

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

29-12-2025

Total pilgrims: 59,631

Tonsures: 18,609

Hundi kanukalu: 4.36 CR

Waiting Compartments: 13

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) : 6-8 H

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India to receive its 1st Bullet Train on Aug 15 next year: Ashwini Vaishnaw



WORLD | NEWS

Zelensky says peace deal is 90% ready in new year address

SPORTS | NEWS

Shubman Gill's return date confirmed, set to Play in this tournament After T20 world cup snub



INBRIEF

Faridabad gang-rape: Accused threatened to kill victim before dumping her on road



Faridabad (TSIT) A day after a 25-year-old woman was reportedly gang-raped in a moving van through the night and thrown out of the speeding vehicle, chilling details have surfaced pointing at the brutality of the two alleged perpetrators. According to the victim's family members, when the woman, a mother of three, screamed for help, the accused allegedly threatened to kill her before taking turns to rape her. According to the victim's family members, when the woman, a mother of three, screamed for help, the accused allegedly threatened to kill her before taking turns to rape her. The two men accused of the Faridabad assault, one from Uttar Pradesh and the other from Madhya Pradesh, have since been arrested and sent to judicial custody, police said. According to officials at a private hospital where the woman was admitted on Wednesday, her condition remains stable on Thursday. "The victim, whose condition is stable now, is undergoing treatment at the hospital," Dr Amit Yadav, director of the private hospital, said.

One dead, 15 fall ill after New Year party in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, (TSIT) : New Year celebrations turned tragic in Hyderabad after a person died and 15 others were taken ill after a late-night party. The incident occurred in Bhavani Nagar under Jagadgirigutta Police Station of Cyberabad Police Commissionerate in Medchal Malkajgiri district. A group of 17 friends celebrated the New Year with a party at Bhavani Nagar Welfare Association, where they ate Biryani and consumed liquor. On returning home past midnight, they took ill. One of them succumbed before he could be taken to the hospital. He was identified as Pandu (53). Fifteen people have been admitted to Narayana Malla Reddy Hospital. Food poisoning is suspected to have led to the tragedy. Police registered a case and took up an investigation.

T'gana formed to protect water rights: CM Revanth



Hyderabad (TSIT): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday asserted that the Telangana government is firmly committed to safeguarding the State's rightful share of river waters and correcting historical injustices. Speaking at Praja Bhavan, the Chief Minister said Telangana was formed primarily for water rights and accused previous regimes of compromising the State's interests. He alleged that after State formation, agreements signed during the BRS regime allotted only 299 TMC of Krishna waters to Telangana, while Andhra Pradesh

received 511 TMC, giving it permanent rights. Revanth Reddy said Telangana deserves 79 percent share based on catchment area and is demanding 555 TMC. He accused the previous government of inflating project costs in Palamuru-Rangareddy by changing the water source, leading to massive financial losses. Stating that inquiries would be ordered into past decisions, he said the government is now seeking approvals for 45 TMC to secure Central funds. He praised Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy for his dedicated efforts in defending Telangana's water rights.

Another Bangladeshi Hindu set on fire, 4th attack in two weeks



Dhaka (TSIT) A 50-year-old Hindu man was allegedly set on fire on December 31 in Shariatpur district in Bangladesh, the fourth attack on minorities in two weeks in the neighbouring country. Khokon Chandra, a medical shop owner, was returning home when a mob stabbed him with a knife and then set him on fire. He managed to escape after jumping into a nearby pond, NDTV reported. Das injured his lower abdomen and head. He was rushed to the

Misceants attack the businessman, 50-year-old Khokon Chandra Das, seriously injure him, pour petrol on his body and set him on fire

Dhaka Medical College Hospital and is currently under medical care.

His family has demanded justice. "My husband is a simple man. He did not harm anybody, he did not hurt anybody. I don't know who did this," his wife was quoted as saying by NDTV. Since

December last year, Bangladesh has been witnessing violent attacks on Hindu minorities. Twenty five-year-old Dipu Chandra Das was lynched to death by a Muslim mob over alleged blasphemy accusations. His body was hung from a tree before being set on fire.

A week later, 29-year-old Amrit Mondal was killed in the Hossaindanga area of Kalimohar Union. India has consistently condemned the attacks and raised safety concerns of Hindus, Christians and Buddhists. However, the Bangladeshi Ministry of Foreign Affairs called New Delhi's statement "incorrect, exaggerated and misleading." Exiled former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina attacked the Muhammad Yunus government, calling the deaths an absolute collapse of law and order and failing "to protect religious minorities and allow extremists to dictate foreign policy."

2,731 drunk driving cases booked in Greater Hyderabad



Hyderabad (TSIT): As many as 2,731 people were caught driving vehicles under the influence of alcohol during New Year celebrations in three police commissionerates covering Greater Hyderabad. In the special drive undertaken by police on the intervening night of December 31 and January 1, a total of 1,198 drunk drive cases were booked in Hyderabad commissionerate limits.

Police in Cyberabad booked 928 cases while 605 motorists were caught in Rachakonda commissionerate. The Hyderabad traffic police conducted a special enforcement drive

against drunken driving from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. to ensure road safety and prevent road accidents.

The primary objective of this special drive was to ensure that commuters reach their destinations safely, to deter drunken driving, and to minimize the risk of fatal and non-fatal road accidents during the New Year celebrations.

Hyderabad Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) R. Venkateshwarlu said that the Hyderabad traffic police aimed to welcome the New Year without a single accident, thereby enabling citizens to celebrate responsibly and safely.

KTR seeks opportunity for BRS to make PPT presentation in Telangana Assembly

Hyderabad, Jan 1 (TSIT) : Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday demanded that if the Telangana government proposes to make a PowerPoint presentation in the Legislative Assembly, the principal Opposition party, the BRS, must also be given the same opportunity in the spirit of parliamentary democracy.

Speaking to the media at Telangana Bhavan, KTR said that once members enter the Assembly, there is no distinction between the Chief Minister and an ordinary legislator. "All 120 MLAs enjoy equal rights on the floor of the House. If the government presents its version, the Opposition must also be allowed to present its facts," he said.

The Telangana government is likely to make a PowerPoint presentation in the Assembly on Friday on irrigation projects and river water-sharing issues. "You present your version and allow us to present ours. As the principal Opposition, we are fully prepared to explain how



Telangana's agriculture and irrigation were transformed over the last ten years under BRS governance," said KTR, as the BRS leader is popularly known. KTR asserted that the BRS is fully prepared to place facts and data before the Assembly.

Recalling an earlier instance, KTR said that when former Chief Minister K. Chandrabab Naidu made a PowerPoint presentation in the Assembly on March 31, 2016, the Congress party had boycotted the House, calling it a violation of parliamentary traditions. "What was unacceptable then—how has it suddenly become acceptable now?" he asked. He said that a letter has been submitted to the Speaker seeking fairness and equal opportunity for the Opposition in the

matter. Launching a sharp attack on the Congress government, KTR questioned the Chief Minister's understanding of irrigation and river water issues. He alleged that the Chief Minister had publicly claimed that the Bhakra Nangal Project was located in Telangana, whereas it is actually located in Himachal Pradesh.

"A Chief Minister who does not even know basic river basins wants to lecture us on irrigation?" KTR asked, adding that the Chief Minister was also unaware of the river basin to which the Devadula project belongs. KTR highlighted what he described as the government's failures in the irrigation sector, referring to the collapse of the Srisailem Left Bank Canal tunnel that claimed eight lives, the collapse of the Sunkishala project, and the submergence of the Vattem pump house. "What should we learn from you—how to make check dams fail, how Medigadda collapsed, or how Telangana's rightful share in Krishna waters was handed over to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB)?" he asked.

Op Sindoor displayed might of DRDO weapon systems: Rajnath

Lauded Team DRDO for bolstering India's indigenous capabilities by equipping the Armed Forces with state-of-the-art technologies and platforms.

New Delhi, Jan 1 (TSIT): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday praised the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the decisive role played by its weapon systems during Operation Sindoor.

Greeting the DRDO on its 68th Foundation Day, the Defence Minister said, "The weapon systems developed by DRDO



played a decisive role during Operation Sindoor, which serves as a testament to the professionalism and commitment

AI a "big opportunity", essential to ensure its benefits reach all: Murmu

NEW DELHI (TSIT): Describing Artificial Intelligence as a "big opportunity" for ushering in positive change, President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said it is essential to ensure that its benefits reach all sections of the society, especially the underprivileged. Addressing a programme organised by Ministry of Skill

Development and Entrepreneurship, she observed that AI is emerging as a critical growth driver for India's economy and will contribute significantly towards the country's GDP, employment and productivity in the coming decades. AI should be utilised for reducing societal, economic and technological barriers, said the President.



ment of the organisation towards safeguarding national interests."

In a social media message, Rajnath Singh said, "Visited the @DRDO India Headquarters in New Delhi on the occasion of their 68th Foundation Day. Lauded Team DRDO for bolstering India's indigenous capabilities by equipping the Armed Forces with state-of-the-art technologies and platforms."

During the event at DRDO headquarters, he appreciated the efforts of the scientists and personnel, praising their unwavering commitment, scientific excellence and deep sense of national duty.

In another message on X, the Defence Minister said, "On DRDO Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all DRDO scientists, personnel and their families.



Dozens feared dead, about 100 hurt in Swiss Alps bar blaze

Crans-Montana, Switzerland (TSIT) A New Year's party at the Le Constellation bar turned into tragedy when fire tore through the packed venue less than two hours after midnight. Police say "several tens" of revellers are presumed dead and around 100 injured, many critically. Rescue helicopters and ambulances ferried victims to hospitals across Valais canton, whose intensive-care unit and operating theatre quickly reached capacity.

Witnesses told French TV that a barmaid holding a lit candle in a bottle accidentally ignited the wooden ceiling; flames spread within seconds, collapsing the roof and trapping partygoers in a basement nightclub. Survivors described

smashing windows and surging up a narrow stairwell to escape; parents arrived in panic searching for children.

Investigators have not yet entered the charred building and say it is too early to name a cause, but they rule out foul play. Officials believe combustible gases produced a sudden flash-over. Identifying the dead, including foreign visitors, "will take time," said cantonal police commander Frederic Gisler.

Crans-Montana, a leading ski and golf resort set to host World Cup races next month, is less than 5 km from the 2012 Sierre bus-crash tunnel that killed 28. Authorities now urge locals to avoid further strain on overwhelmed medical services.

India & Pak exchange lists of prisoners, nuclear installations

New Delhi, Jan 1 (TSIT): India on Thursday called for early release and repatriation of civil prisoners, fishermen along with their boats, and missing Indian defence personnel from Pakistan's custody.

As both countries exchanged - through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad - the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated that Pakistan has been asked to expedite the release and repatriation

tion of 167 Indian fishermen and civil prisoners, who have completed their sentence.

"India has shared lists with details of 391 civil prisoners and 33 fishermen in its custody, who are Pakistani or believed to be Pakistani. Similarly, Pakistan has shared lists with details of 58 civil prisoners and 199 fishermen in its custody, who are Indian or believed to be Indian," read a statement issued by the MEA.

"The Government of India has called for early



release and repatriation of civil prisoners, fishermen along with their boats, and missing Indian defence personnel from Pakistan's custody.

Pakistan has also been urged to expedite the release and repatriation of 167 Indian fishermen and civil prisoners, who have completed their sentence.

In addition, Pakistan has been asked to provide immediate consular access to 35 civil prisoners and fishermen in Pakistan's custody, who are believed to be Indian and have not been provided consular access so far," it added. Under the provisions of the bilateral Agreement on Consular Access 2008, such lists are exchanged every year on January 1 and on July 1.

New Delhi asserted that it has asked the government of Pakistan to ensure the safety, security

and welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be-Indian civil prisoners and fishermen, pending their release and repatriation to India.

"As a result of the sustained efforts by the Government of India, 2,661 Indian fishermen and 71 Indian civil prisoners have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014. This includes 500 Indian fishermen and 13 Indian civilian prisoners who have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2023 till date," the MEA statement mentioned.

EDITORIAL

'India Out': In South Asia, India Bears the Burden of Nearness

This season, once again, the street in Bangladesh fills before it decides why it has filled. Bangladesh has once again become the place where South Asia’s unease gathers. The protests are familiar in form – students, slogans, police lines – but their cause resists precision. They are not only about water, though the rivers matter. They are not only about borders, though the dead along them are remembered. They are not only about diplomacy, though the language of insult and interference circulates freely. What moves beneath these moments is older and more intimate: a feeling that pressure is being applied from beyond the horizon, that decisions are being made elsewhere and lived locally, that proximity itself has become a burden. India enters these scenes less as an actor than as a presence: structural and unavoidable, and therefore endlessly interpretable.

This essay begins here, not because Bangladesh is exceptional, but because it is emblematic. Over the past half-century, similar moments have surfaced across South Asia, appearing suddenly, intensifying quickly, and dissolving without resolution. Moments like this have come to be called “India Out”, though what they name is not an ideology so much as a recurring strain of proximity. India is rarely absent in South Asia. Even where it is not invoked, it is felt: through rivers that thin without warning, through fuel queues that lengthen toward dusk, through borders that harden unexpectedly, through a rumour that arrives before reason can intervene. For many of its neighbours, India is not a policy problem so much as a condition of life: proximate, immense, and inescapable. It is this condition, more than any single action, that explains why, at moments of strain, the street turns outward and demands that India go.

These moments do not announce themselves as ideology. They do not sustain programs or carry manifestos. They appear instead as moods. A gathering thickens at a crossroads; a slogan hardens; a phrase repeats itself until it no longer sounds like news but like truth. By the time the words ‘India Out’ are painted or shouted, the work has already been done elsewhere: in the mind, in the image, in the shared sense that something has been taken, withheld, or imposed without consent. Over decades, since India ceased to be an episodic actor and became a structural presence in the lives of its neighbours, such moments have surfaced repeatedly across Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. They differ in scale and consequence. Some pass without blood; others do not. Yet they share a peculiar intimacy. India is not a distant empire to be denounced, but a neighbour whose presence is already woven into daily life; into water, trade, labor, language, cinema, and news.

To protest India, then, is not to reject an abstraction. It is to recoil from a closeness that, at certain moments, becomes unbearable. In Bangladesh, the earliest murmur rose not from the street but from the river. When the Farakka Barrage was commissioned in the mid-1970s, the grievance it produced was slow, almost geological. Water does not protest; it withdraws. Crops fail quietly. Livelihoods erode before they break into the open. The Farakka Long March of 1976, disciplined, largely non-violent, did not accuse India of malice so much as of indifference. India appeared there as a force upstream, unseen yet decisive, capable of altering lives downstream without ever crossing a border.

That image endured. Long after the slogans faded, the sense of hydrological vulnerability remained, ready to be recalled whenever scarcity returned. Along the border, death arrived more abruptly. Civilians shot while crossing fields or tending cattle did not require ideological framing to become symbols. Each killing was small in number, large in meaning. Protest followed death, not the other way around.

Edit

The Vishwaguru Complex: Supremacist Rhetoric and National Decline

When Mohan Bhagwat, chief of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), declared that India should aspire not merely to superpower status but to become “Vishwaguru”– teacher of the world – he articulated a vision that demands serious critical scrutiny. This rhetoric, increasingly central to contemporary Indian nationalism, represents a peculiar form of supremacist discourse that claims for India a position of moral, spiritual, and civilisational superiority over other nations. What makes this formulation particularly striking is its divergence from the nationalist idioms of other major nations, which typically emphasise strength, prosperity, or influence rather than pedagogical authority over humanity itself. This column examines the historical, sociological, and psychological roots of this “Vishwaguru complex,” argues that it emerges from specific caste-based epistemologies, and demonstrates how such hyperbolic rhetoric functions as deliberate mystification in an era of measurable national decline. The uniqueness of supremacist pedagogy The rhetoric of “becoming a superpower” or “Vishwaguru” is close to unique to India. No other country speaks of its future greatness with this level of certainty and theatricality. Established powers don’t advertise their ascent: the United States doesn’t run on promises of becoming a superpower – it already behaves like one. China avoids the language of impending supremacy and instead invests steadily in technology, industry, and global influence. Russia talks of restoring lost stature. Even ambitious economies like Brazil, South Korea, or Turkey don’t turn national pride into a public campaign of inevitable world leadership. In this sense, India stands alone. Its political class has converted the idea of superpower status into a collective fantasy and a mass pedagogical project. This boastfulness operates as a substitute for capability. Instead of proprietary technology, industrial depth, or strategic leverage,

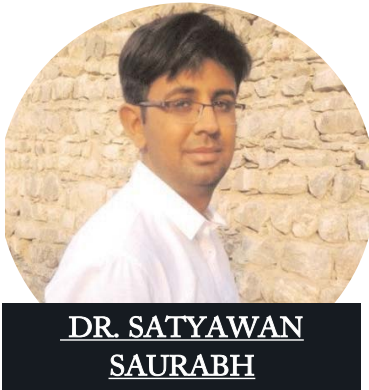


slogans perform the work of achievement. The fixation on future supremacy is less about aspiration than compensation: loud claims filling the vacuum left by institutional decay and developmental stagnation. Nations that genuinely shape the world rarely speak in this register; they demonstrate strength through action, not incantation. The countries that declare destiny most aggressively are usually the ones furthest from realising it. The slogan “Vishwaguru” is even more distinctive. American exceptionalism invokes power; Chinese nationalism invokes rejuvenation; Russian nationalism invokes restoration; even religious states like Iran or Saudi Arabia define themselves by regional authority or theological guardianship. Only India frames itself as the world’s teacher, the bearer of knowledge the rest of humanity supposedly lacks. This is not the language of partnership or even leadership – it is hierarchical, didactic, and civilisationally patronising. It positions India as the enlightened instructor and the world as its classroom. Such confidence does not arise in a vacuum. It draws from a social tradition built on knowledge monopoly and stratified authority: the Brahminical idea that wisdom flows downward from a

self-appointed pinnacle. The modern claim to global tutelage is simply this logic scaled up. It is not confidence born of achievement but the inflation of a historical caste impulse onto the international stage. In that sense, India’s boasts are not just loud – they are structurally unique. The rest of the world speaks of power. Only here do we speak of destiny, mastery, and the world awaiting our instruction. Brahminical epistemology The ideological substratum that informs the RSS and wider Hindutva emerges from a specifically Brahminical epistemology grounded in the premise of congenital hierarchy. Within this framework, human inequality is not merely social but ontological: Brahmins are positioned as inherently superior by virtue of birth, endowed with a putatively greater proximity to sacred knowledge and spiritual authority. The caste system thus operated not as a neutral division of labour but as a division of human worth, naturalised through doctrines of ritual purity, karma, and rebirth that framed hierarchy as cosmic order rather than historical construction. Central to this structure was the consolidation of epistemic power. Access to sacred knowledge – most notably the Vedas – was institutionally

monopolised by Brahmins, who alone possessed the authority to interpret, disseminate, or withhold it. Educational exclusion constituted a mechanism of control rather than mere deprivation: Shudras were legally and theologically barred from hearing Vedic recitation, with violence sanctioned to enforce these boundaries. The result was an epistemological regime in which the Brahmin became teacher by definition, while marginalised castes were structurally designated as non-knowers. Intellectual authority was grounded in claims of exclusive access to transcendence rather than demonstrable competence, producing what can be described as a supremacist epistemology stabilised through ritual, repetition, and punitive enforcement. The RSS inherits this genealogy. Founded by a Brahmin (K.B. Hedgewar), theoretically consolidated by a Brahmin ideologue (M.S. Golwalkar), and repeatedly led by Brahmin leadership thereafter, the organisation’s ideological production bears the marks of this ancestry. While its social base has broadened through strategic lower-caste mobilisation, its conceptual architecture remains Brahminical: the nation is imagined through hierarchical categories, cultural authority flows from the top down.

New Year: New Dreams, New Hopes



A new year isn't just a change in the calendar. It marks a pause in our lives—a time where we look back, understand the present, and chart a course for the future. Each new year brings with it new hopes, new resolutions, and new possibilities. It's a moment when we look within ourselves and ask ourselves, "How was the past year, what did we learn, what did we lose, and what do we want to become"

In today's fast-paced lives, we're often rushing—chasing goals, burdened by responsibilities, and racing against expectations. A new year offers us the opportunity to pause, take a breath, and reconsider our life's direction. This introspection becomes the foundation for new dreams.

The past year: A school of learning Every passing year is like a teacher for us. It brings joys and sorrows; successes and failures. But the real question isn't what happened to us, but what we learned from it. Too often, we judge the past year solely on the events—who we lost, what we gained—and ignore the lessons.

The past year may have taught us patience, made us self-reliant, and taught us the importance of relationships. Some experiences made us stronger, while others humbled us. The new year becomes meaningful only when we move forward with these lessons, not just carrying old sorrows and grievances.

New dreams: not appearances, but direction The New Year often begins with lofty resolutions—I will do this, I will become that, I will achieve this. But within a few months, these resolutions begin to fade.

This is because our dreams are often influenced by the expectations of others, rather than our true selves. Meaningful dreams are those that are rooted in our values. They excite us from within, not exhaust us. The New Year gives us a chance to reflect on whether our dreams are merely for show or for direction. Do we want to be what society wants, or what our soul desires

Dreams can be small—like keeping yourself healthy, spending time with your family, or taking some time for yourself. Not every dream demands a big stage or recognition; sometimes the biggest dream is a balanced and peaceful life.

New expectations: internal, not external We often place our hopes on others—that someone will change, circumstances will improve, systems will be fixed. But the New Year reminds us that the strongest hope is the one that comes from within. When we believe in ourselves, we can find a way out, no matter the circumstances.

Inner hope means believing that we can change, that we can learn, and that we can become better. This hope lifts us from despair and gives us the strength to stand up even after failure.

Relationship with yourself: The best start to the new year The first relationship that needs to be mended in the New Year is the one with ourselves. We are quick to notice the mistakes of others, but often shy away from our own shortcomings. The New Year teaches us to balance self-acceptance with self-improvement.

Being honest with ourselves doesn't mean judging ourselves, but rather accepting our true selves. Understanding our limitations, recognizing our strengths, and being compassionate toward ourselves. When we understand ourselves, our expectations of the world become more realistic.

Relationships: Quality, not quantity The New Year is also a time to reconsider relationships. In today's world, connections are plentiful, but relationships are few. Social media has connected us, but it has also increased the distance between our hearts. The New Year offers an opportunity to reflect on which relationships in our lives energize us and

which ones drain us.

It's not necessary to maintain every relationship, but it is important to treat it with honesty. Some relationships require time, some boundaries, and some require a respectful end. Cleaning out relationships in the new year is as important as cleaning out your closet.

A new definition of success Society has established a fixed definition of success—money, position, and prestige. But the New Year gives us an opportunity to reflect on whether this is success. Is a person who is calm, content, and stands by their values truly a failure The new definition of success should also include mental peace, self-esteem, health, and balance. If we can sleep peacefully at the end of the day, feel proud of ourselves, and not do injustice to anyone—that too is success.

Friendship with failure With new dreams come new failures. But failure is not something we should fear; it's important to learn from it. Every failure shows us which path isn't right for us. A new year gives us the courage to try again, without underestimating ourselves.

Those who fear failure often don't try. And those who don't try never move forward. The new year is all about taking risks and learning as you go.

Society and responsibility The New Year is not only a time for personal change, but also for social responsibility. We cannot remain untouched by the problems of the society we live in. Small efforts—such as honesty, sensitivity, and environmental awareness—can improve society. If everyone adopts just one good habit in the new year—change will begin to show itself. Conclusion: New Year, New Outlook A new year isn't a magic wand that will change everything. Change comes when we change the way we think. New dreams, new hopes are only meaningful if they make us better people—more sensitive, more responsible, and more truthful. Let's resolve this New Year to strive not to be perfect, but to be honest. We won't strive to be ahead of everyone, but to be on the right track. And when we look back at the end of the year, we can proudly say—yes, I was honest with myself. This is the true meaning of New Year –

CAG Audit Report Finds PMKKKY Goals Are Unmet in Karnataka

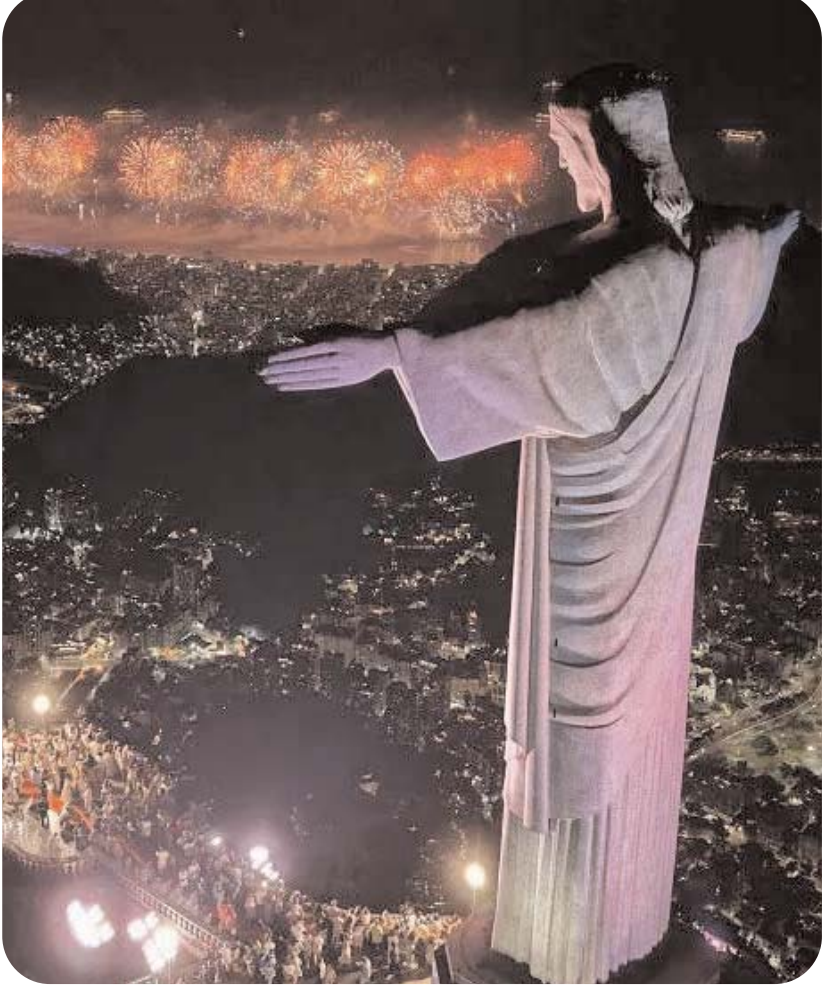
On December 17, the Comptroller and Auditor General's Performance Audit report that scrutinised in detail the flagship Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana was tabled in the Karnataka state assembly. This flagship scheme was designed as per the provisions of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (Amendment) Act, 2015; immediately after National Democratic Alliance government came into power in May 2014. The amendment to India's framework law governing the mining sector was rooted in the belief that part of the royalty paid by mining leaseholders shall remain in the district to ensure the overall welfare of mining affected people. Thus, a specified percentage of mining royalty will remain at district-level District Mineral Fund to be managed by organisations named District Mineral Foundation Trusts. In September 2015, as per the provisions of MMDR (Amendment) Act, the Union ministry of mines issued guidelines for the implementation of what it termed the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana. The objectives of PMKKKY are: To implement various developmental and welfare projects/ programmes in mining affected areas; To minimise/mitigate the adverse impacts, during and after mining, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts; and To ensure long-term sustainable livelihoods for the affected people in mining areas. This performance audit on PMKKKY implementation in Karnataka points out that as on March 31, 2023, the District Mineral Fund amounted to Rs 4003.51 crore; whereas expenditure had remained sluggish at Rs 1826.46 crore (i.e. 45.62%). However, as we analyze the audit findings, the message that emerges is not just sluggish expenditure, but also instances of works getting awarded without inviting tenders, as well as money getting spent to what auditors have termed as “irregular and inadmissible expenditure”. In a shocking audit finding, auditors reveal that authorities had not paid enough attention to planning processes,



thereby defeating the participatory planning purpose that was at the heart of the PMKKKY. In test-checked districts, CAG found that DMFTs had not prepared any Master Plan or Vision Document for the activities to be taken up. While the PMKKKY Guidelines, model rules and Karnataka DMFT Rules provided for the very basic activity of preparing lists of mining affected people and mining affected villages in respective districts, after almost a decade of PMKKKY implementation, these basic lists were not prepared and were not found on records. In absence of such basic lists, the targeting of works under PMKKKY for mining affected villages and people remained an unachieved goal. The performance audit also revealed that monitoring and impact evaluation remained neglected tasks. CAG audit states: “[T]hrough the State Level Steering Committee, headed by honorable Chief Minister, was constituted in March 2018, five years later, as on June 2023 no meeting were held”. As envisaged under Rule 5A of Karnataka DMFT Rules 2016, the SLSC shall meet at least once a year. The mechanism meant to ensure checks and balances has utterly failed, since the State-Level Empowered Committee, headed by Chief Secretary, whose prerogative was to ensure timely monitoring and review the progress of projects financed by DMFTs and functioning of DMFT Managing Committees, had met

only four times between March 2018 and June 2023. As per Rule 5B of Karnataka DMFT Rules 2016, the SLEC shall meet at least three times in a year. Thus, against the mandatory minimum requirement of 15 meetings, the SLEC could meet only four times, exposing poor compliance. Similar shortfalls and non-compliance with basic planning and monitoring mechanism were noticed with regard to mandatory minimum requirement of meetings of DMFT Governing Councils and Managing Committees in test checked districts, as explained in the table below: *Vijayanagara DMFT came into being only after the erstwhile Ballari district was bifurcated, leading to creation of Vijayanagara as separate district on November 17, 2021. Hence, the mandatory minimum number of meetings for this test-checked districts are not at the same level as for other four test-checked districts. CAG auditors also found several deviations in the way projects got approved and managed, defeating the very purpose of creating a fund to address the legacy development and welfare issues in mining affected districts. While PMKKKY guidelines of the Union Ministry of Mining, as well as Rule 18(2) of Karnataka DMFT Rules, had unambiguously underlined upon a judicious prioritisation of projects, by defining High Priority Areas (60% fund utilisation) and Other Priority Areas (remaining 40% fund utilisation).

In pictures: New Year welcomed around the world



STRANGER THINGS
DRAWS TO AN EPIC AND
EMOTIONAL CLOSE

Stranger Things has drawn to an epic and emotional close, with a dramatic two-hour finale that briefly jammed Netflix's servers. Viewers rushed to watch the final episode, which concludes the 10-year run of the sci-fi horror series, as it was released at 01:00 GMT. Some fans also attended special cinema screenings of the finale in cities across the US and Canada, several of which were attended by the show's stars. Set in the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana, Stranger Things first aired in 2016 and stars Millie Bobby Brown, Winona Ryder and David Harbour. The dramatic two-hour series finale, titled Chapter Eight: The Rightside Up, initially overloaded Netflix servers. Several fans said they were shown an error message as they tried to play it - something that often happens with big new releases on streaming platforms. But the episode was soon restored and viewers were able to watch a finale that included massive battle scenes and



emotional tributes that brought in all five seasons, giving closure to the characters that we've fallen in love with over the years. The finale left you on the edge of your seat at moments and had you both cheering and crying in others. A lot was riding on Netflix and The Duffer Brothers, who created the 1980s-inspired, monster-infused, inter-dimensional series. Ending any beloved series comes with both anticipation and a lot of critics. So far this season, fans have picked apart scenes and gone through past seasons in an attempt to piece together how it all might end in the Upside Down.

US military says five
killed in latest strike on
alleged drug boats



The US military says it struck two boats it alleges were carrying drugs on Wednesday, killing five people on board. US Southern Command did not say where it had carried out the latest strikes but US forces have been targeting vessels they suspect of smuggling narcotics to the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific for the past three months. Wednesday's strike came a day after the US targeted what it said were "three narco-trafficking vessels traveling as a convoy", killing at least three people. The Trump administration has cast its operations as a non-international armed conflict with the alleged traffickers but legal experts say they could be in violation of the laws governing such conflict. In total, there have been more than 30 strikes on vessels as part of the Trump administration's "war on drugs" with more than 110 people

killed since the US carried out its first attack on a boat in international waters on 2 September. That first attack has come under particular scrutiny from lawmakers in Washington since it emerged that US forces struck the targeted boat twice. Two people who had survived the first strike and were clinging to the hull of their boat were killed in the second. Some lawmakers expressed concern that the "double-tap" strike breached the rules of engagement. In its post announcing the strike on a convoy of three boats carried out on 30 December, US Southern Command said that there had been a number of survivors, without specifying how many. It said that "the remaining narco-terrorists abandoned the other two vessels, jumping overboard and distancing themselves before follow-on engagements sank their respective vessels".

New discovery may challenge
theory Vikings built first Irish
towns - researcher

A recently discovered large hilltop settlement could challenge the theory that the Vikings built the first towns in Ireland, a researcher has said. Dr Dirk Brandherm and his colleagues have identified more than 600 suspected houses in the Brusselstown Ring making it, to date, the largest nucleated settlement ever discovered in the entirety of prehistoric Britain and Ireland. The settlement, which is thought to have emerged at about 1200 BC (the Late Bronze Age), is located within a region called the Baltinglass Hillfort Cluster in the south-western edge of the Wicklow Mountains. It is among the 13 large hilltop enclosures spread across



the mountain range where there are structures dating back to the Neolithic period and Early Bronze Age. The findings were recently published within Antiquity, a peer-reviewed journal of world archaeology. The study states: "Given its exceptional size, density of occupation and architectural complexity.

SEVERAL DOZEN FEARED DEAD IN
SWISS SKI RESORT BAR FIRE

Several dozen people are presumed dead and around 100 injured after a fire ripped through a bar in a ski resort in southern Switzerland, officials have said. The fire broke out at around 01:30 (00:30 GMT) during new year celebrations in a bar called Le Constellation in Crans-Montana, police said. People from multiple countries have been affected, according to Swiss authorities, and "significant work" will be needed to identify victims and return bodies to families. Officials investigating the incident have not mentioned any cause, but categorically ruled out an attack. Ten helicopters, 40 ambulances and 150 emergency responders were sent overnight to the scene of the fire in the



Valais region, which is popular with tourists. Most of the injured experienced severe burns and were sent to Valais hospital, said Mathias Reynard, the region's council leader, in a press conference on Thursday morning. Its intensive care unit had reached full capacity and Reynard said the local community must take extra care to avoid needing hos-

pital treatment unnecessarily. Details are still emerging, and it is not yet known the precise number of people who have been killed and injured, their nationalities, the cause of the fire or how many people were in the bar. Officials have, however, confirmed that several nationalities were involved. The Italian foreign ministry said information from Swiss police indi-

cated around 40 people had died. Police at the press conference said "several dozen" were presumed dead, but did not give a more precise number when responding to questions from the media. Local media reports earlier on Thursday suggested pyrotechnics could have caused the incident, although this is unconfirmed. Valais canton prosecutor general Beatrice Pilloud said an investigation was under way "to identify the circumstances which caused this dramatic situation to occur". She told the press conference "currently we are favouring a fire and at no time is there question of any attack", adding out of respect for the families she cannot say more at this time.

NETHERLANDS POLICE FACE 'UNPRECEDENTED'
NEW YEAR'S VIOLENCE

Police in the Netherlands were pelted with fireworks and faced an "unprecedented amount of violence" on New Year's Eve, officers have said. A 19th century church in Amsterdam was engulfed by fire in the early hours of New Year's Day, although the cause of the blaze is not yet known. The Vondelkerk, which overlooks the largest park in the city, the Vondelpark, has been a tourist attraction since it was built in 1872. Elsewhere in the Netherlands, a 17-year-old boy and 38-year-old man were killed in fireworks incidents. In Bielefeld, Germany, local police said two 18-year-olds died after



setting off homemade fireworks. The head of the Dutch Police Union, Nine Kooiman, said she had been pelted by fireworks and other explosives on her shift in Amsterdam. The amount of violence was "unprecedented" she said. Reports of attacks against

police and firefighters were widespread across the country. Petrol bombs were thrown at police in the southern city of Breda. In Rotterdam, the city's eye hospital said it had treated 14 patients, including 10 minors, for eye injuries. Two received surgery. A 17-

year-old boy from Nijmegen and a 38-year-old man from Aalsmeer were killed in fireworks incidents, local media reported. In Amsterdam the 50-metre high tower of the historic Vondelkerk church collapsed. Authorities said the roof was badly damaged but the structure was expected to remain intact. The neo-Gothic basilica was designed by architect Pierre Cuypers whose works also include the Rijksmuseum. A ban on unofficial fireworks is due to come into force in 2026. According to the Dutch Pyrotechnics Association, a record 129m (£112m) had been spent on them this year.

ZELENSKY SAYS PEACE
DEAL IS 90% READY IN
NEW YEAR ADDRESS



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said a peace agreement to end the war with Russia is "90% ready", in a New Year address that largely focused on resistance to Moscow's full-scale invasion. Zelensky said the remaining 10% of the agreement to end nearly four years of conflict would "determine the fate of peace, the fate of Ukraine and Europe". In his own New Year speech, Russian President Vladimir Putin told his troops that "we believe in you and our victory". Earlier on Wednesday, Moscow also released what it said was evidence of Ukraine using drones to target Putin's private home on Lake Valdai in north-west Russia, allegations Kyiv has strenuously denied. It included a map allegedly showing that the drones were launched from the Sumy and Chernihiv regions of Ukraine and a video of a downed drone lying in

snowy woodland. A serviceman standing next to the wreckage claims it is a Ukrainian Chaklun drone. The BBC hasn't been able to verify the footage, and it is not possible to locate where it was shot. Russia would review its position on the ongoing peace negotiations as a result of the alleged incident, the Kremlin said. However, Kaja Kallas, the EU's top diplomat, on Wednesday described the Russian claims as a "deliberate distraction" and an attempt to derail the peace process. In his 20-minute address to the nation, Zelensky said that Ukraine did not want peace "at any cost", adding that "we want the end of the war - not the end of Ukraine". He said that a Ukrainian withdrawal from the eastern Donbas region means "everything will be over", a reference to Russia's maximalist demand that Moscow secure full control of the industrial area in any peace agreement. Moscow currently controls about 75% of the Donetsk region, and some 99% of the neighbouring Luhansk. The two regions are known collectively as Donbas. Its fate has been a major obstacle throughout negotiations, with Russia consistently unwilling to compromise on its aim to seize full control of Donbas.

SOCIAL MEDIA FUELLED MAMDANI'S RISE. CAN
HE KEEP THE MOMENTUM AS NEW YORK MAYOR

Jumping into the frigid waters of Coney Island in January for a pun on "I'm freezing... your rent". Visiting food trucks to discuss how city permitting processes have led to "Halalflation". Walking the length of Manhattan to show New Yorkers they "deserve a mayor that they can see, they can hear, they can even yell at". Those social media videos have helped propel Zohran Mamdani and his left-wing policies to a surprise win in New York City's mayoral primary, and then to victory in the November election. The democratic socialist, 34, engaged New Yorkers - particularly young voters who spend much of their time "doom-scrolling" - by using

social media to build an image of someone who is authentic and joyful, experts told the BBC. Now, after he was sworn in as mayor on 1 January, his next challenge will be keeping those same supporters engaged and maintaining the momentum in office. About three-quarters of New York City voters under the age of 30 voted for Mamdani, according to an Associated Press voter poll. Mamdani's robust social media strategy engaged these voters by delivering an image of a political candidate that young people - frustrated with older, more established candidates - craved, said Jane Hall, a communications professor at American University who studies poli-



tics and the media. A candidate does not have to be young to connect with young voters, Hall said, "but I think you have to be seen as being authentic and speaking to what people care about in a way that is hip and makes people want to be on the bandwagon". Jack Bratich, a journalism professor at Rutgers

University who studies political culture and social media, said Mamdani has shown he is able to combine a light-heartedness with serious conversations. That sense of fun stands in contrast to some of the negativity that President Donald Trump has leaned into on social media, Jennifer Stromer-Galley, who teaches

communications, political science, and rhetorical studies at Syracuse University, told the BBC. Despite an unexpectedly friendly first meeting in November between the two politicians, where they said they agreed on a number of issues facing New York City, such as the affordability crisis, the pair locked horns during the mayoral race. Trump painted Mamdani as an extremist "lunatic", threatened to withhold federal funding from the city if Mamdani won, and said he would have him arrested if he stood in the way of immigration enforcement operations. On election night, Mamdani snapped back in his victory speech, telling the president "to get to any of us,

you will have to get through all of us". That comment prompted a raucous cheer from his supporters at the time, but experts say the reality of governing may mean engaging with the Trump administration in a pragmatic way. That warm meeting in November may have been an early sign that Mamdani is willing to do so. How he works with the White House - and the kind of relationship he cultivates with the president - could prove crucial for implementing his agenda. While it may be easy to promise "fast, sweeping change" in campaign videos, things become much more difficult when it comes to actually "governing under a hostile administration.

Virat Kohli's First Instagram Post Of 2026 With Anushka Sharma Gets Over 5 Million Likes In 3 Hours

Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma welcomed the New Year 2026 with friends and family. Several photos of the Indian cricket superstar have gone viral on social media, where he can be seen with Anushka and his brother Vikas along with some close friends. Kohli himself posted a photo with Anushka Sharma on Instagram, which was incidentally his first social media post of the year. In the caption of the photo, he used an emoticon. The photo garnered over five million likes in three hours. Earlier, Kohli's last photo of 2025 contained a special message: "Stepping into 2026 with the light of my life @anushkasharma," he posted on Instagram. The post received close to four million likes in less than an hour. Kohli is spending some quality time with his family currently, before he returns to action with the



Vijay Hazare Trophy and the India vs New Zealand ODI series. Kohli is just 25 runs away from breaking a sensational world record held by Sachin Tendulkar. He needs 25 runs to complete

28,000 runs in international cricket, and he could become the fastest cricketer to achieve this milestone. The star batter will be in action for India in the upcoming ODI series against New

Zealand, starting January 11. Kohli will become only the third batter to reach the feat, after Sachin and legendary Sri Lankan cricketer Kumar Sangakkara. While Sachin achieved it in 644

innings and Sangakkara in his 666th, Kohli has already scored 27,975 runs in just 623 innings. As a result, he has ample opportunity to surpass Sachin's record, and it is expected that the Indian star will reach the milestone during the ODI series against New Zealand. Kohli was in good form in the first two games for Delhi, smashing 131 and 77 respectively. In the process, he also became the fastest to 16,000 List A runs, reaching the milestone in his 330th innings and surpassing the iconic Sachin Tendulkar, who touched the landmark in 391 innings. A BCCI source said that while the Indian ODI squad for the New Zealand series is assembling in Vadodara by January 8, there is a possibility that Kohli might arrive a day earlier to train. The three-match ODI series against the Black Caps will begin at the same venue on January 11.

Pretoria Capitals Enjoy A Rousing SA20 New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve proved to be the good luck charm for Pretoria Capitals as they joined Paarl Royals in opening their SA20 Season 4 accounts with their respective first victories on Wednesday. Capitals eased past MI Cape Town by 85 runs to earn a bonus point victory at Newlands. Sherfane Rutherford enjoyed a New Year's Eve to remember with the West Indies allrounder delivering the perfect all-round performance for Capitals. Rutherford (47 not out 15 balls, 6x6) and Dewald Brevis (36 not out off 13 balls, 1x4, 4x6) brought the fireworks with the bat before the Windies superstar delivered a career-best bowling performance of 4/24 to dismiss MI Cape Town for just 135 in response to the Capitals' mammoth 220/5. The 'Sky Blues' pair delivered an explosive 86-run partnership off just 27 balls that offset a poor Powerplay after a fit-again Kagiso Rabada had helped reduce



the visitors to 36/3. It was a belligerent exhibition of power-hitting with 92 runs for the loss of just one wicket at a run-rate of 18.2 coming in the last five overs. The duo almost matched each other shot for shot, but it was Rutherford's astonishing assault on Dewald Pretorius in the penultimate over that shocked the Newlands faithful. The West Indian blasted four successive maximums, which formed part of a sequence of a half dozen sixes in a row that had been kickstarted by Brevis' double in the previous over. It was the perfect

ending after Shai Hope (45 off 30 balls, 3x4, 2x6) and Wihan Lubbe (60 off 36 balls, 7x4, 2x6) had done the initial resurrection job. The four Player of the Match candidates were Dewald Brevis, Wihan Lubbe, Keshav Maharaj and Sherfane Rutherford with the West Indian winning 77.4% of the fan vote. MI Cape Town's chase was always going to be dependent on their openers Ryan Rickleton (33 off 17 balls) and Rassie van der Dussen (28 off 20 balls) and the pair duly delivered a 60-run stand within the Powerplay.

Australia Great Tears Into Babar Azam On Live TV After Pak Star's Latest BBL Fifty

Star batter Babar Azam slammed a half-century for the Sydney Sixers during their Big Bash League (BBL) clash against the Melbourne Renegades on Thursday. The former Pakistan captain struck an unbeaten 58 off 46 balls and was the top scorer for his side as the Sixers beat the Renegades by six wickets at Marvel Stadium in Melbourne. Chasing a tricky target of 165, Babar hit four fours and a solitary six, striking at just over 126. This was his second half-century of the campaign following a 58 against the Sydney Thunder on December 20 and his first since being omitted from Pakistan's squad for the upcoming T20I series against Sri Lanka. While there was a huge roar in the



stadium for Babar following his half-century, former Australia wicketkeeper-bat-

ter Adam Gilchrist raised concerns over his approach in the chase. Gilchrist, who

was on commentary duty for Fox Cricket, pointed out that Babar's 'run-a-ball' approach puts unfair pressure on the other batters. A video of the remarks has since gone viral on social media. "Babar is not known to have a power-packed game. He is not going to hoick across the line and slog one over the boundary for a six. He needs to be proactive. He can't just think run a ball and put all the responsibility on his batting partner to get the job done," Gilchrist was heard as saying on-air. Sixers were in a spot of bother in the chase before Joel Davis slammed a quickfire 34 off just 15 balls. They eventually won the game with five balls to spare. Babar has been struggling for touch in recent times.

BBL Player Suffers Huge Embarrassment After Fiery Send-Off To Australia Star

An embarrassing moment took place for Perth Scorchers' Mahli Beardman during the side's Big Bash League 2025-26 game against Hobart Hurricanes at Bellerive Oval, Hobart, on Thursday. The Hurricanes were chasing a big target of 230. On the sixth ball of the 12th over of their chase, Australian batter Matthew Wade shuffled across the stumps and tried to play a sweep shot. Pacer Beardman nailed his yorker to perfection, cleaning up the stumps. Given Wade had already smashed one six and two fours in the over, Beardman gave the batter



a fiery send-off. Things took a U-turn as the umpire signalled that it was a front-foot no-ball. As a result, Wade was declared not out and returned to his crease, resuming his batting. Talking about the game, Mitchell Marsh's scintillating century powered

Perth Scorchers to a commanding 40-run victory over Hobart Hurricanes. Opening the batting, Marsh smashed a brilliant 102 off just 58 balls, lacing his innings with 11 fours and five sixes. He was well supported by Aaron Hardie, who produced a blistering unbeat-

en 94 off 43 deliveries, striking nine boundaries and five maximums. The duo dismantled the Hurricanes' bowling attack and guided the Scorchers to a formidable total of 229/3 in their allotted 20 overs. Chasing a mammoth target, Hobart Hurricanes were restricted to 189/9 despite a few spirited cameos. Nikhil Chaudhary emerged as their top scorer with a quickfire 31 off 15 balls, which included five fours and a six. Hobart had opted to field after winning the toss, but their chase never quite gathered the required momentum as they lost wickets at regular intervals.

BRAZIL LEGEND ROBERTO CARLOS RECOVERING IN HOSPITAL



Brazil and Real Madrid legend Roberto Carlos is "recovering well" after undergoing what he described as "a preventative medical procedure". The former left-back, 52, updated fans on his condition via his Instagram page, which included a picture of him smiling in a hospital bed. He also denied rumours that he had suffered a heart attack. "I would like to clarify recent information that has been circling," he wrote. "I recently underwent a preventative medical procedure, planned in advance with my medical team. The procedure was successful, and I am well. I did not suffer a heart attack. I am recovering well,

and looking forward to returning to full fitness and resuming my professional and personal commitments soon. I sincerely thank everyone for the messages of support, care, and concern. I would like to reassure everyone that there is no cause for concern. "My heartfelt thanks go to the entire medical team who took care of me." Carlos won four La Liga titles and three Champions Leagues across 527 appearances for Real Madrid, and lifted the World Cup with Brazil in 2002. Renowned as a free-kick specialist, his other clubs included Palmeiras, Inter Milan, Fenerbahce and Corinthians.

Shubman Gill's Return Date Confirmed, Set To Play In This Tournament After T20 World Cup Snub

Star India batter Shubman Gill is all set to take part in the upcoming round of games for Punjab in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, according to a report. The 26-year-old, who is India's Test and ODI captain, was left out of the T20 World Cup squad last week after a prolonged lean patch with the bat in the shortest format. According to a report in Cricbuzz, Gill is expected to feature in Punjab's matches on January 3 and 6 against Sikkim and Goa in Jaipur. Veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has reportedly informed Saurashtra that he will play the January 6 and 8 fixtures against Services and Gujarat. Wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul is also expected to play in the January 3 and 6 games against Tripura and Rajasthan for Karnataka, though there is no official confirmation as of yet. Gill,



Jadeja and Rahul will then join the Indian team ahead of the upcoming three-match ODI series against New Zealand, beginning on January 11. Gill was part of the Punjab squad announced by the side but did not feature in the first four matches. It is worth noting that Gill was dropped

from India's squad for the New Zealand T20Is as well as the 2026 T20 World Cup following a lean patch in the format. He had been brought back into the team for the Asia Cup earlier this year, a return that saw him playing a T20I after a gap of more than one year. However, the comeback proved difficult

for the right-handed batter, who managed just 291 runs in 15 innings at an average of 24.25. His below-par performance led the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selectors to drop him from the T20I team. Gill had initially returned to the T20I setup at a time when things were going well for the side. He was the top scorer in the England Test series and, impressed by that form, the selectors recalled him to the T20I squad. Consequently, he replaced Sanju Samson in the opening slot after a year-long absence from the format. The fact that Samson was dropped despite impressive performances in that position drew widespread criticism at the time. However, while naming the squad for the 2026 T20 World Cup, the BCCI selectors performed a U-turn, naming Samson in the team in place of Gill.

Rees-Zammit signs 'long-term' deal with Bristol

Louis Rees-Zammit says he is "incredibly happy" to have signed a new deal with Bristol Bears. The club have not disclosed the length of the 24-year-old's new contract, but describe it as "long-term". The Wales wing or full-back returned to rugby union from the NFL last summer and has looked at home in Pat Lam's side, scoring six tries in eight appearances. "Louis is a world-class talent and someone who embodies the way we want to play at Bristol Bears," said director of rugby Lam. "Since coming back from the NFL, he's shown incredible professionalism and hunger to



keep improving. His speed, power and skill set are obvious, but what really stands out is his willingness to learn, adapt and deliver on the biggest stage." Lam also thinks there is more to

come from Rees-Zammit, who toured with the British and Irish Lions in 2021. "He's only just scratching the surface of his ability," he added. "If he keeps progressing on this journey, he

has everything it takes to become one of the very best players in the world." Rees-Zammit said: "I'm incredibly happy to have committed my future to Bristol Bears. This is the perfect club for me and I'm excited to see what we can achieve here. "The environment here allows me to express myself and play the game the way I love, and that brings out the best in me. "Running out at Ashton Gate in front of huge crowds and feeling that energy from the fans is special, and it makes me excited about what we can build together in the years ahead."

SA20: David Miller Stars For Paarl Royals To End Sunrisers Eastern Cape's Perfect Start



In a dramatic showdown at St George's Park, Paarl Royals captain David Miller upended the Sunrisers Eastern Cape's New Year's Eve festivities, delivering a thrilling performance that secured his team's first win of the SA20 Season 4. Miller struck an impressive unbeaten 71 runs off just 38 balls, ultimately leading the Royals to chase down the Royals' total of 149 all out with only two balls and five wickets to spare. Royals found themselves in deep trouble early on, with Sunrisers fast bowlers Marco Jansen and Anrich Nortje blowing away the visitors' top-order. Jansen claimed his 50th SA20 wicket in the process. Royals stumbled to a precarious 35/4, with Lhuan-dre Pretorius, Asa Tribe, Rubin Hermann, and Kyle Verreynne all back in the pavilion. It was at this critical juncture that Miller stepped up to

guide his side through the turmoil. Showing off all his experience, Miller forged a pivotal partnership with Rising Star Keagan Lion-Cachet, who contributed a commendable 45 runs off 40 deliveries. The duo shared a 114-run partnership for the fifth wicket, turning the tide for the Royals, with Lion-Cachet falling just short of the finish line. The St George's Park crowd, who were buying for a miracle and a dramatic Super Over, had their hopes dashed when Lewis Gregory delivered a fateful wide that confirmed the Royals' victory. Earlier, the Royals delivered yet another teenage starlet with Ngobani Mokoena delivering a four-star performance in just his second SA20 appearance. The 19-year-old seamer claimed career-best figures of 4/34, which included the golden wicket of Quinton de Kock in the Powerplay.

Prabhas’ Powerful First Look As AJANUBAHUDU From Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s Spirit Unveiled

Rebel Star Prabhas is set to unleash one of the most intense chapters of his career with Spirit, being helmed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, who delivered hat-trick blockbusters with his first three movies. The makers welcomed the New Year by dropping a powerful first look that has instantly sparked conversation. Sandeep Reddy Vanga shared, "INDIAN CINEMA.... witness your AJANUBAHUDU / AJANUBAHU Happy New Year 2026 #SpiritFirstLook" The poster introduces Prabhas in a raw, unfiltered avatar. Shot from behind, his bare, sculpted frame is riddled with scars, bruises, and bandages, silently narrating a life shaped by violence and survival. His long hair and thick beard add to the intensity of the character. A liquor bottle clenched in his hand, Prabhas' posture reflects exhaustion, anger, and inner chaos. Adding to the mood is Tripti Dimri, who appears beside him in a charged, close moment as she lights his cigarette. The first look presents the char-



acter as intense, broken, and powerful, signaling a brutal film with a focus on violence, inner conflict, and strength. The film is currently in its early stages

of production, and Prabhas has already begun building anticipation by openly expressing his excitement and enthusiastically hyping the project.

MASS KA DAS VISHWAK SEN, SAI KIRAN DAIDA, KALAAHI MEDIA ANNOUNCE POLITICAL DRAMA, LEGACY WITH AN INTENSE, STUNNING AND SENSATIONAL TEASER

Mass ka Das Vishwak Sen is renowned for trying different characters and scripts without sticking to one kind of mould films and scripts. His penchant to deliver chase excellence over quantity and emphasis on quality films made him such a fan favorite. He grew a name for himself as a "Minimum Quality Entertainment Guarantee" Hero. Now, he is starring in the second production of Kalaahi Media, who produced critically acclaimed Pindam, directed by Sai Kiran Daida. The new movie, Legacy, is also being directed by the exceptionally talented writer-director. The makers have released a stunningly intense and dark teaser on New Year's Day, 1st January 2026, announcing the interesting film. The political drama is an interesting character study of a reluctant young man, Siddharth, who is forced to carry legacy of his highly influential political leader, father. The teaser takes off with Vishwak's voice over talking about how he despises the vultures who surround a chair without a successor to take over. He states that even though he dislikes such political power games and chess moves to gain one upmanship, deceit of opportunistic vultures, he has to



take over because the Legacy needs to be carried on someone's able shoulders and he had to. Vishwak Sen is introduced going to visit his late father's memorial and there he discredits urine on his dead body and wish-

es, "Happy New Year". Later, we see him holding a gun among leaders and shoot blanks, someone in his room. As a diabolical, rude, grief-stricken, broken, very rude and crude individual Vishwak Sen is sensational. His performance, look and

screen presence are stunning and the kind of political drama that is set to unfold, it is interesting. His acting prowess and skills to showcase intensity through his eyes, walk and completely transform into the character increase anticipation and curiosity for this film. After a critical acclaimed film like Pindam, director Sai Kiran Daida is focused to bring a riveting political drama to life and the teaser visuals highlight his technical and artistic prowess. Production values by producers Yeshwanth Daggumati, Saikiran Reddy Daida are exceptional and Sanjay Sambrani, V.V.N Prasad are co-producing it. Govind Vasantha's scintillating background score added a mystic and sinister layer to proceedings that are apt to the dark and intense tone of the character. Being the composer of 96, the expectations from this film are huge. Jiju Sunny is handling cinematography while Sirish Prasad is editing it. Ekta Rathod is playing leading lady role while reputed actors like Rao Ramesh, Sachin Khedekar, Murali Mohan, Kay Kay Menon are playing prominent roles in the film. With first announcement teaser itself, the movie has scored exceptional marks among audiences and it is going to be a very happy new year indeed for Telugu Cinema with such a phenomenal start. The movie shoot is progressing at a rapid pace and more details to be announced by the makers soon.

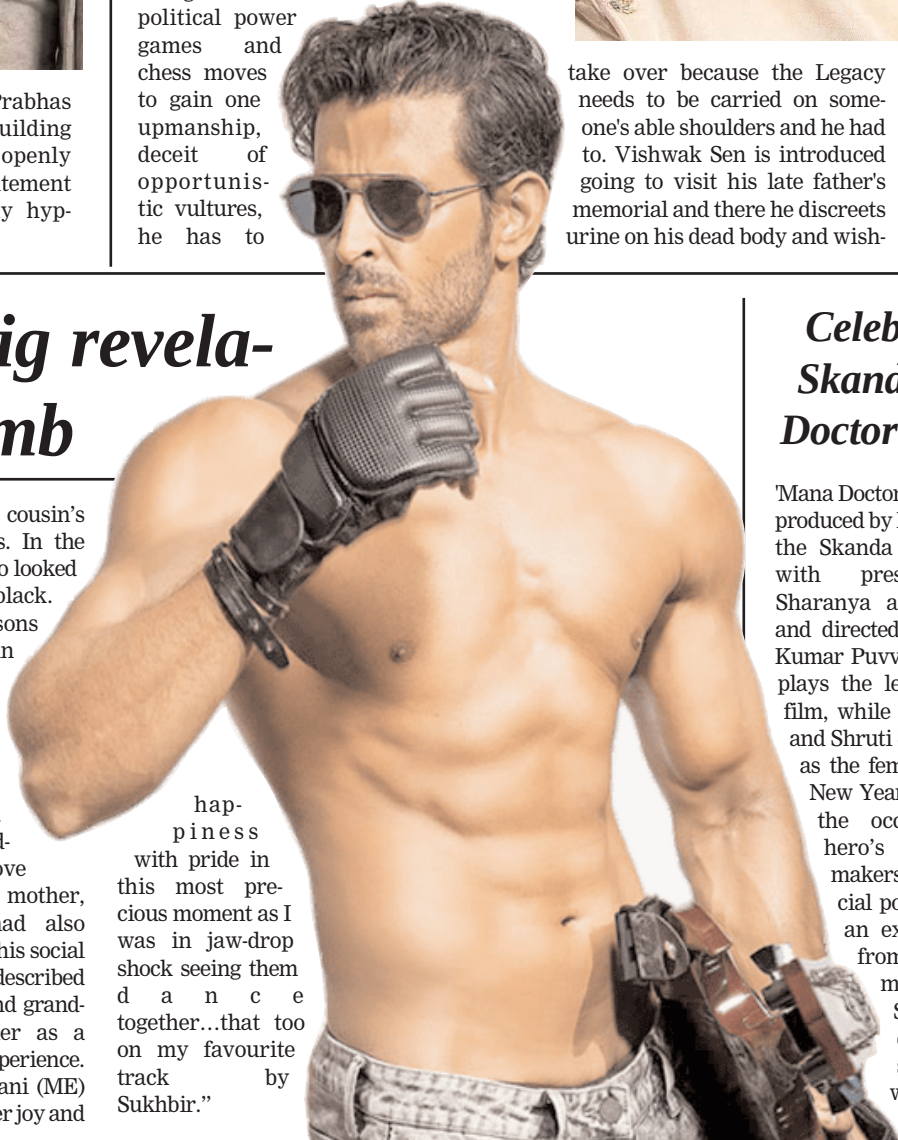
Hrithik Roshan makes a ‘big revelation’ about his double thumb

Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan quipped about how he has never been able to form the perfect heart shape with his hands because of his "double thumb". The actor, calling it a 'big revelation', mentioned how it is the second thing that he cannot do with his extra thumb. The actor shared a carousel post featuring himself in a silhouette alongside what looks like a shadow of his girlfriend, Saba Azad; the superstar bid 2025 a farewell on a 'merry' note. He wrote, "Caught some happy shadows dancing next to us. 2025 seems to be ending on a very merry note. Sending big love to all my fans out there. I especially dedicate the new year to you

guys. Happy almost 2026, everyone. #keepflowing #keeploving #keepgrowing #staycurious P.s. Not being capable of making a hand heart properly is only the 2nd thing I can't do with my double thumb. Big revelation." In the past few weeks, Hrithik Roshan was seen taking the internet by storm with his appearances at his cousin's wedding. The actor along with Saba and his two children Hridaan and Hrehaan, was seen turning eyeballs at the wedding and caught all the media glare. In a video shared by Hrithik on his social media account, he along with his sons were seen dancing their hearts out to Sukhbir's popular track "Oh

Ho Ho Ho" at his cousin's saangeet celebrations. In the clip, the father of two looked dapper in black. Meanwhile, his sons looked handsome in hues of white and black. Hrithik wrote in the caption: "Damn Gotta get lighter on my feet to keep up. @eshusaishu #wedding #family #love #joy." Hrithik's mother, Pinkie Roshan, had also shared the video on his social media account and described watching her son and grandsons dance together as a deeply emotional experience. She wrote, "Dadi Nani (ME) is joyfully sharing her joy and

happiness with pride in this most precious moment as I was in jaw-drop shock seeing them dance together...that too on my favourite track by Sukhbir."



Celebrating New Year and Sri Skanda’s Birthday with ‘Mana Doctor Baabe’ Poster & Glimpse

'Mana Doctor Baabe' is being produced by Kritakshi under the Skanda Films banner, with presentation by Sharanya and Sudhiksha, and directed by Chalapathi Kumar Puvvala. Sri Skanda plays the lead role in the film, while Mohana Siddhi and Shruti Shankar appear as the female leads. As a New Year special and on the occasion of the hero's birthday, the makers released a special poster along with an exciting glimpse from the film. To mark Sri Skanda's birthday, a New Year special poster was unveiled. The glimpse

clearly indicates that the film is going to be a comedy entertainer set against a village backdrop. The visuals showcase lush greenery, the rustic village atmosphere, a local clinic, and the doctor working there. With this glimpse itself, the makers convey that the film will be packed with ample entertainment. Overall, 'Mana Doctor Baabe' promises to be an out-and-out comedy entertainer. Music for the film is composed by Manoj Kumar Busam. Cinematography is handled by Kishore Boyidapu, while Selva Kumar is the editor. Lyrics for the songs are written by Rambabu Gosala, Giridhar Ragolu, and Vishnu Yarravula. "



Netflix crashes again as ‘Stranger Things’ finale premieres

Los Angeles: Some users found it difficult to log in on Netflix on Wednesday night to watch the finale of "Stranger Things", the series that debuted in 2016 and became an instant hit with viewers with its band of adventure-loving kids, nostalgic 80s setting and the Upside Down. The streamer faced a similar technical issue during the season 5 premiere of the show on November 26. The crash on Wednesday lasted for about a minute and was fixed after a few refreshes. Users encountering the error were met with an image from "Nailed It!" with the caption: "Something went wrong. Sorry, we're having trouble with your request. You'll find lots to explore on the home page", reported Variety. During the November 26 crash, Netflix was down for about five minutes when the first four episodes of Season 5 released. Season 5 of "Stranger Things" was the most-watched title worldwide thanks to the three new episodes. Between December 22-28, the fifth and final season received 34.5 million views. That marked the season's second-best weekly total after its debut with 59.6 million views in November, which was Netflix's best-ever opening week for an English-language title, according to the website.



The series, created by Matt and Ross Duffer, revolves around the residents of a fictional small town of Hawkins, Indiana. A group of young friends witness supernatural forces and befriend a young girl with psychokinetic abilities, named Eleven. She opens a gateway between Earth and a hostile alternate dimension known as the Upside Down at a nearby human experimentation facility. Winona Ryder, David Harbour, Finn Wolfhard, Millie Bobby

Brown, Gaten Matarazzo, Caleb McLaughlin, Natalia Dyer, Charlie Heaton, Cara Buono, Matthew Modine, Noah Schnapp, Sadie Sink, Joe Keery, Dacre Montgomery, Sean Astin, Maya Hawke, Priah Ferguson, Brett Gelman, Jamie Campbell Bower and Linda Hamilton star in the series. Just hours before the premiere of the finale, Ross Duffer wrote a moving Instagram post to recall their 10-year journey.

Action thriller 'The Task' in Telugu



The Kannada film 'The Task' with the theme of drama and action thriller was a huge success there. Now this film with the same name will be released in Telugu. Jayasurya R. Azad, Sagar Ram, Srilakshmi, Raghu Shivamogga are the main characters. Directed by Raghu Shivamogga, this film was recently released in Kannada... and has gained a lot of audience there. The film, which has been released in Telugu by famous director Mutyala Subbaiah's son

Mutyala Anant Kishore, will be released in Telugu. Mutyala Anant Kishore has made a name for himself as a passionate producer through a good family story film like 'Thalli Manasu' in the past.

Kishore expressed the opinion that all the newcomers have acted in this film, which is an action thriller, and that the Telugu audience will also like this film very much. He said that the rest of the details will be provided soon.

Horror Comedy Movie “Rukmini” First Look Poster Launched by Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad on New Year

"Rukmini" is an upcoming film produced under the G Cinema banner by Nelaballi Subrahmanyam Reddy and Katta Gangadhara Rao, with Smt. Nelaballi Kumari presenting the film. The movie stars Niranjan, Greeshma Netrika, Priyanka, and Deepti Srirangam in the lead roles. Director Simhachalam Gudupuri is bringing this film to the screen with a fresh horror-comedy storyline. On the occasion of New Year's Day, the first look poster of "Rukmini" was officially launched by Nata Kireeti Rajendra Prasad. Speaking at the event, Rajendra Prasad said: "Gangadhar has worked with me for many years. He was part of several hit films like Edurinti Mogudu Pakkinti Pellam. I'm very happy that my good friend is now producing the film 'Rukmini'. The film industry stays healthy only when small films receive appreciation. I have always wished for the success of small films. Niranjan is playing the hero in this movie, and I sincerely hope 'Rukmini' becomes a big success. My best wishes to the entire team." Hero Niranjan said: "My thanks to Rajendra



Prasad garu for launching the first look poster of our film 'Rukmini'. Our young team has come together to make a good film. 'Rukmini' will be a horror-comedy that families can enjoy together. We will be coming before you with the teaser this Sankranti. We request your support for our team." Heroine Greeshma Netrika said: "You all encouraged me as a child artist in the film Malliswari. Now, I'm coming before you as a heroine with 'Rukmini'. I'm very happy that Rajendra Prasad garu launched our first look poster. Just as much as we enjoyed shooting this film, you will enjoy watching it." Actor Vikhyath said: "We believe you all liked the first look poster of 'Rukmini'. I played a key role in this film. My

thanks to our producers and director for giving me this opportunity. We will bring the 'Rukmini' teaser to you this Sankranti." Actor Jayanth said: "I played a good character in 'Rukmini'. The film is being made with all commercial elements that will appeal to audiences." Producer Katta Gangadhara Rao said: "New Year greetings to everyone. I'm very happy that Rajendra Prasad garu released the first look poster of 'Rukmini'. I share a 30-year association with him and have worked on his films earlier. With strong content and a new concept, we hope everyone will support 'Rukmini'." Director Simhachalam Gudupuri said: "We are making 'Rukmini' with a fresh horror-comedy concept.