



27-01-2026  
Total pilgrims: 77,049  
Tonsures: 21,469  
Hundi Kanukulu: 3,735CR  
Waiting Compartments: 18

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam  
(with our SSD Tokens): 8 H



Mamata seeks apex court probe after fatal plane crash claims Ajit Pawar's life



WORLD | NEWS  
Nobody is safe: China's Xi targets close ally in purge

SPORTS | NEWS

Novak Djokovic advances to the Australian Open semifinals after Musetti retires with injury

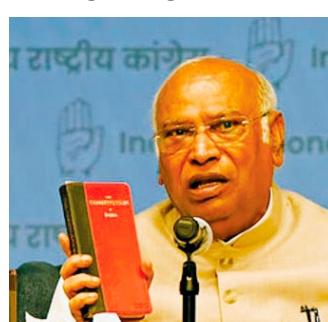


## INBRIFS

SC to hear challenge against UGC equity regulations on January 29

**New Delhi (TSIT):** The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a set of petitions on Thursday questioning the validity of the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026. According to the cause list released by the apex court, the matter will be taken up on January 29 by a bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi. Earlier in the day, the Chief Justice agreed to urgently list the case after a petition challenging the regulations was mentioned before him. Assuring the petitioner's counsel, CJI Surya Kant said the matter would be heard once procedural defects in the petition are rectified. "We are aware of the issue. Ensure the defects are cured, and we will list it," the Chief Justice remarked. The petition raises concerns that the UGC's Equity Regulations could lead to discrimination against individuals from the general category by denying them access to effective grievance redressal mechanisms.

**Opposition leaders to take strong stand on MGNREGA repeal during budget session**



**New Delhi (TSIT):** Floor leaders of several opposition parties under the INDIA bloc met at Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge's chamber in the Parliament House complex on Wednesday, resolving to strongly raise the issues of MGNREGA repeal and Special Infrastructure Regions (SIR) during the ongoing Budget session. The meeting saw participation from key leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretaries Jairam Ramesh and K C Venugopal, DMK's T R Baalu, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Arvind Sawant, Samajwadi Party's Javed Ali Khan, RJD's Premchand Gupta, CPI(M)'s John Brittas, and RSP's N K Premchandran, among others.

## Ajit Pawar, PSO, attendant & 2 crew members killed in plane crash

**Baramati (TSIT):** Five people, including Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, died in the Baramati plane crash on Wednesday morning, according to the flight details.

Apart from Deputy CM Pawar, the people onboard the plane, Learjet 45 aircraft (registration VT-SSK) operated by VSR, included a personal security officer (PSO), an attendant, and two crew members - a Pilot-in-Command (PIC) and a Second-in-Command (SIC).

The deceased have been identified as Vidip Jadhav (male), Pinky Mali (female). Additionally, the crew members were PIC Sumit Kapur and SIC Shambhavi Pathak, according to the passenger list.

Amid ongoing elections to the Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis, Dy CM Ajit Pawar was travelling from Mumbai to Baramati to attend a public meeting.

Emergency services and senior security officials have reached the site in Baramati. Rescue teams were deployed immediately after the aircraft lost control during the landing phase. Three bodies were rushed to the Baramati Medical College. The identification of the bodies is underway, as per the Pune Superintendent of Police (SP).

A team of DGCA officials has arrived at the plane crash site. More details were awaited about the plane crash. According to the reports, locals had rushed to the spot on seeing the plane crashing. This



incident comes after several aviation-related scares for the leader. In October 2024, a heli-

copter intended to pick up his party colleague Sunil Tatkare crashed in Pune, and there

have been previous instances of emergency landings in the region due to bad weather.

### AJIT PAWAR PLANE CRASH: NCP CHIEF'S FUNERAL ON THURSDAY; MODI, SHAH LIKELY TO ATTEND

**Baramati (TSIT):** The last rites of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, killed in a plane crash, will be held with full state honours on Thursday in Baramati, Pune district. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are expected to attend the funeral, which will be held at Vidya Pratishthan ground at

11 am. Leaders cutting across the political spectrum will be

present, the Nationalist Congress Party said. The plane crash occurred in the morning shortly after Ajit Pawar and four other persons took off from Mumbai. Besides Pawar, his Personal Security Officer, an attendant, and two crew members (pilot in command and the first officer) were also killed.

## CM Revanth, CM Naidu express shock over Ajit Pawar's demise

**HYDERABAD (TSIT):** Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday expressed deep shock over the death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash. Revanth Reddy, who is currently on a visit to the United States, expressed deep shock and profound grief over the



tragic demise of Ajit Pawar.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, he said Ajit Pawar's sudden passing is an irreparable loss to public life and extended heartfelt condolences to his family, the Government of Maharashtra, and the people of the state. CM Revanth Reddy prayed for strength to the bereaved family in this moment of immense sorrow. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, too, mourned the death of Ajit Pawar in the plane crash.

"Shocked and deeply saddened by the sudden passing of

of Maharashtra NCP and an NDA alliance leader Ajit Dada Pawar in a devastating plane crash. "His dedicated public service and immense contributions towards the welfare and development of the people of Maharashtra will always be remembered, and his enduring commitment to the people will continue to be held with respect. I express my profound condolences on his passing and extend my deepest sympathies to his family members, admirers, and party cadre during this moment of immense grief," said the Jana Sena leader.

## Pawan Kalyan meets HM Amit Shah, discusses 'ongoing issues' in Andhra Pradesh



**Amaravati (TSIT):** Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and discussed 'ongoing issues' in the state. The Jana Sena leader posted on social media that he had a meaningful meeting with Amit Shah at his residence.

"We held detailed discussions on the ongoing issues in Andhra Pradesh, and several other important matters of public and administrative importance," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister thanked Amit Shah for providing an opportunity to the Kakinada district administration to present the proposal on the Uppada sea protection wall before the Technical Advisory Committee of the National

Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Pawan Kalyan also met Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw with a focus on improving rail infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh.

The Jana Sena leader said they discussed the development of Pithapuram Railway Station, construction of a Road Over Bridge, and key railway projects in the state. "I requested that Pithapuram,

an important spiritual centre visited by devotees from across the country, be developed as a model station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, and that the Road Over Bridge be taken up under the PM Gati Shakti programme," he said. Pawan Kalyan said he was received very cordially by Ashwini Vaishnaw, and the discussions were held in a positive and constructive atmosphere.

## Mamata govt to move motion in Bengal Assembly session to condemn ED, CBI



**Kolkata (TSIT):** The Mamata Banerjee government will move a motion in the West Bengal Assembly to condemn the role of Central probe agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the state during the Budget Session starting next week.

Sources in the Trinamool Congress's legislative party in the state Assembly said that during the session, the Treasury Bench will also move another motion condemning the manner in which the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is being conducted in the state. The Budget Session will start on February 3 and will end on February 9. The West Bengal minister of state for finance (independent charge)

will be presenting the "vote on accounts" for the financial year 2006-27 on February 5.

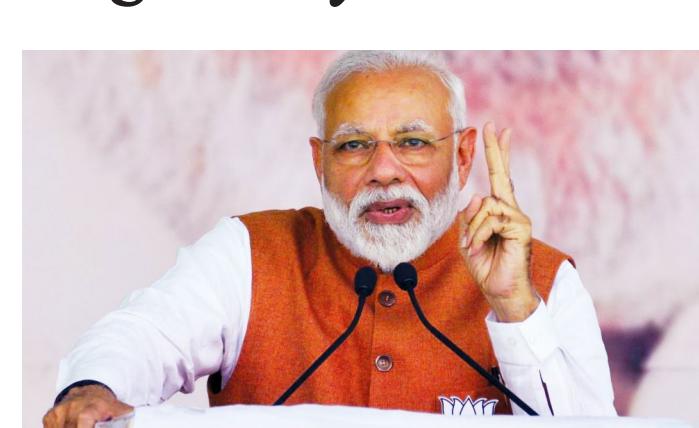
The full budget will be presented by the new state cabinet after the Assembly elections are over. Insiders from Trinamool Congress' legislative party said that both special motions will be moved during the forthcoming Budget Session by the state Agriculture

and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Sovandeb Chattopadhyay.

The motion condemning the role of CBI and ED is extremely significant in the backdrop of the recent controversies over ED's simultaneous raid and search operations at the Indian Political Action Committee's Salt Lake office and the residence of I-PAC's co-founder, Pratik Jain, at Loudon Street in central Kolkata.

While the simultaneous raid and search operations were being conducted at the two places, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accompanied by top bureaucrats and police officials, stormed into both places one after another, taking away several files and electronic documents.

## India emerging as aviation gateway between Global South and the world: PM Modi



**New Delhi (TSIT):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that India is emerging as a major aviation gateway between the Global South and the world, with major opportunities for investors and manufacturers connected with the aviation industry. Addressing the Wings India 2026 programme at Hyderabad via video conferencing, the Prime Minister welcomed industry leaders, investors and experts, noting that the next era of the aviation industry is full of aspirations and India is emerging as a major player.

He highlighted the vast opportunities India presents in aircraft manufacturing, advanced air mobility, aircraft leasing and pilot training.

PM Modi said that over the past decade, India's aviation sector has undergone a historic transformation, evolving from an exclusive club to become the world's third-largest domestic aviation market. He pointed out that passenger traffic has grown rapidly and Indian airlines are expanding their fleets, with more than 1,500 aircraft ordered in recent years.

The Prime Minister underlined that this growth has been possible due to the government's long-term vision, making air travel inclusive rather than exclusive, with the mission of enabling every citizen to travel easily by air. He emphasised that Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities have been connected with airports, noting that in

He highlighted the vast opportunities India presents in aircraft manufacturing, advanced air mobility, aircraft leasing and pilot training.

travelled on routes, many of which did not even exist earlier. Prime Minister Modi remarked that as India advances towards the goal of becoming a developed nation, the expansion of air connectivity is certain to multiply many times

over, creating greater opportunities for investment.

He highlighted that by 2047, India is expected to have more than 400 airports, creating a vast network. He noted that the government is working on the next phase of the UDAN scheme, which will further strengthen regional and affordable air connectivity, alongside the expansion of seaplane operations, with the aim of improving connectivity across every corner of the country. Tourist destinations are being upgraded nationwide, and air travel is becoming the preferred choice for an increasing number of people, he added.

The Prime Minister further stated that India is placing strong emphasis on aircraft design, manufacturing, and the

aircraft MRO ecosystem. The country is already a major manufacturer and supplier of aircraft parts and has begun producing military and transport aircraft domestically. It is now moving forward in civil aircraft manufacturing as well, he added.

He emphasised that India's aviation vision is equally focused on air cargo, and the government is working on all necessary regulatory reforms to make cargo movement faster and more efficient. Underlining that India is also set to emerge as a major and competitive transhipment hub, PM Modi urged investors to explore opportunities in warehousing, freight forwarding, express logistics, and e-commerce sectors.



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Branch Office: Bajaj Finance Ltd, D No 3/6/23/2, 1st Floor, ADR Centre, Road No 2, Vivekananda Nagar, Kukatpally, Hyderabad, Telangana 500072.

**POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property)**  
(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Bajaj Finance Limited (BFL), under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Sec.13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand by registered post ("Notice") calling upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned hereinunder to repay the amount mentioned in the notice U/s 13(2) of the said Act within a period of 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors named below having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors and public in general that the undersigned has taken Physical Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Sec.13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

The borrowers in particular and public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said property and any dealing with this property will be subject to the charge of the Bajaj Finance Limited, for the amount mentioned herein below along with interest thereon at contracted rate.

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.

Loan Account No./Name of the Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Immovable Property	Date of Notice U/s 13(2) and U/s 13(2) Notice Amount and Date of Possession
H400BLT035744 & 400DLFFD81555 Subhash Vaddavalli (Borrower) & VTanuja (Co-Borrower) Both At: Trendset Villas F-8-2-309/12 RD No.132 & Banjara Hills Hyderabad - 500038	All that piece and parcel of the Non-agricultural Property described as: Flat No.205, Geetha Grandeur Bungalow Number 8-3-272/1, 8-3-272/2, 8-3-292/1 Situated at Yousufguda, Hyderabad Telangana - 500045 North: Flat No: 206, East: Flat No: 204, South: Open To Sky, West: Open To Sky.	21/10/2021 Rs.40,59,882/- (Rupees Forty Lakh Fifty-Nine Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-Two Only) as on 11/10/2021 Possession Date 27/01/2026

Date: 29.01.2026 Place: HYDERABAD Sd/- Authorized Officer, Bajaj Finance Limited

**BAJAJ FINANCE LIMITED**  
Registered Office : Bajaj Finance Limited, C/o Bajaj Auto Limited Complex Mumbai Pune Road Akurdi Pune 411035  
Branch Add: Bajaj Finance Limited,2nd Floor Bopa Residency 8134 Gandhi Nagar Secunderabad 500545 Telangana

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No.	Loan Account No./Name of the Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of Property Schedule of Property	Date of Notice U/s 13(2) and U/s 13(2) Notice Amount and Date of Possession
1 LAN: PU59PBT10235402	1. Devansh Water Plant thr. Its Prop. Burugu Srikanth R/o: 8 55 55 1A 1d 3008 State Bank of India Korula Road Vemulawada Rajanna Sircilla Near Main Road Karimnagar Telangana 505302 Contact: 7013333474 Email id: burugusrikant44@gmail.com, Also at, R/o, State Bank of India 8 55 55 1A 1d 3008 Korula Road Vemulawada, Rajanna Sircilla Telangana 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/1 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/2 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/3 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/4 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/5 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/6 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/7 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/8 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/9 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/10 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/11 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/12 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/13 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/14 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/15 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/16 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/17 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/18 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/19 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/20 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/21 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/22 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/23 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/24 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/25 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/26 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/27 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/28 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/29 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/30 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/31 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/32 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/33 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/34 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/35 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/36 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/37 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/38 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/39 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/40 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/41 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/42 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/43 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/44 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/45 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/46 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/47 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/48 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/49 in Survey No. 505302, 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R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/68 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/69 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/70 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/71 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/72 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/73 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/74 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/75 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/76 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/77 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/78 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/79 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/80 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/81 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/82 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/83 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/84 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 8-5-55-1A/85 in Survey No. 505302, Also at, R/o, H.NO. 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## People of AP vexed with coalition govt: Jagan



Amaravati, Jan 28 : Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday said that people are vexed with the coalition government as it is 'wicked, vindictive, and soaked in corruption and inefficiency'. The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president said that he would take up a mass contact programme covering all the Assembly constituencies to instil confidence among the people.

"We supported people in every way and helped them out despite COVID and fulfilled all our poll promises. Chandrababu, on the other hand, has broken all the Super Six promises and cheated all sections of the people," he said, comparing the two governments.

Jagan Mohan Reddy, during the five-year term of the YSRCP government, had taken loans of about Rs 3.2 lakh crore, of which Rs 2.3 lakh crore was given under DBT for welfare schemes. "Chandrababu has taken Rs 3 lakh crore loan during his less than two-year term, and there is no accountability. While welfare schemes were not

Stating that people are vexed with Chandrababu Naidu's policies, the for-

mer Chief Minister promised that Jagan 2.0 would be different, with the cadre being given top priority, which would be an amendment to the previous term.

"When it comes to sand, sales have increased, but revenue has fallen, which is another shining example of corruption. Sankranti festival was run like a gambling festival with high stakes, and the festive spirit was lost in commercial activity and commissions of leaders and cadre of the ruling party, with the police also actively involved," he said.

Alleging that law and order has deteriorated in the state, Jagan Mohan Reddy cited the allegation against some coalition MLAs. Railway Kodur MLA has intimidated a female employee, another woman employee attempted suicide, unable to bear the harassment of the Amadalavalasa MLA, while the Satyavedu MLA raped a woman and closed the case by misusing his power. These are but a few examples, he said.

### Telangana Speaker to hear petition for disqualification of MLA on Jan 30

Hyderabad, Jan 28 : Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar will conduct the hearing on January 30 on the petition for disqualification of MLA Danam Nagender who was elected on a Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) ticket but allegedly shifted loyalties to the ruling Congress party. The Speaker has issued a notice to Nagender, directing him to appear for hearing. BRS MLA Kaushik Reddy, who

had submitted the disqualification petition, has also been summoned for hearing. The Speaker will also conduct hearing on the same day on the petition submitted by BJP floor leader in the Assembly A. Maheshwar Reddy for disqualification of Nagender.

Meanwhile, Nagender said that he has filed an affidavit, urging the Speaker to dismiss the disqualification petition. The former minister said he has not resigned

## Victory Responsibility Lies with MLAs: Bhatti



Madhira: Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Wednesday asserted that the responsibility of Congress party's victory in the upcoming elections lies squarely with the MLAs. Addressing a press meet at Madhira Assembly constituency headquarters, he said all MLAs should take the elections seriously and move forward in coordination with party leaders and in-charges. Priority should be given to candidates who enjoy public support, understand Congress ideology and are capable of effective-

ly taking government welfare schemes to the people, he stressed.

Bhatti Vikramarka said the people's government under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is committed to public welfare and has implemented nearly 90 per cent of the promises made before elections. He highlighted key initiatives such as distribution of fine rice, free RTC bus travel for women, Rs 5 lakh assistance for Indiramma houses and enhancement of Aarogyasri coverage from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. The Deputy CM said the

government successfully conducted Group-I and Group-II examinations and completed recruitment, which had not been done during the previous regime. On the Singareni tenders issue, he clarified that complete transparency was ensured and all facts were placed before the public, adding that continuing to politicize the issue was futile.

Stating that education forms the foundation of Telangana's future, Bhatti Vikramarka said Young India International Schools are being established in every constituency with world-class facilities at an estimated cost of Rs 200 crore each. He said the government has given top priority to urban infrastructure development and released the Vision 2047 document based on the integrated PURE-CURE-RARE policy framework to drive the state's long-term growth. Decisions on electoral alliances will be taken by PCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud, he said, adding that the State Cabinet is functioning like a united family with the sole objective of Telangana's development and welfare.

## Prepare Progress Charts for Children Under Training – TTD JEO (Health & Education)

Tirupati: The TTD Joint Executive Officer for (Health & Education) Dr. A. Sarath has instructed the officials concerned to prepare a detailed progress chart pertaining to the children undergoing training depicting various stages of development at the TTD run Sravanam Project for the hearing impaired. On Wednesday, Dr. Sarath inspected the Sravanam premises along with the officials. Speaking on the occasion, he suggested that children with hearing impairment should be video recorded at the time of admission, during different stages of training, and after completion of training. These videos should be provided to the parents/guardians, which would give them greater happiness and satisfaction to visualize the



improvement of their children. He also directed that boards be displayed within the Sravanam campus clearly showing the different stages of progress achieved by children in the age group of 0-5 years during training.

Stating that the Sravanam institution is functioning with the blessings of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, he emphasized the need to provide more specialized training using modern methods.

He further said that steps are being taken to provide improved facilities as per the directions of TTD Chairman Sri B.R. Naidu and TTD Executive Officer Sri Anil Kumar Singh. Earlier, Dr. Sarath reviewed the training processes, arrangements, and facilities provided to children at Sravanam.

He interacted with the children undergoing training and closely observed the teaching methods being adopted and offered several suggestions to the teachers and advised them to impart training in simpler and more effective methods. Later, he held a meeting with the mothers of the children and enquired about improvements in speech articulation and comprehension skills after joining Sravanam.

## Additional EO reviews arrangements



Tirumala: The TTD Additional Executive Officer, Sri Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary, on Wednesday conducted a review meeting at Padmavathi Guest House in Tirumala regarding the arrangements for Sri Ramakrishna Theertha Mukkoti scheduled to be held on February 01. Speaking on the occasion, the Additional EO instructed the officials to make all necessary arrangements for the Ramakrishna Theertha Mukkoti, one of the most important torrent festivals held in Tirumala. He directed the engineering officials to set up shamianas, make announcements through radio broadcasting, and install display boards for the convenience of devotees and also emphasized that TTD security personnel and police should work in coordination.

In the subsequent technical session, Mr. Mohammad Ali Naguri stated that both the government and banks are providing extensive support to transform innovative ideas of youth into successful business ventures. He elaborated on business opportunities available in the MSME sector, loan facilities for startups, subsidies, and credit guarantee schemes.

He also noted that financial assistance can be easily availed with a well-prepared project report and a viable business model.

In her inaugural address, Chief Guest Mrs. Swathi emphasized that students should aspire not only to be job seekers but also job creators. She highlighted the various financial assistance schemes offered by banks for women entrepreneurs, the importance of basic financial planning for startups, and the need for prudence in utilizing loans. She underlined the crucial role played by banks in the initiation and growth of small-scale enterprises.

Business Incubator (WBI). In the following session, Prof. P. Jyotsna and Dr. D.

Sujatha from the Department of Biotechnology explained the role of TOCIC and the process of converting research outcomes into business opportunities. In the final session, Mr. Surya Kumar, representative of the TBI Centre, SPMVV, spoke about the mentoring support, infrastructure facilities, and market linkage services provided to startups through the Technology Business Incubator (TBI).

The programme was coordinated by Dr. M. Giridhara Kumari, Ed-Cell Coordinator, with the participation of Ed-Cell committee members, faculty members, and students.

As part of the Entrepreneurship Awareness Camp, the organizers informed that an industrial visit has been arranged for students on Thursday (29-01-2026) to ISUZU Motors Private Limited, Sri City.

## Entrepreneurship Awareness Camp Inaugurated Grandly



Tirupati (TSIT) An Entrepreneurship Awareness Camp (EAC) was inaugurated grandly on Wednesday under the aegis of the School of Engineering and Technology, Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam. The programme was held at MV101 Hall on the university campus. Mrs. Swathi, Branch Manager, Union Bank of India, SPMVV Branch, attended the event as the Chief Guest. Mr. Mohammad Ali Naguri, Chief Manager and MSME Loan Point Head, Union Bank of India, Tirupati, participated as the Special Invitee. The programme was presided over by Prof. P. Mallikarjuna, Director, School of Engineering and Technology.

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FREE sparsa darshan for tribals in srisailam. This free sparsa darshan is being provided to the Chenchu tribal devotees on the last Wednesday of every month. As part of this, today, the Chenchu devotees had free touch darshan of Srisailam bramarambha mallikarjuna swamy



## Rs.10 Lakh Donation to TTD

Tirumala, 28 January 2026: ASR Convention, based in Guntur, donated Rs.10 lakh on Wednesday morning to the TTD Sri Balaji Arogya Varaprasadini Scheme. Representatives of the organization presented the donation DD to the Additional EO of TTD, Sri Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary, at the Additional EO Camp Office in Tirumala.

## Mamata seeks apex court probe after fatal plane crash claims Ajit Pawar's life



Kolkata, Jan 28: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday raised serious doubts over the circumstances surrounding the death of Maharashtra deputy chief minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar, calling for an investigation monitored directly by the Supreme Court into the tragic plane crash.

Deeply shaken by the incident, Banerjee postponed her scheduled visit to Delhi later in the day. Speaking to reporters while en route to Singur in Hooghly district for a government programme, she suggested that the crash could be linked to a larger political conspiracy.

The chief minister claimed that Ajit Pawar was reportedly considering a break from the BJP-led NDA and was in talks

to rejoin the Opposition's INDIA bloc. Referring to recent statements circulating on social media, she said there had been indications of political realignment shortly before the crash.

Expressing a lack of confidence in central investigative agencies, Banerjee asserted that only a probe overseen by the country's highest court could ensure fairness and transparency. "We have faith only in the

Supreme Court. Other agencies cannot be trusted anymore," she remarked, alleging that institutions had lost their independence. Reacting emotionally to the news, Banerjee said the incident highlighted serious concerns about the safety of citizens, including political leaders. "It is shocking and painful. If leaders are not safe, one can only imagine the fate of the Opposition," she added, calling Pawar's death a major loss to the nation.

Ajit Pawar, who served as Maharashtra's deputy chief minister and was also the NCP chief, died earlier in the day when a small aircraft carrying him crashed near Baramati airport. Four others, including the pilots and his security personnel, also lost their lives.

## Supreme Court to hear plea against UGC's new caste-based equity regulation



New Delhi, Jan 28: The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to list a plea challenging the recently notified University Grants Commission (UGC) regulation on caste-based discrimination, after concerns were raised over its exclusionary definition.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi took note of submissions seeking an urgent hearing of the matter. A lawyer representing the petitioners highlighted the potential for discrimination against the general category, citing the case

"Rahul Dewan and Ors vs Union." "There is a possibility of discrimination against the general class," the lawyer said. The Chief Justice responded, "We know what is happening. Make sure defects are cured. We will list it." The UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education

Institutions) Regulations, 2026, notified on January 13, mandate that all higher education institutions form equity committees to address discrimination complaints and promote equity. These committees must include members of Other Backward Classes (OBC), Scheduled

Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), persons with disabilities, and women. The new regulations replace the largely advisory UGC 2012 Equity Guidelines, but the plea contends that by strictly defining caste-based discrimination as affecting only SCs, STs, and OBCs, the UGC has denied protection and grievance redressal to general category students who may also face harassment based on caste identity. The regulations have sparked protests across several states, with student groups and organisations demanding their immediate rollback.

the movements of both suspects. Security has been heightened across the Civil Court campus in the wake of the incident. Court authorities urged staff and lawyers to remain calm and cooperate with law enforcement.

Preliminary investigations indicate the suspects intended to create fear and disruption within the court. Police are analyzing their communications and planning to determine if a wider criminal network is involved. Authorities have assured the public that the identities of the arrested individual and his accomplice will be revealed soon, and that all responsible parties will face strict legal action.

cerns over the breach, urging stricter surveillance and enhanced security measures at all entry points. Town DSP-1 arrived at the scene to begin questioning the arrested individual, whose past criminal record is currently being verified. Meanwhile, the second suspect managed to escape, prompting a large-scale search operation. CCTV footage is being examined to track

## Armed suspect arrested at Patna Civil Court, security breach sparks alarm



Patna, Jan 28: Panic erupted at the Patna Civil Court on Wednesday morning when police apprehended an armed criminal during a routine security check near Gate Number 1. The incident falls under the jurisdiction of Pirbhore police.

Police said two individuals had entered the court premises with alleged criminal intent, but their plans were thwarted thanks to vigilant security personnel. During frisking, one suspect was caught attempting to bring a pistol into the court complex. The arrest caused immediate chaos among lawyers, litigants, and court staff. Several advocates voiced strong con-

## Prez Murmu highlights social justice, development achievements as budget session begins



New Delhi, Jan 28 (TSI): President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday addressed the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, marking the commencement of the Budget Session of Parliament, and reaffirmed the government's commitment to "true social justice."

In her address, Murmu highlighted several key achievements of the government, including social welfare measures benefiting women, Dalit and Adivasi communities, and rapid progress in science, technology, and infrastructure. She emphasised that social security benefits now reach nearly 95 crore citizens, and claimed that 25 crore Indians have been lifted out of poverty over the past decade.

Paying tribute, she condemned the tragic death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash, calling it an "irreparable loss" and acknowledging his contributions to the cooperative sector in the state.

**DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE MILESTONES**  
President Murmu lauded the country's infrastructural progress, citing achievements in Indian

Railways with expanded connectivity, the introduction of Vande Bharat trains, and the near completion of 100% electrification. She also mentioned record-breaking projects such as the Chenab Bridge and the Pamban Bridge, showcasing India's engineering prowess.

The President highlighted the growth in manufacturing, electronics, agro-commodities, and fisher-

ies, noting that the government has strengthened India's foundation across sectors over the past decade.

### NATIONAL SECURITY & DEFENCE

Murmu reaffirmed India's rich cultural and historical heritage, recalling the 350th martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 150th birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda, and the contributions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in fostering national unity. She said commemorating these figures inspires the younger generation and accelerates India's journey towards a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). The Economic Survey will be tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday, with the Union Budget presentation scheduled for Sunday.

### HONOURING HERITAGE & INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS

The President celebrated India's rich cultural and historical heritage, recalling the 350th martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 150th birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda, and the contributions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in fostering national unity. She said commemorating these figures inspires the younger generation and accelerates India's journey towards a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). The Economic Survey will be tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday, with the Union Budget presentation scheduled for Sunday.

## Arson in Manipur's Kangpokpi triggers fresh tensions, security stepped up

Imphal, Jan 27: Fresh tension gripped Manipur's Kangpokpi district after multiple houses and temporary structures were set on fire, forcing security forces to launch operations in the affected area, officials said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred at K. Songlung Part II village, about 23 km from Kangchup police station, in the tribal-dominated Kangpokpi district. Police said investigations are underway to ascertain responsibility for the arson. According to residents, three houses and

four makeshift huts were gutted in the blaze on Monday. A Gypsy vehicle was completely destroyed, while a Jeep and several other vehicles suffered partial damage. Stored paddy, food grains, gas cylinders and household items were also reduced to ashes.

Pro-Meitei organisations have alleged that suspected cadres of the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF-Kamson) were behind the incident.

Expressing solidarity with the affected families, the two organisations called on authorities to ensure immediate relief

and justice. The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) also strongly condemned the incident, noting that it took place on the day the country marked its 77th Republic Day. In a statement, the KZC described the arson as another grim reminder of ongoing violence and insecurity faced by the Kuki-Zo community, alleging that since May 3, 2023, over 7,000 houses have been burned and more than 150 lives lost. The council further claimed that despite the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur.

## CBI arrests two Northern Railway officials for bribery in pension claim case



Lucknow, Jan 28: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday arrested two officials of Northern Railway, Lucknow, for allegedly accepting a bribe during the processing of a pension claim. The accused, Akash Tyagi, an Accountant in the Office of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), and Akshay Srivastava, Assistant Divisional Finance Manager (ADFM), were caught red-handed while taking a bribe of Rs 70,000 from a complainant on Tuesday, the agency confirmed. The case was registered based on a complaint alleging that the officials demanded Rs 1 lakh

for generating the Pension Payment Order (PPO) and an additional Rs 2.5 lakh upon settlement of the pension claim. Acting swiftly, the CBI laid a trap and intercepted the officials during the partial payment. Both Tyagi and Srivastava have been taken into custody and will be produced before a competent court in Lucknow. The investigation is ongoing to identify any additional individuals involved in the bribery scheme.

## PM Modi highlights Ayurveda's global legacy at Arya Vaidya Sala centenary



Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised India's ancient healing tradition of Ayurveda on Wednesday, calling it a timeless system that has guided humanity across regions and eras. He was speaking via video message during the centenary celebrations of Kerala's Arya Vaidya Charitable Hospital, marking 125 years of service.

"Ayurveda has always shown us how to live in balance and harmony with nature," the Prime Minister said. He emphasized the need to modernize Ayurveda by integrating technology and artificial intelligence while preserving its preventive health focus, a goal reflected in initiatives like the National AYUSH Mission and the network of over 12,000 AYUSH wellness centres across India.

PM Modi lauded the contributions of the hospital's founder, Vaidyaratnam PS Varier, and described Arya Vaidya Sala as a "living symbol of India's traditional medicine," producing over 600 Ayurvedic medicines and treating patients from more than 60 countries. He credited its century-long charitable service for establishing trust in the institution.

Highlighting India's holistic approach to traditional medicine, the Prime Minister noted that the creation of the Ministry of AYUSH has unified Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy under one framework. This, he said, has enabled greater access to medicines, preventive care, and community health services nationwide.

PM Modi also drew attention to the growing global impact of Indian wellness practices. He mentioned the Ayush Export Promotion Council, which has helped raise exports of Ayurvedic and herbal products from Rs 3,000 crore in 2014 to Rs 26,500 crore today, benefiting farmers and practitioners alike. India is also emerging as a hub for Ayush-based medical value travel, supported by initiatives like the Ayush Visa, and has presented traditional medicine on global platforms such as the BRICS and G20 summits.

Several modern developments were highlighted, including the WHO's Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for cancer research, and the promotion of medicinal plant farming along

the Ganga river. PM Modi also praised the recent EU trade agreement, which enables qualified Indian AYUSH practitioners to offer services in Europe and expand wellness centres abroad.

The Prime Minister commended Arya Vaidya Sala for blending tradition with science through collaborations with institutions such as CSIR and IIT, focusing on drug research, clinical studies, and cancer care. He urged further integration of AI and technology to advance disease prediction and innovative treatment methods.

Kerala governor Rajendra V. Arlekar and other dignitaries attended the centenary event. PM Modi concluded by congratulating the hospital staff, doctors, and vaidyas, wishing the institution continued success in improving lives through dedication and service.

## Nitish Kumar launches and inaugurates development projects worth Rs 136 crore in Darbhanga



including Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, JD(U) National Working President and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Jha, Cabinet Ministers Vijay Kumar Choudhary and Madan Sahani, Darbhanga City MLA and BJP State President Saran Sarogi, along with district officials and other dignitaries.

As part of the tour, the chief minister reviewed the construction of

the Inter-State Bus Terminal at Delhi Mod, a project announced during the earlier Pragati Yatra. The terminal, being built at a cost of Rs 88.78 crore, began construction on December 15, 2025, and is slated for completion by December 14, 2027. Officials informed him that procurement of machinery and materials is currently underway.

Nitish Kumar also visited the

model exhibition at the bus stand complex, where replicas of 11 major schemes launched under the Pragati Yatra are on display to raise public awareness.

In addition, he inspected the under-construction terminal building at Darbhanga Airport, being developed at a cost of Rs 112 crore. Officials said around 50 per cent of the work has been completed, with the main structure expected to be finished within the next six months. The chief minister further reviewed progress on Bihar's first expressway—the Amas-Darbhanga Expressway—at its camp office. Once completed, the expressway will connect Darbhanga to NH-27, significantly boosting regional connectivity. Officials also informed him that the state cabinet, in its January 13 meeting, approved the allocation of 50 acres of land for a proposed logistics park in the district. Nitish Kumar inspected the site and directed the district administration to begin the land acquisition process at the earliest.

Patna, Jan 28: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for 50 new development projects valued at Rs 103 crore and inaugurated 40 completed works worth Rs 33 crore in Darbhanga district, as part of the ongoing Samridhi Yatra.

During his visit, the Chief Minister reviewed model exhibition stalls set up by various government departments, highlighting key development initiatives being implemented across the district. He also chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of district-level schemes before addressing a large public gathering. At an interaction programme held at Nagendra Jha Stadium, Nitish Kumar engaged with members of Jeevika self-help groups and local residents. He outlined the achievements of the state government, shared the roadmap for Bihar's future growth, and reiterated his administration's focus on inclusive and balanced development. The event was attended by several senior leaders and officials,

## Editorial

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2026

## An AI pioneer warns the tech 'herd' is marching into a dead end

Throughout his 40-year career as a computer scientist, Yann LeCun has earned a reputation as one of the world's leading experts on artificial intelligence and a man with a penchant for throwing verbal grenades. He was one of three pioneering researchers who received the Turing Award, often called "the Nobel Prize of computing," for their work on the technology that is now the foundation for modern AI. For more than a decade, he also served as chief AI scientist at Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram. But after leaving Meta in November, LeCun has become increasingly vocal in his criticism of Silicon Valley's single-minded approach to building intelligent machines. He argues that the technology industry will eventually hit a dead end in its AI development — after years of work and hundreds of billions of dollars spent.

The reason, he said, goes back to what he has argued for years: Large language models, the AI technology at the heart of popular products like ChatGPT, can get only so powerful. And companies are throwing everything they have at projects that won't get them to their goal to make computers as smart as or even smarter than humans. More creative Chinese companies, he added, could get there first. "There is this herd effect where everyone in Silicon Valley has to work on the same thing. It does not leave much room for other approaches that may be much more promising in the long term," he said.

That critique is the latest shot in a debate that has roiled the tech industry since OpenAI sparked the AI boom in 2022 with the release of ChatGPT: Is it possible to create so-called artificial general intelligence or even more powerful superintelligence? And can companies get there using their current technology and concepts? Few scientists have as much history with the topic as the 65-year-old. Much of what the tech industry is trying to do now has its roots in an idea that he has nurtured since the 1970s. As a young engineering student in Paris, he embraced a concept called neural networks, even though most researchers thought the idea was hopeless.

Neural networks are mathematical systems that learn skills by analysing data. At the time, they had no practical use. But a decade later, when he was a researcher at Bell Labs, LeCun and his colleagues showed that these systems could learn to read handwriting scribbled on envelopes or personal checks.

By the early 2010s, researchers had begun to show that neural networks could power a wide range of technologies, including face recognition systems, digital assistants and self-driving cars. As Google, Microsoft and other tech giants placed big bets on the idea, Facebook hired LeCun to build an AI research lab. Not long after ChatGPT was released, the two researchers who received the 2018 Turing Award with LeCun warned that AI was growing too powerful. Those scientists even warned that the technology could threaten the future of humanity. LeCun argued that was absurd.

"There was a lot of noise around the idea that AI systems were intrinsically dangerous and that putting them in the hands of everyone was a mistake," he said. "But I have never believed in this." LeCun also helped push Meta and its rivals to freely share their research through academic-style papers and so-called open source technologies.

## Edit

HYDERABAD  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2026

6

## All-night concerts bring fleeting normalcy in a war-ravaged

The performer stood in front of an audience of 800, right before dawn on a recent Sunday. It was the tail end of his eight-hour extravaganza featuring pop, hip-hop and Burmese folk music. He was upbeat, relishing his recent return to the stage. "Regardless of any difficulties you face, one day, summer will come," Than Zaw Htwe, 30, told his audience, many of whom were sitting cross-legged on a silver tarp in an open field on the outskirts of Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city.

Life in Myanmar was upended five years ago, when the military seized power in a coup. Now the junta is trying to project a veneer of legitimacy and normalcy, even as it is fighting a grinding civil war with pro-democracy rebels and other groups. It has held elections, which have been widely derided as a sham. It has organized a massive hot-air balloon festival. And it has allowed some traditional music artists to return to the stage.

Than Zaw Htwe is one of them, leading a new 70-member troupe that was founded in October. He performs zat pwe (pronounced zat-PWAY), or "story show," an opera-like art form that dates back to the 1800s. Today, it is a kaleidoscope of Burmese pop, synchronized dance, slapstick comedy and the retelling of legends.

His shows — which go from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. — are booked out until April. Known by his stage name San Yat Moe, his videos have flooded Burmese TikTok accounts. "People are feeling mentally suffocated," he said in an interview. "They need happiness."

Another performer had a similar message for his audience at one of his recent shows. "Live in the present," said Chit Myo Htike, perhaps the most prominent zat pwe performer and whose stage name is Phoe Chit.

Many urbanites in the country are doing just that. In Yangon, nightclubs are heaving. Domestic tourism is booming in parts of the country where there is no fighting. Night bazaars are now held regularly. Many of these events are sanctioned by the junta, which controls the nation's cities but not its hinterlands. On a recent Sunday, I stood in line with hundreds of people to watch a performance. It was the last night of a three-day run in Hmawbi township, on Yangon's outskirts. The tickets ranged from \$30 to 60,000 kyats, or about \$14 to \$28, which is relatively pricey, given that the average monthly wage is about \$75. (I shelled out roughly \$10 more for a chair.)

With temperatures dipping to the low 60s Fahrenheit, many in the audience settled in with blankets and beanies. "For three days a week, this is their happy hour," Aung Kyaw

Life in  
Myanmar was



upended five years ago, when the military seized power in a coup. Now the junta is trying to project a veneer of legitimacy and normalcy, even as it is fighting a grinding civil war with pro-democracy rebels and other groups....

Tun, the founder of the San Yat Moe troupe, said in English. He said he once experimented with shorter shows that ended at midnight, but the audience was not satisfied and clamored to stay until the morning. It was clear that San Yat Moe was the biggest draw.

"I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU!" a woman behind me screamed in English toward the stage.

"I love you, too!" San Yat Moe responded, also in English.

In keeping with tradition, audience members showed their appreciation by heading to the stage and pinning cash on the performers' outfits. At one point, San Yat Moe had so much money pinned on his sleeves that the bills looked like feathers on wings.

Around midnight, I went backstage, where wages were being distributed. Aung Kyaw Tun said he made about 100 million kyats, or \$25,000, for the three nights. San Yat Moe gets to take home the money that is given to him by fans, this time roughly 70 million kyats, or \$17,500. At 1:30 am, it was time for San Yat Moe to perform a medley of songs. He strode out in a purple suit with a strip of silver sequins running down his trousers and top. A group of backup dancers gyrated behind him.

Next up was one of his hypersonic costume changes. Off came his purple top and on came a white vest. The audience waved their hands in the air. Near the stage, a group of men moshed around.

At 3:30 am, the show moved into

an adaptation of the Ramayana, the Hindu epic. By this time, it was fading; but not San Yat Moe, who was in character, writhing on stage.

Two weeks later, I returned to Yangon to see Phoe Chit perform. His show felt almost like a spiritual experience. The audience knew the words to all his songs, and took out handkerchiefs and cellphones to wave along to the music. One was a ballad titled "To A Friend," in which the singer urges a jilted friend to move on.

Then, Phoe Chit moved to a play in multiple acts that touched on filial themes and had a climax in which the lead character was forced to marry his brother's pregnant girlfriend.

This month, Phoe Chit, 43, was among a list of celebrities who received distinguished artist awards from Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the military commander who led the coup in 2021.

In 2022, Phoe Chit was detained for a brief period on suspicion that he was helping fund armed resistance to the junta, according to some reports.

Phoe Chit declined to comment but said that his troupe started performing in February after a hiatus of six years because he got the approval from the authorities.

At the night bazaars and the San Yat Moe show, many used the phrase "political situation" to refer to what their country was going through. I asked people whether they were happy.

"We want a new normal," said Shoen Lao Po, 25, who runs a currency exchange service and was strolling around at a night bazaar, which sold snacks like "husband and wife" pastries, and offered "ceramic astrology," palm-reading and Burmese pythons for stroking.

Her partner, Thiri Zaw Zaw, 23, chimed in. "It's been five years, we cannot stay like this," he said.

In Yangon, two residents told me that they had stopped going to the movies and traveling after the coup. They wept as they spoke of their guilt, thinking about friends who had gone into the jungles and taken up arms against the junta. But one of them said that she was planning a holiday trip for the sake of her mental health.

Thazin Oo, 26, a student, said people turned up to the shows to "relieve their stress" and because "there's nothing to entertain us at the moment."

"People are not happy anymore," she said. But when I asked what stress she felt, her friend chimed: "Just say work stress!"

Soon, the sun was rising. A comedian intoned into the microphone: "Go home please, we want to sleep!" The audience chuckled. It was past 6 a.m. A white strobe light turned on. It was the cue to leave. San Yat Moe walked around taking selfies. Others packed up their blankets and baskets and filed out of the field. Outside, trucks with workers huddled in their beds streamed past, ready to start a new day.

## NATO must be ready for key summit in pivotal year

The World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last week highlighted an ongoing rift between the worldview of the US and that of its transatlantic partners in Europe. This time, the dispute centered on Greenland — specifically, America's desire for greater access to and control over the territory. While tensions were high at times, it was NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte who ultimately helped calm the situation and get transatlantic relations back on track.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a pivotal year for NATO, with a major summit scheduled to take place less than six months from now in Ankara, Turkiye. To ensure the summit's success, policymakers must begin shaping the agenda immediately. While the meeting may seem far off, in terms of statecraft and diplomacy, six months is very little time at all. Aligning the US and its European partners more closely will require early preparation, sustained engagement and political will on both sides of the Atlantic.

Getting the transatlantic relationship right carries significant economic implications — not only for North America and Europe, but for the global economy as well. Together, the two account for nearly half of the world's gross domestic product. Europe and the US are each other's largest export markets and each is responsible for trillions of dollars of investment in the other's economy, supporting millions of jobs. When rifts emerge across the Atlantic,

the consequences are felt well beyond security policy, with ripple effects across trade, investment and global growth.

As the alliance heads toward the July summit, four major issues are likely to dominate discussions. Policymakers would be wise to begin laying the groundwork now to ensure the meeting delivers tangible results rather than political friction. Aligning the US and its European partners more closely will require early preparation, sustained engagement and political will.

The first issue, unsurprisingly given the recent focus on Greenland, is Arctic security. Just as Donald Trump has done more than any other US president to push NATO members to increase their defense spending, he has also done more than any predecessor to force the alliance to take the Arctic seriously. Until recently, NATO avoided even mentioning the region in its official documents, largely due to internal disagreements among Arctic allies over what role the alliance should play there.

With growing competition in the High North and with Trump's renewed emphasis on Greenland's strategic importance, Arctic security has been pushed near the top of NATO's agenda for the first time. For this summer's summit to proceed smoothly, allies should expect concrete deliverables related to NATO's posture, presence and coordination in the Arctic.

The second issue likely to be raised concerns NATO's relationship with the broader region — a



matter of particular importance to the host country, Turkiye. While Turkiye has been an integral part of transatlantic security since join-

ing NATO in the 1950s, Ankara also places increasing emphasis on security issues in the Black Sea region and the Middle East. Notably, it was a Turkish initiative at the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul that led to the creation of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which formalized NATO's engagement with several Gulf states. Since then, the framework has provided a useful platform for high-level dialogue, though it has produced relatively few tangible outcomes in terms of shared security. With the political momentum that comes from hosting the summit, NATO should seize the opportunity to revamp, or at least reenergize, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and strengthen its relationships with key Gulf partners. Despite occasional tensions in the relationship, it is essential that both sides of the Atlantic continue to work together.

The third issue, and one that will no doubt be a top priority for Trump, will be the health of the alliance's defense spending. Dating back to his first term in the White House, Trump has been among the most vocal US presidents in urging European allies to spend more on defense. At last year's summit in The Hague, NATO took a historic step by agreeing to aim for defense spending of 5 percent of gross domestic product. This is three percentage points higher than the long-standing 2 percent benchmark. While this goal is not expected to be met until the early 2030s, there is little doubt that Trump will be closely monitoring progress in the meantime. At present, only a handful of allies, primarily the Baltic states and Poland, come even close to meeting the 5 percent target. If

Trump succeeds in working with Congress to pass his proposed \$1.5 trillion defense budget, the US itself would reach that threshold. The faster European allies demonstrate meaningful progress toward this goal, the smoother alliance management is likely to be between the White House and European capitals. The final issue, though unlikely to receive much public attention, will be discussed intensively behind closed doors: the war in Ukraine. Trump has made slow but steady progress in pushing Russia and Ukraine toward negotiations and NATO's posture at the summit will depend heavily on how far diplomatic efforts have advanced by then. Trump has been clear that Ukrainian membership of NATO is off the table, meaning the alliance will need to find creative ways to remain engaged with Kyiv — strengthening cooperation and support without crossing political red lines set by Washington. Despite occasional tensions in the transatlantic relationship, it is essential that both sides of the Atlantic continue to work together. Without a stable and secure Europe, the US economy would suffer, with knock-on effects for the global economy as well. As the Ankara summit approaches, NATO's leaders have little time to waste. Managing differences across the Atlantic while delivering progress on security, spending and diplomacy will determine whether the alliance emerges stronger — or more divided — at a moment of growing geopolitical uncertainty.

# Ajit Pawar's death shocking, leaders must be cautious while travelling: Shivakumar

Bengaluru, Jan 28 : Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress president D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said the death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash had left him shocked and stunned, and urged political leaders to be more cautious while travelling. "The death of Deputy Chief Minister of

Maharashtra Ajit Pawar is shocking. I too was stunned when I heard the news of his demise. As politicians, we must be extremely cautious. We should be careful while travelling from place to place. We have lost many leaders in this manner," Shivakumar told reporters near his residence in Bengaluru.

Recalling his associa-



tion with Pawar, he said, "Ajit Pawar was a leader with highly progressive thinking. Just recently,

the Maharashtra Chief Minister had said that he was extending cooperation in all works. May his soul rest in peace. May God grant the strength to bear this grief to his family members and supporters. His family has also developed close ties in Bengaluru. I had met his relatives on Tuesday."

Shivakumar said Pawar had played a significant role in

politics over the years. "Ajit Pawar was a senior leader. He left the party and returned for political reasons. I do not wish to comment on that. At present, he was serving as the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra," he added. When asked about the recent spate of aircraft accidents and claims of technical faults, Shivakumar said he would wait for official findings. "I will speak after a detailed report comes out.

What do I know about technical faults? Several people, including friends from Mumbai, have informed me about the matter," he said. Earlier in the day, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, while condoling Pawar's death, had demanded a detailed probe into the Baramati plane crash that killed the Maharashtra deputy chief minister and four others on board.

## Central government is directly attacking the rights of the states by amending new VB RAM JI : Manohar

Bengaluru: MEI President S Manohar has alleged that the central government is directly attacking the rights of the states by amending the NREGA and the lives of farmers and rural workers. The scheme in the name of "VB Ram Ji" is an anti-people and anti-Gandhi attitude of the central government.

He held a protest against the anti-people policies of the central government and the unconstitutional move of the governor by promoting the wearing of the RSS garb, calling the governor a puppet of the BJP and the RSS. He also condemned Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand



Gehlot for insulting Article 176 of the Constitution in the assembly without reading it and for fleeing before the national anthem was played. The central government's behavior as a puppet, going beyond constitutional values, has caused serious concern for the democratic system of the country. In this context, a massive protest was held today through a mock demonstration on the instructions of the KPCC.

## Franchise India Accelerates Bagelstein's India Expansion with 4th Store Launch in Koramangala, Bengaluru

Bengaluru : Bagelstein, France's bagel pioneer founded in 2011, has strengthened its presence in India with the opening of its 4th store at Koramangala, Bengaluru. Following the successful launch of its third outlet in the city, the new store underlines the brand's accelerating momentum and the growing appetite for premium bagels among India's urban consumers. The store was inaugurated in the presence of Ramanalinga Reddy, Minister of Transport, Govt of Karnataka, who joined as the special guest.

With Bengaluru emerging as one of India's most dynamic food destinations, the city continues to attract young professionals, entrepreneurs, students, and global workforces who are constantly exploring international cuisines and convenient gourmet dining formats. Koramangala, one of



the city's most happening neighbourhoods, is a buzzing hub for cafés, startups, nightlife, and experiential dining — making it a strategic location for Bagelstein's next phase of expansion. The increasing popularity of bagels in India reflects evolving consumer preferences, where quick-service formats meet quality, freshness, and indulgence. Bagelstein's menu caters to this shift with oven-fresh handcrafted bagels, premium fillings, stacked sandwiches, flavour-

ful spreads, artisanal coffees, refreshing beverages, and indulgent desserts. True to its European roots, the brand blends authenticity with creativity while delivering a casual yet premium café experience.

Commenting on the expansion, Gaurav Marya, Founder and Chairman, Franchise India, said, "Global food brands today are increasingly looking at franchising as the most efficient and scalable route to enter and expand in fast-growing markets like India. The country's strong consumption story, young demographics, and appetite for international flavours make it a compelling destination for global QSR and café brands. Bagelstein's consistent expansion reflects how structured franchising enables faster market penetration while maintaining brand consistency and operational excellence."

## Work and Selfless Service Bring Inner Peace: MP Basavaraj Bommai

Haveri: Former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai opined that if one adopts work (kayaka) and selfless service (paropakara) in life, it leads to inner peace and mental tranquility.

Speaking after celebrating his 66th birthday today at the Jyothi Residential School for Mentally Challenged Children at Ijirilakampura in Haveri—by distributing clothes and books to the children and sharing sweets, he said that since 2009, the children of the Jyothi school have been taken care of continuously with great patience. The humanitarian challenges of educating them



are being undertaken wholeheartedly. Naveen Savanur has been rendering selfless service to the backward and the helpless. District BJP President Virupakshappa Ballari has been providing complete coop-

eration in successfully strengthening the party organization. Basavaraj Arabagonda and his team have succeeded in establishing the Haveri Milk Producers' Unit and are making sincere efforts for the district's development. They are engaged in selfless service. Everyone has stood by him with support" Birth and death are not in our hands, however, God has given us the ability to think about why we are born. If we reflect on that, the path of our life becomes clear. God resides in work; the divine is present in labor. There is no time limit or boundary for work. Wherever good can be done—where help can be extended to the poor and where it can benefit mentally challenged children—that work itself is selfless service. If work and selfless service are incorporated into life, one attains inner peace and mental peace", he said.



A Congress delegation has filed a complaint at the High Grounds Police Station alleging that Mangalore MLA Bharat Shetty has made baseless allegations against Minister R.B. Thimmapura. A Congress delegation including Bengaluru West District Congress Party Vice President Kushal Haruvegowda, MIE President S. Manohar, A. Anand, visited the police station and lodged a complaint.

## Maheshwar Rao orders special task forces for road widening and building deviation monitoring

Bengaluru: Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to form separate task forces in all five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to monitor road widening works and unauthorized building deviations. He instructed that these task forces be constituted immediately and tasked with closely supervising all road widening activities and illegal constructions.

The Chief Commissioner issued the directions while addressing a coordination meeting with officials from various departments. He stressed the need for effective inter-departmental coordination to resolve issues arising during the implementation of development works across the five city corporations.

To strengthen civic administration, Maheshwar Rao said a facial recognition-based biometric attendance system has been introduced for pourakarmikas across the GBA area. While the system has shown good progress in the Central City Corporation, officials were instructed to ensure it becomes fully operational in all city corporations within the next two weeks.

He also directed officials to prepare and submit a



comprehensive list of all ongoing railway works, following which a review meeting with the Railway Department will be convened to accelerate project execution.

Emphasizing environmental protection, the Chief Commissioner ordered strict measures to prevent wastewater from entering the K-100 stormwater drain. Officials were asked to identify all inflow points, conduct on-site inspections where industrial effluents or slaughterhouse waste is discharged, impose double penalties on violators, and ensure zero recurrence.

Maheshwar Rao further instructed the BWSSB to ensure adequate water

availability for firefighting by installing five-lakh-litre capacity water tanks in select areas and establishing a Fire Control Room within the GBA. He also reviewed road widening plans, directing inspections on Nagarbhavi Main Road and Hosur Road (Anepalya Junction) and seeking a detailed plan for Banashankari Main Road by next week.

To speed up white-topping works, he called for close coordination between city corporations, BWSSB, BESCOM and traffic police. He also directed immediate action on constructing pedestrian overbridges at locations identified by traffic police and resolving issues

related to bus stops, waterlogging points, bus bays and road humps.

Ahead of the monsoon, Maheshwar Rao instructed officials to take permanent measures in 44 flood-prone areas, with special focus on Silk Board Junction, Hebbal Junction and Kogilu Cross. He directed that works on the Geddalahalli railway vent be completed by the end of April.

The meeting was attended by Special Commissioner Dr. K. Harish Kumar, city corporation commissioners, senior officials from BWSSB, BESCOM, BMRCL, BDA, traffic police and other concerned departments.

## FIR registered against Saamar International Islamic School at Kothanur Police Station

Bengaluru: The School Education Department has cancelled the recognition of Saamar International Islamic School and has ordered alternative arrangements for 1130 students studying in the school within seven days. A four-member committee headed by the Sector Coordinator has been formed to close the school, and the Bengaluru South Zone [4] Block education officers are working to implement the order issued by the School Education Department.

An FIR was registered against Khalid Musharraf S/o Abdul Jalil, the Chief Administrative Officer, acting on behalf of the Chairman and Secretary of the School Management Board, at the Kothanur Police Station.

Since the school's recognition has been withdrawn and the registration has been cancelled, the school has to be closed and the students have to be enrolled in other schools, and a complaint has been registered under 318 (4), 336, 340 BNS on the basis of the complaint filed by the



Block Education Officer of Bangalore South Zone [4] seeking appropriate arrangements in this regard. The police are working to ensure that there is no law and order problem. The recognition of the school running from Saamar International Islamic School 1 to 10th class has been cancelled as per Section 39 of the Karnataka Education Act 1983. The Minority Department has been instructed by the School Education Department to investigate and submit a report on the use of five lakh rupees in the name of Jamia Education Society by the Minority Welfare Department for Madrasa.

Alternative arrangements should be made for the students within seven days. The academic records of this school should be handed over to the nearest government high school and a separate record should be maintained in this regard by the Block Education Officer. The Block Education Officer should take appropriate action regarding the closure of the school. For this, a four-member committee should be formed under the leadership of Block Coordination Officer T.S. Radhamani. The students should be handed over to the nearest primary and high schools and a report should be submitted.

## SURI ANNA TRAILER RELEASED

Bangalore: The trailer launch ceremony of the film "Suri Anna", produced and directed by actor Dinesh Kumar of Salaga Suri Anna fame under the DJ Prakash Cine Production banner, was held at Hyde Park Hotel.

The film is the last film in which Harish Roy acted, and it was special that his wife Aarthi launched the trailer of the film.

Velu of Lahari Audio spoke and wished Dinesh, who is celebrating his birthday today, a happy birthday. The film is releasing on Feb. 20. He said that the trailer has come out very well.

Harish Roy's wife



Aarthi, who released the trailer, spoke and said, "I did not even know that this is our master's last film. This film will definitely do well. Thank you to everyone who helped the film industry during difficult times. My husband used to meditate on cinema until the end. My son has also grown up. He needs your support. Don't forget us, he asked. Actor Praveen said that I have played the role of Bat in this film. I was the lead in Marigudda. Vishwa's contribution to this film is very big.

# TN introduces refundable deposit for sand removal



CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government has amended key provisions of the Tamil Nadu Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1959, introducing a refundable security deposit system for permission-holders seeking to remove sand and other minor minerals from lands and tanks under the control of various government departments.

The move is aimed at strengthening regulatory oversight, preventing excessive quarrying, and ensuring the protection and restoration of waterbodies.

Under the revised rules, applicants seeking permission to remove sand or other minor minerals must now pay a refundable security deposit in addition to the application fee. The security deposit will be equivalent to two

## Amendment of rules to prevent excessive quarrying

times the seigniorage fee payable for the quantity of mineral applied for.

At the same time, the government has significantly increased the application fee from Rs 1,500 to Rs 5,000. The amended provisions also define the procedure to follow when a permission-holder exceeds the permitted quantity of mineral removal or violates the conditions attached to the permission.

As per the new rule, the District Collector is empowered to cancel the permission after providing the permission-holder an

opportunity to be heard. In such cases, the difference in the seigniorage fee and the cost of the mineral for the quantity quarried and removed will be recovered from the permission-holder.

Additionally, any expenditure incurred by the government for restoring tanks or other affected areas will be adjusted against the security deposit. If the total amount recoverable exceeds the deposited security amount, the balance will be recovered from the permission-holder under the provisions of the Revenue Recovery Act, 1890. Earlier, the

rules provided for automatic cancellation of permission if excess quarrying or violation of conditions was detected, with damages recovered based on the excess quantity removed and the extent of damage caused to the tanks.

The revised framework introduces a more structured process, including hearings and detailed recovery mechanisms, while placing greater financial responsibility on permission-holders.

The government has also inserted a new clause to ensure post-operation accountability. On the expiry of the permission period or upon exhaustion of the permitted quantity - whichever occurs earlier - authorities must inspect to verify compliance with the stipulated conditions.

A report of this inspection will be submitted to the concerned District Collector. Based on this report, the District Collector is required to pass a written order refunding the security deposit to the permission-holder, provided all conditions have been complied with.

The amendments are expected to act as a deterrent against illegal mining while ensuring better conservation of tanks and public lands.

CHENNAI: With less than two months for the upcoming Assembly elections, the spotlight has turned to a possible alliance between NTK and TVK, as both parties' leaders are actively voicing against the State and Union governments.

The election is currently expected to be a four-cornered contest. The ruling DMK is leading one front, while the Opposition AIADMK anchors another. Vijay's TVK and Seeman's NTK are preparing to contest independently, positioning themselves as alternatives to the traditional Dravidian parties. Despite keeping its doors open with promises of "power sharing", no

## Speculations pour in on possible Seeman-Vijay alliance



Vijay is believed to have reached out to Seeman through a mutual film industry contact, proposing an alliance. The message was clear, sources say. Contesting separately would only fragment votes, while a joint front could significantly improve their chances. Though Seeman did not respond immediately, he is reportedly giving the proposal serious thought, even as pressure mounts on him to go solo.

Political analysts point out that if the Seeman-Vijay alliance materializes, the election could shift from a four-cornered to a triangular contest, potentially altering the balance of power in Tamil Nadu.

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## Coimbatore to get Rs 10 crore world-class paralympic sports complex

CHENNAI: The Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation has received administrative approval from the Tamil Nadu government to construct a world-class Paralympic sports complex at a cost of Rs 9.90 crore. The facility will be developed on a 1.10 acre site at Jeevanagar in the West Zone's 33rd ward, and construction work is expected to begin soon.

Municipal Commissioner Sivaguruprabakaran said the proposed complex is being designed exclusively to support athletes with disabilities and to meet international standards. The facility will host both indoor and



outdoor Paralympic sporting events. indoor sports such as table tennis, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and badminton, as well as outdoor disciplines like javelin throw, discus throw and shot put. The sports complex will include

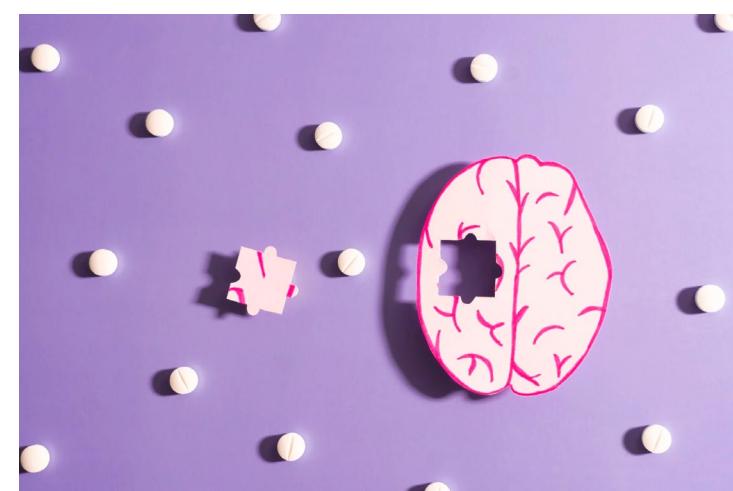
will be equipped with a gymnasium, separate rooms and restrooms for men and women, a yoga centre, a first-aid and medical facility, spectator seating areas and a cafeteria.

According to the Commissioner, the project has received administrative clearance from the Municipal Administration Department, paving the way for the commencement of construction. Once completed, the facility is expected to significantly enhance training infrastructure for para-athletes in Coimbatore and promote inclusive sports development in the region.

## Long-term NSAID use may reduce dementia risk, study suggests

New Delhi, Mar 5: A new study suggests that long-term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) may help lower the risk of developing dementia, a condition affecting over 55 million people worldwide. The study, led by M. Arfan Ikram from Erasmus MC University Medical Center Rotterdam in the Netherlands, supports the idea that inflammation contributes to dementia progression. Since NSAIDs possess anti-inflammatory properties, they may offer protective benefits against cognitive decline.

The research analyzed data from 11,745 adults over an average follow-up period of 14.5 years. Among the participants, 9,520 had used NSAIDs at some point, while 2,091 developed dementia. Findings revealed that long-term NSAID use was linked to a 12% lower risk of dementia. However, short-term and interme-



diate-term use did not provide significant benefits, and higher cumulative NSAID doses were not associated with additional risk reduction. These findings, published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics

Society, indicate that consistent, prolonged NSAID use—not just high doses—may help protect brain health. Additional research published in Alzheimer's and Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical

Interventions, which examined health data from over 130 million individuals, further supports this link. It found that antibiotics, anti-virals, vaccinations, and anti-inflammatory drugs were all associated with a reduced risk of dementia. This supports the theory that common dementias may be triggered by bacterial or viral infections. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 10 million new dementia cases are diagnosed annually, making it the seventh leading cause of death and a major contributor to disability and dependence among older adults. Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, accounts for 60-70% of cases. While the study highlights NSAIDs' potential role in dementia prevention, researchers stress the need for further studies to confirm these findings and explore new preventive strategies.

## Tackling obesity: A national health imperative

Obesity is not just a matter of genetics but is deeply influenced by lifestyle and health choices, according to leading health experts. They stress that obesity is a serious medical concern rather than merely a cosmetic issue. On World Obesity Day, Dr. Nikhil Tandon, Head of Endocrinology and Metabolism at AIIMS, New Delhi, highlighted key contributors to India's rising obesity rates. He pointed to disruptions in circadian rhythms, poor dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles, and societal stress as major factors fueling the crisis.

Speaking at an Assocham session on "Obesity and its Adverse Impact on Health," Dr. Tandon noted a worrying surge in adult obesity while also drawing attention to the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity in India. He emphasized the need for education, awareness, and open discussions to combat the issue effectively. Anil Rajput, Chairperson of Assocham's National Council on CSR, underscored that obesity is a growing concern being addressed at multiple levels. He



cited government initiatives such as FIT India, Eat Right India, Poshan Abhiyan, and Khelo India, all designed to promote balanced nutrition and active lifestyles. "People are becoming more health-conscious, and with continued collective efforts, India will progress towards a healthier, more productive nation. This will be a significant step in

achieving the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047," Rajput remarked.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the 119th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat,' also raised concerns about the increasing incidence of obesity and its link to diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancer.

"To build a fit and healthy nation, tackling obesity is crucial. Research

indicates that one in every eight individuals struggles with obesity," PM Modi stated, urging people to take preventive measures.

Dr. Sudhir Kalhan, Chairman of the Institute of Minimal Access, Metabolic, and Bariatric Surgery at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, echoed these concerns. He pointed out that sedentary lifestyles, poor diet, and genetic predispositions are driving obesity rates higher, subsequently increasing cases of diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. "As a bariatric surgeon, I witness the devastating effects of obesity every day. The urgency for awareness and preventive strategies cannot be overstated. Simple steps like maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and seeking timely medical advice can significantly curb obesity," he stressed. With coordinated efforts from individuals, healthcare professionals, and policymakers, India can take decisive strides toward combating obesity and fostering a healthier future for its citizens.

## The Glacier That's Rewriting Climate History

The Thwaites Glacier in Antarctica, undergoing significant ice loss since the 1940s due to climate changes and El Niño events, contributes to 4% of global sea-level rise. Researchers emphasize the ongoing retreat initiated by external factors like ocean and atmosphere circulation changes, highlighting the importance of understanding these dynamics for future sea-level rise projections. Credit: Robert Larter Nestled within the immense wilderness of Antarctica, the Thwaites Glacier stretches impressively across approximately 80 miles on the continent's western frontier. Despite its monumental scale, this colossal glacier faces a troubling imbalance, shedding around 50 billion tons of ice annually in excess of what it gains from snowfall.

This critical disparity puts its stability in jeopardy. Accelerating ice loss has been observed since the 1970s, but it is unclear when this significant melting initiated—until now. A new study published in the journal PNAS, led by researchers at the University of Houston, suggests that significant glacial retreat began in the 1940s. Their results on the Thwaites Glacier coincide with previous work that studied retreat on Pine Island Glacier and found glacial retreat began in the '40s as well.

"What is especially important about our study is that this change is not random nor specific to one glacier," said Rachel Clark, corresponding author, who graduated from UH last year with a doctorate in geology. "It is part of a larger context of a changing climate. You just can't ignore what's happening on this glacier."

Clark and the study authors posit that the glacial retreat was likely kicked off by an extreme El Niño climate pattern that warmed the west Antarctic. Since then, the authors say, the glacier has not recovered and is currently contributing to 4% of global sea-level rise. "It is significant that El Niño only lasted a couple of years, but the two glaciers, Thwaites and Pine Island, remain in significant retreat," said Julia Wellner, UH associate professor of geology and U.S. lead investigator of the Thwaites Offshore Research project, or THOR, an international collaboration whose team members are authors of the study. "Once the system is kicked out of balance, the retreat is

ongoing," she added. Nathaniel B. Palmer Sails Past Thwaites Glacier

Their findings also make it clear the retreat at the glaciers' grounding zone, or the area where the glaciers lose contact with the seabed and start to float, was due to external factors. "The finding that both Thwaites Glacier and Pine Island Glacier share a common history of thinning and retreat corroborates the view that ice loss in the Amundsen Sea sector of the West Antarctic ice sheet is predominantly controlled by external factors, involving changes in ocean and atmosphere circulation, rather than internal glacier dynamics or local changes, such as melting at the glacier bed or snow accumulation on the glacier surface," said Claus-Dieter Hillenbrand, U.K. lead investigator of THOR and study co-author.

A significant implication of our findings is that once an ice sheet retreat is set in motion, it can continue for decades, even if what started it gets no worse," added James Smith, a marine geologist at the British Antarctic Survey and study co-author. "It is possible that the changes we see today on Thwaites and Pine Island glaciers—and potentially across the entire Amundsen Sea embayment—were essentially set in motion in the 1940s." Clark and the team used three primary methods to reach their conclusion. One of those methods was marine sediment core collection that was closer to the Thwaites Glacier than ever before. They retrieved the cores during their trip to the Amundsen Sea near Thwaites in early 2019 aboard the Nathaniel B. Palmer icebreaker and research vessel.

The researchers then used the cores to reconstruct the glacier's history from the early Holocene epoch to the present. The Holocene is the current geological epoch that began after the last ice age, roughly 11,700 years ago. CT scans were used to take X-rays of the sediment to gather details from its history. Geochronology, or the science of dating earth materials, was then used to reach the conclusion that significant ice melt began in the '40s. Clark used 210Pb (lead-210), an isotope that's naturally buried in the sediment cores and is radioactive, as the most important isotope in her geochronology. This process is similar to radiocarbon dating, which measures the age of organic materials as far back as 60,000 years.

# Sensex jumps 646 points in early trade on optimism over India-EU FTA

MUMBAI: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged in early trade on Wednesday, extending their previous day's rally, on optimism over India-EU FTA.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 646.49 points to 82,503.97 during initial trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 196.7 points to 25,372.10. From the 30-Sensex firms, Axis Bank, Reliance Industries, NTPC, Bharat Electronics, ICICI Bank



and Bajaj Finance were among the major gainers. However, Asian Paints dropped nearly 6 per cent after the firm reported a decline of 4.83 per cent in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,073.92 crore in the December quarter of FY26 on a year-on-year basis on account of exceptional items as implementation of the new labour code and impairment of loss in a subsidiary.

Maruti, HCL Tech, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank

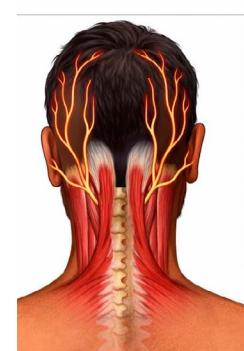
of India were among the other laggards.

India and the European Union on Tuesday sealed a landmark free trade agreement—billed as the “mother of all deals”—to create a market of two billion people with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the top EU leadership unveiling a transformative five-year agenda to largely leverage trade and defence in protecting the rules-based world order.

## Advanced migraine therapies offer relief to chronic sufferers at Aster Prime Hospital

Hyderabad (TSIT) Advanced interventional therapies are bringing meaningful relief to patients suffering from chronic migraine who have not responded to conventional treatments, according to neurologists at Aster Prime Hospital, Ameerpet. Doctors at the hospital on Wednesday shared recent success stories highlighting the effectiveness of procedures such as Greater Occipital Nerve (GON) blocks in managing refractory migraine cases.

One such case involved a 36-year-old homemaker from Khammam who had been experiencing daily migraine-like headaches for nearly seven years. Despite multiple medications, her condition continued to severely affect her quality of life. In November 2025, she under-



went a GON block at Aster Prime Hospital, following which she reported a significant reduction in headache days, allowing doctors to gradually taper her medications.

In another case, a 28-year-old breastfeeding woman sought treatment for frequent migraine-like headaches. With limited medication options due to breastfeeding, she was



offered a GON block. Within two months of the procedure, she experi-

enced nearly a 70 per cent reduction in headache severity and improved daily functioning.

“These cases demonstrate the growing role of interventional therapies in migraine care, especially for patients who do not respond adequately to oral medications or where drug use is restricted,” said Dr. Vivek Potluri, Consultant Neurologist at Aster Prime Hospital.

Migraine is among the most common neurological disorders worldwide, affecting nearly 18 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men, while chronic migraine impacts about 2 per cent of the population. Often dismissed as a routine headache, migraine is a complex condition associated with severe pain, nausea, visual disturbances, and sensitivity to light and sound.

## Sennes from House of Senco opens first store in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Sennes, a contemporary luxury lifestyle brand from the House of Senco, has opened its first store in Bengaluru at Phoenix Mall. With this launch, Sennes has expanded its pan-India presence to 10 stores, strengthening its footprint across major cities including Kolkata, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh and Patna.

Rooted in Senco's legacy of trust and fine craftsmanship spanning over eight decades, Sennes represents modern luxury tailored for contemporary lifestyles. The brand combines global aesthetics, sustainability and refined craftsmanship, appealing to a new generation that values individuality, responsibility and understated elegance.

Spread across 780 sq. ft., the Bengaluru store features a curated collection of lab-grown diamond jewellery, Italian-designed leather bags and fine fra-



grances. Each product reflects modern design sensibilities and conscious craftsmanship, offering

versatile luxury suitable for everyday living.

Speaking on the occasion, Suvankar Sen, Managing Director & CEO of Senco Gold Ltd., said Bengaluru is a dynamic and design-forward market with a strong appreciation for modern luxury, making it an ideal destination for Sennes, especially among Gen Z and millennial consumers. Joita Sen, Director and Head of Design & Marketing at Senco Gold and Diamonds, said Sennes is designed as a complete sensory experience, bringing together the brilliance of lab-grown diamonds, fine leather craftsmanship and sophisticated fragrances under one roof. The new store is located at Sennes, Phoenix Marketcity, Whitefield Main Road, Maha deva pura, Bengaluru.

## GITAM congratulates Dr. S.D. Bhavani on successful completion of Ph.D. in chemistry

Hyderabad (TSIT) GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, congratulates Dr. S. D. Bhavani on the successful completion of her Ph.D. in Chemistry. Her research, titled “Effect of Calcination Temperature and Composition on Properties of Gadolinium-Doped Nickel Ferrite Nanoparticles,” contributes significantly to the field of advanced functional nanomaterials.

Under the guidance of Dr. B. Purna Chandra Rao, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, the study explored the synthesis



and characterization of Gd-doped nickel ferrite nanoparticles using the sol-gel auto-combustion method and examined the impact of calcination temperature on their structural and functional properties. The findings highlight

the potential of these nanomaterials for applications in high-frequency electronics, magnetic devices, EMI shielding, and microwave technologies.

The GITAM community—including Prof. D. S. Rao (Pro Vice-Chancellor), D. V. V. S. R. Varma (Resident Director), Dr. M. Reza (Principal, School of Science), Dr. Gousia Begum (Head, Department of Chemistry), along with faculty, researchers, and students—extends its heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Bhavani on this outstanding academic accomplishment.

## Rupee rises 11 paise to 91.57 against the US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI: The rupee gained 11 paise to 91.57 against the US dollar in early trade on Wednesday, supported by a retreating dollar index and the landmark India-EU trade deal.

Forex traders said the rupee opened higher as the US dollar index softened and a long-awaited trade breakthrough with Europe offered quiet reassurance. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 91.60 against the US dollar, then gained some ground to 91.57, registering a gain of 11 paise over its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee rebounded from its all-time low levels and gained 22 paise to close at 91.68 (provisional) against



the US dollar. In the initial trade, it also touched 91.66 against the American currency. “The 92.00 level remains the key near-term pivot for USD/INR. A sustained move above this zone could open the way toward the 92.20-92.50 range,” CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said.

Pabari further added that continued RBI presence in the market, combined with a softer dollar backdrop, may help stabilize the pair and gradually pull it back toward the

90.80-91.00 zone in the near term. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.13 per cent lower at 96.09.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.53 per cent higher at USD 67.93 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex jumped 646.49 points to 82,503.97 in early trade, while the Nifty surged 196.7 points to 25,372.10. Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 3,068.49 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

## Ultra-rapid ECMO saves 14-year-old girl at KIMS Cuddles, Kondapur



Hyderabad, 28 January, 2026: Doctors at KIMS Cuddles, Kondapur, achieved a major clinical success by saving the life of a 14-year-old girl using ultra-rapid veno-venous extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (VV-ECMO). The child was admitted in a critical condition with severe pneumococcal pneumonia, empyema, profound hypoxaemia and septic shock.

Disclosing the details, Dr. Parag Dekate, Clinical Director (Paediatrics) and Head of the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), said the girl, a resident of Mulugu village in Medak district, was unresponsive to treatment and on mechanical ventilation when she was referred to the hospital. With her condition deteriorating rapidly, the PICU team initiated an emergency “scoop-and-run” ECMO retrieval strategy, with parallel planning for ECMO support even before her arrival. Despite maximal conventional support after admission, the child's oxygen levels continued to fall. Demonstrating speed and precision, the multidisciplinary PICU team completed VV-ECMO cannulation within 50 minutes of arrival and placed her on ECMO support in less than an hour. “The ultra-rapid decision-making and execution were crucial in saving her life,” Dr. Parag

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The patient was supported on VV-ECMO for eight days. ECMO is an advanced life-support modality used when the lungs fail to func-

## ‘Global voices one vision’ – International Health Dialogue 2026 by Apollo Hospitals to be held in Hyderabad



practices, and the latest advancements in the industry.

CLINOVATE will spotlight the expanding role of

diagnostics as a cornerstone of patient safety and clinical decision-making, under the theme “The Future - Ready Laboratory.” The sessions will explore how laboratories are evolving into critical enablers of healthcare transformation, driven by artificial intelligence, automation, and advanced analytics.

The International Health Dialogue will bring together global health leaders and policymakers, including Hon. Col. Maj. Garba Hakimi, Minister of Public Health, Republic of Niger; Hon. Mr. Elias Kapavore, Minister of Health and HIV/AIDS, Papua New Guinea; and Hon. Prof. Jean Rosarie Ibara, Minister of Health and Population, Republic of Congo.

Joining them will be leading voices in international healthcare quality, patient safety, and innovation, including Dr. Jonathan Perlman, President and CEO, The Joint Commission Enterprise; Dr. Carsten Engel, CEO, ISQua; Dr. Dean Ho, Head, Department of Biomedical Engineering, National University of Singapore; Dr. Atul Mohan Kochhar, CEO, NABH; Dr. Neelam Dhingra, Vice President and Chief Patient Safety Officer, Joint Commission International; and Dr. Eyal Zimlichman, Chief Innovation, Transformation and AI Officer, Sheba Medical Center and Founding Director of ARC, Israel, along with global experts in digital health and healthcare transformation.

This year's conference will feature Safe-A-Thon – a collaborative, solution-building challenge

designed to spark innovation in patient safety to tackle real-world safety problems with smart, scalable, and cost-effective solutions. The conference will also witness the launch of THNX (Technology & Healthcare Network Exchange) – India's first digital health startup community that will feature pitch days, funding opportunities, and investor interactions.

Over the years, the International Health Dialogue has created a vibrant exchange between public health leaders, technology innovators, clinicians, and patient advocates. The 2026 edition in Hyderabad will continue this legacy through plenary discussions, innovation showcases, technology demonstrations, and global networking forums, offering participants an immersive experience in thought leadership and practical innovation.

“Over the years, the International Health Dialogue has evolved into a dynamic global platform where clinicians, innovators, policymakers, and evangelists converge to shape the next era of healthcare. The Hyderabad edition builds on this vision, bringing together the power of AI, data, and digital ecosystems with the timeless values of empathy and collaboration. At its heart, IHD represents a shared global commitment to make healthcare more predictive, sustainable, and inclusive, where every innovation serves humanity and every partnership drives progress toward a healthier planet.”

HOPE – Healthcare Operations & Patient Experience Conference focuses on operational excellence by integrating efficiency, empathy, and innovation to enhance every touchpoint of the patient journey.

THIT – Transforming Healthcare with IT Conference brings together healthcare and IT leaders from around the world to share insights, best

practices and healthcare systems can improve patient safety.

IPSC – International Patient Safety Conference discusses how proactive

# Nobody is safe: China's Xi targets close ally in purge



**Beijing/Washington, Jan 28:** China's investigation into its top general is taking President Xi Jinping's years-long corruption purge into his innermost circle, underlining that even close personal ties do not offer protection when it comes to loyalty to the party leadership.

China experts said Xi's move against his long-term ally and Politburo member Gen. Zhang Youxia also concentrates even more power in the president's hands, makes the already secretive command of China's military more opaque, and suggests that a near-term attack on Taiwan is less likely.

"Zhang's removal means that truly nobody in the leadership is safe now," said Jonathan Czyn of the Washington-based Brookings Institution, who called the investigation "astonishing".

Czyn, who spent years as a top China analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency and, in 2021-2023, served as the director for China at the United States National Security Council, added that the probe marked a "profound shift" in Chinese politics. The change is remarkable as past purges targeted people who may have had some overlap with Xi but lacked strong personal ties. This time around, the purge has crossed into what Czyn has described as the "asteroid belt" of Xi's political solar system.

Both Xi and Zhang are princelelms, children of former senior officers. The 75-year-old general was initially expected to retire in 2022, but Xi kept him on the Central Military Commission (CMC), the Chinese military's top leadership body, for a third term, underscoring

their closeness.

The defence ministry announced a probe Saturday into Zhang - second-in-command under Xi as senior vice-chairman of the CMC - "for suspected serious violations of discipline and law". The military was one of the main targets of a broad corruption crackdown ordered by Xi after coming to power in 2012. The purges reached its elite Rocket Force, which oversees nuclear weapons as well as conventional missiles, in 2023. Two former defence ministers were also purged from the ruling Communist Party in recent years for corruption.

"I think corruption concerns are probably real, though those are typically more a pretext to remove someone in Chinese politics," said Czyn, citing how deeply entrenched graft was before Xi's campaign.

Another senior member, Liu Zhenli, chief of staff of the CMC's Joint Staff Department, was also placed under investigation, effectively shrinking the seven-member body into two, with Xi at the top.

"Xi has eviscerated the People's Liberation Army (PLA) top brass like no leader before

him," said Neil Thomas, a fellow at the Asia Society.

#### ELIMINATING THREATS

In a front-page editorial Sunday, the PLA Daily described the probe as a major achievement, adding that the two generals had "seriously undermined and violated" the Chairman Responsibility System.

Under the system, Xi, as the CMC chairman, is vested with the "supreme military decision-making." It also serves as the "institutional arrangement for practising the party's absolute leadership over the army," according to China's government.

"To invoke violating the Chairman Responsibility System suggests Zhang had too much power outside of Xi himself," said Lyle Morris, a senior fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Center for China Analysis.

#### DEPLETED LEADERSHIP

But leaving the army leadership depleted and without replacements raises questions about how the world's largest military is run.

"It is honestly not clear how the chain of command should be functioning - especially since so many of the officers who would otherwise be eligible to replace the disposed members of the CMC have themselves been ousted," Brookings' Czyn said.

Other analysts said they expect higher-level initiatives like expanding joint training to slow down until Xi can rebuild the commission.

"That could look like adding additional members, or it could involve building some sort of new apparatus around Xi as the central decision maker," said Eric Hundman, director of research at BluePath Labs, a Washington-based security consultancy.

## Meta, TikTok, YT face landmark trial over youth addiction claims

**Washington, Jan 28:** Three of the world's biggest tech companies face a landmark trial in Los Angeles starting this week over claims that their platforms - Meta's Instagram, ByteDance's TikTok and Google's YouTube - deliberately addict and harm children.

Jury selection starts this week in the Los Angeles County Superior Court. It's the first time the companies will argue their case before a jury, and the outcome could have profound effects on their businesses and how they will handle children using their platforms.

The selection process is expected to take at least a few days, with 75 potential jurors questioned each day through at least Thursday. A fourth company named in the lawsuit, Snapchat parent company Snap Inc, settled the case last week for an undisclosed sum.

At the core of the case is a 19-year-old identified only by the initials "KGM", whose case could determine how thousands of other, similar lawsuits against social media companies will play out.

She and two other plaintiffs have been selected for bellwether trials - essentially test cases for both sides to see how their arguments play out before a jury and what damages, if any, may be awarded, said Clay Calvert, a nonresident senior fellow of technology policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

KGM claims that her use of social media from an early age addicted her to the technology and exacerbated depression and suicidal thoughts. Importantly, the lawsuit claims that this was done through deliberate design choices made by companies that sought to make their platforms more addictive to children to boost profits.



**Washington, Jan 28:** The chief judge of Minnesota's federal court ordered the acting chief of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement to appear in court Friday to personally explain why that agency has not complied with dozens of court orders in recent weeks.

In a filing late Monday, Chief Judge Patrick Schiltz said acting ICE director Todd Lyons must explain why he should not be held in contempt after his agency missed a deadline to provide a detainee with a bond hearing.

"This court has been extremely patient with respondents, even though respondents decided to send thousands of agents to Minnesota to detain aliens without making any provision for dealing with the hundreds of habeas petitions and other lawsuits that were sure to result," Schiltz wrote. "The court's patience is at an end."

The Department of Homeland Security, which includes ICE, was not immediately available for comment Tuesday. Schiltz said he will cancel Friday's hearing if the detainee is released. The judge, who sits in Minneapolis, was appointed to the bench by Republican President George W. Bush.

Schiltz's order came as protesters complain about ICE's tactics to advance President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown.

ICE agents shot and killed two US citizens, Renee Good

## US judge warns ICE chief with contempt

### US ICE agents to support security at Winter Olympics in Italy

**Rome:** US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel will help protect US delegations at the Winter Olympics in Italy, a US embassy source said Tuesday, confirming local media reports and prompting anger among some Italian politicians. ICE and Border Patrol agents have come under heavy criticism in the United States over their enforcement of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown after two US citizens were shot dead in separate incidents this month in the state of Minnesota.

The embassy source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) division would back up the US State Department's security service at the February 6-22 Milan Cortina Winter Olympics. The HSI agents will not carry out any immigration enforcement activity while in Italy but will rather aim to "mitigate risks from transnational criminal organizations", the source said, without elaborating. "All security operations remain under Italian authority," the source added. However, some Italian politicians, including

the leader of one of the parties in the right-wing coalition of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, an ally of Trump, have criticised the involvement of ICE in next month's Games. "It seems sheer idiocy to me," Maurizio Lupi, leader of the Noi Moderati party in Meloni's governing coalition, told *la Repubblica* daily, while recognising that Italian law enforcement bodies may need to coordinate with foreign counterparts.

and Alex Pretti, in separate enforcement actions in Minneapolis this month.

## Starmer heads to China



**London, Jan 28:** Prime Minister Keir Starmer will fly to China Tuesday on the first visit by a British leader in eight years, in a bid to mend ties with the world's second-largest economy and reduce its dependence on an increasingly unpredictable United States.

Starmer is the latest western leader to visit China, and his trip comes amid tensions between Britain and its long-standing closest ally - the United States - over President Donald Trump's threats to take control of Greenland.

On a three-day visit accompanied by dozens of business executives and two ministers, Starmer will meet with Chinese leaders in Beijing and then travel to Shanghai, before a brief visit to Japan.

At the forefront of the visit "will be what both sides make of the current behaviour and posture of the US and Trump," said Kerry Brown, professor of Chinese studies at King's College London.

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## ISSF "B" Coaches course concludes successfully with 55 coaches graduating



New Delhi, Jan 28 (TSIT) The five-day International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) "B" Coaches Course, conducted under the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) Education Program, concluded successfully here on Wednesday, marking another significant step in strengthening India's coaching ecosystem in the sport of Shooting. A total of 55 coaches were awarded diplomas on the final day, having successfully completed the intensive certification programme. After a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the ISSF Academy, who have newly developed these courses, and the NRAI last year, it was the first time such a course was conducted in India and

indeed anywhere in the world at this scale.

Led by Dr. Vesa Nissinen, Director, ISSF Academy and President of the Finnish Shooting Federation, the course brought together a diverse faculty of international and Indian experts, offering a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary learning experience. The program focused on advancing professional coaching practices, extending well beyond technical instruction to include athlete management, physical preparation, and long-term performance development.

The instructional team featured two-time Olympian and former India international rifle shooter Sanjeev Rajput, who led sessions on rifle shooting techniques, while Agathi Kassoumi and Vidhya Jadhav conducted modules on pistol shooting techniques. Davide Secondi of Italy, the current national coach of Saudi Arabia, delivered specialized instruction in shotgun shooting techniques. Sayali Manjrekar addressed the critical role of physiotherapy within a shooting team, and Vijendra Pal Singh conducted sessions on physical testing protocols for shooters in high-performance environments.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, NRAI Secretary General Pawan Kumar Singh highlighted the long-term significance of the program, stating, "The successful completion of this ISSF 'B' Coaches Course is a major milestone for Indian shooting. Our objective through the NRAI

Education Program is to build a strong, knowledgeable, and ethically grounded coaching base that can support athletes across all levels. With 55 newly certified coaches, we are adding quality and depth to the system, which will directly impact athlete development in the years to come."

ISSF Academy Director Dr. Vesa Nissinen expressed his satisfaction with the response and engagement from the participants, saying, "The level of commitment and curiosity shown by the coaches during this course has been outstanding. This program is designed to prepare coaches for a much broader professional role, creating structured training environments, understanding athlete psychology, physical preparation, and working effectively with support teams. India has immense potential, and programs like this lay a strong foundation for future international success."

The conclusion of the course further reinforces the NRAI's vision of becoming a global hub for ISSF-certified coaches, officials, and technical experts, while aligning closely with the federation's broader efforts to decentralize talent development and enhance coaching standards nationwide.

The graduation ceremony brought the curtains down on a landmark initiative under the NRAI Education Program, setting the stage for future collaborations with the ISSF Academy and continued capacity-building within Indian shooting.

## Novak Djokovic advances to the Australian Open semifinals after Musetti retires with injury



MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic

was the first to admit he's lucky to be back in the Australian Open semifinals instead of Lorenzo Musetti. Despite being two sets down, slowed by a serious blister on his foot and already thinking about his flight home, the 24-time major winner won Wednesday's quarterfinal when fifth-seeded Musetti retired with an injury.

Musetti took the first two sets 6-4, 6-3 but needed a medical timeout for treatment on his upper right leg after being broken in the third game of the third. The 23-year-old Italian played on for almost two games but couldn't continue. After serving a double-fault in the fifth game to give Djokovic another breakpoint

chance, Musetti wiped a hand across his face, walked toward the net and removed his headband before exchanging a handshake and quick hug. Djokovic, who was leading the third set 3-1, will continue his bid for an 11th Australian title and a record 25th major but acknowledged he was lucky this time. He also said, it happens in tennis.

"It happened to me a few times. But being in the quarters of a Grand Slam, two sets to love up and being in full control I mean, so unfortunate," for Musetti, Djokovic said in an on-court TV interview. "He should have been a winner today." Musetti was also forced to retire from the French Open semifinals last year with an injured left leg.

after taking a set from eventual champion Carlos Alcaraz. "I feel really sorry for him," the 38-year-old Djokovic said. "He was a far better player I was on my way home tonight."

In the first set, Djokovic tried to go out hard. He took an early break and was just a point away from a 3-0 lead before Musetti responded and took control of the match. The situation appeared to get more dire for Djokovic when he needed a medical timeout after the second set for a serious blister on the ball of his right foot.

"I tried my best yes. A blister here and there. I just wasn't feeling the ball today due to his quality, and his variety in the game," he said. "I'm extremely lucky."

But in tennis, no player takes any victory for granted. Just a few days ago, Djokovic received a walkover into the quarterfinals when Jakub Mensik withdrew 24 hours ahead of their scheduled fourth-round match with an abdominal injury. Djokovic has seen it from the other side. None more dramatic than here last year when he had to quit the Australian Open semifinals with a torn leg muscle. He was booted off the court when he retired immediately after dropping the first set against Alexander Zverev. Djokovic will next face the winner of Wednesday's later quarterfinal between No. 8 Ben Shelton and two-time defending Australian Open champion Jannik Sinner.

### Merchants and Bankers Golf tournament set for tee off



CHENNAI (TSIT): The 19th edition of the prestigious Merchants and Bankers Golf Tournament is set to take place at the Cosmo TNGF Golf Course on Friday, January 30. To be played in the Stableford format, the tournament is a test of both skill and mental fortitude, adding to the appeal of the sport. Hosted by the Rotary Club of Madras (RCM), itself a couple of years shy of marking its hundred years pres-

## U-19 World Cup: India inflict 204-run defeat on Zimbabwe in Super Six

BULAWAYO: Young middle-order batter Vihaan Malhotra showed admirable composure to rediscover his touch and compile a fine century, while Abhigyan Kundu extended his sublime run of form as India stormed to a commanding 204-run victory over Zimbabwe in their opening Super Six match of the U-19 World Cup here on Tuesday.

India, after an all-win group-stage campaign in which they emphatically defeated the USA, Bangladesh, and New Zealand, continued their aggressive brand of cricket to pile up a mammoth 352 for 8. The innings was anchored by Malhotra's cautious yet confident unbeaten 109 (107 balls, 7x4) while Kundu chipped in with a fluent 61 (62 balls, 5x4, 1x6), as the hapless Zimbabwe bowlers were taken apart with alarming ease.

Skipper Ayush Mhatre (3/14) bowled his part-time off-breaks to run through the late-order, completing the annihilation, while left-arm seamer Udhav Mohan also chipped in with three wickets.

India's pace-bowling duo didn't let up, as RS Ambrish (2/19) and Henil Patel (1/25) bowled the first nine overs in tandem to completely overwhelm the Zimbabwean batters, reducing them to 24 for 3 by the ninth over.

Zimbabwe were eventually bundled out for 148 in 37.4 overs, giving India a superb start to their Super Six campaign.

India now have six points and are on top of Group 2 of the Super Six. India carried four points into the Super Six, having beaten New Zealand and Bangladesh, the other teams to have qualified. Since USA didn't qualify, India's points weren't carried over.

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India's dominance was evident as they brought up their first 100 in just 62 balls, with batting prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi leading the charge. He piled on the runs with remarkable ease at the top, smashing a 52 off 30 balls, an innings studded with four boundaries and an equal number of sixes.

### I don't see Varun struggling with dew during World Cup: Anil Kumble



NEW DELHI: The legendary Anil Kumble has backed leg-spinner Varun Chakaravarthy to spearhead India's spin attack during next month's T20 World Cup as he believes he will have no issue dealing with the evening dew that could be more troublesome for a wrist spinner like Kuldeep Yadav.

The T20 showpiece is scheduled to be held from February 7 to March 8 in venues across India and Sri Lanka.

Speaking on JioHotstar, Kumble said dew is certainly going to play its part in the tournament "...especially during the time of the World Cup in February

and March, with matches being played late in the evening. It's not going to be easy. As spinners, you tend to get used to bowling with a wet ball; it's nothing new. "However, one aspect that India can certainly take comfort from is that I don't think it affects some-

Tamil Nadu man as the biggest plus among the tweakers. "I don't think dew will bother him (Varun) that much. Yes, it's not the same as bowling with a dry ball, of course, but with a wet ball, I don't see Varun struggling too much."

"Similarly, Axar Patel should also be fine. The one person who might find it a bit more difficult is Kuldeep Yadav with a wet ball because of his bowling style. Having said that, Kuldeep is also used to bowling in these conditions." Due to their bowling style, wrist spinners are likely to find it more difficult to grip a wet ball.

### Oram clueless about how to contain Indian batting

VISAKHAPATNAM:

The sustained aggression of Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav has made it difficult for New Zealand bowlers to "remain calm" in the ongoing T20I series, but bowling coach Jacob Oram urged them to embrace the challenge and learn how to negate it.

The three Indian top-order batters have put the New Zealand attack through the wringer, scoring consistently at a strike-rate of near 250 in the previous three T20Is.

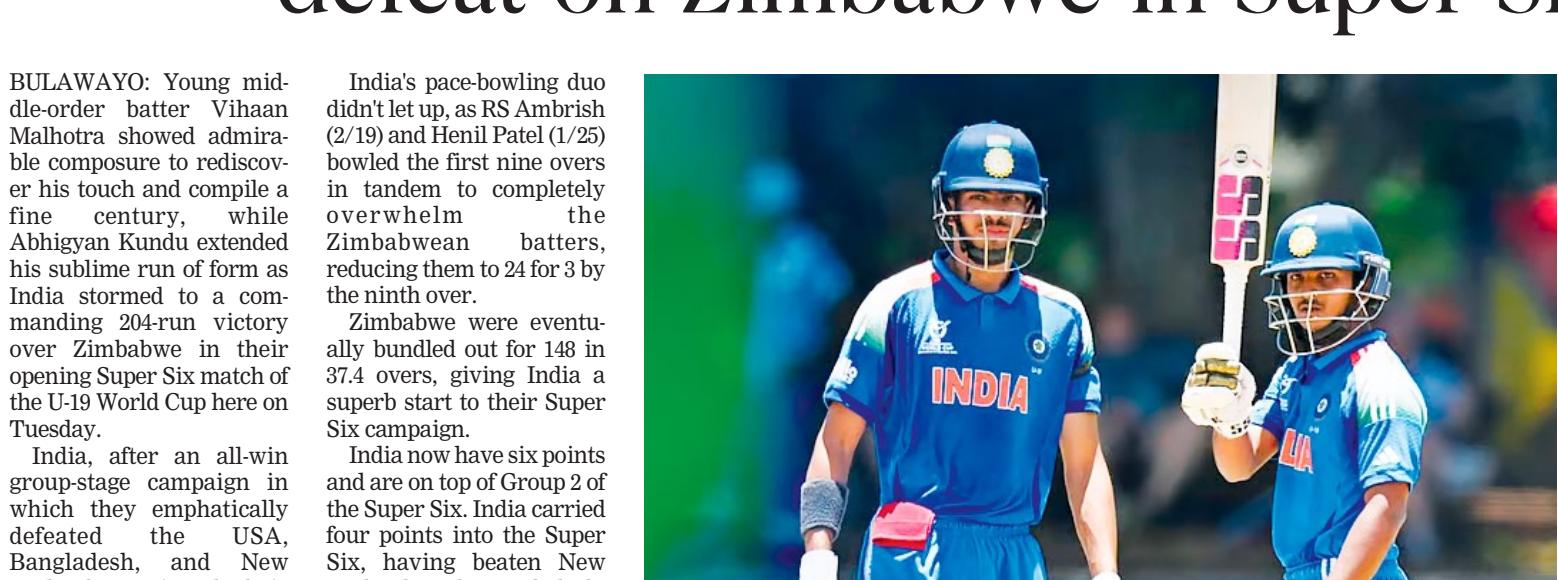
"It's been a little bit of chaos out in the middle with the ball flying everywhere, to remain calm and controlled and remember those plans and then obviously execute them. But I say again, it's all part of the learning," said Oram during the pre-match press conference here.

The clean-hitting of Indian batters reminded Oram of Sri Lankan great Sanath Jayasuriya, who batted in similar manner from the 90s to mid 2000s.

"Jayasuriya from Sri

Lanka who kind of did the same thing at that time and I think that's just a natural progression of the game. I think what you see is the tendency for bowlers to have to catch up and that's our challenge now as the bowling coach and there are plenty of discussions happening."

But neutralising three batters in prime form has been a huge challenge for the Kiwi bowlers. "Abhishek at the moment ... outstanding form, hitting it clean, let's just hope game two is reproduced in game four and we get him out early. We're not glazing over these results. "But the thing is he's (Abhishek) not the only one, Suryakumar has played well, Ishan Kishan in the second game. We know there are challenges up and down the (Indian batting) line-up," said Oram. Oram's words found a reflection in pacer Lockie Ferguson, who bowled extensively at nets here ahead of the fourth T20I on Wednesday.



India did hit a minor roadblock in the 11th over, losing Mhatre (21) and Suryavanshi in quick succession to slide to 101 for 3. The setback, though, barely dented the momentum, with Malhotra and wicket-keeper-batter Kundu batting with composure and resolve to steady the innings. Malhotra brought up his century off 104 deliveries as India continued to plunder runs. Zimbabwe's persistence with the profligate pacer Nigel Mazarai proved costly, with the bowler conceding 86 runs from his eight overs, effectively giving the opposition a licence to score freely. Zimbabwe threw as many as eight bowlers at the





## Suhas' entertainer Hey Bhagavan teaser unveiled, film to release on Feb 20

The teaser of hero Suhas' upcoming film Hey Bhagavan, touted as an out-and-out entertainer, was released on Wednesday. The film is slated for a worldwide theatrical release on February 20. Presented by Bunny Vaas and Vamsi Nandipati under the banners of Nandipati Entertainments and Bunny Vaas Works, the film stars versatile actor Suhas in the lead role, with Little Hearts fame Shivani Nagaram as the

heroine. Senior actor Naresh plays a key role, while anchor Sravanti Chokkarpal will be seen in an important character. The film is directed by Gopi Acharya and produced by B. Narendra Reddy under the Trishul Visionary Studios banner. Speaking at the teaser launch event, Suhas said his character in Hey Bhagavan is completely different from his earlier films and promises pure entertainment. He expressed confidence

### Suhas' entertainer Hey Bhagavan teaser unveiled, film to release on Feb 20

**S**habara, directed by Prem Chand Kilaru, stars Dheekshith Shetty and Kriitika Singh in the lead roles. The film is produced by Harshita Chadalavada, Durga Chunchu, and Ramadevi Kilara under the Visram Film Fraternity banner. The world of Shabara was introduced through the Heartbeat of Shabara event. Mithun Mukundan has composed the music, and Ajay Abraham George worked as the cinematographer. Dheekshith Shetty said, "Thanks to everyone who came for Shabara. The media gave good support to my film The Girlfriend. I hope they will give the



same support to Shabara. I think everyone must have liked \*Heart Beat of Shabara. Shabara means a world, a world created by Prem Chand. The whole story takes place in the forest. A success meet for this film will definitely happen. I have done eight films so far. For the first time, I trusted one person completely and did this film for Prem Chand. Thanks to the team that has been with us for two years.

Mithun created magic with his music. If you liked the Heartbeat of Shabara, please share it and support it so it reaches everyone. Director Prem Chand Kilaru said, "HeartBeat of Shabara has received a good response. The shooting is not yet complete. We will come before the audience soon. My father is more than God to me. If I am making a film facing him then you can understand what kind of film I am making. Thanks to Dheekshith for supporting me in this journey. Mithun has given excellent music. I will continue my journey with him from now on. Ajay Abraham George's name will be

heard more in the future. The film itself will speak. Doing what you like is life." Kriitika Singh said, "Without Prem Chand, Shabara would not have turned out this great. Thanks to him for trusting me and giving me such a good role. Heartbeat of Shabara is receiving a good response. This is just the beginning. We will come before the audience with much more content in the future."

## Buchibabu Sana releases trailer of Shri Chidambaram Garu, film to hit screens on Feb 6

**T**he trailer of the upcoming Telugu film Shri Chidambaram Garu was released by successful director Buchibabu Sana on Wednesday. The film is slated for a worldwide theatrical release on February 6. Directed by Vinay Ratnam, Shri Chidambaram Garu is produced by Chinta Vinisha Reddy and Chinta Gopala Krishna Reddy under the banner of Sri Chakras Entertainment and presented by Chinta

Varalakshmi. The film stars Vamsi Tummala and Sandhya Vasishtha in the lead roles. Earlier, the teaser of the film received an encouraging response, while the song Velledaari, sung by renowned music director MM Keeravani, also impressed audiences.

Releasing the trailer, Buchibabu Sana, who is currently directing the pan-India film Peddi starring Mega Power Star Ram Charan, extended his best wishes to the film unit. The trailer suggests that Shri Chidambaram Garu is a feel-good emo-

tional love story with a meaningful social message, presented in a natural and relatable manner.

Speaking on the occasion, the producer said the film has been made with a team of newcomers and carries a mature and inspirational message relevant to today's society. Highlighting the issue of youth distress, he said the story aims to inspire people to turn their flaws into strengths and face life with confidence. He expressed hope that the film would both entertain and motivate audiences.



## Golla Ramavva wins hearts of ETV Win audiences

**G**olla Ramavva, directed by Mullapudi Vara, is receiving an overwhelming response from audiences on ETV Win since its streaming began on January 25. The film, a powerful cinematic adaptation of the Telangana Armed Struggle written by former Prime Minister late P. V. Narasimha Rao, has been widely appreciated for its gripping narrative and emotional depth. The film is jointly produced by Ram Vishwas Hanurkar and Raghavendra Varma (Bujji) under the banners of Sucheta Dream Works Production and Varma Dream Creations. Azhar Shaikh served as Executive Producer and also contributed lyrics to the project. Notably, the same team earlier delivered Mouname Nee Bhasha for ETV Win, but Golla Ramavva has reportedly received nearly double the response, marking a significant achievement. Veteran actress Talluri Rameshwari, fondly known as "Telugu Sita Malakshmi," has been praised for her powerful portrayal in the title role. The film also features Allu Geetha, Anvitha and Mani Manthana in key roles. Expressing his happiness over the film's success, director Mullapudi Vara thanked the producers and everyone who supported the project. He also extended special gratitude to P. V. Prabhakar Rao and Surabhi Vanidevi, son and daughter of late P. V. Narasimha Rao, for their encouragement. The technical team includes music by Sai Madhukar, cinematography by Gangamoni Shekhar, editing by Raghavendra Varma, adaptation by Bayyavarapu Ravi, and PRO services by Dheeraj Appaji.



## Shruti's FL from Aakasamlo Oka Tara released

**T**he makers of director Pavan Sadineni's upcoming film 'Aakasamlo Oka Tara', featuring actors Dulquer Salmaan and Satvika Veeravalli in the lead, on Wednesday unveiled the look of actress Shruti Haasan in the film on the occasion of the actress' birthday.

Taking to its X timeline, well known production house Geetha Arts, which is presenting the film, shared the first look posters of the actress and wrote, "A trailblazer in every sense.... Team AakasamloOkaTara wishes @shrutihaasan a very Happy Birthday. And Meet a character that stands her ground and owns her space."

Directed by Pavan Sadineni, who is known for his inventive storytelling and distinct visual style, the film is being presented by the prestigious Geetha Arts and Swapna Cinema. 'Aakasamlo Oka Tara' is being produced by Sandeep Gunnam and Ramya Gunnam. Newcomer Satvika Veeravalli plays the female lead opposite

Dulquer in this film in which Shruti Haasan will be playing a pivotal role.

In the first look posters that were unveiled on Wednesday, Shruti sports an intense, unvarnished look, with glasses framing a steady, downward gaze that reflects quiet intensity. The cigarette in her lips and the drifting smoke add a gritty layer to her character, hinting at emotional depth.

Sources say Shruti Haasan's character is going to play a decisive role in the film's narrative arc, with her entry steering the story into a new phase. Her mere appearance suggests her to be a force who brings sharp dimension and weight to the drama.

The film boasts of a strong technical team with GV Prakash Kumar scoring its music, Sujith Sarang handling its cinematography and Shwetha Sabu Cyril overseeing production design. Currently in its final phase of production, 'Aakasamlo Oka Tara' is slated for a Pan-India release in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, and Malayalam in the summer of 2026.



## Director Yadhu Vamsee announces open casting call for new Telugu film

**F**ilmmaker Yadhu Vamsee, who made a strong impression with his debut film Committee Kurrulu, has announced an open casting call to discover a young female actor for his upcoming Telugu project. The initiative aims to identify fresh talent aged between 18 and 25 years, offering aspiring performers an opportunity to enter Telugu cinema through a merit-based and performance-driven process. Yadhu Vamsee's Committee Kurrulu earned critical acclaim for its rooted storytelling, social relevance and emotional depth. The film received top honours at the Gaddar Telangana Film Awards, international recognition at the Gulf Academy Movie Awards (GAMA) in Dubai, and a nomination for Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film at the 56th International Film

Festival of India (IFFI), establishing the director as a promising new voice in Telugu cinema. With the new casting call, the director is looking for an " — a young woman who reflects cultural rootedness, confidence and expressive ability. The focus, he said, is on emotional depth and natural performance rather than glamour or prior industry exposure. Aspiring candidates can submit their audition videos via email at yadhuvalley@gmail.com or through WhatsApp at 8639164104. The casting process is currently open, and entries are being reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Backed by Pink Elephant Pictures, the initiative reflects a commitment to nurturing new talent and strengthening content-driven Telugu cinema, offering a meaningful platform for fresh voices to begin their cinematic journey

