



Chouhan hits out at Congress over VB-G-RAM-G scheme protests



Trump warns new Venezuelan leader as Maduro set to appear in court

Virat Kohli Takes Stunning Vijay Hazare Trophy Decision Ahead Of New Zealand ODI Series



INBRIEF

3 injured as 5.1-magnitude quake hits Assam

Guwahati (TSIT) At least three people were injured in an earthquake of 5.1 magnitude, which jolted central Assam in the early hours of Monday, officials said. A National Center for Seismology (NCS) report said the quake was recorded at 4:17 am in Morigaon district on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, at a depth of 50 km. The exact location of the epicentre of the earthquake is at a latitude 26.37 N and longitude of 92.29 E in central Assam, it added. People in the neighbouring Kamrup Metropolitan, Nagaon, East Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, Hojai, Dima Hasao, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Charaideo, Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Dhubri, South Salmara-Mankachar and Goalpara districts also felt the jolt. Darrang, Tamulpur, Sonitpur, Kamrup, Biswanath, Udaguri, Nalbari, Bajali, Barpeta, Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Lakhimpur on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra too felt the tremor.

Couple from Andhra killed in road accident in US

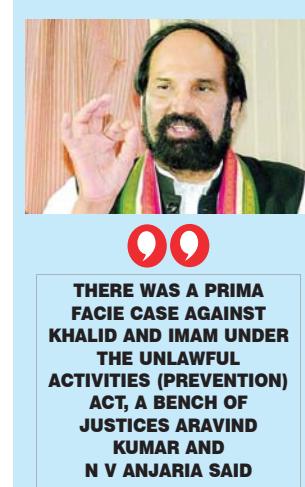
Palakkad (TSIT) A couple from Andhra Pradesh settled in the United States died in a road accident in Washington, a police official said on Monday. K. Krishna Kishore (49), a native of Palakkad, moved to the US in 1999 and married Asha (45), a native of Kakinada, who had already been settled there. "The couple

ple, Kishore and Asha, who were settled in the United States, lost their lives in a road accident in Washington on Sunday, leaving their families in West Godavari district devastated," the official said. Kishore's father, Purushottam, who has a vision impairment, and his mother continue to reside in West Godavari district. According to police, the couple had two children—a son and a daughter—while Kishore's sister is also settled in the United States. The couple had recently visited their native village and returned to the US.

Gas leak, fire at ONGC well triggers panic in Andhra village

Amaravati (TSIT) Huge flames following a gas leak from a well of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in Andhra Pradesh's Ambedkar Konaseema district on Monday sent people in a state of panic, forcing authorities to evacuate residents of nearby villages.

Panic gripped Irusumanda and surrounding villages in Malipikuram Mandal following a massive gas leak from a well of the ONGC. The crude-



THERE WAS A PRIMA FACIE CASE AGAINST KHALID AND IMAM UNDER THE UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT, A BENCH OF JUSTICES ARAVIND KUMAR AND N V ANJARIA SAID

Congress party was trying to create confusion among the public regarding Telangana state's water rights. He recalled that the Telangana state government had written letters to the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), Polavaram Project Authority, Central Water Commission, Union Ministry of

Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, opposed the Polavaram-Nallamala project. He claimed that that all these institutions agreed with the Telangana government's stand. He said that the letter written by the Central Water Commission to the state government on December 4 was a proof of this.

He stated that not only Telangana but also Maharashtra and Karnataka states are opposing this project. The irrigation minister revealed that the state government is also pursuing legal action in the Supreme Court. The government has appointed senior Supreme Court lawyer Abhishek Singhvi to protect the interests of the Telangana and present strong arguments. However, he revealed that the arguments scheduled for today (January 5) have been postponed to next Monday, and Telangana has been advised to convert the writ petition into a suit petition and file it accordingly.

in strengthening Visakh Refinery to support the nation's energy security. With this, the East Coast also emerges as a world-class refining hub, he added.

The Chief Minister was reacting to Union Minister for

Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri's post. Bharat's journey toward achieving energy security has reached a milestone with the successful commissioning of HPCL's Residue Upgradation Facility (RUF) at the Visakh Refinery,"

Avoid non-essential travel to Iran until further notice: MEA



TEHRAN/NEW DELHI (TSIT): India on Monday advised its nationals to avoid non-essential travel to Iran until further notice, owing to the recent developments in the country.

"Indian citizens and PIOs currently in Iran should exercise due caution, avoid areas of protests or demonstrations, and closely monitor news as well as the website and social media handles of the Embassy of India in Tehran," read an advisory issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

"Indian nationals living in Iran on resident-visas are advised to register with the Indian Embassy, if not already done so," it added. Iran is witnessing major protests in number of cities over the sharp depreciation of the national currency rial. Clashes between the security personnel and protesters have resulted in several deaths in Iranian provinces.

Earlier on Monday, India time, US President Donald Trump warned Iran against

using violence to suppress protests, saying the United States is closely monitoring the situation and would respond forcefully if Iranian authorities begin killing civilians. Aboard Air Force One on his way back to the White House from Mar-a-Lago, Trump was asked about reports of protesters being killed in Iran and his earlier comments that the US was "locked and loaded."

"We'll take a look," Trump said. "We're watching it very closely." Trump drew a clear line around the use of lethal force by Iranian authorities. "If they start killing people as they have in the past, I think they're going to get hit very hard by the United States," he said.

Mamata moves court over SIR

KOLKATA (TSIT): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said she would move court against the EC's SIR of electoral rolls, alleging that fear, harassment and administrative arbitrariness linked to the exercise had led to deaths and hospitalisa-

tions, as she sharpened her confrontation with the poll body ahead of the state assembly polls. Addressing a massive public gathering at Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas district, Banerjee alleged that technology was being "weaponised" to disenfranchise voters ahead of the 2026 Assembly

tions, as she sharpened her confrontation with the poll body ahead of the state assembly assembly polls. Addressing a massive public gathering at Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas district, Banerjee alleged that technology was being "weaponised" to disenfranchise voters ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, as she sharpened her confrontation with the poll body ahead of the state assembly assembly polls. Addressing a massive public gathering at Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas district, Banerjee alleged that technology was being "weaponised" to disenfranchise voters ahead of the 2026 Assembly

farmers will benefit as they will help in achieving higher yields and better quality of produce. The minister also asked farm scientists to focus on increasing the production of pulses and oilseeds to make India self-sufficient. The minister also highlighted that as many as 3,236 high-yielding varieties have been approved in the last 11 years since the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government came to power, as compared to 3,969 varieties that were between 1969 and 2014.

The newly released varieties have been developed to address challenges confronting the agricultural sector such as climate change, soil salinity, drought, and other biotic and abiotic stresses, while also supporting natural and organic farming practices.

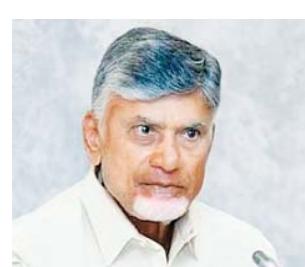


India surpasses China to become world's largest rice producer

New Delhi (TSIT): India has surpassed China to become the largest rice producer in the world with a production of 150.18 million tonnes, Union Agriculture Minister Shrikrishna Singh Chouhan has said. The minister said that China's rice production stood at 145.28 million tonnes. India has achieved great success in the development of high-yielding seeds and was now a leading exporter of rice to world markets, he added.

Chouhan launched 184 improved varieties of 25 field crops, developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), at an event held in the national capital. The 184 varieties that were released include 122 cereals, 6 pulses, 13 oilseeds, 11 fodder crops, 6 sugarcane, 24 cotton, and one each of jute and tobacco.

The Agriculture Minister also directed officials to ensure that these new varieties reach farmers quickly. Explaining the significance of the new advanced varieties, the minister said that



ANDHRA PRADESH ANCHORS ANOTHER MAJOR MILESTONE FOR AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT. AS PART OF THE THREE-STAGE VISAKH REFINERY MODERNISATION PROJECT (VRMP), THE REFINERY NOW HOSTS A NEW RESIDUE UPGRADATION FACILITY FEATURING THREE OF THE HEAVIEST REACTORS IN THE WORLD," THE CM NAIDU POSTED ON 'X'.

in strengthening Visakh Refinery to support the nation's energy security. With this, the East Coast also emerges as a world-class refining hub, he added.

The Chief Minister was reacting to Union Minister for

the Union Minister posted. Hardeep Singh Puri wrote that this critical infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh is a decisive leap toward Aatmanirbhav Bharat under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Naidu.

Amaravati (TSIT): Huge flames following a gas leak from a well of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in Andhra Pradesh's Ambedkar Konaseema district on Monday sent people in a state of panic, forcing authorities to evacuate residents of nearby villages.

Panic gripped Irusumanda and surrounding villages in Malipikuram Mandal following a massive gas leak from a well of the ONGC. The crude-

underway using a workover rig after the well had temporarily halted production. A powerful blowout released a massive volume of gas mixed with crude oil, which shot high into the air.

Local officials said the leaked gas soon caught fire, with flames erupting at the site. Thick clouds of gas and smoke spread across Irusumanda and the surrounding areas like dense fog, officials said.

mixed gas suddenly erupted while repair works were

US to receive \$600 bn in tariffs: Trump

Washington (TSIT): US President Donald Trump on Monday said the US has taken in, and will soon receive, more than \$600 billion through tariffs, arguing that the policy has strengthened the country financially and bolstered national security. The President also accused the country's media of downplaying the issue ahead of a key Supreme Court decision.

Chennai (TSIT) : Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will inaugurate the first phase of the Tamil Nadu government's ambitious laptop distribution programme, titled 'The World Is in Your Hands', on Monday. As part of the first phase, 10 lakh laptops will be distributed to college students across the state, marking a major step towards digital empowerment in higher education.

According to an official statement issued by the Tamil Nadu government, the initiative forms part of the DMK government's broader focus on student welfare and inclusive growth. Since coming to power,

the Stalin-led administration has implemented a range of education-oriented schemes, including the Tamil Pudhalvan scheme, the Innovative Women scheme, the First-Generation Graduate scheme, Post-Matric Scholarship programmes, and Social Justice Hostels, all aimed at expanding educational access and reducing socio-economic barriers.

As a continuation of these efforts, the Chief Minister had announced the distribution of 20 lakh laptops to college students in two phases, with the objective of equipping them with digital skills required in today's technology-driven world.

There was a prima facie case against Khalid and Imam under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria said. While the two will remain in jail, activists Gulfisha Fatima, Meera Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohd. Saleem Khan and Shadab Ahmad have been

given bail. According to the court, delay in trial does not operate as a "trump card" which automatically displaces statutory safeguards.

"All the appellants do not stand on equal footing as regards culpability. The hierarchy of participation emerging from the prosecution case requires the court to examine each application individually," the bench said, adding that the roles attributed to them are different. "This court is satisfied that the prosecution mate-

THE SCHEME AIDS TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY ACCESS TO STUDENTS FROM ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS ACROSS TAMIL NADU.

rial disclosed a prima facie allegation against the appellants Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam... This stage of proceedings does not justify their enlargement on bail," the apex court said.

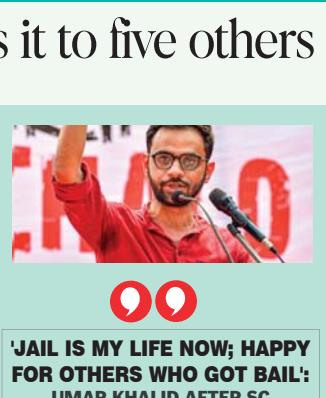
CM Stalin to launch distribution of 10 lakh laptops to TN college students


THE SCHEME AIDS TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY ACCESS TO STUDENTS FROM ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS ACROSS TAMIL NADU.

DELHI RIOTS CASE:
SC refuses bail to Umar Khalid & Sharjeel Imam, gives it to five others


NEW DELHI (TSIT): The Supreme Court on Monday refused bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case but granted it to five others, citing "hierarchy of participation" and saying all accused in the case do not stand on the same footing.

There was a prima facie case against Khalid and Imam under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria said. While the two will remain in jail, activists Gulfisha Fatima, Meera Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohd. Saleem Khan and Shadab Ahmad have been


JAIL IS MY LIFE NOW; HAPPY FOR OTHERS WHO GOT BAIL: UMAR KHALID AFTER SC DENIES BAIL

CM Revanth, Dpty CM Bhatt & several ministers attended the special screening of movie "Phule".

Hyderabad (TSIT) A special screening of the movie "Phule" produced by renowned journalist Ponnambalam Ravichandran was held at Hyderabad Prasad Labs. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy participated as the chief guest in this program. Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Vivek Venkata Swamy, Sridhar Babu, Ponnambalam Prabhakar, Vakiti Srihari along with many MLAs and MLCs were present in this program. On this occasion

On this occasion, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Jyothirao Phule and Savitribai Phule fought a great fight for the eradication of caste and the challenges they faced for women's education were vividly shown in the film. On this occasion, CM Revanth Reddy said that the social service qualities of the Phule couple and their lives are inspiring for today's generation.

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka said I would like to thank my cabinet colleagues Ponnambalam Prabhakar garu for inviting our Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues, MLAs and MLCs to the special screening of the movie Phule. This movie gives a wonderful



message to the Indian society.

The Phule couple laid the foundations for the advancement of women, overcoming caste discrimination and other problems in the society of that time and for an equal society. Today, we are experiencing those fruits and results in our own India. Our government, under the leadership of CM Revanth Reddy garu, will work to achieve their aspirations and goals by building on the foundations they laid. He said.

Writer Mamidi Harikrishna said, "Jyothirao Phule and Savitribai Phule fought a unique fight for the establishment of an equal society and for the advancement of women. It is commendable that this film is made as a living spectacle of their fight. It is necessary for everyone to make efforts for a great society with the inspiration of those great social reformers."

Music director MM Srilekha said, "I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to provide music for the film Phule. I was emotional while watching the film Phule. I cried at the end. The work done by Jyothirao Phule and Savitribai Phule for women is commendable." Congress leader VH said - Phule has made a great film. This film will inspire everyone. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that this film should be shown in every village. Only education can take the poor to great level. To provide that education to everyone, Jyothirao Phule and Savitribai Phule dedicated their lives for the society, working hard to eradicate discrimination against women and bad customs. He said

Producer and journalist Ponnambalam Ravichandran said, "I am happy that CM Revanth Reddy came to the special screening of the movie 'Phule'. He spent more than two hours watching the movie. I request that this movie be screened in every village. 'Phule' movie inspires everyone to eliminate the ills of society and provide education to everyone."

The ED action follows

ED attaches Rs 2.85 crore assets of former NHAI official for corruption and money laundering

New Delhi, Jan 5: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets worth Rs 2.85 crore, including flats, land, jewellery, and bank balances, belonging to former NHAI deputy general manager Prabhanshu Shekhar over allegations of corruption and money laundering during his tenure in Bihar from 2016 to 2022.

According to officials, Shekhar acquired these assets in his own name and in the names of family members by indulging in corrupt practices, including clearing inflated bills, manipulating measurement books, and overlooking the use of sub-standard construction materials by Ashoka Buildcon Limited. These actions generated significant proceeds of crime, which were deposited into bank accounts of his family and used for daily expenses. Cash proceeds were further invested in immovable properties, insurance policies, and gold and silver jewellery.

Officials stated that the ED's attachment includes flats and land in Bihar and Delhi, bank balances, investments, and valuables, aiming to prevent further misuse of illegally acquired assets.



investigations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, based on FIRs and charge-sheets filed by the CBI and Bihar's Anti-Corruption Bureau, citing offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and the Indian Penal Code. The CBI charge-sheet revealed that Shekhar amassed disproportionate assets totaling Rs 4.07 crore during his posting.

As their health condition deteriorated further, all the affected children were shifted to Jorhat Medical College and Hospital (JMCH) on Sunday morning for advanced treatment.

13 children hospitalised after consuming soapberries at Jorhat tea estate; 3 in critical condition

Jorhat, Jan 4: At least 13 children fell ill after consuming washnuts, also known as soapberries, at Bor Soycote Tea Estate in Titabara area of Assam's Jorhat district, officials said on Sunday.

According to a senior official from the health department, the incident occurred on Saturday evening when the minors accidentally consumed the soapberries while playing in the tea garden premises. Their condition report-



edly worsened later in the night, prompting parents to rush them to the estate's garden hospital.

Officials stated that the ED's attachment includes flats and land in Bihar and Delhi, bank balances, investments, and valuables, aiming to prevent further misuse of illegally acquired assets.

Govt-backed Bharat Taxi adds 45,000 users daily, crosses 4 lakh users

New Delhi, Jan 5 : A new government-backed cab-hailing app, Bharat Taxi, is gaining rapid traction across India just days after its launch, signalling a strong early response from users, giving fierce competition to Ola and Uber.

Supported by the Ministry of Cooperation, the app is seeing a surge in registrations, with around 40,000 to 45,000 new users signing up every day over the past two days.

According to a post by the Ministry of Cooperation on

social media platform X, Bharat Taxi has already crossed four lakh registered customers. The platform is currently ranked ninth on the Google Play Store and thirteenth on Apple's App Store, while its driver-focused app stands at number 20 on the Play Store.

The ministry said this phase marks a build-up towards a larger nationwide rollout under the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" and "Sahkar Se Samriddhi" vision led by Union Home



and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah. Bharat Taxi was formally launched as a cooperative-based alternative to existing cab aggregators.

It positions itself as a transparent and driver-friendly platform, with an emphasis

on police-verified drivers and safer travel. The app is now available on both Android and iOS, and early use suggests it is beginning to make space for itself in India's crowded ride-hailing market.

From a user's point of view, the app offers a clean and simple interface. Booking a city ride is easy, and the app also includes additional services such as metro ticket bookings and cab rentals for up to 12 hours.

Safety features are prominently highlighted, including

options to call the police, alert emergency contacts, reach a safety team, and activate a siren from within the app. While many of these features are similar to those offered by established players, their real-world performance will become clear only as usage grows. Early experience, however, also points to some limitations. Fares do not always appear cheaper than existing platforms, and there are occasional inconsistencies, such as identical pricing for AC and non-AC

cabs, suggesting the app is still being fine-tuned.

The sign-up process is quick and simple, requiring only basic details like a mobile number, name, and email address, but the overall experience still feels like a work in progress. A key promise of Bharat Taxi is its driver-first approach. The platform currently claims it will not charge any commission from drivers, allowing them to keep the full fare paid by passengers.

NTPC Ramagundam Operations Department organises Fitness Run

Peddapalli, Jan 5 (TSIT): The Operations Department, RSTPS, organised a Fitness Run on Monday at PTS, NTPC Ramagundam, with enthusiastic participation from employees and township residents. The initiative, held with the motto "Fit Engineers, Safe Operations, Stronger Families," aimed at promoting awareness about healthy living among employees and their families. The Fitness Run was flagged off from the Spandana Club premises by Executive Director (Ramagundam & Telangana) C. K. Samanta along with President of DMS Rakhi Samanta. Despite foggy weather



er conditions, over 300 members of the R&T family actively participated in the 5-km run, reflecting strong commitment towards fitness and well-being. Samanta appreciated the initiative and encouraged the organization of such activities periodically to foster a healthy lifestyle. Addressing the gathering, HOD (Operations), M. K. Jha highlighted the importance of healthy habits for personal well-being and safe, efficient operations and thanked all participants and contributors for the successful conduct of the event. He also acknowledged the support of the HR Department, Medical Services Team, and Spandana Club. The event was graced by GM (O&M), Telangana Mukul Rai, GM (O&M), Ramagundam Manish Aggarwal, CMO Dr. I. R. Lahari, senior officials of R&T Plant, senior DMS members, and representatives of the Union and Executive Association.



Nalimada Uttam Kumar Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Irrigation & CAD; Food & Civil Supplies, Government of Telangana, and others have called on the Hon'ble Governor of Telangana, Shri Jishnu Dev Varma, at Lok Bhawan, Hyderabad.

GITAM School of Architecture, Hyderabad Celebrates HOMECOMING 2025 with Alumni and Students



Hyderabad: The GITAM School of Architecture, Hyderabad, recently hosted HOMECOMING 2025, a memorable event that brought together alumni, faculty members, and current students in a celebration of shared heritage and enduring bonds. The gathering was marked by warmth and nostalgia as alumni fondly revisited their campus memories and shared experiences from their professional journeys. The event provided a vibrant platform for interaction and knowledge exchange, inspiring current students through alumni insights while reinforcing the lifelong connection between the institution and its graduates. The engaging interactions highlighted the School's strong academic culture and its commitment to building a closely knit and supportive community. Special appreciation was extended to all alumni and guests who contributed to the success of the event, with particular recognition to Alumni Coordinator Ar. Sneha S. Reddy for her meticulous planning and coordination. Her efforts played a key role in making HOMECOMING 2025 a meaningful and enriching experience for all participants. The event stood as a testament to the enduring legacy of the GITAM School of Architecture and served as a reminder of the importance of community, shared history, and collective growth in shaping future generations. The institution reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening alumni ties and fostering a sense of belonging for years to come.

CA Murali Manohar Palod elected chairman and Govind Narayan Rathi as vice-chairman of A.P. Mahesh Cooperative Urban Bank



Hyderabad: CA Murali Manohar Palod was unanimously elected Chairman and Shri Govind Narayan Rathi as Vice-Chairman of A.P. Mahesh Cooperative Urban Bank Ltd. following the Board elections held on December 7, 2025. The Bank, established in 1978, operates 45 branches across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. CA Palod said the Board will focus on improving financial performance, customer service, and accelerating digitalization. Vice-Chairman Rathi thanked shareholders and customers for their support. MD & CEO Shri V. Arvind said the smooth elections reflect stability and unity in the Bank's governance.

Chouhan hits out at Congress over VB-G-RAM-G scheme protests



Opposition Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha during discussions on the issue.

Terming the planned campaign "an attempt to protect corruption," Chouhan alleged large-scale irregularities under MGNREGA. "Under social audits done by gram sabhas, there were more than 10,51,000 com-

plaints. Same work was repeated, work was done by machine, and money was siphoned in the name of cleaning canals and roads. Thirty percent workers were above 60 years," he said.

Chouhan added that the Modi government had allocated significantly higher funds to rural employment,

UPSC aspirant held for posing as IAS officer for seven years

Palamu, Jan 5: In a startling case of impersonation, Jharkhand police have arrested a man who posed as a senior IAS officer for nearly seven years to fulfil his father's wish and his own dream of joining the civil services. According to police, the accused, identified as Rajesh Kumar (35), walked into the Hussainabad police station in Palamu district on January 2 and introduced himself as a 2014-batch IAS officer of the Odisha cadre, claiming to be posted as a chief accounts officer in Bhubaneswar. He told the officer-in-charge that he was on leave and sought police assistance in a land dispute involving a relative in the Hussainabad area.

Country's First Indigenous Runway Cleaning Vehicle Handed Over to Noida International Airport



Bengaluru: Minister for Large and Medium Industries M.B. Patil on Monday handed over the country's first indigenously manufactured airport runway cleaning vehicles, developed by Bengaluru-based Anlon Technology

Solutions Limited, to Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL). The advanced vehicles have been manufactured under the Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative. Developed in collaboration with Switzerland-based

M/s Bucher Municipal and assembled at Anlon's facility in the Adinarayanaahosahalli industrial area near Doddaballapur, the vehicles are designed to enhance runway safety. Minister Patil formally handed over the keys of two vehicles to NIAL representative Pradeep Rana.

The specialised vehicles are capable of removing nails and sharp metal fragments that pose a threat to aircraft tyres. They also vacuum dust and effectively clear algae from runways, reducing the risk of skidding during aircraft landings.

Siddaramaiah's Record Deserves to Be Buried, Not Celebrated:

H.D. Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru: Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah claims that he will break the record of Devaraj Urs. "What merit does he have for all this? Looking at the condition of the State, his record deserves to be buried.

Addressing a press conference at the JD(S) State office, JP Bhavan, the Union Minister said that Siddaramaiah, who boasts of having administered the State for a long time, is in fact a textbook example of bad governance. He expressed anguish, stating that Siddaramaiah's administrative record deserves to be consigned to dust.

"Karnataka, which once stood as a testimony to good governance, has today become an example of inefficiency and poor administration. Where is Devaraj Urs, and where are these people? Forget about breaking Urs' record, he himself will be the last Chief Minister of the Congress party in this State. Voters will teach Congress a lesson. Those who claim they will win the next election will be taught a fitting lesson by the electorate," he warned.

The last two-and-a-half years of governance will go down in history as one of the worst administrations. Corruption, murder, extortion, drug mafia activities and honour killings have continued unabated. Unable to curb any of this, it

appears that Siddaramaiah's government is functioning merely for the sake of setting records. Officers have been reduced to slaves. Under this administration, officials are working like bonded labourers, with no freedom whatsoever. You won't find a single good officer," he said, launching a scathing attack.

On the issue of law and order in the State, the Union Minister said that the Chief Minister and the Home Minister are behaving like impostors.

The Home Minister does not even understand the authority of his office. Whenever an incident occurs, they wash their hands of it by forming an SIT and speaking softly, he charged.

MakeO Tothsi Expands Bengaluru Footprint at HSR Layout with Apple International Dental, Bringing Expert Dental and Derma Closer to Consumers



Bengaluru : MakeO Tothsi, India's largest national teeth aligner brand and a clinical skincare chain focused on smile and skin makeovers, launched a new clinical center in HSR Layout, in partnership with Apple International Dental.

With over 300,000 treated cases across India, the brand continues to expand its offline presence, making expert-led and advanced dental care more accessible to urban consumers.

The HSR Layout Clinical Center, inaugurated by Karnataka's Transport Minister, Honorable Ramalinga Reddy, is operated by Apple International Dental. The center provides a comprehensive range of in-person dental services, including invisible aligners, braces, implants, and other advanced dental treatments.

Backed by 14 years of experience, Apple International Dental is recognized for delivering world-class, doctor-led care, supporting

ed by rigorous safety standards and a strong commitment to patient well-being.

"Our mission is to make professional orthodontic care accessible without compromising quality," said Dr. Arpi Mehta, Co-founder and CEO of Tothsi. "At HSR, patients will receive evidence-based treatment plans from experienced orthodontists, supported by digital monitoring for predictable outcomes and a comfortable experience."

In addition to dental services, the HSR clinical center also offers advanced aesthetic treatments through MakeO Skin solutions. These include laser hair reduction, targeted acne treatments, and advanced acne and anti-aging procedures. All treatments use advanced medical technology and personalized treatment plans, delivered under expert clinical supervision to ensure safe and effective results.

The clinic also provides flexible EMI options, free smile and skin consultations, and convenient booking options both online and offline.

Kochi/Kerala

KOCHI
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026

3

'Never dreamt of becoming a minister': Siddaramaiah set to equal record of longest-serving Karnataka CM

Mysuru, Jan 5 : Amid the leadership tussle, Siddaramaiah is all set to equal the record of the longest-serving Karnataka Chief Minister, held by D. Devaraj Urs, on Tuesday.

Devaraj Urs served two terms as the Chief Minister of Karnataka 1972-77 and 1978-80, while Siddaramaiah has been holding the post since May 2023 after serving a full term from 2013 to 2018.

Celebrations are already underway among Siddaramaiah's supporters and admirers. Congratulatory banners and posters have been put up near the Chief Minister's residence, including at the circle in front of the Kaveri residence in Bengaluru,

marking the occasion of Siddaramaiah achieving the distinction of becoming the longest-serving Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Addressing reporters in Mysuru, CM Siddaramaiah on Monday said that with the blessings of the people, he would, on Tuesday (Jan 6), equal the record of late Devaraj Urs in terms of the length of service as Chief Minister of the state. He noted that it was a moment of joy for him as Devaraj Urs also hailed from Mysuru district, to which he himself belongs.

Siddaramaiah said he had never expected to reach such a milestone when he entered politics. "I never imagined that I would become a minister



or the Chief Minister. I had only aspired to become an MLA after serving as a taluk board

member," he said.

The Chief Minister said he has contested 13 elections in total, including taluk board elections. "So far, I have won eight elections and lost two Parliamentary elections and two Assembly elections," he said.

Recalling the tenure of Devaraj Urs, he said there was no comparison between him and the late leader. "Devaraj Urs did not belong to a socially backward community. The Urs community is traditionally a ruling class. Though its population is small, he earned immense popularity and became Chief Minister. There can be no comparison between him and me," he said.

Siddaramaiah said circumstances and challenges differed from time to time. "When I first contested elections in 1983, people funded me and voted for me. Similarly, people supported and voted for Devaraj Urs during his tenure. Once, Devaraj Urs was elected unopposed in 1962. Times have changed now," he said.

Noting that political records are meant to be broken, he quipped: "Did Virat Kohli not break the records of Sachin Tendulkar?"

The Chief Minister said he did not believe that such milestones would remain unmatched. "Other leaders may emerge, they may rule for a longer period than me and present more budgets than me," he said.

CDSL IPF and BSE IPF in association with SEBI and IEPFA organize 'Niveshak Shivir'

Bengaluru : CDSL Investor Protection Fund (CDSL IPF) along with BSE Investor Protection Fund (BSE IPF) under the aegis of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), Ministry of Corporates Affairs, jointly organised the Niveshak Shivir on 3rd January, 2026. This outreach initiative aimed to assist shareholders in reclaiming unpaid dividends and unclaimed shares, thereby reducing the volume of unclaimed investor assets in the system, while empowering investors to safeguard their investments.

The awareness drive, themed 'Niveshak Shivir', focused on guiding participants through the process of reclaiming unpaid dividends and unclaimed shares. The Shivir was organized in collaboration with leading Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) including BSE, NSE, NSDL and the Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTAs) - KFin Technologies Limited, MUFG Infoline Private Limited, CAMS, Integrated Registry Management Service and Purva Shareregistry.

(India) Private Limited. To provide holistic assistance, the event featured 17 dedicated service desks offering end-to-end support on:

- Claiming dividends and shares that have remained unclaimed for over six years;
- On-the-spot updating of KYC and nomination details;
- Prompt resolution of claim-related queries;
- Processing of pending claims submitted to IEPFA.

The day-long event witnessed more than 892 investors and claimants from Bengaluru and surrounding locations. Attendees included retail investors, entrepreneurs, and corporate professionals.

The event was graced by Smt. Anita Shah Akella, CEO, IEPFA and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs; Shri Krishnanand Raghavan, Chief General Manager, Shri Binod Sharma, General Manager, SEBI; Lt. Col. Aditya Sinha, General Manager, IEPFA; Shri C.S. Harisha, Asst. Vice President, CDSL; Shri Vinay Kumar, BSE along with other senior officials from SEBI, IEPFA, MIIs, and RTAs.

Kumaraswamy Alleges Double Post-Mortem in Ballari Killing, Demands CBI Probe

Bengaluru : Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, revealed explosive information regarding the firing incident carried out by the gunman of Ballari MLA Nara Bharath Reddy's close associate, alleged that the post-mortem of Congress worker Rajasekhar, who was killed in the firing, was illegally conducted twice. He demanded that the State Government hand over the case to the CBI for investigation.

Addressing a press conference at the party's State office, JP Bhavan, the Union Minister said that while the murder of party worker Rajasekhar is one issue, the Congress government has gone to extreme lengths to cover up the killing of its own party worker. This, he said, is shameful. As part of this attempt, the unfortunate worker's body was subjected to post-mortem examination twice, he alleged.

"What were the findings of the first post-mortem report? What does the second post-mortem report say? The government must answer this. As per the information available to me, Rajasekhar's body was subjected to post-mortem examination twice," he said. "Why was a second post-mortem conducted? Who exerted pressure for it? Who ordered another examination? Was it because the first post-mortem report did not suit your interests?" Kumaraswamy asked sharply. "Aren't you honest? Every day you boast of 'Satyameva Jayate' in advertisements. Now speak the truth. Shouldn't the truth be told to the people of the State? What is there in the second post-mortem report? Hon'ble Chief Minister, tell the truth to the people," Kumaraswamy demanded.

There is information that in the first post-mortem, small pellets were found in the body. By conducting a second post-mortem, a conspiracy was hatched to fix the narrative that Janardhan Reddy himself fired the gun. However, the second post-mortem backfired on this government and on those who attempted to throw light on the issue, the Union Minister said. The Chief Minister says the incident happened due to firing in the air. The Deputy Chief Minister says his party will

stand by MLA Bharath Reddy. The Chief Minister himself has stated that the firing occurred from the gun of Satish Reddy's gunman. Yet, the Home Minister is delaying action through statements instead of ordering the arrest. Under these circumstances, what kind of investigation can this government conduct? Can the truth really come out through their investigation? Kumaraswamy questioned.

Accusing the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of attempting to bury the Ballari shootout case, Kumaraswamy said that when Janardhan Reddy wrote to the Union Home Minister seeking security, the Deputy Chief Minister mocked it, saying he could seek security from the US or Iran, or deploy 100 BJP workers for protection. "This is the kind of language used by the Deputy Chief Minister," Kumaraswamy lashed out. "The SP has been suspended for dereliction of duty? If that is the case, haven't the Additional SP and the IG also committed dereliction of duty? When the stampede occurred near the Chinnaswamy stadium, several senior police officers were suspended. Then why is action being taken only against the SP in Ballari? Aren't the officers who have been posted there for years also at fault?" The Minister asked angrily. The Deputy Chief Minister has said that disturbances are occurring after Gali Janardhan Reddy came to Ballari, with Home Minister Parameshwara echoing the same line. Janardhan Reddy came to Ballari one-and-a-half years ago with Supreme Court permission.

Vehicle registrations witness mixed trends in coastal Karnataka during 2025



Mangaluru, Jan 4 : While vehicle registrations continued to rise nationally, coastal Karnataka witnessed uneven trends over the past year. India saw 2.62 crore vehicles registered in 2024, which rose by 7.69% to 2.82 crore in 2025. In Karnataka, registrations increased from 18.88 lac in 2024 to 19.09 lac in 2025, marking a 1.15% rise.

Within the Mangaluru and Udupi RTO jurisdictions, registrations showed an upward trend. Mangaluru recorded a 2.44% increase, while Udupi saw a 3.97% rise. In contrast, registrations fell in Bantwal and Puttur RTO areas.

Meanwhile, registrations declined in Puttur and Bantwal. Puttur RTO registered 12,283 vehicles in 2025, down 5.15% from 12,950 in 2024, including 7,410 two-wheelers, 3,207 light motor vehicles, and 727 electric vehicles. Statewide, two-

wheelers remain the preferred choice, with 13.42 lac sold in 2025. In coastal districts, Mangaluru led with 30,335, Udupi 24,458, Puttur 7,410, and Bantwal 4,514 two-wheelers sold.

Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurdo Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India
Branch Office: City Mall, 2nd Floor, Office No.62/1521, YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode (Calicut)-673001
[See provision to rule 8(6) Notice for sale of immovable assets]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs, Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Mathai K U (Borrower) Jitha Mathew (Co-Borrower) Lan No. LHCLT00001318033	Re Sy No 161/9 Baluserry Koyilandy Re Sy No 161/9 Calicut Kerala- 673612	Rs. 14,51/- 989/-	Rs. 40,73/- 387/-	January 08, 2026 11:00 AM	January 22, 2026 02:00 PM	January 21, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-<https://BidDeal.in>) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Mortgagors/ notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till January 21, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before January 21, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form and Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article or before January 21, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icicilfc.com/>

Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited", CIN Number: U65922MH1999PLC120106

EDITORIAL

Why NHRC's Global Downgrade Demands Urgent Reform

The year 2025 was a turbulent one for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which proclaims to stand tall in its human rights interventions and was once considered a shelter in the storm for Indians. The recent decision by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to downgrade the status of the apex human rights body of the world's largest democracy, however, is a sobering story.

Since its inception in 1993, the NHRC has had chairpersons of four thematic commissions as its deemed members. In 2019, this was expanded to include three more thematic national commissions. To make its services more accessible to citizens, every state has a human rights commission and, in addition, thematic commissions meant for women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, among others. In all, there are 169 such institutions, making India the country with the largest number of national and state human rights institutions.

Accreditation by GANHRI

National human rights institutions around the world are accredited by GANHRI, which ensures their compliance with the Paris Principles. These principles set out the minimum parameters for national human rights institutions, emphasising their broad mandate and functions and their pluralism, independence and effectiveness.

As part of this alliance since 1997, the NHRC was subjected to GANHRI evaluation in 2016, 2023 and 2024, in which its 'A' status was deferred thrice by a sub-committee on accreditation, or the SCA. The GANHRI sub-committee recommended actions for the NHRC to consider. These included emphasising plurality of gender, ethnicity and representation of religious minorities within the NHRC. It also recommended a transparent appointment process and independent and effective functioning. The recommendations highlighted the need to effectively intervene in several human rights violations and the lack of civil society engagement by the NHRC. They also raised concerns that only police officers were investigating abuses by their colleagues, which was seen to greatly jeopardise independence and accountability. These recommendations were the result of reports by civil society organisations at the regional, national and international level that communicated the NHRC's non-compliance with the Paris Principles.

NHRC downgraded after inaction

While laudable for its large network and broad mandate, the NHRC's conduct in some of the gravest instances of abuse has been deeply concerning. In 2015, the commission intervened – on the same day as the incident, April 15, 2015 – in the fake encounter killing of 20 Tamil labourers by the Red Sanders Special Task Force in the Seshachalam Forest Range of the erstwhile undivided state of Andhra Pradesh.

The NHRC intervened swiftly, conducted rapid investigations and passed effective interim orders, but thereafter failed to ensure their implementation. Even after ten years, it has been unable to vacate the Andhra Pradesh High Court's stay of its order dated May 29, 2015.

Another chilling incident was that of police excesses in 2018 against demonstrators protesting Vedanta's copper smelting unit in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. Infamously called the Sterlite shooting, it led to 16 deaths and left hundreds critically injured. The NHRC did not hold the police accountable. Instead, it closed the case, citing the Tamil Nadu government's compensation and the appointment of a commission of inquiry. It thus left the victims in the dark, despite eight UN Special Procedures voicing their condemnation of the killings since May 30, 2018.

Edit

KOCHI
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026

4

info.southindientimes@gmail.com

ACT OF TERROR WAR?

Donald Trump Has A New Project: 'Make Venezuela Great Again'



The Trump administration has made a remarkable bet early in the new year by capturing Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife in a military raid in Caracas last week. For a President who had come to office pledging to end "forever wars", this is a serious turnaround as he is now suggesting that the US is "going to run the country [Venezuela] until such time as we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition". Trump's "America First" agenda now includes rebuilding a South American nation whose economy is in shambles and whose political institutions have been eroded by the vagaries of dictatorship over decades.

After being charged with drug and weapons offences, Maduro and his wife are reportedly being held at Brooklyn's Metropolitan Detention Center. Venezuela's Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez vowed the government is ready "to defend" the country, and condemned "armed aggression". US oil companies would also fix Venezuela's "broken infrastructure" and "start making money for the country." Trump also seems to be not ruling out deployment of American soldiers to Venezuela at this point, saying, "We're not afraid of boots on the ground...we had boots on the ground last night." This is a significant policy shift from "Make America Great Again" to "make Venezuela great again". Operation Absolute Resolve

Tensions between the United States under President Donald Trump and Venezuela intensified significantly between 2017 and 2021, when Washington took a hardline stance against Maduro, whom it accused of authoritarianism, human rights abuses, and corruption. After the disputed 2018 presidential election, the United States refused to recognise Maduro's legitimacy, and in 2019, the Trump administration formally recognised opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president,

dramatically escalating diplomatic tensions. The US imposed sweeping economic sanctions targeting Venezuela's oil industry, state assets, and key government officials, aiming to pressure Maduro to step down. While Washington argued that sanctions were intended to restore democracy, its actions merely worsened Venezuela's already severe economic crisis, marked by hyperinflation, shortages of food and medicine, and mass migration.

Washington's recent military intervention, 'Operation Absolute Resolve', culminating in the dramatic capture of Maduro, signals a definitive shift in American strategic posture in the Western Hemisphere. By asserting that the US will "run" Venezuela until a transition occurs, Trump has effectively operationalised his recently released National Security Strategy, underlining his penchant for transactionalism and strategic primacy in America's periphery.

It's The Oil, Silly
This shift is not merely about regime change; it is a calculated geopolitical move to secure Venezuela's vast energy reserves

and purge extra-regional influences, namely China, Russia, and Iran, from America's "near abroad". Trump's insistence that American companies will lead the reconstruction of Venezuela's oil infrastructure underscores a foreign policy where economic interests and national security are inextricably linked.

However, the "day after" problem remains acute. While the Chavista leadership is decapitated, the underlying institutional decay and humanitarian crisis persist, risking a protracted period of instability that could haunt Washington's regional ambitions. For the global order, Trump's decisive, yet disruptive, unilateralism in Caracas serves as a stark reminder: in the current age of great power competition, the US is increasingly willing to trade global legitimacy for hemispheric dominance.

Trump entered office nearly a

year ago, projecting himself as a dealmaker-in-chief who is committed to ending wars rather than starting new ones. Yet the record of the past year tells a more familiar story of American power being exercised through force. Despite the rhetoric of restraint, the use of military instruments

has remained central to his foreign policy toolkit.

Same Old, Same Old
In just the past week, Trump authorised air strikes in Syria and Nigeria, underscoring how quickly crisis management has translated into kinetic action. This pattern has been evident throughout 2025. US forces struck Iranian nuclear facilities, intercepted suspected drug-trafficking vessels in the Caribbean, and carried out operations against rebel groups in Yemen. American military power has also been deployed against armed factions in Somalia and Islamic militants in Iraq. Yet this is nothing new but a continuation of Washington's long-standing reliance on coercive tools to manage instability and signal resolve. Trump's presidency, much like those before him, reveals the structural constraints that limit any US leader's ability to disengage from global conflicts. The promise of peace has collided with the realities of power, interests, and credibility, leaving military force as an option that Trump, like his predecessors, has shown little hesitation in using. Other powers will be watching and learning.

How Venezuela's China-Made Weapons Failed To Keep The US Away



The United States' military intervention in Venezuela on the evening of January 3, 2026, has kicked the new year off with great uncertainty for the Western Hemisphere. In hindsight, it seems that while the air strikes and the arrest of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife may have been unprecedented, military tensions between the US and Venezuela were likely to manifest one way or another. The November 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS) released by US President Donald Trump clarified that the 'Monroe Doctrine' was back in action and that the US was putting in place plans to carve an undisputed 'sphere of influence' in the Western Hemisphere. In particular, the NSS highlighted that the US National Security Council will build an interagency task force supported by the Intelligence Community's analytical arm, to "identify strategic points and resources in the Western Hemisphere with a view to their protection and joint development with regional partners". Further, the goal is to keep "Non-Hemispheric competitors" out of the region, so that they do not "harm [the US] strategically in the future". These odes, combined with the buildup in tensions between the US and Venezuela over illicit narcotic trade and sustained American sanctions on Venezuelan oil traders, now constitute the

metaphorical writing on the wall. China As A Competitor. It is clear that China is one such 'Non-Hemispheric Competitor' in the US's conception. Maduro's regime was Beijing-friendly, and the economic and military ties between Venezuela and China run deep. Naturally, with Maduro set to face "the full wrath of American justice on American soil", in US Attorney General Pam Bondi's words, and Trump wanting Washington to "run Venezuela", China's interests and stakes in the country and the region are in jeopardy. But what are these interests and stakes? What is China likely to be concerned about now? For starters, if one looks at the statement released by the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry a few hours after the US's strikes, there is harsh condemnation of America's actions on the account that it is a violation of Venezuela's sovereign

territory, international law, and principles of the UN Charter. Beijing also opposed the actions on the grounds that they fundamentally "threaten peace and security" in Latin America. As much as China is an aggressor in its own region, in narrative, it has often used international law and UN-centred norms as ideals that each great power must uphold. In that regard, in Beijing's view, the US's actions are a display of raw power, even if the indictments issued by New York courts act as some *casus belli* for Washington's intervention. But beyond the rhetoric, China would ideally be seriously concerned about two main issues - the failure of some of its military equipment used by the Venezuelan Armed Forces, and the future of its oil and economic ties with both Caracas in specific and Latin America (LatAm) in general. The

Silence Within China
Venezuela's National Guard deployed over a hundred Chinese-origin Armoured Utility Vehicles of the VN4 class, its Marines deployed approximately 10 each of the Chinese-origin, VN-1 and VN-18 class Infantry Fighting Vehicles, and its Air Force operated over 20 K-8 'Karakorum' light attack fighter aircraft developed by China's Hongdu Aviation Industry Corporation. Most importantly, the Caracas fielded the China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC)-made JY-27 counter-stealth radar, which the Chinese claimed in May 2025 could capture and locate "extremely stealthy targets". As is evident from the US's successful campaign, which used both F-22s and F-35s in operations, Venezuela's air defence systems failed to respond to, if not detect, threats.

Why the Murder of Anjel Chakma Exposes India's Everyday Racism Against the Northeast

The year 2025 ended with nationwide protests demanding justice for Anjel Chakma, a 24-year-old youth who was pursuing an MBA in Dehradun. According to news reports, on December 9, 2025, Anjel was out on a routine errand with his brother, Michael Chakma, when they encountered some local men hurling racial slurs at them because of how they looked and the language they spoke. The brothers protested and the altercation quickly escalated. Anjel was repeatedly stabbed and sustained serious injuries, to which he succumbed after fighting for his life in hospital for 16 days. His last words were, "I'm not Chinese. I'm an Indian." Anjel Chakma was from Tripura, one of the seven northeastern states that have been constitutionally recognised as part of India for a considerable length of time. I am also from Tripura, and as many of my peers from the state would corroborate, we have all had to explain where Tripura is at some point during our stay in any so-called mainland state of the country we call our own. Fellow citizens have asked us whether it is somewhere in Assam. I have personally been asked by a civil services aspirant whether Tripura is in South India because its name resembles Trivandrum or Thiruvananthapuram. As Indian citizens from Tripura, these questions are not nearly as baffling to us as the confidence – and lack of embarrassment – with which they are asked. The shameless ignorance about the Northeast prevalent in mainland India is not merely a matter of individual negligence; it is a symptom of the systematic exoticisation of the region and its

people, layered and deeply entrenched. The demography of the Northeast is as varied as that of the rest of India. Contrary to popular belief, we do not all look the same. Factors such as tribal migration, self-acclituration, and assimilation from animism into religions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity have shaped the region's population. Political events, particularly those related to the Indian state and its foreign policies, have also had a significant impact, resulting in states like Tripura and Assam hosting substantial non-indigenous populations. In Tripura especially, Bengali settlement began as early as the mid-fifteenth century. Historian Anindita Ghoshal writes: "Historically, the Hindu rulers of Tripura's Manikya dynasty had always encouraged the immigration and settlement of non-tribals, especially Bengalis, in Tripura. Rajmala, a court chronicle of the Tripura kings, authenticates the fact that Ratna Manikya (1464–1468) was the first to 'settle 4,000 Bengalis in four

places' in Tripura. Gradually, the tribal kings adopted Hinduism as the state religion and assimilated Bengali language and literature into their culture." During the late colonial period, and again during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, Tripura witnessed a massive influx of Bengalis from East Bengal, further complicating the question of Bengali presence in the state. The assimilated socio-religious culture practised by both indigenous and Bengali communities is another reason why the region's demography cannot be neatly compartmentalised into exclusive categories. The shifting of political territories on paper maps has displaced cultures, languages and nationalities of indigenous people and Bengalis alike. As one can see, identity politics in Tripura is complex – making it easier for many mainland Indians to either ignore this reality altogether or to deny us the dignity of an Indian identity. In practice, development, modernisation and knowledge production about the Northeast have largely

remained matters of what I can only mock as "the brown man's burden" – a sympathetic, representative framework rather than a genuine component of nation-building. As young adults, many of us, like Anjel Chakma, are compelled to leave our homes for the so-called mainland to pursue even the most basic of modern livelihoods. In a country that obsessively equates familial duty with physical proximity, we are forced to migrate far away to ensure our families have access to care and opportunity. If we stay back and demand equitable development from the government, we are labelled "extremists". The systematic ignorance of our demography, cultures, languages and people is excused because we are treated as an exotic anomaly – one that does not fit the acceptable, marketable "image" of an Indian. And because we are "exotic", we are also perceived as threatening. Among Indians who are blessed with resemblance to that image, we deserve the fate of a snake that appears in broad daylight: either "rescued" and caged.

Crude oil rises in futures trade amid Venezuela crisis

New Delhi: Crude Oil prices rose by Rs 42 to Rs 5,197 per barrel in the futures trade on Monday amid cautious sentiment over geopolitical developments. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), crude oil futures for January delivery rose by Rs 42, or 0.81 per cent, to Rs 5,197 per barrel in a business turnover of 18,270 lots. Similarly, the February contract increased by Rs 37, or 0.72 per cent, to Rs 5,202 per barrel in 3,011 lots. In the international markets, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil futures went up by 0.24 per cent to USD 57.46 per barrel, while Brent Crude was trading marginally higher at USD 60.78 per barrel in New York. "WTI crude oil futures hovered around USD 57.2 per barrel on Monday, moving between gains and losses as investors assessed the implications of recent US military action in Venezuela, including the capture of President Nicolas Maduro," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd, said. The market sentiment remains cautious amid concerns over potential supply disruptions, given



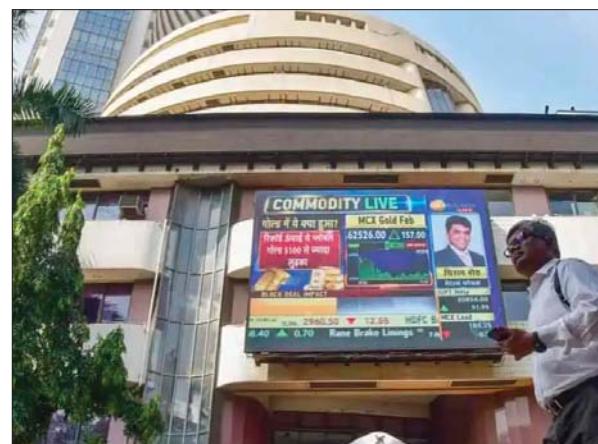
Venezuela's status as the country with the world's largest proven oil reserves, he added. Market experts believe the immediate impact on global supply may be limited, as Venezuela's current output stands below one million barrels per day, representing less than one per cent of total global production. Meanwhile, rising concerns that the US may intensify pressure on other oil-producing nations, such as Iran, could lead to tighter supply conditions later in the year, Kalantri said. He added that some reports sug-

gest the White House has encouraged US companies to support the revival of Venezuela's oil industry, particularly for firms seeking compensation for assets expropriated nearly two decades ago. Shares in US energy companies have jumped as investors bet that the US capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro will open opportunities to tap the country's oil reserves. Shares in Chevron opened more than 4% higher, after surging more than 7% in pre-market trading, while other firms, including

ConocoPhillips and Exxon also gained. Precious metal prices and shares in defence stocks also rose as the intervention increased investors' concerns about geopolitical risks. Gold was about 1.9% higher at \$4,412 (£3,275) an ounce, while the price of silver was up by 3.6%, as money was moved into so-called "safe-haven" assets. Prices of precious metals such as gold and silver often rise in times of uncertainty as they are seen as safer assets to hold. The gold price saw its best annual performance last year since 1979 after rising by more than

60%, reaching an all-time high of \$4,549.71 on 26 December. Those gains were driven by several factors including expectations of more interest rate cuts, major purchases of bullion by central banks and investor concerns about global tensions and economic uncertainty. Oil prices fluctuated on Monday as investors weighed whether Washington's intervention in Venezuela would affect crude supplies. Brent crude rose more than 1% to nearly \$61.50 a barrel, still below highs seen in recent years, as analysts said ample global supplies would offset any disruption. Shares in Chevron, the only US company currently operating in Venezuela, rose 4%, while Spanish energy firm Repsol, among the other few Western energy firms with a presence in the country, gained 2%. Oil services firms also climbed, with Halliburton up more than 7%. US President Donald Trump has vowed to tap into Venezuela's vast oil reserves after seizing Maduro and said that the US will "run the country until such time as we can do a safe."

Stock markets decline in early trade dragged by IT firms



Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Monday, dragged by blue-chip IT stocks. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 125.96 points to 38,636.05 during early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 30.95 points to 26,297.60. From the 30-Sensex firms, HCL Tech, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, and NTPC were among the biggest laggards. However, Bharat Electronics, Tata Steel, Axis Bank, and Reliance Industries were among the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 289.80 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) also bought stocks worth Rs 677.38 crore. "The year 2026 has begun with major geopolitical developments which can have profound consequences. The US action in Venezuela has the potential to further destabilise global geopolitics," V K Vijayakumar, Chief

Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index were trading significantly higher, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted marginally lower. US markets ended mostly in positive territory on Friday. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.08 per cent to USD 60.70 per barrel. On Friday, the Sensex climbed 573.41 points, or 0.67 per cent, to settle at 35,762.01. The Nifty went up by 182

points, or 0.70 per cent, to 26,328.55. Foreign portfolio investors have started 2026 on a cautious note, extending their selling streak from last year by withdrawing Rs 7,608 crore (USD 846 million) from Indian equities in the first two trading sessions of January. The withdrawal of funds followed the largest outflow of Rs 1.66 lakh crore (USD 18.9 billion) recorded in 2025, triggered by volatile currency movements, global trade tensions and concerns over potential US tariffs, and stretched market valuations. This sustained selling pres-

sure by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) has significantly contributed to the nearly 5 per cent depreciation of the rupee against the dollar during 2025. However, market experts believe the tide could turn in 2026. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said the year is likely to witness a shift in FPI strategy, as improving domestic fundamentals may start attracting net foreign inflows. A robust GDP growth and the prospects of a recovery in corporate earnings bode well for positive FPI flows in the coming months, he added. Echoing similar views, Vaqarjaved Khan, Senior Fundamental Analyst at Angel One, said normalisation in India-US trade relations, a benign global interest rate environment and stability in the USD-INR pair could create a favourable backdrop for foreign investors. He noted that equity valuations have become relatively comforting compared to last year, which could further support a revival in inflows.

Net office leasing up 25 pc in 2025 in top 8 Indian cities: Report



New Delhi: Net leasing of office spaces rose 25 per cent last year to a record 61.4 million sq ft across eight major cities on strong demand from domestic and overseas companies, according to Cushman & Wakefield. Net leasing of office spaces stood at 49.1 million sq ft during 2024 in these eight cities. Net absorption or leasing represents the net change in office space occupied during the year. Real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield on Monday released the data, showing that net office leasing rose in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Delhi-NCR, and Chennai but declined in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad. "The last year's performance reflects more than record numbers, it signals a long-term growth trajectory anchored in strong fundamentals," said Anshul Jain, Chief Executive, India, SEA, MEA & APAC Office and Retail, Cushman & Wakefield. He projected

that the office demand would remain strong during 2026, driven by expansion of global capability centres (GCCs) in India and rising technology adoption. As per the data, the net office leasing in Chennai almost tripled to 7 million sq ft last year from 2.4 million sq ft in the 2024 calendar year. Delhi-NCR witnessed a sharp growth of 82 per cent in net office leasing to 10.9 million sq ft during 2025 from 6 million sq ft in the preceding year. Bengaluru, the most prominent office market, witnessed a marginal rise

in net office leasing to 14.4 million sq ft from 14.2 million sq ft in the preceding calendar year. According to Cushman & Wakefield, the gross leasing of office space also hit an all-time high at 88.7 million sq ft in 2025, up 1 per cent from 88 million sq ft in the preceding year. The gross leasing factors in all leasing activity in the market, including fresh take-up, open market renewals by occupiers as well as pre-leasing. New supply of office spaces rose 17 per cent to around 53 million sq ft during the last year.

THE FRENCH UNIVERSITY WHERE SPIES GO FOR TRAINING



University professor Xavier Crettiez admits that he doesn't know the real names of many of the students on his course. This is a highly unusual state of affairs in the world of academia, but Prof Crettiez's work is far from standard. Instead, he helps train France's spies. "I rarely know the intelligence agents' backgrounds when they are sent on the course, and I doubt the names I'm given are genuine anyway," he says. If you wanted to create a setting for a spy school, then the campus of Sciences Po Saint-Germain on the outskirts of

Paris seems a good fit. With dour, even gloomy-looking, early 20th Century buildings surrounded by busy, drab roads and large, intimidating metal gates, it has a very discreet feel. Where it does stand out is its unique diploma that brings together more typical students in their early 20s, and active members of the French secret services, usually between the ages of 35 and 50. The course is called Diplôme sur le Renseignement et les Menaces Globales, which translates as Diploma of Intelligence and Global Threats. It was developed

Samsung Presents 'Your Companion to AI Living' at The First Look During CES 2026



everywhere. "Samsung is building a more unified, more personal experience across mobile, visual display, home appliances and services," said CEO TM Roh. "With our global connected ecosystem, and by embedding AI across categories, Samsung is leading the way to offer more meaningful everyday AI experiences." Entertainment Companion: Extending the Experience Beyond Simple Viewing SW Yong, President and Head of the Visual Display (VD) Business at

center of the display lineup is the 130-inch Micro RGB, which represents a monumental leap in scale and picture quality. The 130-inch Micro RGB marks a new era of color, featuring the widest and most detailed spectrum ever seen in Samsung TVs while its Timeless Frame design minimizes distractions and allows the picture to take center stage with understated elegance. A micro-sized RGB light source drives the unprecedented picture quality, with each microscopic red, green and blue diode shining independently to produce color in its purest, most natural form. Micro RGB AI Engine Pro enables precise control of RGB colors and creates overwhelmingly vivid picture quality in every scene. Elevating this next-level viewing experience, Vision AI Companion (VAC) uses AI technology to work alongside users as a full entertainment companion to enhance viewing, dining and mood. Samsung Electronics, and Sukhmani Mohta, Chief Marketing and Partnerships Officer, VD Business at Samsung Electronics America, took the stage to describe how Samsung's displays are combining hardware excellence and visual intelligence to provide a true entertainment companion. Drawing from twenty years of leading the TV industry, Samsung has built a full AI TV lineup that provides an entirely new way for users to interact with their TV. The

Trump warns new Venezuelan leader as Maduro set to appear in court

Donald Trump has warned Venezuela's new leader Delcy Rodriguez she could "pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro" if she "doesn't do what's right". His comments to US magazine *The Atlantic* came as the country's deposed president Nicolás Maduro was set to appear in a New York court on Monday. The US accuses Maduro, who is charged with drug trafficking and weapons offences, of running a "narco-terrorist" regime, a claim he denies. Rodriguez - who served as Maduro's vice president - adopted a conciliatory tone at her first cabinet meeting on Sunday, offering co-operation with the US. "We invite the US government to collaborate with us on an agenda of co-operation orientated towards shared development within the framework of international law," she said. Backed by Venezuela's

Supreme Court and the military, she will be sworn in as president on Monday in Caracas, at 08:00 local time (12:00 GMT). US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has insisted the US is not at war with Venezuela, after air strikes in Caracas on Saturday led to Maduro and his wife being taken into custody and transported to the US. Some Democratic lawmakers said the operation was an "act of war". In an interview with *The Atlantic* on Sunday, Trump said of Rodriguez: "If she doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro." He added that for Venezuela, "Regime change, anything you want to call it, is better than what you have right now. Can't get any worse". On Saturday, Trump had vowed the US would "run" the country until "a safe and proper and judi-



cious transition" was possible. Trump also promised US oil companies would move into the country to fix infrastructure "and start making money for the country". Despite the US president's claims, Maduro's allies remain in charge. The Cuban government has said

operation in Venezuela, stressing the action did not mean the US is at war with the South American country. "We are at war against drug trafficking organisations. That's not a war against Venezuela," Rubio told NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday morning. The secretary of state also told CBS that if Venezuela doesn't "make the right decisions", the US "will retain multiple levers of leverage to ensure that our interests are protected". That includes the "quarantine" the US has placed on Venezuela's oil, he said. "We're going to judge everything by what they do, and we're going to see what they do," he added. Trump also threatened Venezuela's neighbour Colombia, in comments to reporters aboard Air Force One. He did not rule out military action against Colombia, saying "it sounds good to me", and

called Colombian President Gustavo Petro "a sick man". "Colombia is very sick, too, run by a sick man, who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States, and he's not going to be doing it very long," Trump said. Maduro, who leads the United Socialist Party of Venezuela and has been in power since 2013, has frequently been accused of repressing opposition groups and silencing dissent in Venezuela, at times with the use of violence. He is widely seen by opponents within his country as well as by foreign governments as having illegitimately won Venezuela's 2024 election. Venezuela's left-wing leader and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured at their compound and flown to the US, as part of a dramatic special forces operation in the early hours of Saturday that also saw strikes on military bases.

'We need Greenland': Trump repeats threat to annex Danish territory

Donald Trump has again proposed annexing Greenland, after Denmark's leader urged him to "stop the threats" over the island. Speaking to reporters, the US president said "we need Greenland from the standpoint of national security". Trump has repeatedly raised the prospect of the semi-autonomous Danish territory becoming an annexed part of the US, citing its strategic location for defence purposes and mineral wealth. Greenland's Prime Minister Jens Frederik Nielsen responded by saying "that's enough now" and described the notion of US control over the island as a "fantasy". He said: "No more pressure. No more insinuations. No more fantasies of annexation. We are open to dialogue. We are open to discussions. But this must happen through the proper channels and with respect for international law." Earlier, Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had said "the US has no right to annex any of the three nations in the Danish kingdom". Frederiksen added that Denmark "and thus Greenland" was a Nato member and covered by the alliance's security guarantee, and said a defence agreement granting the US access to the island was already in place. The Danish prime minister released her statement after Katie Miller - the wife of one of Trump's senior aides, Stephen Miller - posted on social media a map of Greenland in the colours of the American flag alongside the word "SOON". The Danish ambassador to the US responded to the post by Miller - a right-wing podcaster and former aide to Trump during his first term - with a "friendly reminder" that the two countries were allies and saying Denmark expected respect for its territorial integrity.

Bluefin tuna fetches record \$3.2m at Tokyo auction



A bulky bluefin tuna made a splash at Tokyo's Toyosu fish market on Monday morning, fetching a record 510.3 million yen (\$3.2m; £2.4m) at the market's first auction of the year. The winning bid for the 243kg fish came from Kiyomura Corp, the operator of popular sushi chain Sushi Zanmai, which has outlets across the country and abroad. "The year's first tuna brings good luck," said Kiyoshi Kimura, the company's president and a familiar figure at the annual new year's auction, Kyodo reported. Mr Kimura, who has been dubbed the Tuna King, is known to bid high for bluefin tuna at new year's auctions. The entrepreneur told reporters after the auction that he was "surprised at the price", AFP reported. "I'd thought we would be able to buy a little cheaper, but the price soared before you knew it," he said. Mr Kimura paid 56.5 million yen for a bluefin tuna in 2012 and 155 million yen in 2013 - setting record prices both times. In 2019

he bought a bluefin tuna with 333.6 million yen (\$2.1m; £1.6m) - another historic price. Despite telling reporters at the time that he thought he "did too much", however, Mr Kimura has now gone on to break his own record again. The first auction at Tokyo's Toyosu fish market typically sees fish selling for exorbitant prices. Last year, the first tuna at the auction was bought for 207 million yen by Onodera Group, another food company that owns a sushi chain. It said that the fish would be served at its restaurants across the country. The frenetic energy at fish markets during such pre-dawn auctions has become a popular tourist attraction in Tokyo. Monday's auction, which started at around 05:00 local time (20:00 GMT), was no exception. The million-dollar tuna was sliced up for customers at Kimura's sushi restaurants shortly after it was auctioned off. "I feel like I've begun the year in a good way after eating something so auspicious as the year starts.

Raw emotions as mourners attend Mass for Swiss bar fire victims



In the snow-dusted street outside St Christopher's Church, hundreds joined a special Sunday Mass for the victims of the fire that tore through Le Constellation bar on New Year's Eve. Many hugged each other, crying quietly, as they remembered the dozens killed and those still in hospital with severe burns, fighting for their lives. During the service, several in the crowd fainted and fell to the ground,

overcome. All 40 of the dead have now been identified, although not named publicly. Their bodies are being returned to their families, some of whom had been holding on to the hope their children might yet be found - injured, but alive. They're now receiving the worst possible news. Ever since the fire, Laetitia Brodard had been posting pictures of her teenage son Arthur online and appealing for help to find him.

TEN FOUND GUILTY OF CYBER-BULLYING BRIGITTE MACRON



Ten people have been found guilty of cyber-bullying Brigitte Macron, the wife of French President Emmanuel Macron, by a Paris court. The defendants were accused of spreading false claims about her gender and sexuality, as well as making "malicious remarks" about the 24-year age gap between the couple. Most of the defendants were handed suspended prison sentences of up to eight months, but one was jailed immediately for failing to attend court. Some had their social media accounts suspended. The judge said the eight men and two women had acted with a clear desire to do harm to Brigitte Macron, making remarks online that were degrading and insulting. Two of the defendants - self-

styled independent journalist Natacha Rey and internet fortune-teller Amandine Roy - were found guilty of slander in 2024 for claiming that France's first lady had never existed. They said her brother Jean-Michel Trogneux had changed gender and started using her name. They were later cleared on appeal. The argument used by the appeals court in clearing them was

that saying someone had changed gender was not necessarily an "attack on their honour". The Macrons are now taking that case to the high court of appeal. "The most important things are the prevention courses and the suspension of some of the accounts" of the perpetrators, Jean Ennouchi, Brigitte Macron's lawyer, said after the verdict was handed down, the AFP news agency reported. Tiphaine Auzière, Brigitte Macron's daughter from a previous marriage, previously told the trial that the cyber-bullying had negatively affected her mother's health and living conditions. She said her mother "has had to be careful about her choices of outfits, of posture... she knows perfectly well that her image will be used to back these theories". While her mother had "learned to live with it", Auzière said, she suffered from the repercussions on her grandchildren who were taunted at school. Monday's ruling in France is a forerunner of a much bigger trial due in the US, where the Macrons have filed a defamation lawsuit against right-wing influencer Candace Owens.

THIRTY-TWO CUBANS KILLED DURING US ATTACK ON VENEZUELA



The Cuban government has said 32 of its nationals were killed during the US operation to seize Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro. It said the dead were members of its armed forces and intelligence agencies, with two days of national mourning declared. A short statement did not elaborate on the role of the Cubans in Venezuela, but the two governments are long-standing allies, with Cuba providing security support in exchange for oil. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said they had been providing protection to Maduro and his wife "at the request" of Venezuela. An official government state-

ment read: "Our compatriots fulfilled their duty with dignity and heroism and fell, after fierce resistance, in direct combat against the attackers or as a result of bombings on the facilities." Venezuela has not confirmed how many people were killed during the US raid on Maduro's compound in Caracas on Saturday. The New York Times, citing an unnamed Venezuelan official, reported on Sunday that the death toll stood at 80 and was expected to rise. BBC News has not independently verified that report. In the days

Activist group says it was behind Berlin fire that cut power to thousands



A far-left activist group in Germany has claimed responsibility for a suspected arson attack that left tens of thousands of homes, as well as hospitals and businesses, without power in around-freezing temperatures. The Vulkangruppe (Volcano Group) said in a statement that the fossil fuel economy, not cutting power, was the target of the action. It will take until Thursday to reconnect power for all customers, with some schools due to be closed at the start of this week.

Early on Saturday, several cables on a bridge were spotted burning near a power plant in south-west Berlin. The fire was quickly put out, but around 45,000 households and 2,200 businesses were left without electricity. Some schools, which were due to reopen on Monday after the Christmas holidays, will remain closed. The capital's electricity operator said it would take until Thursday to reconnect all customers. The Vulkangruppe in its statement apologised to less affluent residents impacted by the power cuts.

SOUTH KOREA'S LEE JAE MYUNG MEETS CHINA'S XI AS HE SEEKS TO RESET TIES



South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung is meeting Chinese leader Xi Jinping as he seeks to reset frayed ties with his country's biggest trading partner. Regional security and Beijing's unofficial ban on Korean pop culture are also on the agenda for Monday's meeting, which is their second summit since November, when Xi visited South Korea. Given what a vital economic partner China is, experts say Lee is looking for assurances that it would not weaponise that relationship in the face of political tensions in the region. For weeks, China and Japan have been engaged in a diplomatic row over the former's claim on self-governed Taiwan, which

puts Seoul, a key regional power, in an awkward spot. Beijing ramped up the rhetoric against Japan after its prime minister Sanae Takaichi suggested in parliament that Tokyo could respond with its own self defence force in case of a Chinese attack on Taiwan. So visiting Beijing at this time is a significant move for Lee. Like Japan, South Korea too is an ally of the US, which supports Taiwan and supplies arms for its defence. Xi is expected to hold a welcoming ceremony for Lee in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, state-run CCTV reports. Lee, who arrived in Beijing on Sunday, will then meet China's Premier Li Qiang and the chairman of

parliament, Zhao Leji, before flying to Shanghai. Speaking before Korean residents in Beijing on Sunday, Lee said his visit would "serve as a new starting point to fill in the gaps in Korea-China relations, restore them to normal and upgrade them to a new level". This is the first visit by a South Korean leader since 2019. The relationship soured under Lee's predecessor, impeached ex-president Yoon Suk Yeol, who was very critical of China. On the other side, Xi's eagerness to meet Lee signals the pressure he faces in finding a regional ally. Park Seung-chun, professor of China

studies at Yongin University told the BBC. "China may beat around the bush but its demand is clear: side with China and denounce Japan." Beijing has been leveraging the two countries' shared history of fighting against Japan during the 20th Century. Mr Park said. Lee is expected to hold a memorial service in Shanghai for activists who fought for Korea's independence from Japan. While Korea is "still showing all its deference towards China", it wants to "strengthen its relationships with both Japan and China", Mr Park added. Seoul has long walked a diplomatic tightrope between Beijing and Tokyo. Lee is reportedly planning to visit Japan later this month to meet Takaichi. And on Friday, South Korea's national security director Wi Sung-lac told reporters the country "respects the One China policy". The diplomatic acknowledgment that Beijing is the only Chinese government. Security on the Korean Peninsula will also be part of the discussions with China, Wi told reporters. Lee has sought to engage North Korea diplomatically, but there has been little progress so far. He needs Chinese cooperation in pressuring the North's Kim Jong Un to give up his nuclear weapons. Beijing is the dictator's biggest supporter, economically and diplomatically, Russia aside.



Desert Vipers Seal Historic First ILT20 Crown After 46-Run Victory Over MI Emirates

The Desert Vipers secured their maiden DP World ILT20 trophy after beating MI Emirates by 46 runs in front of a packed Dubai International Stadium on Sunday night. The Desert Vipers took home a cash prize of USD 700,000 along with the Black Belt, while MI Emirates were awarded USD 300,000. Curran smashed an unbeaten 74 off 51 balls, studed with eight fours and two sixes, to power his team to an unassailable 182/4. He was well supported by Max Holden (41 off 32) and Dan Lawrence's (23 off 15) late charge. Naseem Shah (3/18), Usman Tariq (2/20), and Khuzaima Tanveer (2/22) led the bowling effort before David Payne's three-wicket haul (3/42) restricted MI Emirates to 136. Fans at the Dubai International Stadium were treated to a spectacular build-up ahead of the final, with a dazzling fireworks display and a drone show lighting up the night sky. The pre-match extravaganza created a carnival-like atmosphere as thousands of spectators



soaked in the visual spectacle that celebrated the league and set the stage for the biggest clash of the season. The Vipers' skipper Sam Curran capped off an impressive tournament by finishing with both the Red Belt (Most Valuable Player) and the Green Belt (Best Batter). Curran ended the season with 397 runs, including three half-centuries, and complemented his batting efforts with seven wickets and 10 catches. In the second innings, the Vipers' Naseem Shah set the tone early,

removing Andre Fletcher (10 off 11) and Tom Banton (7 off 6), while Khuzaima Tanveer capitalised with the key wicket of Muhammad Waseem (26 off 13). MI Emirates lost three wickets inside six overs and crawled to 46/3, leaving Shakib Al Hasan and Sanjay Krishnamurthi with plenty of work to do. Usman Tariq turned up the heat by dismissing Sanjay Krishnamurthi (2 off 9) in the eighth over. Shakib Al Hasan (36 off 27) attempted to steady the innings with calculated strikes, but boundaries were

hard to come by. With Kieron Pollard struggling to break free, MI Emirates reached 72/4 after 10 overs, falling further behind in the chase. MI Emirates' hopes rested on Shakib and Kieron Pollard (28 off 27), who completed their 50-run stand in 38 balls before Tariq delivered a decisive blow by removing Shakib, pushing the equation to a daunting 61 off the final four overs. After Naseem Shah removed Kieron Pollard to end any late resistance, David Payne ripped through the lower order, bag-

ging three wickets in the 18th over. Khuzaima Tanveer sealed the title by clattering Muhammad Rohid's stumps (3 off 4) as the Vipers closed out the match with nine balls to spare. Earlier, the Vipers began briskly in the powerplay as Fakhar Zaman (20 off 15) and Jason Roy (11 off 7) put on 34/0 in the first three overs. Momentum shifted in the fourth over when Fazalhaq Farooqi struck twice to dismiss both openers. Sam Curran responded emphatically, smashing three consecutive boundaries in the final over of the powerplay to carry the Vipers to 59/2. Curran then joined hands with Max Holden, rotating the strike efficiently and attacking smartly to take the Vipers to 83/2 at the halfway stage. The duo completed their 50-run stand in the 11th over, off just 39 balls. Curran kept the offensive going while Holden played the anchor role before Arab Gul ended their 89-run partnership off 64 balls with Holden's wicket in the 15th over.

Virat Kohli Takes Stunning Vijay Hazare Trophy Decision Ahead Of New Zealand ODI Series

Indian cricket team star batter Virat Kohli will not be available for Delhi's Vijay Hazare Trophy encounter against Railways on Tuesday. As per the BCCI mandate, Kohli played two matches in the competition for Delhi - against Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. He looked in brilliant form, scoring 131 and 77 respectively in those matches. Although the star batter was supposed to play one more match for Delhi before joining the national side for the ODI series against New Zealand, Delhi coach Sarandeep Singh confirmed that he will not be available. "No, he is not available," Singh said. Earlier, Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) President Rohan Jaitley stated that Kohli had given his availability for three games in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. "As of now, he is playing. Virat has given



his availability for three games," he told PTI. Shreyas Iyer has been appointed as captain of Mumbai for the remainder of their Vijay Hazare Trophy Elite Group C games in Jaipur, said the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on Monday. Shreyas will take over the captaincy from injured regular skipper Shardul Thakur who has been sidelined from the rest of the competition due to injury. Mumbai are currently at second place in Group C and will take on Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday, before facing Punjab on January 8.

"Glad SA20 Has Made It Possible For Me To Finish With Super Kings": Faf du Plessis

At 41, Faf du Plessis, the former South African captain is still going strong and is hungry to play and perform. Leading the Joburg Super Kings for the fourth season in a row, du Plessis was excited to have another crack at winning the title in yellow. As he sat down with his former Proteas teammate and one of the members of the SA20 commentary panel, Dale Steyn, du Plessis spoke about the Super Kings franchise, mega auction and needing to have a strong bowling attack. Speaking with SA20, looking forward to the new season, Faf du Plessis recalled his journey with the Super Kings franchise, from CSK to now with JSK: "As players, you look back on your career and are very grateful for certain



things that happened at certain times. And for me, getting signed the same year when I made my international debut, by CSK, was obviously something that, if I look back now, was a huge starting point of my career. So the 10 years with CSK in the IPL, which was an incredible part of my life, you know, it was such a great

time to just be into a team, win 3 IPLs. So obviously, I was very happy when they decided to invest in South African cricket in the SA20. And then you just obviously want to be with people that you know and trust and have a good relationship with. "You have this fairy tale in your mind that somehow, I thought I would finish back

in the IPL where I started my IPL career and do a season with CSK. I thought that was always on the cards, but life doesn't always work out like that. So I'm glad that it's still possible to do it here in SA20. So yeah, loving playing for this team." On the mega auction and changes in the Joburg Super Kings' squad: "That's the sad thing about big auctions. When you're building leagues and teams, ideally, you want to have as many retentions as possible and keep the core of your team. But it isn't, it doesn't work like that. You have only got a certain amount of retentions that you can keep. And then you go into the auction and you try to pursue some of the players that were part of your squad because it is the Chennai way.

KKR Advised To Sign This Star As Mustafizur Rahman's Replacement In IPL 2026 After Bangladesh Player's Release



And upon request, BCCI will allow a replacement player," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI here on Saturday. Asked why the BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to do so, he replied, "Because of recent developments all across." After the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)

released a press statement that they want Bangladesh's matches to be shifted from India due to 'safety and security' reasons. The broadcast of IPL has also been stopped. In the midst of the developments, former Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) player Shreyas Goswami has suggested

KKR pick Marco Jansen's brother Duan as a replacement. "Marco Jansen's brother Duan Jansen isn't a bad replacement option for the @KKRiders. Like for like and also can definitely bat better. Get him @KKRiders," he wrote on X. Duan, who bowls left-arm pace like Mustafizur Rahman, has been in great form for Joburg Super Kings in the SA20. Earlier, in a statement, KKR said it has released the player as instructed by the BCCI. "Kolkata Knight Riders confirms that BCCI/IPL as the regulator of IPL, has instructed it to release Mustafizur Rahman from the squad ahead of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

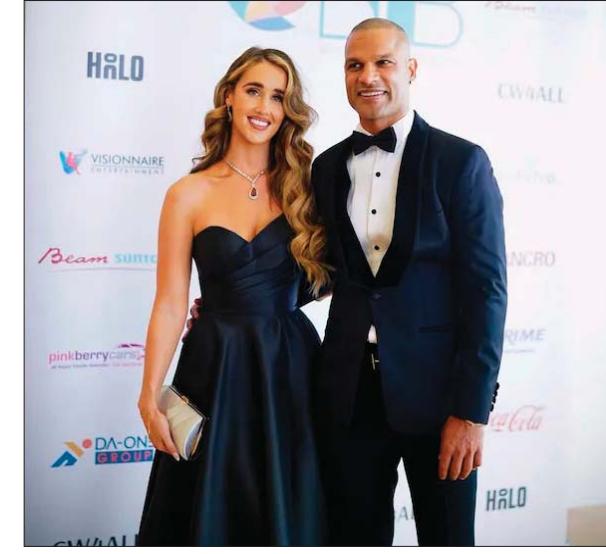
Paarl Royals Paint Western Cape Pink With Double Derby Win



Paarl Royals made SA20 history at Newlands on Sunday when they beat coastal rivals MI Cape Town for the first time at Newlands. After three previous defeats under the watch of Table Mountain, the Royals completed a Season 4 Western Cape derby double with a comprehensive seven-wicket bonus point victory.

Royals lost Lhuanandre Pretorius early in the chase to Trent Boult, but a solid 54-run partnership between Asa Tribe and Rubin Hermann for the second wicket set the visitors on the path to victory. Although both Hermann (18, 2x4) and Tribe (34, 3x4, 2x6) fell before the finish line was crossed, there would be no further setbacks with Kyle Verreyne (10 not out, 1x4) and his captain David Miller (19 not out, 2x4, 1x6) sealing the bonus point victory and Cape bragging rights for the boys in pink.

SHIKHAR DHAWAN SET TO MARRY LONGTIME GIRLFRIEND SOPHIE SHINE



when the couple was spotted in the stands during the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. According to reports, they met in Dubai a few years ago and gradually became

friends. The couple has reportedly been living together for over a year. Dhawan was earlier married to Ayesha Mukherjee, with whom he has a son, 11-

year-old Zoravar Dhawan. The couple divorced in 2023. Dhawan has also praised Virat Kohli's hunger and clarity about his game. He recalled captaining Kohli in the Ranji Trophy and highlighted how Kohli showed his character by scoring runs even after his father passed away. "Yes, Kohli always had that hunger. He played under my captaincy in the Ranji Trophy, and even at 16-17 years old, he had great clarity about his game. That was his biggest strength. The day his father passed away, he still came out to bat and scored runs - that showed his character and focus. From that day on, his discipline and intensity only kept increasing," Dhawan said on Backstage with Boria, to Boria Majumdar.

Pratika Rawal, Women's World Cup Hero, Irritated After Her Edited Photos Go Viral: "I Do Not Authorise"



genuine concern on X. "Hey @grob, I DO NOT authorise you to take, modify, or edit ANY photo of mine, whether those published in the past or the upcoming ones I post. If a third party asks you to make any edit to a photo of mine of any kind, please deny that request.

Thanks," she posted on X. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has announced a reward of Rs 1.5 crore for right-handed opener Pratika Rawal, who was part of India's title-winning squad at the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup. The Delhi and District Cricket

Man City increase interest in Palace captain Guehi



Manchester City are emerging as contenders to sign Crystal Palace captain Marc Guehi this month. BBC Sport understands City are exploring a move for the England centre-back in the wake of defences Josko Gvardiol and Ruben Dias suffering injuries in the draw against Chelsea on Sunday. England centre-back John Stones is also currently out injured. City will wait to discover the full extent of the Gvardiol and Dias injuries before making a final decision on whether to proceed with their interest in Guehi during the current transfer window. But sources have told BBC Sport that City's interest in Guehi, 25, has progressed and that a move in January should not be discounted. Meanwhile, City have recalled academy defender Max Alleyne from his loan spell at Championship side Watford and he could be involved in the squad for Wednesday's Premier League game against Brighton. The 20-year-old son of former England cricketer and current Gloucestershire head coach Mark Alleyne made 17 appearances for the Hornets after joining on a season-loan, but that has now been cut short as City try to tackle their growing injury crisis in defence. After the draw with Chelsea, which saw City concede an injury-time equaliser, manager Pep Guardiola told BBC Radio 5 Live "it doesn't look good" for Dias and Gvardiol and that the pair could be sidelined "for a few weeks". The Spaniard added: "We have a lot [of injuries]. John Stones is missing for I don't know how many months. Ruben now will be out, Josko will be out. "Nathan [Ake], always we know he cannot play regularly. It's the situation - stay strong and we will find a solution. "The spirit is there and will be there." Plenty of interest in Guehi, who has won 26 England caps, is out of contract this summer. It has been expected he will leave Selhurst Park as a free agent at the end of the season.

Nache Nache Song from Rebel Star Prabhas' Prestigious Film The Raja Saab Launched Grandly in Mumbai in the Presence of Bollywood Celebrities

Rebel Star Prabhas is playing the lead role in the prestigious film The Raja Saab. Directed by Maruthi, the film is being crafted as a one-of-a-kind evergreen entertainer in the romantic horror-comedy genre. Producers TG Vishwa Prasad and Krithi Prasad are mounting the film on a massive scale with uncompromised production values. The film stars Malavika Mohanan, Nidhhi Agerwal, and Riddhi Kumar as the female leads. Adding to the festive Sankranti celebrations, The Raja Saab is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on January 9. As part of promotions, the much-awaited song "Nache Nache" was launched today at a grand event in Mumbai, held in the presence of several Bollywood celebrities. Riddhi Kumar said, "When I received the call for The Raja Saab, I honestly couldn't believe it. I had previously acted in Radhe Shyam, but when I was told I would be paired opposite Prabhas sir, I thought it was a prank call. Later, SKN and director Maruthi sir came to



Mumbai, narrated the script, and we even did photo shoots. For this film, I learned Telugu and gave my first-ever Telugu dubbing. Prabhas sir used to send food in huge quantities, so much that it was enough for me, my team, and even the film unit. I enjoyed every moment of working on this film. Thank you to everyone who came today and supported us. Special thanks to producer Vishwa Prasad sir for giving me this opportunity. Acting opposite India's biggest superstar Prabhas in The Raja Saab makes me extremely happy." Malavika

Mohanan said, "I always wanted to make my Telugu debut with a big project, and The Raja Saab gave me exactly that opportunity. Acting alongside Prabhas sir is something I will always cherish. My heartfelt thanks to producer Vishwa Prasad sir. This is a romantic horror fantasy film that includes horror, comedy, romance, drama, and action. It's a complete entertainer that you can enjoy with your children as well. I sincerely hope audiences will watch The Raja Saab in theatres on January 9." Nidhhi Agerwal said, "Eight

years ago, I worked in Bollywood in a film called Munna Michael with Tiger Shroff. After many years, I am happy to be back in Mumbai for such a grand event. The Raja Saab is a romantic horror fantasy, a genre that is quite new to Indian cinema. Working with a star like Prabhas is truly an honour. Unfortunately, director Maruthi sir couldn't attend today's event, but producer Vishwa Prasad sir is presenting such a prestigious film to us. This has been one of the most enjoyable shoots of my career. The VFX in

The Raja Saab look extremely natural and realistic. I am confident that audiences of all age groups will love this film. Please watch The Raja Saab in theatres on January 9 and enjoy." Zarina Wahab said, "I was born in Andhra Pradesh and have been in the film industry for over 40 years. Many people often asked why I didn't do more Telugu films. Though I acted in a few earlier, I believe The Raja Saab will give me a strong identity. I am currently working on a few Telugu films. While Hindi cinema lacks family-oriented films today, Telugu cinema continues to make wonderful family entertainers. Director Maruthi extracted excellent performances from all of us. Prabhas is the real 'Raja'. Everyone loves him. People call him 'Darling', and when I asked him what it means, he explained, but for me, 'Darling' truly means Prabhas." Boman Irani said, "One day, director Maruthi called me. My wife asked who it was, and when I told her it was for a role in Prabhas' The Raja Saab, she immediately said, 'Tell them you're doing it.'

Megastar Chiranjeevi & Victory Venkatesh To Attend Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu Pre-release Event On January 7th, Trailer Gets Record-breaking 25 M+ Views

Megastar Chiranjeevi's highly anticipated action and family entertainer Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu, directed by hit machine Anil Ravipudi, had its trailer launched yesterday, and the response has been remarkable. In an extraordinary achievement, the trailer crossed a massive 25 million views within just 24 hours, registering one of the biggest 24-hour view counts ever. This milestone places it at the top among trailers of Chiranjeevi's contemporaries. The overwhelming response reflects the strong connection the trailer has established with audiences. The moment fans have been eagerly waiting for is finally here. Megastar Chiranjeevi and Victory Venkatesh will come together to share the stage at the grand pre-release event of Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu, scheduled to be held on January 7 in Hyderabad. Although the film's team has been actively promoting the project, this event marks the first time Chiranjeevi and Venkatesh will appear side by side as part of the film's



promotions, instantly making it one of the most awaited pre-release events in recent times.

Complete Entertainer "Crazy Kalyanam" Title -Look Poster Released



The title -look poster of the upcoming Telugu film Crazy Kalyanam has been officially unveiled, creating curiosity

with its vibrant and festive appeal. The film stars Naresh VK, Anupama Parameswaran, Tharun

Bhascker, and Raju Weds Rambai fame Akhil Uddemari in the lead roles. The project is being produced as Production No. 2 under the Arrow Cinemas banner by passionate producer Boosam Jagam Mohan Reddy, with Badrappa Gajula helming the film as writer and director. Set against a wedding backdrop, Crazy Kalyanam is designed as a complete entertainer packed with humor, emotions, and celebration. The film revolves around an engaging story centered on marriage and relationships, promising wholesome entertainment for family audiences. Major portions of the film were shot across several rural locations in Telangana, adding authenticity and local flavor to the narrative.

'Nari Nari Nadu Murari' is a festive film.. will make you laugh throughout - Producer Anil Sunkara

Sharwanand is the hero of the upcoming family entertainer film 'Nari Nari Nadu Murari'. Samyukta and Sakshi Vaidya are the heroines in this movie. Anil Sunkara produced this film under the banner of AK Entertainments. Director Ram Abbaraju directed this film. The film is going to be released on January 14 as a Sankranti gift. In this context, producer Anil Sunkara spoke to the media and shared the film's features. Here are the things he said on the occasion...

There is stiff competition for Sankranti, isn't there? Was it made as a Sankranti film from the beginning?

We made 'Nari Nari Nadu Murari' as a movie suitable

for Sankranti. This is a festive movie. The Sankranti season is a workout for movies. The movie came out as we expected. It is common to have four or five movies during the Sankranti season. There have also been cases where all the movies released during the Sankranti season have been hits.

How is 'Nari Nari Nadu Murari' going to be?

It is a film that is entertaining throughout. We will make the audience laugh as long as they sit in the theater. We had Balayya garu open our title. We did not use the entire song. We only used a few words.

Tell us about the release and



movie grandly during the Sankranti season. In the current situation, no producer can say how many theaters.

Did you commit to this movie with the director around the time of 'Samajavaragamana'?

I committed to Ram Abbaraju while making 'Samajavaragamana'. I sent Ram Abbaraju to Mythri for his next movie.

What kind of films do you want to produce right now?

Our movie is being released by Dil Raju in Nizam and Vizag. We are doing it ourselves in the East. Raja is releasing it in the West, Krishna and Guntur, and Shobhan is releasing it in Seeded. We are releasing our

You are the last to enter the Sankranti ring, aren't you?

We announced two months ago that we would be coming for Sankranti. But many people didn't believe us. Many people called and asked. But we are coming for Sankranti as we said. It's not about competition in promotions. If our content is good, the audience will support us.

Tell us what the role of Sri Vishnu will be like in the film, unlike Sharwanand?

A good role was cast in the film. We asked Sri Vishnu for that character because he was the hero we could get. When that role comes, everyone in the theater enjoys it. That character makes us laugh all the time.

Sanjay Dutt's daughter drops cryptic note on 'emotional manipulation'



Mumbai: Actor Sanjay Dutt's elder daughter Trishala Dutt shared a cryptic note on social media, reflecting on how some people use silent treatment as a tool for emotional manipulation in a relationship. Trishala, who works as a psychotherapist in the United States, said that instead of communicating their feelings, some people decide to punish the other person for having boundaries or a different perspective. "They are silently 'teaching' you that your voice is dangerous, and that speaking up will clearly cost you connection with them." Trishala revealed that this is certainly not the way to be treated in a relationship, as "Silence used as punishment is abuse". She advised everyone facing such a situation to refuse such abuse and protect their peace. "Real relationships don't teach you lessons through pain, they heal through communication." Providing a healthy alternative, Trishala said that it is better to switch to healthy silence. However, the cooling-down period should be first communicated effectively. "I need a few hours to collect myself so I don't say something

hurtful". This should also be followed by returning for a healthy communication about whatever is bothering you. She concluded her post saying, "Silence that protects your nervous system is self respect. Silence that punishes someone else is power play." Although she has not directed the post towards anyone in particular, there is always speculation that her post is hinting at her father and family. For the unversed, Trishala is Sanjay Dutt's

Did you know? The world's highest cinema theatre is in India!



Hyderabad: Movies are a big part of life in India, with fans everywhere. Whether it's Bollywood in Mumbai, Tollywood in Hyderabad, Kollywood in Chennai, or regional film industries in every state, cinema is loved by people from all walks of life. The variety of films in different languages makes the movie experience even more special. India has a huge number of theatres, from traditional single screens to modern multiplexes. While single-screen cinemas were once the norm, multiplexes have become more popular. They offer multiple screens, better sound, high-definition visuals, and comfortable seating, making the movie-watching experience more enjoyable. Cinemas across the country are constantly upgrading to keep up with the growing demand for high-quality entertainment. PVR INOX: India's Highest Multiplex PVR INOX has recently taken a bold step by opening the highest multiplex in India, located in Leh, Ladakh, at an altitude of 11,500 feet. This new cinema offers top-notch technology, including 2K projection, Dolby 7.1 surround sound, and next-gen 3D technology, ensuring a world-class experience even in such a unique location. The multiplex also features Leh's first organized food court.

Akhil Akkineni's Lenin Unveils Soulful Track "Vaare Vaa Vaare Vaa", Gears Up for Summer Release

The makers of Lenin have unveiled the melodious romantic track "Vaare Vaa Vaare Vaa", which is already striking a chord with music lovers. Beautifully rendered by Shweta Mohan and Jubin Nautiyal, the song stands out for its soulful vocals and emotional depth. Lyricist Anantha Sriram adds poetic finesse, enhancing the song's romantic appeal. Composed by Thaman S, the track beautifully captures the emotional core of the film. The music complements the on-screen chemistry between the lead pair and elevates the narrative mood, further increasing anticipation around the film. With nearly 70% of the shoot completed, Lenin is progressing at a brisk pace and is gearing up for a Summer theatrical release. The film is produced by Manam Enterprises LLP and Sithara Entertainments, and presented by



Annapurna Studios. Directed by Murali Kishor Abburu, the film stars Akhil Akkineni and Bhagyashri Borse in the lead roles.