

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

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

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

Former Medchal–Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandhi Sravan Kumar Reddy Participates in CSI Church Celebrations and Hands Over Government Cheque



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 31 (Indian Chronicle):““Former Medchal–Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandhi Sravan Kumar Reddy participated as the chief guest in the New Year and Christmas celebrations held at the Habshiguda CSI Church, organized under the supervision of the Habshiguda Division Church Association and pastors.On this occasion, as part of the Telangana State Government’s support and following the instructions of Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, Kandhi Sravan Kumar Reddy handed over a cheque of ₹1 lakh, sanctioned by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, on behalf of the state



government.The pastors and church association members warmly felicitated Kandhi Sravan Kumar Reddy during the programme.The event was attended by Habshiguda Division Congress Party President Vijay Kumar, Division General Secretary and Director of the Endowments Department Dharmendra Naik (Dharma), SC Cell leader Solomon Babu, Habshiguda Division Youth Congress President Vasu Naik, Indiramma Committee member Gundurajanna, division leaders Javid, Church Association members, Church Father Jitender, Pastor Paneer, Vinod Kumar, Kumar, Division Secretary Suman Naik, Shiva, Christian Minority members, and other party leaders and supporters.

Task Force Raids Fake Kova Units in Tandur

Two persons Arrested



“Indian chronicle, Vikarabad Tandur(jan,31)““ Police arrested two people involved in manufacturing and selling adulterated kova — a popular dairy product — which poses serious health risks to consumers. District SP Sneha Mehr announced the arrests in an official statement.““Acting on credible intelligence under SP’s orders, Task Force Inspector Md. Anwar Pasha and his team raided a suspected site in Tandur police station limits. They seized approximately 120 kg of adulterated kova.““Two suspects — Prakash Vishnu from Rajasthan and Mohammad Salman from Chandrayangutta, Hyderabad — were taken into custody. The seized contraband and accused were handed over to Tandur police for further legal action.““A case has been registered at Tandur Police Station and investigation is underway, said SP Sneha Mehra. She warned that strict action will be taken against those tampering with food items and endangering public health.““She urged citizens to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activity related to adulterated food production or sale immediately to the police.

Free, Fair & Peaceful Elections Our Priority


SP Sneha Mehra



““Indian Chronicle Vikarabad, Tandur(Jan,31)““ District SP Sneha Mehr emphasized that ensuring free, fair, and peaceful municipal elections is the topmost priority of the police force. Speaking at a special online orientation meeting with police officers held at the district police headquarters on Saturday, she directed every officer to strictly enforce the Model Code of Conduct.““She instructed officers to identify highly sensitive polling booth areas, prepare advance deployment plans, and station extra forces there. Officers were told to continuously monitor booth-wise geography, past election trends, and voter profiles to stay alert.““SP ordered strict surveillance on individuals with criminal records, rowdy-sheets, and suspects likely to disrupt law and order. Their movements must be tracked, and bind-over proceedings initiated immediately if needed.““Officers were also directed to curb illegal liquor transportation, cash distribution, and freebies influencing voters. Licensed firearms must be deposited promptly, and illegal arms trade/use dealt with firmly.““To instill confidence, police flag marches should be conducted so citizens can exercise their franchise fearlessly. SP Sneha Mehr urged all staff to work in coordination to ensure successful elections.““Additional SP B. Ramulu Naik, DSPs, Cls, RIs, SIs, RSIs, and other personnel attended the meeting.

Chief Minister’s Relief Fund a Boon for the Poor and Middle Class: Uppal Congress In-Charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy

““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 31 (Indian Chronicle):““Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-Charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund (CMRF) has become a major support system for the poor and middle-class families. He said that under the Congress government, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is ensuring timely settlement of medical bills through the CMRF for all eligible beneficiaries.““On Saturday, Parameshwar Reddy distributed CMRF cheques to beneficiaries belonging to the Uppal constituency. On this occasion, cheques were handed over as follows:Jangaiah – ₹60,000; Rohith – ₹60,000; Sandhya – ₹60,000; Praveen Kumar – ₹60,000; Paila Nagaraju – ₹57,000; Gummadilli Mallesh – ₹60,000; Golconda Janga Jangaiah – ₹31,000; and Venkatesh – ₹25,000.Speaking at the event, Parameshwar Reddy reiterated that the Congress government is committed to extending financial assistance to those in need through the CMRF and ensuring that deserving patients receive medical relief without delay.The programme was attended by Uppal Division President Bakaram Laxman, Ramanthapur Division President Mohammed Rafiq, Mallapur Division President Kappara Sai Goud, along with Nemali Anil Kumar, Akiti Agam Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Venkat Reddy, Ramana, Madan Goud, Rajesh, Krishna Reddy, Gummadilli Kishore, Jangaiah, and other party leaders.





Journalist Kadari nominated for the 21st ward

“Yellandu, January 31 (Indian Clinical):““Journalist Kadari Nataraj has filed his nomination for the 21st ward as an independent candidate in the upcoming municipal



elections in the town. Nomination candidate Kadari said on Saturday that there were times when he fought on public issues and solved many problems as a leader. He asked the people of the ward to vote for him and win.



BSP candidate Madhu. Mateti Madhu sir in 23rd ward municipal res..

““ Yellandu, January 31 : Mateti Madhu the candidate being strengthened by BSP as the 23rd ward councillor under Illandu municipality. Successfully completed the first stage of nomination. On Saturday, the process of nominations started and the second phase of the scrutiny was held. Three sets of nominations were filed and three nomination papers were accepted by the sixth officers. He will soon come before the voters of the 23rd ward for campaigning with an elephant symbol.

BJP Confident of Victory in Kagaznagar Municipal Council: MP Nagesh

““Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 30 (Indian Chronicle)““Adilabad Member of Parliament Godam Nagesh on Saturday expressed confidence that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would emerge victorious and hoist its flag in the Kagaznagar Municipal Council.“Addressing a preparatory meeting of BJP councillor candidates held at the residence of MLA Dr. Palvai Harish Babu in Kagaznagar, the MP said that local bodies in Telangana were functioning largely with funds provided by the Central government.““He announced the sanction of ₹50 lakh from the MP Local Area Development (MPLAD) funds for the construction of a new branch library building in Kagaznagar town.“Speaking on the occasion, MLA Dr. Palvai Harish Babu said that top priority would be given to improving drainage systems, roads, and sanitation facilities in the town.“Later, BJP pamphlets and door posters were released, and the party’s councillor candidates were formally introduced.“The meeting was attended by BJP district president Dhoni Srisailam, former district president Dr. Kothapalli Srinivas, and other party leaders.



Vidyajyothi High School Student Wins Gold Medal in State-Level Boxing Tournament



“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, January 31: “Seguri Yashwanth, a student of Vidyajyothi High School, won the gold medal in the 49–52 kg category at the Telangana State Level Boxing Tournament conducted under the aegis of the School Games Federation (SGF) “Yashwanth, who is currently studying Class IX, is undergoing professional boxing training at the I.V. Rao Boxing Academy under the guidance of coach Satyanarayana. He impressed everyone with his exceptional performance throughout the tournament.” Nacharam Congress leader Mahesh Yadav, who attended the event as the chief guest, congratulated Yashwanth for his outstanding achievement. Speaking on the occasion, he assured full support to young sportspersons in the future and expressed confidence that Yashwanth would scale greater heights in his boxing career.

Three Members of a Family Die by Suicide After Being Run Over by Train Between Cherlapally–Ghatkesar

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 31, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “A tragic incident occurred in the early hours of Wednesday on the MMTS down line between Cherlapally and Ghatkesar, where three members of the same family died after allegedly coming under a train. The deceased have been identified as Vijayashanthi Reddy and her two children, Vishal Reddy and Chaitanya Reddy, residents of Harithavanam Colony, Boduppal. The incident came to light after the loco pilot of a goods train alerted railway authorities. Railway police rushed to the spot and found three bodies on the railway tracks. According to the Government Railway Police (GRP), no railway tickets or valuable belongings were found near the bodies. Based on preliminary observations, the police suspect the deaths to be a case of suicide. The bodies were shifted to Gandhi Hospital for post-mortem examination. A case has been registered under GRP Crime No. 57/2026, and further investigation is underway.



Elect me as the 33rd ward councilor candidate of Bhongir town... Let's pave the way for development: Nakkala Chiranjeevi Yadav, 33rd Ward Councilor Candidate

“(Mandava Srisailem... Yadadri Bhongir District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 31):- Nakkala Chiranjeevi Yadav, who is contesting as the 33rd ward candidate, said that he is coming before you with the sole aim of developing the 33rd ward, and if you elect him as the councilor, he will undertake the following programs to transform the face of our ward. As part of this, the 33rd ward candidate's key promises and our ward development plan are as follows: Respectful Governance: 5 development committees will be formed, and ward development works will be undertaken only with the advice and suggestions of the elders of the ward. Medical Services: Special health camps will be organized exclusively for the people of our ward. Protection & Security: Special CCTV camera services will be installed exclusively within the limits of our ward. Resolution of Public Problems: He said that his duty is to permanently eliminate the major problems in the ward, such as the menace of monkeys and dogs. “He also said that he will ensure the construction of an ideal community hall for everyone, and 100% implementation of sanitation and drainage. Right to Recall (Right to withdraw vote): Ward public voting every 6 months (If confidence falls below 50% - the councilor and officials will be suspended). He said that public approval will be made mandatory for every work. I will ensure that the potholes on the colony road are filled regularly to prevent inconvenience to commuters. “I will strive to ensure that garbage and debris are removed from the ward every day.” Support for the Elderly: Providing constant support and special services to senior citizens and the elderly in our ward. Environment: Giving top priority to greenery and cleanliness throughout the ward. Ward Identity: Construct-



ing a grand arch on the main road with the name “Vidyanagar Welfare Association - 33rd Ward” to reflect the prestige of our ward. Culture & Tradition: Every year, during the Bathukamma festival, all necessary arrangements will be made at a location decided by the elders, ensuring no inconvenience to the women. “The ward is ours, the governance is ours... “If you elect me as the Councilor from 33rd Ward, the responsibility is mine - the development is ours!” Nakkala Chiranjeevi appealed to the voters to cast their valuable vote and elect him with a huge majority.



Corporator Submits Representation to GHMC Commissioner for Development Works

“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, January 31: “Corporator Jeripotula Prabhudass respectfully met GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan and submitted a representation seeking the sanction of funds for CC roads and various development works in several colonies under the Meerpet HB Colony Division. “The meeting was attended by Nacharam Corporator Smt. Shanti Sai Jan Shekhar.

National Best Teacher Award recipient retires.



“Secunderabad Cantonment. January 31 (Indian Chronicle): “MLA Sri Ganesh said that the services rendered by Aashirvad, the principal of Bapuji Nagar Government School and recipient of the National Best Teacher Award, to the students are unforgettable. Meda Aashirvad, the headmaster of Bowenpally Bapuji Nagar Primary School and recipient of the National Best Teacher Award, retired from service on Saturday. On this occasion, Cantonment MLA Sri Ganesh attended

the program organized at the school as the chief guest. In the presence of teachers and students, he felicitated Mr. Aashirvad, praised his services over the past 38 years, and sincerely wished him a happy and fulfilling retired life. Hyderabad District Tribal Welfare Officer Kotaji, Ashram School Principal Lalu Naik, Teachers' Association leaders Shadrach, Neelima, and others participated in this program.

District Collector Launches WJI Media Diary in Karimnagar.



“P. S. ASHOKAN. “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU “District Collector Ms. Pamela Satpathy emphasized that the media plays a pivotal role in bringing public issues to the attention of the government. “On Saturday, at her office in the District Collectorate, she formally launched the Media Diary published by the district unit of the Working Journalists of India (BMS). On this occasion, the District President of WJI, Dharam Jagannath Reddy, and District Secretary Gudala Srinivas, along with executive committee members, extended a warm welcome to the Collector by presenting a sapling as a token of respect. “After un-

veiling the diary, the District Collector lauded the commendable efforts of WJI in bringing out the publication and assured her full cooperation and support to the district union committee. She advised journalists to adopt a realistic and responsible perspective, and encouraged them to produce writings that are constructive and beneficial to society. “The launch event was attended by District Vice President Moguram Ramesh, Treasurer Chittimalla Mahender, executive members Kandi Srinivas Reddy, Gangam Raju, and several other members of the union.

Malkajgiri Police Honour Four Retiring Officers



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 31, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “The Malkajgiri Police organised a retirement function at the Commissioner of Police Office, Neredmet, to honour four police officers who retired from service on Friday. The programme was presided over by Malkajgiri Commissioner of Police Avinash Mohanty, IPS, along with Deputy Commissioner of Police (Administration) P. Indira. The officers' dedication, discipline, and significant contributions to the department were acknowledged during the event. Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner of Police expressed appreciation for the services rendered by the retiring officers in maintaining law and order. He stated that retirement marks the completion of active service but carries forward years of experience and responsibility. He encouraged the

officers to lead a purposeful post-retirement life by spending time with their families, pursuing personal interests, and engaging in community service. The event was attended by family members of the retiring officers, colleagues, and senior officials, creating a warm and memorable atmosphere. Senior officers including G. Narasimha Reddy, DCP (Special Branch), Shiva Kumar, ADCP (Administration), CAOs Srinivas, Pushparaj, and Ch. Bhadra Reddy, President of the Police Officers Association, along with Krishna Reddy and Directors of the Police Cooperative Society, were present. “Retired Officers: Md. Habeeb, Sub-Inspector (She Team); “V. Satyanarayana, Reserve Sub-Inspector, CAR Amberpet; “K. Subba Rao, Assistant Sub-Inspector, Special Branch; “L. Buchaiah, Armed Reserve Sub-Inspector, CAR Amberpet.

Request letter to Tahsildar to put Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo in government offices



““Jan31. indian chronicle.medak.”“ Vanjari Shyam, a young leader of Bharatiya Janata Party, has submitted a petition to Shivampeta Tahsildar, MPDO Bharatiya Janata Party, to put a picture of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in all Gram Panchayats and government



offices in Shivampeta mandal. Vanjari Shyam expressed hope that about 85 percent of the funds are coming to the state government, all kinds of welfare schemes are being provided to the poor people with the central government funds, and the Bharatiya Janata Party will raise its flag in Telangana state in the coming days.

ECIL Union Former Working President Dubbaka Surender Reddy Retires: S.A. RAHEEM

““NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 31, (INDIAN CHRONICLE);““Dubbaka Surender Reddy, former Working President of the ECIL Company Union, has retired from his services at ECIL. On this occasion, colleagues and friends extended their best wishes, expressing hope that his post-retirement life will be filled with happiness, good health, and prosperity.



AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi Campaigns Muncipal Elections in Tandur, Opens Party Office



““Indian chronicle, Tandur (Jan,31)““ AIMIM President and Hyderabad MP Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi visited Tandur extensively on Saturday as part of the municipal election campaign. He toured several wards, urging residents to support AIMIM candidates and vote them in with a massive majority.““Later, under the leadership



of district president Abdul Hadi Shaheri, Owaisi inaugurated the AIMIM party office in Tandur town. He appealed to the people of Tandur to ensure AIMIM candidates win by a huge margin.““The event saw massive participation from AIMIM leaders, activists, and candidates from various wards.

Janahita services are commendable



““Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 31.““Representatives of the G-Span organization visited the Janahita Janaki Jeevan Special School for the Mentally Disabled. They inaugurated a newly established biogas plant. They participated in games and activities along with the students and distributed prizes to the students who won the singing competition.“At the Janahita Janaki Jeevan Special School for the Mentally Disabled,

Janahita Seva Trust Managing Trustee Narasimha Murthy and Trustee Sridevi briefed the guests about the special care being taken for the students, the education and medical facilities being provided, and the employment opportunities being created for them.“The representatives of the G-Span organization stated that the services being rendered by Janahita Seva Trust for children with mental disabilities are highly commendable.

DCC Training Classes Preparations Reviewed in Vikarabad



““Indian Chronicle Vikarabad, Tandur (jan,31)““AICC In-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, along with CWC member Challa Vamsi Chand Reddy and Vikarabad DCC President Jadhav Dharasingh Naik, inspected arrangements for the upcoming DCC training classes in Vikarabad district.““The training will be held at Ananthagiri from February 21 to March 3. AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and Lok Sabha Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi are scheduled to attend.““Meenakshi Natarajan and TPCC Training Committee Chairman reviewed accommodation and logistics for the event. Parigi MLA Dr. Ram Mohan Reddy also participated.““All set for a strong, organized training session ahead!



In a global first, Airtel provides 360 million Indians with free access to Adobe Express Premium

Hyderabad: Bharti Airtel, one of India’s largest telecommunication service providers, is putting the power of Adobe Express, the quick-and-easy, create-anything app, into the hands of its 360 million customers across India.

This landmark and first-of-its-kind partnership will provide access to Adobe Express Premium to all Airtel customers for creating high-quality social assets, marketing materials, short videos and anything they wish to design quickly and effortlessly. With the Adobe Express Premium worth ~₹4,000* now available for free for a year, all Airtel customers can express their creative abilities and produce professional-quality content—regardless of their design experience.

The Adobe Express Premium subscription will be available to all Airtel customers, including mobile, Wi-Fi and DTH customers. Customers can avail themselves of this subscription by logging on to the Airtel Thanks App, with no credit card requirement.

Commenting on the partnership, Siddharth Sharma, CEO – Connected Homes and Director – Marketing, Bharti Airtel, said, "This partnership is about more than technology. It is about empowering millions of Indians with cutting-edge AI tools to create and innovate. From a student crafting their first resume to a small business owner designing a poster or a creator editing videos for followers, we want to empower every Airtel customer with the tools for self-expression. With Adobe Express, world-class creative tools are no longer a luxury—they’re a reality for every Indian."

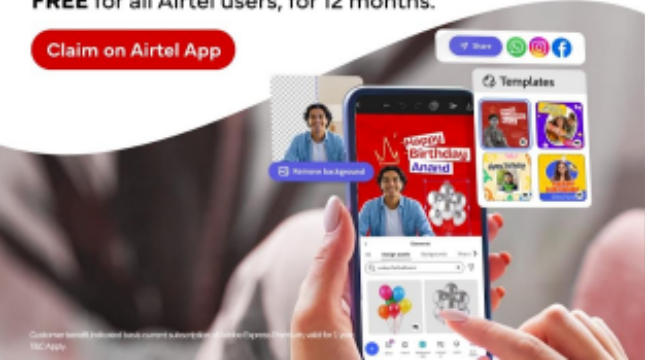
"We are committed to empowering everyone to create and stand out with Adobe Express, the quick and easy create-anything app," said David Wadhvani, President, Creativity & Productivity Business, Adobe. "We are excited to partner with Airtel to bring Adobe Express Premium to millions of people across India for free, accelerating the growth of India’s vibrant creator economy and



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Biopeak attracts repeat investment from Nikhil Kamath to scale longevity care

Hyderabad.

Biopeak, India’s first longevity and health optimisation brand, has raised 2.7Mn in its latest funding round led by repeat investor Nikhil Kamath, through NKSquared, the investment arm of Zerodha.

The follow-on investment reflects continued conviction in Biopeak’s work to build structured, preventive care systems for longevity in India. While India has made significant progress in acute and episodic care, organised clinical models focused on early detection, longitudinal tracking, and healthspan remain limited. Biopeak is addressing this gap by building multidisciplinary specialist-led programs that combine diagnostics, proprietary AI-driven insights, targeted clinical interventions, and sustained follow-up over time. Its approach is designed around Indian health profiles and disease patterns, enabling early risk identification, health optimisation, and supported recovery and regeneration.

Over the past year, Biopeak has continued to expand its clinical programs and deliver measurable outcomes for clients, reflecting growing demand for structured, specialist-led preventive and longevity care. The capital will be used to expand Biopeak’s presence and deepen capabilities across diagnostics, proprietary AI, research, and program development. This includes the launch of a new flagship centre in Bengaluru, continued investment in clinical longevity programs, and team expansion across clinical, research, product, and operations. Building on growing consumer acceptance, Biopeak is strengthening its network of global advisors and institutional partners to advance protocol development and clinical governance.

Commenting on the fundraise, Rishi Pardal, Co-founder and CEO, Biopeak, said, "In India, we’re seeing



a real shift in how people think about health, not just when something goes wrong, but how they stay well over time. What’s been missing is a clinical system that connects diagnostics, specialists, and follow-up into one long-term view of health. That’s what we’re focused on building at Biopeak. The validation of the model over the past year has given investors the confidence to deepen their commitment, and Nikhil’s continued support reflects a shared belief that longevity in India needs to be built carefully, with strong clinical foundations and the right partnerships."

Biopeak has steadily expanded its clinical programs and patient engagement as interest in structured preventive and longevity-focused care grows. The company’s model centres on multidisciplinary specialist teams supported by diagnostics and longitudinal health data, enabling more informed and consistent clinical decision-making over time.

Advanced Laparoscopic Hernia Live Workshop Held Successfully at St. Theresa’s Multi Specialty Hospital

Hyderabad St. Theresa’s Multi Specialty Hospital, Erragadda, Hyderabad, successfully conducted a full-day Advanced Laparoscopic Hernia Live Workshop, bringing together around 100 surgeons and medical professionals from across Telangana and neighboring states.

The prestigious academic program was endorsed by the National Chapter of APHI and the Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) – Telangana Chapter, and focused on advancements in laparoscopic hernia surgery and abdominal wall reconstruction.

As part of the comprehensive workshop, delegates witnessed multiple live laparoscopic hernia surgeries, beginning with a Laparoscopic TAPP Inguinal Hernia repair performed by Dr. Ramesh Dharmavaram, which provided in-depth understanding of anatomical landmarks and operative techniques.

This was followed by an expert academic session on anatomical landmarks and the critical view in laparoscopic hernia surgery, delivered by Dr. Rajendra.

Another key live demonstration included a Laparoscopic Ventral Hernia Repair (TARM / Ventral TAPP), performed by Dr. T. Varun Raju, highlighting advanced methods in managing complex hernia cases.

An evidence-based lecture on mesh science, fixation methods, and long-term outcomes was presented by Dr. Milind Kondavar, addressing evolving technologies and best practices.

The workshop further featured a Laparoscopic IPOM+ Hernia Repair, performed by Dr. C. R. K. Prasad, focusing on precision, safety, and complication avoidance.

Participants also benefited from a focused lecture on prevention and management of complications in



laparoscopic hernia surgery, delivered by Dr. Vijay Bhargava.

A major academic highlight was the panel discussion on "Decision-Making in Modern Hernia Surgery – Open vs Laparoscopic vs Robotic", with eminent panellists Dr. Surendra Jasthi, Dr. Suresh, Dr. Aslam Baba, and Dr. Ramesh Dharmavaram, who shared practical insights and clinical perspectives.

The program concluded with the distribution of certificates, followed by a valedictory session and vote of thanks.

Sr. R. Nirmala, Administrator, St. Theresa’s Multi Specialty Hospital, said, "St. Theresa's Hospital continues to prioritize academic excellence and advanced clinical training. Hosting such a comprehensive workshop reflects our commitment to quality healthcare and professional development.

The event was sponsored by Dolphin Sutures, Healthium, and Alonsoa Life Sciences.

Mamata Banerjee counters PM Modi in Singur with 1,694 projects worth Rs 33,500 crore: ‘I keep promises 100%’



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

In an apparent counter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Singur on January 18, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday inaugurated or laid the foundation stone for 1,694 projects, worth Rs 33,551 crore, under the state government. Attacking the BJP during her speech in Singur, Banerjee said, “Many people give big promises but do not keep them. My principle is that I would rather die (than not keep my word). I keep promises 100 per cent. I don’t do jumla. We are not a dual-engine government. We are the government of ma-mati-manush.” Banerjee also inaugurated the Ghatal Master Plan which aims to curb the devastating floods that hit the region every year. Speaking on the occasion, actor-turned-MP Dipak Adhikari (Dev), who represents the Ghatal constituency, said he had been fighting for the master plan for 10 years. “Nobody kept their word. Only one person did and that is Mamata Banerjee. I thank didi on behalf of the people of Ghatal,” he said. “Today is the age of social media. Trolling starts as soon as something is said. Earlier, I said that Trinamool will win 250 seats and a lot of trolling started. But you say, it is normal for people to have trust in a government that promises development and implements it,” Adhikari added.

Mamata said the MP repeatedly contacted her over the matter over the years. “I have run to Ghatal many times during floods. DVC (Damodar Valley Corporation) water flooded Ghatal every year. I have been writing to the Centre for 10 years. They always fooled us. Now, we have fooled them and sanctioned money for the Ghatal Master Plan. Work worth Rs 500 crore has already been done. More work worth Rs 1,000 crore will be completed very soon,” she stated. The chief minister said that by 2027, the height of river dams will be increased by about 50 metres, and canals and rivers will be dug up to 50 km. Besides, two pump houses, three regulators, a bridge extension and 104 new bridges will be built by the Irrigation and Water Resources Department.

32 lakh homes under Banglar Bari schemeBanerjee announced that 32 lakh houses will be built under the Banglar Bari housing scheme over the next two months. “One crore homes have already been built. A few days ago, I gave 12 lakh houses. Delhi has not paid a single rupee... When the money comes in, they will lay the bricks for the house. I don’t want anyone to suffer. Let everyone have a roof over their heads,” she said. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo also laid the foundation stone for the warehouse project in Singur. “Thousands of people will get jobs at this warehouse. We developed Furfura Sharif, Jairambati, and Kamarpukur in this same Hooghly district,” she stated.

Banerjee criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for refusing to give ‘classical status’ to the Bengali language. “I sent five sacks of books to Delhi. You have not given the status of classical language to Bengali. We have demanded. I created a research team. You kill people if anybody speaks Bengali,” she said. Targeting the BJP over the issue of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, she said that they will fight it in court if necessary. “They are showing arrogance. I will crush all. Just stay by me. Stay healthy,” the chief minister added.

Punjab govt power connections to have prepaid smart meters; state’s borrowing limit to go up

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

The instructions were issued through a letter dated January 28 addressed to chief engineers of various districts and are aimed at meeting reform conditions that would allow Punjab to avail of additional borrowing space to the extent of 0.5 per cent of the state’s gross state domestic product (GSDP). In 2021-22, the Centre introduced a power sector reform-linked borrowing incentive in the form of additional borrowing space up to 0.5 per cent of GSDP.

According to the letter, the move is in compliance with the circular dated February 7, 2023, and its subsequent amendment of February 14, 2023. In the February 7 circular, the scheme of the installation of prepaid smart meters was introduced for government departments, and on February 14, an amendment was made to the effect that the scheme would not be applicable to government hospitals, street lights, and water works power connections, as they were emergency public services. As per the latest directions, prepaid metering will be implemented only on one-phase and three-phase whole current smart meters, with sanctioned load up to 7 kW for single-phase connections and 7 kW to 45 kVA for three-phase connections, subject to a maximum load of 100 amperes.

PSPCL has also ordered the rationalisation of electricity connections, stating that only one meter will be permitted per premises or area, including grid stations, subdivision offices, and nearby board offices. All multiple or parallel connections must be removed. The letter clarifies that since consumer complaints are already handled through the centralised 1912 complaint system, separate electricity connections for different complaint centres or board offices are no longer required. Smart meters are to be installed strictly outside the premises, on poles or meter boxes, with anti-tampering measures such as polycarbonate seals. Paperless billing will be adopted, making it mandatory for departments to provide updated contact details of nodal officers and drawing and disbursing officers for bill delivery through email and mobile platforms. Outstanding dues of government departments

According to PSPCL records, nearly 38,000 smart meters had already been installed across various Punjab government departments as of December 31, 2025, but all these meters are currently operating in post-paid mode. As



a result, the issue of delayed and non-payment of electricity bills has continued. Sources within PSPCL indicate that outstanding power dues of Punjab government departments have crossed Rs 2,600 crore, adding to the financial stress on the power utility. Departments such as water supply, local bodies, health and rural development are among the major defaulters. The conversion of existing smart meters into prepaid mode is expected to end this chronic problem by ensuring advance payment for electricity consumption, revealed PSPCL sources.

Punjab’s GSDP for 2024-25 is estimated at around Rs 8.1 lakh crore, while the projected GSDP for 2025-26 is approximately Rs 8.9 lakh crore. Based on these figures: This means that by meeting the Centre’s power sector reform conditions, Punjab could gain additional borrowing capacity of over Rs 4,000 crore, over and above its normal borrowing limit. The Centre had linked this borrowing window to reforms such as pre-paid smart metering, reduction of power distribution losses, improvement in billing efficiency and strengthening the financial position of distribution companies from 2021-22 onwards. Punjab is already under heavy fiscal stress, with the state’s outstanding debt estimated to cross Rs 4 lakh crore by the end of the 2025-26 financial year. Against this backdrop, the pre-paid smart metering drive is being seen as a reform-driven measure aimed at improving PSPCL’s cash flow, reducing arrears and enhancing the state’s eligibility for additional borrowing, rather than merely a technical upgrade of meters, said PSPCL sources.

20 Haryana schools receive bomb threat; police later declare them a hoax



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Several schools in Chandigarh also received similar bomb threat emails earlier in the day, prompting immediate security alerts, evacuations, and suspension of classes. (File Photo) Several schools in Chandigarh also received similar bomb threat emails earlier in the day, prompting immediate security alerts, evacuations, and suspension of classes. Around 20 schools in Haryana received bomb threat emails Wednesday, forcing school administrations to evacuate all students from their respective premises.

After these institutions, 13 schools in Cyber City, Gurgaon, and 7 in Karnal, received the threat, the police were informed, and the schools declared a day off. A large number of parents rushed to the schools to take their children home, and some were sent back on school buses. After receiving the information, police and bomb squad teams conducted searches in the schools, although nothing suspicious was found. Vikas Kaushik, ACP, Gurgaon, said that “initial investigations indicate it was a ‘hoax call’.” “Search operations were conducted in all schools. So far, no suspicious items have been found. The police are fully alert, and

the source of the email is being investigated,” Kaushik said. The police officer said that no holiday orders were issued by the administration. “Parents and the public were urged not to panic as the situation is under control. Cyber teams are investigating the email source, as all emails came from a single ID. The schools were evacuated as a precaution, ensuring the safety of students, teachers, and staff,” he said. “Police teams conducted thorough searches of school premises, classrooms, buildings, and surrounding areas. So far, no suspicious items or explosives have been found.” In Karnal, bomb squad, dog squad, and SDRF teams conducted thorough searches of schools, checking classrooms, playgrounds, and other sensitive areas for potential threats. Several schools in Chandigarh also received similar bomb threat emails earlier in the day, prompting immediate security alerts, evacuations, and suspension of classes.

Samsung unveils advanced privacy tech, showcases Olympic edition Galaxy Z Flip 7

Seoul: Samsung Electronics said on Wednesday its upcoming Galaxy smartphone will come with a built-in privacy feature allowing users to protect on-screen information from others without the need to attach an additional film. The South Korean tech giant said the new feature will allow users to customise display visibility to prevent “shoulder surfing,” noting the feature will be “coming to Galaxy very soon.”

NHAI to build Rs 51-crore tunnel-style service road on Bengaluru airport highway



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has recently invited bids to construct a depressed service road, an underpass built approximately six metres below the main road level, on the Bengaluru airport highway for Rs 51.27 crore, excluding Goods and Services Tax (GST). The project includes a 320-metre covered depressed service road, an 800-metre surface-level road, relocation of Indian Air Force (IAF) assets, and other allied works. The underpass will feature two lanes with paved shoulders, connecting the IAF station’s domestic area to its technical area while also linking the runway to Hunasamaranahalli Lake.

K B Jayakumar, project director at NHAI, Bengaluru, told The Indian Express that this stretch is currently the

only section without a service road on the 22.12-km Hebbal-Trumpet section of National Highway 44 (formerly NH 7). “There is an absence of service roads, which is causing many of the service road users to take the main carriage, leading to traffic congestion and accidents. We want to address that. It will help the commuters taking the service road by not entering the main way,” he said.

The underpass will be significantly longer than any existing one in Bengaluru. An NHAI official said it would be built as a tunnel road using the cut-and-cover method. “This construction technique involves excavating a trench from the surface, building the tunnel within it, and restoring the road through backfilling—distinct from the tunnel boring machines (TBMs) being used for the 16.75-km Silk Board junction-Hebbal tunnel road and underground metro lines,” the official said. The NHAI will relocate IAF assets, including the entrance gate and compound wall, with approximately 200 metres of this work already completed. Bids will be opened on February 25, and the contract is expected to be awarded by the end of March. While the official project deadline is 18 months from the award date, NHAI aims to complete substantial work ahead of Aero India 2027, scheduled for February next year. No traffic diversions will be required during construction. The NHAI has recently completed service roads at two locations on the airport highway: a one-kilometre stretch opposite Esteem Mall in Hebbal and a 1.1-km stretch at Jakkur, both approximately 10 metres wide.

‘I couldn’t accept it’: UP man challenged last-minute withdrawal of 556 gazetted posts. What happened next?

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

‘I couldn’t accept it’: UP man challenged last-minute withdrawal of 556 gazetted posts. For nearly two years, Mishra, represented by advocate Namit Saxena, fought the case in the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). In 2023, 32-year-old Alok Krishna Mishra, a resident of UP’s Deoria, gave the Staff Selection Commission’s (SSC) Combined Graduate Level Examination (CGLE) for the gazetted posts of Assistant Accounts Officer and Assistant Audit Officer (AAO).

Mishra cleared the qualifying exam (Tier 1). Four days before the Tier 2 exam results were to be announced — marks of which are considered for final selection of candidates — vacancies for the posts were withdrawn. “I was so disappointed. There are many others like me. They have now got other jobs, and lost hope in the law. But not me. I can’t accept this, I’ll fight till the end,” said Mishra. “I had matched my answers with the answer key, analysed the previous year’s cut-offs. I was so hopeful I would clear the exam and get a posting in my home state,” he added.

For nearly two years, Mishra, represented by advocate Namit Saxena, fought the case in the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). But on Tuesday, the CAT Principal Bench in New Delhi upheld the withdrawal of vacancies as valid. “... the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training)... clearly permits Ministries/ Departments to reconfirm or withdraw vacancies well before finalisation or declaration of results. In the present case, the withdrawal of AAO vacancies was effected on 30.11.2023, whereas the result of CGLE-2023 was declared on 04.12.2023. Thus, the withdrawal cannot be said to be post-result or contrary to the governing executive guidelines,” the CAT ruled on January 27. “... mere inclusion in a select list or successful completion of a recruitment process does not confer an indefeasible right to appointment... The applicants have no vested or indefeasible right to appointment merely by participation in the examination or by securing higher marks,” it added.

Mishra, an engineer by profession, had been preparing for the exam since 2018 after his graduation in civil engineering from Allahabad. He worked for close to two-and-a-half years with Larsen & Toubro. He is currently posted as a Junior Statistical Officer (JSO) in MP after clearing the SSC CGLE in 2024. The JSO post is a group ‘B’ non-gazetted, technical post under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). “I’m planning to move the High Court now,” said Mishra. It was on December 4, 2023, that Mishra found the SSC did not allot the post of AAO to any candidate and that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) had withdrawn the 556 vacancies.

On January 17, 2024, the CAG via a letter said: “... Requisitions for filling up a total of 556 vacancies comprising the posts of Assistant Audit Officer, Assistant Accounts Officers, Auditor and Accountant through CGLE-2023 have been placed by this office with the Staff Selection Commission. However, the same has been withdrawn due to administrative exigencies.” Tuesday’s CAT order also ruled that this decision was taken due to genuine reasons. “The decision of withdrawal of AAO vacancies was taken due to genuine and compelling administrative constraints, including compliance with judicial orders and statutory recruitment priorities. Consequently, we cannot compel the respondents to fill up the withdrawn vacancies or to proceed with appointments contrary to statutory rules and administrative feasibility,” it said. Advocate Saxena is representing 33 other petitioners who had moved the Tribunal for jobs among the 556 posts. “The petitioners first approached the High Court, which relegated them to CAT with a direction to dispose of the matter in six months...,” he told. “Meanwhile, a few petitioners got selected for services... For others who were facing age barriers, we obtained interim relief so they could appear in the examination... After declaration of Tier 1 results, which all of them had cleared, while declaring result of Tier II, the vacancies itself were withdrawn...,” the advocate added.

‘If this is the state of the animals...’: Seeing photos of Mangaluru’s Pilikula zoo, Karnataka HC says it should be shut



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by a wildlife conservationist, the Karnataka High Court on Wednesday saw photos of the animals housed inside the Pilikula Biological Park in Mangaluru and orally observed that it would have to be closed down. A division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Poonacha was hearing a PIL filed by Bombay Natural History Society member Bhuvan M. On seeing the photograph of a sambar deer attached to the petition, the bench said, “If this is the state of the animals, you (state government) will have to close down the zoological park.”

Advocate Ashwin Joyston Kutinha, appearing for the petitioner, brought to the court’s notice the alleged defects in the park and the representations made to the Central Zoo Authority that have not been acted upon. The defects mentioned were regarding the poorly maintained enclosures that are rusted, fragmented, or inadequately secured—some even covered with fishing nets. The petition cites alleged violations of the minimum enclosure size required to be maintained at the zoo, highlights the lack of proper veterinary care, and points to the unhygienic conditions within the enclosures, including exposure to contaminated water.

The petition further claims that animals are unauthorisedly acquired and released inside the park in violation of Central Zoo Authority guidelines. The court was also informed that the park was currently functioning without a licence, as it was only extended till December 1, 2025. Advocate Kutinha also informed the court last week that information had been received about illegal wildlife trade of scheduled animals and alleged that Pilikula Biological Park was a part of it. The court allowed the advocate to place the mate-

rial on record. He also informed the court that the park was transferred from the district authority to the Karnataka Forest Department in 2023, pursuant to a recommendation made by the Central Zoo Authority on inspection, but still no steps have been taken to improve the conditions. Further, the Central Zoo Authority has also issued show-cause notices to the Pilikula park in 2023 and 2025, he added.

The counsel for Union of India and Central Zoo Authority submitted that the park authorities have filed an application to extend the recognition and it is under consideration. Additional Government Advocate Niloufer Akbar sought two weeks to seek instructions and reply to the averments made in the petition, which was allowed. The petition prays for a direction to the Central Zoo Authority to take actions against the Pilikula Development Authority under provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and Zoo Rules, 2009.

Google rolls out AI-powered photo editing feature in India

New Delhi: Tech giant Google on Wednesday launched a new Artificial Intelligence-powered photo editing feature in India. With the new feature, users can edit images in Google Photos by simply describing the changes using voice or text. “Now in India! Edit your images in Google Photos by simply asking. We’re rolling out the ability to edit your images by simply describing the edits you want using your voice or text. And, with a little help from advanced Gemini capabilities, Photos brings your vision to life,” Google shared in a blog post.

Individuals can use the feature by opening a photo and tapping “Help me edit.” You can now also ask Photos to remove a friend’s sunglasses, open their eyes, or make them smile. The feature uses images from your private face groups to generate accurate, personalised edits of the people in your library,” Google said. This feature in Google Photos is available in English, Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Telugu, Bengali, and Gujarati on any Android device with at least 4GB of RAM and Android 8.0 or higher.

They’re retired but relentless: A quiet band of seniors in Mohali are planting hope for the future, one tree at a time

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

The Padma Shri announcement for Inderjit Singh Sidhu, 88, the retired deputy inspector general (DIG) of Punjab Police, for his cleanliness crusade in Chandigarh has gladdened the hearts of Mohali’s white brigade – a band of green warriors, including men and women, in white T-shirts and jackets as well as white hair and beards. “We are extremely happy. It feels as if one of us has been awarded,” says Ramesh Kumar Singh, 70, a group member who retired as superintending engineer from Haryana Irrigation and Water Resources Department.

The feeling of oneness stems from shared concerns. Ramesh is a member of the Eco Plantation Association in Sector 69, a group of like-minded people living in harmony with each other and nature. “Harmony starts from home. My mother was a Sikh and father a Hindu. They had six sons – three Sikh, three Hindu – and one daughter, a Hindu. I am a Sikh living in peace with my Hindu brothers at home and outside. This family feeling extends to our group as well.”

One earth, one family “Yes, we are a family now. Recently, I packed 14 members of our group into two cars, went to Patiala and celebrated my grandson’s Lohri there,” says Harmesh Singh Matharu, 67, who retired as executive engineer, Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation. It is the earth indeed that has brought these people together, but there was only one person in the beginning. “When I started, I was alone. From 2017 to 2019, I single-handedly planted 300 saplings in my neighbourhood,” says Hari Ram Shimar, 71, who retired as assistant general manager, State Bank of India. He grew plants, not a beard, but was over time joined by bearded fellow volunteers. “People noticed and came to me. We started expanding in 2019,” Hari adds. By the beginning of 2021, the Eco Plantation Association was registered with the realisation that – in Hari Ram’s words – there is “an utmost urgency for planting 700 crore trees every year in our country.” 14,000 saplings and counting On its part, the association has planted 14,000 saplings so far, says its president Malkiat Singh, 70, who retired as manager from Punjab Tractors Limited, acquired by Mahindra and Mahindra in 2007. “My mother is 95. She lives in our village near Malerkotla. Even she planted a sapling in our park and donated Rs 1,100 to us.” While their membership has gone up, with 70-80 members in their WhatsApp group, only 14-15 people come daily, according to the president. Regular female participation is ensured by Baljit Kaur, 69, an agent with Max Life insurance. “I have been in love with plants since Class 5. I joined the group in 2022,” she says. Software engineer Tanvir Singh, 50, is the person who infuses ‘youthful energy’ into the group. “I began associating with them in 2022. I like to do digging during plantation, and hammering while putting the tree guard,” he says.

The eldest – and the fittest – of them all is Joginder Singh, 80, who retired as a supervisor from the Ministry of Defence. An avid 100-metre runner and javelin thrower, he



has won a few athletic competitions as well. “We need to speed up to boost the greenery of our country,” he says. The dada-dadis and nana-nanis are out in the field early in the morning, from 8 am to 10.30 am, with a tea break at 9 am. “We plant new saplings and tend to old ones every day. Everyone brings tea and snacks by taking turns. We celebrate birthdays and other happy occasions over tea,” says Malkiat, who gets up at 3 am. The seniors have also developed a herbal park in Sector 69 with 21 different kinds of herbs, bringing waste concrete material, including tiles, paver blocks, and bricks, and put it to good use in the park, which serves as their headquarters now. Besides, there is a plant nursery that caters to people’s needs free of cost.

To accelerate their efforts, Ramesh donated his Hyundai Accent car to the association in 2023. A 500-litre tanker was joined to it with some jugaad, and now it has become their identity car. “We use this car daily to ferry plants and tree guard materials made of bamboo sticks and plastic mesh. We also use it to water the plants,” says Kulwant Singh Aulakh, 59, an agriculturist. Watering plants during summers has, however, been a daunting task for the group. But this time, they are going to find it easier as the group was sanctioned Rs 3 lakh from the MP Local Area Development fund for a 4,000-litre tanker. The group has already bought a second-hand tractor worth Rs 3.5 lakh through contributions. “We don’t have any membership fee. We make contributions as and when required. Initially, we used to contribute Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 each. For the tractor, everyone opened their purse strings and collected the money within a short span of time,” says Ramesh. “Trees are very important for our planet. We should plant more and more of them. Everyone should plant at least one tree for a future that is free of pollution,” says Malkiat. The group’s sincere and selfless efforts won praise from Mohali Mayor Amarjit Singh Sidhu, who honoured them this Republic Day. “I have seen many NGOs. Each one of them has vested interests. But these guys don’t have any axe to grind. They are just doing social service. If everyone starts working like them, our city will become cleaner and greener.” Om Parkash, a Mohali-based environmentalist known for his love for medicinal plantation, too, finds the group’s efforts praiseworthy. He says, “Punjab is heavily polluted, green cover is going down. We need people like them in the entire state to save us.”

‘Just 5 more minutes, then we will die’: victim’s wife recalls last call as death toll mounts in Kolkata warehouse fire



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Standing near the “do-not-cross” yellow tape, staring at the fire-ravaged warehouses in Kolkata’s Anandapur, is 24-year-old Moushumi Haldar, whose husband, Pankaj Haldar, worked at the premises for the past three years. Pankaj, 27, was among the dozens of people who have been missing since the massive fire that erupted at the warehouses, which stored momos, at around 3 am Monday. According to police sources Wednesday, the death toll has risen to 19, with several people still reported missing.

Moushumi has been at the site as the police and the firefighters work their way through, hoping that she will be able to identify her husband if some remains are found. “He had called to say that the entire godown was on fire, and there was no escape route. He said ‘just five minutes, and then we will die, take care of my daughter and yourself’. Whenever I close my eyes, I only hear this.” “Imagine locked inside and burning alive”

Like Moushumi, Hare Krishna Maiti has been at the site, where his brother, Shri Krishna, and nephew, Bapan, worked for close to eight years. He said he has been to the police station seeking information about them, but has not been able to trace his relatives. Speaking to The Indian Express, Hare Krishna said, “No one is saying anything. They are just saying, ‘go to the police station and file a missing persons report.’ I know my brother and nephew are no more. I know our family will not get anything to perform their final rites. Their ashes are probably washed away in the water

poured by the firefighters to douse the flames.” “Imagine locked inside and burning alive, seeing the flames engulfing them. No one deserves such a death,” said Maiti as he broke down.

Prasanta Haldar, a relative of Basudeb Haldar, 56, said he had called his daughter at 3 am. “He told her they were trapped inside the door was locked from the outside. ‘There is no more time’.” Tapan Doloi, 35, a flower decorator at one of the godowns, spoke to his wife, Barnali Doloi, at 11 am on January 25. “He said they were all very tired will go to sleep. He was to come home the next day.” Tapan was the only earning member of the family, consisting of his parents, his wife, and their five-year-old child. ‘I could feel the heat of the flames coming close’ The air still reeked of smoke, and water flowed from the two godowns as civic body workers brought down the sheds with gas cutters, and firefighters checked for pocket fires, with residents trying to take a peek into the cordoned area.

Survivors spoke of the chaos after the fire broke out, and they scrambled to get out of the burning buildings. “We were all very tired as there was continuous night duty from January 20. Suddenly, I heard people screaming about a fire. We were close to the front gate. I could feel the heat of the flames coming closer, and the whole place was dark. I ran towards the gate, and we managed to open it and ran for help,” Susanta Jana of Tamluk told The Indian Express. Another survivor, Bimal Bhowmik, said, “I don’t remember the exact time; it was very dark. Everyone was calling out to each other, and I suddenly fell down. I got up and ran again. But the smoke was getting heavy. I do not remember anything when I woke up in an ambulance.” Walking through the rubble and peering into the godowns reveals the absence of basic fire safety measures: no windows, no sprinklers, no safeguards. Scattered amid the debris are mangled bicycles and motorcycles belonging to workers who had come in for duty but will never return home. According to residents, the area was a part of the East Kolkata wetland. Protima Mondol, a resident, told The Indian Express that fish farming was done in the area. “Over the past 10 -12 years, these areas have been filled up, and several godowns have come up,” she added. “Hectares of farm land, ponds and wetlands were there.

Kerala court grants bail to Rahul Mamkootathil in third sexual assault case

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Pathanamthitta (Kerala): A Kerala court on Wednesday granted bail to expelled Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil in the third sexual assault case against him, in which he was arrested earlier this month. The bail was granted by the Pathanamthitta District Sessions Court, which was considering an appeal filed by the MLA against a judicial magistrate’s court order that had denied him relief, stating that the allegations against him were serious and that he had “similar antecedents”. The third sexual assault case was registered against the Palakkad MLA under Sections 376 (rape) and 506(1) (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code,



Karnataka follows Kerala in restricting private practice by govt doctors to out-patient services

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

The Karnataka government Wednesday issued an order restricting government doctors in the state from providing in-patient treatment in their private practices, but allowing them to continue out-patient treatment. The move comes following frequent complaints that government doctors divert patients who turn up for in-patient treatment at government hospitals to their private practices.

The order clarifying the extent of private practice allowed for government doctors working under the Health and Family Welfare Department states, “The treatment of in-patients at private hospitals as part of the private practice by government doctors may interfere with the discharge of their regular government duties. Accordingly, it is instructed that treatment of in-patients (IPD) or proposed in-patients as part of private practice by government doctors is strictly prohibited.” The private practice of government doctors will be limited to out-patient department (OPD) cases, provided that these private OPD services do not disrupt regular government medical services and occur outside official duty hours, the order states. The private practice for OPD cases “can be carried out only at any one private clinic or hospital, the details of which shall be declared to the government,” it adds.

“Violation of the above conditions shall be treated as misconduct and shall attract disciplinary action under the



relevant Karnataka Civil Services Rules, in addition to any other action permissible under law,” says the order signed by an under secretary in the health department. “Similar restrictions are in force in other states such as Kerala, wherein private practice is permitted only for the OPD services under strict conditions,” the order notes. The order states that the government has noticed “many instances of neglect of the care to the patients in government hospitals, even leading to deaths in certain cases,” due to the absence of doctors, a concern raised by various authorities, including the Karnataka Lokayukta. The Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission has also recommended restrictions on doctors’ private practice to ensure priority to public service.

‘Raises serious questions’: Mamata Banerjee demands ‘Supreme Court-monitored probe’ into Ajit Pawar’s death in plane crash

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

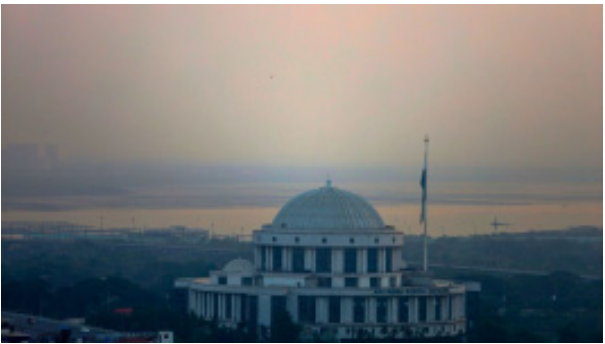
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said Wednesday she was “really shocked” over the death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who was killed in a plane crash in Baranati, as she demanded a Supreme Court-monitored investigation into the accident. The chief minister was on her way to Singur to hold a public rally when she spoke to the media, and also hinted at the possibility of foul play.

“I am really shocked to see the news that there is no safety and security for the people of this country. I learned on social media that Ajit Pawar was likely to leave the BJP, and it happened. I want a proper investigation under the supervision of the Supreme Court,” she said. “What happened today raises serious questions. We have trust only in the Supreme Court, and no other agency, as all investigative agencies have lost their independence. All other agencies are purchased. It is a great loss for the country. He was likely to join the original force of his party,” she added. She also mentioned recent reports suggesting that Ajit Pawar had been considering a return to the Nationalist Congress Party (SP), led by his uncle, Sharad Pawar. “Deeply shocked and stunned by the sudden demise of Ajit Pawar! The Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra and his co-passengers have died in a disastrous plane crash at Baramati today morning, and I am feeling a deep sense of loss. My condolences to his family



including his uncle Sharad Pawar ji, and late Ajitji’s all friends and followers. The incident needs proper investigation,” she also posted on X handle. She deferred her scheduled visit to New Delhi after the news of Ajit Pawar’s death. The Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee also expressed his shock over the death of the NCP leader. “I am profoundly shocked and saddened by the tragic and untimely demise of Shri Ajit Pawar, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, in the devastating plane crash at Baramati. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family, colleagues and associates, as well as to the families of all those who lost their lives in this tragic incident. May they find strength, courage and peace during this moment of deep sorrow,” said Abhishek.

BMC to deploy 28 high-tech machines as Mumbai’s air quality hits ‘unhealthy’ levels 21 times in one month



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

To address the declining air quality index (AQI) in Mumbai, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is implementing a localised approach to reduce pollution levels. According to civic officials, this strategy will involve targeted interventions in various municipal wards that consistently record unhealthy AQI levels. Senior officials told The Indian Express that as part of this initiative, BMC is acquiring 28 automatic sweeping machines to clear road dust. Additionally, the BMC will deploy vehicle-mounted mist spraying vans to eliminate suspended particulate matter from the air by spraying water. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reveals that Mumbai experienced 21 days of unhealthy AQI readings between January 1 and January 27, while only six days were classified as satisfactory. During this period, the average AQI in Mumbai ranged between 120 and 150, which is considered moderate and unhealthy for vulnerable groups, including senior citizens and children.

Targeted approach: How will it work?

In addition to monitoring the overall AQI levels, the BMC is also keeping track of AQI data from 28 localised

monitoring stations across the city. Civic officials told The Indian Express that if a particular location shows a dip in AQI readings, immediate actions such as spraying water on roads and using mist guns in the air will be initiated. “Last week, the AQI stations in Andheri East had started to show a consistent dip in AQI, soon after which we deployed our own ward-level officials to find out the cause. If we detect open burning of garbage in any place, then we take efforts to stop it. If we find out that the area is filled with dust due to construction work or similar activity, then immediate sprinkling of water is being taken up,” Avinash Dhakane, BMC Additional Municipal Commissioner who is also in charge of the environment department, told Dhakane also confirmed that the BMC is acquiring 28 sweeping machines for dust clearance in Mumbai. “These machines will carry out sweeping of Mumbai’s all major roads on a routine basis. They will be better equipped to clear the dust along the curbs, which can be otherwise challenging with vehicles parked on both sides,” Dhakane said.

Sweeping will be conducted from the north end to the south end in the morning, and from south to north in the evening, he added. Moreover, the BMC has floated tenders to procure vehicle-mounted mist spraying vans for nine municipal wards in the western and eastern suburbs, including areas such as Andheri, Jogeshwari, Malad, Borivali, Ghatkopar, Kanjurmarg, Bhandup, and Mulund. Civic officials stated that each of these wards will receive one dedicated misting vehicle for regular water spraying. Till now, vehicle-mounted misting machines were only available in a few south Mumbai wards, which were deployed across the city to carry out routine activities. “By adding more vehicles to our fleet, we will be able to cut down response time. Dust displacement and emission have been regarded as one of the major contributing factors behind poor AQI in Mumbai. Therefore, it is important to carry out sprinkling of water regularly,” said a BMC officer.

BRS exposes Congress govt running taxpayer-funded propaganda network

Hyderabad: In an explosive set of allegations targeting the corridors of power, the BRS accused the Congress government of running a State-funded organised propaganda network from within the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) to malign opposition leaders. The opposition charged that these propaganda machines were being operated using public resources, and demanded an in-depth investigation apart from immediate action against those in official positions.

The BRS social media team, led by Manne Krishank, revealed details of a propaganda network comprising multiple WhatsApp groups and social media bot accounts, spreading false and misleading information targeting senior BRS leaders. The alleged WhatsApp group named “Telangana Rising Talk Communication”, which is central

to this network, is reportedly being operated by individuals holding official positions and drawing government salaries.

According to Krishank, screenshots from the group, purportedly shared by a whistleblower who was a Telangana movement activist, indicated coordinated dissemination of fabricated content linked to the ongoing phone-tapping investigation. Krishank alleged that CMO PRO Anvesh, Digital Media director Sriram Karri and Congress social media convener Manne Satish along with other functionaries were part of the group, which has over 138 members and functions as what he called a misinformation hub. He accused the network of deploying bot accounts to circulate unverified and defamatory content against BRS leaders, particularly KT Rama Rao. Dinesh Chowdhary said

Yunus-led interim govt’s patronage fuels organised mobs in Bangladesh: Experts



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Dhaka: As the law and order situation in Bangladesh continues to deteriorate, experts warned that patronage from the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government is inciting organised mobs in the country, local media reported. The remarks were made during a dialogue organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) titled ‘Media Reform in Bangladesh: Between Freedom, Responsibility and Power’, on Tuesday, which brought together senior journalists, editors, academics, political leaders, and media analysts across the country. Expressing concerns, the speakers stated that media freedom in Bangladesh is increasingly restricted, with journalists facing insecurity, financial difficulties, and pressure from politically affiliated groups, as the leading Bangladeshi daily, The Dhaka Tribune, reported.

Recalling the December 18 attacks on the offices of media outlets, The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, senior Bangladeshi journalist Nurul Kabir said either the interim government allowed the attacks or failed to prevent them. “That was not spontaneous — that was organised,”

The Daily Star quoted Kabir as saying. He further stressed that the inability of fire services to respond during the arson attacks on the media houses demonstrated a grave breakdown of state responsibility. CGS President Zillur Rahman, referring to attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, said that a senior editor critical of the interim government was subjected to harassment and branded a political collaborator. “This raises serious questions about media freedom,” he added, noting that a representative of the interim government at the CGS program refused to term the incidents as mob attacks.

Criticising the upcoming February 12 election, Rahman said, “There is no real vote in the country; what exists is referendum campaigning — government campaigning through government offices, with ‘Referendum 2026’ above parliamentary election.” Bangladesh Media Reform Commission Chief Kamal Ahmed warned that the Yunus-led interim government’s proposed Broadcast Commission Ordinance and Media Commission Ordinance may lead to serious regulatory conflicts due to overlapping powers.

Kamal slammed the interim government’s haste in passing ordinances, describing the new Information Broadcasting Commission and Media Commission as “patchwork initiatives” with insufficient planning. Meanwhile, senior Bangladeshi journalist Zahid Newaz Khan shared accounts of surveillance and pressure, drawing attention to concerns over press accreditation and reliance on advertising. Calling for gender inclusivity, Ayesha Kabir, head of Prothom Alo English, said, “Women’s participation in media must increase to build an equitable state.” Bangladesh has witnessed a surge in attacks on journalists, the rise of mob culture and a deteriorating law and order situation since the Yunus-led interim government assumed power in August 2024.

Rubio set to warn of future military action if Venezuela's new leaders stray from U.S. goals



In prepared testimony for a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Rubio says the U.S. is not at war with Venezuela and that its interim leaders are cooperating, but he notes that the Trump administration would not rule out using additional force if needed following a raid to capture former President Nicolas Maduro early this month.

“We are prepared to use force to ensure maximum cooperation if other methods fail,” Mr. Rubio will say, according to his prepared opening statement released Tuesday (January 27, 2026) by the State Department. “It is our hope that this will not prove necessary, but we will never shy away from our duty to the American people and our mission in this hemisphere.” As he often is called to do, Mr. Rubio, a former Florida senator, will aim to sell one of President Donald Trump’s more contentious priorities to former colleagues in Congress. With the administration’s foreign policy gyrating between the Western Hemisphere, Europe and the West Asia, Mr. Rubio also may be called to smooth alarm that has emerged in his own party lately about efforts like Mr. Trump’s demand to annex Greenland. In the hearing focused on Venezuela, Mr. Rubio will defend Mr. Trump’s decisions to remove Mr. Maduro to face drug trafficking charges in the U.S., continue deadly military strikes on boats suspected of smuggling drugs and seize sanctioned tankers carrying Venezuelan oil, according to the prepared remarks. He will again reject allegations that Mr. Trump is violating the Constitution by taking such actions.

“There is no war against Venezuela, and we did not occupy a country,” he will say, according to the prepared remarks. “There are no U.S. troops on the ground. This was an operation to aid law enforcement.” Congress has not curtailed Mr. Trump on Venezuela. Congressional Democrats have condemned Mr. Trump’s moves as exceeding the authority of the executive branch, while most — but not all — Republicans have supported them as a legitimate exercise of presidential power. The House narrowly defeated a war powers act resolution that would have directed Mr. Trump to remove U.S. troops from Venezuela. As Mr. Rubio will argue, the administration says there are no U.S. troops on the ground in the South American nation despite a large military buildup in the region. Democrats had argued that the resolution was necessary after the U.S. raid to capture

Mr. Maduro, and because Mr. Trump has stated plans to control the country’s oil industry for years to come.

The pushback has begun in the courts, too, as the families of two Trinidadian nationals killed in a Trump administration boat strike filed what is thought to be the first wrongful death case arising from the campaign. Three dozen strikes on boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean have killed at least 126 people since September. The U.S. takes steps to normalise ties, while still issuing warnings.. While keeping pressure on those whom the Trump administration dubs “narcotraffickers” without providing evidence, U.S. officials are working to normalise ties with Venezuelan acting President Delcy Rodríguez. Nonetheless, Mr. Rubio will make clear in his testimony that she has little choice but to comply with Mr. Trump’s demands. “Rodríguez is well aware of the fate of Maduro; it is our belief that her own self-interest aligns with advancing our key objectives,” Mr. Rubio said, noting that they include opening Venezuela’s energy sector to U.S. companies, providing preferential access to production, using oil revenue to purchase American goods, and ending subsidised oil exports to Cuba.

Ms. Rodríguez, who previously served as Mr. Maduro’s Vice-President, on Tuesday (January 27, 2026) said her government and the Trump administration “have established respectful and courteous channels of communication.” During televised remarks, Ms. Rodríguez said she is working with Mr. Trump and Mr. Rubio to set “a working agenda.” So far, she has appeared to acquiesce to Mr. Trump’s demands and to release prisoners jailed by the government under Mr. Maduro and his predecessor, the late Hugo Chavez. On Monday, the head of a Venezuelan human rights group said 266 political prisoners had been freed since January 8. Mr. Trump had praised the releases, saying on social media that he would “like to thank the leadership of Venezuela for agreeing to this powerful humanitarian gesture!” In a key step to the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the State Department notified Congress just this week that it intends to begin sending additional diplomatic and support personnel to Caracas to prepare for the possible reopening of the U.S. Embassy there. It was the first formal notice of the administration’s intent to reopen the embassy, which shuttered in 2019. Fully normalising ties, however, would require the U.S. to revoke its decision recognising the Venezuelan parliament elected in 2015 as the country’s legitimate government. Mr. Rubio also planned to meet Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado later Wednesday (January 28, 2026) at the State Department. Ms. Machado went into hiding after Mr. Maduro was declared the winner of the 2024 presidential election despite ample credible evidence to the contrary. She reemerged in December to pick up her Nobel Peace Prize in Norway. After Mr. Maduro was ousted, she came to Washington. In a meeting with Mr. Trump, she presented him with her Peace Prize medal, an extraordinary gesture given that Mr. Trump has effectively sidelined her.

Researchers use sound waves to detect elusive helium gas leaks

Helium is famous for making balloons float, voices squeak, and as a critical resource for MRI machines and aerospace engineering. Helium is expensive and scarce, finding leaks quickly is essential, but that’s easier said than done because helium is also chemically inert and sensors, which usually rely on chemical reactors, have a tough time detecting it. In a new study, researchers from Nanjing University in China have reported a sensor that uses sound waves instead of chemistry to ‘hear’ helium leaks. The study paper was published in the December 2025 issue of Applied Physics Letters. Most gas sensors work like a sponge that reacts when it touches a particular liquid. They work by absorbing gas or using chemical reactions to change an electrical signal. Since helium is chemically stable, it doesn’t react with these sensitive coatings. And while existing methods like mass spectrometry can detect helium, they’re often bulky and expensive. In the new study, the researchers took a different approach. They designed a sensor based on acoustic topological materials. These are structures that can trap sound using a particular geometric pattern called a Kagome lattice.

The Kagome lattice is made of interlaced triangles and hexagons. In their specific design, the researchers used rigid cylinders connected by small tubes, creating an effect called topological corner states. Essentially, sound waves introduced into the structure get trapped at the three cor-

ners of the triangle and are unable to escape into the middle or from the sides. Helium detection device inspired by Kagome. Left: The device’s triangular structure helps determine the location of helium leaks in a 2D space. Helium detection device inspired by Kagome. Left: The device’s triangular structure helps determine the location of helium leaks in a 2D space. | Photo Credit: Wang et al. Sound travels at different speeds through different gases. When helium leaks into the sensor and mixes with the air inside, it changes the speed at which sound waves travel through the tubes. This change in speed changes the frequency (or pitch) of the trapped sound at the corners. So by measuring this shift in frequency, the sensor can instantly calculate the concentration of helium present. The acoustic approach offers several advantages over traditional chemical sensors. Because it doesn’t rely on delicate chemical coatings, the sensor is incredibly tough. It works well in temperatures ranging from a comfortable 26° C to a freezing—34° C. It also ignores changes in humidity and thus doesn’t need to be constantly recalibrated like other sensors. The topological nature of the sensor means its ability to trap sound is very stable. The researchers found that they could drill large holes in the sides of the cylinders to let gas in faster and the sound trap still worked well. This means the sensor can detect leaks rapidly as the gas doesn’t have to seep in slowly.

China approves first batch of Nvidia H200 chip imports, sources say



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China has approved its first batch of Nvidia H200 artificial intelligence chip imports, three people familiar with the matter told Reuters, marking a shift in position as Beijing seeks to balance its AI needs against spurring domestic development. ByteDance, Alibaba and Tencent have been approved to purchase over 400,000 H200 chips in total, with other enterprises now joining a queue for subsequent approvals, said two of the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity. It was granted during Nvidia Chief Executive Jensen Huang’s visit to China this week, the sources said.

China’s industry and commerce ministries as well as Nvidia had not yet responded to requests for comment at the time of publication. ByteDance, Alibaba and Tencent had not responded either. The H200, Nvidia’s second most powerful AI chip, has emerged as a major flashpoint in U.S.-China relations. Despite strong demand from Chinese firms and U.S. approval for exports, Beijing’s hesitation to allow imports has been the main barrier to shipments.

What’s happening in Syria’s Kurdish regions? | Explained



How was the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria or Rojava established? Why did the Shaara-Abdi agreement fall through? Why does Türkiye support the Syrian government forces? What has been the U.S.’s position? What does the ceasefire agreement demand?

When Bashar al-Assad’s regime collapsed in December 2024, many hoped it would mark the end of Syria’s years-long civil strife. Ahmed al-Sharaa (formerly Abu Muhammad al-Golani), who emerged as the country’s interim leader, pledged to form an inclusive administration. But the past year has been marked by a resurgence of sectarian violence against the Alawites in the west and the Druze community in the south. In the latest flare-up, fighting broke out in the country’s northeast, between government forces and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF has been pushed out of parts of eastern Syria it once controlled, and, despite a ceasefire, a tense standoff persists between Kurdish militias and government forces in the country’s Kurdish areas. The renewed violence now threatens to unravel the autonomy Syria’s Kurds have exercised since the 2011 civil war.

Who are the main Kurdish actors?

Syria’s Kurds, who make up roughly 10% of the country’s population, have long demanded autonomy for the Kurdish-populated regions in the north and east. When the Assad regime was forced to withdraw troops from the northeast in 2012, amid the civil war, Kurdish parties, councils and militias moved swiftly to fill the vacuum by establishing their own administrative structures. Several Kurdish regions (called ‘cantons’) came together to declare autonomy from the Syrian state, and establish the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES), also known as Rojava. The main party in Rojava is the left-leaning Democratic Union Party (PYD), whose ideology is rooted in the ‘democratic confederalism’ championed by Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Another major political actor is the Kurdistan National Council (KNC), which is aligned with the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party. The main armed militia in Rojava is the People’s Protection Units (YPG), which is aligned with the PYD, the ruling party. The YPG and its women’s brigade YPJ gained prominence in 2014-15 as they defeated Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria’s Kobane, a predominantly Kurdish region. After their victories against the IS in Syria’s north and east, the U.S. started offering them air cover in the battles against jihadists. In 2015, with the blessings of the U.S., the Kurdish leaders formed the SDF with Arab and other minority militias, with the YPG being its core component.

Why did fighting break out?

The question of Kurdish autonomy emerged immediately after the Assad government fell. Mr. Sharaa, formerly the chief of al-Qaeda’s Syria branch, wanted to establish a centralised regime in Damascus — an idea pushed back by the country’s ethnic and religious minority communities. In March 2025, Mr. Sharaa and SDF commander Mazloum Abdi signed an integration agreement, laying out principles for integrating the SDF and other administrative units into the Syrian state. But the Kurds were clear on one point — they did not want to forfeit the autonomy they had built over more than a decade. In an interview with The Hindu in May, Salih Muslim Muhammad, co-chairman of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) said that “nobody wants another centralised regime in Syria”. The Shaara-Abdi agreement promised to flesh out the details of integration by the end of the year, but that deadline passed without progress. Tensions mounted as Damascus proposed deploying its troops in Kurdish regions. While the Syrian government wanted to extend its control across the country which it thinks is essential for reasserting its sovereignty, Kurdish leaders argued that losing military control of the north and east would

The U.S. earlier this month formally cleared the way for Nvidia to sell the H200 to China, where the company is seeing strong appetite. However, Chinese authorities have the final say on whether they would allow it to be shipped in. It was unclear in recent weeks whether Beijing would grant approval as the government wants to balance meeting surging domestic demand for advanced AI chips and nurturing its domestic semiconductor industry. Chinese customs authorities told agents that the H200 chips were not permitted to enter China, Reuters reported earlier this month.

But Chinese technology firms have placed orders for more than two million H200 chips, far exceeding Nvidia’s available inventory, Reuters reported last month. It remains uncertain how many additional companies will receive approval in subsequent batches or what criteria Beijing is using to determine eligibility. Huang arrived in Shanghai last Friday for routine annual celebrations with Nvidia’s China employees and has since travelled to Beijing and other cities, Reuters reported last week. The approvals of H200 suggest Beijing is prioritising the needs of major Chinese internet companies, which are spending billions of dollars to build data centres needed to develop AI services and compete with U.S. rivals, including OpenAI. While Chinese companies such as Huawei now have products that rival the performance of Nvidia’s H20 chip, previously the most advanced AI chip it was allowed to sell to China, they still lag far behind the H200. The H200 delivers roughly six times the performance of Nvidia’s H20 chip. Still Beijing has discussed requiring companies to buy a certain quota of domestic chips as a condition for receiving approval to import foreign semiconductors, Reuters previously reported.

imperil their autonomy. As talks stalled in early January, Mr. Sharaa’s forces moved into the Arab neighbourhoods of Aleppo, which were controlled by Kurdish forces. Fighting soon followed and government forces asserted control within days, forcing the SDF to withdraw to the northeast.

What does Damascus want?

While the Syrian state forces withdrew in 2012 and other rebel and jihadist groups were preoccupied with their battles against Damascus during the civil war, the IS exploited the vacuum to establish a solid presence in Syria’s east. But the YPG, the Kurdish militia, emerged as critical foot soldiers in the war against the IS. The first major defeat the IS faced was at the hands of the YPG. In the following years, the YPG (or the SDF, the expanded version) became the key anti-IS force on the ground in Syria while the U.S. provided them air cover. They controlled the regions they liberated from the IS and established Rojava. The Assad regime tolerated Kurdish autonomy because it was preoccupied with other problems. Now, Mr. Sharaa, who has been emboldened by the international recognition he has achieved, wants to end Kurdish autonomy. He has taken a two-pronged approach. On January 16, amid ongoing fighting between government forces and the SDF, Mr. Sharaa issued a decree formally recognising Kurdish as a “national language” and offering citizenship to all Syrian Kurds. He also declared Newroz, the new year festival celebrated by Kurds, as a national holiday. But he said nothing about Kurdish autonomy. His plan is to give cultural concessions while taking control of the Kurdish militias militarily.

Where do Türkiye and the U.S. stand?

Türkiye sees the PYD (the political party) and the YPG (the militia) as extended arms of the PKK (the Türkiye-based Kurdish group which has been designated as a terrorist entity by Ankara and its Western allies). Mr. Sharaa and his group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) are close allies of Türkiye. Ankara backed Mr. Sharaa’s plan to integrate the Kurdish administrative and military structures into the Syrian state. When Kurds resisted the move, in December 2025, Türkiye warned against them. In the past, Türkiye had carried out military operations to push Kurdish forces away from the Syria-Turkish border and create a buffer. Now that a peace process is under way in Türkiye between the government and the PKK, Ankara believes weakening of the SDF across the border would strengthen its hand and weaken the overall Kurdish push for confederal autonomy.

The U.S. on the other side backed the SDF in the fight against the IS. The U.S. still has some 900 troops in Syria, mostly in the Kurdish northeast. But Washington has warmed up to Damascus after Mr. Sharaa, a former designated terrorist who carried a \$10 million State Department bounty on his head, captured power. Mr. Sharaa visited Washington in November 2025 and met Mr. Trump after which Syria announced that it would join the U.S.-led coalition to fight the IS. Now that the U.S. has Damascus, it doesn’t need the Kurds to maintain its presence in Syria. The U.S. and Türkiye also find common ground in establishing a centralised Syria, by strengthening the hands of Sharaa, so that the influence of Iran and Russia could be gradually neutralised.

What lies ahead?

After seizing the SDF-held regions of Aleppo, Mr. Sharaa’s forces turned to areas between Aleppo and the Euphrates River. These predominantly Arab-populated regions were captured by the SDF between 2015 and 2019 after it drove out the IS. SDF positions subsequently collapsed across Raqqa and Deir al-Zour, both former IS strongholds. Reports also emerged of internal cracks within the SDF, with some Arab militias breaking ranks with YPG commanders. Dozens of IS members escaped from a prison in Hassaka which was caught in the crossfire. On January 18, Mr. Abdi, the SDF commander, agreed to a ceasefire and integration deal. Mr. Sharaa insists that the military integration of the SDF be undertaken on an “individual basis” — not as units. The ceasefire agreement also asks the SDF to hand over Raqqa and Deir al-Zour provinces “administratively and militarily” to the government; to integrate all administrative institutions in al-Hassaka into government structures; to hand over all border crossings and oil and gas fields; and to expel all non-Syrian members of the PKK from Syria. But there seems to be serious disagreements on the degree of autonomy Kurds would retain. The agreement affirms the need “to protect the special character of the Kurdish areas”. The SDF seems ready to give up Raqqa and Deir al-Zour, but they don’t want to give up their positions in Kobane, al-Hassaka and Qamishli. While the Sharaa regime wants to end the SDF’s local monopoly on the use of force, the SDF doesn’t want government troops to be deployed in Kurdish areas. A Kurdish representative based in Europe told The Hindu that the autonomous administration has called for a general mobilisation. “Kobane is now under siege. But Kurdish fighters are defending their positions,” he said.

How Ajit Pawar reshaped the Pawar dynasty



The death of Ajit Pawar has once again drawn attention to the Pawar family, one of Maharashtra’s most powerful political clans, and to the deep divisions that now run through it. For decades, the family shaped politics in western Maharashtra through control of cooperatives, sugar factories and the Nationalist Congress Party. Ajit Pawar was long viewed as Sharad Pawar’s natural successor. His break from his uncle did not just divide the party; it also divided the family, changing the course of one of the state’s most powerful political households.

The family’s political roots go back to Govindrao and Shardabai Pawar, whose 11 children went on to build influence in politics, business and public life. At the centre of the family’s rise was Sharad Pawar, who became one of the state’s tallest leaders. His nephew Ajit Pawar later emerged as his political heir, before breaking away and dividing both the party and the family.Ajit Pawar Old archive picture of Ajit PawarGovindrao and Shardabai Pawar had 11 children, including seven sons and four daughters. Their political influence came mainly from Shardabai Pawar, who was active in the Peasants and Workers Party and later the Congress. In 1938, she was elected unopposed to the Pune local board and was among the few women in politics in the district at the time.

Sharad Pawar has often said it was his mother who taught the family the value of public service and hard work.Among their children wereVasantrao Pawar, a lawyer who was killed in a land disputeWhile Sharad Pawar became the family’s political face, his siblings built influence in law, business, media and cooperatives.

The second generationThe second generation largely stayed united behind Sharad Pawar for many years.From Dinkarrao Pawar’s branch came Rajendra and Ranjit Pawar, who built businesses in agriculture. Rajendra Pawar’s son Rohit Pawar entered politics in 2019 and won the Karjat Jamkhed Assembly seat. He is now seen as one of the younger faces of Sharad Pawar’s group.

From Anant Rao Pawar’s branch came Ajit Pawar. Rising through the cooperative sector, he became Sharad Pawar’s closest political aide in the 1990s. Ajit Pawar went

A political dust storm over the Singareni coal mines

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka inspects the Singareni Collieries Company Limited’s JVR Opencast Project-II at Sathupalli in Khammam district. File photo: Special ArrangementSingareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL), the 140-year-old State Public Sector Undertaking in Telangana has been in news for all wrong reasons in the recent weeks, with the Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the ruling Congress sparring over alleged irregularities in tenders for removal of overburden (the layer of soil, rock, and ecosystem that lies above a coal seam) in the coal mines.

The ruling party has been forced on the back foot by the BRS, with the ruling party lacking punch in its rebuttal. The BRS has alleged that the tender norms were framed in favour of Congress bigwigs and their kin, helping them make easy money and causing loss to the company.

Buoyed by the encouraging results in the Gram Panchayat elections held in December last year, the BRS has added a pinch of aggression in targeting the ruling party. The Congress claimed that candidates backed by it won about 60% of the 12,733 Sarpanch posts, which is seen by the Opposition as an underperformance for a ruling party. The BRS claimed over 40% success rate in the Gram Panchayat polls held on non-party basis. The BRS has sharpened its attack on the Congress at every given opportunity in a bid to consolidate its position further in the upcoming election to urban local bodies (ULB), which is fought on party symbols.

The row over the Singareni tenders erupted when senior BRS leader and former Minister T. Harish Rao piled the allegations of irregularities on January 19. The BRS’s main target in the matter is not Deputy Chief Minister M. Bhatti Vikramarka, who handles the portfolio of Energy under which the SCCL operates. Rather, it is Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. The party says the Chief Minister got the ‘site visit certification’ system introduced in the tenders with a view to favour his brother-in-law (wife’s brother) S. Srujan Reddy’s companies, with bids quoted at a value much higher than the estimates prepared by the company.

Soon after the BRS raised the allegations, Mr. Harish Rao and party working president K.T. Rama Rao received notices from the special investigation team (SIT) in the phone-tapping case, asking them to appear before it for examination as witnesses. The Opposition party wasted no time in playing the victim card, alleging that the leaders were served notices as part of the ruling party’s plans to harass them for making ‘the scam’ public. As if to bolster its claim, another party leader and former senior police officer R.S. Praveen Kumar too received a notice from the SIT in the same case, a day after he questioned the morality of the SIT chief holding the position.

In a vain bid, Deputy Chief Minister Vikramarka tried to rebut the allegations, stating that the norm/condition of site visit certification was in practice in many Central PSUs, Departments and PSUs of other States and that in SCCL too, it was introduced in 2018 when the BRS was in power. He also read out some documents which impose the site visit condition as an attempt to turn the tables on the Opposition party. However, the BRS took it as another opportunity to corner the ruling party.

“The Deputy CM too appears to have taken a cue from the Chief Minister who had conveniently read out portions of irrigation documents to suit/support his argument in the Assembly on more than one occasion. Mr. Vikramarka read out only the portions that were convenient for him to do some mudslinging on the Opposition and did nottell people the fact that the site visit condition introduced by SCCL when the BRS was in power was only for establishing coal handling plants (CHPs) and not for the overburden removal contracts,” Mr. Harish Rao said. He stated that some of the

on to become one of the most powerful leaders in the state, serving several terms as Deputy Chief Minister and handling key departments such as Irrigation and Finance.Ajit Pawar’s family also entered politics. His son Parth Pawar contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election from Maval and lost. His wife Sunetra Pawar stepped into electoral politics in 2024.Sharad Pawar’s daughter Supriya Sule entered Parliament in 2009 and became the main political face of her father’s camp.

NCP leader Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar. (Express Archive Photo by Mukesh Parpiani) NCP leader Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar. (Express Archive Photo by Mukesh Parpiani) The family feud becomes publicCracks in the family became visible after Supriya Sule entered politics and later when Rohit Pawar won his Assembly seat in 2019. Ajit Pawar, who saw himself as Sharad Pawar’s natural successor, felt sidelined.In 2019, Ajit Pawar briefly formed a government with the BJP before returning to Sharad Pawar’s camp. The break became final in July 2023, when Ajit Pawar split the NCP and joined the BJP led government.Most members of the Pawar family stayed with Sharad Pawar. Ajit Pawar publicly complained of being treated as an outsider by his own relatives. His brother Shrinivas is believed to have campaigned against him.

Supriya Sule vs Sunetra PawarThe family split was laid bare in the 2024 Lok Sabha election in Baramati, when Supriya Sule faced Sunetra Pawar in a direct contest.For the first time, the Pawar family stronghold saw a fight between two women from the same clan, standing on opposite sides of the political divide. Supriya Sule represented her father Sharad Pawar’s NCP faction, while Sunetra Pawar was fielded by Ajit Pawar’s group with the backing of the BJP.The campaign turned into a battle for control of the Pawar legacy. Supriya Sule projected herself as the heir to Sharad Pawar’s politics, while Sunetra Pawar sought votes in Ajit Pawar’s name and highlighted his work in the region.Sule won the election, dealing a blow to Ajit Pawar’s attempt to wrest Baramati from his uncle’s camp. The result showed that Sharad Pawar still commanded strong loyalty in the family bastion, even after the party split. Ajit Pawar however trumped his uncle in the 2024 Assembly elections. In recent months, there had also been growing speculation of a possible rapprochement between the two Pawar camps, driven by electoral setbacks and the practical limits of a divided family and party. Leaders from both sides had maintained discreet channels of communication, and the decision of the two NCP factions to cooperate in some local body elections was seen as an early signal of softening positions.Sharad Pawar remains the senior figure in the clan. Supriya Sule and Rohit Pawar now carry forward his political line. On Ajit Pawar’s side, Sunetra Pawar and Parth Pawar remain the visible faces, though without Ajit Pawar’s personal grip over party and government.



examples of site visit condition for tenders cited by Mr. Vikramarka were strange as, for instance, the Ministry of Defence’s tenders were for supply of washing machines and dryers for Sainik Schools.The BRS claims the site visit condition for overburden removal contracts was introduced as recently as May 2025 and some of the tenders finalised till that time from December 2023, when the Congress assumed office, were as per the old procedures without the site visit condition. Those tenders were locked for lower values/rates than the estimates prepared by SCCL, saving money for the company, it says.

To make sense of cosmic rays, CERN team tracks a fragile nucleus

The hydrogen atom is the lightest in the universe and it consists of the simplest nucleus: a single proton. But while helium is the second-lightest element, its nucleus isn’t the second simplest. That distinction belongs to the deuterium, the nucleus of the deuterium atom, which contains one proton and one neutron. (Deuterium is an isotope of hydrogen.)However, the two particles are bound with a very low binding energy, making deuterons seem fragile relative to the energetic, messy environment created when particles collide at nearly the speed of light at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). Yet experiments have repeatedly observed deuterons (and anti-deuterons) emerging from these collisions. How do they survive this environment?Coalescence scenario

Physicists have come up with two broad explanations. One, called direct emission, assumes the deuterons are produced directly from a hot source, meaning their formation doesn’t involve a different particle (or particles) condensing from a soup of energy, then decaying to form deuterons. The other idea, called coalescence, holds that the proton and neutron are produced first, then they stick together later if they get close enough. The problem is a proton and a neutron can’t fuse if they have too much energy, so there has to be a third particle to carry away the excess energy. That third participant can be a type of particle called pion that acts like a catalyst, i.e. it will enable the reaction without becoming part of the final deuterium.Finding out whether this is possible matters beyond collider physics. If scientists have to predict how light nuclei and antinuclei form in high-energy collisions in space — such as when cosmic rays strike interstellar gas — they need to know which formation mechanisms are possible and which ones nature doesn’t ‘allow’.

Delta resonanceA new study out of the ALICE collaboration at the LHC has provided the answer. The collaboration works with the ALICE detector, one of nine detectors on the LHC. At four points on its ring, the LHC smashes together opposing beams of protons at high energy. The collisions produce a morass of particles and reactions between them. The detectors have computers and sensors that are triggered when they identify reactions of

Netanyahu says Israel focusing on disarming Hamas, demilitarising Gaza



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday (January 27, 2026) that Israel would shift its focus to disarming Hamas and demilitarising Gaza following the return of the last hostage from the Palestinian territory.He further said that no reconstruction work would take place in Gaza until those two missions were accomplished.

Mr. Netanyahu also vowed to block the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza, insisting Israel would maintain security control over both it and the occupied West Bank, despite widening international recognition of Palestinian statehood.The U.S.-sponsored Gaza ceasefire plan, in effect since October 10, stipulated the return of all the hostages held in the territory under its first phase, and Hamas’s disarmament under the second.“Now we are focused on completing the two remaining tasks: disarming Hamas and demilitarising Gaza of weapons and tunnels,” Mr. Netanyahu said during a televised press conference.“It will be done the easy way or it will be done the hard way. But in any case it will happen.”I’m hearing even now claims that Gaza’s reconstruction will be allowed before demilitarisation — this will not happen,” Mr. Netanyahu said.

Militants took 251 hostages during the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel that sparked the Gaza war. Israeli forces

Researchers use sound waves to detect elusive helium gas leaks

Helium is famous for making balloons float, voices squeak, and as a critical resource for MRI machines and aerospace engineering. Helium is expensive and scarce, finding leaks quickly is essential, but that’s easier said than done because helium is also chemically inert and sensors, which usually rely on chemical reactors, have a tough time detecting it.In a new study, researchers from Nanjing University in China have reported a sensor that uses sound waves instead of chemistry to ‘hear’ helium leaks. The study paper was published in the December 2025 issue of Applied Physics Letters.

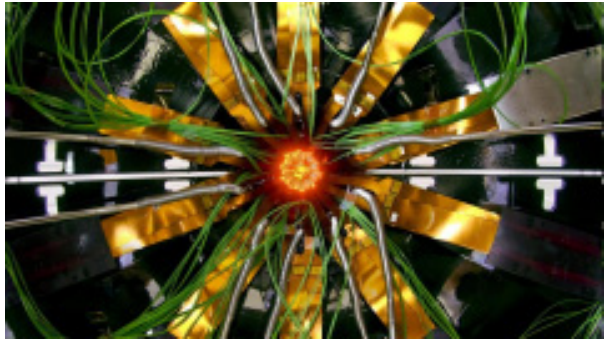
Most gas sensors work like a sponge that reacts when it touches a particular liquid. They work by absorbing gas or using chemical reactions to change an electrical signal. Since helium is chemically stable, it doesn’t react with these sensitive coatings. And while existing methods like mass spectrometry can detect helium, they’re often bulky and expensive.In the new study, the researchers took a different approach. They designed a sensor based on acoustic topological materials. These are structures that can trap sound using a particular geometric pattern called a Kagome lattice.The Kagome lattice is made of interlaced triangles and hexagons. In their specific design, the researchers used rigid cylinders connected by small tubes, creating an effect called topological corner states. Essentially, sound waves introduced into the structure get trapped at the three corners of the triangle and are unable to escape into the middle or from the sides.

Helium detection device inspired by Kagome. Left: The device’s triangular structure helps determine the location of helium leaks in a 2D space.Helium detection device inspired by Kagome. Left: The device’s triangular structure helps determine the location of helium leaks in a 2D space. [Sound travels at different speeds through different gases. When helium leaks into the sensor and mixes with the air inside, it changes the speed at which sound waves travel through the tubes. This change in speed changes the frequency (or pitch) of the trapped sound at the corners. So by measur-



ing this shift in frequency, the sensor can instantly calculate the concentration of helium present.

The acoustic approach offers several advantages over traditional chemical sensors. Because it doesn’t rely on delicate chemical coatings, the sensor is incredibly tough. It works well in temperatures ranging from a comfortable 26° C to a freezing –34° C. It also ignores changes in humidity and thus doesn’t need to be constantly recalibrated like other sensors. The topological nature of the sensor means its ability to trap sound is very stable. The researchers found that they could drill large holes in the sides of the cylinders to let gas in faster and the sound trap still worked well. This means the sensor can detect leaks rapidly as the gas doesn’t have to seep in slowly.And because the sensor is a triangle with three distinct corners, it can do more than just say whether helium is present in the air. By comparing the timing of the signals at each of the three corners, the sensor can triangulate the direction the gas is coming from. If the frequency shifts at corner 1 before corner 3, for instance, it would mean the leak is closer to corner 1.According to the research, this device could make it much easier and cheaper to protect valuable helium supplies in industries ranging from medicine to space exploration.



Why is finding out how deuterons survive particle collisions in the Large Hadron Collider important? If scientists have to predict how light nuclei form in high-energy collisions in space, like when cosmic rays strike interstellar gas, they need to know which formation mechanisms are possible and which ones nature forbids

neutrons, with help from pions nearby. This should change how theorists model the way nuclei (and anti-nuclei) are produced in high-energy particulate reactions.In fact the ALICE team’s paper, published on December 10, noted that scientists can use this insight to build more realistic models of reactions induced by cosmic rays.Cosmic rays are very energetic protons and atomic nuclei hurtling through space and which often collide with other nuclei in outer space. When scientists are studying telescope data of these collisions or are modelling them in the lab, e.g. for astronomy research or because they’re sending a probe to that part of space, they’ll need to know which signals are coming from which sources.“These findings not only explain a long-standing puzzle in nuclear physics but could have far-reaching implications for astrophysics and cosmology,” the ALICE team said in a statement.“Light nuclei and antinuclei are also produced in interactions between cosmic rays and the interstellar medium, and theymay be created in processes involving the dark matter that pervades the universe. By building reliable models for the production of light nuclei and anti-nuclei, physicists can better interpret cosmic-ray data and look for possible dark-matter signals.”

‘Punjab is industry-ready’: CM Bhagwant Mann to visit Japan on 10-day trip



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will embark on a 10-day visit to Japan starting December 1, leading a delegation comprising Industries Minister Sanjeev Arora, Chief Secretary KAP Sinha, and other officials to invite Japanese industry leaders to invest in India.Sources said that Mann will be in Tokyo and Sapporo to hold meetings with captains of industry there. The visit will be part of the state government’s international outreach in the run-up to the 6th Progressive Punjab Investors’ Summit scheduled from March 13-15 next year.

Sources said that political clearance from the Centre had been received and preparations were being made for the trip. Mann was reportedly wrapping up all his meetings as he would be away from the state for 10 days.“The Zila

Parishad and Block Samiti elections have also been announced for December 14. Model Code of Conduct is in place in rural areas. Hence, CM’s absence would not matter much. The elections have been timed in such a way that there is code during most of his visit abroad,” an official said.

“The CM’s schedule is packed. There are back-to-back meetings during all 10 days. He will be meeting representatives of 25 leading Japanese companies like Yamaha, Panasonic, Sumitomo, Nippon, NEC, Toyota and others. We will be doing our bit. We will showcase to Japan that Punjab is industry-ready. Let us see how successful the visit would be,” the official added.On November 26, Mann, accompanied by Arora, held a detailed virtual deliberation with a high-level delegation from Japan comprising representatives of the Embassy of Japan, Japan External Trade Organisation, Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in India, and leading Japanese companies. The CM battled for a strategic tie-up with Japan in key sectors of advanced manufacturing, mobility, electronics, food processing, renewable energy, and global services.The interaction took place at the Indian School of Business in Mohali, where the CM extended an invitation to Japanese companies to be part of Punjab’s next phase of industrial transformation.Meanwhile, a video of Mann meeting passengers waiting for buses amid a strike call given by the Punjab Roadways and PRTC contractual employees at Kurali at 4 am on Saturday surfaced. He is likely to visit Jalandhar to meet the family of the Jalandhar rape victim.

When hospitals were distant dreams, this midwife in Karnataka brought 13,000 babies into the world

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

It was during 1972 that Yellamma, a 22-year-old pregnant woman, was in severe labour pain. But the hospital was not just a faraway but a distant dream for Yellamma, who lived in a remote village of Karnataka. The woman who came to her rescue was Sulagatthi Eeramma, a midwife, to perform the delivery successfully, and Yellamma gave birth to a baby boy, Manjappa, who is now 53 years old.In her over 50 years of ‘career’ in midwifery, Eeramma, who is now 103 years old, has attended more than 13,000 such deliveries in and around her village called Obalashettihalli, located 79 km away from Vijayanagar district. To her villagers, Eeramma, popular as Sulagatthi Eeramma across Karnataka, has been a living goddess who has successfully performed normal deliveries at a time when healthcare systems in India had not even penetrated the two-tier towns of the state.



In Kannada, Sulagatthi refers to traditional midwives who were much sought after before advanced health care systems were in vogue.Born in 1922, Eeramma was married at a young age, and she gave birth to three children during the Plague that struck North Karnataka, taking the lives of many in the region. Eeramma, who used to work in the fields, learnt midwifery from her grandmother.“I assisted in the first delivery when I was 30 years old. I did not have any kind of doubt about my ability, and there was community support. After the first success, it was news in and around my village,” she says.Born in 1922, Eeramma was married at a young age, and she gave birth to three children during the Plague that struck North Karnataka, taking the lives of many in the region. Eeramma, who used to work in the fields, learnt midwifery from her grandmother.Since then, Eeramma got busy as a midwife attending to one delivery after another. “She used to keep herself available all the time. She used to travel at least 30 km — on bullock carts or as a pillion rider on cycles — to perform deliveries. It doesn’t matter whether it was during night or day, she never said ‘no’ to anyone, despite her difficulties,” says Manjappa.

“This part of the region was not a developed place then. Forget hospitals, the villagers back then did not know the term doctor. The nearest district headquarters was Ballari, which is again 76km. There was no reason for the villagers to travel to Ballari. If Eeramma were not there, many women and children would have died. Some 25 years ago, a pri-

mary health centre came into existence in Chikkajogahalli, 7 kilometres from the village, and it was upgraded to perform deliveries around 15 years ago,” Vinay Kumar M T, a teacher at Government Higher Primary School, Obalashettihalli, explains about the situation during the 1950s.Nagaveni B B, 23, an attender at a co-operative society, says she is indebted to Eeramma’s for her labour care during her mother’s delivery. “When my mother was pregnant, she was not in a state to afford the cost to travel to the town to get the baby delivered, even at a government hospital. If there was no Eeramma, I don’t know whether I would be alive to talk to you today,” she says.“As a child, I have seen that she has delivered babies in bullock carts on the way to hospitals. Some people in nearby villages also preferred Eeramma to doctors, fearing C-section deliveries,” she adds.At a time when health care has become a costly affair with advancements in modern medicine, Eeramma recalls that years ago, the highest money she received was Rs 5. She also points out the difference in pay depending on the gender of the baby.“I never asked for money from anyone, but some people gave me. In the early days, if a boy child was born, I used to get two plates of jowar or ragi, and if a girl child was born, I used to get one plate. I would have to take care of the newborn and the mother for the next 16 days,” she says.With health care facilities in her village getting upgraded, Eeramma stopped attending to delivery cases when she turned 85. “During that time, some of the government nurses asked me not to do midwifery and warned me of legal actions. I stopped it then,” she says.In recognition of her contribution to rural maternal health, the Karnataka government honoured Eeramma with the Karnataka Rajyotsava award this year. “Forget applying for an award, she did not know that such an award existed till she got one. Despite being 103 years old, we took her to Bengaluru, and it is a proud moment for us,” Manjappa says.

Minor shoots at neighbour to settle two-month-old dispute, apprehended: UP Police

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

A Class IX student allegedly shot and injured his 17-year-old neighbour in Uttar Pradesh’s Shahjahanpur on Thursday, reportedly to settle an old dispute between them. Police have apprehended the minor. Police said around two months ago, the older boy had allegedly slapped the younger one outside the intermediate college. The tension between the two had been simmering since then.Late Thursday evening, police said the juvenile reportedly called the victim to meet him outside the village. The victim reached the spot and waited for the juvenile. Suddenly, police said, the juvenile arrived and began abusing him. Before the victim could react, the juvenile took out a pistol and allegedly opened fire. The bullet hit the victim in the back.Hearing the gunshot and the victim’s cries, villagers in the nearby field rushed to the spot. Seeing that, the juvenile fled from the scene.The villagers immediately took the injured boy to the hospital,

and some of them informed the police and his family about the incident.A police officer involved in the investigation said, “We have detained the juvenile and recovered a country-made pistol from him. The boy claims he brought the weapon from his home.” He further added that the minor will be produced before the Juvenile Justice Board as part of the legal procedure.During the initial investigation, police found that the two boys had clashed several times over the past two to three months. Both live in the same neighbourhood and the earlier dispute between them had reportedly escalated over time, eventually leading to the shooting.According to the police, the victim’s father said the accused boy had called his son and asked him to meet him outside the village. The victim left home, telling his family that he would be back within an hour.However, a few minutes later, the family received information that their son had been taken to the hospital with a gunshot wound.

Aristotle PG College hosts ‘ARIS-AAGAAZ 2025’ fresher’s celebration for MBA batch

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Hyderabad: Aristotle PG College, MBA Chilkoor, hosted its freshers’ celebration ‘ARIS-AAGAAZ 2025’ at Patnavathi Function Hall, Moinabad, welcoming the new MBA batch with enthusiasm, cultural vibrance, and motivational guidance from esteemed guests and faculty.

The chief guest, DCP Giri Raju, delivered an address focusing on cyber awareness and youth safety and highlighted that cybercrime is rapidly increasing across India, causing financial loss and emotional distress to many

people.He cautioned students against online betting and harmful additions, reminding them to protect their time, money, and future. “Stay away from bad habits that distract you from progress,” he said, urging students to choose discipline and personal responsibility.

Principal Sri L Srinivas Reddy emphasised that education is the strongest tool for success, urging students to learn with curiosity, confidence, and commitment.The event featured energetic performances, fresher introductions, and warm interactions between seniors and juniors, creating a memorable start for the new academic year.

How the new Badlapur-Karjat lines will ease congestion in Mumbai’s busiest rail corridor



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

The Union Cabinet’s approval for constructing the third and fourth railway lines between Badlapur and Karjat marks a major intervention in one of Mumbai’s most overloaded suburban and long-distance corridors. The 32-km stretch, part of the Central Railway’s Main Line, has long struggled with saturated capacity, frequent delays and limited scope to add new services. The new lines aim to untangle this bottleneck by separating suburban, express and freight traffic, a move expected to significantly improve punctuality and passenger experience over the next few years.The Badlapur–Karjat section is part of the high-density Kalyan–Karjat corridor that handles all suburban local services beyond Kalyan, long-distance passenger trains heading towards Pune and the south, and heavy freight traffic. Currently, only two tracks carry all categories of trains. This mixed movement leads to slow-moving freight, halting suburban locals and high-speed express trains to share the same lines, creating daily choke points.

The rise of satellite towns such as Badlapur, Ambernath and Ulhasnagar has also led to a surge in commuter numbers. With the existing pair of tracks already operating at near-maximum capacity during peak hours, the Central Railway has had limited room to add new suburban services, particularly beyond Ambernath.“The Badlapur–Karjat 3rd and 4th line will not only address future passenger demand in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, but will also strengthen connectivity to southern India. By fully segregating suburban operations from long-distance and freight traffic, we will be able to significantly improve punctuality and scheduling across the entire corridor,” said Dr Swapnil Nila, Chief Public Relations Officer, Central Railway.What the new project involvesThe Rs 1,300-plus crore project will lay two additional tracks parallel to the existing ones on the 32-km stretch between Badlapur and Karjat. The engineering scope includes over 100 minor bridges, several major bridges, modifications at intermediate stations and signalling upgrades required to integrate all four lines.The new tracks will complement the ongoing Kalyan–Badlapur quadrupling work being executed under MUDP-3A by the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation (MRVC). Once both sections are completed, the entire Kalyan–Karjat corridor will effectively have four tracks, restoring capacity on a route that has remained unchanged for decades despite rising traffic.“This stretch is a critical freight route for coal, cement, salt, containers and POL (Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants) products, and the added ca-

capacity will support nearly 18 million tonnes of additional freight every year. This increase will reduce logistics costs, cut oil imports by almost 3 crore litres, and lower CO2 emissions by about 16 crore kilograms. The environmental impact alone is equivalent to planting 64 lakh trees,” said Nila.The biggest change will come from segregating suburban and long-distance traffic. Central Railway plans to allocate one pair of tracks primarily for suburban locals while the other pair would handle express/mail and freight trains. This separation allows each category of trains to run at their optimal speeds without interfering with each other.For suburban commuters, this means the possibility of introducing additional services between Kalyan, Badlapur and Karjat, especially during peak hours, where demand routinely exceeds availability. Faster turnaround and reduced waiting times at stations are also expected once the bottleneck is removed.Long-distance trains, especially those towards Pune, Chennai and southern India, will benefit from smoother sections running without getting stuck behind locals. Freight movement too will gain momentum, as heavy goods trains will no longer slow down suburban services.“People travelling from CSMT to Karjat currently go via Kalyan, which is the most crowded stretch on the suburban network. Once the Panvel–Karjat route is completed by March 2026, passengers will be able to switch at Panvel, saving nearly 15 minutes and easing load on the Kalyan route,” Nila said, adding, “With increased capacity, we can run more suburban, express and freight services without the delays caused by mixed traffic.”

Once operational, the project is expected to reduce delays significantly on the Main Line. Sectional speed restrictions caused by track sharing are likely to ease, improving punctuality across the board. Suburban passengers on the Badlapur–Karjat stretch, many of whom travel more than two hours one way, could see shorter and more reliable journeys.The corridor may also see the introduction of more semi-fast services that currently struggle to overtake slower trains. Reduced congestion is expected to ease crowding inside trains, particularly during morning and evening peaks.“This will reduce overcrowding, ease congestion and improve punctuality for lakhs of daily commuters. Long-distance trains towards Pune, Chennai and beyond will also move faster, and freight loading will increase as the bottleneck reduces,” said NilaWhile approval has been granted, construction will involve multiple engineering challenges, including bridge work, station modifications and realignment in certain sections. Land acquisition requirements, if any, will also influence the pace of work.According to Central Railway officials, the full advantage of the new Badlapur–Karjat lines will be realised once ongoing capacity upgrades on adjacent sections, including the Kalyan–Badlapur quadrupling project, advance alongside this work.Key part of Mumbai’s long-term rail strategyThe addition of the third and fourth lines is part of a broader plan to expand multi-tracking across Mumbai’s suburban rail network. As the city continues to push outward, particularly along the Central Railway’s main corridor, increasing track capacity is essential to support both daily commuters and national long-distance connectivity.Once complete, the Badlapur–Karjat upgrade is expected to become a pivotal piece in decongesting Mumbai’s suburban network, unlock-

With 8ish, Rachel Goenka gives SoBo a cocktail bar it didn’t know it needed

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

While South Bombay has always had its share of pubs and restobars, it never truly had a cocktail bar — a place to slip into after work for a drink (or several) before heading home. Filling that gap is 8ish, the newly launched bar by restaurateur-chef Rachel Goenka.Parked on the ground floor of Express Towers, exactly where The Sassy Spoon once stood, 8ish takes its drinks seriously. The bar programme, led by seasoned mixologist Jishnu A.J. (previously with Ekaa, KMC), and Bombay Daak — all by the same team and Koko), leans on techniques such as pickling, fermentation and clarification, and sources wild ingredients from across the country. What charmed us most, though, is that while it is elegant and chic, it is never pretentious.“Sassy Spoon was established here 13 years ago, and the neighbourhood has changed so much since then, especially with the opening of the coastal road, which has opened South Bombay to the rest; earlier it was always a trek. The town has had a revival of its own, especially Nariman Point,” said Goenka, adding that this felt like the right time to turn it into a cocktail bar, a concept she had long envisioned.Goenka, daughter of Viveck Goenka, chairman, The Express Group, is the creative force behind The Sassy Spoon, House of Mandarin, Baraza and Sassy Teaspoon.8ish bar food Bar Bites- Crispy lotus stem smoked BBQ rub, spiced nuts rosemary, crunchy chickpeas, marinated olives, mahua flowers caperberries, steamed edamame with fried garlic.



When asked about the name — quirky and almost a conversation-starter — she smiles: “Everybody has been raving about it. I think it’s because everyone can relate to it. Whenever people discuss what time they should meet for a catch-up, the answer is usually ‘around eight-ish.’ So we thought, why not take that old neighbourhood familiarity and call the space 8ish? Now the question isn’t just ‘what time’, but ‘where should we meet?’”Speaking about the concept, she added, “There are many places in the area classified as pubs, resto-bars or upscale restaurants with strong beverage programmes, but I don’t think anyone has truly done a bar, especially in South Bombay. For me, 8ish was about building a warm, inviting, friendly neighbourhood cocktail bar. Cocktail bars don’t have to be super fancy or pretentious. They can be neighbourhood spaces too, the kind you drop by three or four times a week for your favourite drink. It doesn’t need to be a destination; it can simply be a detour, as we like to call it.”

Having made up her mind early this year, Goenka turned around the space in just 60 days and opened it to the public mid-November. Translating her vision into a design language was Shweta Kaushik of SKID, who created a room for that in-between hour when the city begins to loosen up and the night finds its rhythm.rachel goenka Rachel Goenka, Founder and CEO of TCSC Hospitality, the restaurateur behind The Sassy Spoon, House of Mandarin, Baraza and Sassy Teaspoon.At this 120-seater, seating ranges from high chairs to plush mahogany leather sofas, all bathed in amber-hued lighting. The deep maroon marble bar framed with tarnished copper is the dramatic centrepiece, as is the lenticular artwork that shifts between Salvador Dalí and John Lennon — a playful, slightly surreal welcome that reveals itself through the evening, alongside witty lines etched onto glasses (“We are just getting started”) and tables (“Come as you are”). There’s also a breezy al fresco section. The space allows you to unwind without feeling the need to de-code the science behind your drink — it’s technique-for-

ward without being intimidating.

We began with ‘Nearly Misbehaved’ (Rs 890), a flirtatious mix of gin, chingfing and mint, sharpened with supasawa and rounded with fresh apple juice. The herby bitterness comes from chingfing, a North Eastern herb that takes the place of bitters. Next came the delightfully ‘Dangerously Unhinged’ (Rs 990), a whiskey-based concoction softened with pandan, sesame milk and banana saccharum. Velvety, tropical and just sweet enough, it demands a repeat.In sync with her vision, the food menu is largely bar nibbles and small plates, with a few mains to round out the night. The crispy lotus stem in smoked barbecue masala kept us company throughout. The Asparagus Mousse was a celebration of all things asparagus — an airy, foamy mousse with a citrusy salsa at the centre, topped with tempura asparagus and served with rice crackers. Their pull-apart soft cheese bread arrives on a bed of smoked scamorza and white onion sauce, finished with a tomato-chilli jam.jishnu at 8ish Jishnu A.J., a seasoned mixologist with over a decade of experience at Ekaa, KOKO, Four Seasons Mumbai, and Marriott Kochi, helms the bar at 8ish.A standout is the buff and bone marrow slider. Between soft sesame-sprinkled milk buns sits a juicy patty with bacon jam. A cured egg yolk binds everything without overpowering the flavours. We’re told they’re already a hit, with many patrons ordering repeats, and we’re not surprised. We also tried the Goan chorizo hummus. The deep, smoky chorizo pairs beautifully with what might be one of the smoothest hummuses we’ve had. The pillowy texture comes from white beans instead of chickpeas. The in-house sourdough crackers are the ideal crunchy accompaniment.Then came another round of drinks. ‘Lenon’ (Rs 990) is a bright, herbaceous blend of shiso-infused vodka, muskmelon and basil, with a wisp of mezzal for quiet rebellion and a clean citrus lift from supasawa. ‘Garibaldi’ (Rs 750) sticks to two ingredients — Campari and orange juice — but the latter is whipped into an impossibly fluffy texture. Definitely opt for it if you enjoy your drinks on the bitter side.From the toastsies, we loved the roasted cherry tomato and mozzarella version on thin sourdough slathered with basil pesto. We also recommend crispy chicken, truffle hot sauce and parmesan aioli toastie in milk bread — comforting, indulgent and generously sized.For mains, we had the drunken prawn noodles that saw well-seasoned prawns, peanuts and vegetables tossed with noodles in a hearty,

With fortune smiling on him, and a relatively fresh body at his disposal, Novak Djokovic has best chance against Jannik Sinner in semifinal



Novak Djokovic was in the throes of a drubbing; what would have unquestionably been a hugely demoralising defeat that would have triggered all sorts of speculation about his future. Instead, a golden opportunity has landed in his lap: he will play second seed Jannik Sinner in the semifinal of the Australian Open on Friday with mind and body totally fresh, just two-and-a-half hours of tennis under his belt in the six-day period between the third round and the semifinal. Djokovic's fourth round opponent, Jakub Mensik, had handed him a walkover.

"I will double my prayers tonight," Djokovic said, expressing "gratitude" for the good fortune of making the semifinals without winning a single set in two rounds. On a warm Wednesday evening at Melbourne Park, an inspired Lorenzo Musetti, the fifth seed from Italy, spent two sets thoroughly outplaying the Serb before he heard a pop in his right adductor muscle and could barely walk any more. Intense treatment was received, but his fate was sealed. The best performance of the sprightly 23-year-old's career led to nowhere as he was forced to retire from a match he was leading 6-3, 6-4, 1-3.

"Don't know what to say except that I feel sorry for him. He was the far better player, I was on my way home tonight," Djokovic said, commiserating with his opponent, after the abrupt ending. "Being in the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam, two sets to love up and being in full control. I mean, so unfortunate. I don't know what else to say. I wish him a speedy recovery and he should've been the winner today, no doubt." The misfortune is truly immense. In Open Era men's tennis history before Wednesday, no player had ever retired from a quarterfinal or thereafter with a two-set lead. The misery is compounded by just how well he had been

playing: the ball bouncing off his aesthetically-pleasing one-handed backhand with aplomb, his near-perfect point construction leaving the sport's greatest-ever scrambling behind the baseline.

The Rod Laver Arena is firmly Djokovic's favourite hunting ground, where he is a record 10-time former champion. On Wednesday, he was made to look like a shadow of himself against a player he had beaten in nine of their last 10 meetings. His groundstrokes were spraying everywhere; he made 24 unforced errors in the first two sets alone.

Lady Luck smiles Yet, an instantaneous stroke of luck has turned ignominy into opportunity. This is the Serb's fifth successive Major semifinal; he complained about physical troubles in each of the last four that he lost. The wear and tear on his 38-year-old body has manifested itself in double-quick time, while Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz have established themselves at the top of men's tennis. To go into the semifinal fully fresh is the kind of chance that is unlikely to come again. Despite the good fortune, the task of beating Sinner, the two-time defending champion in Melbourne who has beaten Djokovic in each of their last five meetings, remains difficult. Especially with how well the Italian's game is flowing. In the night session on Wednesday, he crushed eighth seed Ben Shelton 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 with metronomic precision and destructive power from the baseline: a combination of attributes that Sinner has now made a typical feature of his game.

Shelton had come into the match with form on his side, equipped with a wicked lefty serve and a big frame that allowed him to power through almost anyone on tour. Almost. Just as he had done against the 23-year-old American in their eight previous meetings, Sinner dwarfed his serve with his elite-level returning and moved him side to side by coming up with thunderous groundstrokes to take control of the baseline exchanges. That in itself would have been enough, if not for an elite serving day, winning 78 per cent of the points behind his first serve to make it 22 consecutive sets won against Shelton. Sinner's hard-court prowess is a throwback to Djokovic's own heyday. It throws up a sticky challenge for the Serb to contend with the 24-year-old's relentless hitting power from the baseline. But Friday's encounter is his best chance to do so without any underlying physical problems. There are unlikely to be many more in the future.



natural choice was VVS Laxman. Laxman, being the head coach, has always had a good winning percentage. In my opinion, the BCCI should convince him because he is a level-headed guy and he is a very good human being as well. He has the coaching experience as well," Tiwary added. Earlier this month, India had lost a home ODI series against New Zealand for the first time in over three decades with the team losing the ODI series 1-2. Last year, BCCI had replaced Rohit Sharma as ODI captain with Shubman Gill. Earlier Tiwary had also questioned the BCCI's move to remove Sharma from ODI captaincy. "What was the need to remove Rohit Sharma from the captaincy? I'm pretty sure that if Rohit were leading even today in the ODIs, it would have been a different result (New Zealand series) altogether. Because when he won the Champions Trophy, I think the team was going forward in the right direction," Tiwary had told InsideSport earlier this month.



his mistake. "I think he has done a good job. On and off the field, things like this happen — everybody goes through it; the greatest players have been through it. It's about how you learn and how you come back. Mistakes can happen; it was just highlighted a lot more because we lost the Ashes. I think he will be fine, and he'll learn a lot," Ali said. The 38-year-old, who reversed his decision to retire from England's domestic circuit, signed with Yorkshire for this year's T20 Blast on Wednesday.

Ali, who previously played for Warwickshire and Worcestershire, spoke about his desire to win as much as possible in the final stages of his career. "There might be some fans disappointed at signing a 38-year-old, but I'm there to do a job and hopefully win silverware. Playing at Headingley, which is such an iconic ground, is one of the main reasons I signed for Yorkshire. I know this might be the last two or three years of my career, and I want to win as much as I can," Ali told the BBC.

'This isn't gully cricket': Rohit Sharma on why he wants Kuldeep Yadav to stop appealing on every ball and trust wicketkeeper's instincts



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Around a month ago, a video went viral during South Africa's tour of India where in a match in the ODI series, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli engaged in banter with spinner Kuldeep Yadav due to his relentless appealing. In a recent interaction, Rohit had an advice for Kuldeep ahead of the T20 World Cup- to stop with the incessant appeals on every ball and trust the wicketkeeper's judgments. "My one simple advice to Kuldeep is to just bowl quietly and go back to his mark. You can't appeal on every ball. This is basic. I keep saying it, but it still happens often. Even after telling him many times, he appeals at every chance. You have to use your head. Where did the ball hit? Just because it touches the pad, it doesn't mean it's out every time. This isn't gully cricket," Rohit said in JioHotstar's 'Captain Rohit Sharma's Roadmap for the T20 World Cup' show.

'There has definitely been a change throughout all of the counties...': former England all-rounder Moeen Ali on joining Yorkshire amid racism charges

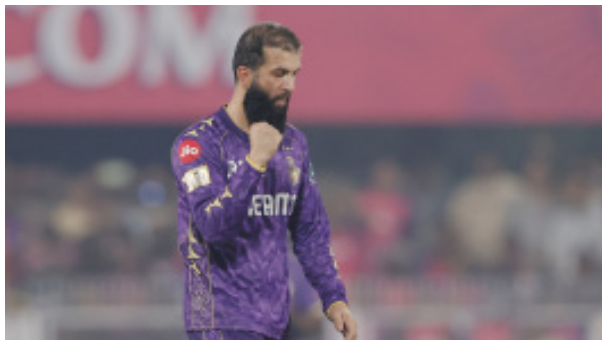
A year after he retired from English domestic circuit and two years after he retired from international cricket, England all-rounder Moeen Ali has reversed his retirement from the England domestic circuit and has joined England domestic club Yorkshire for the 2026 T20 Blast. The 38-year-old, who played for Warwickshire in T20 Blast, England's domestic T20 tournament, last year, had left the club mid-season to play for Guyana Amazon Warriors in Global Super League and Caribbean Premier League. Ali had done so to circumvent England Cricket Board's policy on getting No-Objection-Certificate to play in such leagues.

"I'm delighted to be joining Yorkshire for the Blast. It's a huge club with a proud history, but what really appeals to me is where the team is heading. There's a lot of talent in the squad and the chance to work with Anthony (McGrath, head coach) and help push the group forward is exciting for me. I've always loved playing at Headingley. The wicket, the atmosphere and the supporters make it a special place. This feels like a fresh challenge and I'm arriving hungry for it. I want to bring my experience, enjoy my cricket and help Yorkshire compete," said Ali in a club statement on Wednesday.

Ali, who played in 68 Tests, 138 ODIs and 92 T20Is for England, had scored 7,792 runs and taken 721 wickets in 420 T20 matches in his career. The 38-year-old had previously played for Warwickshire and Worcestershire. With Yorkshire in the news in recent years due to racism charges by players like Azeem Rafiq, Ali also shared about how there has been a chance in country cricket tackling the issue in recent years. "There was no doubt in my mind (to join Yorkshire). There has definitely been a change throughout all of the counties, all the way through from coaches to umpires," added Ali. Ali has played in the Canada Super 60, Abu Dhabi T10 as well ILT20 and Bangladesh premier League and will also be playing in the Pakistan Super League

"I get he is enthusiastic, but think of the team first. Each team only gets two DRS reviews. If I was the keeper, I could see where the ball pitched and if it was hitting, I could tell the bowler. But from covers or slip, you don't know the angle. You have to listen to what the keeper and bowler say. That's why when there's a review off Kuldeep's bowling, I don't look at him, I look at the keeper to decide," he added. former India skipper also said that it will be a difficult decision for captain Suryakumar Yadav and head coach Gautam Gambhir on which spinner to pick for the Playing XI in the T20 World Cup- Kuldeep or Varun Chakravarthy.

"The biggest challenge for Captain Suryakumar Yadav and Coach Gautam Gambhir will be how to play both, Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy together. If you want that combination, you can only do it if you play with two seamers, which is a big challenge. But honestly, I would be tempted to play both, Varun and Kuldeep, because they are wicket-takers and batters struggle to read them. I would surely pick them," he said. Looking at conditions in India, like in this New Zealand series, there is a lot of dew. In February and March, dew will be heavy across most parts as winter ends. Even in Mumbai, which doesn't get cold, there's still dew. I'd say 90-95% of grounds in India have dew. That's the challenge. What do the Coach and Captain think? Are they comfortable with three spinners? Then they can play spin, but there's no fixed rule. Then you have to drop a pacer, which may not be right. It depends on the team leaders' thinking," Rohit added.



before the T20 Blast in England in May. In IPL, the two-time World Cup winner has played for teams like Kolkata Knight Riders, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings. Ali has scored 1192 runs and taken 53 wickets in 103 matches. He was also part of the 2021 and 2023 IPL winning Chennai Super Kings team. In T20 Blast, Yorkshire have never won the title. Ali had captained Worcestershire to their maiden T20 Blast title in 2018.

Gavin Hamilton, Yorkshire's general manager of cricket, welcomed Ali in his new role in the Yorkshire team. "Moeen is a world-class allrounder whose influence extends well beyond his on-field ability. His experience and leadership will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen our T20 side and build a team capable of challenging consistently in the Blast." "He will bring presence to the dressing room, and his arrival will be positive for the wider club and for cricket in Yorkshire. His decision to join Yorkshire reflects the direction of travel at the club and the environment we are building. We're excited about what Moeen will bring, not just in performances, but in setting standards and helping drive the group forward." Hamilton said in the club statement.

'I'm chasing Jannik and Carlos? In which sense?': Novak Djokovic slams 'disrespectful' question by journo in Aus Open press conference



GNS News Agency, Jan 31

Novak Djokovic who qualified for the semifinals of the Australian Open on Wednesday after Italian fifth seed Lorenzo Musetti had to retire despite a two-set lead in the quarterfinal, took umbrage to a question by a journalist in the press conference where he told the Serb that he was chasing after Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz, the new top dogs of world tennis. "I'm chasing Jannik and Carlos? In which sense? So I'm always the chaser and never been chased? I find if a little bit disrespectful that you kind of miss out on what happened in between where the times when I started 'chasing' as you say Rafa and Roger... and now that I'm chasing Carlos and Jannik. There's probably about a 15 year period in between where I was dominating the Grand Slams. I think it's important to put that in perspective. I don't feel like I'm chasing to be honest," Djokovic said in the press conference.

"Roger and Rafa will always be my greatest rivals. I have tremendous respect for what Jannik and Carlos are doing and they will continue to do for the next 10, 15, 20 years. This is a kind of natural cycle in sports. You're going to have another 2 superstars that are going to maybe have a 3rd guy that I'm going to cheer for, because I've always been the 3rd guy at the beginning. It's good for our sport. I think these kind of rivalries and the contrast of personalities and the styles of play are very good for tennis. And how is that affecting me? I don't feel like I'm chasing. I'm creating my own history," he added. Djokovic's quest for a record

Grand Slam title continued in dramatic circumstances after Musetti quit their match with an injury after taking a two-set lead at Melbourne Park. Musetti's retirement when leading 6-4 6-3 1-3 meant Djokovic pulled off a great escape at his most successful hunting ground, with the 10-times champion's bid for a standalone 25th major to break the tie with Margaret Court still alive.

Badoni, Arya to miss Delhi's Ranji clash against Mumbai after India A call-up

New Delhi: Ayush Badoni and Priyansh Arya will miss Delhi's final Ranji Trophy Elite Group D clash against Mumbai, starting at the BKC Ground on Thursday, after being named in the India A side for two warm-up matches of the Men's T20 World Cup.

India A are scheduled to face the USA at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on February 2 before taking on Namibia at the BCCI CoE Ground in Bengaluru on February 6 as part of the build-up to the Men's T20 World Cup happening in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8. Ashok Sharma, DDCA Secretary, told IANS that Ayush Doseja, the leading run-getter in the ongoing Ranji Trophy, will lead Delhi in the seventh round of the Ranji Trophy against Mumbai. While table-toppers Mumbai have already qualified for the knockouts, a depleted Delhi are at sixth place and aim to sign off from the domestic season on a high.

"Ayush Badoni and Priyansh Arya will not be playing in tomorrow's Ranji Trophy clash, as they have been named in the India A squad slated to play Men's T20 World Cup warm-up games against USA and Namibia in Navi Mumbai and Bengaluru, respectively." Ayush Doseja will captain Delhi in their Ranji Trophy game against Mumbai, as he's the highest run-getter in the tournament so far," said Sharma to IANS on Wednesday.

GNS News Agency, Jan 31

The recent Ashes series saw incidents of players drinking excessively in the resort town of Noosa during the gap between the second and third Tests. Media reports highlighted episodes involving England opener Ben Duckett. Following England's 1-4 defeat, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) launched a review of the disastrous tour, examining the team's 'planning and preparation, individual performance, and behaviours.' Former England all-rounder Moeen Ali has shared his views on drinking as an issue in cricket, stating that regulations should be put in place and predicting that the sport could see changes within four or five years.

"I think when you're at the elite level, things have to be proper, and if you're trying to perform at the highest level, then drinking is a bigger issue. I think there should be something in place... I know in football, guys hardly drink before a game. I think it will be the same in cricket within four or five years," Ali told the BBC in an interview.

After the Ashes loss, a report by The Daily Telegraph revealed that England's white-ball captain and Test vice-captain Harry Brook was involved in a late-night altercation with a nightclub bouncer during England's tour of New Zealand last year. According to the report, Brook was struck by a bouncer after being denied entry to the club. The 26-year-old was later fined £30,000 by the ECB and issued a final warning regarding his conduct. Despite the incident, Brook led England in the third ODI the following day and retained his role as vice-captain for the Ashes. Earlier this week, he scored his third ODI century to guide England to a win in the third match against Sri Lanka in Colombo.

Ali expressed confidence that Brook would learn from

Rishi Kapoor got high, smashed everything, scared Ranbir Kapoor had to confront him: When Neetu Kapoor spoke about husband's drinking



Rishi Kapoor loved his drinks, and he wasn't shy about admitting it. But, his drinking sometimes got the better of him and while the actor continued to love alcohol, it took a toll on his marital life with wife Neetu Kapoor. Rishi and Neetu got married in 1980, and welcomed daughter Riddhima in the same year. Ranbir Kapoor was born two years later. The Kapoors maintained that they were a united family, but behind closed doors, their family was like anyone else's, the kind where difficult subjects were sometimes brushed under the carpet, and Rishi's drinking, was, perhaps, one such subject. Rishi and Neetu were parents two a daughter and a son, and they saw everything that went on in the house. Neetu found that the Kapoor household functioned on one "cardinal rule", that no one interfered in each other's lives. So the phase when the husband and wife were fighting relentlessly, often due to his excessive drinking, Neetu found no allies in the extended Kapoor family. At this time, her only support was her son Ranbir and while he went against his father for the sake of his mother, she knew that it wasn't fair to him. After all, Rishi was a "very good father."

Madhu Jain, in her book, The Kapoors: The First Family of Indian Cinema, quotes Neetu's interview with Filmfare, where she said, "I realised that nobody was going to help me, except my son but it wasn't fair to make a child take sides against a father who was a very good father." The book was published two years before Ranbir's debut in the movies in 2007. Neetu said that Ranbir "did tick his father off a couple of times when Chintu (Rishi) got so high that he smashed everything in sight." Neetu added that Rishi would

not remember anything the next day so when Ranbir confronted him, he would just blankly stare at his son. "But his father could never remember anything the next day. I felt so sorry for poor Ranbir, who hated having to confront an innocent-faced father who just stared back in complete amnesia." In an earlier chat with Nikhil Kamath on his YouTube channel, Ranbir opened up about this phase where he recounted that he was "always scared" and "on edge". "My parents went through a lot of fights. We lived in a bungalow, so I have spent most of my childhood on the staircases, hearing them fight. I was always scared and on the edge." Talking about his father, Ranbir shared in the same chat, "He never shouted at us, never raised his hand at us, but just because around us his temperament was so volatile that it always scared me." Here, Ranbir mentioned that his father was a short-tempered man who loved his alcohol, "I believe my father was a short-tempered man, but he was a good man. He was somebody who loved his family, work, food, and alcohol. He was a very open person. He could speak up his mind."

Rishi Kapoor with Ranbir Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor (Photo: Express Archives) Ranbir Kapoor would hear his parents fight all night. Ranbir, in a 2012 chat with the YouTube channel TBIP, recalled that his parents' fights were covered in the press but at that time, the press didn't bother him as much as he was more concerned about being in the "fire zone" with his parents. He also recalled that his parents would break things and he would sometimes hear their fights all night long. "At that time, press didn't matter because I was in the fire zone. I lived with my parents so seeing them going through that phase, I was very much part of it. I was right there. We live in a bungalow and my parents live downstairs and I live on the upper floor. I remember sitting on staircases for four hours from 1 am to 5 am and hearing them fight, break things." Ranbir said that his friends at school also knew about it, since it was being covered in the press, and he found it a little embarrassing. "Everyone goes through it but just that my parents were celebrities so it was in the press. It was a little embarrassing in school. Your friends don't mention it because they are good friends, but somewhere you know that there is a sense of 'I know what is happening in your life'. But you have to deal with it. What's more important is that your parents became okay. They came out of this phase and find companionship and love and friendship again," he said.

Sandeep Reddy Vanga lauds Dhurandhar for having a 'masculine spine', Aditya Dhar says they are 'brothers walking towards a stronger cinema'



After receiving high praise from Ram Gopal Varma for his gangster actioner Dhurandhar, filmmaker Aditya Dhar is now garnering even more acclaim. On Saturday morning, his contemporary, Sandeep Reddy Vanga took to X to commend the film. Sandeep praised Dhurandhar for having a "masculine spine" and wrote, "Dhurandhar is built like a man who doesn't talk much & carries a masculine spine. Dhurandhar – The title fits because the film moves with dominance & fierce. The depiction is very clear with zero chaos."

Bharti Singh, Haarsh Limbachiya share a video to announce the arrival second son: 'Limbachiya and sons, again it's a boy'

Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiya welcomed their second child, a baby boy, on Friday, following a medical emergency. Bharti was originally scheduled to shoot for Laughter Chefs but was rushed to the hospital after experiencing discomfort. On Saturday, the couple took to Instagram to officially announce the news with a cute reel.

In the reel, Bharti and Haarsh are both dressed in white, as they walk slowly towards a clothesline and hang a t-shirt, accompanied by the text on screen: "It's a boy." The moment ends with the couple sharing a warm hug. The reel was captioned, "Limbachiya and sons, again it's a boy." Several celebrities congratulated the couple on this joyous occasion. Actress Rashami Desai wrote, "Congratulations to Gola and mummy papa." TV actor Gautam Rode commented, "Congratulations to all of you." Karishma Tanna shared her wishes with a series of clap emojis, while Sriti Jha added, "Congratulations" to their post. Bharti and Haarsh had announced their pregnancy in October. Since then, Bharti has kept fans updated about her journey through social media and her YouTube channel. In November, the couple shared photos from a pregnancy shoot. Haarsh captioned one, "Smallest kicks, the biggest feelings," while Bharti



wrote, "2nd Baby Limbachiya coming soon." Recently, on Bharti TV, Sonali Bendre appeared as a guest. During the episode, Sonali playfully scolded Haarsh for often making Bharti cook, even after long and tiring days. Haarsh defended himself, saying, "It's about the taste. I'm not asking you to chop vegetables or anything. It only takes 10 minutes to add some seasoning, and she makes such tasty food, what else should I do?" Sonali responded, "I'm judging you."

After Dhurandhar, Lyari residents recall the 'dark ages' of gang wars: 'India has also made films like Gangs of Wasseypur'



Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar has put the spotlight on one of the most violent chapters in Pakistan's Karachi — the Lyari gang wars. The film explores how these gangs were involved in drug trafficking, extortion, kidnappings and gun violence that once paralysed the region. Recently, BBC News Hindi did a detailed report on Lyari, documenting how residents lived under the constant shadow of fear during the gang wars. Through conversations with locals, the report traces how everyday life was disrupted and how the area has gradually changed following the eradication of organised gangs. During the interactions, Lyari residents spoke about how they lived through those years when they couldn't even get from one lane to the next one safely, referring to the period as the "dark ages". They also reflected on how Lyari has transformed over time and shared their reactions to Dhurandhar and its depiction of their hometown.

According to the report, Lyari has a population of nearly 10,00,000. It was Karachi's first working-class area, but in the early 21st century, the rise of criminal gangs severely disrupted peace and stability. The report shows visuals of

buildings riddled with bullet marks, many of them abandoned during the peak of the gang wars.

Kamran Adam, a rapper from Lyari, admitted that the trailer of Dhurandhar reminded him of the Lyari he saw growing up. "Dhurandhar's trailer made me revisit my childhood, because when these gang wars were happening, we would be playing cricket on the streets." He added, "People only started accepting Lyari when its talented people came forward. Like our football team went international, and the hip-hop music also gained fame, and it is not seen anywhere else in Karachi." An elderly resident from the region echoed similar sentiments and said, "Before 2016, it was a dark age." A boxer from the area recalled how his son and five boxers, including a national-level boxer, from his boxing academy were killed because they were being forced to join gangs. Writer Ramzan Baloch, also from Lyari, added to this and recalled a life surrounded by violence and how it permanently affected the youth of the region. "Our daily lives were hindered by gang wars. It affected employment, young people were getting killed, the reputation of the area was ruined." Another Lyari resident explained how every lane in the town had its own 'hero', making it difficult for residents to walk freely from one area to another. She also shared her reaction after watching Dhurandhar: "When I watched the trailer, I thought, is this the tension between India and Pakistan because of which Lyari is being targeted or is it something else?" A young resident spoke about how people from other parts of Karachi often associated Lyari residents with gangs, and how it took time to make them understand that they had no links to criminal groups and that Lyari was peaceful before the gang wars began. Talking about Dhurandhar, he said, "Crime happens everywhere in the world. It is there in New York's history and in India also they have made films like Gangs Of Wasseypur. We were disrupted before but now Lyari has come a long way."

'Dharma ka picture kyun nahi diya?': Akshay Kumar's niece Simar takes a jibe at Karan Johar after he calls her 'gorgeous' in Ikkis



kyun nahin diya?" (Then why didn't you give me a Dharma film?). Karan responded promptly by reposting her story, saying: "Haha! This is the best launch for you, my darling... it looks so good! Excited to watch it and of course see your debut performance." Simar shared his story in reply, clarifying: "All just for laughs sir, really appreciate your post. I do indeed feel this is the best thing ever happened to me."

Earlier this month, Akshay Kumar also took to Instagram to wish his niece luck, sharing her poster from the film. He wrote, "Holding you as a tiny baby to now watching you step into the world of films... life really has come full circle. Simar, I've seen you turn from a shy little girl who would hide behind your mom into this confident young woman ready to face the camera like she was born for it. Safar mushkil hai, (journey would be tough) but knowing you, you'll walk into it with that same spark, that same honesty, and that same stubborn determination that runs in our family. Hum Bhatias ka funda simple hai: kaam karo, dil se karo, aur phir universe ka magic dekho. (The Bhatias' principle is simple: work hard, work with heart, and then watch the universe's magic unfold). I'm so proud of you beta... The world is about to meet Simar Bhatia, but to me, you've always been a star. Go shine! Jai Mahadev." Ikkis, backed by Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films, was originally slated to release on Christmas, clashing with Karan Johar-backed Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, starring Kartik Aaryan and Ananya Panday. However, just this week, the producers decided to avoid the clash and moved the release to January 1, 2026. Speaking to PTI, Dinesh Vijan explained the rationale behind the move: "I feel you should make a decision that is good for everyone, and that will help you as well. It's a film that requires space. We are lucky that we're getting a solo date at the beginning of the year. This is kind of not to have clutter."

'Vibrant' Dharmendra stayed up till 4 am to shoot a song in his last film Ikkis, shares choreographer Vijay Ganguly: 'He was full of life'



Sriram Raghavan's Ikkis marks the final on-screen appearance of late actor Dharmendra. After the veteran star's death last month, fans have been waiting for the release of his last film. Now, in a new interview, choreographer Vijay Ganguly, who worked on Ikkis, opened up about his experience of working with Dharmendra, and shared that despite his old age, the star stayed up till 4 am to finish all his work.

In the movie, Dharmendra can be seen playing the role of Arun Khetarpal's father. During a conversation with Mid-Day, he shared his experience as a "moment of pride" and called the 89-year-old "full of life." "Shooting with Dharmendra was amazing as he was vibrant and full of life. He was awake till we completed the song at 4 am," he revealed. The choreographer, who has worked on two tracks in the film, further added, "It was a moment of nostalgia for both of us. Dharamji had done a film earlier with my father (filmmaker Anil Ganguly)

called Dushman Devta. During the shoot, he remembered my father fondly. He told me he was a kind man and that he enjoyed working with him." Previously, in a chat with Galatta India, Sriram Raghavan shared that Dharmendra was having a tough time while dubbing for the film. He said, "I could see that he was having a tough time dubbing. I told him to get better soon. We had finished our work with him, I thought I would show him the entire film in a month. That is a big regret. He was really looking forward to watching the film. It's like when 1942: A Love Story happened, RD Burman wasn't there to get the accolades."

Tom Holland wraps shooting for 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day'

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Tom Holland has wrapped shooting for his upcoming film "Spider-Man: Brand New Day". Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, the film is set to release in theatres on July 31, 2026. It also features actors Zendaya, Jacob Batalon, Sadie Sink, and Liza Colon-Zayas, among others. The filmmaker shared a series of pictures on his Instagram handle on Saturday, featuring him alongside the actor. It was followed by the picture of the entire crew of the film. Cretton praised the efforts of everyone involved in the film, which was the biggest and most rewarding project for the filmmaker. "I'm so deeply grateful for the people who walked with me through the biggest, most rewarding film I've ever been a part of. To @nik_ki, for laughing through the insanity and carrying our entire family on your back. To my kids, for forcing me to put my phone down and get out of my head long enough to build a fort in the living room with couch cushions."