



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA



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INBRIEF

IndiGo cancels 57 flights; Hyderabad among affected airports



Mumbai: Domestic carrier IndiGo on Saturday cancelled 57 flights across its network, citing 'bad weather' at various airports, according to the airline's website. The airline has also cancelled 13 flights, as of now, for Sunday, with two of them for 'operational reasons', and the remaining largely due to 'forecasted bad weather'. The Gurugram-headquartered IndiGo, which cancelled thousands of flights early this month on account of stricter norms related to the pilot's duty period and rest, have been cancelling some flights for more than one week now on account of 'bad weather'. The 57 flights cancelled on Sunday include from Chandigarh, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Amritsar, Bengaluru, Delhi, Gaya, Kolkata, Chennai, Jaipur and Pune, among others.

Cong plans 'MGNREGA Bachao Abhiyan' from Jan 5; Kharge says Modi govt will face people's anger

NEW DELHI (TSIT): The Congress will launch a nationwide campaign against the repeal of the UPA-era rural employment legislation MGNREGA on January 5, similar to the pushback against the three farm laws which eventually forced the Narendra Modi government to rollback its decision, party president Mallikarjun Kharge said.

At a press conference here on Saturday after a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Kharge said the party will lead the 'MGNREGA Bachao Abhiyan' across the country. The VB-G RAM G Bill, replacing the 20-year-old MGNREGA, was passed in Parliament during the recently concluded Winter Session of Parliament amid vociferous protests by the opposition. The new law has a provision for 125 days of wage employment for rural workers.

He said the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was not just a scheme, but the 'Right to Work' given by the Constitution.

"People are angry over the repeal of MGNREGA. The government will have to face the consequences," he said.

"At the CWC meeting, we took an oath that a campaign would be launched with MGNREGA as its focal point. The Congress would take the lead and start a "MGNREGA Bachao Abhiyan" from

January 5," Kharge said. He said party leaders took an oath of protecting MGNREGA at any cost.

"We will fight unitedly for the rights of rural labourers to dignity, employment, wages and timely payment and will protect the rights of demand-based employment and gram sabha," he said.

Kharge said the Congress would democratically oppose the "conspiracy" to erase Mahatma Gandhi's name from MGNREGA and to "convert the rights of workers into charity".

Referring to the cost-sharing clause between the Centre and state governments under the VB-G RAM G Act, the Congress chief said states will have an additional expenditure burden and termed it a one-sided decision taken without consultation. "This law has been brought to crush the poor. We will fight against it on the streets and in Parliament," he said.

Earlier, speaking at the CWC meeting, Kharge said repealing MGNREGA is an insult to Mahatma Gandhi. The Congress chief cited precedents, including the 2015 amendments to India's land acquisition law that were effectively rolled back. He also quoted the three farm laws, which were first brought in as ordinances and then passed in Parliament amid opposition protests, but had to be repealed following the 2020-21 farmers' protests.

10.56 LAKH NAMES DELETED AS EC RELEASES ASSAM'S DRAFT ELECTORAL ROLLS AFTER SPECIAL REVISION

GUWAHATI (TSIT) The names of 10.56 lakh voters have been deleted after Special Revision of electoral rolls in Assam, where assembly polls would be in less than six months. According to the integrated draft rolls released by the Election Commission on Saturday, the state has a total of 2,51,09,754 voters, excluding 93,021 D-Voters or doubtful voters. Additionally, the names of 10,56,291 voters have been deleted due to death, shifting, or multiple entries.

D-Voters are a category of voters in Assam who have been disenfranchised by the government on account of their alleged lack of proper citizenship credentials. D-Voters are determined by special tribunals under the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the person declared as a D-Voter is not given a voter card.

All related particulars,



such as name, age and photograph, of D-Voters have been carried forward to the draft electoral roll without any change. The draft rolls were published after house-to-house verification of the Special Revision was held from November 22 to December 20. Now, voters will be able to file claims and objections till January 22, and the final electoral rolls will be published on February 10, a statement said.

Of the 10.56 lakh, 4,78,992 names were deleted because of deaths, it said. The verification was conducted in 61,03,103 households across the state, it added. The exercise involved 35 District Election Officers (DEOs), 126 Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), 1,260 AEROS, 29,656 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and 2,578 BLO Supervisors, the statement said.

DMK has earned strong reputation for its governance, welfare schemes: Stalin



TIRUVANNAMALAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Saturday said the Dravidian model government led by him in the state has earned a good name even from the people who have not voted for the DMK. However, it was not the case with the BJP that governs the Centre, as even its supporters were making searing criticism of the union government, he alleged.

Addressing a government function at Malappambadi near here, the chief minister said the DMK regime is working for the overall development of Tamil Nadu, which includes each and every district and every family. The Dravidian model of governance and growth across sectors speaks volumes about the state overcoming a string of challenges. Due to the BJP-led government's implementation of GST, the state does not have the "right over tax," he alleged and claimed that the funds due to the state have not been released by the Centre. On top of it, the state has a governor who has been deputed by the Centre only to cause trouble to the elected gov-

KTR claims rising public anger against Congress in Telangana



HYDERABAD, DEC 27: BRS Working President K. Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) on Saturday said that a state-wide revolt against the Congress government has begun in Telangana, citing public anger over unfulfilled promises and alleged governance failures. Speaking at an Atmiya Sammelanam of newly elected BRS-backed Sarpanches and Upa-Sarpanches in Hyderabad, KTR asserted that the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) would reclaim power.

KTR accused the Congress government, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, of betraying farmers by failing to release Rythu Bandhu investment support on multiple occasions. He contrasted this with the previous BRS regime under K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR), claiming Rs 72,000 crore was directly transferred to farmers without delays.

He alleged that the Congress came to power through deception and criticised the government for focusing on inquiries and cases rather than administration.

KTR also hailed the BRS-backed candidates'

performance in recent Gram Panchayat elections, calling it a sign of strong grassroots support despite political pressure.

Announcing protective measures for elected local representatives, KTR said BRS would set up legal cells and training programmes in every district. He emphasised the constitutional authority of Sarpanches and accused the government of misusing power to harass local bodies. He highlighted that the government's retreat on the Lagacharla land issue was a direct result of the party's massive protest in Mahabubabad.



Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah participating in the inaugural function of 'Anti-Terrorism Conference-2025' in New Delhi on December 26, 2025.

Four of family die from toxic fumes in Bihar's Chhapra, three critical



PATNA: Four members of a family, including three infants, died after inhaling toxic fumes from a charcoal brazier in Chhapra city of Bihar, while three others are battling for their lives, police said on Saturday. Three other family members are battling for their lives and remain in critical condition, the police added.

According to information, the family had lit a charcoal brazier inside their room to protect themselves from the severe cold on Friday night. As the room was closed, carbon monoxide gas accumulated, caus-

ing all the occupants to lose consciousness. The deceased have been identified as 70-year-old Kamalawati Devi, three-year-old Tejansh, seven-month-old Adhya, and nine-month-old Gudiya. The deaths of the elderly woman and three infants have left the family in deep shock and mourning. On receiving information, neighbours gathered at the spot, and the police and ambulance services were immediately alerted. Some family members had come from Varanasi after medical treatment and were also affected by the fumes. Anjali, Amisha, Amit Kumar, and the wife of Sanjay Sharma were rushed to Chhapra Sadar Hospital. Hospital authorities confirmed that three of the injured are in critical condition, and a team of doctors is closely monitoring their treatment.

Develop curriculum to expose urban students to village life: Shivakumar



BENGALURU (TSIT) Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday called for the development of a curriculum that creates awareness about village life among urban students, stressing the need to bridge the growing gap between rural and urban realities. Speaking at the Farmers' Day celebrations held at Gandhi Krishi Vigyan Kendra (GKVK) in Bengaluru, he said the Agriculture Minister and Vice-Chancellors of Agricultural Universities should jointly for-

gested including two to three days of village tours as part of the academic syllabus. Recalling his personal experiences, Shivakumar said he comes from a farmer's family and had attended a poultry farming course at GKVK during his college days. He noted that his family continues to be connected with agriculture through horticulture and plantation activities, adding that he understands the challenges faced by the farming community.

SC delivered key verdicts on presidential reference, Waqf law in 2025

NEW DELHI: Landmark verdicts on the powers of governors and the president on bills, staying few provisions of the Waqf law and a series of path-breaking judgements defined 2025 for the Supreme Court, a year which saw an unprecedented shoe attack on CJI B R Gavai and the discovery of huge cash at high court judge Yashwant Varma's bungalow here.

The apex judiciary saw a rare transition through three Chief Justices of India (CJs) within a single year -- Sanjiv Khanna, Gavai, and the incumbent, Surya Kant.

In a move aimed at bolstering judicial independence, justices Khanna and Gavai publicly announced their decisions to not to take any post-

retirement assignments, an issue which has been keenly debated.

This set the stage for further institutional transparency, as the court finally began uploading the asset statements of its judges to the public domain and introduced a first-of-its-kind reservation policy for SC/ST categories in its administrative staffing.

The judiciary was rocked after burnt wads of huge currency notes were found at the official residence of Justice Varma, the then sitting Delhi High Court judge, on March 14. This led to a series of decisions including administrative ones by the then CJI Khanna.

After an in-house inquiry panel indicted Justice Varma, he refused to

resign even after being nudged by CJI Khanna, who was then compelled to write to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his impeachment.

Currently, a parliamentary panel is conducting its inquiry against Varma, a condition precedent before the impeachment.

On October 6, advocate Rakesh Kishore, now suspended, hurled a shoe towards then CJI Gavai during proceedings. He was apparently miffed over Gavai's alleged remarks on Hindu gods in an earlier proceeding. As the incident sparked widespread condemnation, Modi spoke to the then CJI and said the attack was "reprehensible" and angered every Indian.

TN jaggery producers seek inclusion in Pongal gift scheme to revive traditional industry



CHENNAI: As the harvest festival of Pongal approaches, farmers and jaggery producers across Tamil Nadu have urged the state government to include locally produced jaggery in the annual Pongal gift hamper distributed through fair price shops.

They said that such a move would not only support traditional cottage industries but also provide much-needed relief to thousands of rural families struggling with rising production costs and declining demand.

Every year, the Tamil Nadu government distributes essential commodities such as raw rice, sugar and sugarcane to ration card holders as part of its festive welfare initiative.

Jaggery producers argue that replacing refined sugar with locally made jaggery would strengthen rural livelihoods while promoting healthier consumption practices.

Dharmapuri district, one of the major jaggery-producing belts in the state, has over 100 traditional jaggery units spread across areas such as Palakkad, Pernagar, Papparapatti and surrounding villages.

Despite contributing significantly to the state's total jaggery output, producers in the region say the sector has been steadily declining due to low demand, rising input costs and shrinking profit margins. Industry representatives note that Dharmapuri alone accounts for nearly 17 to 20 per cent of Tamil Nadu's jaggery pro-

duction, with around 60 tonnes produced daily. However, escalating costs have made production increasingly unviable. To produce 100 kilograms of jaggery, nearly one tonne of sugarcane is required, costing around Rs 2,800. Additional expenses, such as transportation, fuel, labour and processing, push the total production cost to around Rs 5,200-Rs 5,500, while market prices hover at only Rs 46-Rs 48 per kg, resulting in consistent losses.

Labour shortage has further compounded the crisis. Jaggery production is labour-intensive and requires skilled workers, who now demand daily wages ranging between Rs 700 and Rs 1,000.

Many workers are unwilling to continue in the sector due to the physically demanding nature of the job and uncertain returns. Producers believe that including jaggery in the Pongal gift scheme would provide assured demand, stabilise prices and help sustain traditional production methods.

Officials in the district administration have acknowledged that similar demands were raised in previous years, but clarified that the final decision rests with the state government as it involves policy-level considerations.

For thousands of farmers and small-scale manufacturers, the move is seen as a lifeline that could revive a declining rural industry while reinforcing the cultural essence of the harvest festival.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigating the Sabarimala gold theft case on Friday extended its probe to Tamil Nadu in search of a jeweller who has alleged connection to the case, according to police. Police are on the lookout for Balamurugan, also known as D Mani, from Dindigul. According to police sources, Mani and his associate came under the SIT's radar after senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala gave a statement, alleging the involvement of an international antique racket

Rajasthan: Fog in parts of Udaipur, Kota; Karauli coldest at 3.1 degrees C

JAIPUR: Rajasthan witnessed cold and dry weather over the past 24 hours while fog was witnessed at isolated places in the Udaipur and Kota divisions, the Meteorological Centre here said on Saturday.

According to the weather office, minimum temperature dipped sharply in several parts of the state, with Karauli being the coldest place in the state at 3.1 degrees Celsius. Pali recorded a low of 3.4 degrees Celsius, Anta 4.5 degrees, Dausa 4.7 degrees, Alwar 5.2 degrees, Nagaur 5.3 degrees, Lunkarsar 5.8 degrees and Sirohi 6.2 degrees Celsius. Jaipur, the state's capital, recorded a minimum temperature of 9.6 degrees Celsius on Saturday morning.

Barmer was the hottest place in the state, registering a maximum temperature of 29.0 degrees Celsius, the department said.

in the Sabarimala gold theft incident.

Based on Chennithala's revelation, the SIT also recorded the statement of an NRI businessman, who told police that the gold from Sabarimala might have reached Mani, who allegedly procured large volumes of temple antiques. The SIT traced Mani's phone number and also obtained a search warrant and reached his office in Dindigul, police said. However, the businessman told the SIT he was not the D Mani they were looking for. He said he was Subramaniam, also known as MS Mani, and was engaged in real estate, not gold trade.

SIT sources said the phone number traced by the team was being used by MS Mani, following which they decided to conduct a detailed investigation to ascertain whether D Mani and MS Mani are the same person. A notice was issued to Subramaniam to appear for interrogation in Thiruvananthapuram. The SIT is also looking for one Srikrishna in Virudhunagar, police said. SIT sources said the involvement of Mani and his associate in the Sabarimala case has yet to be established. So far, it has arrested nine persons, including two former presidents of the Travancore Devaswom Board, in two cases related to the gold theft from the 'dwaramalaka' idols and the 'sreekovil' doorframes.

70 detained, 6 cops hurt after stone pelting outside Jaipur mosque during anti-encroachment drive

JAIPUR: More than 70 persons have been detained after a stone pelting incident in Jaipur district early Friday after the administration moved to remove iron railings erected along the road outside a mosque, police said.

Six policemen sustained injuries when the mob pelted stones at them. The incident occurred around 3 am near the bus stand in Chomu, 40 km from Jaipur. Tension erupted when police attempted to remove the iron railings outside the mosque. They had to use tear gas shells and mild force to disperse the crowd, officials said. Local residents and traders had repeatedly complained to the police that the

encroachment caused frequent traffic congestion at the busy intersection. "The situation is completely under control now. Six policemen sustained injuries in stone pelting. Strict action will be taken against those who took the law into their hands," DGP (Law and Order) Sanjay Agarwal said. "Seventy people have been detained for their involvement in the incident," Chomu DSP Usha Yadav said. According to police, talks were held on Thursday evening between the administration and members of one community about removing some stones encroaching on the road outside the mosque. The community members agreed to remove them on their own. However, after the stones were removed, some people allegedly began installing iron railings outside the mosque to create a boundary, triggering fresh objections and unrest.

Sabarimala gold theft: SIT hunts for Tamil Nadu jeweller for suspected links



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Centre's green panel gives nod to Dulhasti hydel power project on Chenab river

NEW DELHI: A panel under the Ministry of Environment has approved the 260-megawatt Dulhasti Stage-II hydropower project on Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, officials said on Saturday.

The clearance comes in the backdrop of India suspending the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan following the deadly Pahalgam terror attack in April this year.

The Expert Appraisal Committee on hydel projects accorded the approval during its 45th meeting earlier this month, paving the way for floating construction tenders for the run-of-the-river project, estimated to cost over Rs 3,200 crore.

According to the minutes of the meeting, the panel noted that the water of Chenab basin is shared between India and Pakistan in accordance with provisions of the Indus Water Treaty, 1960, and the project's parameters were planned in accordance with the treaty.

"However, the Indus Water Treaty stands suspended effective from April 23, 2025," the panel noted. When the Indus Water Treaty was in force, Pakistan had rights over the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers, and India over the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

With the treaty now in abeyance, the Centre is pushing ahead with several hydroelectric projects in the Indus basin, such as Sawalkote, Ratle, Bursar, Pakal Dul, Kwar, Kiru, and Kirthi I and II.

Dulhasti Stage-II is an extension of the existing 390 MW Dulhasti Stage-I Hydro Electric Project (Dulhasti Power Station), which has been successfully operating since its commissioning in 2007 by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited.

Under the plan, water will be diverted from the Stage-I power station through a sepa-

Court frames charges against two accused of attacking Delhi CM

NEW DELHI: Setting the stage for trial, a Delhi court on Friday formally framed charges against two persons accused of attacking Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at a public event earlier this year. Additional Sessions Judge Ekta Gauba Mann said the proceedings of the case will be in camera since the victim is a public figure. The judge formally framed charges against Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai and Tahsin Raza Rafiullah Shaikh, who pleaded not guilty to the charges, after they were physically produced in the court. Earlier on December 20, the court had ordered the framing of charges against the duo under various penal provisions, including attempt to murder, saying there was a prima facie case against them. The judge said that prima facie all ingredients for the offence punishable under BNS Sections 61(2) (criminal conspiracy), 221 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 132 (using criminal force on a public servant while they are executing their duty), 109(1) (attempt to murder) are made out against both the accused.

The accused was attacked during a 'Jan Sunwai' programme at her camp office in the Civil Lines area on August 20, with her office terming the assault a part of a "well-planned conspiracy to kill her".



Pinarayi Vijayan must not interfere in Karnataka's affairs without knowing the truth: DCM DK Shivakumar

Bengaluru : Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar hit out at Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan for unnecessarily interfering in evictions in an encroached land in Bengaluru.

Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, he said, "It is unfortunate that senior leaders like Pinarayi Vijayan has commented on this without knowing the facts of the matter. The land which was cleared of encroachment was a solid waste pit. There are many health-related issues in the area due to this. We also have humanity and we had given them an opportunity to move to other areas. Leaders like Pinarayi Vijayan should not interfere in such matters. Land mafia sets up slums in order to encroach upon the land at a later stage, we won't let that happen. We are willing to



give houses under Rajiv Gandhi scheme if there are eligible people." He was replying to Kerala CM saying Karnataka government was involved in 'Bulldozer raj' in Bengaluru.

"We don't have Bulldozer culture, I appeal to Pinarayi Vijayan not to talk like that. We are only pro-

tectioning government land in the middle of the city. We will send out a message regarding this to our party leaders in Kerala," he added.

"Bengaluru is not like other cities, we don't have many slums. This is Krishna Byre Gowda's constituency and he has spoken to officials about it. This is nothing to do

with minorities. If there is anyone who is genuinely affected, we will provide them with housing elsewhere. Our government under the leadership of CM and Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed has built lakhs of homes for the poor in the state."

Asked about some people protesting in view of Pinarayi Vijayan's statement, he said, "These are all politically motivated statements and protests. He should not comment on matters of our state without knowing the facts. This is a political gimmick in view upcoming Kerala elections."

Asked if the evicted people had any rights, he said, "Whoever lives in Karnataka with valid documents will be provided necessary support. We have instructed officials to give out clear instructions regarding this."

"EDUCATION HAS NO BOUNDARIES": MINISTER MADHU BANGARAPPA

Mundgod: Minister for School Education and Literacy, Mr. Madhu Bangarappa, said that education as a boundary-less force that transcends language, religion, state, and national borders and emphasised that peace and progress can only be sustained through education and human values. Speaking at the 55th Anniversary celebrations of the establishment of

Gaden Shartse Thoesam Norling School at the Tibetan Colony in Mundgod, Bangarappa outlined several welfare initiatives under the School Education Department, including mid-day meals, milk, eggs, ragi malt, free textbooks, notebooks, uniforms, shoes and socks for students. He noted that nearly 1.16 crore students across government, aided,

and private schools are beneficiaries of the state's education ecosystem. The Minister also reiterated the reintroduction of Moral Science as a compulsory subject from the next academic year, aimed at strengthening human values, civic responsibility, health awareness, environmental sensitivity and ethical living among students.

NEP key to developed India, Karnataka students deprived of its benefits: Basavaraj Bommai

Former Karnataka Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the National Education Policy (NEP) with a visionary goal of building a developed India and securing a bright future for coming generations. He expressed concern that children in Karnataka are being deprived of quality education as the NEP has not been implemented in schools across the state.

Bommai was speaking after inaugurating the Navotsava-2025 programme at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Maharajpete village of Hanagal taluk, Haveri district. Describing student life as the most beautiful and golden phase, he recalled his own days as a student and said the enthusiasm of today's children



made him feel like returning to the classroom.

He said students of Navodaya schools are fortunate to receive quality education, career guidance and facilities that are rare-

ly available elsewhere, adding that Navodaya institutions are shaping the architects of New India. Bommai emphasised that talent can emerge from any background and

is not limited to wealthy families, noting that knowledge is a divine blessing that can arise even from rural and economically weaker sections. Highlighting India's

intellectual strength, he pointed out that Indian students learn advanced concepts at an early age and that over 30 per cent of scientists at NASA are Indians. He said the 21st century belongs to knowledge holders and cited Bengaluru's global recognition through companies such as Infosys and Wipro as an example of India's knowledge-driven growth.

Bommai recalled that he was the first Chief Minister in the country to implement NEP, which promotes multidimensional learning, and urged students to make the best use of opportunities at Navodaya schools, strive for excellence and give back to their institution. Principal Kurian Thomas, retired principal Vijay Krishnan, faculty members and students were present on the occasion.

KREDL sets up dedicated War Room to assist farmers with PM-KUSUM-B Scheme

Bengaluru : With an aim to ensure that no eligible farmer is deprived of the benefits of KUSUM-B Scheme due to lack of information or technical difficulties, KREDL has set up a dedicated War Room at its Nagarbhavi office.

Operational from 23.12.2025 to 31.12.2025, the War Room will offer a direct contact platform for farmers to address their concerns over phone call, ensuring ease of access for farmers across Karnataka.

Farmers can directly contact the KREDL War Room through the official phone numbers 080-22202100 and 0895132100 for information, online payment, and other related queries under the PM-KUSUM Component-B scheme, without approaching any middlemen, and avail the benefits of the scheme. The farmers need not pay money to anyone except their own share of the contribution*.

The PM-KUSUM-B scheme has received an overwhelming response from the farming community. So far, 83,204 farmers have registered online on the



portal www.souramitra.com. Applications that have received technical feasibility approval are now allowed to proceed with online payment.

Steps for farmers under the PM-KUSUM-B Scheme: Farmers need to register at www.souramitra.com, select their preferred vendor or agency from the available options, and complete the process by making the applicant's contribution payment online. The last date for payment is 31.12.2025. KREDL has already issued multiple ads / notifications informing farmers that failure to make payment by the

deadline will result in ineligibility under the scheme.

In this context, the War Room is ensuring that no eligible farmer is deprived of the benefits due to lack of information or technical difficulties.

To ensure uninterrupted support, KREDL staff will work in two shifts from 6.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. every day, without any leave, till 31.12.2025. K.J. George, Energy Minister said, The PM-KUSUM scheme is a transformational initiative aimed at empowering farmers through clean and affordable solar energy. By setting up a War Room,

KREDL is ensuring that every eligible farmer receives timely guidance and support without any hurdles. With direct assistance, we are eliminating barriers and ensuring that farmers can confidently access the benefits without intermediaries. The State Government is fully committed to transparency, farmer welfare, and the expansion of renewable energy across Karnataka."

Gaurav Gupta, ACS, Energy, Government of Karnataka said, The establishment of a dedicated War Room reflects the Government's proactive approach to ensuring seamless implementation of the PM-KUSUM-B scheme. This initiative strengthens efficiency, and trust in the system while accelerating Karnataka's transition towards sustainable and farmer-centric energy solutions." K.P. Rudrappaiah, Managing Director, KREDL said, The War Room has been created exclusively to assist farmers during this crucial phase of the PM-KUSUM Component-B implementation.

Vaikunta Ekadashi Celebrations at TTD: Special Darshan Arrangements for Devotees;

Bengaluru : In view of the auspicious Vaikunta Ekadashi festival, special arrangements have been made for devotees to have Srivari Darshan at the TTD Information Centre, Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, located at 16th Cross, Vyalikaval, Bengaluru, on December, 30, 2025.

Speaking about the arrangements at the local temple, TTD Bengaluru Local Advisory Committee President, K. Veeranjaneyulu said:

"The committee has made all necessary preparations to ensure a smooth and convenient darshan for devotees on Vaikunta Ekadashi. There will be continuous darshan from 1:35 AM to 11:45 PM. Queue systems and drinking water facilities have been arranged to ensure devotees face no inconvenience. Continuous Annaprasadam (food distribution) will be provided to devotees visiting on this holy day."

He further informed that the sale of Srivari Laddu Prasadam (Rs. 50/- per laddu) will commence at 2:00 AM within the temple premises and will continue while stocks last.

For the benefit of devotees, a counter for the sale of TTD 2026 diaries, calendars, agarbathis, and other TTD products will also be opened. "We are expecting a footfall of approximately 70,000 devotees this year," he added.

Arrangements for Quick Darshan

"Queue lines for devotees will commence from 16th Cross, Chowdiah Memorial Hall, and 2nd Main Road. We have ensured a comfortable darshan experience



for senior citizens and differently-abled persons with the assistance of volunteers through a dedicated channel. Furthermore, for devotees wishing to save time, a 'Quick Darshan' facility has been arranged. Devotees can avail of this special entry by paying Rs. 200/-."Speaking about the preparations at Tirumala, TTD Board Member Sri S. Naresh Kumar said:

"Massive preparations have been undertaken at Tirumala for Vaikunta Ekadashi. The TTD administration has planned to facilitate Vaikunta Dwara Darshan for over 80,000 devotees daily. High priority is being given to common devotees, and measures have been taken to efficient-

ly manage food and beverages for those waiting in the queues. Emphasis has been placed on the safety and comfort of the pilgrims."

Cultural Programs:

To mark this holy occasion, special devotional music and cultural programs have been organized throughout the day at the temple premises by the Hindu Dharma Parirakshana Trust (HDPP), Bengaluru. TTD officials have requested all devotees in Bengaluru to participate in the Vaikunta Ekadashi celebrations in large numbers and seek the divine blessings of Lord Venkateswara. TTD Bengaluru superintendent Jayanti present at the conference.

Remove Debris from the Service Roads and Footpaths from Bhadrappa Layout to the Outer Ring Road: Pommala Sunil Kumar



Bengaluru: While carrying out an inspection after identifying the limits and wards falling under the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru North City Corporation from Hebbal Flyover Junction to the Guruguntepalya Signal on Tumakuru Road it was observed that construction debris and soil had accumulated at several locations on the footpaths and service roads from Bhadrappa Layout to the Outer Ring Road.

Noting that works are currently in progress by B-SMILE, the Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Pommala

Sunil Kumar, directed the concerned B-SMILE officials to immediately remove the unusable debris.

During the inspection conducted this morning along with engineers from B-SMILE and the Solid Waste Management Department, the Commissioner instructed officials to ensure that all works within the City Corporation's jurisdiction are carried out efficiently and in a proper manner.

During the inspection, Joint Commissioners Shri Mohammed Naem Momin and Smt. Pallavi, along with the concerned Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, engineers from B-SMILE and the Solid Waste Management Department, and other staff members were present

neers from the Solid Waste Management Department jointly undertake a comprehensive cleanliness drive on the service roads and footpaths from Bhadrappa Layout to the Outer Ring Road, and ensure sustained cleanliness in this area.

During the inspection, Joint Commissioners Shri Mohammed Naem Momin and Smt. Pallavi, along with the concerned Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, engineers from B-SMILE and the Solid Waste Management Department, and other staff members were present

Padma Shri Dr. C. N. Manjunath Participates in Parliamentary Committee Meeting on Women empowerment."

Bengaluru: Bengaluru Rural Member of Parliament, Padmashri Dr. C. N. Manjunath, participated in the interactive discussions held by the Parliamentary Committee on Women Empowerment in Bengaluru. The Committee held an informal discussion with representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Government of India), IRCTC, RVNL, RailTel, IRCON, and RITES Limited in connection with the examination of the subject "Empowerment of Women through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)"



Activities Undertaken by Public Sector Undertakings and Financial Institutions.

The meeting was chaired by Smt. Daggubati Purandeswari, Hon'ble Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Women Empowerment. Smt. Sudha Murty and other Parliamentary standing committee members and senior officers were also present.

EDITORIAL

Wildlife crushed in the path of development

The December 2025 train accident that killed seven elephants—including a calf—in Assam's Hojai district was no ordinary accident. It symbolized the growing conflict between India's development model and environmental sensitivity. The high-speed train not only killed the elephants, but also derailed the engine and several coaches, highlighting the serious threat such incidents pose not only to wildlife but also to human life and public property.

The elephant is India's "National Heritage Animal" and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Despite this, the annual deaths of elephants on railway tracks raise questions about whether our development is truly sustainable, or is it proceeding at the expense of nature. According to government data, hundreds of elephants have been killed in train accidents over the past two decades, with Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand being the worst affected states.

India has seen rapid expansion of railway lines, national highways, power transmission lines, and other linear infrastructure. This expansion was considered essential for economic progress, but problems arise when these projects encroach upon forests, grasslands, and wetlands without adequate ecological planning. Railway tracks are particularly dangerous because trains cannot change direction or stop suddenly. Elephants, on the other hand, have limited vision and their heavy bodies, hindering rapid reaction.

Elephants are large-scale migratory animals and rely on traditional migratory routes for food, water, and breeding. When railway lines cut off these corridors, elephants have no choice but to cross the tracks. Unfortunately, many accident-prone areas have still not been officially declared "elephant corridors." The Hojai region of Assam is a prime example, where legal protection has been lacking despite regular elephant movement for years.

Excessive train speeds are a major cause of accidents. Even in environmentally sensitive areas, trains often reach speeds of 90 to 110 kilometers per hour. At such speeds, it is nearly impossible to stop a train in the face of elephants. Temporary speed restrictions and warnings often prove to be mere formalities. This demonstrates that time and efficiency continue to be prioritized over environmental safety in railway operations.

Visibility problems also contribute to these accidents. Most elephant-train collisions occur at night or early morning, when fog, rain, or dense vegetation limit train drivers' vision. This situation is even more severe in Assam and Northeast India, where unpredictable weather is common. Furthermore, railway tracks themselves attract elephants. Food waste thrown by passengers, salty soil, and ripening crops near the tracks draw elephants to vulnerable areas, especially during the harvest season.

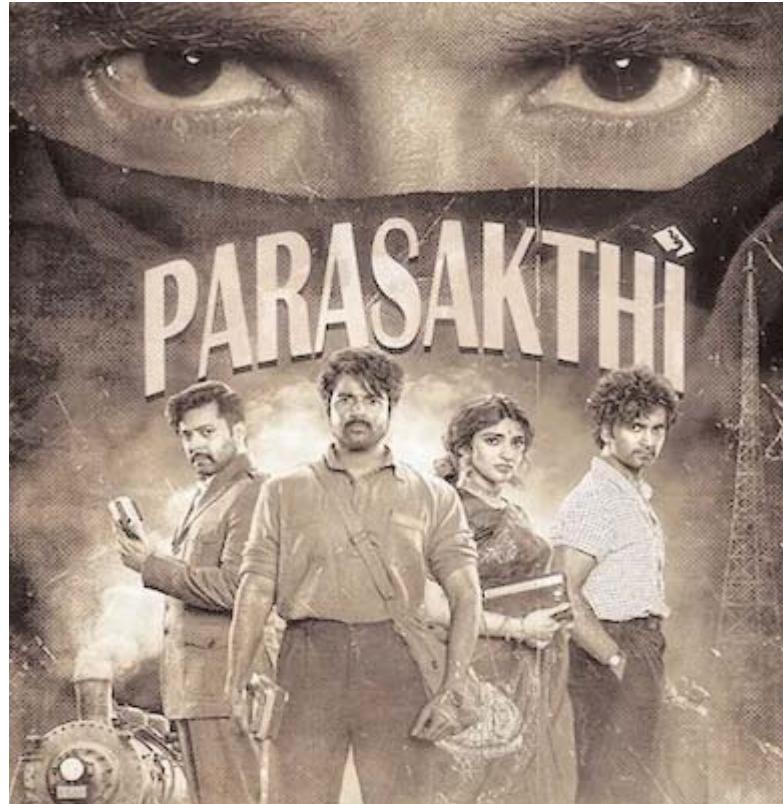
The design of railway tracks also often exacerbates the problem. High embankments, concrete walls, and fences trap elephants on the tracks. Cubs are unable to escape quickly, slowing the entire herd down and increasing the risk of accidents.

Furthermore, a lack of proper coordination between the Forest Department and the railways is a major challenge. Patrol teams often fail to report elephant presence to the railway control room in time, preventing accidents.

After every major disaster, steps such as investigations, compensation, and temporary bans are taken, but these are all reactive measures. Environmental impact assessments often remain a formality, and changes in animal behavior after project approval are not taken seriously. The need is to treat conservation not as an obstacle to development, but as an essential part of it.

To protect elephants, it is essential to provide legal protection to all known migratory corridors, whether they are already notified or not. Permanent speed limits should be implemented in all such areas. As a technological solution, AI-based intrusion detection systems, which detect elephant movements and alert train drivers in time, could prove extremely effective. Limited use of these systems is not sufficient; they need to be adopted nationwide.

Additionally, scientifically designed underpasses, overpasses, and earthen ramps can play a vital role in ensuring safe elephant transit. According to the Ministry of Environment, such structures can significantly reduce elephant mortality.

Jana Nayagan vs. Parasakthi: The Politics Playing Out On Tamil Nadu's Screens

This Pongal, Tamil cinema isn't just selling tickets - it's signalling the opening moves of the 2026 assembly election. January 9 and 10 promise more than the usual festive box-office fireworks in Tamil Nadu. They mark a cinematic clash freighted with political meaning - one that could shape the narrative heading into the 2026 Assembly elections. On one side is Jana Nayagan, Vijay's much-hyped "final film" before he focused entirely and only on winning the 2026 assembly elections. On the other hand is Parasakthi, a title that echoes with the ideological thunder of Dravidian politics itself. This is not merely a contest between two films; it is a proxy battle for political space, symbolism, and supremacy. At the centre of this confrontation stands Vijay - the undisputed "X factor" in Tamil Nadu's political landscape. His entry into politics has disrupted a system long defined by the DMK-AIADMK binary that has dominated the state since 1967. By positioning the 2026 election as a direct contest between the DMK and his own Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam (TVK), Vijay has declared his intent to rewrite the rules of the game. Importantly, Vijay is not an ideological disruptor. He has publicly endorsed Dravidian ideology and embraced its political traditions. His

challenge is not to the idea of Dravidianism itself but to the electoral dominance of the two parties that have historically claimed ownership of it. That makes him a far more dangerous challenger - an insider with mass appeal, not an outsider railing against the system. Jana Nayagan, which Vijay has declared will be his final film, appears tailor-made for this political moment. Early indications suggest a familiar but potent narrative: the righteous mass hero taking on a corrupt and unjust system. The subtext is hard to miss. This is Vijay, the star, rehearsing Vijay, the politician, toppling a decaying order and offering a new alternative. If the tone for 2026 hasn't already been set, Jana Nayagan aims to set it. From a purely commercial standpoint, the film's success seems all but assured. Vijay's recent track record has made him arguably the most bankable star in Tamil cinema today, if not in India. Box-office dominance has become his default mode. Yet, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) is not content to cede this symbolic space uncontested. Its counter comes in the form of Parasakthi, starring Sivakarthikeyan, another rising superstar but one whose film carries weight far beyond its leading man. The title Parasakthi is inseparable from Tamil cinema's



political history. The 1952 classic, featuring Sivaji Ganesan and scripted by M Karunanidhi, was a cinematic manifesto. Its iconic courtroom monologue - an exorcism of God, social inequality, religious orthodoxy, and moral hypocrisy - became a rallying moment for the Dravidian revolution. Released just two years after the DMK's formation, the film functioned as powerful propaganda to sow the seeds for many such cinematic moments that culminated in an electoral revolution. "Odinen Odinen, Vazhakai Ellairke Odinen" (I ran and ran, I ran till the end of life itself) thundered Shivaji Ganesan passionately. It has echoed in the Dravidian political theatre since. The 2026 Parasakthi, directed by the largely apolitical Sudha Kongara, is unlikely to replicate that radical substance. But it doesn't need to. The power lies in the name and in the machinery behind it. The film is being distributed by Red Giant Movies, founded by Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, a company frequently accused of wielding disproportionate influence over film distribution in the state. The decision to release Parasakthi on January 10 - just a day after Jana Nayagan - is strategic to the point of provocation. It creates the unmistakable optics of a direct challenge to Vijay at the box office during the lucrative Pongal window. Notably, the release was advanced from January 14, a move that followed Vijay's fiery Erode rally, where he branded the DMK an "evil force". The timing suggests retaliation as much as competition. Red Giant, founded by Udayanidhi Stalin and now run by his son, has been accused several times of leveraging political power to secure screens and crowd out rival releases. This time, too, there will be a battle for theatres between the two releases, which could lead to sharp political accusations. The fact that Red Giant is releasing a film with a politically enormous title in a politically timed manner to challenge Vijay, arguably DMK's most powerful threat, leaves no doubt that Parasakthi is political. An impact on Jana Nayagan's opening collections would be symbolically significant for the DMK, but this is not about money. This is about the perception of a cinematic and political challenge to Vijay. Beyond box-office tallies, Parasakthi sends a clear political message: the DMK is ready for Vijay's challenge. It reasserts the party's claim as the original custodian of Dravidian ideology and attempts to dilute the political conversation Vijay hopes to dominate with Jana Nayagan.

AT 14, VAIBHAV SURYAVANSHI MIGHT JUST BE TOO GOOD TO BE 'PROTECTED'

On April 2, 2011, when MS Dhoni hit Nuwan Kulasekara for the ODI World Cup-winning six at the Wankhede stadium, about 1,900 kilometres away, in Tajpur village of the Samastipur district of Bihar, a six-day-old infant lay blissfully unaware of the historic achievement of the Indian men's cricket team. Fast forward just over 14 years, and that kid is being tagged a "generational talent". Some might feel it's a little too early to call him that, but Vaibhav Suryavanshi seems to be on a mission to silence any and all doubters. A batter's job is to simply score as many runs as possible, every single time he or she strides out to the middle. And Vaibhav, who will turn 15 in March next year, has been keeping the scorers and statisticians rather busy. A look at just the last year he has had makes for rather surreal reading. In April, he became the youngest centurion in men's T20s (14 years and 32 days) when he hit a 35-ball 101 for RR vs GT in IPL 2025. In July, he hit the fastest recorded century in a youth One-Day international (a 78-ball 143 vs England in Worcester). In November, he smashed a 32-ball ton for India A vs the UAE in an Asia Cup Rising Stars T20 game, becoming the joint fifth fastest centurion in men's T20s (144 off 42 balls). And

then, just under a year after his senior team debut for Bihar, he became the youngest to score a century in men's List A cricket (One-day cricket, including ODIs and domestic one day cricket) and also broke AB de Villiers' record for the fastest 150 in men's List A cricket (190 off 84 balls), in just his seventh List A match. Keep The Balance The million-dollar question now is, should Vaibhav be fast-tracked into the senior India set-up for T20i cricket? The one caveat here that must be mentioned is that the people in the corridors of power in Indian cricket have to be clear about the fact that while he potentially can be fast-tracked into white ball formats, his development in the red-ball format must not suffer at any cost. For T20i cricket, the wait ideally should

n't be a long one. He has an average of 41.23 in the format with a strike rate of 204.37, and is not overawed by a 'star player' running in to bowl to him. But at the same time, they must give him time to play more First-Class cricket against quality opposition - something his team, Bihar, is not getting in the Ranji Trophy Plate Group - to ensure that his Test future is not put in jeopardy. That is going to be a tightrope walk. There has to be a proper plan in place in terms of allowing him to express himself fully in one format while continuing to improve in another. But it's difficult to do so, especially with Bihar cricket not in the best of shape. They were sidelined for 17 years after Jharkhand received statehood in November 2000, and their return to the Ranji Trophy

Elite Group for the 2023-24 season made headlines for all the wrong reasons. A 'Special Case' This is where the BCCI has to take the lead. The people in charge of the Centre of Excellence (formerly the National Cricket Academy) have to be directed to handle Vaibhav as a 'special case' and liaise with the selectors on a regular basis vis-à-vis his improvement. Remember, he is just 14, and for many experts, he should be allowed to develop his game and hone his natural skills some more before being pushed into the deep end. But then again, as far as white ball formats are concerned, this is a young man who faced the likes of Mohammed Siraj, Rashid Khan, Ishant Sharma, Prasidh Krishna and Washington Sundar to score a 38-ball 101 in the IPL and has

RAHUL VS PRIYANKA? NOT REALLY

Imran Masood of the Congress recently said that if Priyanka were made Prime Minister, she would teach Pakistan a lesson, just like Indira Gandhi did. In other words, Imran Masood subtly advocated for Priyanka Gandhi. It's true that many in the Congress see a glimpse of Indira in Priyanka; people find her accessible and natural. However, is this resemblance alone a reason enough to make Priyanka the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha? After all, she has been a member of the Lok Sabha for barely 12 months, and that doesn't quite justify being potentially appointed as either the Congress's leader or the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. It is true that in Rahul Gandhi's absence recently, Gandhi stepped forward during the Parliament session and led the opposition deftly - especially on issues like the G Ram G Bill and the overhaul of MGNREGA. Her march with the entire opposition to the Gandhi statue was striking, as was her chat over tea and snacks with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. However, not many have pointed out how this decision was taken by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. People

also appreciated Priyanka's style, which stood out in stark contrast to the fact that Rahul never attended such tea meetings. The little-discussed truth, however, is that the decision not to go for tea with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha was taken by the party itself. And this time as well, the decision to attend the meeting was the party's. That said, it can't be denied that there is certainly a difference between the two siblings' approach to politics. Rahul Gandhi has been much harsher towards the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), while many others spend their time pulling down those who are actually fighting. Rahul has his own team of young workers, running the party in their own way, and it is for them to answer why the party's performance has not improved, and whether the issues they are raising will bring success or not - and, if not, why.

US pauses OFFSHORE WIND projects over security concerns

The US is immediately pausing leases for offshore wind energy projects currently being built near the Atlantic coastline, citing security concerns. In a statement, the Department of the Interior said it was pausing five large-scale projects to look into how windmills could interfere with radar and create other risks to east coast cities. President Donald Trump has long opposed wind energy, saying it is unreliable and drives up costs, and attempted to stop all projects when he returned to office. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum has said wind farms have no future in the US energy grid. Renewable energy companies, as well as state leaders, have expressed alarm over the administration's stance. In its statement, the Department of the Interior said the pause "addresses emerging national security risks, including the rapid evolution of the relevant adversary technologies, and the vulnerabilities created by large-scale offshore wind projects with proximity near our east coast population centres".



The five wind farms now on pause are being constructed off the coast of New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Specifically, the announcement noted that officials are concerned about radar interference "clutter" that can obscure real moving targets or, conversely, create false ones. It added that a radar's threshold for false-alarm detection could be increased to reduce some clutter, but

only at the risk of missing actual targets. The wind projects could make it difficult to "determine what's friend and foe in our airspace", Burgum said in an interview with Fox Business on Monday, where he cited drone strikes between Russia and Ukraine and between Iran and Israel as examples. Dominion Energy, the company behind the Virginia wind farm, said its project is far offshore and "does not raise visual impact concerns." "The project's two pilot turbines have been operating for five years without causing any impacts to national security," it said in statement. Dominion saw its share price drop more than 3% after the announcement. Orsted, the Danish wind energy giant, recorded a 12% drop in its share price, while turbine maker Vestas' stock fell by 2.6%. Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, a Democrat, described the pause as an

"erratic" move that "will drive up the price of electricity in Connecticut and throughout the region". "This project is nearing completion and providing good-paying clean energy jobs," he added. "Businesses and residents deserve economic predictability, yet with the administration's constant starts and stops they're left with the opposite." Earlier in December, a federal judge struck down an attempt by President Trump to ban new wind power projects in the US, calling it "arbitrary and capricious and contrary to law". On the first day of his administration in January, Trump issued a memorandum halting permits and new leases until a federal review could be undertaken. Five months later, 17 US states led by New York sued the administration, calling the ban an "existential" threat to the US wind industry. Demand in the US for energy is expected to significantly expand in the years ahead, driven by the needs of artificial intelligence firms.

Coinbase ex-employee held for cyber-crime; CEO thanks Hyderabad Police



Coinbase Global Inc. co-founder and CEO Brian Armstrong thanked the Hyderabad police for arresting an ex-Coinbase customer service agent who allegedly led a cyberattack on the company in May this year. In an X post shared on Friday, December 26, Armstrong said, "We have zero tolerance for bad behaviour and will continue to work with law enforcement to bring bad actors to justice. Thanks to the Hyderabad Police in India, an ex-Coinbase customer service agent was just arrested. Another one down and more still to come." The arrest is linked to one of the most high-profile security breaches involving a crypto-based company this year. Criminals demanded USD 20 million ransom. Hackers

allegedly bribed the employees outside the United States to attain sensitive information on customer data and demanded a USD 20 million ransom. The company stated that the breach could cost it up to USD 40 million, Bloomberg reported. Upon confirmation of the breach, the company spokesperson also reported that it had filed charges against a Brooklyn man. In a blog post dated May 15, Coinbase laid out the details of the extortion attempt. The criminals had reportedly targeted their customer support agents overseas, which has now been established as India, and used cash offers to bribe employees to copy data from customer support tools. This primarily affected fewer than 1 per cent of

Coinbase's monthly transacting users. "Their aim was to gather a customer list they could contact while pretending to be Coinbase—tricking people into handing over their crypto. "They then tried to extort Coinbase for USD 20 million to cover this up. We said no," the blog read. The company stated that it would compensate those affected by the cybercrime, instead of paying the ransom. "We're cooperating closely with law enforcement to pursue the harshest penalties possible and will not pay the USD 20 million ransom demand we received," adding, "Instead, we are establishing a USD 20 million reward fund for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the criminals responsible for this attack."

Sikh community marks Guru Gobind Singh's birth anniversary with fervour



Hyderabad: The 359th Prakash Utsav (birth anniversary) of the tenth and last Sikh Guru Guru Gobind Singh, concluded on Saturday across Telangana. The event was organised under the aegis of the Prabandhak Committee at the Central Gurudwara Sahib, Gowliguda, where a Vishaal Deewan (mass congregation) was held in front of the gurudwara.

Gurinder Singh from Rudrapur, Ravinder Singh, recited gurbani kirtans and delivered lessons on the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh and called for justice, peace and human dignity in today's times. Following the congregation, Guru Ka Langar (community kitchen) was organised.

Prominent Sikh preachers, including Satinder Singh, Bodal from Amritsar,

Waymo robotaxis stop in the streets during San Francisco power outage



A massive power outage in San Francisco over the weekend led Waymo self-driving taxis to stop working around the city. "Significant and extensive" damage from a fire in a substation caused the Saturday afternoon outage that left more than 100,000 customers without power, utility provider PG&E said in a statement. Videos posted to social media showed Waymo robotaxis halted in the middle of city streets and intersections with their hazard lights flashing, as traffic jams grew and drivers zigzagged around the stopped cars. Waymo initially paused all service in the Bay Area following the outage, but has

since resumed its operations, a spokesperson said in a statement. During the outage, many traffic signals stopped working, city officials said, and Mayor Daniel Lurie deployed police officers, fire crews, and others to help with the flow of cars on the roads. Some commuter train lines and stations shut down, as well. Waymo said it was working with city officials throughout the outage. "While the Waymo Driver is designed to treat non-functional signals as four-way stops, the sheer scale of the outage led to instances where vehicles remained stationary longer than usual to confirm the state of the affected intersections.

GOLD AND SILVER HIT RECORDS AS INVESTORS HUNT FOR SAFETY



The gold price has hit another record high, trading above \$4,400 (£3,275) an ounce for the first time. The price of the precious metal has risen on expectations the US central bank will cut interest rates further next year, analysts said. Gold started the year worth \$2,600 an ounce, but geopolitical tensions, the Trump tariffs and expectations of rate cuts have added to investor demand for safe haven assets, such as gold and other commodities. The prices of other precious metals also rose on Monday, with silver hitting a record high as well. The gold price has risen more than 68% this year, the highest increase since 1979, according to Adrian Ash, director of research at gold bullion marketplace BullionVault. 2025 has seen "slow-burning trends around interest rates, around war and trade tensions", Mr Ash said, which have helped to push up the price of gold. "The precious metals market says that President Trump has really triggered something – and gold has gone crazy this

year. "You've got the trade war, the attacks on the US Federal Reserve and you've got geopolitical tensions, all of those provocations come from Trump," he said. After passing the \$4,400 an ounce mark on Monday, the spot price of gold hit a high of \$4,426.66. Lower interest rate expectations typically mean lower returns for investments such as bonds, so investors look to commodities such as gold and silver to get a return, but also diversify their portfolios. The consensus among analysts currently is that the US will lower interest rates twice in 2026.

Another factor adding to demand is that central banks globally are expanding their own physical holdings of gold as a way to counter economic turbulence, reduce reliance on the US dollar, and diversify their own portfolios, according to analysis from Goldman Sachs, which predicted the pattern would continue in 2026. The steady increase in the price of gold across the year could be because it is seen as a way for traders to help shield themselves from the threat of inflation and economic

Surprise drug checks to be carried out around Hyderabad for New Years



Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Narcotic Enforcement Wing (H-NEW) has formed special teams to conduct surprise special checks at pubs, clubs, bars, and restaurants across the city in view of the New Year celebrations. As part of their special drive on December 26, six decoy teams were deployed randomly to conduct discreet checks without causing any inconvenience to the management or the general public, a press release said. Suspicious persons around the premises of various establishments were screened using rapid drug testing kits, and all results were found to be negative. Such special drives will continue across the city in the upcoming days to deter offenders and safeguard public interest. Hyderabad police to adopt 'zero drugs' policy. The Hyderabad Police on Friday said it would adopt a 'zero drugs' policy for the New Year celebrations. City Police Commissioner V C Sajjanar, who chaired a coordination meeting with police officials, issued a stern direc-

tive to top brass and officers on the field to maintain a "hawk-eyed" vigil across the city. Officials of various police wings, including H-NEW, Task Force, Special Branch and local law enforcement, have been tasked with preparing a comprehensive list of known drug peddlers and consumers. Additionally, the police will also collect the details of individuals entering the city for the festivities. The crackdown is not limited to public venues, the police will also monitor private gatherings at service apartments and hostels to prevent illicit activities. The City Police have set a mandatory

1:00 am closing time for all New Year celebrations at pubs, hotels and restaurants. "Strict action will be taken against violators. (They) will face immediate cancellation of licenses if found engaging in any illegal activities this year," the Commissioner warned. To manage the influx of revellers, check-posts and barricades would be set up at major hubs, including Maitrivanam, Necklace Road, Tank Bund, and KBR Park, he added. While the security is set to be intense, the Commissioner emphasised that the general public should not be inconvenienced. The

Bourbon maker Jim Beam halts production at main distillery for a year

Highlights

- The maker of Jim Beam bourbon whiskey says it will halt production at its main site in Kentucky for all of next year.
- The distillery will stay closed while the firm takes "the opportunity to invest in site enhancements," it told the in a statement on Sunday.
- "We are always assessing production levels to best meet consumer demand and recently met with our team to discuss our volumes for 2026."

The maker of Jim Beam bourbon whiskey says it will halt production at its main site in Kentucky for all of next year. The distillery will stay closed while the firm takes "the opportunity to invest in site enhancements," it told the BBC in a statement on Sunday. "We are always assessing production levels to best meet consumer demand and recently met with our team to discuss our volumes for 2026." Distillers in Kentucky



famous for its bourbon - face uncertainty, in part, due to US President Donald Trump's trade policies. The brand is owned by Japanese drinks giant Suntory Global Spirits, which employs more than 1,000 people across its sites in Kentucky. The firm said its other operations in the state, including a separate distillery and its bottling and warehousing plants, would continue to run next year. The visitor centre in Kentucky also

remains open. Jim Beam also said it was assessing how it would use its workforce during the production pause, and was holding talks with the workers' union. In October, the Kentucky Distillers' Association (KDA) trade body said the amount of bourbon in warehouses across the state was at a record high of more than 16 million barrels.

According to the association, the barrels of bourbon, which are taxed by the state, have cost distillers "a crushing" \$75m (£56m) this year. US distillers have faced retaliatory import taxes on their goods after Trump's so-called "Liberation Day" announcement in April saw the US imposing tariffs on most countries around the world. "Much of the expansion over the last decade has been geared towards global growth," the KDA said in October as it called for a "for a speedy return to reciprocal, tariff-free trade". Trade tensions between the US and Canada have also affected sales of alcohol, with most Canadian provinces boycotting American spirits earlier in the year.

THOUSANDS WITHOUT POWER in Kyiv after massive Russian attack

A third of residents in Ukraine's capital Kyiv are without power after a "massive bombing" of residential areas and critical infrastructure by Russia overnight, Ukraine's foreign minister has said. Andrii Sybiha said residents had been left without heating in freezing winter temperatures. At least one person was killed and 28 others were injured in the strikes, Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported. The attacks happened hours before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky departed for Florida, where he will meet Donald Trump on Sunday for peace talks. Russia's ministry of defence said it had launched a "massive retaliatory strike" on Ukrainian energy infrastructure facilities. It said it used long-range, land, air, and sea-based precision weapons to target the facil-



ties, which it claimed were being used "in the interests of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and enterprises of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex". Following the strikes, Zelensky repeated his claim that Russia does "not want to end the war and is trying to use every opportunity to inflict more pain on

Ukraine". Writing on Telegram, Zelensky said Russia directed almost 500 drones and 40 missiles towards Kyiv, targeting energy and civilian infrastructure. Pictures show apartment buildings with gaping holes and homes on fire following the strikes. The apartment block of BBC journalist Anastasiya

Gribanova was struck, leaving some homes on the higher levels of the high-rise building in flames. Gribanova, who was in the building's elevator at the time, was unharmed. Ukraine's State Emergency Service said that 68 people were evacuated from a retirement home in the eastern Darnytskyi district. "Russian representatives are having long conversations, but in reality the Daggers [missiles] and Shaheds [drones] are speaking for them," Zelensky wrote on Telegram, saying that Vladimir Putin does not want to end the war. "This sick activity can only be responded to with really strong steps. America has this opportunity, Europe has this opportunity, many of our partners have this opportunity," he wrote, urging allies to show strength against Russian aggression. The strikes saw Poland, which shares a 530km-long (320-miles) border with western Ukraine, ready its fighter jets, ground-based air defence systems and radar reconnaissance. The move was "aimed at securing and protecting the airspace, especially in areas adjacent to the threatened regions," Poland's Armed Forces said. Later on

Saturday morning, it concluded that there had been no violation of the country's airspace. Meanwhile, Russia's defence ministry said its air defences destroyed seven Ukrainian drones overnight. On Saturday, Zelensky, EU leaders and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen are expected to hold a phone call to discuss the road to peace. Zelensky's new 20-point draft is a revised version of an earlier 28-point plan which was drafted by US special envoy Steve Witkoff, but widely seen as being too favourable to Russia. The Ukrainian president has voiced optimism around the new draft, describing it as "a foundational document on ending the war", but Trump warned that Zelensky "doesn't have anything until I approve it" in an interview with Politico.

THOUSANDS OF US FLIGHTS DISRUPTED AS WINTER STORM LOOMS



Thousands of flights across the US have been cancelled or delayed as the north-east braces for a severe winter storm during the peak holiday travel season. As of Friday night, 1,600 flights across the US had been cancelled and 7,400 had been delayed, according to flight tracking website FlightAware. The most affected airports are John F Kennedy International, Newark Liberty, and LaGuardia, which all serve the New York area. Boston, Chicago, and Toronto, Canada, are also impacted. The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning from 16:00 local time (21:00 GMT) on Friday until 13:00 on Saturday, with as much as 9in (23cm) of snow expected in NewJetBlue Airways had cancelled 229 flights, while Delta Air Lines scrapped 241 flights. Republic Airways and Southwest Airlines cancelled 180 and 151 flights respectively. About 100 scheduled flights by

American Airlines and United Airlines were also cancelled. On social media, airports were warning travellers to check with their airline to determine the status of their flights. The heaviest snow was expected between 18:00 local time (23:00 GMT) and midnight. Drivers were warned of hazardous conditions and advised to bring an emergency supply kit. New York Governor Kathy Hochul said people should avoid unnecessary trips, but if they had to travel, they should "plan ahead, take it slow, and leave plenty of time to get to where you need to go safely". There were similar warnings from the governors of New Jersey and Connecticut.

This will be the second significant snowfall of the season for New York City, which was blanketed with several inches on 14 December. Mayor Eric Adams asked people who drove to work on Friday to leave early or consider taking public transport home.

Two killed in suspected Palestinian ramming and knife attack in Israel



Two people have been killed in what police say was a "rolling terror attack" in northern Israel. Police said the attacker ran over a pedestrian in the eastern city of Beit Shean, then drove on before stabbing a woman near Ein Harod, about 8 miles (12.5km) to the west. The suspect was eventually shot and wounded by a civilian outside the city of Afula, according to police. Shimshon Mordechai, a 68-year-old man, was killed and a 16-year-old boy was hurt in Friday's ramming, officials said, while the stabbing victim was Aviv Maor, aged 18. A day before the attack, an Israeli reservist was fired after video emerged of him ramming a praying

Palestinian with a quad bike. The suspect in the attack came from the village of Qabatiya, in the northern occupied West Bank, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said. Following the incident, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it was preparing to carry out an operation in the Qabatiya area. Katz

Israel recognises Somaliland as independent state, Netanyahu says

Israel has become the first country to formally recognise Somaliland's breakaway region of Somaliland as an independent nation. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said Israel intended to immediately expand cooperation in agriculture, health, and technology. Somaliland's president, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, called the development "a historic moment". Recognition by Israel could encourage other nations to follow suit, increasing the region's diplomatic credentials and access to international markets. Somaliland's prime minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, said his country categorically and unequivocally rejected what he called a deliberate attack by Israel on its sovereign.

eighty. Abdullahi said in a statement that Somaliland would join the Abraham Accords, in what he called a step toward regional and global peace. Somaliland was committed to building partnerships, boosting mutual prosperity and promoting stability across the Middle East and Africa, he added. The decision has been condemned by the foreign ministers of Somalia, Egypt, Turkey and Djibouti, who in a statement affirmed their "total rejection" of Israel's announcement. The two countries had agreed to establish "full diplomatic ties, which will include the appointment of ambassadors and the opening of embassies". Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said in a statement on X.

Thailand and Cambodia agree ceasefire after weeks of deadly clashes



Thailand and Cambodia have agreed to an immediate ceasefire, the defence ministers of both countries have said in a joint statement. The two sides have agreed to freeze the front lines where they are now and allow civilians living in border areas to return home, halting almost three weeks of intense clashes in which dozens of people have been killed and nearly one million displaced. The ceasefire took effect at noon local time (05:00 GMT) on Saturday. Once it has been in place for 72 hours, 18 Cambodian soldiers held by Thailand since July will be released, the statement said. The breakthrough came after days of talks between the two countries, with diplomatic encourage-

ment from China and the US. The agreement prioritises getting the displaced back to their homes, and also includes an agreement to remove landmines.

Thailand's Defence Minister Nataphon Narkphanit

described the ceasefire as a test for the "other party's sincerity".

"Should the ceasefire fail to

materialise or be violated,

Thailand retains its legitimate right to self-defence under international law," he told reporters. Thailand had been reluctant to accept the ceasefire, saying the last one was not properly implemented. They also resented what they saw as Cambodia's efforts to internationalise the conflict. Unlike the last ceasefire in July, US President Donald

Trump was conspicuously absent from this one, although the US State Department was involved. That ceasefire agreement collapsed earlier this month, when fresh clashes erupted. Both sides blamed each other for the breakdown of the truce. The Thai army said its troops had responded to Cambodian fire in Thailand's Si Sa Ket province, in which two Thai soldiers were injured. Cambodia's defence ministry said it was Thai forces that had attacked first, in Preah Vihear province, and insisted that Cambodia did not retaliate. Clashes have continued throughout December. On Friday, Thailand carried out more air strikes inside Cambodia.

Blast at Syrian mosque during Friday prayers leaves at least eight dead



An explosion has killed at least eight people and injured 18 others during Friday prayers inside a mosque in the Syrian city of Homs, the health ministry has said. Pictures from Syria's state-run news agency, Sana, show the inside of the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib Mosque with black, scorched walls, smashed windows and blood on the carpet. Officials believe that an explosive was detonated inside the building, Sana reports, citing a security source. While authorities are still searching for the perpetrators, jihadist group Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah said it was behind the explosion. The mosque is in the Wadi al-Dhahab neighbourhood, where most people are part of the Alawite ethnoreligious group. Syria's Foreign Ministry condemned the "terrorist crime", writing in a statement on X that the "cowardly act is a blatant assault on human and moral values"

TWO DEAD IN 50-VEHICLE PILE UP ON JAPAN HIGHWAY



A pile-up involving at least 50 vehicles on a highway in central Japan has left two people dead and 26 injured, according to police. The incident was caused by a crash between two trucks, sparking a chain reaction that set at least 10 vehicles on fire, local police said. A 77-year-old woman from Tokyo was killed, and another body was discovered in the driver's seat of a burnt-out truck. Five people were seriously injured and 21 suffered minor injuries, police said. There was a heavy snow warning in place at the time of the crash. Police believe icy surfaces likely caused the trucks to skid on the roads. The crash happened on the Kan-etsu Expressway in Minakami, Gunma prefecture, about

160km (100 miles) northwest of Tokyo, at about 19:30 local time (10:30 GMT) on 26 December. It took about seven and a half hours to put out the fire, police said. Following the incident, a section of the highway was closed, with a long line of vehicles, many charred beyond recognition, stuck in the outbound lane. Work is under way to tow them away. A man in his 60s, whose vehicle was involved in the accident, told local media outlet NHK he heard a loud explosion from the far end of the pile-up and saw fire during the crash. The blaze then spread to other vehicles, he said. He said he was evacuated to a nearby toll gate with about 50 other people and spent the night in the hallway there.

FOUR HIKERS FOUND DEAD AFTER AVALANCHE IN CENTRAL GREECE



Four hikers who went missing on Christmas Day have been found dead after being buried by an avalanche in the snow-covered Vardousia Mountains in central Greece. The bodies of three men and a woman were found on Friday evening after a large-scale search in the mountainous region of Fokida, according to Greek state broadcaster ERT. Fire service teams located the bodies partially covered by snow on a steep and inaccessible slope near the summit of Korakas peak, at an altitude of about 2,000m (6,561ft). Rescue officials said the group was swept away by an avalanche. Authorities said the hikers had begun their ascent in favourable weather, but conditions quickly worsened due to the altitude and the area's terrain. Vasilis Vathrakogiannis, a spokesperson for the Hellenic Fire Service, told the BBC the alarm was raised by a friend of the three men after they failed to return at the expected time. "Weather conditions were extremely difficult, with low temperatures and poor visibility," he said, adding this made it hard for both drivers and a helicopter to detect anything. He said a fire service ground team later found the bodies of the three men and a woman.



Kohli's Brilliant Gesture For Gujarat Spinner Who Dismissed Him In Vijay Hazare Trophy

Up against Gujarat in Delhi's second match of the Vijay Hazare Trophy, Virat Kohli couldn't complete back-to-back centuries in the domestic white-ball tournament on Friday. Kohli, who registered a whopping knock of 131 in the last match against Andhra, looked at his best against Gujarat too, but departed just 23 runs shy of another triple-digit score. It was left-arm orthodox spinner Vishal Jaiswal who got the better of the Indian batting icon. While Kohli was understandably disappointed to miss out on yet another hundred, his gesture for Jaiswal after the game said it all about how grounded he is. Kohli could be spotted engaging in a conversation with Jaiswal after the game. He even signed the match ball for the spinner, who went on to share a glorious post on Instagram later. "From watching him on TV to sharing the field. Grateful for moments like these," Jaiswal wrote in a post.

"From watching him dominate world cricket to sharing the same field and taking his wicket is a moment I never imagined would turn into reality. Getting the wicket of Virat Bhai is something I'll cherish forever. Just grateful for the opportunity, the journey, and everything this beautiful game has given me," he added. Coming to the match, Delhi secured a narrow seven-run victory.

Sent in to bat first, Delhi posted a competitive total of 254/9 in their 50 overs, anchored by Virat Kohli's 77 and Rishabh Pant's 70, while Jayaswal's four-fer kept Delhi's total within reach. In response, Gujarat appeared to be in a commanding position at 121/1 before a middle-order collapse shifted the momentum back to Delhi. Despite a fighting 57 from Aarya Desai and a late charge by Saurav Chauhan (49), Gujarat was eventually bowled out for 247 in 47.4 overs. Prince Yadav was the hero with the ball for Delhi,



Stuart Broad Gets Emotional In Commentary Box As England End 5468-Day Wait

England registered a historic win over Australia in the fourth Ashes Test on Saturday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Chasing a modest target of 175, England lost six wickets but still managed to cross the finish line. It was a special moment for Ben Stokes and his team, as they ended England's 18-match winless streak in Australia. This was their first victory Down Under since 2011. Despite clinching such a memorable win, England have already missed the chance to reclaim the Ashes, as Australia lead the series 3-1. Apart from the win, one of the biggest highlights of the day was former England pacer Stuart Broad's smiling face. Fans



were quick to draw comparisons between his expressions during the Perth and Melbourne Tests. During the Perth Test, Broad's disheartened expression from the commentary box was captured after he saw Joe Root getting clean bowled. Fast forward to the Melbourne Test, Broad witnessed the winning runs being hit and joyously celebrated the moment with a big smile. After the match, England skipper Ben Stokes expressed his thoughts on the victory and called it a complete team effort. "It's been a massive effort from everyone, and to come out on the right side of the result

feels really special. Hopefully it means a lot. We play for a lot of people - not just ourselves. The support we get, wherever we go in the world, is incredible. The noise, the chants, the constant backing - the lads out in the middle hear it, feel it, and thrive off it. I know a lot of our fans will be buzzing right now. (the build up to this game and how satisfying to win the game) Definitely very satisfying," said Stokes. "There was a fair bit going on in the build-up to this match, a lot being thrown our way. For the lads to come out, stay focused, and perform the way they did says a lot about the character in this team. Huge credit to the players, support staff,

Ryan Rickelton's 1st SA20 Ton Goes In Vain As MI Cape Town Lose To Durban's Super Giants



Ryan Rickelton's maiden SA20 century was not enough to save MI Cape Town from a 15-run defeat to Durban's Super Giants in a cracking Season 4 opener at Newlands. On a run-filled opening night when a cumulative total of 449 runs were struck, which included 25 sixes and 40 boundaries, Rickelton's 113 off 65 balls took MI Cape Town to the brink. But ultimately, Durban's Super Giants' record 232/5, which eclipsed Sunrisers Eastern Cape's 204/3 in the Season 2 Final at this venue, was too much on a night when the Newlands faithful were royally entertained. DSG's all-New Zealand opening pair of Devon Conway and Kane Williamson laid the platform as they dominated the Powerplay, racing to 96 in just 8.3 overs before Tristan Luus had Williamson (40 off 25 balls, 7x4) brilliantly caught by MI Cape Town captain Rashid Khan, who ran back from mid-off before diving full length to hold on to a stunning catch. The momentum was maintained by Englishman Jos Buttler (20 off 12 balls) and Heinrich Klaasen (22 off 14 balls) after Conway (64 off 33 balls, 7x4, 2x6) had been picked up by fellow Kiwi Trent Boult. There was no relief for the defending champions with Aiden Markram and Evan Jones keeping the boundaries flowing. Markram blitzed 35 off 17 balls (5x4, 1x6), while Jones struck an undefeated 33 off only 14 balls (4x4, 2x6). The MI Cape Town run-chase was centered around Rickelton with the left-hander continuing his love affair with Newlands. The League's leading run-scorer cut, drove and pulled powerfully despite Rassie van der Dussen (2) and Reeza Hendrick's falling by the wayside. The introduction of Jason Smith, however, changed the momentum with the MI Cape Town debutant smashing an exhilarating 41 off just 14 balls (4x4, 3x6). But DSG kept chipping away with Smith, Nicholas Pooran (15) and Dwayne Pretorius (5) departing during the death overs.

When Billie Jean beat Bobby - the Battle of the Sexes that defined an era

It was the only tennis match to start with a piglet being handed over to one of the competitors - but this was no ordinary match. On 20 September 1973, an estimated 90 million people around the world watched Billie Jean King beat self-proclaimed chauvinist Bobby Riggs in a best-of-five match at the Houston Astrodome. There was pageantry, pomp and a \$100,000 (£74,765) cheque for the winner. It was the second instalment of the Battle of the Sexes - but that name is more than just a marketing slogan. King's victory over Riggs was a part of the women's right movement. It had the potential to influence politics and the future of women's tennis. When Aryna Sabalenka faces Nick Kyrgios on Sunday, it will be under the banner of the Battle of the Sexes, but the



stakes will not be as high as those that faced King 52 years ago. "The only similarity is that one is a boy and one is a girl. That's it," King told BBC Sport when asked about the Sabalenka-Kyrgios match. "Everything else, no. Ours was about

social change; culturally, where we were in 1973. Mine was really political. I knew I had to beat him for societal change. I had a lot of reasons to win." In 1973, King was 29 years old, a 10-time Grand Slam singles champion and at the height of her powers. Riggs was 55, having won the men's singles, doubles and mixed doubles title at Wimbledon in 1939 before his career was interrupted by World War Two. "He had been following me around for two years, asking me to play. I kept saying 'Bobby, I'm not going to play you,'" King told BBC World Service's Sporting Witness programme in 2017. "I only said yes because Margaret lost." Australia's Margaret Court, the 24-time major singles champion and then world number one, was one of King's fiercest rivals.

Marnus Labuschagne Frustrated, Huge Umpiring Controversy Erupts In Ashes 4th Test

The Day 2 of the 4th Ashes Test in Melbourne witnessed a big controversy unfold, forcing Marnus Labuschagne to head back to the pavilion, disappointed with the third umpire's decision. The incident took place in the 18th over of the second innings, when England pacer Josh Tongue managed to get an edge off the bat of Labuschagne, with the ball flying to the slip cordon. It was Joe Root who grabbed the ball, prompting a big appeal from the England camp. Labuschagne remained unmoved, suggesting he isn't sure if the ball carried to Root in the slips. The on-field umpire referred the decision to the third umpire, who ruled the decision in favour of the bowling team



after checking multiple angles. The third umpire suggested that Root's fingers were underneath the ball when he caught it, ruling out the possibility of the ball touching the ground first. Labuschagne, however, wasn't happy with the decision. He looked visibly frustrated as he had to head back to the dressing room. As for the match, England fought back to

The brothers from Dagestan shining in MMA and for Man Utd



Ibragim Ibragimov cracks a smile as he reflects on how his family's life has changed since moving to England from Dagestan eight years ago. "I love it here," the Professional Fighters League (PFL) star tells BBC Sport. "My dad and I always say, 'this is the country I should have been born in.' The 21-year-old left his home in the North Caucasus region in 2017 because his father believed a move more than 3,000 miles across Europe would offer better career opportunities for him and his siblings. The plan was for Ibragim and his three brothers - Amir (17), Gazik (16), and Muhammad (15) - to finish school before enrolling in one of the country's universities. But life looks slightly different for the Ibragimov family now. Ibragim is a professional mixed martial arts fighter and is regarded as one of the top prospects in PFL, one of the leading MMA leagues. His brothers have taken a different path in sport and have all been signed by Manchester

United - with Amir pushing

Children from the area are often encouraged to take up wrestling almost as soon as they are able to stand. "When I was a kid, my dad was always telling me and my little brothers that we had to be strong, firstly to protect yourself, your family, and your friends," says Ibragim. "So we all got used to fighting, and that's why everyone knows how to fight in Dagestan. It's not a surprise. "Amir was a very good wrestler. You can see the transition from wrestling to football; obviously, it helped my little brothers a lot. "Some of the footballers he comes up against don't have the same base he has.

Updated World Test Championship Points Table: What England's Win Over Australia Means For India



In a Boxing Day miracle for the visitors, England secured a famous victory over Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) by 4 wickets on Saturday. While the Ashes urn had already been retained by Australia following their 3-0 lead, the result comes as a welcome boost for England, as the Melbourne win is the tourists' first in Australia in 19 Test matches. This result also has massive ramifications for the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2025-2027 points table. Before this match, Australia held a flawless 100% points percentage (PCT). This defeat marks their first loss of the cycle, finally opening the door

for the chasing teams.

Despite the loss, Australia

(and the psychological advantage it brings) is officially back on. India, at present, sit in 6th place with a PCT of 48.15%. With Australia and New Zealand looking strong, India will need a near-perfect run in their upcoming series to break into the top two. England, having added another win to their tally, haven't leapfrogged India yet will be pushing to surpass them in the coming games. The final Test of the Ashes series moves to the SCG (Sydney Cricket Ground) starting on January 4th. Australia will be looking to re-establish their dominance, while England will hope to carry this momentum to further improve their standing in the WTC table.

England Great Slams MCG Pitch, Calls It "Joke" After 20 Wickets Fall On Day 1 Of 4th Ashes Test



Former England captain criticized the Melbourne Cricket Ground pitch after a dramatic collapse of wickets during the fourth Ashes Test against Australia. A total of 20 wickets fell on Day 1 as Australia were bundled out for 152 after England opted to bowl first. However, the visitors also struggled, getting bowled out for just 110, handing Australia a 42-run lead. On Day 2, the carnage continued as England quickly wrapped up Australia's second innings for 132, setting themselves a target of 175 runs to win.

It was the first time in 74 years that 20 wickets had fallen on Day 1 of a Test match down under.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Vaughan wrote, "This pitch is a joke.. This is selling the game short.. The players / Broadcasters and more importantly the fans .. 26 wickets in 98 overs !!!!! #Ashes." Talking about the "Bazball" style.

45 The Movie' Will Captivate Everyone: Karunada Chakravarthy Shiva Rajkumar at the Pre-Release Event

Starring Karunada Chakravarthy, Shiva Rajkumar, Real Star Upendra, and Raj B. Shetty, '45 The Movie' is directed by Arjun Janya. The film is being produced on a grand scale by Smt. Uma Ramesh Reddy and M. Ramesh Reddy under the Suraj Productions banner. The Telugu version is set for a grand release through Mythri Distributors on January 1, and as part of the promotions, a pre-release event was held on Saturday. Shiva Rajkumar said, "After Veda, I came to Hyderabad again for 45. Arjun Janya narrated the story brilliantly within just four to five minutes. The interval and climax left a strong impact on me. I advised Arjun to direct the film himself. Initially, he shot two or three scenes using animation. After watching those visuals, Ramesh garu decided to back the project. Arjun has done complete justice to the opportunity given to him. I'm very happy that Mythri is releasing our film in Telugu. The Kannada version has already been a success. Watching this film will



surely make you love and respect every living being. We don't know how long we live on this earth, but the film teaches us to live happily for as long as we do. Satya's cinematography and Ravi Varma's action choreography are outstanding. Arjun Janya will become India's number one director. This film will touch everyone's hearts. Do watch 45 on January 1." Upendra stated, "I really liked the way Arjun Janya narrated the story. I know how success-

ful he is as a music director, but while narrating this script, he enacted every character with great conviction. He first shot a scene, completed DI and dubbing, and screened it in a theatre for the producer. Only after that we began the film. I have never seen Shivanna like this in any of his earlier films. Arjun has done a phenomenal job with the screenplay. After this movie, he will emerge as a big director. He gave me a role that no one has dared

to offer me before. He may look calm in real life, but on screen he has created absolute mayhem. Telugu audiences always encourage good cinema. Please watch and support 45 on January 1." Director Arjun Janya acknowledged, "With 45, audiences will experience a completely new world. I have worked tirelessly on this film for three and a half years. I sincerely thank Shivanna garu and Upendra garu for giving me this opportunity. Raj B.

Shetty has delivered a brilliant performance. Many thanks to Mythri Shashi garu for releasing our film—his suggestions were extremely valuable to us. Please watch and support 45 on January 1." Producer Ramesh Reddy said, "No matter how much we speak about 45, it will still fall short. One must watch the film to truly understand its value. The movie presents the Garuda Purana in a very powerful manner. Shivanna, Upendra, and Raj B. Shetty have all delivered outstanding performances. This is a film everyone should watch. Do come with your family and enjoy it on January 1." Mythri Shashi stated, "Thank you to the team for trusting us with the release of 45. The film flows in one direction until the interval, after which you will witness the true, powerful avatars of Upendra garu and Shivanna garu. The climax is a high point. Raj B. Shetty's character will greatly impress audiences. The film carries a strong and meaningful message, and the present generation must definitely watch it. Please support 45 on January 1."

Animation Movie "Kiki & Koko", Designed to Teach Children Real Life and Human Values, Teaser Released

The global craze for Hollywood animation films is immense. Just like films of any other genre, animation movies also receive equal importance and appreciation. In recent times, Indian animation films have also started making a strong impact. It is well known that the animated film "Maha Avatar Narasimha", released in July this year, impressed both children and adults alike and emerged as a grand success with record-breaking collections. Now, another heart-touching Indian animation film titled "Kiki & Koko" is taking shape. Designed to appeal to children as well as adults who have a childlike heart, "Kiki & Koko" is being presented by Inika Studios. The film is produced by Dharani and directed by P. Narayanan. Child artiste Srinika plays the character of Koko, while Meena Chabria serves as the CEO. Currently under production, the animated movie "Kiki & Koko" will soon be released



in theatres as well as on OTT platforms in nine languages. Along with all Indian languages, the film is also set for release in several international languages worldwide. On this occasion, the teaser of the film was launched at a press meet held today at Prasads Preview Theatre, Hyderabad, where the film team shared highlights of the movie.

Speaking at the event, child

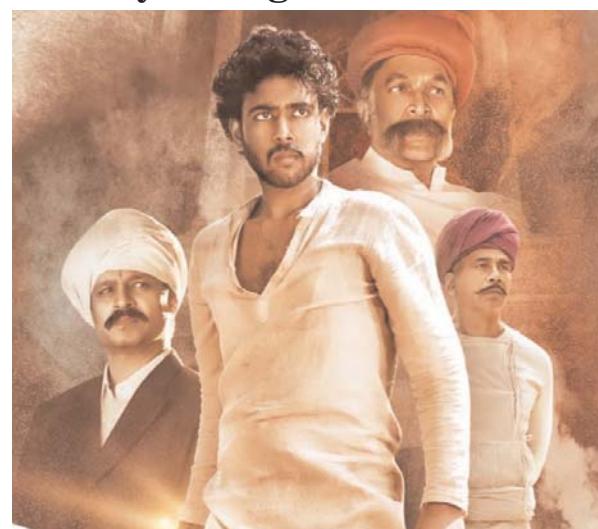
artist Srinika said:
"I played the character of Koko in 'Kiki & Koko'. In the movie, Kiki is my best friend. I really wish I had a friend like that in real life. I love animation movies a lot, and acting in 'Kiki & Koko' made me very happy. When I grow up, I want to become a good actor."

Creative Director Gokul Raj Bhaskar said:

"I have been working in the Malayalam animation

industry for the past 20 years. Animation films usually focus heavily on fantasy. However, through 'Kiki & Koko', we are not showing fantasy but reality to children. Through our art, we aim to convey all the emotions of real life to kids. We are happy to introduce 'Kiki & Koko' to Telugu audiences who truly love cinema. This is not just an introduction to the film, but an attempt to introduce emotions through its characters."

"Playing the "Khudiram Bose" who ascended the gallows at 18 is my life's greatest honor"



with immense pride, but it also felt like a huge responsibility.

Q: How did you land this prestigious role?

Rakesh: My father, Vijay Jagarlamudi, is the producer of this film. It was through him that I got this opportunity. While getting the role was relatively easy because of my background, I knew that justifying the character would require immense hard work and dedication.

Q: What inspired your father to produce a film on Khudiram Bose specifically?

Rakesh: My father is a staunch patriot. He is an avid reader of history and scriptures; our home is filled with books on India's freedom struggle. His passion for our heritage and the desire to introduce this forgotten hero to the current generation led him to produce this film.

"This victory is not mine alone It belongs to my supporters and my family!"



One incident that happened about five years ago, without any fault of mine, shook my life and career completely. But I am a fighter by nature. I battled against adverse circumstances and finally emerged as a winner," said popular actress Sanjanaa Galrani, who secured a place among the Top 5 finalists of Bigg Boss Season 9, becoming emotional while sharing her journey.

On this occasion, Sanjanaa expressed her heartfelt gratitude to her family, well-wishers, and fans who stood by her side through every high and low. After finishing as a Top 5 finalist in Bigg Boss Season 9, she interacted exclusively with the media and shared her experiences and emotions from the Bigg Boss house. She said that Bigg Boss taught her many life lessons and that this experience has inspired her to begin a fresh innings in her career. Sanjanaa stated

"With increasing demand for Bad Girlz, we are adding new shows and screens," say Makers at Success Meet



"Bad Girlz", directed by Phani Pradeep Dhulipudi of '30 Rojullo Premichadham Ela' fame, is running successfully in theatres. The film is produced under the banners of Prashvitha Entertainment, Neeli Neeli Aakasam Creations, and NVL Creations. Anchal Gowda, Payal Chengappa, Roshini, Yashna, Rohan Surya, Moin and Rohan Surya are the main actors in 'Bad Girlz'. Producers Sasidhar Nalla, Emmadi Soma Narsaiah, Ramisetti Rambabu, and Ravula Ramesh have stated that they have added extra shows in response to the growing demand from the audience. Director Phani Pradeep Dhulipudi (Munna)

said that the film may be short in length, but it is very big in terms of content. "The main strengths of this movie are Anup Rubens' music and Chandrabose's lyrics. Because of these two reasons, everyone is liking our movie even more. I had told people to come to the theater only if they liked our teaser, songs, and trailer. 30 Rojullo Premichadham Ela, which was released during the pandemic, became a big hit. My new film, Bad Girlz, is a hit as well. Our producers especially believed that we could score a hit no matter how much competition there is, and that has now come true. At present, the producers are working on increasing the number of theaters. We made this film with a lot of honesty. This is a film made for girls. If Jathi Ratnalu were made with girls as lead actors, our film would be like that. If you liked Jathi Ratnalu and MAD, you will like our movie too. Please continue to support our film in the same way," he said. Producer Sasidhar Nalla thanked the audience and said, "Every actor stood by us with great support. I am receiving calls from theaters asking us to increase the number of shows and screens. Despite stiff competition, you have turned our small film into a wonderful success. Thanks to everyone who is encouraging our movie."

A GRAND TRAILER LAUNCH EVENT FOR MASTER MAHENDRAN'S "NEELAKANTHA" MOVIE, THE MOVIE IS SET FOR A GRAND THEATRICAL RELEASE ON JANUARY 2ND



Master Mahendran, who has acted as a child actor in many Telugu and Tamil super hit films, is turning into a hero in the movie "Neelakantha". This movie is presented by Mrs. M. Mamatha, Mrs. M. Rajarajeswari and produced by Marlapalli Srinivasulu and Venugopal Devi under the banners of LS Productions and Global Cinemas. Rakesh Madhavan is directing it. Neha Pathan, Yashna Muthuluri and Sneha Ullal are playing the heroines. "Neelakantha" movie is getting ready for a grand theatrical release on January 2nd in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam along with Pan India. The trailer launch event of this movie was held in Hyderabad today. In this program Producer Marlapalli Srinivasulu said - I come from an IT background. I love cinema. I entered film production with that passion. I liked a line my friend Shashidhar

said and decided to produce it. Director Rakesh Madhavan prepared a bounded script. After reading that script, we started the "Neelakantha" project to definitely make a movie with this story. During the shooting time, nature did not cooperate and sometimes we faced storms. We stopped the shooting for a few days. After overcoming some such obstacles, we are bringing our film to you for

a grand theatrical release on January 2. This was possible only because of the support of our film team. We want you all to support the film "Neelakantha". DOP, Editor Shravan G. Kumar said - I am a friend of director Rakesh. We used to screen our short films here at Prasad Labs. Then we dreamed of making a good film. I am happy that it has come true with the film "Neelakantha". The trailer

Progressive Panel Press Meet



In the backdrop of the Telugu Film Chamber elections, a press meet was organized on Saturday afternoon by the Progressive Panel (Supported by Allu Aravind, Daggubati Suresh Babu, Dil Raju), where several producers shared their views on key issues concerning the film industry. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. K.S. Rama Rao said: Progressive activities in the Chamber have not been implemented properly. It is unfortunate that some people are more focused on money-lending and interest business. The Film Chamber building was constructed purely for the benefit of the entire film industry. Even as Vice-President, he reiterated. To improve the present situation of the industry, the Progressive Panel must come to power. Only those who actually make films should have a place and role in the Chamber. Mr. Ravikishore said: Responding to allegations on the Guild, he clarified that it was formed to meet the day-to-day needs of producers. On issues like Qube and UFO, they coordinated with producers and sought workable solutions. He alleged that another panel is planning to sell the Chamber building. Since GST on mediclaim made it expensive, benefits were planned only for eligible members, he explained.