also offered flowers and paid their respects. Komaraiah, Bandi Srinivas, Ajit Kalyan, Srikanth, Saibaba Yadav, Bhanu, Gomathi, Karan Singh, Vasu Goud, Ramarao, Suresh, Mukesh Yadav, Varaprasad, and others participated in the program."



Menstrual health a right, provide sanitary napkins in schools: SC

New Delhi, Jan 30

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Friday declared that "the right to menstrual health is a part of the right to live with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution" and ordered states and union territories to provide free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins to girl students.

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. The right to healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health," a Bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan said.

Linking girl students' menstrual health with the right to education, the Bench directed states and UTs "to ensure that every school, whether government-run or privately managed, in both urban and rural areas, is provided with the functional, gender-segregated toilets with usable water connectivity".

The top court directed the Centre, states and UTs to ensure that its directions were strictly complied with in three months from the date of the judgment.

"All existing and newly constructed toilets in schools shall be designed, constructed and maintained so as to ensure privacy and accessibility, including by catering to the needs of children with disabilities. All school toilets shall be equipped with functional hand-washing facilities, with soap and water available at all times," it ordered.

The verdict came on a petition filed by Madhya Pradesh Congress leader Jaya Thakur, seeking directions to ensure that free pads were provided to every girl child from Class VI to XII and to ensure separate toilets for them in all government-aided and residential schools.

As regards the "availability of menstrual absorbents", it directed that "all states and UTs shall ensure that every school provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins manufactured in compliance with the ASTM D-6954 standards free of cost".

It said, "Such sanitary napkins shall be made readily accessible to girl students, preferably within the toilet premises through vending machines or where such installation is not immediately feasible, at a designated place or with a designated authority within the school."

The Bench directed the states and UTs to ensure that every school established menstrual hygiene man-



agement corners. "Such corners shall be equipped with (but not limited to) spare innerwear, spare uniforms, disposable bags and other necessary materials to address menstruation-related exigencies," it said.

It ordered that each school must be equipped with a safe, hygienic and environmentally compliant mechanism for the disposal of sanitary napkins in accordance with the latest solid waste management rules. Each toilet unit shall be equipped with a covered waste bin for the collection of sanitary material and cleanliness and regular maintenance of such bins shall be ensured at all times.

The court said, "The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) shall incorporate gender-responsive curricula on menstruation, puberty and other related health concerns with a view to break stigma and taboo associated with menstrual health and hygiene."

"All teachers, whether male or female, shall be adequately trained and sensitised on menstrual hygiene, including appropriate ways of supporting and assisting menstruating students. Information regarding the availability of Jan Aushadhi Suvidha oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkin shall be widely disseminated through advertisement in social media, print media, radio, TV, cinema and outdoor publicity like bus queue shelters," the Bench said.

It said, "The child helpline set up by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights in furtherance of Rule 26 of the RTE rules be disseminated forthwith through social media, print, radio, TV and cinema advertisement, etc."

Cong objects to Economic Survey's RTI review pitch

New Delhi, Jan 30

The Congress on Friday objected to the Economic Survey's call for a "re-examination" of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, warning that the recommendations could further weaken the country's transparency framework and restrict citizens' access to information.

The survey, tabled in Parliament on January 29 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, suggested exploring a possible ministerial veto to withhold information and proposed shielding certain categories of public service records, including transfers and staff-related reports of bureaucrats, from public scrutiny.

Reacting to the recommendations, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accused the Modi government of steadily undermining the RTI Act since 2014. He said the law had been weakened through a combination of policy changes, institutional neglect and legislative inter-

ventions.

Kharge pointed to the growing backlog of cases under the RTI framework, stating that more than 26,000 appeals and complaints were pending as of 2025.

Referring to the 2019 amendments to the RTI Act, Kharge said the Centre had taken control of the tenure and salaries of Information Commissioners, eroding the independence of bodies meant to function as autonomous watchdogs.

He also cited the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, alleging that it diluted the RTI's public interest clause by expanding privacy exemptions, thereby enabling authorities to deny information and block scrutiny.

The Congress chief further alleged that more than 100 RTI activists had been killed since 2014, creating a climate of fear for those seeking information. He said the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, passed in 2014 under the Congress-led UPA government, had not been implemented by the BJP.

Laxman welcomes Economic Survey as growth gateway

Hyderabad: MP Dr K Laxman has formally welcomed the Economic Survey 2025-26 describing the document as a realistic and reform-oriented assessment of the Indian economy today. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha on Friday he noted that the survey reflects the robust foundations established under the leadership of Narendra Modi.

He emphasised that despite various global economic uncertainties and geopolitical tensions India remains the fastest-growing major economy in the world. With GDP growth projected to fall between 6.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent the survey highlights a path driven by strong domestic demand and structural reforms K Laxman pointed out that the government's commitment to fiscal discipline and inflation control has provided much-needed relief to common citizens.

Turning his attention to regional impacts K Laxman

stated that the survey offers substantial opportunities for Telangana particularly in sectors where the state maintains a proven competitive advantage over others. The continued emphasis on the services sector information technology and the digital economy is expected to bolster the position of Hyderabad as a premier global technology hub.

He highlighted that Global Capability Centres and the burgeoning startup ecosystem would receive significant support through this policy. Increased central capital expenditure on railways highways and digital connectivity will directly benefit the state by improving logistics and industrial competitiveness. The survey's focus on high-growth areas like pharmaceuticals electronics and electric vehicles aligns perfectly with the industrial ecosystem of Telangana K Laxman also praised the focus on labour reforms and skilling initiatives designed to increase the participation of women in the workforce.

BJP chief touts Jagtial as base for state victory

Telangana BJP chief Ramchander Rao has declared that the journey towards establishing a BJP government in the state has officially commenced from Jagtial. Speaking at the Vijay Shankharav meeting on Friday, which marked the induction of prominent industrialist Konda Lakshman into the party, Rao described himself as an advocate dedicated to fighting for the public interest. He praised leaders like Arvind Dharmapuri for their commitment to national service and urged the people to unite under the BJP banner to save Telangana from its current political challenges. The meeting saw attendance from senior leaders including MP Dharmapuri Arvind, District President Yadagiri Babu, and other party workers who gathered to strengthen the regional base. Rao launched a scathing attack on the Congress administration, accusing Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of failing to honour the guarantees made two and a half years ago. He highlighted that the promised investigations into corruption under the previous BRS regime have yielded no significant results.

Uttam blasts BRS for historic water betrayal

Hyderabad, Jan 30

Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy launched a blistering counterattack on the Bharat Rashtra Samithi on Friday, firmly rejecting



BRS allegations that the Congress government had compromised the state's water rights during inter-state discussions on issues pertaining to Krishna and Godavari river water sharing.

Reddy branded the BRS claims as baseless propaganda and repeated lies, accusing the previous BRS regime under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao and former Irrigation Minister T. Harish Rao of a historic betrayal of Telangana's farmers.

He pointed out that the BRS had accepted an inequitable 299 TMC ft share in a 66:34 split of 811 TMC ft of Krishna waters post-bifurcation, describing the agreement as a shameful legacy sealed in Union Jal Shakti Ministry meetings with Harish Rao's direct involvement, while also squandering nearly Rs 1.8 lakh crore on incomplete irrigation projects, including the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme and the Sitarama

delivered no meaningful new ayacut or even a single additional acre under key schemes.

Turning to the Godavari, Reddy highlighted the catastrophic collapse of the Medigadda Barrage under the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme, a project conceived, constructed and inaugurated entirely during BRS rule, which the National Dam Safety Authority's 2025 report labelled the worst man-made disaster in India's history.

Over five years, only 165 TMC ft of water was pumped, while massive volumes were released back to the sea. Additional losses occurred due to evaporation, leaving just 65-70 TMC available for actual use, resulting in negligible new irrigation.

The facts lay bare the hollowness of claims about creating significant new ayacut.

Reddy vowed that the Congress government, in office since December 7, 2023, would not yield even a single drop of Telangana's rightful share and is aggressively pursuing the state's entitlements through tribunals, courts and official talks to reclaim what was lost and expose the BRS's decade of failures. In sharp contrast to the BRS-era compromises, the present administration is demanding approximately 70 per cent of Krishna waters, grounded in Telangana's 68 per cent catchment area, and has been vigorously advancing this position before the Krishna River Management Board, the KWDT-II and the Supreme Court. On Andhra Pradesh's proposed Polavaram-Nallamala Sagar project, intended to divert 200 TMC ft of Godavari floodwaters annually to Krishna basin areas, including Rayalaseema, Reddy reiterated the state's strong opposition, arguing that it violates the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014 and tribunal awards. Written assurances were received even from Union Minister CR Patil and the Central Water Commission confirming that no approvals have been granted.

Pro-nation, not pro-BJP, says Tharoor on his political stance

New Delhi, Jan 30

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday sought to put to rest speculation about his political position, asserting that his comments on sensitive national issues should not be viewed through a partisan lens.

Responding to questions about past remarks that drew criticism within the party, Tharoor said that his interventions had always been guided by national interest rather than political alignment. Speaking to reporters, the Thiruvananthapuram MP said he had never concealed his approach to foreign

policy and international affairs, where he prefers to speak as an Indian rather than as a party politician. He said that this position had remained consistent over the years and should not come as a surprise.

The clarification comes months after a controversy erupted over Tharoor's remarks on India-Pakistan relations and India's diplomatic engagement following the Pahalgam attack. His comments had differed from the Congress' stated position, triggering sharp reactions from several party leaders who publicly questioned his intent and political messaging.

While defending his record, Tharoor also acknowledged that party discipline mattered. He underlined that a Congress member was expected to broadly adhere to the party line, adding that his conduct in Parliament reflected that commitment.

Inter-State Burglary Gang Arrested by Medipally Police



NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal-Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 30, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Medipally police under the Malkajgiri Commissionerate arrested an inter-state burglary gang involved in a series of house thefts in the Boduppal Circle during the Sankranti holidays. The accused had targeted houses whose occupants had gone to their native places for the festival. Addressing the media at Medipally Police Station, DCP Suresh Kumar stated that the burglaries took place on January 15, when the accused broke into nine houses and escaped with stolen property. The arrested persons were identified as Mahadev Jha (A1) and Pawan Gupta (A2) from Delhi, and Mangal Singh (A3) from Kanpur. The trio allegedly stole 250 grams of gold, 6 kilograms of silver, and cash worth Rs. 2 lakh. According to police, the accused operated as a gang and carried out multiple thefts in a

planned manner. Taking the case as a challenge, Medipally police analyzed technical evidence and CCTV footage, which helped in identifying and tracking the suspects involved in the serial burglaries. Police also arrested Sriram Saw Birendra (A4), a native of Bihar, who allegedly purchased the stolen property. He was brought to Medipally on a transit warrant. Two of the accused have been sent to judicial remand, while efforts are underway to bring the remaining two accused from Bihar to Medipally. DCP Suresh Kumar further stated that the accused were previously involved in several burglary cases registered in Nalgonda, Warangal, and Jangaon police station limits. Police recovered four mobile phones and Rs. 2,04,000 in cash from the accused. The DCP appreciated the police personnel for solving the case efficiently and announced rewards for the team involved. Further investigation will continue after completion of the remand proceedings.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Stop politicising human tragedy

Floating conspiracy theories around the tragic plane crash that claimed the life of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar are highly reprehensible. By raising suspicion over what is clearly an unfortunate accident and suggesting a political conspiracy behind it, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has further lowered the bar of political discourse in the country. Within hours of the accident at Baramati airport, Banerjee made a distasteful speech claiming that his death raised suspicion because he was about to return to the Sharad Pawar faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). When the whole nation was still in a state of shock, struggling to process the tragic news, she chose to politicise the issue and even demanded a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the tragedy. In a highly inappropriate remark, Banerjee claimed that all agencies of the central government have been compromised. Such positioning is irresponsible and preposterous, particularly coming from a senior politician occupying a constitutional post. Ajit Pawar's uncle and NCP founder Sharad Pawar displayed commendable maturity in the face of a grave personal loss when he made it clear in no uncertain terms that it was an accident and not a political conspiracy. He pleaded with people not to politicise the tragedy. This should serve as a reality check for those who are itching to seek political capital out of a human tragedy. This is not the time to indulge in petty politics, but to stand by the bereaved family.

The focus should be on addressing the safety issues to prevent such disasters in future. The Baramati airstrip, the scene of the plane crash, is equipped only with a rudimentary Air Traffic Control (ATC) set-up operated by a flying school, and lacks a dedicated meteorologist and navigational aids to transmit cues to the cockpit. The Learjet 45 aircraft, carrying Ajit Pawar and four others, made two attempts to land at Baramati but the pilots faced difficulty in sighting the runway. The airstrip is categorised as an "uncontrolled aerodrome" as it does not have typical airport infrastructure and navigation procedures such as an instrument landing system, or security and fire-fighting arrangements. The ill-fated aircraft is owned by Delhi-based charter company VSR Ventures Private Limited, which has 17 aircraft in its fleet.

Buchesh Yadav, a young leader of Bharatiya Janata Party, who will be given a chance as a councillor, will work as a servant

“Jan30.indian chronicle.medak.” Buchesh Yadav nominated as councilor of Narsapur 13th ward of Medak district on Friday saying that Bharatiya Janata Party is a symbol of the country, Bharatiya Janata Party is a symbol



of Hinduism, Bharatiya Janata Party is a symbol of national defense, Bharatiya Janata Party is a symbol of national development, Bharatiya Janata Party is a symbol of selfless workers.” Buchesh Yadav informed that if given a chance as a councilor from Narsapur town, he will work as a servant and not as a councillor, he will work to solve drainage problems in the town, street lights, fresh water supply, greenery cleanliness, houses for those who do not get a double bedroom, he will talk to the authorities so that those who do not get pensions will get pensions. Buchesh Yadav informed that he will stand by the side and he requested people to bless him as the councilor of the 13th ward.

Bharatiya Janata Party workers campaigning extensively for the victory of 13th Ward Councilor

Buchesh Yadav

“Jan30.indian chronicle.medak” Even though Buchesh Yadav won twice as the 13th ward councilor of Narsapur town center of Medak district and is ready for a hat-trick for

the third time, the Bharatiya Janata Party activists and friends organized a massive campaign in the town center for the victory. Buchesh Yadav, who will stand in the victory circle for the third time after winning, is known as a mild-mannered and uncontroversial. Senior leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party Velduri, Arey Venkatesh Mudiraj and Hanumadri Mahesh Goud participated in the event.

Agreement for the conduct of mBAJA SAEINDIA 2026

Jan30.indian chronicle.medak” In a significant step towards encouraging young engineers and further strengthening experience-based engineering education, BAJA SAEINDIA and Sri Vishnu Educational Society have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the physical round of mBAJA SAEINDIA 2026. This prestigious competition will be held at B.V. Raju Institute of Technology (BVRIT) in Narsapur, near Hyderabad, from February 25 to March 1, 2026. mBAJA, recognized as one of the oldest and most prominent competitions in the BAJA series, stands unparalleled among off-road engineering competitions conducted for students in India. Through this collaboration, both organizations aim to foster innovation, practical learning, sustainability, diversity, and a strong industry-academia connection, with the goal of producing industry-ready engineers. For the 2026 edition, BVRIT will transform into an exciting engineering hub for engineering teams from across the country. Dynamic and Static: Students participating in this event will showcase their design and manufacturing skills of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) across all terrains. This competition will provide students with invaluable experience in facing real-world engineering challenges, bridging the gap between academia and industry. Speaking on this occasion, Dr. K.V.N. Sunitha, Principal of BVRIT Hyderabad, stated that hands-on learning, innovation-based education, and collaboration with industry are the core principles of their institution's educational philosophy. She assured full support for the successful conduct of mBAJA SAEINDIA 2026. Recalling past achievements, Mr. Ravichandran Rajagopal, Vice Chairman of Sri Vishnu Educational Society, said that hosting national-level BAJA events is a matter of pride for the institution.

He mentioned that under the inspiring leadership of Chairman Mr. K.V. Vishnu Raju, they are promoting sustainable and future-ready mobility solutions. Speaking at the event, Mr. Balraj Sushrutha, Chairman of the BAJA SAEINDIA Organizing Committee, said that this competition, which started in 2007, has today grown into a major engineering event spread across the country. He explained that BAJA SAEINDIA plays a crucial role in developing technical, problem-solving, and collaborative skills among students to face future mobility challenges. In his guest address, Dr. P. Srinivasa Raju, Director of Sri Vishnu Educational Society, said that BAJA SAEINDIA provides an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems. He added that this competition develops skills in design optimization, teamwork, project management, and decision-making under pressure among the students. Mr. Ali Syed, Convenor of mBAJA 2026, spoke about the diverse and inclusive culture present in BAJA SAEINDIA. He said that through HR meets, students get the opportunity to interact directly with industry representatives, leading to internships and



job opportunities. Finally, Dr. Srinidhi Pal of BVRIT Narsapur concluded the program. Sanjay Dubey thanked BAJA SAEINDIA, the Revish Educational Society, the Organizing Committee members, the participants, teachers, and student volunteers for their cooperation. The BAJA SAEINDIA 2026 Phase-3 physical round will be conducted from February 25 to March 1, 2026, followed by the HR meet on March 2 and 3, 2026.

Widespread Joy Over Approval of Rs160-Crore Link Road: Colony Residents Perform Milk Abhishekam to CM Revanth Reddy's Portrait

Parameshwar Reddy Participates Along with Residents



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 30 (Indian Chronicle):” There is widespread happiness following the approval for the construction of a long-pending link road from Amberpet Ali Café to Uppal Nalla Cheruvu. With the sanction of ₹160 crore for the project, the long-cherished dream of residents in this region is set to become a reality. The proposed link road will connect Amberpet, Patel Nagar, Ramanthapur, Uppal (Bhagya D-Mart), via Metro Cash & Carry, to the Warangal National Highway. Taking part in the celebrations, residents of the area, along with Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, performed a milk abhishekam to the portrait of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy as a mark of gratitude. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy stated that District In-charge Minister Sridhar Babu will soon undertake a massive padayatra along the route of the proposed link road through Patel Nagar, Ramanthapur, and Uppal, where construction works are expected to begin shortly. Parameshwar Reddy emphasized that the GHMC Standing Committee approved the project due to the special initiative taken by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He further noted that the Chief Minister, who has a thorough

understanding of the Uppal constituency, is sanctioning substantial funds for the comprehensive development of the area. The program was attended by Tafik; Division Presidents Rafiq and Valapu Srikanth Yadav; Jaleel Pasha; colony presidents including TV Colony President Satti Reddy, KCR Nagar President K. Swamy, Gandhi Nagar President Mogili Lingam, Srinagar Colony President Peddi Raju Sandeep Kumar, Shantinagar Colony President T. Narsing Rao, and Satya Nagar Colony President Ramakrishna Reddy; Medchal Youth Congress General Secretary Kishore; Kuruma Association President Gotike Sattaiah; Kodandarama Temple Member Mallaiah; Abhaya Anjaneya Temple Member Raghu; General Secretary Balaiah; Congress leaders Sandhya Rani, Raji Reddy, Upender Reddy, Poosa Sattanna, Bhaskar, Aleem, Sudhakar, David Santu, Bullet Ashok, Mittu, Satish Goud, Muthyala Jangaiah, Muthyala Babu, Samuel, Seema Kandla Jangaiah, Vijay, Arun Sai, Srinivas Goud, Narasimha, Shaik Sridhar, Kashamalla Shankar, Khadeer, Pentaiah, Yadagiri Reddy, Uday Kumar, Janga Reddy, Ramchander, Nagaraju G. Swamy, Krishna, Nagamallaiah, Shankar Goud, Venkatesh, Anjaiah, Ramu, Chintu, Saleem, Gautham Kiran, Ambika, Gayatri, Menga Shobha, Geetha, Bejjim Shobha, Suvarna, Vasavi, Harish Reddy, Narasimha, Shabeer, Mustafa, Pasha, Gumula Ashok, Bhanu, Bhaskar, Naga Chari, Oggu Siddulu, Suresh, Srikanth, Rajesh, Shiva, and several others.

Collector launches Media Centre, MCMC to monitor municipal election coverage

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 29 (Indian Chronicle):” District Collector Inaugurates Media Centre for Municipal Elections in Komaram Bheem Asifabad” K. Haritha, District Collector of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, on Friday inaugurated the Media Centre and Media Certification and Monitoring Cell (MCMC) set up in Room No. 13 of the Integrated District Offices Complex (Collectorate), in connection with the forthcoming municipal elections. The inauguration was carried out jointly with Lokeshwar Rao, Revenue Divisional Officer. The District Collector inspected the facilities made available for the media and reviewed the arrangements for the effective functioning of the MCMC. Speaking on the occasion, she instructed officials to ensure that information related to the municipal elections is disseminated regularly and promptly to both print and electronic media through the Media Centre. She stated that, as per the directions of the State Election Commission, the Media Certification and Monitoring Cell has been established at the district level. Through the MCMC, paid news will be identified, and election expenditure related to campaign advertisements will be accounted for in a timely manner. She further emphasized that social media posts

must be continuously monitored and that legal action will be taken against posts violating the Model Code of Conduct. The District Collector appealed to the media to extend its cooperation in conducting the elections in a transparent and impartial manner. District Public Relations Officer Y. Sampath Kumar, Collectorate Administrative Officer Kiran, staff members, and others were present at the programme.



Gajgatla pally surpunch nagabhushanam honor to the students



“Jan30.indian chronicle.medak.” Gajgatlapalli village sarpanch Bandaru Nagabhushanam felicitated the students of Gajgatlapalli Gram Panchayat on the occasion of winning the first prize as part of Mandal level CM Cup competition.

Congress Candidates' Nomination Rally Kondapalli couple from BRS party joins Congress.

“Yellandu, January 30 (Indian Chronicle): The Congress party candidates' nomination rally resembled



a victory celebration rally. On Friday, under the leadership of constituency MLA Koram Kanakaiah, Congress party candidates went in large numbers and filed their nominations. Kondapalli Ganesh and his wife, from the BRS party, joined the Congress party under the leadership of the MLA. The MLA welcomed them into the party by draping them with the party scarf. On this occasion, the MLA said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's government is giving high priority to BCs and has allocated a large number of seats to them. He appealed to the people of the municipality not to be deceived by the words of BRS party leaders.

Sanath Nagar Tigers win in Khelo India Cricket Tournament



Nagar Tigers team achieved a resounding victory against the Amberpet Warriors team by 7 wickets. In the match held on Friday, the Amberpet team scored 78 runs in the stipulated ten overs. Subsequently, the Sanath Nagar Tigers team chased down the target of 79 runs in 7.2 overs, losing only three wickets, and secured the victory. Ameerpet Corporator Kethineni Sarala was the chief guest at the event and presented the prizes. Speaking on the occasion, she congratulated the journalists, who are constantly busy with their professional work, for displaying their excellent sportsmanship in the Prime Minister's Khelo India tournament. She stated that these competitions are being conducted to encourage the youth of the country to stay away from bad paths, develop an interest in sports, and maintain good health. She added that regular sports training will improve everyone's physical fitness and health, thereby enabling the country to move forward in all sectors of development. On this occasion, Kiran was awarded the Man of the Match prize and congratulated. Journalists from various regions participated in the program.

Blessings of Medaram Sammakka Saralamma Should Be Upon All the People of Telangana: Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen

Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen seeks blessings of Medaram Sammakka Saralamma



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 30 (Indian Chronicle):”Chilkanagar Division Corporator and former GHMC Standing Committee member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj visited Medaram Sammakka Saralamma on Friday along with her family to seek divine blessings. On this occasion, Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj, accompanied by her family members and senior leaders of the BRS party from the division, offered prayers to Sammakka Saralamma. After the darshan, Geetha Praveen prayed to the goddesses, seeking their blessings for the welfare and happiness of the people of Telangana. She also expressed her wish that K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR), the first Chief Minister of Telangana, should once again become the Chief Minister, and that the divine blessings of Sammakka Saralamma should remain upon all the people of the state. Senior leaders Eddula Kondal Reddy, Muddham Srinivas Yadav, Cheryala Srinivas, Masa Shekhar, Balakrishna Goud, Chinna, Mahesh, and others were present and participated in the darshan.



The Venkateswara Swamy Brahmotsavams began grandly.



“Secunderabad Cantonment, January 30 (Indian Chronicle):”The Brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateswara Swamy at Bowenpally New City Colony, popularly known as 'Poor Man's Tirupati', began grandly on Friday. As part of the Brahmotsavams, on the first day, special decorations were made for the processional deities of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, and the rituals commenced grandly with Raksha Bandhanam and Ankurarpana. A special abhishekam was performed for the Lord with milk, curd, ghee, turmeric, sandalwood, and other fragrant substances. Afterwards, Lord Srinivasa, the ruler of the entire universe, gave darshan to the devotees in a special attire. In the presence of the temple priests, the special Brahmotsavam priests Ranganatha Charyulu and Srikanthacharyulu, and the temple committee members, Mangala Neerajanam (waving of lamps) was offered to the Lord. Narayana, Yadaiya, Sumanth Reddy, Rammohan, priests Tirumala Pawan, Deepak, Sridhar, and a large number of devotees participated in the program.

Gandhi Martyrdom Day Observed in Uppal; Congress Party In-Charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy Pays Tributes



gathering, Parameshwar Reddy said that Mahatma Gandhi united crores of people through the path of non-violence and led the nation to independence. He called upon everyone to practise Gandhi's teachings of truth, non-violence, peace and service in their daily lives. He further urged party workers and citizens to work with dedication to realise Gandhiji's ideals such as Swadeshi, women empowerment, Gram Swaraj and eradication of poverty. Senior leaders of Uppal Division and party functionaries including former councillor Rajender, Bazar Jagannath Goud, Eega Anjaneyulu, Telakala Mohan Reddy, Agam Reddy, Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Tummala Devi Reddy, Bhusam Raghunath Reddy, Gorige Mahesh, Khaja Moulan, Pujari Hanumanthu, Suman Reddy, Babu, Javed, Vijay Kumar, Jangaiah, Anwar, Afzal, Waheed, Mehan Nayak, Nagar Venkatesh, Ramulu, Nagoor Basha, Tirupati, Beerrappa, Bhaskar Reddy, G. Bodige Mallesh, Prashanth Reddy, Shiva Goud, Rangula Shekhar, Mudhiraj, Sai Chandra Shekhar Reddy, and several others participated in the programme.

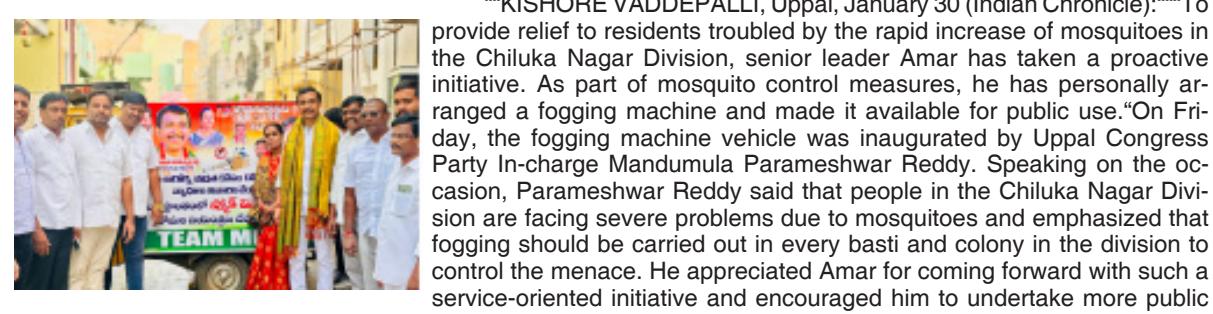
Free Medical Camp Inaugurated by Youth Leader Gaddam Saikiran



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 30 (Indian Chronicle):”A free medical camp comprising eye check-ups, blood pressure, and sugar tests was organized under the aegis of Medicure at the premises of Sri Trishakti Nalla Pochamma Temple, Venkat Reddy Nagar. The camp was inaugurated by BJP youth leader Gaddam Saikiran. Speaking on the occasion, Gaddam Saikiran stated that public health is their primary objective and

urged people to make proper use of free medical camps. He expressed his heartfelt thanks to all the participants and the Medicure team for their cooperation in making the camp a success. Emphasizing that “health is the greatest wealth,” he advised everyone to undergo regular health check-ups. He also revealed that several free medical camps have been conducted under the auspices of the Supra Foundation to promote public health awareness.

Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Parameshwar Reddy Inaugurates Fogging Vehicle



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 30 (Indian Chronicle):”To provide relief to residents troubled by the rapid increase of mosquitoes in the Chiluka Nagar Division, senior leader Amar has taken a proactive initiative. As part of mosquito control measures, he has personally arranged a fogging machine and made it available for public use. On Friday, the fogging machine vehicle was inaugurated by Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy said that people in the Chiluka Nagar Division are facing severe problems due to mosquitoes and emphasized that fogging should be carried out in every basti and colony in the division to control the menace. He appreciated Amar for coming forward with such a service-oriented initiative and encouraged him to undertake more public welfare programs in the future. Chiluka Nagar Division In-charge Akiti Agam Reddy, Division President Rajesh Mudiraj, Amareshwari, Machala Raghu, Mahender Mudiraj, Satyam, S.K. Moinuddin, Jangaiah, Gandikota Ganesh, Kiran, Faheem, and other division leaders participated in the programme.



Woman strangled over unpaid loan; police arrest accused in Kaghaznagar



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 29 (Indian Chronicle)“Crime No. 10/2026 | Section 103(1), BNS-Police Station: Dahegaon“Accused arrested for murder of woman over unpaid loan“Kaghaznagar Rural Police have arrested Wagade Bade Ram @ Bade Rao, resident of Rallaguda village, Dahegaon Mandal, for the murder of Atmakuri Kalavathi, who was killed following a dispute over repayment of money.“Details of the Case:“Four years ago, the deceased, Atmakuri Kalavathi, and her husband Santosh, residents of Rallaguda village under Dahegaon Mandal, borrowed ₹40,000 from the accused Wagade Bade Ram @ Bade Rao for the construction of their house. Recently, disputes arose between the accused and the deceased over repayment of the amount, during which the accused allegedly threatened to kill her.“On January 28, 2026, a Parents-Teachers Meeting was held at the Itiyala Government School, which was attended by both the accused and the deceased. After the meeting, the accused consumed alcohol at a grocery shop in the village and proceeded towards his house on his Hero HF Deluxe motorcycle.“At around 1:30 pm, in the outskirts of Itiyala village, the deceased was walking alone towards her home when the accused intentionally hit her from behind with his motorcycle. When she confronted him and threatened to expose their alleged illicit relationship to villagers and lodge a police complaint, the accused, fearing loss of reputation and repayment of the loan, assaulted her.“The accused knocked her to the ground, strangled her using the end of her saree, and suffocated her to death. He later dumped the body in a cotton field belonging to Sudhakar in the Itiyala outskirts.“Details of the Deceased:“ Name: Atmakuri Kalavathi“ Husband: Santosh“ Age: 36 years“ Caste: Carpenter community“ Residence: Rallaguda village“Details of the Accused:“ Name: Wagade Bade Ram @ Bade Rao“ Father's Name: Bapu“ Age: 49 years“ Caste: Aare“ Occupation: Agriculture“ Residence: Rallaguda village, Dahegaon Mandal“Items Seized from the Accused:“1. Hero HF Deluxe motorcycle (Registration No. TG20-9635)“2. Shirt with bloodstains“ Kaghaznagar Rural Police

Invitation extended to the Tadbund temple EO for the Brahmotsavam.



“Secunderabad Cantonment, January 30 (Indian Chronicle).“The temple committee members extended a special invitation to Narendra, the Executive Officer (EO) of the local Tadbund Anjaneyaswamy temple, for the Brahmotsavam celebrations to be held from the 30th of this month to the 4th of next month in New City Colony, Bowenpally, in the Cantonment constituency. Speaking on this occasion, he expressed his immense happiness at receiving the invitation for the Brahmotsavam celebrations, which will be conducted grandly at the Sri

Venkateswara Temple in New City Colony, and wished for the celebrations to be a resounding success. He requested that devotees and the public attend the Brahmotsavam at this renowned temple in large numbers to make the celebrations a success. He also commended the services of the temple committee members who strive every year to ensure that devotees receive the blessings and grace of the deity during the Brahmotsavam. Among those who presented the invitation were temple committee members Lakshman, Narayana, and others.

Principals and lecturers should strive to help students studying Intermediate in government junior colleges achieve better results



: - Telangana Intermediate Board Director and Secretary Srikrishna Aditya

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 30):- Telangana Intermediate Board Director and Secretary Srikrishna Aditya said that principals and lecturers should work hard to help students studying Intermediate in government junior colleges achieve better results. On Friday, the Director and Secretary of the Telangana Intermediate Board, Srikrishna Aditya, held a meeting with the District Intermediate Officer and principals at the District Intermediate Office. On this occasion, the Director said that the Intermediate practical examinations, which will be held from February 2nd, and the annual examinations, which will be held from February 25th, should be conducted smoothly without any irregularities. He gave several suggestions while reviewing the students' progress. He directed the officials and the principals of the district government junior colleges to increase the pass percentage in the Intermediate examination results and to increase admissions in government junior colleges in the coming academic year. The District Intermediate Officer, Smt. C. Ramani, and the principals participated in this meeting.

Presiding Officers must act responsibly regarding their duties in the municipal elections:

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 30): Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumantha Rao said that presiding officers must act responsibly regarding their duties in the municipal elections. On Friday, the District Collector, along with the Additional Collector for Local Bodies, Bhaskar Rao, participated in the training classes for presiding officers at the Collectorate meeting hall. Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector said that the role of presiding officers is crucial in conducting the municipal elections transparently, freely, and in a peaceful atmosphere. He stated that everyone assigned to election duties must report for duty and that there would be no exceptions. He advised them to thoroughly examine every piece of polling material and to double-check the ballot papers and polling boxes. He emphasized that opening and sealing the polling box is a very important aspect and therefore they should be careful. He said that they should be vigilant in every aspect, from receiving the polling material to the conclusion of polling. He added that they should provide a comfortable environment and all necessary facilities for the voters. He stated that the entire election process must be impartial, adhering to the election rules and regulations. District Education Officer Satyanarayana, Master Trainer Narsireddy, presiding officers, and others participated in the training program.

Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in the Congress party candidates' nomination rally in Alair town.



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 30):- A grand nomination rally for Congress party municipal councilor candidates was held in Alair town. Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated as the chief guest in this rally. The rally, which started after special prayers at the Durgamma temple in the town and proceeded to the municipal office, received an overwhelming response from the public. In this event, which saw a massive crowd, Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated and walked in support of the Congress party candidates. Speaking during the rally, Beerla Ailaiah said that the development of towns is in the hands of the people's representatives, and only Congress party councilors can directly understand and solve the problems of the people. He clarified that after the Congress party came to power, they are implementing many welfare schemes for the people, and similarly, they are working with the goal of comprehensive development in the municipalities as well. He said that they will work towards solving the major problems in Alair town. He stated that the underpass construction was completed only after a people's government came into power in the town, and that they will construct a new municipal office. He said that they will work to ensure that pensions are distributed to the elderly and disabled at the municipal office premises. He also said that Bahadurpet will be made a Gram Panchayat again. He promised to construct a crematorium for the Andhra families residing in the town. Similarly, he stated that the Congress party is moving forward with a clear action plan on issues such as housing construction, drinking water, drainage, concrete roads, street lights, sanitation, strengthening of women's self-help groups, and employment opportunities for the youth. He asserted that the Congress party is the only party that will not betray the people's trust and called upon the people to elect Congress party councilors with a huge majority for continued development. The leaders stated that this nomination rally reflected the strength of the Congress party and the confidence it enjoys among the people. The entire town resonated with Congress flags and slogans, and a large number of party workers and supporters participated enthusiastically, chanting slogans. The leaders expressed confidence that the Congress party is certain to achieve a resounding victory in the upcoming municipal elections.



Karnataka JD(S) MLA Karemma Nayak faces threats from sand mafia; home minister assures protection



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Tuesday that illegal sand mining had become a menace in the state and that leaders of all parties were involved in it. He was responding to JD(S) MLA Karemma Nayak's statement that she had received threats from illegal sand miners in her Devadurga constituency. "It is a big business where influential people are involved. I have given only a restricted answer (about it)," the minister told the Assem-

Electric cars sale gain pace, but fuel-powered vehicles still dominate in Chandigarh: Data

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Electric vehicle (EV) registrations in Chandigarh have risen sharply over the past five years — from 123 cars in 2021 to 1,512 in 2025 — yet petrol and diesel vehicles continue to dominate the city's automobile market, data from the Registering and Licensing Authority (RLA), Chandigarh, shows. In 2025 alone, 10,805 petrol cars and 4,558 diesel cars were registered in the city, underlining that conventional fuel vehicles still account for the bulk of car purchases despite growing interest in electric mobility. The RLA data for the period 2021–2025 suggests that while EV adoption is increasing at the fastest pace in percentage terms, the transition remains gradual. Petrol cars continue to be the first choice for most buyers, followed by diesel vehicles, which, despite a decline, still sell in higher numbers than EVs. Petrol light motor vehicle (LMV) registrations increased steadily from 12,798 in 2021 to 14,947 in 2022, before peaking at 16,697 in 2023. The segment, however, witnessed a sharp correction thereafter, with registrations falling to 10,303 in 2024 and recovering marginally to 10,805 in 2025. Even after this decline, petrol cars in 2025 were registered in numbers more than seven times higher than electric cars.

Diesel vehicles, often considered to be on a faster decline due to higher costs and stricter emission norms, continue to maintain a significant presence. Diesel car registrations rose from 6,033 in 2021 to 7,922 in 2022, before falling to 6,510 in 2023 and 3,895 in 2024. In 2025, registrations saw a slight uptick to 4,558, still nearly three times higher than EV registrations. Explaining the trend, Hitesh Taneja, general manager, Lally Motors Volkswagen, Chandigarh said that EV growth is visible but still constrained by practical considerations. "Electric vehicles are clearly gaining acceptance, especially among city users, but petrol and diesel vehicles continue to dominate due to existing infrastructure, driving habits and long-distance travel needs," he said. Taneja also highlighted that another reason behind more sales of petrol cars is because its resale value is better as compared to EVs.

Rishi Sharma, a Sector 44 resident who recently purchased a diesel SUV, said reliability remains a key factor. "I frequently travel to Himachal and Rajasthan. Diesel still offers better range, torque and peace of mind. With EVs,

Techie's 'suicide': Kin say she was forced to undergo abortion by in-laws



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

A 30-year-old woman computer engineer who died allegedly by suicide due to harassment and dowry demand from her husband and in-laws, was forced to undergo sex determination when she was pregnant and forceful abortion, her family has alleged. Police have arrested her mother-in-law who is a Sarpanch and her husband in the case.

Dipti Rohan Chaudhari (30), died allegedly by suicide at her home in Kad vasti in Sortapwadi area of Uruli Kanchan around 7.30 pm on January 24. Police said that Dipti married Rohan Karbhari Chaudhari in 2019 and the couple has a three-year-old daughter. An FIR in the case was registered at Uruli Kanchan police station under Pune Rural Po-

Invest in India's energy sector; offers USD 500 bn investment opportunity: PM Modi

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday invited global investors to participate in India's growing energy sector, which offers a USD 500 billion investment opportunity, and stressed that the country will soon become the world's largest refining hub.

Addressing the India Energy Week 2026, he urged investors to invest in sectors like refining, LNG value chain infrastructure, city gas distribution, and oil & gas exploration.

The Prime Minister said the nation is targeting USD 100 billion investments in the oil and gas sector by 2030, and the oil refining capacity will be expanded from 260 million tonnes per annum to 300 MTPA.

The Prime Minister said, "Our energy sector is at the heart of our aspirations. It offers investment opportunities

worth USD 500 billion. Therefore, my appeal is: Make in India, innovate in India, Scale with India, Invest in India." He pointed out that India is among the top five exporters in the energy sector. "If I talk about the energy sector, there are immense investment opportunities across the energy value chain. Take the exploration sector, for example: India has opened it considerably, he stated. You are also aware of our deep-sea exploration efforts, the 'Samudra Manthan' project, he noted.

"We are trying to increase investments in our oil and gas sector to USD 100 billion by the end of this decade. Our goal is also to expand the scope of exploration to one million square kilometres. With this vision, more than 170 blocks have already been awarded here," he said. The Andaman and Nicobar basin is also becoming our next hydrocarbon hope, he noted.

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Mahakumbh stampede: Allahabad HC directs relief within 30 days



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Pulling up the Uttar Pradesh government over the delay in payment of ex-gratia to a man who lost his wife in last year's Mahakumbh stampede, the Allahabad High Court has directed it to finalise the compensation claim within 30 days, and submit a compliance report by the next hearing on February 18. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had announced an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh to the kin of each deceased, with the official death toll in the stampede put at 37.

In a January 8 order, uploaded recently, the Division Bench of Justices Ajit Kumar and Swarupama Chaturvedi stated that the petitioner, Uday Pratap Singh, had already appeared before the District Magistrate to share the required documents regarding compensation for his wife, as well as recorded his statement before the commission probing the stampede. "... we find it necessary to get the issue of claim of compensation of the petitioner finalized at the earliest. Accordingly, we direct the Commission as well as the Mela Authority to finalise the claim of compensation of the petitioner within the next 30 days from today," the Bench said. Uday Pratap, who belongs to Bihar's Kaimur, lost his wife in the stampede that occurred on the Mauni Amavasya Snan day at the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj on January 29

Searching high and low for 4 'missing' corporators, Sena (UBT) moves police, puts up posters



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Ever since the Maharashtra civic election results were declared 11 days ago, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has been dialing phones, writing emails and making house calls. Despairing, it has finally gone to police and put up missing posters. So far, it has not turned up its four newly elected Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) members whom the Sena (UBT) is looking for, in a continuation of the blatant tug-of-war over the state's civic bodies. The 122-member KDMC election was the second-most watched municipal contest after Mumbai, and with no clear majority for any party, the tussle for its control, including the mayor's post, continues — making Madhur Mhatre, Kirti Dhone, Swapnali Kene and Rahul Kot, all first-time corporators, the KDMC's most valuable.

While the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena is the single-largest party in the corporation with 53 members, the BJP has 50. The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) won five wards, and the Sena (UBT) 11, including the four wards whose corporators are now "missing". Sena (UBT) leaders claim that the four corporators are in contact with the Shinde-led Shiv Sena, which has moved them to an undisclosed location. The Shinde Sena already has the support of the MNS's five corporators, and four more of the Sena (UBT) would take its tally to the majority mark of 62 in the 122-member house. While the BJP is ruled out of the mayor's race as the post is reserved for the Scheduled Tribe category in this term, and the party does not have an eligible

Word power in Bengaluru: World No. 3 Hubert Wee clinches 20th Indian Open Scrabble title

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

The 20th edition of the Indian Open International Scrabble Championship, organised by the Karnataka State Scrabble Association, came to a close on Monday after four days of competition featuring some of the best players from across the world, including Hubert Wee, ranked third in the world. The event was conducted at the Whitefield premises of the tournament sponsor, tech company Mu Sigma. The 165 players in the tournament were divided into four divisions, labelled A, B, C, and D, in order of experience, with the A Division hosting some of the best players in the world and the D Division comprising relative newcomers. At the very highest levels, Scrabble not only tests the player's vocabulary but also involves complex strategies and analysis of probability.

Securing the prize for the second year running was Singapore's Hubert Wee, winning Division A's prize of Rs 1.35 lakh. Kenya's Millie Kikechi secured the Division B trophy, while India's Pranav Ramkumar came out on top in Division C after an unbeaten 15-game streak. The tournament was also livestreamed on the Let's Play Scrabble YouTube Channel, with commentary from players including Indian youth champion Madhav Kamath. Journalist and event organiser Radhika Mahalingaiah said, "For the past eight tournaments Mu Sigma has been sponsoring us. Every year we grow bigger, with more participants, and this time we had almost 40 people who had never played in Scrabble tournaments. In the players across the four divisions, there are almost 30 foreigners from 13 countries." Regarding Scrabble gaining recognition as a mental sport comparable to chess, she expressed her belief that it is progressing in that direction. She identified sponsorships as a crucial factor in elevating Scrabble's profile.

Several newcomersWhile many of the foreign visitors are veteran international players, several newcomers flew in for the tournament, including three players from Mauritius. Among the high-level international players present was Lukeman Owolabi, the Ireland-based President of the

last year. While she was initially believed to be missing, her body was later found by her son in a hospital mortuary, and handed over to the family on February 5. In his petition, Uday Pratap said the authorities did not prepare the inquest and autopsy report when the body was handed over, and that this was done in Bihar, identifying the cause of death as fractures to the rib cage. He said because she had been "crushed" in the stampede, resulting in the injuries, he submitted his application for compensation to the Prayagraj Mela Authority. At the first hearing held on the matter in the High Court on June 5 last year, the government counsel opposed Uday Pratap's petition, disputing the facts.

However, in a detailed order on June 6, the court observed that "it could not be stated that no occurrence had taken place on the night preceding the 'Amrit Snan' on 28/29.01.2025". The Division Bench of Justices Saumitra Dayal Singh and Sandeep Jain added that it was the duty of the State to protect lives and "offer remedies and care where... unintended loss may be suffered", adding: "Once the identity of the families of the deceased was known to the State, it appears to be a pretence and an excuse on part of the State to ask the aggrieved families who had come from far off places to beg for money from the State for the irreversible loss suffered... certainly not on account of any fault committed by the deceased." Further, the court observed: "... we find the stand taken (by the government) to be untenable and smacking of apathy to the plight of the citizen". While the stampede "may have been caused for reasons beyond the control of the State", the court said, "having realised the consequence of that occurrence and having announced a scheme for payment of ex-gratia compensation, it was the bounden duty of the State to pay up the compensation to the aggrieved families with utmost grace and dignity". The court also questioned the handing over of the body of Uday Pratap's wife "without inquest and without prior autopsy report", and asked why the hospital had not provided a record of how the body had come to be at its mortuary.

corporator, control of the KDMC would be a major boost for the Shinde Sena in its battle of oneupmanship against ally BJP. Lately, the Kalyan-Dombivli region has also emerged as a political battleground between Shinde and BJP Maharashtra president Ravindra Chavan. While the Deputy Chief Minister has traditionally enjoyed influence in the region and his son Shrikant Shinde is the Lok Sabha MP from Kalyan, Chavan hails from Dombivli.

An upper hand in the KDMC would also be a good bargaining chip at a time when the post of Mumbai mayor is still up for grabs. The Sena (UBT) worries that in this power game, its corporators have become pawns. Of the four, Mhatre and Dhone were earlier associated with the Shinde Sena but contested the KDMC elections on the UBT ticket after failing to secure nominations on its ticket. Mhatre beat former deputy mayor Vicky Tare from Ward 21 in Kalyan East, while Dhone won from Ward 13 A in Kalyan East. Kot, who won from Ward 4 in Dombivli, and Swapnali Kene, the winner from Ward 6 in Kalyan West, are said to have started out in the MNS.

The UBT's Kalyan East district chief Sharad Patil, who lodged a complaint at the Kolewadi Police Station about the "missing" corporators, urged police to trace them using CCTVs, Call Data Records and mobile tower locations. A senior police officer said the matter is being looked into. Alleging that "inducements" were being offered to corporators, Patil said: "They (the four) got tickets from us, contested on our symbol, and won because people voted for the Sena (UBT). Now they have suddenly gone untraceable. This is a betrayal of the people of Kalyan." Claiming that the Shinde Sena is trying to wean away more of the UBT's corporators, Patil said: "I myself received calls... They are saying they will ensure we are not disqualified even if the anti-defection law is applied." However, he said, the party will initiate disqualification proceedings against anyone crossing over. Patil added that their calls, emails and attempts to reach out to the four via common contacts had failed. "When we went to their houses, family members refused to tell us their whereabouts and even reacted aggressively." In the meantime, the Sena (UBT) has formally registered its remaining seven corporators as a separate group in the KDMC.

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GNS News Agency, Jan 30

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After Madhav Kamath's historic 2025 World Youth title, the 20th Indian Open showcased the rising global profile of Scrabble, which is now adopting a chess-like Grandmaster system.

World English Scrabble Players Association, a 30-year veteran of the game who started playing as a student. In conversation with the Indian Express, he said, "The new things in this tournament, such as livestreaming, will be very good for media exposure. The tournament's paperless scoring system is also good."

He also praised the hosts' organisational skills and hospitality. With regard to the many young players attending the tournament in Bengaluru, Owolabi added that promoting the game among youth back in Ireland was something he also intended to do. The tournament came on the heels of a strong 2025 for Indian Scrabble, with 14-year-old Madhav Kamath having secured the World Youth Scrabble Championship. The Scrabble Association of India also launched a national title system to classify players by skill, similar to how chess classifies its players. At the moment, India has seven national grandmasters, 12 national masters, and 17 national experts under this system.

Ukraine says 'false' Russian reports of attack on Putin's residence undermine peace process



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Ukraine's Foreign Minister called on other countries to refrain from responding to what he said were false Russian reports about an attack on President Vladimir Putin's residence, saying they undermined the peace process. "Almost a day passed, and Russia still hasn't provided any plausible evidence to its accusations of Ukraine's alleged 'attack on Putin's residence'. And they won't. Because there's none. No such attack happened," Andrii Sybiha said in a post on X. Almost a day passed and Russia still hasn't provided any plausible evidence to

its accusations of Ukraine's alleged "attack on Putin's residence." And they won't. Because there's none. No such attack happened. "We were disappointed and concerned to see the statements by Emirati, Indian, and Pakistani sides expressing their concerns regarding the attack that never happened," he added in his post.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister said that all three states failed to issue any official statements when a Russian missile struck the Ukrainian government building on September 7, 2025. Calling Russia's accusation a "signature tactic", he said, "Russia claimed it wouldn't attack Ukraine in the beginning of 2022. They also often accuse others of what they themselves plan to do. Their words should never be taken at face value." He called on all States to act responsibly and refrain from responding to unverified claims. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday (December 30, 2025) voiced "deep concern" over the reports of the targeting of the residence of Russian President Vladimir Putin and urged Russia and Ukraine to focus on diplomatic efforts to end hostilities. Deeply concerned by reports of the targeting of the residence of the President of the Russian Federation. Ongoing diplomatic efforts offer the most viable path toward ending hostilities and achieving peace. We urge all concerned to remain focused on these efforts and to avoid any...

Russia's nuclear-capable Oreshnik missiles entered active service, Moscow says

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Moscow: Russia's nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile system has entered active service, Russia's Ministry of Defence said Tuesday, as negotiators continue to search for a breakthrough in peace talks to end Moscow's war in Ukraine. Troops held a brief ceremony to mark the occasion in neighbouring Belarus where the missiles have been deployed, the ministry said. It did not say how many missiles had been deployed or give any other details.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier in December that the Oreshnik would enter combat duty this month. He made the statement at a meeting with top Russian military officers, where he warned that Moscow will seek to extend its gains in Ukraine if Kyiv and its Western allies reject the Kremlin's demands in peace talks.

The announcement comes at a critical time for Russia-Ukraine peace talks. US President Donald Trump hosted Zelenskyy at his Florida resort Sunday and insisted that Kyiv and Moscow were "closer than ever before" to a peace settlement. However, negotiators are still searching for a breakthrough on key issues, including whose forces withdraw from where in Ukraine and the fate of Ukraine's Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, one of the 10 biggest in the world. Trump noted that the months-long US-led negotiations could still collapse.

Putin has sought to portray himself as negotiating from a position of strength as Ukrainian forces strain to keep back the bigger Russian army.

At a meeting with senior military officers Monday, Putin emphasised the need to create military buffer zones along the Russian border. He also claimed that Russian troops



were advancing in the eastern Donetsk region of Ukraine and pressing their offensive in the southern Zaporizhzhia region. Moscow first used the Oreshnik, which is Russian for "hazel nut tree," against Ukraine in November 2024, when it fired the experimental weapon at a factory in Dnipro that built missiles when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union. Putin has praised the Oreshnik's capabilities, saying that its multiple warheads, which plunge toward a target at speeds up to Mach 10, are immune to being intercepted. He warned the West that Moscow could use it against Ukraine's NATO allies who've allowed Kyiv to use their longer-range missiles to strike inside Russia.

Russia's missile forces chief has also declared that the Oreshnik, which can carry conventional or nuclear warheads, has a range allowing it to reach all of Europe. Intermediate-range missiles can fly between 500 to 5,500 km. Such weapons were banned under a Soviet-era treaty that Washington and Moscow abandoned in 2019.

United States has become 'real' United Nations, says Trump as Thailand, Cambodia stop fighting 'momentarily'



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

The United States has become the "real" United Nations and the world body has been of very little help in resolving conflicts around the world, President Donald Trump said as he announced that the fighting between Thailand and Cambodia will stop momentarily. "I am pleased to announce that the breakout fighting between Thailand and Cambodia will stop momentarily, and they will go back to living in peace, as per our recently agreed to original Treaty," Mr. Trump said in a post on Truth Social. Mr. Trump congratulated both the "great leaders on their brilliance in coming to this rapid and very fair conclusion," saying that it was "fast & decisive" as all of these situations should be. He said the U.S., as always, was proud to help in bringing the hostilities to an end, as he criticised the UN for its failure in resolving conflicts around the world. He also again claimed credit for ending eight wars in the first eight months of his second term in the White House. "With all of the wars and conflicts I have settled and stopped over the last eleven months, eight, perhaps the United States has become the real United Nations, which has been of very little assistance or help in any of them, including the disaster currently going on between Russia and Ukraine," Mr. Trump said. The United Nations must start getting active and involved in world peace, he added. Mr. Trump is set to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at his Palm Beach, Florida, residence on Sunday for talks on a peace plan to end the conflict with Russia. Mr. Trump has been critical of the UN and its failure to maintain international peace and security, slamming the world organisation as he addressed global leaders during the UN General Assembly high-level session in September this year. "It's too bad that I had to do these things instead of the United Nations doing them. And sadly, in all cases, the United Nations did not even try to help in any of them," Mr. Trump had said from the UNGA podium.

The fighting between Cambodia and Thailand is among the eight wars that Trump has claimed he settled, along with the conflicts between India and Pakistan, Kosovo and Serbia, the Congo and Rwanda, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan. Fighting resumed between Cambodia and Thailand on December 7, with the

UN noting that "strikes have increasingly been reported further from the border and into each other's territories." The U.S. on Saturday welcomed the announcement from Cambodia and Thailand on reaching a ceasefire that halts hostilities along their border following the General Border Committee meeting. Washington urged the two nations to immediately honour this commitment and fully implement the terms of the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accords.

Houthi leader says Israeli presence in Somaliland will be a 'target'

The leader of Yemen's Houthi rebels warned that any Israeli presence in Somaliland would be considered a "military target", according to a statement published Sunday (December 28, 2025), in the latest condemnation of Israel's move to recognise the breakaway region. "We consider any Israeli presence in Somaliland a military target for our armed forces, as it constitutes aggression against Somalia and Yemen, and a threat to the security of the region," said the group's chief Abdulmalik al-Houthi, according to a statement published by rebel media online. Israel on Friday (December 19, 2025) announced that it was officially recognising Somaliland, a first for the self-proclaimed republic that in 1991 declared it had unilaterally separated from Somalia. The Houthi chief warned that the move carried grave consequences, saying recognition was "a hostile stance targeting Somalia and its African surroundings, as well as Yemen, the Red Sea, and the countries along both shores of the Red Sea". Somaliland, which has for decades pushed for international recognition, enjoys a strategic position on the Gulf of Aden and has its own money, passport and Army. Regional analysts believe that a rapprochement with Somaliland would provide Israel with better access to the Red Sea, enabling it to hit Houthi rebels in Yemen. Israel repeatedly struck targets in Yemen after the Gaza war broke out in October 2023, in response to Houthi attacks on Israel that the rebels said were in solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The Iran-backed Houthis have halted their attacks since a fragile truce began in Gaza in October. Somaliland has been diplomatically isolated since its unilateral declaration of independence, even if it has generally experienced greater stability than Somalia, where Al-Shabaab Islamic militants periodically mount attacks in the capital Mogadishu. Israel's recognition of Somaliland was criticised by the African Union, Egypt, Turkey, the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council and the Saudi-based Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Thailand army accuses Cambodia of violating truce with over 250 drones



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Thailand's army on Monday accused Cambodia of violating a newly signed ceasefire agreement, reached after weeks of deadly border clashes, by flying more than 250 drones over its territory. The Thailand army said "more than 250 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were detected flying from the Cambodian side, intruding into Thailand's sovereign territory" on Sunday (December 28, 2025) night,

according to a statement.

"Such actions constitute provocation and a violation of measures aimed at reducing tensions, which are inconsistent with the Joint Statement agreed" during a bilateral border committee meeting on Saturday (December 27, 2025), it added. Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn said in remarks aired on state television on Monday that the two sides had discussed the incident and agreed to investigate and "resolve it immediately". Mr. Prak Sokhonn described it as "a small issue related to flying drones seen by both sides along the border line".

Thailand and Cambodia agreed to the "immediate" ceasefire on Saturday (December 27, 2025), pledging to end renewed border clashes that killed dozens of people and displaced more than a million this month. The reignited fighting spread to nearly every border province on both sides, shattering an earlier truce for which US President Donald Trump took credit. Under the agreement signed on Saturday (December 27, 2025), the Southeast Asian neighbours agreed to cease fire, freeze troop movements and cooperate on demining efforts and combatting cybercrime.

Bangladesh's student-led NCP allies with Jamaat-e-Islami ahead of February election

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

The student-led Bangladeshi party born out of the protest movement that toppled Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has forged an electoral alliance with Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami ahead of February's parliamentary election, stirring internal rifts. Since last year's uprising, the National Citizen Party (NCP) has cast itself as a centrist, reformist alternative to nepotism and two-party dominance, but as the election nears, it is struggling to turn street power into voter support. NCP chief Nahid Islam said on Sunday (December 28, 2025) the party had decided to enter into the alliance for greater unity, adding that the final list of candidates would be announced on Monday. Other NCP figures have described the alliance as a pragmatic step in a fragmented political landscape.

But the decision to join forces with Jamaat has already prompted internal ructions. Tasnim Jara, a doctor who left a career in Britain to join the NCP, becoming a leader in the party, resigned on Saturday (December 27) and said she would contest the election as an independent candidate. Several other members have also quit. The alliance has drawn attention because Jamaat has long faced criticism for opposing Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan and its alleged role in 1971 war crimes. Years of trials, leadership bans and political marginalisation have left the party with a limited but loyal support base. "The moral support I had for the NCP will no longer exist due to this ideological mismatch," said one university student, asking not to be named. The partnership comes amid broader political

realignments, with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) - aligned with ailing former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and effectively led by her son, acting chair Tarique Rahman - regaining momentum following Rahman's return after nearly 17 years in exile.

The February 12 election will be held under an interim administration headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, who took charge after Hasina's ouster and is seen as crucial to restoring political stability after nearly two years of turmoil. A December survey by the US-based International Republican Institute showed the NCP in a distant third place with 6% support, behind the BNP at 30% and Jamaat on 26%. The alliance might shift voting trends but could hurt the NCP's long-term bid to become a dominant force, said Shakil Ahmed, a government and politics professor at Jahangirnagar University.

Request Sonia Gandhi to return Nehru's letters to Prime Ministers' Museum: Shekhawat



The world's largest digitisation activity took place. We digitised millions of files and secured them. As far as the preservation of manuscripts is concerned, he said, "We have undertaken the task of preserving this invaluable heritage of the country, written many centuries ago. Some are on palm leaves, some on tree bark, some on silk paper, and some are handwritten on paper. Some even carry illustrations."

The minister said millions of such manuscripts, containing a rich heritage of knowledge, are kept in the Prime Ministers' Museum, and it is important to digitise and conserve them. "Realising this need, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the 'Gyan Bharatam Mission'. We organised a national conference. We invited subject-matter experts and other stakeholders and discussed this. We created a portal to store the digitised content, so that anyone can access it," he said. Mr. Shekhawat also said that the Aravalli Hills controversy was a classic example of the Congress creating an issue out of a non-issue. Mr. Shekhawat said, "The court's statements were appropriated in an attempt to score political brownie points under the garb of saving Aravalli. But as soon as a clarification notice was issued, everything cleared." A controversy erupted when the Supreme Court, on November 20, accepted the definition proposed by the Centre for the Aravalli hills and ranges. According to the new definition, "The Aravalli hills are any landform in the designated Aravalli districts with an elevation of 100 metres or more above its local relief" and "The Aravalli range is a collection of two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other". On the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, which replaced the UPA-era rural employment scheme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Mr. Shekhawat said that as the nation changes, policies must evolve. The minister said it must be acknowledged that India in 2005 and India today are not the same. "The country has transformed. When the MGNREGA was launched in 2005, its requirements and social context were different," he said. "Over the last 11 years, the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has taken decisive action across sectors. Major decisions such as the Citizenship Amendment Act and the abrogation of Article 370 reflect this approach. There is hardly any issue on which the government has not acted firmly," he said.

He said that over 20 years, from 1970 to 1990, all non-official documents related to Nehru were brought to the museum, including letters Nehru wrote to people, the replies received, and his personal comments and notes. "Similar documents of all the Prime Ministers are preserved at the museum. There are about 2.5 crore such documents. Of them, 4 lakh are related to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru alone," Shekhawat said.

While documents of other Prime Ministers are the permanent property and heritage of the museum, it has been written that Nehru's documents were not given to the museum as a loan or gift, but for safe custody, Mr. Shekhawat stated. He said that on April 29, 2008, on the instructions of Sonia Gandhi, her representative M V Rajan wrote a letter requesting that she wished to take back all the private family letters and notes of Nehru. Subsequently, it was decided that since these were kept in the museum for safe custody, whichever letters the family wanted should be returned to them. Hence, around 57 cartons containing around 26,000 documents were taken away from the museum. "We have sought their return. Sonia Gandhi has said that she will look into the matter. Because, naturally, these ministerial documents cannot be the personal property of any individual. We have written two letters to her; we once again urge that they be returned," Mr. Shekhawat said. Digitisation initiatives On the digitisation initiatives by the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Shekhawat said, "About a year-and-a-half ago, we started a digitisation mission at the National Archives.

He said that today, due to the Modi government's policies and effective implementation of schemes, nearly 300 million people have been lifted out of poverty. "Schemes that were becoming prone to corruption needed reforms to make them more effective, productive and performance-driven," he said, adding, "These changes reflect the government's commitment to a changing and developing India, taken without fear and without concern for political consequences, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." Mr. Shekhawat said heritage conservation is at the centre of the government's 'Viksit Bharat' vision. On the culture ministry's priorities next year, he said, "There is only one priority. We will work to increase the level of tourism, the number of tourists, and improve the tourist experience. We will advance Prime Minister Modi's vision of creating 50 iconic, world-class destinations. A major responsibility that the Prime Minister has entrusted us with is to create the world's largest museum, 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat', in our iconic North and South Blocks. We will work on its construction."

Russia offers cash bonuses, frees prisoners and lures foreigners to replenish its troops in Ukraine



ported to be just over \$1,600. There also are tax breaks, debt relief and other perks. Despite Kremlin claims of relying on voluntary enlistment, media reports and rights groups say conscripts – men aged 18-30 performing fixed-term mandatory military service and exempted from being sent to Ukraine – are often coerced by superiors into signing contracts that send them into battle. Recruitment also extends to prisoners and those in pretrial detention centers, a practice led early in the war by the late mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin and adopted by the Defense Ministry. Laws now allow recruitment of both convicts and suspects in criminal cases. Targeting foreigners

Foreigners also are recruiting targets, both inside Russia and abroad. Laws were adopted offering accelerated Russian citizenship for enlistees. Russian media and activists also report that raids in areas where migrants typically live or work lead to them being pressuring into military service, with new citizens sent to enlistment offices to determine if they're eligible for mandatory service.

In November, Putin decreed that military service was mandatory for certain foreigners seeking permanent residency. Some reportedly are lured to Russia by trafficking rings promising jobs, then duping them into signing military contracts. Cuban authorities in 2023 identified and sought to dismantle one such ring operating from Russia. Nepal's Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud told The Associated Press in 2024 that his country asked Russia to return hundreds of Nepali nationals who were recruited to fight in Ukraine, as well as to repatriate the remains of those killed in the war. Nepal has since barred citizens from traveling to Russia or Ukraine for work, citing recruitment efforts. Also in 2024, India's federal investigation agency said it broke up a network that lured at least 35 of its citizens to Russia under the pretext of employment. The men were trained for combat and deployed to Ukraine against their will, with some "grievously injured," the agency said.

Some come from abroad to fight in what has become a bloody war of attrition. After signing a mutual defense treaty with Moscow in 2024, North Korea sent thousands of soldiers to help Russia defend its Kursk region from a Ukrainian incursion. Men from South Asian countries, including India, Nepal and Bangladesh, complain of being duped into signing up to fight by recruiters promising jobs.

Officials in Kenya, South Africa and Iraq say the same has happened to citizens from their countries. President Vladimir Putin told his annual news conference last month that 700,000 Russian troops are fighting in Ukraine. He gave the same number in 2024, and a slightly lower figure 617,000 in December 2023. It's unclear if those numbers are accurate.

Still hidden are the numbers of military casualties, with Moscow having released limited official figures. The British Defense Ministry said last summer that more than 1 million Russian troops may have been killed or wounded. Independent Russian news site Medazona, together with the BBC and a team of volunteers, scoured news reports, social media and government websites and collected the names of over 160,000 troops killed. More than 550 of those were foreigners from over two dozen countries.

How Russia gets new soldiers Unlike Ukraine, where martial law and nationwide mobilization has been in place since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Putin has resisted ordering a broad call-up. When a limited mobilization of 300,000 men was tried later that year, tens of thousands of people fled abroad. The effort stopped after a few weeks when the target was met, but a Putin decree left the door open for another call-up. It also made all military contracts effectively open-ended and barred soldiers from quitting service or being discharged, unless they reached certain age limits or were incapacitated by injuries. Since then, Moscow has largely relied on what it describes as voluntary enlistment. The flow of voluntary enlistees signing military contracts has remained strong, topping 400,000 last year, Putin said in December. It was not possible to independently verify the claim. Similar numbers were announced in 2024 and 2023.

Activists say these contracts often stipulate a fixed term of service, such as one year, leading some potential enlistees to believe the commitment is temporary. But contracts are automatically extended indefinitely, they say.

The government offers high pay and extensive benefits to enlistees. Regional authorities offer various enlistment bonuses, sometimes amounting to tens of thousands of dollars. In the Khyant-Mansi region of central Russia, for example, an enlistee would get about \$50,000 in various bonuses, according to the local government. That's more than twice the average annual income in the region, where monthly salaries in the first 10 months of 2025 were re-

Kateryna Stepanenko, a Russia researcher at the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War, said the Kremlin has gotten more "creative" in the last two years with attracting enlistees, including foreigners. But recruitment efforts are becoming "extremely expensive" for Russia, which faces a slowing economy, she added.

Moscow: For average wage earners in Russia, it's a big payday. For criminals seeking to escape the harsh conditions and abuse in prison, it's a chance at freedom. For immigrants hoping for a better life, it's a simplified path to citizenship. All they have to do is sign a contract to fight in Ukraine. As Russia seeks to replenish its forces in nearly four years of war – and avoid an unpopular nationwide mobilization – it's pulling out all the stops to find new troops to send into the battlefield.

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Bangladesh elections: Minority Hindus in crosshairs as radical plot unfolds

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

New Delhi: A plot has been engineered in Bangladesh to incite violence against the minority Hindus ahead of the February elections. Many leaders who are contesting the elections are planning on using the anti-Hindu rhetoric as an election plank. An Intelligence Bureau official said that a plot was hatched last week by several leaders to incite violence against the Hindus in Bangladesh. During this meeting, several radical elements were roped in to help further this plan. An official said that the situation is very worrisome for the minority communities in the country. While violence has been a concern, the worry is that it is set to escalate further ahead of the elections. Bangladesh watchers say that the polls will not be fought on the development plank. There would be no talk about security, economics, and other important topics. The poll would be all about an anti-Hindu, anti-India rhetoric, the experts say.

Many leaders are trying to incite the radicals against the Hindus, stating that India has been giving shelter to the ousted leader, Sheikh Hasina. Further, they are telling the people that the Hindus support India, and hence they have no place in Bangladesh. Another official said that this plot also includes running a fake narrative against the minority community. They would create stories about the Hindus trying to incite tensions. Allegations of theft and other crimes would be made against them, so that the locals can commit atrocities against the minority community. Another campaign issue would be Sheikh Hasina. They are branding her as anti-Bangladesh and pro-India. Most parties are accusing India of sheltering Hasina, despite Bangladesh seeking her extradition. Experts say that it is hard to analyse whether this strategy would work entirely.

A large majority in Bangladesh seeks good ties with India instead of Pakistan. Many leaders have realised this, and hence they feel that this strategy to polarise voters based on religion may work for them. An official said that this anti-India, anti-Hindu rhetoric is working for many leaders. The Jamaat-e-Islami, especially, is reaping the benefits of this strategy. The worry, according to the official, is that the situation is only going to worsen in the coming days. Many Hindus continue living in fear in the country. If the violence escalates, they would look to leave the country, and there could be a major exodus. This would put a lot of stress on the borders, which already remain fragile since the Jamaat-backed Muhammad Yunus took over power.

The persecution of the minorities is nothing new in Bangladesh. It has always taken place, and the population of the minority community has dropped significantly over



the years. Officials say that this time it is different. This is not only about persecution, but it has also become vote bank politics. Such plots to target the minorities systematically come at a time when many leaders are calling for the establishment of an Islamic state. However, many do not want the country to be governed by the Constitution. They have been demanding that Sharia law be implemented. When the atmosphere is so charged up, there is a lot of worry ahead for the minorities who live in Bangladesh. Officials say that the persecution of minorities will not stop even if there is a democratic government in place. The big worry is that it would be multi-fold until the elections are over, an official added.

Power employees JAC to stage protest over untimely transfers

Hyderabad: Voicing dissent against the 'unilateral' move for untimely general transfers by TGGENCO, the Telangana Electricity Employees Joint Forum has decided to stage a protest at Mini Compound on Wednesday. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the employees' forum said both TGPEJAC and TEEJAC had submitted representations to the government, especially Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao, appealing to postpone the general transfers in TGSPDCL and TGNPDCL. However, there was no positive response from the DISCOM managements. These moves had triggered unrest among employees, who were agitated over the untimely transfers and the unilateral move to issue transfer guidelines.

UK's Starmer heads to China seeking thaw in relations but risking rift with Trump



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

London: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer is heading to China, seeking a thaw in relations with Beijing at a time of strained ties with the United States. He's hoping for an economic boost to Britain, but risks the wrath of China hawks at home and of US President Donald Trump, who's already heaping tariffs and criticism on America's closest allies.

Starmer is due to meet China's President Xi Jinping during the visit that starts Wednesday, the first by a UK leader since 2018. He is expected to be accompanied by UK Business Secretary Peter Kyle and dozens of corporate chiefs as Britain seeks Chinese technology and investment, alongside greater access to the world's second-largest economy for UK financial services, cars and Scotch whisky. "China is no longer just the world's factory; it is also becoming a global market," said Zhao Minghao, a professor in the Institute of International Studies at Shanghai's Fudan University.

Kerry Brown, director of the Lau China Institute at King's College London, said the trip comes as dramatic shifts in geopolitics create new opportunities for UK-Chinese relations. But he said "Starmer is going to be talking to a very sceptical audience." Britain has not been very consistent in its relations with China. We have been very hot and cold," Brown said. The relationship has soured since the short-lived "golden era" proclaimed in 2015 by Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, who took Xi to a traditional English pub during a state visit. Beijing's crackdown on civil liberties in Hong Kong, China's support for Russia in the Ukraine war and growing concern about espionage and economic interference have widened the gap between London and Beijing.

Cameron's Conservative successors barred Chinese investment in sensitive telecoms infrastructure and squeezed China out of investment in new UK nuclear power plants. Starmer's centre-left Labour Party government carried out a review of relations with Beijing after it was elected 18 months ago. It says its approach is one of hard-headed pragmatism – protecting national security from Chinese espionage and interference while keeping up diplomatic dialogue and economic cooperation with the Asian superpower. Both Britain's economy – the world's sixth largest – and Starmer's popularity could use a boost. His government has struggled to deliver the economic growth it promised and ease a cost-of-living crisis for millions of

households. Labour lags behind hard-right Reform UK in opinion polls, and nervous Labour lawmakers openly mull whether it would be better to ditch Starmer for a more charismatic leader, such as Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham. Starmer's visit to China comes as cracks are starting to appear in his attempt to strike up a warm relationship with Trump efforts rewarded with a trade deal that reduced US tariffs on Britain's key auto and aerospace industries. For months Starmer refrained from public criticism as Trump attacked the mayor of London, slammed British immigration policy and sued the BBC for USD 10 billion.

But in recent days, Starmer has spoken out against Trump's desire to take over Greenland – calling it "completely wrong" and condemned Trump's disparaging comments about the role of UK and other NATO troops in Afghanistan, which Starmer called "insulting" and "appalling." Starmer travels to Beijing days after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. Next month it's the turn of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, as some of America's strongest allies hedge their bets against the unpredictable Trump. Zhao said growing unease among US allies over Washington's recent policy moves, including on tariffs, Greenland and the war in Ukraine, "have triggered a wave among allies to recalibrate their policies to de-risk" from the United States. But rapprochement with Beijing brings the risk of a rift with Washington. Trump has threatened to slap a 100 per cent tariff on all Canadian goods after Carney struck a trade deal with China on his trip this month. Espionage and human rights concerns

Starmer's critics say the government is being naive about China's threat to Britain's security and weak in the face of pressure from Beijing. The trip follows UK approval of a 20,000 square-metre (around 215,000 square-foot) Chinese embassy near the Tower of London despite strong opposition from critics who say the "mega-embassy" will make it easier for China to conduct espionage and intimidate dissidents. Starmer also faces criticism over an agreement to hand over the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean to Mauritius. The government says the move will secure the future of a key UK-US military base against legal challenge, but critics argue it opens the door to Chinese influence. Last week Trump spoke out against the deal, reversing his previous support. Human rights are another tricky area. Chris Patten, who was governor of Hong Kong from 1992 until the British colony was handed back to China in 1997, said Starmer should be firm in raising disagreements over issues including the treatment of China's Uyghur minority and the imprisonment of Jimmy Lai, a Hong Kong pro-democracy campaigner and British citizen. "You have to say with them, without being impolite, exactly what you think," Patten said. "They know we're different, but they want to have a reasonable relationship with us and, particularly given the state of the world with Trump, we should want to have a reasonable relationship with them." Brown, from King's College, said Starmer will likely consider his trip a success if it secures significant investment and avoids major political pitfalls. "What they're going to do is basically commit to consistency, a bit more predictability," he said. "Friends where we can be friends, otherwise agree to disagree."

Where do seashells come from?



Florida: Seashells are so plentiful that you may sometimes take them for granted. Scientists have estimated that just one small stretch of beaches along the Gulf of California contained at least 2 trillion shells. That is followed by 12 zeros. 2,000,000,000,000 shells – in just one small stretch of coast! Imagine if every human alive today went there to collect shells. Each of them would be able to claim nearly 1,000 shells. But where do all these shells come from, and what tales can they tell us? We are a paleontologist and marine ecologist, and our scientific research involves looking at shells and discovering where they came from and how old they are. Skeletons on the beach

Shells are simply skeletons of animals, the remains of dead organisms. But unlike humans and most other animals, these mollusks, such as snails, clams, oysters and mussels, have an exoskeleton, meaning it's on the outside of their bodies. When people talk about seashells, they usually mean shells of mollusks. And these are, indeed, the most common types of shells we find on the beach today. Many other marine animals also make skeletons, including, among others, echinoids such as sand dollars that make internal skeletons called tests, and brachiopods, also known as "lampshells." These marine animals build their own shells to protect their soft bodies from external threats, such as predators or changes that happen around them in their habitat. Shells can also help these sea creatures stay stable on the seafloor, grow bigger or move around more efficiently.

Just as our bones provide a scaffold to which we attach our muscles, shells provide a rigid frame to which sea creatures attach their muscles. Some mollusks, such as scallops, can even swim by using powerful muscles to vigorously flap the two valves that make their shell. Other sea creatures use muscles attached to their shells to quickly bury themselves in the sediment.

The process of making a shell is known as biomineralization. How marine animals build their shells can vary greatly depending on the species, but all of these animals have special tissues to make their shells, just as humans have special tissues to grow and strengthen our bones. Most marine animals form their shells from calcium carbonate, which is a tough mineral also found in limestone. Some sponges and microorganisms use another compound called silica. There is also a group of brachiopods that build shells using calcium phosphate, which we use to build our bones, too. More than 50,000 mollusk species live today on our planet, and most of them make shells. But each species makes a different shell. This accounts for the huge variety of shapes and sizes in the seashells you find on the beach. Just as with bones, shells can last for a very long time. The shells of dead animals are moved around by currents and waves. Many eventually wash up on shorelines. Other shells get buried beneath the seafloor. With pressure and time, the buried seafloor sediment becomes a rock, and shells turn into fossils. In fact, seashells are among the most common types of fossils large enough to see with the

naked eye. When an experienced hunter finds a bone in the forest, they know right away whether it came from a deer, rabbit or wild boar. Similarly, when a seashell expert finds a shell, they can tell you what sea creature made it.

Besides the sheer number of sea creatures, another reason shells are so prolific is that they last for a very long time. In our research, we use a process called carbon dating to figure out how old a shell is. Mollusks and many other animals use calcium, carbon and oxygen to build their shell. There are three types of carbon called isotopes and one of them, known as radiocarbon, is unstable. As a shell ages, its radiocarbon decays at a constant rate. Older shells have less radiocarbon, and we scientists can estimate their age based on that fact.

This process has allowed us and other researchers to date thousands of shells collected from modern beaches and sea bottoms all around the globe. We discovered that many of those shells are hundreds or thousands of years old. These shells are not just beautiful to look at – they're also very useful. Like little time machines, these shells carry within them a wealth of information about the past, including details about the habitats in which they lived. Scientists like us can often tell from a shell whether the animal that created it was a predator, a plant eater or even a parasite.

By studying the chemical makeup of the shell, scientists can learn about past climates and environments. We can often even discern how the owner of a shell died and the hazards it faced during its life. So the next time you admire shells on your favorite beach, inspect them for clues about their past lives. Does the shell contain a round hole? That reveals that the animal was killed by a drilling predator. Does it have a repair scar? It may have survived an attack by a crab. Does the shell belong to an animal that lived in a seagrass meadow that is no longer there? Each shell is a little diary, and if you know how to read it, it can tell you exciting stories of animals and habitats from the past.

Gold, silver continue to touch new highs as US dollar weakens

Mumbai: Gold and silver prices surged to record highs on Tuesday, amid persistent weakness in the US dollar and expectations of rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve. MCX gold February futures rose 1.48 per cent to Rs 1,58,343 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, MCX silver March futures rose 6.56 per cent to Rs 3,56,670 per kg. Earlier in the day, gold had peaked to Rs 1,59,820 per 10 grams, up 2.4 per cent, before profit-taking eased the price level. International markets also saw gold and silver touching record highs, as geopolitical risks drove investors to safe-haven assets. Renewed fears of a government shutdown in the US and President Donald Trump's new threats of 25 per cent tariffs on South Korean automobiles, lumber, and pharmaceutical imports added fuel to trade tensions. Trump also warned Canada of a 100 per cent tariff if it makes a deal with China. US gold futures April contracts rose around 1 per cent to \$5,113.70 per troy ounce as the dollar index eased by 0.1 per cent, making bullion cheaper in overseas currencies. Persistent safe-haven demand, steady central bank accumulation, and expectations of accommodative global monetary conditions continue to underpin prices. COMEX Silver has surged beyond the \$99 mark.

Aravalli question faces the brunt of India's fondness for 'strategic exemptions'



On December 23 Air Marshal and the Integrated Defence Staff chief Ashutosh Dixit laid out the defence establishment's case for critical minerals. Modern defence systems, he said, rely on reliable access to these minerals and import dependence has become a strategic vulnerability because global supply chains are concentrated and exposed to export controls and geopolitics. He also linked self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing and operational readiness to secure mineral value chains and pointed to the National Critical Mineral Mission as the country's policy vehicle of choice.

Even if they were understated, his words come as the defence establishment's contribution to the charged public debate over how the Aravalli Hills should be protected and whether their mineral wealth should be mined. Right now, India doesn't resolve clashes between its climate commitments and industrial demand through any clear rules. Instead it often resorts to executive discretion and opaque instruments like office memoranda, project-specific exemptions, and ad hoc appraisals that treat "national defence" or "strategic considerations" as sufficient reason to evade scrutiny. The environmental impact assessment (EIA) framework itself allows exemptions from public consultation for projects linked to security and other strategic considerations "as determined by the Central Government". This together with the government's disinclination to bind itself to transparent criteria has often rendered the scope of "national interest" arbitrary and opaque, however. Controversy over the Aravalli Hills flared up after November 20, when the Supreme Court adopted a uniform way to identify the "hills and ranges", froze new mining leases until the Environment Ministry had prepared a sustainable mining plan for the landscape, and said mining should be prohibited in "core" or "inviolate" areas, with an exception for critical, strategic and atomic minerals notified under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957. The Court called this a "strategic exemption".

In the new operational definition vis-à-vis mining, "Aravalli Hills" is any landform in the Aravalli districts that rises at least 100 m above the local relief (measured from the lowest contour line encircling the landform). Likewise the "Aravalli Range" is two or more such Aravalli Hills that lie within 500 m of each other, including the landforms in between. Environmental groups and opposition parties have argued that this definition could still exclude large tracts from protection and weaken enforcement in a landscape already stressed by illegal mining, urban expansion, denudation, and a dropping water table. For instance, if a surveyor draws the Aravalli Hills' boundary using the elevation and distance rules, the new landscape that emerges will be of 'Aravalli'-like feature sitting like islands in a sea of non-'Aravalli' features, including valleys, plains, scrubland, and forests. Yet the latter connect the Aravalli Hills and make the current landscape as good as it currently is.

And just these features are endangered by the same Environment Ministry that must execute the sustainable mining plan — whatever it looks like — also having weakened the legal environment protection framework to promote ease of doing business, creating gaps that make the "strategic exemption" easier to misuse.

The Ministry has repeatedly softened India's environmental clearance process to reduce friction for projects and industrial investments since 2014. Two decisions in 2025 are notable. First, in May, the Supreme Court had held that ex post facto clearances are alien to environmental jurisprudence and "anathema" to the environmental impact assessment (EIA) framework because they invert the logic of prior scrutiny and can lead to irreparable environmental damage. But in November, the Court recalled that judgment on review, reopening the space for post facto regularisation, this time with the Court's own uncertainty built into the regu-

latory space. This element wasn't there before. Second, in September, the Environment Ministry issued an office memorandum to accelerate mining projects involving critical minerals by exempting them from public consultations as required by the EIA Notification 2006. This move didn't require the notification to be amended because it already includes a special clause for "strategic considerations", and the Ministry used that to accelerate projects while also reducing the formal space where affected communities and independent experts could force the government to disclose details of risks and cumulative impact. Ministers also defended the move in Parliament on national security grounds. Next, the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act 2023 and subsequent administrative practices have widened the exemptions for certain activities and have introduced new categories of land and projects with modified clearance requirements. The amended Act applies to land notified as 'forest' under the Indian Forest Act 1927 (or other laws) and land recorded as forest in government records on or after October 25, 1980, yet it exempted land that had already been shifted to non-forest use on or before December 12, 1996, by a State or UT order. It also exempted land along roads and railway tracks, the international border, and near "security-related infrastructure" and expanded the list of activities not treated as "non-forest purpose". As a result, the Centre and States can now collect information by drilling narrow holes during exploration to pull up rock samples before having to file a mining proposal. And in forest districts with mineral deposits and which overlap with areas notified as harbouring left-wing extremism, it's now easier to establish some connective infrastructure like roads and power lines, which can also support exploration and other mining work.

Sure, the amendments don't exempt mining outright, but there's a scope creep that, together with the government's sympathetic attitude towards businesses and the post facto regularisation regime, merits scrutiny. If nothing else, it serves the state's framing of exploration as part of a strategic pipeline for critical minerals, a narrative supported by ministers' statements in Parliament and in official documents.

This is also why the public controversy over the Aravalli Hills matters so much. The Supreme Court order itself linked the Hills to groundwater recharge and to functions that prevent desertification, which are the same ecosystem services that India needs to preserve to meet outcomes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, including clean air, water security, and good living conditions. The Hills also contain or are believed to have potential for minerals that India's strategic planners care about, including base metals in certain established belts, minerals such as tungsten and others often classified as 'strategic', and other bulk minerals including stone and rocks. The Court-appointed committee has also emphasised the potential for minerals relevant to the green energy transition, including lithium and rare-earth elements. This combination, together with the Ministry's weakening of safeguards, makes the Court's "strategic exemption" precarious. Taken together the state has also effectively reduced the information that outsiders can access to hold claims of greenness — including "sustainable mining" and the circular economy of critical minerals that the new National Critical Minerals Mission promises — accountable. If India is going to invoke a "strategic" need to carve out exceptions in sensitive areas, it should also formalise how it arbitrates these conflicts, instead of letting them be negotiated through exemptions and post-hoc regularisation. At a minimum, the government or the Court should establish a binding test for when "strategic considerations" merit simpler or easier procedures; require landscape-level cumulative-impact and groundwater assessments before all leases; and disclose, in the public record, assumptions about the alternatives — including imports, substitution, recycling, and sourcing from less sensitive areas — that were rejected. Without such a framework, climate action and economic growth will keep colliding through ad hoc decisions that expand quietly while environmental law is left to absorb the political pressure. In fact if the Indian government accepts the defence and industrial establishments' case that critical minerals are strategic enablers, it should also accept that strategic supply chains need strategic legitimacy. This includes the Court's directions but should also be augmented by the Environment Ministry ceasing its parallel efforts to widen exemptions and reduce procedural checks. On the question of these minerals, the stakes are higher and the temptation to take shortcuts is greater.

Colleges as civil service coaching hubs

From January 2026, in Chennai, those aspiring to crack competitive examinations that would open doors to civil services jobs have an added place to visit to sharpen their edge — the IAS study circle established by Anna Veilankanni college at its premises in Saidapet. While offering coaching to its arts and science students at a "subsidised" fee, the college rolls out the red carpet to aspirants in their neighbourhood. Both arts and science and engineering colleges running their in-house academies/study circles that serve as a pathway to a career in civil services is not a new trend, just that the number of institutions offering this option has been on the increase over the years.

From government colleges to self-financing institutions, a focused group or centre providing coaching, mock tests, inviting expert speakers and offering personalised guidance for success in examinations conducted by UPSC and TNPSC has become an important talking point.

While a majority of institutions offer these classes at no cost, some levy a nominal fee. Many of them do not promise intensive coaching, just a launch pad. This academic year, A.M. Jain College in Meenambakkam opened two study circles, one for careers in armed forces and the other for UPSC coaching, both offered free of cost. "In a class of 40 if one cracks the exam then it motivates the others. The preparation for the exam is such that there is greater collaboration among students and there is a plenty of resources available on the campus for students to get much out of it. We only see students gaining by preparing for such examinations," says M. Ramya, dean, AM Jain College. A faculty related to the subject is asked to handhold the students. "We ensure there is separate remuneration for any value-added course a faculty takes up," she says. For those keen on intensive training, A.M. Jain College has a MoU with an external academy that comes to the campus to train students at a cost. For students focused on cracking the exam, the college grants them on-duty leave to prepare before exams or gives a re-test if they have missed an internal exam, says the Dean of A.M. Jain College. Colleges opening their doors for external coaching academies and roping in guest speakers means students save on the additional travel they would have to undertake to access these resources. Last year, Guru Nanak College



set up a committee to support students keen on a career in the civil services. The website of KCG Tech says its Civil Service Aspiration Club conducts classes every alternate week for two hours, which includes exam preparation and talks from UPSC achievers and high-ranking civil servants. Easwari Engineering College calls its programme Civil Services Training Programme. CTTE College in Perambur is increasingly focusing on helping its students excel in Group II and IV exams. Janani G, a Union Public Service Commission aspirant and a tutor at academies, says, "When I graduated from engineering college 12 years ago, we did not have such avenues being opened to us."

There may not be many success stories from colleges, but that is fine as long as students are getting exposure even while pursuing under graduation. "Even before Chennai began to witness a craze for civil services, Queen Mary's College started providing free training since 2001 for women graduates who are selected through an entrance exam and interview. The free coaching centre is funded by the government of Tamil Nadu. But more still needs to be done. Despite having Anna Nagar, which is hailed as a magnet for civil service coaching centres and colleges grooming students to think of a career in UPSC, Chennai is yet to see a string of success stories. Delhi continues to see the highest number of successful UPSC candidates. Fashioning civil servants for 25 years. For the last 25 years, Directorate of Employment and Training has been running 'Study Circles' that function at all the district employment and career guidance centres in the State."

How Central Europe's 'water guardians' are fighting desertification



Oszkár Nagyapáti climbed to the bottom of a sandy pit on his land on the Great Hungarian Plain and dug into the soil with his hand, looking for a sign of groundwater that in recent years has been in accelerating retreat. "It's much worse, and it's getting worse year after year," he said as cloudy liquid slowly seeped into the hole. "Where did so much water go? It's unbelievable."

Nagyapáti has watched with distress as the region in southern Hungary, once an important site for agriculture, has become increasingly parched and dry. Where a variety of crops and grasses once filled the fields, today there are wide cracks in the soil and growing sand dunes more reminiscent of the Sahara Desert than Central Europe. The region, known as the Homokháság, has been described by some studies as semiarid, a distinction more common in parts of Africa, the American Southwest or Australian Outback, and is characterised by very little rain, dried-out wells and a water table plunging ever deeper underground. In a 2017 paper in European Countryside, researchers cited "the combined effect of climatic changes, improper land use and inappropriate environmental management" as causes

for the Homokháság's aridification. Now a group of farmers and other volunteers, led by Nagyapáti, are trying to save the region and their lands from total desiccation using a resource for which Hungary is famous: thermal water.

Along with the group of volunteer "water guardians," he began negotiating with authorities and a local thermal spa last year, hoping to redirect the spa's overflow water, which would usually pour unused into a canal, onto their lands. The thermal water is drawn from very deep underground. According to the water guardians' plan, the water, cooled and purified, would be used to flood a 2.5-hectare low-lying field, a way of mimicking the natural cycle of flooding that channelizing the rivers had ended. "When the flooding is complete and the water recedes, there will be 2.5 hectares of water surface in this area," Nagyapáti said. "This will be quite a shocking sight in our dry region."

A 2024 study by Hungary's Eötvös Loránd University showed that unusually dry layers of surface-level air in the region had prevented any arriving storm fronts from producing precipitation. Instead, the fronts would pass through without rain, and result in high winds that dried out the topsoil even further. The water guardians hoped that by artificially flooding certain areas, they wouldn't only raise the groundwater level but also create a microclimate through surface evaporation that could increase humidity, reduce temperatures and dust and have a positive impact on nearby vegetation. Tamás Tóth, a meteorologist in Hungary, said that because of the potential impact such wetlands can have on the surrounding climate, water retention is the "key issue in the coming years and for generations to come". Following another hot, dry summer this year, the water guardians blocked a series of sluices along a canal, and the repurposed water from the spa began slowly gathering in the low-lying field. After a couple of months, the field had nearly been filled.

How the moon kicked Chandrayaan-3 propulsion module into a new orbit



On December 30, astronomer Jonathan McDowell posted on X.com: "The abandoned Chandrayaan-3 propulsion module, left in a 125000 x 30500 km orbit in 2024, had a bit of a tussle with the Moon in November and has now been found in a 365000 x 983000 km x 22 deg orbit". Dr. McDowell is well-known for, among other things, publishing Jonathan's Space Report, "an irregular newsletter which attempts to provide a detailed and pedantic historical record of the space age" and for maintaining the 'General Catalog of Artificial Space Objects'. His post describes a common problem in spaceflight: once you leave a spacecraft in a very large and lopsided orbit around the earth that comes anywhere near the moon's path, the moon's gravity can keep nudging it in ways that are hard to predict far in advance.

"Moon-orbit-crossing" in his post means the object's orbit around the earth reaches out to distances comparable to the moon's distance. As a result at some points the object and the moon can pass relatively close to each other. When that happens, the moon's gravity matters a lot. In low-earth orbit, i.e. 150-2,000 km above sea level, the earth's gravity dominates and the motion of satellites here is fairly regular. But when you get closer to the moon, you're effectively in a three-body situation: the earth pulls, the moon pulls, and an object in between that's affected by both their pulls moves quickly through regions where the balance of those pulls changes. In these systems, small differences in timing or position can lead to big differences later. That is what Dr. McDowell meant by "chaotic". The orbit is still governed by the laws of physics but the underlying equations are very difficult to solve. This was also the premise of the science fiction book and later Netflix show '3 Body Problem'. An alien species inhabited a world in a system with three suns orbiting each other, repeatedly leading to periods of climate chaos. The three-body problem asks how three masses move when each attracts the others by gravity. In classical mechanics, this problem doesn't have a general closed-form solution, meaning there's no single formula with which you can predict how the system will evolve for all possible starting positions, speeds, and masses. A looping path

The Chandrayaan-2 mission ended in partial failure when its lunar lander crashed on the moon's surface in 2019. But since it had successfully launched an orbital module, which continued to orbit the moon, the Chandrayaan-3 mission only consisted of a propulsion module, a lander, and a rover. After the lander and rover descended on the moon in August 2023, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) moved the propulsion module to a 125,000 x

305,000 km orbit around the earth in October. These two numbers are the distances from the earth at the closest point (perigee) and farthest point (apogee) of the orbit. So the propulsion module was looping around the earth on a highly elliptical path: it came as close as about 125,000 km, then swung out to about 305,000 km, approaching the moon's average distance (~384,000 km). That means it spent some of its time in the moon's gravitational neighbourhood. The moon's kick

When Dr. McDowell says it had "a tussle with the moon in November", he means the propulsion module had a relatively close pass by the moon. During a close pass, the moon's gravity can kick, or suddenly change, the object's speed and direction relative to the earth. This is not like friction or a collision but a purely gravitational interaction. Depending on the geometry, the kick can raise the orbit, lower it, tilt it or change its shape. According to an ISRO statement in November, the propulsion module entered the moon's "sphere of influence" on November 4 and exited it on November 14. The organisation said it tracked the 'event' using the Indian Deep Space Network (IDSN), a collection of antennae near Bengaluru that, together with data received by similar ground stations operated by NASA and other space agencies, monitors Indian assets in space. While it was in the moon's sphere of influence, the propulsion module flew by the moon twice: on November 6 it came within 3,740 km of the lunar surface and on November 11 within 4,537 km. After this encounter, the orbit of the propulsion module changed in three ways. First, it became much larger overall. According to ISRO the apogee jumped to 727,000 km; Dr. McDowell wrote in his post on December 30 that it was 983,000 km high. Either number is well beyond the moon's distance and a sign that the moon's pull added (or rearranged) orbital energy in the earth's frame. Second, the new orbit has a different shape and orientation. ISRO concluded the perigee to be 409,000 km and Dr. McDowell, 365,000 km. That is, the propulsion module no longer comes back anywhere near 125,000 km; it stays high almost all the time. And third, the orbit became noticeably tilted, by 22°, relative to the earth's equator. This happened because the moon's gravity pulled the module in a direction that wasn't perfectly aligned with its current motion and orbital plane. As a result the module's angular momentum vector changed. Per the statement, ISRO took "special care ... to monitor its trajectory" and its proximity to other space objects. "The overall satellite performance was normal during the flyby and no close approach was experienced with the other lunar orbiters. This event garnered valuable insights and experience from mission planning, operations, flight dynamics perspectives, and especially enhanced the understanding of disturbance torque effects." In sum, ISRO left the Chandrayaan-3 propulsion module in a wide earth orbit that grazed the moon's neighbourhood. In November 2025, the timing lined up such that the moon passed close enough to strongly tug on the propulsion module. This reshaped its orbit, pushing it into a higher, more tilted, and more extreme ellipse. As a result, tracking teams now found it with a very different set of orbital parameters. In his post, Dr. McDowell credited amateur astronomer Sam Deen, astronomer Luca Buzzi, and Bill Gray, who developed notable software to track near-earth objects, "for figuring out that the suspected asteroid CE1M9G2 ... was actually Chandrayaan-3".

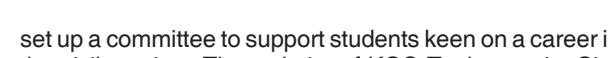
Protests erupt in Tripura over murder of student Angel Chakma in Uttarakhand

The Tripura Chakma Students Association on Sunday (December 28, 2025) requested intervention from the central government following alleged persistent attacks on students and youth from the Northeast in various parts of the country. The demand was made during a press conference in Agartala, where the organisation highlighted the case of Angel Chakma, a student from Tripura who was severely assaulted in Dehradun, the capital of Uttarakhand, and later died in the hospital.

Chief Minister Manik Saha telephoned his Uttarakhand counterpart, Pushkar Singh Dhami, to discuss the fatal attack on a student from Tripura. Dr. Saha later informed that he had received assurance from Mr. Dhami of a complete investigation and justice for the deceased. Dr. Saha is likely to visit the family of the deceased near Agartala on Monday (December 29, 2025). The top brass of the Tripura police have also been in contact with the Uttarakhand police regarding the tragic incident that triggered protests in the State. Six people were reportedly wanted in connection with the murder case, and five have been arrested.

Leaders of the Chakma Students Association expressed grave concern regarding the safety of students from Northeast India, citing violence and harassment against them elsewhere in the country. They urged the government to take urgent and effective measures to prevent such incidents and called for the implementation of strict laws against derogatory comments and hate crimes directed at people from the Northeast. The Association warned that such "unwarranted incidents" could invite serious repercussions. The leaders stated that they will hold a candlelight march in Agartala in memory of Angel Chakma on Monday (December 29, 2025).

They will also submit a memorandum to Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha on Tuesday (December 30, 2025) to advocate for severe punishment for the perpetrators and compensation for the grieving family from the governments of Tripura and Uttarakhand. Meanwhile, Pradyot Kishore Manikya, founder of Tipra Motha, has condemned the murder of Angel Chakma and declared that his party would continue to fight for justice for Angel Chakma.



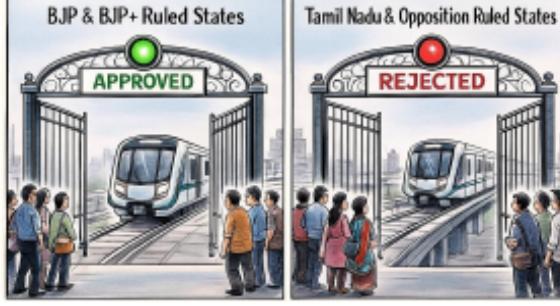
set up a committee to support students keen on a career in the civil services. The website of KCG Tech says its Civil Service Aspiration Club conducts classes every alternate week for two hours, which includes exam preparation and talks from UPSC achievers and high-ranking civil servants. Easwari Engineering College calls its programme Civil Services Training Programme. CTTE College in Perambur is increasingly focusing on helping its students excel in Group II and IV exams. Janani G, a Union Public Service Commission aspirant and a tutor at academies, says, "When I graduated from engineering college 12 years ago, we did not have such avenues being opened to us."

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Metro Rail projects ride into political row

SAME POLICY; TWO RULE BOOKS



The Union government's rejection of the Metro Rail projects for Coimbatore and Madurai has provided the ground for yet another fierce political battle between the ruling DMK-led front and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the ruling party at the Centre. Citing one of the norms stipulated in the 2017 Metro Rail Policy — that a city must have a population of at least 2 million to qualify for a mass transit system such as Metro Rail — the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, in its November 14, 2025 communication to the Tamil Nadu government, referred to 2011 Census data showing Coimbatore's population at 1.58 million and Madurai's at 1.5 million as the basis for its decision. Returning detailed project reports for the two cities, the Ministry stated that "the Metro projects are cost-intensive and should be planned carefully for long-term sustainability." It suggested other cost-effective urban transport systems, including the Bus Rapid Transit System.

The State government had followed the Union Ministry's guidelines while commissioning feasibility studies for the Mass Rapid Transit System in Coimbatore, Madurai, and three other tier-II cities in Tamil Nadu. Detailed project reports were eventually prepared by Chennai Metro Rail Limited for Madurai and Coimbatore and sent to the Centre, with a recommendation that the project cost be met under a 50:50 equity sharing basis. While completely elevated, two corridors have been proposed for nearly 35 kilometre in the case of Coimbatore; the other city is to have an elevated corridor of 26.5 km and an underground corridor of 5.5 km. Each project was estimated to cost around ₹11,000 crore. When the communication became public on November 18, 2025, it triggered loud protests from the rul-

ing party and its allies. It was left to the BJP and its ally, Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar), to defend the move of the Union government, which was said to have come after 21 months. Late evening on Tuesday (November 18, 2025), the DMK's information technology wing, on X, complained of the Centre's discrimination against Tamil Nadu vis-à-vis a couple of cities in north India, for which the approval had been given in the past despite "not fulfilling" the norm of a 2-million population. Senior BJP leader and legislator of Coimbatore (south), Vanathi Srinivasan, rejected the charge of bias against the State and contended that under the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance's reign at the Centre, the State had "received ₹1.5 lakh crore in rail funds, hardly the sign of any anti-Tamil Nadu agenda." She added that the State could resubmit the project proposal, "using urban agglomeration data, or give special justification — just as Agra Metro was approved for tourism. Similar precedents exist for Bhopal and Patna." The TMC(M)'s chief and former Union Minister G.K. Vasan expressed hope that the projects would take off in the future. On Wednesday morning (November 19, 2025), Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, in a post on X, accused the BJP-led government of using "flimsy grounds" to deny the Metro Rail projects for the "Temple City" Madurai and "South India's Manchester" Coimbatore. The BJP's ally in the State, the AIADMK, known for its strong base in Coimbatore and other western districts of the State, chose not to join the debate directly. However, its general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, in a representation submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was coincidentally in Coimbatore on Wednesday (November 19, 2025) to attend a farmers' meet, appealed to the Centre to expedite the implementation of the Metro Rail projects. The AIADMK's IT wing reposted a statement issued by the BJP's State unit. The national party had explained that the Centre had "returned" the metro proposals, asking for basic clarifications. A similar process was followed for metro extension projects in Bengaluru, in addition to Agra and Patna, the BJP added. Even though the DMK and BJP find fault with each other over the present fate of the project proposals, they, however, sound optimistic about making the projects a reality. It remains to be seen how they are going to accomplish it, but what is certain is that the Coimbatore and Madurai Metro Rail projects will get featured in election manifestos of all major parties when Tamil Nadu goes to the polls in April-May.

China's Master Teacher model vs. India's B.Ed.: Why teacher quality depends on better support systems



Most education systems in Asia look the same on the surface. They are all about high-stakes exams and intense competition. But a closer look reveals a huge difference in how they create and support their teachers. China and India, the two biggest countries, show this contrast perfectly. China has built a system where expert teachers train their peers. It is a "practice-first" model. These expert teachers are called ming shi, or "Master Teachers." India has a different story. It faces a deep "quality crisis" in how it trains its teachers. The main pathway is through a university degree, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). This model is heavy on theory but often fails in practice. Now, India is launching a huge new National Education Policy (NEP), which includes new ways to train and mentor its teachers. This brings up a big question: As India struggles with its B.Ed. programs, can it learn from the structure of China's "Master Teacher" system? China's model is a case study. It shows that a great teaching force needs a strong support system. It needs a good "middle-tier" that helps teachers grow after they start their jobs. An internal support system China's ming shi system is not some ancient tradition. It is a modern government policy. It creates a formal career path for excellent teachers. It is a clever policy. It gives top teachers a high-status career path that does not require them to quit teaching and become administrators. It also turns these expert teachers into a national resource, a team that can train thousands of others. How do they do it? They use something called a "Master Teacher Studio," or gongzuofang. This is not a physical building. It is a small group, a professional learning club. A Master Teacher leads this group and recruits several "disciple" teachers from nearby schools.

The work in this "studio" is 100% practical. They watch each other's classes, give feedback, and work together to plan better lessons. They research real problems that they face in their own classrooms. This is a formal "mentor-disciple" relationship, and the studio is judged by one thing: did the teachers in the group get better? This creates a powerful drive for real improvement. India's system is different and also crisis-ridden. The pre-service training, the B.Ed. de-

gree, was described as being in a state of "disrepair" by the 2012 Justice Verma Commission, which found many colleges were mere "shops." The 2021 UNESCO "No Teacher, No Class" report for India estimated a deficit of over 11 lakh teachers. Government data from 2023-24 reflects this, showing a national teacher vacancy rate of 15.17%. Teacher vacancies are not the biggest problem. Quality is a big concern.

According to UDISE+ (2024-25) data, about 92-93% of India's secondary teachers are "trained," meaning they hold a B.Ed. or equivalent. Yet, the NITI Aayog's School Education Quality Index (SEQI) reveals a massive gap in "Learning Outcomes" across states (e.g., Kerala at 76.6% vs. Uttar Pradesh at 36.4%). This is the core paradox: teachers are qualified on paper but ill-equipped in practice. The B.Ed. teaches theory, but when new graduates face the "shock" of a real classroom, they often fall back on the same rote-learning methods they were taught to avoid. India's training system is failing because its support structure is weak. China's system works because its "middle-tier" is strong, respected, and run by practitioners. Supporting continuous teacher development But there is an important structural experiment in India. The Delhi government's "Mentor Teacher" program offers a powerful blueprint for how such a system could be designed. Launched in 2016, the program took a cohort of 200 expert, practicing teachers and made them "mentors." Each mentor was tasked with supporting 5-6 schools. This created a "whole system of peer support" designed to be practical. The key takeaway is its design: it replaced a top-down, bureaucratic inspection model with a practitioner-led, peer-mentoring model. It provides a field-tested Indian answer to the "theory-practice gap." And this brings us back to India's new education policy (NEP). The NEP wants to create its own "Master Teachers." It also has the new 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP), which has already begun its rollout in an initial 57 institutions to replace the B.Ed. The ITEP may be a good start. But the Chinese model shows us that you do not graduate as a master. You become one through years of practice and good mentoring. The path forward is to connect the dots. The new National Mission for Mentoring (NMM), which has a formal implementation "Bluebook" published by the NCTE, should take over the old, broken infrastructure. We should stop the top-down, theory-based workshops. Instead, we should put practitioners in charge, using the Delhi "Mentor Teacher" design as the blueprint. When the new ITEP students go to schools for their internships, they should be assigned as "apprentices" to these certified Master Teachers. China's system shows us the power of an "apprentice" model. India's own Delhi experiment shows us a plausible design. By smartly combining its new policies with this proven, practical structure, India can finally fix its teacher quality crisis and build a generation of masters.

26 e-commerce platforms declare compliance to eliminate dark patterns

New Delhi: In a major step towards protecting consumer interest in the digital marketplace, 26 leading e-commerce platforms have voluntarily submitted self-declaration letters confirming compliance to eliminate dark patterns, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, on Thursday.

The compliance with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023, marks a significant milestone in India's efforts to curb deceptive online design practices that mislead or manipulate consumers. "The platforms have conducted internal self-audits or third-party audits to identify, assess, and eliminate any presence of dark patterns. All 26 companies have declared that their platforms are free from dark patterns and do not deploy any manipulative user interface designs," the Ministry said.

The compliance demonstrates a strong commitment towards consumer transparency, fair trade practices, and ethical digital ecosystems. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has also appreciated these declara-

tions and termed them "exemplary". It encouraged other companies to adopt similar self-regulation. To strengthen compliance, CCPA issued an Advisory on 5 June 2025, instructing all e-commerce platforms and online service providers to conduct a mandatory self-audit within three months to detect and eliminate dark patterns.

The advisory emphasised transparency, explicit consent, clear disclosures, and non-manipulative design. The CCPA strongly urges all other e-commerce platforms, marketplace entities, service providers, and app developers to follow the example set by these companies. Through the National Consumer Helpline (NCH), social media campaigns, informative videos, and outreach programmes, consumers have been educated about identifying dark patterns and reporting them," the Ministry said. "Such complaints are being systematically addressed, and enforcement action is being contemplated wherever necessary," it added. The CCPA has reaffirmed that it is maintaining a close watch on potential violations and will not hesitate to act against errant platforms.

The myth of the 'normal': what does your lab report really mean?



When the U.S. wrestler and actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson was in his prime, his Body Mass Index (BMI) was around 33 kg/m², technically 'obese' by World Health Organization (WHO) standards. Yet no one watching him could call him unhealthy. This paradox is one glimpse of how numbers alone can't be used to define good human health. For many years, the WHO has used universal BMI cut-offs: over 25 kg/m² for 'overweight' and 30 kg/m² for 'obesity'. But research in Asian populations has revealed that even at lower BMI levels, people developed diabetes and heart disease more often. Recognising these ethnic differences in fat distribution, the WHO revised the 'normal' upper limit for many Asian countries to 23 kg/m². Thus, 'normal' health is not fixed or global but a shifting statistical boundary shaped by population data and biological diversity.

The reference range Every lab report for continuous variables includes a reference range, which is often mistaken to be the normal range. Laboratories use the term 'reference' because the range is statistical, not absolute. This means it's derived from the test results of a large number of individuals. When these values are plotted on a graph, they form a bell-shaped curve, with most results clustering near the average and fewer at the extremes. The reference interval is the central 95% of this distribution, meaning 95 out of 100 healthy people fall within it, while 5% lie outside it. This is why falling outside the reference range doesn't always indicate disease — nor does falling within guarantee good health. It's only a guide, rather than a definitive boundary of normalcy.

Diagnosing disease would be simple if health and illness were cleanly separated, the way India and Sri Lanka are separated by the Palk Strait. But biology resembles the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border: fluid and gradual, without a clear point where Tamil-speaking people end and Malayalam-speaking people begin. In the border villages, both languages mingle and one shades into the other. Similarly, no single value separates health from disease with precision. Consider diabetes: when the fasting blood glucose levels of thousands of people are plotted on a graph, the healthy and the diabetic curves merge smoothly. The diagnostic cut-off of 126 mg/dl wasn't a mathematical discovery but a practical compromise; there's no fixed line beyond which a person suddenly becomes diabetic. Clinicians draw a line only for practical purposes, and assume that beyond that limit, the risk of complications such as diabetic retinopathy rise sharply. Put another way, all such medical boundaries balance the two concepts of sensitivity and specificity. A lower threshold would detect all true cases but falsely label many healthy ones, increasing the number of false positives; vice versa for a higher threshold. No test in medicine is 100% sensitive and 100% specific at the same time. Since no test is perfectly accurate, the chosen cut-off reflects medical judgment shaped by a disease's severity, prevalence, and social consequences. For serious yet treatable conditions, clinicians prefer caution and accept more false positives; for mild or stigmatising ones, they raise the bar to

avoid overdiagnosis. Every cut-off in medicine is thus a negotiation and, for that reason, they must be regularly revisited. Mathematics of normalcy

Not all biological measures vary equally. Sodium and potassium can vary within very tight limits because even small deviations from this range can disrupt muscle or nerve function. On the other hand, cholesterol and liver enzymes can vary across a wider range of values: their smaller changes reflect only incidental changes, such as the person's water intake on that day. Hormones are even more dynamic, fluctuating with time of day, age, sex, stress, and nutrition. Interpreting the corresponding numbers on a lab report thus demands more than just numeracy. To do so, a health worker must understand when the sample was collected, how it was tested, and what the patient's clinical picture reveals (or has already revealed).

Every reference range is also determined using a particular mathematical process, and understanding this process can allow health workers to make more informed decisions. Among other things, the distribution of the values of a medical variable is assumed to follow the "68-95-99.7" rule. For instance, if health workers collect blood samples from a number of people and find that the average value is 70 and the standard deviation is 10, the rule says that about 68% of samples score 60-80, about 95% score 50-90, and about 99.7% score 40-100. In other words, the rule helps to visualise how 'spread out' the possible values are and how rare it is for a value to fall far from the mean. The catch here is that not all biological data are symmetrical, that is, fall with equal probability on either side of the mean. For instance, most hormone-related readings are low while a few are extremely high. In such cases, labs select values from the third or the 97th percentiles. For this, they need at least 120 health samples, otherwise their tests won't be reliable.

When we call something "normal," we rarely ask, "normal for whom?"

Laboratory reference ranges are not universal truths but reflect the populations they study. Some parameters, like height, vary widely across gender and ethnicity. A Scandinavian and a South Indian may differ greatly yet both be healthy. People's nutritional and metabolic needs change with age, gender, race, and even occupation. 'Normal' haemoglobin or lipid related values depend on genetics, diet, and the environment. Men have higher red blood cell counts; Africans have lower white cell counts; and Himalayan populations have more haemoglobin.

On the other hand, physiological constants such as heart rate or kidney filtration vary little worldwide. As a result, medical interpretation in India demands that we recognise these differences rather than borrow benchmarks wholesale from the West. Unfortunately, for many common laboratory parameters, including haemoglobin, no large, authoritative Indian reference studies exist. As a result, we risk both over diagnosing and underdiagnosing disease. The reference ranges are not natural: they are statistical constructs that people put together by testing others in particular circumstances, with particular assumptions. At the bottom of every lab report is a line written keeping this fact in mind: "Please correlate with clinical findings." To correlate clinically means to bring a number back into the world of people, that is, to listen to a patient's story, examine them, and interpret the number in their full context. For example, a high BMI may signal overweight or, on the positive side, increased muscle mass, which is often the case with athletes. Similarly a borderline thyroid reading may reflect an illness or it could be a normal physiological variation. Ultimately, health workers must go in with a measure of humility that focuses as much on the term "range" as on "reference".

Between Apple's iPhone 17 series, Samsung Galaxy S25, and Google's Pixel 10 Pro, which one wins the WiFi battle?

In the crowded arena of flagship smartphones, networking performance has quietly become a major battleground. According to new data from Ookla, that compares networking performances of iPhone 17 series and other flagship Android devices, including Pixel 10 Pro, shows just how far networks, silicon and software integration matter. The bottom line is: Apple's strategy of bringing networking hardware in-house is beginning to pay off. At the heart of the iPhone 17 family's performance leap lies the new in-house networking chip, the N1. Previously, Apple's handsets used connectivity chips supplied by Broadcom where Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and other radio functions were outsourced.

With the N1, Apple has made a strategic shift, bringing Wi-Fi 7, Bluetooth 6 and Thread radio support onto a single die under its own control. [On paper the N1 is capped at 160 MHz channel width (while other devices offer up to 320 MHz) but the real-world data tells a more nuanced story.] Ookla's crowdsourced Speedtest Intelligence data shows that the iPhone 17 series has achieved a global median download speed of 329.56 Mbps, while the Pixel 10 Pro-series managed 335.33 Mbps, giving Google's device a narrow edge in median download throughput. However, when one looks at the chip's capabilities in challenging conditions (think for instance, dense residential areas), the iPhone 17 family recorded 56.08 Mbps compared to the Pixel's 53.25 Mbps, suggesting Apple's networking chip boosts resilience in tougher environments.

How does the N1 chip translate into stronger connectivity? The key lies in integration. The N1 unites Wi-Fi 7 (though limited to 160 MHz), Bluetooth 6 and Thread into a single platform, enabling Apple to optimise hardware and software together rather than relying on third-party modules. This shift away from Broadcom means Apple can reduce supply-chain reliance, tune its radios to its own devices ecosystem and deliver more consistent performance across environments. Moreover, while the N1 lacks support for full 320 MHz channels, Apple appears to have focused on improving the "floor" of performance by lifting slower speeds more strongly rather than chasing maximums that few users currently experience. That, to put it crudely, translates to clearer WhatsApp calls on a poor network. Practically, the iPhone 17 series tends to hold up better under challenging network conditions, crowded WiFi networks, weaker signal zones or congested bands. The Pixel 10 Pro, on the other hand, edges it at the median in more ideal conditions. For instance, per the Ookla report, in North America, where 6 GHz Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi 7 adoption are relatively higher, the iPhone 17 series posted a median download of 416.14 Mbps and a 90th-percentile download of 976.39 Mbps — both among the highest in the dataset. This is significant given the N1's theoretical limitations in channel width.

And beyond the head-to-head with the Pixel 10 Pro, the iPhone 17 also performed well against leading Android



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flagship phones, including the Samsung Galaxy S25 family. The Galaxy S25, equipped with Qualcomm's FastConnect 7900 WiFi silicon, did not lead any major metric, but registered the lowest latency in several regions, indicating strong responsiveness. When it comes to upload speeds, Xiaomi's 15T Pro, powered by MediaTek's WiFi silicon leads in many regions and provides low latency and strong responsiveness. So which device "wins"? It depends on your priorities. If you care about raw median throughput under typical conditions, the Pixel 10 Pro slightly outpaces the iPhone 17 series. If your concern is consistent performance across worse networks, like dense living environments or multi-device WiFi hotspots, then the iPhone 17 with Apple's N1 chip appears to have the upper hand. Apple's strategy of migrating away from Broadcom-sourced wireless chips and building the N1 in-house is bearing fruit. The company may not be chasing the absolute theoretical best link speeds right now, but its optimization shows up in everyday real-world performance. As broader adoption of WiFi 7, 6 GHz band devices and 320 MHz channels rolls out globally, the competitive landscape may shift again, but for now, Apple's twin goals of integration and consistency are translating into a tangible networking advantage. The Pixel 10 Pro still puts up compelling numbers, but the iPhone 17 series may just offer a steadier connectivity experience in the less-ideal real world.

The India-EU deal's big swap: Automobiles & wine for labour-intensive goods



Reflecting India's priority to shore up trade-linked jobs in textiles, footwear and the marine sector amid the US tariff hit, and Europe's bid to revive its industrial base through automobile exports in the face of Chinese competition in global markets, New Delhi and Brussels closed negotiations on a high-stakes trade-off: EU access for automobiles and wine in return for concessions on India's labour-intensive sectors.

The market access trade-off assumes significance as India-EU trade talks had collapsed in 2013 over market access negotiations for automobiles. For India, zero duty on labour-intensive goods brings it at par with competing countries, particularly with Vietnam, which signed a trade agreement with the EU in 2019, which helped it assume a key role in the global supply chain. Commerce ministry officials said that tariffs in the European Union are expected to go down to zero for labour-intensive goods, including marine sector that currently face up to 26%, leather & footwear up to 17%, chemical up to 12.8%, plastic & rubber up to 6.5%, textile & apparel up to 12%, gems & jewellery up to 4%, toys up to 4.7% and sports goods up to 4.7%.

The EU, in a statement, said that the duty on European motor vehicles has been reduced from 110% to 10% and the quota has been set at 250,000 units. The quotas on Electric Vehicles (EVs) will only come into effect in the 5th year, as Indian EV manufacturing is growing. The EU said that tariffs on wine under the trade deal have been reduced from 150% to 20% for the premium range and 30% for the medium range. For spirits, the duty for the EU has been reduced from up to 150% to 40%, and for beer from 110% to 50%. Similar duty reduction was done in the UK and Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Government officials said that the exports from the labour-intensive products were \$35 billion in 2024 and that the duty on \$33.5 billion worth of products will go down to 0 when the trade deal enters into force. Their duty on the remaining goods will go down to zero in 3, 5 or 7 years.

"Under the deal, the EU has agreed upon tariff liberalisation in approximately 99.5% of the value of the

goods traded, covering 96.8% of their tariff lines. In the case of India, the tariff liberalisation will be 97%, covering 92.1% of our tariff lines," government officials said. The Commerce Ministry officials said that India has given market access to the EU's automobiles on a quota basis to take care of sensitivities on both sides. The quota has been allocated only for imported EU luxury cars that would retail above Rs 25 lakhs to protect the mid-level segment, where Indian automobile manufacturers are key players.

"Both sides have negotiated automobiles on a quota basis. Automobiles have been an aggressive demand from the EU. But we want our industry to grow too. So the market has been segmented into three parts, and the quotas are increasingly going down to protect the lower segments. If the market grows beyond the quota, we would want the EU manufacturer to set up units in India," an official said. However, the official clarified that quotas on Electric Vehicles (EVs) will only come into effect in the 5th year, as Indian EV manufacturing is growing. "For every car quota that we have given, we have taken a 2.5 times quota from the EU so that India's exports can also grow. The EU's automobile market is twice our market. We stand at 5 lakh, and they stand at 10 lakh. This part of the negotiations went down to the wire and was the most complicated," the official said.

The gains will be broad-based and cluster-led, benefiting manufacturing and services hubs across multiple states, especially those having large numbers of MSMEs and labour-intensive value chains, officials said. States such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh are expected to gain due to the presence of textiles clusters and MSMEs dealing in engineering goods, leather and footwear, diamonds and jewellery, electronic goods and pharmaceuticals. With tariffs on textiles moving from 12% to 0% and electronics from 14% to 0% on 99.6% of exports, garment manufacturing clusters in Ichalkaranji, Maharashtra, Tirupur in Tamil Nadu, Ludhiana in Punjab stand to gain, officials said. Exporters of electronics and engineering goods in Bengaluru-Tumakuru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Noida along with the pharmaceutical sector in Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, Thane-Raigad, Pune are expected to see a bump up in orders and deepen EU supply chain linkages, officials said. Veraval in Gujarat, Kochi and Alappuzha in Kerala stands to benefit through higher marine exports including shrimp and tuna exports, while Bharuch-Vadodara can scale up chemical exports with tariffs falling from 12.8% to 0% on 97.5% of chemicals exports to the EU, officials said. Leather and footwear exporters in Kanpur and Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Vellore-Ambur in Tamil Nadu are also expected to benefit from a cut in tariffs from 17% to 0% now to the EU, they added.

Economic ties matter more than ever amid global uncertainty: India-EU joint statement



As world trade continues to reel through trade frictions driven by US tariffs and Chinese overcapacity, the India-EU joint statement on Tuesday said that the "historic deal" between New Delhi and Brussels is a "milestone in the strategic partnership" that will significantly enhance bilateral trade and investment ties. "The leaders of India and the EU are committed to ensuring the full implementation of the FTA. Additionally, they tasked their respective teams to complete negotiations, at the earliest opportunity, on an Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) and on an Agreement on Geographical Indications (GIs)," the joint statement read.

Amid ongoing uncertainty impeding global trade growth, India and the EU said that both trade partners have complementary strengths in the technology domain and both sides will increase collaboration across the entire value chain, linking enhanced research and innovation to business engagement and market operationalisation, the joint statement said. "In the current geopolitical environment and amidst global disruptions, they reaffirmed the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), a high-level coordination platform to address key trade, technology and economic security issues, as the cornerstone of their technology partnership and aim to further enhance its work," the joint statement read.

India and the EU stressed their shared commitment to the International Solar Alliance (ISA) at a time when the US left the grouping earlier this month. India has played a central role in ISA since its inception in 2015, as the deployment of solar energy has a larger strategic purpose of outreach to the Global South, particularly to countries in Africa.

"The leaders committed to accelerated cooperation in clean transition and energy resilience in the framework of the EU-India Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. In this context, they welcomed the creation of the India-EU Task Force on Green Hydrogen and the announcement of an India-EU Wind Business Summit to be convened in 2026. Closer engagement of the EU with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) complements this cooperation," the joint statement said. India and the EU said that the two sides will continue to advance together on promoting Digital Public Infrastructure, including interoperable standards and exchange of best practices on regulatory frameworks, collaboration in new technologies (including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, digital public infrastructure and 6G) to build cyber-secure, trusted digital ecosystems as well as to advance cooperation in clean tech.

Amid shared concerns over supply chain dependencies, the joint statement said that they will broaden discussions on economic security, in particular on the resilience of supply chains and research security, underlining the importance of protecting sensitive technologies. "Both sides agreed to hold the next TTC ministerial meeting in Brussels in 2026 and to deepen business consultation," the statement read. The joint statement touched upon the advances in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), among other connectivity partnerships. This assumes significance as it is widely seen as India's and the West's answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative. However, the unrest in West Asia has disrupted the progress of IMEC.

"They [the leaders] welcomed advances in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), launched during the 2023 G20 New Delhi Summit, and looked forward to the first Ministerial meeting. The two sides will implement trilateral cooperation projects under the India-EU Administrative Arrangement on Trilateral Cooperation, in areas such as energy, climate resilience, green mobility, and digitalisation," the statement read. A EU official had said that the India-EU summit is expected to "inject some momentum" into the preparatory work for the India-Middle East-

Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). The IMEC was announced during the G20 Summit held in New Delhi in 2023, "to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe." Its eastern leg will carry container traffic from India's western ports to the UAE, from where a high-speed freight railway will carry goods across the Arabian peninsula (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan) until the port of Haifa in Israel. The second leg will see cargo being shipped from Haifa to ports in Greece and Italy, from where Europe's well-established train networks will take goods to their final destinations across the continent.

7 animals that live in your house rent-free

A house isn't always just for people. Whether you live in a city apartment or a quiet suburban home, you probably share your space with a few uninvited but mostly harmless animal guests. These small creatures slip through tiny cracks, hide behind cupboards, and only come out when they feel safe. Many people think of them as pests, but they actually play interesting roles in nature and can help keep your home free of even worse intruders. Let's take a look at some of the most common animals that share your home and why they decide to move in.

1. House lizards: the silent pest controllers

Those quick, pale geckos you see running across your walls are more helpful than you might think. House lizards eat mosquitoes, flies, moths, and cockroaches, helping control pests naturally. They like warm corners, ceilings, and areas near lights, where insects gather.

Why they stay: Plentiful food, warmth, and relative safety from predators.

2. Spiders: the web architects of your corners

Whether they build delicate webs or hide behind furniture, spiders are some of your most industrious cohabiters. They help trap insects, sometimes eliminating dozens of pests a day. Most species that enter homes are harmless, shy, and essential to balancing indoor ecosystems.

Why they stay: Steady food supply and quiet, undisturbed spaces.

3. Ants: the unofficial food inspectors

Ants show up wherever there's food—crumbs in the kitchen, sugar spills, or open snack jars. While their presence can be annoying, ants are incredibly organised and intelligent. They leave chemical trails, communicate directions, and operate like tiny efficiency experts. Why they stay: Access to sugary foods and moisture-rich areas.

4. House Centipedes: the lightning-fast hunters

These long-legged creatures may look frightening, but they are among the most effective natural exterminators you could ask for.

India at heart of megatrends driving energy demand growth, says UAE industry minister amid deepening oil, gas trade



per day (bpd), while demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG) as well as electricity is expected to rise by half.

"Demand at this scale and pace requires investment in all forms of energy. The biggest risk is not over supply, it is underinvestment. And you know what, what we are really seeing play out is energy addition," he said as he highlighted that despite one in four cars sold last year being an electric vehicle, demand for petrol continues to rise. Speaking on the India-UAE relationship in the energy sector, Al Jaber said, "As India consumes more crude to fuel its refineries, ADNOC is proud to be a trusted, dependable supplier. As India aims to double natural gas in its energy mix, we have made this nation our number one market for LNG. As millions of Indian households turn to cleaner cooking fuels, we are already India's largest supplier of LPG. We will continue to supply feedstocks and chemicals for India's petrochemical and industrial needs."

The UAE is also India's fourth-largest source of India's oil imports, behind Russia, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its oil demand and around half of its natural gas demand. The country depends on imports to meet around two-thirds of its LPG requirement. He added that as India expands its renewable energy capacity, the UAE is investing across 11 gigawatts of solar, wind, and storage projects in India through its global climate investment vehicle Altérra, which is the world's largest private climate investment fund. The fund has a \$30-billion commitment from the UAE, and aims to mobilise further investments of up to \$250 billion by 2030. "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi put it so clearly, India does not do progress in increments, it goes for quantum leaps. And progress at this pace, and growth at this scale demands a special kind of partnership. Partnership that is strategic, long-term, agile, and flexible. Partnership that is steadfast, dependable, principled, and consistent. And partnership that is based on trust and will endure through thick and thin. That is precisely what defines the UAE-India relationship," he UAE minister said on the broader relationship between the two countries. Last year, India-UAE trade breached the \$100-billion mark, spanning sectors like energy, technology, logistics, infrastructure, health, education, and tourism. Last week, during UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's India visit, the two countries agreed to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032.

'I love my kidneys': Nutritionist lists 6 foods, beverages she does not consume

Nutritionist Amita Gadre recently shared a list of six foods and beverages that she avoids at all costs. "Six foods that I don't eat as a nutritionist," she mentioned. Energy drinks are high in calories, and I don't want to consume so much caffeine, shared Gadre. Any detox juices, vegetable juices, or detox beverages. "I love my kidneys. I don't want any extra oxalate load," Gadre noted in an Instagram post.

She also avoids foods that have added colour to them. "Red or even a green added colour. Cakes and foods like chicken lollipop, which have extra added food colour, I never have them," said Gadre. She also listed namkeen, farsan, bhujia, and the like. "While it seems a little bit, the trans fats in all of these add up, and I love my heart and my arteries. I don't want any added plaque formation," mentioned Gadre. Next up, all products that have any whipped cream. "Whipped topping is nothing but palm oil, which I don't want to eat," Gadre pointed out, finally mentioning fruit juices. "I might as well eat a fruit rather than drink its juice," said Gadre. Taking a cue from her, let's understand if skipping these foods and beverages is really beneficial.

Dr Narander Singla, lead consultant, internal medicine, CK Birla Hospital, Delhi, agreed that it is perfectly reasonable to exclude these items from one's personal diet, and there are good health reasons behind each choice. "Energy drinks are often high in sugar and caffeine, which in excess can lead to weight gain, impaired lipid profiles, and increased cardiovascular risk," said Dr Singla. Altogether, avoiding these items aligns with a diet that emphasises whole, less processed foods, moderate sugars and fats, and better nutrient density. "If a dietician chooses this, it reflects a focus on long-term health rather than short-term indulgence," said Dr Singla.



This is what happens to the body if you jump 50 times every morning for a week



Jumping is one of the simplest yet most effective cardiovascular exercises. So, what happens to your body when you perform 50 jumps every morning for a week? According to Dr Surender Pal Singh, HOD Physiotherapy Department, CK Birla Hospital, Delhi, it can lead to several positive changes in the body and overall well-being.

Jumping strengthens the heart muscles. "It increases the heart rate, improves blood circulation, and enhances cardiovascular endurance. Over time, this helps the heart pump more efficiently and reduces the risk of heart disease," said Dr Singh. It also helps improve muscle and bone strength. "Jumping engages multiple muscle groups, especially the legs, core, and glutes, making them stronger and more toned. The impact of jumping also stimulates bone density, supporting long-term bone health and helping to prevent conditions such as osteoporosis," said Dr Singh.

This short daily workout helps boost mood and reduce stress. "Physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural 'feel-good' hormones, which enhance mood, improve focus, and create a sense of well-being," said Dr Singh.

Additionally, jumping improves balance, coordination, and agility by training the body to move rhythmically and maintain stability with each bounce. "From a fitness perspective, jumping 50 times a day can also aid in weight management, especially when combined with a balanced diet. It helps burn calories, improve metabolism, and in-

crease energy levels throughout the day," said Dr Singh. In just one week, significant physical changes may not be visible, but the body tends to feel more energised, lighter, and mentally refreshed. "Over time, maintaining this simple habit can provide lasting benefits for the heart, muscles, bones, and overall health. Starting the day with 50 jumps is a quick, easy, and effective way to rejuvenate the body and set a healthy tone for the day ahead," said Dr Singh.

Indian companies boost privacy to support AI adoption: Cisco report

New Delhi: As artificial intelligence rapidly becomes part of everyday business, 97 per cent of companies in India have already expanded their privacy programmes, a new report said on Monday.

Data compiled by Cisco showed that nearly 96 per cent of organisations plan to invest even more — underlining how critical data protection has become in the AI era. The study, which surveyed over 5,200 IT, technology and security professionals across 12 countries, highlights that AI is the main force behind this transformation.

In India, nearly all organisations reported expanding their privacy programmes to keep up with the growing complexity of AI systems. Globally too, spending on privacy initiatives has increased sharply, with many companies now investing millions of dollars annually to strengthen data protection frameworks. The report showed that businesses clearly see the link between strong privacy practices and successful AI use. A large majority believe that robust privacy frameworks help them innovate faster and build trust in AI-powered services.

When Rohit Sharma told Rahul Dravid: 'I will do this, at the cost of my average and personal numbers'



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

The team of head Rahul Dravid and captain Rohit Sharma provided India with one of the most memorable moments in recent times when the duo steered India to the T20 World Cup Trophy back in 2024, ending India's 11-year wait for an ICC Trophy. The last few years has seen Rohit batting with a fearless approach, rarely caring for personal milestones as he seemed hell-bent on giving India the best possible start to their innings. Dwelling on that, Dravid said that it was Rohit's strategy to push the envelope in white-ball cricket. "There was a feeling that we were slightly behind in white-ball cricket and needed to push the envelope a little more. Run rates were going up, risk-taking was increasing, and we needed to adapt to that reality," Dravid said at a special event celebrating 'The Rise of the Hitman' by author R. Kaushik which was held at the KSCA and

hosted by Jain Sports.

"What was brilliant was that Rohit took the lead immediately. He took responsibility for setting the tempo himself, rather than asking others to do it. When your leader stands up and says, 'I will do this, even if it comes at the cost of my average or my personal numbers,' it becomes much easier to pass that message through the team," he added. Rohit Sharma L-R: Hockey legend Dhanraj Pillay, author R. Kaushik, Dr Chennaj Roychand, Chairman, JGI Group, cricketing icons, GR Vishwanath and Rahul Dravid, and double Olympic medallist P.R. Sreejesh.

In a recent interaction, Rohit had opened up about how his mindset had changed about his batting after he failed to help India win the 2019 ODI World Cup despite scoring 6 centuries and ending the tournament as the highest run scorer. "The 2019 World Cup was a big lesson for me. I scored so many runs there, but we did not win the World Cup. So I asked myself, what is the use of this? What will I do with these runs? Yes, they remain in your statistics column and all that, but for me, that was of no real use. That is when I decided that I would play for what makes me happy," he said on JioHotstar's 'Captain Rohit Sharma's Roadmap for T20 World Cup' show. "That is why I started thinking differently in 2020. What I eventually implemented in 2022 and 2023 took me two years to adapt to, from 2020 to 2022. I realised that I had to play with intent and without any fear. Otherwise, it does not matter how many times I got out in the 40s or in the 90s; it never bothered me at all," he added.

The Forehand problem: Why Coco Gauff can't break through tennis's final barrier

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Coco Gauff arrived at last year's US Open with an audacious plan to overhaul her serve. Its recent faltering results — she had lost a match in which she hit 19 double faults — prompted a sudden change in her coaching team and an attempt to change her technique in real time as the most high-profile American at her home slam. The plan achieved mixed results. Yet, as Gauff obliterated her racquet in the locker room following a 1-6, 2-6 quarterfinal defeat to Elina Svitolina at the Australian Open on Tuesday, the source of her frustration would not have been her serve. Instead, it was another prominent technical flaw in her game: an unstable forehand. The American, turning 22 in two months, has had the unenviable task of attempting to evolve as a tennis player under the glare of the public eye ever since she was 15 years old. Her impressive results — two Major titles and a career-high ranking of World No. 2 — at such a young age are a result of a class-leading backhand, phenomenal athleticism, and mental fortitude that has allowed her to elongate high-stakes contests into mental battles. These are even more creditable considering there remains so much room for improvement. At the peak of her short career so far, she had a productive partnership with Brad Gilbert. Having worked with Andre Agassi in the past, the American celebrity coach — often doubling up as a TV analyst — has even authored a book titled 'Winning Ugly.' But there is only so much winning that can be done the ugly way, especially when the areas of concern are the two most important shots in tennis.

Gauff's serve receives the brunt of the flak, but it is not far removed from its ceiling. The issue is the variance between her best and worst serving days. A short grip change as opposed to a change in motion like other players make, as current coach Matt Daly has suggested, should lead to more consistency over time. Her forehand betrays her far more consistently. Part of the problem is her grip: the extreme Western grip through which she imparts excessive topspin makes last-minute adjustments



tough. But that's not to say it can't be used effectively — Iga Swiatek uses the same grip and has arguably the best forehand on tour. The problem is her tentativeness with racquet in hand. Unsure of whether to go on the attack or give in to her more natural defensive instincts, she is often caught with all her weight on the back right foot. It's a premeditated cop-out, especially when she is being outplayed, leaving her too far behind the baseline to go on the attack, often looping balls back into play. This is far removed from the attitude she displays on her backhand, which she can hit flat or with spin, and use to both attack and defend effectively, leaning into her shots with intent. On Tuesday, her entire game fell apart. She hit three winners and 26 unforced errors in a match that only lasted 15 games. Five of those were double faults and 12 came on the forehand side, but she was outplayed on all accounts against an experienced, peaking opponent who was smelling blood. Svitolina is into her fourth Major semifinal, where she faces the red-hot World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka. For Gauff, while time may be on her side, she must also solve technical issues while her place among tennis's elite is still established. Doing so following a tumble down the rankings will come with mental hurdles of its own. The time has come to start winning elegantly, too.

Which player will be a 'massive bonus' for India for his experience as per bowling coach Morne Morkel

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Ever since returning to the national fold during the series against South Africa, Hardik Pandya has looked the part. Coming back from an injury lay-off, the all-rounder has been cranking up good pace apart from providing finishing touches with the bat whenever required, thus making this Indian outfit a well-rounded one going into the T20 World Cup.

While Pandya hasn't been able to flex his muscles with the bat as much as he would have liked, with the ball, he has been making telling contributions. Pandya taking the new ball has also meant India have been able to save Jasprit Bumrah for the back-end. At the T20 World Cup, his form with both bat and ball would be crucial for them to go all the way again. India's bowling coach Morne Morkel said Pandya is again beginning to show his class with the ball, providing key breakthroughs and his experience was huge for the side. "Hardik is again in the series with the ball for me, showing his class," Morkel admitted. "He's looking extremely fit, and his body is in good shape at the moment, which is a massive bonus for us. Unfortunately, so far with the way we've been batting, he's sort of lacked that time in the



middle. But I think we all saw at the game, the last match — that afterwards he went down to the nets and he practised for hours. That was great to see. He's really focused to put in a great performance for the team. I think with everything that he's done so far, he's been very professional, he's been world-class. Just to have his experience in the changing room is a massive plus point, bonus for us," the former South Africa pacer added.

Gukesh beats Fedoseev to bounce back at Tata Steel Masters

Wijk aan Zee (The Netherlands): World Champion D Gukesh bounced back after two consecutive losses and defeated Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia in the eighth round of the Tata Steel Masters here on Monday. Gukesh won handsomely with the black pieces, a result that should boost his confidence.

The Indian ace had been playing well till the first rest day but then lost two games in a row before pulling one back. It was a picturesque finish when Gukesh sacrificed his rook and wrapped up the game in 41 moves. On a day when Arjun Erigaisi survived a difficult position against compatriot Aravindh Chithambaram and settled for a draw, R Praggnanandhaa escaped in a pawn-down endgame to hold youngster Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus of Turkey. Meanwhile, local favourite Anish Giri threw the tournament open with a fine victory against overnight leader Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan. Abdusattarov remained in sole lead on 5.5 points despite the loss, as his nearest rival and compatriot Javokhir Sindarov was held to a draw by Vincent Keymer

of Germany. With five rounds to go, Abdusattarov on 5.5 points is still at the top, pursued closely by Sindarov half a point behind. The day produced just two decisive games out of seven in the 14-player field, which meant that 14-year-old Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus of Turkey stayed in joint third spot with Hans Moke Niemann of the United States and Jorden van Foreest of the Netherlands. Close behind and hoping for a few victories is Gukesh on four points, with Giri, Fedoseev, Keymer and Matthias Bluebaum of Germany also in contention. Erigaisi is next on 3.5 points after drawing Chithambaram, while Praggnanandhaa still awaits his first win — a rare sight in any tournament he has played in recent years. Hans Moke Niemann (4) drew with Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 4); Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 2.5) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 3.5); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 4) lost to Gukesh (Ind, 4); Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur, 4.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 5); Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze, 3) drew with Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 4).

Young Indian shuttlers eye strong show at Thailand Masters



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Bangkok: A crop of young Indian shuttlers will aim to seize an early-season opportunity when they begin their campaigns at the Thailand Masters, a USD 250,000 event, beginning here on Tuesday. The tournament offers a valuable chance for the likes of Priyanshu Rajawat, Kiran George and Tharun Manneppali to test themselves and attempt deep runs at the Super 300 level, the second-lowest tier within the Badminton World Federation World Tour structure.

Thomas Cup-winning squad member Rajawat, who claimed the Orleans Masters Super 300 title in 2023, will open his campaign against fourth seed Brian Yang. The 23-year-old from Dhar returned to competitive action after a five-month layoff due to a knee injury at the Syed Modi India International Super 300 in November 2025. Seventh seed Kiran, a former Odisha Masters Super 100 champion and a quarterfinalist at the 2025 India Open Super 750, will face Malaysia's Sholeh Aidil in the opening round.

Manneppali, a gold medallist at the 37th National Games in 2023 and a silver medallist at the 2023 Senior National Championships, along with former world junior No 1 S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian, are also part of India's next generation of singles players on the BWF Tour. Manneppali, who reached his maiden BWF Super 300

semifinal at the Macau Open last year, will take on Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen, while 2022 World Junior Championships silver medallist Subramanian will face fifth seed Arnaud Merkle.

Former national champion Mithun Manjunath has been handed a tough first-round match against eighth seed Magnus Johansen, while youngster Manraj Singh will open against a qualifier. In women's singles, former national champion Anmol Kharb, who won titles in Belgium and Poland in 2024, will face Hong Kong's Lo Sin Yan Happy. The 19-year-old is a member of India's historic gold medal-winning team at the 2024 Badminton Asia Team Championships. She enters the tournament after stretching former world champion Nozomi Okuhara at the Indonesia Masters last week. Among others, Rakshitha Ramraj has been drawn against top seed Supanida Katethong, while Aakarshi Kashyap will take on third seed Hina Akechi. Tasnim Mir will play fifth seed Huang Yu-Hsun and Shriyanshi Valishetty meets Canada's Wen Yu Zhang.

Tanya Hemanth is set to face seventh seed Julie Dawall Jakobsen, while an all-Indian clash between Isharani Baruah and Malvika Bansod is also on the cards. Devika Sihag and Anupama Upadhyaya are slated to face qualifiers in their respective first-round matches. In women's doubles, Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam will open against fifth-seeded Indonesian pair Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma and Meilysa Trias Puspitasari. Another Indian combination, Rutaparna Panda and Swetaparna Panda, has been drawn against seventh-seeded Chinese duo Bao Jing and Li Yi Jing. India will also feature in mixed doubles, with Ashith Surya and Amrutha Pramuthesh set to face Spain's Ruben Garcia and Lucia Rodriguez. In another tie, Dhruv Rawat and Maneesha K will take on the Chinese Taipei pair of He Zhi-Wei and Liang Ching Sun. Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K will face a stiff opening-round test in the men's doubles when they take on fourth-seeded Malaysians Nur Mohd Azriyin Ayub and Tan Wee Kiong.

Why the Indian team will be tough to read this World Cup, according to Morne Morkel

GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Come T20 World Cup, India's bowling coach Morne Morkel wants opponents to be least prepared when it comes to how Suryakumar Yadav & Co will be playing their cards with the ball. In the ongoing series against New Zealand, India's bowling unit has evolved into an attack where bowlers have been comfortable to bowl in different phases. They are being used for even a one-over spell and Morkel said every Indian bowler possesses an X-factor. From Jasprit Bumrah, their premier pacer, who has been handed a flexible role, even the spinners Varun Chakaravarthy and Kuldeep Yadav have been called in at different times to send an over or two, which has caught opponents off-guard. When they started preparing for the T20 World Cup, it was their priority, he revealed. "That's a luxury we have at the moment," he said about the versatility of their attack. "We've got a handful of bowlers that can bowl in every situation, in different situations. Part of the thinking for us, leading into the World Cup, was to look at different combinations. We don't want teams to have set plans against us. I think at the moment, we're doing that quite well. If teams start to plan against us, they don't know where we are going to fit and how we're going to play our cards. For us, it is important to give guys that opportunity in that role, to get comfortable in those roles. Because of the conditions we might face on the day, we'll go up with different game plans. But, yeah, to have that quality in our bowling attack that allows us options is always a great place to be," Morkel said.

Different thinking

While most teams have usually relied on winning games with the bat in the format, Morkel said India are aligned more towards taking wickets at the powerplay,



which would curtail the opportunity to put up huge totals. "For us it's about getting those bowling partnerships, getting that sorted for the World Cup. 20-20 is about taking wickets. We want to try and get teams down, seven, eight down, six down, by the 15th, 16th over. So how we can plan that with our bowling attack to get those wickets is going to be important. We've got, with the 11 that we can pick on match day, we've got 11 match winners. And that's a nice position to be in." While teams often look for one X-factor option with the ball, India have three in Bumrah, Kuldeep and Varun. All three offer variety in their own ways. "Everybody has a certain ability of X factor about them. So yeah, for us it's just to keep on having good, clear communications about their roles, what to expect. And then they also know, the buy-in for this team is that there's no guarantee of starting in the 11. It's about who is suited based on the conditions and how we can see the team winning at the end of the day. It's about the team and the conditions and how we can win a great game of cricket," Morkel said.

'This is not how we wanted to go to a World Cup': Cricket Scotland chief executive Trudy Lindblade says team sympathizes with Bangladesh



GNS News Agency, Jan 30

Cricket Scotland chief executive Trudy Lindblade said that the team sympathizes with Bangladesh for getting ousted from the T20 World Cup, adding this is now how they wanted to compete in the showpiece event, set to begin from February 7. "We certainly have for the Bangladesh team," Lindblade said when asked if she had sympathy for the side they had replaced. "Obviously, this is not how we wanted to go to a World Cup. There is a qualification process and nobody wants to qualify or attend or be invited to a World Cup in the way that we have done. We acknowledge it is certainly unique circumstances by our participation, and we do feel for the Bangladesh players," Lindblade said to ESPNcricinfo.

"We are a team that is ranked 14th in the world. We are also a strong team that plays consistently throughout the year. That World Cup [qualifier] for us was not how we normally play, and therefore we are just pleased to be at this World Cup... We are happy to step in, although it is unique and challenging circumstances and we absolutely recognise that," she added. The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Saturday informed the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) that they will be replaced by Scotland in the T20 World Cup.

The ICC's decision came after the Bangladesh government reiterated that its players would not play in India, and asked for their matches to be shifted to Sri Lanka. The world body has asked Scotland to prepare their team to

replace Bangladesh in the tournament. BCB president Aminul Islam and the country's sports advisor Asif Nazrul had repeatedly cited 'security concerns' as reasons for their demand — a claim categorically rejected by the ICC. A 24-hour ultimatum was given to the BCB and the formal information was conveyed on Friday evening, stating Bangladesh's exclusion from the tournament.

The call was taken after a decision by the ICC Board, where only Pakistan supported Bangladesh's stand. The Board noted that it was not feasible to make changes so close to the tournament and that altering the schedule under the circumstances, in the absence of any credible security threat, could set a precedent that would jeopardise the sanctity of future ICC events and undermine its neutrality.

Nat Sciver-Brunt hits first WPL century as Mumbai beat RCB

Vadodara: Nat Sciver-Brunt (100 not out) hit the first-ever century in Women's Premier League history in its fourth edition as dominant Mumbai Indians beat Royal Challengers Bengaluru by 15 runs, despite Richa Ghosh's whirlwind 90, here on Monday. In a must-win game to remain in contention for play-offs, defending champions Mumbai produced a near-perfect performance with the bat, piling up 199 for four. Despite making early inroads to leave RCB reeling at 35 for five inside the powerplay, MI bowlers struggled against Richa, who hammered 10 fours and six sixes to make 90 off 50 balls in her team's 184 for nine. RCB collected 43 runs in the last two overs, with India all-rounder Amanjot Kaur hit for three sixes in a row by Richa. Hayley Matthews (56 and 3/10), who had earlier struck a vital half-century, jolted MI twice as she dismissed skipper Smriti Mandhana (6) and Georgia Voll (9) in the fourth over, and Radha Yadav (0) in her next. Shabnim Ismail (2/25), who had struck first to remove Grace Harris (15), cleaned up Gautami Naik (1) for her second wicket and also took a sharp catch in the deep to help Matthews dismiss Radha.

Dharmendra worshipped 'star' Meena Kumari, tried to curb her drinking; she loved him 'passionately': 'Most beautiful...'



patch in her life, and so he did.

They signed a couple of more films with each other, and while none of these films were anything close to what she had done on screen before, it gave them a chance to spend some time with each other. Purnima released and sank without a trace. Here, the two played star-crossed lovers who are forced to marry other people, but in a strange twist, they come back together again after their respective spouses die. They also worked together in Kaajal, where they were not romantically paired together, but shared a strange bond that seemed romantic at first, but was later revealed to be that of a brother and sister.

When Dharmendra said, 'I don't like women drinking' The on-screen relationship might not have been working for the audience, but off-screen, they were starting to become each other's confidantes. Dharmendra would frequently visit her at Janki Kutir and while people might believe that he accelerated her drinking habit, that wasn't the case. As per her biography, he actively tried to curb her drinking, and to some extent, it worked as well. She would not drink much in his company, but as soon as he was gone, she would gulp down whatever was in front of her. Years later, when Dharmendra was asked during Aap Ki Adalat if he encouraged Meena to drink, he just said, 'I don't like women drinking.' Their closeness was starting to get apparent in front of the world as well, and unlike her contemporaries, Meena did not believe in hiding relationships behind closed doors. If she liked someone, she made it known, and thus, their relationship soon became tabloid fodder. She was famously married to Kamal Amrohi and so naturally, there was more attention given to this relationship.

She was a mentor-like figure to him as she helped him navigate the corridors of stardom, and he was like a project to her, someone who needed her guidance. It was widely believed that Dharmendra somehow used his relationship with Meena to get better film offers, but that wasn't really the case as Dharmendra was doing just as many, or probably more films, with actors like Mala Sinha as well, who were also more popular than him.

'I would just keep looking at her' As Meena and Dharmendra's relationship rumours increased, the tabloids started printing stories of her reciting shayari for him at cocktail parties, or Meena losing her patience when she wasn't around him, but stories like these were unverified and could have been the product of anyone's imagination. While Dharmendra tried to stay mum on the subject for almost all of his life, he once admitted his love for Meena as a star. At Aap Ki Adalat, when Rajat Sharma asked him if he was in love with her, he said, 'It wasn't love, I was her fan. As a fan, I would just keep looking at her. If you call the relationship between a fan and a star love, then call it love.' Their next film, Phool Aur Pathar, in 1966, was another run-of-the-mill story, but luck favoured Dharmendra here, and after this, he was a star. His fortune changed, and he was now the next big Bollywood star. Meena's fortune was starting to change as well, as her glory days were now behind her. She had given in to alcoholism completely and was now starting to look visibly sick. Their next film was Hrishikesh Mukherjee's Majhli Didi, which was almost a precursor to Amar Prem, had Meena giving a beautiful performance, but much like all of their other films, this one disappeared soon after the release as well. Their last two films – Chandan Ka Palna and Baharon Ki Manzil – were just as forgettable. And after 1968, the two never worked in any film together, and the unnamed relationship they shared with each other also ended. Around that time, Kamal came back into Meena's life and they restarted work on Pakeezah, upon Sunil Dutt's insistence. Kamal was yet to cast the male lead of the film, and Dharmendra was in the running for that role. But, Kamal did not want to cast someone who was close to his wife. When Dharmendra was asked about this by Rajat Sharma, he just laughed and said, 'People were jealous.' Meena's health was deteriorating with every passing day, and Dharmendra was no longer a part of her life.

It was almost as if she had expected her husband to be there for her at this juncture of her life, but he disappointed her once again. And it was probably this disappointment that made her believe that Dharmendra was there for her with absolutely no ulterior motives. In 1972, after Meena died, Dharmendra paid his respects at her funeral, and Nargis wrote an open letter where she finally declared Meena's love for him. 'If Meena has ever loved anyone passionately, the person is Dharmendra. If Meena ever turned crazy in love for someone, it was Dharmendra.' Describing it as the 'most beautiful' phase of her life, Nargis made it clear that Dharmendra was nothing but a positive influence on her.

Salman Khan cries on national television as he remembers Dharmendra: 'We lost the most amazing man'



During the episode, Salman said, 'We lost the He-Man. We lost the most amazing man. I don't think there is anyone better than Dharmji. The way he lived life was king-size. He gave us Sunny, Bobby, and Esha. Since the day he joined the industry, he only wanted to work. He did so many roles. My career graph—I have only followed Dharmji. He came with an innocent face and a He-Man's body. That charm stayed with him till the end. Love you, Dharmji. Will always miss you.' He added, '

Rhea Chakraborty quit acting to start clothing brand, achieved valuation of Rs 40 crore in less than a year



arrested, my T-shirt read: 'Roses are red, violets are blue, let's smash the patriarchy, me and you.' It spoke for me when I couldn't." That moment sparked the idea of turning clothing into a medium of expression, and a pathway back to her career. Reflecting on their journey, she said, "When we went through what we went through, we both sort of lost our careers. I stopped getting acting calls, and Showik had scored 96% in CAT and was set to attend a prestigious college. But he went to jail around the same time, and by the time he came out, the first trimester was over—and so were his MBA plans and future prospects." She added, "It was at this moment that we wanted to create something that gives people their voice—something that helps people feel seen and heard. That's how this idea was born."

Rhea Chakraborty launched Chapter 2 Drip online in August 2024, and in June this year, they opened their first offline store—despite her initial hesitation. "I didn't even have the guts to open a store because overheads naturally increase. Rents on Bandra's Linking Road are ridiculously high. We were doing well online, and I wanted to stay that way, but Showik found the space and convinced me."

We were building a community, and a community needs a headquarters. We wanted to host events, meet people, talk to them about their Chapter 2. That couldn't happen if we stayed only online." The brand received Rs 1 crore in seed funding from retail pioneers Kishore and Ashni Biyani, and quickly reached a valuation of around Rs 40 crore. Recalling the unexpected moment that led to the investment, Rhea said, "I invited them on our podcast for a chat, thinking we would just get some insights. But while we were talking and I asked sir for advice, he suddenly said, 'You can give us free equity.' I said, 'One second—I don't want to give you free equity, but we will give you equity.' She continued, "I was confident about my numbers. If your brand isn't bringing in revenue, nobody will invest in you. But we were generating revenue, we were profitable. I didn't go for a 5X valuation." Today, Chapter 2 Drip sells denims for Rs 5,500, the viral "indifferent" white T-shirt for Rs 2,290, Anti-Everything Club vests for Rs 1,790, and co-ord sets priced up to Rs 7,990.

Speaking to CNBC-TV18, Rhea recalled, "When I was

Dileep claims conspiracy against him began with ex-wife Manju Warrier's remark: 'Real conspiracy was to make me accused, destroy my career and life'



began the moment Manju (Manju Warrier) stated that the criminal conspiracy behind the incident must be investigated. A senior officer at that time, along with a team of criminal-minded police personnel chosen by them, orchestrated this action against me. For this purpose, they supported the main accused in the case and the co-accused who were lodged in prison with him, and together this police team created a fabricated story." It may be recalled that during a solidarity meet organised at the Durbar Hall ground in Kochi on February 19, 2017, two days after the incident shook Kerala, Manju Warrier had said, "There has clearly been a criminal conspiracy behind this crime." However, she hadn't named anyone at that time. Industry bigwigs like Mohanlal and Mammootty, as well as Dileep, were present on the occasion. 2017 actress abduction and assault case timeline | From the day that shook Kerala and Dileep's arrest to the verdict Dileep added while talking to reporters, "Then, with the help of certain media organisations and a few journalists who were ready to support them, this fabricated narrative was widely circulated through social media. Today, in court, this fake story created by that police team has collapsed. The real conspiracy in this case was to make me the accused, to destroy my career, my image, and my life in society." Although Dileep dubbed the case against him as fabricated and claimed that "truth has won," it may be recalled that the survivor in the case had previously approached the Kerala High Court more than once seeking the transfer of the case to another court, alleging she was not satisfied with the trial proceedings conducted by Judge Honey Varghese, who eventually pronounced the verdict on December 8, 2025. According to The News Minute, the survivor had questioned why the judge did not disclose in court that she had received a forensic report indicating that the visuals of the sexual assault had been illegally accessed by someone while in the court's custody. She also stated that the judge treated prosecution witnesses "rudely." It may also be recalled that two special public prosecutors assigned to the case had earlier resigned, stating that it had become untenable to continue working with the judge. However, the HC dismissed the survivor's petitions.

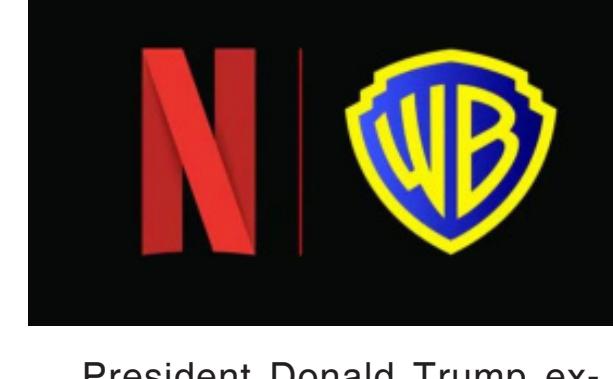
Meanwhile, shortly after the court proceedings, Dileep addressed the media and slammed the police, alleging they had conspired to implicate him in the case. He also bluntly blamed his former wife, renowned actor Manju Warrier, for initiating the conspiracy theory against him with her statement. Claiming that "truth has won," he thanked those who stood by him, including his family and fans, over the years. Only in SCREEN | Dileep's downfall: How the 2017 actor abduction and assault case accused dug his own grave in cinema and real life

Alleging that there was indeed a criminal conspiracy in the case, Dileep told reporters, "The conspiracy against me

Trump says Netflix deal to buy Warner Bros. 'could be problem' because of size of market share

Washington: President Donald Trump said on Sunday that a deal struck by Netflix to buy Warner Bros. Discovery "could be a problem" because of the size of the combined market share. "There's no question about it," Trump said, answering questions about the deal and various other topics as he walked the red carpet at the Kennedy Centre Honours. The Republican president said he will be involved in the decision about whether the federal government should approve the USD 72 billion deal. If approved by regulators, the merger would put two of the world's biggest streaming services under the same ownership and join Warner's television and motion picture division, including DC Studios, with Netflix's vast library and its production arm. The deal, which could reshape the entertainment industry, has to "go through a process and we'll see what happens," Trump said.

"Netflix is a great company. They've done a phenomenal job. Ted is a fantastic man," he said of Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos, noting that they met in the Oval Office last week before the deal was announced Dec. 5. "I have a lot of respect for him, but it's a lot of market share, so we'll have to see what happens." Asked if Netflix should be allowed to buy the Hollywood giant behind "Harry Potter" and HBO Max, the president said, "Well, that's the question." "They have a very big market share, and when they have Warner Bros., you know, that share goes up a lot, so, I don't know," he said. "I'll be involved in that decision, too. est jobs in the history of movies and other things."



President Donald Trump expressed concerns over Netflix's US\$ 72 billion deal to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery, citing potential market share issues. He said he would be involved in the regulatory decision, emphasizing the merger could reshape the entertainment industry.

If veteran star Dharmendra were alive today, he would have been celebrating his 90th birthday today—a milestone his family had been eagerly looking forward to after he was discharged from the hospital just a couple of weeks earlier. But fate dealt a heartbreaking blow. On 24 November, the legendary actor passed away and was quietly cremated at Pawan Hans in Mumbai. Two days later, his family, including his sons Sunny Deol and Bobby Deol, hosted a prayer meet to honour his extraordinary life and legacy. Now, actor Salman Khan, who shared a deep and affectionate bond with Dharmendra, has openly expressed his grief. During the grand finale of Bigg Boss 19, which he hosted on Sunday, Salman broke down on national television while remembering the star. "Dharam ji died on my father's birthday," he said, his voice trembling. Several clips of a teary-eyed Salman have since emerged online, resonating with fans who know how close the two were.

During the episode, Salman said, "We lost the He-Man. We lost the most amazing man. I don't think there is anyone better than Dharmji. The way he lived life was king-size. He gave us Sunny, Bobby, and Esha. Since the day he joined the industry, he only wanted to work. He did so many roles. My career graph—I have only followed Dharmji. He came with an innocent face and a He-Man's body. That charm stayed with him till the end. Love you, Dharmji. Will always miss you." He added, "