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HOLIDAY NOTICE

On the Occasion of
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There will be Holiday on
15th Jan 2026.

So there will be no issue of
THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES
English Daily
on 16th Jan 2026

Revanth to inaugurate Chanaka-Korata and Sadarmat barrages on Jan 16

ADILABAD (TSIT): Farmers in Nirmal and Adilabad districts have welcomed the long-awaited move to make the Chanaka-Korata and Sadarmat irrigation projects operational, with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy scheduled to inaugurate the barrages on January 16.

According to officials, the Chief Minister will first inaugurate the Korata-Chanaka pump house and release water into the main canal at Hatti ghat in Bhoraj mandal. Although nearly 90 per cent of the Chanaka-Korata barrage works were completed earlier, the project had not been formally inaugurated. Once operational, it is expected to provide irrigation to nearly 50,000 acres across the Adilabad and Boath Assembly constituencies.

Later in the day, Revanth Reddy will inaugurate the Sadarmat barrage and release water for Yasangi crops at Ponkal in Mamada mandal of



THE CHIEF MINISTER WILL INAUGURATE THE KORATA-CHANAKA PUMP HOUSE AND RELEASE WATER INTO THE MAIN CANAL AT HATTI GHAT IN BHORAJ MANDAL IN THE AFTERNOON: OFFICIAL INFORMATION

Nirmal district. He will also address a public meeting in Nirmal town. The Sadarmat project is designed to irrigate about 18,000 acres in Nirmal and Jagtial districts.

Irrigation officials have already inspected pump house motors and conducted trial water releases ahead of the visit. Paddy and cotton are the main crops under the Sadarmat aayacut, and officials expect an increase in paddy cultivation after irrigation begins. However, uncertainty remains over

International kite festival begins in Hyderabad



Hyderabad (TSIT): The skies over Hyderabad transformed into a vibrant canvas as the Seventh International Kite and Sweet Festival began at the Parade Grounds on Tuesday.

The three-day cultural event was formally launched by Minister for Tourism and Culture Jupally Krishna Rao, alongside Transport Minister Ponnambalam Prabhakar. A total of 40 international kite fliers from 19 countries and 55 members from kite clubs in 15 states are participating in the kite festival, organised as part of the Sankranti celebrations. A total of 60 stalls have been set up at the venue, offering a variety of sweets from various parts of the country and abroad. More than 100 handloom and handicraft stalls have also been set up. Addressing the gathering, Minister Jupally Krishna Rao emphasised that festivals with centuries of history are vital for safeguarding the state's rich culture and traditions.

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US base in Qatar advised to evacuate

Washington: Some personnel at a key US military base in Qatar have been advised to evacuate by Wednesday evening, a US official said. The decision came as a senior official in Iran brought up an earlier Iranian attack there. The official, who spoke to The Associated Press on Wednesday, January 14, on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive plans, described the move at the base as a precautionary measure. The official wouldn't go into any further details about the move, including whether the evacuation was optional or mandatory, if it affected troops or civilian personnel, or the number of those advised to leave, citing the need for operational security. It comes as anti-government protests in nearby Iran continue, and President Donald Trump has said that he is willing to conduct military operations in the country if the government continues to retaliate against the protesters.

Sankranti celebrations kick-off in Telugu states with 'bhogi'



AMARAVATI (TSIT): Highlighting the rich Telugu culture, Sankranti celebrations began across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on Wednesday with 'bhogi' amid usual pomp and gaiety. Villages and towns in both the Telugu states came alive with traditional celebrations to mark the harvest festival.

Three-day celebrations kicked off with 'bhogi', burning of old and unwanted items such as old clothes, mats and broomsticks in the belief that new things usher into their lives. People in villages and towns began the day

with bhogi and prayers. Women were seen playing and dancing around the bonfire.

Sankranti or Makar Sankranti is the biggest festival in Andhra Pradesh. The festival marks the end of the winter harvest season of rabi crops and the beginning of the next sowing season, kharif. Ministers, MPs, state legislators and leaders of all political parties participated in bhogi in various parts of the two states. Andhra Pradesh Home Minister V. Anitha participated in the 'bhogi' festival at her house in Anakapalli. Accompanied by her family members, she

resolved in Delhi," he said. "Yesterday, no discussion took place with Rahul Gandhi. He has asked both leaders to come to Delhi and assured them that everything will be set right.

Both CM Siddaramaiah and Dy CM Shivakumar have been invited to Delhi. Shivakumar conveyed to Rahul Gandhi that he wanted to speak to him, and Rahul Gandhi asked both leaders to come to Delhi," Pattan stated.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru on Wednesday, Pattan made the statement when asked about LoP Gandhi's conversations

Congress rule in Telangana reminds of Emergency days: KTR



Hyderabad (TSIT): Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday alleged that the Congress rule in Telangana reminds of Emergency days. Condemning the arrest of two journalists of a Telugu television channel, he demanded their immediate release. He posted on X that the Director General of Police (DGP) is hell bent on treating journalists like criminals. "You could have served them notices and called them for an investigation.

Going into journalists' homes in the dead of the night is definitely a stretch! I demand immediate release of the arrested journalists.

None of the sections are non-bailable, so why did the Telangana police decide to terrorise the journalists and their families with these midnight arrests," he asked.

Rahul has called CM Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM Shivakumar to Delhi: Cong MLA



with CM Siddaramaiah and Dy CM and State Congress President D.K.

Shivakumar at the Mysuru airport on Tuesday.

"All the confusion will be

resolved in Delhi," he said. "Yesterday, no discussion took place with Rahul Gandhi. He has asked both leaders to come to Delhi and assured them that everything will be set right.

Both CM Siddaramaiah and Dy CM Shivakumar have been invited to Delhi. Shivakumar conveyed to Rahul Gandhi that he wanted to speak to him, and Rahul Gandhi asked both leaders to come to Delhi," Pattan stated.

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APPENDIX-IV Possession Notice (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **Hinduja Housing Finance Limited (HHFL)** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub -section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of HHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No. Demand Notice Date and Amount DATE OF POSSESSION

1.Mr. SAIDULLA KANDULA R/o.H.No: 9-B/901, RK NAGAR, Bandlaguda, Hyderabad, Telangana, India - 500068.....Borrower	29/10/2025	Rs.6,82,711/- (Rupees Six Lakhs Eighty two thousand seven hundred and eleven Only)	13-01-2026
2.Mrs. VINITHA KANDULA, W/O SAIDULLA R/o.H.No: 9-B/901, RK NAGAR, Bandlaguda, Hyderabad, Telangana, India - 500068.....Co-Borrower			
3.Mrs. Kandula Yadamma R/o.H.No: 9-B/901, RK NAGAR, Bandlaguda, Hyderabad, Telangana, India - 500068.....Co-Borrower			
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/BVGR/A000000090			

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All that the Part and Parcel of Residential constructed House bearing No.5-27, Admeasuring 225 Sq.Yards, situated at Redia Repaka Village, VALIGONDA Mandal, Yadadri Bhongir Dist, Telangana , India - 508285 and bounded by: North: CC Road,South: House of Kandula Bixapati,G3 East: CC Road,West: House of Kandula Yadaiah NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No.	Demand Notice Date and Amount	DATE OF POSSESSION
1.Mr. SANTHOSH KUMAR GUNDA R/o.HOUSE NO.11-10-153, PLOT NO.197, SBI COLONY, ROAD NO. 0.5, KALKI NAGAR, KOTHAPET SAROORNRAGH, HYD, Telangana, India - 500035.....Borrower	27/10/2025	Rs. 48,25,612/- (Rupees Forty Eight Lakhs Twenty Five Thousand Six Hundred Twelve only)
2.Mrs. RAMAKRISHNA GUNDA R/o.HOUSE NO.11-10-153, PLOT NO.197, SBI COLONY, ROAD NO. 0.5, KALKI NAGAR, KOTHAPET SAROORNRAGH, HYD, Telangana, India - 500035.....Co-Borrower		
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/ECIL/A000000142		

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All that the Semi Finished Flat No.305, in 3rd Floor, Of "Swastik Heights", With A Plinth Area Of 1070 Sq.Fts, And One Car Parking, Along With Undivided Share of Land Admeasuring 46.01 Sq.Yds, Out Of Northern Portion of land Admeasuring 2000 Sq.Yds Or 1672.2 Sq.Mtrs, Out Of 4476 Sq.Yds In sy.no.126. Situated At Matuguda H.O Thattamaram Village, Previously Under Hayatnagar Revenue mandal. Presently under Abdullaipuram Mandal, R.R DISTRICT, Under Peda Ambepet Municipality, And Registration Sub-Dist. Saroorgam, Telangana, India - 500033 and bounded by: **Boundaries For Entite Land:**North: Factory In Sy.no.125 Of Vizaya Mahan Reddy,South : Remaining Land Of Sy.no.126,East: 400' Fts Widg Road,West: Land In Sy.no.123, 124 & 126. **Boundaries For Flat:**North: Corridor,South: Open To Sky,East: Lift & Open To Sky,West: Open To Sky

NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No.	Demand Notice Date and Amount	DATE OF POSSESSION
1. Mr. Mohamed Aleem Khan, S/o.Md.John Khan, R/o.H.No: 7-865, Bangarigadda, Miryalaguda, Telangana, India - 508207,.....Borrower	15/10/2025	Rs. 26,38,728/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakhs Thirty Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Eight Only)
2. Mrs. Mohamed Parveen R/o.H.No: 7-865, Bangarigadda, Miryalaguda, Telangana, India - 508207,.....Co-Borrower		
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/NLGD/A000000243 & CO/CPC/CPOF/A000000760		

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All that the Property of House bearing No.7-865, in Sy.no.961, Total Extant Of Land 121 Sq.Yds, OR 101.16 Sq.Mtrs, situated at Bangarigadda, Miryalaguda, Telangana , India - 508207 and bounded by: **Boundaries of Property:**North: Road,South: Houses Of Mallaiah, Pichaiah,East: House Of Rapolu Biksham, West: House Of Gouri Nagabhusanam NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No.	Demand Notice Date and Amount	DATE OF POSSESSION
1. Mr. Dachepally Amar kumar R/o. H No.6-2-90, Housing Board colony, Nalgonda , Telangana , India - 508001.....Borrower	15/10/2025	Rs. 12,74,781/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Seventy Four Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty One Only)
2. Mrs. Dachepally Salaja R/o.H.no: 6-2-90, Housing Board colony, Nalgonda , Telangana , India - 508001.....Co-Borrower		
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/NLGD/A000000219		

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All that the House bearing municipal dno: 6-2-1230/309, in third floor at Venkateshwara towers constructed by MD Sri Venkateshwara builders having 675 square feet, 27 square yards out of 1205 square yards sy.no.149881506 Sri Venkateshwara colony resident area Nalgonda Municipality under the jurisdiction of district and sub register of Nalgonda Telangana , India - 508001 and bounded by: **Boundaries of Property:**North: Land Of AP Agros,South: Others Plot & 500' Wide Road,East: 240' Fts Wide Road,West: 240' Fts Wide Road, **Boundaries of Plot No.53 in Third Floor:**North: Open To Sky,East: Lift & Open To Sky,South: Open To Sky,East: Staircase & Corridor,West: Open To Sky

NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No.	Demand Notice Date and Amount	DATE OF POSSESSION
1. Mr. Tuluma Prem Kumar R/o. H 3-25, Panagal, Nalgonda, Telangana , India - 508001.....Borrower	15/10/2025	Rs. 9,02,957/- (Rupees Nine Lakhs Two thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Seven Only)
2. Mrs. Tuluma Sugunama R/o. H no 7-3-25, Panagal, Nalgonda , Telangana , India - 508001.....Co-Borrower		
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/NLGD/A000000144		

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All that the Register district Nalgonda, sub Register Nalgonda, zilla parishat Nalgonda, Mandal parishat Nalgonda, grama panchayat Panagal, residential house bearing municipal dno: 7-3-41, comprising total area as per plan 222.00 Sq.yards=185.86 Sq.mtrs, Nalgonda, Nalgonda , Telangana , India - 508001 and bounded by: **Boundaries of Property:**North: Plot of Tuluma Janaiah,South: Road,East: House D.Narayana,West: House D.Vishwanatham. NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No.	Demand Notice Date and Amount	DATE OF POSSESSION
1. Mr. Dachepally Amar kumar R/o. H No.6-2-90, Housing Board colony, Nalgonda , Telangana , India - 508001.....Borrower	15/10/2025	Rs. 12,74,781/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Seventy Four Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty One Only)
2. Mrs. Dachepally Salaja R/o.H.no: 6-2-90, Housing Board colony, Nalgonda , Telangana , India - 508001.....Co-Borrower		
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/NLGD/A000000219		

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All that the House bearing No.2-86, Assessment No.181, in admeasuring area 146 Square Yards, or equivalent to 122.056 Square Meters, with R.C.C. Roof plinth area 576 Sq.Ft, Sited at KATEPALY H/o. CHADA VILLAGE, MOTAKONDUR MANDAL, YADADRI-BHONGIR DISTRICT, TELANGANA - 508286 and bounded by: **Boundaries of Property:**North: Plot of Eragadinda Lachia, South: 120' Wide Road,West: Land Of Angadi Narsaiah,East: 120' Wide Road,West: House Of R.Rajanaiah NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/LAN No.	Demand Notice Date and Amount	DATE OF POSSESSION
1. Mr. VENKATESH E R/o. H.no: 2-2G175, SC COLONY, KOTHULAPURAM, NARAYANPUR, YADADRI BHONGIR, Telangana, India - 508253.....Borrower	15/10/2025	Rs. 10,18,557/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs Eighteen thousand Five Hundred Fifty Seven Only)
2. Mrs. PULAMMA E R/o. H.no: 2-2G175, SC COLONY, KOTHULAPURAM, NARAYANPUR, YADADRI BHONGIR, Telangana, India - 508253.....Co-Borrower		
Loan Account Nos. AP/HDB/LBNG/A000000773		

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY : All the All that piece and parcel of House bearing House No. 2-2-G175, Assessment No. 175, constructed with Brick walls, R.C.C. Roof, built-up area: 364 Sq. Feet covered with R.C.C. Roof in Ground Floor, Total area (Including built up area and open place): 92 Sq. Yards or its equivalent to 76.91 Sq. Meters, Situated at Kothulapuram village, Narayanapur Mandal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District, under Grama Panchayat Kothulapuram, Mandal Parishad Narayanapur, T.P. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, under Registration Sub NARAYANAPURAM Telangana , India - 508253 and bounded by: **Boundaries of Property:**North: Plot of Eragadinda Lachia, South: 150' Wide Road,East: Plot Of Eragadinda Lachia, West: 250' Fts Wide Road.

NOTE: Through this notice, all the previous notices issued in this LAN is hereby recalled"

Place : Hyderabad
Date : 14-01-2026

Sd/-Authorized Officer,
For Hindujah Housing Finance Limited

Telangana

Minister Komatireddy Supports Young Woman Sarpanch with 3 Lakh for Mineral Water Plant

Hyderabad: State Minister for Roads & Buildings and Cinema to graphy Komatireddy Venkat Reddy extended encouragement and support to K.N. Nikitha, a young woman Sarpanch and third-year MBBS student, by sanctioning 3 lakh through the Prateek Foundation for setting up a mineral water plant in her village.

Nikitha, who is pursuing her MBBS third year, was recently elected as the



Sarpanch of Y.Shagapur village in Pebberu mandal. She met the Minister on Wednesday during his tour of Mahabubnagar

and Wanaparthy districts in the Wanaparthy Assembly constituency.

Impressed by her commitment to public service

while continuing medical education, Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy congratulated and felicitated Nikitha with a shawl, appreciating her decision to enter public life at a young age. When the young Sarpanch brought to his notice the drinking water problem in the village, the Minister immediately announced financial assistance of 3 lakh for establishing a mineral water plant, aiming to address the issue on a priority basis.

DGP Shivadhar Reddy Warns Against Misuse of Social Media

Hyderabad: Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy, has issued a strong warning against the misuse of social media platforms, particularly acts involving personal attacks, character assassination, and circulation of fake news. DGP recalled that even at the time of assuming charge as the State Police Chief, he had clearly cautioned against irresponsible behaviour on social media. He reiterated that any attempt to malign individuals under the guise of social media freedom will invite strict legal action.

Shivadhar Reddy said that spreading false news, indulging in character assassination, or posting defamatory content targeting individuals or their family members will not be tolerated. He specifically warned against publishing unverified and false information related to the personal lives of others and their families. DGP clarified that constructive criticism made within the framework of law is acceptable, and there is no objection to expressing opinions in a lawful and responsible manner. However, he made it clear that crossing legal and ethical limits by spreading lies, personal attacks, or fake narratives will lead to stringent action under the law.

Rekha Charitable Foundation Conducts Sankranti Kabaddi Tournament

Hyderabad: On the occasion of the Sankranti festival, Rekha Charitable Foundation organized Junior and Senior Kabaddi tournaments at the founder's native village with the aim of promoting rural sports and encouraging grassroots talent.

The tournament was held in a festive atmosphere with active participation from village youth and enthusiastic support from local residents. The event reflected the true spirit of Sankranti by blending traditional celebrations with sportsmanship, unity, and community



bonding.

Founded in 1919, Rekha Charitable Foundation has been working continuously to nurture local talent, preserve cultural values, and provide platforms for rural youth to

showcase their abilities. The Kabaddi tournament served as a strong example of the Foundation's commitment to empowering village-level players and boosting their confidence.

The organizers stated that encouraging sports in rural areas is essential for building discipline, teamwork, physical fitness, and character among youth, while also strengthening pride in village traditions. The initiative was widely appreciated by locals, who expressed hope that such tournaments would be conducted regularly.

Minister Konda Surekha who participated in Inavolu Shri Mallikarjuna Swamy Brahmotsavam

AP celebrates Bhogi with traditional fervour

The former CM said Bhogi symbolises the burning away of evil.



AP CM N Chandrababu Naidu participated along with his family in the Bhogi celebrations held in Naravipalle.

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh celebrated Bhogi, the first day of the Sankranti festival, with religious devotion and traditional enthusiasm on Wednesday, as bonfires were lit across temples, villages and towns, marking the beginning of the harvest festivities.

The premises of the Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Temple glowed with spiritual grandeur as the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) organised traditional Bhogi bonfires in and around the Srivari Temple complex, following age-old customs. "As Sankranti celebrations commenced, devotees from across the country thronged the hill shrine, with many expressing joy and spiritual fulfilment after having darshan of Lord Venkateswara," an official from TTD told PTI on Wednesday.

People across Prakasam district and other districts celebrated Bhogi in the early hours of the day by lighting traditional bonfires, symbolically dis-

carding old and unwanted items to welcome a fresh beginning.

Bhogi bonfires were witnessed in villages across the districts, residents gathered street by street to light the fires and celebrate the festival in a festive atmosphere. Speaking to PTI, several residents said they returned to their native places from distant locations to celebrate Sankranti with their families, adding that lighting Bhogi bonfires in front of their houses has been a long-standing tradition passed down through generations.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer also conveyed his heartiest greetings to the people on the occasion of Bhogi.

In a message, the Governor said Bhogi marks the beginning of the harvest festival and symbolises renewal, hope and prosperity, reflecting the rich agrarian traditions and cultural heritage of the region, and wished the people a happy and prosperous Bhogi festival.

Extending Bhogi greetings, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in a post on X said, "Heartfelt greetings to the Telugu people celebrating the Bhogi festival in Telugu households adorned with Sankranti rangolis. I sincerely wish that the bright-

ly glowing Bhogi bonfires bring new light to you and your family."

YSRCP supremo and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy extended greetings to the people on the occasions of Bhogi, Sankranti and Kanuma. "Best wishes to all the people of the state on the occasions of Bhogi, Sankranti, and Kanuma," said Reddy in a post on X on Wednesday.

The former CM said Bhogi symbolises the burning away of evil, Sankranti welcomes happiness and prosperity, and Kanuma celebrates love for livestock, expressing hope that the festivals would bring good health, joy and prosperity to all families.

"Earlier, there was immense respect and popularity for Haridasus, but today the response is not as encouraging as before," Mastan told PTI, urging people, especially the younger generation, to understand the cultural and spiritual importance of the tradition.

Amaravati: The Centre urged the Andhra Pradesh government to adopt a public-private partnership model to modernise its healthcare system. In a letter to State Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav, the Ministry of Health highlighted that collaborating with the private sector is the fastest way to bridge gaps in medical demand and expand service delivery across the state.

"The Centre urged Andhra Pradesh to extensively adopt the PPP model to accelerate healthcare expansion and improve availability, quality, and efficiency of services," said an official release on Wednesday.

The Ministry suggested implementing PPP in rural and semi-urban areas, focusing on nucle-



ar medicine, mobile units, dental clinics, radiology services, and cancer day care centres. It proposed an approach where private partners are engaged for 5 to 10 years.

The Centre noted that

ening the primary-level dental services statewide urgently. On cancer care, the Ministry said PPP suits day care centres, aiming nationwide coverage by 2027-28, with fourteen centres sanctioned for Andhra Pradesh already.

Gold prices eye fresh record high, silver skyrockets after softer US inflation data

Mumbai, Jan 14 : Gold hovered near fresh record high while silver touched new peak on Wednesday, as softer US inflation data and elevated geopolitical tensions boosted safe haven demand among investors.

MCX gold February futures rose 0.58 per cent to Rs 1,42,995 per 10 grams around 10.05 am, while MCX silver March futures climbed 4.53 per cent to Rs 2,87,640 per kg.

US core Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for December showed a 0.2 per cent month-on-month surge and 2.6 per cent year-on-year rise, below forecasts and reinforcing market bets that the Federal Reserve will cut rates in 2026, driving gold prices higher. Analyst said the softer inflation print, coupled with mixed US jobs data, will lead the Fed likely to hold in January but likely undertake two to three cuts through the year, supporting gold prices.

"Ongoing geopolitical and economic uncertainties continued to fuel safe-haven demand. Civil unrest in Iran and rising geopolitical tensions further supported buying interest in precious metals. Core CPI was below expectations of 0.3 per cent, and remained steady on year-on-year basis, reinforcing the view that underlying inflation pressures are easing," said Rahul Kalantri, VP



Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd. "Gold has support at Rs 1,39,550-Rs 1,37,310 while resistance at Rs 1,44,350-Rs 1,46,670. Silver has support at Rs 2,69,810 to Rs 2,54,170 zone while resistance at Rs 2,79,810 to Rs 2,84,470 zone," analyst said.

Market watchers also pointed rising geopolitical risks stemming from unrest in Iran and tensions involving Venezuela and Greenland as additional drivers of demand.

Gold and silver prices are expected

to remain volatile this week amid volatility in the dollar index, ahead of the US Supreme Court decision on tariffs, they added. Silver prices remain decisively above short and medium-term averages following a strong breakout, reflecting aggressive buyer dominance. The rally is being driven by a powerful mix of industrial demand in solar, EVs, AI, electronics and safe-haven flows, against the backdrop of tightening supply conditions, they added.

NHAI's Bengaluru-Kadapa-Vijayawada Corridor on fast track, set to revive AP's economy

The economic implications for Andhra Pradesh are expected to be profound. Upon completion, the expressway will slash travel distance by approximately 100-112 kilometers



The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has crossed a major milestone in the construction of Bengaluru-Kadapa-Vijayawada (BKV) Economic Corridor, also known as National Highway-544G. NHAI has created four world records in the initial phase of the construction itself. They were made near Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh's Sri Sathya Sai district.

Two records in 24-hours The NHAI achieved the two records in a 24-hour period on 6 January: Laying the longest stretch of bituminous concrete for 28.89 lane kilometers (equivalent to a 3-lane-wide, 9.63 km section) and the highest quantity at 10,655 metric tonnes.

Building on this momentum, NHAI teams, between 5 and 11 January, laid 57,500 metric tonnes of bituminous concrete and paved 156 lane kilometers (a 3-lane-wide, 52 km section), surpassing the previous global benchmark of 84.4 lane kilometers. By doing so, the NHAI has achieved total four Guinness Book's world records. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, in a post on X on Sunday, 11 January said: "NHAI has set new global benchmarks in highway engineering. NHAI

has created history by achieving two Guinness World Records in continuous Bituminous Concrete paving. These achievements highlight India's rising leadership in world-class highway infrastructure and large-scale project execution." Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu lauded the effort, congratulating NHAI, state officials, and the concessionaire while urging sustained efficiency to wrap up the remaining works. "This is a testament to our commitment to world-class infrastructure," Naidu stated, emphasizing the project's role in Andhra Pradesh's development agenda.

BKV Corridor The BKV Corridor, an under-construction six-lane access-controlled expressway, spans 518 kilometers from Bengaluru in Karnataka to Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, passing through Kadapa and traversing 11 districts—three in Karnataka and eight in Andhra Pradesh. The core greenfield section measures about 343 kilometers, with the total alignment incorporating upgrades to existing highways like NH-44 from Bengaluru to Kodikonda and NH-16 from Addanki to Vijayawada, bringing the effective corridor

length to over 520 kilometers. Designed for safe, high-speed travel, it features 17 interchanges, 10 wayside amenities,

a 5.3-kilometer tunnel, and eco-sensitive sections through forested areas like the Eastern Ghats.

Part of the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-II, the project is divided into 14 packages, awarded by February 2023 to

contractors including Dilip Buildcon, Raj Path Infracon, and Megha Engineering & Infrastructures (MEIL). Construction kicked off with preparatory works in March 2023, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone on 11 March, 2024. So far, the progress includes earthwork, embankment formation, and structures like bridges and flyovers. The recent record-breaking paving suggests accelerated momentum, with the full corridor targeted for completion by 2026 or early 2027 at a revised cost of Rs 14,000 crore.

Economic implications for Andhra

The economic implications for Andhra Pradesh are expected to be profound. Upon completion, the expressway will slash travel distance by approximately 100-112 kilometers (from 630-635 km to 518-535 km) and reduce time from 11-13 hours to 6-9 hours. This efficiency will create a vital logistics artery, linking Andhra's port-led economy and industrial nodes like Kurnool with Bengaluru's tech and manufacturing hubs. For Andhra Pradesh's Rayalseema region—encompassing arid districts like Kadapa and Kurnool—the corridor promises a revival. Improved connec-

tivity will enhance agricultural market access, fostering agro-processing industries and reducing post-harvest losses for crops like groundnuts, millets, and horticulture products. The expressway will spur logistics parks, warehousing, and MSME clusters, attracting investments in sectors like electronics, automobiles, and food processing. Towns along the route, such as Pulivendula, Mydukur, Addanki, and Podili, might trigger real estate activity, with rising land values, new townships, and infrastructure like schools, hospitals, and retail hubs. This could generate jobs in construction, logistics, and services.

Tourism is also expected to flourish, with easier access to sites in the Eastern Ghats, including temples in Puttaparthi and wildlife in Nallamala Hills. Environmental measures, such as tree planting and tunnels, ensure sustainable development, aligning with India's green infrastructure goals. As NHAI pushes forward, the BKV Corridor exemplifies how infrastructure can bridge regional disparities. For Andhra Pradesh, reeling from bifurcation challenges, this project might integrate remote areas into India's economic mainstream.

SIR in Bengal: ECI rejects TMC claim over notices to former MPs

Kolkata, Jan 13 : The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday rejected allegations by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) that two of its former Rajya Sabha members were summoned for hearings during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls without valid grounds.

Earlier in the day, reports emerged that former TMC Rajya Sabha MP and ex-Mohun Bagan football club president Swapnil Sadhan Bose, popularly



known as Tutu Bose, and his son Srinjoy Bose - also a former Rajya Sabha MP and the club's general sec-

retary - had been issued notices to appear for hearings on claims and objections related to the draft

voters' list.

The TMC accused the Commission of deliberately targeting the two leaders because of their association with the ruling party in the state. However, on Tuesday evening, the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), West Bengal, issued a statement dismissing the allegations and clarifying that notices were issued as the enumeration forms submitted by both individuals had left the linkage columns blank.

Tej Pratap Yadav invites Lalu, Rabri and Tejashwi for Dahi-Chura feast



Patna, Jan 13 : A touching and emotionally charged moment unfolded on Tuesday at 10 Circular Road, the residence of former Chief Minister Rabri Devi, when Tej Pratap Yadav met his parents and younger brother, signaling a visible thaw in strained family ties.

The primary purpose of the visit was to formally invite Tejashwi Yadav, the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, and his parents, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri

Devi, to a Dahi-Chura feast being organised on January 14 on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

Tej Pratap personally handed over the invitation letter to his younger brother

er, a gesture widely seen as an attempt to convey brotherhood, reconciliation, and family unity.

Upon arrival, Tej Pratap Yadav first touched the feet of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav and former Chief Minister Rabri Devi, seeking their blessings.

The meeting marked the first occasion in a long time when Tej Pratap and Tejashwi were seen together with warmth and ease in front of the media, after months of living separately and maintaining dis-

tance on public platforms.

Amid the political symbolism, a deeply personal moment stole the spotlight when Tej Pratap Yadav lifted Tejashwi's daughter in his arms. Tej Pratap later described the moment as a wonderful experience. Photographs of him smiling with the child quickly went viral, reflecting that despite political differences and separate living arrangements, familial bonds remain intact.

Indian passport jumps five places in Henley Passport Index

New Delhi, Jan 14 : Indian passports jumped five places in global mobility rankings in 2026, offering visa-free, visa-on-arrival or eTA access to 55 destinations, a report said on Wednesday. The Henley Passport Index placed India at 80th spot sharing this rank with Algeria and Niger. Singapore, which topped the list, has visa-free access to 192 countries. Japan (188 destinations) and South Korea followed closely, highlighting the connection of travel freedom with the economic strength of the country.

Indian travellers enjoy visa free access across parts of Southeast Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and island nations. However, advance visas are still required for most of Europe, the UK, the US, Canada and large parts of East Asia. European passports dominated the top 10 spots, each offering access to more than 180 countries.

Afghanistan remained the weakest passport with access to just 24 destinations. The United States returned to the top 10 in the index after a brief dip in recent years, even as both the US and UK recorded steep year-on-year losses in visa-free access. "Over the past 20 years, global mobility has expanded significantly, but the benefits



have been distributed unevenly", said Dr. Christian H. Kaelin, Chairman at Henley & Partners and creator of the Henley Passport Index.

"Today, passport privilege plays a decisive role in shaping opportunity, security, and economic participation, with rising average access masking a reality in which mobility advantages are increasingly concentrated among the world's most economically powerful and politically stable nations," he added.

Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland were in third spot of the index with access to 186 destinations, ahead of an unprecedented group of ten European countries sharing the fourth position. The UAE emerged as the strongest performer on the Henley Passport Index over the past 20 years, adding 149 visa-free destinations since 2006.

Maharashtra votes for high-stakes civic polls on Jan 15; Mumbai key battleground

MUMBAI: As Maharashtra heads to the elections on Thursday for 29 municipal corporations, the spotlight is on Mumbai, where the BJP-led Mahayuti is locked in a battle with the united Thackeray front for control of the cash-rich BMC. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has predicted that MNS leader Raj Thackeray would emerge as the biggest loser in his alliance with cousin and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray.

He also dismissed the coming together of both NCP factions in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad as merely a local development.

Fadnavis rued that Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar broke the rule that the alliance partners will not speak against each other. CM Fadnavis led the ruling alliance's canvassing, traversing the state to campaign for candidates of the Mahayuti, which includes the BJP and the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. NCP, the third partner in the Mahayuti, was strategically excluded to attract "non-Hindu" voters, observers said. This will be the Shiv Sena's first Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) election since the 2022 split, when Eknath Shinde broke away with a majority of the party's legislators, along with its name and symbol. The undivided Shiv Sena had held sway over the country's richest civic body for 25 years. Polling for the 2,869 seats spread across 893 wards will begin at 7.30 am and conclude at 5.30 pm on January 15. A total of 3.48 crore voters are eligible to decide the fate of 15,931 candidates, including 1,700 in Mumbai and 1,166 in Pune.

Counting of votes will take place on January 16. More than 25,000 police personnel, including senior officers, will be deployed across Mumbai to oversee elections to the BMC and vote counting. Except for Mumbai, the other 28 urban bodies have multi-member wards. In a political turn ahead of the elections, estranged cousins Uddhav and Raj Thackeray concentrated their efforts on Mumbai, Thane, Nashik, and Chhatrapati



Uddhav and Raj Thackeray reunited after two decades in their bid to consolidate Marathi votes, even as rival NCP factions forged a local alliance in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad.

In this election, the Opposition Congress has asserted its presence in Mumbai by stepping out of the shadow of its Maha Vikas Aghadi allies - Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP). The Congress has joined hands with Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) and the Rashtriya Samaj Paksh in the state capital, even as it contests independently in Nagpur.

Elections to 29 municipal corporations are being held after a gap of over six years, with their terms having ended between 2020 and 2023. Of these, nine fall within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), the most urbanised belt in India.

The battlegrounds include Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Navi Mumbai, Vasai-Virar, Kalyan-Dombivli, Kolhapur, Nagpur, Mumbai, Solapur, Amravati, Akola, Nashik, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Pune, Ulhasnagar, Thane, Chandrapur, Parbhani, Mira-Bhayandar, Nanded-Waghala, Panvel, Bhiwandi-Nizampur, Latur, Malegaon, Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad, Jalgao, Ahilyanagar, Dhule, Jalna and Ichalkaranji. Chief Minister Fadnavis, along with his deputies Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, campaigned extensively across Maharashtra, while cousins Uddhav and Raj Thackeray concentrated their efforts on Mumbai, Thane, Nashik, and Chhatrapati

Sambhajinagar, where Uddhav held a rally. Telangana minister Mohammad Azharuddin, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and Tamil Nadu BJP leader K Annamalai were also among the star campaigners for the polls. Populist promises for women were the highlight of the manifestos of both the Mahayuti and the Shiv Sena (UBT)-MNS. The Mahayuti has promised a 50 per cent concession for women in BEST bus travel, while the Thackeray cousins have assured a Rs 1,500 monthly allowance for women domestic helps and a property tax waiver on houses up to 700 sq ft. The Congress manifesto, by contrast, prioritises combatting Mumbai's pollution, upgrading the BEST fleet, and strengthening the city's financial health.

The race for Mumbai's mayoral post took centre stage in the campaign, with the BJP claiming that a Sena (UBT) victory could lead to a Muslim mayor, a charge the Uddhav Thackeray-led party countered by assuring voters of a Marathi mayor.

CM Fadnavis also guaranteed that the mayor will be a "Hindu and Marathi". In the 227-ward Mumbai, the BJP is contesting 137 seats, the Shiv Sena 90, while the NCP is fighting separately on 94 seats. The Shiv Sena (UBT) has fielded 163 candidates, the MNS 52, the Congress 143 and the VBA 46. The Congress has fielded 1,263 candidates across the rest of the state. After the end of the campaigning on Tuesday, Fadnavis said Raj Thackeray will be the biggest loser in the alliance with his cousin, Uddhav Thackeray. Downplaying the coming together of the rival NCPs in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad as a "localised phenomenon", he said the BJP will react only if both factions decide to ally after the polls, which he felt was unlikely at the moment. Fadnavis also remarked that the Thackerays lacked wholehearted commitment in their campaign and appeared "unwilling to stake their political prestige".

Palak paneer dispute ends in Rs 1.8 cr win for Indian PhD students in US

CHENNAI: Two Indian PhD students have won a Rs 1.8 crore (USD 200,000) settlement from the University of Colorado Boulder following a civil rights lawsuit that stemmed from an incident involving heating a lunch of palak paneer on campus, said an Indian Express report.

The issue dates back to September 5, 2023, when Aditya Prakash was warming his lunch in a departmental microwave.



and a staff member objected to the smell, asking him not to use the facility. Prakash calmly responded, "It's just food. I'm heating and leaving."

Prakash and his partner Urmil Bhattacharya, both PhD scholars then, filed a civil rights lawsuit, alleging discrimination and retaliation by the university. Following the incident, Bhattacharya lost her teaching responsibilities, which was also cited as part of their complaint.

In September 2025, the

university agreed to a settlement, under which it would pay USD 200,000 and confer Master's degrees to both. The settlement also bars them from any future enrolment or employment at the university.

The couple has returned to India this month, with Prakash describing the episode as part of "systemic racism" and saying the department initially refused to award their Master's degree, promoting legal action.

In an Instagram post, Bhattacharya wrote: "There is a hardening, a kind of narrowing of empathy. Institutions talk a lot about inclusion, but there is less patience for discomfort, especially if that discomfort comes from immigrants or people of colour." As an international student, the shift is unmistakable, she adds. "The message wasn't always explicit, but it was there: you are here conditionally, and you can be made to feel that very quickly."

Medicover Cancer Institute Successfully Treats Rare Pontine Cavernoma Using Advanced Stereotactic Radiosurgery



Hyderabad, 14 January, 2025: Medicover Cancer Institute has successfully treated a rare and high-risk brain condition — Pontine Cavernoma with hemorrhage — in a 57-year-old patient, Mr. Ambati Ramulu, using advanced

Radiosurgery (SRS), avoiding the need for high-risk open brain surgery.

Mr. Ramulu presented

with double vision and restricted eye movements. Detailed evaluation with MRI Brain revealed a pontine cavernoma, a condition caused

by abnormal blood vessel formation in the pons, a critical area of the brain that controls vital neurological functions. Such lesions are prone to micro-bleeds or major hemorrhage, making conventional surgery extremely risky. Considering the sensitive

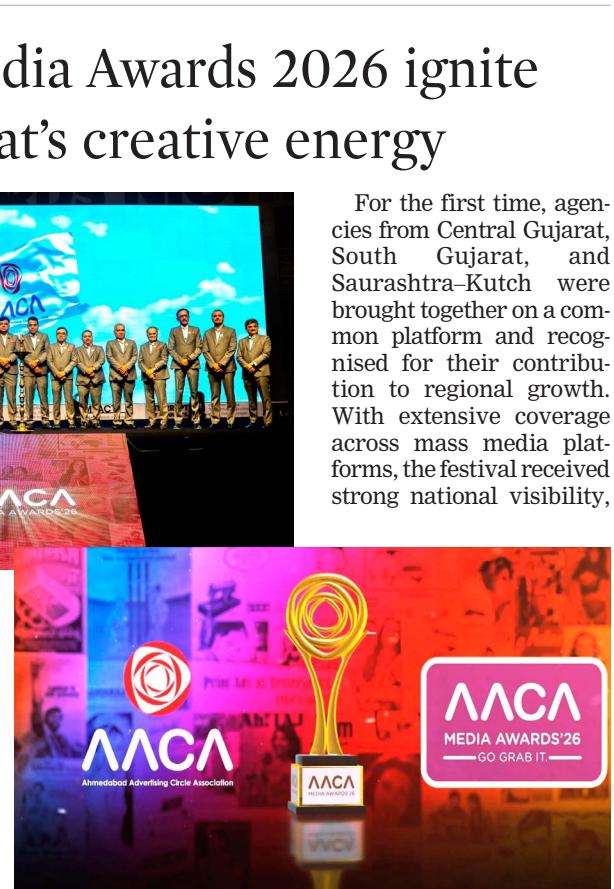
location, the medical team opted for SRS, a highly precise, non-invasive radiation technique that delivers focused radiation to the lesion while sparing surrounding healthy brain tissue. The patient received 5 fractions of SRS with a total dose of 25 Gy (5 Gy per

fraction). The treatment was well tolerated, performed as an outpatient procedure, and the patient was discharged in stable condition on the same day of his final session. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kandra Prasanth, Consultant Radiation Oncologist, Medicover Cancer Institute, said, "Pontine cavernomas are challenging due to their deep and critical location. Stereotactic Radiosurgery offers a safe and effective alternative for patients where surgery carries high risk. In this case, SRS helped control the lesion, and the patient has had no fresh bleeding episodes on follow-up." Doctors added that SRS is particularly beneficial for deep-seated brain lesions that cannot be safely operated upon, offering patients a safer, surgery-free treatment option with excellent outcomes. The patient is currently under regular follow-up and continues to remain stable.



Ahmedabad, January 4: The Ahmedabad Advertising Welfare Circle Association (AAC) successfully hosted the AAC Media Awards 2026 as part of the grand Festival of Advertising 2026, marking the association's 35th anniversary with record participation and national attention.

The festival brought together leading advertising agencies, media owners, media professionals, and advertisers from across Gujarat to celebrate three and a half decades of creativity, collaboration, and value-driven growth. A total of 39 awards were presented across Print, Television-Cinema, Radio, Outdoor, and Digital Advertising, recognising excellence and innovation in the industry.



Nomination announcements and award presentations kept excitement high throughout the evening, creating several emotional and memorable moments as agencies and professionals were honoured for their creative journeys. The event featured a grand red-carpet welcome, engaging entertainment, and vibrant interactions, reflecting pride in Gujarat's advertising fraternity.

AAC President Manish Gandhi said the response highlighted Gujarat's creative confidence and national impact. He also announced upcoming initiatives including a coffee table book, Creative Spark, blood donation drive, and cricket carnival, reinforcing AAC's commitment to creativity and social responsibility.

EDITORIAL

Bitumen: A Crude Item's Curious Link To Trump's Venezuela Strike - And India

Amid the pervasive gloom and jitters of geopolitics, India has found a silver lining in innovation. It became the first country in the world to successfully develop bio-bitumen, a sustainable alternative to the petroleum-based binder widely used in asphalt for building roads. The New Delhi-based CSIR-Central Road Research Institute and the Dehradun-based CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum jointly developed commercially viable bio-bitumen from agricultural residues such as hay (think farm stubble, which is usually burnt). They made it using pyrolysis, an oxygen-free heating process popular in organic waste recycling. The Jorabat-Shillong Expressway (NH-40) in Meghalaya now sports a 100-metre trial stretch using bio-bitumen, demonstrating its feasibility. Regular bitumen, which gives roads their black top, is derived from crude oil and India imports the commodity worth about \$3 billion annually.

What's the Big Deal?

On the face of it, the innovation might appear trivial, especially when compared with headline-grabbers such as artificial intelligence or quantum computing. But if you consider the bitumen story at the centre of the geopolitical storm unleashed by President Donald Trump when he ordered the US military to march into the capital of Venezuela and kidnap its head of state, Nicolas Maduro, and his wife, the achievement gets an added sheen for its timing. At over 300 billion barrels, Venezuela holds the largest reserve of crude oil in the world. Crucially, much of it is ultra-heavy crude, the richest source of bitumen and diesel, the former crucial for transport infrastructure and the latter for powering trucks, trains, ships and jets. For the foreseeable future, the US will control where Venezuelan oil flows to.

Blow to China

The heavy oil pumped out from the Orinoco fields of the Latin American producer used to be the main feedstock for independent Chinese refineries, nicknamed 'teapots'. China imported 3,89,000 barrels per day of Venezuelan crude in 2025. PetroChina built a refinery complex in Jeyiyan in Guangdong province specifically to process heavy crude originating from fields such as Orinoco. Now, the US intends to steer much of that oil towards refineries in Texas. The US is awash with light sweet shale crude, which is used as a diluent to pump out heavy crude. US energy secretary Chris Wright has said that the country will ship copious amounts of diluent to Venezuela and bring heavy oil back stateside. The US move not only deprives China of discounted heavy oil but also more than half of its source for bitumen. The scarcity of bitumen can impact the expansion and maintenance of highway networks. At the very least, it will make it more expensive to build roads. The other major source countries for heavy crude are Iran, Russia and Canada. While the former two do not produce oil as heavy as Venezuela's, crude from the tar sands of Alberta in Canada matches up but is costlier to transport. The first of China's major sources of relatively cheap heavy crude oil - Venezuela - is blocked. Buying oil from Russia is risk-ridden as Trump will soon likely be armed with fresh powers to impose punitive tariffs up to 500% on sanction-defiers. Iran is gripped by an unprecedented economic crisis and people's agitation that could result in a regime change, jeopardising its oil production and sales in the international grey market.

India's Advantage

Several Indian oil companies' shares rose soon after the US attack in Caracas. While a few Indian companies, such as ONGC, Indian Oil and Oil India, have equity stakes in some fields in Venezuela, several Indian refineries, especially Reliance Industries' Jamnagar complex, are equipped to process ultra-heavy crude oil. One of the valuable byproducts of ultra-heavy crude is vanadium, which is used to make steel and aluminium alloys in the auto and aerospace industries. It is also key to making vanadium redox flow batteries, which have a long life and are suited for large-scale grid storage. But it requires sophisticated tech know-how to extract it from petroleum coke or refinery waste.

Why This Women's Premier League Is Different - And More High-Stakes Than Ever



Watching a Women's Premier League (WPL) match in the ongoing season is a very interesting exercise. After all, everything has changed for the Indian cricketers and by extension for their respective franchises. If you thought you were imagining things when you saw the likes of Harmanpreet Kaur, Deepti Sharma, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma and others have an extra spring in their steps, don't fret, you are not the only one. What you saw is probably real. After all, this is the first edition of the WPL that the Indian cricketers have entered as world champions. They could be forgiven for thinking that they can walk on water - such was the enormity of their achievement last year. So, another very interesting angle that has now been added to WPL viewership, thanks to the added lens of the World Cup triumph, is that of assessing just how far the able-bodied Indian women's game has come.

Historically, most Indian fans, even those who followed cricket closely, would be able to name maybe two or three prominent Indian female cricketers. The likes of Diana Edulji, Shantha Rangaswamy, Anjum Chopra, Jhulan Goswami and Mithali Raj would usually make that cut. However, in the run-up to WPL 2026, along with the "star names", many people have also been curious about the likes of Shree Charani, Richa Ghosh, Sneh Rana, Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Kranti Gaud, Radha Yadav and others. All of them might not have become household names just yet, but they are being followed by virtue of being World Cup winners. And the WPL is giving them the opportunity to catapult themselves into that category - much like the IPL did for the likes of Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant, Suryakumar Yadav and others. Meanwhile, every single field movement of the World Cup "stars" like Jemimah, Deepti, Harman, Shafali and Smriti is being put under the microscope, reviewed, analysed, dissected, criticised, commented on and sometimes appreciated. It wouldn't be unfair to point out that perhaps for the first time in the history of Indian women's cricket, the star able-bodied female cricketers are being viewed through the same fan lens as the male stars. For years, the

likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, and many other former and current male cricketers have been "idols" for the women's teams. Now, the female "stars" find themselves sharing the same celebrity boat. The biggest indicator that the women's game is becoming more and more popular in India is the largely packed stadiums for the India games, as we saw at the World Cup. It wouldn't be a surprise if the WPL 2026 numbers break all previous records for in-stadia numbers and Television TRPs plus online viewership. The spike in interest though is not just from the fans. In fact, well before fan interest in the WPL saw a fresh surge, a rather influential cluster had honed in on this group as the next Indian cricketing gold mine and drawn up water-tight sales and marketing plans - the money bags, i.e., sponsors. For them, the World Cup win last year finally saw the women's game in the country make the transition from "something we need to keep an eye on" to "let's bank on them big time". The World Cup heroes, after all, are now "bankable" properties. People want to see them, hear their stories, know about their struggles, meet their families, find out what food they like, where they prefer to vacation, what music they like to listen to and who their favourite movie stars are. As

Harmanpreet Kaur and co. have found out, winning a World Cup as an Indian cricketer will change your life overnight. Their lives are no longer just theirs; their own personal worlds are now a thing of the past. They are suddenly on multiple magazine covers, on TV and radio shows, on billboards and hoardings. They are the topics of living room conversations and fan polls. Such was the impact of India's inaugural women's World Cup title triumph that, according to news reports, the overall brand value of the team went up by almost 30%. India's able-bodied women cricketers were suddenly brand darlings. Player endorsement and appearance fees zoomed as more and more brands, including those from industries like automobiles, wellness, FMCG, tech & gadgets, etc., queued up to sign the big names. The Mumbai Indians WPL team, which is captained by the World Cup-winning skipper, Harmanpreet, added the likes of De Beers Group and BKT Tyres to their sponsor list. According to reports, the Delhi Capitals franchise in the WPL, buoyed by the Indian team's recent success and the news of World Cup semi-final hero Jemimah Rodrigues being handed captaincy, saw a huge jump in sponsor interest. It's pretty much the same story across all five franchises. Existing sponsors want to stay put, while those who have so far not boarded the WPL bandwagon are more than interested in getting

on board. For the sponsors, the WPL ecosystem has expanded. They are starting to feel more and more confident in the overall, long-term vision of the BCCI - that the WPL can well and truly do for the women's game in India what the IPL did for the men's. Women's cricket in India and by extension the WPL are now very much a part of the economics of cricket conversation. And no one wants to miss the bus. Thankfully, while the women are finally enjoying a piece of the pie that was so far almost exclusively reserved for the men, no one is grudging them their success. We see it happen all the time in the men's game, with fans pointing out just how much money the star male cricketers are making, especially when they fail. The logic behind spending sums often equivalent to the price of a sprawling four-bedroom house in an ultra-luxury locality in Gurgaon or even Mumbai on acquiring the services of one player for one season at an IPL player auction is often questioned. While the female cricketers are not paid anywhere in the same vicinity as their male counterparts, just yet (Smriti Mandhana, Nat Sciver-Brunt and Ashleigh Gardner were retained for a record Rs 3.5 crore by their franchises, while in the IPL, Virat Kohli was retained by RCB for Rs 21 crore ahead of the 2025 mega auction), we must also not forget that the WPL is only four years old so far.

Parental intentions, upbringing, and broken homes



PRIYANKA
SAURABH

In Indian society, parents hold the highest moral position. They are considered the epitome of sacrifice, austerity, and selfless love. From childhood, we are taught that parents can never be wrong. Their every word is an order, their every decision the ultimate truth. But in the changing social landscape, this belief is now under many questions. Today, when incidents of family disintegration, divorce, separation, and domestic tension are increasing, it has become necessary to honestly admit that parents are not always right. The breakdown of many families is not solely due to differences between husband and wife, but the role of parents is becoming equally crucial. This may sound harsh, but the truth is that in many homes, parental favoritism, interference, and control are eroding relationships from within. First, let's discuss the culture of discrimination. It's not uncommon in Indian families to see comparisons and favoritism between children. The eldest son is considered the "heir," the younger one the "compromiser," the daughter "someone else's property," and the daughter-in-law "outsider." When this thinking translates into practice, it creates persistent tension within the home. Parents, unconsciously or intentionally, favor one son and neglect the other. The daughter-in-law is considered the root of every dispute, while the daughter's faults are glossed over. This inequality gradually breaks down

relationships. Even today, the daughter-in-law's place after marriage remains ambiguous in many homes. She is expected to unquestioningly accept every tradition, obey every decision, and abandon her own identity. If she speaks up for her rights, respect, or independence, she is labeled a "homebreaker." The truth is that often the home is already broken from within—only a facade remains. Excessive parental interference is also becoming a major cause of family disintegration today. Interfering in the personal affairs of the son and daughter-in-law, blowing small matters out of proportion, ignoring the daughter-in-law's complaints, and subjecting the son to emotional pressure—all these situations make marriage a burden. The son is often caught between two sides—wife on one side, parents on the other. And society teaches him that supporting his parents is his duty, even if it means sacrificing his marital life. It is also seen that even after his daughter's marriage, parents want to keep her under their control. By repeatedly calling her to their parents' home, interfering in her marital life, and forming opinions against the son-in-law, they inadvertently weaken their daughter's home. The result is that distrust grows between the daughter and son-in-law, and ultimately the relationship reaches the brink of collapse. Another serious aspect is emotional blackmail. "What all have we not done for you?" "You are in this position because of us," "What will people say if you don't listen to us"—such statements mentally enslave children. They strive to keep their parents happy, even at the cost of their own happiness, their relationships, and their dreams. But this suppressed dissatisfaction explodes one day. The problem becomes even more serious when society also promotes this mentality. In every dispute, the first question asked is the daughter-in-law—"What did you do?" The son is considered "forced," and the parents are considered "victims." Due to this

PM Shri Vidyalaya Teacher Deployment: New Policy for Backdoor Entry



DR. SATYAWATI
SAURABH

(Selection in the name of merit or killing of merit in the name of selection?)

This is perhaps the first time in history that the passing criteria and merit of a selection exam have been set to be determined after the results are viewed. The Haryana government's State Model Culture and PM Shri School Teacher Deployment Policy - ??2025 is being touted on paper as a document of transparency and fairness, but a closer examination of its provisions raises several serious and uncomfortable questions. The most significant and fundamental flaw in the PM Shri Vidyalaya Teacher Recruitment Policy is that it doesn't set a minimum passing score for the screening test. How can selection be considered merit-based when it's unclear how many marks are required to pass the exam? This isn't a simple technical error, but a direct blow to the credibility of the entire selection process. The policy assigns 60 percent weighting to the screening test, but the lack of clear pass-fail criteria leaves the test entirely at the discretion of the administration. When there are no written, public, and binding standards for discretion, the selection process automatically becomes suspect. This gives rise to the possibility of backdoor entry—admission and exclusion. Even more shocking is that the policy makes no provision for a mandatory merit list. There is no mention of rankings, no cut-off marks, and no clarification on how priority will be determined in the event of a tie. Previously, when selections were made through centrally

conducted examinations, clear merit lists, public scores, and comparative evaluation were in place. Under the current policy, the selection process appears to be merely a means of formal legitimacy, rather than being challengeable—as if decisions were already made and scores were added later to justify them. The transparency of the screening test itself is a major question mark. It is not clear who will set the question paper, which institution or agency will conduct the evaluation, and by what method, and whether there will be any system like normalization of scores. When this test is the largest and most opaque in selection, it is natural to fear that recognition, access, and recommendation may play a decisive role over merit. A look at the background behind the policy reveals a clearer picture. The reality is that the expected number of applications for these PM Shri and Model Sanskriti schools did not arrive. The department itself knows that not all candidates passed the screening test at the required level. This is why many positions in these schools remained vacant even in the initial stages. Vacant positions pose a threat to departmental credibility. Vacant positions in "model" schools undermine the claims of the education system's success. Under this pressure, the department relaxed the selection criteria in the initial stages. Teachers working in remote districts were accommodated in these schools by relaxing the appropriate criteria, interview, and merit requirements. This process allowed many teachers who had been posted in remote areas for years to return to their home or nearby districts. The situation became even more inconsistent in the later stages. The candidates who subsequently joined differed from the criteria initially set for these schools. This disparity in the selection process itself is evidence that the implementation of the policy was neither uniform nor fair. Against this backdrop, the current policy's lack of minimum passing marks and the failure to publicly publish results and merit lists does not appear to be a mistake. The department clearly fears that if stricter criteria,

clear cut-offs, and transparent merit are implemented, a large number of seats will remain vacant. The reality is that most teachers do not want to move to these schools—neither the working conditions are attractive, nor does the transfer policy offer any long-term security. This is why the entire process has been deliberately kept flexible, vague, and subject to administrative discretion. If seats remain vacant, anyone—especially "our own people"—can be sent to these schools without merit, without comparative evaluation, and without public accountability. This is where the concept of merit-based selection ends and the system of controlled selection begins. Another serious aspect of the policy is that after selection, teachers can remain in the same schools for ten years. If the selection process itself is flawed or biased, there is no practical possibility of correcting the mistake. The harm will not be limited to qualified teachers, but students and the entire education system will have to pay the price. If the government truly intended fair and quality selection, a clear merit list of three or five times the number of candidates could have been prepared. This process would have been constitutionally, equitably, and legally sound, but the policy deliberately omitted this option. Often, the true intent of a policy is revealed not by its contents but by what it does not state. The absence of minimum qualifying marks, the absence of a mandatory merit list, and the lack of clear provisions for challenging the selection process—all indicate that the objective is not merit-based selection, but rather to fill seats and control selection. Ultimately, this policy appears more like backdoor entry in the name of merit than merit-based selection. If the government is truly serious about quality and equity in education, it must clearly establish minimum passing scores, make merit lists mandatory, and subject the entire selection process to public scrutiny. Otherwise, this policy will be remembered in the future not as selection, but as an example of the killing of merit in the name of selection.

Amruthanjan short film turns into full-length entertainer, says director Jyothi Rao Mohit



Bengaluru: Everyone remembers the Amruthanjan short movie. They were laughing and laughing happily. Now the same team has made a movie. Director Jyothi Rao Mohit shares his experience.

The reason for making a movie in the name of Amruthanjan...? There is a big difference between the Amruthanjan short movie and the Amruthanjan movie. I had done a movie called Sodabuddi before this, which failed. Then when I was unemployed, I made a short movie, the same Amruthanjan. It happened like history. Then when I was thinking about doing something, I decided to make the Amruthanjan movie on the big screen. I did everything that was needed for the movie format.

Short movie won. Expectations on the movie...?

You can have 100% expectations on this movie too. You have worked so deeply that you have written the story for a year, rehearsed for 3 months, worked with the same team. You can laugh out loud 40-45 times while watching the movie. We have given importance to

laughter in every scene. What new things have you given to people in the short film? Here are some new things. If I stop drinking, will you stop wearing makeup? You have made this dialogue a carry. The story line is very new. Every parent thinks that they should do this for their children.

What was the challenge of making a movie of the same title...?

When we set out to make a movie, you too were short film makers, who wouldn't watch a movie if you made a short film? Viewers who watch on mobile phones won't come to the theater, this won't be a workout, and so on. When we said we would make it new and normal, these kinds of words are all too common. It's censored. If there's a correction, they call us in and say. But they come, shake our hands and say we've made a really good movie. That's a plus point now. It could be a family audience, it could be a youth audience, it wouldn't bore anyone. This movie will be like a treasure buster. If any of you are bored in life, come to our movie and laugh your heart out, we promise.

Bengaluru: A delegation from New Zealand's innovation ecosystem, part of the Prime Minister's Scholarship for Asia (PMSA) programme, met Minister Priyank Kharge and Department officials to explore opportunities for collaboration across technology, education, research and emerging sectors. The interaction focused on strengthening people-to-people connections and building long-term institutional linkages between Karnataka and New Zealand.

The Prime Minister's Scholarship for Asia (PMSA) is a New Zealand Government-funded programme, administered by Education New Zealand (ENZ), aimed at deepening partnerships across Asia while building global capabilities in innovation, education and leadership. The visiting delegation comprised representatives from New

Himesh Reshammiya, Talwinder, Aditya Rikhari, Shalmali Kholgade and 'Dhurandhar' Hitmaker Flipperachi to Perform at UN40



India. While UN40 is designed primarily for audiences under 40, attendees above 40 are welcome to attend when accompanied by someone under 40. The festival focuses on shared cultural sensibilities and contemporary tastes, placing emphasis on mindset and experience rather than age alone. In addition to live performances, UN40 will feature a dedicated Gaming Zone inspired by classic tele match style challenges, with team based games built for friendly competition and group participation. Designed as much for

The inaugural edition will feature performances by Himesh Reshammiya, Talwinder, Aditya Rikhari, Shalmali Kholgade, and viral music sensation Flipperachi, whose track in Dhurandhar has gained widespread popularity. The festival will also mark Flipperachi's first confirmed live performance in

Complete All Pending Road Development Works Under Rs.694 Crore Package Within One Month: D.S. Ramesh

Bengaluru: Commissioner of Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S. Ramesh, visited various locations where road development works are in progress within the city corporation limits and reviewed the status of the ongoing projects. Complete Road Development Works Within One Month:

Reviewing the road development works being taken up under the 694 crore package in the city corporation limits—including Horamavu-Agara Main Road, Horamavu-Kalkere Main Road, Ramamurthy Nagar-Kalkere Main Road, Kalkere-Channasandra Main Road, Vaddarapalya Main Road, and other roads—the Commissioner strictly instructed the concerned officials and contractors to



complete all pending works within one month while ensuring high quality standards.

Expedite Sewerage Works on Vaddarapalya Main Road: The Commissioner observed that the sewerage pipeline installation work being carried out by the BWSSB

on Vaddarapalya Main Road is progressing at a slow pace. He directed the officials to coordinate with the concerned departments to ensure that the sewerage pipeline works are completed within one month. He further stated that road development works would commence

Young Bharatanatyam Artiste Sonika Satish Makes Her Rangapravesh at 'Ranga Sammilana'

Bengaluru: Natyanjali School of Dance presents 'Ranga Sammilana', the Bharatanatyam Rangapravesh of Kum. Sonika Satish, a promising young dancer and disciple of Guru Acharya Ashok Kumar, on Saturday, 17th January 2026, at 5.00 pm. The Rangapravesh will be held at Dr. D. Premachandra Sagar Auditorium and Centre for Performing Arts, Kumaraswamy Layout, adjacent to Dayanand Sagar College, Bengaluru. Kum. Sonika Satish is the daughter of Smt. Ramya Satish and Satish Aradhy. Trained under the able guidance of Guru Acharya Ashok Kumar, her debut performance marks a significant milestone in her artistic journey, showcasing years of disciplined training and dedication to the classical dance form. The event will take place in



the esteemed presence of Dr. Saraswathi Ramesh, Gynaecologist and Medical Director at Arka Anugraha and AV Hospitals; Vidushi T. S. Sreelakshmi Kumar of Nrusuya Kalakshetra, Mysuru; and Ms. Vrinda Ravi of Nartana School of Dance, Australia, lending grace and distinction to the occasion.

Kasturinagar, from Kempegowda Underpass to Benniganahalli Lake. He instructed the concerned officials to complete the work on a priority basis and at an accelerated pace.

Emphasizing the importance of smooth and safe traffic movement, the Commissioner stated that road infrastructure development works are being taken up on priority across the city corporation and that utmost importance will be given to completing all works within the stipulated time frame while maintaining quality. During the inspection, Additional Commissioner (Development) Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar, Chief Engineer Krishnamurthy, Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, and contractors were present.

immediately after the completion of the BWSSB works.

Complete Stormwater Drain Retaining Wall Works on Priority: The Commissioner also inspected the retaining wall construction work of the stormwater drain being taken up in

Siddaramaiah," and alleged that loans exceeding 4 lakh crore had been taken. He questioned the need for spending public money on Assembly sessions when several critical issues remained unresolved. The BJP leader also accused the Congress of hypocrisy in invoking Mahatma Gandhi's ideals, alleging that the party had opposed policies and values Gandhi stood for, including cow protection, prohibition, and spiritual teachings. He questioned the Congress's objection to the term "Vikas Bharat." Ashoka further alleged harassment of government officials under political pressure, citing threats against Shidlaghatta Municipal Commissioner Amrutha Gowda, and claimed that more than two lakh illegal Bangladeshi immigrants were residing in the state.

BWSSB Implements AI-Based 'IPUMPNET' Across 78 Pumping Stations; Set to Save Over Rs 40 Crore Annually: Chairman Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar

Bengaluru : The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has successfully deployed the AI-based smart pump monitoring and optimization technology, 'IPUMPNET', across 78 of its pumping stations. This new technology is

also reducing carbon emissions, thereby contributing significantly to Bengaluru's environmental sustainability.

"Under the guidance of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, BWSSB is committed to leveraging cutting-edge technologies to enhance operational excellence and improve service delivery for every citizen of Bengaluru. 'IPUMPNET' has enabled us to gain a deeper scientific understanding of our pumping infrastructure, helping us optimize energy use and ensure greater reliability in water supply. This initiative marks a transformative phase for BWSSB, setting a new benchmark for innovation in the water sector," he said.

In a press statement released, the Chairman explained that 'IPUMPNET' is a fusion of real-time sensors, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and predictive diagnostics. Unlike traditional methods, this system continuously monitors the performance of pumps and detects 'Hidden Performance Losses'. The system has already identified several pumps consuming power significantly above their designated limits. Based on this data, the Board has initiated the process of replacing low-efficiency pumps with High-Efficiency pumps.

This technological upgrade is projected to save more than Rs. 40 Crore in electricity costs annually. By preventing energy wastage, BWSSB is not only ensuring financial savings but is



through its Global Innovation Alliance (GIA) platform to enable sustained engagement with startups, academia, industry and government bodies. The delegation expressed interest in working with the department to identify priority areas of collaboration and constitute a working group to progress them. Both sides indicated that a formal collaboration framework, including a memorandum of understanding, is being explored to provide structure and continuity to this engagement.

Complete Geddalahalli Railway Vent Works by End of April: Maheshwar Rao

Bengaluru : The Chief Commissioner, Sri Maheshwar Rao, directed officials to complete the Geddalahalli railway vent works by the end of April. While inspecting various locations within the GBA jurisdiction today, the Chief Commissioner reviewed the progress of the Geddalahalli railway vent project and instructed officials to ensure completion of the work before the onset of the pre-monsoon season.

He noted that the casting work of one vent has already been completed and needs to be pushed beneath the railway track. He directed that the pushing work be commenced immediately and that the casting of the second vent be completed on priority. Officials were instructed to complete the entire project, including the RCC retaining walls, by the end of April.

Conduct Mass Cleanliness Drive:

The Chief Commissioner instructed that a mass cleanliness drive be undertaken in the Geddalahalli and HBR Layout areas using 10-15 tractors. He directed that the East and Central City Corporations coordinate closely to carry out the cleanliness drive effectively.

Hennur-Bagul White Topping Road:

White topping work has been taken up on a 5 km stretch of the Hennur-Bagul Road. Of this, white topping has been completed on a 3.2 km stretch, and vehicular traffic has been allowed on sections where curing has been completed. Continuous inspections are being carried out to ensure timely completion of the remaining work.

He instructed officials to install green cloth barriers in newly concreted areas to prevent pedestrian movement and footprint marks, and to give equal priority to completing footpath works in parallel.

Officials informed that the work is being executed in phases with partial traffic restrictions, in close coordination with the Traffic Police, to avoid inconvenience to road users.

Provide Free Left at Nagawara Junction:

At Nagawara Junction, BWSSB pipeline works are currently in progress. The Chief Commissioner directed that the works be expedited and the road developed immediately thereafter. He also instructed officials of the North City Corporation to coordinate with BMRC to clear certain properties and provide a free-left turn from the junction towards Tannery Road.

To prevent water stagnation during rains at Nagawara Junction, he directed officials to construct sponge-type recharge pits.

Expedite White Topping Works:

White topping works are being taken up



on a total stretch of 5 km, including 2.4 km of Nagawara Road and 2.6 km of Tannery Road. As BWSSB pipeline works have been completed on a 1 km stretch of Nagawara Road, he instructed the Police Department to grant immediate permission to carry out white topping works on half the carriageway.

Hennur 80 Feet Road White Topping Completed:

White topping works on a 2 km stretch of Hennur 80 Feet Road have been completed and opened for vehicular traffic. However, footpath development works are pending. Officials were instructed to complete footpaths along with street lighting, bollards, and other associated works within the stipulated timeline.

White topping works are proposed on a 450-metre stretch of Lazar Road, for which police permission is pending. Officials were directed to obtain the required permission immediately and commence the work. They were also instructed to upgrade the building located on Corporation land along the same road.

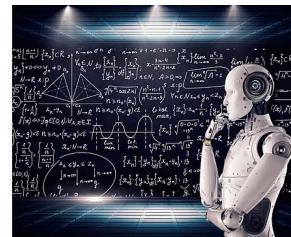
White topping works are proposed on a 1 km stretch of Netaji Road from Bamboo Bazaar up to the railway track. As BWSSB pipeline works are yet to be taken up, officials were instructed to obtain immediate police permission and ensure that BWSSB undertakes the pipeline work on priority. During the inspection, East City Corporation Commissioner Sri D.S. Ramesh, Additional Commissioner (Development) Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar, DGP Jayaprakash, Chief Engineers Krishnamurthy and Dr. Raghavendra Prasad, Executive Engineers, and other officials were present.

TN, Sarvam AI MoU to set up India's 1st Sovereign AI Park

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sarvam AI to establish India's first full-stack Sovereign AI Park, aimed at attracting investments of around Rs 10,000 crore over a five-year period. The project is expected to generate about 1,000 high-skilled deep-tech jobs and is seen as a foundational step towards building a robust and inclusive artificial intelligence ecosystem rooted in public interest.

The MoU was exchanged in the presence of Chief Minister MK Stalin, Industries Minister TRB Rajaa, Industries secretary Arun Roy, and IIT Madras Director V Kamakoti. The project includes the establishment of data centres exclusively to host government data.

The Sovereign AI Park will be a first-of-its-kind, purpose-built district in India integrating AI compute infrastructure, secure data frameworks, model research laboratories and AI innovation clusters, along with a dedicated institute for AI in governance. To come up near the IIT Research Park in Taramani, it will function as a



full-stack system in which data, models and compute capabilities remain within the State's trust boundary, ensuring a sovereign, ethical and inclusive ecosystem for the deployment of AI systems.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat, minister Rajaa said the initiative would set a precedent for other states. With large capacity being created in the data centres, he said, other states could also host their data in Tamil Nadu.

He added that the initiative would position Tamil Nadu as a national leader in the large-scale deployment of AI, with implementation across key sectors such as education, agriculture, healthcare and citizen engagement. Kamakoti said artificial intelligence would define the next generation of jobs just as manufacturing and information technology defined the previous one.

Annamalai remains tight-lipped on potential Vijay-NDA tie-up

NEW DELHI/CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu BJP leader K Annamalai on Wednesday was tight-lipped about a possible alliance with actor-politician Vijay's TVK ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, saying he is not authorised to comment on it.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of Pongal celebrations at Minister of State L Murugan's residence in Delhi. When reporters pressed him about whether a Vijay-BJP tie-up would strengthen the NDA, Annamalai reiterated, "...there are some things which I don't want to answer. It's above my pay grade."



Duraimurugan to get Anna award from CM Stalin on Jan 16

CHENNAI: Ahead of Thiruvalluvar Thirunal day, which falls on January 15th or 16th as part of the Pongal festival, the State government on Tuesday announced the recipients of the Ayyan Thiruvalluvar award for 2026, the Peraignar Anna, Thanthai Periyar, and Kalaignar awards, among others, for 2025. According to an

official release, scholar of Saiva Siddhantham Sathyavel Muruganar has been selected for the Ayyan Thiruvalluvar award 2026, which is presented to persons popularising the values and principles of Thirukkural in society. DMK general secretary and Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan has been selected

Annamalai had told earlier at a press conference, when asked if he wanted Vijay to join the NDA: "It's not about personal feelings. The best way for DMK to go is if all anti-DMK votes get consolidated. That's politics."

The BJP leader described Tamil Nadu's electoral landscape as a rare "four-corner fight" involving the DMK-led alliance, AIADMK-headed NDA, Tamilaga Vettir Kazhagam (TVK), and Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) chief Seeman's outfit with its 8.9 per cent vote share.

ed for the Peraignar Anna award, presented to persons who make outstanding contributions to the development of Tamil society. Nellai Jayantha has been selected for the Mahakavi Bharathiyaar award, while former Chief Secretary V Iraianbu has been picked for the Thiru Vi Ka award 2025.

Tamil Nadu: Over 9.6 lakh passengers travel by buses ahead of Pongal

CHENNAI: More than 9.6 lakh passengers travelled from Chennai and other parts of the State by government and omni buses ahead of the Pongal festival in 2026, as transport operators stepped up services to meet the festive rush.

According to Managing Director of the State Express Transport Corporation R. Mohan, special buses were operated by the Transport Department to facilitate public travel.

He said that as of mid-



night on January 13, 2,092 regular buses were operated as scheduled, in addition to 2,238 special buses.

In all, 4,390 buses were

buses were operated, enabling 6,90,720 passengers to travel. Of these, 2,73,152 passengers travelled after making advance reservations.

During the Pongal travel period, additional buses would continue to be operated based on public demand. Passengers were advised to plan their journeys in advance and make reservations to avoid last-minute rush, the official said. Meanwhile, All Omni Bus Owners Association president A. Ambazhagan said that 2,72,850 passengers travelled in omni buses on January 10.

On January 11, 47,250 passengers travelled in 1,180 buses, while 58,000 passengers travelled in 1,450 buses on January 12. On January 13 alone, 74,400 passengers travelled in 1,860 omni buses, he said.

gers travelled in omni buses from Chennai to various parts of Tamil Nadu in view of the festival. As of 5 p.m. on January 13, 49,200 passengers travelled in 1,230 buses on January 9, followed by 44,000 passengers in 1,100 buses on January 10.

On January 11, 47,250 passengers travelled in 1,180 buses, while 58,000 passengers travelled in 1,450 buses on January 12.

On January 13 alone, 74,400 passengers travelled in 1,860 omni buses, he said.

HMPV not new virus, majority Indian population immune to it: Experts



New Delhi The Human

Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is not a new virus and most of the Indian population are immune to it, said health experts on Monday, even as the number of reported cases climbed to three in the country. On Monday, health officials in the country reported three cases of HMPV – babies aged three- and eight-month-old from Bengaluru (Karnataka) and a two-year-old child in Gujarat's Ahmedabad.

"Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is not a new virus. It has been part of the circulating flu virus in India for long. Hence, the majority of the Indian population has developed immunity against it," Dr. Harshal R. Salve, Additional Professor, Centre for Community

Medicine at AIIMS, New Delhi, told IANS. He added that "chances of a severe disease are very rare".

HMPV was first discovered in 2001 and is part of the Pneumoviridae family along with the Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The symptoms commonly associated with HMPV include cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath.

"Like for any other flu viruses, elderly people, children and people with comorbidities must take care. There is no need to create panic, and one should stop rumour-mongering in the public," Salve said.

The two cases from Karnataka were detected via routine surveillance by ICMR in a 3-month-old girl and an 8-month-old boy.

Both had a history of broncho-

pneumonia – a form of pneumonia, a lung infection, and were admitted to a private hospital. Bronchopneumonia affects both the alveoli in the lungs and the bronchi.

The Health Ministry informed that while the baby girl "has been discharged", the baby boy "is now recovering". In the third case, the child, from Rajasthan, was admitted to a private hospital in Chandkheda's area of Ahmedabad, after showing symptoms of cold and cough. The child is stable now, reports quoted civic officials as saying. "HMPV is not a new virus. It commonly causes colds among children and also some adults. For self-limiting colds, we don't do expensive tests to diagnose which specific virus it is due to. Therefore, the finding of this virus

upon testing is not anything unusual or worrisome," Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, Chairman of the Kerala State IMA Research Cell, told IANS.

"All over the world, HMPV is a well-known cause of common cold," he added. HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with HMPV have been reported in various countries, particularly in China.

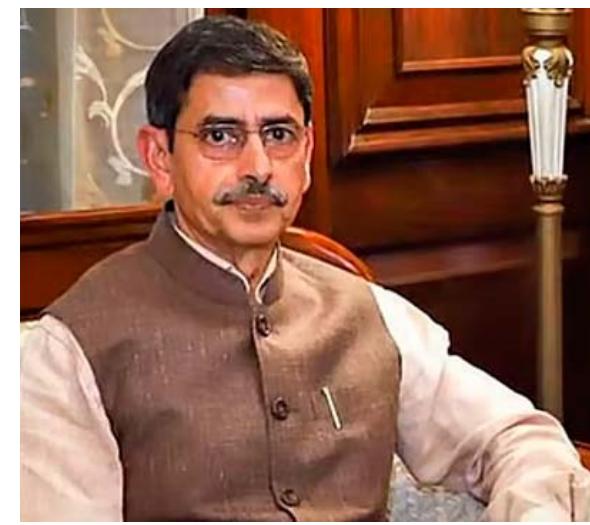
"Common cold is more common in winter, therefore it is being reported from China at this time. People should not get the impression that a new virus from China has now reached Bangalore," Jayadevan told IANS. Notably, the three cases of HMPV have no travel history. Thus, it currently remains unknown whether the cases are related to the outbreak seen in China.

"They (infected children) have not travelled to China, Malaysia, or any other country. The outbreak in China is linked to a new variant of HMPV. We do not yet have full details, and the government is still gathering information," said Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, while speaking to the media.

"HMPV isn't new. What we don't know is whether the strain is novel and has a virulence that's different from what we've experienced in the past. Unless one knows that it is a novel strain, cases have been detected all the time! Hopefully, whole genome sequencing and clinical information will clarify soon," said Lancelot Pinto, an Indian pulmonologist and epidemiologist, in a post on social media platform X.

Meanwhile, the government has issued precautionary measures such as covering mouth and nose with handkerchiefs or tissue paper while coughing, or sneezing; washing hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer; avoiding crowded places; staying away from public places while having fever, cough, or sneezing.

Governor RN Ravi extends warm Pongal greetings, hails farmers and Bharatiya heritage



CHENNAI: TN Governor, RN Ravi, extended his heartfelt Pongal greetings to the global Tamil community in a formal message released from Lok Bhavan on Wednesday.

In his message, the Governor emphasised the festival's deep-rooted connection to nature and agriculture. "We express our deepest gratitude to

Mother Earth and the Sun God for their abundant blessings that sustain our farms, nurture our families and shape our future," he stated.

Paying tribute to the agricultural community, Governor Ravi said, "We salute our farming community, whose skill, devotion, and perseverance nourish the land and sustain life." He also

highlighted the significance of Maatu Pongal, celebrating the indispensable role of cattle in agriculture and rural life. The Governor described Pongal as a proud celebration of the nation's spiritual and cultural heritage, which transcends boundaries and unites people worldwide. He connected the festivities to the spirit of national unity, noting that "Kaanum Pongal celebrates joy, togetherness... reflecting the various manifestations of the same oneness — Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat." Concluding with his wishes, Governor Ravi expressed hope that the festival would fill every home with happiness, prosperity, and good health. He underscored that the celebrations should strengthen "the spirit of unity, peace, and progress, leading us toward a Viksit Bharat by 2047."

42 resorts sealed in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve on court orders

COIMBATORE: Forty-two unauthorised resorts in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) were sealed by authorities on Tuesday in compliance with court directions.

The action follows a public interest litigation by environmental activist R Karpagam from Coimbatore, alleging that illegal resorts were functioning inside the reserve without obtaining mandatory approvals



and other regulatory bodies. On the court's directions to take action and submit an action taken report by 19 January, the authorities issued notices to resorts functioning illegally in areas including Thalavadi, Hassanur, Thalumalai and surrounding areas.

They were directed to obtain proper permission by 13 January, failing which, they would be shut down. Following this, the officials sealed them all and pasted closure notices on the premises.

Study says ozone therapy promising new treatment for sepsis-induced lung injury



New Delhi: Sepsis, a severe and often fatal complication of infection, is a leading cause of both acute lung injury (ALI) and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). Now, researchers report medical ozone therapy as a promising new treatment for sepsis-induced ALI.

This innovative approach could significantly improve survival rates and lung function in preclinical models, offering hope for patients with limited treatment options, according to the study from Nanjing Medical University in China.

Neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs) play a central role in the progression of sepsis, as they are involved in trapping pathogens but can also trigger excessive inflammation, exacerbating lung injury.

"Our research demonstrates that medical ozone therapy could dramatically improve the management of sepsis-induced ALI. This represents a promising new approach to critical care

that could lead to better outcomes for patients suffering from sepsis," said Dr. Wen-Tao Liu, the principal investigator of the study.

The implications of this study are far-reaching. If subsequent research confirms these results in human trials, medical ozone therapy could become a viable and effective treatment for sepsis-induced lung injury, a condition currently with few treatment options.

Ozone therapy's potential to improve survival and lung function could transform the management of sepsis, offering new hope for patients who face a bleak prognosis. The study authors noted that as this promising therapy advances through further research, it may become a cornerstone in the fight against sepsis, reshaping how we treat this life-threatening condition.

KRAFTON, Royal Enfield team up to bring rideable bike inside game

New Delhi: KRAFTON India and Royal Enfield today announced a landmark partnership that bridges two of India's most influential cultural domains – mobile gaming and motorcycling. The collaboration debuts Royal Enfield's iconic Bullet 350 and the OG cafe racer Continental GT 650 as rideable motorcycles inside BATTLE-GROUNDS MOBILE INDIA (BGMI), offering an unprecedented blend of automotive heritage and interactive entertainment. The iconic Royal Enfield Bullet 350 and sporty Royal Enfield Continental GT 650 will be introduced as rideable motorcycles inside the BGMI universe. Both motorcycles to make their debut in the game from January 19, 2026, as a part of the BGMI 4.2 update that goes live on January 15, 2026. New update introduces a range of exclusive Royal Enfield-themed in-game content and rewards Royal Enfield to also showcase a unique custom-built Royal Enfield Continental GT 650 inspired by elements from the BGMI universe. Royal Enfield also showcased a custom-built, real-world motorcycle inspired by BGMI's tactical and war-ready aesthetic – crafted on the soul of the



Continental GT 650 – underscoring the creative synergy between both brands. Opening 2026 with one of the most significant brand integrations in Indian gaming history, this collaboration reinforces BGMI's continued ambition to expand its universe through culturally relevant, localised experiences, while reflecting Royal Enfield's intent to engage India's next-generation audiences through innovative digi-

tal platforms. Gaming enthusiasts will soon experience the thrill of riding legendary Royal Enfield machines across virtual battlegrounds, while auto aficionados will see their passion reflected inside one of the country's largest entertainment ecosystems. "This strategic partnership with Royal Enfield embodies BGMI's vision of creating culturally meaningful and locally rooted experiences," said Seddharth

Merrotra, Head of Business Development & Partnerships at KRAFTON India. "2026 will be a year of many firsts, and we're kicking it off with one of our most ambitious brand integrations yet, while fundamentally elevating how partnerships enhance player engagement and drive shared value. Royal Enfield is an iconic name in the global automotive universe and its deep community roots with evolving digital ethos make it a natural

ally for BGMI's player-centric universe. Together, we are weaving storytelling, lifestyle, and digital culture into gameplay in a way that truly reflects the aspirations of modern Indian youth. Looking ahead, this collaboration sets a strategic foundation for future partnerships that are experiential, immersive, and deeply connected with our community's passions across movies, sports, FMCG and lifestyle landscapes."

Big tech plans major hiring push in India in 2026 amid US layoffs: Report



New Delhi: Around 52 per cent of tech and banking professionals in India and US said their companies plan to increase hiring in India in 2026, a report said on Wednesday, January 14. The report from anonymous community app for professionals, Blind, said that 34 per cent of respondents expect a significant increase and 18 per cent who anticipate a moderate rise, the report said. The survey gathered responses from 2,392 verified professionals across the United States and India and reported that the trend signals an acceleration of offshoring by major global tech firms including Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Uber, and eBay. When asked how India hiring affects US-based roles, 38 per cent said it is replacing US-based roles while 23 per cent said it complements US hiring, the report said. The report highlighted that 28 per cent of respondents cited recent H-1B visa restrictions as a factor pushing companies to hire more in India, while 25 per cent said the changes had no material impact. Around 4 per cent respondents said the restrictions led to increased US-based hiring. "The findings point to India's growing role as a functional alternative to the US hiring market. Rather than relying on U.S.-based expansion, many companies appear

to be redirecting growth to India, signaling a structural shift in global workforce planning," the report mentioned. Among employees at global firms such as eBay, Wayfair, LinkedIn, Qualcomm, Capital One, Google, Amazon, Salesforce, SAP and Microsoft, up to 93 per cent reported plans to expand hiring in India. In terms of how companies are expanding in India, 25 per cent said their employers are scaling up existing India teams, while about 20 per cent reported the creation of new roles in India and another 20 per cent said specific projects or functions are being moved there.

Coupang told to remove internal data breach findings amid probe



Seoul: South Korea's data protection watchdog on Wednesday, January 14, urged online retailer Coupang to take down its independent probe results into a massive data leak from its mobile application and website, describing them as unverified information. The Personal Information Protection Commission took issue with the company's notice that claims a former employee breached the personal information of 33 million users but saved data from only about 3,000 accounts, which Coupang claimed was later deleted.

Coupang is currently under investigation by authorities over the data breach, which the company earlier reported in November as having impacted the personal data of 33.7 million customers, such as their names, phone numbers and delivery addresses. The regulator said the company's internal probe results could lead to confusion among the public as it has yet to be verified by an official investigation, noting the notice could be considered as interfering in its investigation into the company. It noted Coupang has been uncooperative with its investigation by

delaying or failing to submit requested documents, warning such acts could be seen as acts of obstruction that could be considered in possible future penalties. It also called on the company to make improvements to its response measures to the leak, such as adding a function within its mobile app and website for users to look up whether their data has been breached. Meanwhile, ordering a temporary suspension of business operations at e-commerce giant Coupang may be possible, the head of South Korea's antitrust watchdog said, amid an ongoing investiga-

tion over a recent large-scale data breach at the US-listed company. "If an order is not implemented or if it is deemed insufficient to provide relief to affected consumers, a business suspension is also possible," Ju Byung-gi, chairman of the Fair Trade Commission (FTC), said in a radio interview. Coupang announced the results of its internal probe on December 25, saying a former employee had stolen personal information from 33.7 million user accounts but saved data from only about 3,000 accounts, which, it claimed, was later deleted.

Samsung Innovation Campus Certifies 1,750 Youth in Future-Tech Skills in Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW, India – January 2026 – Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, on the occasion of National Youth Day, announced the certification of 1,750 students in Uttar Pradesh under its flagship Samsung Innovation Campus (SIC) programme, marking a significant milestone in the company's youth-skilling efforts in the state. The certification ceremony was held at the City Group of Institutions in Lucknow, in the presence of Smt. Rajni Tiwari, Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh, along with academic leaders and programme partners. With this cohort, the total number of students trained under Samsung Innovation Campus in Uttar Pradesh has reached 3,900, making it one of the fastest-growing states under the programme. Samsung announced its intent to skill 5,000 youth in Uttar Pradesh, as part of its broader national target

of upskilling 20,000 students, a six-fold increase over the previous year. The programme is currently operational across 10 states. Under the Lucknow initiative, students received industry-aligned training in emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (950 students), Coding & Programming (550 students), Big Data (150 students), and Internet of Things (100 students). "At Samsung, our firm belief is that the future of India will be defined by its youth. Samsung Innovation Campus is designed to bridge the gap between education and industry by providing hands-on training in future-tech courses such as AI, IoT, or Big Data and Coding. The certification of 1,750 students in Lucknow underscores our commitment to support the Government of India's skilling vision and empower young learners across Uttar Pradesh with industry-relevant capabilities. Samsung Innovation

Campus is our flagship programme designed to empower the next generation and make them job-ready for the fourth Industrial revolution", said Shubham Mukherjee, Head, CSR & Corporate Communications at Samsung Southwest Asia. "As higher education evolves, it is essential that learning outcomes remain aligned with emerging economic and technological needs. Samsung Innovation Campus adds significant value by exposing students to advanced digital disciplines and experiential learning. Such collaborations strengthen our institutions and help create a knowledge-driven, competitive workforce for Uttar Pradesh. I commend Samsung's commitment to empowering our youth and supporting the state's vision of building a future-ready, skilled workforce. Our young people are the foundation of Uttar Pradesh's progress and the driving force behind India's growth story", said Smt. Rajni Tiwari, Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh. Launched in India in 2022, Samsung Innovation Campus focuses on expanding access to future-tech education, particularly in underserved and semi-urban regions. The programme is implemented in collaboration with the Electronics Sector Skills Council of India (ESSCI) through accredited training partners. Nationally, the programme has recorded 44% women participation, underscoring Samsung's focus on inclusive and equitable skilling. In addition to technical training, students receive soft-skills inputs and placement support to improve workplace readiness. Together with initiatives such as Samsung Solve for Tomorrow and Samsung DOST, Samsung Innovation Campus reflects the company's long-term commitment to strengthening and expanding India's digital skilling goals.

Indian equities enter 2026 on firmer footing, await Budget 2026



Mumbai: Indian equity markets are entering 2026 on a firmer footing after a year of consolidation, with improving valuations, realistic earnings expectations and strong domestic fundamentals shaping a more constructive outlook, according to a report released on Wednesday, January 14. While global events could be a source of uncertainty, India's macro fundamentals remain strong, according to smallcase managers. They believe that the coming year is likely to reward earnings-led investing rather than momentum-driven trades. They project a strong consumption-led growth cycle in 2026, supported by moderate inflation, tax cuts, GST reductions, and interest-rate cuts that boost disposable incomes and ease borrowing conditions, said the report. "As we move into 2026 which structurally is more constructive than 2025, valuations look far more reasonable today, earnings expectations are

realistic rather than euphoric, and India enters the year with macro stability," said Sonam Srivastava, smallcase Manager and Founder of Wright Research. We expect returns to be earnings-led in 2026 rather than multiple-led, which favours disciplined stock selection and factor-driven strategies, Srivastava added. Sneha Jain, smallcase Manager, Founder and CEO, WealthTrust Capital Services said that after the valuation reset in 2025, large caps, traditionally the premium P/B cohort, are now trading below SMIDs on a price-to-book basis – an

CHINA ANNOUNCES RECORD \$1TN TRADE SURPLUS DESPITE TRUMP TARIFFS

China announced record export numbers for 2025, a year when US President Donald Trump's tariffs and trade policy caused turmoil in the global economy. Beijing on Wednesday reported the world's largest-ever trade surplus – the value of goods and services sold overseas compared to its imports – at \$1.19tn (£890bn). It's the first time China's full-year trade surplus has passed \$1tn, beating 2024's record figure of \$993bn. China's monthly export surpluses passed \$100bn seven times last year – a sign that Trump's tariff campaign have barely affected its overall trade with the rest of the world. Trade with the US did weaken, but this was made up for by a rise in Chinese exports elsewhere, especially to South East Asia, Africa and Latin America. Wang Jun, the deputy director of China's customs, said during a press conference on Wednesday that the figures are "extraordinary and hard-won" given the "profound changes" and challenges in global trade. He noted a rise in exports of green technology, artificial intelligence-related products and robotics. The huge surplus can be explained by strong overseas demand for Chinese goods as trade

in global partners including South Asian countries and others in Africa and Europe grew, as well as a weak domestic market. China's economy has been weighed by a property crisis and rising debt, which has made businesses more hesitant to invest and consumers cautious about spending. As a result, there is less of a need to import goods, and imports rose by just 0.5%, according to the new figures. Meanwhile, a weaker yuan, a strong supply of goods and inflation in Western countries have also made Chinese exports more attractive. The results are a "mixed blessing" for Beijing, said trade policy analyst Deborah Elms from the Hinrich Foundation. China has benefited from sales and more jobs created from its business abroad, but its goods could face "greater scrutiny" from foreign markets that are under pressure to compete with its products, she said. China's success will likely continue in 2026 as Chinese goods and services become more deeply entrenched into global businesses, said Elms. These latest figures will be seen in Beijing as a sign that China has customers all around the world, besides the US, but Wang warned

that China faces an uncertain external environment. Several countries have raised concerns that their markets are being flooded with low-priced Chinese products they cannot compete with. Businesses are also bracing for another year of turbulence and tariff tensions from the Trump administration. In April last year, Trump caused turmoil in the global economy by announcing sweeping tariffs on goods from more than 90 countries. Some of the most severe tariffs were reserved for China, which exports more to the US than any other country. An escalating war of words between the world's two largest economies saw threats of blanket triple-digit tariffs. At the time, trade experts saw this as a test of China's reliance on the US market, which Beijing insisted was just one of many places that Chinese businesses could sell to. Both sides managed to pause hostilities after a meeting between Trump and China's leader Xi Jinping in South Korea in October, avoiding a complete breakdown in trade relations. Other more moderate tariffs remain in place, which have severely dampened Chinese exports to the US.



LA to open ticket draw for 2028 Olympics - with seats starting at \$28



Sport fans will be able to sign up from Wednesday for a chance to attend the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games - with tickets starting at \$28 (£20.80). Registration opens at 07:00 local time (15:00 GMT) for fans to enter a random ticket draw covering all events that will take place at the Games. The window will remain open until mid-March. If chosen, fans will be notified via email and will be given a time slot to purchase tickets in April. One million of those tickets will sell for \$28, and about one-third are set to cost less than \$100 (£74.41). "These Games belong to everyone," Casey Wasserman, the chairman of LA 2028 said on Tuesday. "These Games have to be affordable and inclusive." The announcement of affordable ticket prices come after the price of tickets for the 2026 men's football World Cup - which will also be hosted in the US, as well as Canada and Mexico - received some

public criticism. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, LA officials said affordability and accessibility were central to their ticketing plan - and their hope that sport fans around the globe would be able to attend. Tickets for the 2024 Olympics in Paris started at \$27.95 (£20). A special early purchase window will also be open for residents in the Los Angeles area and Oklahoma City, where some Olympic Games are also being held. 2028 will be the first time the Olympics will be held in the US since the 1996 Games in Atlanta. Los Angeles has twice hosted the Olympics - in 1932 and 1984 - and plans to use its already established infrastructure to host the Games. Event organisers, along with hundreds of Olympians and Paralympians, gathered at the LA Memorial Coliseum on Tuesday for a ceremonial lighting of the Olympic venue's cauldron ahead of the opening of ticket registration.

President Donald

Trump has said the US will take "very strong action" against Iran if it executes protesters, as rights groups say more than 2,400 anti-government demonstrators

have been killed in a violent crackdown by Iranian authorities. Relatives of 26-year-old Erfan Soltani, who was detained last week, told BBC Persian he was due to be executed on Wednesday. It is unclear whether this has taken place. A representative from the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights also told the BBC that they had "never witnessed a case move so quickly". Speaking to the BBC's US partner CBS News, Trump said of potential executions: "If they hang them, you're going to see some things... We will take very strong action if they do such a thing."

Soltani's relative told BBC Persian that an Iranian court had issued a death sentence "in an extremely rapid process, within just two days". They were "deeply concerned that he could

be executed without any prior notice", given that contact with Iran has been affected by the internet shutdown. Soltani's detention demonstrated that the Iranian government was trying "to control the population, to not allow any more protests to happen", Hengaw representative Aywary Shekhi told the BBC's Radio 4 Today programme on Wednesday. Soltani's sister - who is a lawyer - tried to intervene in his case but was told by authorities there was nothing to pursue, Shekhi added. Prisoners sentenced to death in Iran are typically granted final moments with loved ones. While the Iranian authorities have told the family they will allow a meeting with Erfan before his execution, Shekhi said, he hasn't been allowed any contact with his family since his arrest. An Iranian official told Reuters that 2,000 people had been killed, but that "terrorists" were to blame.

Trump earlier said he planned to attend a meeting at the White House on Tuesday night to discuss the situation in Iran, pledging to get "accurate numbers" on the death toll from the protests. "The killing looks like it's significant, but we don't know yet for certain," Trump told reporters while returning to the White House. Once he has the numbers, he said, "we'll act accordingly." The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said that it had so far confirmed the killing of 2,403 protesters, as well as 12 children, despite an internet blackout. Nearly 150 people affiliated with the government have also been killed, the group said. State-linked Iranian news agency Fars reported that funerals were held in Tehran on Wednesday for more than 100 members of the security forces and others they described as "martyrs". On Tuesday, Trump wrote on his

Truth Social platform that Iranian authorities would "pay a big price" for the killings, and urged people to "keep protesting". "I have cancelled all meetings with Iranian officials until the senseless killing of protesters stops. HELP IS ON ITS WAY. MIGA!!!," he added, using the acronym for a US-based Iranian opposition slogan, "Make Iran Great Again". Trump has been weighing military and other options in response to the crackdown, having already announced 25% tariffs on any country trading with Iran. Iran's government has responded by accusing the US of seeking to "manufacture a pretext for military intervention", warning that "this playbook has failed before". The protests, which have reportedly spread to 180 cities and towns in all 31 provinces, were sparked by anger over the collapse of the Iranian currency and soaring cost of living.

World

HYDERABAD
THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026

10

AT LEAST 32 KILLED
AFTER CRANE COL-
LAPSES ON TRAIN IN
THAILAND



Colleen Hoover reveals 'successful' cancer surgery



Best-selling author Colleen Hoover has revealed she has been having treatment after being diagnosed with cancer. The US writer, 46, known for *It Ends With Us* and *Reminders of Him*, said she has nearly finished radiotherapy and that earlier surgery was a success. She publicly discussed the news in an Instagram post this week, with a selfie showing her in a hospital gown. In a further message on Tuesday, she told fans: "I'm doing much better. My cancer diagnosis was a while ago but I chose to keep it private until after finding out my surgery

was successful and what my other treatments would be." That came after she initially shared the news with fans in a private Facebook chat about a month ago, telling them the cancer had been removed and that "I'm okay".

ONLY TRUMP CAN STOP PUTIN, POLISH PRESIDENT TELLS



Donald Trump is the only world leader capable of stopping Vladimir Putin from threatening Europe, according to Poland's President Andrzej Duda. In an interview with Radio 4's Today programme he said the Russian leader was not to be trusted, but that Europe needed to do everything it could to support President Trump in his efforts to end the war in Ukraine. President Duda was already well-known as a firm supporter of Donald Trump even before he landed in Britain for meetings with PM Liz Truss and others. Now, he says that with Vladimir Putin's Russia threatening his country as well as central

and eastern Europe, the US president was the only person who could, as he put it, "solve this problem" - as well as ending the war in Ukraine. Referring to last September's mass incursion by Russian drones, when more than 20 uncrewed aircraft crossed into Poland from Belarus and Ukraine, President

Duda called it "an extraordinary situation", adding that "until that time, no NATO member state had experienced a drone attack on that scale". Russia, he said, was testing Poland's defences and testing NATO's solidarity. The Polish president then thanked Britain for sending over RAF Typhoon jets to help defend his borders. He said Poland had been in a state of hybrid war with Russia since 2021, as it dealt with drones and disinformation. This Russian grey zone activity showed "we are living in dangerous times", he added. He was asked about his friendship with Donald Trump, particularly in the light of the US president's threats to take over "by any means" the Danish autonomous territory of Greenland, something which has rattled Europe and which threatens to rupture the 77-year-old NATO alliance. The US, he insisted, despite recent statements by US officials to the contrary, was still the guarantor of security in Europe.

RUSSIAN DOCTORS ARRESTED AFTER 9 BABIES DIE IN MATERNITY HOSPITAL



Two senior doctors have been arrested in Russia following the deaths of nine babies in a maternity hospital in Siberia this month. The newborns died during the long New Year holiday in Novokuznetsk, Russia's main investigative authority said in a statement. No reason for the babies' deaths has been given. The case has caused anger around Russia. All the babies were born in the Novokuznetsk Maternity Hospital No.1 from 1-12 January, with the first death on 4 January, Russia's Investigative Committee spokesman

Svetlana Petrenko said. Without giving details, the committee said the chief physician and the head of the intensive care unit had been detained for the "improper performance of their official and professional duties in organ-

ising and providing medical care". It said the suspects were co-operating with the investigation and authorities were deciding on charges as well as pre-trial detention. The committee released a video showing one man being escorted

away and a man signing some papers in the presence of a uniformed officer. Victims and witnesses had been questioned and materials seized as work continued to gather more evidence, it added. Nine post-mortem examinations were being carried out. The Interfax news agency said the Kemerovo Region Ministry of Health which was also investigating said the infants had had a severe intra-uterine infection. The hospital has announced that it is no longer accepting patients due to a higher-than-usual rate of respiratory infections.

Uganda election chief says he has had threats over results declaration



The head of Uganda's electoral body says he has received threats warning him against declaring certain presidential candidates the winners of Thursday's election. Simon Byabakama said he would not be intimidated by such threats from senior state officials, whom he did not name. He was responding to a BBC question about a widely shared video which shows a presidential assistant saying the electoral commission would never declare opposition candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, popularly known as Bobi Wine, as president, even if he were to win. "Some people say if you don't declare so-and-so as president, you will see. I tell them that I am not in the business of donating votes," said Byabakama. President Yoweri Museveni, 81, who has ruled the country for nearly four decades, is seeking a seventh term in office. Bobi Wine, a 43-year-old pop star turned politician, is Museveni's main challenger, seeking to unseat him for the second time after finishing runner-up in 2021 polls. Six other candidates are also in the race, in which about 21.6 million voters are registered to vote. Campaigning has been marked by the disruption of opposition activities, including the detention of activists and the breaking up of rallies by police. At the Electoral Commission headquarters in the capital, Kampala, Byabakama said he was not worried about threats from what he called "idle people". "You can see from my demeanour that fear is a word that does not exist in my vocabulary," said the poll chief, adding that only the will of voters and the law would guide the process. In the video shared by the Daily Monitor newspaper on social media last week, Yiga Kisakye Mukama, the special presidential assistant for service delivery and monitoring, was captured saying Museveni would never leave power through the ballot.

Greenlanders brace for summit that could shape the Arctic's future - and their own



take it "the easy way or the hard way". Ahead of Wednesday's talks, he said the US needed Greenland for national security, and NATO "should be leading the way for us to get it". After his recent controversial military action in Venezuela, people in Greenland are taking him at his word. The anxious countdown to the Washington meeting has been going on for days. Passers-by tell me it feels like years. "I would like to encourage (Donald Trump) to use both his ears wisely, to listen more and to speak less. We are not for sale. Our country is not for sale," Amelie Zeeb said, removing her chunky mittens, tradi-

tionally made here with seal-skin and known as pualuk, in order to wave her hands for emphasis. "My hope is for our country to be independent and well-managed and not be bought," said Inuit writer and musician, Sivissok Rask. While Maria, with her seven-week-old baby, wrapped snugly inside her winter coat, told me, "I worry for the future of my young family. We don't want all this attention here!" But international attention on Greenland is not going to disappear anytime soon. Far more hangs in the balance than the fate of this island

alone. The tussle over Greenland pits NATO nations Denmark and the US against one another. Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark. The Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that if the US takes control of the island by force, that will be the end of the transatlantic defence alliance that Europe has relied on for security for decades. It will also be another damaging blow to US-European relations, already badly bruised since Donald Trump's return to the White House. And remember: Europe's leaders are desperate to keep the Trump administration onside, to back a sustainable

peace deal for Ukraine too. The potential ramifications of a fallout over Greenland are huge - but it is unclear how Washington intends to handle Wednesday's meeting. Will the spirit be one of compromise or confrontation? President Trump insists he needs Greenland for national security. If the US doesn't take Greenland, then China or Russia will, he says. Mindful of this, major European powers, which have vocally supported Danish sovereignty over Greenland, have also been scrambling to come up with military proposals to boost NATO's presence around the island and in the Arctic more broadly.

It's crunch time. The US Vice-President, JD Vance, is hosting the Danish and Greenlandic foreign ministers, as well as their US counterpart, Marco Rubio, in the White House on Wednesday. The focus of the talks: the future of the world's biggest island, Greenland. There is a large digital news ticker tape running above the snow-covered shopping mall in the island's capital, Nuuk. You don't have to speak Greenlandic to understand the words "Trump", "Greenland" and "sovereignty" that appear over and over again, in stark red letters. Donald Trump says he wants this territory and he'll



AMATEUR STUNS WORLD'S BEST TO WIN AS\$1M IN MELBOURNE

Amateur player Jordan Smith would have been "happy winning just one point" - but walked away with A\$1m (£496,835) and bragging rights over world number two Janik Sinner as he triumphed at the Australian Open's Million Dollar One Point Slam. The innovative format offered amateur players the opportunity to win the prize money by playing a sole point against some of the sport's top talent and other famous faces. Smith was the star of the show on Rod Laver Arena, also defeating women's world number four Amanda Anisimova in front of almost 15,000 people. Smith faced women's world number 117 Joanna Garland in a fitting finale, after the Taiwanese 24-year-old stunned men's world number three Alexander Zverev and former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios. New South Wales state champion Smith was not the only amateur to seize his moment in the spotlight, with Queensland state champion Alec Reverente beating men's world number seven Felix Auger-Aliassime. As the two best performing amateurs, Smith and Reverente also went head-to-head to win a brand new car, with Reverente



triumphing. The tournament was played in good spirits - even a racquet smash by Kyrgios following his defeat was performed with humour - and generated genuine intrigue. Many of the beaten players, including men's number one Carlos Alcaraz, remained at Rod Laver Arena and gathered around televisions to watch the conclusion between the two unlikely finalists. The opening match set the tone for the evening when tennis coach Andres Schneiter knocked out men's world number 34 Corentin Moutet. The upsets kept on coming across the

quick-fire format as fellow players offered enthusiastic support from the side of the court and the crowd rallied behind the underdogs. British-born Garland, who was beaten in the first round of singles qualifying in Melbourne, appeared more stunned than anyone as she beat former women's world number three Maria Sakkari and 2024 Wimbledon semi-finalist Donna Vekic. Smith, meanwhile, did not need to hit a ball against Sinner after the men's world number two failed to land his serve - with professionals only granted one opportunity to get it right. He was not

Revised Guidelines For Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy In Question, Panjab University Files Formal Complaint With Ministry

A major controversy has erupted surrounding the Khelo India University Games 2025. A government university in Punjab, Guru Nanak Dev University, has lodged a formal complaint with the Sports Ministry, alleging that sudden changes in the rules have undermined the fairness of the entire tournament. The university says that these changes have harmed government institutions while benefiting a private university. What is the issue? For nearly 65 years, the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy in Punjab has been awarded based on year-round sporting performance. International tournaments, All-India University Championships and consistent performance were given



importance. However, after the end of the 2023-24 sports session, the rules were changed. Earlier, the Khelo India University Games had only a 10-15 per cent weightage in determining the Abul Kalam Azad Trophy. This was suddenly increased to around 100 per cent. According to the complaint, before the rule change, the private university in question had only three medals.

But within a single session, this number jumped to 32 medals, and in the current session, it has risen further to 42 medals. Medals increased by adding expensive sports. The controversy doesn't end there. In 2024-25, sports like canoeing and kayaking were included in the Khelo India University Games. These decisions were taken during or after the sports session, by which

time most universities had already finalised their sports budgets and preparations. While these relatively expensive sports have about 10 Olympic events, the Khelo India University Games conducted nearly 30 events in these categories. These sports are costly and require special infrastructure that most government universities do not have. Allegation: Sports Were Chosen So That Only a Few Could Win The government university alleges that the organisers intentionally selected such sports and added more events in which only a few select universities could benefit. This drastically increased the chances of winning medals in expensive sports and disrupted the balance of the medal tally.

SA20: Sikandar Raza Seals Dramatic Last-Ball Victory In Record Chase



Sikandar Raza climbed deeper into the hearts of the Paarl Royals faithful when the Zimbabwean international struck a six off the final ball to clinch a six-wicket victory at Boland Park on Tuesday evening. The Royals required six runs off David Wiese's final over, and the equation was reduced to two runs off the last delivery when Raza held his nerve in this Betway SA20 clutch moment to send the Royals fans into a state of delirium. It also saw the Royals complete the highest successful chase at Boland Park after Durban's Super Giants had posted an imposing 186/5. Raza finished on 27 not out (13 balls, 2x4, 2x6), but the Royals had plenty of heroes on this dramatic night, with Rubin Hermann (65 not out, 45 balls, 3x4, 3x6) and Dan Lawrence (63 off 41 balls, 2x4, 4x6) striking vital half-centuries to keep the chase alive. The third-wicket partnership between Hermann and Lawrence was pivotal, with the pair adding 106 runs off only 61

Indian Super League To Kick Off On February 14 After All Clubs Confirm Participation

The delayed Indian Super League will kick off on February 14 after all 14 football clubs confirmed participation, officials said Wednesday. The ISL, India's flagship football competition, is usually played between September and April. It faced uncertainty because a commercial rights agreement between the AIFF and Football Sports Development Limited, which operated the ISL, expired on December 9, leaving the league without a sponsor. Some clubs, including reigning champions Mohun Bagan, halted player salaries and suspended football activities in December. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) plans to take over

the running of the ISL from the 2025-26 season under a 20-year proposal sent to clubs, according to local media reports. "Many clubs had agreed earlier, but the remaining

few came on board on Tuesday," an AIFF source told AFP on condition of anonymity. Talks are continuing to finalise a home-and-away format for a 91-match season after sports

minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced last week that all 14 clubs would compete. Launched in 2014 with global stars such as Italy's Alessandro Del Piero, the franchise-based ISL aimed to give Indian football a glamorous reboot. But television ratings have slumped and sponsor interest has waned. The AIFF invited bids for a new commercial partner under the supervision of a Supreme Court-appointed committee, but failed to find any takers. Indian football has long struggled to find its footing on the global stage despite a passionate fan base and a rich history. India's men's team is a dismal 142nd in the FIFA world rankings.

'Game has gone' - bad night for VAR in semi-final

Manchester City's 2-0 win over Newcastle in the first leg of the Carabao Cup semi-final was overshadowed by a contentious decision to disallow a goal from Antoine Semenyo in the second half. The £65m January signing fired City ahead after 53 minutes and thought he had added a second 10 minutes later when he flicked Tijjani Reijnders' cross past Nick Pope. However, the forward was denied what would have been a third goal in two games for his new side after a five-and-a-half-minute VAR check determined Erling Haaland had interfered with play from an offside position. "The second goal should have stood," Semenyo said after the game. Haaland was jostling for position with Newcastle's Malick Thiaw

when he was deemed to have obstructed the defender from stopping Semenyo's effort. Both players were closer to goal than goalkeeper Pope, meaning that whether Haaland was ahead of Thiaw, the deepest Newcastle outfield player, was irrelevant. The factual offside appeared quite clear. However, a failure of the semi-automated offside technology meant the

lines had to be drawn manually and it was more than four minutes before an image confirming the offside was shown on the television coverage. In that time, the crowd at St James' Park had grown increasingly restless, with boos and anti-VAR chants filling much of the delay. After more than four minutes, referee Chris Kavanagh was finally sent to the screen



Mitchell Starc Wins Internet With 3-Word Post After Wife Alyssa Healy Announces Cricket Retirement

Australia pacer Mitchell Starc made a heartwarming post on social media after his wife Alyssa Healy announced her retirement from international cricket. Wicket-keeper-batter Healy, who has won six T20 World Cups, two 50-over World Cups and a Commonwealth Games gold in women's cricket, announced that she would retire following Australia's series against India in February and March. Starc captioned his post with a three-word phrase. The two have been married for nearly a decade, having tied the knot in April 2016. "Proud of ya," wrote Starc in a post on his Instagram story, along with a heart emoji. The 35-year-old pacer also made a separate post, celebrating Healy's Australia career. Healy made the announcement on the Willow Talk podcast she co-hosts, drawing curtains on a 16-year international career. Healy has also been one of the most



productive all-format run-scorers, with her 7,106 behind only Meg Lanning (8,352) and Ellyse Perry (7,607) for Australian women. "It's with mixed emotions that the upcoming India series will be my last for Australia," Healy said in a statement.

"Delhi Not The Place To Host Badminton": World No. 3 Anders Antonsen Withdraws



"Very Poor" categories between 300 and 400, stating that the city is currently not a fit environment for professional badminton. The Badminton World Federation (BWF) regulations mandate that the top 15 singles players must participate in Super 750 events or face financial penalties.

World Championships take place in Delhi." Antonsen is not alone in his grievances. His compatriot, Mia Blichfeldt, also voiced sharp criticisms after her first-round match at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. While she praised the scale of the arena, she described the conditions as "unhealthy" and "unprofessional," citing a lack of cleanliness and even the presence of birds inside the hall. The timing of these withdrawals is particularly sensitive for the Badminton Association of India (BAI). The current tournament is being treated as a "test run" for the 2026 BWF World Championships, scheduled to be held at the same venue this August.

WHY OSIMHEN HAS BECOME 'KING OF NIGERIAN FOOTBALL'



The 27-year-old striker and his Nigeria team-mates face hosts Morocco in the semi-finals of the Africa Cup of Nations on Wednesday, with five wins from five games so far. Osimhen is joint second in the tournament's top scorers list with four goals, level with Liverpool and Egypt's Mohamed Salah and one behind Morocco's Brahim Diaz. But the tournament has not been plain sailing for Galatasaray striker Osimhen or the Super Eagles, with a high-profile on-field argument threatening to overshadow their impressive displays. His spat with Ademola Lookman during the 4-0 last-16 win over Mozambique attracted plenty of headlines, with reports - which Nigeria have denied - even suggesting Osimhen had threatened to quit the camp. Osimhen confronted Lookman over his failure to pass the ball to him in a clear goal-scoring position and then signalled to manager Eric Chelle to replace him, which he duly did. Osimhen went straight down the tunnel at full-time, not taking part in the on-field celebration. The storm has since died down, with players - including Osimhen himself and Chelle insisting any internal conflict had been squashed soon after the final whistle. But people who know him best insist Osimhen would not be the same striker without that will to win and say any accusations of selfishness towards the striker could not be further from the truth. With two goals needed to level the table, Rashidi Yekini as Nigeria's record goal scorer with 37, Osimhen is on the brink of cementing his place in Nigerian football folklore. He said: "It doesn't matter if I equal the record or surpass it. I think Mr Rashidi Yekini is the best striker the Super Eagles have ever produced. I'm just doing my best. Of course, it's amazing to be part of the history of the Super Eagles. So I'm just trying to win something important for my country. And I think with the help of my team-mates, I'm on that path." He's had a tough upbringing born in Lagos, the early years of the Galatasaray striker's life were unimaginably difficult.

Pawan Kalyan Creative Works and People Media Factory promise many interesting and diverse projects



Power Star Pawan Kalyan is one of the biggest stars of Indian Cinema and he established his revered production house, Pawan Kalyan Creative Works, to give talented individuals great opportunities to realize their creative dreams. Now, the production house has joined hands with another prominent production house, People Media Factory. These two organizations are preparing to deliver great films to the audience. Discussions regarding stories have

already started in the past and recently, on Bhogi day, they met again taking them to next level. Regarding the meeting between Pawan Kalyan and TG Vishwa Prasad, Pawan Kalyan Creative Works tweeted on X, "Marking the spirit of new beginnings on the auspicious occasion of Bhogi, and taking forward earlier discussions on upcoming projects, Sri @PawanKalyan met with @peoplemediafactory Producer Sri @vishwaprasadtg for further

PRABHAS NIMMALA'S "MIRACLE" FIRST LOOK AS A SANKRANTI TREAT!!



As a special Sankranti gift, the first look of the action entertainer "Miracle", directed by Prabhas Nimmala, is all set to be released on January 16. Produced jointly by Ramesh Eggidi-Srikanth Mogadasu-Chander Goud under the banner Saida Family Entertainment, "Miracle" is being made on a prestigious scale. The film is directed by Prabhas Nimmala, who earlier impressed audiences with "Satya Gang" and "Fighter Shiva". Randheer Bhisu plays the lead role in the film, with Hebbah Patel as the

female lead and Akanksha as another heroine. Senior heroes Sriram and Suresh will be seen in key roles. The film also features an ensemble cast including Naresh Naidu, Janardhan, Yogi Khatri, Vijay Surya, Imtiyaz, Sai Baba, Dil Ramesh, Jhansi, Suryanarayana, Sridhar, Srikanth, Shiva, Aamani, Haimavathi, Navya (Ammu), Bejawada Mastan, Dheeraj Appaji, and others in important roles. With a strong cast and experienced technical team, "Miracle" promises to be an engaging action-packed entertainer.

'Kotha Malupu' First Look Launched as a Sankranti Treat – Akash & Bhairavi Ardhya as the Lead Pair



Hyderabad: Marking the festive occasion of Sankranti, the makers of 'Kotha Malupu' unveiled the film's first look, presenting it as a special treat for audiences. The film features Akash, son of renowned playback singer Sunitha, in the lead role, with Bhairavi Ardhya playing the female lead. Kotha Malupu is being produced under the Tadhaastu Creations banner. The movie is directed by Shiva Varaprasad Keshanakurthi and produced by Tati Balakrishna. Senior actors Raghu Babu, Prudhvi, Prabhavathi, Mahender, DD Srinivas, and Kittayya will be seen in key supporting roles. Speaking about the film, director Shiva Varaprasad Keshanakurthi said, "We have blended romantic

love, suspense, and comedy in this film. The pair

Grand Introduction of Hero Pidugu Vishwanath at 'Vedavyas' Launch During K. Atchi Reddy's Birthday Celebrations

On the occasion of the birthday of renowned producer K. Atchi Reddy, director SV Krishna Reddy's 43rd film "Vedavyas" hero Pidugu Vishwanath's introduction program was held in a grand manner. Director SV Krishna Reddy, who has given many great successes in the Telugu film industry with wholesome family entertainers, is producing his 43rd film "Vedavyas". This film is being presented by renowned producer K. Atchi Reddy and produced by renowned businessman and politician Kommuri Pratap Reddy under the banner of Sai Pragathi Films. It is noteworthy that South Korean actress Jun Hyun Ji is playing the heroine in this film. On Wednesday, producer K. Atchi Reddy celebrated his birthday and on Tuesday evening, along with his birthday celebrations, "Vedavyas" hero Pidugu Vishwanath was introduced. Actor Saikumar participated as a guest in this program held at the Filmnagar Cultural Center in Hyderabad. On this occasion

Actor Saikumar said - This is the first time I am acting in a film by Atchi Reddy and Krishna Reddy. However, I dubbed for their first dubbed movie Surya The Great. Since then, I have a good relationship with them. However, I have dubbed for their movies many times but for some reason I could not act. I am happy to get that opportunity with this film. I am playing a good character named Vedha Narayana in the movie "Vedavyas". It is

called Knowledge is Divine.

SV Krishna Reddy is making this film so that the whole family can watch it together with the good theme that we should not forget our civilization. Atchi Reddy introduced our Adi with the movie Prema Kavali. I am as happy as I

felt then, today I am equally happy to see Vishwanath being introduced as a hero. Pidugu Subbarao garu's son, who has been familiar to us in the film industry for many years, is coming before us as a hero. He should make a good name as a hero. I want this movie to be a big hit.

Pidugu Subbarao said - I am very happy that my son Vishwanath is being introduced as a hero with the great combination movie of SV Krishna Reddy and Atchi Reddy garu. There has

never been a time in my life when I have felt happier. My thanks to Krishna Reddy

for this movie.

Hero Pidugu Vishwanath

said - I am grateful to Atchi

Reddy and Krishna Reddy garu for giving me the opportunity to act as a hero in the movie "Vedavyas". I feel lucky to be introduced as a hero with their movie. I thank all our team who supported me to act well and look good in this movie. I also thank Neeraja Kona and Trikoti garu for giving me the opportunity to work as an AD in the past. He said. Producer K. Atchireddy said - This is a script that our SV Krishna Reddy has prepared with great perseverance. He has been working on this movie for almost five to six years. He wanted everything to be new for this movie. He went to Korea for an audition and selected a Korean girl, Jun Hyun Ji. When I asked him if our audience would accept a Korean girl, Krishna Reddy said that they would accept that character, not the Korean girl. He also went to Mongolia and selected the

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