INDIAN (CHRONIC)

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Chaos in Sangareddy gram sabhas as officials fail to answer people's questions

Sangareddy: Officials continued to face the ire of people during the second day of gram sabhas held across the erstwhile Medak district on Thursday. The public, whose names were missing in the beneficiary lists for ration cards and other schemes, questioned the officials. During a meeting held in the third ward of Andole-Jogipet municipality, the citizens were seen questioning the officials on the discrepancies in the list released by the officials. During another gram sabha in Chinnakodur mandal headquarters in Siddipet district, BRS leaders demanded that the officials release the accurate beneficiaries list. When they failed to show anything, the BRS leaders alleged that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy was just trying to advertise his work rather than selecting the eligible beneficiaries.

New airport near Nagarjuna Sagar: Central team visits site to assess suitability of land

Nalgonda: A team from the Airports Authority of India visited Nagarjuna Sagar to assess the suitability of the land available for developing a new airport. The team inspected the old airport in Vijayapuri South and its surrounding areas.

The team has already reviewed several sites in the Andhra region. Vijayapuri South is one of them and it being preferred over other places for construction of the new airport spanning approximately 1600 acres, according to reports. A proposal for construction of the new airport at Nagarjuna Sagar has been under consideration as it would help develop the place as a tourism hub giving access to the places of tourism importance in both the Telugu States.

Wipro to Expand Investments in Telangana with New IT Center in Hyd



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, along with Industries and IT Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu and senior officials, met Wipro Limited Executive Chairman Rishad Premji at the World Economic Forum in Davos. During the meeting, Wipro announced its plans to expand investments in Telangana, further strengthening its presence in the state.

As part of the expansion, Wipro will establish a new IT center in Gopanapally within Hyderabad's Financial District. The project will add 5,000 direct and indirect job opportunities in the state. Additionally, the company's campus in

Hyderabad will also undergo expansion, highlighting Wipro's commitment to the city's IT ecosystem. Hyderabad, already a key hub for Wipro, is expected to see significant growth in its technology sector with these new initiatives. The new IT center is projected to be completed within the next two to three years, reinforcing Telangana's reputation as a global IT investment destination.

Welcoming the announcement, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reiterated the government's commitment to supporting major corporations like Wipro by fostering a businessfriendly environment and offering necessary support. Expressing enthusiasm, Rishad Premji, Executive Chairman of Wipro, stated, "We are excited to collaborate with the Telangana government to encourage innovation and create opportunities. Telangana's efforts in promoting skill development and fostering a conducive business environment align perfectly with Wipro's vision. "Minister Sridhar Babu invited Wipro to partner with various skill development initiatives implemented by the state government, including the Young India Skills University. He emphasized the government's dedication to equipping the workforce with industry-relevant skills. Wipro's expansion is set to bolster Telangana's technology sector, contributing to employment generation and reinforcing Hyderabad's position as a leading IT destination.

BJP readies poll blitzkrieg, top brass including PM Modi to campaign



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

New Delhi: For the upcoming Assembly elections in the capital, Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with top leadership will join the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) highdecibel campaign to bolster its poll pitch and corner the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) over its failures and failed promises. From Home Minister Amit Shah to BJP President JP Nadda and several Union Ministers will join the electoral fray to woo the Delhi electorate over the next 10 days. BJP is keen on carrying the momentum set by the phase-

wise release of its poll manifesto and wants to seize the moment by launching its most reliable and credible faces in

Party insiders say that many Union Ministers have been attributed with the task of canvassing, with each minister being given charge of two Assembly seats each.PM Modi is expected to hold three election rallies while Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President JP Nadda are likely to address more than 18 public rallies and gatherings. The programme has been specially designed to cover all 70 Assembly seats. Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath will also add vigour to BJP's poll campaign and is expected to rally support in at least 14 public meetings. Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Bhupendra Yadav, Piyush Goyal, Mansukh Mandaviya, and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat will also be seen partaking in the election campaign. BJP national general secretaries Vinod Tawde, Sunil Bansal, Tarun Chugh and Arun Singh have also been deployed. Former Union Minister Anurag Thakur, Sanjeev Balyan, Rajya Sabha MP Surendra Nagar, and former Rajasthan BJP President Satish Poonia have also been included in the star list of campaigners. Till date, BJP leaders have conducted about 4,500 meetings with the Dalit community, 1,700 public meetings with the Muslim society and 7,500 outreach programmes with women of different sections.

Union government sends notices to Uber, Ola over pricing disparity on Apple and Android phones

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

A Union government body has sent notices to ridehailing firms Ola and Uber over alleged differential pricing for Android and Apple phones, Consumer Affairs Minister, Pralhad Joshi, said in a post on X on Thursday (January 23, 2025). The move comes after several reports by local media and complaints by users on social media that iPhone users were charged higher prices for the same ride than those using phones that ran on Android operating systems. After receiving complaints on the National Consumer Helpline regarding performance issues in #iPhones following the iOS 18+ software update, the department, after examining these grievances, has issued a notice to #Apple through the CCPA, seeking a response on the matter. The Minister said he would direct the Central Consumer Protection Agency (CCPA) to also look into differential pricing strategies used by other sectors, including food delivery ately respond to a Reuters request for comment. India is "blatant disregard" to consumer rights.



one of Uber's biggest markets outside the United States and Canada, where it is locked in a fierce battle with SoftBank-backed Ola, local rival Rapido, as well as all-electric ride hailing app BluSmart.Mr. Joshi had last month and online ticketing portals. Ola and Uber did not immeditermed differential pricing an "unfair trade practice" that is a

BRS demands Revanth Reddy's apology for **Davos remarks on IT employees**

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Hvderabad: BRS leader Dasoju Sravan has demanded an immediate apology from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for his controversial remarks belittling IT employees during his Davos visit. Charging the Chief Minister with tarnishing the State's reputation and insulting IT employees before a global audience, Sravan urged him to act responsibly on global platforms. Interacting with the mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Thursday, Sravan said Revanth Reddy's comments in Davos had brought disrepute to Telangana, insulting the hardworking IT employees who significantly contribute to the country's GDP. He pointed out that the IT sector contributed over 10 per cent to the GDP. "Revanth Reddy's disparaging remarks undermine their efforts and the progress of the State. If there are grievances with KT Rama Rao, they should be addressed differently without maligning IT employees," he said. He found fault with the Chief Minister for referring to IT employees as just workers, stating that such statements indicate a feudal mindset. He urged Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, also present in Davos, to counsel Revanth Reddy on representing the State responsibly on international platforms. The BRS leader also lashed out at Revanth Reddy for his remarks against Rama Rao, citing the latter's professional credentials, contrasting them with Revanth Reddy's rise to power. "Rama Rao headed a US-based company's operations in India and later, proved his mettle by bringing in investments and creating jobs. However,



Revanth Reddy's rise from being a painter to the Chief Minister is a result of collective hard work by others, not personal merit," he said. Calling for introspection, Sravan criticised the Chief Minister for his unclear and contradictory statements regarding Hyderabad's IT future. "Revanth Reddy's remarks contradict the Congress principles and constitutional values. He owes an apology not just to IT

MoUs signed in Davos spark criticism over foreign site choices



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

New Delhi: As the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu enthusiastically signed several MoUs with Indian companies in Davos during the World Economic Forum (WEF) Summit, a glaring question emerges: Why are these deals being inked on foreign soil?

The question being hotly debated on social media and in political circles is why state governments insist on sending delegations abroad to sign agreements with Indian firms, deals that could easily be finalised within India? Many analysts argue that this is nothing more than a PR exercise. The governments appear to be not only pushing their business-friendly image, but also flaunting their ability to attract

If these were foreign investments, it would at least justify the MoU signing spree on foreign soil. Netizens also criticised mega Indian deals being inked at the ongoing WEF event in Davos, with some even seeking clarification around misusing taxpayers money.Rajya Sabha MP_Priyanka Chaturvedi posted on X that the Maharashtra State government entourage has spent huge amounts of money to sign MOUs with Indian companies in Davos! Arrey bhai Mumbai main hi sign kar lete oh but wait, AQI is better there.

Another post by an X user called such exercises as absolutely blatant. Opposition should demand and seek clarification around this Junket on Tax Payers Money!!! They are having ball of a time!!! Entire Indian entourage having Picnic in #Switzerland - Pity a common man, wrote the X user. According to another X user, the fact is that most of this year's MoUs again seem to be with companies based in India, and these deals could have been signed in Mumbai

itself. In fact, I'm told that several MoUs were deliberately held back for months to inflate the investment figures showcased at Davos. No amount of PR spin can whitewash the Mahayuti's grave sin of driving crucial projects out of Maharashtra, the X post claimed.

Indian short film 'Anuja' earns Priyanka Chopra, Guneet Monga a nod at the Oscars 2025

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Indian cinema celebrates another Oscar nomination as Anuja, a short film backed by Priyanka Chopra and Guneet Monga, secures a coveted spot in the Best Live Action Short Film category at the 2025 Academy Awards. The nominations, announced by Bowen Yang and Rachel Sennott, mark a significant milestone for the film, which tells the story of a young girl navigating challenging circumstances

The film follows the titular Anuja, who works in a garment factory in Delhi alongside her sister Palak, portrayed by Ananya Shanbhag. When she is faced with a life-altering decision, the responsibility of her family's future rests heavily on her young shoulders

This nomination places Anuja among five finalists selected from an initial pool of 180 qualifying films. It will compete against Alien, I'm Not a Robot, The Last Ranger, and A Man Who Would Not Remain Silent

This marks Guneet Monga's third Oscar nomination, following the success of The Elephant Whisperers and Period: End of Sentence, both of which won Academy Awards. The film, directed by Adam J Graves and produced by his wife Suchitra Mattai, is a collaboration with the Salaam Baalak Trust, Shine Global, and Krushan Naik Films.

The film also earned the top honor at the HollyShorts Film Festival last year. Graves collaborated with organizations like Salaam Baalak Trust, Shine Global, and Save the Children to ensure the film authentically portrays the challenges and triumphs of working children in India.

It features performances by Ananya Shanbhag, Sajda Pathan, and Nagesh Bhosle. Anuja will soon be available for streaming on Netflix. The 97th Oscars, hosted by Conan O'Brien, will take place at the Dolby Theatre on March 2.

Young Woman Dies, 28 Injured as Bus Overturns on Rajamahendravaram Bridge

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Rajamahendravaram: In a tragic accident, a private bus overturned on the Gaman Bridge near Rajamahendravaram in the early hours of Wednesday, leaving one young woman dead and 28 others injured. Among the injured, 10 sustained serious injuries, while three are reported to be in critical condition. The incident occurred around 1-30 a.m. when a Kaveri Travels bus traveling from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad lost control and overturned on the bridge between Komthamuru and Katheuru. Preliminary investigations by the police revealed that the driver, allegedly under the influence of alcohol, was driving negligently, leading to the accident.

The deceased has been identified as Homini (21), a resident of Visakhapatnam. She was traveling to Hyderabad for a job interview along with her sister Dhanalakshmi. Homini succumbed to her injuries on the spot. Emergency response teams dispatched six ambulances from Rajamahendravaram to transport the injured to the government hospital. Most of the injured passengers hail from



Visakhapatnam, Tuni, and Annavaram, with several being students. East Godavari District SP D. Narasimha Kishore visited the accident site and personally monitored the rescue operations. A crane was deployed to remove the overturned bus, and three people trapped beneath it were rescued. The tragic accident has once again highlighted the risks posed by reckless driving. Authorities are investigating further to ensure strict action against those responsible.

Seven Telangana universities in dire straits with no professors

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Hvderabad: A startling reality has emerged in the State's higher education particularly with regards to Stateof-academic affairs in the universities. Not one, two or three, seven out of 11 public universities in Telangana have been operating without a single professor. Kakatiya University, one of the oldest universities in the State, Mahatma Gandhi University, Satavahana University, Palamuru University, Telugu University, Dr BR Ambedkar Open University, and Rajiv Gandhi Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), Basar, have no regular professors on staff rolls. Out of 390 profes-

sor positions sanctioned in 11 universities, only 174 worked as of November 30, 2024. Among the working, 147 alone were in the Osmania University. With professors, the universities, which are meant to provide rigorous academic work and research, have been severely compromised. Worst is the situation of Satavahana University, Telugu University and RGUKT as they do not have associate professors as well. These varsities are just managing the show with regular assistant professors and academic assistants on contract basis. Another worrisome issue has been that only 27 per cent of the sanctioned strength in 11 universities are present on the rolls.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Bitter pill for India

THE Trump administration has declared that it is seen to work with India to address concerns related to rregular migration. 'Irregular', of course, is just a diplonatic euphemism for 'illegal'. There is no dearth of desperate Indians who try to enter the US every year through he notorious donkey/dunki route or other underhand neans. Some are able to sneak in, while the majority of nem get caught; and then there are the unfortunate ones vho don't survive the ordeal. like the four-member Guiarati amily that froze to death near the US-Canada border in 022. Anticipating a deportation bloodbath, the Indian govrnment is planning to take back about 18,000 citizens who are living illegally in the US. The actual number of such immigrants is probably far higher. According to the Pew Research Centre, an American think tank, there are around 725,000 undocumented Indian migrants in America — the third largest group after those from Mexico and El Salvador. The government's readiness to facilitate Ghar Wapsi' of these Indians is certainly not prompted y charitable intentions. Putting on a brave face, India is poking to deflect the embarrassment caused by its erant citizens. It's a bitter pill that has to be swallowed. After all, Trump is a 'dear friend' of PM Modi, and bad lood is not good for bilateral relations. Taking it on the hin is the way forward, even as there is no guarantee hat all those prodigal sons and daughters will not try their uck again in their eternal pursuit of the American Dream.Beyond the immediate face-saver, India must vork in close coordination with the US to curb illegal miration and create more avenues for aspirants within the egal framework. However, the irony is that the legal route self has now become far less attractive to Indians, thanks o Trump's order blocking birthright citizenship. But all is not lost as the controversial move has triggered a huge

'Think independently, don't be shy about standing out': Prof Yamuna Krishnan to aspiring women scientists

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

"To all aspiring women scientists, do not listen to anything anybody tells you, even me. Follow your own path, think independently, do not be shy about standing out," Dr Yamuna Krishnan, known for her pioneering contributions in the field of DNA nanotechnology, has said. A recipient of the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar prize for science and technology, India's highest science award, Infosys Prize for Physical Sciences and other awards, Dr Krishnan, presently is a professor at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on developing DNA-based molecular devices capable of probing and manipulating living systems at the nanoscale. She was recently in the country at Ashoka University campus for the inaugural ceremony of Ashoka Zeiss Core Imaging Facility. Ahead of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (February 11), Dr Krishnan in an interview with The Indian Express reflected on the concerns related to inadequate representation of women in science."There are deep social problems of gender inequity and unless those are addressed, we will continue to see inadequate representation of women in science. There is no easy solution, except to encourage the women who do make it past the barriers, instead of discouraging them or downplaying their achievements," she said

Can you walk us through your journey from obtaining a PhD in organic chemistry to gaining global recognition as a biophysicist in DNA nanotechnology? What influenced your decision to explore this interdisciplinary field?

I got my PhD in Organic Chemistry from the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and then went to Cambridge UK for four years for a postdoc with Dr Shankar Balasubramanian. After that, I returned to India to the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), in Bengaluru and set up my independent group there, because I found my future colleagues' work extremely exciting and I wanted to contribute to their research somehow. Then we invented a DNA-based nanotechnology to unveil the chemistry within organelles and then relocated to the University of Chicago in 2014 where I have been ever since.

Can you elaborate on current research in DNA nanotechnology and its potential applications in treatment of cancer and neurodegenerative disorders? Is there any other area or field that you are currently working on?

Well, the innards of organelles were not mapped out prior to the development of our technology. Therefore, the organelle environment has remained unused and unexplored in our understanding of health and disease. It's an ongoing effort to see if we can use the organellar environment as a powerful readout of disease severity.

What potential advancements or discoveries in DNA nanotechnology are you most excited about? How do you see the field evolving over the next decade?

We have been able to deliver DNA nanodevices organelle specifically to a certain class of immune cells called macrophages. It would be very interesting to see if we can do the same for other cell types, and bring hyper-specific organelle-level delivery to more cell types.

How do you perceive the current state of India's research ecosystem? What are the most critical improvements required to elevate it to international standards?

India has a long way to go. We are investing a fraction of what China and the US are investing in research and higher education. Most critical is to acknowledge frankly that if we don't actively engage internationally, we will lose the game. The ability to send students and young faculty abroad to train or various durations and return to work on problems that are of current interest, with cutting-edge methods, is going to be central. Student applications from the best schools in China, for example, are way more attractive than those from the best schools in India - at every level – simply because they have a much more modern level of training and are more ambitious in their thinking.

In your view, what opportunities do facilities like the Ashoka Zeiss Core Imaging Facility create for India's re-

search ecosystem and foster global competitiveness? The Zeiss-Ashoka facility is precisely the kind of effort that can move us in a direction towards leveling this difference I talked about. We need dozens more centers like this, not just one. But this pioneering center is a start. The key will be how it is run on the ground, and its accessibility to those from other Indian institutes.

After bus, Metro rides to get Costlier in Bengaluru as BMRCL approves Fare Hike



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

This marks the first fare revision by BMRCL since 2017 and comes just two weeks after the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation increased its ticket and pass prices by 15 per cent. (file photo)This marks the first fare revision by BMRCL since 2017 and comes just two weeks after the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation increased its ticket and pass prices by 15 per cent. Metro rides in Bengaluru are set to get costlier as the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) board has approved a recommendation to hike fares. The official announcement on the extent of the hike and its implementation date will be made soon. This marks the first fare revision by BMRCL since 2017 and comes just two weeks after the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation increased its ticket and pass prices by 15 per cent. The current Metro fares range from Rs 10 to Rs 60 with Smart Card users getting a 5 per cent discount.

"The exact extent of the hike, along with details of con-

cessions for Smart Cards and other ticketing systems, will be disclosed soon," a BMRCL spokesperson said. The BMRCL currently operates a 77 km network, with the Purple Line covering 43.5 km and the Green Line spanning 33.5 km. Since commencing operations in 2011 on the Baiyappanahalli-MG Road route, BMRCL has faced financial challenges, incurring a cumulative loss of Rs 1,280 crore over the past three years. However, the corporation reported a reduction in losses from Rs 476 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 341 crore in 2023-24, partly due to daily ridership reaching 8.5 lakh on non-holiday weekdays. The fare revision is based on recommendations by a committee led by a retired high court judge after public consultations. The committee has proposed a 15-20 per cent hike in fares.

Bangalore Central MP P C Mohan slammed the move "to impose a 45% fare hike", saying he was "disappointed" by the decision. Last week, Mohan had urged BMRCL Managing Director Maheshwara Rao to reconsider the revision of Metro fares, saying it would push people from public to private transport, eventually resulting in traffic congestion. "BMRCL must act urgently to resolve key issues in its services. Overcrowding in Namma Metro has caused door malfunctions and disputes among passengers—this is unacceptable. BMRCL must prioritize adding Metro coaches, expediting delayed lines, and improving operational efficiency. It must also enhance security, streamline entry and exit, and improve parking, queue systems, and last-mile connectivity for a better commute. Hiking fares without fixing these issues will force people to use private vehicles, worsening congestion. BMRCL must rethink its priorities," he said on Friday.

'Panjab '95', Diljit Dosanjh film on activist Jaswant Singh Khalra to release globally on Feb 7; no date for India yet

Diljit Dosanjh-starrer Panjab '95, which has been stuck with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for more than a year, is set to be released internationally but the producers have yet to clarify if it will be screened in India.On Friday, the Punjabi singer-actor released the trailer of the film on social media, saying the film will be released internationally on February 7. "P.S. Full Movie, No Cuts," Dosanih wrote on his Instagram handle. Dosanjh's recent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sparked speculation that it could lead to the film being released in India.diljit dosanjh On January 11, Dosanjh had posted a story on his Facebook account in which he wrote: "Panjab 95. In Febru-

Panjab '95 is based on the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra. The CBFC had earlier proposed 120 cuts to the film. Khalra had exposed the Punjab Police's extra-judicial killings of Sikh youth during the militancy in the early 90s. He was kidnapped in 1995 and murdered. Later, six Punjab police officials were convicted for kidnapping and murdering him. On January 11, Dosanjh had posted a story on his Facebook account in which he wrote: "Panjab 95. In February". He has also shared stills from the film. In a similar post on Instagram, Dosanjh captioned the photos:



"I Challenge the Darkness." Khalra's wife Paramjit Kaur Khalra had condemned the censor board's demand for 120 cuts, saying the biopic on her husband's life was made with the family's consent and should be released without any cuts. She had said that over four years ago, her family had read the script and granted permission to director Honey Trehan to make the movie with Dosanjh portraying Khalra. The family had also watched the film in 2022 and said it was satisfied with its depiction of the activist's struggle for human rights during a critical period in Punjab's history.

Hours after attack on Saif Ali Khan, accused caught on CCTV buying mobile phone cover outside Dadar railway station

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Saif Ali Khan Attacker CCTV Footage: Scenes outside Bandra Police Station on Saturday as cops continue manhunt for the accused in the Saif Ali Khan attack caseSaif Ali Khan Attacker CCTV Footage: Scenes outside Bandra Police Station on Saturday as cops continue manhunt for the accused in the Saif Ali Khan attack case. Saif Ali Khan Attacker New CCTV Footage: The man who allegedly attacked actor Saif Ali Khan inside his residence in Bandra roamed around Dadar in central Mumbai hours after the incident and even purchased a mobile phone cover from a shop, the police team investigating the case have concluded after tracking the intruder's movements. Sources in the police department said that after being spotted in the Lucky Junction area in Bandra, the accused likely boarded a local train, travelled to Dadar, purchased a mobile phone cover from a shop named IKRA near platform 1 of Dadar (West) railway station, walked outside the Suvidha showroom, and headed towards Kabutarkhana. The accused's movements have been recorded on the CCTV camera at the mobile shop at 9.04 am, sources added. The police may record the statement of the person who sold the phone cover to the accused. The Mumbai police have intensified their hunt for the accused who has not been caught more than 50 hours after the attack on Khan. The suspect in the Saif Ali Khan attack case at a shop in central Mumbai The suspect



in the Saif Ali Khan attack case at a shop in central Mumbai. (Screengrab) The accused, believed to be in his early 30s, snuck into Khan's 11th-floor apartment between 2 am and 2.30 am on Thursday, allegedly demanded Rs 1 crore, injured the family's nanny, and later attacked Khan with a knife six times before escaping. Khan, who bled profusely, was rushed to Lilavati Hospital in an autorickshaw, where he underwent surgery. Senior doctors say he is stable and out of danger. The police have already recorded the statement of Khan's wife Kareena Kapoor Khan and other staff present at the crime scene who witnessed the attack. More than two dozen police teams are working on the case from different angles and are putting efforts into nabbing the culprit, a police officer said.

Karnataka HC reserves order on B S Yediyurappa's plea to quash Pocso case against him

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

YediyurappaThe Karnataka Criminal Investigation Department had filed a chargesheet against Yediyurappa on June 27 under the Pocso Act and Indian Penal Code provisions related to sexual assault, destruction of evidence, and offering gifts to silence the victim. The Karnataka High Court on Friday reserved judgment on former chief minister and senior BJP leader B S Yediyurappa's petition to quash the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act case against him. Justice M Nagaprasanna reserved verdict after hearing the final arguments. A woman had lodged a complaint against Yediyurappa, accusing him of sexually assaulting her daughter, a minor, when they visited his house in February last year to seek help regarding an earlier case of sexual assault. The complainant died of cancer in May 2024. The chargesheet in the case was filed in July 2024. The Karnataka Criminal Investigation Department had also filed a chargesheet against Yediyurappa on June 27 under the Pocso Act and Indian Penal Code provisions related to sexual assault, destruction of evidence, and offering gifts to silence the victim. During arguments in the matter on Wednesday, Special Public Prosecutor

Ravivarma Kumar argued on behalf of the Special Investigation Team that under the Pocso Act, there was a statutory presumption of guilt that would have to be rebutted in a trial. Other points raised by the prosecution included the purported recording of the conversation of the victim and complainant with Yediyurappa afterward, alongside the fact that almost one year had passed (a prior Karnataka High Court order in 2021 mandates that Pocso trials be completed within a year). On Friday, on the presumption of guilt, Yediyurappa's counsel, senior advocate C V Nagesh, had argued, "At what stage would the presumption be raised is the question....the proof to the contrary would arise not at the stage of FIR, processing....". He further argued that the presumption of guilt would not be absolute and would apply at the trial stage. Yediyurappa's counsel also questioned the application of mind at the stage of taking cognisance of the FIR. While not doubting the authenticity of the voice recording that the prosecution had cited in the previous hearing - allegedly secretly recorded by the minor when she and her mother went back to speak to Yediyurappa after the incident - the counsel stated that Yediyurappa had been referring to the fact that he was checking the details of the

TN tourist dies in paragliding accident in Himachal's Kullu, pilot injured



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

A tourist from Tamil Nadu was killed and a pilot was severely injured after the paraglider they were on collided with another paraglider in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu on Friday. The incident took place at the Gadsa paragliding site. While the victim was identified as Jayesh Ram, 28, a resident of Vigneshwara Nagar in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, the pilot was identified as Ashwani Kumar, a resident of Gadsa

"The victim, Jayesh Ram, was taking a tandem flight, with Ashwani Kumar as his pilot. Preliminary investigations suggest that Kumar attempted to perform a 360-degree swirl with the paraglider. The paraglider collided with another one, which managed to maintain its balance. Eyewitnesses reported that the damaged paraglider collapsed, causing the pilot and the rider to fall to the ground. The victim's family has been informed about the incident," Vikas Shukla, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Kullu, told . Sources said that both the injured were rushed to a private hospital where Jayesh Ram was declared brought dead. Kumar, a registered tandem pilot with the Kullu district tourism department, was later referred to PGIMER, Chandigarh. The district administration in Kullu has ordered a magisterial probe into the incident. At least seven paragliders, including some foreigners, have been killed in the last one-and-a-half years in Himachal Pradesh. Paragliding at the Gadsa site had been banned in January 2023 after authorities found certain violations. However, the ban was lifted in February 2023.

Undertrial who shot at 2 cops dies in police encounter in West Bengal days after DGP warns of retaliatory fire

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

An undertrial was shot dead in a police encounter in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district early on Saturday, three days after he fired at and injured two policemen and escaped from a prison van. The undertrial's escape had prompted Director General of Police (DGP) Rajiv Kumar to issue a warning: "If a criminal fires at us, we will fire back four times."The incident occurred in the jurisdiction of the Goalpokhar police station near the Bangladesh border. According to police, they received a tip-off that undertrial Sajjak Alam, a murder case accused, was hiding in the Kichaktala area. The police raided the area and spotted Alam, who allegedly opened fire on them when he was asked to surrender, leading the police to "fire in self-defence".

Today, at around 7.10 am, Sajjak Alam, who is accused of firing upon the police with an escort party near the Panjipara post, was injured in an exchange of fire with the police. The police had to fire in self-defence. He was immediately rushed to the hospital," Rajesh Kumar Yadav, Inspector General of Police, North Bengal, said on Saturday, addressing the media at Goalpokhar police station. Alam received three bullet injuries and was rushed to Lodhan Rural Hospital at around 8.15 am and succumbed to his injuries at around 8.30 am. Alam was planning to escape to Bangladesh with the help of his accomplice Abdul Hussain, police sources said, adding that Hussain's in-laws and relatives reside in the Goalpokhar area and had a house in Bangladesh too. Alam had escaped from a prison van after firing at and injuring two policemen while he was being taken back to Raiganj jail from court. The incident took place on National Highway 27 under the jurisdiction of the Goalpokhar police station. A day later, DGP Kumar had issued a stern warning, saying the police would "respond with four times the force" if they were fired at.

The injured police officials, Assistant Sub-Inspector Deben Baishya and Constable Nilkanta Sarkar, are currently undergoing treatment at a private nursing home in Siliguri's Matigara. "According to our investigation, the accused undertrial somehow got a gun from an accomplice while he was inside the court premises. He used that gun and fired at our colleagues. We have released the picture of the accused Sajak Alam and his accomplice Abdul Hussain and announced a reward of Rs 2 lakh for any information on them," a senior police officer of Islampur had said then.

Gujarat PMJAY Angioplasty Deaths: Pvt hospital's absconding Chairman Apprehended at airport

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

With Kartik Patel's arrest, the police have apprehended all nine accused in the PMJAY death case, including the hospital's CEO and the marketing director. (express file photo)With Kartik Patel's arrest, the police have apprehended all nine accused in the PMJAY death case, including the hospital's CEO and the marketing director. (express file photo)

The police have arrested the chairman of a private hospital in Gujarat's Ahmedabad, who evaded arrest for more than two months in connection with the deaths of two PMJAY beneficiaries after botched angioplasty procedures, an official said

Kartik Patel, the chairman of Khyati Multispeciality Hospital, was arrested after he landed at the Ahmedabad airport from Dubai late on Friday night, inspector V B Aal of the Ahmedabad crime branch said.

Seven persons underwent angioplasty, a procedure that widens blocked or narrowed coronary arteries to improve blood flow to the heart, at Khyati Multispeciality Hospital on November 11, last year, following which two of them died, prompting Vastrapur police to register three FIRs the

South Bombay's beloved Irani bakery Yazdani isn't shutting down; baton to be passed on to 28-year-old Zyraa Zend



Even as Yazdani Bakery continues to draw a queue of loyal patrons—regulars coming for their ladi pav, generously slathered bun maska, or jumbo sandwich bread, alongside foreigners navigating South Bombay's bylanes, admiring its architectural charm, and stopping by for a slice of its iconic mawa cake—a persistent murmur has been growing louder: is the bakery shutting down?"No! We aren't shutting down," declared Perzon Zend, the third-generation custodian of this heritage establishment.

Perzon Zend represents the third generation inheriting the iconic Yazdani Bakery Perzon Zend represents the third generation inheriting the iconic Yazdani BakeryYazdani Bakery's story dates back to the 1950s, when Merwan Zend Kabir, Perzon's grandfather, acquired a share in an Irani restaurant at the very spot Yazdani now stands. Later, his elder son, Zend Merwan Zend-Perzon's father-purchased the remaining share, and together, they established Yazdani Bakery & Restaurant, now a Mumbai institution. However, whispers of closure gained traction in recent years, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the passing of Zend Merwan Zend and his younger brother Parvez Irani in 2021—both of whom were iconic figures at the bakery—the Zend family hasn't maintained a permanent presence at the bakery. Trusted long-time employees now man the counter, and dining services remain suspended. Adding fuel to the speculation is a recent showcause notice issued to Yazdani and 286 other bakeries, mandating a switch to cleaner, greener fuels such as electricity or PNG. The notice warns that non-compliance could result in closures. "The Covid-19 pandemic led many of our employees to return to their hometowns, and they never came back. At Yazdani, we use a special custom-made blend of Irani tea that requires precise brewing and a skilled hand. We would rather not serve it than have it done poorly," explained Zend, adding that the bakery's ownership has recently transitioned, now shared between him, his brothers Zorast and Zyros, and his cousin Tirandas, the son of Pervez Irani

He further elaborated on the challenges posed by the government notice. "If the notice is implemented, all woodfired bakeries will be forced to shut down. A one-month timeframe is far too short for such a significant transition, and most bakeries won't be able to afford the new ovens, especially without government subsidies akin to those provided for solar panels. The immediate need is to get a stay order, prevent bakery closures, and ensure that the common man isn't deprived of his daily bread. We are confident that our political leaders will find a win-win outcome," he said. Foreigners enjoying mawa cake at Yazdani Bakery Foreigners enjoying mawa cake at Yazdani BakeryHighlighting the irony, he added, "Across the world, people are preserving these bakeries and celebrating them as artisans, but we aren't. We're going back to wood-fired pizzas while killing our own heritage bakeries."

The beginningEstablished in 1950 at a site that once housed a Japanese bank, Yazdani Bakery, with its skyblue exterior and red-painted roof, though now peeling, remain iconic. Inside, the bakery retains its nostalgic charm with vintage posters, family photographs, a silver Urban Heritage Award from 2007, and a timeless ambience. The blackboard menu outside continues the tradition, currently promoting French onion bites with the distinct sweetness of caramelised onions. A new addition is a wall adorned with artwork by various artists who have captured Yazdani's essence and gifted their creations to the owners. "The red rafters you see were always here, perhaps because this was once a Japanese bank. As for the blue walls, I'm not sure why, but I do know that sky blue was my father's favourite colour," shared Perzon Zend.Legend has it that Merwan Zend Kabir, the founder of Yazdani, began his career as an apprentice at the legendary Rising Sun Bakery near Alexandria Cinema in Golpitha. This bakery used traditional methods of bread-making, similar to sourdough. The technique involved kneading dough in khamir, an Iranian method where a lump of dough from the previous day's batch acts as a natural ferment for the next. "My grandfather was a very hardworking man," said Zend, "He worked his way up to become a junior partner at Rising Sun Bakery. After selling his share, he cycled around the city searching for a space to open his bakery. That's when he found

Baking has always been a family tradition at Yazdani, with each member contributing to its menu over the decades. Inside Yazdani Bakery Inside Yazdani Bakery "My father created the jumbo sandwich bread, which was supplied to restaurants and hotels for their sandwiches. Parvez Kako invented the big ladi pav, while their brother Rashid Kako, a pharmacist by profession, introduced multigrain bread 20 years ago along with gingerbread. Zyros, who studied baking at Sophia College and later taught there, developed focaccia bread, French rolls, baguettes, and fortune cookies. I introduced olive and herb toast, rolls, and Brun toast," Zend proudly shared. The future

Will dining services resume at Yazdani Bakery, and who will take charge of the restaurant? "Dining will restart. How soon? That, I can't say," shared Perzon Zend. He added that as Zoroastrians, they worship fire, and their bakery, which uses fire, is akin to a place of worship for them. "Our bakery has always operated, even during the riots of the 1992-93 when the entire city came to a standstill. We ensured that no one who came to us left emptyhanded! That commitment is why we told our father that this bakery should be inherited by all of us, not just one person," he explained. Looking ahead, Zend shared his vision for the bakery's future. While he would love to visit Yazdani every evening to chat with customers—a tradition he and the generations before him enjoyed—the plan is to pass on the legacy to the fourth generation.

"My niece, Zyraa Zend (daughter of Zyros and the brand manager of Fortune Cookies India) has studied baking and is currently working at a fine-dining restaurant in Goa (Marai by Malini Akerkar and her daughter, Amalia). She will be the one to carry forward the Yazdani legacy under the mentorship of her father and masterbaker, Zyros, Zend revealed. Will the next generation preserve Yazdani's old-world charm? "They better do," Zend replied firmly, his tone underscoring his seriousness. "Things will be spruced up, but only as much as needed," he added.

Why construction for shorter route to Chandigarh airport is still stalled



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The much-debated shorter route between Shaheed Bhagat Singh International Airport and Chandigarh continues with the Punjab government and CHIAL (Chandigarh International Airport Limited) having varied outlooks on the issue. On Thursday, The Punjab and Harvana High Court on Thursday asked the CHIAL to produce the resolution and its previous decisions on the alternative route to the Chandigarh airport. How did the issue begin? In September 2022, the Union Ministry of Defence told the Punjab and Haryana High Court that they have received the proposal from the Chandigarh Administration over the alternative/ shorter routes to approach the Chandigarh airport. The Chandigarh Administration claimed that the present distance between Chandigarh and the airport is around 11 kilometres and as per the proposals submitted, one alternative route will shorten the distance by 2.85 kilometres, while the other will cut down by 3.32 kilometres. However, till date the construction of any such route is hanging.

What is the PIL filed by Mohali Industries Association?

A public interest litigation (PIL) filed by the Mohali Industries Association (MIA) at the high court has been pending since December 2015. The PIL alleged lack of facilities at the airport. Since then, the high court has been monitoring the progress of various projects at the airport.

When did the demand for alternative routes arise?

The demand for an alternative route started in 2016-2017, mainly because of Haryana and Chandigarh to reduce the travel time between Panchkula and Chandigarh to the airport. Later after a study, a route was finalised which was to start from Sector 48, and the current distance between Chandigarh and the airport, 11.5 km, was to come down to only 3.5 km, thereby bringing the travel time down from 25 minutes to merely 5 minutes. The advocate general of Punjab in May 2023 had submitted that 14.02 acres of land was to be acquired by the state government and the process in this regard would be undertaken and completed expeditiously. The Chandigarh counsel had also submitted that remaining 42 acres of land, that is to be acquired by UT, would also be done by the concerned authorities at the earliest, and the process of constructing a road would also be initiated by the administration.

In August 2023, on the issue concerning shorter route to the Chandigarh International Airport at Mohali, the Punjab and Harvana High Court asked the Punjab government, Chandigarh Administration and other stakeholders to hold a joint meeting to finalise an implementation plan for constructing the connecting route, and sought from them a datewise plan for implementation.

What are the objections raised by Punjab?

According to the Punjab government, the land is to be provided for maintenance and repair work adjoining the existing airport. The road proposed, if constructed, will cut through the connectivity of the airport to the area where these facilities are to come up in future. It will also hamper the potential expansion of the airport, the government said. "In view of the seriousness of the matter it is humbly submitted that the said alternative route may kindly be reconsidered in public interest as it will have adverse effects on the airport expansion," the affidavit by Malwinder Singh Jaggi, secretary, Punjab department of civil aviation, said. As the matter came up for hearing before the division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sudhir Singh on Thursday, senior advocate Chetan Mittal, appearing for the CHIAL, pointed out that C to C, which is a sectoral road, is strictly not an alternative route. The Punjab counsel referred to an earlier affidavit of the CHIAL to mention that there was a board meeting wherein some concern was shown by the CHIAL with regard to road A to A, and it was due to this objection that this route was abandoned for construction. The high court then asked the CHIAL to produce the said resolution as well as its previous decisions and other related documents, and adjourned the matter for January 23.

Transgender person bludgeoned to death in Nirmal

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Nimal: A fourteen-year-old transgender person was murdered by some unknown persons on the outskirts of Chityala village in Nirmal mandal late on Friday night. The incident came to light on Saturday.

Police said that Shashank, a transgender from the village died on the spot after being bludgeoned by another transgender of the same village. The role of other

transgenders was also suspected. Nirmal Superintendent of Police Dr Janaki Sharmila and ASP Rajesh Meena inspected the scene of the offence upon receiving information. They made inquiries into the incident. Sharmila said that special teams were formed to

nab the accused persons. A case was registered. Investigations were taken up.

Body parts in rice bags, three switched-off mobile phones, a blurry CCTV image: How police cracked East Delhi murder mystery



In the densely populated east Delhi, the old Ram Lila maidan is a rare open space. Nestled among dense jhuggi clusters, the expansive stretch of land is like a common compound where the local residents come out to get some air even as garbage is dumped all around, cows graze about, children play a game of cricket, and an occasional drug addict sneaks in for a snort. It was around 8 pm that Sunday evening when a few people loitering about this ground spotted two white plastic rice bags under the bushes in a corner. A strong stench was emanating out of them; one of the bags was slightly open. Out of curiosity, they moved closer to take a look. What they saw inside almost made them throw up: the bag contained parts of a human body.

"Constable Ashish informed his superior, Sub Inspector Abhishek, at Pandav Nagar police station who arrived at the spot along with constable Ravi. This ground here is a large chunk of empty government land where annual Ram Lila used to be held until two decades ago when the venue of the festival was shifted to another ground, half a kilometre away. This vacant stretch borders Sanjay Lake on one side where a portion of the ground has turned into a thicket, serving as a perfect hideout for junkies. On the other side of the ground is a densely populated JJ cluster, Kalyanpuri – home to thousands of migrant workers and their families – where tiny, two-storeyed houses, resembling two match boxes placed one over the other, jostle for space. The lanes here are so narrow that only one motorcycle can pass through at a time. A wide road stretch separates the JJ cluster from this vacant maidan, which has now turned into a dumping ground for trash. A bit ahead is Delhi Police's cyber police station and then there is another dense JJ cluster, Trilokpuri.

That summer evening, when the police collected the body parts, they had absolutely no clues. They didn't know whether the body parts belonged to one person or more. The personnel scanned through the trash. A few dozen yards ahead, they found another similar white bag. A skull was packed inside it. The forensic team was called and the body parts sent for a detailed examination. A week later, police received the details: the body parts belonged to a man in his early 40s, and that he had been dead for a week. And then, a chilling piece of information: the body parts were frozen before being dumped.

The police, though, had one hunch: the perpetrators were likely from the vicinity; they seemed aware that the area close to the bushes was littered with all kinds of trash plastic wrappers, household waste, debris — giving them a perfect cover to hide the evidence of their crime. The investigators started scanning the area around the ground for CCTV cameras. "At that time, there weren't many CCTV cameras installed there," says Ashish. "Luckily, there was one on the top of a two-storey house that looked right over the ground. Whatever this camera may have captured was our only hope."The investigators approached the house owner, Tarkeshwar Saini, who earns his livelihood by sell-

"My son had bought a car and we were worried that someone would steal it because it was parked outside, on the road," Saini tells The investigators, though, were inter-Ram Lila ground. Scanning through several hours of footage, the officers stopped at a clip recorded on the wee hours of May 31. The camera had captured the movement of two people — a man and a woman — none of whom could be recognised because their pictures were blurry. Apart from a white mobile phone that could be spotted in the woman's hand, nothing could be made out. The police sent out teams with sniffer dog squads across Kalyanpuri and even scanned refrigerators for clues. After 15 days, the leads dried up. "We thought this is one of those cases that remain unresolved," recalls another officer at Pandav Nagar police station. "The investigation had hit a wall. Besides, we also got busy with other law and order issues".

But unknown to the local police, Delhi Crime branch was also put on the case. This murder had taken place barely a fortnight after the Shraddha Walkar murder case in which her live-in partner was accused of killing her before chopping her body into pieces and storing it in the fridge. There were visible similarities between the two cases. "The circumstances associated with this murder were unusual: body cut into pieces, kept in a freezer and then dumped in trash... it was unusual...," Inspector Rakesh Sharma of the Crime branch says.

By this time, five months had passed. "At this stage, (only) one thing was clear - that the person was murdered a week before his body parts were dumped," says Sharma. Beside scanning CCTV footage, his team members started working on technical evidence. The dump data of almost a thousand phones found active around the spot were collected. The phone numbers were scrutinised one by one. On November 5, Head Constables Rahul, who goes by only one name, and Satyendra Dahiya came across a number which was switched off on May 30 - the estimated day of the man's death.

Further verification threw up another peculiar information: this particular phone number was active round the clock till May 30. "We looked for a pattern. This number had been active without break till May 30. Then, it vanished. Both the SIM and the phone set were not used again. That was unusual," an official explains. "If SIM was changed for any reason, the phone set would have been used with a new SIM. That was not the case here."The user of that mobile number was identified as Anjan Das, 45, a resident of Trilokpuri.On further analysis of the CDR, it was found that Das's phone was in constant touch with two numbers before it went silent permanently. The police checked the other two numbers, they were also switched off. "Those two numbers were, however, active till June 6 - a day after the discovery of the human body parts from (old) Ram Lila Ground," Sharma says. "This added to our suspicion".A probe into the other two numbers led the police to the residence of Poonam Devi, 48, in Trilokpuri's Block number 4. Here, Poonam lived with her daughter in a two-storeyed house with two single rooms stacked one above the other just like the houses in neighbouring Kalyanpuri. She informed police that Das was her husband, who had gone to his native place in Banka in Bihar. On November 10, Inspector Sharma sent two team members — Head Constables

Banka. "They found out that he never reached his village. In fact, he had not visited his family there for some time now," Sharma says. Poonam was picked up for questioning. "She didn't have a satisfactory answer to why she changed her phone number," Sharma recalls. Meanwhile, her body structure and gait seemed to match the silhouette seen in the CCTV footage scanned earlier. And then came the clincher. "We found the white colour mobile phone; Poonam was still using it," Sharma says. "She (Poonam) tried to mislead us but when we interrogated her thoroughly, she broke down and revealed that she and her son Deepak killed Das.

Deepak is Poonam's son from second husband, and the owner of the other number that was in regular touch with Das before he went missing. A native of village Bikhaudi in Devgarh, Jharkhand. Poonam was 13 when she was married to Sukhdev Tiwari of Chutki Neni.Jod village in Arrah, Bihar. Tiwari worked in Delhi and would visit home regularly. But soon after Poonam gave birth to a daughter, Tara, Tiwari went incommunicado. Her daughter in tow Poonam arrived in Delhi to look for her husband but could not find him. She started working as a domestic help. Soon, she met Kalu, who worked as a daily wage labourer, in Trilokpuri and started living with him. The couple went on to have three children: son Deepak and two daughters, Jaimala and Vandana. Vandana, their youngest daughter, was 4 when she fell off the roof of their home and died. Kalu turned to alcohol and his health started to deteriorate rapidly.

In 2011, Das, who worked as a lift operator, became a tenant in Poonam and Kalu's house. Following Kalu's death in 2016, Poonam and Das "became close" and soon started to live together. They got married the next year.

By this time, Poonam's son Deepak had also grown up and found a job as a waiter at parties. He got married and started living a few blocks away from his mother in Trilokpuri. Meanwhile, Poonam's daughter, Jaimala, came back to live with her mother following problems in her marriage. The strife between Poonam and Das, she told the police, started with his drinking. The tipping point was when Das started to show "ill intention" towards Poonam's nowdivorced daughter and her daughter-in-law, Deepak's wife. "He (Das) tried to force himself on her (Poonam's daughter). Had I not been home, he would have raped my daughter. He tried to do this with my daughter-in-law too," Poonam told the investigators. There was something else bothering her: Das was already married, a fact he had concealed from Poonam. "I came to know that he (Das) had a wife and eight children back home. He didn't tell me about this before he married me," Poonam told the police. This is why, Poonam and her son Deepak told the police, they decided

to kill Das.

'Though the mother-son duo had no prior criminal record, the way they planned the murder was shockingly meticulous," Inspector Sharma says. On May 30, Poonam sent her daughter to Deepak's home for the night. "Deepak bought a big knife from a local shop. They also sourced six empty plastic sacks from a rice shop near their home. Besides, they obtained sleeping pills from a medical shop in the locality," Sharma adds. When Das came home, Poonam and Deepak offered him a drink laced with the sedatives. Once Das fell unconscious, Deepak stabbed him in the neck chest and abdomen. He then proceeded to chop off Das's limbs. "Deepak cut the body into 10 pieces. His throat was also slit and his head severed. It took around five hours,' Poonam told the police. "They let the blood drain out before putting the body parts in six plastic rice sacks and keeping them in the refrigerator," said police. Poonam told the investigators that they took out the SIM from Das's mobile phone and snapped it into two before breaking the device into small pieces and dumping it along with the garbage.

'In the wee hours of May 31, Deepak went out to pose of the sack containing the torso in the drain in New Ashok Nagar. He also threw the knife there. He then did several rounds of the old Ram Lila ground to dump the other five sacks. This time Poonam accompanied him," Inspector Sharma says. "They were confident that because there are heaps of garbage scattered around this ground, no one will pay any attention."The sack that contained the torso and the knife were never found despite extensive search

"When they learnt that the body parts they had dumped in the ground were recovered by the police, Poonam and Deepak panicked and decided to change their phone number. This is why their phones were switched off soon after the body parts were recovered on June 5," says Inspector Sharma. "This blind murder case was solved only because the killers thought they would evade police by switching off their phones. And it was these switched off devices, which helped us crack the case."Poonam's daughter has now moved in with her sister-in-law - Deepak's wife - and nephew, who is five now. She abandoned the house where the crime took place. She has started working at a gas agency at a modest wage and supports whatever is left of the family. She regularly tracks the case, says inspector

Farmer, notified of land acquisition for Regional Ring Road, dies of heart attack in Bhongir

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Bhongir: In a tragic incident, a farmer named Nagavelli Chinna Lakshmaiah from Varkatpally village in Yadadri Bhongir district died of a heart attack on Saturday morning, allegedly due to mental distress over fears of losing his land to the RRR (Regional Ring Road) project. The farmer owned four acres of land in survey numbers 201 and 202.

The local Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) visited Varkatpally with his staff for a survey on January 10 and as part of the exercise, he informed Lakshmaiah that his land would be taken over for the RRR project.

This news reportedly caused severe mental anguish to Lakshmaiah, leading to his untimely death. He suffered a massive stroke at 5:30 AM.

This is not the first tragedy to strike this family due to the RRR survey. Previously, Nagavelli Pedda Lakshmaiah and Nagavelli Lakshmamma, both from the same family, also passed away after being informed that their land would be acquired for the project.

Many other farmers in the region are reportedly experiencing similar mental distress, fearing the loss of their lands. The affected families have repeatedly appealed to the local MLA, RDO, MRO, and the District Collector for justice and support but their pleas have been ignored.

What did the high court direct to Punjab and Chandigarh

Kamal and Nahan ji Meena — to Das's native place in

Ranga Reddy INDIAN CHRONICLE FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2025

'Will AI replace lawyers, judges soon? I think not,' says Supreme Court Justice Dipankar Datta



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Supreme Court Dipankar Datta Datta was speaking in Delhi at the launch of a Bachelor's programme in Al and Law at the OP Jindal Global University (JGU) which, according to the varsity, is the first one of its kind in Asia. Supreme Court judge Justice Dipankar Datta on Friday expressed his reservations on the capabilities of artificial intelligence (Al) in the legal sphere when it comes to replacing judges and lawyers.

He was speaking in Delhi at the launch of a Bachelor's programme in AI and Law at the OP Jindal Global University (JGU) which, according to the varsity, is the first one of its kind in Asia. "It is undeniable that it (AI) has the capacity to change academia, the practice of law and the delivery of justice... AI has to be responsibly scrutinised and critically analysed before its widespread use... Will AI replace lawyers and judges anytime soon? I think not... At least for the moment it is a misplaced notion...," Justice Datta said.

"AI, in its present form, cannot communicate like how present on the occasion.

humans do. Litigants rely on lawyers to provide insight into their matter and apply their knowledge to help them make informed decisions. Lawyers are aware that judges may pose questions from unexpected perspectives, catching them off guard; they must therefore be prepared to think on their feet, lest they falter," he added. Pointing out that in a multicultural country like India, a client may take comfort in a lawyer belonging to the same region or speaking the same language as her, Justice Datta remarked, "Communication in law is key... While AI has the power to change the way in which humans interact, it is unlikely to be a substitute for humans in such sensitive professions. Communication is also a key factor for judges... Such communications have different tone and tenor, let alone different purposes." "Judges have different types of cases one after the other, the complexity associated with each individual matter calling for a nuanced approach, the need for understanding human values and emotions, the imperatives to be fair and just to the parties before it...etc make me believe that Al would struggle to replicate a judge... Al can and definitely has been helping judges in research and analysis, ensuring efficiency and speed... Al as a tool can bring about revolutionary changes in assisting our legal system...and can make our legal system more accessible," he said.Meanwhile, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who also attended the event, expressed his concerns over AI taking over the human aspects of legal procedures and implored that the use of Al be limited to solving logistical issues "such as number of matters, classification of matters, how to deal with those matters speedily etc." Mehta added, "Rather than concentrating on other algorithmic aspects of AI, please provide for a think tank which can decide how to regulate it so that it (AI) becomes our slave and not become our master."Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal, Attorney General R Venkataramani, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi and OP Jindal Global University chancellor and Lok Sabha MP Naveen Jindal were also

A murder, a movement, and the search for justice: A timeline of events in the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder case

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

On an August morning, the body of a 31-year-old junior doctor was found in the seminar hall of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. More than six months later, the country remains on edge, awaiting a verdict in the case as the sessions court in Sealdah, Kolkata, is poised to deliver its judgment. However, the story leading up to this moment is as much about what happened after the crime as the crime itself. August 9, 2024: A discovery, a nightmare

The body of the 31-year-old junior doctor was found in the seminar hall on the fourth floor of the hospital. Her body had 16 external and nine internal injuries. The postmortem would later confirm death by manual strangulation following sexual assault. The accused, a 28-year-old traffic police volunteer named Sanjay Roy, was arrested the next day, August 10, 2024. Shock turned into anger, and anger into a nationwide movement. Protests erupted not just in Kolkata but across the country. Doctors, medical students, and the Indian Medical Association (IMA) led a fierce campaign, demanding justice for their colleague and increased safety for healthcare professionals. The demand for justice

Just two days after the body was discovered, the West Bengal government transferred the hospital's Superintendent. But this administrative shuffle was far from enough to quell the growing outcry. The hospital's principal, Sandip Ghosh, stepped down on August 12, following nationwide protests led by the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA), which brought elective medical services to a grinding halt.rg kar, rg kar timeline, rg kar verdict, news, Protesting doctors block a road at Moulali Crossing in Kolkata on Saturday.

By August 13, the dissatisfaction was palpable. The victim's parents, along with others, filed a petition before the Calcutta High Court. They demanded an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), citing distrust in the Kolkata Police. The High Court agreed, handing over the case to the CBI. The protests grew. Doctors refused to return to work. Services in hospitals across India were disrupted as medical professionals stood united in their demand for swift action. "We will not be silent," read one banner held aloft during the demonstrations. The Human Rights Commission and scrutiny

As the nation watched, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) intervened, noting visible signs of struggle on the victim's body. On August 14, the Kolkata Police formally handed Sanjay Roy over to the CBI.Just a day later, on August 15, as the nation celebrated its Independence Day, another form of protest emerged: 'Reclaim the Night' rallies, organized by women and activists, demanding justice and protection for women. At RG Kar Medical College, however, the protests turned violent. A mob vandalized the hospital and crime scene. Tensions flared further when the National Commission for Women (NCW)



accused the authorities of security lapses and raised alarms that the crime site had undergone premature renovations.rg kar, rg kar timeline, rg kar verdict, news, Women at the 'Reclaim the Night' protest in Kolkata. Nationwide outrage, strikes, and investigationsAugust saw a cascade of events: On August 17, the IMA announced a 24-hour nationwide strike in solidarity with the victim. On August 20, the Supreme Court itself weighed in, constituting a 10-member task force to address the safety of healthcare professionals. By the end of the month, the protests had spiralled into larger political movements. The Nabanna Abhijan march to the West Bengal secretariat turned into clashes between police and protestors, leading to a state-wide strike, called by the BJP on August 28.

rg kar, rg kar timeline, rg kar verdict, news, The Kolkata police used water cannons and tear gas shells to disperse protesters enroute West Bengal secretariat. The CBI, under intense pressure, raided the homes of Sandip Ghosh and several others connected to the hospital. By mid-September, the agency arrested Ghosh, accusing him of tampering with evidence. The officer-in-charge of the local Tala police station, Abhijit Mondal, was also detained for delaying the filing of the first information report (FIR). Court battles, protests, and bailThe court formally charged Sanjay Roy only in November. Roy faced charges under India's Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including rape and murder. But even as the trial began in a Sealdah court, it was clear that the road to justice was anything but smooth. In December, the CBI's case took a blow. The court granted bail to both Sandip Ghosh and Abhijit Mondal after the CBI failed to file its chargesheets within the statutory 90-day period. Allegations swirled that Ghosh had known about the crime earlier than he had reported, and he remained under scrutiny by the Enforcement Directorate for unrelated financial crimes. For the victim's parents, it was another blow in a long and painful process. They moved the Calcutta High Court, alleging that the investigation had been half-hearted, urging for a new inquiry. January 2025: Awaiting a verdict The final hearing at Sealdah court concluded on January 16, 2025, and the verdict is now set for today. For many, the outcome has far-reaching effects. In the words of one protesting doctor: "This isn't just about her. This is about all of

CBI court grants agency five-day remand of ED officer Vishal Deep in corruption case

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The special CBI court of Chandigarh on Friday granted the agency a five-day remand of the ED assistant officer Vishal Deep in a corruption case. Deep was produced before the special CBI court of Additional District and Sessions Judge, Alka Malik, on Friday. A day earlier, the CBI Court had allowed the production warrants of Deep to the CBI. The CBI through Public Prosecutor Narender Singh sought seven days remand for Deep on Friday. The CBI Public Prosecuter said that the remand was required as Vishal Deep had been evading investigation in this case since December 22, 2024, and had never joined investigation in the case deliberately. A notice dated January 1, 2025 was issued for his presence but he did not joined investigation and the investigation of the case is being hampered severely as this accused is required to be interrogated in police custody, submitted Narender Singh. The CBI counsel further told the court that the remand was required for recovery of the remaining bribe money of Rs 1 lakh. Further for recovery of mobile phone used by the accused during the trap proceedings as the complainant had received a WhatsApp call during the trap proceedings in which he had

talked to accused Vishal Deep, and also to unearth the larger conspiracy and role of other public and private persons, and to recover any other incriminating documents/articles, submitted the CBI counsel. Vishal Deep's council, however, opposed the agency's plea for remand. The court on hearing the contentions, granted five days remand of the accused. The CBI has registered two FIRs in a bribery case against Deep. The bribery allegations surfaced on December 22, 2024, when the CBI registered two FIRs based on complaints lodged by Bhupinder Kumar Sharma, chairman of Dev Bhumi Group of Institutions, Una, and Rajneesh Bansal, chairman of Himalayan Group of Professional Institutions, Sirmour. Both accused Deep and other ED officials of "demanding bribes for not arresting them" in connection with cases registered against their institutions. Notice to CBI on Deep's applicationThe CBI Court of Chandigarh has issued notice to the agency, on an application filed by the ED officer-Vishal Deep, seeking directions for preservation of footage of the CCTV Camera installed near his parent's house. Deep, through counsel-Manpreet Singh Kaler, and Abhey Joshi, also sought directions for preservation of CDR of the investigating officer

'Huge tragedy if a life is lost because govt didn't respond'



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Samyukt Kisan Morcha Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to ignore the farmers' demands and to save the life of Jagjeet Singh Dallewal who has been on a hunger strike for the past 53 days. "It is extremely unfortunate that the Union government has neither held talks nor has it responded to the Supreme Court's intervention of giving an assurance. It will be a huge tragedy for the country if a valuable life is lost only because the government choose not to respond. We firmly believe that the Union government should hold talks and save his life." the SKM's national coordination committee has written in the letter sent via e-mail to PM Modi.In the letter, a hard copy of which would be sent separately to Modi through MPs and chief ministers, the SKM expressed concern over Centre's "apathy" towards the farmers who have been demanding a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP), among

Farmers, under the banner of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 last year. Dallewal, the convener of the SKM (non-political), has been on an indefinite hunger strike at Khanauri since November 26 last year in support of various demands of the farmers, including a legal guarantee of MSP.The SKM, in its letter, urged prime minister to not ignore the demands being raised by farmers, "to implement the written assurances given to SKM by the Government on December 9, 2021, and to save the life of Dallewal"

With deep concern over the continuous apathy of the Central government, we write to you to help solve the extremely serious issues concerning the farming community of India and the economy as a whole. We hope that vou will be able to take up these issues with the Government of India, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi," read the letter addressed to MPs and chief ministers. Earlier, Dallewal had twice written to PM Modi. The SKM's to PM comes a day day before it meets SKM (non-political) and KMM for a third time to further discuss modalities for a joint struggle. The meeting will be held at Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara at Patran in Patiala, about 18 km from the morcha site. The SKM, which had led the agitation at the Delhi borders against the now-repealed three farm laws, is not party of the morcha at the Haryana's borders. In its letter, the S KM also raised the issue of the Draft National Policy Framework for Agricultural Markets, terming it a "reincarnation" of the now-repealed farm laws.

'This draft is out and out a policy to hand over all agricultural operations to private corporations and MNCs. This policy prominently exhibits its anti-farmer intent by remaining totally silent on granting of any MSP or government procurement or food distribution through PDS. We urge you to go through this anti-people, pro-corporate policy and raise your voice against it. We request your Vidhan Sabhas to kindly reject this draft and immediately notify the Central government," read the letter. "The Government knows very well as is also common knowledge that the main demands of the farmers are grant of MSP @ C2+50% with legal assurance of procurement and debt waiver for all farmers and agricultural workers. It is extremely unfortunate that the Government has not moved to solve these pending problems. On the other hand it has introduced provisions of the New Electricity Act that had been presented in the form of raising tariff and imposing smart metres, while the farmers had been demanding free electricity for tube wells and 300 units free power for other users countrywide," it adds. It urged the MPs and CMs to remind the prime minister of his written commitment to the farmers of India, made when the farmers' protests were withdrawn. "We also urge you to ask the prime minister to immediately hold talks on all these issues with all farmers' organizations, chief ministers and all political parties to solve these problems," they said.

Punjab and Haryana HC orders to reinstate judicial officer who was dismissed over 'misconduct' as a lawyer

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ordered to reinstate an Additional District and Sessions Judge, who was dismissed from service in March 2022, during the probation period, on account of "doubtful integrity". The petitioner, Prem Kumar, had moved the high court seeking quashing of the order dated April 18, 2022 and April 20, 2022, whereby his services were dispensed with. He had also sought quashing of the ACR (Annual Confidential Report) for the year 2015-16; the order dated December 3, 2021, whereby the representation of the petitioner was rejected, and the order dated March 7, 2022, withdrawing the judicial work from the petitioner.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sudhir Singh, directed the respondents to upgrade the ACR of the petitioner for the year 2015-16, and to re-instate him in service with immediate effect with all consequential benefits. It was alleged that the petitioner, while practicing as a lawyer, in connivance with a woman had got registered a false FIR in 2012 for rape against a person. He was then given 'B+ Good' grading in the ACR for the year 2014-15 and in the integrity column, it was mentioned: 'good, subct to the outcome of the pending complaint' A liminary enquiry, the high court's OSD (Vigilance), Haryana, in May 2016 concluded that the conduct of petitioner was found to be an act of professional misconduct. This led to him being graded 'C (integrity doubtful)' in the ACR for 2015-16. In 2019, he was informed that proceedings in the 2014 complaint was being dropped on the recommendations of the Vigilance/Disciplinary Committee. He was advised to be careful in future and his ACR for 2014-15 was also confirmed as 'B+ Good'. However, the ACR for 2015-16 was



finalized as 'C-Integrity Doubtful'. Consequently, his judi cial work was withdrawn and the Punjab government terminated him on the recommendation of the full court. Hearing the matter, the bench noted that there is nothing on record except the complaint to infer that the integrity of the petitioner was doubtful due to any extraneous consideration or otherwise. The HC asserted that the Full Court decision passed in 2021 and the recommendations of the Recruitment and Promotion Committee (Superior Judicial Service) made in 2022, approved by the Full Court in 2022, did not notice the dropping of the proceedings in the complaint filed and treating the ACR of the petitioner as 'B+Good' as final, for the year 2014-15. "Therefore, applying the same ratio, which was made basis for treating the provisional remarks recorded in the ACR for the year 2014-15 as final, the remarks recorded in the ACR for the year 2015-16 do not hold the ground and, therefore, there being no material except the complaint, the proceedings wherein were dropped, the said remarks could not have been made the basis," said the bench, while allowing the petition.

Chandigarh administration calls for fresh demand survey for Sector 53 housing scheme

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Reviving hopes, the UT administration has decided to conduct a fresh demand survey for the Sector 53 housing scheme. Chief Secretary Rajeev Verma, who is also the Chairman of the Chandigarh Housing Board, on Friday questioned the previous demand survey of the housing scheme and asked the officials to conduct a fresh demand survey. The decision was taken after the officials of the Chandigarh Housing Board gave a presentation on the Sector 53 scheme.

When the chief secretary quizzed about the demand survey, he was told that it was done in 2018. Verma then directed officials to start a fresh demand since it has been many years since the previous one. He suggested that the survey should be conducted and finalised before the final presentation to UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria. The Sector 53 housing scheme was halted by then Chandigarh administrator Banwarilal Purohit. It was in November 2024



that Kataria directed officers for a fresh presentation on the scheme by December 31.In February 2024, the launch of a General Housing Scheme for people in Sector 53 was approved by the then adviser, with a proposal for four-bedroom flats as well on the same parcel of land.

Samadhi to maha samadhi: After postmortem, selfstyled guru again lowered into crypt at Kerala home



GNS News Agency, Jan 23 Self-styled Kerala guru's body found, Kerala guru's

body found, Gopan Swami, Gopan Swami dead, Gopan Swami body found, kerala, kerala news,Kerala samadhi case: Police and authorities seal the burial site of 81-year-old Gopan Swami in Aralumoodu, Neyyattinkara. The body of Gopan, the self-styled spiritual guru whose mysterious death has attracted a police probe, was buried in a specially-erected crypt — dubbed as "maha samadhi" — at his house at Aralumoodu near Neyyattinkara in Thiruvananthapuram Friday.The body of the 69-year-old Gopan was lowered into the chamber in a sitting position, and the crypt was filled with ashes and camphor while scores of Hindu sanyasis led the prayers. Since Gopan belonged to Hindu Nadar community, several leaders of the community outfit Vaikunda Swami Dharma Pracharana Sabha (VSDP) took the lead in the rituals.

Javier Milei touts 'promises kept' after producing rare Argentine budget surplus



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Argentina's government said Friday (January 17, 2025) it had produced the country's first budget surplus in more than a decade in 2024, after a year of drastic austerity by libertarian President Javier Milei, whose term has also seen inflation fall. Economy Minister Luis Caputo said the budget surplus, which amounted to 0.3% of GDP, was the first since 2010. "The promises have been kept. The 'zero deficit' is a reality. Long live freedom, goddammit," Mr. Milei wrote on Instagram.

On the campaign trail in 2023, the self-styled "anarchocapitalist" economist brandished a chainsaw as a symbol of his plans to slash public spending and tame inflation after years of eye-watering price increases.Mr. Caputo said the 2024 surplus was the fruit of a reform program "that surprised the whole world. "Mr. Milei has applied shock therapy to try to stabilise South America's long-struggling secondbiggest economy. He devalued the national currency by 52%, fired more than 33,000 public sector workers, slashed state subsidies on transport, fuel and energy and led a massive deregulation drive. His reforms nearly halved annual inflation, which fell 94 points to 117.8% last year but still remains amongst the highest in the world. Criticism and

But his policies also plunged Argentina into recession and tipped an additional five million people into poverty in the first half of 2024, bringing tens of thousands of people onto the streets in protests. The 54-year-old has swatted away criticism, declaring that what he presents as shortterm pain will restore the prosperity Argentina enjoyed in the early 20th century. His government has forecast an economic rebound in 2025, with GDP growth of 5%. A fervent admirer of Donald Trump, Milei will attend the Republican's inauguration for a second term as president next week and also hold talks with International Monetary Fund leader Kristalina Georgieva on a new loan agreement. The IMF's current 30-month loan agreement with Argentina expires on December 31, and is worth around \$44 billion, making it the largest program it has.

Impeached South Korean President arrives for arrest warrant hearing

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol arrived at court for the first time to attend a hearing that will decide whether to extend his detention as investigators probe his failed martial law bid. Yoon, who has claimed his arrest is illegal, threw the nation into chaos on December 3 when he attempted to suspend civilian rule, citing the need to combat threats from "anti-state elements". Yoon's diehard supporters gathered outside the court building Saturday, even trying to surround the blue van carrying the suspended leader, AFP reporters saw. Yoon's martial law bid lasted just six hours, with lawmakers voting it down despite the president ordering soldiers to storm parliament to stop them. Yoon was subsequently impeached by parliament and resisted arrest for weeks, holed up in his guarded residence until he was finally detained Wednesday in a dawn raid. South Korea's first sitting President to be detained, Yoon has refused to cooperate during the initial 48 hours detectives were allowed to hold him

But the disgraced president remains in custody after investigators requested a new warrant Friday to extend his detention. A judge at Seoul Western District Court was set to review the request at a 2:00 pm (0500 GMT) hearing, with her decision expected Saturday night or early Sunday.Before the hearing, Yoon's lawyer Yoon Kab-keun told AFP the president would attend "with the intention of restoring his honour". If approved, the new warrant would likely extend Yoon's detention by 20 days, giving prosecutors time to formalise an indictment. The Corruption Investigation Office (CIO) is probing Yoon for insurrection, a charge that could see him jailed for life or executed if found guilty.

Detention silence Yoon said Wednesday he had agreed to leave his compound to avoid "bloodshed", but that he did not accept the legality of the investigation. His supporters



have gathered in front of the court since Friday, holding South Korean and American flags and demanding judges dismiss the request to extend the president's detention. The court closed its entrance to the public Friday evening, citing safety concerns. Yoon has refused to answer investigators' questions, with his legal team saying the president explained his position when detained on Wednesday. The president has also been absent from a parallel probe at the Constitutional Court, which is mulling whether to uphold his impeachment. If the court rules against Yoon, he will lose the presidency and elections will be called within 60 days. He did not attend the first two hearings this week, but the trial, which could last months, will continue in his absence. Although Yoon won the presidential election in 2022, the opposition Democratic Party has a majority in parliament after winning legislative polls last year. The Democratic Party has celebrated the president's arrest, with a top official calling it "the first step" to restoring constitutional and legal order. As challenges against the embattled leader mount, parliament passed a bill late Friday to launch a special counsel probe into Yoon over his failed martial

Donald Trump inauguration moving indoors: Here's what to know about changed plans

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Sub-freezing temperatures forecast for Monday (January 20, 2025) in Washington are prompting President-elect Donald Trump to take the oath of office from inside the Capitol Rotunda. Almost everyone visiting Washington won't be able to see it in person. The decision to move Monday's event indoors marks the first time in 40 years that a President will not be sworn in on the Capitol steps. Plans are underway to accommodate some attendees at the city's pro basketball and hockey arena. Here's what we know about the arrangements so far, with updates to come as organizers scramble to change plans:

Where will Trump now be sworn in?

The Rotunda is prepared as an alternative for each inauguration in the event of inclement weather. The swearing-in was last moved indoors in 1985, when President Ronald Reagan began his second term. Monday's (January 20, 2025) forecast calls for the lowest Inauguration Day temperatures since that day. First lady Nancy Reagan, center, looks on as President Ronald Reagan is sworn in during ceremonies in the Rotunda beneath the Capitol Dome in Washington First lady Nancy Reagan, center, looks on as President Ronald Reagan is sworn in during ceremonies in the Rotunda beneath the Capitol Dome in Washington oPresident Joe Biden, members of Congress and other dignitaries and notable guests will be able to view the ceremony from inside the Capitol. Workers were installing a small platform in the Rotunda on Friday. The U.S. Capitol Police said Friday that outside ticketed areas at the Capitol would be closed "due to the extremely cold weather," so even if people wanted to gather there as Trump takes the oath inside, they won't be allowed to do so.

How cold is it going to get on Monday?

The National Weather Service is predicting that the temperature will be around 22 degrees Fahrenheit (minus-6 Celsius) at noon Eastern time, when Trump becomes president. That would be the coldest since Reagan's second inauguration saw temperatures plunge to 7 degrees (minus-14 Celsius). If the infographic isn't visible or is incomplete, click here to exit AMP mode"The weather forecast for Washington, DC, with the windchill factor, could take temperatures into severe record lows," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform. "There is an Arctic blast sweeping the Country. I don't want to see people hurt, or injured, in any way." In 2009, it was 28 degrees (minus-2 Celsius) for President Barack Obama's swearing-in. Biden was sworn in four years ago in a relatively balmy 42 degrees (5.5 Celsius). A few Democrats poked fun at Trump's decision. Minnesota Gov Tim Walz, who was Vice President Kamala Harris' running mate in the Democrats' losing 2024 campaign, posted a photo of himself standing in a snowstorm with the caption, "There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing." Monday's forecast temperature is about the same as it was in Washington 64 years ago, when John F. Kennedy took the oath in a 22-degree chill, and after crews worked overnight clearing eight inches of



fresh snow from the parade route. Kennedy delivered his speech from the Capitol's east steps without a topcoat, his frosty breath visible as he spoke.

A half-century earlier, William Howard Taft held his 1909 inauguration indoors after 10 inches of snow fell. That's when the inauguration was still held on March 4, not Jan. 20. How many members of the public can attend the inau-

In his social media post about the weather-related change, Trump said that "various Dignitaries and Guests" would be taken into the Rotunda for the ceremony, although it's unclear how many people that meant, or whom. According to a notice from the US House's sergeant at arms sent to congressional offices, the vast majority of the seats that had been planned for an outdoor ceremony will be excluded and those tickets will become "commemorative." Organisers are still deciding whether they can admit people who have tickets in sections 3 and 4, which would have been right in front of the stage outdoors. According to Trump's post, Capital One Arena — where the incoming president is holding a Sunday afternoon rally that remains on — will be open again on Monday for "LIVE viewing of this Historic event." No information is available yet on how to sign up for a seat inside the arena on Monday.

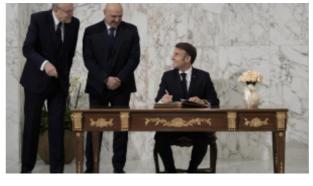
What about the parade — is it still happening?

Trump also said that Capital One Arena would "host the Presidential Parade," another tweak from tradition. Trump also said that he would "join the crowd" at Capital One after he takes the oath. The parade is managed by the Joint Task Force-National Capital Region, and they are hurriedly working to figure out what changes need to be made and how the parade will go on, a task force official said. The official asked not to be named to provide details ahead of an announcement on how the parade will continue. Normally, thousands of people line the route from the US Capitol to the White House, which the president typically traverses following the swearing-in ceremony. Marching bands and other participants from around the country come to Washington to participate, so presumably they will also be part of the newly arranged indoor festivities.

Are other inaugural events still happening?

According to Trump, yes. The Republican presidentelect said on Friday that other inaugural events.

France's Macron expresses support for new leadership in Lebanon as it recovers from crisis



French President Emmanuel Macron met Friday (January 17, 2025) with Lebanon's newly elected President Joseph Aoun and vowed to support the small nation as it tries to recover from a historic economic crisis and the 14month Israel-Hezbollah war.Mr. Macron's trip to Lebanon. his first in more than four years, follows a 60-day ceasefire deal that went into effect on November 27 between Israel and Hezbollah that aims to end their war. France helped broker the agreement and a French officer is a member of the committee supervising the truce.

Shortly after the ceasefire agreement, Lebanon's parliament overcame a stalemate that had left the presidency vacant for over two years. That cleared the way for the naming of a permanent Prime Minister, prominent jurist and dip-Iomat Nawaf Salam, who is in the process of forming a new government.Lebanon's government hopes the political breakthrough will boost international confidence and clear the way for the release funds needed to rebuild after the Israel-Hezbollah war, which killed more than 4,000 and wounded over 16,000 in Lebanon. An international conference for Lebanon in Paris in October raised \$1 billion in pledges for humanitarian aid and military support. Macron, who has been critical of Lebanon's leadership in the past, said during a joint news conference with Aoun that France will be supporting Lebanon and that he hopes the country's new government will open "a new era, that of a change in political behavior, the return of the state to the benefit of all." Aoun asked Macron to be a witness that the confidence of the Lebanese people in their country and state has been restored. "The world's confidence in Lebanon should be also restored," he said. "The real Lebanon has come back," Aoun

Mr. Macron was received earlier at Beirut's international airport by caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati. He said that France will add some 80 experts to the 750 French troops deployed in south Lebanon as part of a U.N. peacekeeping force along the border with Israel."This is a message of gratitude," Mr. Macron told journalists at the airport. He later toured parts of Beirut where he spoke to people in the streets and took selfies with them before going to the presidential palace for talks Aoun, Mikati and parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. Macron said two thirds of the international pledges made during the Paris conference to support Lebanon in October have been met and that France has provided 83 million euros of the 100 million it has promised. The French leader has harshly criticised Lebanon's political class, whom many blame for the decades of corruption and mismanagement that led in October 2019 to the country's worst economic and financial crisis. For years, Macron has pressed Lebanese officials to implement reforms to help the former French protectorate out of an economic crisis that the World Bank described as among the worst the world has witnessed in over a century. Few steps have been taken by the country's rulers since then.

Aoun and the Prime Minister-designate have promised to work on getting Lebanon out of its economic crisis and to impose state authority over parts of the country long controlled by Hezbollah. The Israel-Hezbollah war has weakened Hezbollah, an Iran-backed militant group that dominated Lebanese politics for years. Hezbollah favored other candidates for president and prime minister but eventually ended up voting for Aoun while abstaining from naming Salam for the premier post. "President Macron promised to keep support for the new government," Mikati said after meeting the French leader at the airport. He added that Macron will meet early Friday with the U.S. and French officers on the ceasefire monitoring committee and will later meet Lebanese officials. Asked if France can guarantee that Israel will withdraw its troops from Lebanon by the end of the 60-day truce, Mikati said this was not discussed, but said that the French side is following up on the matter with

Macron said some progress has been made on implementing the ceasefire deal but that more is needed. "We need a total withdrawal of Israeli forces and that the Lebanese army gets a total monopoly on weapons," he said. "The ceasefire marked the end of an unbearable spiral of violence ... This is a precious diplomatic success that has saved lives and that we must consolidate," Macron said.Mr. Macron last visited Lebanon in August 2020, days after a massive port blast in Beirut killed over 200 people and wounded thousands.

The multiple layers of the Gaza ceasefire

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Just days before the swearing-in of United States President-elect Donald Trump, and a few hours before outgoing President Joe Biden gave his final address to the American people on January 15, 2025, Israel and Hamas announced that the long-elusive ceasefire agreement over Gaza had been struck. The state of Qatar, long stuck in between as a mediator, said the deal was to take effect from January 19, 2025, a day before Mr. Trump takes charge. An exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners is at the centre of this arrangement.

The deck and the cardsThe news of the agreement saw Palestinians in Gaza take to the streets in celebration, having faced death and destruction at the hands of the Israeli military whose response to the October 7, 2023 terror attack went on for over 15 months even as political deadlocks continued. In a statement, Hamas has highlighted that the movement "dealt with all responsibility and positivity, based on its responsibility towards our patient and steadfast people in the honorable Gaza strip, by stopping the Zionist aggression against them and putting an end to the massacres and war of genocide to which they are being

In Washington DC, Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden reportedly worked in unison to deliver the deal even as both tried to lap up the credit. For Mr. Trump, who previously demanded that such a deal be reached before his presidency, this was a marketable advertising of renewed American strength as promised in his election campaign. For Mr. Biden, it is an attempt to salvage legacy. The joker in this geopolitical deck is Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Amidst misplaced perceptions that Mr. Trump would allow Mr. Netanyahu a longer leash to continue his military operations in Gaza unabated, opinion prevailed that anyone but Mr. Biden would be good for both stemming the ongoing conflicts and reigning in Israel's military posturing. It is in all likeliness not a coincidence that the Israeli leadership agreed to the deal — which, in parallel with Hamas, it has scuttled many times — to send a message of partnership and resolve to Mr. Trump.

Why Mr. Netanyahu would go out of the way to court Mr. Trump, even after the Israeli leader was invited by the Republicans to address a joint session of Congress in July 2024, is a question that has a simple answer. Mr. Trump prioritises personality over policy. Agreeing to this deal with Hamas is offering Mr. Trump a victory at potentially big domestic costs for Mr. Netanyahu. For long, Mr. Netanyahu has maintained that only a complete victory over Hamas is acceptable. With this deal, he becomes an Israeli Prime Minister who has cut a political settlement with the arch foe, but without a complete elimination of Hamas.

On Hamas and IsraelThere is no doubt that Hamas and also Hezbollah in Lebanon have had their capacities diminished over the past year after leadership decapitation operations conducted by Israel.Simultaneously, outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has also said that assessments show that Hamas has recruited as many new militants as it has lost. The lack of a political track acting as insurance for the ceasefire remains a concern. Hamas is expected to continue to be in control of Gaza in the time to come as barely any movements have taken place to reorganise Palestinian politics in a way where the group can be brought under a wider and more mainstream Palestinian-led political ecosystem.

Hamas, by itself, will remain steadfast in its ideology against Israeli security and sovereignty, while Hamas and Israel continue to remain on the same page against a twostate solution, despite a global push for this being the only viable option available for lasting peace. The prevailing situation of this status quo, despite the ceasefire, can be leveraged by Mr. Netanyahu in case Hamas resumes attacks against Israeli territories and populations. In such a situation, Mr. Netanyahu will be able to approach Mr. Trump from a vantage point, having agreed to the Hamas deal. A return to retaliatory tactics at this juncture will in all likeliness come with the full support of Mr. Trump, manoeuvring the Israeli position back to one of strength — like one it enjoyed under Mr. Biden. Previously, Mr. Trump has publicly stated that there would be 'hell to pay' for Hamas if Israeli hostages, which includes American citizens, are not released. Gaza and its rebuilding



Beyond the political intricacies of this ceasefire arrangement, the most important deliverable would be that of critical aid to the people in Gaza as food and medical shortages surpassed criticality a long time ago. Beyond the aid front, the rebuilding of Gaza may yet be a premature discussion until alternative political mechanisms are envisioned within the Palestinian fold. This is where the Arab powers have an opportunity to exert influence, and seek a remoulding, a re-shaping, and a revitalisation of the Palestinian Authority to better equip Palestinian politics as a core stakeholder for a challenging future, where the much sought-after two-state solution remains a distant reality. Finally, the international community must also play its role to push for the sustainability of this deal. The future of West Asian prosperity, newer geo-economic architectures such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, a potential expansion of the Abraham Accords, and even the radicalism of a Saudi Arabia-Israel normalisation, ultimately hinges on this momentum. At the end of the day, the management of regional geopolitical fissures by regional powers will determine all outcomes.

Israel's Cabinet approves deal for ceasefire in Gaza; 737 hostages to be freed in first phase

Israel's Cabinet voted to approve a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal on Saturday (January 18, 2025), the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, ending days of uncertainty about whether the truce would go into effect this weekend. The ceasefire, set to begin Sunday, would halt fighting and bombardment in Gaza's deadliest-ever war.It would also enable the release of hostages held in the territory since Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails

The government has approved the hostage return plan", Mr. Netanyahu's office said early Saturday morning after the cabinet held its vote. Israel's justice ministry has said 737 prisoners and detainees will be freed as part of the first phase of the deal -- none before 4:00 pm local time (1400 GMT) on Sunday.

Israeli strikes have killed dozens since the ceasefire deal was announced, with the military saying Thursday it had hit about 50 targets across Gaza over the previous 24 hours. The truce is to take effect on the eve of the inauguration of Donald Trump, who claimed credit for working with outgoing US President Joe Biden's team to seal the deal.It was earlier approved by Israel's security cabinet, with Netanyahu's office saying it "supports achieving the objectives of the war". Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said the Palestinian Authority has completed preparations "to assume full responsibility in Gaza" after the war. Even before the truce begins, displaced Gazans were preparing to return home."I will go to kiss my land," said Nasr al-Gharabli, who fled his home in Gaza City for a camp further south. "If I die on my land, it would be better than being here as a displaced person."In Israel, there was joy but also anguish over the remaining hostages taken in the Hamas attack. Kfir Bibas, whose second birthday falls on Saturday, is the youngest hostage.

Ranga Reddy INDIAN CHRONICLE FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2025

RBI bulletin article: Economic growth poised to rebound but food inflation needs careful vigil



The country's economic growth is expected to rebound driven by higher domestic demand and revival in public capital expenditure on infrastructure, a Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) article said. However, elevated food inflation requires close monitoring, the 'State of the Economy' article published in the RBI's January bulletin said. "India's economic growth is poised to rebound as domestic demand regains strength. Rural demand continues to gain momentum, reflecting a resilience in consumption, supported by brighter agricultural prospects. A revival in public capex on infrastructure is likely to stimulate growth in key sectors,"

the article said. It said that the rising input cost pressures in the manufacturing sector, coupled with weather-related exigencies and global headwinds could, however, pose risks to this outlook, it said.

In India, it said, there is a "conducive quickening" of high frequency indicators of economic activity in the second half of 2024-25, bearing out the implicit pick up in real GDP growth for this period in the annual first advance estimates of the National Statistics Office (NSO).

As per the first advance estimate of NSO, the country's real gross domestic product (GDP) is seen growing at a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in the current financial year. The article has been prepared by the RBI's former Deputy Governor Michael Patra and other central bank officials. The RBI said the views published in the article are of the authors and not of the institution. As per the nowcast estimate, the GDP growth in Q3 FY2025 is seen at 6.2 per cent, the article said. High frequency indicators suggest that aggregate demand firmed up in Q3 FY2025. E-way bills rose on a y-o-y basis in volume terms in December, and toll collections recorded strong growth both in volume and value terms, it said.

Govt clears Rs 11,440-cr plan for reviving Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd

The decision was taken in the Thursday meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Rs 11,440 crore revival package includes fresh equity infusion of `10,300 crore and conversion of `1,140 crore working capital loan as 7 per cent non-cumulative preference share capital redeemable after 10 years to keep RINL as a going concern, the statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has a "special place in the hearts and minds of the people of Andhra Pradesh". "During yesterday's Cabinet meeting, it was decided to provide equity support of over `10,000 crore for the plant. This has been done understanding the importance of the steel sector in building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," Modi said in a post on social media platform X.With this revival, Andhra Pradesh will get a major steel plant revived, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw



said, adding that two blast furnaces in the plant will start functioning in the coming days and all three blast furnaces are expected to become functional by August. The equity infusion of `10,300 crore into RINL will help it overcome the operational problems related to raising working capital.

'Slowing nominal growth major headwind; front-loading capex, easing monetary conditions critical for reviving economy'



much more focus and energy than what it does in most other economies. This unusual focus on the budget is understandable, since it was through the budgets in the nineties that major industrial and financial reforms would get announced, and rather than being just an accounting process, the annual announcement is now almost synonymous with a "state of the economy" address that the government presents, as we approach the new fiscal year.

The expectations are no different this time. The budget for financial year 2025-2026 is being awaited, as the economy appears to have hit a rut, while global headwinds are rising. To be sure, government finances have been well managed, and are expected to reach a stable level post pandemic. Indeed, the 9.2% fiscal deficit recorded during the pandemic year is fading from memory, and the government which had laid down an ambitious target to achieve the glide path of fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by FY26 is homing in on the target. This fiscal marksmanship has come while improving the quality of spending and strengthening the social security net despite multiple shocks. On the face of it, the ability to consolidate deficits while keeping growth and welfare considerations in mind is commendable and needs to be appreciated and acknowledged.

Still, there are risks ahead. As mentioned above, the cyclical state of the economy appears weak, and the government needs to manage the need for fiscal consolidation, while ensuring steady growth. One reason for the economic slowdown has been the lower pace of capital spending than what was budgeted, and while this slower pace puts the fiscal finances in good order, it does produce a negative impact on growth. Restoring the pace of execution and deployment of capital expenditure will be critical for reviving growth. Indeed, the government can take a leaf out of its second term, where a significant highlight of its fiscal management was the surge in capital expenditure, which increased to 3.2% of GDP in FY24. We believe the government would be keen to restore this spending mix, and re-

start the spending momentum, as it pushes for greater infrastructure investments. As such, the government could consider front-loading capex to the first half of FY26 to ensure better planning, and with the revenue expenditure to capital expenditure ratio expected to go up from 3.7x to 4.0x in FY25 but fall to 3.25x in FY26, indicating a renewed focus on capex.

A major headwind comes in the form of slowing nominal growth. Indeed, just prior to the pandemic, the slowdown was causing fiscal headaches, and the return of sub-10% nominal GDP growth prints in consecutive years can do the same. In Q3 (July-September) 2024, nominal GDP growth slowed to a fifteen-quarter low of 8% annual growth, plications for wage growth, tax buoyancy and debt consolidation going forward. At 9.7%, the first advance estimate for FY25 is below the 10.5% nominal GDP growth that was factored into the July'24 budget. We believe to revive nominal growth along with real GDP growth, one needs to see both public capex spending and monetary conditions ease in coming quarters, which could improve the outlook for growth in FY2026. We continue to project GDP growth to be around 6.5% YoY in FY2025, with risks skewed to the downside, but expect a recovery to 7.0% YoY, contingent on conditions turning more supportive of both fiscal and monetary policy. If monetary policy remains entangled in dealing with a policy trilemma, then the heavy lifting of supporting growth will need to be done by fiscal policy. Beyond the cyclical challenges, the bigger question remains - where do we go on fiscal management post the 4.5% of GDP deficit target?

Prior to the pandemic, the government had discussed a potential shift in the fiscal objectives away from deficits to debt, which may be restored, and can have several implications. While there will be an implied need for further fiscal consolidation, the expenditure mix and the pace of economic growth would also be key for this new approach to be successful. We believe the government is considering adopting a debt-driven fiscal framework, rather than one anchored on fiscal deficits, to approach the next stage of its mediumterm fiscal framework.

As such, the primary deficit could become the de-facto operational parameter rather than the fiscal deficit as the government seeks to move away from debt financed consumption. However, it would also mean that the need to balance monetary conditions, which anchor borrowing costs, nominal growth which drives revenues and the denominator of debt, and fiscal prudence which reduces primary deficits, would be critical for the success of the new framework, which in the medium term can create fiscal space for the next crisis, as and when

People Tech Enterprises to invest Rs 1,800 crore for 1,200 acre EV park in Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati: People Tech Enterprises Pvt Ltd inked an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh government on Friday to set up a 1,200-acre electric vehicle (EV) park in Kurnool district, with an investment of Rs 1,800 crore. Dubbed as Orvakal Mobility Valley, the park aims to foster a complete EV ecosystem, providing state-of-the-art infrastructure for EV manufacturing and allied industries. "Once fully operational, the park is expected to attract an investment of \$1.5 billion (Rs 13,000 crore) and generate employment opportunities for 25,000 people. As the anchor unit of the park, People Tech Enterprises will set up an electric two-wheeler manufacturing unit with an investment of Rs 300 crore," said a press release. The park aims to catalyse EV industry growth by offering essential infrastructure such as R&D

centres, testing tracks, plug and play industrial spaces and readymade plots for industries. The deal was struck in the presence of IT Minister Nara Lokesh and Industries Minister TG Bharath.

"The Orvakal Mobility Valley is a significant step towards creating a thriving ecosystem for electric vehicles and demonstrates our government's ability to enable rapid industrial growth through cutting-edge policies and seamless support," said Lokesh.People Tech Group representative Bhaskar Reddy noted that the ground breaking ceremony for both the park and the two-wheeler manufacturing unit is planned for the end of March 2025. "The first electric two-wheeler from our factory is expected to roll out by December 2026.

Coldplay's Chris Martin and girlfriend Dakota Johnson quell breakup rumours with Mumbai temple visit



As part of their Music of the Spheres World Tour, Coldplay is set to perform in Mumbai at the DY Patil Sports Stadium on Saturday, with two more shows lined up on January 19 and 21. Coldplay's frontman, Chris Martin, was recently spotted visiting the Shri Babulnath Temple, hand in hand with his girlfriend, actress Dakota Johnson, quashing all breakup rumours around the mysterious couple. A widely circulated video shows the duo dressed in traditional Indian attire, with Martin in a powder blue kurta set and Johnson in a salwar suit, with a dupatta wrapped around her head. She was also seen whispering in the ear of a Lord Nandi idol, a ritual associated with making wishes.

Martin and Johnson began dating in 2017 after the singer legally separated from ex-wife Gwyneth Paltrow, with whom he shares two children, Apple and Moses. Though they prefer to keep their relationship low-key, the couple has been spotted together on multiple occasions—from cosy restaurant dates in Los Angeles and Malibu to attending concerts and high-profile events. From Buenos Aires to London, Johnson has been captured by fans cheering on the band as they performed. According to People magazine,

the duo made their first public appearance at Stella McCartney's Autumn 2018 Collection. After almost a year of speculation, Johnson acknowledged her relationship with Martin in a 2018 interview with Tatler.

Their romance extended into professional collaborations as well. Johnson directed the music video for Coldplay's Cry Cry Cry in February 2020. In October 2021, Martin made a heart-felt onstage gesture, dedicating the song Universe to Johnson during a Coldplay concert in London. "This is about my universe, and she's here," he told the audience, as Johnson was spotted dancing in the front row. In March 2024, a source told People that the couple had taken the next step in their relationship. "They got engaged years ago but were in no rush to get married," the source revealed. Adding fuel to speculation, Johnson has been spotted multiple times wearing a striking emerald ring. Despite breakup rumours in August 2024, Martin and Johnson's recent public appearance in Mumbai suggests their relationship remains strong. Fans will undoubtedly be keeping an eye on the couple as Coldplay continues their

Step inside actor Divya Dutta's Mumbai home: 'Shabana Azmi told me 'ghar ko dheere dheere sajana"



Explore Divya Dutta's luxurious Mumbai home with its spiritual vibes, artistic corners, and a unique blend of modern and personal aesthetics. Explore Divya Dutta's luxurious Mumbai home with its spiritual vibes, artistic corners, and a unique blend of modern and personal aesthetics. Actor Divya Dutta's home in Mumbai not only reflects luxury but also the personalities of its dwellers.

Divya recently gave Pinkvilla an exclusive tour of her elegant residence, a space she has meticulously curated to reflect her personality and career. Sharing the journey of her home's evolution, Divya revealed anecdotes, inspirations, and the emotions that make her house a haven. The tour begins at the entrance, where a long-standing idol of Lord Ganesha sets a serene tone; flanking it are two Ganesha-inspired chairs. Speaking about this setup, Divya said, "This idol has been with me for years. It's the first thing I see every time I enter the house—it gives me a sense of calm and grounding."

Reflecting on how she approached decorating her home, Divya credited her co-star Shabana Azmi for her advice. She recalled, "I was shooting in Jaipur jab ghar ki taiyaari ho rahi thi. Tab Shabana (Azmi) ji told me sab cheezein sath mein na le aana ghar ki, toh fir pata hi nahi chalega kaha kya rakhna hai. Dheere dheere ghar ko

sajana. (I was shooting in Jaipur when my house was being set up. Shabana ji told me, 'Don't bring everything into your home at once. Take your time to feel the space and decide where each thing belongs.)"The dining-cum-living hall houses what Divya fondly calls her "Glory Corner," a collection of awards that celebrate her successful career.

Divya emphasised the significance of awards in an actor's life: "Hum log kehte hain ki awards matter karte hai va nahi (We often debate whether awards matter or not), but for me, they absolutely do. They're like a tonic—they remind us that our work is appreciated and acknowledged. Holding a trophy feels like holding a memory." She joked about expanding the corner, saying, "Ghar me yeh joke hota hai ki isko hum aur badhaenge aage (There's a running joke in my house that we'll expand this corner further)."The drawing room showcases Divya's love for woodwork and vibrant accents. Speaking about her evolving style, she shared, "I used to think that everything should match perfectly, but now I believe in blending different elements. Contrasting pieces complement each other beautifully." A highlight of this room is a portrait gifted by her Dhakaad team, which she proudly displays. "It's a reminder of the wonderful time I had shooting that film and the friendships I made,"

Divya's fondness for nature is evident throughout her home, with plants and flowers in almost every corner. Her coffee nook exudes a cosy charm, designed to give her a French café vibe. "I wanted a space where I could sit and feel like I'm in a café—peaceful and inspiring," she said. Having a balcony in a city like Mumbai is a rare privilege, and Divya treasures hers. "To have a balcony in your home in Bombay is very lucky. It's where I read, relax, and sometimes entertain my friends," she said. Divya's library is another personal sanctuary, decorated with earthy tones and housing stacks of books alongside film posters. "This space combines my two great loves: reading and cinema. It's where I lose myself in stories," she explained.

Proenza Schouler designers depart in further fashion world tumult

Proenza Schouler, a New York brand that was once considered the future of fashion in the city, announced that its designers, Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez, would be stepping down from the company, which they founded back in 2002. They will remain on the board and will continue to be minority shareholders. A search is underway for their replacements. No reason was given for the decision, other than that the time simply felt "right," and no statement was made about what the designers would do next. McCollough and Hernandez reportedly began thinking about exploring other opportunities after the company's 20th anniversary in 2022, and their new CEO, Shira Suveyke Snyder, was brought in last October in part to manage the transition. Still, a designer leaving a house he or she founded when it is relatively stable and they are relatively young (Hernandez and McCollough are 46) is almost unheard-of, unless there has been a falling out with a backer or the designer is planning to take another job. It is possible McCollough and Hernandez are setting a new precedent when it comes to career paths. But they are also widely rumored to be under consideration to be the new designers of Loewe, the Spanish brand owned by LVMH, replacing Jonathan Anderson, who has been said for months to be heading to Dior. (A spokesperson declined to comment on the move.) It should be noted that Anderson has not officially left Loewe, nor has Maria Grazia Chiuri, the creative director of Dior womenswear whom he would theoretically replace, left Dior. Also, Kim Jones, the creative director of Dior menswear, recently re-signed his contract with the

LVMH, which once explored acquiring Proenza Schouler, has neither confirmed nor denied the various anonymous reports suggesting all the above, even as the rumors have spread across social media. Neither Loewe nor Proenza Schouler nor JW Anderson, Anderson's namesake brand, are on the coming fashion show schedules in New York, Paris or London. According to headhunters, major luxury groups are now asking that designers who take on positions at fashion houses in their group stop doing double duty with their own labels. For example, Veronica Leoni, the new designer at Calvin Klein, put her Quira collection on hold when she took the bigger job. All of which has further fueled the speculation about who is going where. The only thing that is certain is that despite Proenza Schouler's being synonymous with McCollough and Hernandez, the designers intend for it to go on without them. It is not being closed or suspended, and the opening of a second store in New York in February is going ahead. (The February woman's collection will be released digitally; the fate of a planned men's collection is to be determined.) What Proenza Schouler, which was named after McCollough and Hernandez's mothers, will look like without its founders is less clear. Other than being known for a coolly urban art gallerist vibe and a hit bag (the PS1), and despite McCollough and Hernandez's being highly mediagenic, winning five Council of Fashion Designers of America awards and being championed by Anna Wintour, Proenza Schouler never really fulfilled the promise of becoming the Next Great American Brand. Within the industry, the designers are still known as "the Proenza boys," which reflects the sense that they have remained designers on the verge.

Kangana Ranaut's confused Indira Gandhi biopic is weak in craft

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

The much-delayed, riding-on-controversies 'Emergency', written and directed by Kangana Ranaut, is finally out. The long disclaimer states that the biographical feature 'draws information from the life and real life events of one of the most respected politicians and former prime ministers, Smt Indira Gandhi'. And then it follows up the standard caveat of 'creative liberties' having been taken in the dramatisation, with a most un-standard sentence: 'the film-makers fully acknowledge and respect other perspectives and viewpoints'. This unexpected dissonant note pretty much sets the tone of this film in which Ranaut has played the role of Indira Gandhi, which swings from showing her as a young woman growing into an autocratic leader, to a weak, vacillating mother under the influence of Sanjay, her 'bigda hua beta', and back again.

The trouble is not so much Ranaut's playing of Indira, though her accentuated voice and constant pursing of the lips comes off more a tic than a characteristic in a series of tight close-ups, but the confusion that runs through most of the film. Was Indira a powerful, autocratic leader who bested the West, in the shape of the US President Richard Nixon? Was she a decisive strategist who was instrumental in the birth of Bangladesh, with the help of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw (Milind Soman)? Or was she a paranoid creature who turned away from her close confidant, Delhi's cultural czarina Pupul Jayakar (Mahima Chaudhary), and saw scary apparitions in the mirror, withdrawing unto the sage ministrations of J Krishnamurthy?It's not as if Indira Gandhi wasn't complex enough to have all of these contradictory impulses within her, but the portrayal is wanting, with a weak craft underlining the choppy scenes, fashioned more as explainers according Ranaut, whose writing is based on (this is stated in the overlong, overstated disclaimer), among other sources, veteran journalist Coomi Kapoor's terrific treatise on the Emergency. The slanted version of events which unspool in the film come as no surprise. Nehru is shown as a sick, insecure man who had problems with his decisive daughter, her aunt Vijaylakshmi is an early villain who never let her mother Kamala breathe freely; later, except for her personal secretary, the forever loyal RK Dhawan who was rightfully dubbed the most important man in the PMO, she laments that everyone has deserted her, including her beloved countrymen, for whom she sacrificed ev-

It was her Cabinet minister DK Barooh who famously intoned 'India is Indira, Indira is India'. But Ranaut's Indira with tacky compt says it not just once but twice, clearly in an attempt to underline her character's hubris. It is the callow Sanjay Gandhi (Vishak Nair) who is shown as having struck an understanding with Sikh extremist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, not Indira. Atal Bihari Vajpayee (Shreyas Talpade), who came into his own later, has prominence; an impressed Indira calls him a



'future PM' after one meeting. The late Satish Kaushik gets smirking play as Jagjivan Ram, who went over to the other side. Jayaprakash Narayan's (Anupam Kher) 'sampoorn andolan' is given short shrift, as is George Fernandes's 'rail roko abhiyaan'. Rajiv, Sonia, Menaka, the grandchildren, show up as ciphers.

The most puzzling thing about this enterprise is why it is called Emergency. Given the title, it should have been an in-depth before-and-after depiction of one of the most tumultuous periods in recent Indian history; it feels like just another rushed chapter here as are the rest of the momentous events, including Mrs Gandhi's trial and arrest, and resurrection. And soon after, assassination. One of the most significant events of Indira's political career, showing Indira's arrival, atop an elephant, in Belcchi, a tiny outpost which brought her back in power, leaves little impact: if there was something even her bitterest rivals acknowledged, it was that she was an astute, fearless politician, who kept a hold on the public imagination even in her darkest hours. In this revisionist era, we have been flooded with films which claim to set the record straight. How about making them well? Randeep Hooda's 'Veer Savarkar' was much better on practically all these metrics, including a superb lead performance. For the most part, 'Emergency' is more a scattershot caricature of time and place and people, riddled with tacky computer graphics: in a preposterous sequence, Manekshaw, Indira, the members of the Parliament, including Vajpayee, join in a song. Not even Ranaut's undoubted competence as an actor, armed with that distinctive prosthetic nose, white streak of hair and tasteful handloom saris which add to the remarkable resemblance to her sub-

Rakesh Roshan had mortgaged his house and cars for Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai; Hrithik Roshan recalls heated argument with dad: 'He gave it back to me'

A lot was on the line with Hrithik Roshan's debut film, Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai. There was immense buzz surrounding the film, directed by his filmmaker father Rakesh Roshan and featuring fellow debutante Ameesha Patel. He had a huge family legacy to live up to, and tremendous personal battles to overcome. The pressure, as can be expected, caused friction between him and his father. They reflected on the film's tense production in the newly released Netflix documentary series The Roshans, and Hrithik recalled the moment he realised everything that his father had done for him.

Hrithik suggested that he didn't have the smoothest relationship with his dad, who belongs to a generation of men that aren't taught to show affection and vulnerability. "My father was, is, and always will be someone who loves deeply. But his expression of love was the kind that was taught to him when he was growing up. I don't think that he was granted the kind of compassion from the world, so the only way he learnt was to be hard on himself. And that is how he expresses his love, and it's often misunderstood," he said.

He continued, looking back on an argument that led to a showdown between the two of them, "I always saw the glass half-full. I had not colour-corrected in two or three scenes, because I was handling that. And the overseas prints had already been sent. So, I came to my dad, really upset that, 'How could you let that go?' And I think that was the first time that my dad gave it back to me. He gave it back to me in my face. He turned to my mom, and he said, 'I am doing everything for him, and he's sitting here and he's complaining'. And that's the night I found out, my mom told me, that the house was mortgaged, the cars were mort-



gaged... I realised how much was at stake." Ameesha Patel and Hrithik Roshan in Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai Ameesha Patel and Hrithik Roshan in Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai. Hrithik's mother, Pinkie, said that she often had to play the mediator between father and son. She said, "There were days when I found him a bit sad sometimes. I would ask him, 'What happened? You don't look good'. Then he would come out of it eventually tell me that he wanted to do a scene a different way, but papa wanted it another way. I used to feel bad, as a mother. From his room, I would go to my room and talk to my husband, and I would ask what happened, and he'd say, 'Hrithik knows nothing! I'm the director!"Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai turned out to be a massive blockbuster, and turned Hrithik into an overnight sensation. His remains the last major Bollywood debut of a future superstar. Hrithik has sustained his stardom for over two decades, and will next be seen in the film

Dakota Johnson whispers prayers in Lord Nandi's ear as she visits Shiva temple with boyfriend Chris Martin in Mumbai.



Rock star Chris Martin, who is currently in India as part of Coldplay's Music of the Spheres World Tour, was recently spotted with his girlfriend, actor Dakota Johnson, in Mumbai. The couple visited the Shri Babulnath Temple on Friday, and were spotted walking hand in hand, quashing their breakup rumours. They have been together since

Ahead of Coldplay's first performance in Mumbai on Saturday, the couple visited the Shiva temple. A video of their visit has surfaced online, and it shows the couple dressed in Indian outfits. While Chris opted for a powder

blue kurta set, Dakota wore a cotton salwar suit for her visit. In the video, she could be seen whispering in the ears of a Lord Nandi idol. Chris and Dakota began their relationship after the singer separated from his wife, Gwyneth Paltrow, in 2016. He has two children, Apple and Moses, with the Iron Man actress. In early 2024, it was speculated that Chris and Dakota have broken up. However, with their current visit to India, the couple have put the rumours to rest.

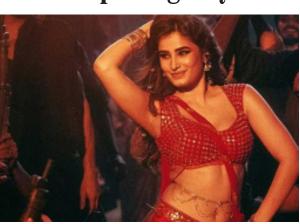
In 2022, in an interview with Vanity Fair, the Madame Web actress had shared that she loves to accompany her boyfriend when she is not working. She often tours with him for his scheduled performances across the world.

Coldplay is all set to perform in Mumbai at the DY Patil Sports Stadium on Saturday. Two more performances are scheduled in the same venue, on January 19 and January 21, respectively. This will be followed by two more performances in Ahmedabad on January 25 and 26, at the Sardar Patel Stadium. Previously, the band was scheduled to have three performances: two in Mumbai and one in Ahmedabad. However, due to heavy demand, the band added two more shows to their India tour.Following their India tour, the band will head to Hong Kong in April. They are also scheduled to perform in South Korea in the same month. Coldplay's India performance will be exclusively streamed live on Disney+ Hotstar. This will mark the band's second visit to India after their 2015 performance at the Global Citizen Festival in Mumbai.

Rasha Thadani's debut film lands with a thud, makes only Rs 1.5 crore on opening day

Azaad box office collection day 1: Director Abhishek Kapoor's new film, the period drama Azaad, opened to low numbers at the box office. The film was marketed as the acting debut of Aaman Devgan, the nephew of Ajay Devgn, and Rasha Thadani, the daughter of Raveena Tandon. Director Kapoor previously 'launched' newcomers such as Sushant Singh Rajput in the film Kai Po Che, and Sara Ali Khan in the film Kedarnath. While both those films emerged as hits, Azaad will have a difficult time recovering from its disappointing debut. According to industry tracker Sacnilk, Azaad made Rs 1.5 crore on day one. The movie reported poor occupancy rates throughout the day. Morning shows registered an occupancy rate of just 5%, while the night shows saw 26% occupancy. The film was marketed heavily, with both young actors being taken to numerous events across the country. Their illustrious family members also joined in. Rasha Thadani has been a paparazzi favourite since before her acting debut was even announced.

By comparison, Kai Po Che made Rs 4.5 crore on its opening day, Rs 18 crore in its first weekend, and around Rs 50 crore during its domestic run. All of this happened in 2013. Released five years later, Kedarnath made Rs 6.8 crore on opening day, Rs 27 crore in its first weekend, and Rs 66 crore in total, according to Bollywood Hungama. Kapoor's last film was the Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui, which was seen as a disappoint-



ment after making Rs 28 crore domestically after a Rs 3.5 crore opening. Azaad is the filmmaker's lowest-ever debut, and an inauspicious start for star-kids Rasha and Aaman. The movie opened alongside Kangana Ranaut's long-delayed Emergency, which performed only marginally better, with a Rs 2.5 crore debut. Azaad also has to contend with mediocre response. In her review, the Indian Express' Shubhra Gupta wrote, "Why are such films still being made in 2025? And is Abhishek Kapoor, who made the terrific 'Kai Po Che' and 'Rock On', really the director of this mothballed exercise?"

Punjab 95 teaser: Diljit Dosanjh plays courageous activist Jaswant Singh Khalra; film to finally release on this date

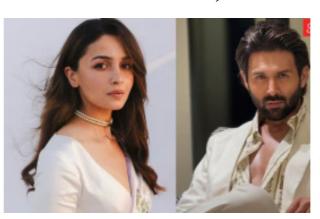
As promised, Diljit Dosanjh shared the teaser of the much-anticipated film Punjab 95 on Friday with a special message. The Punjabi actor-singer took to his X handle to share the teaser and mentioned, "Full Movie, No Cuts." His caption was accompanied with the hashtag Challenge The Darkness. The film, directed by Honey Trehan and produced by Ronnie Screwvala, is all set to theatres on February 7. The teaser begins with Arjun Rampal's character saying, "Look at the history of Punjab, sir. Be it the dispute over its rivers or the operation Bluestar, Indira Gandhi's assassination or the riots of 1984, from President's rule to the chief minister's assassination and now... why is Punjab suffering?"

The teaser then introduces Diljit Dosanjh, who plays Sikh rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra looking into the disappearance of Sukhdev Singh. Dosanjh is seen clicking pictures and looking for leads to unravel the missing case of Sukhdev, putting his own life in danger. The film is based on the life of Jaswant Singh Khalra, who exposed 25,000 unlawful killings, disappearances and secret cremations by Punjab Police. The film will reportedly showcase his fight for justice before his kidnapping, torture, and murder by the same police force. Six police officials were allegedly convicted of the crime. On January 15, Diljit Dosanjh took to his Instagram handle to share a series of BTS pictures of himself from Punjab 95, where he could be seen brutally injured. The movie previously faced sig-



nificant obstacles with the CBFC allegedly suggesting 120 cuts due to its sensitive subject. The movie has been on hold for a couple of years. In 2022, the film was screened for the family of Jaswant Singh Khalra, who were reportedly satisfied with the same.

Fan playfully grills Kartik Aaryan on his chat with Alia Bhatt at 100 years of Raj Kapoor event: 'Raha, Ranbir ke baarein mein...'



Actors Alia Bhatt and Kartik Aaryan recently crossed paths at the 100 years of Raj Kapoor event held in Mumbai. A video of the two went viral on social media. In the video, the two could be seen indulged in an intense conversation, followed by laughter. During the SCREEN Live event held on Thursday in Mumbai, a curious fan asked the Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 actor about his conversation with Alia, which took a humorous turn, leaving the audience in splits.

During the fan interaction session, a student asked Kartik, "Recently, a video of yours went viral with Alia Bhatt. In the video, you both can be seen talking something... may

I know what was it?" Kartik, who laughed at the fan first, replied, "Yeh saree wali madame bahaut acha sawaal puchi hai, Pehle se prepare hoke aayi thi... apko kya lagta hai kya baat ki hogi? (The lady in saree has come prepared... what do you think we spoke?)"The fan quickly replied, "How would I know? This is exactly why I am asking this to you," leaving Kartik stunned and audience in splits.

He then answered, "I was just talking to her normally..." The fan quipped, "Jaise ki?" Kartik, who couldn't stop laughing, said, "The lift wasn't working there... so I was telling her, 'You should at least have fixed the lift before doing the event."The unconvinced fan sarcastically replied, "Acha bahana tha, han theek hai (Nice excuse, okay fine)."Kartik Aaryan, who was surprised by her reaction, said, "I was genuinely asking her, 'Acha, kab tak will your new film release' and she was asking me about my film." This too didn't sound convincing to the fan, who said, "Thank you, sir."Looking at her disappointment in his answers, Kartik said, "Arey, kaunsa jawab tumhe acha lagega mai woh batata hu... Raha ke baarein mein puch raha tha, Ranbir ke baarein mein puch raha tha... (What will convince you? I will tell you the same... I was talking about Raha, Ranbir...) I don't like to disappoint you."

The fan replied, "It's okay, sir." Looking at her disappointment, Kartik said, "You have now forced me to overthink this for the next few weeks... kash kuch aur jawab deta."

Tamil Nadu Actor-politician Vijay to lead protest march against Parandur airport on Jan 20

Chennai: Tamil superstar and Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) Chief Vijay will lead a protest march on January 20 at Eganapuram village against the proposed greenfield airport, which is set to become Chennai's second airport. Vijay has sought permission to visit Eganapuram village in the Kanchipuram district, where the airport is planned. The protest aims to highlight the ongoing agitation by residents of about 20 villages who have opposed the project since 2022. Vijay sought permission to hold the meeting on January 19 or 20, and Kanchipuram Police allowed him to do so on January 20.TVK office-bearers have already begun preparations for the event by engaging with the protest committee's leaders. On the Pongal day, two TVK state office-bearers, Jagannathan and another member, visited Eganapuram and identified five acres of land for the gathering. On Friday, TVK General Secretary N Anand oversaw the levelling of a vacant ground near the Ambedkar statue in Eganapuram village, where Vijay is expected to address the people. Since the Union government announced Parandur as the site for the greenfield airport in August 2022, residents have staged vehement protests, citing concerns over ecological damage and the loss of agricultural land.



The project requires the acquisition of 5,746 acres across 20 villages, with plans to complete the airport by 2028. Residents, particularly from Eganapuram – one of the largest affected villages – argue that the project will destroy fertile agricultural land and eco-sensitive water bodies, threatening their livelihoods and local ecosystems. Demonstrations, including nighttime protests, recently marked their 900th day on January 10. Villagers have also boycotted grama sabha meetings, elections, and passed resolutions demanding that the project be scrapped.

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Why Gautam Gambhir and Ajit Agarkar need to be reasonable and not reactionary



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Long before he was the Indian coach, Gautam Gambhir, a known opponent of Indian cricket's intrinsic superstar culture, was asked to name his favourite footballer. Messi or Ronaldo? "Marcus Rashford," he said. Not many would have picked Manchester United's committed team man who warms the benches these days over the two GOAT contenders. It's like opting for Nitish Reddy when the choice is between Kohli or Rohit. But then that's Gambhir.

The Delhi opener is now in a position of authority. Though the start to his stint has been disastrous, India's head coach has the firm backing of the BCCI and he still thinks that the prima donnas need to be treated like the choir of the group. It is this thought that jumps off the pages of the newly released Team India policy document that BCCI has come up with after the chaotic tour to Australia. No travel by car when the rest of the team is on the bus, no avoiding domestic games, no personal advertisement shoots during tours, no leaving of nets too soon, no returning home if games end early, no extra baggage provision, no long stay for families and no personal chefs or security. Since juniors don't get these perks or have the temerity to demand them, it is clear that this latest BCCI diktat is put in place to clip the wings of stars and deny them preferential treatment.

It also comes across as an angry reaction that is illogical and unfeasible in parts. It's like the 'no play, no TV' grounding of a child after a poor report card – a punishment that is irrational, unimplementable and also unreasonable. Almost overnight, after a quick turn of events, the team's 'Special Ones' are now Commoners. The sudden downgrading of seniors in a team set-up isn't conducive to foster a healthy environment. It breeds insecurities and intrigue. It also puts a question mark on the authority of the captain and other leading voices. Unlike the selectors or the powerful board officials involved in the review, Gambhir will be on the ground as change sweeps in. He will have to implement the new and unpopular curbs. It's a tough job and for that he needs to learn the subtle art of manmanagement. Lessons from Ancelotti

Since the Team India head coach has interest in football, he needs to read up on European club managers who handle global superstars with bigger egos and bank balances than the cricketers. He can start with the best in business, the most successful Champions League manager Carlo Ancelotti. Called Don Carlo and El Maestro, he is both affable and authoritative. While managing the star-studded teams at Real Madrid, Juventus and Chelsea, he has harnessed the strengths of geniuses, mavericks, enfant terribles and even the imposters.

Carlo Ancelotti Real Madrid Real Madrid's head coach Carlo Ancelotti gives instructions from the side line during the Spain Super Cup final soccer match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at King Abdullah Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025. (AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

In his early days as coach at Italian club Parma, Ancelotti was stubborn. He wasn't willing to change his ways to accommodate stars. He once rejected Italian football's cult hero Roberto Baggio, the Divine Ponytail himself, since he didn't want to tinker with his 4-4-2 formation to accommodate a celebrated No. 10.But with time, like all great coaches, Ancelotti changed. There is this fascinating story involving Zinedine Zidane from his days at Juventus that shows how the Italian was ready to bend if it was worth the trouble. This certainly was. In an interview to The London Times, he spoke about Zidane's habit of arriving late to board the team bus which didn't go down well with him.

"I said to the driver, 'No more, let's leave,' but he was scared and wouldn't move, and then [Juventus defender]

Paolo Montero came down the bus to speak to me. I said to him, 'Let's get going, and then we'll talk.' But he said, 'You don't understand. Without Zizou, we're going nowhere'." The team and Ancelotti would wait. That day the coach learnt a very important life lesson that day – without stars, a team is going nowhere. Another Ancelotti trait that Gambhir can learn is malleability. He takes the shape of the mould that the team he joins has got cast in. There is no Ancelotti way, he doesn't have a signature style, he has not one but many blueprints. Ancelotti is an embroiderer who uses the stencils of his players to draw varied designs on the field. Working around limitations

Gambhir too needs to understand that what worked with him at KKR can't necessarily be implemented when he is with the Indian team. He would have his reasons to pick all-rounders but Test matches in Australia have been won with specialists in the past. Besides, unlike in IPL, national team squads don't have a global pool to pick players of your choice that fit into your favourite template – your own 4-4-2.

Most teams have limitations and coaches have to live with them and work around them. Those who excel are the ones who find solutions and those aren't about sacking the seniors and hoping that the juniors who replace them are good enough. Gambhir the captain and coach is known to back talented youngsters but he also needs to get the best out of seniors and prolong their peaks. A vocal nationalist Gambhir wears the tri-colour on his sleeve. During the Australian tour, he inspired the 'find of the tour' Nitish Reddy with a talk that was about "taking a bullet for your country" The coach needs to know that it might not work with everyone. The cricket landscape has the likes of the 1950s Aussie cricketer and World War fighter pilot Keith Miller. Known for his irreverence and not one to make sport a matter of life and death, Miller was once asked about pressure in cricket. "Pressure is a Messerschmitt up your arse, playing cricket is not". This Indian team needs astute communicators and quality support staff. Virat Kohli has a problem in leaving the ball outside the off-stump and him travelling with the team isn't going to solve that problem. Rohit Sharma doesn't look sharp on the field but will him playing J&K in a Ranji game, before the Champions Trophy next month, change that? Maybe, but most likely not. He would have needed a few Ranji outings before the Test season, not before the

Gambhir has to only delve into his own past to see the answers staring at him. He personally saw what Greg Chappell's autocracy did to the team he was part of. He was the fall guy then, dropped from the Test team in Pakistan to accommodate Ganguly. And later lost his ODI spot. He saw how Gary Kirsten's relaxed, even-handed approach fetched a World Cup trophy, where he starred. He was part of the team when Duncan Fletcher was the coach and who by then was on autopilot in his coaching stint; Gambhir nearly became the Test captain but the board stuck with Dhoni. Autocracy and auto-piloting doesn't work – this much he must know for sure. A middle path needs to be found, not easy for a proudly stubborn man perhaps but if he sees his own mantra of putting team over individuals, which in this case is himself, he might perhaps see the wisdom in the middle path

Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir (left) and Chairman of senior selection committee Ajit Agarkar after the press conference in Mumbai. (Express Photo by Devendra Pandey) Team India head coach Gautam Gambhir (left) and Chairman of senior selection committee Ajit Agarkar after the press conference in Mumbai. The chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar, like Gambhir, too is a stickler for discipline. When leading Mumbai he would speak his mind in case the juniors in the team lacked focus. On the Mumbai cricket circuit, they still call him 'Tiger'. Early in his stint as selector, he knocked Shreyas Iver and Ishan Kishan off the list of contracted cricketers as they missed Ranji games. Iyer's injury didn't sway him from taking this reme step.In Gambhir and Agarkar, Indian the youngest pair of decision-makers ever. They have a temper but also the team's best interests at heart. In days to come, Gambhir and Agarkar will have to take tough calls. This policy document that reads like a primary school handbook for parents isn't what Indian cricket needs. They need not be impulsive in managing the team's transition. They also need to be open-minded and patient. Easy Tigers.

Virat Kohli needs to play a lot of red-ball cricket: Sanjay Manjrekar Trophy game against Saurashtra in Rajkot but doubts re-



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

India Australia Virat Kohli Irfan PathanIndia's Virat Kohli bats during play on the first day of the fifth cricket test between India and Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground, in Sydney, Australia, Former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar says Virat Kohli needs to play a lot of red-ball cricket before the Test series in England and insists that he should seek inspiration from Cheteshwar Pujara and play county cricket. Kohli managed only 190 runs in 9 innings in Australia. Barring one century at the Perth, his batting has been underwhelming. "Kohli needs to play a lot of red-ball cricket," Manjrekar said in the latest episode of Star Sports' Deep Point podcast."The first Test in England is in June, while the County Championship begins in April. "He could join a county team, as Pujara did, and gain valuable match practice. Virat Kohli ended the Australia series with a lowly 190 runs at a 23.75 average. (AP) Virat Kohli ended the Australia series with a lowly 190 runs at a 23.75 average. (AP)"India can then evaluate his performances in the initial Test

"If there are positive signs, he can continue. But the last thing you want is Kohli going there and struggling, as we've seen before. "That wouldn't be good for Indian cricket. Playing county cricket could be a very sensible move for him," he added. Meanwhile, Virat Kohli has been named in Delhi's 22-member provisional squad for their next Ranji

Trophy game against Saurashtra in Rajkot but doubts remain about his participation after it came to light that he is nursing a niggle. India vs Australia Virat Kohli ABD India's Virat Kohli bats during play on the first day of the fifth cricket test between India and Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground, in Sydney, Australia, Friday, Jan. 3, 2025. (AP Photo/Mark Baker)Kohli had last played a red-ball game for Delhi back in 2012 against Uttar Pradesh in Ghaziabad. The BCCI has made it mandatory for all centrally-contracted cricketers to play domestic cricket unless there is some compelling reason to skip the assignment. The Board has warned that non-compliance would invite sanctions, including deductions from central contract retainer and ban on playing in the Indian Premier League.

Satwik-Chirag storm into semifinals of India Open

New Delhi: Doubles badminton stars Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty lifted the spirits of the Indian camp with a dominant performance as they stormed into the semifinals of the India Open Super 750 badminton tournament on Friday.Satwik and Chirag, the 2022 champions, pulverised the Korean pair of Jin Yong and Kang Min Hyuk with a barrage of attacking shots, winning 21-10, 21-17 in just 41 minutes. The victory marked their third consecutive semifinal appearance on the tour, following finishes in the last four stage at the China Masters and Malaysia Super 1000 last year. The seventh seeded Indians will face Malaysian third seeds Sze Fei Goh and Nur Izzuddin in the semifinals. "Right from the word go, we were all guns blazing. I think that's what we wanted to do because once they were able to defend, if we are a bit slow, then they are able to capitalize on the opponent being a bit slow and try to maneuver the shuttle around," Chirag said. "We were pretty comfortable even though it was close. It was our mistakes we did in the last three points, so there was no tension. We are under control, we are telling like nothing to worry, just one point at a time. So we kept believing that and we are very positive from the start as well," Satwik added.

Sindhu left disappointed by quarterfinal defeat against Tunjung, but shows promise on return to action





GNS News Agency, Jan 23

As PV Sindhu closed the gap down from 15-17 to 17-17 in the quarterfinals against Gregoria Mariska Tunjung at the India Open Super 750, the atmosphere was electric at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. The fairly strong crowd on Friday was living every point at the moment. One of them was 12-year-old girl, who had brought a hand-made poster with Sindhu's photos and one of her own that said 'I am the next Sindhu, coming soon.'A huge fan of Sindhu's, having taken a shine to badminton, she was jumping up and down from her front row seat as Sindhu nailed two winners to catch up with the Indonesian youngster. There was a real sense of hope in the arena that the Indian star was turning the match around, after starting the night with a 9-21 scoreline in the opening game. But then came a turning point. A 24shot rally at 17-17. Sindhu started the point well, taking the shuttle early and keeping the pressure on Tunjung but the Indonesian started taking control when she drew the Indian forward to the net. Sindhu did well to stay in the point with a couple of desperate lunges but Tunjung managed to finally find the winner down the line. As Sindhu was bent double, that fan slumped back into her chair. The match still went on for a few points, but the kid didn't stand back up... she knew, as did Sindhu. Tunjung went on to win a sensational contest 21-9, 19-21, 21-17 in 62 minutes."I think it was 17-all in the third set where maybe some of my strokes were just too parallel and into her hand," Sindhu said when asked what was the turning point. "If that 1-2% I had played a bit more back, maybe that would have been the difference. It is sad for sure, when you play a long match and lose in the third set after fighting so hard. But that's sport. And either of us would have been disappointed with losing that point. I'll just have to be more consistent. Sometimes these things happen. Over there, I should have made her move a bit more. The rallies were long, and we had to fight for each point."Sindhu poses with a hand-made poster brought to the stadium by a 12-year-old girl that had Sindhu's photos and one of her own that said 'I am the next Sindhu, coming soon.' (Express Photo) Sindhu poses with a handmade poster brought to the stadium by a 12-year-old girl that had Sindhu's photos and one of her own that said 'I am the next Sindhu, coming soon.'It wasn't a cliche from Sindhu. When she lost the opening game 9-21, it was eerily similar to the Spain Masters 2023 final when Tunjung won 21-8, 21-8. Tunjung was slicing and dropping the shuttle like it's hot, and Sindhu didn't have answers. "But if you saw the 2nd and 3rd games, I wasn't leaving the drops or half smashes or her slices. We were anyway prepared for it, but if the first game wasn't comfortable for me, there were easy mistakes. It took me some time actually to get agile on the court. The second game, came back. And at 17 all in the final set, it could have been anyone's game," she reiterated. Disappointing as the end result was, Sindhu showed promise. For one, she looked sharp in her attacks for the majority of her three matches, despite training for just over a week be-fore the tournament. "Quarterfinals is not a bad result, but for me to improve these are the matches I need to learn from," Sindhu said. As for the 12-year-old, the disappointment of seeing Sindhu lose, turned into happy tears, as she got her poster autographed right next to her own

Scenes from Khel Ratna and Arjuna Awards ceremony: Moist eyes, proud hearts, and validation for sacrifices



GNS News Agency, Jan 23

Thulasimathi Murugesan's parents wanted to raise their hands over their heads to clap when she received the Arjuna award from the President of India at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Friday. But father Murugesan and mother Viji forgot the brief and shed tears of joy. Watching their daughter, a Paralympics silver medalist shuttler, donning the special maroon blazer when walking down the hallway of the Ganatantra Mandap was a moving experience for the proud parents. For being a taskmaster, Murugesan, a daily wage labourer-turned coach, is nicknamed the 'Dangal father' by Thulasimathi and her younger sister Kiruttigha. For the family of four that once lived in a straw hut that caught fire every summer, an invitation to the president's official residence will remain a cherished memory.

On a day India's sporting achievers were honoured – a record 17 para-athletes with the Arjuna award – there were happy scenes of selfies with the bronze statuettes, gleaming athletes in the ceremonial dress, parents with moist eyes and proud hearts. Like the Murugesans from Kanchipuram, entire families were celebrating. "I cried when Thulasimathi received the Arjuna award from the president. I couldn't hold back my tears," Murugesan said, clutching onto the citation certificate. The flight to Delhi was the first time his wife Viji travelled by air.

"Since childhood I have seen many legendary athletes getting this award. This is a special moment. I thank my dad who is also my coach. My sister and I call him 'Dangal father'. Whether we won or lost, he would wake up at 5 am and take us to the stadium," Thulasimathi said. She and her sister Kiruttigha first played badminton using racquets that came free with the nutritional drink Boost. They later switched to Complan. Their father saved his daily wage for the diet and education of his two daughters. He got criticised by relatives because they felt he was foolish not to buy gold for their marriages. "Our father was determined that we should be able to choose our own path. Today there are people coming home to honour him," Kiruttigha, a former national school games squash champion, said. Paris Paralympics javelin gold medalist Navdeep Singh was overjoyed about fulfilling his late father Dalbir Singh's dream. The athlete from Buana Lakhu village in Panipat, lost his father seven months ago. Dalbir had taken ill just days before Navdeep won bronze at the World Para Athletics Championships in May last year. He didn't live long enough to see his son win gold in Paris four months later.

Navdeep's older brother Mandeep and mother Mukesh Rani travelled to the capital for the special day. "Our father took a loan of Rs 1 lakh using a Bima policy to buy Navdeep his first javelin," Mandeep, Navdeep's older brother, said. Mandeep, a boxer, dropped out because the underprivileged family didn't have enough money to fund two athletes. "Rashtrapati Bhavan aam admi ke liye ek sapna hai... (For the common man it is a dream to be at the Rashtrapati Bhavan). Phones were allowed but I have captured the moment in my mind and it will stay forever," Mandeep said. Preethi Pal. the double bronze winner at the Paralympics — 100 metres and 200 metres — was accompanied by her grandfather Rishi Pal. A PWD road work supervisor from Hashampur in Muzaffarnagar, Rishi's only previous memory of Delhi is a visit to see the outer walls of the Red Fort. "Pothi ne poore parivaar aur desh na naam roshan kar diya. (My granddaughter has made the family and nation proud)," Rishi said. Because of the no-phone policy, he did not follow up on the promised phone call to colleagues and neighbours wanting to watch the awards ceremony on TV. "When I go back I will enthrall them with

stories about our trip to Delhi," he said.Standing a few feet away from the grandfather and granddaughter is Vantika Agarwal, a chess Olympiad gold medal winner, along with her father Ashish and mother Sangeeta. Ashish had proposed to Sangeeta on the very day both of them cleared the CA exam. Sangeeta put a lucrative and rewarding career on the backburner to travel with Vantika to chess tournaments

"I quit to support her. For over a decade I have travelled to each and every tournament," Sangeeta said. Sangeeta carries a 'travelling kitchen' to be able to cook for Vantika, a vegetarian with a craving for roti-sabzi. "I have started taking bhindee (ladies finger) because she loves it," Sangeeta said. Vantika wouldn't have made it this far without the support of her travel-companion mother. "Today is an amazing day and when the government is recognizing me it is a proud moment, My mother sacrificed her career for me. Her moral support is incredible. When she is not there I feel lonely. After a win or a loss, I discuss the game with her... she understands my emotions," Vantika said.

A coach and trainee too basked in glory. Paris Olympics bronze-winning rifle shooter Swapnil Kusale was bestowed with the Arjuna award and his coach Deepali Deshpande was conferred the Dronacharya award. "It is a special day for me because my coach was also recognised," Swapnil said. The athlete couple — former kabaddi captain Deepak Hooda and boxer Saweety Boora — now have two Arjuna awards at home. Deepak who won in 2020 was at the president's official residence the second time to see his wife Saweety be conferred with the award. They first met as chief guests at the Haryana marathon a decade ago and got married in 2022. Deepak was emotional. "I felt more pride when my wife Saweety won the award today than when I won earlier."

Kho Kho: India men, women cruise into World Cup semifinals

GNS News Agency, Jan 23

New Delhi: Ramji Kashyap, Pratik Waikar and Aditya Ganpule laid the foundation in turn 1 as the Indian men's team marched into the semifinals of the Kho Kho World Cup with a 100-40 win over Sri Lanka here on Friday.

The troika of Kashyap, Waikar and Ganpule impressed as India scored 58 points in turn 1 and prevented the Sri Lankans from scoring a single point via Dream Runs, ensuring a strong start to the game. Sri Lanka worked hard in turn 2, as their attackers made the job difficult for their Indian opponents

But their efforts were not enough to bridge the gap as India remained ahead at the start of turn 3. India took the aggressive route in turn 3 as Siva Reddy, V Subramani, and Waikar put in plenty of sky and pole dives to keep the Sri Lankans quiet. India reached 100 points at the end of turn 3, which was enough to help them seal a spot in the semifinals. The women's team also produced a clinical performance to crush Bangladesh by a huge margin of 109-16 and book their spot in the semifinals of the Kho Kho World Cup here on Friday. Led by captain Priyanka Ingle, India dominated the contest throughout all four turns, including an impressive dream run in turn 2 that lasted over five minutes and continued to record 100 or more points for the fifth

India were dominant from the beginning of the quarterfinal against Bangladesh, hitting a half-century of points courtesy Nasreen Shaikh and Priyanka in turn 1 as their points soared past the mark of 50. At the end of turn 2, the Bangladesh managed only four simple touches as the score read 56-8 with two more turns remaining in the game. There was no change in the course of the game as India did not allow Bangladesh to settle into the contest. A sky dive from Reshma Rathod brought up their fifth-straight 100 points in the tournament and at the end of turn 3 the score read 106-8. India eventually won 109-16 at the end of turn 4.In other matches, Uganda scored a decisive victory over New Zealand, securing their semi-final berth with a final score of 71-26, South Africa beat Kenya 51-46 to advance to the next round whereas Nepal crushed Iran 103-

Printed and Published by V. Srinivas Reddy, on behalf of M/s Sai Krishna Publications, Owned by M/s Sai Krishna Publications, Printed at Sree Seshasai Enterprises, Plot No.98/1, Co-operative Industrial Estate, IDA, Gandhinagar, Quthbullapur Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri Dist, Telangana. Published at Plot No. 3, Flat No.13, Surya Saroj Apartments, Huda Complex, Saroor Nagar, Ranga Reddy Dist. T.S. 500 035.

Editor: V Srinivas Reddy RNI No. TELENG/2013/49469, Cell No. 9440231967.