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## Two Telugu NRIs killed, two injured in road accident in Ireland

Hyderabad: Two Telugu NRIs were killed and two were injured in an accident on Friday in Co Carlow of Ireland. The two victims have been identified as Bhargav Chitturi (23) and Suresh Cherukuri (24).

Both the victims, who went to the United Kingdom for pursuing higher education, are natives of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

According to local news websites of Ireland, the accident occurred when the car in which they were driving, rammmed into a tree on the N80 at Graiguenaspiddoge, in Leagh, Rathoe at 1.15 am on Friday.

## Hyderabad cybercrime arrest five persons involving in job fraud

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Cybercrime police arrested five persons on charges of cheating job aspirants to the tune of several lakhs by promising part-time task based jobs with hefty salaries, police said on Saturday.

The arrested persons are P Devakrupa, V.V.Shiva Shankar, Balaraju, Prajwal Reddy and C Vijay Sagar.

Police said the fraudsters with the help of several bank accounts, as per their well-orchestrated plan, impersonated as organizers of reputed companies with lucrative returns on the investments. They cheated job aspirants to the tune of several lakhs.

## PM Modi hails Union Budget 2025 as 'Janata Janardan Ka Budget'



GNS News Agency, Feb 1

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lauded the Union Budget 2025, calling it a 'Janata Janardan Ka Budget' and emphasising its people-centric approach that will propel India's development journey. Sharing his thoughts on the Budget, PM Modi described it as a significant milestone in India's growth trajectory. "This is a budget for the aspirations of 140 crore Indians. It will fulfill the dreams of every citizen. We have opened up several sectors for the youth, and the common people will be at the heart of India's mission to become a developed nation. This Budget is a force multiplier," he said.

He further highlighted that the Budget would accel-

ate investment, consumption, and growth. "I congratulate Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her team for presenting a people's Budget -- 'Janata Janardan Ka Budget'," he added. The Prime Minister pointed out a fundamental shift in the approach of this Budget, stating that while most budgets focus on filling government coffers, this one is dedicated to ensuring more money in the hands of citizens.

"This Budget is focussed on how the pockets of the countrymen will be filled, how they would increase their savings, and how they would contribute towards the development of the country. This Budget lays a strong foundation for this," he remarked. Discussing key reforms introduced in the Budget, PM Modi termed the decision to include the private sector in nuclear energy as "historic." He explained that this move would significantly boost India's civil nuclear energy sector and contribute to national progress. Highlighting employment-driven initiatives, the Prime Minister underscored the importance of giving infrastructure status to shipbuilding.

"With this status, large-scale ship construction in India will be encouraged, providing a fresh impetus to the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign. Shipbuilding is a sector that generates extensive employment," he noted. PM Modi also stressed the potential of India's tourism sector, announcing that hotels would be constructed at 50 key tourist destinations. "By bringing hotels under the infrastructure category for the first time, the tourism and hospitality sectors will receive a major boost. These industries play a crucial role in employment generation," he said. The Prime Minister reiterated that India is progressing with the mantra of "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi (Development and Heritage together)." He highlighted initiatives like the 'Gyan Bharat Mission' and the 'National Digital Repository' as key steps in preserving India's rich heritage while advancing its modern infrastructure.

## Telangana gets a big zero in 2025-26 Union Budget



GNS News Agency, Feb 1

Hyderabad: The BJP-led Central government has once again demonstrated its apathy toward Telangana by completely ignoring the State's Budget proposals, despite a formal request for Rs 1.63 lakh crore in allocations for crucial infrastructure projects. Not a single rupee was allocated to the State in the Union Budget 2025-26, further deepening the financial injustice meted out to Telangana. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka had submitted detailed proposals to the Centre, seeking funds for key projects such as the Regional Ring Road, Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase II, Musi River Development, a Railway Coach Factory in Kazipet, Bayyaram Steel Plant, Navodaya and Kendriya Vidyalayas, and other commitments made under the Andhra Pradesh

Reorganisation Act. However, Telangana's proposals found no mention in the union Budget presented in the Parliament on Saturday, leaving the State empty-handed. Economic experts point out that the State's priorities were not aligned with the Centre's funding patterns, which may have contributed to the neglect.

They argue that while the previous BRS government focused on irrigation projects, the current Congress-led government failed to clearly communicate its top priorities. However, this does not justify the union government's outright rejection of Telangana's proposals, particularly when States aligned with the BJP continue to receive generous allocations. The glaring indifference in budgetary allocations raises serious questions about the Centre's commitment to cooperative federalism. Telangana, a State that contributes around 5.1 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), finds itself treated as an outsider, while other NDA-led States benefit from substantial allocations. The latest budget has once again exposed the Centre's step-motherly attitude, reinforcing the growing sentiment that Telangana is being systematically sidelined in national development planning. Proposals for critical investments Regional Ring Road: Project estimated at Rs.34,367 cr, crucial for bolstering industrial growth, logistics, pharmaceutical sector Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-2: 76.4-km expansion, costing Rs 24,269 crore, proposed as joint State-Centre venture Musi Riverfront Development: Comprehensive project seeking Rs 14,100 cr to enhance urban infrastructure, secure 220 acres of defence land

## KTR slams 2025-26 Union Budget, demands apology from BJP and Congress MPs

GNS News Agency, Feb 1

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao rubbished the Union Budget 2025-26 over the Centre's step-motherly treatment of Telangana. He said the BJP-led Centre was deliberately sidelining Telangana while favouring poll-bound States. Telangana puts high hopes on Union Budget 2025-26; submits proposals for Rs.1.63 lakh crore He also lambasted Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Telangana MPs from both the BJP and Congress for their failure to secure even a single rupee for the State, demanding that they apologise to the people for their inaction.

"The Union Budget has once again proved that national parties can never protect Telangana's interests. The BJP's 'double-engine' government claim has been exposed as a farce," he said, adding that the BJP and Congress MPs have brought zero funds to Telangana, proving their complete incompetence. In a statement, Rama Rao said Revanth Reddy's frequent visits to Delhi were not for securing funds but to serve political interests. He charged Revanth Reddy with making a secret pact with the BJP, leading to Telangana's continued neglect. "Even with eight MPs from the Congress and BJP each, Telangana got nothing. These MPs have only pleased their Delhi bosses instead of raising Telangana's voice in Parliament," he said.

The BRS working president criticised the BJP government at the Centre for prioritising BJP-ruled States in Budget allocations while sidelining Telangana. He said BJP MPs from other States have secured substantial funds for their regions, whereas Telangana BJP MPs and the two Union Ministers have been ineffective and powerless. He termed them as inefficient and powerless, who failed to bring even a single rupee while BJP representatives from other States secured massive allocations.

Rama Rao was outraged that Telangana was not even mentioned in the Budget, calling it a grave insult to the State's four crore people. He pointed out how poll-bound Bihar received massive allocations, while Telangana was denied



even its rightful dues. "The Centre has given financial aid to the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, but has ignored the long-promised Bayyaram Steel Factory, ITIR project and national status for our irrigation project as promised under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act," he said.

He also criticised the lack of higher educational institutions such as IIT, IIM, IISER, NID and IIIT in Telangana, calling it a severe injustice to students and youth. The former Minister charged the BJP government of favouring its own-ruled States, while neglecting Southern States that contribute heavily to the national treasury. "The Centre's attitude is a blatant attack on federalism. Their step-motherly treatment towards Telangana and other Southern States exposes their true priorities," he said. Reiterating that only the BRS would fight for Telangana's rights, Rama Rao said the people of Telangana have realised the importance of regional parties in securing the State's rights and understood the betrayal by both the BJP and Congress. "The Central government's discriminatory approach towards Telangana has once again been exposed in this Budget. Both the BJP and Congress will pay the price for their failure," he warned.

## Foreign Ministry budget decreased, women welfare abroad ignored



GNS News Agency, Feb 1

Dubai: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been allocated a budget of Rs 20,516 crore for the fiscal year 2025-26 in the Union Budget, a notable decrease from last year's revised allocation of Rs 25,277 crore. Though there is significant increase in allocation for the last few years compared with the past, the allocation this time is yet not at par with India's growing global clout and ambitions. The vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 hinges on sustained global partnership. Despite its challenging mandate in making India into a leading power and influential entity among the nations of the world, MEA remains one of the least funded Central Ministries. The MEA's allocation not only reflects the government's foreign policy priorities but also its capacity

to deliver on its global ambitions and commitments. Though Rs. 4,206 crore was allocated to expenditures for embassies and missions, an increase from last year's revised layout of Rs.3,969 crore, the budget for women welfare abroad this year remained dismal with only a sanction of Rs. 1 crore. The budget also allocated a significant amount of Rs. 1,913 crore for passport and emigration where the Ministry is intended to usher electronic passports. Bhutan remained India's top recipient of foreign aid with allocation of Rs. 2,150 crore from total aid outlay of Rs. 6,750 crore.

## Opposition walks out during Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech

In the Budget session of the Parliament, Opposition parties walked out of Lok Sabha in protest on Saturday (February 1, 2025), after their demand to discuss the Maha Kumbh stampede was not accepted. At least 30 pilgrims died and 60 were injured in a stampede at the Maha Kumbh on January 29th, 2025, when a large number of pilgrims reached the sacred Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj to take a holy dip on Mauni Amavasya.

## Tax booster for middle class: No income tax payable on income up to Rs 12 lakh

GNS News Agency, Feb 1

In a big boost to the Indian middle class, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced that there will be no income tax payable for incomes up to Rs 12 lakh, and Rs 12.75 lakh for salaried taxpayers (including standard deduction). In the new tax regime, the revised tax rate structure is Rs 0-4 lakh (zero tax), Rs 4-8 lakh (5 per cent), Rs 8-12 lakh (10 per cent), Rs 12-16 lakh (15 per cent), Rs 16-20 lakh (20 per cent), Rs 20-24 lakh (25 per cent), and above Rs 24 lakh (30 per cent).

"The new tax structure would substantially reduce tax for the middle class," announced FM Sitharaman. Presenting the Union Budget 2025-26, FM Sitharaman said that the tax deduction at source (TDS) rates will be rationalised and the limit for tax deduction for senior citizens will be doubled to Rs 1 lakh. FM Sitharaman also proposed to extend the time limit to file the updated return from two years to four years. The threshold to collect TDS on remittances under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) would be increased to Rs 10 lakh from Rs 7 lakh and an annual limit of Rs 2.4 lakh for TDS on rent has been raised to Rs 6 lakh. Delay for payment of TCS up to the due



date would be decriminalised, according to the Finance Minister, adding that TCS on remittances, if a loan was taken for education, has been waived. The Union Budget also proposes to exempt withdrawals from National Savings Scheme (NSS) accounts on or after August 2024 from tax. The Budget Session of Parliament, which commenced on Friday, will be conducted in two phases - the first started on January 31 and will conclude on February 13, while the second phase will begin on March 10 and end on April 4.

## Government to set up daycare cancer centres in all district hospitals over next three years: Sitharaman



GNS News Agency, Feb 1

The government will facilitate setting up of daycare cancer centres in all district hospitals over the next three years and 200 of these will be established in 2025-26, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Saturday. Presenting the 2025-26 Union Budget, her record eighth, Sitharaman said gig workers will be provided healthcare facilities under the PM Jan Aarogya Yojana (PM-JAY). In the next year, 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and hospitals towards the goal of adding 75,000 seats in the next five years.

The government will facilitate setting up of daycare cancer centres in all district hospitals in the next three years, she said. She said, "200 centres will be established in 2025-26 itself." Sitharaman further announced that gig workers will be provided healthcare facilities under PM-JAY and this measure is likely to assist nearly 1 crore workers. On adding seats in medical colleges and hospitals, she said, "Our government has added almost 1.1 lakh undergraduate and postgraduate medical education seats in 10 years, an increase of 130%." "In the next year, 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and hospitals towards the goal of adding 75,000 seats in the next five years," she

said. The minister also informed that broadband connectivity will be provided to all government secondary schools and primary healthcare centres.

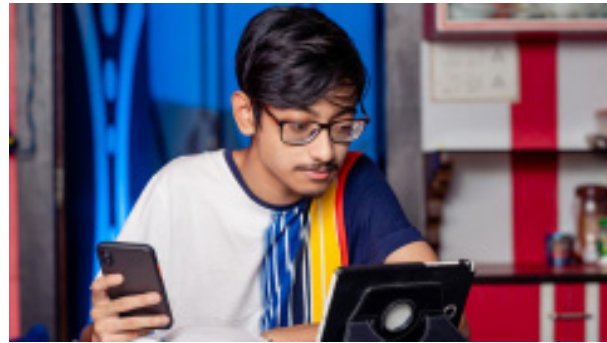
## CM Revanth Reddy Invited to Sri Jogulamba Ammavari Brahmotsavams & Maha Shivaratri Celebrations.

GNS News Agency, Feb 1

Gadwal : Former MLA and AICC Secretary Dr. SA Sampath Kumar, along with Jogulamba Temple Committee Chairman Nageshwar Reddy, Executive Officer (EO) Purennder, Chief Priests, and temple committee directors, formally invited Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to attend the grand celebrations of Sri Jogulamba Ammavari Annual Brahmotsavams and Sri Bala Bhrameshwara Swamy Maha Shivaratri Utsavams. The Brahmotsavams are scheduled to take place from January 30 to February 3, with the Vasantha Panchami celebrations being a significant highlight. Devotees from across the state are expected to participate in the religious events. The Maha Shivaratri Utsavam of Sri Bala Bhrameshwara Swamy is also set to be a grand occasion, drawing thousands of devotees. Temple authorities and religious leaders have made elaborate arrangements to ensure a smooth and spiritually enriching experience for all devotees. The invitation extended to CM Revanth Reddy signifies the importance of these sacred celebrations in Telangana's cultural and religious calendar.



## Navigating AI in education: challenges, ethics, and the need for comprehensive policies



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

In November last year, a law student from a private university took his university to court for failing him in an assignment on the allegation that it was completed with the use of AI. His argument was largely that the university had not explicitly prohibited use of AI, illustrating the urgent need for a thought-out policy for use of AI in academic and research work. On the one hand, the government has pushed for integration of artificial intelligence in higher education. On the other, growing use of AI tools by students has been a cause for concern as the distinction between assistance and plagiarism becomes hard to tell. Given all this, a comprehensive AI policy is found lacking in the domain of higher education.

The 2018 AI strategy paper by NITI Ayog talks about the potential of AI in "supplementing pedagogy", facilitating lesson planning, customised learning content for multi-level classrooms, automating resource allocation, and so on. As far as usage by students is concerned, Intelligent Tutoring Systems are seen as the pathway. However, the way that NITI Ayog envisions customised learning, the assumption is that the tools will stay largely in the hands of teachers or administrators who will use AI for assistance. The use of freely available AI tools independently by students remains largely unaddressed.

The Indian Council for Medical Research is possibly the only significant national body in India so far which has laid down some guidelines on the ethical usage and application of AI. Plagiarism and its detection as such the University Grants Commission (UGC) adopted the 'Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Education' regulations in 2018 which set upper limits for how much percentage of the content can be copied, and how it should be acknowledged and referenced. But at the outset, detection itself remains a major challenge. Vaibhav Narawade, president of Mumbai University College Teachers' Association said, "AI tools are being used by students and teachers in a helpful way but the drawback is that students are increasingly using it to substitute original and creative thinking. We have some software that can detect plagiarism and AI use. But that is limited to thesis or dissertation and research submissions. The regular assignments and internal assessments are largely handwritten and there is no way to check those for plagiarism or AI use." Moreover, as generative AI gets better with time, plagiarism detection software like Turnitin have themselves acknowledged that there can be a possibility of inaccurately detecting AI-use. Ethical considerations

Even when detected, the dilemmas are many. On the one hand, it is argued that the data generated from freely accessible tools is openly available so the individual using it should not be held accountable. On the other, the person using it is not the one who created it, so, strictly speaking, should not get the credit for it.

Apart from plagiarism, there are concerns that include but are not limited to the quality of academic output, perpetuation of inherent biases in AI, erosion of critical thinking skills in students, data privacy concerns and intellectual property rights. Prof Arun Tangirala, Dean of Competency and Outreach at IIT Tirupati, said, "While talking about ethics of AI usage by students, one will be remiss not to mention the ethical concerns that abound in the very development and maintenance of AI models. There are examples where individuals' content on certain platforms has been used for developing AI models without any permissions even from the platform. So the questions of originality, copyright

and so on are built into the tool as well." Apart from that, AI tools collect our data and given the lack of awareness around data privacy, our personal information is susceptible to misuse, he pointed out. Comprehensive legislation at an international level to address these concerns or regulate the dynamic domain of generative AI and its consequences to intellectual property rights have themselves been at a nascent stage. So the confusions and gaps among academics and institutions about AI usage are but natural. In the meantime, some best practices have been adopted by some institutes or academics. "AI is here to stay, the question is how can we use it responsibly?" asks Prof. Tangirala. For teachers like Manjula Venkataraghavan, Associate Professor at Manipal Institute of Communication, MAHE, transparency and a focus on responsible usage has been the way to go. She said, "As faculty, we are ourselves having workshops and training on how to leverage AI for academic as well as administrative purposes. Students will also inevitably use it. We use plagiarism-detection software but they are not foolproof and there are freely available tools which can help students humanise AI-generated data. So what we have been telling them is how to use it correctly, whether it is to structure their text or for a literature review in research."

A team of two Senior Writing Tutors and one Senior Writing fellow at the Centre for Writing and Communication of Ashoka University have been conducting a project assessing AI tools for academic writing in the field of humanities and social sciences. Neerav Dwivedi from the team said, "Since 2022, we've found a large dependence on AI tools amongst the student community. When interacting with students, we often emphasize the importance of including an AI information use statement where they declare how and why they have used AI for specific writing tasks. Sarah Eaton's concept of post plagiarismism is productive to think through these evolving concerns."

In a collective statement, the team said that AI should be used thoughtfully. One can ask clarifying questions, challenge assumptions, critique writing, and prompt deeper analysis and counterarguments. When used responsibly, it can enhance accessibility by assisting students—especially non-native English speakers—in refining clarity and structure. "For students not having proficiency in certain disciplines and familiarity with new topics, AI often serves as an accessible starting point for learning", said the statement.

The team said the role of AI should remain that of a supplement rather than a substitute for intellectual engagement. "AI aids in synthesizing large volumes of literature, identifying key themes, and facilitating an iterative writing process through structured feedback and revision. By focusing on ethical use and integrating it as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for intellectual effort, academic institutions can harness its potential to enrich learning and research while maintaining academic integrity", they said. Cambridge International put out a policy statement on the use of generative AI in student work submitted for assessment stating, "AI to create or enhance student work without acknowledgement risks being classed as plagiarism and, like other forms of malpractice, may be subject to penalty." They laid down that all use of generative AI programs to conduct initial research, create text, images, sound or video or plan a project must be acknowledged in the work and AI-generated material must be clearly referenced. In Australia, institutes are slowly coming up with rules around this and some schools are saying that two things are necessary, shared Assistant Professor Tangirala. "One is declaring the tool that has been used. Second is the series of prompts that were given to arrive at that result. The logic here is transparency as well as demonstrating the way in which the AI-tool was used, which is also a skill." The adjacent question is that of the skill sets needed in the future, he stresses. "What we need is a new skill set. Before calculators were introduced in school exams, there were a certain kind of questions that could be asked. When calculators were allowed, students no longer needed to be tested on their computational abilities. Instead, we could now give more complex questions requiring students to think differently." So, instead of testing a student on their ability to write code, which AI can easily do now, we can test the student's ability to understand and evaluate the best out of three programs performing the same task.

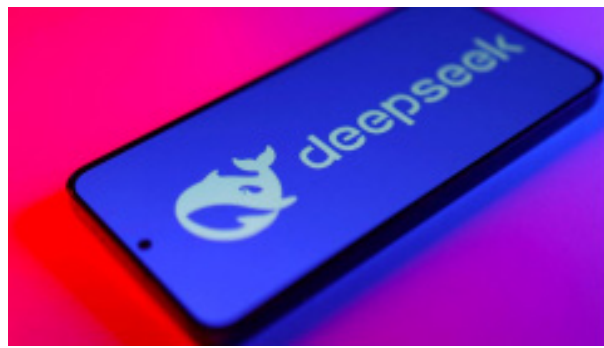
## Why there's a hype behind DeepSeek's new AI model: In Charts

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

China-based startup DeepSeek's latest AI models, primarily the DeepSeek-R1 reasoning model, has caused a stir in the world of Large Language Models (LLMs) which has been dominated by giants like OpenAI. Apart from being on par with OpenAI's flagship o1 model on multiple benchmarking tools, the DeepSeek-R1 model is also available at a fraction of the cost, which has disrupted the tech-world order. On January 28, 2025, DeepSeek's AI assistant also overtook OpenAI's ChatGPT to become the top-rated free application on Apple's App Store in the United States. One of the benchmarks used to grade the performance of a LLM is the Massive Multitask Language Understanding (MMLU), which consists of 16,000 multiple-choice questions across 57 academic subjects. Despite some critique, the MMLU is still one of the prominent benchmarking tools used. In the MMLU, DeepSeek-R1's performance is comparable to OpenAI's o1 (and the o1 'Pro') model, where the former scored a 90.8 while the latter scored 92.3, as shown in the plot below. DeepSeek-R1, which can be scaled to 671 billion parameters, surpassed Meta's flagship Llama 3.1 (405 billion parameters) and Anthropic's famous Claude 3.5 Sonnet which was released in June 2024. Human domain-experts are estimated to achieve a score of 89.8 in the MMLU. DeepSeek's technical paper, available for everyone to see on the model's GitHub page, demonstrates the R1's score in across benchmarking tools used to grade English, code, math, and Chinese. In language expertise, out of OpenAI and Anthropic's most powerful models, the R1 performed competitively on most except the SimpleQA, where it scored a 30.1 which was over 35% lower than o1's score of 47, as shown in the plots below. While the R1's performance was the best in the LiveCodeBench benchmarking tool, with a score of 65.9, it's performance in the rest of the tests shown in the graphic below is comparable to o1 and the Claude 3.5 Sonnet. The R1 is in the top two ranks in each of the tools used to grade a model's coding capabilities.

DeepSeek-R1 outperforms the powerful o1's excellent score in the MATH-500 and AIME 2024, scoring 97.3 in the former and 79.8 in the latter, whereas OpenAI's o1 scored 96.4 and 79.2, respectively. DeepSeek's R1 and V3 models scored highest in benchmarking tools used to grade a models' compatibility with the Chinese languages.

DeepSeek-R1's cost efficiency in what seems to be



DeepSeek-R1 outperforms the powerful o1's excellent score in the MATH-500 and AIME 2024, scoring 97.3 in the former and 79.8 in the latter, whereas OpenAI's o1 scored 96.4 and 79.2, respectively

the most attractive aspect of the model, the DeepSeek-R1 is available for users for only a fraction of the cost when compared to its closest rival, OpenAI's o1. To access R1's API (Application Programming Interface), the input cost - which is the cost incurred to feed in prompts in the model's textbox which then generates a response - is just \$0.55, as compared to o1's \$15, for 1 million tokens. A 'token' is essentially the smallest unit of text data (a few characters) that is broken down for the LLM to process. Claude 3.5 Sonnet costs \$3 (almost six times that of R1) for an input of 1 million tokens. R1's output costs (which is the cost of the output generated by the model) are also significantly more affordable when compared to OpenAI's o1, o1-mini, GPT 4o as shown in the graphic below. DeepSeek-R1's output cost per million tokens is over 25 times cheaper than OpenAI's o1. DeepSeek-R1's release disrupted the global AI sector and also led to the biggest market cap loss in the US where Nvidia lost \$590 billion as the company's stocks fell 17% on January 27, 2025.

## Economic Survey 2024-25 | What does it say about air pollution?



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Focusing on climate adaptation as a key goal, the government in the 2024-25 Economic Survey, tabled in Parliament on Friday (January 31, 2025) said that India will need to continue "efforts to maximise the efficiency of its existing fossil fuel resources in the medium term". The Survey pointed to developed countries prematurely shutting down thermal power plants without viable alternatives, and said that widespread adoption of renewable energy remains challenging.

The Economic Survey recognises air pollution as a major concern for north India, especially for people in the Delhi NCR region where unhealthy air has almost become a staple in the winter months. In 2024 (until December 27, 2024), Delhi saw 155 days of 'poor', 'very poor', or 'severe' air quality, with an air quality index (AQI) of 200 or more. For the first time in six years, the city did not witness even one day of 'good' air quality days (AQI lesser than 50) in 2024. Even on the day the Economic Survey was tabled in Parliament, the air quality was recorded in the "very poor" category at 9 a.m., with an AQI of 349 — and this was two days after stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) was invoked in NCR on January 29, 2025 as the air quality deteriorated.

Quoting the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Economic Survey says that 99% of the world breathes air

that exceeds WHO guideline limits and contains high levels of pollutants, but people in low and middle-income countries suffer the most. The document recognises the role of human activities like vehicular traffic, agricultural practices, and use of coal and wood for cooking, it also puts the blame on geography and wind direction. The Survey focuses on government programmes like the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and actions like GRAP that have been designed to tackle the problem of air pollution. "The NCAP emphasises the implementation of City Action Plans (CAPs) through the convergence of resources from various central government schemes such as Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), AMRUT, Smart City Mission, SATAT, and Nagar Van Yojana, as well as through resources from state governments/UT administration and agencies like municipal corporations and urban development authorities," the Survey states. However, a report published in The Hindu on April 28, 2024 analyses how implementation of Clean Air Action Plans under NCAP has been inconsistent.

"The NCAP was well-intentioned, and a significant sum of money has been allocated. However, as Economic Survey shows, not much progress has been made in Delhi. This is because the NCAP is focused on cities. But air pollution is a truly national phenomenon, with our rural communities also experiencing bad air quality because of sources such as wood, waste, and agricultural residue burning and informal industries (e.g. brick kilns). These emissions from outside the non-attainment cities pollute our villages and contribute to urban air pollution," R Subramanian, sector head (air quality) at CSTEP told GRAP is a series of restrictions imposed in response to air pollution levels, but in December 2024, when Delhi NCR was going through yet another bout of air pollution, Supreme Court compared the plan to "medicine given to an already critical patient", raising doubts on its efficacy. The Economic Survey says that India's climate efforts keep the country's 2070 net-zero emissions target in mind, and climate mitigation and adaptation should be included in its growth strategy to achieve this goal without comprising on economic development.

## Phone calls offering MPSC exam question paper for Rs 40 lakhs: 3 arrested

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Pune city police have arrested three people in connection with a case relating to phone calls asking aspirants to pay Rs 40 lakh in order to question papers for the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC), ahead of the exams. Police have identified the accused persons as Deepak Gayaram Gaydhane (26), Sumit Kailas Jadhav (23) and Yogesh Surendra Waghmare.

Dr Suvama Kharat, secretary of MPSC, lodged the first information report (FIR) in this case at the Bund Garden police station on Friday. The MPSC is conducting examinations for Group B (Non-Gazetted) Services on February 2 across the state. Thousands of students are appearing for the examination. But, in the last few days, some students from Pune received calls on their mobile phones from a person claiming to be an employee of "Rohan Consultancy" in Nagpur, who offered to provide them with question papers for the scheduled MPSC examination on payment of Rs 40 lakh.

An audio clip of this phone call went viral on social media, causing a major disturbance among candidates appearing for the MPSC examination. To prevent any panic, MPSC's secretary Suvama Kharat held a press conference in Navi Mumbai on Friday, saying that no question papers had been leaked. Kharat also filed a formal complaint with the Pune city police. Subsequently, the crime branch sleuths initiated a probe into it. Based on clues obtained during the investigation, cops arrested Deepak Gaydhane, a native of Bhandara district and Sumit Jadhav of Nashik district, from Chakan area in Pune. Their mobile phones were also seized. Further probe revealed that Gaydhane and Jadhav are factory workers, who got hold of a list of 24 candidates appearing for the MPSC examination, from one Yogesh Waghmare of Nagpur on January 24, 2025. The duo had then contacted at least two candidates whose contact numbers were mentioned in this list, police said. A police team was dispatched from Pune to Nagpur to arrest Waghmare.



Taking swift action, Nagpur police nabbed Waghmare and handed him over to the Pune cops on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime) Nikhil Pingle of Pune city police said that so far there is no evidence to show that MPSC question papers may have been leaked. "An investigation is on to know from where the accused got a list of the candidates appearing for the MPSC examination. We are probing whether they got this information from any coaching classes. We suspect the involvement of more persons in this crime. So far, we have not found involvement of any MPSC staffers in this case," said Pingle. Police have booked the accused persons under section 62, 318 (4), 353 (1), 353 (1)(b) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for allegedly cheating the candidates and causing fear and panic among a section of society by spreading false information. Assistant commissioner of police Rajendra Mulik produced the accused Gaidhane and Jadhav before a magistrate court in Pune on Saturday. Public prosecutor Dilip Gaikwad sought police custody of the two accused for 14 days for further investigation. Police are probing the mobile phone calls and financial transactions of the accused persons. Police suspect the role of an organised group that wanted to cheat multiple candidates. The court remanded Gaidhane and Jadhav to police custody till February 7.

## Chennai: Man, daughter found dead; doctor close to the family held

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

The bodies of a 78-year-old man and his 36-year-old daughter were found in a locked apartment under suspicious circumstances. Police identified the deceased as Samuel Sankar, 78, and his daughter Ann Cynthia, 37, both from Vellore. The duo had been residing in Thirumullaivoyal in order that he can get dialysis treatment at a private hospital in the city. According to police sources, relatives grew concerned after repeated attempts to contact them failed. When no response was received to phone calls, the Thirumullaivoyal Police were alerted. Officers traced the location using mobile phone signals and, upon breaking open the locked apartment, discovered the decomposed bodies.

Inspector George Miller of Thirumullaivoyal Police sent the bodies for postmortem and launched an investigation. Scrutiny of Cynthia's call records led them to Samuel Ebinezer, 34, a native of Orikkai, Kancheepuram district, who had studied medicine in Vienna and was reportedly in close contact with Cynthia. Police detained Ebinezer, who was staying in the same apartment complex. Initial inquiries revealed that Cynthia, estranged from her husband, had moved to the apartment with her father based on Ebinezer's suggestion. He had allegedly been providing medical treatment to her father, including dialysis procedures.

Investigations suggest that Samuel Sankar died in September, allegedly due to improper treatment. A dispute



between Cynthia and the doctor ensued, during which Ebinezer allegedly pushed her, rendering her unconscious. Panicking, he fled the scene, locking the apartment without informing authorities. Police are now probing whether Sampath's death resulted from medical negligence or natural causes. Additionally, they are investigating the exact circumstances that led to Cynthia's death. Authorities also noted that the air-conditioner had remained on for some time after the deaths. Police suspect that a chemical, possibly camphor, was used to suppress any odour, as no neighbours had reported anything unusual. Further investigations are underway to corroborate the doctor's confession and establish a clear sequence of events.

## Cleanup drive at Indira Park: 40kg of discarded manja collected in 3 hours

Sangareddy: As many as 40 volunteers of Animal Warriors Conservation Society, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), and HCL Foundation collected 40 kg of discarded nylon manja from the trees in Indira Park during a clean-up drive on Saturday.

They could remove the manja from 60 trees during a three-hour-long effort. Santoshi Nair, a member of AWCS, said that still they could hardly clean 10 per cent of Indira

Park. She said they would take up another clean-up drive next Sunday by involving more volunteers. The GHMC officials arranged multiple boom lift vehicles to help the volunteers remove the manja from trees. The forest department, GHMC, AWCS, and HCL foundation collaborated for the clean-up drive as the AWCS had rescued 28 birds trapped in manja during January. Out of these 28, seven died while four of them were disabled permanently.

# School enrolment down by over 1 crore in 2023-24, says govt. report



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

The total enrolment of students has dropped by over a crore in 2023-24 as compared to the previous years, shows the latest data released by the Ministry of Education (MoE). A total of 24.8 crore students enrolled in the academic year 2023-24, Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report released by the Ministry said. Over the last four years, the enrolment data has hovered around 26 crore.

Education officials have stated in the report that the data observes some real changes from the previous years as this exercise of maintaining a separate student base is totally different, unique and incomparable to that of 2021-22 or the previous years. The UDISE+ facilitates online uploading of data at school level with inbuilt validation checks and the subsequent data verification at the block, district and State level ensures data reliability and timely completion. In 2018-19, the total enrolment of students in school was 26.02 crore, which increased in 2019-20 by 1.6% and crossed 26.45 crore, an increase of more than 42 lakh students. The enrolments slightly fell in 2020-21 as compared to 2019-20. In 2021-22 as compared to 2020-21, total enrolment increased by 0.76%. Even according to data from back in 2012-13, the total enrolment was 26.3 crore.

In 2022-23, there was a drop in enrolment with 25.18 crore students being registered and there was a further fall

in 2023-24 to 24.8 crore in the total enrolment, a drop of 6% (nearly 1.22 crore students) as compared to 2018-19. In 2022-23, MoE started a revitalised UDISE+ ecosystem which captures data on the more than 60 fields for each student and to maintain the uniqueness of the child the Aadhaar details were also collected on voluntary basis. In the latest report, more than 19.7 crore students provided Aadhaar numbers by 2023-24 voluntarily, the report said. Officials have stated that UDISE+ 2022-23 data is not strictly comparable with the previous reports on various educational indicators like Gross Enrolment Ratio, Net Enrolment Ratio, dropout rates and so on. Since 2022-23, more efforts have been put in accurately establishing student and teacher credentials to weed out duplicate or ghost entries for specific identification of beneficiaries for various educational schemes. Apart from Aadhaar, a separate unique educational ID (EID) for every student has been created in the UDISE+ portal to cover each and every child under the ecosystem of UDISE+, officials said. "Through the creation of unique student and teacher identities, credentials of individuals students and teachers in the education ecosystem can be established more accurately leading to weeding out of duplicate or ghost entries resulting in precise identification of beneficiaries for benefit transfers of Samagra Shiksha scheme, PM POSHAN Scheme, National Scholarship scheme etc. (and) can bring significant savings to government in future years," the report said. While in 2018-19, 13.53 crore boys were enrolled, this saw a drop to 12.87 crore enrolments in 2023-24 a decrease of 4.87%, while enrolment of girls decreased from 12.49 crore in 2018-19 to 11.93 crore in 2023-24, a decrease of 4.48%. States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra saw among the highest drop in enrolments. In 2018-19, Bihar reflected an enrolment of over 2.49 crore students which dropped to over 2.13 crore (a dip of over 35.65 lakh students) in the respective years UDISE+ report data. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh had shown enrolment of 4.44 crore students in 2018-19 which dropped by 28.26 lakh to 4.16 crore in latest data. Maharashtra recorded a decrease of 18.55 lakh students from over 2.32 crore to 2.13 crore in the latest report.

# Peek into the world of Bengaluru's smallest inhabitants

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Did you know ants once shared the planet with dinosaurs like the T-Rex and the Velociraptor? Or that termites cultivate food gardens of fungi within their large, intricately constructed mounds? And that it isn't just honey that will go missing in a world without bees, but also many fruits, vegetables, grains and nuts. Also, not all spiders build webs, cockroaches are a lot more than irritating house pests, butterflies can taste food with their feet, and male cicadas serenade potential mates using a unique sound-producing organ on their abdomen called the tymbal? The world of these minibeasts is indeed both enigmatic and fascinating, as a new book, Commonly Spotted Insects & Spiders in the City of Bengaluru, reinforces repeatedly. "The lives, survival strategies and nature history stories of insects and spiders can range from the calmly simple (or at least what we know so far) to the bizarrely complex," states the introduction to the book, which has been co-authored by Vena Kapoor, Priya Venkatesh and Vaidya R., designed by Pratyush Gupta and enabled by the Bengaluru Sustainability Forum's Small Grants Programme. Filled with mind-boggling facts and gorgeous pictures, it offers a ringside view of the lives and natural histories of some of the city's many six- and eight-legged creatures — around 135 insects and 25 spiders — serving as "an easy-to-use tool to help you identify and get to know more about the some of the commonly found insects and spiders living their lives around us." As Vaidya points out, most of the images in the book were not shot in far-flung, wooded areas with many trees but bang amid the concrete jungle that is Bengaluru. "Most of them have been shot right at homes or just outside them, in gardens, etc.," says the Bengaluru-based nature enthusiast and photographer. "The main point we are trying to emphasise is that there is a lot of biodiversity, even in your backyard." Arthropods, the phylum which includes insects, spiders, scorpions, centipedes, millipedes, crabs, prawns and even head lice, is the most successful animal group on the planet, consisting of over 800,000 described species, with many still undiscovered. First emerging in the water around 500 million



years ago, before colonising land a few million years later, arthropods are found in every nook and cranny of the planet today. So ubiquitous are these tiny creatures that the combined biomass of terrestrial arthropods alone is believed to be roughly 1 billion tonnes, roughly equivalent to the biomass of all human beings and livestock put together, according to a study published in the open-access journal Science Advances in 2023.

Insects, which form the majority of the arthropods, "pretty much rule the world," says Priya, the founder-director of The Naturalist School (TNS), Bengaluru. She considers them "the most diverse and fascinating creatures we have on Planet Earth: they come in all shapes, sizes and colours, are also found everywhere, in the air, land and water" and are "a very important part of the entire food chain because of which the whole planet is going around," she says. Not only are they both prey and predators, but they also play an important role in helping many plants propagate. "Most of the plant kingdom, as you know, are producers, without which there would be no food on this planet," says Priya. And many of these plants, particularly those that make fruits, depend on insects for pollination. "In that sense, they are very intricately connected to life on earth." Vena, a city-based conservationist and independent nature educator, believes that observing and learning about arthropods is also a great way to get people interested in nature and natural systems. Often, too often, there is a deep cognitive dissociation between human beings and insects, she says. "They are all around us but are often kind of hidden. We don't notice them as much because of their size or the associations we have with them." She finds it pretty humbling to know that there

are millions of organisms around us, playing such crucial roles and that we are only just scratching the surface and getting to know them. "They are as messy as human beings with bizarre habits and behaviours." The idea for Commonly Spotted Insects & Spiders in the City of Bengaluru started with the realisation that there was no easy-to-use guide on insects that could help people get more natural history information about arthropods, especially insects and spiders that they encounter even in a city like Bengaluru. People would have to troll through popular apps like iNaturalist or Google it," says Vena, who often leads these nature walks. "Nature educators, like myself, were also doing that because we had no other means to access this information." The idea, therefore, was to create a resource for beginner naturalists that was easy to use and understand without being too heavily scientific, she says. The initial plan was to create a set of flashcards about insects, much like the flashcards on common Indian birds currently produced by the Nature Conservation Foundation, says Vena. "We pitched this idea to the Bengaluru Sustainability Forum's Small Grants Programme and were, luckily, selected among many applicants," she says. The next step was selecting the insects and spiders that would be featured, a mammoth task considering the sheer diversity. "We could have easily done a book 10 times this size." They started by first coming up with different groups, such as ants, termites, butterflies, spiders, mantids, lacewings, beetles and so on, and then identifying the most common species in those groups using a combination of experience and also by using the iNaturalist database, says Vaidya, adding that, in some cases, where quite a few species

existed in each group, as in the case of beetles and dragonflies, it was further narrowed down to the most commonly-seen species to "make sure you get the most representative species in the city." Once the initial master database was created, images had to be sourced and matched to the various insects and spiders that were finally selected. While some of the photos already existed with the co-authors, many did not, and so "my main task was about finding these images," says Vaidya, who turned to iNaturalist, reaching out to nature enthusiasts and naturalists who had posted images on it, such as Jithesh Pai, Anubhav Agarwal, Chandu Bandi and Yuvan Aves. While the initial plan was to create flashcards, after taking feedback from multiple people, the initiative evolved into its current format, a book offering detailed information about some common insects and spiders in the city, including the tropical fire ant, the carpenter bee, the potter wasp, the common tree cricket, the giant Asian mantis, the flesh fly, the cotton stainer bug and crab spiders. "The idea was to create a reference book and visual tool that nature educators can use while taking people out for walks," says Vena, adding that around 100 free print copies of the book will be distributed free of cost to Bengaluru's nature educators. An e-version of the book is also available for free download on the Bengaluru Sustainability Forum website, and a Kannada translation is in the works. "Having the whole book as open source means that people can look at it, take printouts for themselves and use it," she adds. By this offering, the authors hope that people will eventually feel a sense of connection to these tiny animals that are such a crucial part of Planet Earth. "The idea is that the more we get to know about the life forms that share our world,

# Centre gives Odisha 677 cr for HEIs after signing on to PM-USHA



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Four months after Odisha signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre to implement the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), the State's higher education institutions are set to receive ₹ 676.7 crore for infrastructural development and their transformation into world-class multidisciplinary universities. Under Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU) Category, four universities will receive 400 crore with ₹ 100 crore each. This major fund has been evenly distributed in four different regions representing Ravenshaw University in east, Berhampur University in south, Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University in north and Sambalpur University in west. While Berhampur and Sambalpur universities are old universities, Ravenshaw and Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo are newer ones. At a time when administrative costs, including salaries, consume over 50% of the total budget allocation for the State's Higher Education Department, minimal resources remain for developing infrastructure to support quality education. The State was urgently requiring a much needed infusion of funds for capital expenditure. The funds were allocated following the decisions made during the third Project Approval Board meeting of the Ministry of Educa-

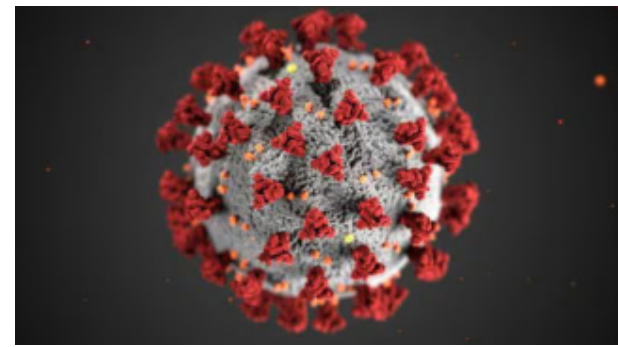
tion. This allocation was made against the backdrop of political controversy, as the previous Naveen Patnaik-led government had reportedly shown little interest in the Central scheme. In 2023, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had written two letters urging the State government to sign the MoU necessary to access PM-USHA funds. However, it was only after the BJP came to power that the Odisha government signed the MoU for the scheme. According to State Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, out of the total fund, 408.7 crore will come from the Central Government while 268 crore will be contributed by the State. "This funding aims to strengthen the infrastructure and enhance human resource development, research and skill-building initiatives in universities and colleges across Odisha. It also seeks to promote employable education for students," said the Minister. A statement from Higher Education says the funds will be utilised for setting up smart classrooms, laboratories, computer laboratories, academic buildings and libraries. Additionally, advanced research infrastructure will be developed to support high-quality education. Under Grants to Strengthen Universities Category, five universities will get ₹ 100 crore with ₹ 20 crore each. Under Grants to Strengthen Colleges category, 24 colleges will receive 120 crore with ₹ 5 crore each. Under Gender Inclusion and Equality Initiatives 10 crore will be provided to five districts — Bhubaneswar, Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur and Sambalpur. Three districts Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur are dominated by tribals. After approval, the State government has expedited the process asking nodal officers to prepare detailed project report to utilize the fund and achieve the objective of gender inclusion and equality in higher education. "The scheme focuses on inclusive education, ensuring no student, including women and differently-abled students, is left behind. The scheme also emphasizes skill development, self-defense training and employability enhancement, paving the way for students to secure better career opportunities," said Mr. Suraj. Odisha has 18 government universities and seven private universities. There are 1,058 colleges available in different disciplines. It is to be noted that Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 1.0 and RUSA 2.0, both centrally sponsored schemes, have been implemented in Odisha since 2014-15 and 2017-18, respectively. Under RUSA 1.0, the Centre has given ₹ 331.75 crore while State share was ₹ 220 crore. Under the RUSA 2.0, the State had submitted proposals worth 290 crore with Centre.

# HMPV: Put your masks on, says Punjab health minister

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

HMPV Virus: Do not panic, says TN government. Dr Balbir Singh further noted that Union Health Minister JP Nadda had already alleviated fears on Monday, stating that HMPV is not a new virus but one known to cause flu in humans. As the Centre urged states to heighten surveillance amid cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), Punjab Health Minister Dr Balbir Singh on Tuesday urged people to put on their masks while adding that there was no need to panic as no cases had been reported in Punjab so far. Speaking to The Indian Express, Dr Balbir Singh said the state government was in touch with the Centre and prepared for any eventuality arising from the virus spread.

Advising individuals with compromised immunity and those above 60 to wear masks in crowded places, the minister said the virus was not as severe as coronavirus. "It is a mild virus causing flu-like symptoms. It is not fatal. Only those with compromised immunity, such as people with diabetes, or those above 60 and below one year of age, are advised to be cautious. They simply need to wear a mask in crowded places. Otherwise, there is nothing to panic about," he said. Dr Balbir Singh further noted that Union Health Minister JP Nadda had already alleviated fears on Monday, stating that HMPV is not a new virus but one known to cause flu in humans. "Hence, there is nothing to worry about. Punjab is prepared for any pandemic. Our hospitals are well-equipped. In any case, this virus will not overwhelm the healthcare system," he assured. When asked why the



virus appeared to be overwhelming the system in China, Dr Balbir Singh said, "It is too early to comment on that. Nothing definitive can be said about China at this stage. We are monitoring the situation closely. We will issue an advisory if required. Otherwise, there is no need to panic at all." The minister, who is a practising doctor, also emphasized the importance of preventive hygiene. "Populations are always advised to wash their hands frequently and avoid touching their face and eyes. This is how infections spread. It is always better to stay cautious. That said, there is currently no surge in respiratory illnesses in Punjab. We are alert," he added. While Punjab has not reported any cases of HMPV yet, the Centre has alerted states to heighten surveillance following confirmed cases in some parts of the country.

# HC seeks Haryana's response on elder helpline implementation



GNS News Agency, FEB 1 elder helpline punjab The court was informed that Elderline is a toll-free service (14567) designed to address issues such as emergency assistance, legal aid, healthcare guidance, emotional support, and access to social welfare schemes. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has directed the State of Haryana to file an affidavit detailing the number of districts in which a helpline for senior citizens has been established and, if not, the reasons for the delay. The division bench, comprising Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sudhir Singh, issued the directive while hearing a petition filed by Ram Pal Malhotra.

Malhotra, represented by counsels Satyam Tandon, Mahima Dogra, and Nisha Kanojia, sought directions for the establishment and implementation of the "Elderline Helpline" in Haryana for the welfare of senior citizens. The court was informed that Elderline is a toll-free service (14567) designed to address issues such as emergency assistance, legal aid, healthcare guidance, emotional support, and access to social welfare schemes. However, despite the mandate of the Haryana Maintenance of Parents and Senior Citizens Rules, 2009, the helpline has not been established in the state.

The HC issued notices to the Union and Haryana governments. Satya Pal Jain, Additional Solicitor General of India, assisted by Saigeeta Srivastva, senior panel counsel, accepted the notice on behalf of the Union government. Deepak Balyan, Additional Advocate General, Haryana, accepted the notice on behalf of Haryana and the Directorate of Social Justice and Empowerment. The bench directed Haryana to file an affidavit, sworn by a competent officer, detailing the number of districts where the helpline has been implemented and providing reasons for its absence in

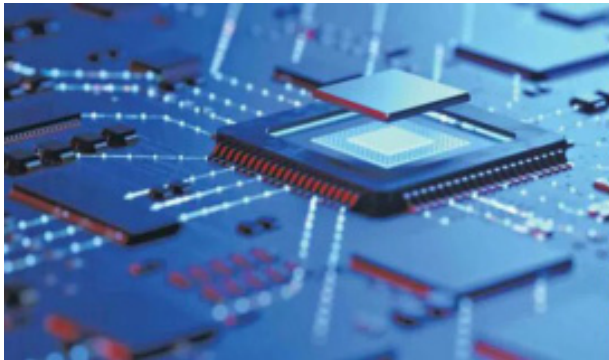
others. "The timeline for the establishment of the Elderline helpline under Rule 23(2)(x) of the Haryana Maintenance of Parents and Senior Citizens Rules, 2009, must also be included," clarified the HC, which scheduled the matter for further hearing on February 18.

# Congress track record casts doubt on Telangana's promise-laden energy policy

Hyderabad: After failing to add even a single megawatt of renewable energy in the last one year, the Congress government has now come up with a new Clean and Green Energy Policy which claims to target investments of Rs 1.98 lakh crore and creation of 1.14 lakh jobs over the next decade.

While the policy seems promising on paper, Telangana in recent times has not been visibly making use of the potential of solar energy for various reasons. Apart from this, the lack of awareness, high initial costs, absence of State government subsidy and lack of financing options are hindering rooftop solar installation programmes in the State. The new policy aims to add 20,000 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy capacity by 2030, making Telangana a major player in renewable energy in the country. However, at the field level, the situation is totally different with the solar power generators facing problems due to the non-cooperative attitude of the staff of DISCOMs. The new policy talks about encouraging rooftop solar power plants in government schools, Indiramma houses, government buildings and gram panchayat offices. However, going by the track record of this government, the move does not appear to work at the field level as in the last one year, the government did nothing to set up solar panels on government buildings. In fact, the Congress government could not even complete the programme to install rooftop solar panels on government schools across the State initiated by the previous BRS government.

# Realising semiconductor dream



Though India aspires to be a global leader in the semiconductor sector, there are several challenges ahead and many lessons to be learnt from international experiences. Most important among them is that India lacks a robust and integrated supply chain for the semiconductor industry, which involves the availability of raw materials, equipment, components, testing facilities and skilled manpower. The complexity and capital intensity of semiconductor manufacturing is a major barrier, with a new fab costing over \$1 billion to build. Setting up fabrication plants requires cutting-edge technologies, sophisticated materials and a meticulous production process. India has a shortage of skilled talent and lacks access to high-end technologies, which are licensed by patent holders at a high price. Apart from restrictive bureaucratic procedures, infrastructure limitations, such as power supply, water availability and logistics, can pose significant hurdles for semiconductor manufacturing. Also, India faces stiff competition from established semiconductor manufacturing hubs like China, Taiwan and South Korea. There is also an argument that the Centre's incentives are not sufficiently attractive compared to what other nations are offering. There are also apprehensions about policy stability. India imports all chips and only a few ele-

ments of the semiconductor supply value chain are indigenously available. There is a need to promote research collaborations between academic institutions and industry players to develop cutting-edge chip technologies to keep pace with the ever-changing consumer demands and market trends. While India boasts a large pool of engineering and technical talent, there is a need for specialised skills in semiconductor manufacturing.

Though India traditionally had a strong base for the semiconductor design industry, hardware manufacturing has remained elusive. Over the last 15 years, several consortiums made multiple attempts at chip-making but without success. The Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions have exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains, underscoring the need for domestic chip production to ensure both economic growth and national security. However, India's current investment in low-level assembly and packaging repeats the mistakes of China and limits the country's ability to move up the value chain. India must aim higher to compete on a global scale. It must foster innovation, encourage private-sector leadership and pursue global collaborations to access cutting-edge technologies. It needs a more comprehensive and forward-thinking strategy. Unlike China's inward-looking approach, India must embrace international partnerships. It must create a favourable ecosystem for startups and entrepreneurs to enter the semiconductor space by offering incentives such as investment tax breaks and funding opportunities. Building state-of-the-art fabrication facilities (fabs) is essential for India's semiconductor aspirations. The global semiconductor industry is poised for a decade of growth to become a trillion-dollar industry by 2030. The country aspires to be one of the major drivers of this growth by creating a conducive manufacturing environment and forging more international collaborations. The Indian semiconductor market, valued at about \$23.2 billion, is projected to reach \$80.3 billion by 2028.

# Israel-Hamas draft ceasefire deal: A look at the terms and tensions

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

If the Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal goes according to the current draft, then fighting will stop in Gaza for 42 days, and dozens of Israeli hostages and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners will be freed. In this first phase Israeli troops will pull back to the edges of Gaza, and many Palestinians will be able to return to what remains of their homes as stepped-up aid flows in. The question is if the ceasefire will survive beyond that first phase. That will depend on even more negotiations meant to begin within weeks. In those talks, Israel, Hamas, and the U.S., Egyptian and Qatari mediators will have to tackle the tough issue of how Gaza will be governed, with Israel demanding the elimination of Hamas. Without a deal within those 42 days to begin the second phase, Israel could resume its campaign in Gaza to destroy Hamas — even as dozens of hostages remain in the militants' hands. Hamas has agreed to a draft of the ceasefire deal, two officials confirmed, but Israeli officials say details are still being worked out, meaning some terms could change, or the whole deal could even fall through. Here is a look at the plan and potential pitfalls in the draft seen by the Associated Press. During the first phase, Hamas is to release 33 hostages in exchange for the freeing of hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. By the end of the phase, all living women, children and older people held by the militants should be freed.



and short of supplies. The draft deal specifies that equipment will be allowed in to build shelters for tens of thousands whose homes were destroyed and to rebuild infrastructure like electricity, sewage, communications and road systems. But here, too, implementation could bring problems. Even before the war, Israel has restricted entry of some equipment, arguing it could be used for military purposes by Hamas. Another Israeli official said arrangements are still being worked out over aid distribution and cleanup, but the plan is to prevent Hamas from having any role.

Further complicating matters, Israel's government is still committed to its plan to ban UNRWA from operating and to cut all ties between the agency and the Israeli government. The UN agency is the major distributor of aid in Gaza and provides education, health and other basic services to millions of Palestinian refugees across the region, including in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. If all of that works out, the sides must still tackle the second phase. Negotiations over it are to begin on Day 16 of the ceasefire. Phase two's broad outlines are laid out in the draft: All remaining hostages are to be released in return for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a "sustainable calm." But that seemingly basic exchange opens up much bigger issues. Israel has said it will not agree to a complete withdrawal until Hamas' military and political capabilities are eliminated and it cannot rearm — ensuring Hamas no longer runs Gaza. Hamas says it will not hand over the last hostages until Israel removes all troops from everywhere in Gaza.

So the negotiations will have to get both sides to agree to an alternative for governing Gaza. Effectively, Hamas has to agree to its own removal from power — something it has said it is willing to do, but it may seek to keep a hand in any future government, which Israel has vehemently rejected. The draft agreement says a deal on the second phase must be worked out by the end of the first. Pressure will be on both sides to reach a deal, but what happens if they don't? It could go in many directions. Hamas had wanted written guarantees that a ceasefire would continue as long as needed to agree on phase two. It has settled for verbal guarantees from the United States, Egypt and Qatar. Israel, however, has given no assurances. So Israel could threaten new military action to pressure Hamas in the negotiations or could outright resume its military campaign, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened. Hamas and the mediators are betting the momentum from the first phase will make it difficult for him to do that. Relaunching the assault would risk losing the remaining hostages — infuriating many against Netanyahu — though stopping short of destroying Hamas will also anger key political partners. The third phase is likely to be less contentious: The bodies of remaining hostages would be returned in exchange for a 3- to 5-year reconstruction plan to be carried out in Gaza under international supervision.

# Sri Lanka lifts ban on vehicle imports with effect from February 1

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Colombo: Sri Lanka has finally lifted the import ban on cars, having last week allowed only trucks, buses and double cabs. Through a new special gazette notification on Friday, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake lifted the ban on vehicle imports with effect from February 1.

This has completely ended the ban on vehicle imports imposed in early 2020 with the Covid outbreak. The ban was continued when Sri Lanka suffered its economic crisis triggered by forex shortage. In April 2022, Sri Lanka declared its first ever debt default. However, the imports will be subject to a 50 per cent surcharge on the import duties which is expected to push prices of new imports higher.

Dissanayake had earlier announced that 1.2 billion US dollars would be reserved for vehicle imports. Sri Lanka is guided by IMF conditions that its forex reserves have to be maintained and built in order to avoid another 2022 type crash of the economy.

# South Korean impeached President Yoon arrested by law enforcement officers



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol was detained in a massive law enforcement operation at the presidential compound Wednesday (January 15, 2025), defiantly insisting the anti-corruption agency didn't have the authority to investigate his actions but saying he complied to prevent violence. In a video message recorded before he was escorted to the headquarters of the anti-corruption agency, Yoon lamented the "rule of law has completely collapsed in this country." Mr. Yoon, the country's first sitting president to be apprehended, had been holed up in the Hannam-dong residence in the capital, Seoul, for weeks while vowing to "fight to the end" the efforts to oust him. He has justified his declaration of martial law Dec. 3 as a legitimate act of governance against an "anti-state" opposition employing its legislative majority to thwart his agenda. The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials said Yoon was brought into custody about five hours after investigators arrived at the presidential compound and about three hours after they successfully entered the residence, in their second attempt to detain him over his imposition of martial law. A series of black SUVs, some equipped with sirens, were seen leaving the presidential compound with police escorts. Yoon was later seen stepping out of a vehicle after arriving at the agency's office in the nearby city of Gwacheon. Following the questioning, Mr. Yoon was expected to be sent to a detention center in Uiwang, near Seoul. In this image released by South Korean President Office via Yonhap, impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol speaks in Seoul, South Korea, What's next?

The anti-corruption agency, which is leading a joint investigation with the police and the military over whether Yoon's martial law declaration amounted to an attempted rebellion, has 48 hours to request a court order for a formal arrest on a charge of attempting a rebellion, and if it fails to do so, Mr. Yoon will be released. If Mr. Yoon is formally arrested, investigators can extend his detention to 20 days before transferring the case to public prosecutors for indictment. The anti-corruption agency told reporters that Mr. Yoon, during his first two hours of questioning, exercised his right to remain silent. The detention warrant for Mr. Yoon, issued by the Seoul Western District Court, said there were substantial reasons to suspect that he committed crimes as a "tringleader of a rebellion." Mr. Yoon's presidential powers were suspended when parliament impeached him on December 14. The impeachment case now rests with the Constitutional Court, which could formally remove Yoon from office or reject the case and reinstate him. In a separate message posted on his Facebook account after his detainment, Mr. Yoon claimed that "martial law is not a crime," saying his declaration was necessary to raise awareness about an opposition that was exercising "legislative dictatorship by blocking laws and budgets" and "paralyzing" state affairs. He denied the rebellion accusations, describing his impeachment as "fraud." The scene at the compound as they began the detention operation in the early morning, the anti-corruption investigators and police officers engaged in an hourslong standoff at the compound's gate with presidential security forces but otherwise encountered no meaningful resistance. Police officers were seen using wire cutters to remove the barbed wire placed by the presidential security service on the perimeter of the compound to block their entry. Some police officers used ladders to climb over rows of buses placed by the presidential security service near the compound's entrance, and then the investigators began moving up the hilly compound. The investigators and police later arrived in front of a metal gate

with a gold presidential mark that's near Yoon's residential building. Some officers were seen entering a security door on the side of the metal gate, joined by one of Yoon's lawyers and his chief of staff. The presidential security service later removed a bus and other vehicles that had been parked tightly inside the gate as a barricade.

Despite a court warrant for Mr. Yoon's detention, the presidential security service had insisted it's obligated to protect the impeached president and fortified the compound with barbed wire and rows of buses blocking paths. The preparations and the concerns South Korea's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, issued a statement early Wednesday urging law enforcement and the presidential security service to ensure there are no "physical clashes." Following Mr. Yoon's detainment, Choi met with diplomats from the Group of Seven nations, including the United States, Japan, Britain and Germany, as well as the representative of the European Union, to reassure them that the government was functioning stably. Why did the now-impeached President of South Korea declare martial law? | In Focus podcast

Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which drove the legislative campaign that led to Yoon's impeachment on Dec. 14, said Yoon's detention is the "first step toward restoring constitutional order, democracy, and realizing the rule of law." As investigators moved up the hillside compound, lawmakers from Mr. Yoon's People Power Party held a rally in nearby streets, decrying the efforts to detain him as unlawful. The National Police Agency met with field commanders in Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi province in recent days to plan their detainment efforts, and the size of those forces fueled speculation that more than a thousand officers could be deployed. The agency and police had openly warned that presidential bodyguards obstructing the execution of the warrant could be arrested. Mr. Yoon's lawyers have claimed that the detainment warrant issued by the Seoul Western District Court was invalid. They cited a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge — which would be Mr. Yoon. They also claimed that the anti-corruption agency had no legal authority to investigate rebellion allegations. "I am truly appalled to see illegalities upon illegalities upon illegalities being carried out and procedures being forcefully conducted under an invalid warrant," Yoon said in the video released before his detention. "I do not acknowledge the investigation by the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials. As the president, who is responsible for upholding the constitution and legal system of the Republic of Korea, my decision to comply with such illegal and invalid procedures is not an acknowledgment of them, but rather a willingness to prevent unfortunate and bloody incidents." Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose his impeachment near the presidential residence in Seoul, South Korea, on January 15, 2025

Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose his impeachment near the presidential residence in Seoul, South Korea, Mr. Yoon's supporters and critics have held competing protests near the residence — one side vowing to protect him, the other calling for his imprisonment — while thousands of police officers in yellow jackets closely monitored the tense situation.

What led to this? Mr. Yoon declared martial law and deployed troops around the National Assembly on Dec. 3. It lasted only hours before lawmakers managed to get through the blockade and vote to lift the measure. The opposition-led assembly voted to impeach him on rebellion charges Dec. 14. The Constitutional Court held its first formal hearing in the impeachment case on Tuesday, but the session lasted less than five minutes because Yoon refused to attend. The next hearing is set for Thursday, and the court will then proceed with the trial whether or not Yoon is there. The White House National Security Council issued a statement saying that the United States stands by its support for the Korean people and "our shared commitment to the rule of law." It said Washington remains committed to working with the government led by Seoul's acting leader, Choi, and reaffirms the strength of the countries' alliance.

# Know about Los Angeles area fires

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

LOS ANGELES: Wildfires, which have turned into infernos, have burnt homes and businesses in Los Angeles for a week, killing at least 25 people, displacing thousands of others, and destroying more than 12,000 buildings. Around 30 people are still missing. The blazes started on January 7, fueled by fierce Santa Ana winds. The Palisades, Eaton, Kenneth, and Hurst fires have consumed about 163 square kilometers. Investigators are still trying to determine what sparked the fires. AccuWeather puts the damage and economic losses at \$250 billion to \$275 billion. Here's what to know about the fires in the mountains surrounding LA, dry winds are blowing at the speed of 80 kph, which are likely to increase with the potential for more powerful gusts across the mountains into coastal and valley areas.

A red-flag warning has been in effect, but the weather service has issued a rare warning about a "particularly dangerous situation" related to severe fire conditions. The Santa Ana winds have turned seasonal wildfires into infernos that have leveled neighbourhoods in and around Los Angeles where there has been no significant rainfall in over eight months. Southern California's winds typically flow onshore from the Pacific, carrying moist air onto land. The Santa Ana winds are warm currents that move in the opposite direction. They usually occur from September through May. Though Biden has announced to cover 100 per cent of firefighting recovery, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers up to \$770 to help cover the evacuees' immediate needs, but its larger grants generally aren't available until after insurance companies pay out. Businesses can borrow up to \$2 million, while homeowners can borrow up to \$500,000 for rebuilding and another \$100,000 for personal property. LA County Recovers, a government-run program, posted interactive maps on its website that show the damage. Addresses may be entered into a search bar to find a specific location. Users can also see photos of the damaged buildings. Nine people have been charged with looting, including a group that stole an Emmy award from a house that had been evacuated. Another pair took more than \$200,000 worth of items.

Price gouging has become an issue with hotels, short-term rentals and medical supplies. Scammers are also soliciting donations for bogus relief efforts. Three were arrested outside the fire zones for starting small fires. The fires were spotted by alert citizens and quickly extinguished. One person was using a barbecue lighter to start fires. Another lit a trash can on fire. The third was caught lighting brush on fire. Sewer, water and power infrastructure across the re-



The other cohosts are Miriam Adelson, the Dallas Mavericks owner and widow of casino magnate Sheldon Adelson; Tilman Fertitta, casino magnate, Houston Rockets owner and Trump's pick to serve as U.S. ambassador to Italy; Todd Ricketts, the co-owner of the Chicago Cubs; and Ricketts' wife, Sylvie Léger.

gion has been significantly damaged, and several utilities have declared their drinking water unsafe until extensive testing can prove otherwise, which may take weeks or months. As toxic chemicals can get into damaged drinking water systems, experts say filtering or boiling won't help. About 88,000 people from highly populated neighborhoods including Pacific Palisades, Altadena and others remained under evacuation orders. Another 84,800 might be ordered to evacuate. More than 80,000 households were without power across California. Thousands have fled and many have lost their homes, including Hollywood stars Billy Crystal and Mandy Moore, and Los Angeles Lakers head coach JJ Redick.

Fires have also burned through more affordable communities such as Altadena, which has served generations of Black families. The fires have also destroyed several places of worship, including a mosque, a synagogue, a Catholic parish and a half-dozen Protestant churches. A person whose home was destroyed in the Eaton blaze claims in a lawsuit that Southern California Edison's equipment sparked the fires. Lightning is the most common source of fires in the US, according to the National Fire Protection Association, but investigators quickly ruled that out. There were no reports of lightning in the Palisades area or the terrain around the Eaton Fire, which started in eastern Los Angeles County. The next two most common causes are fires that are intentionally set or caused by electricity lines.



# Gukesh draws with Wei Yi, Praggnanandhaa outwits Caruana in Tata Masters



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

World champion D Gukesh maintained his half-point lead with an easy draw against Wei Yi of China, while R Praggnanandhaa outwitted top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States to come within striking distance of the leader after the 11th round of Tata Steel Masters.

The Indian was up a pawn when the endgame surfaced but the position was level and the peace was signed in 30 moves. The draw helped Gukesh jump to eight points out of a possible 11 in the first major tournament of the year, while Praggnanandhaa stunned Caruana with black pieces to move to 7.5 points.

As it happened, Caruana's 32nd move was a huge blunder giving Praggnanandhaa another victory five moves later. On a good day for other Indians too, P Harikrishna accounted for Alexey Sarana of Serbia while Leon Luke Mendonca put it across Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia.

Meanwhile, Dutchman Erwin L'Ami regained the sole lead in this section after a finely-crafted victory over Chinese teenager Mioyi Lu. L'Ami, on eight points, benefitted as the overnight sole leader Nguyen Thai Dai Van was outdone by Svane Frederik of Germany.

# Jasprit Bumrah reigns supreme, named ICC men's Test Cricketer of 2024



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was on Monday (January 27, 2025) named ICC men's Test Cricketer of the Year for amassing 71 wickets in just 13 matches at a jaw-dropping sub-15 average, statistics that placed him heads and shoulders above his contemporaries during a phenomenal 2024.

Bumrah pipped fellow nominees England's Harry Brook and Joe Root, and ICC's Emerging Cricketer of the Year Kamindu Mendis to win the award, becoming the first

Indian cricketer since Virat Kohli in 2018 to do so. Before Kohli, legendary off-spinner R Ashwin had been named the Test Cricketer and Cricketer of the Year in 2016. "I am deeply honoured to receive the ICC men's Test Cricketer of the Year award. Test cricket has always been a format I hold close to my heart, and to be recognized on this platform is truly special," Bumrah said in a media release.

He sent down an eye-watering 357 overs in the format, but maintained a phenomenal average of 2.96, breaking the mold in the quick-scoring era of the Test game. He ended 2024 with an annual strike rate of just 30.1. He became the fourth bowler from India to take more than 70 Test wickets in a calendar year, following in the footsteps of Ravichandran Ashwin, Anil Kumble and Kapil Dev.

# Sachin Tendulkar to get BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Legendary former batter Sachin Tendulkar, whose records and impact on international cricket have stood the test of time, will be conferred with the BCCI's Lifetime Achievement Award at the Board's annual gala in Mumbai on Saturday (February 1, 2025).



where wished that he was his son. When he withstood pain and nearly took India to a victory against Pakistan in Chennai in 1999 and broke down, a billion hearts broke into pieces. When he shed tears of joy while hugging Mahendra Singh Dhoni on April 2, 2011, a nation shared his happiness.

BT' which is Before Tendulkar, 'DT' which will be 'During Tendulkar' and 'PT' that is Post Tendulkar. Tendulkar always united India with his craftsmanship creating organic love in the pre-social media days free of toxicity.

# Virat Kohli's Ranji Trophy Return : Got removed by Himanshu Sangwan after scoring 6in the 1st Innings

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

Virat Kohli's first Ranji Trophy innings in 13 years lasted all of 15 balls, extending his lean run and fuelling the raging debate over his form. For the 5000-odd crowd that assembled here to watch Kohli, it was fun while it lasted but when he had his off-stump rooted by Railways pacer Himanshu Sangwan in the 28th over of Delhi's first innings, a majority of them took no time to exit the Arun Jaitley Stadium.



After collecting two singles, Kohli decided to dominate the opposition—right-arm pacer Sangwan in this particular over. Standing way outside the crease, Kohli disdainfully dispatched Sangwan towards the straight boundary.

# Badoni helps Delhi claim first-innings lead after Kohli's flop show

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

An estimate of the exact time that Virat Kohli spent at the batting crease on Friday was between 20 and 24 minutes. Whatever it was, it was nowhere near enough for Kohli to rediscover his form heading into the ICC Champions Trophy beginning on February 19.



drive, but was done in by a ball that jagged back through the yawning gap between bat and pad and sent the off-pole for a stroll. When the day's play drew to a close, he was felicitated by the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA).

# Litmus test for Shami as Men in Blue hope to end on a high

GNS News Agency, FEB 1

A series without real context sealed with a game to spare. Despite most of the boxes being ticked, India's last T20I game of the season at the Wankhede Stadium will be far from being a meaningless affair.



The pacer has fond memories of playing at the Wankhede; Buttler & Co. will be desperate to sign off with a victory

who was substituted as a precautionary measure — will be retained at his home ground. The Hindu understands that Dube had been cleared by doctors at the Pune stadium after checking him for a suspected concussion.

# Mukund, Ramkumar register easy wins as India lead 2-0 against Togo

New Delhi: Sasikumar Mukund returned to Davis Cup action with a fluent straight-set victory while Ramkumar Ramanathan hardly broke a sweat in his match as an untroubled India took a 2-0 lead in the World Group I play-off tie against Togo, here Saturday.

sting as he made high number of unforced errors. His returns mostly fell on net or flew over the lines. Ramkumar lost just one point on his serve in the opening set, making high-quality serves while Setodji struggled to contain his unforced errors.



## Shahid Kapoor film is dragged down by loose threads, long slack stretches



GNS News Agency, FEB 1

themselves, as well as anyone else, dubbing the Shahid Kapoor starrer a remake. Kapoor plays Dev Ambre, a hot-headed cop who is constantly on the boil. A drunk-on-power neta (Girish Kulkarni) who doesn't abide by the rules? Wade into said neta's goons, and shout him down. A colleague (Pavai Gulati) who is being too soft on the politician? Give him a lecture on good cops who need to do their duty. Female colleague (Kubbra Sait) daring to tell him that she may know more about a locality? Scoff at her.

Basically, Dev aka Deva comes off as a cross between Zanjeer's Vijay — several scenes have been helpfully shot against a Mumbai wall with Amitabh Bachchan's visage plastered across it — and Dirty Harry, with a vigorous dance sequence involving a number of crotch thrusts thrown in, as a differentiator. Kapoor's close-shaved head in this one may remind you of his appearance in 'Haider', which was his last striking performance. He adds in a cocked-to-a-side head, collar open enough to show off chain against buffed, gleaming chest, dangling cigarettes, and a slo-mo stride to match. The look is a good fit for a badass movie cop. But Shahid Kapoor cannot get past that, getting stuck in a flat, stylised delivery, for the most part. Naming a film after a titular character skews the script: everything flows from hero Shahid Kapoor's actions and reactions, whereas a 'Mumbai Police' keeps our attention on everyone in it, even if Sukumaran is clearly in the lead. Leading lady Pooja Hegde, who returns to the screen after a gap, leaves an impact in her brief role. Less can, more often than not, be more. There are at least a couple of instances when Shahid Kapoor does come alive, reminding us of the actor that he can be. Both are scenes in which he allows his character to be vulnerable, and you wish there were more of these, rather than the loose threads and the long slack-blah stretches which make you feel every minute of its nearly two-and-a-half hour length.

Deva movie review: Shahid Kapoor plays Dev Ambre, a hot-headed cop who is constantly on the boil. Deva movie review: Shahid Kapoor plays Dev Ambre, a hot-headed cop who is constantly on the boil. Deva Movie Review & Rating: A bunch of cops in Mumbai track down the killer of a fellow officer, opening up several cans of worms. That, more or less, was the thrust of the Roshan Andrews-directed Mumbai Police (2013), headlined by Prithviraj Sukumaran.

Another bunch of cops in Mumbai do the same, broadly, in the 2025 'Deva', also by the same director. From what I remember of the original, there seem to be several scenes which are exact replicas, but for some strange reason, the filmmakers have taken great pains to prevent

## Tanuja was scared that Kajol would end up killing sister during their fights, recalls Tanishaa: 'She had a very bad temper'

Like many other siblings, Tanishaa Mukerji too shares a special bond with her sister Kajol. And while the sisters cherish each other today, things weren't always so smooth between them. In a recent interview, Tanishaa shared that her mother Tanuja banned the two sisters from fighting physically as she was scared that Kajol would kill Tanishaa.

In an interaction with Hauterrfly, Tanishaa was asked about her childhood memories and shared how she was raised by a bunch of strong women. "My great-grandmother raised me. My mom would go for work. Her brother and his 2 daughters were also used to stay with us. So, I grew up with three sisters," shared Tanishaa. When asked about her fights with sister Kajol during their childhood, Tanishaa recalled that mom Tanuja was "scared" for her younger daughter's life. "Kajol and I used to fight a lot. She is older than me in age as well as in size. She is physically bigger than me," she said and added, "My mother used to get scared that Kajol would kill me one day. She had a very bad temper when she was a kid. My mom used to be very scared." Tanishaa went on to add, "My mom made a rule that we can fight without touching each other. I think it was a very good thing that Mummy did for us. Because of that, Kajol and I developed a strong bond of sisterhood for each other." Tanishaa made her debut in the movies in the early 2000s but got people's attention when she appeared with



Uday Chopra in the 2005 YRF's film Neal n Nikki. Tanishaa also participated in Bigg Boss 7 as a contestant and emerged as the first runner-up. She also participated on the dance reality show Jhalak Dikhla Jaa.

## Sudesh Lehri says he's illiterate, made shoes and sold vegetables for a living: 'When Archana Puran Singh laughed at me, I made many houses'



Speaking with Archana Puran Singh and her family, Sudesh shared, "I have said this several times that I have worked really hard to be where I am today. When I started my career, I struggled so much that I became bankrupt, my house was sold. Everybody laughed at me. But, when Archana Puran Singh laughed at me, I made many houses."

Sudesh Lehri is among the famous Indian comedians. While he has been in the industry for over two decades, he gained widespread recognition after his participation in the The Great Indian Laughter Challenge Season 8. Over the years, he appeared on various comedy shows including Kapil Sharma's television shows. He recently appeared on Archana Puran Singh's YouTube channel, where he shared his journey to success and all the struggles he went through as a child. "A drunkard slapped me mid performance", shared the comedian.

Speaking with Archana Puran Singh and her family, Sudesh shared, "I have said this several times that I have worked really hard to be where I am today. When I started

my career, I struggled so much that I became bankrupt, my house was sold. Everybody laughed at me. But, when Archana Puran Singh laughed at me, I made many houses." He also spoke about Archana's bungalow in Madh Island. He said, "I always doubted whether or not you are rich, but today, it has been confirmed that you are indeed rich. I have seen such homes only in films." Listening to Sudesh praise her house, Archana interrupted and said, "I have seen your house on your YouTube channel, you have made such a beautiful house. You even have a home theatre." Sudesh replies, "I have made home theatre only for Krushna (Abhishek)." When a curious Archana asked, "Why?" He said, "Because his films don't release in theatres. He always claims they are in theatres, but I can never find." During their conversation, Sudesh shared, "I have done a lot of hard work when I was young. I have seen poverty. I have worked in small shops, used to make tea, I have worked in several factories, I used to make footwear. I sold vegetables. The rich don't have to lie, but being poor we often have to lie when money lenders would ask for money. All this worked like an acting course for me."

Sudesh used to do private shows before attaining fame. He shared the one incident that changed his life. He said, "Once I was doing a show. There was a drunkard there, he randomly came on stage, held me by my collar and slapped me. My mic fell. All my teammates were ready to beat him up, but I stopped them. Later, I was very disappointed. I was like 'What am I even doing, who are these people, they don't value talent and art.' I returned home and told my wife, 'I am never going to perform at weddings.'"

Sudesh then decided to sell his house and return people's money. "I wanted to do something of my own. I wanted to create a brand of my own and gain fame. I knew I will only be respected if my build my name. Then I got a show. It became a massive hit. I toured so many places." He then lightened the mood by showing off his singing skills. Seeing his talent, Archana shared with her family, "I never believed he was illiterate. I thought he was just joking."

Later, Sudesh shared, "I have never even been inside a school. Recently, I had to shoot an ad, we had to play school kids. It was the first time that I entered a school." Sudesh even shared his wedding story. He said, "My marriage was fixed and people were behind my life to get married. I got frustrated and said 'Get me married right now, or I won't do it.' We had this conversation at 10 am on a Sunday morning, by 12 pm I was married. We tied the knot at a temple."

## Madhavan defends stalking in Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein, says no other way to approach a girl but 'follow her': 'Can't judge on Western yardstick'



R Madhavan and Dia Mirza-starrer Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein did not work at the box office when it released but in the years since, the film has developed quite a following. In the first few years, fans expressed their love for the characters but later, as they evolved, they started to see the problematic aspects of the film. The film's lead character lies and stalks the woman he likes, and is rewarded for his misdeeds. Now, Madhavan has spoken about these aspects and said that back in the day, there was no other way to approach a woman other than stalking. Disagreeing with the criticism, Madhavan shared on Mashable India that he doesn't agree with the criticism. He said that the film was being judged on a "Western yardstick" which wasn't fair. "Main inn sab baaton se bilkul sehmat nahi rakhta. Ye green flag, blue flag ye sab cheezein nikkamme logon ka nikkamma kaam hai.

## Salman Khan calls himself 'the dumbest' for participating in nephew Arhaan's podcast, says he speaks to himself 'rather harshly'

In 2024, Salman Khan's nephew Arhaan Khan started his own podcast and after releasing a few episodes and teasing an episode with Salman Khan, the podcast channel went silent. Now, Arhaan has shared a new teaser featuring his uncle and some of the life lessons he has shared with the young guns of the Khan family. The teaser video included some throwback moments from his old interviews and some footage from their family time. During their conversation on the podcast, Salman Khan can be seen making some revelations about himself as well as advising his nephew to always be present for family and friends. The teaser starts with an old interview of Salman Khan where the interviewer can be heard saying, "What you do on the screen is everybody's business." To this, Salman Khan agrees and replies, "Exactly. It's the image, you know? You are selling the image basically. I mean like me as an individual, I am just like all you people. Like just a normal human being."

The teaser cuts to present day where the superstar can be seen having a conversation with his nephew and saying, "You just need to be there for friends, family. The effort that you have to keep on putting in." He then goes on to share some secrets and revealed, "If I give you advice, the advice I give to myself, way I speak to myself... you will hate me. Because I speak to myself rather harshly." Salman Khan can also be heard speaking about forgiveness. He says, "You can forgive a person once, twice, third time... chalo khalaa." He then pulls his nephew's leg and calls him dumb. Pointing towards his nephew and his friends, the actor says, "Dumb and dumbers and we are the dumbest for doing this." The video ends with Salman's another advise, where he says, "When your body says no,

Mera maanna hai ki ek gentleman hona zaroori hai. Bachpan se hume sikhaya gaya hai ki ladies se kaise baat ki jaaye, kaise unhe approach kiya jaaye, aur ye hamesha hamari sanskriti ka ek hissa raha hai. Badmaash toh hote hi hain. Par aap hume Western yardstick se judge nahi kar sakte (I completely disagree with all this. These concepts like green flag, blue flag—these are just meaningless things said by idle people. I believe it's important to be a gentleman. Since childhood, we were taught how to talk to women, how to approach them, and this has always been a part of our culture. Of course, there are troublemakers everywhere, but you can't judge us using a Western yardstick.)"

He then went on to say that there was no other way to approach a woman back in the day so following her around was the only way. "Main aapse puchta hoon, jo log problematic bolte hain. Us zamane mein agar Mumbai mein kisi ladki se hume mulaqat karni hoti, hum dil se mohabbat karte hai aur izzat se milna chahte hai. Toh kaise mile? (I ask those who call it problematic — back in the day, if we wanted to meet a girl in Mumbai, we did it with love and respect. If we were in an unfamiliar city and wanted to meet a girl, how would we do it?)"

Madhavan then questioned that in Western countries, people meet at bars and it is considered totally acceptable. He added that if someone fell in love with a woman in those days, one had to track the woman, follow her to her house and then contact her as otherwise, there was no other way. "Aap usko track kiye bagair, uske peeche jaakar woh kahan rehti hai, woh jaane bagair, use contact kar hi nahi sakte. Kaise karta koi insan? (Without tracking her, without following her home, you couldn't contact her. How could anyone do it?)" He also added that his character Madhav Shastri in the film did not have any other option but to stalk her. The 2001 Gautham Vasudev Menon film Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein was the Hindi remake of his own Tamil film Minnale. Produced by Vasu Bhagnani's Pooja Entertainment, the film marked the Bollywood debuts of both Madhavan and actor Dia Mirza. The film also featured Saif Ali Khan.

The teaser starts with an old interview of Salman Khan where the interviewer can be heard saying, "What you do on the screen is everybody's business." To this, Salman Khan agrees and replies, "Exactly. It's the image, you know? You are selling the image basically. I mean like me as an individual, I am just like all you people. Like just a normal human being."



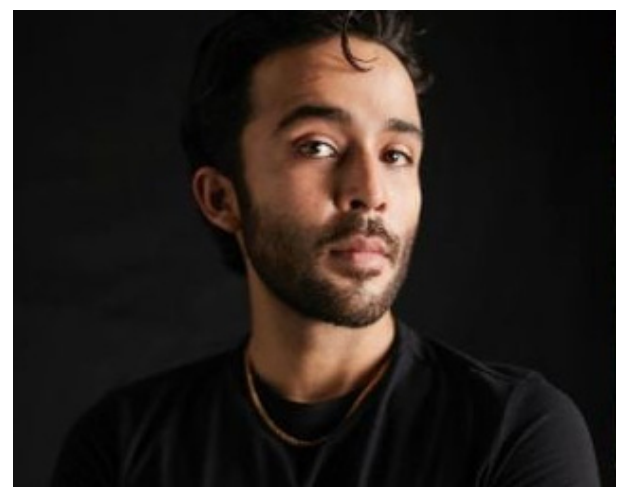
your mind should say yes. When the body and mind both say no, you should say, come on guys, one last round." Salman also shared the promo and shared that this podcast was shot almost a year ago. He wrote, "I spoke to the boys a year ago, I'm not sure if they even remember all the advice. My first ever podcast appearance." Tagging Arhaan's podcast handle Dumb Biryani, Salman Khan shared the podcast will stream soon.

## 'Embarrassed' Zahan Kapoor had no idea about cousin Ranbir Kapoor until his debut Saawariya: 'We were slightly more distant'

Zahan Kapoor, the second cousin of actors Kareena Kapoor and Ranbir Kapoor, recently gained recognition for his work in Vikramaditya Motwane's Black Warrant. In a recent interview, Zahan shared that he did not grow up with them and did not know much about Ranbir until his debut film Saawariya. Zahan is the grandson of late actor Shashi Kapoor, and Ranbir and Kareena are grandchildren of Raj Kapoor. Raj and Shashi were sons of Prithviraj Kapoor.

Speaking about his distant relationship with his cousins, Zahan told Bollywood Hungama, "I have developed a relationship with them now more as a young adult because they are my second cousins. So, there is a separation. They are first cousins to each other so their relationship with each other is still closer. But, I have childhood memories with them. The structure of the family is also just so big." Shashi Kapoor would host the annual Kapoor family Christmas lunch for many years. After his passing, his son Kunal Kapoor took over that role. Zahan said that they were "distant" during his childhood as they were already grown up and working, while he was much younger. He said, "While growing up, we were slightly more distant. They were already working members, I was a young kid. We grew up differently. My dadaji also made a conscious decision to separate himself; he valued his privacy. As a nuclear family, we value our privacy. The family would gather on special occasions and once in a while, maybe randomly also."

He revealed that he was in school when Ranbir made his debut in the movies and while he knew of Rishi Kapoor,



he did not know much about his family. "I am so embarrassed about it. I did not really have an idea about Ranbir Kapoor before he was launched. Of course, I knew Chintu uncle. But, we were so separate. I was living in my world as a young kid. It was around the time when he made his splash with Saawariya as a young adult in 2007. I was still in school." In the same conversation, Zahan also talked about he is envious of Ranbir as he can stay away from social media. "A little separation from social media is necessary. We live in a different age."