

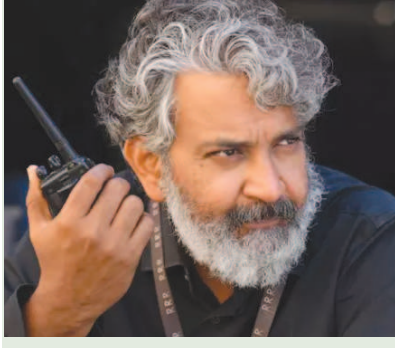
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Rajamouli Juggling Between Major Projects?

SS Rajamouli is currently working on SSMB29. The movie will feature Mahesh Babu in the lead role and Priyanka Chopra will play the female lead.

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A Transformational Journey of Women security and Empowerment in Railways

Mobility is not merely about the movement of people; it is a tool for empowerment, an enabler of rights, and a precursor to socio-economic development. In India, where Indian....

02



Never sold users' Siri data to anyone for any purpose : Apple

Apple on Thursday said that it never used Siri data to build marketing profiles, never made it available for advertising, and never sold it to anyone for any purpose. Last week...

07



Have faith that Yuva Shakti will make India a developed nation : PM Modi

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed confidence in the Indian youth, stating that they are collectively charting the roadmap for India's future over the next 25 years and will achieve the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. Addressing the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on the occasion of National Youth Day, celebrated to honour Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, PM Modi said, "Swami Vivekananda had immense trust in the youth of the nation. He believed in the new generation, and I share the same unwavering belief in today's youth. Continued on pg 02

Revanth Reddy blames lack of ideology in politics for defections

Hyderabad, Jan 12 (IANS):Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday blamed lack of ideology and student politics for increasing defections. Stating that leaders are changing parties for posts, he underlined the need for ideological student politics. Students who follow party ideology will always be loyal to the political organisation, he said. The Chief Minister was addressing at an event to release former Maharashtra Governor Vidyasagar Rao's

autobiography 'UNIKA' Revanth Reddy was all praise for Vidyasagar Rao strictly following the ideology while in student politics at Osmania University. He lauded the contributions of Vidyasagar Rao as governor of two states and said he upheld the honour of Telangana. Continued on pg 02



Govt not imposing any new rules in issuance of ration cards: Ponnampalapati Prabhakar

Hyderabad, Jan.12 (NSS): Minister for Transport and BC Welfare Ponnampalapati Prabhakar has announced that the State government will not be introducing any new regulations concerning the issuance of ration cards, and the existing guidelines will continue to apply. A review meeting regarding the selection of Indiramma housing beneficiaries and the process for issuing new ration cards took place on Sunday at the GHMC head office in Hyderabad, with Minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar in attendance.

In his comments to the media, he indicated that the distribution of new ration cards is set to commence on January 26, while the verification of beneficiaries will occur at the field level from January

16 to 20. The Minister further stated that data entry for eligible beneficiaries will begin on January 21, and ration cards, along with Indiramma housing, will also be available for those who have relocated from other districts and are now living in Hyderabad.

Emphasizing the State government's commitment to ensuring justice for all impoverished individuals, irrespective of political affiliations, Ponnampalapati Prabhakar reiterated that programs would be executed for all eligible parties.

"Those who have land in Hyderabad, but do not have a house will be given first priority in the Indiramma housing scheme," he disclosed.

Recognize power within you, overcome setbacks with resilience : Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Jan.12 (NSS): "Do not let failures define you. Recognise the immense strength within yourself and take confident strides toward your goals," urged Minister for IT and Industries Sridhar Babu, while addressing young minds on the occasion

of National Youth Day. Drawing inspiration from Swami Vivekananda's teachings, he encouraged the youth to remain resolute and determined in the face of challenges. Speaking as the chief guest at an event organised by the Ramakrishna Math in Domalguda, here on Sunday, the Minister said.



Union Minister Kishan Reddy to visit Riyadh today

Hyderabad, Jan 12 : Union Minister Kishan Reddy is going to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia to participate in the 'Future Minerals Forum Ministerial Roundtable Conference'. At the invitation of the Saudi Arabian government.

Formula-E race enhanced Hyderabad's brand image : Danam Nagender

Hyderabad, Jan.12 (NSS): Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender has made significant remarks regarding the Formula E car race, asserting that the event has positively contributed to enhancing Hyderabad's brand image.

In an address to the media, Danam Nagender, originally elected as a member of the BRS party but subsequently joining the Congress party, acknowledged the improvement in Hyderabad's reputation stemming from the car race, while also noting the

existence of potential corruption within the event. He stated, "KT Rama Rao, who served as the Municipal Minister during the previous BRS administration, sought my counsel during the organisation of the electric car race in Hyderabad. I merely provided my perspective on the event and expressed that the hosting of the E-car race has placed Hyderabad on the global map."

Furthermore, he remarked, "The matter regarding the Formula E car race is currently under judicial consideration. I will refrain from making any negative comments



about KTR." He stated that the State budget remains unbalanced. Nevertheless, the administration led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is committed to progressing with the fulfillment of its promises to the people.

Danam Nagender noted that if activists fail to disseminate government initiatives to the citizens, a significant gap will emerge. He

recommended that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy participate in a ceremonial anointing with milk, as the loan waiver and Rythu Bharosa schemes are currently being implemented.

He emphasized that his previous criticisms of the Hyderabad Road Development Authority (HyDRA).



MLA Kaushik Reddy create ruckus at Karimnagar DRC meeting

Karimnagar, Jan.12 (NSS): The district review meeting held at Karimnagar Collectorate on Sunday turned out to be a stormy affair. In the presence of State ministers Ponnampalapati Prabhakar, Sridhar Babu and Uttam Kumar Reddy.

Congress govt drowned farmers : Harish Rao

Siddipet, Jan.12 (NSS): Former minister Harish Rao today alleged that the Congress government had drowned the farmers of the state. He was speaking to the media in Siddipet today.



Actor Venkatesh, family booked in hotel demolition case

Hyderabad, Jan 12 (IANS) : Hyderabad police have registered a criminal case against film actor Venkatesh and his family members in connection with the demolition of the Deccan Kitchen Hotel in Film Nagar. On the direction of a city court, Film Nagar Police registered a case under various sections.

The First Information Report (FIR) has named producer Daggubati Suresh as accused number one (A1), his brother Daggubati Venkatesh as A2, Suresh's son and actor Daggubati Rana as A3 and Rana's brother and producer



Daggubati Abhiram as A4. The case has been registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 448, 452, 458, and 120B for trespass and criminal conspiracy.

The Nampally court had Saturday directed police to register a case and take action for violation of court orders.

The court issued orders on a complaint by Nanda Kumar, accusing Venkatesh and his family members of illegal demolition.

The complainant alleged that despite a pending injunction from the City Civil Court and orders from the Telangana High Court, the accused unlawfully entered the properties.



By-election to Ayodhya's Milkipur on Feb 5, fresh BJP-SP poll battle in the works

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday announced February 5 as the date for the much-anticipated by-election to Ayodhya's Milkipur Assembly seat. The seat had fallen vacant after the resignation of Samajwadi Party (SP) Awadhesh Prasad who got elected as Member of Parliament (MP) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, creating a lot of heartburn in the BJP circles. His son Ajit Prasad has been nominated from the seat by the Akhilesh Yadav-led party. The date for the Milkipur by-election were announced

along with Delhi election dates. The poll panel on Sunday declared February 5 as the date of voting for the 70-member Delhi Legislative Assembly. The date of the issue of Gazette Notification is January 10, the last date for making nominations is January 17, the date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18, and the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is January 20. The results will be declared on February 8. With Milkipur constituency going to polls in a month from now, it will see a fresh round of intensified and heated poll battle between the ruling BJP and rival SP. Just months ago, the nine constituencies of Uttar Pradesh which went to bypolls hogged the national headlines owing to the repeated war of words between the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and SP supremo Akhilesh Yadav.

RG Kar tragedy: Verdict to be pronounced on January 18

Kolkata, Jan 12 (IANS) : A special court in Kolkata will pronounce, on January 18, the verdict in the ghastly rape and murder of a junior woman doctor of R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital in Kolkata in August last year.



Drone monitoring to strengthen maritime security in Maharashtra: Minister

Mumbai, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Maharashtra government on Sunday launched a drone monitoring system to prevent illegal fishing and infiltration in the maritime area of the state.

Centre, AAP in Punjab equally responsible for agricultural crisis: Akali Dal

Chandigarh, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Sunday said the Union government and the AAP government in Punjab were equally responsible for the deepening agricultural crisis in the country, and also appealed to both governments to engage with farmers and do their utmost to save the precious life of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal. In a statement here, SAD leader Daljit Singh Cheema said it was shocking that even though the Supreme Court was monitoring the fast unto death of the fasting leader almost on a daily basis, both the Union and the state

governments were resorting to the blame game and playing politics. "Efforts are also on to polarise the entire issue which is condemnable and could be dangerous for a border state like Punjab." Cheema appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take the lead and create an atmosphere which could lead to the end of Dallewal's fast. "For this to take place, the Prime Minister should notify the guar-



antee on minimum support price (MSP) immediately. This is in keeping with the assurance made to the people of the country when the Prime Minister withdrew the three agricultural laws which led to the end of the Kisan Andolan."

VIP Darshan culture in religious places opposed to equality: Vice-Prez Dhankhar

Mangaluru, Jan 12 (IANS) : Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday that the VIP darshan culture concept in religious places is opposed to the idea of equality. He was addressing the gathering after the inauguration of the New Queue Complex "Sri Sanidhya" at the famous Hindu pilgrimage centre of Karnataka's Dharmasthala in Mangaluru district. He also inaugurated the 2024-25 Jnanadeep programme.

"The religious institutions are emblematic of equality since there is no individual higher before the Almighty or the God. We should reinstall the idea of equality in religious institutions. When precedence is accorded... when priority is given to someone, when we label it as VVIP, this is belittling the concept of equality," Vice-President Dhankhar opined. "VIP culture, friends, is an aberration, it is an incursion when viewed in the anvil of equality. It should have no place in society and much less in religious places," he underlined. "Let us shun for all times VIP culture. The very idea of VIP darshan militates against divinity it should be dispensed with," Vice President Dhankhar appealed. "A soothing change in recent years



in our country has been infrastructural growth that is germane to our religious places. This needs to be applauded as these are centres also of our civilisational values," he noted. "India is like the spiritual centre of the world, and Dharmasthala is its crown jewel. Lakhs of people come here to seek blessings from the Lord." Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said: "This place is a blend of spirituality, excellence, and beauty, with state-of-the-art facilities. India's religious places are more than just places of personal faith. They are centres of community service."

"Dharmasthala's contribution in the fields of education and medicine is immense. India is a rural country, and its development determines the country's economy. Sri Kshetra is doing development work in rural areas," he added. "India is growing globally. Our goal should not just be to make India a developed country by 2047, but it should be our purpose. This can be achieved by personally contributing to the country. India is a land of culture, and one-sixth of the world's population resides here. The new generation of youth should know about our civilisation. Otherwise, we will forget our history."



Union Carbide plant waste disposal: Awareness to be spread among people about incineration impact

Bhopal, Jan 12 (IANS) : To ensure the disposal of Union Carbide's waste under the safety protocols, the Madhya Pradesh government will spread awareness among the people of Pithampur industrial area, state Urban Development Minister, Kailash Vijayvargiya said on Sunday.

The Minister said the state government will utilise the six-week period granted for the safe disposal of toxic chemical waste, and the process will start after taking the people into confidence. He said the concerns raised by every individual living in the surroundings of Pithampur industrial town would be addressed through proper communication.

Mahakumbh: Digital 'Khoaya-Paya Kendras' set up to assist visitors with lost items

Mahakumbh Nagar, Jan 12 (IANS) : Realising the vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for a safe and grand Mahakumbh 2025, Uttar Pradesh Police have established 10 state-of-the-art digital 'Khoaya-Paya Kendras' across the Mahakumbh area to ensure safety and convenience of millions of devotees. These centers have been equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including, among others, waiting rooms and medical rooms for providing immediate assistance to the devotees. To ensure the com-

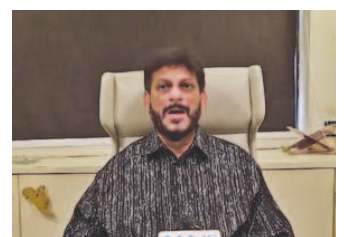
fort of families, a separate refreshment area has been arranged for women and children. All centers have been fitted with 55-inch LED screens connected to a public address system, which will display live updates regarding lost and found persons and items. The centers will also provide essential information on ghat arrangements and routes related to Mahakumbh. To manage the large influx of devotees, Additional Director General (ADG) Zone Bhanu Bhaskar emphasised that every measure is being taken to ensure a smooth experience for pilgrims. Ten computerised



'Khoaya-Paya Kendra' have been established across the Mahakumbh area, he added. The main model center situated at the western end of the Sangam Return Route will be staffed with five employees on regular days and nine during the peak bathing festivals to manage the crowd ef-

fectively and ensure smooth operations. The digital centers will assist in locating missing children, mobile phones, purses, and other belongings. The ten centers are strategically located in 10 sectors. To further support pilgrims, inquiry centers have been set up

throughout the fairgrounds. All important information related to the Mahakumbh, Prayagraj city and fair area will be available at these centers: The centers have been designed to ensure maximum efficiency in handling lost persons and items.



AIMIM rejects allegations of giving tickets to riot accused in Delhi

Mumbai, Jan 12 (IANS) : All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader and party's national spokesperson Waris Pathan has dismissed allegations that the party in Delhi gave election tickets to persons accused of involvement in riots.

Speaking to IANS, Pathan countered, "Those making baseless allegations should introspect. People living in glass houses should not throw stones at others. Didn't the BJP give a ticket to Pragya Singh Thakur, who is an accused in the Malegaon blast case?" He asserted that the AIMIM candidates, Tahir Hussain and Shafaur Rahman, are innocent. "They are undertrial prisoners. What will critics say when they are acquitted?" he asked.



Punjab Police unearths MSP payment fraud, arrests four

Chandigarh, Jan 12 (IANS) : Punjab Police's State Cybercrime Division has unearthed a minimum support price (MSP) payment fraud with the arrest of four accused involved in manipulating the Anaaj Kharid Portal to divert crop payments from farmers to their own bank accounts, Additional Director General of Police V. Neeraja said here on Sunday. Those arrested have been identified as Manish, Jasvir Singh, Angrej Singh, and Balwinder Singh. Police teams have also re-

covered digital devices and routers used by them to commit the fraud. ADGP Neeraja said the accused used an innovative modus operandi to divert the payment of crops to the farmers to their accounts fraudulently by replacing the mobile numbers of farmers with their mobile numbers and thereafter using them to update the

bank account information of the farmers. To avoid detection, the accused would restore the original details immediately after the payment was processed, she said, adding the state-wide operation is being conducted to nab the other accused.

OPINIONmail

DRAFT UGC REGULATION 2025
UNDERMINES HIGHER EDUCATION

The Draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications of Appointment & Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025 released by Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan paves the way for greater control of the Centre on Higher Education. It undermines not only the supremacy of the academicians as vice-chancellors of universities, but also worsen the service conditions of teachers by allowing their appointments on contracts in large numbers. Autonomous functioning of universities will be casualty and thereby the quality of higher education in the country. Nevertheless, Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan has said that the draft reforms and guidelines will infuse innovation, inclusivity, flexibility and dynamism in every aspect of higher education, empower teachers and academic staff, strengthen academic standards and pave the way for achieving educational excellence. He even congratulated the team of UGC for their efforts in formulating the Draft Regulations and Guidelines in sync with the ethos of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Currently, the Draft Regulations, 2025 have been placed in the public domain for feedback, suggestions, and consultations. Union Minister Pradhan expressed his confidence that the UGC will soon publish the Draft Regulations 2025 in its final form. It was claimed by the government that the regulation will give flexibility to university in appointing and promoting teachers and academic staff in their institutions. The nine benefits enumerated are: flexibility, promotion of Indian Languages, holistic evaluation, diverse talent pool, inclusivity, enhanced governance, simplified promotion process, focus on professional development, and enhanced transparency and accountability. Nevertheless, the big sounding claims conceals the real intentions. For example, as an official has been reported saying that "the regulation doesn't mention the Governor anywhere. Whoever is the Chancellor will appoint the selection committee." One can sense something fishy about the choice of words since many of the Governors as Chancellors of universities in the states they holding the constitutional post, especially in the opposition ruled states, have been at loggerheads with the ruling establishments, such as in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. There has been a general allegation against the Centre led by PM Narendra Modi that they have been trying to fill the Higher Education with their own people from RSS-BJP family. In the last 11 years, institutions of higher education and universities has seen large number of backdoor entries, while numerous posts are vacant and regular appointments are not being done. Appointments of Vice Chancellors have been a contentious issue. Through the Draft Regulation 2025, Governors are made more powerful, so that as Chancellors they can appoint Vice-Chancellors without hindrance from the ruling establishment of the state. It is just undermining the federal structure, in which a Governor is only a constitutional head of the state, who is supposed to act on the advice of the state government. Currently, many governors are acting as mere agents of the Centre, the new provisions of appointment of Vice-Chancellors are matter of serious concern, since they give much scope for manipulation. As per the new provision "The Chancellor/Visitor shall constitute the Search-cum-Selection Committee comprising of three experts." Such a power to Governors would erode the rights of a state's ruling establishment. Not only that, the draft regulation says that non-implementation may result in debaring an institution for participating in UGC schemes or from offering degree programmes. The Draft Regulation also gives enough room to Governor to manipulate appointment of Vice-Chancellors, since the necessity of the candidate to have "distinguished academician" has been done away with. The new regulation says that the candidate's qualification would be a "distinguished person possessing high academic qualifications and demonstrated administrative and leadership capabilities." Now a person having an experience at a senior level in industry, public administration, public policy.

(By Dr. Gyan Pathak)

EDITORIAL
the indian mailFOR AAP AND BJP, THE FINAL
BATTLE FOR DELHI IS SET FOR FEBRUARY 5

Voting is on February 5. Results will be declared on February 8. The BJP put out a poster within minutes of the announcement that Delhi will have a BJP Chief Minister by mid-February. But the BJP was beaten to the claim by AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar who asserted, even before the Election Commission announced the dates, that Delhi's voters will vote to make Arvind Kejriwal Chief Minister for the fourth time, no worries. The good thing going for this Priyanka is that Ramesh Bidhuri

won't be calling her names. The Election Commission warned that those casting slurs against women candidates and women in general will be held to account and put behind bars. Cases will be lodged against the Bidhuris of this world. Yes, what they call "Zero Tolerance". For sure, tin-pot misogynists like Bidhuri will keep his oats shut in tin cans. Bidhuri just survived getting lynched by a couple of days.

Else, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Congress' Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would have been celebrating Bidhuri's

punishment. The Election Commission warned male candidates and political parties to mind their language when talking about women. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said this, his face stern after an initial bout of 'shero-shayari' that, if it did regale voters, would be known only on February 5. Delhi has a total voter strength of 1 crore 55 lakh, of which male voters account for 83.89 lakh and female voters number around 71.74 lakh. There has been an increase of 1.70m lakh voters from the last election.

PM Modi's aura
unmatchable: Global
delegates at 18th
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's keynote address at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in Bhubaneswar, Odisha on Thursday received enthusiastic praise from the members of Indian diaspora residing worldwide.

IS JUSTIN TRUDEAU THE FIRST VICTIM OF
TRUMP-MUSK DUO'S FAR RIGHT OFFENSIVE IN 2025

Is the Canadian Prime Minister and the ruling Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau's resignation marks the first success of the Donald Trump-Elon Musk duo in organising regime change as a part of far right agenda in 2025? Apparently, many might argue that this was not so as the developments in the Liberal Party

and the Canadian Government in the last few weeks indicated that Trudeau was getting isolated and his Party was going to lose in the coming elections on October 20 this year. There is some truth in it, but the fact is that Trudeau still would have tried for a turnaround in his Party's fortunes in the next ten months if the President elect Donald Trump

aided by Elon Musk would not have humiliated him and openly advocated his ouster. Trump talked of his idea of converting Canada into the 51st state of America and completely changing the trilateral agreement between USA, Mexico and Canada to the detriment of the Canadian national interests.

NSDC's shocking move: Choosing pollster
with a history of blunders for key skill development project

In a surprising move that has enough ingredients for the public to flag the decision, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) -- a public-private partnership (PPP) enterprise working under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship -- has partnered with Axis My India, the pollster company owned by Pradeep Gupta, to address key gaps in skill development initiatives.

While the goal of this joint partnership is to facilitate and enhance the participation of beneficiaries in various parts of the country, particularly in underserved regions, the decision to involve Axis My India has sparked widespread skepticism and heated debate.

The crux of the controversy lies in the fact that Axis My India has failed spectacularly in providing the actual outcome in its exit polls. The most notable failure was its disastrous prediction for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The exit poll firm's projection that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance would win over 400 seats, which would be the achievement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Abki Baar 400 Paar" mission, was off by a considerable margin. It was a full-blown miscalculation as well. The reality of the BJP's performance was a stark contrast, with the party falling short of a majority, ultimately securing only 240 seats. The NDA got only 293, which was not even close to the company's projected 361-400 seats. This major blunder was followed by a similarly "faulty and miscalculated" projection in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections of 2024, where Axis My India's predictions of a hung assembly and a strong showing by the Congress-National Conference (NC) combine proved abjectly incorrect. The firm also predicted a Congress win in Haryana with 53-65 seats, a prediction that was equally far from reality. Despite the company's shocking, patchy



track record, the NSDC's decision to rely on Axis My India for a project centered around "data-driven gaps" in skill development raises serious questions.

The project, which includes surveys to gather crucial data on the state of skill development programmes, beneficiary participation, and industry needs, is vital for future policy evaluations. However, after a series of high-profile failures in its exit polling and data accuracy, one must wonder: Does the NSDC truly trust the firm's "surveying skills and data authentication"? Experts warn that there is a significant risk of Axis My India repeating its past mistakes by providing the government with inaccurate and unreliable data.

GLOBAL COOPERATION AT
CROSSROADS DUE TO RISING
GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

The World Economic Forum (WEF) the organization of the leading global heads of the companies will be meeting in Davos Switzerland from January 20 to 24 this year to discuss the issues of development in an era of conflict. The World Economic Forum's Global Cooperation Barometer offers a critical assessment of the state of global cooperation, showing a world grappling with heightened competition and conflict, while also identifying various areas where leaders can drive progress through innovative collaboration. Released amid geopolitical, technological and socio-political upheaval, the Forum's flagship annual report underscores the urgency of addressing shared challenges and offers leaders guidance on what cooperation can look like in a shifting world.

The Global Cooperation Barometer 2025, developed in collaboration with McKinsey & Company, uses 41 indicators to measure the current state of global cooperation.

Cold wave grips South Korea as temperatures plunge below minus 10 degrees Celsius

Seoul, Jan 12 (IANS) : The season's coldest weather gripped South Korea on Sunday with temperatures plunging below minus 10 degrees Celsius in Seoul and the northern regions. As of 8 a.m. the lowest tempera-

ture in Seoul was minus 10.2 degrees Celsius and the lowest apparent temperature minus 16.7 degrees Celsius, according to the Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA). A cold wave advisory took ef-

fect for all of Seoul at 9 p.m. the previous day. An advisory is issued when a morning low of minus 12 degrees Celsius or less is expected for two or more consecutive days. The lowest temperatures in other

regions ranged from minus 16.9 degrees Celsius in the Daegwallyeong mountain pass in Gangwon Province to minus 13.6 degrees Celsius in Cheorwon and minus 13 degrees Celsius in Cheonan.



South Korea: Opposition parties introduce revised special counsel Bill targeting Yoon's martial law bid

Seoul, Jan 12 (IANS) : South Korea's Opposition parties on Sunday introduced a revised bill to launch a special counsel probe into impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his failed martial law bid, a day after a previous version was voted down at the National Assembly. The new version proposes that the Supreme Court's chief justice recommend a special counsel to look into Yoon's insurrection charges. The previous Bill, which proposed special counsel recommendations from the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) and the minor opposition Rebuilding Korea Party, was scrapped Wednesday after being voted down by just two votes. The Opposition's decision

comes in an apparent effort to secure more defection votes from the ruling People Power Party. "The two candidates for the special counsel will both be recommended by the chief justice of the Supreme Court," a DP official told. "The ruling party will have no reason to oppose it." The DP also decided to exclude a clause that allows Opposition parties to request a new recommendation in the event the proposed candidate is deemed unfit, Yonhap news agency reported. Instead, the revised bill expands the scope of the investigation to include charges Yoon committed the "crime of treason" against his own country.



Zambia starts vaccination campaign in cholera-affected district

Lusaka, Jan 12 (IANS) : A cholera vaccination campaign targeting 191,153 people has started in a northern Zambian district following fresh outbreaks. According to state media reports on Sunday, the cholera vaccination campaign in Nakonde district began Tuesday, targeting those aged one and above, with 200,000

doses received, said District Health Director Philip Munkonge. "We are hopeful that the administration of the vaccine will be successful so that people can get immunity from contracting the disease," Munkonge was quoted by the Zambia Daily Mail as saying.

Intense cold wave conditions grips again most parts of Bangladesh

Dhaka, Jan 12 (IANS) : Intense cold wave conditions gripped again most parts of Bangladesh. According to the latest weather bulletin from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), a severe temperature drop occurred in most parts of Bangladesh, starting at 9:00 a.m. local time on Sunday. The BMD noted that cold

feelings may intensify during the day due to dense fog. On Wednesday, the country's Jashore district, some 164 km from the capital city Dhaka, recorded the country's lowest temperature at 12.8 degrees Celsius.



South Korea: Health ministry expresses hope for talks with new doctors' group head

Seoul, Jan 12 (IANS) : South Korea's health ministry on Sunday expressed hope for engaging in talks with the new head of the country's top doctors' lobby group amid a prolonged deadlock over medical reform.

No entry without polio vaccination certificate, Saudi Arabia tells Pakistani travellers

Islamabad, Jan 12 (IANS) : A polio vaccination certificate has been made mandatory for Pakistani citizens travelling to Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's civil aviation authority has announced. According to Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), anyone found violating the latest directives would face severe penalties and legal action. Pakistan, along with Afghanistan, remains one of the last two polio-endemic

countries in the world. The country has experienced a concerning surge in poliovirus cases, with 68 instances of the crippling disease reported in 2024. Over the years, questions have been raised over the Pakistan government's continued failure to handle the spread of polio virus in the country, especially in the troubled provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan which have seen rejection of polio vaccination campaigns and even casualties for health workers. The Saudi

government's decision comes at a time when several Gulf countries have imposed a visa ban on Pakistanis over their involvement in crime, fraud and begging. On Wednesday, as many as 51 deported Pakistanis landed in Karachi from seven countries, while 30 passengers were offloaded from international flights at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport on Tuesday night due to issues with their travel documents and other irregularities, officials from the immigration department told



Geo News. Earlier, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had made it mandatory for visa applicants from Pakistan to submit a police character certificate. Besides Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Gulf nations have imposed an indefi-

nite ban on granting visas to people from at least 30 different cities of Pakistan, following an alarming rise in number of cases where Pakistani nationals have been caught begging or being involved in smuggling, drug trafficking, human trafficking

and other criminal offences abroad. Gulf countries and cities, especially Dubai and Abu Dhabi, remain the most preferred destinations for millions of Pakistani travellers and job seekers.



US-British coalition launches more airstrikes on Yemen

Sanaa, Jan 12 (IANS) : The US-British coalition launched airstrikes on several parts of northern Yemen, including its capital Sanaa, on Sunday before dawn, the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV reported. The coalition launched five airstrikes on Sanhan district south of Sanaa, and Harf Sufyan district in the northern province of Amran, and one airstrike on Al-Luhayyah district north of Hodeidah province, the report said.

Somalia, Nepal and Palestine ranked above Pakistan in latest passport rankings

Islamabad, Jan 12 (IANS) : Pakistani passport continues to rank among the weakest in the world on the 2025 Henley Passport Index (HPI), which ranks all the world's passports according to the number of destinations they can access visa-free, and is based on exclusive Timatic data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Pakistan, the fifth most populated nation in the world, is ranked at the 103rd position on the index, with even Somalia, Nepal, Palestine, Libya and North Korea placed above the country. Only Iraq (104), Syria (105) and Afghanistan (106) have weaker passports than Pakistan. Pakistani citizens, already struggling massively to travel abroad with extremely high visa rejection rates, have access to only 33 visa-free destinations. Singapore leads the index as possessing the most-coveted passport in the world with Singaporeans having visa-free access to 195 out of 227 destinations worldwide. The research showed that Pakistan (49.6 per cent) and Bangladesh (43.3 per cent) are also among the top 10 countries facing the highest Schengen visa rejection rates. Over the past many years, severe restrictions and bans



have been imposed by many countries on Pakistani passports and the country's citizens, leading to rejections of visas for the country's travellers. Interestingly, the latest index was released at a time when Saudi Arabia announced that Pakistani citizens travelling to the kingdom must carry a polio vaccination certificate along with them. Earlier, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had made it mandatory for visa applicants from Pakistan to submit a police character certificate. Several Gulf countries have also imposed a visa ban on Pakistanis over their involvement in crime, fraud and begging.

South Korea's President Yoon's lawyers file for injunction against 2nd detention warrant

Seoul, Jan 12 (IANS) : South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's lawyers said on Sunday they have filed for an injunction against a second warrant to detain him over his brief imposition of martial law. Yun Gap-geun and other members of the impeached president's legal defence team made the remark during a meeting with foreign news outlets, saying the request was filed with the Constitutional Court.



At PBD 2025, PM Modi urges diaspora to become force behind India's march towards 'Viksit Bharat 2047'

Bhubaneswar, Jan 12 (IANS) : Spotting the country's march towards becoming a 'Viksit Bharat', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday sought the participation of the diaspora in making India a developed nation by 2047. "India got independence in 1947 and our diaspora played a big role in this. They contributed towards the freedom of India while living abroad. Now we have a target of making India a developed nation by 2047," said Prime Minister Modi while speaking at the inaugural session of 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. Praising the Indian diaspora for its contribution in India's growth, the PM said that it is due to their hard work that the country has become number

one in the world in terms of remittances. Asserting that India is not limited to big cities only, he mentioned that a large part of the population resides in tier-2, tier-3 cities and villages and the diaspora should promote 'heritage tourism' of India in the countries they are residing. "There's a lot of Indian culture there. We have to connect the world with this heritage," stated PM Modi. He appealed to the diaspora to visit the amazing tourist destinations located in small towns, villages of India and later share their experiences with friends and ensure they also visit India. "You have to come forward to let the people of the country you are living in know the real history of India. Today's generation in those countries does not know our pros-



perity in the past, the long periods of subjugation and our struggles. You all can let the world know the true history of India," the PM said. PM Modi noted that India is following the mantra of development along with heritage. He said that the Indian government during the G-20 event organised various meetings in every nook and corner of the country so that the world could get a first-hand experience of India's diversity. He informed the gathering that the Indian government has decided to establish Thiruvalluvar Culture Centres to propagate the

thoughts of Saint Thiruvalluvar. Referring to the collection and digitisation of documents related to some people of Gujarati origin who settled in Oman centuries back, PM Modi said "the history of the Indian diaspora has spread across the world, the stories of how they reached that country and made their mark there is a significant legacy of India. You also have so many interesting and inspiring stories. It needs to be shown, heard and cherished. This is our shared legacy, shared heritage."



Parvesh Verma's illegal acts will reduce polls to farce: Kejriwal tells ECI

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Seeking a ban on BJP nominee Parvesh Verma for Model Code of Conduct violation, the AAP's National Convenor and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday reiterated allegations of manipulation in the electoral rolls of New Delhi constituency, claiming the electoral process may be reduced to a "big farce" if the Election Commission of India (ECI) fails to intervene. Hitting back, Verma said

the AAP's allegations against him and poll panel officials were a sign of Kejriwal conceding defeat even before voting on February 5. After leading a party delegation to the Election Commission, Kejriwal alleged wrongdoing in addition of 13,000 voters and deletion of 5,500 voters' name between December 15-January 7 in the New Delhi Assembly seat, where he is pitted against Verma and Congress nominee Sandeep Dikshit.

Deprived of 'Maiya Samman Yojana' aid, beneficiaries protest outside DC office in Jamshedpur

Jamshedpur, Jan 12 (IANS) : Many women beneficiaries of the 'Maiya Samman Yojana' gathered outside the Deputy Commissioner's Office on Sun-

day and protested against the Hemant Soren-led JMM government over non-payment of financial aid, as stipulated under the scheme. They shouted slogans,

expressed resentment and called out the state administration for what they called 'step-motherly' treatment against them. Dozens of women claimed that

they have been deprived of the monetary aid under the scheme and their multiple appeals and requests to the government officials are going unheard and unheeded.



Delhi polls: Congress promises Rs 25 lakh health insurance for all

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Former Delhi Health Minister, Dr Narendra Nath said on Sunday that Delhi Congress' Rs 25 lakh 'Jeevan Raksha Yojana', universal health scheme, will provide free health insurance to all Delhi residents, under the party's 'right to health' scheme. The senior Delhi Congress leader said the health insurance being promised by the party will not be like AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal's 70 promises, which he has not fulfilled till date despite enjoying power for 10 years. Dr. Nath said that the Congress will implement all its promises as soon as it comes to power. He said the AAP government's 'Mohalla Clinics', built on pavements, were without medicines, doctors, staff and equipment, and yet, Kejriwal takes credit for the so-called "Delhi model" of healthcare.

Withdrawal of draft UGC regulations: TN Assembly adopts resolution moved by CM Stalin

Chennai, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Sunday unanimously adopted a resolution moved by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, urging the Centre to immediately withdraw the draft University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations of 2025. These regulations pertain to the selection and appointment process for Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs) and the minimum qualifications required for the appointment and promotion of teachers and academic staff in colleges and universities.



Should have been done earlier: Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind chief on AAP's Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : As Delhi heads toward its Assembly elections, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) announcement of the 'Pujari-Granthi Samman Yojana', a scheme aimed at providing financial support to Hindu priests and Sikh Granthis, has sparked mixed reactions. On Sunday, Mahmood Madani, the chief of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, weighed in, suggesting that the initiative should have been introduced much earlier.

Speaking to IANS, Madani said, "Look, this is a political decision. Delhi Assembly polls are almost here. But, I want to say that it should have been done earlier. However, it is better late than never. If it has been done, I think there is no harm in it." On whether former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should come up with some schemes for Muslims as well, Madani said, "Some people are making it a big issue. I feel that instead of doing something special for the minor-

ity community, just ensure equal rights for them in education and other sectors." Madani further emphasised that the core issue for Muslims was not special treatment but the guarantee of equal opportunities and justice. "Look, I feel that even in today's environment, in the structure of India, the situation that has been created — if justice is done to everyone and equal opportunities are ensured, then nothing will be bigger than that," Madani added. Madani further stressed that the country needs efforts to reduce the growing communal tensions. "More than doing something for Muslims, it is important to reduce the hate-filled situation that is being created. Hatred is being increased, and efforts are being made to create distance and rift between communities," Madani said. "All political parties should focus on reducing this. Instead of bringing schemes specifically for Muslims.



India and EU discuss shared goal of advancement of all human rights

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : India and the European Union (EU) have reiterated their commitment to the shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, rule of law, and to the promotion and protection of all human rights during the 11th India-European Union Human Rights Dialogue held in New Delhi on Sunday.

Apex tribal body urges Centre not to fence India-Myanmar border in Naga community's interest

Kohima, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Tenyimi Union Nagaland (TUN), an apex body of five major tribes in Nagaland, has reiterated its support to the Nagaland Assembly resolution and urged the Centre not to fence the India-Myanmar boundary in the interest of the Naga community. TUN President Kekhngengulo Lea said that the apex body strongly supported the Nagaland Assembly resolution adopted on March 1, 2024, urging the Union government to reconsider its decision to erect a fence along the India-Myanmar border. He said that as the Naga community people are residing on both sides of the border, the fencing would disrupt cultural ties, social bonds, education, and healthcare access. "Communities would be isolated, and vital connections would be cut off. The absurdity of this plan is starkly illustrated in bordering Longwa village, where the proposed fence would physically

bisect the home of a Konyak Angh, with the kitchen in India and the bedroom in Myanmar," Lea said in a press statement. He said that the TUN, during its 1st Foundation Day held at Kohima Village in June last year, had resolved, among several resolutions.



Himachal cabinet decisions: STF to fight drug abuse, 12 pc stamp duty, increase in BPL list

Shimla, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Himachal Pradesh cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu, on Sunday, took several important decisions, including the setting up of a Special Task Force (STF) to dismantle drug trafficking,

levying 12 per cent stamp duty on transfer and lease transactions and increase in the BPL Beneficiary list. The cabinet also paid tributes to former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and observed two minutes of silence in his memory.



Never sold users' Siri data to anyone for any purpose : Apple

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Apple on Sunday said that it never used Siri data to build marketing profiles, never made it available for advertising, and never sold it to anyone for any purpose. Last week, the tech giant last week paid \$95 million to settle a class-action lawsuit, which alleged that it recorded their private conversations with Siri and disclosed these conversations to third parties such as advertisers.



59 ultra-luxury homes sold in India for Rs 4,754 cr in 2024, 17 deals worth over Rs 100 cr

Mumbai, Jan 12 (IANS) : India saw the sale of 59 ultra-luxury homes priced above Rs 40 crore at a total value of Rs 4,754 crore last year, a 17 per cent increase from 2023, according to a report on Sunday. The data showed that out of the 59 ultra-luxury homes sold in 2024, at least 17 were priced at more than Rs 100 crore each. The total value of these 17 homes sold alone was Rs 2,344 crore, said the report by Anarock Group. In 2023, 58 ultra-luxury homes were sold for a total sales value of nearly Rs 4,063 crore. Of a total of 59 ultra-luxurious homes sold in 2024, 53 were

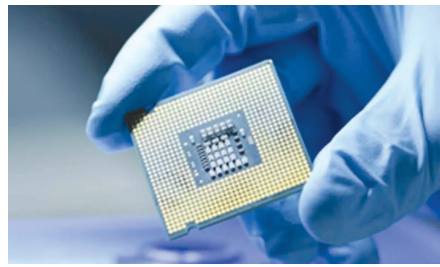
apartments and just six deals were of bungalows. At least 17 deals in 2024 were worth over Rs 100 crore each — 16 in Mumbai and one in Delhi-NCR (Gurugram). Mumbai dominated with 52 ultra-luxury residential deals, comprising an 88 per cent share of total deals. Delhi-NCR recorded three deals for two ultra-luxury homes in Gurugram and one in Delhi. Hyderabad and Bengaluru each saw two deals worth over Rs 40 crore, the data showed. "The yearly increase in both the number of deals and their overall sales value underscores the enduring demand for ultra-luxury properties across the top cities," said

Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group. Since the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the demand for luxury and ultra-luxury properties. "HNIs and ultra-HNIs are purchasing these trophy residences for personal use, investment, or both," said Puri. This is a noteworthy market dynamic, given that home prices are surging nationwide due to increased input costs and robust buyer demand. Although there was only a one-unit increase in the number of transactions closed in 2024 compared to 2023, there was a 17 per cent annual increase in value during the same period.

SIP inflows in India cross

Rs 26,000 crore mark for 1st time in December : AMFI

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Monthly systematic investment plans (SIPs) surpassed the Rs 26,000 crore mark for the first time in the month of December, showcasing that small investors continue to rely on mutual funds for long-term investments, as per the data released by the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI) on Sunday. The SIP contribution during the last month stood at Rs 26,459 crore compared to 25,320 crore in November.



Indian firms aiming to surpass global rivals in adoption of future technologies : WEF

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Indian employers are planning to outpace global adoption in key technologies, with 35 per cent expecting semiconductors and computing technologies and 21 per cent expecting quantum and encryption to transform operations, according to the 'Future of Jobs Report 2025' published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

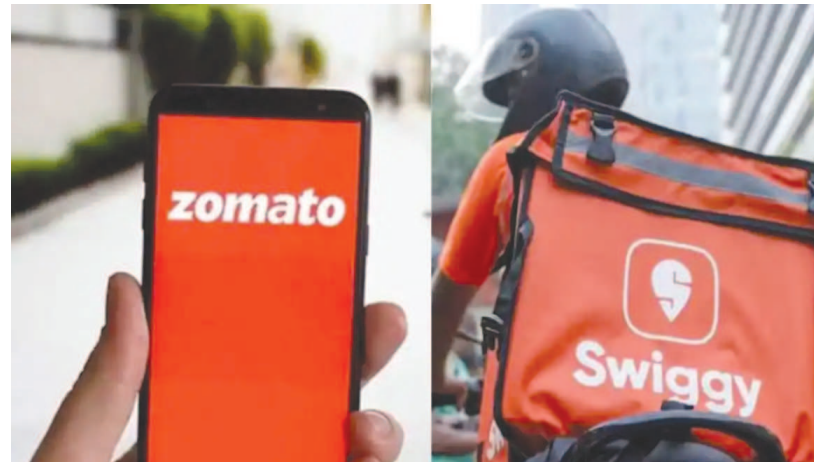


NRAI slams Zomato and Swiggy over private label food delivery via Q-com apps

Mumbai, Jan 12 (IANS) : The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) on Sunday strongly opposed the recent foray of food delivery platforms Zomato and Swiggy into private-label food delivery via their quick commerce (Q-com) apps. The leading hotel

industry body said in a statement that their move undermines the principles of fair competition and poses a significant threat to the viability of thousands of restaurants across the country. The NRAI represents over five lakh restaurants, an industry valued at Rs 5.69 lakh crore.

"Zomato and Swiggy, originally established as marketplace platforms, are now leveraging their dominant positions and access to restaurant data to venture into private-label food delivery either directly or via their subsidiary," said the NRAI. This strategy not only "cannibalises the business of res-



taurants that rely on these platforms" but also raises serious concerns under the Copyright Act and related laws. Their entry into delivering food through private labelling and selling on their platforms and also delivering privately labelled food via their own quick commerce platforms such as Blinkit Bistro and Swiggy Cafe/Snacc fundamentally violates neutrality.



Equity fund inflows in India surge over 14 pc to Rs 41,156 cr in Dec

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Actively managed equity mutual fund inflows saw over 14 per cent monthly growth at Rs 41,155.9 crore in the month of December, the data by the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI) showed on Sunday. The growth in equity mutual fund inflows came as thematic/sectoral and small-cap funds saw higher investments. The small-cap funds clocked a net inflow of Rs 4,667.7 crore in December, while the net inflows stood at Rs 4,111.8 crore in the previous month. The mid-cap category saw an inflow of Rs 5,093.2 crore in December, from Rs 4,883.4

crore in the previous month, as per the AMFI data. Inflows into the sectoral and thematic category rose to Rs 15,331.5 crore. Meanwhile, flexi-cap funds saw an inflow of Rs 4,730.7 crore, while multi-cap funds recorded inflows worth Rs 5,084.1 crore. Inflows from new fund offers accounted for inflow of Rs 13,643 crore last month. Passive fund category saw the most number of new fund offering (NFO) launches. NFOs brought a total of Rs 4,052-crore inflow into the industry last month. Indian mutual fund industry's assets under management (AUM) saw significant growth over the last decade, as it increased by a whopping 524 per cent to 68.08 lakh crore in November 2024 from 10.9 lakh crore in November 2014. The AUM growth in B-30 (Beyond 30 cities) outpaced the top-30 cities during this period. The mutual fund industry's AUM has increased by more than Rs 37 lakh crore in the last four years.

TCS reports employee headcount drop by 5,370 in Q3

Mumbai, Jan 12 (IANS) : IT services major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Sunday reported a drop in its employee headcount by 5,370 in the third quarter this fiscal (Q3 FY25), which is a reversal after two consecutive quarters of headcount growth. The Tata Group company's headcount had increased by 5,726 employees in Q2 FY25.



Indian economy expected to clock 6.8 pc growth in 2025-26 : Report

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Indian economy is projected to grow at a robust 6.8 per cent in the financial year 2025-26, driven by strong high-frequency indicators, according to a Bank of Baroda forecast. The report expects nominal GDP growth to be around 10.5 per cent during the next financial year. It highlights that key indicators of this growth include robust air passenger traffic, a rise in services PMI.

How long can you stare at your wife at home? Come to office and work 90-hr a week : L&T Chairman

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : After Infosys' N. R. Narayana Murthy's controversial 70-hour-a-week work, it is now the turn of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Chairman S. N. Subrahmanyam, who has gone beyond Murthy's work call, suggesting employees to work 90 hours a week - including Sundays - to stay competitive.



ED raid case: Madras HC dismisses plea filed by DMK MP Kathir Anand's college

Chennai, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Madras High Court has dismissed a writ petition filed by Kingston Engineering College owned by DMK leader and Parliament member Kathir Anand, challenging the sealing of its server room by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The server room was sealed as part of a money laundering case registered against the MP. Kathir Anand is the son of Tamil Nadu Water Resources Development Minister S. Duraimurugan, who is the second-in-command in the Stalin cabinet after the Chief Minister.

A Division Bench comprising Justices S.M. Subramaniam and M. Jothiraman rejected the plea after ED Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) N. Ramesh informed the court that the server room had already been de-sealed on January 7. He added that the ED had seized only two out of the nine servers during its investigation. The SPP claimed the server room was sealed due to non-cooperation from the college management, which allegedly delayed access to the data. According to Ramesh, ED of-

officials were made to wait for over six hours on January 4 despite repeated requests to Kathir Anand and other college staff to unlock the server room. He said a carpenter had to be brought in to forcibly open the locks of the server room and the chairman's office. During the search operation, the ED reportedly seized Rs 2.74 crore in cash from the college premises. The college management, however, stated in its affidavit that the cash was meant for employee salaries and Pongal bonuses, claiming that it was sourced from student fees. The management also alleged that documents related to the college, bank transactions, and a hard disk were taken by the ED. The ED's searches are part of an ongoing probe into a 2019 Income Tax case against Kathir Anand involving cash-for-vote allegations during the Lok Sabha elections. Over Rs 10 crore in cash was seized from premises allegedly linked to Anand's associate in Vellore during raids that year, which led to the cancellation of the election in the Vellore constituency. The college management denied the ED's claim of non-cooperation and requested the court to direct the agency to pro-

vide a copy of the data retrieved from the seized servers. However, the judges declined to issue such a direction, stating it was beyond the scope of the writ petition. The Bench clarified that the college could pursue remedies through other legal avenues. In an affidavit, Kingston Engineering College principal U.V. Arivazhagu stated that ED officials had conducted a search and seizure operation on the campus from January 3 to January 5 under an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) filed against Kathir Anand under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) of 2002. The principal asserted that the college staff fully cooperated with the ED during the operation. He claimed that after completing the search, the ED officials shut down the servers and sealed the server room.



Our Constitution, Our Pride: What right does Cong have to speak about Dr. Ambedkar, says K'taka BJP

Bengaluru, Jan 12 (IANS) : Karnataka BJP on Sunday claimed that pro-Constitution, pro-reservation amendments had been made by the BJP and what right do Congress leaders have to speak about Dr. Ambedkar? At the BJP state office in Bengaluru, a meeting was held under the leadership of state President and MLA B.Y. Vijayendra as part of the 'Constitution Honour Day' and 'Our Constitution, Our Pride' campaign. The meeting was attended by BJP National General Secretary B.L. Santhosh, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashoka, LoP in the Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, MLC C.T.

Ravi and others. Speaking to the media after the meeting, BJP state Vice President N. Mahesh stated, "Since BJP came to power in 2015, Constitution Day has been celebrated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has undertaken the task of honouring and raising awareness about the Constitution." He further questioned, "Those who pushed Babasaheb Ambedkar back at every step from 1920 until his demise, those who insulted and defeated him, what right do they have to speak about Dr. Ambedkar today?" He claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP have erased instances of disrespect towards Dr. Ambedkar and worked to bring him the honour he deserves. "Who amended the Con-

stitution? Who strengthened it? We are conveying this message through our campaign," he added. From November 26, the day the Constitution was adopted, to January 26, the day it came into force, a two-month-long awareness campaign is being conducted. After district-level campaigns, information is now being disseminated at the zonal level. So far, 106 amendments have been made to the Constitution. Of these, BJP has made 22 amendments — 14 during former PM late Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure and 8 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure. "All these amendments were pro-Constitution and pro-reservation, aimed at empowering SCs, STs, and other backward communities," Mahesh said.

Punjab Police bust Pak-backed weapon smuggling racket; one held

Chandigarh, Jan 12 (IANS) : Punjab Police have busted a Pakistan-backed weapon smuggling racket being operated by absconding smuggler.



INDIA bloc only for general elections, Cong building momentum for Delhi: Khera

Jaipur, Jan 12 (IANS) : Congress leader Pawan Khera on Sunday reiterated that the INDIA bloc was formed exclusively for the Lok Sabha elections and asserted that the party is gaining significant momentum ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections. Khera's statement came in response to remarks by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav,

who had also emphasised that the INDIA bloc was designed for the general elections at the national level. Tensions within the INDIA bloc have surfaced as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress.



Drugs Inspector can't ban product in absence of Central govt notification: SC

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Supreme Court has ruled that in the absence of notification issued by the Central government prohibiting "aromatic tincture of cardamom", a Drugs Inspector lacks authority to impose new prohibitions or to classify a duly licensed drug as contraband. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and P.B. Varale was hearing special leave petitions filed against the decision of the Allahabad High Court upholding the restrictions imposed on sale of a medicinal preparation known as "aromatic tincture of cardamom" at the appellants' medical shops. The appellants, engaged in the wholesale and retail sale of drugs and medicines at Uttar Pradesh's Agra, hold valid and subsisting licenses under the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the rules framed thereunder, permitting them to sell, stock, and distribute various drugs, including a herbal medicinal preparation commonly referred to as "aromatic tincture of cardamom".

Cong's focus on defeating BJP in Delhi, says Alvi after Chavan's remark on Kejriwal's victory

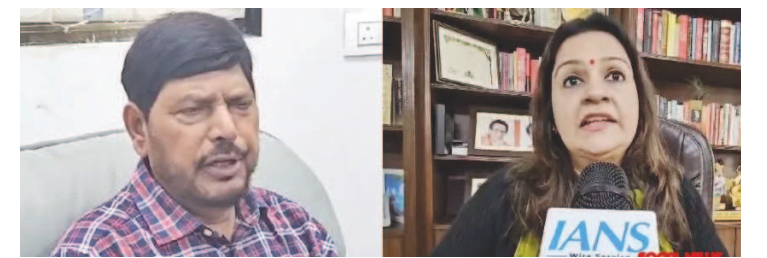
New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : As Delhi gears up for the upcoming Assembly elections, the political landscape is witnessing controversies and clarifications. Congress senior leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan made headlines by predicting that Arvind Kejriwal's AAP would emerge victorious in the upcoming polls. However, Congress leader Rashid Alvi responded on Sunday, firmly stating that the party's focus is solely on defeating the BJP in the national Capital. Speaking to IANS, Rashid Alvi acknowledged the uncertainty of electoral outcomes but expressed his belief in Kejriwal's potential for victory. "Who will win and who will lose is a matter of time," he

said, adding, "In my opinion, Kejriwal should have talked about an alliance. The Congress doesn't want a BJP government in Delhi." Significantly, Chavan on Thursday issued a clarification regarding his earlier comments on Kejriwal's victory. He maintained that his remarks had been "taken out of context." The clarification came amid a growing conversation around possible alliances and political dynamics within the Opposition. Rashid Alvi further expressed concern over the ongoing fragmentation of Opposition parties. Referring to allies within the INDIA bloc, such as the Samajwadi Party and Trinamool Congress, supporting the AAP in Delhi, Alvi remarked.



Trinamool to expel leader arrested in Bengal councillor murder case

Kolkata, Jan 12 (IANS) : Trinamool Congress leadership has decided to expel party leader Narendra Nath Tiwari arrested after being accused of conspiring the murder of Dulal Sarkar a.k.a. Babla, the party councillor from Ward number 22 of English Bazar Municipality under Malda district in West Bengal. The formal announcement on the matter is likely to be made later in the day at a press conference at Trinamool Congress' Malda district headquarters by the party's district president, Abdul Rahim Bakshi. Besides being the Malda town president of Trinamool Congress, Tiwari also holds the portfolio of the district president of the Hindi cell of the ruling party in Malda.



Athawale's party to contest Delhi polls; says will help BJP form govt

Mumbai, Jan 12 (IANS) : As the battle for Delhi intensifies, smaller parties and splinter groups are gearing up to make their mark. The Republican Party of India (RPI) president and Rajya Sabha member Ramdas Athawale has announced that his party will field candidates in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. Speaking to the media, Athawale said, "The BJP is not giving us any seats in Delhi, even though we have a significant presence there. I will be visiting Delhi tomorrow for a party meeting. We have received 30-35 applications from candidates wanting to contest in Delhi out of the 70 Assembly seats. If any of our candidates win, we will support the BJP in forming the government." Commenting on the Opposition alliance he claimed, "There is a clear division in

the INDIA bloc." "While the AAP and Congress had an alliance during the Lok Sabha elections, they are now at odds. The AAP has declared that it will fight alone in Delhi, and the Congress is also contesting independently. Although some smaller parties are supporting the AAP, it won't make a significant difference. The INDIA bloc is fractured, in my view," he said. On the other hand, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Rajya Sabha MP, Priyanka Chaturvedi has expressed her party's support for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi. "In the INDIA bloc, the AAP is an important constituent. It is the only party capable of challenging the BJP in Delhi, and we have decided to strengthen its hand. Partners of the INDIA bloc have a responsibility to support those who can defeat the BJP."



Egypt announces new archaeological discoveries near Luxor

Luxor, Jan 12 (IANS) : Archaeologists in Egypt have unearthed significant finds near Luxor, including parts of a temple linked to Queen Hatshepsut, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said.

A team led by Zahi Hawass on Saturday discovered a well-preserved section of the Valley Temple's foundations, which served as the main gateway to Hatshepsut's funerary temple, dating back to the 18th Dynasty (around 1539-1292 BC), reports Xinhua news agency.

The excavation yielded over 1,000 decorated blocks and fragments with detailed carvings and inscriptions, considered rare examples of

sculpture from Hatshepsut's reign and that of her successor, Thutmose III.

The ministry said these inscriptions are the most complete found from the temple, which was deliberately destroyed during the Ramesside Period (around 1292-1077 BC). More than 100 limestone and quartzite tablets bearing Hatshepsut's royal cartouches (nameplates) were also found. These, along with other foundation deposits, confirm Hatshepsut's ownership of the temple.

The team also uncovered rock-cut tombs and artefacts from the Middle Kingdom (around 1938-1630 BC), including a tomb be-

longing to "the Overseer of the Palace" of Queen Tetisheri from the 17th Dynasty (around 1630-1540 BC). Burial shafts from the same period, an extensive necropolis, and bronze coins from the Ptolemaic Period (the last dynasty of ancient Egypt) were also discovered. Abdel-Ghaffar Wagdy, Director General of Luxor Antiquities, told Xinhua that the discoveries, supported by the Ministry, would "undoubtedly help attract more tourists."

Last year in November, an Egyptian-American archaeological team unearthed the first Middle Kingdom-era burials at the Assasif cemetery near Luxor.

2024 New Zealand's 10th-warmest year on record : NIWA

Wellington, Jan 12 (IANS) : 2024 was New Zealand's 10th-warmest year on record, and eight of New Zealand's 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 2013, according to the annual climate summary published by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) on Saturday.

The ongoing warming trend observed both locally and globally is consistent with human-caused climate change, which is largely driven by human greenhouse gas emissions, said a NIWA statement, adding atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2) levels continued to rise, surpassing 420 parts per million (ppm) at NIWA's monitoring station during 2024.



South Korea to find new area of cooperation with US in 2025

Seoul, Jan 12 (IANS) : South Korea plans to explore new areas of cooperation with the United States and respond promptly to potential changes in US trade policies following the launch of the second Donald Trump administration later this month, the industry ministry said on Sunday.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy outlined the policy direction for this year during a briefing to acting President Choi Sang-mok.

During the briefing, the ministry said it plans to implement "well-coordinated" responses to the changing trade environment through regular meetings on external economic affairs chaired by the acting president, reports Yonhap news agency.

The move comes as Trump has vowed to bring significant

changes to Washington's trade policies, including the potential reduction or elimination of the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

"South Korea and the U.S. have been developing a mutually beneficial trade relationship, with South Korea becoming the biggest investor in the U.S. in 2023," said First Vice Industry Minister Park Sung-taek.

"We plan to explain such aspects (to Washington) to have South Korea excluded from new tariff measures," Park added.

The government is planning to explore new areas of cooperation with the United States and is preparing to launch an interagency task force to strengthen ties in the shipbuilding industry, a sector Trump hinted at prioritising for collaboration with South Korea after taking office.

Iran's President says Tehran, Baghdad share common concerns about Syria

Tehran, Jan 12 (IANS) : Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that his country and Iraq have common concerns about the ongoing developments in Syria.

He made the remarks at a joint press conference with visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani following their meeting in the Iranian capital Tehran earlier in the day, according to a statement published on the website of his office.

Pezeshkian said he had discussed recent developments in the West Asia region with the Iraqi prime minister, listing some of the two countries' common concerns over Syria as ensuring stability and calm, maintaining its territorial integrity.



Turkey establishes cybersecurity directorate to combat cyber threats

Ankara, Jan 12 (IANS) : Turkey has established a new Cybersecurity Directorate to strengthen defence against cyber threats, according to a presidential decree published in the Official Gazette on Saturday. The newly-formed body will be responsible for implementing decisions made by the Cybersecurity Board.



Germany's recovery dims amid industrial order decline

Berlin, Jan 12 (IANS) : Germany's industrial sector experienced a sharp decline in incoming orders in November 2024, falling by 5.4 per cent compared to the previous month, official data revealed. This follows a 1.5 per cent decline in October, intensifying concerns over the recovery of Europe's largest economy. The Federal Statistical Office on Sunday at-

tributed the downturn to a significant drop in large-scale orders from the transport equipment manufacturing sector, including aircraft, ships and trains. While these orders were substantial in October, they did not persist into November, leading to a 58.4 per cent month-on-month decline, the office noted.

Australian inflation rises to 2.3 per cent

Canberra, Jan 12 (IANS) : Australia's annual rate of inflation rose slightly in the year to November, new official figures have revealed.

According to the new data, which was published on Sunday by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the consumer price index (CPI) -- the headline measure of inflation -- rose by 2.3 per cent in the 12 months to November 2024.

It marks a slight acceleration from the 2.1 per cent CPI increase reported in the year to October 2024. The Australian Bureau of Statistics identified spending on food and drink, alcohol and tobacco and recreation as the major drivers of inflation over the 12 months to November.

Food and non-alcoholic beverage prices rose by 2.9 per cent, alcohol and tobacco prices by 6.7 per cent and recreation and culture prices by 3.2 per cent in that period.

Those increases were partially offset by a 21.5

per cent fall in electricity prices and a 10.2 per cent drop in automotive fuel prices.

The underlying inflation rate, which excludes the most volatile price changes, fell from 3.5 per cent in October to 3.2 per cent in November. Australia's central bank, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), has a target band for inflation of 2-3 per cent, Xinhua news agency reported.

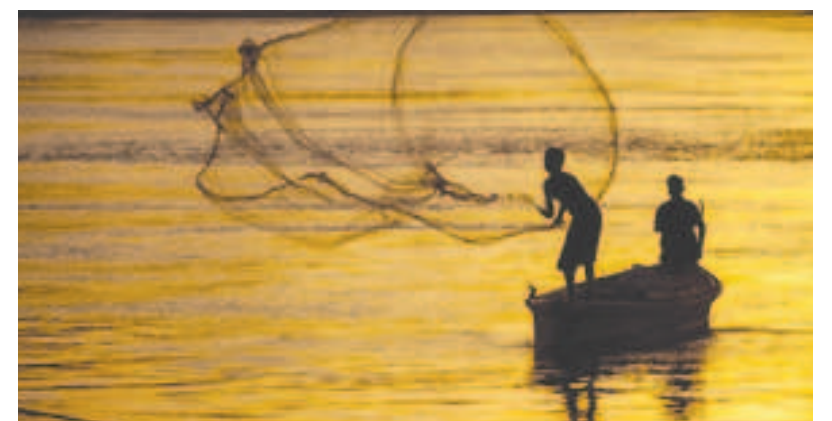
Responding to the data, Treasurer Jim Chalmers said that headline inflation has now been within the RBA's target band for four consecutive months.

In November, the Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese had declared that the worst of the



country's inflation crisis is over. Albanese had said that the Australians have reason for optimism with new data showing inflation is at its lowest level over three years.

According to official figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the last week of October 2024, the CPI rose by 0.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2024, spanning from the start of July through the end of September.



Ten TN fishermen arrested by Sri Lankan Navy, mechanised boat seized

Chennai, Jan 12 (IANS) : Ten Indian fishermen from Karaikkal in Tamil Nadu were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of Sunday. The mechanised boat they were fishing in was also seized.

The fishermen have been taken to the Sri Lankan Navy's Kankesanthurai camp for further questioning and investigation.

Since June 16, 2024, the Sri Lankan Navy has reportedly arrested 425 Tamil Nadu fishermen and confiscated 58 costly mechanised boats.

Many of these fishermen remain detained in Sri Lankan jails, sparking widespread protests

and calls for government intervention. During a recent visit to Sri Lanka, the Union External Affairs Minister raised the issue with the Sri Lankan government, urging them to prevent further arrests and boat seizures.

However, despite these discussions, the arrests have continued, intensifying fears within the fishing community.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, in a letter to Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, urged immediate diplomatic efforts for the release of all Indian fishermen detained by the Sri Lankan Navy, along with their mechanised boats.

Greece reports first HMPV case

Athens, Jan 12 (IANS) : Greece has confirmed its first case of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in a 71-year-old man, the national news agency AMNA reported on Sunday.

The patient, who had pneumonia and underlying health conditions, is in intensive care in Thessaloniki, a northern port city. The National Public Health Organisation has ad-

vised medical staff to follow Covid-19 protocols and maintain strict hygiene measures.

Gkikas Magiorkinis, associate professor of epidemiology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, reassured the public, saying there is no need to panic as HMPV is a known virus that has circulated for decades and is not considered highly dangerous, Xinhua news agency reported.





Antony asks Cong leaders to concentrate on Kerala local body polls, not on next CM

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 12 (IANS) : Breaking his silence, veteran Congress leader and former Defence Minister A.K. Antony on Sunday asked his junior colleagues in the party to concentrate on the upcoming local bodies elections and not on the 2026 Assembly polls in Kerala. The Congress party in the state continues to be caught in factional feuds with various leaders like Leader of Opposition (in Kerala Assembly) V.D. Satheesan, his predecessor and veteran legislator Ramesh Chennithala, supporters of AICC General Secretary K.C.Venugopal, fighting for supremacy in the party. With the polls nearing, the leaders are now tussling on the issue of who should be the candidate for the Chief Minister's post in the 2026 Assembly polls. Besides these prominent leaders, the state party president and Kannur Lok Sabha member, K.Sudhakaran also has his faction.



Israeli, Palestinian scientists develop metamaterials for scalable production of meat alternatives

Jerusalem, Jan 12 (IANS) : Israeli and Palestinian bioengineers developed two new metamaterials to create whole cuts of meat using injection molding, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU) said in a statement on Sunday. In a new study published in Nature Communications, the team leveraged cutting-edge materials science to overcome the long-standing challenges of replicating the texture and structure of traditional meat while offering a scalable and cost-effective production method.

God belongs to everyone, there should be no politics on it: AAP refutes 'Hindu card' charges

New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) National Spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar, on Sunday, refuted charges of playing the 'Hindu card' and said that "God belongs to everyone" and that "religion should not be used for political gain." Priyanka Kakkar's comments followed the AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal's statement that several members of the BJP's Pandit Prakoshth had joined the party's Sanatan Sewa Samiti. Speaking to IANS, Kakkar addressed the controversy by stating, "God belongs to everyone, there should be no politics on it. If sadhus and saints are joining

the AAP after being disillusioned with the BJP, it's because the BJP has misled them with false promises and failed to deliver. We welcome them to our Sanatan Seva Samiti, and we are grateful for their support." The controversy erupted alongside the announcement of a new AAP scheme offering a monthly honorarium of Rs 18,000 to Hindu and Sikh priests, sparking a heated debate in political circles. Kakkar also responded to the BJP's provocative poster reading, "Saaf hogi hawa, kyunki aa rahi BJP," asserting that the party lacks any clear agenda or vision for Delhi. "They have no narrative, no Chief Minister face. They should tell us who Arvind

Kejriwal is competing against," Kakkar said. The political battle escalated further with the ongoing dispute over Arvind Kejriwal's former official residence, dubbed 'Sheesh Mahal' by Opposition parties. Kakkar questioned the claims made by the BJP regarding luxurious amenities in the residence, including a golden commode, swimming pool and mini-bar. "If such things existed, why is the media not allowed to see it? Why is access being denied to the media and AAP leaders? The BJP's accusations are baseless," she remarked. Kakkar also suggested that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official bungalow, often referred to as 'Raj



Mahal,' should be scrutinised for its cost. Kakkar further expressed gratitude for support from the Trinamool Congress and Samajwadi Party in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. "In Delhi, the contest is clear: AAP versus BJP. While the BJP has allied with some smaller parties, Arvind Kejriwal continues to have the support of Delhi's people and the

blessings of God," she concluded. With the Delhi Assembly elections set for February 5, the Election Commission confirmed that over 1.55 crore voters will cast their ballots across 70 constituencies, including 12 reserved for specific communities. The votes will be counted on February 8, as Delhi's political climate heats up ahead of the crucial election.



Nawsad Siddique files defamation suit against Trinamool MLA

Kolkata, Jan 12 (IANS) : Nawsad Siddique, the lone representative of All India Secular Front (AISF), has filed a defamation suit against Trinamool Congress legislator Saikat Molla over the latter's recent controversial comments describing Siddique as a terrorist. While Siddique is an MLA from Bhangar, Molla is a legislator from Canning (East), with both constituencies coming under the South 24 Parganas district. The constituencies have a notorious track record of witnessing frequent political clashes between the supporters of the two parties and at times between two groups of the ruling party.

Panamanian control over Panama Canal non-negotiable, say former LatAm FMs

Panama City, Jan 12 (IANS) : Former foreign ministers from various Latin American countries have expressed their support for Panamanian sovereignty over the Panama Canal, in response to recent comments made by US President-elect Donald Trump suggesting the possibility of retaking control of the waterway. In a joint statement, the top diplomats expressed their "full support" for the people and government of the Republic of Panama, firmly affirming that "the sovereignty and independence of Panama over the Isthmian Canal are not negotiable." "It is indisputable that the Republic of Panama and its people have managed the Canal responsibly, guaranteeing its contribution to international maritime trade and global economic development, which constitutes a symbol of Latin American autonomy and pride," the diplomats added. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties, signed by the United States and Panama in 1977, "established a schedule for the handover



of the Canal and its adjacent areas to Panamanian control," said the statement. The historic agreement, reached under the watchful eye of the international community, was the result of the "Panamanian people's prolonged and determined struggle, supported by widespread international solidarity," the statement notes. Signatories of the statement included over 20 former foreign ministers from Panama, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, and Argentina, among other countries, Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. "We reaffirm our solidarity with

Panama and its people, supporting their legitimate defence of sovereignty over this valuable strategic asset," they concluded. In mid-December, Trump floated the idea of retaking control of the Panama Canal if Panama does not decrease toll rates for US ships crossing the waterway. Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino dismissed Trump's threat, saying that "every square metre of the Panama Canal and its adjacent area belong to Panama, and will continue belonging to Panama."

Nothing wrong with Maoists surrendering at CM's office: K'taka Home Minister

Bengaluru, Jan 12 (IANS) : Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara said on Sunday that there was nothing wrong with Maoists surrendering at the Chief Minister's office. Responding to objections regarding facilitating the surrender process of six Maoists, he said, "A message must be conveyed to society that no one should indulge in Naxal activities. When they surrender in front of the

Chief Minister, it becomes known to everyone in the state. The government has provided an opportunity for the transformation of Naxals. What is wrong with that?" The Minister was referring to Karnataka BJP General Secretary and MLA V. Sunil Kumar who on Saturday slammed the Siddaramaiah government for facilitating the surrender of six Maoists, saying this was a move to create urban naxals. Sunil Kumar, who represents the



Maoist activity-prone Karkala Assembly constituency, said, "It is an attempt to make the Maoists, who are operating in forests, urban naxals. For many years the police personnel attached to the

Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) carried out operations day and night against them and this development will bring down their morale," Sunil Kumar stressed.



Tit for tat by CM Vijayan: MLA, ex-legislator named in FIR in Cong leader's suicide case

Wayanad, Jan 12 (IANS) : In a swift move that has landed the Congress party in trouble, the Kerala Police on Sunday registered an FIR in which several party leaders have been named in a suicide case. The FIR has named Sulthan Bathery Congress legislator I.C. Balakrishnan and former party MLA and Wayanad district Congress committee president N.D. Appachan and other party leaders in the suicide case of treasurer N.M. Vijayan. The quick move by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is also the Home Minister, can be seen as a retaliatory action for the Congress demanding that CPI-M Kannur district panchayat president.

Sexual assault videos case: K'taka HC stalls framing of charges against ex-JD(S) MP Revanna

Bengaluru, Jan 12 (IANS) : The Karnataka High Court on Sunday issued directions to stall the process of framing of charges against Prajwal Revanna, the former JD(S) MP and grandson of former Prime Minister, H.D. Deve Gowda in the sensational sexual assault video case. The Bench headed by Justice M. Nagaprasanna has passed the order in this regard and is-

sued directions to the lower court not to frame charges against accused Prajwal, who is lodged in the Bengaluru Central Jail, till January 16. Earlier, the date for framing of charges against him was fixed as January 13. The Bench passed the order while looking into the petition submitted by Prajwal Revanna in this regard. However, the Bench has directed the trial court to continue the hearing of the case until Janu-



ary 16. Prajwal Revanna in his petition submitted his request for documents and electronic evidence in the form of photos and

videos collected from his driver. The driver had allegedly copied the private videos and photos from Prajwal Revanna's personal

cellphone. Additional Special Public Prosecutor B.N. Jagadeesha submitted to the High Court that pen drives and DVDs have already been provided to Prajwal Revanna and he is further demanding the entire data and content which was found in the phone. He further argued that the submission has been made by Prajwal Revanna with the intention to delay the trial. Prajwal Revanna's counsel submitted that he was not provided with all reports.

Egypt, Cyprus, Greece stress Middle East stability main pillar for cooperation

Cairo, Jan 12 (IANS) : Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides emphasised that the stability and security of the Middle East are essential pillars for fostering cooperation. "The region cannot tolerate additional risks that could undermine its stability, destroy its countries, and negatively impact the potential of its peoples," Sisi said during a televised press conference on Sunday following the 10th Summit of the Egypt-Cyprus-Greece

Trilateral Cooperation Mechanism held in Cairo. "We emphasised during the summit that establishing an independent Palestinian state, in accordance with international references and relevant UN resolutions, is the only way to achieve sustainable peace, and, consequently, economic development and the desired comprehensive cooperation among the peoples of the region," Sisi added. "Our joint response is crucial in efficiently addressing regional challenges," Christodoulides stated, highlighting the need for

regional coalitions to promote human development and economic prosperity. Mitsotakis stressed, "We must work together to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza, release detainees, and establish a two-state solution." He added that the increasing instability in the region necessitates enhanced geopolitical cooperation. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity of Syria and establishing a timetable for political transition, reports Xinhua news agency.



Israeli forces find body of October 7 hostage in Gaza

Jerusalem, Jan 12 (IANS) : Israeli forces have recovered the body of Yusef Ziyadne, an Israeli-Bedouin hostage kidnapped by Hamas during its October 7 attack, from a tunnel in Gaza's Rafah area, the military said. Ziyadne, 53, was confirmed dead at Israel's National Institute of Forensic Medicine after his body was found on Sunday. The military on Sunday said he was "killed in captivity" and that evidence found during the recovery operation raised "serious concerns" about the fate of his son Hamza, who was also taken hostage, reports Xinhua news agency. Ziyadne and his three children -- Hamza, 22, Bilal, 18, and Aisha, 17 -- were abducted while working at Kibbutz Holit. Bilal and Aisha were freed during a prisoner exchange in November 2023. His family confirmed they had been notified of the recovery.



Korean American Senator stresses need for 'stability' in South Korea



Washington, Jan 12 (IANS) : Andy Kim, the first-ever Korean American senator, underscored the need for South Korea to focus on ensuring stability amid political uncertainty caused by President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched martial law bid while cautioning against any move to use the situation to advance "political ambitions." Kim (D-NJ) made the remarks as South Korea has been thrust into a period of political turmoil following Yoon's short-lived martial law imposition on December 3 and his impeachment on December 14, Yonhap news agency reported.

"It's really a critical time for stability, not for any particular person to try to use this to advance their own political ambitions," Kim said during a meeting with Korean and Asian American reporters at the Capitol in Washington. "It's about stabilising it first and foremost," he added, noting South Korean politicians need to be "very careful and thoughtful" with their thoughts and actions as they are "under a microscope." While the newly minted senator was initially concerned by Yoon's martial law order, he now has a sense that South Korea's democratic process is working.



Kenya reports surge of tea export volumes, earnings in 2024

Nairobi, Jan 12 (IANS) : Kenya's tea export volumes surged 20.8 per cent in the first ten months of 2024, boosted by increased demand in destination markets, the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK) said. The TBK on Sunday said export volumes stood at 500.8 million kg, an increase from 414.5 million kg recorded in the same period of 2023. The East African nation earned 155 billion Kenyan shillings (about \$1.19 billion) from exports during the first 10 months, a rise from \$1.09 billion in a similar period in 2023, said the TBK in a report released in the

Kenyan capital of Nairobi. "The export earnings were higher on account of higher export volumes and a stable exchange rate," the TBK said. The Kenyan shilling exchanged at an average of 129 to the US dollar during the period, reports Xinhua news agency. With the country earning an average of \$199 million per month from tea, earnings in 2024 are expected to surpass the \$1.39 billion earned in 2023, according to the TBK. Meanwhile, tea production also surged 7 per cent in the first 10 months of 2024, boosted by favourable weather conditions.

Pakistan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Sudan remained the main markets that shipped more tea from Kenya during the period. Kenya is expanding its market, especially in Asia, with the government recently opening a tea trade centre in the Fujian Province of China to facilitate distribution in the country. Meanwhile, Kenya's exports in the third quarter of 2024 increased by 5.5 per cent to 284.4 billion Kenyan shillings (about \$2.19 billion) compared to the same period in 2023, the country's national statistics bureau said on Saturday.

Canadian finance minister not running for Liberal Party leadership

Ottawa, Jan 12 (IANS) : Canadian Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc has said that he won't be a candidate in the upcoming race to replace Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as head of the Liberals. LeBlanc announced the decision on Sunday ahead of a Liberals caucus meeting. One of the caucus' discussions will be whether cabinet ministers ought to resign while seeking the leadership of the Liberal Party. The finance minister said with Canada at a crucial juncture in its relationship with the United States, he wants to focus on his job in the cabinet, reports Xinhua news agency.



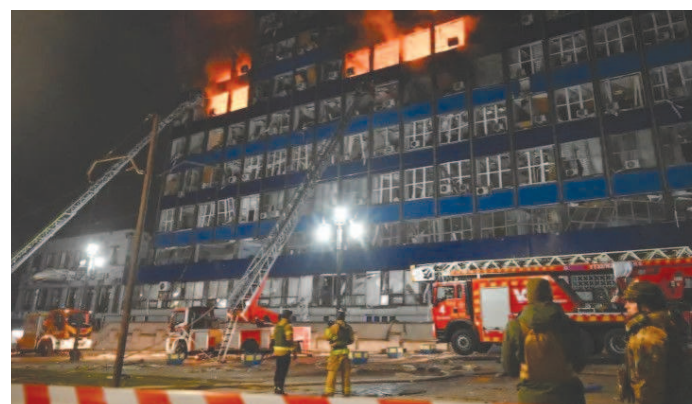
Albania to lower electricity price

Tirana, Jan 12 (IANS) : Albania will reduce household electricity prices by 1 Albanian lek (0.01 US dollar) to 8.5 lek per kilowatt-hour between February 1 and December 31, Prime Minister Edi Rama announced. Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, Rama highlighted that this marks the first electricity price reduction in Albania in 35 years. According to the new price system set by the Energy Regulatory Authority, from February 1, households consuming up to 700 kilowatt-hours will pay 8.5 lek per kilowatt-hour (excluding VAT), while households exceeding that threshold will pay 9.5 lek per kilowatt-hour, reports Xinhua news agency.

13 people killed in Russian strike in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia

Kyiv, Jan 12 (IANS) : At least 13 people were killed and 63 others injured on Sunday in a Russian strike on Ukraine's southern city of Zaporizhzhia, according to a statement by Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office. Two guided bombs struck the city at about 4 p.m. local time, damaging industrial infrastructure and residential buildings, Zaporizhzhia regional governor Ivan Fedorov reported. Four of those injured are in critical condition, Fedorov added. The State Service for Emergencies said that the attack damaged four administrative buildings and 27 vehicles. Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelensky said that 13 people were killed in the attack and offered condolences to the families of the victims. Zelensky shared a video on X which showed bloodied civilians lying on the street being treated by emergency services and firefighters trying to contain the fire. While sharing a video on X, Zelensky said, "Russians struck Zaporizhzhia with aerial bombs. It was a deliberate strike on the city. As of now, dozens of people are reported wounded. All are receiving the necessary assistance. Tragically, we know of 13 people killed." "My condolences to their families and loved ones. Regrettably, the number of casualties may increase. There is nothing more



cruel than launching aerial bombs on a city, knowing that ordinary civilians will suffer. Russia must be put under pressure for its terror. The protection of lives in Ukraine must be supported. Only through strength can such a war be ended with a lasting peace," he added. On Wednesday, the Ukraine Prosecutor General's Office said that high-rise residential blocks, an industrial facility and other infrastructure were damaged in the at-

tack. It further said that the debris hit a tram and a bus which was carrying passengers, according to Al Jazeera report. Regional Governor Ivan Fedorov said that Russian forces launched guided bombs at a residential area in the city during the afternoon and at least two residential buildings were hit in the attack.

Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik PMs meet on strengthening cooperation

Bishkek, Jan 12 (IANS) : A trilateral meeting was held between Kyrgyz Prime Minister Adylbek Kasymaliyev, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, and Tajik Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda, the press service of the Kyrgyz Cabinet of Ministers announced.

The meeting took place on Sunday at the junction of the state borders of the three countries, the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan, the Fergana region of Uzbekistan, and the Sughd region of Tajikistan, reports Xinhua news agency.

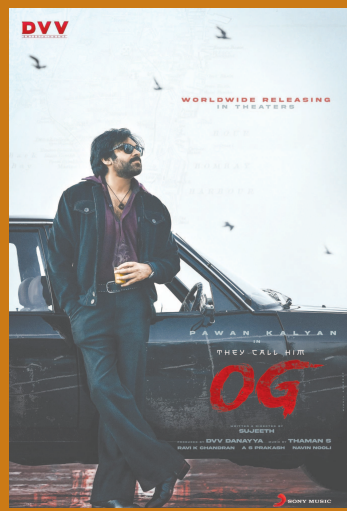


Malayalam Star Shoots For NTR: What Next?

It is known that director, Prashanth Neel is working with NTR for his upcoming film. This project has been officially announced, and the only thing pending now is the start of the shoot. In the meanwhile, pre production activities are in full swing.

The latest reports pertaining to the film are suggesting that Malayalam Star Tovino Thomas has completed the look test for the film. He is roped to play a crucial role in the film and in tune with this, he had completed the test shoot.

This will be Tovino's first Telugu film and he must be mighty excited about the same. He has reportedly been given a crucial role that has a lot of importance in the story. Interestingly enough, this is the second time that Prashanth is roping in Malayalam actor for his film after having on boarded Prithviraj Sukumaran for Salaar. He is working with another Malayalam star Tovino Thomas now. The resemblance is very uncanny hear as Prashanth appears to have grown a liking for Malayali actors who come with a good skill set.



PK's OG Part 2? Huge Updates Inside

There is no debating the fact that Pawan Kalyan's OG stands to be one of the most anticipated films in the making in Telugu Cinema.

In tune with the massive expectations that are set on the film fans are keenly anticipating a possible update on the same.

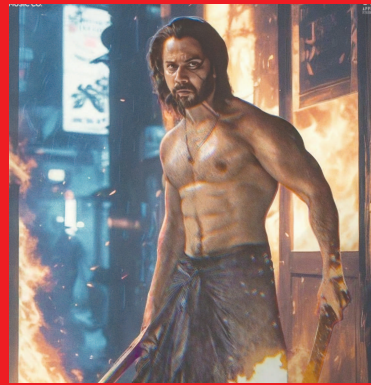
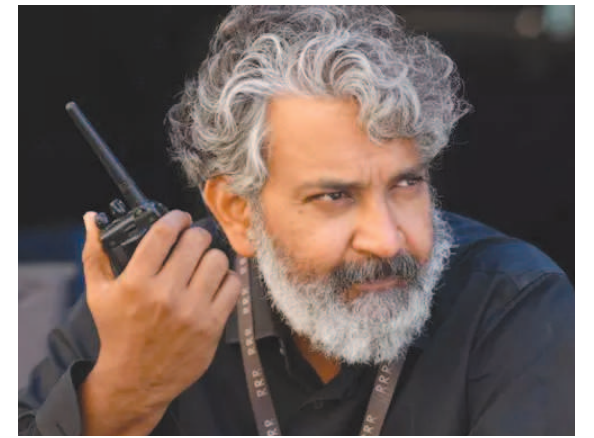
In an attempt to pacify the long waiting fans, we now have a substantial update on the film and here is a look into the same.

As per our sources who are placed very close to the team, we are hearing that the film is nearing the completion of the shooting and there is only 15 days shooting part left.

Rajamouli Juggling Between Major Projects?

SS Rajamouli is currently working on SSMB29. The movie will feature Mahesh Babu in the lead role and Priyanka Chopra will play the female lead. Fans are eagerly waiting for SSMB29. It has generated a lot of excitement.

What's interesting is that along with SSMB29, Rajamouli is also planning to make a movie based on Mahabharata. He has wanted to make this film for a long time.



Varun Dhawan 'Depressed' Over Baby John Flop?

The box office flop of Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan's most recent movie, "Baby John," has raised questions about how he is handling the setback. Despite having a budget of over 160 crore, the film, which was predicted to be a huge smash, has reportedly made less than 50 crore.

Puri Jagannadh Explains the Science of Self-Healing!

Well-known master Puri Jagannadh, who has faced back-to-back flops with Liger and Double iSmart over the past few years, has presently turned to podcasting to share his views with his fans. His YouTube Channel, Puri Musings, has picked up a critical following

as he opens up on different themes, advertising his group of viewers unused bits of knowledge and motivational contemplations. In one of his later scenes, Puri dug into the concept of "autophagy," a term that's been picking up footing in wellbeing and wellness circles.



Allu Arjun's Secret Meeting with Sanjay Leela Bhansali Fuels Bollywood Buzz

Pushpa 2 actor Allu Arjun continues to enjoy the film's success in theaters. Recently, he was seen leaving the office of filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali in Mumbai. This sighting has fueled speculation about a potential collaboration between the two.

In a video shared online, Allu Arjun is seen stepping out of Bhansali's office. He wore a black T-shirt and quickly got

into his car while photographers gathered around him. Fans are now eagerly waiting for news about this possible project. There is no official information yet about their rumored collaboration.

Any confirmation is expected to come later. If this project happens, it will be an exciting development for both fans and the film industry. Allu Arjun's recent movie, Pushpa 2: The Rule, directed by Sukumar, is the second part of the Pushpa franchise. It is a continuation of the story started in Pushpa: The Rise, released in 2021.



S. Shankar to Helm Rajinikanth's Epic Biopic!

Global Star Ram Charan starred in S. Shankar's eagerly awaited Game Changer, which debuted to a positive reception today. Shankar, who is well-known for his expansive cinematic vision and provocative social tales, has once again become the focus of attention. In the midst of the excitement surrounding Game Changer.



'My fans are disciplined sainiks': Balakrishna

The pre-release event of Daaku Maharaj was held with grandeur in Hyderabad. The event saw the cast and crew of the movie gathered to celebrate its upcoming release. Nandamuri Balakrishna shared interesting words at the event including the Tirumala incident.

"I was deeply moved by the tragic incident in Tirumala and I wish peace for the souls of the deceased. Because of this unfortunate event, we had to cancel a planned celebra-

tion in Anantapur. However, my fans are disciplined sainiks and that's what they understood and supported our decision. I feel blessed to have millions of fans who love me.



SV is the perfect festival film for everyone - Anil Ravipudi

Director Anil Ravipudi has achieved a blockbuster director tag after he delivered successes with everyone of his movie without a flop till date. The director has joined hands with Victory Venkatesh for the third time for Sankrantiki Vasthunnam after blockbusters like F2, F3.

The director interacted with media to talk about the movie releasing on 14th January. He stated that Venkatesh and him became best buddies during the filming. He also stated that he love to add entertainment to his stories and even though he tried a different genre with Venky, he wanted to add his style of entertainment to it. Anil Ravipudi further stated that Venkatesh has great energy and he, himself came forward to sing "Blockbuster Pongal" song which they converted into a reel.

Meet the real life inspiration behind Game Changer?

Ram Charan and Shankar have returned to the big screens with their latest film, Game Changer which released in theatres today. The film has opened at the box office and there is already a debate about the same on social media. Coming to the topic now, where is an interesting report pertaining to the real-life inspiration behind this film, that was originally scripted by director, Karthik Subbaraj in the first place.

Apparently, there is a strong real-life inspiration in the form of an honest IAS officer for this film.

Karthik Subbaraj, who originally wrote the script, for this film, had revealed that Tamil Nadu cadre IAS

officer TN Seshan is the inspiration for the film. He revealed that this sincere IAS officer inspired him to write the story of this film as he was so very influenced by the kind of work, put up by this sincere officer.

Reportedly the IAS officer, who is in question now was a fiery officer back in his day. He was posted as election duty officer, and he had the reputation of putting even the hardest of politicians in tough spots with his strict policing measures.

