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## Today nalacheruvu ramesh goud was conducted motivation classes to the ssc students

Feb 12, Indian Chronicle, Medak. Nalacheruvu Ramesh Yeldurthi is a good role model for the tenth standard students. He studied hard and grew up in life with persistence. Emphasis on education, discipline and good values make him stand out. The philosophy of moving forward without backing down no matter what the difficulties are, is an ideal for the students. That's why the students of class 10 should take him as a role model, study hard and achieve their goals, said Zilla Parishad High School Principal B. Sambiah. Ramesh Garu said that as the tenth class exams are nearing, they should not be under pressure and should not get nervous and write the exams. After that, prizes were given to the students. Narasimha Reddy, Charles, Amulya, Jayasudha, Padmaja and other teachers participated in this program.



## Revanth asks Centre to bear full Krishna–Vikarabad rail line cost

New Delhi, Feb 12

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Thursday, February 12, urged the Centre to take up the entire cost of developing the Krishna–Vikarabad railway line, as the state government was bearing the cost of land acquisition for the project.

He met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in Delhi and informed him that limestone deposits have been identified at Tekulakode in Karnataka, located along the proposed route, and efforts are underway to develop the region into a cement and textile industrial hub.

To strengthen his case, the CM added that the Krishna region is strategically located near several cement industries in Karnataka, and Kodangal, Tekulakode, and Doulthabad are being developed as industrial zones.

Speaking about the three high-speed rail corridors proposed in this year's Union Budget, Revanth Reddy suggested that all three corridors originate from Shamshabad, making it a tri-junction high-speed rail hub.

He also proposed allocating 500 acres near

Shamshabad International Airport for the development of these corridors.

The Union Budget 2026-27 had proposed developing seven high-speed railway lines between various cities, including three connecting Hyderabad to Chennai, Bengaluru and Pune.

Telangana CM requested the Railway Minister to approve extending the Hyderabad–Chennai high-speed corridor via Amaravati and sanction a rail link from there to Machilipatnam Port, which would help to accelerate cargo movement from dry ports to the seaport.

The Railway Minister has assured necessary steps would be initiated, a release from Telangana CMo stated.

On the same day, Revanth Reddy also met Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu and sought the speedy clearance for the proposed airports in the state.

He also met with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss the upcoming Gandhi Sarovar Project, which is being undertaken as part of the prestigious Musi River Rejuvenation initiative.

## Tight Police Security Arrangements for Municipal Vote Counting: SP Nithika Panth

Indian Chronicle, Kumram Bheem, Asifabad District Report, Jade Srinivas, February 12. District Superintendent of Police (SP) Nithika Panth stated that elaborate and fool-proof security arrangements have been made to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the municipal election vote counting scheduled for today. On Thursday, the SP inspected the counting centres and strong rooms set up at the Telangana Social Welfare Gurukul School in Asifabad town and at DAV Public School in Kagaznagar town. During her visit, she thoroughly reviewed the security arrangements, CCTV surveillance systems, counting halls, and the surroundings of the strong rooms. She directed officials to implement a three-tier security system to prevent any untoward incidents. The SP clarified that Section 163 of the BNSS will be enforced in and around the counting centres on the day of counting, and no unauthorized persons will be allowed entry. Strict instructions were issued to ensure that only candidates, their authorized agents, and designated staff are permitted within the counting premises. Police personnel were advised to remain alert and discharge their duties with dedication to maintain law and order. She further stated that continuous surveillance, patrolling, and monitoring through the control room will be maintained until the completion of the counting process.

Kagaznagar DSP Wahiduddin, Kagaznagar Town Inspector Prem Kumar, Asifabad Inspector Balaji Varaprasad, Asifabad Municipality Commissioner Gajanand, Special Branch Inspector Satish, and other officials were present during the inspection.



## Sriramulu Gnaneshwar Donates Rs 51,111 for Sri Sitarama Anjaneya Swamy Temple Construction

NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, February 12, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Boduppal: Senior Congress leader and contested corporator Sriramulu Gnaneshwar donated 51,111 towards the construction of the Sri Sitarama Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Boduppal Circle. Speaking on the occasion, Gnaneshwar said that the temple construction is a sacred initiative for the Boduppal area and called upon devotees to actively participate in the noble cause. He stated that every contribution, regardless of the amount, holds spiritual significance and reflects devotion towards Lord Rama. He urged residents and devotees to extend their support for the temple construction and be part of this collective spiritual effort. He expressed confidence that once completed, the Sri Sitarama Anjaneya Swamy Temple will emerge as a prominent spiritual landmark in the region and attract a large number of devotees in the coming years.

## Congress Will Sweep ULB Polls, Revanth Tells Rahul



Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has informed the Congress high command that the party was set to secure a decisive victory in the municipal elections, whose results will be announced on Friday.

Revanth Reddy, who is in Delhi, met Congress leader and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, and AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal on Thursday. He submitted a report on the party's performance in the gram panchayat elections held in December 2025.

The Chief Minister told the central leadership that the Congress had secured around 70 per cent of the seats in the gram panchayat polls and that the Opposition BRS and BJP had failed to make a major impact. He presented detailed reports on the outcome of the local body elections.

He also briefed them that elections to 116 municipalities and seven municipal corporations were held on Wednesday and expressed confidence that the Congress would register strong results when votes were counted on Friday. Revanth Reddy attributed the favourable response at the grassroots level to the implementation of key welfare schemes.

Rahul Gandhi, Kharge and Venugopal congratulated Revanth Reddy on the party's performance in the local body elections and appreciated the electoral gains.

Party leaders said preparations were under way to ensure that the Congress secured the control of

municipalities and municipal corporations where the contest was expected to be close and where the party may fall short of a majority by one or two seats.

Ex-officio members affiliated to the Congress are expected to play a key role in such urban local bodies (ULBs). These members have voting rights in the election of mayors, deputy mayors, chairpersons and vice-chairpersons. Ex-officio members include Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members as well as MLCs and MLAs.

The Congress eight Lok Sabha members, three Rajya Sabha members, 66 MLAs and six MLCs in the state.

According to party sources, internal assessments and exit polls conducted after polling concluded on Wednesday indicated an advantage for the Congress. Most exit polls have projected that the party will win five of the seven municipal corporations. In the remaining two—Karimnagar and Nizamabad—a close contest has been forecast.

The leadership has obtained reports from district units on the likely performance of each party and has drawn up contingency plans for civic bodies where margins are expected to be narrow.

The AIMIM, which maintains friendly relations with the Congress, is expected to secure a significant number of seats in certain ULBs. In such cases, Congress leaders indicated that they are confident of securing the support required to bag such civic bodies.

## DAC nod for 114 Rafale jets, sets stage for Russia-like France tie-up

New Delhi, Feb 12

In its biggest-ever push, the Defence Acquisition Council on Thursday approved a proposal to procure 114 Rafale jets from French plane manufacturer Dassault, setting the stage for a long-drawn strategic tie-up for the Indian Air Force's battle readiness.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the apex decision-making body of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), also okayed the acquisition of six additional US-made Boeing P-8I surveillance planes for the Navy. It also approved the purchase of a high-altitude pseudo satellite (HAPS) vehicle and 350-plus Scalp long-range air-launched cruise missiles that played a major role in last year's Operation Suroor against Pakistan.

Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the DAC meeting accorded "acceptance of necessity" (AoN) for proposals of the services having an estimated value of about Rs 3.60 lakh crore (\$39 billion), the MoD said. The payment schedule will be spread across several financial years and the AoN is the first step towards the acquisition process.

The purchase of 114 Rafales will allow France Russia-like dominance in India's combat jet sector. The planes will be acquired under a Make in India scheme, with Dassault partnering with an Indian company. The Air Force already flies 36 Rafales while the Navy has ordered 26 maritime variant planes.

After the latest acquisition, India will have 176 Rafales in its fleet, with experts saying increasing the numbers would reduce maintenance costs. The Russian-origin Sukhoi 30MKI jets—272 in number—so far comprise the largest fleet.

A Rafale flight-training and maintenance, repair and overhaul facility is operational at the IAF base in Ambala. The Air Force has the capacity—space, spares, tooling and trained manpower—to immediately induct two squadrons (some 36-38 planes).

The French plane maker will integrate Indian weapons, missiles and ammunition on all 114 jets and also provide secure data links to allow digital integration.



tion of the jets with Indian radars and sensors. This will allow sending imagery to ground-based controllers.

Dassault will be facilitating the transfer of technology (ToT) for manufacturing air frames. The company's suppliers, including engine maker Safran and avionics provider Thales, will be part of the ToT.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, KATTURI PREETHIKA D/O KATTURI RAKESH (old name) born on 05-01-2002 at Nizamabad earlier was holding Passport No. S0666033 DT: 02-04-2018 hereby changing my name and henceforth in future I would be known as KATHURI PREETHIKA D/O KATTURI RAKESH (new name), H. No. 9-83/2 Gandhi Chowk, Booth Dist. Adilabad-504304 Telangana State.

### DECLARANT.

KATHURI PREETHIKA D/O KATTURI RAKESH

Place: Booth

Date: 12-02-2026

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Upswing in Indo-Canadian ties

Despite being thriving democracies with shared values, trade interests, and a vibrant diaspora, a sense of unease has long marked the bilateral relations between India and Canada. This was largely due to the hostile policies adopted by the Justin Trudeau administration in the past. The drift started ever since Trudeau took over as the Prime Minister in 2015, and his brazen attempts to please pro-Khalistani elements in his country as a means for political survival led to the gradual deterioration of the bilateral relations. However, things are now changing for the better, following sincere efforts from both sides to reset the ties and restore the traditional friendship. Since his victory in the national election in April last year, Prime Minister Mark Carney has been taking sagacious steps to revive the relations. Carney's pragmatic approach towards India has helped in sending across an unambiguous message to anti-India elements that they cannot take Canadian freedom for granted to malign India. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval's recent visit to Ottawa — his first since the diplomatic clash over the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar — signals that both sides are willing to move from recrimination to pragmatic engagement. This is a welcome departure from the past when Justin Trudeau kept peddling a false narrative of Indian agents' alleged involvement in the killing of Nijjar, without providing even an iota of evidence. Doval's visit reflects a thaw in the relations. The agreement to establish security and law enforcement liaison officers in each other's countries is a significant development.

Such institutional links are not symbolic gestures; they are the nuts and bolts of modern-day security cooperation. Streamlined communication channels and timely information-sharing are essential when dealing with transnational gangs and drug trafficking networks — threats that respect no borders and demand coordinated responses. The upswing in bilateral ties is heartening. Mark Carney is likely to visit India next month, providing yet another opportunity for the two countries to rebuild relations. Apart from signing deals on uranium, energy, minerals, and artificial intelligence, negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement are expected to be resumed during his visit. The first signs of a diplomatic thaw had surfaced in August last year with the two countries appointing new high commissioners in Ottawa and Delhi. The re-opening of high-level diplomatic channels ensures continuous engagement so that no dispute will be allowed to escalate into permanent hostility.

## Late Former MLA Bandari Rajireddy Birth Anniversary Celebrations in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division

— Fruits distributed at Government Hospital, notebooks distributed to students under the leadership of Dr. B.V. Chari

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle): “As per the directions of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, the birth anniversary celebrations of late former MLA Bandari Rajireddy were held grandly on Thursday in the Venkat Reddy Nagar Division under the leadership of senior BRS leader and former Habsiguda president Dr. B.V. Chari. On this occasion,



fruits were distributed to patients at the government hospital in Venkat Reddy Nagar. With the cooperation of Jahangir, notebooks were distributed to students at a government school. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. B.V. Chari said that the services rendered by the late former MLA Bandari Rajireddy, the first MLA of the Uppal constituency, have left a lasting legacy in the region. He stated

that the welfare-oriented services carried out by Rajireddy, beyond party lines, are still remembered by leaders of all political parties. He recalled that

Bandari Rajireddy's contributions as a Municipal Chairman, MLA, and as a member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Board were unforgettable and historic. He appreciated the gesture of leaders from all parties paying tributes on his birth anniversary, stating that even though he is no longer among us, his services will always be remembered. Participants in the program included Addanki Rao, Narender Raju, Doosa Ganesh, Madduri Srinivas, Topi Jahangir, Abbu, Akbar, women leaders Yadamma, Rekha, Aishwarya, and others.

## AERIS-2026 National Conference to be Held at BVRIT, Narsapur on February 12-13



“Feb12, indian chronicle.medak”“B V Raju Institute of Technology, Narsapur is set to host a two-day national conference titled AERIS-2026 (Atmospheric and Environmental Research for Innovation in Science) on 12th and 13th February 2026. The conference aims to provide a common platform for researchers, academicians, scientists, and students to deliberate on recent advancements in atmospheric, environmental, space, and allied sciences. AERIS-2026 has been conceived to promote interdisciplinary research, encourage scientific collaboration, and address contemporary challenges related to Earth and space environments. The event is expected to foster meaningful interactions among experts from diverse scientific domains and inspire innovative research approaches. The conference has received funding sanction from the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India, reflecting its academic relevance and national importance. Preparations for the event are progressing steadily, and the organizing team has received an enthusiastic response from the research community, with over 70 research abstracts submitted from institutions across the country. The conference will feature invited talks and technical sessions with participation from several premier national institutions, including National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL), Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM Pune), India Meteorological Department (IMD), National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), TERI, INCOIS, CSIR-NERI, IARSc, Gauhati University, MANUU, SRM, VIT, Kurushetra University and Nalanda University, along with many universities and research organizations from across India. The organizers expressed their sincere gratitude

to the National Organising Committee for their guidance and continued support in ensuring the academic quality and scientific rigor of the conference. They also acknowledged the invaluable contributions of the Management of SVES, Director, the Principal, Deans and Heads of the Departments for their encouragement, institutional support, and leadership, which have been instrumental in the successful planning of the event. Appreciation was further extended to the reviewers, sponsors, and volunteers who are playing a vital role in organizing the conference. AERIS-2026 is expected to serve as a significant academic forum, contributing to future research collaborations and strengthening India's scientific efforts in atmospheric and environmental studies. “Principal, Dr. Sanjay Dubey FC

**Let Us Carry Forward the Ideals of Late Former MLA Bandari Rajireddy: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy**

**Blankets, fruits and pens distributed to the poor under the leadership of BRS leader Gudi Madhusudan Reddy**



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle): “The birth anniversary of late former Uppal MLA Bandari Rajireddy was observed with great reverence in Uppal and Chiluka Nagar divisions. On this occasion, leaders and party workers paid floral tributes to his portrait at the Gandhi statue in Uppal, remembering his invaluable contributions to the constituency. As part of the programme, under the leadership of senior BRS leader Gudi Madhusudan Reddy, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy distributed blankets, fruits and pens to the poor, reflecting the late leader's commitment to public



service. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that the services rendered by his brother, former MLA

Bandari Rajireddy, would remain etched forever in the hearts of the people of Uppal. He recalled that Rajireddy served with

dedication as Uppal Municipal Chairman, the first MLA of Uppal, and as a member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Board, working tirelessly for the welfare of the people. He urged everyone to strive to realize the ideals of Bandari Rajireddy, stating that although he is no longer among them, the people of Uppal remember him every day. He noted that during his tenure as MLA, Rajireddy worked with a singular focus on the development of the Uppal constituency, rising above party lines and prioritizing public welfare. Leaders across party lines paid rich tributes to the late leader. The programme witnessed the participation of several BRS leaders from Uppal and Chiluka Nagar, including Palle Nursing Rao, Irelly Ravinder Reddy, Tirumalesh, Kompelli Raj Kumar Raju, along with hundreds of leaders and supporters from various political parties, who gathered in large numbers to pay homage to Bandari Rajireddy.



## Workers Hold Hunger Strike at ITC PSPD Sarapaka in Protest Against New Labour Codes

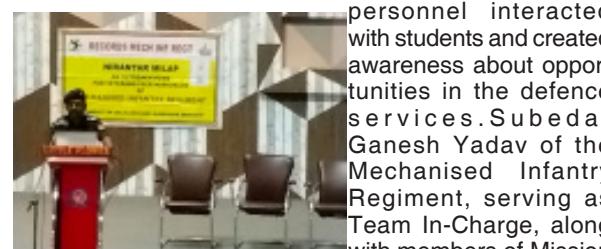
“Kranthikumar Dasari | Pinapaka Constancy | February 12 | Indian chronicle : Workers at the ITC PSPD paper mill in Sarapaka, Burgampadu mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district, staged a hunger strike



on Thursday in support of the nationwide general strike called against the Union government's newly introduced labour codes. The protest was jointly organized by major trade unions, including CITU, TNTUC, INTUC, BRTU and AITUC. Union leaders and workers assembled at the factory premises, alleging that the new labour codes undermine workers' rights, weaken job security and dilute long-standing labour protections. Addressing the gathering, union representatives said the reforms were being implemented without adequate consultation with workers' organizations and would adversely impact working conditions, wages and collective bargaining rights. They demanded that the Centre withdraw the labour codes and initiate meaningful dialogue with trade unions before introducing any changes to labour laws. The workers reiterated their commitment to continue peaceful protests as part of the nationwide movement until their demands are addressed.

## Inspirational Interaction with Army Personnel at LFDC College

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle): “With the objective of motivating students to pursue a career in the Indian Armed Forces, an inspirational interaction programme with Army personnel was organized at LFDC College. The programme was held at the Golden Jubilee Auditorium, where Army personnel interacted with students and created awareness about opportunities in the defence services. Subedar Ganesh Yadav of the Mechanised Infantry Regiment, serving as Team In-Charge, along with members of Mission



Niranjan Milap 1.0 – Phase 2 from the Southern Zone, participated in the programme and delivered an informative PPT presentation for the students. Addressing the gathering, Subedar Ganesh Yadav elaborated on the importance of discipline, courage, and service to the nation, leaving a strong impression on the students. Former Subedar Major Srinivasa Rao Saranam (ESM – NCC PI Staff, 1T Armoured Squadron, NCC, Secunderabad Group) also took part in the programme and shared his valuable experiences from military service. The interactive session, held from 10:00 am to 11:00 am, encouraged and inspired students to consider joining the armed forces as a profession. At the conclusion of the programme, LFDC Director Rev. Bro. John Antony Kallarakal and Principal Jayanthi Reddy felicitated the Army personnel for their inspiring contribution.

# Ramanthapur Division Congress President Mohammed Rafiq Visits Indranagar as Part of Basti Bata Programme



“““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle):““As part of the Basti Bata outreach programme, Ramanthapur Division Congress President Mohammed Rafiq toured the Indranagar area of Ramanthapur on Thursday. During the visit, local residents brought several pressing civic issues to his notice. The residents highlighted problems such as the poor condition of roads, underground drinking water issues, and electric pole-related problems. Responding promptly, Mohammed Rafiq assured the public that he would take up the matter with the concerned officials and bring it to the attention of Uppal Congress In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy, promising to work towards permanent solutions. The programme was attended by PCC representative Tofeeq, Pusa Satyaiah, Satyanarayana, Adinarayana Goud, Jaleel Pasha, Nama Rajireddy, Gangaputra Bhaskar, Angala Sandeep, Mogili Lingam, Samuel, Raghu, Swamy, Srinivas Goud, Ramanthapur Division Mahila Congress President Sandhyarani, Gayatri

# All Set for Municipal Poll Counting in the District

"Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), February 12, "District Election Officer and Collector K. Haritha stated that all necessary arrangements have been completed for the counting of votes pertaining to the 2nd General Municipal Elections held in the municipalities of the district."On Thursday, she inspected the vote counting centre set up for the Asifabad Municipality at the Social Welfare Gurukul School and College located at the district headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, the District Election Officer informed that comprehensive arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of the counting process."She stated that two halls have been arranged with five counting tables in each hall, making a total of ten tables. The counting of votes for 20 wards will be conducted in two rounds."For Kagaznagar Municipality, the counting process for 30 wards will also be conducted strictly in accordance with the guidelines instructed to report to their assigned counting security arrangements."Concerned officials

# Former Uppal MLA NSS Prabhakar Felicitates Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkataraao



“““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle):““Former Uppal MLA NSS Prabhakar felicitated Ramanthapur Division Corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkatarao at his residence, appreciating her dedicated public service over the past five years.“Speaking on the occasion, Prabhakar said that Srivani Venkatarao has earned the trust and appreciation of the people by taking up several developmental initiatives with public welfare as her primary objective. He praised her role in the development of Ramanthapur Division and described her efforts as commendable.“He further stated that her commitment, determination, and service-oriented approach in resolving public issues are exemplary. Prabhakar expressed hope that she would rise to greater heights in the future and serve people on a much broader platform.Several leaders and party members attended the programme and conveyed their greetings, including Muthineni Jagadish, Division President Santosh Gupta, Repu Narasimha, Sankuri Kumaraswamy, Narayanasu, Dayakar Reddy, Vemula Tirupathaiah, Thammala Ravi, Thallamanga Ambati Bhagyalakshmi, Shailender, and T. Anand, among others.



# Labour Roars in Kagaznagar Protest During Nationwide General Strike



“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), February 12, “‘Massive Workers’ Rally in Kagaznagar Against Centre’s Labour Policies” As part of the nationwide general strike observed across the country, a massive workers’ rally was organized in Kagaznagar on Thursday under the leadership of CITU, protesting the alleged anti-labour policies of the Central Government. “The rally commenced from Bala Bharathi High School and passed through Rajiv Gandhi Chowrasta, Potti Sriramulu Statue and Ambedkar Chowk, before concluding in front of the State Bank of India, where a public meeting was held. “Addressing the gathering, senior CITU leader Munjam Srinivas alleged that the Modi Government is handing over the nation’s hard-earned public wealth to corporate forces. He criticized the repeal of several labour laws won through prolonged struggles and the introduction of four Labour Codes, stating that they weaken workers’ rights and job security. “He said the Centre is prioritizing the interests of the wealthy while ignoring the concerns of common people. He called upon workers to unite in order to resist what he termed anti-people policies. When legally guaranteed benefits are denied, peaceful protests and strikes become the only tools available to workers, he said. “Referring to the “hire and fire” policy, he described it as an attempt to legitimize labour exploitation, adding that workers are forced to live under constant fear of losing their jobs. He alleged that even before the Labour Codes are formally implemented, managements are preparing to enforce them, and warned that if implemented, workers of Sirpur Paper Mills (SPM) would face severe hardship. “He further criticized the Centre’s minimum wage provision of ?178 per day, questioning how a worker could lead a dignified life on such wages. He stated that fear of job loss or wage cuts would only embolden employers, and stressed the need for collective struggle. “Agricultural Workers’ Union District Convener Munjam Anand Kumar and Adivasi Girijan Association District Vice-President Kota Srinivas also addressed the gathering. They criticized the Congress leadership for not engaging with striking workers locally, and emphasized that the country prospers only when farmers prosper. They alleged that policies are being framed to benefit corporate groups such as Ambani and Adani at the cost of farmers and workers. “The speakers demanded that the Modi Government heed the voices raised through the nationwide strike and resolve the workers’ demands. “Among those present were CITU District Treasurer E. Shankar, Sirpur Paper Mill Mazdoor Union General Secretary Kushan Rajanna, SFI District President Sunkari Sai Kumar, union leaders Y. Aruna, M. Vinod, Malleswari, Panchasheela, Surekha, Sravanti, Ankayya, Ramesh, and Sanjeev, along with Anganwadi, ASHA, MDM, Gram Panchayat, Municipal, Hamali, Building, Hostel daily wage workers and SPM workers.

# Bhadrachalam Bar Association Seeks Withdrawal of GO Rt No 70



“““Bhukya RanjithNaik , Bhadradri kothagudem Bureau,February 12,Indian Chronicle :“The Bhadrachalam Bar Association has urged the State Government to immediately withdraw GO Rt No 70, stating that it adversely affects the legal rights of people living in Scheduled Areas. A delegation of the association met MLA Tellam Venkata Rao and submitted a representation in this regard.“According to the association, the Government Order issued on February 6, 2026 transfers civil judicial administrative powers back to Revenue Divisional Officers and Sub Collectors. Bar Association president Kota Devadanam stated that this decision would seriously impact access to justice for tribal and rural populations in Scheduled Areas and weaken the existing judicial support system.“He pointed out that Mobile Courts, established in 1990, were intended to deliver speedy justice to people residing in remote and tribal regions. These courts played a crucial role in ensuring legal access for economically weaker sections, Adivasis and those living in interior areas who often face difficulties in approaching regular courts. Diluting this system, he said, would effectively distance Scheduled Area residents from timely justice.“The association also questioned the legal basis of the decision, recalling that earlier High Court judgments had clarified that Mobile Courts were not constituted for a limited duration. The recent order, they said, raises concerns regarding its legality and its impact on the constitutional safeguards meant for Scheduled Areas.“Bar Association General Secretary Poosala Srinivasachari and several senior advocates including M V Prasad, Kodali Srinivasan, K Srimannarayana, M Ganapathi Rao, Ravi Rammohan, Perala Nagaraju, P Tirumala Rao, Avuluri Satyanarayana, Padisi Srinivas, Cheemala Narasimharao, Tata Lalitha, Aruna Sri, Rama, P Bhaskar Rao, Bandi Ramprasad, Taruni, Rekha, Anil, Korasa Krishnarjuna Rao, M Sandhyarani, Salma, Gayatri, B Ramakrishna, Karam Ramesh and Ashritha were present.“The delegation requested the MLA to take up the issue with the Chief Minister and ensure appropriate action to safeguard the legal rights of people in Scheduled Areas.

# Fire Accident at Bhasha Fruit Market: Aakarapu Arun Patel Extends Support to Victims



““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle):““A fire accident occurred at the Bhasha Fruit Market located in Srinivasapuram Colony of Venkat Reddy Nagar Division. Uppal Youth Congress President Aakarapu Arun Patel responded immediately to the incident. He visited the accident site and assured the affected traders and workers of his support. Arun Patel called the concerned officials to the spot and held discussions regarding the causes of the fire. He urged the authorities to ensure that adequate financial assistance is provided by the government to those who suffered losses in the incident. To prevent such accidents in the future, he submitted representations to officials of the Fire Department, Police Department, and the Electrical Department (DE), requesting them to take necessary precautionary and safety measures.

## IntrCity SmartBus launches India's first air-purified bus service on Hyderabad - Bengaluru route



Hyderabad:

IntrCity SmartBus, India's leading intercity mobility brand, today announced the launch of IntrCity SmartBus.AQI on the Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Bengaluru - Hyderabad routes, bringing India's first air-purified bus service to travellers in the region and planning to start more routes in due course of time.

The SmartBus.AQI service on the Hyderabad –

Bengaluru route was formally flagged off in Hyderabad in the esteemed presence of Shri C. Ramesh, Joint Transport Commissioner and District Transport Officer, Hyderabad.

Each IntrCity SmartBus.AQI bus services are powered by advanced filtration and air quality systems that continuously remove pollutants, dust and odours - keeping Air Quality Levels (AQI) upto 5 times better than outside air.

## Inspection of Strong Room, Counting Center at Wesley College



"Feb12.indian chronicle.medak." Additional SP Shri S. Mahender" The strong room and counting center set up in Wesley College under Medak Municipality was inaugurated by the Additional SP of Medak District Shri S. Mahender checked." He personally reviewed the security arrangements made in view of the vote counting program to be held on Friday. Three levels of security set up at the strong room, continuous monitoring through CCTV cameras, strict police presence at the entry and exit gates

and other aspects were examined. Officials have been directed to take strict action against unauthorized persons from entering the strong room." Candidates, their agents and others are advised to park their vehicles only in the places indicated by the police. Carrying mobile phones into the counting center is completely prohibited, he said." He clarified that victory rallies are not allowed as the Election Code is in force." He said that as Section 30 of the Police Act is in force in Medak district, it is prohibited to hold assemblies and meetings without permission." Discussed with the officials about the counting tables set up in the counting center, the positions allotted to the agents of the candidates and the infrastructure. It is suggested that all the departments should work in coordination to make the counting process transparent and run smoothly as per the election rules." The Additional SP appealed to the public and the candidates to cooperate with the police to ensure that tight security is maintained to prevent any untoward incident." On this occasion, along with Additional SP, Medak DSP Prasanna Kumar, Medak Town CI Mahesh, RSI Mahipal, SI Sirisha and other staff participated.

## Grand Ashwatha-Neem Tree Wedding Festival at Sri Maisamma Temple

"— Organized under the leadership of BRS leader Anya Balakrishna couple

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle)." The Ashwatha-Neem Tree Kalyana Mahotsavam was conducted with great devotion on Thursday at the Sri Maisamma Temple in New Bharat Nagar, under the Uppal Division. The programme was organized under the leadership of Uppal Division BRS senior leaders Anya Kavitha and Anya Balakrishna. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the event as the chief guest, participated in special prayers, and conveyed his blessings to the devotees. Several prominent



leaders attended the festival, including Ragidi Lakshma Reddy, DRS Party In-charge of the Malkajgiri Parliamentary constituency; Dr. Shilpa Reddy, President of the BJP Mahila Morcha; Marineni Phaninder, BJP President of Uppal Division; along with leaders from various political parties, who participated in large numbers. All the dignitaries who attended the Kalyana Mahotsavam were felicitated by TRS senior leader Anya Balakrishna. Following the ceremony, an Annadanam (community feast) programme was organized. Leaders and activists from the TRS, BJP, and other parties, along with devotees, took part in the event in large numbers.



## Nationwide Strike Brings Cherlapally Industrial Area to a Standstill Industrial operations disrupted; trade unions protest Central labour policies



ering during the protest, CITU State Committee Member and Medchal District Assistant Secretary G. Srinivasulu criticized the four Labour Codes introduced by the Central Government, alleging that they weaken workers' rights and dilute long-standing labour protections. Union leaders demanded the withdrawal of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill-2025, V.B.G.-Ram G Act, the proposed National Seed legislation, and the decision to allow 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the insurance sector. They also opposed the privatization of public sector undertakings and called for fixing the minimum wage at ₹26,000 per month. The leaders further demanded that scheme workers be recognized as formal workers with full labour rights and benefits. They also sought the regularization of contract and outsourcing employees and amendments to certain provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act-2019, which they described as burdensome. Protesters raised slogans asserting that collective struggle was the only way to secure justice and protect labour rights. Union representatives stated that the strike was conducted peacefully. Several trade union leaders and representatives from different industrial employee unions participated in the protest, along with a large number of workers from various industries in the Cherlapally industrial belt.

## Paradise Launches 'Jashn-e-Haleem' Festival Ahead of Ramzan



"NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, February 12, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)." Industrial activity in the Cherlapally Industrial Area came to a halt on Thursday as workers participated in the nationwide general strike called by central trade unions. The strike witnessed large-scale participation from industrial workers, contract and outsourcing employees, and scheme workers, significantly affecting production and business operations across several units. Protest rallies and demonstrations were organized across the industrial belt, with workers raising slogans against the Central Government's labour and economic policies. Work was suspended in many factories, leading to disruption of regular industrial activities. Addressing a gath-



ity checks are maintained from sourcing to service to ensure consistent taste and hygiene. Paradise, which holds a Limca Book record for serving the highest number of biryanis in a year, continues to strengthen its culinary legacy with the annual Haleem festival." About Paradise" Established in 1953 in Secunderabad, Paradise has grown into one of India's most recognized restaurant brands, known for its authentic Hyderabadi cuisine.

## Grand Celebrations Held for Late Former MLA Bandari Rajireddy's Birth Anniversary Under the Leadership of BRS Leader Kaleru Jai Naveen

Gifts Distributed to 300 Municipal Workers; Breakfast Arranged



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, February 12 (Indian Chronicle)." As per the directions of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, the 79th birth anniversary of late former Uppal MLA Bandari Rajireddy was celebrated in a grand manner at Habsiguda Junction under the leadership of BRS leader Kaleru Jai Naveen. On this occasion, floral tributes were paid to the portrait of late Bandari Rajireddy. Marking his birth anniversary, breakfast was arranged and gifts were distributed to around 300 municipal workers. Speaking at the event, Kaleru Jai Naveen said that the services rendered by late former MLA Bandari Rajireddy to the Uppal constituency are unforgettable.



He stated that they would continue to move forward in achieving his ideals. He added that the people of Uppal have not forgotten the public service rendered by Bandari Rajireddy and that he will always be remembered for serving the public beyond party lines. Bandari Rajireddy's son, Bandari Jagan Mohan Reddy, attended the programme as the chief guest. Senior leaders Lakshminarayana, Habsiguda BRS leaders, women leaders, admirers of Bandari Rajireddy, and party workers participated in large numbers.

## Modi Government is Diluting Labour Laws Demand to Repeal Anti-Worker and Anti-Farmer Policies DYFI District Secretary Godisela Karthik

"Indian Chronicle" kumram bheem, Asifabad Dis-trict Report, Jade Srinivas. February, 12" DYFI District Secretary Godisela Karthik alleged that the Modi-led Central Government is weakening labour laws and introducing anti-worker and anti-farmer policies. He demanded that such laws be immediately repealed. Speaking at the nationwide general strike held in front of the Kumram Bheem Asifabad District Collector office, Karthik said that workers across the country are continuously fighting for their rights and for the protection of labour laws. He stated that many workers are being exploited without receiving minimum wages, despite the nation's

production and development being driven by their hard work. He criticized the Central Government for introducing four Labour Codes, claiming that they are designed to hand over workers' rights and labour power to private corporate forces. He emphasized that workers across the country must strongly oppose these measures. Karthik further alleged that the government is privatizing public sector undertakings, thereby reducing employment and livelihood opportunities for the unemployed. He accused the government of attempting to divide people on the basis of religion, caste, and region while pushing forward privatization policies and transferring public assets and lands to corporate entities. He called upon workers, farmers, employees, students, and youth across the country to unite and fight against anti-worker policies. He urged all labourers to come together and strengthen the struggle against what he described as anti-labour laws. DYFI District Vice President Durgam Nikhil and District Joint Secretary Vadluri Srikanth also participated in the programme.

## Last-mile connectivity remains key challenge in Delhi's fight against air pollution



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

According to the plan, 480 feeder buses are required to support Metro ridership, but only 100 are currently available, leaving a shortfall of 380 buses. According to the plan, 480 feeder buses are required to support Metro ridership, but only 100 are currently available, leaving a shortfall of 380 buses. Last-mile connectivity continues to be a challenge amid the Delhi government's ongoing efforts to strengthen the public transport in the Capital and fight against air pollution. The government's Annual Action Plan 2026 to combat air pollution — submitted to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) recently — highlighted that existing feeder services at Metro stations fall short of the assessed demand.

The annual plan also includes station-wise data carried out by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). It assesses last-mile requirements across 193 operational Metro stations, as of December 31, 2025, which is crucial in tackling vehicular pollution in the Capital. Data from various

sources has repeatedly shown that vehicular pollution continues to be a key contributor to the city's air pollution crisis. DMRC, as per the annual plan, has stated that 158 of the 193 stations already have access to at least one last-mile connectivity option, including e-bikes, bike taxis, e-rickshaws and e-autos. However, according to the plan, while basic coverage exists at a majority of stations, there is an overall gap of nearly 60% when the scale of services is assessed against commuter demand, according to data. DMRC has also said that it has signed memoranda of understanding with ride-hailing platforms Uber and Rapido to provide on-demand last-mile services at several stations.

According to the plan, 480 feeder buses are required to support Metro ridership, but only 100 are currently available, leaving a shortfall of 380 buses. To bridge these gaps, the annual plan has laid out monthly expansion targets for 2026. DMRC has projected the induction of 850 e-rickshaws, 120 e-bikes and 360 e-autos by December 31, 2026. According to the plan, the need for reliable last-mile services will intensify as the Metro network expands. Once Phase IV of the metro expansion — which shall add 112 km to the network — is completed, daily ridership is projected to rise to 1.4 crore passengers. The annual plan also underlines a significant shortage in Delhi's city bus fleet, which forms a key part of the public transport system. Against a total assessed requirement of 11,000 buses, the existing fleet comprises 3,377 electric buses and 1,868 CNG buses, leaving a gap of 5,755 buses. While the government plans to add 2,468 buses by the end of 2026, in line with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs guidelines, and gradually phase out CNG buses, the plan acknowledges that the overall shortfall will persist. It also records that a monthly induction target of 983 buses for January 2026 was set but not met.

## Most cases filed against Centre, L-G by AAP govt withdrawn



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The BJP government has withdrawn a majority of the cases that the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) regime had filed against the Centre, the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) and some bureaucrats who were posted as the heads of departments, said officials. The withdrawal of cases has benefited the government in implementing several stalled projects and schemes in the Capital, said officials. According to the government sources, over 20 such cases were filed, including 12 against the L-G. The process of withdrawal of cases initiated by the government involves the government first taking a decision internally after consultation and taking opinion from its legal officers. This is followed by submission of a formal application, seeking withdrawal of the case, before the court concerned.

Such a case is then deemed to be withdrawn only after the court passes a formal order recording the disposal of the case owing to the parties involved withdrawing the case and the other side consenting to such withdrawal. Law minister Kapil Mishra told The Indian Express, "Cases between the agencies, filed against each other, due to political mud-slinging are being withdrawn."

A senior Delhi government official said, "The process to withdraw all the cases was initiated soon after the BJP formed the government in Delhi... A lot of these cases were politically motivated with an intention to harm the Delhi government's projects and schemes. Not only did these cases stall the projects, but they were also a waste of resources...." The Law department, officials added, had moved a proposal stating that such litigations not only cause "hardship" for the bureaucracy but also lead to "administrative paralysis", which delays policy-making and execution of projects. The L-G Secretariat had approved a proposal moved by the Law department in this regard, sources added. In an internal note, citing several such cases filed by the previous AAP regime and the minister-in-charge, the

Law department had previously underlined, "Such cases not only create an embarrassing situation before courts of law but also have the potential to adversely affect the relations of the government of NCT of Delhi with the Central government within the meaning of the GNCTD Act, 1991." It added: "...in the interest of constitutional harmony with the Union government and the L-G, it is proposed in public interest that all such cases filed by the then minister-in-charge be withdrawn by filing appropriate applications/petitions before the concerned courts by the concerned administrative departments."

"The majority of the cases were withdrawn last year only. Some of the cases at the administrative secretary level and between agencies are being withdrawn. Final modalities are being worked out....," said a source. After taking charge in Delhi last February, the BJP-led government had moved respective courts and filed separate applications before judges of all courts concerned — as there were several cases and they were being heard on different dates — seeking "early hearing" to withdraw the cases, said sources. Some of these cases were related to the appointment of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) chairman, the Services department, the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission, funding for the Delhi Jal Board, appointment of lawyers in Delhi riot cases, and the formation of a high-level committee on Yamuna river pollution, among others, immediately.

In May last year, the Supreme Court had allowed the Delhi government to withdraw seven cases against the L-G. The same month, the Delhi High Court had also allowed the government to withdraw its plea against the L-G for appointing prosecutors of its choice for arguing farmers' protest and Delhi riot cases. Some of the cases that involved the L-G were related to the release of funds for the Delhi Jal Board by the Finance department, challenging the 2023 ordinance promulgated by the President of India amending the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act, 1991, Section 45D of the GNCTD Act, and the appointment of the chairperson and members of the DERC, stoppage of funds, and non-procurement of judgment in the alderman case by the Supreme Court, seeking a prayer that till the announcement of judgment, the Standing Committee may be exercised by the corporation. Other cases were related to the high-level committee under the L-G for preventing pollution in the Yamuna. Besides, the Health department had also moved an application to withdraw the cases filed by former Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj. "There were about eight to nine such cases which were filed by the AAP ministers," said a government official.

## 'No proof of tip-off': Mumbai special court discharges studio owner in 2023 MCOCA case involving gangster's death

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Vishal Utekar was discharged by the special court designated under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) on all charges, including murder and criminal conspiracy. Vishal Utekar was discharged by the special court designated under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) on all charges, including murder and criminal conspiracy.

Noting that his name was mentioned in a panchama part of the chargesheet as a witness, a special court in Mumbai on Monday discharged a photo studio owner from a 2023 murder case of a gangster. Vishal Utekar was discharged by the special court designated under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) on all charges, including murder and criminal conspiracy.

The Mumbai police arrested Utekar on allegations that he was the one who had tipped off the co-accused that gangster Sumit Yerunkar was coming to his photo studio on December 24, 2023. Yerunkar was at the photo studio to get his photographs clicked to display them on flex banners in the Chunabhatti area for his birthday; five people arrived at the spot and fired at him, the police said. Utekar, who was first named as a witness, was then made an accused, with the police claiming that an accused's interrogation had revealed that he had informed them about the gangster's location. Utekar, through his lawyer Prashant Pawar, had said that there was no proof of his involvement — the statement of the co-accused against him was not recorded, no call data records were collected, nor was any

other proof of his being part of the organised crime syndicate given. The police had opposed the plea, saying that there was evidence to frame charges against him. The court said that the investigating officers admitted that the call records and confession statement of the co-accused were not brought before the court as evidence, and no proof was shown to claim that Utekar had tipped off the others about the gangster's visit to the studio. The court said that Utekar also had no other case against him. "It is appropriate to mention that in the prior approval order passed under MCOCA, the name of the applicant/accused (Utekar) is not mentioned as an accused. In the 'panchnama', dated 11.01.2024, he is shown to be one of the witnesses. Thereafter, he is shown to be an accused in this crime. Considering all the above aspects, I conclude that there is no sufficient ground for proceedings further against the applicant/accused," special judge N R Pradhan said.

## UP man held for helping Bengaluru techie murder his wife by sharing live location



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The Bengaluru city police have arrested a 32-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh for allegedly helping a software engineer murder his wife by tracking and sharing her live location in December last year. The police said on Monday that Abhimanyu Singh, who worked as an assistant to a gold merchant in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, was arrested for his role in the conspiracy that led to the killing of Bhuvaneshwari.

On the evening of December 23, Bhuvaneshwari, 39, an assistant manager at the Union Bank of India's Basaveshwaranagar branch, was shot dead in the Industrial Town area under the jurisdiction of the Magadi Road police station, following which her husband, Balamurugan,

40, a software engineer, surrendered before the police. Balamurugan was then arrested for allegedly orchestrating and executing the murder. According to the police, he had planned the killing for several months and kept a knife as backup if the shooting failed.

The police revealed that Balamurugan initially hired Tamil Nadu-based burglar Moulesh Kumar to carry out the shooting. When Moulesh repeatedly delayed the plan's execution, Balamurugan allegedly murdered his wife himself. Moulesh was subsequently arrested by Tamil Nadu police during a burglary investigation, which led to the recovery of one of the countrymade pistols allegedly procured by Balamurugan. During the investigation, technical evidence indicated Abhimanyu's role. "Abhimanyu came into contact with Balamurugan and often visited Bengaluru before the murder. He visited a gym located opposite the bank where Bhuvaneshwari worked. He took note of her entry and exit from the bank," a police officer said. On the day of the murder, Abhimanyu shared Bhuvaneshwari's live location with Balamurugan, enabling him to track her before carrying out the attack, according to the police. The police also said that Abhimanyu accompanied Moulesh to Bihar to procure two countrymade pistols used in the conspiracy. Two other associates of Moulesh — Surya and Rahul — have been identified for their alleged involvement in the murder plot. Both are currently imprisoned in Tamil Nadu.

## Don't compel schools to form fee regulation panels till Feb 20: Delhi HC to govt as it extends deadline



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The High Court on Monday directed the Delhi government not to compel schools till February 20 to form school-level fee regulation committees (SLFRCs) under the new fee fixation law. The court stated that no prejudice would be caused if the formation of the committees was deferred.

As per the new law, private schools were given the deadline of February 10 to finalise the SLFRCs. ASG S V

Raju, appearing for the Delhi government, informed a division bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela that nearly 80-90 per cent of schools have already formed the committees, while also submitting before the court that any further extension of time for constitution of SLFRCs will disrupt and delay the entire timeline for fixation of fee for academic year 2026-2027. After the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act came into force on December 10 last year, the Delhi government on February 1 had issued a notification clarifying that the new law shall be implemented from the next academic year. By way of the gazette notification, the government had stipulated that the SLFRCs have to be constituted within 10 days of the notification, even though its decisions will not affect fees for 2025-26. The court on Monday issued notice to the Delhi government on pleas by several associations of schools challenging the February 1 notification and reasoned that "no prejudice will be caused to either side, nor will it cause prejudice to the timeline for fixation of fee for academic year 2026-27" if more time is granted for formation of the committees. The matter will be next heard on February 20.

## For the first time, Nandi Hills will shut its gates to all visitors on Valentine's Day



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The district administration in Karnataka's Chikkaballapur on Monday issued an order banning visitors from entering Nandi Hills ahead of February 14, citing crowd management and public safety concerns. G Prabhu, Deputy Commissioner, Chikkaballapur, issued an order imposing a complete ban on visitor entry to Nandi Hills between 6 am and 6 pm, a period that usually sees higher footfall on Valentine's Day.

Speaking to the media, Ramesh, Special Officer for Nandi Hills, said the main gate would remain closed, and visitors attempting to enter would be turned away. This marks the first time Nandi Hills has been closed specifically on Valentine's Day, though similar restrictions have been enforced during New Year celebrations to manage large crowds. According to officials, the decision was made to prevent overcrowding and potential law-and-order issues on a day that traditionally attracts large numbers of young visitors and couples. "Increased vehicle movement and unruly behaviour can harm the flora and fauna in the region.

## Stop 'mechanical' FIRs: Karnataka police chief issues warning over lodging cases on social media posts



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Karnataka's police chief has directed officials to avoid the mechanical registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) and arrests in cases related to social media posts. The circular, issued by Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG&IGP) M A Saleem on February 7, follows a spate of recent cases booked over online content.

"It has been observed that the police officers are registering the case relating to social media posts mechanically without undertaking preliminary enquiries as stipulated by the Supreme Court of India in Imran Pratappgadhi vs State of Gujarat, Criminal Appeal No. 1545/2025, dated 28.03.2025," Saleem said, adding that a circular on the matter was earlier issued on July 4 last year.

"Further, the Supreme Court of India has upheld the guidelines framed by the Telangana High Court relating to the registration of FIRs in cases arising out of social media posts in the referred judgement. Hence, the same guidelines are adopted herewith, and the police officers of the state are instructed to adhere to the guidelines to avoid mechanical registration of the FIRs and arrest relating to social media posts," the current circular stated.

It added that before registering any FIR for alleged defamation or similar offences, the police must verify whether the complainant qualifies as the 'person aggrieved' in terms of law. "Complaints by unrelated third parties lacking standing are not maintainable, except where the report concerns a cognizable offence," it read. It also said that officials should conduct a preliminary inquiry to ascertain if the statutory ingredients of the alleged offence are, prima facie, made out. No case alleging promotion of enmity, intentional insult, public mischief, threat to public order, or sedition shall be registered unless there exists prima facie material disclosing incitement to violence, hatred, or public disorder, the circular said.

The police shall not mechanically register cases concerning harsh, offensive, or critical political speech. Only when the speech amounts to incitement to violence or poses

"It added that before registering any FIR for alleged defamation or similar offences, the police must verify whether the complainant qualifies as the 'person aggrieved' in terms of law

"an imminent threat to public order may criminal law be invoked. Constitutional protections for free political criticism under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution must be scrupulously enforced," it emphasised.

Since defamation is classified as a non-cognisable offence, the police cannot directly register an FIR or crime in such matters, the circular stated. The complainant must be directed to approach the jurisdictional magistrate, and police action may follow only upon a specific order of the magistrate, it added. Saleem also directed officials to abide by arrest guidelines. Citing Arnesh Kumar vs State of Bihar, the circular said that automatic or mechanical arrests are impermissible and the principle of proportionality in the exercise of the criminal process must be observed. "In matters involving political speech/post or other sensitive forms of expression, the police shall obtain prior legal opinion from the public prosecutor before registering an FIR, to ensure that the proposed action is legally sustainable. If a complaint is found to be frivolous, vexatious or politically motivated, the police shall close the matter under Section 176 (1) of BNSS [Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita], citing absence of sufficient grounds for investigation," the circular said.

## After Ajit Pawar's death, common symbol and seat sharing lift NCP factions' fortunes



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The decision by the two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party to contest the Zilla Parishad elections together using a common symbol in most seats and arriving at a tacit seat sharing arrangement in several districts has paid political dividends in rural Maharashtra. The results have also acquired added significance in the aftermath of the death of Ajit Pawar, who had been a key proponent of the alliance between the two sides.

The understanding to fight the Zilla Parishad polls jointly in Pune district and to coordinate seat-sharing in at least 10 other districts appears to have helped both factions revive their performance in the rural belt particularly in western Maharashtra a region considered the NCP's traditional stronghold. The rural local body arrangement was also seen as the first step towards a merger of the two NCP factions led by Ajit Pawar and his uncle Sharad Pawar. NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar has said that a formal announcement on the merger of the two parties was scheduled for February 12 after the declaration of the Zilla Parishad election results. According to sources, it was Ajit Pawar who had pushed for the alliance and later for the merger arguing that the split in votes was shrinking the political space available to both factions.

The Zilla Parishad results in western Maharashtra appear to support that view. In Pune, the NCP emerged as the single largest party with an absolute majority in the 73 member Zilla Parishad winning over 40 seats. Both factions contested on the common Clock symbol across the district barring a few friendly contests in the Ambegaon region. The move appears to have consolidated votes and helped the party secure a clear majority. After the setback suffered in the municipal corporation elections, talks had begun between the two factions on coming together for the Zilla Parishad polls with Pune the Pawar family's home turf chosen as the centre of the experiment. Following discussions, NCP (SP) state president Shashikant Shinde announced in January that both parties would contest the rural local body elections together. A similar strategy appears to have worked in Kolhapur as well where the NCP emerged as the single largest party in the Zilla Parishad and is set to install its president. In the 68-member body the NCP won 20 seats followed by the Congress with 15 the BJP with 13 and the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena with nine seats.

The Mahayuti alliance is expected to install an NCP leader as Zilla Parishad president. In Sangli, although no formal alliance was announced the two NCP factions contested on mutually agreed seats. The NCP (SP) emerged as the single largest party winning 19 seats followed by the Congress with 11. The NCP won four seats while the BJP secured 15. The NCP (SP) is in a strong position and is likely to install its Zilla Parishad president with Congress support. In Satara, too, the NCP maintained an understanding with allies and won 18 seats emerging as the second largest party in the Zilla Parishad. Overall the results suggest that the strategy championed by Ajit Pawar of contesting rural local body elections through coordination and common symbols has strengthened the party's position especially in western Maharashtra. "The decision was taken by the senior party leadership to contest together or to have understanding while seat sharing. It has helped the party considerably. We hope that the results will now be analysed in detail by our leaders," an NCP SP MLA said.

## Juhu beach waves turn electric blue at night. Here's the science behind the viral sight



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Over the last few days, videos showing bright blue waves rolling onto Mumbai's Juhu beach at night have gone viral on social media. While the sight has surprised many visitors, the phenomenon, though striking, is a natural process caused by tiny marine organisms and has been recorded earlier along parts of Maharashtra's coastline.

Why do the waves look blue?

The glowing effect is caused by a natural phenomenon often called a "blue tide". It happens when very small marine organisms known as phytoplankton, especially a type called dinoflagellates, light up when disturbed. When waves crash or move, these organisms release a blue glow through a chemical reaction inside their bodies, making the sea appear illuminated.

What is bioluminescence?

Bioluminescence is the ability of living organisms to produce light. It happens because of a chemical reaction inside the organism. A light-producing molecule called lu-

ciferin reacts with oxygen, catalysed by an enzyme called luciferase, releasing light. The glow can be blue, green, or sometimes yellow, depending on the organism. It is found in many forms of life, including plants, animals, fungi and bacteria. In the ocean, several creatures, such as algae, jellyfish, small crustaceans, worms, fish, and even some sharks, can glow. This glowing effect is most commonly seen in plankton and deep-sea species.

Why do these organisms glow?

Scientists believe glowing helps these organisms protect themselves. The sudden flash of light can confuse or scare predators, allowing the organisms to escape. Another reason could be that glowing helps them gather together, forming larger groups.

Is this common along Indian beaches?

Along India's west coast, bioluminescence has occasionally been observed, mostly during November and December. While uncommon, similar glowing waves have been reported earlier in places such as Ratnagiri and along the Dakshina Kannada-Udupi coast. Its appearance depends on several factors, including water temperature, nutrient levels, rainfall and wind. Because these conditions change, the glowing waves remain unpredictable and rare rather than routine.

Is the blue tide harmful?

Small glowing patches are usually harmless. However, larger and slow-moving blooms can affect marine life and fishing activity. Blue tides can also be a warning sign of stress in the marine environment. Factors such as rising sea temperatures, heavy rainfall, sewage discharge, fertiliser runoff, low oxygen levels and changing wind patterns can trigger such events.

## Hansraj principal's son to tie the knot today — on college grounds; triggers protests



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

By Monday afternoon, the invitation had triggered a protest on campus, with students alleging access to the ground was blocked for them. By Monday afternoon, the invitation had triggered a protest on campus, with students alleging access to the ground was blocked for them.

Titled "Wedding and Blessing Ceremony", this floral e-invite card announced a marriage that would take place on "Tuesday, February 10, 2026". The venue? "Gate No. 5, Hansraj College, Delhi-110007". According to the invitation, the groom is the son of Rama Sharma, the principal of Delhi University's Hansraj College. And going by the card, he appears to be tying the knot on the college premises. According to the invitation, the groom is the son of Rama Sharma, the principal of Delhi University's Hansraj College. According to the invitation, the groom is the son of Rama Sharma, the principal of Delhi University's Hansraj College. (Special Arrangement) By Monday afternoon, the invitation had triggered a protest on campus, with students alleging access to the ground was blocked for them.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Principal Sharma said, "This is a facility given to faculty and staff of Hansraj college. This is not something new. Even if I wasn't a principal here, I would be allowed to use the college premises to conduct private events. And when it comes to the allegations of cancelling sports events, it is a logical fact that the wedding date in any wedding is set way before, so why would we choose any date on the same date of a sports event if we were to use the college premises? These are all false claims. No sports event has been cancelled so far and none is scheduled for today (the day of the wedding)." DU Registrar Vikas Gupta also told, "The principal is the resident on campus and it is permitted for residents to use the

space for a personal event, provided they maintain cleanliness of the premises. Recently, two college principals lost their parents and they held a kriya in the college... It is natural for them to act as a resident and use the space occasionally." In a statement during the protest, the Students' Federation of India (SFI) said the wedding invitation itself underscored what it called the administration's double standards.

While the card lists Hansraj College as the venue for a private wedding and reception, the organisation claimed students are barred from using the college ground after 4 pm for sports activities and are frequently denied permission to organise freshers' welcomes and farewell events. Even the annual Khelo Hansraj sports tournament, SFI alleged, was rescheduled to make way for the wedding. "The Principal treats our campus like a private estate while students are forced to function within arbitrary restrictions," alleged Asikul Islam, secretary of the SFI's Hansraj College unit.

Students also raised objections to the alleged use of the Hansraj College hostel in connection with the wedding. The hostel has remained closed for nearly a year after being declared unfit for habitation, displacing several student residents. The SFI claimed the facility is now being used as accommodation for wedding guests. "When the hostel was shut, students were told it was unsafe to live in. That concern seems to disappear when the space is needed for a wedding," the SFI statement said.

## Eight-year-old raped by two relatives

Hyderabad: An eight-year-old girl was allegedly raped by two of her relatives, one of whom is a minor, in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district of Telangana, police said on Monday. Officials said the assaults occurred in separate incidents, one last week and the other on Sunday. According to a senior police officer, one of the accused, a 21-year-old man and the girl's uncle, took her from her house to his residence in the neighbourhood and sexually assaulted her on Sunday evening while her parents were away working in the agricultural fields. The girl returned home in distress, and when her parents saw her crying, they asked her what had happened.

## Police arrest 24 peddlers in citywide raids, seize 2.08 crore worth of narcotics



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

ish, 76 kg of ganja, 11 kg 600 grams of charas, and 121 grams of MDMA. The total value of the contraband is estimated at 22.08 crore. Investigations revealed that the accused, some of whom are from outside Karnataka, allegedly procured narcotics from unidentified suppliers and sold them locally, targeting college students and IT and Bio Technology (BT) employees to make quick profits. The police have launched a manhunt to trace the main suppliers and said that efforts are underway to dismantle the larger network behind the illegal trade. "Making Bengaluru drug-free is our priority. In that direction, we have been carrying out sustained anti-drug campaigns. This is a continuous effort, with the CCB, law and order police, and all units working in close coordination," said Seemant Kumar Singh, City Police Commissioner. The arrests come amid a sustained, citywide crackdown on drug trafficking and consumption. According to police officers, between January 1 and February 7, enforcement teams conducted widespread checks covering 3,227 rowdies, 572 NDPS accused, 297 chemical factories, 1,503 godowns, 2,164 medical shops, 2,140 pan shops, and 1,251 petty shops located near schools and colleges. Travel agencies, parcel services, and commercial establishments were also inspected to prevent misuse for the storage or transport of narcotics. The drive led to the registration of 109 cases against drug peddlers, resulting in 179 arrests, and 839 cases against consumers, with 1,038 people taken into custody. The police seized 278.35 kg of ganja, 8,918 kg of hydro ganja, 2,493 kg of synthetic drugs, besides 509 tablets and 38 strips of banned substances. The total value of narcotics seized during this period is estimated at 28.19 crore.

## Gait analysis report confirms presence of accused at crime scene, say cops

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Almost a month after a chargesheet was filed in connection with the murder of a 32-year-old UPSC aspirant, the Delhi Police has received a gait test analysis report which confirmed that the three accused in the case were present at the spot when the crime was committed in October last year. The report has been filed as part of a supplementary chargesheet last week. In the first week of January, the police had filed an 813-page chargesheet which mentioned that a gait test would be a key evidence in the case.

According to the police, on October 5, victim Ram Kesh Meena was first thrashed, then strangled with a phone charging cable by his partner Amrita Chauhan, his former boyfriend Sumit Kashyap and their accomplice Sandeep Kumar. Police said that on the day of the murder, Amrita interacted with the other accused on Instagram. As she informed them that the victim was at his residence, CCTV cameras captured the accused entering Ram Kesh's house around 8:54 pm. Thirty eight minutes later, Sandeep was spotted leaving, while Amrita and Kashyap stayed back.

The duo then poured petrol on Ram Kesh's body, turned on the gas cylinder, set him on fire and left the premises at 2:57 am October 6, police said. Police then conducted a gait analysis to tally the CCTV footage with a sample video recorded with the accused. "It came into notice that some burn injuries are found to be antemortem in nature indicating that the victim was alive/unconscious when he was set on fire," the chargesheet also mentioned.

## Pune police launch counselling programmes for drunk drivers, signal zero tolerance



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The Traffic Control Branch of the Pune City Police has launched a series of counselling programmes for drivers caught for drunk driving, as part of its road safety campaign. During these sessions, offenders are briefed on legal provisions, road safety norms and the stringent action they may face in future, with police signalling zero tolerance towards repeat violations. Under the Road Safety Campaign, the Pune City Traffic Police organised a counselling programme on Monday at the Pune Police Headquarters in Shivajinagar. Joint Commissioner of Police Ranjan Kumar Sharma, Additional Commissioner of Police Manoj Patil and Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Himmat Jadhav addressed the gathering.

This was the second such session conducted by the traffic branch, the first having been held on February 2. The programmes are being conducted as per the directions of Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar to curb driving under the influence. As part of the initiative, vehicle drivers booked under the Motor Vehicles Act for drunk driving offences are being summoned for counselling. Around 600 offenders attended the session on Monday. "These sessions are being conducted every Monday as part of a series we have launched. The primary objective of the programme is to inculcate adherence to traffic rules among drivers, pro-

mote safe driving practices, and create awareness about social responsibility. During the programme, presentations on the road safety campaign were made. The attendees were also provided with detailed guidance on the serious consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol, loss of life caused by accidents, as well as the relevant legal provisions and penalties," said DCP Jadhav.

"It was strongly conveyed that driving after consuming alcohol is not merely a violation of law but is dangerous to society. Drivers were also urged to drive safely and responsibly. Around 600 accused vehicle drivers were present at the programme. The participants benefited from the counselling session and assured the police that they would not commit such offences in the future and would strictly follow traffic rules," he said. "All traffic divisions were also instructed to implement special drives against drunk driving hereafter and to take stricter action than earlier in such cases. In 2024, around 4,000 were caught drunk driving and in 2025, the number was close to 6,500. In the present year, we plan to conduct back-to-back dedicated drives against drunk driving," Jadhav added. Police use breathalyser tests to check drunk driving. The device detects the concentration of ethanol in a person's breath, which corresponds to the blood alcohol concentration. Those found with alcohol levels above the permissible limit are booked and prosecuted in designated courts.

Section 185 of the Motor Vehicles Act pertains to driving by a drunken person or a person under the influence of drugs. If a person has an alcohol level exceeding 30 milligrams per 100 ml of blood, detected through a breathalyser test, or is under the influence of drugs to the extent of being incapable of exercising proper control over the vehicle, the offence attracts punishment. For a first offence, the provision carries imprisonment of up to six months, or a fine, or both, and may also lead to cancellation of the driving licence. For a second or subsequent offence committed within three years of the previous offence, imprisonment may extend up to two years, or a fine, or both.

## Yamuna ferry service, Rs 5 meals and more: How BJP Delhi govt is marking one year in power

As the Delhi government nears the successful completion of its first year in office, the BJP has lined up a series of projects and welfare measures that will be rolled out in the coming days, including Ayushman Arogya Mandir clinics, Atal canteens, smart classrooms, and Pink Smart Cards.

The BJP formed a government in Delhi with a majority of 48 seats on February 20 last year. To mark its first anniversary, the party is set to organise a major event at the IGI stadium on February 20, where it is expected to announce financial assistance to some beneficiaries of the Delhi Ladli scheme and direct benefit transfers under the free LPG cylinder initiative on Holi. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to attend the event. Other initiatives in the pipeline include Pink Smart Cards, which will let women travel for free in public transport buses, the Dilli Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana, an online portal, and a ferry service on the Yamuna. The government is planning to hold a series of events to inaugurate new projects and roll out public welfare schemes this month. Ahead of the anniversary celebrations, 100 Arogya Mandir health clinics will be launched



on February 13, while a ferry service on the Yamuna is expected to be inaugurated on February 20. The next day, on February 21, 25 Atal canteens offering meals at a nominal rate of 75 per person will be opened. Additionally, smart classrooms and smart libraries in CM-SHRI schools, developmental works in SC-ST colonies, and reimbursement of tuition fees will also be announced.

## U.S., India to work toward finalising Interim Agreement with view to concluding BTA: White House fact sheet



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

In the coming weeks, the U.S. and India will work toward finalising the interim agreement on trade with a view to concluding a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement, the White House has said. The two countries will also continue negotiations to address remaining issues, including services and investment, labour and government procurement, it said. Days after India and the U.S. announced in a joint statement the framework for an Interim Agreement regarding reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade, the White House issued a fact sheet on 'The United States and India Announce Historic Trade Deal (Interim Agreement).' The fact sheet highlights key terms of the agreement, including that India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of U.S. food and agricultural products.

This includes dried distillers' grains, red sorghum, tree nuts and fresh and processed fruit, certain pulses, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products and India has committed to buy more American products and purchase over USD 500 billion of US energy, information and communication technology, agricultural, coal, and other products.

On the 'Prosperous Path Forward', the fact sheet said that U.S. President Donald Trump continues to advance the interests of the American people, enhancing market access for American exporters and lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers to protect our economic and national security. "India has maintained some of the highest tariffs on the United States of any major world economy, with tariffs as high as an average of 37 per cent for agricultural goods and more than 100% on certain autos. India also has a history of imposing highly protectionist non-tariff barriers that have banned and prohibited many U.S. exports to India," the fact sheet said. "In the coming weeks, the United States and India will promptly implement this framework

and work toward finalising the Interim Agreement with a view to concluding a mutually beneficial BTA to lock in benefits for American workers and businesses," it said. The announcement provides a "tangible path forward" with India that underscores the President's dedication to realising balanced, reciprocal trade with an important trading partner.

Further, it added that in line with the roadmap set out in the terms of reference for the BTA, the United States and India will "continue negotiations to address the remaining tariff barriers, additional non-tariff barriers, technical barriers to trade, customs and trade facilitation, good regulatory practices, trade remedies, services and investment, intellectual property, labour, environment, government procurement, and trade-distorting or unfair practices of state-owned enterprises." It said India will address non-tariff barriers that affect bilateral trade in priority areas. The United States and India will negotiate rules of origin that ensure that the agreed benefits accrue predominantly to the United States and India.

India will remove its digital services taxes and committed to negotiate a robust set of bilateral digital trade rules that address discriminatory or burdensome practices and other barriers to digital trade, including rules that prohibit the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions. The United States and India committed to strengthening economic security alignment to enhance supply chain resilience and innovation through complementary actions to address non-market policies of third parties as well as cooperating on inbound and outbound investment reviews and export controls, it said adding that the two countries will significantly increase bilateral trade in technology products and expand joint technology cooperation.

It noted that last Friday (February 6, 2026), Mr. Trump announced the trade deal with India that will open up the country's market of over 1.4 billion people to American products. The joint statement follows a call between Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week, "in which the leaders reached a framework for an Interim Agreement on reciprocal trade and reaffirmed their commitment to broader U.S.-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) negotiations." It noted that Mr. Trump agreed to remove the additional 25% tariff on imports from India in "recognition of India's commitment to stop purchasing" Russian oil. Accordingly, the President signed an Executive Order last Friday removing that additional 25% tariff. "Given India's willingness to align with the United States to confront systemic imbalances in the bilateral trade relationship and shared national security challenges, the United States will lower the Reciprocal Tariff on India from 25% to 18%.

## U.S. trims tariffs on Bangladesh to 19%

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Bangladesh on Monday (February 9, 2026) secured a reduced 19% tariff under a trade agreement with the United States that would exempt some textiles and garments manufactured with U.S. materials, interim government chief Muhammad Yunus said. In an X post, he said Washington had "committed to establishing a mechanism for certain textile and apparel goods from Bangladesh using U.S.-produced cotton and man-made fibre to receive zero reciprocal tariff in (the) U.S. market".

Mr. Yunus, known for his pro-U.S. stance, said the deal was reached after nine months of negotiations since April last year. According to Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, Bangladesh's key export-earning ready-made garments (RMG) made from cotton and synthetic fibres imported from the U.S. would enjoy zero reciprocal duty under the deal. He said the agreement was signed in Washington by Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin and U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Jameson Greer. Ambassador Greer joined Bangladesh's Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin in signing the U.S.-Bangladesh Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, advancing our economic partnership and opening new markets for U.S. exports.

Commerce Ministry officials said apart from cotton, the deal includes provisions for importing U.S. wheat, soybean, and LNG; refraining from imposing tariffs on e-commerce; complying with US-mandated intellectual property rights standards; and supporting US proposals for reforming the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Bangladesh recently agreed to purchase 25 aircraft from U.S. aerospace giant Boeing, with an estimated cost of Tk 30,000-35,000 crore (in Bangladeshi currency), as part of broader efforts to ease the U.S. tariffs. According to Bangladesh's Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the U.S. remains Bangladesh's largest export market. The South Asian nation in August last year secured a reduction in U.S. tariffs on its exports to



20%, down from 37% initially proposed by Washington. Bangladeshi policymakers earlier said they expected the tariff could be brought down to 15%.

Business analysts, however, said the deal offered much-needed relief to Bangladesh's apparel exporters, as the RMG sector accounts for more than 80% of its export earnings and employs some 4 million workers, mostly women, and contributes about 10% to gross domestic product (GDP). The U.S. earlier this month announced lowering tariffs to 18% from 50% for India, seeking New Delhi to halt Russian oil purchases and lower trade barriers.

In Focus Podcast | India-US 'trade deal': What does India gain from it? The Commerce Secretary said the recently concluded U.S.-India trade deal might have influenced Washington's decision to cut the tariff "possibly due to geopolitical considerations". Bangladesh's closest competitor, Vietnam, received a 20% reciprocal tariff, while Pakistan, Cambodia and Indonesia have also been subjected to a 19% tariff. The development comes as Bangladesh heads for the February 12 general election to choose new leadership and bring an end to the 18-month Yunus-led interim regime, which took charge after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government following a violent student-led street campaign dubbed the July Uprising.

## Starmer stays on as British PM, for now



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer's job appeared to have survived a day of calls for him to resign after his Cabinet colleagues came out in support of the Prime Minister in advance of a meeting between Mr. Starmer and Labour MPs. The Prime Minister had come under increasing pressure on Monday (February 9, 2026) as Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar called for him to step down following the resignation, earlier on Monday (February 9, 2026), of Mr. Starmer's communications head, Tim Allan. Another rift emerged in the party by the end of the day, as per reports in the British press, with Mr. Starmer's aides accusing Health Secretary Wes Streeting of instigating Mr. Sarwar, an accusation denied by Mr. Streeting's staff.

It has been a battle for political survival for Mr. Starmer since Sunday (February 8, 2026). His communications head Mr. Allan, who quit to "allow a new No. 10 team to be built", departed less than a day after key Starmer ally and Chief of Staff Morgan McSweeney resigned after taking "full responsibility" for the appointment of Peter Mandelson as Britain's U.S. envoy. Mr. Mandelson was sacked by Mr.

Starmer in September after it came to light that his ties with child sex offender and financier Jeffrey Epstein were stronger than was previously known to the public. Mr. Allan, who was part of the Tony Blair Government's communications team and ran a private PR agency, was appointed by Mr. Starmer in September 2025. His departure is the latest test of Mr. Starmer's ability to stay on in No. 10, with some MPs from his own party as well as the opposition calling for his departure. With a view to the approaching May 7 elections at the local and Assembly levels (i.e., the Scottish and Welsh legislatures), Mr. Sarwar called on Mr. Starmer to step down, even as he referred to their "genuine friendship" and called Mr. Starmer a "decent man". "There have been too many incidences where the wrong judgement calls have been made," Mr. Sarwar said at a press conference. The opportunity to get rid of the ruling Scottish National Party (SNP) in May was "too important to be missed", he added.

In Westminster, however, Mr. Starmer got the backing of many of his cabinet colleagues, including former Labour Deputy Leader Angela Rayner, Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves, Energy Secretary Ed Miliband and Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy.

Labour, under Mr. Starmer, won a large majority in the U.K. Parliament in July 2024, but his government has been beleaguered by rifts within the party over issues including welfare spending and tax rate commitments. Additionally, both Mr. Starmer's party and the opposition Conservative Party have faced a strong and growing Reform UK, a nationalist party that grew out of the movement for Brexit (Britain's departure from the E.U.). While Mr. Starmer may have made it through Monday (February 9, 2026) as Prime Minister, his leadership will be tested as his party faces elections, starting with a byelection at the end of the month in a Greater Manchester constituency.

## Foreign Secretary Misri doesn't refute Trump's claims, says 'national interests' guide oil imports



Russia, India is expected to raise its imports from other countries including the U.S. and Venezuela. As The Hindu reported last week, India's purchases of Russian oil were down to a 38-month low in December 2025, and a number of news agencies confirmed on Monday that India's major refiners Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Reliance Industries have so far avoided advance orders for the month of April entirely.

Thus far, however, the government has neither confirmed nor denied the U.S.'s contention that it has agreed to ending its Russian oil imports. When asked last week about the deal, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar fielded questions to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, while Mr. Goyal said that questions on Russian oil would be answered by the External Affairs Ministry. "On the Russian oil issue and the India-U.S. trade deal - the Commerce Minister says, ask the External Affairs Minister, the External Affairs Minister says ask the Commerce Minister, and the Petroleum Minister is preoccupied with other issues," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post, adding that this contrasted with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy of a "whole of government" approach. In addition, the Ministry is expected to field questions from the members of the parliamentary committee on the impact of the FTA with the EU and the joint statement with the U.S. In a pre-briefing note to the panel, the Ministry shared details of the EU agreement, as well as trade figures with Bangladesh. Underscoring the significance of the deal, the government said the EU is well-positioned to shape "international standards and narratives". India and the EU, it added, are now "natural and preferred partners". The Ministry highlighted that over the past two years, there have been more than 30 visits at the head-of-state or government-level between India and Europe, along with more than 150 ministerial-level engagements. Under the FTA with the EU, India has secured preferential access to European markets across 97% of tariff lines, covering 99.5% of trade value, it said. The Ministry note on U.S. trade outlined the benefits of the trade deal being negotiated. While it mentioned Mr. Trump's executive order, it omitted mentions of the contentious portions, including the Indian "commitment" on ending oil imports from Russia. On Bangladesh, the Ministry is expected to explain the downturn in trading ties and connectivity due to tensions in bilateral relations with the Yunus administration in Dhaka, with hopes of a reset once an elected government is in place after elections on February 12. According to the figures, India's exports to Bangladesh came down from \$11 bn in 2024-25 to \$8 bn in the year 2025-26 till date.

## U.K. foreign office to review pay-off to Epstein-linked U.S. envoy

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

The U.K. Foreign Ministry said on Sunday (February 8, 2026) it was reviewing an exit payment to former U.S. envoy Peter Mandelson, who was sacked over links to convicted U.S. sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Mr. Mandelson received an estimated pay-out of between £38,750 and £55,000 (\$52,000 and \$74,000) after only seven months in the job as British ambassador to the United States, according to a report in the Sunday Times.

Documents released on January 30 by the U.S. Justice Department appear to show that Mr. Mandelson allegedly leaked confidential U.K. government information to the late Epstein when he was a British Minister, including during the 2008 financial crisis. The revelation has placed intense pressure on Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer and triggered a police investigation into party insider Mandelson, 72, for alleged misconduct in a public office. The Foreign Office said in a statement it had launched a review into Mr. Mandelson's severance payment "in light of further information that has now been revealed and the ongoing police investigation".

Cabinet Minister Pat McFadden insisted Mr. Starmer should remain in office despite his "terrible mistake" in appointing Mandelson. The close Mr. Starmer ally told broadcasters the party should stick with the Prime Minister. "He (Starmer) should be realistic and accept that this has been a terrible story, that this appointment was a terrible mistake," McFadden, the Work and Pensions Secretary, told BBC television. He said the real blame lay "squarely with Peter Mandelson", who put himself forward for the job despite knowing the extent of his relationship with Epstein.

Mr. Starmer's deputy, David Lammy, became the first Cabinet Minister to appear to distance himself from the premier, according to a report in the Sunday Telegraph. The Minister had not been in favour of appointing Mandelson, a



pivotal figure in British politics for decades, due to his known links to Epstein, the report quoted friends of Mr. Lammy as saying. Starmer's Labour Party took power just over 18 months ago in a landslide election victory. But it has been trailing Nigel Farage's anti-immigrant Reform UK as the government has come under fire over immigration, economic growth and the cost of living crisis. Reform UK has led by double-digit figures in the polls for the past year. Mandelson, also a former European Union trade commissioner, stood down from Parliament's unelected upper chamber, the House of Lords, earlier this week. Mr. Starmer fired him in September following an earlier release of Epstein documents. The ex-envoy was one of numerous prominent figures again embarrassed by last week's latest revelations of ties to financier Epstein, who died in jail in 2019 while facing charges of alleged sex trafficking. A spokesperson for law firm Mishcon de Reya, representing Mandelson, said the latter "regrets, and will regret until to his dying day, that he believed Epstein's lies about his criminality". Lord Mandelson did not discover the truth about Epstein until after his death in 2019. He is profoundly sorry that powerless and vulnerable women and girls were not given the protection they deserved," the law firm said.

## China comments on Japan election: Takaichi victory sparks diplomatic reflection

Beijing: China on Monday said that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's massive victory in the midterm polls, a result widely seen as fuelled by public resentment over Beijing's strong opposition to her, reflects some deep-seated structural problems and shifting ideological currents.

Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party won more than two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives in Sunday's election. The election results in Japan reflected some deep-seated structural problems as well as evolving trends of ideological currents, which deserve profound reflection by visionary individuals from all walks of life in Japan and the international community at large, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters. He was replying to a question at a media briefing here whether Beijing's tough stance toward Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan, persisting with diplomatic tension, influenced the outcome of elections in her favour.

China never interferes in the internal affairs of other countries, firmly opposes any erroneous words and actions that interfere in its internal affairs, infringe upon its core interests, Lin said, defending Beijing's tough stance towards Japan in the last few months, objecting to Takaichi's remarks.

China mounted a massive diplomatic offensive against Japan over Takaichi's remarks in November last year that a Taiwan contingency could be a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan that may lead to action from the country's defence forces in support of the United States. China, which claims Taiwan as part of it and vows to integrate it with the mainland, asked her to retract her remarks, saying that Taiwan-related issues are its internal affairs.

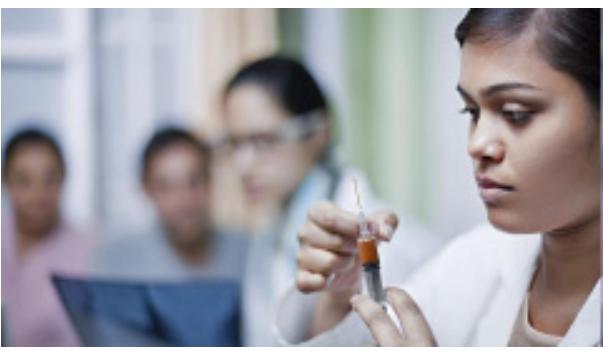


China's policy toward Japan is clear and consistent, Lin told a media briefing here while answering a volley of questions on Takaichi's victory, which came as a surprise here. Regardless of who leads Japan or which party is in power, they must abide by the four political documents between China and Japan, as well as Japan's pacifist constitution, and fulfil their commitments and international obligations, Lin said. He hoped that Japan would pursue a peaceful path and "not repeat the mistakes of militarism."

The diplomatic row deepened after the Chinese Consul General in Osaka, Xue Jian, in a post on X, threatened to "cut off dirty neck without a moment of hesitation", prompting Japan to lodge a strong protest with China. China, which is the largest source of tourists to Japan, also asked its citizens to avoid travelling to Japan, resulting in a spate of cancellations of trips by Chinese tourists. China also banned imports of fish from Japan.



## Indian women's ovaries age faster compared to Caucasian women: why?



(PCOS), which alters follicular dynamics and AMH measures, is highly prevalent and complicates the interpretation of "reserve" versus "function." Insulin resistance and chronic inflammation may blunt ovarian responsiveness and accelerate clinically apparent decline. Recent Indian studies link reproductive and metabolic markers to AMH trends.

The third component is societal change. Women in India are progressively postponing childbirth for education and careers; as a result, there has been an increase in women who come to fertility clinics at older ages or after years of subfertility; thereby, clinics are becoming more aware of cases of diminished reserves. Besides that, the differential limitations in access to nutrition, healthcare, and early detection lead to the manifestation of ovarian ageing being mostly at the stage when fertility is already compromised. International commentary in 2024 on AMH testing in India emphasises that there is a necessity for population-specific reference ranges and that the public should be more aware, so that over-diagnosis as well as under-diagnosis can be avoided. Nevertheless, a warning should be placed at the forefront: AMH is a worthwhile clinical tool - in particular, for the purpose of assisted reproduction - however, it is not a miraculous predictor of a woman's capability of conceiving naturally or the time of menopause. Women need to stay wary of the heavy interpretation of AMH as a consumer "fertility test" without counselling; the hormone refers to the number of small follicles, not necessarily the quality of eggs or other aspects of fertility. Healthcare providers recommend that the AMH level be accompanied with other criteria such as: age, ultrasound, menstrual history, and metabolic screening together, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of fertility.

### What can be done?

At a public-health level, researchers recommend establishing robust, region-specific AMH/AFC nomograms so that clinicians and women have realistic, population-appropriate expectations; tackling environmental exposures, reducing air and water pollution, and monitoring heavy metals should be made a priority; addressing metabolic health early through lifestyle and primary care is crucial; and improving access to fertility counselling and timely testing for women who plan pregnancy will also help. On an individual level, awareness matters: earlier fertility planning, metabolic health optimisation, and early discussion with a reproductive specialist can preserve options. In short, the observation that ovarian reserve declines earlier in many Indian women is supported by studies and expert consensus, but it is not reducible to one cause or a single number. It is a multifactorial reality at the intersection of biology, environment, and social change, and it demands both better population-specific research and practical public health responses so women can make informed reproductive choices.

## India tops global doping list for the third consecutive year



260 positive cases in 2024, as many as 76 came from athletics, followed by weightlifting (43) and wrestling (29). Boxing and powerlifting recorded 17 cases each, while kabaddi accounted for 10 cases. These figures reflect a pattern that has held over several years, with endurance and strength-based sports dominating the list of violations. In July, under-23 wrestling champion and Paris Olympics quarter-finalist Reetika Hooda tested positive for banned substances and was provisionally suspended, drawing attention to doping risks even among elite athletes. At the grass-roots level, enforcement itself appears to be a deterrent. During India's University Games earlier this month, there were reports of several athletes skipping track and field events after anti-doping officials arrived at venues, in some cases leaving only a single competitor to participate.

India's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has defended its record, arguing that higher numbers reflect improved detection rather than rising drug use. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the agency said India had "significantly strengthened" its anti-doping framework in recent years. However, global comparisons suggest that India's problem is not merely one of testing volume. Several countries with comparable or higher testing numbers continue to report far lower positivity rates.

The WADA report comes months after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expressed concern over the widespread use of performance-enhancing drugs in India and urged authorities to "set their house in order". In response, the Indian Olympic Association constituted a new anti-doping panel in August. The government has also moved to tighten the legal framework. Parliament recently passed the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025, incorporating changes sought by WADA to bring India's anti-doping regime in line with global standards. The Bill prohibits doping in sports, and provides a framework for testing, enforcement, and adjudication of violations. Note: Adverse Analytical Findings (AAF) is a laboratory report identifying the presence of a Prohibited Substance or its metabolites or markers (including elevated quantities of endogenous substances) or evidence of the use of a Prohibited Method, in line with WADA standards.

## Bombay HC tells Vijay Mallya to return to India before challenging Fugitive Offenders law

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday (December 23, 2025) declined to hear absconding businessman Vijay Mallya's petition questioning the constitutional validity of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEO Act) unless he first returns to India and submits to its jurisdiction. Mr. Mallya has moved two petitions before the High Court — one challenging the special court's 2019 order declaring him a fugitive economic offender, and another questioning the constitutional validity of the FEO Act. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad heard that he cannot pursue both pleas simultaneously while remaining abroad. "First submit to court's jurisdiction" You will have to make a statement as to when you will return to India; only then we will hear the petition challenging the vires of the FEO Act, the Bench said, directing him to file an affidavit indicating his timeline. "Come back to India, we are here to provide you with a solution," the judges added. The Court clarified that while his appeal against the special court's declaration can proceed even if he stays overseas, the constitutional challenge requires his presence. "How does one wipe out criminal liability without submitting to the jurisdiction of the Court?" the Bench re-

marked. Senior advocate Amit Desai, appearing for Mr. Mallya, argued that the law does not mandate physical presence for such challenges. "The statute permits a person to question the validity of the Act without being in India. My client has cooperated and his assets worth ₹14,000 crore have been attached against an alleged liability of ₹6,000 crore," Mr. Desai submitted. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Enforcement Directorate (ED), opposed the plea, citing Section 14 of the Act, which bars fugitives from contesting proceedings while evading Indian courts. He also noted that extradition proceedings in the United Kingdom are at an advanced stage and should not be stalled by these petitions. Mr. Mallya left India in March 2016 amid investigations into alleged loan defaults by Kingfisher Airlines. He was declared a fugitive economic offender by a Mumbai special court in January 2019 under the FEO Act. Enacted in 2018, the law empowers authorities to confiscate the properties of individuals accused of economic offences involving ₹100 crore or more if they refuse to return and face trial. The matter has been adjourned to February 12 for Mr. Mallya's response on whether he will withdraw one petition or indicate a date for his return.

## A bittersweet Test for Australia's Lyon-hearted spinner



time, for it was the breakthrough that took him past McGrath. With Crawley's stumping late on day four being the last of his five wickets across the two innings, Lyon has moved along to 567 wickets in 141 Tests. Second to Warne

Remarkably now, only the late Shane Warne, whose 708 scalps came in 145 Tests at an average of 25.41, stands above Lyon in the pantheon of Australia's most prolific wicket-takers. It is worth remembering that in the period between Warne's exit in 2007 and Lyon's entry in 2011, Australia went through spinners with the frequency of a chameleon changing colour, yearning desperately to find a worthy successor to the irreverent genius from Victoria. While Lyon isn't Warne — no one can fill those proverbial big shoes — he has optimised his attributes to carve a career that will be just as hard to emulate for the men to follow. Looking back, Lyon's first two years were riddled with bumps, and when he was dropped for the opening Ashes Test of the 2013 series in England, he seemed set to go down the path of his immediate predecessors. But Australia was shrewd enough to realise its folly and bring Lyon back for the third Test of that series against Alastair Cook and Co. The turning point for the spinner came in the reverse Ashes just a few months later, where he proved to be an able foil to the Mitchell Johnson-led pace battery and claimed 19 wickets in a 5-0 whitewash at home. Starting from the middle of the English summer in 2013, Lyon has evolved into a near-permanent presence in Australia's playing XI, with the Lord's Test in 2023 marking his 100th successive appearance in whites. Not dissimilar to the mishap in Adelaide, it was only a calf injury while fielding during England's first innings at Lord's that curtailed his incredible streak and prompted a premature end to his series two years ago. Lyon's success over a long Test career is proof that there is still a place for an off-spinner in the classical mould in the modern game. While he is one of three off-spinners with more than 500 wickets in Test history, he doesn't possess Muttiah Muralitharan's big-spinning off-break or deadly doosra. Neither does he have the repertoire to experiment as R. Ashwin did. But what he does have is a stock ball, armed with overspin and drift, that he backs himself to deliver at a desired spot at any given juncture. It has held him in good stead in a land usually unforgiving to his tribe: his record of 273 wickets in 74 Tests at 31.08 in Australia is in marked contrast to a host of visiting off-spinners of repute who have travelled to those shores. Unusually, though, he has been dropped from a couple of Tests in recent months. Having claimed a match haul of six for 117 in the second Test against West Indies at Grenada in July, Lyon was benched for the third Test in Jamaica as the Aussies opted for an all-pace attack with the pink ball. Australia's selector on tour, Tony Dodemaide, described Lyon's omission as a "one-off". But when the team had to be picked for the second Ashes Test in Brisbane two weeks ago — another day-night affair — Lyon was again left out. To say Lyon wasn't pleased with the call would be an understatement. "Absolutely filthy," he told broadcaster Channel 7 of his reaction to the omission. Long road to recovery

It will be all the more infuriating, then, that just as he had begun getting back into his groove in Adelaide, the injury has thrown another curve ball. On Tuesday, Lyon underwent surgery as Cricket Australia confirmed that he will be sidelined for an "extended period". In Lyon's place, the bespectacled Todd Murphy, who has played seven Tests so far, has been drafted into the squad for the next two games in Melbourne and Sydney. Coach Andrew McDonald weighed in on Lyon's road to recovery. "The surgeon will give us a report and a rough length of time. It is going to take a lot of hard work with that type of injury. It is going to be a hard period for him to get back to where he was," he told the Australian media on Tuesday. At the same time, McDonald knows that Lyon's will to keep going hasn't dimmed in the slightest. A five-Test tour of India, where Lyon has never won a series, in early 2027 is a target that the offie had long identified. "Lyon still wants to do it. That's the main thing. India is on the horizon. He will be a key part of that," McDonald added. "In Adelaide, it was probably the best I had seen him bowl for a little while in terms of the shape and energy he had on the ball. He will get through this rehab and then look forward to what it looks like."

## How Indian States are following a pro-incumbency trend

The recently concluded Bihar Assembly election highlights an interesting point; that Nitish Kumar, who has taken oath as Chief Minister for the 10th time, has been able to retain the government even after almost two decades of ruling the State. This shows us a contrast between global and Indian State-level patterns of (anti) incumbency. In many major democracies across the world, voters displayed a strong sense of anti-incumbency. The defeat of the U.S. democrats, the U.K. conservatives, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and South Africa's African National Congress reflect that people in these countries were willing to use their elections as an instrument to address perceived non-performance of the government and demand an alternative in power. Senegal's election similarly captured youth anger and a generational push against elites.

### A pro-incumbency trend

Indian State assembly elections held over the last few years indicate a trend in the opposite direction. Many governments during this period got re-elected, indicating a strong pro-incumbency sentiment. The incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party government got re-elected in Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, despite spirited opposition campaigns. These governments were re-elected, beating anti-incumbency, because the ruling party anchored its election campaign pushing narratives of stability, 'double engine ki sarkaar' (the idea that the Centre and the State is ruled by the same party) for faster development, welfare delivery and strong leadership, which triumphed the narrative propagated by opposition parties. In Gujarat, the BJP extended its record to a seventh straight term, while Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha converted personal credibility and targeted schemes into multi-term mandates. West Bengal's 2021 mandate for Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, against a highly contested BJP challenge, highlights pro-incumbency in a polarised contest. These examples may look like isolated cases of States being voted back to power, with the recent Bihar Assembly election being one of them, but Indian elections since 1952 had witnessed periods of pro and anti-incumbency.

The first few years (1952-1966) were a period of pro-incumbency. Out of the 39 assembly elections held during this period, almost 85% governments got re-elected. But the periods of 1967-79 and 1980-1988 witnessed both pro



and anti-incumbency trends. During 1967-79, out of 82 assembly elections, 54% of governments got re-elected, while 46% of them got voted out. Similarly, during the 1980-88 period, of 53 assembly elections, 51% governments got re-elected while 49% governments got voted out. However, the periods of 1989-98 and 1999-03 witnessed a very strong trend of anti-incumbency. During 1989-98, of 63 assembly elections, 71% of incumbent governments were voted out. The trend continued during the 1999-03 period, where of the 31 assembly elections, 61% of incumbent governments were voted out. The trend changed again during the 2004-15 period, which witnessed a mix of anti and pro-incumbency. In this period, nearly 55% incumbent governments got re-elected, while 45% governments were defeated. The 2016-2018 period has seen a strong anti-incumbency trend where nearly 75% of incumbent governments got defeated. This is understandable, for when the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government came to power at the Centre in 2014, many Congress-ruled States lost in subsequent State elections.

We are again witnessing a strong pro-incumbency trend. Many BJP ruled States have witnessed governments being re-elected. It is true that many of these governments were re-elected riding on the popularity of the welfare schemes, but it also has to do with general infrastructural improvement which the State and its people have started benefiting from. While politics of welfare has helped the ruling party mobilise the votes of the poor and the lower middle classes, infrastructural developments have especially helped in mobilising the votes of the upper middle-class voters.

# How exports are concentrated in few States



Despite a weakening rupee that has put India in the bracket of Asian countries with the worst performing currency, the economy's export numbers look impressive in the aggregate. However, a closer reading of the data reveals a far more uneven and structurally revealing story. When stripped of national aggregates, the data reveals a sharp divergence in performance across regions. A rigorous interrogation of the RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2024-25 reveals underlying structural dynamics.

A core-periphery patternThe geography of India's trade is becoming perilously lopsided as the export engine is being powered by a shrinking cluster of States. The top five exporters — Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh — now command nearly 70% of the national export basket. This creates a deceptive narrative where the national average masks a deepening regional crisis — where exports are becoming agglomerated rather than being dispersed across the nation. Firms are increasingly benefiting from spatial clustering, and not spreading out to newer regions.Half a decade ago, the top five States contributed roughly 65% of national exports. That figure has now crept close to 70%. In technical terms, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), a standard metric used to gauge market concentration, of India's export geography is rising, signalling that India's export geography is becoming dangerously top-heavy. Instead of regions which are lagging behind trying to catch up to these States, we are witnessing a hardening core-periphery pattern. The coastal belts of the south and west are integrating tighter into global supply chains while the vast demographic heartland of the north and the east are effectively decoupling from the trade engine. To understand why this divergence is accelerating, one must look beyond domestic policy to the tightening constraints of today's global trading environment. Shifting from volume to value

The window for low-skill, labour-intensive industrialisation that allowed countries like Bangladesh or Vietnam to plug into the world economy is closing. WTO data indicates a structural slowing of merchandise trade volume growth to a band of 0.5-3%. The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 2023 report estimates show that the top 10 global exporters control approximately 55% of world merchandise trade. In this environment, global capital is not merely seeking low-cost labour which was the traditional advantage of India's hinterland. In today's global economy, capital is no longer drawn merely to low costs but to high economic complexity. Research in economic complexity shows that economies with more diverse and tightly connected export baskets are far better positioned to transition into higher-value production. Product space visualisations reveal a networked structure in which sophisticated goods, such as machinery and automotive components, cluster in dense core areas, enabling relatively smooth movement into adjacent advanced technologies. In contrast, regions whose export baskets are concentrated in sparsely connected, peripheral areas face steep barriers to structural upgrading, as they lack the underlying capabilities required to enter complex value chains.

The tragedy of this divergence is compounded by a shift in the nature of production itself. It undermines the long-held assumption that export expansion would automatically

# Enterprise AI is maturing — will 2026 be the year it breaks free?

For the past few years, artificial intelligence has lived in a strange duality. On the surface, it looked magical — conversational systems, image generators, copilots that seem to reason. Underneath, enterprises have struggled with a more sober reality: hallucinations, brittle workflows, governance risks, and systems that work impressively in demos but falter at scale. In my recent conversation with Dwarak Rajagopal, Head of AI Research at Snowflake, what stood out was not optimism or scepticism, but maturity. AI, he suggested, is finally moving out of its adolescence. And the changes ahead, in 2026, will be less about bigger models and more about how intelligence is structured, verified, and distributed.

One of the most consequential shifts underway is the quiet erosion of monopoly power in foundation models. For much of the current AI cycle, a handful of companies have dominated the narrative, capital, and capabilities around large models. But Mr. Rajagopal pointed to a critical inflection: the centre of gravity is moving from pre-training to post-training. The biggest breakthroughs are no longer coming from simply scaling parameters, but from how models are refined with specialized, high-quality data. This is opening the door for open source foundation models that can be customized, fine-tuned, and deployed for specific enterprise use.

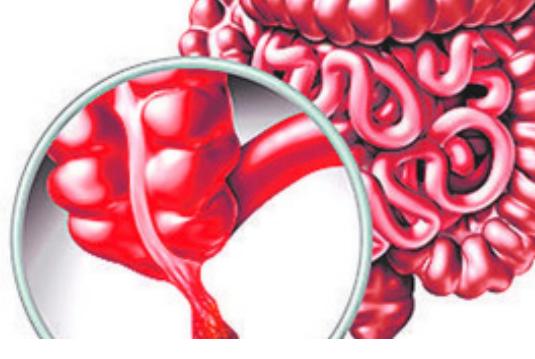
In 2026, this will fundamentally weaken the grip of a few AI giants and enable a more distributed innovation ecosystem where startups, researchers, and enterprises build on shared foundations rather than proprietary silos. This shift has deep implications for how intelligence is deployed inside organisations. Enterprises do not need general intelligence; they need contextual intelligence. They need systems that understand their data, their workflows, and their constraints. Open source models, combined with enterprise data platforms, make that possible. AI is no longer being treated as an oracle. It is being treated as infrastructure. The next major frontier, according to Mr. Rajagopal, will not be another leap in raw model capability but advances in agentic AI, driven by improvements in context windows and memory. Today's models remain constrained by working memory. They are powerful in single interactions but fragile across long, multi-step tasks. In 2026, innovation will focus on giving agents persistent memory that will let them retain longer contexts, learn from prior actions, and operate across extended timelines. This will allow AI systems to move beyond reactive assistance and toward sustained problem-solving, supporting complex business processes rather than isolated queries. Automation won't be that easy.

Yet autonomy brings risk. One of the biggest bottle-



necks in deploying agentic systems today is error accumulation. Small mistakes compound across multi-step workflows, forcing enterprises to rely on human oversight as a safety net. Mr. Rajagopal's view is that this dependency will not scale. The breakthrough will come from self-verification. Instead of inserting humans into every loop, AI systems will develop internal feedback mechanisms. They will be able to judge, validate, and correct their own outputs. These "auto-judging" agents will mark a shift from supervised automation to self-regulating systems, making large-scale, reliable agentic workflows viable for enterprise use. This evolution in AI capability will inevitably reshape the human side of technology as well. Plumbing organisational hierarchiesOne of the most striking implications Mr. Rajagopal outlined is how AI will redefine the software engineering hierarchy itself. As agents take over routine coding and repetitive tasks, the traditional ladder, in which juniors handle low-level implementation and seniors design systems, will blur. Junior engineers will be pushed up the stack, working earlier on infrastructure, integration, and system-level thinking. Senior engineers, meanwhile, will become orchestrators who design architectures, mentor teams, and ensure humans and AI systems collaborate effectively. This will force a rethink of computer science education, career paths, and what it means to be "experienced" in a world where execution is increasingly automated. Threaded through all of this is a geopolitical undercurrent. The U.S. style of AI development has become increasingly corporatised and closed, driven by scale, capital intensity, and proprietary advantage. China, by contrast, is leaning more heavily into academic and open-source approaches, integrating research and state-backed ecosystems. India, meanwhile, sits at a crossroads. It has the talent, the data, and the scale. But its position in the global AI race will depend on whether it invests in open foundations,

# Your appendix plays a bigger role in your health than you may think



For decades, the human appendix was casually dismissed as a "useless" vestige. Modern research and clinical experience, however, suggest that this small, narrow pouch, attached to the cecum in the lower right abdomen, has a more nuanced role than once believed. "The appendix is like a safe house for good bacteria, supporting the digestive system after illness," says Sugi Subramaniam, senior consultant, surgical gastroenterology at SRM Global Hospitals, Chennai. Beyond this, it may influence the immune system, especially early in life, by exposing white blood cells to antigens in the digestive tract, he notes. Arunmozh Varman, consultant for laparoscopic and robotic hernia surgery, Rela Hospitals, Chennai describes it as a lymphoid organ that helps the gut recover post-infection.

"Our ancestors may have needed the appendix more, when food cleanliness was uncertain, but even today, it quietly supports immunity. It's a small, silent job, but not the appendix is not a piece of waste as we once assumed," stresses J. Saravanan, senior consultant surgical gastroenterologist & robotic surgeon, VS Hospitals, Chennai. Typically 7–10 cm long, the appendix varies in position and size, sometimes ranging from 2 cm to 20 cm. Gautham Krishnamurthy, senior consultant, surgical gastroenterologist, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, adds that the appendix has historically been important for digesting raw, plant-based food. Today, it functions mainly as beneficial gut bacteria, protecting and aiding replenishment after disturbances such as diarrhoeal illnesses.

The appendix can become inflamed, causing appendicitis — a common surgical emergency. Classic symptoms include abdominal pain beginning near the belly button and shifting to the lower right side, accompanied by fever, nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite. Siddharth D., consultant, minimally invasive surgery at SIMS Hospital, notes that acute appendicitis affects around 9% of the population, most commonly in their twenties and thirties. Appendicitis is caused by an obstruction from hardened stools (faecalith), an infection, or rarely, tumors. Myths — such as fruit seeds

causing appendicitis, or the condition resolving spontaneously — are incorrect. "Delay can lead to rupture, which is life-threatening," warns Dr. Varman. Appendectomy is the definitive treatment. Minimally invasive options include laparoscopic or robotic surgery. "Most patients walk the same day and go home in a day or two," Dr. Saravanan says. The procedure involves small keyhole incisions and camera guidance, though open surgery remains important for complicated cases. In some cases, uncomplicated appendicitis can be managed with antibiotics. Dr. Subramaniam explains, "Non-surgical methods work initially, but there is a greater risk of recurrence. Surgery remains the standard, long-term solution." Studies show about 70% of uncomplicated cases respond to antibiotics, but recurrence can reach 40% within a year, particularly in patients with appendicoliths or limited healthcare access, says Dr. Krishnamurthy.

Doctors often encounter several misconceptions about the appendix. Many believe it is completely useless, but while not essential for survival, the appendix does house beneficial bacteria and supports immunity. Another common myth is that removal of the appendix harms long-term health; in reality, most patients live normal lives without any dietary restrictions. As Dr. Arunmozh Varman points out, "You can still enjoy pizza and biryani!" Some people think appendicitis affects only young adults, but it can occur at any age, though early adulthood is most common. There is also a dangerous belief that home remedies or ignoring the pain will help; untreated appendicitis can rupture, leading to serious complications. Dr. J. Saravanan emphasises, "If your body sends a strong signal, listen. Come early. We'll fix it before it becomes trouble." Post-surgery recovery is usually smooth. Patients may rest a few days, avoid heavy lifting for several weeks, and start with light meals. Long-term lifestyle or health impacts are minimal. Short-term changes, such as minor bowel adjustments, may occur, but minimally invasive techniques reduce the risk of adhesions or complications. Dr. Krishnamurthy recalls cases during a recent Diwali weekend where a patient delayed surgery, resulting in an emergency laparoscopic procedure due to severe infection. Such cases highlight the importance of timely intervention. The appendix, though small, plays a supporting role in immunity and gut health. Acute appendicitis remains the most common abdominal surgical emergency. Early recognition, proper medical evaluation, and timely treatment, preferably via minimally invasive surgery, ensure safe recovery and minimal long-term impact. "Life after an appendix removal is completely normal, except in rare cases of complications," notes Dr. Saravanan. "For most patients, it becomes something they barely remember and that's the best outcome we can hope for."

# How junk food, hidden genes and obesity pushed teen to a liver transplant

Fatty liver in teens may seem rare. Except it isn't. It is now the most frequent cause of chronic liver disease, affecting an estimated 10–17 percent of adolescents with obesity. What remains rare, however, is the need for a liver transplant in a child under 18. That was the life-saving intervention for a 14-year-old boy from Surat, who arrived at Mumbai's Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital with acute liver failure caused by an advanced form of fatty liver disease. His case is a stark reminder of why childhood obesity demands urgent attention, especially in Indians who are genetically predisposed to fatty liver disease, even with only abdominal fat.

The teen is now recovering at home, with all parameters holding steady as he underwent a liver transplant just a month ago. His father stepped in as donor and gave his right lobe to save him. "The boy arrived with serious complications, including jaundice, fluid accumulation in the abdomen and severe water retention that led to a sudden 15–20 kg weight gain," says Dr Gaurav Gupta, co-director, Department of Liver Transplant and HPB Surgery at the hospital. "The swelling began to reduce after surgery." What triggered the crisis was a genetic mutation that promotes fat accumulation and retention in the liver. But genetics alone was not responsible. "These predispositions often interact with environmental factors such as diet, obesity and insulin resistance," Dr Gupta explains. "A person with high genetic risk may never develop severe disease if they maintain a healthy lifestyle. But like many teens, this boy regularly consumed ultra-processed and junk foods, which accelerated the damage."

Why teen obesity and imbalanced diet pushed the boy over the edge

After evaluating the boy, Dr Gupta thought about all means to manage symptoms of liver failure. But transplant seemed the only option. "In such cases, the liver can no longer perform essential functions such as filtering toxins, producing proteins and storing glucose," Dr Gupta says. "He had jaundice and massive fluid retention, particularly in his legs. Increased pressure in liver veins forces fluid into the abdomen, causing severe swelling that affects breathing and eating." A series of investigations revealed multiple genetic mutations that explained the rapid deterioration. "A transplant was necessary because a healthy donor liver does not carry the same mutations," he explains. At the time of surgery, the boy weighed nearly 84 kg due to fluid overload. Today, his weight is in the low 60s. "His bilirubin level was above 10 mg/dL and has now returned to normal. All symptoms of liver failure have resolved," says Dr Gupta. Because the condition had a genetic basis, first-degree relatives were also advised to undergo genetic testing. "The goal is early lifestyle correction to prevent similar damage," he adds. Genetic testing revealed high-risk variants in the PNPLA3 and GCKR genes, which significantly increase susceptibility to fatty liver disease and are particularly prevalent in the Indian population. "However, genetics alone was not responsible. The diet was the accelerator," says Dr Arti Pawaria, chief paediatric hepatologist and paediatric transplant physician. Unhealthy dietary patterns, excess calorie intake and reduced physical activity aggravated his genetic risk. "He consumed highly processed foods in his diet like packaged snacks, chips, burgers, cookies, noodles and sodas, usually teen favourites. He had a lot of refined sugar junk foods, which in his case turned out to be hazardous. Schools, parents, and policy makers must work together to reduce children's exposure to ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks, while promoting affordable, nutritious meals and daily physical activity. Early, population-level dietary interventions can avert a looming burden of advanced liver disease in young Indians," she says.

Excess fat from obesity releases fatty acids into the bloodstream, overwhelming the liver. "What children eat



Fatty liver in teens may seem rare. Except it isn't. It is now the most frequent cause of chronic liver disease, affecting an estimated 10–17 percent of adolescents with obesity. What remains rare, however, is the need for a liver transplant in a child under 18. That was the life-saving intervention for a 14-year-old boy from Surat, who arrived at Mumbai's Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital with acute liver failure caused by an advanced form of fatty liver disease.

every day silently shapes their liver health — early dietary discipline can prevent a lifetime of liver disease. Children should be encouraged to eat fresh, home-cooked meals with plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, eggs, and milk-based proteins. High sugar and refined foods cause fat to accumulate in the liver, even in children who may not look overweight. Healthy eating habits, started early and sustained with physical activity, can prevent fatty liver disease," says Dr Pawaria.

People who receive a liver transplant in their teens can live long, healthy lives, with many experiencing a near-normal lifespan due to significant advances in medicine, leading to high survival rates. "The boy can resume school three months after transplant surgery. Slowly he can take up sports too. Post-transplant, obviously the first three to four months are very critical, where we need to keep a track of him. He should avoid infections and his diet has to be managed carefully. But thereafter, he can have an absolutely normal life, even marry and have children as an adult," says Dr Gupta. But diet and physical activity will have to be in tandem. "The healthy, transplanted liver portion can correct the genetic defect, provided the recipient adheres to a healthy lifestyle and manages associated metabolic risk factors," he cautions. The 14-year-old will be on immunosuppressants, too, for the rest of his life. Preventing teen obesity, experts stress, must be family-driven. Dr Pawaria advises aiming for at least five daily servings of vegetables and fruits, choosing whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat milk, and healthy fats, and prioritising water over sugary beverages. Lime or cucumber-infused water can help curb soda cravings. Always read food labels to avoid hidden sugars, advise nutritionists. Changes should involve the entire family to avoid singling out the child, while allowing occasional treats in controlled portions. Mindful eating habits also matter. Families should eat together at the table without screens, involve teens in cooking to teach portion control, exercise together, limit screen time, and ensure nine to ten hours of sleep each night. These habits, experts say, may be the most powerful medicine of all.

## Expect to sign legal agreement of US deal before March-end: Commerce Secretary



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal Wednesday said India and the US could sign the trade deal's first tranche by the end of March after having agreed on its broad contours earlier this month. The signing of the deal is expected to lower the reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from 25% to 18%. Washington has already rolled back the additional 25% tariffs imposed on August 27 last year over India's purchase of Russian oil. "We expect that by the end of March... before the end of March... we should be able to finalise and sign the legal agreement. However, having said that, I think drafting a legal agreement... and to the satisfaction of both sides... it also sometimes may take time. But we are hopeful, the teams are working on it, and we should look at March as the timeline in which we should make it operational," Agrawal told ANI on the sidelines of BIOFACH Germany 2026, a trade fair for organic products.

He said the joint statement that India and the US have released lays down the broad contours of the interim agreement, and that this agreement needs to be converted into a legal document. As per the joint statement, India agreed to "eliminate or reduce tariffs" on all US industrial goods and a wide range of American food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

The US agreed to apply a reciprocal tariff rate of 18% on Indian goods, including textiles and apparel, leather and

footwear, plastic and rubber, organic chemicals, home décor, artisanal products, and certain machinery. "Subject to the successful conclusion of the interim agreement, will remove the reciprocal tariff on a wide range of goods identified in the Potential Tariff Adjustments for Aligned Partners," the joint statement said. The US also agreed to remove tariffs on certain aircraft and aircraft parts from India. International trade expert and think tank Global Trade Research Initiative Founder Ajay Srivastava said tariff reductions on US fresh fruits such as apples and oranges, and on soybean oil, are likely to hurt Indian farmers and could face strong opposition from farmer groups. "India has earlier agreed to limited tariff reductions on automobiles under its FTAs with the UK and the EU, but it is not clear whether concessions to the US involve limited quotas and limited duty cuts or unlimited quota and full tariff elimination. Further, tariff elimination on electronic components, smartphones, and solar panels could adversely affect domestic manufacturing of these products in the future," Srivastava said.

The former trade officer said the US, in return, will not reduce regular most favoured nation (MFN) tariffs on any products and will only lower reciprocal tariffs that currently apply to about 55% of Indian exports to America, bringing them down from 50% to 18%. Suresh Nair, tax partner, EY India, said the interim US-India trade deal should make quite a few American farm products cheaper here in India — things like soybean oil, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruits, dried distillers' grains and red sorghum for animal feed, and wines and spirits. India is cutting or scrapping tariffs on these and addressing some longstanding non-tariff barriers that have restricted supply. "That should bring retail prices down for premium nuts, fruits, wines, and particularly soybean oil, making them more accessible to middle-class households and potentially easing input costs for food processors and the livestock sector. On the energy side, the agreement doesn't alter tariffs on oil or energy imports directly, but India's stated intent to purchase \$500 billion worth of US energy products (among other items) over the next five years should lead to larger, steadier volumes coming in, which could help stabilise supply and support more competitive pricing in the longer term, though retail fuel prices will still be influenced by global markets and domestic policies," Nair said.

Shark Tank India's Anupam Mittal stopped using after-shave two years ago; says, 'They are synthetic'

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

In a move aimed at curbing mis-selling, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday proposed that banks and other regulated entities should obtain explicit customer consent before offering any financial products and services, and compensate them for any instance of mis-selling, as part of draft guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct. The RBI has sought public comments on these draft proposals. The final directions will come into effect from July 1, 2026. While suggesting that banks should refund the entire amount to customers in cases where mis-selling of a product or service is established, the norms also stated that customers must be compensated for any losses incurred. The guidelines include norms for advertising, marketing as well as sales of financial products and services by regulated entities (REs).

Under the proposed framework, RBI regulator barred lenders from deploying any dark patterns — any practice or deceptive design pattern using user interface or user experience interactions designed to mislead or trick users — which could create a sense of urgency and coerce customers into making an immediate purchase of products or services.

"A bank shall ensure that its user interfaces do not deploy any dark pattern. User interfaces deployed by the bank shall be subject to user testing and periodic internal audit for identification of any unfair features, including dark patterns," the draft guidelines stated. A lender should put in place a comprehensive policy for advertising, marketing and

sales of its own as well as third-party financial products or services. The policy added that lenders should ensure their policies and practices neither create incentives for mis-selling nor encourage employees or direct selling agents (DSAs) to 'push' the sale of products or services. "No incentive is directly or indirectly received by the employees engaged in marketing or sales of third-party products or services from the third-party," it said. Lenders should not bundle the sale of any third-party product or service with any of its own product or service. In circumstances where the sale of their own product or service depends on the purchase of a third-party product or service, the customer should have the option to purchase the product from another company or agent. The proposed norms also warn REs against funding the purchase of a product or service via loans without securing the customer's explicit consent.

**As FDTL exemptions lapse, IndiGo tells DGCA it is fully prepared to comply with new pilot rest rules**

India's largest airline IndiGo's flights operations are expected to be fully compliant with the new pilot rest and duty duration norms from Wednesday, following the expiration of the specific exemptions given to the airline after its operational meltdown early December, according to aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). "IndiGo Airlines has informed DGCA that it shall be fully prepared to comply with the statutory provisions and to implement the approved Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) scheme... upon expiry of the exemptions," the DGCA said in a statement on Wednesday. The specific exemptions from some FDTL norms granted to IndiGo lapsed on Tuesday (February 10).

"IndiGo Airlines has further stated that all necessary operational, fostering, and monitoring arrangements are being put in place to ensure full compliance with the approved FDTL scheme with effect from 11 February 2026," the regulator added. Last month, the carrier had assured the DGCA that it will have sufficient pilot availability to maintain its current level of flight operations—over 2,200 daily flights—beyond February 10. IndiGo had informed the DGCA that it will have 2,400 captains available for its Airbus A320 fleet, against a requirement of 2,280 to maintain stable operations as per its current flight schedule after February 10. As for first officers, the airline had said it will have 2,240 available, against a requirement of 2,050. When the crisis crippled IndiGo's operations for a few days in December, the airline had informed the DGCA that it was short by 65 captains for its workhorse Airbus A320 fleet to maintain its schedule as per the new FDTL rules, even though it had first officers in sufficient numbers.

The Indian Express had reported earlier in January that the airline expected to maintain its current, slightly curtailed schedule despite its specific exemptions from some night-duty-related FDTL rules lapsing on February 10. The new FDTL rules stipulate more rest for pilots and rationalisation of their flying duties—particularly late night operations—in a bid to better manage pilot fatigue, which is

a key risk to aviation safety. These new norms, which were stipulated in January 2024, were delayed in their implementation and took effect in two phases—from July 1, 2025 and November 1, 2025—with the second phase rollout hitting IndiGo considerably. The new norms meant that airlines either had to have more pilots to maintain their schedule, or shrink the schedule in line with the new requirements. IndiGo, however, was caught unprepared.

IndiGo is currently operating over 2,200 flights—around 1,900 domestic and the rest international—following a 10% government-mandated curtailment in its approved domestic schedule till March. Given that IndiGo commanded a domestic market share of around 65%, the disruption had brought India's civil aviation operations to their knees. The large-scale disruption, which erupted on December 3, peaked on December 5 with over 1,600 of the airline's 2,300-plus daily flights getting cancelled in a single day. But with the DGCA granting specific exemptions, the airline was able to swiftly stabilise operations over the course of the next few days. On January 9, IndiGo was ordered to curtail its approved domestic flight schedule by 10%.

The airline expects to maintain its current schedule for the entire duration of the Winter Schedule, which ends on March 28. According to sources close to IndiGo, pilot hiring and onboarding pipeline at the airline is robust, which they expect will lead to sufficient numbers of pilots. Also, command upgrades—promotions of first officers to captains—in cases where they were already due have been accelerated, which is expected to help the airline increase its pilot buffers, or bench strength to improve its roster resilience. IndiGo accounts for a lion's share of domestic flights that land or depart between midnight and 6 am, the new definition of 'night' in the revised FDTL rules; the earlier definition was midnight to 5 am. In that one hour 5–6 am—also, IndiGo is the dominant carrier, shows an analysis of the airlines' schedule. Among other changes, the new rules capped the number of landings for pilots operating flights encroaching upon any part of this six-hour period at two, down from six earlier.

## 'Is spitting brown phlegm, from smoking, a sign of cancer?'



of the airways caused by smoking. It leads to a daily cough and dark mucus. Old blood: Tiny, irritated blood vessels can leak small amounts of blood, which turn brown as they age. Chest infections: Infections can cause mucus to become thicker and darker. Pollution and dust exposure: Smoke and pollution make mucus darker and thicker. If brown phlegm persists, a chest X-ray may be done to check for infections or lung damage (Image: Unsplash)

Most of these causes are treatable, especially if smoking is stopped. However, they should be taken seriously if any of the symptoms last more than 2–3 weeks, become darker/thicker, involve blood streaks or clots, persist as hoarseness or unusual fatigue, or involve unexplained weight loss, chest pain, or shortness of breath. "These do not mean cancer for sure, but they do mean you should see a doctor promptly," the oncologist cautions. However, if someone quits smoking, within weeks, mucus production decreases, the lungs begin to clean themselves, and brown phlegm often turns clear or disappears. Cough and irritation slowly improve, and the risk of serious lung disease drops over time. Even long-term smokers see benefits—it is never too late to quit.

Which medical tests to get if brown phlegm persists, doctors may recommend these medical tests: Chest X-ray to check for infections or lung damage. CT scan for detailed imaging if symptoms continue. Sputum test to detect infections or abnormal cell. Pulmonary function test to assess lung efficiency. Bronchoscopy, if needed, to examine the lungs directly. However, if a non-smoker develops brown phlegm, the possible triggers could be pollution, chest infections, sinus irritation, occupational exposure, or severe acid reflux. While cancer is less likely in non-smokers, persistent symptoms still deserve evaluation.

## Shark Tank India's Anupam Mittal stopped using after-shave two years ago; says, 'They are synthetic'

Shark Tank India's Anupam Mittal recently spoke about his personal hygiene habits, revealing that he stopped using "synthetic" aftershaves about 2 years ago. "They are hormonal disruptors. They are synthetic. The long-term effect is severe. In fact, I stopped using the aftershave I applied two years ago. I now use phitkari... alum stone," he told Balika Vadhu actor Neha Marda Agrawal, who appeared on the show's latest season seeking investment for her phitkari-based body odour-containing brand.

Switching from aftershave to phitkari (alum) is a choice some people make to reduce skin irritation, but it comes with both benefits and limitations, experts suggest.

Notably, aftershaves often contain alcohol, fragrance, and preservatives, which can dry the skin, disrupt the skin barrier, and trigger irritation, redness, or razor bumps, especially in sensitive or acne-prone skin. "Stopping aftershave can help reduce dryness, stinging, and post-shave inflammation," said Dr Shareefa Chause, dermatologist, Dr Shareefa Skin Care Clinic, Mumbai, adding that many people notice calmer skin and fewer breakouts over time when they stop the usage. Adding that phitkari has natural astringent and antibacterial properties, the expert continued, "It is known to help tighten pores, and reduce bacterial growth, which can lower the risk of razor infections. It is fragrance-free and usually well-tolerated, making it a safer option for people with sensitive skin." However, using phitkari is not without drawbacks. "Overuse can overly dry the skin, leading to tightness, flaking, or increased sensitivity. It also does not provide hydration or barrier repair like modern, dermatologist-tested post-shave products. In people with eczema-



prone or very dry skin, regular alum use may worsen dryness," said Dr Chause. If using phitkari, it should be followed by a gentle, non-comedogenic moisturiser to maintain skin balance and prevent long-term dryness. So, be cautious while using even phitkari as moderation is key, said Dr Chause.

## Lin Laishram, 40, talks about her pregnancy journey, cravings, Randeep Hooda: 'Baby will be served good food every day'



really well these days, and what does it mean for the food and hospitality segment?

Lin: Absolutely. It's a great opportunity for people like me who are working with niche cuisines. Many are taking it seriously now, and I love that you can follow your passion, generate income, and start small without massive investments.

Q: Your wedding truly stood out for its showcase of a beautiful Manipuri wedding in November 2023... what is it like to look back?

Lin: Definitely. It's usually the first thing people mention when they meet me. I think people connected with the authenticity and the genuineness of it—that's what they really admired.

Q: How are you embracing the idea of parenthood?

Lin: I honestly haven't thought too deeply about it yet because I'm still figuring things out. But one thing is for sure... baby will be served good food every day, every meal.

Q: Tell us about your diet?

Lin: I do have certain dietary guidelines to follow, but I fail almost every day—tasting new food is a huge part of my life now, and I have had a major sweet craving my whole pregnancy.

Q: How are you keeping your mental health in check?

Lin: I write, I chant and meditate daily for about 30 minutes every day. Writing, chanting, and sitting in silence really help me reset and realign myself.

Q: What's a typical day in your life like?

Lin: I start with a workout, then work through the day—usually till 6 pm, though most days stretch well into the night.

Q: Your thoughts on social media...?

Lin: I love social media. It has taught me so much and has given me the opportunity to launch a business and learn continuously. But like anything, it can be misused or overused if you're not mindful.

Q: How important is financial independence as a woman?

Lin: Extremely important. My mother was a working woman, and I saw her work well into her 60s. I started working early in life as a sportsperson, and that financial independence brings a very different kind of freedom.

Q: Do you plan romantic dates, or does Randeep?

Lin: We both find typical romantic dates a bit cliché, but we do make time for each other. The only time we truly disconnect from the world and create our own little space is when we're in the jungle—that's when he's in his full element, and I love it. Mumbai is just too hectic to be romantic.

Actor Lin Laishram, who is expecting her first child with husband, actor Randeep Hooda, is "enjoying being pregnant". The 40-year-old has been extremely busy with her entrepreneurial initiative as the founder of Akhoi, a cloud kitchen showcasing Manipuri cuisine. After collaborating with actor Mona Singh for her recent North Eastern flavours pop-up at Singh's Kona Kona restaurant, Lin spoke about her passion for food, culture, and Randeep as a husband in an interview with *indianexpress.com*.

Lin: I'm doing really well. It feels different now. I feel more grounded and more responsible towards myself. I'm truly loving this phase and enjoying being pregnant.

Q: Tell us about your cloud kitchen Akhoi initiative...

Lin: Akhoi, in simple words, is my love language. I love feeding people—cooking, talking, and sharing stories through food. It's also my way of bringing Manipuri culture into the mainstream.

Q: How was it collaborating with Mona for this pop-up?

Lin: I love the vibe, the food, and the people at Kona Kona—and of course Mona, whom I discovered as a fellow foodie through this process. The response to Akhoi was amazing. People were curious, asking questions, and engaging with the food. It felt really special, and I'm so happy we got to collaborate.

Lin Laishram, Mona Singh, Lin Laishram and Mona Singh (PR Handout)

Mona is a darling. She is so passionate about food, which makes working with her fun and effortless. She genuinely enjoyed every dish we curated and even asked for fermented bamboo shoot, which very few people know or ask for. That really stood out to me.

Q: Do you think the cloud kitchen setup has taken off?

Lin: I love social media. It has taught me so much and has given me the opportunity to launch a business and learn continuously. But like anything, it can be misused or overused if you're not mindful.

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## Bennett's unbeaten 48 powers Zimbabwe past Oman in T20 World Cup



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Colombo: The highly rated Brian Bennett showed his class on the big stage with an unbeaten 48 off 36 balls to complement the bowlers' excellent display and power Zimbabwe to an eight-wicket win over Oman in their T20 World Cup match here on Monday. Opting to bowl, Blessing Muzarabani wreaked havoc with the new ball before pace-bowling colleague Richard Ngarava joined him in the demolition job to skittle Oman out for 103.

Muzarabani (3/16 in 4 overs) and Ngarava (3/17 in 4 overs) were the most successful bowlers for Zimbabwe as Oman put up an ordinary display with the bat. They were in danger of being bowled out for a much smaller total after slipping to 27 for five in the seventh over. Pacer Brad Evans also chipped in with impressive figures of 3/18 from 3.5 overs in a brilliant Zimbabwe bowling performance. Zimbabwe then made a flying start to the chase courtesy of Tadiwanashe Marumani, who blazed away to 21 off 11 balls before Wasim Ali pulled off a stunning catch to dismiss the opener.

## Pakistan's X-factor: A multifaceted spin bowling unit that can trouble India's big-hitters

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

With their first win over the United States of America, two years after the 2024 T20 World Cup debacle, Pakistan on Tuesday teased what could set them apart when India and their probable Super 8 opponents come rolling later this tournament. The platform for a 28-run victory in Colombo was laid down by an improved batting performance, but captain Salman Agha also unveiled his team's unique spin-bowling concoction during the old SSC cricket ground's first night T20I. In restricting the USA's 191 chase, Pakistan deployed 16 overs of slow-bowling contrast. Their star pacer, Shaheen Afridi, rendered ineffective on a truer pitch, leaking 42 in four overs. Agha did not summon seam all-rounder Faheem Ashraf either, but rather resorted to his spin riches.

Even as the batting squadron continues to fall on middling lines, there is merit in plotting this Pakistan side as dark horses on the sticky Lankan strips for this assorted spin band. Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed bowls during the second T20 cricket match between Pakistan and Australia, in Lahore, Pakistan, Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. (AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary) Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed bowls during the second T20 cricket match between Pakistan and Australia, in Lahore, Pakistan, Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. (AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary)

In mystery man Abrar Ahmed, offie Saim Ayub, who operates with the new ball, and all-rounders Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz, Pakistan bring a spin attack that could stand on par with India and Afghanistan. Expanding the arsenal from their nervy win over the Netherlands last week, Pakistan also reeled in the "two-elbowed" spinner, Usman Tariq, against the USA batters. When India belted their second-highest T20I score (271/5) against New Zealand in Thiruvananthapuram last month, Pakistan's spin quintet stubbed Australia to a 90-run defeat the same day. Defending 198 at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, the spinners combined for 14.4 overs and snapped up all 10 wickets. In men's T20Is involving Full-Member teams, it was only the second instance in history where spinners had bagged all 10 wickets. India had similarly bowled out the West Indies in 2022, with three spinners producing every dismissal. Their latest assignment saw them nab seven wickets spread across 16 overs in all phases in Colombo, conceding 105 runs. Only once have more overs of spin been used by a team in a T20 World Cup match, coincidentally also by Pakistan (18) in Colombo against Australia in 2012.

Having played all of their T20Is in similar subcontinent conditions since the start of the Asia Cup in September 2025, Pakistan are likely to extend the strategy for the remainder of the World Cup and paper over the batting cracks. Pakistan's Usman Tariq bowls during the second T20 cricket match between Pakistan and Australia, in Lahore, Pakistan, Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. (AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary) Pakistan's Usman Tariq bowls during the second T20 cricket match between Pakistan and Australia, in Lahore, Pakistan, Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026. (AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary) Pakistan spinners have been the most frugal bunch in this period. Averaging 15.55 for 113 wickets with a 6.63 economy, they have edged out Afghanistan and India on both fronts. While the Indian spin attack boasts the best strike rate (13.2) heading into the World Cup, Pakistan are



within arm's length, striking roughly every 14 deliveries. With their batting opener Ayub even doubling up as an unlikely Powerplay enforcer with the ball, Pakistan have bowled more spin in the first six overs than any other team in the last six months. Ayub has collected 10 of Pakistan's 51 Powerplay wickets, emerging as the most successful spinner up front in the world in this period. With Nawaz, Abrar, and the others manning the middle-overs, their versatile attack has been as effective in the phase as India, with negligible strike rate differences. Another factor that could heighten the threat on the island is the spin pack's conjoined ability to relay slower speeds with sharper efficacy than their Indian counterparts. As most of the top-ranked teams shuttle between varying conditions in India and Sri Lanka in the tournament, Pakistan can continue to build on the spin-bowling core and unsettle oppositions. Even the red-hot Indians will be forced to make adjustments if they are to take on Pakistan in the knockouts, a situation that will push their games out from Mumbai/Ahmedabad to the tacky Colombo pitches.

Pakistan's Saim Ayub, second right, celebrates with teammates the wicket of Netherlands' Zach Lion-Cachet during the T20 World Cup cricket match between Netherlands and Pakistan in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026. (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena) Pakistan's Saim Ayub, second right, celebrates with teammates the wicket of Netherlands' Zach Lion-Cachet during the T20 World Cup cricket match between Netherlands and Pakistan in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026. (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena) The two-paced conditions at the Wankhede Stadium had forced the Indian batters to veer away from their one-dimensional hitting exhibitions, requiring captain Suryakumar Yadav to wage a stellar rescue act on his home ground. With as many as six left-handers in the Indian top eight, it will be interesting to see how Pakistan arrange the four overs of Tariq, whose action continues to divide opinions and spark discussions on social media. His unusual stop-and-sling in the delivery stride could unsettle the Indian batters, disrupting their methodical takedown of high-quality attacks on belters at home over the last two months. For mercurial Pakistan, pressure will be constant, as will the suspense over which version turns up on each match day. When India arrive for the rejuvenated Sunday tie in Colombo, Pakistan could assemble a spin-heavy sauce that may no longer be a secret but enough to neutralise a few of the defending champions' strengths.

## India ready for Pakistan challenge in T20 World Cup, says Tilak Varma

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

New Delhi: India batter Tilak Varma on Wednesday said the team is excited for the high-pressure game against Pakistan in the T20 World Cup on February 15. Pakistan had earlier considered boycotting the marquee clash in Colombo but reversed the decision after pressure from the International Cricket Council and other member nations. "To be honest, we are very excited to play. We got to know that the match is going to take place the day before. We are ready to play. We are watching all the teams, the bowlers and the batsmen."

All the players and team members are ready. Now, we are in the match zone. The planning will start," said Tilak on the eve of the Namibia game on Thursday. India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate had earlier spoken about the advantage Pakistan have as they have been based in Sri Lanka for a while and will play all their games there. Talking more about the match, Tilak added: "We are going one by one in every match, so we will see. We have video analysis, we have the technology, so we will see how



India batter Tilak Varma said the team is excited for the high-pressure T20 World Cup clash against Pakistan in Colombo on February 15.

we are playing, how the wicket is behaving. We have already prepared, so everyone has different shots in their team. The shots we have to play on the wicket, the bowlers we have to target."

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Hyderabad: Afghanistan player Mohammad Nabi has been fined 15 percent of his match fee for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Group D match against South Africa in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. Nabi was found to have breached Article 2.4 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "Disobeying an Umpire's instruction during an International Match." In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Nabi's disciplinary record, for which it was the first offence in a 24-month period.

The incident occurred at the start of the 14th over of Afghanistan's innings, when Nabi engaged in a prolonged argument with the umpires over bowler Lungi Ngidi's wristband. Nabi admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by David Gilbert of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Jayaraman Madanagopal

## Michael Leask shines as Scotland beat Italy in T20 World Cup



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Kolkata: All-rounder Michael Leask starred with a late cameo and a four-wicket haul after opener George Munsey's attacking fifty as Scotland thrashed debutants Italy by 73 runs in their T20 World Cup Group C match here on Monday. The left-hander Munsey, who survived a reprieve on 41, dominated the bowling with a fluent 84 off 54 balls (14x4, 2x6) before Leask gave the final flourish with 22 not out from the last five balls, smoking Thomas Draca for two sixes and two fours at Eden Gardens. After his quickfire cameo, the off-spinner struck with the first ball of the innings and returned figures of 4/17. Italy folded for 134 for nine in 16.4 overs as captain Wayne Madsen did not bat after suffering a shoulder injury earlier in the game. West Indies, Scotland and England now occupy the top three spots in Group C, separated by net run rate. Scotland have played two matches while England and WI have played one each. Italy's chase began poorly as Leask struck with the very first ball, removing Justin Mosca.

He remained the busiest man on the field, breaking partnerships at crucial moments. JJ Smuts briefly lifted Italy's spirits, taking 23 runs off Brad Wheal's third over with

a sequence of 6, 4, 6, while Anthony Mosca added another big hit. Despite losing three wickets inside the first 28 balls, Italy showed fight through Ben Manenti (52 off 31), who scored the country's first-ever T20 World Cup fifty. He reached the landmark in 29 balls, hitting Oliver Davidson over midwicket for six.

Ben and his brother Harry added 73 runs off just 46 balls to raise hopes, with Harry scoring 37. But Leask broke the stand against the run of play, dismissing Harry, and Ben followed in the next over. The off-spinner then removed Grant Stewart and Gian-Piero Meade in the space of four balls to cap his spell. Scotland also had a point to prove, having lost to Italy — their only defeat in four matches — at last July's European qualifiers to miss a direct World Cup berth. A dramatic late entry following Bangladesh's refusal to play India on security grounds brought them back into the tournament, and they responded in style against their European rivals. Apart from winning the toss, little went Italy's way.

Their troubles deepened when captain Madsen injured his left shoulder after an awkward dive in the fourth over and had to walk off. He was later ruled out of the game. Munsey set the tone immediately, pulling and driving Ali Hasan for back-to-back boundaries in the first over. Italy's bowlers persisted with short and wide tactics and the aggressive opener cashed in. He was dropped on 41 when Anthony Mosca spilled a skier at cover, a lapse that proved costly as Munsey raced to his 14th T20 fifty off just 30 balls with a six against Ben Manenti. Jones, who was watchful early on, joined the charge as Scotland reached 91 without loss at the halfway mark. Munsey grew increasingly destructive after his fifty before Italy finally broke through in the 14th over when Grant Stewart claimed their first-ever World Cup wicket. The opener failed to clear long-on and was caught by Harry Manenti. Jones departed soon after, but McMullen provided the late surge along with Leask.

## Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur lead India women in Australia tour

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Sydney: The Indian women's cricket team has arrived in Australia for the multi-format series, which will begin on February 15. The tour includes three T20 matches, three One-Day Internationals, and a historic one-off Test. Harmanpreet Kaur will lead India in all formats, with Smriti Mandhana as vice-captain. In a video released by BCCI Women on Monday, the players looked excited for the tour. Smriti spoke about the celebrations after RCB won their second WPL title and how she feels returning to national duty.

"Very hectic, I would say, but worth it. We had a lot of fun, but now back to national duty," she said in the video. India will play the first T20I against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on February 15, followed by the second at Manuka Oval in Canberra on February 19, and the third at Adelaide Oval on February 21. The T20I series will serve as crucial preparation for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, scheduled for June. The ODI series begins on February 24 at Allan Border Field in Brisbane. The second and third ODIs will be played at Hobart's Bellerive Oval on February 27 and March 1. This will be the first ODI meeting between the



two sides since India's five-wicket win over Australia in the Women's World Cup 2025 semi-final last October. It will also be the farewell series for Australia great Alyssa Healy, who has announced her retirement from all formats after the India campaign. The tour will conclude with a prestigious one-off Test, a four-day contest from March 6 to 9 at Perth Stadium.

## 'Sometimes you've got to throw stats out the window': Shai Hope backs Sherfane Rutherford after match-turning 76 against England at T20 World Cup



GNS News Agency, Feb 12

For all the talk about numbers in modern T20 cricket, Shai Hope believes some players defy statistical judgement. After Sherfane Rutherford's decisive 76 off 42 balls helped the West Indies beat England by 30 runs, at the Wankhede Stadium, the captain made it clear that impact matters more than averages. "Sometimes we've got to throw stats out the window," Hope said at the post-match press conference. "If you ask any bowler in world cricket, if they see Sherfane Rutherford at the other end, they're going to feel under pressure. That in itself speaks for itself." Rutherford came into the game with modest T20 returns, his average hovering in the low 20s despite flashes of brilliance across franchise leagues. But on a surface that

offered grip and demanded composure, his innings provided both momentum and stability at a crucial phase. Hope pointed to something deeper than numbers — preparation. "He's always been a hard worker, especially with his batting. He's very diligent with the way he goes about his preparation. He'll bat from the start of a session all the way through to the end if he's really working on something," Hope said. "It's nice to see when guys put in that hard work, and the success follows."

The knock helped West Indies post what Hope described as "around par" on a pitch that did not see the expected dew. That allowed their spinners to squeeze England through the middle overs, a tactical plan that paid off as wickets fell in clusters. While Rutherford's innings shifted the momentum, Hope was careful to frame the performance within the broader tournament context. "It's World Cup cricket. You've got to make sure you execute as precisely as you can from the jump because there's not really a second or third game to come back and hope for the best." For Rutherford, this was less about redemption and more about validation. Hope insisted consistency would follow. "I'm sure the stats will improve over the next few years because he's a quality player. I'm just happy to see him getting the success he truly deserves." At the Wankhede — a venue Hope described as bringing "a different vibe, a different energy" — Rutherford didn't just add runs. He imposed himself. And sometimes, as Hope suggested, that's what truly counts.

## Mohammad Nabi fined 15 pc match fee for code of conduct breach

GNS News Agency, Feb 12

Hyderabad: Afghanistan player Mohammad Nabi has been fined 15 percent of his match fee for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Group D match against South Africa in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. Nabi was found to have breached Article 2.4 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "Disobeying an Umpire's instruction during an International Match." In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Nabi's disciplinary record, for which it was the first offence in a 24-month period.

The incident occurred at the start of the 14th over of Afghanistan's innings, when Nabi engaged in a prolonged argument with the umpires over bowler Lungi Ngidi's wristband. Nabi admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by David Gilbert of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Jayaraman Madanagopal



and Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, third umpire Nitin Menon and fourth umpire K.N. Ananthapadmanabhan levelled the charge. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

## 'I'm not doing this': Sujoy Ghosh reveals the 'dancing condom' scene that made Juhi Chawla reject Jhankaar Beats



Ghosh revealed that Juhi Chawla initially rejected the film after hearing its premise, possibly due to the adult humor it contained. "She read the script, she was shocked. She said, 'I'm not doing this.'" When asked about her reason for saying no, Ghosh explained that she had an issue with one particular scene.

"So there was this scene where Deep (Sanjay Suri) is not having a good day. Lots of tension at the office, and he's unable to crack the advertisement they are working on. His mother-in-law is also staying with him, and the new baby is on the way. He has a dream that Shanti (Juhi Chawla) has delivered, and the baby has arrived. But when he picks up the baby, the baby has the face of his mother-in-law. And suddenly, he realizes there's something very bright behind him. He turns, and he sees this giant fluorescent condom, dancing, telling him, 'Had you used me? Aaj yeh din dekhna nahi padta.' (You shouldn't have to see this day). So Juhi said, 'If this scene is there, I'm not there. So we removed the scene.'

In the same conversation, Ghosh also reflected on the joy of working with Juhi, despite her initial hesitation. "Juhi was probably the saviour of the film. She was the star we needed to make the film happen. Without her, we wouldn't have got the film. And without Shanti, her character, I would have never made the film. Because Shanti was, again, you know, my early Vidya Bagchi (referring to the character of Vidya Balan from Kahaani)." The film was recently screened at Mumbai's Kala Ghodha festival where Sujoy Ghosh, Sanjay Suri, and Shayan Munshi were also present. Suri said at the festival that Jhankaar Beats is unlikely to be made now as "legal teams would first read the script and flag the condom references immediately".

However, in an exclusive conversation with SCREEN,

## Before O'Romeo, revisiting Vishal Bhardwaj's Rangoon, an epic romance unfolding against the fiercest tides of violence



It is 1944. The war is tearing the world apart. History is split in two. Both halves are on fire. On one side, empires are burning. On the other hand, India stands at the edge of its own becoming. Gandhi speaks of resistance without blood. Elsewhere, Subhash Chandra Bose gathers an army, moving through Burma, preparing to answer with violence. Against this fractured geopolitical moment, Vishal Bhardwaj stages Rangoon as an epic romance. Its thesis arrives at the midpoint, just before the interval, and it is distinctly his. There is poetry. There is a song. There is mud. There are two damaged souls. They have taken refuge in what was, until recently, an army base. Tanks surround them like witnesses. The threat of death hangs in the air. And yet they make love. For the first time; in the dirt. They discover love on the ground still scarred by war. Their longing outlives the century's appetite for blood. In a world engineered for ruin, they choose romance.

At its heart, Rangoon is a love triangle (a somewhat subversion of Casablanca). And like any true triangle, it thrives on irony: two romances crossing at the same wound, revealing each other by contrast. With Nawab (Shahid Kapoor), Julia (Kangana Ranaut) is seen. With Rusi (Saif Ali Khan), she is managed. Nawab sees her as a woman; Rusi calls her a "kiddo." Nawab traces the scar on her back as if it were scripture; Rusi dismisses the same mark as something to be corrected. With Nawab, she falls into mud. With Rusi, she is rinsed in water. Nawab draws out the self she has buried and accepts it without amendment. Rusi is forever drafting a neater version, shaping her towards an identity that suits him better than it suits her. One relationship releases her. The other rehearses her. In that sense, Julia becomes the film's soul. She is not only a woman divided between two men; she is a country divided between two futures. As India, back then did not yet know what it was becoming. As it stood between Bose's fire and Gandhi's restraint.

Julia is a character who keeps unfolding. Consider her introduction, which is staged like a musical. She plays a film star (modelled on Fearless Nadia) who is preparing to perform a risky stunt. But before she appears, her name does. The crew sings it: the cinematographer, the custom dadas, the chorus of men who build her myth. They chant her legend into existence. We are told who she is before we are allowed to see her. And when we finally do see her, it is in a mirror. Then she performs the stunt. Rusi, the producer, however, is dissatisfied. He asks for another take. This time, she hesitates. She is afraid. The significance of the mirror is heightened here. The woman we were promised is a con-

struction. That is her image. Her commerce. In life, she is controlled, corrected, spoken for. The film, then, becomes her coming of age. Through Nawab, she encounters a form of love that for her, an awakening. So by the time we reach the climax, she performs again: a stunt more dangerous than the first. But now it is not a staged fantasy; it is a lived risk. The same song plays. The same invocation circles her. Only this time, the words feel unnecessary. She no longer needs to be described. She has become what they once had to sing.

If Julia's journey is one of awakening, Rusi's is one of reckoning. He was once the star of his time. An injury ends that life, and what remains is a man who survives by serving power. He becomes a stooge of the imperialists. After all, comfort edits conscience. When Nawab tells Julia, "Are you even alive? If you were, you would have seen the tyranny of your masters, you would have heard the screams of the innocent," the line cuts through more than one character. It is the film's sharpest moment. It speaks to Julia, but it could just as easily indict Rusi. (What makes the line endure is that it exceeds its moment. It reaches beyond the narrative, beyond its period setting, and gestures toward the present, towards the compromises that continue to haunt the film industry). Transformation is the cornerstone of the film, and it is born not from rhetoric but from intimacy. Julia changes because she is loved without being diminished. Nawab changes because he allows himself to love something larger than himself. And Rusi, too, is granted that possibility. So, in the final frame, when Rusi chooses love over allegiance, the film brushes against something close to Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Because, like him, Bhardwaj locates revolution within romance.

## 'I don't need it for me': Priyanka Chopra reveals she hired bodyguards to stop fans from filming daughter Malti



Celebrity couple Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas have always been private when it comes to their daughter Malti Marie Chopra Jonas. The actor even prefers keeping her 3-year-old's face hidden while posting snaps on social media. Now, in a recent interview, Priyanka revealed that she needs security for her daughter. She also expressed her perspective towards fans recording her family during their personal time.

A recent report by Variety mentioned that Priyanka went to the 83rd Golden Globe Awards with bodyguards. Speaking about the same with the publication, she said, "I am ok with being approached by anyone and taking photos, and they (guards) know that I love people coming to talk to me. They were there to make sure we're not being recorded without consent." The actor further added, "That's my biggest thing with everyone having cellphones. It happens often, especially with my daughter. We're in the park or having ice cream, and suddenly I'll see it online. My security is for that reason. Otherwise, I don't need it. Nobody's gonna kill me." Priyanka Chopra with Lisa at Golden Globes 2026. Priyanka Chopra with Lisa at Golden Globes 2026. Priyanka Chopra with Lisa at Golden Globes 2026. She presented the award for Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Series – Drama with Lalisa Manobal, Lisa of South Korean girl band BLACKPINK.

They gave the award to actor Noah Wyle for his medical drama series, The Pitt. Golden Globes 2026 host Nikki Glaser introduced Priyanka and Lisa with the viral line: "One was in The White Lotus, and one wed the white Nick Jonas." Meanwhile, on the work front, Priyanka Chopra will next be seen in SS Rajamouli's Varanasi alongside Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran. Playing the role of Mandakini, the actor will mark her Telugu debut, set to hit the theatres on April 7, 2027.

## Dawson's Creek star James Van Der Beek passes away at 48; Family issues statement: 'He met his final days with courage'



Kesha's 'Blow' music video, which included his laser gun battle with the pop star in a nightclub and dead unicorns. "It's tough to compete with something that was the cultural phenomenon that 'Dawson's Creek' was," he told Vulture in 2013. "It ran for so long. That's a lot of hours playing one character in front of people. So it's natural that they associate you with that."

More than a decade after the show went off the air, a scene at the end of the show's third season became a GIF. Dawson was watching as his soulmate embarked on a love affair with his best friend and burst into tears. "It wasn't scripted that I was supposed to cry; it was just one of those things where it's a magical moment and it just happens in the scene," Van Der Beek told Vanity Fair. He seemed exasperated when he told the Los Angeles Times: "All of a sudden, six years of work was boiled down to one seven-second clip on loop." (Van Der Beek himself recreated the GIF in 2011 for Funny or Die and gave it a second life.)

While still on Dawson's Creek, Van Der Beek hosted Saturday Night Live — the musical guest was Everlast — and landed a plum role in Varsity Blues, playing a second-string high school quarterback who leaps into the breach when the star suffers an injury. Van Der Beek's character, Mox, turns out to not be a football fanatic, preferring to read Kurt Vonnegut and yearning for the college education that will allow him to escape the jock mentality of his Texas town. "I don't want your life," he screams at one point. Critic Roger Ebert called him "convincing and likeable". After 'Dawson's Creek', some of his projects after Dawson's Creek included co-creating and playing Wesley "Diplo" Pentz, a dull but likeable music producer in the mockumentary satire on Viceroy, "What Would Diplo Do?" In 2019, he made it to the semifinals of ABC's Dancing with the Stars and played a balding, out-of-shape ex-boyfriend on How I Met Your Mother. "The more you make fun of yourself and don't try to go for any kind of respect, the more people seem to respect you," he told Vanity Fair in 2011. "I've always been a clown trapped in a leading man's body."

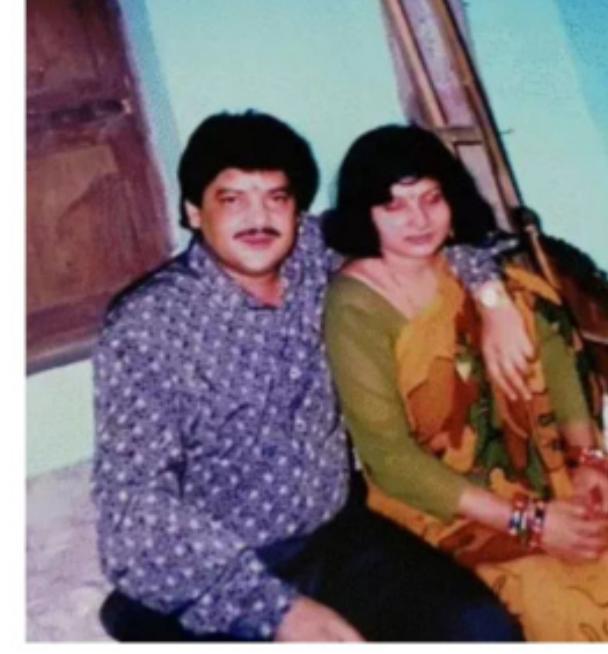
Between 2003 and 2013, he made appearances in shows like Criminal Minds, One Tree Hill, and How I Met Your Mother. He played himself with a crackpot intensity in the Krysten Ritter-led ABC drama Don't Trust the B — in Apartment 23 and the short-lived CSI spinoff CSI: Cyber and CBS' Friends With Better Lives. He's also appeared in movies such as Kevin Smith's 2001 comedy Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back and its 2019 sequel, Jay and Silent Bob Reboot. He was in the Bret Easton Ellis adaptation of The Rules of Attraction in 2002 opposite Jessica Biel and Kate Bosworth. In 2025, he was unmasked as Griffin on The Masked Singer after singing a cover of John Denver's Take Me Home, Country Roads and I Had Some Help by Post Malone and Morgan Wallen. Van Der Beek, who was raised in Cheshire, Connecticut, started acting at 13 after suffering a concussion playing football that prevented him from playing for a year. He landed the role of Danny Zuko in his school production of Grease. He stuck with theatre, landing at 16 in 1994 an off-Broadway role in Finding the Sun by Pulitzer Prize-winner Edward Albee and one of the sons in a revival of Shenandoah at the prestigious Goodspeed Opera House in his home state. He earned a scholarship to New Jersey's Drew University but left school early when he was cast in Dawson's Creek. In 2024, he returned to campus to accept an honorary degree for his "selfless service and exemplary commitment to the mission of Drew," the university said. Drew University President Hilary Link welcomed Van Der Beek with a popular quote from his Dawson's Creek character: "Edge is fleeting, but heart lasts forever. So this morning, we pay tribute to that heart." He is survived by his wife, Kimberly, and six children, Olivia, Joshua, Annabel, Emilia, Gwendolyn and Jeremiah.

"For now we ask for peaceful privacy as we grieve our loving husband, father, son, brother and friend." Van Der Beek revealed in 2024 that he was being treated for colorectal cancer. Van Der Beek made a surprise video appearance in September at a Dawson's Creek reunion charity event in New York City after previously dropping out due to illness. He appeared projected onstage at the Richard Rodgers Theatre during a live reading of the show's pilot episode to benefit F Cancer and Van Der Beek. Lin-Manuel Miranda subbed for him on stage. "Thank you to every single person here," Van Der Beek said.

A one-time theatre kid, Van Der Beek would star in the movie Varsity Blues and on TV in CSI: Cyber as FBI Special Agent Elijah Mundo but was forever connected to "Dawson's Creek", which ran from 1998 to 2003 on The WB. The series followed a group of high school friends as they learned about falling in love, creating real friendships and finding their footing in life. Van Der Beek, then 20, played 15-year-old Dawson Leery, who aspired to be a director of Steven Spielberg quality. With Paula Cole's I Don't Want To Wait as its moody theme song, Dawson's Creek helped define The WB was a haven for teens and young adults who related to its hyper-articulate dialogue and frank talk about sexuality. And it made household names of Van Der Beek, Katie Holmes, Michelle Williams and Joshua Jackson.

"While James' legacy will always live on, this is a huge loss to not just your family but the world," Sarah Michelle Gellar wrote to his widow on Instagram. Katharine McPhee Foster added, "This is just beyond devastating news." Others posting messages of mourning were Jenna Dewan and Olivia Munn. The show caused a stir when one of the teens embarked on a racy affair with a teacher 20 years his senior and when Holmes' character climbed through Dawson's bedroom window and they curled up together. Racier shows like Euphoria and Sex Education owe a debt to Dawson's Creek. Van Der Beek sometimes struggled to get out from under the shadow of the show but eventually leaned into lampooning himself, like in Funny Or Die videos and in

Udit Narayan's first wife alleges he got her uterus removed in the guise of treatment, demands maintenance: 'A wife needs respect'



As per her police complaint, Ranjana claimed that she married Udit on December 7, 1984. After the singer relocated to Mumbai in order to pursue his music career the next year, he never returned. Udit got a breakthrough in Bollywood with the songs of Mansoor Khan's 1988 cult romance Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, starring Aamir Khan and Juhi Chawla. Later, Ranjana learnt that Udit has married another woman, Deepa, in Mumbai, with whom he later had a son, singer Aditya Narayan. But she claims Udit continued to gaslight her whenever she confronted him. As per Deccan Herald, her miseries continued in 1996 when allegedly under the guise of treatment, Udit and his brothers Sanjay Kumar Jha and Lalit Narayan Jha, got her uterus removed.

This happened when Udit and his brothers took Ranjana to a private hospital in Delhi for treatment, where she claimed that they got her uterus removed without her consent or knowledge. Ranjana said that Deepa Narayan was also present at the hospital then. It was only much later, during her treatment that Ranjana learnt her uterus has been removed. Ranjana also alleged that Udit and Deepa abused her and didn't allow her to enter their Mumbai home when she visited them in 2006. She even claimed to have been insulted and driven away by her in-laws at their residence in Nepal. Since then, she's been living at her paternal home in Sapaul.

Ranjana previously approached the Family Court in Sapaul and the Women's Commission, where Udit accepted that he's still legally married to her and promised to pay maintenance. But as he failed to fulfill that commitment, Ranjana has now lodged a complaint at the Women's Police Station there. The move also prompted by her learning that her uterus has been removed. "I was forced to come to the Women's Police Station. Because as you know, Udit commits to me time and again, but hasn't fulfilled those commitments yet. I have full faith in the Women's Police Station. I'm a woman, so I should get justice," Ranjana told Bihar Tak. "I've been keeping unwell these days, so I need his support. But he's not helping," she added. "I demand the respect that should be given to a wife. He's accepted also that I'm his first wife, but doesn't fulfill the commitments of a husband. What else does a wife need but respect?" asked Ranjana. Her lawyer also alleged that Udit has done a lot of harm to her. "During treatment, the doctors told her that her uterus has been removed. That's when she realized Udit is only gaslighting her and ruining her life. That's why she's come to the police now," said the lawyer.

Udit Narayan's first wife Ranjana files a police complaint against the singer. Udit Narayan's first wife Ranjana files a police complaint against the singer. Controversies don't seem to stop chasing Udit Narayan. Months after receiving online flak for kissing female members of the audience at his concert, the singer is now making headlines again for alleged ill-treatment of his first wife, Ranjana. The Bihar resident has claimed that Udit not only withdrew her maintenance, but also got his family to remove her uterus under the guise of medical treatment.

As per her police complaint, Ranjana claimed that she