INDIAN (CHRONICIA

Hyderabad's Riyaz wins big at Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship

2024, extending his unbeaten run in the class with victories in all four races at the MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship 2024, held at the Madras International Circuit in Chennai on Sunday. Riyaz, the only racer to represent Telangana in national championships, finished with a timing of 8.275 seconds in Round 4 and accumulated a total of 86 points, with 25 points awarded to the winner of each round. Speaking after the event, he expressed his determination to come back stronger in next year's championship.

Dr Bharati Kulkarni appointed as the new Director of NIN

Hyderabad: Dr.Bharati Kulkarni, an acclaimed physician-scientist has taken over as new Director of National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) on Wednesday. Dr Bharati specialized in Paediatrics from Pune University and has a Master's degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health apart from a doctoral degree from Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

She served as a scientist at ICMR-NIN for more than 20 years and for the past three years has been holding the position of the Head, Division of Reproductive and Child Health and Nutrition at ICMR.

Cabinet's first decision in New Year dedicated to farmers: Modi over crop insurance schemes

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday (January 1, 2025) that the government's first decision in the New Year is dedicated to farmers, as the Union Cabinet headed by him enhanced allocation to crop insurance scheme and raised subsidy to a key fertiliser. He said on X, "(Govt's) first decision of the New Year is dedicated to crores of farmer brothers and sisters of our country. We have approved increasing the allocation for crop insurance scheme. This will provide more security to farmers' crops and will also mitigate their concerns about any damage." Ours is a Government fully committed to furthering welfare of farmers. We are proud of all our farmer sisters and brothers who work hard to feed our nation. The first Cabinet of 2025 is dedicated to enhancing prosperity for our farmers. I am glad that key decisions have been...The Cabinet's decision on extending the one-time special package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) will help farmers by ensuring the fertiliser at affordable prices, he added. The Cabinet approved the continuation of the 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana' and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme till 2025-26 with an overall outlay of ?69,515.71 crore for 2021-22 to 2025-26. The decision will help in risk



coverage of crops from non-preventable natural calamities for farmers across the country till 2025-26, a statement said. It also approved the proposal of the Department of Fertilizers for the extension of a One-time Special Package on DAP beyond the NBS subsidy at 3,500 per MT for the period starting from Wednesday till further orders to ensure sustainable availability of DAP at affordable prices to the farmers. The tentative budgetary requirement for this would be approximately up to ?3,850 crore, the statement said.

New Year's gift to Hyderabad: Chief Minister decides to extend Metro Rail to Medchal and Shamirpet

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has taken a decision to extend the Hyderabad Metro Rail to Medchal and Shamirpet and gave the green signal for the preparation of detailed project reports, HAML Managing Director, NVS Reddy said. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, NVS Reddy said the Chief Minister given a go ahead for the preparation of DPRs for the Paradise-Medchal (23 km) and JBS-Shamirpet (22 km) metro corridors. The HAML Managing Director was instructed to immediately prepare the DPRs and send them to the Central Government for approval as part of Metro Rail Phase-2 'B'. The Chief Minister took the crucial decision after discussing the preparation of DPR for these two corridors with Principal Secretary, Municipal Administration Department, Dana Kishore and NVS Reddy today. The corridor will be approximately 23 km long from Paradise Metro Station to Medchal via Tad Bund, Bowenpally, Suchitra Circle, Kompally,



Gundlapochampally, Kandlakoya, ORR Exit; Similarly, from JBS Metro Station to Shamirpet will be via Vikrampuri, Karkhana, Trimulgherry, Lothukunta, Alwal, Bollaram,

Book Revanth Reddy in Formula-E case for cancelling event without Cabinet approval, says KTR

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Hyderabad: BRS working president and former Minister KT Rama Rao on Wednesday said Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy should be booked in the Formula-E race case, if taking decisions without the Cabinet approval was wrong. As the then Municipal Administration Minister, he had decided to host the event in Hyderabad, while Revanth Reddy, as the new Chief Minister, decided against it. "If taking decisions without Cabinet approval is wrong on my part, Revanth Reddy also cancelled it without discussing in the Cabinet. If a case is filed against me, why isn't there one against Revanth Reddy?" he asked. In an informal interaction with mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Wednesday, Rama Rao dismissed allegations of wrongdoing in decisions related to the Formula-E race event. He reiterated that the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) case against him in the Formula-E race case was baseless as there was no wrongdoing. He declared that he had complete faith in the judiciary and exuded confidence to come out clean. He rubbished the corruption charges as well. "Leave alone Rs 600 crore, there is not even a single paisa of corruption," he declared, adding that the Advocate General failed to clarify on the doubts raised by the Telangana High Court which heard the arguments on Tuesday and reserved its judgment on his petition to quash the ACB case.

On the summons issued by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials to appear before them on January 7, the BRS working president said his lawyers would decide whether to attend the questioning or not. "This is the sixth attempt targeting to arrest me, and yet, Revanth Reddy has found nothing," he said, adding that the Congress government was trying to jail him without evidence. Rama Rao leveled serious allegations against the Congress, stating that its leaders were involved in massive corruption in contracts related to the Regional Ring Road (RRR) project. "There will be Rs 12,000 crore of corruption in RRR contracts, with Congress leaders collecting thousands of crores from contractors and sending the money to their Delhi high com-

He predicted growing discontent among people with the Revanth Reddy government, particularly over the han-



for a self-declaration by farmers. He suspected that the Congress government would stop the financial as to farmers in a phased manner which would only trigger public revolt against the government. The former Minister pointed out the issues surrounding 42 per cent reservations for BCs in local body elections, blaming the Revanth Reddy government for undermining it. He suspected that the Congress leaders might encourage others to file cases against the increased reservations citing the 50 per cent reservation limit. On the occasion, Rama Rao announced that the BRS would complete its membership registration and appoint the State-level committees in the first half of the year. He said the BRS foundation day celebrations were scheduled for April 27, and training programmes for party leaders were planned to bolster the party's strength in the upcoming local body elections. He also hinted at possible by-elections this year, citing growing anti-incumbency among people. He revealed that the BRS would take the issue of MLAs defection to the Supreme Court after Sankranti festival. In response to a question, he said the party supremo and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao would step out at an appropriate time whenever people of Telangana need him. He also stated that the BRS would

Supreme Court to hear on Thursday plea challenging designation of senior advocates by Delhi HC

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is set to hear on Thursday a plea seeking quashing of the entire process of designation of 70 lawyers as senior advocates undertaken by the Delhi High Court. As per the causelist published on the website of the apex court, a bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan will take up the matter for hearing on January 2. The petition filed by advocate Mathew J. Nedumpara, a Mumbai-based lawyer, said the entire process of designation of lawyers as seniors is vitiated by "favouritism, nepotism, patronage and other illegal and extraneous considerations".

It also said that the separate dress code for designated senior advocates amounts to unjust classification, nay, near apartheid among lawyers and is unconstitutional and void being violative of Articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution of India. In October last year, the top court dismissed a plea challenging the designation of senior advocates under the Advocates Act, 1961.A bench of Justices S.K. Kaul (now retired) and Sudhanshu Dhulia said the system of designation of advocates as 'senior' cannot be said to be untenable or be classified as unreasonable under Article 14 of the Constitution."We dismiss the petition with no orders as to cost." said the bench, adding that the plea has been filed under a "misadventure" by the petitioner-in-per-



that senior designation has created a class of advocates with special rights and "the same has been seen as reserved only for the kith and kin of judges and senior advocates, politicians, ministers, etc."The petition said that the designation of advocates as senior advocates under Sections 16 and 23(5) of the Advocates Act, 1961 as well as under the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 creates a "special class of advocates with special rights, privileges and status not available to ordinary advocates" and is unconstitutional being violative of the mandate of equality under Article 14 and the right to practice any profession under Ar-

mand." he stated. showcase its strength in the local body polls as well. dling of the Rythu Bharosa scheme. He questioned the need

10 dead, 30 injured as vehicle hits crowd in New Orleans



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

At least 10 people were killed and 30 injured on Wednesday (January 1, 2025) after a vehicle drove into a crowd on New Orleans' Canal and Bourbon Street in the heart of the thriving tourist district, authorities in the southern U.S. city said.New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell termed the incident as a 'terrorist attack'. The police further added that the driver tried to hit 'as many people' as possible in the attack. Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick said, "This man, this perpetrator, he fired on our officers from his vehicle when he crashed his vehicle. Two of our officers have been shot. They are stable.'

"The 8th District is currently working a mass casualty incident involving a vehicle that drove into a large crowd on Canal and Bourbon Street. There are 30 injured patients...

and 10 fatalities," NOLA Ready, the New Orleans emergency preparedness program, said in a statement. Emergency authorities said the incident took place at approximately 3.15 a.m. (0915 GMT). At that hour, the area would been packed with revellers celebrating New Year in the French Quarter district, renowned for its bars, restaurants and jazz history. CBS News television reported witnesses saying a truck rammed into the crowd before its driver jumped out and started exchanging gunshots with police. A white truck crashed through a barricade "at a high rate of speed," witnesses Jim and Nicole Mowrer told CBS. "Once it was past us, we did hear gunfire, saw police running that direction," Nicole Mowrer said.

"Once the gunfire stopped, we stayed in the alcove until the gunfire stopped, came out into the street, and came across a lot of — several people who had been hit, (we) wanted to see what we could do to help. Authorities gave no immediate indication as to whether the car ramming was deliberate or any other indication as to the cause. New Orleans is one of the most heavily visited destinations in the United States and the incident came shortly before the city hosts a major football game, known as the Sugar Bowl, featuring teams from the University of Georgia and Notre Dame. Policing was heavy over the New Year's, according to the city, as authorities braced for the crowds. The city police department had announced staffing at "100 percent, with an additional 300 officers assisting from partner law enforcement agencies," including on horseback and using unmarked units

Agra man kills four sisters, mother in Lucknow hotel room, cites property-linked harassment

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

A 24-year-old man killed his four sisters and mother inside a hotel room on Wednesday, alleging land-related harassment by some locals of his community in their hometown Agra, police said. The accused, Mohammad Arshad, was arrested shortly after the chilling incident which took place in the busy Naka area of the city came to light, a senior police officer said. Central Lucknow Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Raveena Tyagi said the incident took place at Hotel Sharanjeet. "The accused, identified as Arshad (24), allegedly killed five members of his own family. Following the gruesome act, the local police promptly apprehended the accused from the crime scene," Ms. Tyagi said."The deceased have been identified as Alia (9), Alshia (19), Aksa (16) and Rahmeen (18) — all sisters of Arshad. The fifth victim is Asma, the mother of the accused," according to the police. The DCP said Arshad's family lived in Agra and preliminary inquiry has revealed that he took the step because of domestic disputes. "The forensic teams have been deployed at the crime spot to collect evidence while a detailed probe has been launched into the matter," she said. Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime and Headquarters) Babloo Kumar, who arrived at the scene, told reporters, "Inquiry is also being conducted with nearby hotel staff and any findings will be shared with the media as soon

as they come to light... Regarding the bodies recovered, some show signs of injuries — on the wrist of one and on the neck of another.

'Based on these marks, statements from witnesses and the post-mortem report, we are conducting a detailed investigation into the matter," he added. A purported video surfaced on social media shortly after the shocking incident came to light in which Arshad confessed to slitting the wrists and throats of his sisters and mother. He claimed that he took the step due to the harassment and oppression the residents of his locality."I, along with my entire family, am forced to take this step in helplessness and despair... I have killed my sisters and myself. When the police get this video, I request that they hold the people of the locality responsible for all of this," Arshad said.

He alleged that the people of his locality have committed "unimaginable atrocities" on his family members in order to snatch away their house. Despite raising their voices, no one ever listened to them, he said. "It has been 10 days now, and we have been forced to sleep on the footpath and wander in the cold. They have taken our house from us, even though we have the legal papers for the property. We wanted to dedicate it to a temple and change our religion, but everything has been snatched away from us," he said.

India, Pakistan exchange list of nuclear installations

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

India and Pakistan on Wednesday (January 1, 2024) exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral pact that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities, in continuation of an over-threedecade practice. The exchange of the list took place under the provisions of an agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

It was done simultaneously through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad. "India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels, simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities," the MEA said. The exchange of the list came amid frosty ties between the two countries over the Kashmir issue as well as cross-border terrorism. The agreement was signed on



December 31, 1988 and entered into force on January 27, 1991. The pact mandates the two countries to inform each other of the nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the agreement on January 1 of every calendar vear.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Looking ahead

AS the dawn of 2025 brings hopes for change Punjab's farmers must reflect on their strategies and open he door for constructive dialogue with the Centre. The rear gone by, marked by relentless protests and the teadfast hunger strike of Jagjit Singh Dallewal for over a nonth now, has highlighted the farmers' demands ome just and deserving, but others simply blackmail. However, the frequent bandhs and road and rail blocks ave also significantly disrupted public life, testing the patience of the very people whose support they depend pon. The peasants' commitment to their cause is undeniable. The success of the latest Punjab bandh on Monay underscored solidarity within the state, but at a steep ost — railway cancellations, road closures and economic isruptions. Such methods risk alienating broader public ympathy. Prolonged stalemates only exacerbate frusrations on all sides, delaying solutions that could address

The Centre, too, must adopt a more empathetic approach, shedding bureaucratic inertia. Invitations for talks should not be viewed as concessions but as avenues to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. The Supreme Court's involvement has spotlighted the urgency of resolving these issues, but judicial mandates alone cannot heal the growing rift between the state and its agrarian backbone.

Punjab's dominant agrarian economy forms the packbone of the nation's food security. However, its farmers remain mired in challenges like diminishing returns, ising debts and an overdependence on wheat and paddy as also land degradation and desertification. Collaborations with policy experts, agricultural economists and political stakeholders could pave the way for innovative solutions, whether in agro-industrial integration or financial safeguards for the peasants

Four instances of 'forgery' in voter ID applications, Delhi Police lodges FIR



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

voter ID applications, voter ID applications forgery, Delhi Police, Delhi Police lodges FIR, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairsPolice said applicants tried to misuse documents to shift their registered address for voting as well as to register as new voters. ArchiveThe Delhi Police has registered a case in connection with instances of forgery in voter ID card applications, where fake documents were allegedly submitted by four individuals for the purpose of new voter registration and address shifting. The FIR has been registered at Shaheen Bagh police station on a complaint by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) of Okhla.

DCP (Southeast) Ravi Kumar Singh said, "The office of the ERO flagged four suspicious applications during routine verification, where forged documents were submitted as proof of identity and address. Three applications included forged BSES electricity bills and another application included a forged Aadhar card." Police said the applicants attempted to misuse these documents for the purpose of shifting their registered address for voting as well as registering as new voters in the constituency. Police said the applicants -Jamil Alam, Kisunee, Mohammad Naim and Sabana Khatoon — uploaded 'tampered' documents. Police said a case has been registered under sections 336 (forgery for the purpose of cheating) and 340 (using forged documents as genuine) of the BNS. "Investigation is on to identify the accused individuals and any possible accomplices or networks involved in these fraudulent activities," they said.DCP Singh added, "The Delhi Police takes sanctity of the electoral process very seriously. Any attempts to manipulate or subvert the system through illegal means will be dealt with strictly. This case serves as a reminder of the vigilance required to maintain the integrity of voter registrations and ensure free and fair elections. Police will continue working in coordination with the Election Commission and relevant authorities to identify and prevent any such cases in

Hyderabad-based NIN researcher gets patent to treat menopausal syndrome

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Hyderabad-based NIN researcher gets patent to treat menopausal syndromeHyderabad: The quest for a non-hormonal formulation that could potentially extend proper care for women suffering from menopausal syndrome, appears to have found a solution right here in Hyderabad, and that too through the ancient knowledge of Ayurveda.In a first of its kind, an Ayurvedic-based therapy for menopausal care, developed by the city-based researcher from National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Dr Vandana Singh, has been granted a patent.

Derived from ancient Sanskrit literature and based on the principles of Ayurveda, Dr Vandana has developed a non-hormonal formulation that could potentially extend proper care to women suffering from menopausal syndrome, a major public health issue that is expected to impact over 1.2 billion women worldwide by 2030. At present, the traditional treatment to deal with menopausal syndrome is Hormonal Replacement Therapy (HRT), which is associated with adverse effects including vaginal bleeding, liver issues, and increases risk of breast cancer, heart disease and strokes. As a result of these inherent risks, the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) advised restrictions on long-term use of HRT.

Incidents in Bangladesh, Pakistan remind us of sacrifices by Sikh gurus: Yogi Adityanath



GNS News Agency, Jan

Veer Bal Diwas, Yogi Adityanath, Yogi Adityanath Veer Bal Diwas, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sikh gurus, Lucknow news, Uttar pradesh news, Indian express, Current affairsChief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a ceremony to mark Veer Bal Diwas at his residence in Lucknow. Taking part in a ceremony to mark Veer Bal Diwas (Sahibzada Diwas) at his official residence in Lucknow, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said that recent incidents taking place in the neighbouring countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan, reminded about the sacrifices of the Sikh Gurus.

"The Sikh community has a glorious history, yet we hear that only a handful of Sikh families remain in Kabul. Incidents in Bangladesh and atrocities in Pakistan remind us of the sacrifices of the Sikh Gurus... The ideals of the Sikh Gurus provide us with the energy to move forward. Their blessings serve as our inspiration. By carrying for-

ward their legacy, we can prevent situations like those in Kabul and Bangladesh. Places like Nankana Sahib will come to us naturally, without the need for agitation or struggle," he said. The event to mark the Veer Bal Diwas saw the commencement of 11,000 Sahaj Paaths. "Today, this event has grown into a national observance. On this day, two Sahibzaades of Guru Gobind Singh—Baba Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh—were walled up alive by Wazir Khan."

Recounting the sacrifices made during the Battle of Chamkaur, where Guru Gobind Singh's sons, Baba Ajit Singh and Baba Jujhar Singh, attained martyrdom, Adityanath said: "Guru Nanak Dev was the first to stand against Babar's atrocities. Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom in Lahore was to protect India from Jahangir's tyranny. Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed his life but upheld India's honor, ensuring that Kashmir remained an integral part of India. Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj witnessed the ultimate sacrifice of his sons and father for the nation."The Chief Minister emphasized that the history of Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh Maharaj, the four Sahibzaades, and the Panch Pyaras, is a testament to their martyrdom for the country and religion.

"This history is not just of the Sikh community, but of the entire nation, serving as a profound inspiration for all Indians," he stated. Recalling the historical significance of Lucknow, he said, "Lucknow is fortunate that Guru Teg Bahadur ji had come here with Guru Gobind Singh. To honor this heritage, a comprehensive plan for the beautification of associated Gurudwaras should be prepared in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation."

HC orders ASI and state govt to protect 17th century Agra monument 'from getting razed'

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Hammam, Agra, Agra monument, asi, allahabad high court, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Lucknow news, Uttar pradesh news, Indian express, Current affairsThe High Court listed the matter to be heard afresh on January 27. 2025, by an appropriate bench. "The matter shall not be treated as tied up or part heard to this Bench," the court said in its order. The Allahabad High Court on Thursday granted interim protection to a Hammam, a 17th-century heritage site located in Agra, and directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and other state authorities to ensure that no damage is done to the monument. The court was hearing a PIL filed by one, Chandrapal Singh Rana, who sought the protection of the heritage building, Hammam of Ali Vardi Khan located in Chipitola in Agra, from the imminent danger of being demolished by "illegal and unauthorised persons". "... considering the facts as disclosed in the petition and the circumstances of the case, the Commissioner of Police, Agra, Uttar Pradesh as well as the Archaeological Survey of India, Agra Circle, 22 The Mall, Agra, U.P and the Director of Uttar Pradesh State Archeology Chhatar Manzil Campus, M.G. Road, Kaiserbagh, Lucknow shall ensure that no damage is done to the building/monument. The Commissioner of Police, Agra shall also ensure that sufficient police force shall be deployed to protect the building/monument," the Bench of Justice Salil Rai and Justice Samit Gopal said in the order.

During the hearing, the counsel of Rana told the court



that a year ago, the ASI had conducted a survey of the heritage building in October 2023. "The ASI report confirms that the Hammam was built in 1620 AD," lawyer Vikrant Dabas told the court. "Despite repetitive requests made to the respondent authorities and to the police no action is taken and there is likelihood that the entire structure would be demolished as the same is carried on by using bulldozers and machines, and the entire structure would be erased within a day or so," the PIL read. The counsel also argued that as per the Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, it is the duty of the ASI along with the State authorities to protect the 400-year-old Hammam from being demolished. The High Court listed the matter to be heard afresh on January 27, 2025, by an appropriate bench. "The matter shall not be treated as tied up or part heard to this Bench," the court said in its order.

HC seeks Centre, Uber reply after visually-impaired advocate who hailed aap-based rides alleges bias

GNS News Agency, Jan 3

Uber India Technology Private Limited, Uber, uber discrimination case, Uber case, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairsBajaj said on October 25 as well, an Uber autorickshaw driver had expressed "reluctance" in guiding him, "given his disability." The Delhi High Court has sought a response from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) and Uber India Technology Private Limited while hearing a petition filed by a visually-impaired advocate, who alleged that he faced discrimination while availing the services of the ride-hailing app and sought Rs 1 lakh in damages for the distress caused to him. Justice Sanjeev Narula, in an order dated December 24, sought response on technical and physical accessibility features on ride-hailing vehicles to accommodate persons with disabilities (PwDs); mandate for regular training and sensitisation for drivers on disability awareness; system for monitoring and enforcing compliance; mechanism outlined for PWDs to report discriminatory behavior and steps for timely redressal and accountability. Rahul Bajaj (30), the petitioner and co-founder of Mission Accessibility an NGO working for PWDs - has sought a "structural framework" to eliminate or redress instances of discrimination. He has alleged that on August 25, he had booked an autorickshaw through Uber to travel from his residence in Sheikh Sarai to near Panchshila Park in Delhi. Bajaj was accompanied by his society's security guard, who assisted him in locating the autorickshaw. Upon noticing Bajaj's cane, the auto driver, however, refused to provide the ride, he

His refusal was made in a disrespectful and discriminatory manner, and he repeated his refusal twice. The reason why he refused the ride was because he felt that he



would have to escort the petitioner to the door of the café... The security guard had to (assure) the driver that the petitioner was capable of traveling independently.

Only after this did the driver reluctantly agree to begin the ride," the petition stated. Following the incident, Bajaj posted about the same on X. While Uber representatives called and apologised to him, Bajaj said the company "committed to no concrete plan of action or grant of compensation, which would serve as a deterrence to prevent such incidents in future". Bajaj said he faced a similar incident on October 25 on an Uber ride where the autorickshaw driver expressed "reluctance and hesitation in guiding the petitioner, given his disability."

Pointing out that Uber India "does not provide any mechanism for passengers to identify themselves as PwDs", he sought imposition of penalties on Uber India for failing to make its app accessible. He also sought that MORTH be directed to adopt best practices to ensure accessible services in the ride-hailing sector.

In next academic session, DU proposes to introduce PhD in Hindu Studies

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

delhi university, delhi university PhD, delhi university Hindu Studies, PhD in Hindu Studies, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairsPending regular faculty appointments, research supervision will be managed by professors from allied departments who have relevant expertise and have volunteered to guide scholars. Delhi University is planning to introduce a PhD programme in Hindu Studies from the 2025-26 academic session, as per a proposal outlined by the Standing Committee. This initiative follows a recommendation by the Governing Body of the Centre for Hindu Studies, which emphasised the programme's relevance and timely implementation. The programme, initially planned for the current academic year, was postponed to align with institutional readiness. The Centre for Hindu Studies aims to begin with 10 seats, including those under the reserved and supernumerary categories. This may increase as the Centre's infrastructure and academic capabilities expand. "In continuation of the decision of the Governing Body of the Centre for Hindu Studies taken on June 21, 2024, it was decided to recommend initiating a PhD in Hindu Studies with effect from the academic session 2025-26," the proposal stated. The Academic Council is expected to review the recommendation during its December 27 meeting. Once cleared, it will be forwarded to the Executive Council, DU's apex decision-making body, for final approval. The initiative is aimed at creating opportunities for students, Joint Director of the Centre for Hindu Studies, Prerna Malhotra, said."... the matter will be placed before the Academic Council. Students have been approaching the Centre, enquiring about research opportunities, especially those who have already qualified for JRF and NET in Hindu Studies. As a premier institution, Delhi University is committed to providing such opportunities and advancing research in diverse areas of Hindu Studies," she told PTI. The programme's eligibility criteria will adhere to DU's PhD regulations. Prospective candidates must hold a Master's degree in Hindu Studies or allied disciplines with a minimum of 55% marks

54-year-old man killed after his vehicle crashes into SUV in Delhi's Chanakyapuri



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

delhiA police officer said the Eeco driver — identified as Sukhdev Yadav — was declared "brought dead" after being rushed to RML Hospital, and a car businessman and his brother who were in the SUV were discharged after the treatment. A 54-year-old man was killed after he hit a Land Rover SUV at a traffic signal at Panchsheel in Central Delhi's Chanakyapuri area early ..

According to the Delhi Police, they found the overturned SUV and the damaged Maruti Suzuki Eeco at the accident spot. Further investigations showed that the Eeco coming from the Dhaula Kuan side crashed into the SUV entering the main road at about 4.30 am Thursday. "The Eeco van was coming from Dhaula Kuan and going towards 11 Murti Road. It hit the Land Rover on the side, going towards Simon Boulevard road, leading to the SUV being rolled over," a police officer said. A police officer said the Eeco driver - identified as Sukhdev Yadav - was declared "brought dead" after being rushed to RML Hospital, and a car businessman and his brother who were in the SUV were discharged after the treatment. The businessman who was driving the Land Rover was suspected to be at fault, and arrested following the registration of a case under relevant sections. Sukhdev, from East Delhi's Kalyanuri, lived with his ailing wife and other family members, the police said, adding that further investigation is ongoing. "Both of them were drunk. His wife has a medical condition and he was working day and night to support her and his children. We want justice for him," a relative of Sukhdev said.

UP police investigate 'local links' of KZF 'members', three detained in Pilibhit

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

According to the police, while tracing the 'local associates' of the alleged KZF operatives, it was discovered that the trio had checked into a hotel on the highway on December 20 and left the next evening. CCTV footage from the hotel showed two local residents present at the hotel during the trio's stay. One of the youths was seen with the operatives. The police tracked the two residents and detained them for questioning. Based on the information provided by them, another local resident was also taken into custody for questioning. "During interrogation, one of the detainees revealed that he assisted the three operatives after receiving a call from a man in England who had visited his village about two years ago and stayed with him for nearly six hours," a police officer stated.

The police suspect that this local resident was responsible for booking hotel room for the trio. A review of the hotel records revealed that the operatives had checked in using Aadhaar cards submitted under false names-Kuldeep Singh, Heera Singh, and Manjeet Singh—listing an address in Ballia. Police guestioned the hotel staff to gather further details about the suspects. "The hotel records show that the trio checked in on December 20 and departed on the night of December 21," said a police officer. He mentioned that efforts are ongoing to establish when the trio arrived in Uttar Pradesh and where they stayed after leaving the hotel and before being gunned down early Monday morning. Meanwhile, local resident Omkar Singh has filed a complaint against three unidentified men who allegedly robbed his 75-year-old father, Gurnam Singh, at gunpoint and took his cellphone. According to the police, the complaint stated in the FIR that the assailants, riding a Bullet motorcycle with their faces covered, stopped Gurnam Singh's vehicle while he was returning from the market on Wednesday and forcibly took his cellphone. "The three men demanded Gurnam Singh's cellphone, but he refused and offered them Rs 2,000 instead," the police stated. "However, the assailants insisted he take the money from them and hand over his cellphone. They explained that after the deaths of their three associates in the encounter, they had become separated from their group and needed the phone to trace the others. They assured Gurnam Singh that they would discard his cellphone after use and that no harm would come to him."Despite these assurances, one of the men suddenly drew a firearm, pointed it at Gurnam Singh's head, and forcibly took his cellphone. Based on a complaint filed by Gurnam Singh's son, Omkar Singh, a case of robbery has been registered at the Sungarhi police station. SP Pilibhit, Avinash Pandey, stated that he spoke with the victim and that efforts are ongoing to trace the accused. He also confirmed that the three operatives killed in the encounter had stayed at a hotel in Pilibhit, and the police are investigating the involvement of local residents who may have aided them.

PETA India billboard at Jubilee Hills urges people to turn VEGAN

Hyderabad: Ahead of the New Year, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in a unique initiative at encouraging people of Hyderabad to turn vegan, erected a huge billboard, appealing to make 2025 a year of compassion and change, by eating vegan. The billboard located at Jubilee Hills, Road No 36, next to Rainbow Park, features a cow, a buffalo, a piglet, a rabbit, a goat, a chicken, a chick and lambs with the message 'Keep Us Alive in 25'. Please, Go Vegan!". "Each vegan saves the lives of up to nearly 200 animals a year by simply not eating products made from their bodies", says PETA India Manager of Vegan and Corporate Projects Dr Kiran Ahuja. "It is really that easy to save thousands of animals' lives in our lifetimes.' Each person who goes vegan also reduces their risk of suffering from heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and cancer, and helps prevent future pandemics. SARS, swine flu, bird flu, and likely COVID-19 all spread to humans from confining and killing animals for food.

3 held from MLA hostel, police say using Abhishek's name used in extortion bid



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Kolkata police on Wednesday night arrested three men from the MLA hostel on Kid Street, Kolkata, who were allegedly attempting to extort Rupees 5 lakh from Kalna Municipality chairman Ananda Dutta by falsely claiming to represent Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee. The caller alleged there were complaints of financial irregularities against Dutta and threatened police action unless ransom was paid. Police set a trap and caught one person from the hostel's room number 417, followed by the arrest of two more individuals from the same location. Dutta, who was told by the accused to meet him at the MLA hostel, visited the hostel on the pretext of delivering money, in plain clothes, with a policeman waiting downstairs. Those arrested have been identified as — Junedul Haque Chowdhury, Subhadip

Malik, and Taslim Sheikh. Police also learnt that the guest room (417) was booked by BJP MLA Nikhil Ranjan Dey of Cooch Behar. Hostel authorities were unavailable for comments. TMC district chief of Purba Bardhman and party MLA Katwa, Rabindranath Chattopadhyay said, "Some miscreants called Dutta for money. He informed Abhishek' office and the police."

As per police, a call was made to Dutta, allegedly demanding Rupees 5 lakhs in the name of TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee. The caller alleged there were multiple complaints of financial irregularities against Dutta and threatened police action unless ransom was paid. Dutta contacted Banerjee's Camac Street office to verify the call and on learning that they did not, Dutta was advised by Banerjee's office to file a police complaint. Subsequently, Dutta lodged a complaint at Shakespeare Sarani Police Station, alleging that he received a suspicious call from an unknown number, with the caller claiming to be from TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee's office. Additionally, the police also learnt that the guest room (417) from where the accused were arrested was booked by BJP MLA Nikhil Ranjan Dey of Cooch Behar. Further investigation is underway. However, the hostel authorities were unavailable to comment on the issue. Reacting to the incident, TMC district president of Purba Bardhman and party MLA Katwa, Rabindranath Chattopadhyay said, "Some miscreants called Dutta for money. But he has doubts. He informed Abhishek Banerjee's office and then the police. We don't think it will tarnish our party's image.'

Vigilance dept asks PWD to probe source of 'lavish items' at CM house



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Delhi Public Works Department, Arvind Kejriwal, Vigilance Directorate, Vinai Kumar Saxena, V K Saxena, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs The bungalow was vacated by Arvind Kejriwal in October after he resigned as Delhi CM. The Vigilance Directorate has asked the Public Works Department (PWD) to initiate a probe and submit a report within five days on who or which organisation provided the "lavish items" found at 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow, which was vacated by AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal in October after he resigned as chief minister.

The probe, which follows a complaint filed by Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly and BJP MLA Vijender Gupta earlier this month with Lieutenant Governor (L-G) V K Saxena, will also look into "financial transactions or benefits made in exchange of these items" and its "impact on public funds". While Gupta had filed the complaint with the L-G through a letter on November 20, Saxena directed the Vigilance Directorate to investigate the matter on December 6. The letter issued by the Vigilance Directorate to the Principal Secretary (PWD) on December 19 stated: "This items..." Responding "BJP neither has a planning, and its Kejriwal". "Let them of want... So far, they and we have been a mately be acquitted engaged in nothing and using ED and the statement."

has a reference to the letter received... from the office of Lieutenant Governor... it has been requested that the matter be investigated to ascertain the identity of the individuals or organisations that provided the lavish items to the chief minister's bungalow."The BJP has been calling the Flagstaff Road bungalow 'Sheesh Mahal', accusing Kejriwal of amassing luxury items by spending "Rs 56 crore" of public money to live a "lavish life" despite claiming to be a common man.In his letter to the L-G, Gupta claimed that "discrepancies" were found in the lists of the items provided by the PWD at the Flagstaff Road bungalow in 2022, and that of the items left behind by Kejriwal after stepping down as CM in 2024. He claimed that an inventory check conducted by PWD after Kejriwal vacated the bungalow, revealed the presence of additional luxurious items not supplied by the department. These included luxury toilet seats, expensive wash basins, reclining sofas, costly curtains, premium carpets, high-value TV sets, and refrigerators, he added. In a statement, Gupta on Thursday claimed that "liquor mafia who benefitted from the excise policy scam" paid for the items. "If PWD didn't supply these items, then who adorned Kejriwal's glass mansion with such grandeur? It is evident that in exchange for the benefits extended in the liquor scam, liquor mafia provided Kejriwal with these luxury items..."Responding to the development, the AAP said that "BJP neither has a credible face for Delhi, nor vision, nor planning, and its sole agenda is to hurl abuses at Kejriwal". "Let them conduct as many investigations as they want... So far, they have filed over 200 cases against us, and we have been acquitted in almost all, and we will ultimately be acquitted in the remaining ones as well. BJP has engaged in nothing but negative politics – filing false cases and using ED and CBI to topple governments," the party

Hyderabad real estate juggernaut losing steam as sales drop drastically

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Hyderabad: A painstakingly built real estate juggernaut appears to be losing its steam and threatening to go off the railsHyderabad's property market that flourished over the decade, growing leaps and bounds and encompassing wide swaths of hitherto untapped acreages on the city outskirts and beyond, is now in a quandary.

Even as property seekers choose a wait-and-watch approach, the sales have started to drop, enquiries dwindle, unsold inventory goes up and new launches clearly seem to be on hold. Offering a perspective on the prevailing situation in Hyderabad is the study of top seven cities released by Anarock on Thursday. According to Anarock data, Hyderabad in the year 2024 registered a decline of 5 per cent in unit sales compared to year 2023 and also 24 per cent drop in new supplies during the same time period. The city-wise housing sales shows that a total of 61,715 units were sold in Hyderabad last year and the numbers have dropped down to 58,540 units - a 5 per cent year-on-year decline. During this period, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Bengaluru witnessed an annual rise, albeit marginal.In the city-wise new launches overview, the Anarock study has Hyderabad recording a decline of 24 per cent with only 58,335 units this year as against launch of 76,345 new units last year. This drop in new launches paints a grim picture for Hyderabad since during the same period, National Capital Region logged in a rise of 44 per cent and Bengaluru recorded 30 per cent rise. According to the Anarock report, strong homebuyer demand and hardening property prices coupled with the general and State



elections dented India's residential growth momentum in 2024. Its data indicates that housing sales in the top 7 cities witnessed a marginal 4 per cent decline in 2024 with approximately 4,59,650 units in 2024 against 4,76,530 units in 2023. Anuj Puri, Chairman – Anarock Group, says, "Average residential prices hikes will stabilise in the coming year, though there will be steady growth amid increased input costs and high demand. 2025 will also see generous new supply infusions by listed developers, who have significant inventory lined up."

Among budget categories, luxury housing demand and new supply increased exponentially in 2024 as homebuyers demand continued the post-pandemic trend of bigger, better homes by branded developers. The new luxury supply addition across the top 7 cities rose by 24 per cent in 2024

Suvendu on terror radar: IB alerts state police over threat from Bangla outfits

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) of the Ministry of Home Affairs has sent an alert to West Bengal Police, warning of a possible attack by Bangladesh terror outfits on Leader of the Opposition in Assembly and BJP MLA Suvendu Adhikari, sources said. In a letter to the Director General of Police and other officials of state police, Assistant Director/VIP Security Subsidiary, Intelligence Bureau (MHA), on December 19, said, "According to an uncorroborated input, Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam. Bangladesh (HUJI-BD) and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT) could be planning to target Suvendu Adhikari (LoP, WBLA) during December 24-26, 2024 at a public meeting for his anti-Bangladesh actions/remarks."

The letter also stated that "some Bangladesh based Islamist outfits have planned to target Adhikari in coming days" especially during any public rally or protest programme. "Further, 3 Bangladeshi criminals, namely Shakil (nfi), Samsul Alam (nfi) and an unknown person may

have been tasked to target the said BJP leader. Also, a separate input suggests that some Bangladesh based Islamist outfits have planned to target Shri Suvendu Adhikari in coming days and Bangladeshi criminals have been tasked to carry out this action, particularly during any public rally or protest programme. Suvendu Adhikari is a 'Z' - category CRP protectee with BR vehicle in West Bengal," it said. However, Adhikari said that he is not afraid of "such threats". "Earlier CPIM, TMC also tried to attack and now terrorists. I would not say anything on this. I will remain among people. They will give security to me. They are my protection shield," he said. "I am in public life and will continue to speak on issues affecting the people, including the attacks on Hindu minorities in Bangladesh," Adhikari had said Meanwhile, the ruling TMC and Opposition BJP engaged in a political slugfest over recent arrests of suspected terrorists in West Bengal. While the state's ruling party holding the Centre responsible for "terrorists infiltrating" Bengal,

Group-1 preliminary exam: Telangana High Court dismisses batch of writ petitions



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Hyderabad: A two-judge Bench of the Telangana High Court on Thursday dismissed a batch of writ petitions that sought the restoration of notification No. 4/2022, dated April 26, 2022, and a re-conduct of the Group-1 preliminary examination. The petitioners argued that the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TGPSC) had unlawfully cancelled the earlier notification and issued a new notification (No. 2/2024) on February 19, 2024, which altered the terms of the recruitment process. While dismissing the petitions, the court provided some relief to the petitioners, granting them the liberty to file separate proceedings regarding the subsequent events that followed the issuance of the new notification. However, the bench clarified that these new issues could not be adjudicated in the present batch of writ petitions. The court noted that there was a significant delay in filing the petitions and remarked that the petitioners had failed to provide an adequate explanation for the delay, which was a key factor in dismissing the case. The bench observed that the principles of justice could not be compromised due to delay in approaching the court, particularly in matters of recruitment. Dr Aditya Sondhi, senior counsel representing the petitioner Sri Palle Srinivas Reddy, had argued that as per an earlier judgment the only viable option left for the TGPSC was to "re-conduct" the Group-1 preliminary examination based on the April 2022 notification. He contended that cancelling the notification and issuing a new one was illegal, as it not only expanded the number of vacancies from 503 to 563 but also altered the selection process mid-course, which he argued was a violation of fairness in the recruitment process.

Further, Sondhi argued that the TSPC had breached the prescribed ratio of 1:50 for vacancies and did not apply the ratio category-wise, which could unfairly advantage some candidates. He also questioned the validity of the new rules introduced through GO Ms No.29, dated February 8, 2024, suggesting that the introduction of such executive orders had created confusion and could potentially infringe on candidates' rights. E Madan Mohan, another senior counsel representing a different petitioner, added that the adjustments to the vacancy calculation, which had been made according to the new rules, were contrary to the earlier guidelines and violated the principles established by the

Supreme Court in various judgments, including the Indra Sawhney case, which upheld the concept of merit-based and fair reservation.

The government, represented by the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TGPSC), opposed the writ petitions, arguing that they were filed too late, and no valid reason had been provided to justify the delay. The bench accepted this reasoning, stating that the petitioners had failed to explain the delay in approaching the court despite being aware of the new notification issued in February 2024. The bench referred to an earlier order where the court had already dismissed similar pleas based on a six-month delay. In another key aspect of the judgment, the bench also noted that several petitioners had sought to challenge the extension of the application deadline, which allowed candidates who did not apply within the original time frame to submit their applications until March 14, 2024. The petitioners contended that this extension unfairly expanded the pool of candidates, putting those who had applied within the prescribed time at a disadvantage. However, the court rejected this argument, emphasising that the delay in filing the petitions had rendered these issues irrelevant for adjudication in this round of litigation. The court ultimately held that, after the dismissal of the previous petitions, there was no ground to "turn the clock back" and restore the previous notification. The bench concluded that the petitions filed in this batch were also to be dismissed, as the delay in filing rendered the merits of the case irrelevant for consideration. Quashes SC, ST Atrocities caseThe Telangana High Court quashed an SC, ST Atrocities case filed against three judicial officers, noting that the complaint was maliciously filed with an ulterior motive. The Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J. Sreenivas Rao, ruled that the High Court has the authority to quash criminal proceedings when they are found to be instituted with personal vengeance or a private grudge. The case involved an FIR filed by a lady judicial officer in 2015, accusing three of her colleagues Asifa Sultana and two others of abusing her based on her caste. The complaint was linked to an incident during a training session at the Judicial Academy in Secunderabad, where the complainant found one of her male colleagues in her guarters at midnight. The authorities later removed the male officer after an inquiry, but the complainant filed a separate case against the three officers, alleging caste-based abuse. The High Court, upon reviewing the case, concluded that the complaint was a "malicious counter-blast" and an abuse of legal process. As a result, the court quashed the FIR, emphasizing that criminal proceedings should not be misused for personal reasons.Reserves ordersustice K Sujana of the Telangana High Court on Thursday reserved for orders the bail application filed by the suspended Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) N Bhujanga Rao, the third accused in the ongoing phone tapping case. It may be recalled, Justice K Sujana, previously granted the interim bail extension on medical grounds, including heart and kidney ailments.

Capturing the tigress: Prohibitory orders in place, plan to lead Zeenat to ambush

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Zeenat, female tiger Zeenat, tigress Zeenat, Similipal National Park, odisha Similipal National Park, Kolkata news, WEst Bengal news, Indian express, current affairsHula workers in Bandwan area, The Purulia district administration has imposed prohibitory orders in the Bandwan area where a three-year-old female tiger, who had strayed out of Odisha's Similipal National Park earlier this month, is presently located. This comes as forest departments of West Bengal and Odisha brought in controversial Hula Party (villagers with burning spears used to drive elephants) and more field workers and officers to Purulia as they plan to drive Zeenat, the tigress, into an ambush so that she could be tranquillized and captured. "Now, our plan is to create an atmosphere where the tigress is driven to a corner for ambush. Then we can try and tranquilize it," said Debal Roy, Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal.

"The abundance of domesticated lambs is posing a major problem for us in capturing the tigress. Two more



carcasses of lambs from neighboring villages have been found in the area where she is. That is why she is not showing interest in animals we have set up as baits," added Roy.Meanwhile, West Bengal Police and forest department officials continued to alert villagers and tourists in the Bandwan area prohibiting them to move out alone or ven-

'Partha Chatterjee used phone numbers issued in others names __to_collect_scam money': ED to court in schools jobs case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), probing the alleged money laundering angle in the schools jobs case, on Thursday told the trial court here that former education minister Partha Chatterjee used the "scam money" to buy properties and floated several benami companies. A court in Kolkata on Thursday started framing the charges against the accused, totalling 54, in the school jobs scam in West Bengal. The process was delayed after the ED failed to submit all the documents sought by the court. In its opening statement, the ED's counsel told the court that Rs 27.9 crore was recovered from the office of a company owned by the TMC leader and his family. "Several companies were floated by him (Partha Chatterjee) with many directors having no knowledge of it... Chatterjee had huge power and influence and used it to purchase properties," the ED told the court. The ED, in its chargesheet, also alleged that the former minister used mobile phones with SIM cards bought in others' names to collect money from the candidates appearing for the school teachers' recruitment exams.

Meanwhile, Partha Chatterjee, who was present in the court, filed a petition for discharge from the ED case after getting conditional bail from the Supreme Court earlier this month. Granting him bail from February 1, 2025, the Supreme Court had said "a suspect cannot be held in custody indefinitely and that undertrial incarceration should not amount to punitive detention". Chatterjee, who was arrested on July 23, 2022, continues to be in jail in connection with the CBI's case against him in the jobs 'scam'. Meanwhile, the ED on Thursday argued that Partha Chatterjee had close links with the accused and his aide Arpita Mukherjee, from whose house the agency claimed to have recovered Rs 50 crore in cash, jewellery, and documents of properties. The central probe agency said several LIC policies and properties were co-owned by the former minister and his "close aide." The ED told the court that Arpita Mukherjee allowed her residence and bank accounts to be used for stashing the proceeds of crime. Last month, the special ED court had granted bail to Arpita Mukherjee, nearly two-and-a-half years after her arrest. The ED further submitted that TMC MLA Manik Bhattacharya, who was also the chairperson of the West Bengal Board of Primary Education during the period of the alleged scam, was actively involved in the crime, acquiring money for the proceeds of crime. "Manik



Bhattacharya used his position to commit the crime. He charged 5,000 per student to add their application in offline mode," the ED claimed. According to the ED, Tapash Mondol assisted Manik in the conspiracy, while TMC youth wing leader Kuntal Ghosh had direct access to Partha Chatterjee and Manik Bhattacharya, and was also involved in the scam. "He (Kuntal) used to take money from the candidates through agents... The proceeds of crime were transferred to different bank accounts," the ED alleged.

Death toll in Hyderabad's Nanakramguda rises to two

Hyderabad: The death toll in Nanakramguda accident involving car and bike reached two as Venkata Ramana Reddy who was critical died while undergoing treatment.

Ramana, along with his friend I Shravani, were going on a bike when a car driven by Sri Kailash rammed the bike on the Nanakramguda slip road on Sunday night.

The woman, a student of CBIT college in Gandipet, died on the spot, while her friend Ramana suffered critical injuries. He was shifted to Gandhi Hospital where he died while undergoing treatment. The police registered a case for rash and negligent driving against Sai Kailash and arrested him. Sai Kailash recently returned from London where he

International recognition for Gujarat Council on Science and Technology



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Gujarat Council on Science and Technology, GUJCOST, Gandhinagar, GUJCOST International recognition, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, current affairsWith the endorsement of the United Nations and coordination by UNESCO, this yearlong endeavour aims to enhance public engagement and strengthen national capacities in quantum science and technology, officials said. The Gujarat Council on Science and Technology (GUJCOST), Gandhinagar, under the Department of Science and Technology, Gujarat, has been recognised as an Academic Institution Partner for Interna-

tional Year of Quantum Science and Technology (IYQST-2025).

The United Nations has proclaimed 2025 as the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. This celebration will highlight the ground-breaking advancements in quantum science, its transformative applications, and its potential to shape the future of innovation, education, and global development, according to officials. "To chart a strategic and visionary roadmap for the celebrations, GUJCOST, in collaboration with Gujarat Science City, is organising a daylong brainstorming session on December 27 (Friday) at Gujarat Science City, Ahmedabad. This pivotal event will convene 60 esteemed scientists, educators, and science communicators from across the state to design innovative action plans and ensure effective implementation in their respective domains," advisor and member secretary, GUJCOST, Narottam Sahoo said. This partnership underscores our commitment to fostering innovation, cultivating scientific curiosity, and spearheading impactful outreach initiatives that will make every day in 2025 a "Quantum Day," he added. With the endorsement of the United Nations and coordination by UNESCO, this yearlong endeavour aims to enhance public engagement and strengthen national capacities in quantum science and tech-

In the backdrop of protests against Christian events, a Tapi village celebrates a quiet Christmas

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

On Wednesday afternoon, residents of Pipalkuva gathered at the 'Vijaybhai Church', the most prominent church in this village in Tapi district, for mass. This was followed by a community lunch of chicken curry and chapatis. Before that, kaju katli and other local sweets bought from Songadh town were served, in the true Gujarati tradition where the sweets are had before the savoury items. Seated on the floor, the guests were served their meal in steel dishes usually reserved for special occasions. After the lunch, the attendees exchanged Christmas wishes and dispersed.

The understated scene outside the church reflects the mood across the village, which bears almost no sign of festivity — no colourful lights adorn the houses, the star of Bethlehem is conspicuous by its absence. The village has 3,000 residents, of which 95% are practising Protestant Christians, according to the community leaders. This, the low-key celebrations, was not always the case. "A couple of years ago, Christmas would be celebrated in open spaces in the village grounds," says 30-year-old Samuel Gamit, son of Pastor Vijay Gamit after whom the church is named. The decision by village elders to not draw attention to Christmas celebrations is not without reason.

Since February, a self-styled organisation that goes by the name of Dev Birsa Munda Sena (DBMS) has been objecting to congregations in the district, alleging they were being used to convert the tribals. On December 23, two Christian leaders were arrested for allegedly threatening the Tapi district president of the Sena, Jignesh Gamit — a tribal.Samuel, who looks after the administration of over 70 churches in South Gujarat, says the Sena has handed several memoranda to the Tapi District Collector objecting to their religious meetings. Samuel, who looks after the administration of over 70 churches in South Gujarat, says the Sena has handed several memoranda to the Tapi District Collector objecting to their religious meetings.

The outfit has not made an exception for even an elected MLA of the state's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). On November 20, DBMS members tried to burn the effigy of Mohan Kokni outside the District Collectorate after he addressed a Christian congregation. He is the first Christian tribal person from the BJP to have been elected as an MLA from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) reserved constituency of Vvara, Held earlier by Congress's Punaii Gamit, who was also a Christian, it is the only seat in Gujarat with a Christian MLA. Samuel, who looks after the administration of over 70 churches in South Guiarat, says the Sena has handed several memoranda to the Tapi District Collector objecting to their religious meetings. Pipalkuva is an interior village of Songadh taluka with a bitumen road leading to six different streets. A majority of residences in the village, which is home to five churches, are pucca houses.

Kalpesh Gamit, 25, who volunteered at the Christmas lunch, tells The Indian Express, "Majority of the youths in our village are studying in colleges... A number of villagers are in government jobs: police department, hospitals, etc. Parents here give more importance to education than having their children assist them in farming."Kalpesh recalls how bands would "play music in the open where people would dance", during Christmas a few years ago. "This year, we were told (by the elders) to celebrate on the church campus...This is because of the recent protests..."At Samuel's spacious home, a huge photograph of Pastor Vijay adorns the drawing room. A second-generation Christian from the village, he was a government employee who died in 1998. Samuel's sisters Rita, Kalpana and Gracy, who reside in different parts of Tapi district, came with their husbands to spend Christmas with their mother and brother.

Samuel says, "This year, we are celebrating the festival indoors — in the churches and prayer halls. We have come across some anti-social elements who are opposing Christian community gatherings." According to Samuel, the police have also delayed issuing permissions to the celebration. "If we don't take permission and somebody tips off the police, our event gets disrupted," he tells Songadh police inspector K D Mandora says that the permission entails a "lengthy process": the venue for every event has to be verified to see if it is privately owned or is situated on forest land. "We send the application to the mamlatdar to see other parameters and later decide whether to give permission or not. Generally, from our side, we keep in mind law and order issues," he adds.

Just a few meters away from Samuel's house lives Gurji Gamit, 79. He recalls how Samuel's great grandfather Relia Gamit was among the first to convert to Christianity in the village. "He came in contact with missionaries in Vyara and set up the first prayer hall of Songadh taluka in Pipalkuva in an open place just beside his house. Slowly, he began preaching to villagers who were addicted to liquor and tobacco. Several houses in our village brewed liquor and sold it for a living at that time," he says. "Those who want to consume tobacco now have to travel at least 10 kilometres to get it!" says provision shop owner Jitendra Gamit, 40. Gurji says the first church in the village was built by Khalpa Gamit, Pastor Vijay's father, in 1965. "After his death, the church named after Vijaybhai was built. This family is highly respected in our village as well as neighbouring villages," he adds.



According to Gurji, although MLA Kokni attends several community meetings, "he has never uttered a single word against the DBMS. We think that he would be under pressure..."Kokni did not take calls from this paper or respond to text messages. Till 2020, Jignesh, a resident of Khogal village in Songadh taluka, was with the Hindu Jagran Manch, a right-wing organisation, which he quit to set up DBMS along with Arvind Vasava in February 2024. Arvind proclaimed himself as the national president and claimed the outfit's purpose was to "save and protect tribal culture". The DBMS protested against Kokni's participation in a three-day event of 'Christi Atmik Sammelan 2024' on November 18 organised by Faith Fellowship Church in Chikhalvav village where the Sena volunteers were detained. A month later, on December 20, Jignesh lodged a complaint against two Christian men alleging they threatened him. Police arrested Rakesh Gamit and Ramesh Gamit on December 23; they were released on bail the same day.

"The tribals are Hindus. The missionaries had been working in our tribal-dominated district for the last 30 to 35 years and got many tribals converted to Christianity...The tribals get benefits due to Schedule Tribes status, like (reservation) in education, government jobs, but they follow Christianity. On government records, they show themselves They follow Christianity so they should not get (reservation) benefits," said Jignesh.Gracy, Samuel's sister, says, "My brother and my two elder sisters had Tribal Hindu mentioned in their school leaving certificates (SLC) while my father had mentioned my religion as Christian. My sisters and brother got all scholarships and benefits as Tribal Hindu, which I did not get."In August this year, Dipak Gamit, a Christian leader from Tapi district, had got a court order in his favour to change "Hindu Tribal" to "Schedule Tribe" in the religion column of his SLC. He claimed that the DBMS opposed the Christian events in Ukai, Vyara and Songadh talukas for this very reason. "Else, the villagers should proudly identify themselves as Christians," he says. National president of the Samast Christi Samaj, Haresh Gamit, says that members of the Christian community in Tapi had submitted a memorandum with the police on December 12, requesting to allow them to celebrate their festival till New Year "in peace". At his home in Pipalkuva, Samuel vehemently dismisses the allegations of DBMS leaders. "I can assure you that no such religious conversion is done in any of the community gatherings. We are open and have invited them to attend our event. They are very few in numbers and want fame and popularity. They are creating disturbances.

Telangana to file rejoinder to Andhra Pradesh's contentions before KWDT-2

Hyderabad: The Krishna river water dispute resolution process involving the two Telugu States is entering a critical phase as Telangana prepares to file a rejoinder before the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal. The rejoinder will address the contentions made by Andhra Pradesh and seek a resolution to the longstanding water allocation issues. With oral submissions in the current reference now closed, both States are gearing up for final arguments that are due. The tribunal's decision will play a role in determining the future allocation of water resources between the two States. The reference under Section 89 of the APRA commenced soon after the bifurcation of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Besides submitting extensive evidence, both States have sufficiently vindicated their stands. Six witnesses representing the two sides were examined thoroughly. The tribunal, in a recent order, clarified that the process of oral evidence is closed. The cross-examination of Anil Kumar Goyal, a witness on behalf of Andhra Pradesh, has concluded, and no other witnesses will be examined by either party, thus indicating that it has completed most of its work and is heading towards the final proceedings. Telangana's application seeks to use the substantial pleadings, evidence and documents filed in both references by the States concerned as a common record for adjudication. The State argues that this will aid in the determination of issues, avoid duplication and ensure a fair adjudication process.

Fair organiser among three arrested day after amusement ride gates open midair



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Vadodara fair, Vadodara fair amusement ride gates open midair, amusement ride gates open, amusement ride gates open midair, Ahmedabad news, Gujarat news, India news, Indian express, current affairsPolice personnel and members of the inspection committee at the venue of Royal Mela. A day after three children, under five years of age, were thrown off from the cabins of an amusement ride when the gates allegedly opened midair at Vadodara's Royal Mela, three people were arrested in connection with the case, said officials on Thursday. The children were unharmed as they were rescued in time, said police. The Vadodara City Police arrested the Royal Mela organiser, Nilesh Turkhiya; manager, Hemraj More, and operator of the amusement ride, Yunus Mohammad, for negligence and endangering the personal safety of others based on Wednesday evening's incident

The City Ride Safety and Inspection Committee — set up to implement The Gujarat Amusement Rides and Gaming Zone Activity Safety Rules — on Thursday questioned the three accused at Raopura police station to prepare its inspection report in the case, police said, adding that they were formally arrested later in the day. Shortly before midnight on Wednesday, an FIR was lodged at Raopura police station against the Mela organiser, manager and ride

operator, based on the complaint of Vadodara resident Jayesh Bhaliya, whose four-year-old son was among the children, who fell from the ride. In his complaint, Bhaliya alleaed that the speed of the ride had increased suddenly after the first three rotations as the operator turned on the levers. "At that time, suddenly the door of the cabin that my son was sitting in, opened and my son was dangling on the side. A child from another cabin of the helicopter ride also fell out as the second door opened... I immediately pulled out my child from the ride but before I could reach out for the other child, panic had ensued and the operator escaped without turning off the ride," Bhaliya said in the complaint. The complainant alleged that another person pulled out the cables of the ride to bring it to a halt, thus averting a mishap. "While I moved to turn off the switch, another man pulled the cable out from under the base, bringing the ride to a gradual halt. We called the police control room. Although my son did not have any visible injuries, he was extremely scared... The organisers and managers of Royal Mela did not conduct appropriate inspections," the FIR quoted Bhaliya as saying. The inspection committee is also expected to visit the Royal Mela spot to verify the permissions granted to the organisers and the actual installations on the ground as it has come to light that "the helicopter fun ride, which is under contention, was not part of the list of rides that have been granted permission". Deputy Commissioner of Police, JC Kothiya, said, "The fair organiser, manager and the ride operator have been arrested. Once the inspection committee submits its report, further action will be decided... The organisers had taken permissions for the fair but the committee has already begun its work on ascertaining which rides were permitted, which were installed and whether they were fit for certification". The accused have been booked and arrested under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Sections 125 (act endangering life or personal safety of others), and 289 (negligent conduct with respect to machinery), said the police.DCP Kothiya added that the police will also consider invoking other sections of the BNS based on

Rise in air pollution sparks concerns among citizens

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Each December morning, residents of Navi Mumbai woke up to a grayish haze blanketing the city, obscuring the skyline under smog and raising alarms on the deteriorating air quality. The problem persists into the evenings, with commuters on the Sion-Panvel Highway reporting low visibility and areas like Vashi and Airoli enveloped in a dusty veil. This persistent haze comes as a reminder of the city's air pollution crisis, closely following in the footsteps of Mumbai.

Data from air quality monitoring stations across Navi Mumbai confirms the gravity of the situation. During the first 25 days of December, a majority of the city recorded air quality indices (AQI) in the 'Moderate' to 'Poor' categories, far from the safe limits. In key locations such as Kopri-Vashi, Airoli, and Sanpada, AQI levels consistently exceeded normal limits, with Taloja and Mahape recording the worst air quality. The AQI in Navi Mumbai in December stayed above 120 which indicates that "the air is unhealthy for sensitive groups." In some areas, locals also complain that visibility has been reduced to less than 10 feet due to dust suspended in the air, especially at night. Drawing attention to these trends, Ronak Sutaria, Founder and ČEO of Respirer Living Sciences said, "Kalamboli and Tondare stations recorded 'good' air quality days, though none of the monitoring stations maintained consistent 'good' air quality and the majority of days fell into the 'moderately polluted' and 'poor' categories. For instance, Mahape and Nerul experienced only one 'satisfactory' day each, with the remaining days either moderately or poorly polluted."Unregulated construction & industrial pollution

Environmentalists attribute the decline in air quality to unregulated construction, industrial emissions, and vehicular pollution. "Unplanned and haphazard development is wreaking havoc in Navi Mumbai," said B N Kumar, director of the NatConnect Foundation. He highlighted the failure of contractors to adhere to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) recently led by the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC). An official from NMMC highlighted that recently they have inspected all construction sites across the city and have fined 87 sites which were non-compliant of the SOPs drafted in August.

Reportedly, basic practices like cleaning dumper truck tires at construction sites are frequently overlooked, causing dirt to spread onto roads where it dries and turns into dust. Large-scale construction projects like the Navi Mumbai



International Airport, MIDC and highway expansions have exacerbated the issue. Navi Mumbai's 'industrial pollution' remains another pressing concern. Taloja's industrial hub is a major contributor to harmful emissions. Meanwhile, the city's APMC market in Vashi, which houses Asia's largest wholesale market complex, sees unchecked operations of trucks with faulty pollution controls. "Authorities remain unconcerned, and complaints often lead to no action," Kumar said. "We are in continuous action to mitigate the rising air pollution in Navi Mumbai. All the industry operations are watched closely and strict actions are taken against defaulters, permissions are denied to industries operating without the SOPs. The current issue is mainly due to the resuspension of dust in the air, which is difficult to eliminate," said Amar Durgule, Sub-regional Officer, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).Need for Hype MonitoringSutaria called for hyperlocal monitoring to tackle the increasing air pollution effectively. "Localised interventions and emission reduction strategies are vital to mitigate long-term exposure risks," he said. Key areas like Kopri-Vashi and Kalamboli reflect the growing air pollution challenge in the region, compounded by urban activities, vehicular emissions, and localised industrial operations. "The data highlights the need for urgent, region-specific intervention, focusing on emission reduction and public health advisories to mitigate long-term exposure risks," Sutaria addedSpeaking on hyperlocal monitoring, Durgule said, "Other than the monitoring stations in Navi Mumbai city at five places, there are monitoring vans across the city to deal with the air quality out of the reach of the station." The MPCB has mandated industries emitting sulfur-based harmful gases to switch to compressed and pressurized natural gas, ensuring safer and more environmentally friendly op-

Focus on 'ease of living', CM Fadnavis tells admin

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday told the administration to focus on "ease of living" and said that good governance in a state is proven when citizens get the benefits of services without delay. Speaking at the launch of District Good Governance Index, 2024 report, Fadnavis said, "The development of a state is based on ease of living. Therefore, the government has always worked on improving it. Good governance of a state is realised when citizens get the benefits of government services without delay. And this good governance is important to take the state's economy to one trillion mark."Adding that governance should be transparent, efficient and people-centric, the CM said, "Ultimately for a government, how many projects we carry is not im-

portant but how we



govern."The index is being prepared studying after analysing 10 development sectors, 161 indicators and 300+ data points. "DGGI is not only about ranking but for improvement. It is seen that the difference between the toppers and those at the bottom is closing down, which is a good sign," he said. As per the DGGI, Amaravati, Washim, Chhatrapati

Sambhajinagar, Latur and Parbhani are top five dsitricts in agriculture and related sectors. Mumbai City, Raigad, Pune, Palghar, Thane topped in commerce and industry; Nashik, Gondiya, Pune, Yavatmal, Satara in human resource development; Sindhudurg, Mumbai suburbs, Palghar, Beed, Ratnagiri in public health; Latur, Nasik,

Buldhana, Chandrapur, Hingoli in infrastructure development, while Gondiya, Amaravati, Nasik, Dhule and Nagpur ranked highest in social

development.Mumbai suburbs, Mumbai city, Raigad, Jalgaon and Bhandara topped in financial discipline; Mumbai suburbs, Mumbai city, Nagpur, Gadchiroli and Raigad in judiciary.

South Korea's acting President faces impeachment vote



GNS News Agency, Jan 1

South Korea's acting President faced an impeachment vote on Friday (December 27, 2024), as the country struggled to shake off political turmoil sparked by his predecessor's martial law declaration that shocked the world. Han Duck-soo took over as acting President from President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was suspended following a parliamentary vote over his move to impose martial law on December 3. But opposition MPs now want Mr. Han, who is also Prime Minister, removed from office too, arguing that he is refusing demands to complete Mr. Yoon's impeachment process and to bring him to justice. "Today our Democratic Party impeaches Prime Minister Han Ducksoo in accordance with the people's order," said Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung. "The 'acting authority' has transformed into 'insurrectionary authority'."

In the impeachment motion put before Parliament, the Opposition said Mr. Han is "intentionally avoiding the special investigation to probe those involved in the insurrection and has clearly stated his intention to reject the appointments of three Constitutional Court judges". Such actions, the motion said, are "in violation of a public official's duty to uphold the law... and serve the public". If the Opposition succeeds in its bid, South Korea will see its second impeachment of a head of state in less than two weeks, further destabilising its vibrant political scene. It will also mark the first time South Korea has impeached an acting

President.Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok would step in as acting president in Mr. Han's place.Holding an emergency press conference with cabinet members, Mr. Choi pleaded against the opposition's action."An impeachment motion against the acting authority is no different from an impeachment motion against the entire cabinet," Mr. Choi said

"Our economy and people's livelihoods, which are walking on thin ice in a national emergency, cannot bear the expansion of political uncertainty surrounding the acting authority," he added. 'True colours' At the heart of the current row is the composition of the Constitutional Court, which will decide whether to uphold parliament's decision to impeach Mr. Yoon. The court is currently short of three judges. While it can go ahead with its six members on the bench, a single dissenting vote would reinstate Mr. Yoon. The Opposition wants Mr. Han to approve three more nominees to fill the nine-member bench, something that he has so far refused to do, essentially leaving both sides in deadlock.Mr. Han's refusal to formally appoint the three judges "revealed his true colours", said Democratic Party lawmaker Jo Seoung-lae. The refusal "is a direct challenge to the Constitution and the law", said Mr, Jo, adding the party would seek to impeach Han to "restore constitutional order and stabilise state affairs". Mr. Han has said that he would certify the judges' appointments only if his ruling People Power Party (PPP) and the opposition reach a compromise on the nominees. "The consistent principle embedded in our constitution and laws is to refrain from exercising significant exclusive presidential powers, including the appointment of constitutional institutions," Mr. Han argued."A consensus between the ruling and opposition parties in the National Assembly, representing the people, must first be reached," added the 75-year-old career bureaucrat. Amid the increasingly protracted political crisis, the South Korean won plummeted to KRW 1480.2 on Friday morning, marking its lowest level in nearly 16 years. The won initially plunged to a two-year low against the dollar after the declaration of the martial law, as investors already concerned about the state of Asia's number-three economy shunned

Ukraine's military intelligence says North Korean troops suffering heavy battlefield losses

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

North Korean troops are suffering heavy losses in the fighting in Russia's Kursk region and facing logistical difficulties as a result of Ukrainian attacks, Ukraine's military intelligence has said. The intelligence agency, known under its acronym GUR, on Thursday (December 27, 2024) said Ukrainian strikes near Novoivanovka inflicted heavy casualties on North Korean units. It said North Korean troops also faced supply issues and even shortages of drinking water. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said earlier this week that 3,000 North Korean troops have been killed and wounded in the fighting in the Kursk region. It marked the first significant estimate by Ukraine of North Korean casualties several weeks after Kyiv announced that North Korea had sent 10,000 to 12,000 troops to Russia to help it in the almost 3-year war. The casualty disclosure came as the Biden administration was pressing to send as much military aid as possible to Ukraine before Presidentelect Donald Trump takes over in January. Ukrainian forces launched an incursion into the Kursk region in August, dealing a significant blow to Russia's prestige and forcing it to deploy some of its troops from eastern Ukraine, where they were pressing a slow-moving offensive. The Russian army has been able to reclaim some territory in the Kursk region from Ukrainian forces, but has failed to fully dislodge them.

At the same time, Russia has sought to break Ukraine's resistance with waves of strikes with cruise missiles and drones against Ukraine's power grid and other infrastructure. The latest attack on Christmas morning involved 78 missiles and 106 drones, striking power facilities, Ukraine's air force said. It claimed to have intercepted 59 missiles and 54 drones and jammed 52 other drones. On Thursday, Russia attacked Ukraine with 31 exploding drones. Twenty were shot down and another 11 didn't reach their target due to jamming, the Ukrainian air force said. As part of the daily barrage, Russian forces also struck a central market in Nikopol in the Dnipropetrovsk region with a



drone, wounding eight people, according to local authorities. Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened Thursday that Russia could again hit Ukraine with the new Oreshnik hypersonic ballistic missile that was first used in a Nov 21 strike on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro. Speaking to reporters, Putin said Russia has just a few Oreshnik missiles, but added that it wouldn't hesitate to use them on Ukraine.

"We aren't in a rush to use them, because those are powerful weapons intended for certain tasks," he said. "But we wouldn't exclude their use today or tomorrow if necessary." Putin said Russia has launched serial production of the new weapon and reaffirmed a plan to deploy some of Oreshnik missiles to Russia's neighbor and ally Belarus. Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko told reporters Thursday that his country could host 10 or more. Ukraine struck back with drone strikes of its own. Ukraine's Centre for Strategic Communications said the military struck a plant in Kamensk-Shakhtynsky in Russia's southern Rostov region that produces propellant for ballistic missiles."This strike is part of a comprehensive campaign to weaken the capabilities of the Russian armed forces to carry out terrorist attacks against Ukrainian civilians," it said in a statement.

Russia's security must be guaranteed by any Ukraine peace deal, Lavrov says



Mr. Putin said last week that he was ready to compromise over Ukraine in possible talks with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on ending the war and had no conditions for starting talks with the Ukrainian authorities

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Russia sees no point in a weak ceasefire to freeze the war in Ukraine but Moscow wants a legally binding deal for a lasting peace that would ensure the security of both Russia and its neighbours, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Thursday (December 26, 2024)."A truce is a path to nowhere," Mr. Lavrov said, adding that Moscow suspected such a weak truce would be simply used by the West to rearm Ukraine. "We need final legal agreements that will fix all the conditions for ensuring the security of the Russian Federation and, of course, the legitimate security interests of our neighbors," Mr. Lavrov said. He added that Moscow wanted the legal documents drafted in such a way to ensure "the impossibility of violating these agreements. "Reuters reported last month that President Vladimir Putin is open to discussing a Ukraine ceasefire

deal with Donald Trump but rules out making any major territorial concessions and insists Kyiv abandon ambitions to ioin NATO

Mr. Putin said last week that he was ready to compromise over Ukraine in possible talks with U.S. Presidentelect Donald Trump on ending the war and had no conditions for starting talks with the Ukrainian authorities. Mr. Putin said the fighting was complex, so it was "difficult and pointless to guess what lies ahead... (but) we are moving, as you said, towards solving our primary tasks, which we outlined at the beginning of the special military operation."Mr. Trump, who has repeatedly said he will end the war, said on Sunday that Mr. Putin wanted to meet with him. Russia says there have been no contacts with the incoming Trump administration.Mr. Trump's Ukraine envoy, Retired Lieutenant-General Keith Kellogg, will travel to Kyiv and several other European capitals in early January as the next administration tries to bring a swift end to the Russia-Ukraine war, according to two sources with knowledge of the trip's planning.

"I really hope that the administration of Mr. Trump, including Mr. Kellogg, will get involved in the root causes of the conflict. We are always ready for consultations," Mr. Lavrov said.Mr. Putin says an arrogant West led by the United States ignored Russia's post-Soviet interests, tried to pull Ukraine into its orbit since 2014 and then used Ukraine to fight a proxy war aimed at weakening - and ultimately destroying - Russia. After a pro-Russian president was toppled in Ukraine's 2014 Maidan Revolution, Russia annexed Crimea and began giving military support to pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. The West says Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine was an imperial-style land grab by Moscow that has strengthened the NATO military alliance and weakened Russia. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Sunday that Ukraine's membership of NATO is "achievable", but that Kyiv will have to fight to persuade allies to make it happen. Moscow says the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO was one of the principal justifications for its invasion. Russia has said it any NATO membership for Ukraine would make any peace deal impossible.

Tapping into Kazakhstan's rare earths potential



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As the world accelerates its transition to cleaner energy through cutting-edge technology, the demand for rare earths has increased globally. India, the third-largest carbon emitter, is pivoting to renewable energy and faces a growing need for rare earths. Despite being the fifth-largest holder of rare earth elements, India relies heavily on China for imports as it lacks advanced technologies for extraction. Amid supply chain disruptions and security concerns tied to China's dominance in this sector, New Delhi is diversifying its sources through agreements with the U.S., Latin American, and African countries to mitigate dependency on China. In this context, Kazakhstan emerges as a promising and strategically closer alternative.

China's monopolyChina accounts for over one-third of the global rare earths' possession and around 70% of its production, with India sourcing around 60% of its imports from Beijing. This heavy reliance stems from India's insufficient domestic production to meet the demands of critical sectors like electronics, defence, and clean energy. However, China's past actions of disrupting critical technology and mineral supply due to bilateral issues give rise to fears as it tries to exert control over the critical mineral industry. China's monopoly in global and Indian rare earth demand leverages its position to dictate supply chain terms. China recently halted the supply of antimony, crucial for flame retardants, solar cells, batteries, and military gear, citing national security concerns. This move, along with a ban in December 2023 on critical technologies for extracting rare earths and producing magnets, reinforces China's grip on the sector.

Meanwhile, reduced ore supplies from Russia — mainly antimony concentrates used in wind and solar energy production — have intensified China's concerns as both the largest producer and consumer of rare earths. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has further exposed the risks of concentrated supply chains, resulting in India and Western nations to seek sustainable, diversified alternatives. Why Kazakhstan is importantln this context, Kazakhstan, a close ally of India, offers a viable alternative to meet India's rare

earth demands. Kazakhstan is among the richest sources of rare earths. With New Delhi's increasing engagement with Astana through the 'Connect Central Asia' policy and connectivity initiatives such as the International North-South Transport Corridor, a rare earth partnership could unlock significant economic benefits for both nations. Kazakhstan holds 15 of the 17 known rare earth elements and, with advanced extraction technologies, could dent China's dominance in this sector. Astana already has extraction agreements with Japan and Germany, while the U.S., South Korea, and the European Union have recently joined exploration and production deals to tap its rare earth reserves.

Kazakhstan's extraction of rare earth elements like dysprosium is projected to grow significantly between 2024 and 2029. The country's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev recently highlighted rare earths as the "new oil" for Kazakhstan's economy. The country hosts one of the world's three full-cycle beryllium and scandium factories, crucial for telecommunications, and is among the four global manufacturers of tantalum and niobium, essential for nuclear reactors and clean energy. Astana is expanding its role in rare earth and strategic mineral production with investments in tungsten, battery materials, and magnets. Its vast mining potential in rare earth elements can complement India's efforts in this sector. The Kazakh government is prioritising advanced technologies and partnerships to strengthen its presence in emerging fields like lithium and heat-resistant alloys. Additionally, Kazakh metallurgical plants extract bismuth, antimony, selenium, and tellurium, and use imported technologies to produce gallium from alumina and indium from polymetallic ores, all of which are essential for renewable energy production. India's COP29 pledge to achieve 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030 highlights the importance of rare earth elements like dysprosium in advancing clean energy technologies. India lacks capacity across the rare earth supply chain but plans a 400% increase in mining output over the next decade. India's overreliance on China and possible global shifts after the U.S. regime change underscore the need for diversification. India-Kazakhstan collaboration can enhance India's resource security, reduce dependence on China, and support sustainability by procuring rare earth through domestic extraction and import sources through partners in closer proximity. Apart from India's direct connectivity challenges with Kazakhstan, there is a lack of necessary extraction technologies in both countries. Nevertheless, the 'India-Central Asia Rare Earths Forum', proposed by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval during the second India-Central Asia Summit in Astana, aims to boost partnerships and private sector investment, potentially combating these challenges. It could facilitate bilateral training, joint mining ventures, shared geological data and expertise, sustainable extraction practices, and create a regional market to reduce reli-

Azerbaijan airline crash: Aviation experts say Russia's air defense fire likely caused plane crash as nation mourns

GNS News Agency, Jan 1

Aviation experts said Thursday that Russian air defense fire was likely responsible for the Azerbaijani plane crash the day before that killed 38 people and left all 29 survivors injured. Azerbaijan Airlines' Embraer 190 was en route from Azerbaijan's capital of Baku to the Russian city of Grozny in the North Caucasus on Wednesday when it was diverted for reasons still unclear and crashed while making an attempt to land in Aktau in Kazakhstan after flying east across the Caspian Sea. The plane went down about 3 kilometers (2 miles) from Aktau. Cellphone footage circulating online appeared to show the aircraft making a steep descent before crashing into the ground and exploding in a fireball. Other footage showed a part of its fuselage ripped away from the wings and the rest of the aircraft lying upside down on the grass. Azerbaijan mourned the crash victims with national flags at half-staff across on Thursday. Traffic stopped at noon, and sirens sounded from ships and trains as it observed a nationwide moment of silence

Speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said that it was too soon to speculate on the reasons behind the crash, but said that the weather had forced the plane to change from its planned course."The information provided to me is that the plane changed its course between Baku and Grozny due to worsening weather conditions and headed to Aktau airport, where it crashed upon landing," he said. Russia's civil aviation authority, Rosaviatsia, said that preliminary information indicated the pilots diverted to Aktau after a bird strike led to an emergency on board. Authorities in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia were tight-lipped about a possible cause of the crash but a lawmaker in Azerbaijan blamed Moscow. Rasim Musabekov told the Azerbaijani news agency Turan that the plane was fired on while in the skies over Grozny and urged Russia to offer an official apology. "Those who did this must face criminal charges," Musabekov was quoted by Turan as saying, adding that compensations to the victims should also be paid. "If it doesn't happen, relations will be affected." As the official crash investigation started, some experts pointed out that holes seen in the plane's tail section could indicate that it could have come under fire from Russian air defense systems fending off a Ukrainian drone attack. Ukrainian drones had previously attacked Grozny, the capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya, and other regions in the country's North Caucasus. An official in Chechnya said another drone attack on the region was fended off on Wednesday, although federal authorities didn't report it. Mark Zee of OPSGroup, which monitors the world's airspace and airports for risks, said that the analysis of the images of fragments of the crashed plane indicate that it was almost certainly hit by a surface-to-air missile, or SAM.

"Much more to investigate, but at high level we'd put the probability of it being a SAM attack on the aircraft at being well into the 90-99% bracket," he said. Osprey Flight Solutions, an aviation security firm based in the United Kingdom, warned its clients that the "Azerbaijan Airlines flight was likely shot down by a Russian military air-defense system." Osprey provides analysis for carriers still flying into Russia after Western airlines halted their flights during the war. Osprey CEO Andrew Nicholson said that the company had issued more than 200 alerts regarding drone attacks and air defense systems in Russia during the war. "This incident is a stark reminder of why we do what we do," Nicholson posted online. "It is painful to know that despite our efforts, lives were lost in a way that could have been avoided."Yan Matveyev, an independent Russian military expert, noted that images of the crashed plane's tail reveal the damage compatible with shrapnel from a small surfaceto-air missiles, such as the Pantsyr-S1 air defense system."It looks like the tail section of the plane was damaged by some missile fragments," he said.

Matveyev added that it remains unclear why the pilots



decided to fly hundreds of miles east across the Caspian Sea instead of trying to land at a closer airport in Russia after the plane was hit. "Perhaps some of the plane's systems kept working for some time and the crew believed that they could make it and land normally," Matveyev said, adding that the crew could also have faced restrictions on landing at another venue in Russia. Caliber, an Azerbaijani news website with good government connections, also claimed that the airliner was fired upon by a Russian Pantsyr-S air defense system as it was approaching Grozny. It questioned why Russian authorities failed to close the airport despite the apparent drone raid in the area. Khamzat Kadyrov, head of Chechnya's Security Council, said that air defenses downed drones attacking the region on Wednesday.

Caliber also wondered why Russian authorities didn't allow the plane to make an emergency landing in Grozny or other Russian airports nearby after it was hit. Asked about the claims that the plane had been fired upon by air defense assets, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that "it would be wrong to make hypotheses before investigators make their verdict." Kazakhstan's parliamentary speaker, Maulen Ashimbayev, also warned against rushing to conclusions based on pictures of the plane's fragments, describing the allegations of air defense fire as unfounded and unethical. According to Kazakh officials, those aboard the plane included 42 Azerbaijani citizens, 16 Russian nationals, six Kazakhs and three Kyrgyzstan nationals. Russia's Emergencies Ministry on Thursday flew nine Russian survivors to Moscow for treatment.

UN force sounds alarm over Israeli 'destruction' in south Lebanon

The United Nations' peacekeeping force in Lebanon expressed concern on Thursday (December 26, 2024) at the "continuing" damage done by Israeli forces in the country's south despite a ceasefire in the war with Hezbollah. The truce went into effect on November 27, about two months after Israel stepped up its bombing campaign and later sent troops into Lebanon following nearly a year of exchanges of cross-border fire initiated by Hezbollah over the war in Gaza. The warring sides have since traded accusations of violating the truce.

Lebanon's Army on Thursday condemned Israel's "violation of the ceasefire agreement by attacking Lebanese sovereignty and destroying southern towns and villages". Under the ceasefire agreement, UNIFIL peace-keepers and the Lebanese army were to redeploy in south Lebanon, near the Israeli border, as Israeli forces withdrew over 60 days. UNIFIL said in a statement on Thursday that "there is concern at continuing destruction by the IDF (army) in residential areas, agricultural land and road networks in south Lebanon"

UltraTech to acquire 8.69 pc in Star Cement from promoters in Rs 851-cr deal



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Leading cement producer UltraTech Cement on Friday announced the acquisition of a minority stake of 8.69 per cent from the promoters of Meghalaya-based Star Cement in a deal worth up to Rs 851 crore. Star Cement, hav-

ing an installed capacity of 7.7 MTPA (million tonnes per annum), has a presence in the markets of north-eastern India and is rapidly expanding in West Bengal and Bihar. According to the company, some promoter and promoter group entities of Star Cement "propose to sell their equity holding in Star Cement and have approached the company for the same". "The board of directors of the company at its meeting held today considered the proposal and approved investing to acquire non-controlling minority stake up to 3.70 crores equity shares of Star.Cement at a price not exceeding Rs 235/- per share, excluding STT, stamp duty and other levies," it said. Over the cost of acquisition or the price at which shares are acquired, UltraTech said it will "not exceed Rs 851 crore, excluding STT". Star Cement, which was incorporated in November 2001, had a turnover of Rs 2,910.66 crore in FY24.UltraTech is the leading cement company in India with an installed capacity of 156.66

Manmohanomics: Inflation focus to reforms in banking

Manmohan Singh dead, manmohan singh passed away, Manmohan Singh death news,, Manmohanomics: Inflation focus to reforms in bankingDr. Manmohan Singh, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission inaugurating the 3rd Yojana Editors' conference in New Delhi on 19.2.1987. The Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ajit Panja is also seen in the picture. It was Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the country in 1982, who brought Manmohan Singh, then Member-secretary of the Planning Commission, to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to succeed the legendary IG Patel as the Governor. Singh who took the reins as the Governor on September 16, 1982 and held office till January 14, 1985, prepared the groundwork for strengthening the monetary policy actions and banking reforms got a boost.

Singh acknowledged in the book 'Strictly Personal: Manmohan and Gursharan', authored by his daughter Daman Singh, that he did have serious differences with the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee when he was RBI Governor. Singh advised the government against granting approval to Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) — a foreign bank promoted a decade earlier by the Pakistan businessman Aga Hasan Abedi — to open a couple of branches in India. However, the government wanted the RBI to grant BCCI a licence, and directed it to approve the application. With the RBI led by Singh opposing it, the government took to the Cabinet a proposal to strip the RBI of its power to license foreign banks. Singh protested and sent his resignation to Mukherjee and the Prime Minister. However, he was persuaded by the government to continue as the Governor. Singhand Mukherjee reportedly had differences of opinion on the hostile takeover plan of Escorts and DCM by UK-based industrialist Swaraj Paul.

Mukherjee wrote in his book 'The Turbulent Years' that the decision to move Singh to the Planning Commission from the RBI was taken by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. "I had absolutely no role in Dr. Manmohan Singh's departure from the RBI. By December 1985, (then) Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was firmly in the saddle and I was out of the Cabinet and the party," he wrote in the book. Singh said the RBI Governor enjoys a position of respect in our system, but the Finance Ministry always "wants to downplay the status of the Governor". "The RBI Governor is not superior to the Finance Minister in authority. And if the finance minister insists, I don't see that the governor can really refuse unless he is willing to give up his job," Singh's daughter's book quoted him as saying.

During Singh's tenure, rural development got a further fillip and, most importantly, the foundations for modern day monetary policymaking that would be consistent with high growth and the expansion of financial markets were laid. The setting up of the Chakravarty Committee (1985) to reform the monetary and financial system was a reflection of this idea. Singh's tenure was also a period marked by double digit inflation as high as 11.87 per cent and high reserve requirements for the banking system. However, inflation came down to 5.56 per cent by 1985 following a moderation in monetary expansion. Singh, with strong academic



credentials and a doctorate from the University of Oxford, carried out comprehensive legal reforms related to the banking sector and a new chapter was introduced in the Reserve Bank of India Act and the Urban Banks Department was set up.

Statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) – the portion of bank deposits to be mandatorily invested in government securities – was as high 36 per cent. There was a request from the Government for a possible increase in SLR by 2.0 percentage points. Singh was firmly against the proposal and resisted the demand for SLR hike. In his letter dated January 20, 1984 to the Finance Secretary, the Governor postulated that the effect of an enhancement in SLR would mean that about Rs 1,550 crore would be diverted from non-food credit to the Government, resulting in lowering of the projected level of non-food credit of 14.8 per cent to 10.6 per cent, the

Unlike the Repo rate which is the main policy rate of the RBI now, during Singh's tenure, main instruments were reserve ratios, changes in refinance limits and selective credit controls. SLR was raised to 36.0 per cent (July 28-September 1, 1984). Cash reserve ratio (CRR) - the portion of bank deposits to be compulsorily kept with the RBI — was raised to 8.0 per cent (May 28, 1983 – July 30, 1983) and again to 8.5 per cent (August 27, 1983). There was an incremental CRR of 10.0 per cent (November 11, 1983). CRR increased to 9.0 per cent (February 4, 1984). The necessity to reform the banking system was spelt out by Singh in his address at the founders' day of the Bank of Maharashtra in Pune on September 16, 1984, where he identified new challenges and responsibilities that the Indian banking system was called upon to meet during the Seventh Five Year Plan. He hoped that this exercise would set in motion a process of thinking and debate about strucprogression that were urgently needed to enable the banking system to perform successfully in the ensuing phase of India's development, the RBI History says. After a comparatively short tenure, he was shifted out on January 14, 1985, over a month after Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister. After leaving the RBI, Singhwas appointed as Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, a post he held till 1987 before becoming Secretary General of the South Commission, an independent economic policy think tank headquartered in Geneva from 1987 to November 1990.

RBI forms committee for ethical enablement of AI in financial sector



RBI forms committee for ethical enablement of AI in financial sectorThe committee will submit its report within six months from the date of its first meeting, the RBI said. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an eight-member committee of experts to develop a framework for responsible and ethical enablement of artificial intelligence (FREE-AI) in the financial sector. The committee, to be headed by Pushpak Bhattacharyya, professor (Department of Computer Science and Engineering), IIT Bombay, will recommend a robust, comprehensive, and adaptable AI framework for the financial sector. The committee will assess the current level of adoption of AI in financial services, globally and in India, and review regulatory and supervisory approaches on AI with focus on the financial sector globally.

As part of the terms of reference, the committee will identify potential risks associated with AI, if any and recommend an evaluation, mitigation and monitoring framework and consequent compliance requirements for financial institutions, including banks, non-bank finance companies (NBFCs), fintechs and payment system operators (PSOs). It will also recommend a framework including governance aspects for responsible, ethical adoption of AI models / applications in the domestic financial sector, the RBI said. Besides Bhattacharyya, the other members of the committee are Debjani Ghosh, independent director, Reserve Bank Innovation Hub; Balaraman Ravindran, profes-

sor and head (Wadhwani School of Data Science and AI),

IIT Madras; Abhishek Singh, additional secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; Rahul Matthan, partner, Trilegal; Anjani Rathor, group head and chief digital experience officer, HDFC Bank; Sree Hari Nagaralu, head of security Al research, Microsoft India (R&D); and Suvendu Pati, CGM, FinTech Department, RBI.

Hyderabad real estate juggernaut losing steam as sales drop drastically

Hyderabad: A painstakingly built real estate juggernaut appears to be losing its steam and threatening to go off the rails. Hyderabad's property market that flourished over the decade, growing leaps and bounds and encompassing wide swaths of hitherto untapped acreages on the city outskirts and beyond, is now in a quandary. Even as property seekers choose a wait-and-watch approach, the sales have started to drop, enquiries dwindle, unsold inventory goes up and new launches clearly seem to be on hold. Offering a perspective on the prevailing situation in Hyderabad is the study of top seven cities released by Anarock on Thursday. According to Anarock data, Hyderabad in the year 2024 registered a decline of 5 per cent in unit sales compared to year 2023 and also 24 per cent drop in new supplies during the same time period. The city-wise housing sales shows that a total of 61,715 units were sold in Hyderabad last year and the numbers have dropped down to 58,540 units – a 5 per cent year-on-year decline. During this period, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Bengaluru witnessed an annual rise, albeit marginal. In the city-wise new launches overview, the Anarock study has Hyderabad recording a decline of 24 per cent with only 58,335 units this year as against launch of 76,345 new units last year. This drop in new launches paints a grim picture for Hyderabad since during the same period, National Capital Region logged in a rise of 44 per cent and Bengaluru recorded 30 per cent rise.

Migration in India is slowing, reduced by 11.78 percent in 2023: PM advisory body report



The domestic migration in India is slowing and the overall number of migrants in the country has reduced by 11.78 percent as compared to the census 2011, said the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) in its latest report. According to the calculations by the council, the total number of migrants in the country, as of 2023, is estimated to be 40.20 crore. While the total number of migrants in Census 2011 were 45.57 crore. EAC-PM also said that the migration rate which stood at 37.64 per as per census 2011 is estimated to have since reduced to 28.88 percent of the population.

Titled as "400 Million Dreams!", the PM advisory body used three datasets- Indian Railway Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) data on passenger volumes; mobile telephone subscribers roaming data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and district level banking data on remittances to come up with this new figure on migration. However, it also said that this method can give a general idea about the trend and accuracy of the findings can only be checked after the decennial Census. "This paper is an attempt to address the issue of timeliness of availability of data for analysing trends in domestic migration especially that of blue collar migration (movement of working-class individuals). While the decennial Census provides comprehensive and granular migration data, however on account of its periodicity, there remains a significant lag by the time the data can be analysed," reads the report, authored by economist Bibek Debroy, who was chairman of EAC-PM, and Devi Prasad Misra, an IRS officer presently posted as Director in the council. Migration in India is slowing, reduced by 11.78 percent in 2023: PM advisory

"Similarly, household surveys capturing data on do-

mestic migration, are restricted by the size of their dataset and have limits in building source-destination dyads, seasonal trends, event study on trends in migration etc.," reads the report further. The paper also hypothesized that migration in India is slowing because of improved economic opportunities in smaller cities. "We hypothesize that this is on account of availability of improved services such as education, health, infrastructure and connectivity as well as improved economic opportunities in or near major sources of migration and is an indicator of overall economic growth," reads the paper. According to the study, the top origin districts are coalesced around major urban agglomerations viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata etc.

The composition of the top five recipient States attracting migrants (all migrants including intra-State migrants) has changed. West Bengal and Rajasthan are the new entrants and while Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are now ranked a notch lower. Other three states in this top-5 list are UP Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. "West Bengal, Rajasthan and Karnataka are the States showing the maximum amount of growth in percentage share of the arriving passengers. Similarly, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh are States where the percentage share of total migrants has reduced. Mumbai, Bengaluru Urban, Howrah, Central Delhi, Hyderabad are the districts attracting most migrant arrivals, while Valsad, Chittoor, Paschim Bardhaman, Agra, Guntur, Villupuram and Saharsa are the top origin districts, reads the report. The authors used TRAI roaming data to identify the seasonality of the movement of migration. "We find that April-June is the high month for movement with November-December witnessing secondary highs. These are perhaps months where most migrant labour travel back to their places of origin," reads the paper.

It also said that even prior to the pandemic related lockdowns, there were signs of the passenger movement showing little growth, however after the pandemic, even the high months i.e. Apr-May are at a distinctly lower level as compared to the corresponding period before the pandemic – passenger levels for May 2023 being 6.67% lower than the corresponding number for May 2012. While there are other reports like Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)'s Migration in India 2020-21 or the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) Report of the Working Group On Migration (2017), to be able to track the volume, direction and trends in migration on a regular basis remains a challenge.

9 ways you can burn more calories during your daily walk

Walking, a simple yet effective exercise, offers numerous health benefits, including weight management and improved cardiovascular health. To maximise calorie burn during your walks, incorporating specific strategies can elevate your workout. Dr Surender Pal Singh, HOD Physiotherapy Department at CK Birla Hospital, Delhi, recommended doing the following:9 tips to boost your walking workout

Increase Walking Intensity: To burn more calories, focus on increasing your walking speed rather than simply lengthening your stride. Aim for a brisk pace that elevates your heart rate. Incorporating short bursts of higher-intensity walking, known as interval training, can also enhance calorie burn, Dr Suhag said. Embrace Inclines: Walking uphill challenges your muscles and boosts calorie expenditure. Seek out hilly terrain or use a treadmill with an incline setting to increase the intensity of your workout. Strengthen Your Body: Incorporate strength training exercises into your routine to build muscle mass. According to Dr Suhag, increased muscle mass contributes to a higher metabolic rate, helping you burn more calories even at rest. Proper Posture and Form: Maintain good posture by keeping your back straight, engaging your core, and swinging your arms. This improves walking efficiency and prevents injuries.

How scorching temperatures could impact the Paris Olympics Hydration with water and electrolyte-rich fluids is crucial during a walk (file)Hydration and Footwear: Stay hydrated by drinking water before, during, and after your walk. Invest in comfortable, supportive walking shoes to



protect your feet and joints. Track Your Progress: Use a fitness tracker or app to monitor your walking distance, time, and calories burned. Tracking your progress can help you stay motivated and identify areas for improvement. Find a Walking Buddy: Walking with a friend can make your workouts more enjoyable and help you stay accountable. Listen to Your Body: Pay attention to your body's signals and adjust your walking pace and duration accordingly. Avoid overexertion and allow for rest days. Vary Your Routes: Explore different walking paths to prevent boredom and challenge your body. By incorporating these strategies into your walking routine, you can maximize calorie burn, improve overall fitness, and enjoy the numerous benefits of this accessible form of exercise. Remember, consistency is key to achieving your fitness goals.

'Usne mera time note kar lia tha': Actor Pratibha Ranta on being stalked; how to safely confront and call them out

In an interview with Hauterrfly, the Laapata Ladies actor described how unsettling and vulnerable the experience made her feel. "Mujhe ek dinn follow kar raha hai mujhe nahi pata main kaise react karu. Mujhe doosre sinn follow kar raha hai, mujhe phir bhi nahi pata main kaise react karu (One day, someone is following me, and I don't know how to react. The next day, they're following me again, and I still don't know how to react)."

She continued to add that he would do this everyday. "Har dinn, usne mera time note kar lia tha... and mujhe samajh nahi aa raha hai ki yaar main kya bolu isey, main ghar aa ke itna weird feel karti thi. Phir ek dinn maine bol dia, again, poori himmat, aur wo himmat gather karne mein mere ko toh bahut time lagta tha... paanch che dinn chale jaate the uske baad main himmat gather karti thi aur bolti thi. Aur uss dinn phir bola ki, 'what are you doing? Main kabse dekh rahi hu tu mujhe follow kar raha hai' (Every day, he had memorised my timings, and I couldn't figure out what to say to him. When I got home, I would feel so weird. Then one day, I finally said something — it took a lot of courage. And gathering that courage would take me so long, sometimes five or six days would pass before I could muster the strength to speak up. That day, I finally said, "What are you doing? I've been noticing you following me for a while now')." After the confrontation, Ranta said that she never saw that boy again, and later on, after she grew older, she got to know from common friends that that boy used to like her and that's why he was following her. "Par usey kabhi himmat nahi hui mujhse poochne ki ki (But he never had the courage to ask me), 'Will you be my friend?' or whatever," she mentioned, adding that at the time, it wasn't common to simply approach a girl and ask her out. As a result, she found herself creating stories in her mind, driven by fear. Stalking in public spaces are experiences many people endure. Learning how to recognise unsafe situations, assert boundaries, and respond effectively can empower individuals to protect themselves. How can someone effectively assert boundaries and communicate with a stalker in



a way that prioritises their safety? Gurleen Baruah, existential psychotherapist at That Culture Thing, tells indianexpress.com, "Communicating with a stalker really depends on the situation, cultural context, specific place and time, as well as factors like maturity, approachability, and the stalker's perceived intent. Before drawing any boundaries or making assumptions, it's important to identify patterns in their behaviour. Do they repeatedly check timings? Do they know your routines or where you go? Have they changed their own routines to align with yours?" If this pattern becomes evident, she says, and ignoring them doesn't deter the behaviour, one approach could involve directly addressing the stalker - if it feels safe and feasible. For instance, you might ask them if they've been following you or express your discomfort with their actions. Keep the communication brief, firm, and neutral to avoid escalation. However, this is only advisable if there's no immediate risk of harm or violence. Baruah asserts, "If direct communication doesn't work, or if the situation feels unsafe, it's critical to seek help from professionals. This could involve contacting law enforcement, seeking legal measures like restraining orders, or working with victim support organisations." Keep the communication brief, firm, and neutral to avoid escalation. Keep the communication brief, firm, and neutral to avoid escalation.

Varun Dhawan-starrer witnesses a 60 percent drop, earns Rs 4.5 cr



Baby John box office collection Day 2: Varun Dhawan starrer isn't performing well at the box office. Baby John box office collection Day 2: Varun Dhawan starrer isn't performing well at the box office. Baby John Box Office Collection Day 2: The Varun Dhawan-starrer Baby John had a mediocre start at the box office on Christmas Day, and on its second day of release, which was a regular working day, the film witnessed a sharp fall in collections. After making Rs 11.25 crore on the first day, Baby John made Rs 4.5 crore, as per industry tracker Sacnilk. This takes the film's nett domestic total to Rs 15.75 crore. Baby John witnessed 11.09 percent occupancy in theatres on Thursday. The film had around 1040 shows in the Delhi-NCR region, which saw an 8.75 percent occupancy, and 793 shows in Mumbai region, which saw 12.75 percent occupancy. Older releases such as Pushpa 2: The Rule and Mufasa: The Lion King made more money than the Varun Dhawan-starrer on Thursday. On its 22nd day in the theatres, Pushpa 2 made Rs 9.6 crore (Rs 7.25 crore in Hindi). Mufasa, which has been in the theatres for a week, made Rs 7 crore on Thursday.

Baby John was marketed as a pan-Indian actioner, with Jawan director Atlee serving as producer. The film is a remake of the Vijay-starrer Theri. The film hasn't performed well at the box office but it is yet to be known if the reason for the same is because Theri's dubbed version is easily accessible to the audience, or because they have rejected Varun in this avatar. Made on a reported budget of Rs 180 crore, Baby John also saw a cameo by Salman Khan. Directed by Kalees, Baby John also starred Keerthy Suresh and Wamiqa Gabbi. On Thursday, trade analyst Taran Adarsh wrote, "BabyJohn is underwhelming on Day 1, benefitting primary from the #Christmas holiday on Wednesday... The *pre-release* trends had projected an opening day in the ? 17 cr - ? 20 cr range, thanks to the festive boost, but as always, #Boxoffice remains highly unpredictable. BabyJohn faced stiff competition from #Pushpa2 [in mass circuits] and #Mufasa [in urban centres], which impacted its opening day biz... It's worth noting that #Pushpa2 continues to be a mighty opponent for *all* films.

"A midweek release coinciding with a major holiday typically ensures a strong opening day... However, #BabyJohn must sustain its momentum till Sunday to achieve a respectable extended weekend total," he wrote. Varun hasn't had a solo hit in the theatres since 2017's Judwaa 2. His last release, 2022's Bhediya, opened with Rs 7.48 crore and made Rs 66.65 crore during its run. Before that, Jugjugg Jeeyo, which also starred Anil Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor and Kiara Advani, managed to open with Rs 9.28 crore, and made Rs 85.03 crore during its run. Varun will next be seen in Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari with Janhvi Kapoor. The film is being produced by Dharma Productions, and is being directed by Shashank Khaitan.

Mohanlal reveals Jeethu Joseph spent years pitching Drishyam script to various other actors before bringing it to him; shares latest update on Drishyam 3

Mohanlal recently admitted he hasn't watched any of the Drishyam remakes in full, not even the ones featuring Ajay Devgn and Kamal Haasan.Mohanlal, Meena, Ansiba Hassan and Esther Anil in director Jeethu Joseph's Drishyam.

Though 11 years have passed since its release, director Jeethu Joseph's Drishyam remains a benchmark in the crime-thriller genre. The first Malayalam film to gross more than Rs 50 crore worldwide, Drishyam reshaped the trajectory of Malayalam cinema, helping it garner international recognition. The film was also remade in numerous Indian and foreign languages, and an official English remake is also in the pipeline. Featuring Mohanlal, Meena, Asha Sarath, Ansiba Hassan, Esther Anil and Siddique in key roles, its sequel Drishyam 2 premiered in 2021 to widespread acclaim, much like its predecessor.

Malayalam superstar Mohanlal recently spoke fondly about the movie and the future of the Drishyam franchise. "Jeethu had Drishyam's script ready at least five years before we shot the film (first part). He approached many people with that script, but it didn't work out as they weren't convinced. Antony Perumbavoor of Aashirvad Cinemas (who eventually produced the movie) informed me and asked if I could listen to it. When I heard it, I felt it was unbelievable script-wise," he shared during a chat with Suhasini Maniratnam for Galatta Tamil. "How does a film become a hit? It's when there's something in it that you can take back home after watching, be it a song or a scene. In Drishyam, the key point was love for the family."

"When we planned Drishyam 2 six years later, Covid hit," he recalled, explaining how they had to forego a theatrical debut due to the pandemic and opted for a direct-to-OTT release. However, this decision proved beneficial for the movie, as it opened to worldwide acclaim, with people from various parts of the globe watching it online, propelling the Malayalam film industry to greater heights. "People all over the world watched Drishyam. I was shooting in Gujarat



recently and many Gujarati people on the flight spoke to me about the movie. It brought Malayalam cinema pan-Indian recognition. Now, we are trying to come out with Drishyam 3," he revealed, hinting at the franchise's future. Both Drishyam and its sequel were remade into several languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. Mohanlal's Drishyam was the first Malayalam film to enter the Rs 50 crore club in worldwide gross. (Both Drishyam and its sequel were remade into several languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, with Ajay Devgn, Kamal Haasan, Venkatesh and Ravichandran reprising the role originally played by Mohanlal. Interestingly, the original version also received international remakes, including Dharmayuddhaya (2017) in Sinhala and Sheep Without a Shepherd (2019) in Mandarin Chinese.

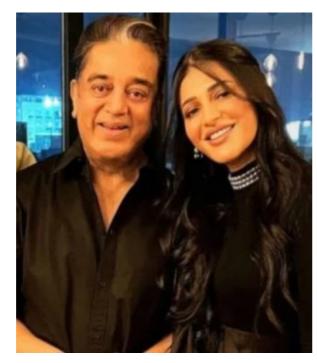
Plans are also underway to remake the movie in English, Korean, and Spanish. However, Mohanlal admitted he hasn't watched any of these remakes in full, not even featuring Kamal. "I haven't watched any remake of Drishyam, not even Kamal's or Ajay's. I've seen parts of all these movies, but not entirely," he confessed.

Sarika gave Shruti Haasan 'chikki balls' to distribute on her birthday, other kids brought fancy chocolates: 'There was no pocket money'

Shruti Haasan with parents Kamaal Haasan and SarikaShruti Haasan has opened up about growing up with a strict mum, Sarika, and not asking for a single penny from her father, Kamal Haasan. (Photos: Shruti Haasan/Instagram)Actor Shruti Haasan, the daughter of legendary actors Kamal Haasan and Sarika, has opened up about her childhood and the values that her parents instilled in her. She shared that her mother was "extra strict" with her while she was growing up, fearing she'll be spoiled as she comes from a "big home with many cars."

When asked if she has ever taken favours from her father or used her privilege to get work, Shruti categorically denied it. She told Pinkvilla, "No, never! The only privilege of my name, that I use, is that sometimes I go ahead in the queue at the airport." She added, "I am too independent to do that. Mujhe ghinn aati hai aise soch ke bhi (I feel sick even thinking about leveraging my privilege)."Kamal Haasan and Sarika's love story is one that has been well-documented, with the two actors meeting on the sets of the 1984 film Raaj Tilak and falling deeply in love. However, their marriage ended in divorce in 2004, after 16 years together. Despite their separation, both Kamal and Sarika have continued to co-parent their daughters, Shruti and Akshara.

Shruti also spoke about her mother's strict upbringing, revealing that Sarika never gave her pocket money and instead encouraged her to earn everything on her own. "There was no concept of pocket money. I had to earn everything. Because mummy always feared that with such a big house, so many cars, the kids will get spoiled. So she was extra strict," Shruti said. She even shared a humorous anecdote about how her mother would send her to school with 'chikki balls' on her birthday, instead of fancy chocolates like her classmates. "I used to be so embarrassed. I used to be told in school, 'we thought your father was an actor! And you got this sweet?' It was really embarrassing. My mum was really down to earth," Shruti laughed.



Despite being perceived as a privileged star kid, Shruti clarified that she has not taken any financial help from her parents since she started earning. "I haven't taken a single penny from anybody since the time I was 21. So when people say that (he bought a house for her, etc) I understand why they are saying it. But that is a big misconception. If you ask my parents, I have never taken a penny from them. Whatever I am today and everything I have today, I have done it with their blessings, their name, and the wonderful people I have worked with in the industry. But everything I own, people may say that my father bought me a new car, but no I got it myself," Shruti said, setting the record straight.

Sharad Kelkar's show makes you feel and think, doesn't sugarcoat harsh realities of medical profession



India's answer to ER/Grey's Anatomy is here: Doctors, which is as straight-forward a title as you can get, is about just that, a bunch of medics, ranging from eager new residents to rockstar surgeons, as well as other denizensnurses, interns, administrators- who make up a busy hospital. It takes a couple of episodes for the 10-part show to get into the groove, which gives us an insider's look at medical practitioners going all out in high-stress emergencies, as well as dealing with those who are struggling with terminal diseases. These are humans who are also doctors. We see them as people, with their strengths and weaknesses, but who do not compromise when it comes to saving the lives of their patients. Like the two long-running American shows that Doctors wants to emulate, personal tics are very much entwined with professional ups and downs. Nitya Vasu (Sethi) who has just joined the prestigious Elizabeth Blackwell Medical Centre in Mumbai has an ulterior motive that she reveals from the get-go. Convinced that top neurosurgeon Ishaan Ahuja (Kelkar) is responsible for botching her brother Dhaval's (Ali) operation, resulting in permanent damage, she has every intention of making him

The other new arrivals include the boyish Roy Saldhana (Shah), who is sweet on Nitya and makes no bones about it. The very ambitious Keyuri Patel (Lyra Dutt) doesn't mind playing hard to get into the ER for tough surgeries, pushing other contenders aside. Sweet Naheeda Jaafri (Hashmi) suffers from anxiety attacks, propelling her into difficult situ-

ations, which her colleagues Riddhun Sethi and Neil Shastri (Khan, S Sethi) have to deal with, with not very salutary consequences. A few of their exchanges feel shoe-horned in, at least to begin with, but they do manage to give off the feeling of having each other's backs when required.

The series revolves mainly around the pulls-andpushes between Nitya and Ishaan, and the stirrings of an attraction may be a predictable outcome between the two, plot-wise (writing credits are shared amongst Shibani Keshkamat, Radhika Anand, Bharat Misra, Sidharth P Malhotra) but both the gravelly-voiced Kelkar who usually gets to play supporting roles in movies, and Sethi, who grabbed our attention in 'Kohrra', make it work. A show like this one, with its eye on the two leads, becomes a tad sketchy about the others. Viraf Patel, as Ishaan's friendand-colleague Abhijat Gupta (Patel), makes you miss him when he's not around. The unfortunate Dhaval is made to brood too much. And an episode, involving a young doctor who has snapped, is downright problematic in its depiction of the psychiatric ward. The harried administrator (Fernandes) feels like a stereotype, complaining about pushing files, and not being able to see patients. The nurses are mostly a faceless group, making noises about striking: anyone who has worked in a hospital can tell you that without them nothing works. But there's also a lot that feels urgent and real, especially when Ishaan and Abhi conduct complicated surgeries, observed by their junior colleagues through the viewing gallery, duly awed by their prowess. Senior doctor Sabeeha Bannerwala (Jalali), who likes to bark, minus bite, at the new 'uns, gets to experience what the other side feels like, with a diagnosis which doesn't really have a prognosis. Much time is spent in the OT, with bodies supine, machines humming, surgeons scrubbing, blood spilling (we have a bleeder!), and, yes, people dying. The series doesn't pull back from showing death as inevitable. A principal character, dealing with a particularly virulent cancer, doesn't make it. And that's a fact of life. I like that the sugarcoating is kept at a minimum. It makes you feel, and think. Hopefully the second season will iron out the edges: these are characters I'm happy to spend more time with.

Govinda's father-in-law refused to attend his wedding with Sunita Ahuja, didn't approve of their marriage: 'Are you crazy?'

Govinda and Sunita Ahuja got married when she was just 18, and Govinda was yet to establish himself as a movie star. At that time, the couple kept their marriage hidden from the public, and in a recent interview, Sunita said that she sometimes felt like a child when she had her daughter Tina at 19. Tina, who was also a part of the same chat, said that Sunita's father was not supportive of their union and hence, did not attend the wedding. Talking to Hauterrfly, Sunita said that she lived in a nuclear family before getting married, but when she married Govinda, she moved in with his joint family. "When I got married to Govinda, he had a big family. I got married when I was just 18. I was 19 when Tina was born so I was still a child when I had the baby." she said. and mentioned that Govinda had already made it clear that his mother will continue to be the head of the household as long as she is alive and Sunita also lived under her shadow.

"At that time, I was too much in love with my husband. He had told me prior that my house will be headed by my mother till the time she is there. After she is gone, then you can do what you want," she said, and recalled how many of Govinda's nieces and nephews lived with them. "Then I got used to be other kids (Krushna, Vinay) being in the house. They were all very little. I am very fond of kids. My heart does not allow me to say that Govinda's mom is not there, let me throw everyone out. I thought if you perform good deeds, god will watch, even if the kids don't," she said. Sunita has been in a public feud with Krushna and his wife Kashmeera for many years now.



She added, "Just because I used to love my husband Govinda a lot, I put up with everything." Tina then spoke about how her mother came from a different world when she married Govinda. "My mom used to wear hot pants, lived in Pali Hill, came from a very rich background. My dad was not that financially strong. He was struggling from Virar. My maternal grandfather was very well to do comparatively. It was a very Bollywood story where he told my mother, 'Are you crazy? He is an aspiring actor'. He didn't even attend the wedding because he was not too happy with the whole thing," she recalled.

Sridevi was dismayed by Boney Kapoor's weight gain and hair loss: 'You were slim and trim when I met you'



Boney Kapoor, the renowned film producer and father of actor Arjun Kapoor, Janhvi kapoor and Khushi Kapoor, has been making headlines for his remarkable weight loss transformation. In fact, he recently also held a press conference following his hair transplant. In a conversation, Kapoor revealed that his late wife, Sridevi, was the inspiration behind his decision to shed the extra pounds and opt for a hair transplant.

Talking to ABP, Boney said, "I was remembering what my wife (Sridevi) had told me. She had said that if you want to do something with your hair, then first lose weight. So I lost weight," he said. Kapoor's motivation to lose weight stemmed from his appearance on the monitor while working on the film Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar (Boney played a small role in the 2023 movie starring Ranbir Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor). "I would feel that everything is fine in that frame except me. I looked like lala ji in that frame. I wanted to get rid of the lala ji look," he admitted.

Boney Kapoor and Sridevi's love story is one for the ages. The two met on the sets of a film and it was love at



first sight for Kapoor. Despite the fact that Sridevi was already an established star, Kapoor was smitten by her charm and beauty. The couple tied the knot in 1996 and were together until Sridevi's untimely demise in 2018. Their love story was a testament to the power of true love, and even years after Sridevi's passing, Kapoor continues to be inspired by her memory. In addition to his weight loss, Kapoor has also been open about undergoing hair transplantation. While he didn't elaborate on the details of the procedure, it's clear that he's feeling more confident than ever. Kapoor's weight loss journey was not just about aesthetics, but also about health. He revealed that Sridevi had been constantly encouraging him to lose weight for health reasons. "For health reasons she wanted me to lose weight," he said.

Kapoor said that his transformation is a tribute to Sridevi's memory, and a reminder that it's never too late to make a positive change in one's life. As Kapoor himself said, his wife's words of encouragement were the driving force behind his weight loss. "She would say, 'When I met you, you were slim and trim, tall and good looking and now you have just...' and I would tell her, '

Tricity sports stars in 2024: From Arshdeep Singh to Chandigarh Hockey Academy's former trainees at Paris Olympics



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While Kapil Dev led India to its first-ever cricket World Cup victory in 1983 and Yuvraj Singh starred in the 2011 triumph, Mohali lad Arshdeep Singh emerged as a key player in India's ICC T20 World Cup win in the USA and West Indies. The 25-year-old pacer was the joint-highest wicket-taker for India and played a pivotal role in the team's seven-run win over South Africa in the final in June, taking two crucial wickets."It feels special to be the joint-highest wicket-taker in the T20 World Cup. When the last five overs remained, we believed we could make a comeback and win the trophy for India," said Singh.

The Kharar native began his cricketing journey under coach Jaswant Rai in Chandigarh and was part of the Indian U-19 team that won the ICC U-19 World Cup in 2018. Since making his T20I debut in 2022, Singh has played 60 T20ls, claiming 95 wickets at an average of 18.10, along with eight ODIs, in which he has taken 12 wickets. Arshdeep Singh T20 World Cup 2024 winner and Chandigarh University student Arshdeep Singh getting a grand welcome on his return to the home university campus at Gharuan in district Mohali on Friday, 19th July 2024. (Express photo by Jasbir Malhi) His father, Darshan Singh Aulakh, now the security head at Groz Beckert Asia, and his mother, Baljit Kaur, played an active role in his journey. They witnessed his historic feat in the West Indies. "It was a dream for Arshdeep to win the World Cup, and it was a proud moment for us to see him wear his medal," said Kaur. Mullanpur Stadium makes its debut in IPL

While cricket fans across India and the region have long enjoyed international matches and IPL games at the IS Bindra International PCA Stadium in Mohali, the completion of the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in 2024 brought a new chapter to Punjab cricket. The 38,000-capacity stadium hosted five IPL matches during the 2024 season. Its debut match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals on March 23 marked a historic moment for the region. "Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium at Mullanpur has been constructed to world standards and designed to provide cricket fans with a memorable experience. Cricketers have always enjoyed playing at Mohali, and the same has been true for the new stadium. All five IPL matches this year showcased world-class facilities and provided fans with an exceptional experience,' PCA secretary Dilsher Khanna told The Indian Express. Built over an area of more than 40 acres, the new stadium includes a secondary ground, Ground B, which features seven pitches and 11 practice pitches. The main ground has seven wickets and is equipped with a herringbone drainage system, sand field, international-grade dressing rooms, steam and sauna facilities, a gym, and parking for over 1,600 cars. The venue also boasts 49 corporate boxes, and its dressing rooms are located in the Harbhajan Singh Pavilion.

The IS Bindra International PCA Stadium, constructed in 1994, has hosted 14 Test matches, 26 ODIs, and seven T20Is, including Virat Kohli's 100th Test match against Sri Lanka in March 2022. While the Mullanpur Stadium is yet to host an international match, it is expected that future international games allotted to the PCA will take place at the new venue. "The new stadium has been built with international cricket requirements in mind, reflecting the vision of the Punjab Cricket Association. Just as fans enjoyed international cricket at the old stadium, we expect them to have a similar experience at the new one," PCA president Amarjit Mehta told The Indian Express.

Olympic medallist trainees at Chandigarh Hockey AcademyTwo of its former trainees, Rupinder Pal Singh and Gurjant Singh, were part of the Indian hockey team that won a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. In 2024, Chandigarh Hockey Academy, Sector 42, celebrated yet another milestone with its trainees Gurjant Singh and Sanjay Kumar contributing to India's bronze medal victory at the Paris Olympics. Singh joined the academy in 2005, while Kumar joined in 2011. Hailing from Khaliara village in Punjab, Singh has played 124 matches for India, scoring 31 goals. Kumar, from Dabra village in Haryana, has represented India in 47 matches, scoring three goals. Kumar's father, Neki Ram, is a small-scale farmer. During a visit to the academy after winning the Olympic medal, Kumar reflected on his journey: "What started as a dream for me as a 10-yearold at the CHA academy in 2010 has finally seen the light of day (in 2024). Returning to the Chandigarh Hockey Academy with the Paris Olympics bronze medal is surreal. I hope this medal inspires each trainee to aim for an Olympic medal one day. My Olympic medal belongs to them too," Kumar told The Indian Express. Gurjant Singh, who is set to play for Soorma Hockey Club in the upcoming Hockey India League, also shared his experience at the academy. "Training at the Chandigarh Hockey Academy allowed us to see players like Rajpal Singh, Baljit Singh Dadhwal, and Prabhjot Singh in action, which always motivated us to dream of representing India. Winning two Olympic bronze medals is a special feeling, and I am confident that these achievements will inspire every trainee at the academy," Singh told The Indian Express. Unearthing new badminton talent

With a total of 1,104 entries, the Yonex Sunrise 31st Smt Krishna Khaitan Memorial All India Junior Ranking Prize Money Tournament, conducted by the Express Shuttle Trust in Panchkula, saw the emergence of new U19 talent in the national ranking badminton tournament. Held under the aegis of the Badminton Association of India, the tournament has a rich history, with London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and Rio and Tokyo Olympics medallist P V Sindhu having won the title in the past. This year, the tournament featured top-ranked U19 shuttlers competing in boys' and girls' singles, doubles, and mixed doubles categories. Rajasthan's Sanskar Saraswat clinched the boys' U19 title, while Punjab's Tanvi Sharma emerged as the girls' U19 champion.badminton, yonex sunrise Prize winners of Yonex-Sunrise 31st Smt. Krishna Khaitan Memorial Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament played at Tao Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula on Thursday. Saraswat secured a 21-11, 21-12 win over Delhi's Ginpaul S to claim the boys' title. "I started playing badminton at the age of seven in Jodhpur. My father and coach, Raj Saraswat, has been my inspiration, and every time I win a title, he celebrates as if he has won it himself. I had won the doubles title here earlier, partnering with Mayank Rana, and while Arsh and I lost in the finals this time, the biggest memory has been winning the boys' U19 singles title," Saraswat told Sharma achieved a commanding 21-9, 21-13 victory over Haryana's Medhavi Nagar to win the girls' U19 singles title. National coach Pullela Gopichand's wife, PVV Laxmi, had won the inaugural title in the tournament's first edition in 1991. "Winning a title that PV Sindhu didi and Saina didi have won is a special feeling for me. My mother and coach, Meena Sharma, has been my pillar of strength, and this win is dedicated to her," Sharma said after her vic-

Year ends on high for specially abled athletesWith a total of 28 medals, including the team championship in the T11 category, at the 23rd National Athletics Championship for the Blind held in Nadiad, Gujarat, earlier this month, eight visually impaired athletes from Chandigarh created history. While six of these students, namely Kashish, Tanisha, Praladh Batra, Gajender, Abhishek Kumar and Kartik, hail from the Institute for the Blind, Sector 26, two athletes, Usha and Jagriti Chaubey, are from DAV College, Sector 10, and Sri Guru Gobind Singh College, Sector 26, respectively.

Twenty-year-old Kashish, who scored 89.6 per cent in the tenth standard and is currently studying in the 12th standard, won five medals in the nationals. She clinched gold in the girls' 400m, 800m, and 1500m events, apart from a gold in the 4x400m relay and a silver in the 4x100m relay. "My father, Om Prakash, has always encouraged me to compete in sports, and I am inspired by players like Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra and badminton player Lakshya Sen. I won five medals in the 2022 nationals as well, and these medals will motivate me further," Kashish told The Indian Express.athletes With a total of 28 medals, including the team championship in the T11 category, at the 23rd National Athletics Championship for the Blind held in Nadiad, Gujarat, earlier this month, eight visually impaired athletes from Chandigarh created history. Eighteen-year-old partially visually impaired Tanisha, who won four medals in the 2022 nationals, added five more medals to her tally this month. The Mohali resident, whose father, Anil Kumar, is a postman in Chandigarh, is currently studying in the 10th standard. She won gold in the girls' 1500m and the 4x400m relay, a silver in the 4x100m relay, and bronze in the 400m and 800m events in her category. "I have been staying at the hostel for the last nine years, and training with my teammates encourages me. I idolise Neeraj Chopra, apart from Paris Paralympics medallist Simran Sharma," Tanisha told The Indian Express. The students have been training under coach Rakesh Sharma. "Each one of them is an inspiration for all of us. They train daily for two hours in the morning before attending school. All equipment is provided by the Institute for the Blind, and our chairman, Dinesh Kumar Kapila, has extended all possible support to these young stars," Sharma said. Chandigarh-born Ganemat Sekhon clinched gold at the 67th National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSCC) for shotgun events held at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi earlier this month.Ganemat Sekhon, India's top skeet shooter, is the first Indian woman to win a World Cup medal in skeet shooting. "Shooting cannot just be only about shooting films, it can also be about shooting a gun. Women can be skeet shooters too and excel in the sport," believes Ganemat.Panchkula's Raiza Dhillon made history at the 67th National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSCC) for shotgun events at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. She set a new national record and equalled another while qualifying for both the women's skeet finals. Raiza's score of 122 topped the qualification rounds for both the junior women's and women's categories, breaking Simranpreet Kaur Johal's junior record of 120 from the 2018 Jaipur Nationals. Her score also matched Ganemat Sekhon's mark at the recent ISSF World Cup Final in Delhi.Kashvee Gautam, cricketerChandigarh-born seamer Kashvee Gautam first made the headlines in February 2020 wen she claimed all 10 wickets in an innings during an Under-19 domestic tournament against Arunachal Pradesh, a game after she took seven wickets against Jammu and Kashmir. Having debuted for Punjab in 2017, Kashvee switched to representing Chandigarh in 2019. A year later, she became the first Indian bowler to claim all 10 wickets in a domestic one-day game, with six dismissals as LBWs and four bowled, showcasing her precision. Her feat included a hattrick and earned her a spot in the Women's T20 Challenge. The tall, hit-the-deck bowler, who idolises Bhuvneshwar Kumar, was picked up by Gujarat Giants for Rs 2 crore

or bring Rohit Sharma back to form? has done in the past, but with three innings poter for him, it's now or bust. Now that he has pitche back as opener — one expects him to continue rather than bailing out — he has to be proactialize to the moment. With this pitch likely to be

What does India want? Win BGT



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The Great Gamble didn't come off. The opening didn't need any fixing; Rohit Sharma's batting did. But the most bewildering event was not that Rohit opened but the way he went about it. The shot he got out wasn't one of intent nor was he 'smashing' the ball. Rohit was slow in the movements and hesitant in the mind. If the reason for his elevation was to bat with more freedom as an attacking mindset can get the feet, hands, eyes sharper, the Indian captain should have tried that approach first in the middle order when the ball turns softer and isn't seaming around. Caution isn't working lower down, so let's try with some whiteball adventurism at the top - Test cricket doesn't work like that. In case the opener KL Rahul or Yashasvi Jaiswal had been struggling, Rohit's elevation would have made sense. But with his form, and more importantly the form and touch of the openers, the change of batting order wasn't really warranted.

Even in this Test, Rohit opening in the second inning makes more sense. When the team is chasing, the ploy to throw in the early punch to rattle the Aussies sounds like a good plan. Not so in the first innings on a fresher pitch. Not when the form isn't great. Not when it's not needed.Rohit Sharma India vs Australia Ravi shastri India's captain Rohit Sharma looks on as rain delays play during play on day three of the third cricket test between India and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane, Australia, Monday, Dec. 16, 2024. (AP Photo/Pat Hoelscher)

With the Kookaburra ball doing its thing in the first 30 overs, Rohit is better off landing counter punches in the middle-order. He has been trying to survive there, poking and prodding at the ball as if he were a bombdefusing agent; if he wishes to be more proactive and aggressive, the middle-order spot is ideal. Even a quick 30, say, as an opener, with a gorgeous six and a couple of belligerent fours, isn't going to help India. The ball will still seam around and others will still have to regroup and fight.Like the recent Chess championship has shown us; the openings can be smart and sharp, but not really sustainable. A counterattacking knock down the order can be helpful, particularly if there has been a middle-order mini-collapse. So the juggling of the top-order was not a wise move. India don't need Rohit to be successful so desperately; they need the team to be successful and retain the BGT. For a captain who had heroically put the team above himself thus far, and also in the past set the white-ball template and dragged the limited-overs team to modern times by himself by his aggressive batting, this move is pretty odd. And the reasons are unconvincing.It's not an act of a selfish man, but that of a man desperate to show his utility. Maybe, he wanted to set the tone like he has done in the past, but with three innings potentially left for him, it's now or bust. Now that he has pitched himself back as opener — one expects him to continue doing it rather than bailing out — he has to be proactive, alert, alive to the moment. With this pitch likely to easen up even more and Sydney is never a fast-bowling paradise, he has better chances of pulling it off. For that, though, the mind and body have to be in sync.

Rohit sharma, Brisbane Weather, Gabba Test India's captain Rohit Sharma, center, and his batting partner KL Rahul leaves the field as rain stops play during play on day three of the third cricket test between India and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)On this relatively demons-free pitch, it shouldn't have surprised him that Pat Cummins would try surprising him with a shortish ball and that it won't be on the legside but the one that lands outside off and shapes away. A typical Cummins short ball that he often tries with the new ball to the right-handed batsmen who like to pull. Rohit's instinct to pull might have been age-old, but so is the body and the form now. The shift in weight transfer wasn't swift enough, and he saw the away movement rather late in the piece to pull out. Instead, he tried to adjust his hands to sort of swat it around, hoping his bat came around in time and in place to cover for the movement and bounce. Instead, it only looped up towards midon. Such things can happen; he isn't the first batsman to get out trying to fetch a pull from outside off. But he would have to change a few things to see success on this tour. As Ricky Ponting put it on Channel 7, "That's just a lazy, not switched on, not up for the moment type of shot. He's been known as one of the best hookers and pullers of the ball since he's made his debut but that's just not there. It's nothing. It's not committed, not really looking to be aggressive, he's just looking to tap it on the head. Might have held in the wicket, yes, it might have seamed away from him a fraction. But if you're going to survive against this Australian attack, you've got to be switched on. You've got to be making good decisions. If you're not, they'll knock you over every time."It's his stature and white-ball past that possibly makes his backers believe that this gamble comes off. Since it's Rohit, people might be wary of making a pronouncement against him, hedging their bets, and murmur, 'Yes, it can be a success, he should go out there and just smash, you never know and such'. But the question is: What was the need? This move topples Rahul from his best spot, messes with Shubman Gill, and tremors can be even felt in Virat Kohli and Nitish Reddy. India's approach at the top isn't an issue. If there has been one solid batsman at the top this series, it has been Rahul. Even Jaiswal has been dismissed a couple of times cheaply only due to his impetuosity, not because he has been sorted out by the Australian attack. That opening pair has been India's bright spot in the batting. India have to win one of the two Tests to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and they may feel like throwing a counterpunch first, instead of waiting and watching. Fair brave sentiment, but that blow can come in other ways. Not creating a potential problem where none exists - at the opening. It can be argued that Gill had to be dropped for the balance - Nitish Reddy can bowl a few overs and is in good form with the bat. Washington Sundar's spin can be useful in Australia's second innings. Even that doesn't mean Rohit has to open. But that's water under the bridge now; the decision has been made. Reputation and a career is on the line. It's time for that one-for-the-road knock.

Sanjay Manjrekar blames Virat Kohli in mix up with Yashasvi Jaiswal calls it 'Cardinal sin'

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Yashasvi Jaiswal Run Out In disastarous turn of events Yashasvi Jaiswal who was batting splendidly on 82 got run-out after a 102-run partnership with Virat Kohli. Former Indian cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar blamed Kohli for the run out and called it as the "cardinal sin." Jaiswal pushed the ball to mid-off fielder and ran for a single and Kohli after responding to the call intially and taking couple of steps looked back to see where the ball was and refrained from taking the single and returned to his crease, meanwhile Jaiswal has already crossed half of the pitch and both the batters ended up at non-striker end which resulted in Jaiswal's runout.

"What happened here? Yashasvi Jaiswal called for the single, but Virat Kohli is looking back [at the ball and]. It is a cardinal sin [to not be looking at running partner]. He [Kohli] is making his case, but Jaiswal says, 'it was my call'," Manjrekar said commenting on Star Sports. "It was the last ball of the over, I just wonder if it had anything to do with not running the single. He wasn't keen to run the single for some reason. He [Virat] has listened to the call and not responded to it and is instead looking behind. It is the basics of running between the wickets. It is a telling moment in the game," Manirekar added.



This is not the first time Kohli has been involved in a runout in recent times at crucial situations. Chasing 359 runs against New Zealand in Pune, Kohli was involved in a runout with Rishabh Pant at the crucial junctre in the chase which induced a collapse with India eventually getting bundled out for 245. Later in the same series in the first innings of final Test in Mumbai during the closing stages of play when India where in a decent position, Kohli looked to sneak a sharp single but Matt Henry's sharp fielding effort ended up in Kohli getting runout as India lost a wicket at crucial juncture yet again.

MCG scorer Michael Walsh recollects Dravid-Laxman stand in Kolkata to Warne's Ball from Hell

"Boring!" Michael Walsh laughs as he makes a lighthearted pithy comment about watching the famous Rahul Dravid-VVS Laxman partnership in 2001 in Kolkata. "It was quite something, wasn't it? They just didn't look like getting out. Luckily the Eden Gardens box I was in was quite comfortable with a great view."

Walsh is 76-years old, and an official scorer at the MCG. This India game is his 101st Test. In his younger days, he travelled with the Australian team all around the world, including India. That's how he had found himself that day at Eden, watching a historic partnership. Sitting beside him now at the scorer's cabin is Kevin O'Neill, doing his 40th Test.

From fab partnerships to Shane Warne's ball of the century – he has watched them all and recorded them. "I remember that magical Warne moment. He was easily the best bowler I saw, always some drama on." The scoring of the event involves acknowledging the umpire's signal, jotting down the wicket, ticking and crossing boxes. In all this, is he able to soak in the moment, like Warne's delivery to Mike Gatting? "Oh yes yes, you have to soak all that up, enjoy it. I remember that was one of the first international series that had a giant screen in the stadium. We do have TVs in the box, but that kind of moment becomes a collective experience with the crowd all craning their necks and

watching the screen – and then the gasps!," says Walsh.Warne himself had recorded that moment of watching thus: "So we saw the replay of it, we're all gathered together next to the wicket, looking up, and I was like 'geez, that was pretty good'," Warne had once said.Walsh was also at hand to watch Sunil Gavaskar threaten a walkout when he instructed his partner Chetan Chauhan to accompany him at the MCG in 1981. "They had almost reached the end with Sunny looking pretty angry and waving his hands, until the manager, an army chap I believe, [Wing Commander Shahid Ali Khan Durrani] stopped the partner and sent him back. On Thursday, he would see Virat Kohli shoulder-barging the teenager Sam Konstas. "Not a pleasant viewing, was it? There should be no place for physical contact in this sport."

Walsh remembers the 1989 Ashes tour of England with great fondness, when under the captaincy of Allan Border Australia's revival began. Border had advised his team-mates not to indulge in any small-talk with the England's players, maintaining a bubble of sorts. "Even in their camp, I remember there were a few rules," Walsh says. "The wives couldn't come on that tour initially. There were team dinners, collective lunches. I was away for four-and-half months, probably did 30-odd matches of scoring. Post the Ashes, I accompanied the team as they played in Denmark too, some friendlies."

West Bengal thrash Odisha to enter Santosh Trophy semifinals

Hyderabad: West Bengal beat Odisha 3-1 to advance to the semifinals of the 78th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy 2024-25 at the Deccan Arena on Thursday. Odisha had a bright start to the game, with Rakesh Oram scoring the opening goal in the 25th minute, heading in a corner from Bikash Kumar Sahoo. However, Bengal equalised at the stroke of halftime through Narohari Shrestha. In the second half, Bengal took the lead through Robi Hansda in the 70th minute, his ninth goal of the campaign. Substitute Manotos Maji's injury-time goal (90+2') sealed the win,



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