INDIAN CHRONICL

One person killed, five injured in road accident at Hajipur chowrasta on Srisailam Highway

severe injuries when three cars were involved in a head-on collision on the Srisailam Highway at Hajipur chowrasta under Achampet mandal in the district on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Bilal. The five others, including Vishnukanth, Vijayalaxmi, Vasavi, Manju and Jagadish, who suffered injuries, were shifted to Achampet area hospital. According to reports, 12 persons of a family from Karnataka were returning to Gulbarga in two cars after darshan at Srisailam. At Hajipur chowrasta, a speeding car from Hyderabad heading towards Rangapur jathara hit the two cars from Karnataka.

Formula E race case: Sponsor of racing event, Greenko MD Anil Kumar appears before ACB

Hyderabad: Greenko Group Managing Director, Anil Kumar Chalamalasetty, appeared before the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday in connection with the on-going investigation into the alleged procedural lapses in the Formula E race case. The ACB had issued summons to Anil Kumar two days ago asking him to appear before the agency for investigation. Ace Nxt Gen Private Limited, a subsidiary of Greenko Group, was the sponsor of the racing event hosted in February 2023. The ACB officials are enquiring into the transactions and the transfer of amounts from the State government to different companies linked to the Formula E race case.

Arvind Kejriwal's car attacked while campaigning in Delhi; AAP points fingers at BJP supporters



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal's car was allegedly attacked on Saturday while campaigning in his constituency of New Delhi ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls, according to party sources. The BJP's New Delhi candidate Parvesh Verma, meanwhile, alleged that two youths hit by Kejriwal's vehicle were critically injured and taken to a hospital.

Sources in the AAP said the former Delhi chief minister was campaigning in the area when black flags were waved at his car and stones hurled. A video circulating on social media shows the car surrounded by a group of youths. A stone was also thrown at the vehicle.Party sources alleged that the youths were Parvesh Verma's supporters. The two injured youths were taken to Lady Hardinge Hospital, BJP sources said, adding that Verma will visit them. The Delhi Police said they are yet to get any complaint in connection with the incident but they are look-

Harish Rao slams Congress government for delayed salaries



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Hyderabad: Coming down heavily on the Congress government for its failure to pay salaries for months together, BRS leader and former Minister T. Harish Rao on Saturday said Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy was making false promises in Delhi while employees and workers in the fold of different government wings were left struggling without salaries under his administration.

Highlighting the plight of workers, including the staff of gram panchayats who were not paid for four months, MGNREGS employees who have been waiting for three months, and municipal sanitation workers who haven't received their salaries for a month, he said thousands of small employees, including field assistants, technical assistants, and APOs in MGNREGS, have been making requests in writing for timely payment of their salaries. Despite the dire situation in almost all districts, the government has shown no concern. Families are facing financial issues and running into debts due to the delayed salaries. The employees are anxiously waiting for their payments, he said while urging the government to focus on governance instead of making trips to Delhi and boasting about bringing in investments worth thousands of crores. He demanded that the government pay all employees their salaries on time.

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan health updates by doctors at Lilavati Hospital on January 18, 2025

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, who was attacked by an intruder at his Mumbai home, is recovering well and is expected to be discharged in two to three days, doctors said on Saturday (January 18, 2025).

The 54-year-old actor suffered multiple stab wounds, including on his neck and near the spine, in a brutal attack at his house in Bandra in the early hours of Thursday (January 16, 2025). He was rushed to Lilavati Hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery. Doctors at the hospital said the actor, who has been shifted out of the ICU, is recovering well. He is walking and is on a normal diet. They said Khan is expected to be discharged in two to three days."We are observing his progress, and he is doing excellently well according to our expectations. As per his progress, we have advised him bed rest, and if he is comfortable, then in two to three days we will discharge him," Dr Nitin Dange, a neurosurgeon at Lilavati Hospital, had said on Friday.

PM Modi distributes 65 lakh Svamitva property cards

GNS News Agency,

Minister

Prime

Narendra Modi on Saturday (January 18, 2025) distributed around 65 lakh Svamitva property cards, and said it will bolster economic activities and help in poverty alleviation. He also interacted with some beneficiaries through video conferencing, and said the scheme will help people in getting loans and benefits of government schemes. These property cards are being distributed to beneficiaries across more than 50,000 villages in 10 states - Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and two Union Territories off Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

"Around 2.24 crore beneficiaries in villages will now have Svamitva property



cards after 65 lakh cards are distributed today," the Prime Minister said."Property rights are a major challenge across the world. Years ago, the United Nations had held a study, which revealed people did not have legal documents for property rights in several countries. The UN has said property rights are important for poverty_alleviation," he said. The Prime Minister said an eminent economist had opined that property in villages is a "dead capital"

because people cannot do

anything with it, and it can't increase their help income."India was also impacted by this challenge. People in villages have property worth lakhs of crores, but they did not have papers for it. There were disputes, properties were snatched, and even banks did not provide loans over it," he said.

"Previous governments should have taken steps to do something about it but nothing much was done," he said.PM Modi said Dalits, backward classes and tribals were the

loans. They have used this money to start their businesses. Many of these are farmers, for whom this property card is a guarantee of financial security," he said.He also said Svamitva and Bhu-Adhaar will become the foundation of development villages.Union Minister of Panchayati Raj Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan', Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj S P Singh Baghel and Ministry of

worst affected by this."After

getting legal property rights, lakhs of people have taken

Panchayati Raj Secretary Vivek Bharadwaj were also present at the event.It was attended virtually by several chief ministers, Union ministers and state ministers. Events are also being organised in over 230 districts for physical distribution of property cards. It is expected that around 13 Union ministers will physically join from designated locations from across the country, to oversee regional distribution ceremonies of property

unique facility among all police organisations in the country. The 10th Battalion of the NDRF has set an extraordinary example of dedication, efficiency, and professionalism in the field of disaster management. Since its formation, this battalion has participated in over 800 missions, saving the lives of more than 15,000 people and evacuating over one lakh citizens to safe locations.In the 2016, Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), PM Modi outlined a 10-point agenda for disaster risk reduction, which continues to guide India's disaster management policy. In line with the 10-point agenda given by PM Modi, the Indian Universities and Institutions Network for Disaster Risk Reduction (IUINDRR-NIDM) has been established under the auspices of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM). The aim of this network is to highlight the role of education, research, and training in building disaster resilience, and to develop model curricula for integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) at various levels. To meet the needs of the southern part of the country, the Central government established the Southern Campus of NIDM in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh, under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014. This campus has been partially operational since May 2023, and in a short span of time, more than 44 training programmes have been organised, with over 2,130 stakeholders trained in various aspects of disaster management.

cards. HM Amit Shah to hold discussions on disaster management in Vijayawada tomorrow

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

With the aim of encouraging a zero-casualty approach in disaster management, Home Minister Amit Shah will on Sunday interact with top officials of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh.HM Shah will be the Chief Guest at the 20th Foundation Day Celebrations of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in Vijayawada, a statement mentioned.On this occasion, HM Shah shall inaugurate and lay the foundation for projects worth over Rs 200 crore. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is now adopting a zero-casualty approach for disaster management, rather than a reliefcentered approach. This approach aims to achieve the goal of Zero Casualty during disasters, said a statement. The Home Minister will also inaugurate the premises of three important centers on Sunday, which include the Southern Campus of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Campus of the 10th Battalion of the NDRF, and the premises of the Regional Response Centre (RRC) in Supaul (9th Battalion).

An official said that under PM Modi's Vision@2047, NIDM and NDRF are making significant contributions towards making India disaster-resilient and strengthening the disaster risk reduction system in the country. They are playing a crucial role in human resource development, capacity building, training, research, documentation, and policy formulation.HM Shah will also lay the foundation stone for a new 'Integrated Indoor Shooting Range' at the National Police Academy (NPA) in Hyderabad, where IPS probationary officers will be trained in firing skills.

This 'Integrated Indoor Shooting Range' will be 50 meters long and have 10 lanes, allowing 10 individuals to practice firing simultaneously. The shooting range will be operational in all weather conditions, fully automated, and technologically advanced. It is being constructed at a cost of Rs 27 crore. The state-of-the-art technology of this range will be in line with international standards, and it will be a

Courts must not use 'abetment of suicide' charge just to assuage distraught family of deceased: SC

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

The Supreme Court on Friday (January 17, 2025) held that the police must not deploy the criminal provision of 'abetment of suicide' casually or to assuage the immediate feelings of the distraught family members of

A Bench of Justices K.V. Viswanathan and A.S. Oka said Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code or corresponding Section 108 read with Section 45 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 appeared to be "too readily resorted to by the police". In order to bring a case of abetment of suicide the police must carefully examine whether the accused had played an active role in instigating or facilitating the death of a person.

To satisfy the requirement of instigation by the accused by his or her act or omission or by a continued course of conduct should have created such circumstances that the deceased was left with no other option except to end their own lives."A word uttered in a fit of anger and emotion without intending the consequences to actually follow cannot be said to be instigation," Justice Viswanathan, who authored the judgment, observed. The court said it was time



investigating agencies were sensitised to the law laid down by the Supreme Court under Section 306 so that persons were not subjected to the abuse of process of a totally untenable prosecution."The trial courts must exercise great caution and circumspection and should not adopt a play it safe syndrome by mechanically framing charges," Justice Viswanathan wrote.

The judgment was dealing with an appeal filed by an accused in a case of abetment of suicide of a young man. The accused was an employee of a financial company who had sought the repayment of a loan.

Kolkata court finds prime accused Sanjay Roy guilty in RG Kar case



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Kolkata: A Kolkata court on Saturday declared Sanjay Roy "guilty" of raping and murdering an on-duty doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, a heinous crime that sparked nationwide outrage and prolonged protests. The Sealdah court, where Roy's trial was held, will declare his sentence on Monday, Anirban Das, the additional district and sessions judge, said. The judgement was pronounced nearly two months after the in-camera trial commenced in November last year and 162 days after the heinous crime was committed on August 9, 2024.

Roy was found guilty under Sections 64 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita that governs rape, and Sections 66 and 103 (1) of the Act, which deals with punishments for death and murder. Section 103 (1) of BNS entails a possible punishment of death or life imprisonment. The judge stated that Roy was found guilty of sexually assaulting the doctor and strangling her to death, and that the CBI had proven all the charges against him. Das said Roy's statement will be heard at 12:30 pm on Monday, and the sentence will be pronounced thereafter. At the time of the delivery of the verdict, Roy claimed in court that he was framed. In his defence, Roy said, "I wear a rudraksh necklace, and if I had committed the crime, it would have snapped." After the judgement, police whisked away Roy from the courtroom to the Presidency Correctional Home under strict vigil, preventing the waiting media persons from attempting any kind of interaction with the convict. The medic's parents thanked the judge for the guilty verdict and said the court honoured the trust they had reposed in it. In its chargesheet, the CBI had mentioned Roy, a civic volunteer with the city police, as the prime and sole suspect of committing the gruesome rape and murder of the postgraduate trainee at the state-

CM Revanth, 'che chor' milking cos, says KTR



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Friday alleged that the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had formed a team of six members to blackmail companies, and the team was indulged in land grabbing in the State. The BRS leader made these comments while talking to the reporters during the Rythu Deeksha at Shahbad in the Chevella Assembly constituency on Friday. Rama Rao alleged that the six-member gang included Tirupathi Reddy, Kondal Reddy, Vem Narender Reddy, Rohin Reddy, Fahim Qureshi, and AV Reddy. "Ali Baba and a half-dozen gang of thieves are roaming in Telangana. This gang is threatening and blackmailing companies to collect money. Along with encroachments, they are also involved in land deals," said Rama Rao.KTR alleged that the Congress unnecessarily brings up many issues to divert their collections, blackmail, and land deals. Replying to a question, KTR said that Revanth Reddy, who praised Hedgewar, is the real RSS man. "Revanth Reddy has worked in ABVP and RSS printing press.

DSP investigation on suspicious girl's death Sangareddy

Zaheerabad DSP Rammohan Reddy inspected the scene of suspicious death of a girl named Vaishnavi in



for this incident The DSP said that they are investi-

well in

gating the incident.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Shun corruption

SO entrenched is corruption in the Indian social and political reality that any resolve to counter it instantly runs nto thick clouds of pessimism. A sense of resignation with regard to the status quo runs deep. Yet, for hope to ilter through, the significance of terse plainspeak at the highest echelons cannot be overstated. Chief Justice of ndia (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna's call to reinforce systems of accountability and fairness is a reminder of how the citien continues to be let down. Corruption as a hydraneaded monster that undermines public trust and hinders he ideals of democracy is an apt description. Equally crucial is the CJI's emphasis that the success of the anticorruption ombudsman, the Lokpal, hinges on public trust and citizen engagement. It's the ability of the little man or voman to hold the big and powerful accountable, as he put it.

It's indisputable that corruption can be rooted out only with the help of an educated and engaged citizenry. What's essentially missing — and that's the hydra on the ground — is institutional support. The social contract beween the government and citizens to safeguard against corruption remains breached, and the gap is only widenng. The referee agencies have been found wanting. Public rust is the sum total of the efficacy of the systemic reaction and action on complaints and grievances at every evel. Nothing less will suffice.

What the citizen has come to recognise is the futility of standing up against corrupt practices, small or big. Nothing weakens the national character more than a social sanction to graft and an official stamp, as it were, to he right to cheat. All organs of democracy are to blame. If you truly desire change, revitalise the institutions. Else, expect a more shrivelled moral and ethical fibre in an average Indian.

The way you delayed tabling CAG reports in Assembly raises doubts, Delhi HC tells AAP govt.



Justice Sachin Datta, who was hearing a petition by the Opposition MLAs from the BJP over the delayed tabling of the CAG reports in the Assembly, remarked,

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

The Delhi High Court on Monday questioned the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for "dragging its feet" on the tabling of the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the city administration before the Assembly, saying it "raises doubts about your bona fides".

Justice Sachin Datta, who was hearing a petition by the Opposition MLAs from the BJP over the delayed tabling of the CAG reports in the Assembly, remarked, "The way you dragged your feet raises doubts about your bona fides...You should have promptly forwarded the reports to the Speaker for having a discussion on the floor of the Assembly". "You have dragged your feet to avoid having a discussion...See the number of dates you held onto the report, and the time taken to send them to the L-G[Lieutenant-Governor], and then forwarding it to the Speaker...The timeline is stark. See the way you have been dragging your feet is something that is unfortunate," Justice Datta remarked.Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta and BJP MLAs Mohan Singh Bisht, Om Prakash Sharma, Ajay Kumar Mahawar, Abhay Verma, Anil Kumar Bajpai and Jitendra Mahajan filed the petition last year, and sought a direction to the Speaker to call a sitting of the Assembly for the purpose of tabling the CAG reports.

'Tenure ending in Feb.'Earlier, the Assembly Secretariat had told the court that no useful purpose would be served by tabling the CAG reports before the Assembly as its tenure was ending in February. It said no judicial order could be passed to the Speaker in matters of internal functioning of the Legislative Assembly. However, the counsel for the BJP leaders, during the Monday hearing, submitted that the court was empowered to direct the Speaker to call a sitting of the Assembly for tabling the reports.

Hearing on Jan. 16The Delhi government's counsel raised an objection over the "political" nature of the petition, and alleged that the L-G's office made the reports public and shared it with newspapers.

To this, the judge said, "How does it matter?" The court posted the case for further hearing on January 16.After the court hearing, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the constitutional scheme required a government to table reports of the CAG, which scrutinised its revenue and expenses, but the AAP dispensation had not done it. He questioned whether AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal considered himself above the Constitution.

'Govt. sitting on over 12 reports'Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that since 2023, the AAP government had been sitting on more than 12 CAG reports, including the one on the construction of the "sheesh mahal" (palatial building, a reference to the official residence of the Chief Minister). He said that though repeated requests were made by the BJP MLAs in the Delhi Assembly to present these reports, the AAP government refused to budge out of fear that their corrupt practices would be exposed. "Why are you dragging your feet on discussion," he asked. Mr. Sachdeva remarked that the AAP government had lost all moral authority to continue in office. The AAP responded that the CAG reports had been sent to the Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker for tabling in the next session of the Assembly. It said that "beyond this, we have no role".

Why this ex-MP has put her hopes in the public to avert climate crisis in Pune



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

"If engineers and corporators do not understand certain aspects of climate change, we will never address global warming. Cement concrete roads are being constructed wall to wall but this is not correct. We must allow a little part of it for seeping water, then the groundwater will get recharged. Now, we have new construction rules that say that builders can construct up to three floors to make parking but this means that we are cutting the aquifers. The latest thing that is going to be a horror and a disaster for Pune is the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations (UDCPR)," said Vandana Chavan, former mayor and MP, who has played a leading role in environmental stability. She added that Pune had a 1.1 FSI but, due to UDCPR, it will increase to five in some places and seven in some places. "With that kind of construction and people coming in, do we have the roads to cater to that kind of traffic? We are already very high on air pollution which is higher than Delhi in some months of the year. Do we have water? We may be having water but we don't have a network. All our public infrastructure has been designed to cater to only 1.1 FSI. Have we really studied what impact this is going to cause?" she said. "If people are not conscious about this, they will never raise the issue," she said.

Chavan was speaking to The Indian Express on the sidelines of a press conference to announce the third edition of the Big Green Fest, an initiative themed around "Sustainable Living: Nurturing Tomorrow's Changemakers" that is expected to be attended by hundreds of schoolchildren, teachers, parents, environmentalists, small businesses working on sustainability and community members. The festival, which will be held on January 18 at Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Auditorium on Ghole Road, is aligned with the belief of global experts that change can best happen at the grassroots. One of its highlights is an unusual fashion show that features eco-friendly designs. "Way back in 1972, it was at the Stockholm conference, when the environment was talked about by all the countries. At the Rio conference, it was decided that, if you really have to make a difference, it has to be at a local level. In Pune, we have been seeing the impacts of climate change for the last 10 years. We have seen cloudbursts, floodings and heatwaves in a city that never used to be very hot," she said. While the city has taken several steps to reduce carbon emissions, "there is still a lot more that needs to be done". "If there are more people who understand the environmental issues, it means that more people will start thinking. They will say, 'no, we don't want this development or we want it only after a proper study has been done. They will say that they don't want gardens that are fully cemented. In the Smart City, open gardens are all cemented and that is not what is expected. We need open spaces for the water to seep in. These are all aspects where if people are not sensitized, nobody will ever raise their voice or go to the municipal corporation and say no, we cannot have this," said Chavan.

Chief of Army Staff inaugurates new upper limb training lab at Pune's Artificial Limb Centre

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on Tuesday visited the Artificial Limb Centre (ALC) in Pune, where he toured the centre's state-of-the-art facilities. The visit highlighted the latest advancements in prosthetic care, with the General being briefed on the centre's cutting-edge computer-aided designing and manufacturing workshops. During the visit, General Dwivedi inaugurated the newly constructed Upper Limb Training Lab, a significant enhancement to the centre's capabilities in providing tailored rehabilitation for upper limb amputees. The lab is expected to play a crucial role in furthering the centre's mission to offer the highest quality of care and support to soldiers and veterans. In addition to the tour, the COAS interacted with the patients, offering words of encouragement.

The Artificial Limb Centre, a premier tri-services institution of the Armed Forces Medical Services, was established in Pune in 1944. Later in 1945, the establishment was shifted to Kirkee and then to Lahore in December 1946. However, after India's partition in August 1947, the Centre was re-established in Pune, at its present location on January 1, 1948. Initially, the ALC was set up to provide prosthetic limbs to soldiers injured in combat. The centre continues to set the standard for prosthetic care, helping soldiers and veterans lead independent and fulfilling lives.

Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi at the Artificial Limb Centre (ALC) in Pune. Initially, the ALC was set up to provide prosthetic limbs to soldiers injured in combat. (Express Photo by Arul Horizon) Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi at the Artificial Limb Centre (ALC) in Pune on Tuesday. Initially, the ALC was set up to provide prosthetic limbs to soldiers injured in combat. (Express Photo by Arul Horizon)Services have extended to civilians and with the advancement of prosthetic technologies the ALC also expanded its role and set up the Department of Prosthetics and Orthotics Education to ensure that the next generation of prosthetists are equipped with technical skills to handle innovations.

The upper limb training laboratory is aimed at helping amputees develop the skills that are vital for using their mechanical and bionic devices. The advanced limbs respond to muscle contractions and utilise sensors to mimic natural movements. The cosmetic limbs are designed to resemble natural ones and each amputee then gets a



personalised approach tailored to his needs. Apart from strength and coordination activities, advanced training is provided so that the patients are functional. It may be recalled that last year, the ALC also set up the state-of-theart gait training lab which included a baropedometer, an advanced tool that analyses weight distribution to optimise gait patterns and enhance comfort for amputees. The lab also had a dynamic stair trainer that simulated real-world challenges such as stairs and slopes. Senior officers at ALC said that the centre plays a significant role in setting up rehabilitation services so that amputees can get used to their new limbs, living up to their motto of "No wheelchairs, no crutches." ALC and Paralympics

India also owes its most successful performance in paralympic history at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games. securing 29 medals - 7 gold, 9 silver, and 13 bronze- to a large extent to the ALC that has been known to fit out many paralympics over the years with prosthetic limbs. This includes Sumit Antil, gold medalist in javelin at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Paralympics; Nitesh Kumar, who won a gold in men's singles in badminton at Paris Paralympics 2024; and Hokato Hotozhe Seema, who bagged a bronze medal in shot-put at 2024 Paralympics. Murlikant Petkar, India's first Paralympic gold medalist in 50-metre freestyle swimming at the 1972 Heidelberg Games in Germany who also happens to be the real inspiration behind the movie 'Chandu Champion' starring Karthik Aryan, said: "ALC did not just give me prosthetics; they restored my warrior spirit and rebuilt my broken dreams. The dedicated staff and worldclass facilities helped me find my strength again. Today's Para-athletes might see me as an inspiration, but I see ALC as the true architect of India's Paralympic journey," said

Haryana BJP chief Mohan Lal Badoli, singer Rocky Mittal booked for gangrape of Delhi resident in Himachal



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

The Himachal Pradesh Police has booked Haryana BJP chief Mohan Lal Badoli and singer Rocky Mittal aka Jai Bhagwan on charges of gang rape in the wake of a complaint by a New Delhi resident. As per the FIR registered at Kasauli police station in Solan district on December 13, the alleged offence was committed on July 3, 2023, at Ros Common Hotel of the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) at Monkey Point Road, Kasauli. The FIR, which surfaced on Tuesday, also mentions detailed addresses and mobile phone numbers of both the accused. Badoli has refuted the allegations and termed them "baseless".

In the FIR registered under Sections 376D (gang rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code, the complainant has alleged that she was in Himachal Pradesh as a tourist along with her Delhi-based employer and a friend on July 3, 2023, when the incident allegedly occurred. The complainant said she met the accused along

with her friend. "One of them identified himself as Mohan Lal Badoli, a senior politician, while the other identified himself as Rocky Mittal alias Jai Bhagwan, a singer."

She added that they took the two women to their room for a conversation. "Jai Bhagwan told me that he would sign me in his album as a heroine. Mohan Lal Badoli told me that he would get me a government job saying that he has very high-level connections. They started praising us. Then they offered us alcohol, which we refused," she stated. "Despite our refusal, they forcibly made us consume alcohol. After that, they started harassing me. I objected, after which they threatened (friend) with dire consequences and made her sit on a side and threatened me that he would get me killed if I did not adhere to his demands. After that, both of them took turns to rape me. They also clicked my nude pictures and a video," she further said. The complainant added, "They threatened to make me disappear if I disclosed the matter to the police or anybody. We felt ashamed... About two months ago, they called us to Panchkula and threatened to implicate us in a false criminal case. After that, we managed to find Rocky Mittal's address in Panchkula and Badoli's address in Sonipat and their mobile phone numbers. I am requesting that justice should be given to me, and stern action should be taken against them. Also, my nude pictures and videos should be deleted from their mobile phone numbers..."Speaking to The Indian Express, Badoli said, "It is all baseless accusations. There is nothing like that. I have no clue what it is all about. Such FIRs can also be fudged. It could be due to the upcoming elections in Delhi that such fake FIRs are being circulated."However, Superintendent of Police (Solan), Gaurav Singh confirmed that a case has been registered in this connection. "

Delhi Police bust international mobile phone smuggling racket run by engineer who collaborated with thieves



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

The cyber cell of the Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested a man from north Delhi's Wazirabad village on Monday for allegedly smuggling stolen mobile phones internationally. They also recovered "195 high-value stolen mobile phones worth approximately Rs 2 crore" from his possession. Sanjay Kumar Sain, additional commissioner of police (cyber cell), on Tuesday informed that the accused, Manish Yadav, 36, an engineer from Loni in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, "collaborated with a network of juveniles and thieves tasking them to steal mobile phones from crowded areas in Delhi-NCR, like Metro stations, buses, and marketplaces". "Yadav purchased these stolen devices at low prices and sold them in bulk to neighbouring countries," he said.

The investigation was led by Inspector Sandeep Singh and supervised by Assistant Commissioner of Police Pawan Kumar. The team included Sub Inspectors Harvinder and Bhagyashri, and High Constables Anand and Pankaj Gupta. It began with a tip-off about the illegal trade of stolen phones. After technical analysis and ground-level intelligence, a trap was laid in Gali No. 6 in Wazirabad village and Yadav was arrested while he was trying to flee.

"During the raid, a large cache of stolen phones – including 39 iPhones, 52 Samsung, 45 OnePlus, Google Pixel and other high-end brands - were seized," said ACP Sain. He said 29 of them were connected with different incidents of theft or lost reports, while 38 phones were found to be unlisted on official records. The police stations concerned were notified regarding the recovery, said the officer. Sain added, "128 phones are inactive, likely due to battery discharge... We are trying to unlock and trace the rightful owners of the recovered phones."He said that Yadav, an engineer at a private firm, is married and has two children. "Due to financial difficulties, he turned to illegal activities in 2023. Initially involved in scrap trading, he started selling stolen mobiles for commissions ranging from Rs 1,000 to 3,000 per phone to a man from Baghpat, Naeem. He has a prior criminal record with four cases registered against him and was arrested in 2017 under similar charges in Khajuri Khas," said Sain. The police booked the accused, and further in-

Nanoparticles from vehicular emissions pose significant health risks to Delhi residents, says study



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Vehicular emissions in Delhi expose residents to millions of airborne nanoparticles (PM1 or less), causing significant health risks, according to a joint study by researchers at Delhi Technological University and the Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad. The study found that people in the capital can be potentially exposed to around 10 to 18 million nanoparticles daily on the road, where particle deposits are 30 per cent higher than in other regions.

The study noted that exposure to high concentrations of nanoparticles is particularly concerning, as they can penetrate the bloodstream and pose serious health risks. Their tiny size allows them to cross the blood-brain barrier, potentially reaching the brain and causing harm. To conduct the study, researchers examined the seasonal variation of particle concentration and assessed exposure and buildup in the human respiratory system. The study was published in October last year in the Dutch journal Elsevier. It was conducted in a roadside urban environment in Rohini in 2021, covering all major seasons. The direct sources of airborne nanoparticles include engine exhausts and industrial emissions, which can also form from the oxidation of existing gaseous pollutants. Seasonal analysis revealed that direct emissions dominate nanoparticle concentrations during winter and autumn, while new particles formed contribute the most during spring and summer. In urban areas, traffic-related sources are the primary contributors to airborne nanoparticles, according to the study. "The concentration of UFP and Nacc (particles of size >100 and up to 1000 nm) during non-peak hours is less than that of peak hours, confirming the dominant influence of emissions from vehicular exhaust in the study region," it observed. Another key finding is that UFP (ultrafine particles, of size between 10 and 100 nm) constitute around 60-80 per cent of the total particle number concentration over Delhi. The study stated, "More than 5 million nanoparticles get deposited during the winter season over Delhi. The annual average nanoparticle deposition is ~500 µg/year over a roadside urban environment, which is 30% higher than the deposition over a location away from the roadside."An exposure assessment found that a wide section of the population is at risk due to exposure to nanoparticles, including the urban poor, motorcyclists, pedestrians and residents. The study emphasised the need for "developing mitigation policies aimed at improving air quality and public health". "These nanoparticles are found in high concentrations near the sources, such as roadways, where most of the population

Can Vice Chancellors be from outside academia?



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Harold W. Dodds, president, emeritus of Princeton University, in his book, "How to choose a college President" wrote: "Above everything, trustees and regents should avoid becoming enamoured of prominent names, eminent public figures who may welcome a try at being a college president, only to become disillusioned and bored in the job. This is no place for a retired governor or general per se or a minister whose congregation or bishop wants to kick him upstairs. An equal chance is taken in the selection of a famous scholar merely for the sake of the prestige he will bring. The man to be desired is one whose fame will be made by how well he performs in the office. If he possesses the capacity for growth, if he is not an uncompromising educational sectarian unable to integrate sharply differing views, the job will make the man."

The above passage may need to be kept in mind while reviewing the draft guidelines for appointments and promotion of faculty in universities/faculties, by the Universities Grants Commission (UGC), has predictably created a buzz around the country. While teachers associations and university leaders have been vocal in their reactions over some of the provisions calling the guidelines too subjective and seeking to move away from established practices, States like Tamil Nadu have promised to seek legal remedy over the guidelines giving primacy to the Chancellor-Governor in Vice Chancellor selection/appointment process; and relegating the role of States in the process. The "Draft Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges, and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education, 2025", aim at enhancing educational quality by establishing clear criteria for faculty appointments and promotions. Key highlights of the draft guidelines

Eligibility criteria: The draft specifies minimum qualifications for various academic positions, including educational credentials, research experience, and other relevant criteria. Promotion guidelines: It outlines the requirements for career advancement, emphasizing performance metrics, contributions to academia, and adherence to institutional standards. Quality assurance measures: The regulations propose mechanisms to maintain and elevate teaching and research standards across higher education institutions. The UGC has sought feedback from stakeholders to refine these guidelines, ensuring they effectively address the evolving needs of the educational landscape.

Vice Chancellor appointmentWhile the draft talks of an entire range of appointments to universities and the minimum standards and qualifications from assistant professors right up to the highest offices in any higher education institution or university, this article limits itself to offer insights and commentary only on the position of Vice Chancellor, which is deemed the highest office in any university. Addressing the issue of "Selection Procedure for the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor in Universities", the draft lays down the following:

"A distinguished person possessing high academic qualifications and demonstrated administrative and leader-ship capabilities, strong alignment to constitutional values, strong social commitment, belief in teamwork, pluralism, ability to work with diverse people, with a flair for innovation and a global outlook in higher education, along with the overall vision of the institution and abilities to manage complex situations with a minimum of ten years of experience as a Professor in an HEI or at a senior level in reputed research or academic administrative organizations or at a senior level in industry, public administration, public policy and/or public sector undertakings, with a proven track record of significant academic or scholarly contributions, shall be eligible to be appointed as Vice-Chancellor.

The selection for the Vice-Chancellor post shall be through an all India newspaper advertisement and public notification. Applications can also be sought through nomination or a talent search process by a Search cum Selection Committee. In a departure from earlier regulations, the draft guideline seeks to look beyond traditional academics

for the post of a V-C and this perhaps also signifies how the role of a V-C is changing rather fast in an era marked by digital transformation, open flow of information through nontraditional media, and the increasing issues around state funded higher education system. The role of State governments in this issue is a separate debate, which this article, does not address.

Ramkumar Ramamoorthy, who has served as a corporate leader (of India's top private sector employer), and also as a teacher and academic administrator, says higher education is today a composite of teaching, research and consultancy. At a time when many HEIs have become only teaching institutions, and breakthrough research in India has become a preserve of the industry, academicians need to look beyond traditional systems for the top post of an HEI.While, a V-C has to be a strong academician and intellectual leader, today's role of a university head goes beyond academic activity. The V-C also needs more capabilities for making the university vibrant, sustainable and economically viable.

"The Vice Chancellor's post has become almost entirely external facing ... be it raising funds, working with corporates for funding, research and student recruitment, working with government funding agencies," says Dr S Sadagopan, a distinguished academic, former V-C of IIIT-Bengaluru, and who also advises and consults government and private sector for research, development and corporate strategy. While the idea of selecting and appointing a V-C from outside the academic system is yet to take shape, Dr Sadagopan notes that academic leaders have become successful in corporates in several countries especially in the U.S.

Today, it is no longer a mere narrative that State funding of higher education has not grown in proportion to the rise in the demand for higher education, as millions of new students enter university portals from outside the traditional swaths of population. First generation learners are more than 50 percent in many of the State funded universities because of the low economic barrier for entry. However, most of the State universities are not ideally managed, in the sense the administrative and governance systems remain in 19th century mode and approach. A truism: no matter the size of the University, fundraising plays an outsized role in the V-C's job. The question is how many from the traditional academic system are ready for it.

In India, the role of registrar or Rector is donned by academicians from university systems but the question is their role remains complementary or subservient to that of the university's chief executive, namely the Vice Chancellor. Civil servants have taken on the role of Registrars or equivalent jobs in universities, but the present system does not create V-Cs with the acumen for fund-raising and making the universities viable. Their 3-4 year tenure could be partially blamed for the situation. A study by Deloitte University in the U.S. about six years ago showed that "fundraising/ alumni relations/donor relations" and "strategic planning" rank as the most important responsibilities in the university head's day-to-day. Fundraising, in particular, is essential from a president's first day in office, according to the survey, and only grows in importance over time in the position. It is here that highly qualified industry leaders, with a long experience in business and have played key roles in training, learning and development in corporates, can make a difference. "It is possible that academic and intellectual capability can come not only from university systems, but also from industry," argues Ramkumar. He says there are several researchers and technology leaders in industry who have spent time both in research as well as publishing research papers and gained patents as part of the work. The more important question to ask is: Would search committees of universities look beyond traditional academic systems and also take the risk of appointing them as V-Cs? Going by the reaction so far for such forward looking reforms, it is clear academicians bristle at such a prospect.

But if the Indian university system must move beyond mere teaching systems and look to create a robust research and industrial consultancy apparatus (which truly is the role of a university), it needs new blood. Perhaps an ideal candidate would be one with about 30 years of industry experience but his or her experience encompasses a long tenure in skilling, training, people development, or has done technology/research roles with publications and patents to boot. In other words, the 21st century Vice Chancellor is a strategist, a fund-raiser, a networker and a great storyteller, combined with financial acumen and academic / intellectual integrity. And, of course, he has resilience to navigate the minefield of present-day State universities.

Army Commanders asked to write to CMs on utilising veterans' strength: Army Chief

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

CALLING THE Armed Forces veterans human capital key to the goal of developed India, Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Tuesday said that Army Commanders have been asked to write and hold discussions with Chief Ministers to decide how veterans can be utilised by the states for development.

The Army Chief was speaking at a programme organised on the occasion of the 9th Armed Forces Veterans' Day in Pune. "From your contributions during service to your social responsibilities post your retirement, your journeys hold immense importance for us as a nation. Our country is moving rapidly toward its established goal of a developed India. To achieve this goal, the commitment and participation of every citizen is essential. In this scenario, our veterans, as invaluable human capital, can become a key asset in making national efforts more capable and strong." the Army Chief said, addressing the gathering of veterans.

"If we count 24 lakh registered veterans, seven lakh Veer Naris, 28 lakh registered dependents, 12 lakh serving soldiers, their 24 lakh dependents, and 28 lakh other family members, the total number comes to approximately 1.25 crore. This human capital, full of experience, discipline, and dedication, can be effectively utilised to make a significant contribution to nation-building efforts," he said. He further said, "In this approach, efforts are being made to actively engage with state governments. This initiative has two key aspects that need to be advanced parallel to each other. First, how a state can utilise the expertise of veterans in its work, and second, establishing a system of recognition and contribution creating a 'win-win' situation for both ex-servicemen and state governments. These discussions have been held on this notion with some Governors, some of whom are veterans themselves soldiers and have supported the core ideas of this initiative.

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To this end, all Army Commanders have been asked



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to write to all Chief Ministers and put forth the strengths of the veterans which the state can effectively benefit from. And when they meet the Chief Ministers take this discussion forward. The success of this initiative depends on how effectively civil functionaries can understand and establish synergy between veterans' skills and societal needs."

Armed Forces Veterans' Day has been organised on January 14 every year since 2017 as a pan-India event under the purview of the Ministry of Defence. The aim of the event is to salute the dedication and sacrifices of tri-Services veterans, both men and women, while standing in solidarity with their families. The event also serves as a forum to address various issues related to the pension and welfare of veterans and their next of kin. January 14 was chosen to be celebrated as the Veterans' Day to commemorate the retirement day of Field Marshal K M Cariappa, the first Commander-in-Chief of Army post Independence, after glorious service to the nation.

Ashok Swain seeks Delhi HC intervention to meet ailing mother in India after OCI status cancelled



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Sweden based NRI Professor Ashok Swain OCI status: As Sweden-based professor Ashok Swain has sought an early hearing of his petition challenging the cancellation of his overseas citizen of India (OCI) status, the Delhi High Court asked the central government on Monday if he could be granted a temporary visa. The Centre cancelled Swain's OCI registration on the grounds that he had been found indulging in "illegal activities inimical" to the interests of the sovereignty, integrity, and security of India. The cancellation effectively bars him from entering the country. Expressing urgency for his petition to be taken up,

Swain's advocate Aadil Boparai, informed Justice Sachin Datta that his 82-year-old mother "may not survive this winter".

Boparai said during the hearing: "Exigency is my mother's health. She is 82 years old...my mother may not survive this winter...please take it up next week...They believe I'm anti-India because I criticise the policies of the current (ruling) dispensation." Swain has submitted that his mother lives alone in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, and suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and various age-related ailments. He has further submitted that owing to the OCI cancellation, he has been unable to meet his mother in the past five years. The Centre has also accused Swain of "indulging in inflammatory speeches and anti-India activities".In his petition, filed in 2023, Swain challenged a July 30, 2023, order from the Indian embassy in Sweden and Latvia that cancelled his OCI registration. On Monday, while the Centre sought time to respond, Justice Datta orally enquired with Swain's counsel if he would be amenable to withdrawing his posts on X that the Centre had cited as examples of inflammatory speeches and anti-India activities. Boparia informed the court that he would take instructions from his client regarding this, adding: "They can't gag me...I'll take instructions...if I say mob violence is antithetical to our constitution (and am asked to withdraw it), it's unfair.'

Man discharges mother's office duties at Bengaluru corporation revenue office, arrested



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BBMP impersonation caseHe visited the office on many occasions under the pretext of being a BBMP employee and used to process applications for e-khatas (digital property documents) of the public in the absence of his mother, said the police after a raid held The Bengaluru police have arrested a 35-year-old man who was impersonating his mother, an employee of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), at her office by using her log-in credentials

According to the police, the accused identified as Naveen K had been using the office computer at the office of the Assistant Revenue Officer (ARO) for the Kempegowda Nagar subdivision at Jayanagar in south Bengaluru to discharge the duties of his mother Kavitha N, a second division assistant at the BBMP office, in her absence. He visited the office on many occasions under the pretext of being a BBMP employee and used to process applications for e-khatas (digital property documents) of the public in the absence of his mother, said the police after a raid held on January 10.

The Bengaluru police have also booked Kavitha and assistant revenue officer Sujatha who facilitated the fraudulent activity in the BBMP office. Kavita had also appointed a computer operator – Geeta – on her own to carry out pro-

cessing of e-khata applications – without an employment letter from the BBMP. She paid the salary of the computer operator, the investigators said. The raid was conducted following mounting public complaints over delays in the issue of e-khatas and bribery by middlemen operating at the revenue offices to process the applications.

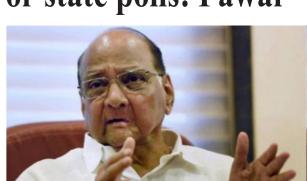
Naveen has been booked under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for impersonation, cheating, criminal breach of trust and criminal trespass, while his mother and the ARO have been booked for facilitating the crime. During the raid at ARO office, the police found out that the computer operator appointed by the SDA was absent from work and instead the SDA's son was doing the work using the login credentials for the e-aasthi software. The staff at the office were questioned and all their names and positions were ascertained. Naveen, who was working on an office computer, meanwhile, showed hesitation in providing his credentials despite introducing himself as a contract employee, the police said. The police found that it was his mother who was the employee of the office. The police said that Naveen "misused the e-aasthi software login ID and password given by the BBMP to his mother" and "trespassed into the BBMP office and cheated in the guise of a . BBMP employee"."The SDA Kavita N hired a computer operator, Geeta, for herself without bringing it to the attention of the BBMP. Geeta has not been appointed by the government. The officials have misused their power," says the Lokayukta police complaint.BBMP crackdown after impersonation caseln the aftermath of the incident, the BBMP has started a cleansing exercise at its offices. It ordered the officers to sign the attendance book every day when they report for duty. It was found that attendance is not maintained at offices. "The attendance book of the employees who are performing duties on an outsourcing basis should also be maintained. But it is found that it is not being maintained," the BBMP said on Monday. The BBMP said it has become evident that its officials are illegally hiring persons for office duties by paying handsome remuneration.

INDIA bloc formed to focus on national issues, not local body or state polls: Pawar

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Amid talks of a split in Opposition unity ahead of local body polls in Maharashtra, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) Chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said that the formation of the INDIA bloc was focused on national issues and polls only. "When INDIA front was formed, the discussion was only about national issues and elections. There was no discussion about local body polls or state polls," said Pawar while addressing a press conference at Y B Chavan Centre in Mumbai. When asked if the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will contest the local polls together or not, Pawar said, "We (leaders of all three parties) will be meeting in coming eight-ten days where the issue of local body polls will be discussed and proper decision regarding it will be taken."

The MVA consists of NCP(SP), Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Congress. Pawar, while replying to a question on his party's position in Delhi Assembly polls, where the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress are fighting against each other, said, "We will extend support to the AAP in some seats. However, we will be discussing our position with the Congress." Commenting on the ongoing talks about the split in the MVA, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole said, "For Congress, country comes first. The issues faced by the country needs to be tackled. We are not interested in the political games," he said. The possibility of a rift in Opposition unity has been discussed following statements from leaders of all three parties in the MVA. In a significant political development, the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction of Shiv



Sena announced on January 11 that it will contest upcoming municipal corporation elections in Mumbai, Thane, Nagpur, and other local bodies independently. Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut explained the rationale behind the move, stating, "In alliances, party workers often lose opportunities, which hampers organisational growth. We are confident in our strength and will fight the elections on our own." Shiv Sena (UBT)'s ally Congress said even its workers felt the same, but ultimately, party leadership would take a final call. "First of all, Sanjay Raut is not the party president. We would have reacted if Uddhav Thackeray had made the announcement. We also feel that such statements in the public domain are unnecessary. It should be discussed first within the senior leadership," Mumbai Congress chief And Lok Sabha MP Varsha Gaikwad said.

'Stop using Ringer's Lactate saline; Don't allow PG students to conduct surgery, anaesthesia alone': Bengal Health dept notice to medical colleges

The West Bengal Health department has issued a memo to all Chief Medical Officers of health in the districts and principals of all medical colleges to stop using Ringer's Lactate (RL) saline. In a separate notice, the department said no surgical or anaesthetic procedure should be conducted by post-graduate students alone. These orders come after a 13-member expert team was formed by the health department to investigate the death of a new mother, and the cases of three others who were critical after childbirth, at the Midnapore Medical College and Hospital (MMCH), allegedly due to the administration of expired intravenous fluid. On Monday, the state government ordered a CID probe along with an administrative probe. The memo on Monday

ordered the officials to "ensure total stoppage of the existing stock of Compound Sodium Lactate Injection (RL) supplied by Pashchim Banga Pharmaceutical Pvt Ltd in his/her jurisdiction. The existing stock if any should be withdrawn from wards/hospitals, if not already withdrawn, and must be kept in a sealed place". The other notice directed "all faculty of anesthesiology, OBS and gynecology, general surgery, orthopedics, ophthalmology, and ENT departments" to ensure that all surgical procedures are done by the "faculty/bed in charge". One of the leading faces of the junior doctors protesting the R K Kar rape and murder incident, Debasish Halder, at a press conference held by the West Bengal Junior Doctors Front.

Millions of diabetes, heart disease cases globally linked to sugary drinks

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A new study estimates that in 2020, 2.2 million new cases of type 2 diabetes and 1.2 million new cases of cardiovascular disease occur each year globally due to consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, representing 9.8% and 3.1%, respectively, of all incident cases. The study estimated sugar-sweetened beverage-attributable type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease burdens across 184 countries in 1990 and 2020. As per the study published in the journal Nature Medicine, in developing countries, the case count is particularly sobering. The highest sugar-sweetened beverage-attributable percentage burdens were in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa. In Latin America and the Caribbean, they contributed to nearly 24% of new diabetes cases and more than 11% of new cases of cardiovascular disease. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the study found that sugar-sweetened beverages contributed to more than 21% of all new diabetes cases. "From 1990 to 2020, the largest proportional increases in sugar-sweetened beverage-attributable incident type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease cases were in sub-Saharan Africa, 8.8% and 4.4%, respectively," the study found.

Colombia, Mexico, and South Africa are countries that

have been particularly hard hit. While more than 48% of all new diabetes cases in Colombia were attributable to consumption of sugary drinks, nearly one-third of all new diabetes cases in Mexico were linked to sugary drink consumption. In South Africa, 27.6% of new diabetes cases and 14.6% of cardiovascular disease cases were attributable to sugary drink consumption. Sugary beverages are rapidly digested, causing a spike in blood sugar levels with little nutritional value. Regular consumption over time leads to weight gain, insulin resistance, and a host of metabolic issues tied to type 2 diabetes and heart disease, two of the world's leading causes of death. Men are more likely than women to suffer the consequences of sugary drink consumption, as are younger adults compared to their older counterparts, the researchers say. The authors call for a multi-pronged approach, including public health campaigns, regulation of sugary drink advertising, and taxes on sugarsweetened beverages. Some countries have already taken steps in this direction. Mexico, which has one of the highest per capita rates of sugary drink consumption in the world. introduced a tax on the beverages in 2014. Early evidence suggests that the tax has been effective in reducing consumption, particularly among lower-income individuals.

Every drive matters, every drop counts

Everyone is talking about a nip in the air. Marghazhi is usually cold to the touch, but this year, it is widely believed to have been a smidge colder. Giving the air-conditioners and ceiling fans an all-night break proving not entirely helpful, some headed to their hibernating, forgotten woollen wear, retrieving them from the lowermost, less-opened compartment in their chest of drawers. Against this backdrop, the Anns Club of Rotary Club of Madras Industrial City (RCMIC) sought that this "compartment" be drawn further to look for any old, sparingly-used sweater sitting deep inside. It could be packed off for charity. Instead, if one chose to open their heart wider and not the compartment, they could buy a new sweater and hand it over to charity.RCMIC's Anns Club was making this plea to meet a need at Institute of Mental Health (IMH) at Kilpauk. If one were to be detailed, 700plus needs, that being the number of residents at IMH receiving treatment. As this collection drive had a steep deadline — what good is a sweater that arrives after the chilly weather had quit the scene — the dragnet was being thrown deep and wide. The RCMIC Anns Club launched the collection drive in association with the NGO Goonj and Rotary

Communication wrapped in words exuding warmth -- "Kindness is the warmest gift we can share" — and with details presented in lines led by sweater emojis, were sent out "Donate new or sparingly used sweaters. Front open sweaters with buttons preferred. If you want to get new ones, you can send your donations. Sizes can be M, L, XL" — thus read the instruction note. The plea was splashed across the walls of RWAs' online groups.

Eight sweaters out of what was finally collected (650) might seem like a crumb, but generosity is still generosity irrespective of its size. Trellis South, a two-tower gated community in Vadapalani managed those eight sweaters, placing two sweater donation boxes, one at each tower.Trellis South has track record of organising an impressive clothes collection drive ahead of Deepavali. In the past, this initia-



tive was a jewel in its crown. Last year, Kathikeyan Rajamohan, who is part of the community-engagement team, headed by Srikanth, made sure the community did not break away from this tradition. On the sweater collection drive, he remarks, "We were aware of this need only on January 3, and by then, the drive was coming to an end. So, we quickly collected these eight sweaters and handed them over for distribution in IMH." Numbers sometimes do not reflect the significance of an act. In this case, it certainly does not. This small, quickfire collection drive in this gated community has loosened its muscles for more clothes collection drives. Says Karthikeyan: "We are currently planning four drives per year covering one each quarter. This helps in decluttering our wardrobe and support the needy. Our intention is to reach out to the beneficiaries directly which gives you more satisfaction rather going through an aggregator. Though we have individual volunteers/champions for each drive, all these activities come under our community engagement team, which is headed by Srikanth."According to Nirupama Aravind from the Anns Club of RCMIC, 650 sweaters were collected and handed over to the residents of IMH. Nirupama adds, "RCMIC did a collection drive at various apartments in the city, particu-

How to host a collection drive

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Just before Christmas when homes were getting decked up with colourful lights and cribs, Mangala Chandran's home at Sriram Nagar West Street in Alwarpet was getting ready to accommodate old but useful stuff. She was receiving cartons and bags of gently used clothes, dry ration, stationery and other usable items — the entrance of her house could have been mistaken for a godown.

This drive for NGO Goonj that Mangala initiated racked up a decent collection. This old stuff could have ended up in landfill, but now they are being diverted them to families that lost much due to Cyclone Fengal. "Mangala is regular in conducting such collection drives, sometimes it is held once in three to four months, opening up her house for people to drop in items that could touch somebody else's lives," says her neighbour L. Hariharan, who has been actively volunteering for Goonj for more than 11 years now. Until 2020, his home was the drop-off point for people in and around Alwarpet to donate reusable items. The donated items would then be transported to Goonj's main centre in Kovilambakkam

During the Christmas week last year, at Karpagam Avenue in RA Puram, The Little Caterpillar, a play school, also assumed the responsibility of conducting a collection drive for people affected by the cyclone. The school also played host to the Goonj team who interacted with visitors at the centre and had a stall selling upcycled items. While many residents have been throwing open a section of their house to stock items for those affected by Cyclone Fengal and other natural calamities, NGOs working on the ground say they still need more helping hands. "Since Cyclone Fengal made landfall on December 1, we have had nearly 10 collection drives, a majority of them in the central parts of the city," says Anisha Baura, team member, Goonj.Our plan is to reach out to 15,000 families but we have so far



only reached out to 3,000 families, she says. Individuals and institutions planning to conduct such drives are required to reach out to Goonj at least five days in advance to receive the help they would need. They are also required to take responsibility of the logistics of stocking the items and transporting them to a central collection point.

"For many people, space is a constraint but we expect one to host it for not more than two days. Some hesitate as the cost of transportation has to be borne by them," says Anisha. Hariharan, who helps people set up camps, says many volunteers sign up through conversations on WhatApp groups. "With one's network it is possible to find interested people," says Hariharan, who has helped collect more than 20,000 garments so far and is secretary of Sri Ram Nagar Association. Nikita Viswanath, founder, The Little Caterpillar, believes creating a buzz around some drives is of paramount importance or people would otherwise be unaware of them. "We are planning another soon with some interesting takeaway workshops for visitors," says Nikita. They also invite volunteers to participate in its other activities which includes packing of items, creative writing to promote a drive and designing posters for the same

Madurai Campus Connect

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

A conference on 'Role of physics in modern technologies' was organised by PG and Research Department of Physics of The American College, Madurai, on January 8 and 9. The resource persons were Krishnakumar Venkateswaran of IMAI LLC, California, USA; Ahamed Umar of Najran University, Saudi Arabia; Annapureddy Venkateshwarlu of NIT - Tiruchi; and Janet Lim Hong Ngee of University of Putra Malaysia. Around 180 participants took part. Pongal, the harvest festival, was celebrated in a grand manner at the Primary Campus of SBOA Schools, Madurai, on January 10. Students of KG to Grade V, dressed in colorful traditional attire, added charm to the festivities. There were speeches, dance performance and songs. Teachers and students actively participated in traditional games. A science exhibition was organised at Yadava College, Madurai on January 7. Arou9nd 350 students and staff from various schools in and around Madurai participated. .A. Krishnaveni, Coordinator of Science Club, welcomed the gathering. C. Raju, Principal (i/e), delivered the presi-

dential address. Former secretary and correspondent KPS Kannan delivered a special address. G.Velmurugan, Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, proposed the vote of thanks. The Entrepreneurship Development Cell (EDC) of Sri Meenakshi Govt Arts College for Women, Madurai, organised an awareness programme on 'Innovation and entrepreneurship development' for final year UG students recently. M.Dhanushkumar of Latha Madhavan group of institutions spoke on how he started his business, difference between business and entrepreneurship, Innovation Voucher Programme and procedure to apply for it under EDII - TN. The placement cell of Sourashtra Women's College, Madurai, organised a lecture on Communicative English recently. The resource person was S. Venkatesh, Associate Professor of English, The Madura College. The session focussed vocabulary enrichment, common mistakes in English and their avoidance, letter writing, developing LSRW skills, body language, group discussion, interview skills, etc., using PPT. Principal Ponni, various faculties and over a hundred students participated.

Tougher U.S. sanctions to curb Russian oil supply to China and India, says analysts



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Chinese and Indian refiners will source more oil from the Middle East, Africa and the Americas, boosting prices and freight costs, as new U.S. sanctions on Russian producers and ships curb supplies to Moscow's top customers, traders and analysts said. The U.S. Treasury on Friday (January 10, 2025) imposed sanctions on Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas, as well as 183 vessels that have shipped Russian oil, targeting the revenues Moscow has used to fund its war with Ukraine.

Many of the tankers have been used to ship oil to India and China as western sanctions and a price cap imposed by the Group of Seven countries in 2022 shifted trade in Russian oil from Europe to Asia. Some tankers have also shipped oil from Iran, which is also under sanctions. Russian oil exports will be hurt severely by the new sanctions, which will force Chinese independent refiners to cut refining output going forward, two Chinese trade sources said. The sources declined to be named as they are not authorised to speak to media. Among the newly sanctioned ships, 143 are oil tankers that handled more than 530 million barrels of Russian crude last year, about 42% of the country's total seaborne crude exports, Kpler's lead freight analyst Matt Wright said in a note.Of these, about 300 million barrels was shipped to China while the bulk of the remainder went to India, he added. Sanctions reducing the fleet of ships"These sanctions will significantly reduce the fleet of ships available to deliver crude from Russia in the short term, pushing freight rates higher," Wright said. A Singaporebased trader said the designated tankers shipped close to 900,000 bpd of Russian crude to China over the past 12 "It's going to drop off a cliff," he added. For the first 11 months last year, India's Russian crude imports rose 4.5% on year to 1.764 million bpd, or 36% of India's total imports. China's volume, including pipeline supply, was up 2% at 99.09 million metric tons (2.159 million bpd), or 20% of its total imports, over the same period. China's imports are mostly Russian ESPO Blend crude, sold above the price cap, while India buys mostly Urals oil. Vortexa analyst Emma Li said Russian ESPO Blend crude exports would be halted if the sanctions were strictly enforced, but it would depend on whether U.S. President-elect Donald Trump lifted the embargo and also whether China acknowledged the sanctions.

What are the alternatives available? The new sanctions will push China and India back into the compliant oil market to seek more supply from the Middle East, Africa and the Americas, the sources said. Spot prices for Middle East, Africa and Brazilian grades have already risen in recent months on rising demand from China and India as supplies of Russian and Iranian oil tightened and became more expensive, they added. "Already, prices are rising for Middle Eastern grades," said an Indian oil refining official. "There is no option than that we have to go for Middle Eastern oil. Perhaps we may have to go for U.S. oil as well."

A second Indian refining source said the sanctions on Russian oil insurers will prompt Russia to price its crude below \$60 a barrel so Moscow can continue to use Western insurance and tankers. Harry Tchilinguirian, head of research at Onyx Capital Group said: "Indian refiners, the main takers of Russian crude, are unlikely to wait around to find out and will be scrambling to find alternatives in Middle Eastern and Dated-Brent related Atlantic Basin crude."Strength in the Dubai benchmark can only rise from here as we are likely to see aggressive bidding for February loading cargoes of the likes of Oman or Murban, leading to a tighter Brent/Dubai spread," he added.Last month, the Biden administration designated more ships dealing with Iranian crude ahead of tougher action expected from the incoming Trump administration, leading the Shandong Port Group to ban sanctioned tankers from calling into its ports in the eastern Chinese province. As a result, China, the main buyer of Iranian crude, will also turn to heavier Middle Eastern oil and most likely will maximise its offtake of Canadian crude from the Trans-Mountain pipeline (TMX), Tchilinguirian

China, India seek new supplies as U.S. sanctions tighten grip on Russian oil



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Chinese and Indian refiners are seeking alternative fuel supplies as they adapt to severe new U.S. sanctions on Russian producers and tankers that are designed to curb the revenues of the world's second-largest oil exporter.U.S. President Joe Biden's administration imposed its broadest package of sanctions so far targeting Russia's oil and gas revenues on Friday (January 10, 2025) to give Kyiv and Donald Trump's incoming team leverage to reach a deal for peace in Ukraine.The incoming Mr. Trump administration has not yet responded to requests for comment.

The U.S. Treasury imposed sanctions on Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegaz, as well as on 183 vessels that form part of a shadow fleet that has so far allowed Russia to skirt sanctions to get its oil to global markets. According to Morgan Stanley, which cited data from tanker tracker Vortexa, the tankers subject to the latest sanctions carried around 1.5 million barrels of crude oil per day in 2024. That equates to around 1.4% of global oil

Many of them have been used to ship oil to India and China as Western sanctions and a price cap imposed by the Group of Seven countries in 2022 shifted trade in Russian oil from Europe to Asia. In addition, some tankers have shipped oil from Iran, which is also under sanctions. Oil prices have jumped. Global benchmark Brent crude rose on Monday (January 14, 2025) above \$81 a barrel to its highest since August and the premium of prompt crude to that for delivery six months later has risen to its highest since April, implying traders expect supplies to remain tight.

The Kremlin said the sanctions risked destabilising global markets, and Moscow would seek to counter them. "It is clear that the United States will continue to try to undermine the positions of our companies in non-competitive ways, but we expect that we will be able to counteract this," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday (January 14, 2025). Washington also imposed sanctions on top Russian ship insurer Ingosstrakh and another insurance provider Alphastrakhovanie. It was unclear what would happen to the vessels whose insurance was unknown in the event of any environmental disaster and what mechanisms

would be in place for clean-up costs or for insurance claims.

Adaptation? China has reiterated its opposition to unilateral U.S sanctions. Analysts said the new sanctions were likely to reduce Russian oil exports in the short term, but Russia could adapt by using the vessels in its shadow fleet that are still not under sanctions. Analysts also said the true size of Russia's shadow fleet was unknown, but it was estimated to comprise close to 600 tankers. Since the new sanctions, at least 65 oil tankers have dropped anchor at multiple locations, including off the coasts of China and Russia, ship tracking data showed. Five of those were stationary off Chinese ports and a further seven dropped anchor off Singapore, with others halting near Russia in the Baltic Sea and the Far East. Shandong Port Group banned tankers under U.S. sanctions from calling at its ports before Washington's announcement on Friday (January 10, 2025). The severity of the new measures has for now driven Chinese refiners back to sellers of oil that is not restricted, pushing up the spot markets for some regional crudes, as well as adding upward momentum on the global oil market. "Chinese refiner Yulong Petrochemical has previously bought Russian ESPO Blend crude, but over the weekend bought 4 million barrels of Abu Dhabi's Upper Zakum crude loading in February and March from Totsa," the trading arm of French energy major TotalEnergies, traders said. In recent weeks, it has also purchased Angolan and Brazilian crude, traders said, and is in talks to buy more oil from West Africa as well as Canada. China's Unipec on Friday (January 10, 2025) also booked four very large crude carriers, which can carry up to 2 million barrels of crude, from the Middle East, figures from data intelligence firm Kpler showed. The numerous sources Reuters spoke to declined to be named as they were not authorised to speak to media. Yulong and Totsa typically do not comment on com-

Two-month transition periodCurrently, over 60% of Russia's seaborne oil exports go to India, the world's thirdlargest oil importer and consumer. Although Indian refiners have stopped dealing with oil tankers and entities under U.S. sanctions, the country does not expect disruption to Russian crude supplies during a two-month transition period, a government source said India will allow Russian oil cargoes booked before Jan. 10 to discharge at ports, the source said, adding that Russia could also offer deeper discounts to India to meet a \$60 a barrel price cap imposed by Group of Seven countries in 2022. Shipments below that level can use western tankers and insurance. Moscow-based Sinara Bank also said temporary discounts were possible for Russia's flagship Urals oil blend to dated Brent. Traders said Indian refiners, which bought spot Middle East crude last week before the sanctions were announced, were seeking more cargoes. India's Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd bought 2 million barrels of February-loading Oman crude from Totsa via a tender last week, two people familiar with the matter

Pradhan defends UGC draft on appointing Vice Chancellors draft UGC Regulations is in the same format as of the UGC

Responding to Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge's statement that the new draft guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) are against federalism and for cementing the Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh control over universities, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the new draft is in the format of the UGC Regulations of 2010. Mr. Pradhan maintained that the new draft follows the past procedures for appointing vice chancellors. The Minister said whether it is UGC Regulations of 2010, 2018, or 2025, it is clear that the Chancellor or Visitor appoints the Vice Chancellor. He said the practice "The practice of Chancellors discharging the responsibilities of Vice Chancellor has been going on even before the independence of the country," Mr. Pradhan said on social media

He added that the selection committee structure of the

Regulations 2010. "In this, a selection committee has been formed for the appointment of teachers and other academic staff and to maintain high standards. Its members include a person nominated by the Chancellor/Visitor (Chairman of the Committee), a person nominated by the UGC Chairman and a person nominated by the Syndicate/Executive Council/Board of Management of the university," he said. The Minister alleged that the Congress kept the country's education system in poor shape and it can never accept that the youth of the country should be educated and the country should develop. "That is why spreading confusion and misleading the youth to spread unrest in the country. This has become the policy of the Congress and its president Mallikarjun Kharge," Mr. Pradhan said asking the Opposition to understand facts.Mr. Kharge had alleged earlier on Friday (January 10, 2025) that the new draft regulations are a direct attack on the rights of States.

ICICI, HDFC, SBI among top 25 global banks by market cap



New Delhi: Three Indian banks — HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and the State Bank of India (SBI) — ended the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2024 at the 13th, 19th, and 24th spots in the top 25 global banks by market capitalisation, respectively, according to a new report. While HDFC Bank ended Q4 2024 with \$158.5 billion in market cap, ICICI Bank had a market cap of \$105.7 billion, and the SBI, \$82.9 billion, according to a report by GlobalData, a leading data analytics and research company. Indian banks demonstrated resilience, with ICICI Bank emerging as a standout performer, with its market cap growing by 25.8 per cent to \$105.7 billion, highlighting the strength of India's expanding digital banking and credit ecosystem

However, HDFC Bank's market cap recorded a 1.6 per cent increase to \$158.5 billion, due to rising competition

and cost pressures. The aggregate market capitalisation of the top 25 global banks increased by 27.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY), reaching \$4.6 trillion in the fourth quarter (Q4) ended December 31, compared to the same period ended December 31, 2023. JP Morgan Chase continues to remain the world's largest bank by market cap, recording an increase of 37.2 per cent to \$674.9 billion by the end of Q4 2024. Goldman Sachs witnessed a stellar 42.9 per cent growth, which propelled it to ninth place in the chart from 13th position in the previous quarter.

Most of the stocks rose in Q4, benefiting from the US Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts, while other regional markets came under pressure amid worries over trade tariffs, according to the report. According to Murthy Grandhi, company profiles analyst at GlobalData, the Federal Reserve implemented consecutive interest rate cuts of 25 basis points in November 2024 and December 2024. "However, n December 2024, the Fed sparked a stock market sell-off by reducing the projected number of interest rate cuts for 2025. This adjustment was driven by concerns over persistently stubborn inflation," said Grandhi. The report predicted that tariffs expected to be imposed under Donald Trump's administration and planned tax cuts in 2025 may offset each other. However, risks such as rising sovereign debt, a stronger dollar, foreign outflows from emerging markets, geopolitical tensions in West Asia, China's economic stimulus, and the yen carry trade are key factors likely to influence market performance and economic growth.

Hamas has accepted draft agreement for Gaza ceasefire, release of hostages: officials



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Hamas has accepted a draft agreement for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of dozens of hostages, two officials involved in the talks said The Associated Press obtained a copy of the proposed agreement, and an Egyptian official and a Hamas official confirmed its authenticity. An Israeli official said progress has been made, but the details are being finalized. The plan would need to be submitted to the Israeli Cabinet for final approval. All three officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door talks.

The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent the past year trying to mediate an end the 15-month war and secure the release dozens of hostages captured in Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack that triggered it. Some 100 Israelis are still captive inside Gaza, and the military believes at least a third them are dead. Officials have expressed mounting optimism that they can conclude an agreement ahead of the January 20 inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, whose Mideast envoy has joined the negotiations. Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said at a weekly briefing Tuesday that the ongoing negotiations are positive and productive, while declining to get into the details of the sensitive talks.

"Today, we are at the closest point ever to having a deal," he said. Hamas, meanwhile, said in a statement that the ongoing negotiations had reached their "final stage". The offensive has reduced large areas of the territory to rubble and displaced around 90 per cent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, with hundreds of thousands packed into tent camps along the coast where hunger is widespread.

Israeli strikes across Gaza overnight and into Tuesday killed at least 18 Palestinians, including two women and four children, while Yemen's Houthi rebels fired two missiles at Israel, setting off sirens and sending people racing into shelters. No one was wounded by the projectiles. A three-phase agreementThe three-phase agreement — based on a framework laid out by US President Joe Biden and endorsed by the UN Security Council — would begin with the gradual release of 33 hostages over a six-week period, including women, children, older adults and wounded civilians in exchange for potentially hundreds of Palestinian women and children imprisoned by Israel.

Among the 33 would be five female Israeli soldiers, each of whom would be released in exchange for 50 Palestinian prisoners, including 30 convicted militants who are serving life sentences. By the end of the first phase, all civilian captives — living or dead — will have been released. During this first, 42-day phase, Israeli forces would withdraw from population centers, Palestinians would be allowed to start returning to their homes in northern Gaza and there would be a surge of humanitarian aid, with some

600 trucks entering each day. Details of the second phase still must be negotiated during the first. Those details remain difficult to resolve — and the deal does not include written guarantees that the ceasefire will continue until a deal is reached. That leaves the potential for Israel to resume its military campaign after the first phase ends. The three mediators, however, have given Hamas verbal guarantees that negotiations will continue as planned and that they will press for a deal to implement the second and third phases before the end of the first, the Egyptian official said. The deal would allow Israel throughout the first phase to remain in control of the Philadelphi Corridor, the band of territory along Gaza's border with Egypt, which Hamas had initially demanded Israel withdraw from. But Israel would pull out from the Netzarim Corridor, a belt across central Gaza where it had sought a mechanism for searching Palestinians for arms when they return to the territory's north.

In the second phase, Hamas would release the remaining living captives, mainly male soldiers, in exchange for more prisoners and the "complete withdrawal" of Israeli forces from Gaza, according to the draft agreement. But Hamas has said it will not free the remaining hostages without an end to the war and a complete Israeli withdrawal, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has in the past vowed to resume fighting unless Hamas's military and governing capabilities are eliminated.

Unless an alternative government for Gaza is worked out in those talks, it could leave Hamas in charge of the territory. In a third phase, the bodies of remaining hostages would be returned in exchange for a three- to five-year reconstruction plan to be carried out in Gaza under international supervision. Growing pressure ahead of Trump's inaugurationIsrael and Hamas have come under renewed pressure to halt the conflict in the lead-up to Trump's inauauration next week. His Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, recently joined US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators in the Gulf country's capital, Doha. Trump said late Monday that a "very close" "Lunderstand there's been a handshake and they are getting it finished — and maybe by the end of the week," he told the American cable channel Newsmax. Hamas has blamed Israel for the repeated setbacks in the negotiations, saying that on more than one occasion, the militant group had accepted a proposal from mediators only to see Israel reject it or launch a new military operation immediately afterwards.

Israel and its close ally the United States have blamed setbacks on Hamas.Hamas-led militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the October 7 attack and abducted another 250. Around half those hostages were freed during a brief ceasefire in November 2023.Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were combatants.

Strikes in Gaza continueTwo strikes in the central Gaza city of Deir al-Balah overnight and into Tuesday killed two women and their four children, who ranged in age from 1 month to 9 years old. One of the women was pregnant and the baby did not survive, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the bodies. Another 12 people were killed in two strikes on the southern city of Khan Younis, according to the European Hospital. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Israel says it only targets militants and accuses them of hiding among civilians in shelters and tent camps for the displaced.

Gaza ceasefire deal close after 'breakthrough' in Doha; Hamas likely to release 33 hostages in first phase

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

A Gaza truce and hostage release deal is close and could be finalised in the final week of U.S. President Joe Biden's term, White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said "We are close to a deal, and it can get done this week. I'm not making a promise or prediction, but it is there for the taking, and we are going to work to make it happen," Mr. Sullivan told reporters.Mr. Biden spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday and called the ruler of mediator Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, on Monday as negotiations intensified. The U.S. leader has been pushing to get a deal between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas before he leaves office on January 20 and hands over to Donald Trump.Mr. Sullivan said he was more hopeful of a deal now than he was on previous occasions since the Gaza war broke out following Hamas's October 6, 2023 attack on Israel."It's because the gaps have fundamentally narrowed down," said Sullivan, Mr. Biden's top national security official. Progress had been made on issues including the formula for the exchange of hostages held by Hamas and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, and on how Israel's forces would be "postured" in Gaza, he said. Hamas likely to release 33 hostages in first phase of truce deal Mediators gave Israel and

Hamas a final draft of an agreement on Monday, an official briefed on the negotiations said, after a midnight "breakthrough" in talks attended by envoys of both the outgoing U.S. president and President-elect Donald Trump.If successful, the ceasefire deal would cap over a year of startand-stop talks and lead to the biggest release of Israeli hostages since the early days of the conflict, when Hamas freed about half of its prisoners in exchange for 240 Palestinian detainees held by Israel. The official briefed on the talks, who did not want to be identified, said the text for a ceasefire and release of hostages was presented by Qatar to both sides at talks in Doha. An Israeli official said negotiations were in advanced stages for the release of up to 33 hostages as part of the deal. Ninety-eight hostages remain in Gaza, according to Israeli authorities. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar told reporters: "There is progress, it looks much better than previously. I want to thank our American friends for the huge efforts they are investing to secure a hostage deal.""The negotiation over some core issues made progress and we are working to conclude what remains soon," a Hamas official said.Mr. Sullivan credited the fact that Israel had achieved its military objectives in Gaza, while Hamas has suffered "catastrophic losses". "When you put those two factors together, we believe that the time is right to get a deal and to have to close." Mr. Sullivan said.

North Korea launches projectile toward eastern waters in year's second launch, South Korea says



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

"North Korea on Tuesday (January 14, 2025) test-fired at least one unidentified projectile toward its eastern waters," South Korea's military said, as it continued its weapons demonstrations ahead of Donald Trump's return to the White House. South Korea's joint chiefs of staff didn't immediately confirm whether the test involved a ballistic missile or another type of weapon. It wasn't immediately clear how far the weapon flew. It was North Korea's second launch event of 2025, following a ballistic launch last week.

North Korea said the January 6 test was a new hypersonic intermediate-range missile designed to strike remote

targets in the Pacific as leader Kim Jong Un vowed to further expand his collection of nuclear-capable weapons to counter rival nations. North Korea is coming off a torrid year in weapons testing. The systems it demonstrated in 2024 included solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to strike the U.S. mainland and various shorter-range missiles designed to overwhelm missile defences in South Korea. There are concerns that its military capabilities could advance further through technology transfers from Russia, as the two countries align over the war in Ukraine. At a yearend political conference, Mr. Kim vowed to implement the "toughest" anti-U.S. policy. He criticised the Biden administration's efforts to strengthen security cooperation with Seoul and Tokyo, which he described as a "nuclear military bloc for aggression". North Korean state media did not specify Mr. Kim's policy plans or mention any specific comments about Mr. Trump. During his first term as president, Mr. Trump met Mr. Kim three times for talks on the North's nuclear programme. "Even if Mr. Trump returns to the White House, a quick resumption of diplomacy with North Korea could be unlikely. Mr. Kim's strengthened position built on his expanded nuclear arsenal, deepening alliance with Russia and the weakening enforcement of U.S. international sanctions - presents new challenges to resolving the nuclear standoff," experts say.

Russia-Ukraine war: North Korean soldiers captured in Ukraine haven't shown desire to defect, says Seoul's spy agency

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers on Monday (January 13, 2025) that two North Korean soldiers who were captured by Ukrainian forces while fighting alongside Russian forces in Russia's Kursk border region haven't expressed a desire to seek asylum in South Korea. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on the social media platform X that he's willing to hand over the soldiers to North Korea if the country's authoritarian leader, Kim Jong Un, arranges for an exchange with Ukrainian prisoners of war in Russia. Mr. Zelenskyy added that "there may be other options" for North Korean soldiers who do not wish to return home, and a video released by his government indicated that at least one of the captured soldiers expressed a desire to remain in Ukraine.

In a closed-door briefing at South Korea's National Assembly, the National Intelligence Service confirmed its participation in the questioning of the North Korean soldiers by Ukrainian authorities. The agency said the soldiers haven't expressed a request to resettle in South Korea, according to two lawmakers who attended the meeting.

The agency said it was willing to discuss the matter with Ukrainian authorities if the soldiers eventually do ask to go to South Korea. About 34,000 North Koreans have defected to capitalist rival South Korea to avoid economic hardship and political suppression at home, mostly since the late 1990s.Koo Byoungsam, spokesperson of South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said facilitating the asylum of the North Korean soldiers would require "legal reviews, including on international law, and consultations with related nations."

"There's nothing we can say at the current stage," Mr. Koo said. Seoul's spy agency believes that about 300 North Korean soldiers have died and another 2,700 have been injured while fighting against Ukrainian forces, in what represents North Korea's first involvement in large-scale conflict since the 1950-53 Korean War.

The agency assessed that the North Koreans are struggling to adapt to drones and other elements of modern warfare. They are further disadvantaged by the crude tactics of their Russian commanders, who have thrown them into assault campaigns without providing rear-fire support, according to Lee Seong Kweun, a lawmaker who attended the agency's briefing. The agency said memos found on dead North Korean soldiers indicated that they had been ordered to commit suicide before being captured, according to Lee. The agency said one North Korean soldier, facing the threat of being captured by Ukrainian forces, shouted "General Kim Jong Un" and tried to detonate a hand grenade before he was shot and killed. Mr. Zelenskyy confirmed the capture of the North Korean soldiers on Saturday (Janu-



ary 13, 2025), days after Ukraine, facing a slow Russian onslaught in the east, began pressing new attacks in Kursk to retain ground captured in a lightning incursion in August – the first occupation of Russian territory since World War II.Moscow's counterattack has left Ukrainian forces outstretched and demoralised, killing and wounding thousands and retaking more than 40% of the 984 square km (380 square miles) of Kursk that Ukraine had seized.

Moon Seong Mook, a retired South Korean brigadier general, said the high death toll for North Korean soldiers was predictable, as they would not have been sufficiently prepared for an unfamiliar mission in the terrain of the Kursk region, which is vastly different from North Korea's mountainous landscape. "Another disadvantage for the North Koreans is that they are not conducting independent operations but are being thrust into combat under Russian commanders, possibly struggling with unfamiliar tactics and communication issues due to language barriers," said Mr. Moon, who has taken part in numerous military talks with North Korea. "The North Korean forces could be operating special surveillance teams to arrest or execute attempted deserters," he said. "The current battlefield environment, combined with drones and other technologies, have created situations North Korean soldiers have never encountered before," Mr. Moon said. "They are also being deployed in large numbers in wide-open fields, where there is no place to hide, in continuous battles to retake the area, and that seems to be where the casualties are coming from," he said. "North Korea's decades-long financial troubles, which have forced many soldiers to grow their own food or spend long hours deployed in construction and other work to sustain the national economy, could also have impacted the quality of training they receive at home," Mr. Moon said. Still, there are concerns in Seoul that North Korea's participation in the Ukraine crisis poses a significant threat to South Korea, as North Korean forces may gain crucial combat experience and Russia may provide technology transfers that could enhance North Korea's nuclear-armed army.

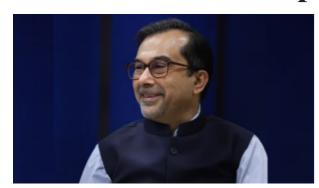
U.S. proposes new rules on exporting AI chips, provoking industry pushback

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

The Biden administration is proposing a new framework for the exporting of the advanced computer chips used to develop artificial intelligence, an attempt to balance national security concerns about the technology with the economic interests of producers and other countries. But the framework proposed Monday also raised concerns of chip industry executives who say the rules would limit access to existing chips used for video games and restrict in 120 countries the chips used for data centers and Al products. Mexico, Portugal, Israel and Switzerland are among the nations that could have limited access. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said on a call with reporters previewing the framework that it's "critical" to preserve America's leadership in AI and the development of AI-related computer chips. The fast-evolving AI technology enables computers to produce novels, make scientific research breakthroughs, automate driving and foster a range of other transformations that could reshape economies and warfare. "As Al becomes more powerful, the risks to our national security become even more intense," Raimondo said. The framework "is designed to safeguard the most advanced AI technology and ensure that it stays out of the hands of our foreign adversaries but also enabling the broad diffusion and sharing of the benefits with partner countries." White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan stressed that the framework would ensure that the most cutting-edge aspects of AI would be developed within the United States and with its closest allies, instead of possibly getting offshored such as the battery and renewable energy sectors. A tech industry group, the Information Technology Industry Council, warned Raimondo in a letter last week that a hastily implemented new rule from the Democratic administration could fragment global supply chains and put U.S. companies at a disadvantage. Another group, the Semiconductor Industry Association, said Monday it was disappointed that the policy was being "rushed out the door" before a presidential transition. "The new rule risks causing unintended and last-

ing damage to America's economy and global competitiveness in semiconductors and AI by ceding strategic markets to our competitors," said SIA President and CEO John Neuffer.One industry executive, who is familiar with the framework and insisted on anonymity to discuss it, said the proposed restrictions would limit access to chips already used for video games, despite claims made otherwise by the government. The executive said it would also limit which companies could build data centers abroad. Because the framework includes a 120-day comment period, the incoming Republican administration of President-elect Donald Trump could ultimately determine the rules for the sales abroad of advanced computer chips. This sets up a scenario in which Trump will have to balance economic interests with the need to keep the United States and its allies safe. Government officials said they felt the need to act quickly in hopes of preserving what is perceived to be America's six- to 18-month advantage on Al over rivals such as China, a head start that could easily erode if competitors were able to stockpile the chips and make further gains. Ned Finkle, vice president of external affairs at Nvidia, said in a statement that the prior Trump administration had helped create the foundation for Al's development and that the proposed framework would hurt innovation without achieving the stated national security goals. "While cloaked in the guise of an 'anti-China' measure, these rules would do nothing to enhance U.S. security," he said. "The new rules would control technology worldwide, including technology that is already widely available in mainstream gaming PCs and consumer hardware."Under the framework, roughly 20 key allies and partners would face no restrictions on accessing chips, but other countries would face caps on the chips they could import, according to a fact sheet provided by the White House. The allies without restrictions include Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

Targeted interventions in labour-intensive sectors, MSMEs needed to take growth to the next level: CII president Sanjiv Puri



An impetus to manufacturing and targeted interventions in labour-intensive sectors such as footwear, apparel, tourism, and furniture are required to take growth to the next level, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president Sanjiv Puri said. In an interview with Aggam Walia and Aanchal Magazine, Puri, who is chairman and managing director of ITC Ltd, also spoke about continuing government schemes for MSMEs which serve as a large employment base.

It's 6.4 (per cent) in a situation where the whole world is in stress. Of course, we would like to see it better but it's still a decent number...the first half is 6 (per cent), second half is 6.7 (per cent). So it is showing that it will pick up. There were transient factors in the first half — the elections, weather etc. We must recognise that it is achieved in a situation where merchandise export is depressed, China has been dumping stock in the globe and in India also. We've also gone through a period where food inflation has been sticky, which impacts the capacity to spend. So, in this situation, the fact that we're growing 6.4 per cent and 6.7 per cent in the second half, it kind of reinforces that we are on a strong foundation. Reinforces that policy interventions over several years have certainly helped to take us this far. We should really be discussing that having come so far, what needs to be done to go to the next level? 6.7 or 7 per cent to 7.5 per cent and 8 per cent.

What measures can be taken for higher growth?

There are several areas where there are opportunities to do things. After a long time, we have seen the resurgence in manufacturing. Certain sectors have really done well. Now, the question would be how can we take the learnings to some other sectors, particularly from an export perspective. How can we provide impetus to labour intensive sectors like footwear, apparel, tourism, furniture, and so on and so forth. Targeted interventions in each one of these sectors is what we've recommended. Second, MSMEs have a large employment base. What is it that can be done to take the MSMEs forward? We believe that the ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme) has worked well, so that needs to be strengthened and continued. Second, the government has done a very good job in terms of digitisation of the economy and a lot of digital platforms are available for MSMEs, given that many of them have small establishments. So, can we look at a single platform? There are many right now, like Udyam, TReDS, GeM, and ONDC is also coming in. So, a seamless solution to all of them. Third, to provide impetus to manufacturing, how do we get more and more sectors to integrate with global value chains. A targeted approach with an integrated view as far as investments, trade, infrastructure, and skilling is concerned would be helpful. It would also mean that in these areas where impetus is being provided, the duty structure has to be aligned so that the cost of inputs do not make us uncompetitive. CII is suggesting that at some point in time, we should be looking at three tiers with very moderate rates

Do you think the bigger corporates have somewhere failed in stepping up investment as much as it was required, especially on the back of corporate tax cuts?

No, I don't think so. As far as corporate investment is concerned, if you look at the period after the rate cut, it has been a very turbulent period. There was Covid, then there was a pickup, and then the global turmoil. Despite all these situations, private capex as a percentage of GDP in 2022-23 was higher than pre-Covid. It's materially higher than pre-Covid. Now, there might have been some transient factors in the recent past where certain activity slowed down. But if you look at it today, CMIE has said that the announcements of capex have seen a segment jump in Q2. There is also data to show that the order books of industries to do with plant and equipment of capital goods is also good. Third, 35 per cent of our members are saying they will be investing more this year, 45 per cent are saying they will be investing more next year. Now, what is coming in the way?

One is this huge issue of China dumping. That does impact investment and two, the growth in consumption – ultimately capacity is invested to meet certain demands, so consumption impacts. And as the public capex on its own also crowds in private investment, that is also starting to pick up and will also provide some impetus going forward. Wage growth has been a concern lately. There was a recnt FICCI-Quess study on stagnant growth in salaries between 2019 and 2023.

I don't know what data was used there. I haven't read the report. There are specialised agencies that actually provide data on how wages are moving in industry. It's a fact that private sector companies do annual reviews to retain talent based on inflation and this is also based on data that the experts publish. So, wages do go up and it is not that when profits go down, wages go down. It doesn't happen that way. The velocity of increase may get a little moderated, but it still increases. To senior and mid-level people, where there is a component of variable pay, that will of course have its impact, but it's not that the wages go down per se. It's very important for companies because otherwise they will not be able to retain talent. I think the larger issue may be on disaggregating the data to figure out which sectors and so on and so forth. I don't have that kind of information. But from an economy perspective, the larger issue is how to create more good quality jobs and which are the sectors that can provide impetus to employment.

You have stressed on the need to create good quality jobs. We have seen a rise in employment in agriculture, which is a reversal of the trend we were seeing earlier and not the ideal way of transition. What is urgently required for the creation of good quality jobs?

As far as agriculture is concerned, it will always remain important. It's about 45 or 46 per cent of the workforce. Even if it goes down, it will still be substantial. We have to bring in agricultural reforms to improve farmer incomes. There's no doubt about it. There are good schemes that the government is pursuing with FPOs (farmers producer organisations) and bringing in technology into agriculture. The journey has to continue and we have to provide impetus to take it forward. Agriculture has to improve. As far as creating good jobs is concerned, providing impetus to labour intensive sectors, MSMEs, and integrating into global value chains - all these will create good quality jobs. The other opportunity we have in India is on the services side, which is really thriving, like GCCs (global capability centers) and IT. 'Targeted interventions in labour-intensive sectors, MSMEs needed to take growth to the next level'

There's a lot of demographic dividend in rural areas given the better physical and digital connectivity. We can create integrated rural hubs, which have components of health care, skilling, education, career management, and so on and so forth. Some of it can be in public-private partnership. It can be around clusters of villages given that connectivity is better, you can travel to that place, do your training and go back. Because if a person has to come to the city, then there are a lot of expenses like lodging. Skilling and human capital development also becomes important to benefit from all of this.CII has emphasised the importance of increasing exports and becoming competitive. In some sectors, like textile, there is a concern that tariffs and quality control orders (QCOs) are restricting access to cheaper raw material and making exports uncompetitive. How do you see this issue?What we have suggested in CII is that, from a perspective of exports and integrating with global value chains, at a sectoral level we need to create an integrated trade, investment, infrastructure, and skilling policy. Once we look at it holistically, the optimal path will emerge. Some of these factors, whether it is tariffs or QCOs, of course they do have their short-term issues, but we need to take a broader view on how these sectors have to integrate with global value chains and stay consistent with that.

There has been a realisation lately that some dependence on China is perhaps unavoidable to make domestic industry competitive. What do you think should be the approach towards China?

We have to recognise that there is the need for efficiency in the industry. At the same time, there are certain larger strategic issues at a national level which also have to be cognized. We cannot disconnect the two. So within that, we have to have an approach that would definitely mean selective. Once we take that selective approach, and in that particular sector what is the best solution, whether it's collaboration or any other form, we have to pursue that. We will have to be very clear, we cannot completely ignore these larger strategic issues, but at the same time we cannot just decouple.

Focus on open, rules-based mega FTAs; cut import tariffs on key manufacturing inputs

Propitious global and regional geopolitical context coupled with a good growth performance presents India with an opportunity to attract investment by MNCs relocating away from China. Propitious global and regional geopolitical context coupled with a good growth performance presents India with an opportunity to attract investment by MNCs relocating away from China. At this juncture of India's growth and development trajectory, it is important that Budget 2025 be oriented towards enhancing manufacturing competitiveness, India's share in global exports and creation of productive employment opportunities. It may be useful, in this context to highlight the fact that despite shock events, increasing uncertainty and geopolitical shifts over the last few years, global trade has been resilient and on track to achieve an all-time high of \$33 trillion in 2024. Furthermore, it may be noted that three-fourths of global trade is trade in goods and of that, trade in manufactured goods dominates with 70 per cent share. India's share in these dominant categories of global trade has been small at around 2 per cent over the last decade. So, there is potential and if India adopts the right policies we can grow our share of trade in manufactured goods, which is important for both employment, exports and demand creation. The best way to do this is by integrating with the Global Value Chains (GVCs) and attracting export-oriented foreign direct investment (FDI). Higher participation in GVCs has helped enhance manufacturing competitiveness and consequently export competitiveness and shares for major ASEAN economies, Mexico and even some central and east European economies. Also, countries that have been the biggest beneficiaries of MNCs shifting out of China, have been those that are already well integrated with GVCs. India's GVC participation and benefits from China+1 GVC diversification strategy have been small in comparison with its comparator set

of developing economies. My wish list for the Budget 2025

therefore includes the following.* First, the initiative of the last Budget to reduce import tariffs especially on key imported inputs in the manufacturing sector should be continued. This should include, among others, sectors that are labour intensive and where India given its demographic profile has an inherent comparative advantage such as in textiles and apparel; sectors where exports are expanding globally such as apparel, office and communications equipment; new age sectors like green energy and Al-related goods and sectors where emerging trade trends are indicative of market and supplier diversification such as solar panels.* Second, the promised review of import tariffs should be aimed at achieving an alignment of India's average, applied import tariffs with competing emerging market economies (EMEs), especially in Asia which continues to be the most trade and economically dynamic region.* Third, it would be a positive signal if the Budget indicated a time schedule to achieve the alignment of import tariffs with competing EMEs. This would reveal India's commitment towards a more open trade regime and simultaneously lend an element of predictability to trade policy. Both aspects will help India attract re-locating investments in the China+1 GVC diversification strategy of MNCs. In addition, given the economic and trade dynamism of SoutheastAsian economies, an announcement towards an early conclusion of the review of the free trade agreement (FTA) with ASEAN in the Budget speech would be further beneficial in this context.* Fourth, signaling India's commitment to greater trade openness and upgradation of domestic regulatory framework in accordance with global standards would be further reinforced if the Budget also announces India's intention to seek membership of the 12 country, mega FTA, the comprehensive and progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership that is, CPTPP which includes major economies like Japan and UK. High proportion of global trade in manufactures is hap-

pening within large FTAs. Also, trade in these large, multi-

'Vineeta just went after me': Chef Gauri Kaushish on her challenging Shark Tank India pitch; how to prepare for high-pressure situations



The founder of Confect, a brand offering baking materials for cakes such as fondant and other consumable accessories, encountered significant challenges during her pitch. She specifically called out judges Vineeta Singh and Anupam Mittal for "not listening but just putting forward their narrative." Reflecting on the moment, Kaushish told SCREEN, "It was one of a kind experience. Every entrepreneur must go through this journey with Shark Tank. It's not about just being in the tank but the entire process. I believe I have come out as a much better version of myself after this experience. It was great to meet other entrepreneurs. We usually get so isolated due to our work that we forget the outside world. Getting into this was one of the best decisions I made in my life."

When asked about the grilling and cross-questioning she had to endure on the show, Kaushish said, "In the first 3 minutes in the tank, you have absolute freedom to talk, but post that it's a frenzy. I felt it was a feeding frenzy because I was not able to complete a single sentence or put my point across before getting interrupted by the sharks. Honestly, that is one of my pet peeves. At some point, I just felt that they were not listening but just putting forward their narrative or little understanding of the industry." She added, "Speaking from my experience, I felt they were not interested in the business or it was a commodity or a category that didn't intrigue them. They were a little dismissive. They wanted to say something for the heck of saying it. They didn't give me a chance to put forward any valid points.' Not everyone will agree with you or see things from your perspective, and that's perfectly okay. Not everyone will agree with you or see things from your perspective, and that's perfectly okay.

She revealed how not a single figure, aside from her turnover, was discussed during the episode. "Right from the time I entered the tank, Vineeta just went after me. When I showed the cake and said it was a disaster, she said, 'Theek toh hai.' I was like are you for real. I was just not understanding how they were not seeing what I was seeing. Similarly, when Anupam said it was my nature to do something different every few years, he gave it a completely different connotation. He found a hook and went with it," Kaushish stated. While maintaining composure under pressure is crucial for making a strong impression, it's not always easy when the dynamics become tense or one-sided. Gauri's experience resonates with many who have faced similar challenges, raising questions about how to stay confident and calm in such moments.

How can individuals prepare mentally and emotionally for high-pressure situations?

Gurleen Baruah, organizational psychologist and executive coach at That Culture Thing mentions, "It's natural to feel nervous before high-pressure situations like interviews, pitches, or public speaking. That nervousness often stems from the anticipation and importance we attach to these moments. However, with the right mindset, it's possible to approach them with a sense of calm and control."

She suggests, "Start by reminding yourself of your ultimate goal. Why are you doing this? What's the bigger picture? Remembering your purpose can help you stay grounded and focused, even when emotions run high. Instead of trying to eliminate nervousness, acknowledge it it's a sign that you care about the outcome. Use that energy as motivation to deliver your best effort."It's also helpful to mentally prepare for differing opinions, notes Baruah. Not everyone will agree with you or see things from your perspective, and that's perfectly okay. Instead of seeking approval from everyone, focus on presenting your thoughts clearly and confidently. "Remember, strong personalities or biases from others are beyond your control. What you can control is your preparation, your tone, and your deliverv. Centering your attention on these aspects can make a significant difference," the psychologist says. "Finally, accept that no one is perfect, which makes us human. Even if everything doesn't go as planned, reflect on what you've learned and how you can improve for the next opportunity,"

'Even with a broken foot, I was...': How Chhavi Mittal prioritised health and conquered challenges post-cancer

Chhavi Mittal's journey toward prioritising her health in 2024 is nothing short of inspiring, especially in light of the challenges she faced following her battle with cancer.In a heartfelt Instagram reel, she shared, "I started 2024 prioritising health and attempted some new PRs (personal records) for the first time after my cancer. While monkeying around with my kids at home, I had a very bad fall, which I believe was the first of four foot fractures I experienced in 2024."

Despite enduring multiple fractures, Mittal demonstrated remarkable perseverance, continuing to push herself physically while focusing on regaining strength and achieving new milestones. "Even with a broken foot, I was trying something when I had a nasty fall, which I think worsened my fracture," she revealed. Throughout it all, the actor remained steadfast in her advocacy for cancer awareness and her commitment to fitness. She kept up with weight training and even managed to perfect a handstand, exemplifying extraordinary resilience and determination. But, is it safe to exert oneself physically after recovering from cancer and what are some precautionary measures one must take?

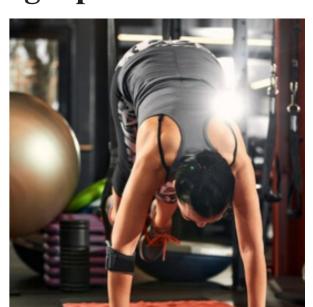
Benefits of engaging in weight training and other intense physical activities Dr Srinath, Senior OrthoOncologist and Founder at Asha Hospitals and Research Centre, tells indianexpress.com, "Weight training plays a crucial role in promoting bone health by stimulating osteoblast activity, which facilitates bone remodelling and helps restore bone density after fractures. Research published in Osteoporosis International highlights that resistance exercises significantly reduce the risk of future fractures. Additionally, strength training rebuilds muscle strength around the injured area, offering better joint support and minimising the risk of reinjury." Controlled weight training exercises enhance proprioception, or the body's sense of movement and position, which is vital for maintaining balance and preventing future falls. This aspect is particularly beneficial for individuals recovering from fractures, as it aids in regaining stability and mobility during the recovery process. Risks and precautionary measures

While weight training offers substantial benefits, Dr Srinath says, it carries certain risks if not approached cautiously. Intense activities can stress healing bones and tissues, potentially delaying recovery. "Overuse injuries, resulting from excessive weight or improper form, can strain weakened areas and lead to secondary injuries. Prematurely engaging in high-intensity exercises may also aggravate residual pain or inflammation. To mitigate these risks, it's essential to start with low-impact exercises under the guidance of a physiotherapist and gradually increase intensity to avoid overloading healing tissues."

Prioritising recovery through yoga or stretching improves flexibility, while incorporating at least one full rest day weekly prevents overtraining, especially after conditions like cancer. Prioritising recovery through yoga or stretching improves flexibility, while incorporating at least one full rest day weekly prevents overtraining, especially after conditions like cancer.

Importance of progressing slowly when attempting complex exercises post-injuryGradual progression, Dr Srinath asserts, is essential for safe recovery and improved performance, particularly when attempting complex exercises like handstands, which demand significant core stability and joint strength. Rushing into advanced moves can stress underprepared muscles and joints, increasing the risk of reinjury. By gradually incorporating exercises, individuals rebuild neuromuscular coordination, enhancing balance and stability while enjoying the psychological boost of achieving incremental milestones. To progress safely, start with modifications like wall-assisted handstands, monitor for pain or fatigue, and prioritise recovery days to allow tissue repair."

After cancer and physical setbacks, how should someone approach setting and achieving new physical goals



without risking further injury or burnout?

Safe goal setting involves adopting a structured and holistic approach to recovery and performance. Dr Srinath highlights, "Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals ensures realistic progress, such as increasing squat strength by 10% in eight weeks. Prioritising recovery through yoga or stretching improves flexibility, while incorporating at least one full rest day weekly prevents overtraining, especially after conditions like cancer." Mind-body practices like meditation help balance physical and mental demands, and tracking biometrics such as heart rate variability (HRV) aids in assessing recovery. Dr Srinath mentions, "Research in Cancer Survivorship underscores that combining strength training with adequate recovery enhances outcomes without increasing fatigue. Additionally, hydration, 7-8 hours of sleep, and an anti-inflammatory diet rich in omega-3s and antioxidants support cellular repair and reduce fatigue.'

Prabhas looks dapper in new poster from The Raja Saab

Mumbai: A new festive poster from the upcoming film 'The Raja Saab' was unveiled on Tuesday on the occasion of Sankranthi and Pongal. The poster showcases Prabhas in an uber-cool yet vintage festive avatar, as he radiates a delightful, celebratory vibe, offering a sneak peek into the film's unique horror-comedy world. His striking look has already piqued curiosity among the fans.

The film is poised to deliver an exciting blend of eerie thrills and laughter. Prabhas steps into the role of a man drawn back to his ancestral property, only to discover a vengeful spirit lurking in the shadows.

This is Prabhas second film after the monumental success of 'Kalki: 2898 AD', and will see him stepping away from his larger-than-life, intense roles, embracing a mischievous, spectral persona that will surely stun audiences. His vintage avatar, reminiscent of the Prabhas fans adored in his earlier days. 'The Raja Saab' is directed by the renowned Maruthi, who is considered a pioneer in the horrorcomedy genre in Telugu cinema. The film is produced by Viswa Prasad under the People Media Factory banner. With music by Thaman S, the film will release across five languages in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.Last year, Prabhas launched The Script Craft, a platform dedicated to promoting and encouraging writers. The initiative gives writers a platform where they can share their story ideas with a broad audience, showcase their creativity, and gain visibility.

Archana Puran Singh's son reveals she has never cooked for them; Farah Khan answers: 'That's why you look healthy'

Farah Khan's cooking vlogs on her YouTube channel have become a hit with her fans, and recently she visited actors Archana Puran Singh and Parmeet Sethi in Madh Island, accompanied by her trusted (and now famous) cook, Dilip. In addition to Farah's fun chatter with Archana and Parmeet, she also interacted with their sons, Aaryamann Sethi and Ayushmaan Sethi. During the conversation, Farah learned an interesting tidbit: Archana has never cooked a meal for her children.

After admiring their beautiful home, Farah complimented the couple, saying, "What a house. So proud of you both." Archana, with a smile, then declared that her son Ayushmaan would be cooking for Farah on the show. Responding with her trademark humour, Farah quipped, "This is the first time a good-looking guy will cook on our show." Seizing the opportunity, Ayushmaan added that his mom, Archana, had never cooked for them. "Mom ne humare liye aaj tak kabhi cooking nahi ki hai (Mom has never cooked for us)," he revealed. Farah then teased Archana and jokingly said, "That's why you guys look healthy," prompting laughter from everyone on the set.In the vlog, Archana herself humorously confessed that she "doesn't know" where the spoons are in her kitchen. Ayushmaan shared an amusing incident when Archana, attempting to make toast, couldn't locate the toaster or the bread. To top it off, Archana referred to an air fryer as a "dry



frier," which sent everyone into fits of laughter. Archana, who recently launched her own YouTube channel, gave her viewers a glimpse into her everyday life in the first episode. She shared details of her stunning house and her expansive

garden in Madh Island.

Black Warrant is a genre-defying coming-of-age tale inside Tihar Jail where endurance triumphs over defiance

Black Warrant, a seven-episode Netflix web series created by Vikramaditya Motwane and Satyanshu Singh, opens with a riveting sequence. The first seven minutes employ parallel editing, presenting Sunil (Zahan Kapoor) in two distinct scenarios. One functions as an interview established as a principle moment in the series' structure — where Sunil applies for the position of a jailer at Delhi's Tihar Jail. The other depicts him, freshly groomed and sporting a thick mustache, as his family prepares him for his first day on the job. The inter-cutting is executed with such finesse that it not only reveals Sunil's personal history but also establishes his urgent need for this position, a role for which he seems ill-suited. Meek, baby-faced, of modest stature, and lacking the physicality typically associated with managing a facility like Tihar. His vulnerability is inherently apparent. Yet, like countless job candidates in this country, his needs outweigh his aptitude. He needs the job more

The odds are stacked against Sunil even before he steps into the role. And these opening seven minutes masterfully hook you with the promise of what lies ahead. A part of you instinctively expects him to rise above the challenges, following the familiar trajectory of a classic underdog story. But the narrative subtly subverts this expectation, reminding you that Sunil's primary motivation for taking the job is not a lofty desire to reform society but rather a desperate need to secure a better life for himself and his family. This moral ambiguity leaves you in a state of conundrum, and, as all great storytelling does, the series soon introduces another twist. On his very first day, Sunil reveals glimmers of idealism. He appears eager to make a positive impression, to do what is right. When a snake is killed within the walls of Tihar, he insists that the proper 'procedure' be followed. This naive insistence, however, invites a calculated response from his senior officer, Rajesh Tomar (a brilliant Rahul Bhatt), who tasks him with discovering who killed the snake. What follows is Sunil's harrowing crash course in the grim realities that make Tihar one of the most haunting and infamous prisons in the country.

On the surface, Tihar is chaos. A place where reform is a forgotten word. But beneath, it simply mirrors the society outside. Caste and religion shape its structure, violence asks and answers its questions, drugs fuel its wars, and power corrupts its core. The innocent are discarded, the influential thrive, and lives are reduced to numbers, categories — B-class, C-class, and so on. Filth is everywhere, not just on the walls but in the air they breathe. For an outcast like Sunil, who sees the world through rose-tinted glasses, such a brutal reality is unforgiving. His naivety becomes a target, and he is repeatedly reminded that he is unfit for this role. Yet, his true crime is not his inadequacy; it is his idealism. In a system that feeds on cynicism, his crime is seeing the world as it could be, rather than as it is.

Still, Sunil persists. More fiercely, with greater idealism. And there are even moments when his efforts yield small victories. Say, in the third episode, his reliance on intellect over brute strength begins to pay off. While others flex their muscles, he chooses his mind, and his solutions work. His immediate colleagues start to see him as more than an idealist. They begin to see him as someone capable of offering real answers. Even Tomar, his seasoned senior, feels something about him. For the first time, Sunil emerges as a threat, someone who could dismantle the carefully constructed system Tomar has long controlled. As a viewer, you begin to believe in his transformation. It



perhaps, through him, Tihar will too. No wonder Motwane cuts to a shot of Sunil running, unbound and free. The imagery evokes Udaan, and for a moment, you think you've cracked the series' essence — hope rising from despair, freedom born from struggle. But that's the facade Motwane and his team craft so deliberately. They want you to believe in Sunil — the revolutionary, the agent of change, the underdog whose grit defies the odds. It's the illusion cinema has conditioned you to accept, a design as seductive as it is intentional. However, the truth is far bleaker. Those small victories are cursory, eclipsed by losses far greater. The system is merciless, always maneuvering Sunil into positions where failure feels inevitable. He loses more than he gains, stumbles more than he stands. His conscience becomes a burden; nothing but an affliction in a world where morality holds no currency. He begins to see his dispensability when a senior colleague, guilty only of daring to do what is right, is sacrificed like a lamb to the slaughter. After all, Tihar is not a place to be changed; it is a place that

It is a place where survival demands not transformation, but compromise. Sunil learns the art of the trade-off, reckoning with this contradiction as his idealism wanes but never extinguishes. The dream of overhauling the system fades, replaced by the resolve to mend it, piece by piece. He knows the machine will never reward him with the validation he seeks, yet he doesn't flee its chaos. Instead, he steps back into it with a steady determination, striving to leave it just a little better than it was the day before. He treats it not as a battlefield for revolution, but as a workplace: a space where managers come and go, assignments evolve, yet the core issues remain stubbornly unresolved. His job becomes more about doing the necessary thing than doing the right thing. His journey becomes less about defiance and more about endurance. His life at the prison is no longer defined by the fight against it, but by his ability to survive within it. Because, eventually, it is a story of survival in a world built to break you. It is about enduring one more day, with one more punishment, and finding the strength to stand. This is not a tale of heroes who conquer, but of those who persist despite the odds, hoping to leave behind something stronger than themselves. Perhaps Sunil's job needed him as much as he needed it. Perhaps the answer to the mystery was not who killed the snake, but why the snake was killed. Perhaps, in Tihar, everyone is a snake — killing to climb ladders of all kinds. Perhaps, Sunil too learns to climb, but the difference is this: when he reaches the top, he doesn't just see the system's endless machinery. For a moment, he can imagine a peacock

Paatal Lok creator Sudip Sharma and Jaideep Ahlawat calls social media obsession 'ridiculous': 'Thankful I found work without many followers'

When streaming platforms entered the Indian market, both filmmakers and audiences had high expectations. They were seen as a paradise for independent films, offering a platform to unique voices that often struggle to find space in mainstream cinema. However, over time, things didn't pan out as envisioned. Recently, Paatal Lok creator Sudip Sharma and actor Jaideep Ahlawat addressed this issue. admitting that Indian streaming platforms have failed to live up to their potential. They highlighted how the overload of information is hindering the emergence of distinctive voices and expressed concern over a troubling trend where actors submit their portfolios with their follower counts.

Speaking On the Hollywood Reporter India, Sudip said, "We live in the times of information overload. We are like hamsters on the wheel, both the audience and the makers. We see something and we think of writing or creating the same thing. We don't think about the stories that we want to

tell and till the time that personal touch isn't there, what we call voice of an artiste, you aren't going to standout or tell stories that are going to connect and last the test of time."He added, "There is a constant urge to create and get attention. It is there at the level streamers, filmmakers and the audience. It's an anxiety about the time we live in." Jaideep added to the discussion, "Everyone wants to be famous and I am thankful I started getting work before this culture because I don't even have those many followers." Calling the social media culture 'ridiculous,' Sudip elaborated, "Now when you get profile of actors its comes with how many followers they have and it's always a dangerous sign. Just because they chose to put that, it's really sad. While pitching a show to streamers if I have to show that I got these many votes on IMDB or these many views on my trailer, its really ridiculous. It really has to be on the quality of the script that you are pitching."

Shakti Kapoor reveals he begged wife Shivangi Kolhapure to give up promising film career, marry him: 'Be a housewife'

Bollywood actor Shakti Kapoor and Shivangi Kolhapure have been married for 43 years. In an earlier interaction, the Raja Babu actor opened up about how Shivangi left a promising acting and singing career to marry him, despite strong opposition from her family

Speaking on the YouTube channel Timeout With Ankit, Shakti recalled first meeting Shivangi on the set of the film Kismet. He said, "I met her. She was a child artiste, and I was playing an older character in the film. She is 12 years younger than me. We met, fell in love, and I thought to myself, 'Where will I find such a homely and beautiful girl?' One day, I told her that my work was getting disturbed, and I needed to focus. She got very angry."Recounting how he eventually proposed to Shivangi, Shakti shared, "I went to her and begged her. I apologized and told her I wanted to marry her. I also said that I wanted her to be a housewife. We had a court marriage. After that, everyone accepted our union. She gave up her singing career and everything else for me. To this day, I fold my hands and thank her for

Shivangi Kolhapure comes from a distinguished Marathi family. Her sister is the iconic actress Padmini Kolhapure, and her relatives include the late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. Shakti, on the other hand, hails from a Punjabi family. Their differing cultural backgrounds became a point of contention, and their families strongly opposed



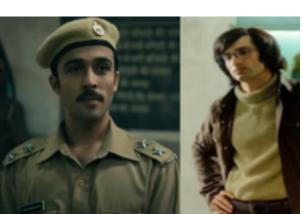
their relationship. However, the couple eloped and tied the knot in 1982. Their families reconciled with them after they welcomed their first child, Siddhant Kapoor. The couple later had a daughter, Shraddha Kapoor, in 1987, who has since become one of Bollywood's leading actors.

Real-life jailor Sunil Gupta from Black Warrant recalls his first encounter with serial killer Charles Sobhraj: 'I thought he was a senior officer'

Vikramaditya Motwane's Black Warrant has been creating waves since its release on Netflix recently. The web series Black Warrant, which is based on the real-life experiences of Sunil Gupta, a former Tihar Jail superintendent, and his journey as a jailer. In a recent interview, jailor Sunil Gupta, whose role has been played by Zahan Kapoor on the show, opened up about his real-life encounter with the serial killer Charles Sobhraj.

Narrating the situation which happened back in 1981, when he first came to Tihar jail for a job with offer letter in hand, Sunil shared, "When I came there with the offer letter, they said that this was sent two months ago. However, I was working in Railways prior to that, I had to resign that permanent job and complete my notice period. I had even given an intimation with a letter regarding that. Sir said that I wasn't given any intimation. I was stressed because I had left my previous Railway job for this. I tried talking to him with an approach of a senior individual RP Singhal, so they didn't send me away instantly and I came outside and sat to wait for a while.

Charles Sobhraj entered the corridor with confidence and asked for an introduction. "By then, a person in proper suit, tie, perfect shoes came up to me confidently. I was sitting on the sofa and stood up for him. He asked, 'Are you new here?' I told him that I am new here and I have come here for the post of an assistant superintendent. He asked me, 'Is he harassing you?' and I said yes. I had no clue who he was. He asked me to wait there and went inside," he said. In a government job, you are given an offer letter and then you have to answer that with a joining letter. Then, on



the basis of that joining letter, they issue a letter stating you have been hired. "After a while, that person came with a letter which said that I have been hired in the jail's strength. I felt like God sent an angel for me. Later on, I came to know that he was Charles Sobhraj. It showed his power and approach. I had thought that he was a senior officer. Look at the impunity with which he was just roaming around, when he was already a prisoner. Tihar jail was actually being ruled by him," Sunil added. The jailor also elaborated on the rumours about the criminal Charles having the privilege to meet his girlfriend in the jail premises. "What I had heard was that Charles Sobhraj had recorded a senior jail officer's conversations on dictaphone and he was blackmailing them through that. He even used an officer's room to spend time

Madhuri Dixit goes for a ride on her new Ferrari worth Rs 6 cr with husband Shriram Nene.

Actor Madhuri Dixit and her husband, Dr Shriram Nene, bought a new car, adding another masterpiece to their massive car collection. According to Carwale.com, the duo bought a Ferrari 296 GTS, which is worth over Rs 6 crore. A video shared by a paparazzi on Instagram snapped Madhuri and Shriram stepping out of a building together, then going for a ride on their brand new luxury vehicle. In the video clip doing rounds on social media, Madhuri can be seen in a shiny shimmery dark blue dress, while Shriram opted for a white shirt, paired with a black blazer and pants. The couple ensured to greet the fans before getting into their red Ferrari. After meeting the fans, they drove off in the new car. The duo looked quite happy and chirpy about their new

Madhuri's brand new car, the Ferrari 296 GTS Rosso Corsa, is a two-seater coupe. As per Carwale.com, the convertible car's pricing starts at Rs 6.24 crore. The automatic car is available in one variant, with an engine of 2992 CC, and in 14 colours. It has a rear mid-engine and rear-wheel drive. According to a July report by News18, Madhuri has an amazing car collection, including a Mercedes-Maybach S560, a Range Rover Vogue, and a Porsche 911 Turbo S.Meanwhile, on the professional front, Madhuri Dixit was last seen in Anees Bazmee's Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, which was one of the biggest hits of 2024. The film also starred Vidya



Balan, Triptii Dimri, Rajpal Yadav, Vijay Raaz, Sanjay Mishra, Ashwini Kalsekar, and Rajesh Sharma, among others. It is the third installment of the Bhool Bhulaiyaa fran-

The first part Bhool Bhulaiyaa, hit the big screen in 2007, starring Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan in the lead roles. The second part Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 (2022) had Kartik Aaryan, Kiara Advani, and Tabu in the main roles. It was backed by T-Series Films and Cine1 Studios.

Gaurav Taneja reveals there was 'garmagarmi' during his Shark Tank India pitch, doesn't deny earning Rs 1 crore in an hour

YouTuber Gaurav Taneja, who has over nine million subscribers on the platform, spoke about appearing on the reality show Shark Tank India, which recently debuted its fourth season. In his latest vlog, he spoke about his experience on the show, and promised his fans plenty of 'masala'. He admitted that he butted heads with some 'sharks', and addressed reports that he earns Rs 1 crore per hour through his whey protein business, which he pitched on the show.

He said that he had no intention of going on Shark Tank, and his wife Ritu Rathee agreed that there was too much at risk. He hinted at some 'garma-garmi' during the pitch, and said that there was 'nok-jhok' between him and the 'sharks'. "There will be enough masala in the episode," he said, adding that his CEO felt that going on Shark Tank could backfire on them. "What if they don't like the product? It'll blow up in our faces," Gaurav recalled being told, noting how a founder was accused of 'misleading' customers last season. "I think it was unfair how Deepinder Goyal and Mr Mittal treated him," Gaurav said. He said that he decided to take the plunge and pitch on the show when one of his investors encouraged him to. Explaining reports that he makes Rs 1 crore per hour, he said, "You are watching this on January 14. My Shark Tank episode will air on January 15. People have started thinking that I earn Rs 1 crore in one hour, but that's not how it works. That's only revenue; it isn't money in the bank or money in the pocket. It's a startup; whatever we earn, we put back into the business. Don't believe everything you watch on business channels on YouTube. You have to understand how the internet works."He continued, "It was an interesting shoot; it happened in September. I would prefer that you watch the episode first, and then we can talk in detail about it. But a lot of people are saying that Gaurav only went on the show to market his brand, and that I didn't need funding at all. I wanted both, marketing and the money. You can't run a business without them. We went for both, it's not like we didn't want the marketing. We did.

Virat Kohli should take a leaf out of Mumbai cricketers and play for Delhi in domestic cricket: DDCA secretary



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Kohli and Rishabh Pant's names are on Delhi's probable squad for the last two rounds of the Ranji Trophy fixture. "Both Virat and Rishabh's names are in the probable list. The Ranji Trophy camp is underway," (DDCA) secretary Ashok Sharma told "Virat should take inspiration from the Mumbai cricketers and play for Delhi in domestic cricket, whenever he is available. "See in Mumbai, there has always been a culture where their India players turn up for Ranji matches whenever available. It is missing in the North, especially in Delhi

"The BCCI has also mentioned players should participate in domestic cricket. I feel Virat and Rishabh should play at least one game, but I don't think they will," he added. Faf du Plessis on Virat Kohli form India's Virat Kohli bats during play on the last day of the fourth cricket test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Dec. 30, 2024. (AP Photo/Asanka Brendon Ratnayake)

Kohli had a disappointing tour Down Under, after scoring a century in the second innings of the first Test at Perth. His scores in the next four Test matches read 7, 11, 3, 37, 5, 17, and 6.Meanwhile, DDCA president Rohan Jaitely says

"fit and available" Kohli and Pant should play Ranji Trophy, but there are other factors as well. "They should, but there are too many moving parts," Jaitely told this newspaper. "With the amount of cricket that they are playing, to be at the top of their fitness, they have to be at the top of their fitness. Multiple factors have to be looked at also."However, Jaitley maintained that playing in domestic cricket should be a top priority for all cricketers."It is exceptionally important to participate in the domestic tournament. If on national duty, obviously one cannot participate, but otherwise, they should. Since the players are managed by the NCA and the national selectors, there are multiple things, based on their load management, etc. But they would keep domestic cricket on their priority list, which is exceptionally important," he said. Virat Kohli India's Virat Kohli reacts as he run between the wickets to score during play on the last day of the fourth cricket test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)Kohli's last appearance for Delhi in the Ranji Trophy came in 2012.

When coaxed about whether the DDCA has reached out to Kohli or not, he said: "In regard to whether we have reached out or not, I am sure the selectors and the CAC are the ones who would be in touch and coordinating things, so it is something that they would be far better equipped to respond on."The remaining two Ranji Trophy rounds are scheduled to start from January 23, with Delhi playing Saurashtra in Rajkot, and then Railways in their last group match at Arun Jaitley Stadium from January 30. Jaitley insisted Kohli's presence in the Delhi camp can leave a longlasting impact on Delhi's up-and-coming cricketers. "You see, it is exceptional because it is not about the game, it is about what you pick up also from the experience of a cricketer. Sharing a dressing room, being a part of a camp with the likes of Virat is huge. I am also a lawyer, so when you assist a senior advocate or you are working on an important matter, you may not be arguing it, but you will learn a lot in that process," he added.

PV Sindhu, with new coach Irwansyah in her corner, says the fire is still there to win the big medals

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

At 29, PV Sindhu starts the 2025 season with winds of change on her back and it is not lost on her. "Everything is new," she said with a smile when asked at the India Open pre-tournament press event about starting the new year as a newlywed. She is seeking to find joy again in the sport that has given her so much. The oddly new feeling of restarting her tour without an Olympic medal around her neck. And she will do that with a new coach in her corner.

Sindhu confirmed on Monday that she has recently begun training under Irwansyah, the former Indonesia men's singles coach who has made his move to India. Irwansyah is credited with the rise of Indonesia's men's singles stars Jonatan Christie and Anthony Ginting, who have both been as high as No 2 in the world. Sindhu, as well BAI General Secretary Sanjay Mishra, confirmed that Irwansyah will be taking up the role of India's women's singles coach."I'll be training in Bangalore with Irwansyah from Indonesia, who is now basically the women's singles coach," Sindhu told select media on Monday in Delhi. "After marriage, I returned to full training at the start of January, so it's been just over a week. He's here with me for the Indian Open. I've heard a lot about (his work with Ginting and Christie), and I believe he is a good coach for me. The way he thinks and approaches opponents is impressive. I'm really looking forward to working with him. It will take time, of course.'

There has been a lot of churn in Sindhu's coaching over the last couple of years. She has tried out quite a few personal coaches since parting ways with Korea's Park Tae Sang. There was Muhammad Hafiz Hashim from Malaysia, Agus Dwi Santoso from Indonesia, Lee Hyun-il of Korea, along with Indian stalwarts Vimal Kumar, Prakash Padukone and Anup Sridhar more recently. But the difference this time is going to be that Irwansyah is going to train a group of players, of course with Sindhu as the primary asset. "I am looking forward to building a bond, as it's important for a coach and an athlete to understand each other. A few training sessions will help us come together, and I look forward to that process," Sindhu said. When Tan Kim Her's appointment was confirmed, the BAI made it clear that he was coming in the capacity of the national team doubles coach, 'to continue the development of our badminton stars and also work with a bigger group of players and help build a strong pipeline of talent for the future.'



"BAI, along with SAI and sports ministry, are trying to avoid appointing personal coaches," Mishra, the federation's general secretary, told "Any foreign coach who comes in will be focussing a group of players or pairs. Sindhu is no doubt a national asset, but there is always the question who after her? So at least this way a group of 4-5 talented junior girls can train with her, and they will gain the confidence of sparring with a legend. And also, we will have a couple of junior coaches along with this group who can learn from the Indonesian. We want Irwansyah's main focus to be on Sindhu, but along with that, we want to develop the talent."There is one question that has followed Sindhu since Paris constantly: 'Are you thinking about LA 2028?' But in the here and now, Sindhu said that the primary aim is to stay away niggling injuries. "After the Olympics, people ask what's next or if I'm playing in the next Olympics. It's important to stay injury-free, that's my primary goal. We'll be picking and choosing tournaments carefully.

Does she have unfulfilled goals? Sindhu – a two-time Olympic medallist, a world championship gold medallist and so much more – said the fire inside hasn't dimmed just yet. "I feel there's a lot more to achieve. I have that fire in me. It's just a matter of time and rhythm. Another medal at the World Championships is something I definitely want, along with the All England Championships. We have big tournaments like the World Tour Finals."She will begin her campaign on Tuesday against Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei and will likely run into Gregoria Mariska Tunjung in the quarterfinal. And if she passes that test, comes the biggest challenge in badminton in the semifinal: An Se Young. The newness in Sindhu's career might take time to shape up but we will get an early sign of what 2025 has in store for

Arsenal forward Gabriel Jesus set for spell on sidelines for suspected ACL injury

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Gabriel Jesus injuryArsenal's Gabriel Jesus is taken from the pitch by medical staff on a stretcher after injuring during the English FA Cup soccer match between Arsenal and Manchester United at the Emirates stadium in London, Arsenal's Gabriel Jesus who left the field on a stretcher in the FA Cup tie against Manchester United on Sunday has suffered what is suspected to be an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, according to reports.

"We know more now. It is not looking good at all. We need to review with one more specialist and will have better information this afternoon. I don't want to confirm anything until we have the final report this afternoon. We were very worried after the game and we are very worried today," manager Mikel Arteta said on Wednesday. Before the unfortunate injury, Jesus had netted his first league goals of the season when scoring a double against Crystal Palace in December, and smashing in another in a win over Brentford on New Year's Day. He also scored a hat-trick against Palace in a League Cup quarter-final game last month. Jesus joined Arsenal in 2022, having won four league titles with Manchester City."We have other issues as well. A player can bring things to a team in different ways. That is what we are trying to do. We are actively looking in the market to improve the squad. We would be naive not to do that. There is an opportunity to improve the squad," Arteta said. After losing against United in penalties, Arsenal will next play Tottenham on Wednesday in the North London derby with the Gunners sitting 6 points behind league leaders



Arsenal's Gabriel Jesus who left the field on a stretcher in the FA Cup tie against Manchester United on Sunday has suffered what is suspected to be an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, according to reports.

Liverpool, who have played a game less. Also, surprise package Nottingham Forest who are 3rd with the same number of points as Arsenal (40) are breathing down their necks, just currently falling short due to an inferior goal difference.

Jasprit Bumrah named ICC Player of the Month for December for exceptional performance at BGT



GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Jasprit Bumrah ICC Player of the monthIndia's Jasprit Bumrah holds up the ball as he leaves the field after taking the five wickets during play on the last day of the fourth cricket test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne, Australia, Jasprit Bumrah on Tuesday won the ICC Player of the Month award for December pipping Australia's Pat Cummins and South Africa's Dane Paterson.

The bowler, who took a total of 32 wickets across 5 Tests in Australia, became the fourth-fastest player to get 200 Test wickets in terms of balls bowled. He also was the first bowler in history to take 200 Test wickets at an aver-

age below 20. The pacer was the standout performer for India in the Border Gavaskar Trophy, taking 22 wickets at an average of 14.22 in December. He started the month with a standout performance in the 2nd Test Adelaide where he took 4 wickets which kept Australia at bay.

He then followed up that feat by taking 9 wickets in both Brisbane and Melbourne Test matches, playing a big hand in helping India punch above their weight Down Under.Bumrah could not bowl in the crucial 5th and final test at Sydney after he suffered from back spasms on Day 2 which led to him leaving the ground to undergo scans. Meanwhile, the speedster is likely to miss the group stage of next month's Champions Trophy due to health reasons. The Indian Express has learnt that Bumrah, who has swelling on his back, has been asked to report to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru where his recovery will be monitored. The Champions Trophy, which will have the world's top eight ODI teams, begins on February 19, with the matches scheduled at Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Dubai for India's games. The national selectors are learnt to have been updated about Bumrah's fitness status. Though the deadline for announcing squads for the Champions Trophy is Sunday, the BCCI has sought an extension. Selectors are considering whether they should name Bumrah in the squad of 15 or add him to the list of

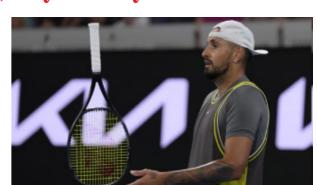
Nick Kyrgios is a tennis influencer, he lives for likes and comments, says Andy Roddick

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Australian Open, Nick KyrgiosNick Kyrgios of Australia spins his racket during his first round match against Jacob Fearnley of Britain at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. Former World No 1 Andy Roddick has launched a scathing attack on Nick Kyrgios for the Australian's recent behaviour surrounding Jannik Sinner and Cruz Hewitt, calling him a 'tennis influ-

Nick Kyrgios who is known to be outspoken has been one of the biggest critics of Jannik Sinner who failed two drug tests last year and still avoided a ban. Since then Kyrgios has openly criticised anyone who has spoken in support of Sinner and his latest critic was the 16-year-old Cruz Hewitt, son of Lleyton Hewitt. The teenager had posted a photo on Instagram where he is seen with Sinner after a training session at the Melbourne Park ahead of the Australian Open. Kyrgios commented on the post saying: "Love ya Cruz but this is wild."And this comment was enough for Roddick to step into the row. "At this point he is a tennis influencer. He lives for the likes, he lives in the comments section," Roddick said on his podcast Served. "What I have an issue with is the hypocrisy with which he picks and chooses when to levy judgment on others while also wanting you to digest the context of his comments - the latest being towards Cruz Hewitt."

Roddick added: "Cruz Hewitt is 16 years old, son of



Lleyton and the toughest competitor that I have ever played in my life, gets to hit with a guy who is No 1 in the world at the Australian Open. That is a big deal."Roddick also brought up the topic of Kyrgios pleading guilty to a domestic violence charge in 2023. "When you have moments in your life that aren't the best. When you've pleaded guilty to physically assaulting your girlfriend, but you want people to understand the context," opined Roddick. "You wanted people to understand your moment in time and life that didn't make this acceptable but at least maybe say 'this isn't who I am, this isn't what I do — I'm not an abuser even though I plead guilty to abuse.' It's just hypocritical. It's purely hypocritical," Roddick said.

From Karun Nair to Ruturaj Gaikwad, players to watch out for in Vijay Hazare Trophy semifinals

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Karun Nair became the third Indian to hit four consecutive List A centuries in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. (Instagram)Karun Nair became the third Indian to hit four consecutive List A centuries in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. The semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy begin are scheduled to take place on Wednesday and Thursday followed by the final on Saturday. Like the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, this has been a high-scoring tournament which has also seen players shatter records. As the tournament enters the business end, here is a look at the players to watch out for from the two semifinals.

Haryana vs KarnatakaNishant Sindhu: The 20-year-old has already made his mark with his all-round capabilities in the last two matches for the defending champions. Apart from churning out noted contributions with the bat, Sindhu who bowls left-arm orthodox has also been one of Haryana's lead bowlers. Thanks to his all-round capabilities he is a player being seen with interest by the selectors. Anshul Kamboj: One of the promising seamers emerging out of the domestic circuit, Anshul is a workhorse with ball in hand. Kamboj is capable of moving the ball both ways and hence is lethal with the new ball in hand. Against an in form Karnataka batting line-up, his battle with their top-order could well decide the outcome. He is also a very handy batsman lower down the order.

Mayank Agarwal: He has been leading the side from the front with his incredible form. So far in the tournament, Agarwal has scored four centuries against Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh, Hyderabad and Nagaland. Though a return to the national fold remains far fetched at this stage of his career, Agarwal knows a strong finish to the tournament could get him a break in the IPL after going unsold at the auctions.



Vidarbha vs MaharashtraKarun Nair: At this stage, it is impossible to look beyond Karun Nair, who has been captaining Vidarbha. Coming into the semifinals he has already set the stage on fire with five centuries, including four on the bounce. With performances in the knockouts tend to weigh extra if Karun can make the most out of his form in the semifinals, his name will definitely be discussed in future selection meetings. Ruturaj Gaikwad: After scoring an unbeaten 148 against Services in the group stage, Gaikwad's form has nose-dived. Since then he has scores of 8, 12, 13 and 5 which really doesn't do justice to his talent. But the 50-over format remains one of Gaikwad's strong suits and if he comes up with a notable performance, his name could feature in discussion for a slot in the Champions Trophy and beyond. Mukesh Choudhary: The left-arm seamer after struggling with injuries in the last two couple of seasons, has found his rhythm back. After an impressive show in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy where he was amongst the leading wicket-takers, Choudhary has carried on the form into Vijay Hazare Trophy. A skilful operater with the new ball, he will be tested by Vidarbha's in-form top-

Magnus Carlsen makes winning return after marriage

GNS News Agency, Jan 18

Magnus Carlsen defeated Max Warmerdam in Hamburg, Germany, on Saturday in his first classical game in almost four months, which helped St Pauli register their first win of the tournament. Carlsen drew against Wei Yi as St Paul narrowly lost to co-leaders Dusseldorf. "It's of course very, very nice to start off married life as a chess player with a win!" Magnus was quoted by Chess.com.On St Pauli's fortunes, Carlsen said: "The team obviously didn't have the best start to the season, so I think at this point we're just trying to climb up the table slowly, and of course I was happy to help today!"

Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet reported that a crew from Netflix was also present at the ceremony. Netflix is reportedly shooting a chess-related TV show, which is said to have a release date in 2025. However, Dagbladet added that it "has not been able to confirm whether they are on assignment for Netflix." Magnus Carlsen recently made



headlines at the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Championship, first for wearing jeans at a game and then withdrawing from the event when fined for it. Carlsen then copped flak for convincing Ian Nepomniachtchi to share the World Blitz title

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