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Rajanna Siricilla said that with the aim of ensuring that everyone who drives after 18 years of age has a license...

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### Audi India sells 5,816 units in 2024, reaches 1 lakh milestone

German luxury carmaker Audi on Thursday said it sold 5,816 units in India this year, along with clocking the sale of 1,927 retail units alone in the fourth quarter (Q4). Moreover...

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### Kimberly Birrell stuns Potapova in Brisbane, makes maiden WTA 500 quarterfinal

Kimberly Birrell's fairytale run at the Brisbane International continues as she surged into her maiden WTA 500 quarterfinal after prevailing against world No. 35 Anastasia...

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## Cabinet Sub-Committee suggests Rythu Bharosa for all cultivating farmers

Hyderabad, Jan 2 (NSS): The Cabinet Sub-Committee, constituted by the State government on the implementation of the Rythu Bharosa scheme, has suggested to provide the financial assistance to all cultivating farmers.

The Cabinet sub-committee, led by its Chairman and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and

Members, including Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, discussed the modalities of the Rythu Bharosa scheme. The final decision on the implementation of Rythu Bharosa will be taken in the upcoming cabinet meeting, which is scheduled to be held on January 4.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee has also decided to provide the

Rythu Bharosa to every farmer who cultivates crops and opined that IT payment and land limit should not be imposed on the scheme. It seems that the Cabinet sub-committee has suggested that the State government should take new applications from farmers for the implementation of Rythu Bharosa. Applications from farmers are likely to be accepted from January 5 to 7.



## Cold wave-like conditions grip parts of Telangana

Hyderabad, Jan 2 (IANS) : Minimum temperatures dropped in parts of Telangana as a fresh spell of cold wave-like conditions gripped the State including capital Hyderabad on Thursday.

Continued on pg 02



## Local body polls to be held soon: Ponnababbar

Siddipet, Jan.2 (NSS): Minister for Transport Ponnababbar has informed that the local body elections will be held soon in Telangana. He advised Congress workers to hoist the party flag in every village and work towards winning the local body elections.

## CM Revanth congratulates Deepthi for being selected Arjuna Award



Hyderabad, Jan 2 (NSS): Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has congratulated Deepthi Jeevanji, a young athlete from Telangana and a darling of Warangal district who won a bronze medal for India in the Paralympics.



## Power contracts with SECI can be cancelled only if there's proof of wrongdoing : Chandrababu

Amaravati, Jan 2 (IANS) : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday said that the state government cannot cancel power purchase agreements with the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) without obtaining concrete proof to back the bribery al-

legations. The Chief Minister's comments came against the backdrop of last month's decision by Andhra Pradesh Power Distribution Companies to procure over 4,000 million units of power from SECI, out of the total agreed 17,000 MU from the next financial year. Naidu asserted that SECI's agreement to buy power

from the Adani Group was an advantage to Andhra Pradesh. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister said that no action will be taken against Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) over allegations of bribery until "concrete proof" is established.

Continued on pg 02



## Revanth Reddy becomes Pan India CM with Allu Arjun's arrest : Congress MP

Hyderabad, Jan 2 : Congress Member of Parliament Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy stated that the recent arrest of film actor Allu Arjun in relation to the Sandhya Theatre

stampede incident during the premiere of the film Pushpa 2 has elevated CM Revanth Reddy's profile to that of a Pan India Chief Minister. While speaking to media representatives at Gandhi Bhavan on Thursday.

Continued on pg 02

## 84<sup>th</sup> ALL INDIA INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION

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Sri Anumula Revanth Reddy Garu, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Telangana

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Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu Garu, Hon'ble Minister for IT, Electronics & Communications, Industries & Commerce and Legislative Affairs, Govt. of Telangana & President - Exhibition Society

**Guest of Honor**  
Sri Komatireddy Venkat Reddy Garu, Hon'ble Minister for Roads & Buildings; Sri Ponnababbar Garu, Hon'ble Minister for Transport & Welfare Govt. of Telangana

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Sri Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud Garu, President, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee; Sri Ashfaq Hyder, Dr.D.Gangadhar Rao, Sri Satish Naik, Sri B.N.Rajeshwar, Sri Ashvin Margam, Sri V. Ajay Kumar, Sri M.Chanradshekar, Sri Milind Gadwalkar, Dr. B. Murali Mohan, Dr. B. Venkateshwar

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**CAN FIN HOMES LTD**  
BRANCH OFFICE: H.No.15-8-1105, 1st Floor, Varadahaiah Nagar, Mamatha Hospital Road, Khammam-507002, Ph:08742-298955, Cell No.7625079213. CIN No. L85110KA1987PLC008699

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
Under Section 13 (2) of "The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002)"

To, 1) Mr. Poosa Kiran Kumar S/o. Poosa Upendhar(Late), Occupation: Business (Borrower), 2) Mrs. Poosa Sarojini W/o. Poosa Upendhar (Late), Occupation: Business, (Co-Borrower), H.No:11-9-55/A, Burhanpuram, Khammam Dist, Khammam-507001

No. 182 have availed a housing loan from our branch against the security of mortgage of the following asset belonging to both of you. An amount of Rs.22,72,773/- (Twenty Two Lakhs Seventy Two Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Three Only) is due from you, to Can Fin Homes Ltd. From 31-12-2024 together with future interest at the contracted rate.

**DETAILS OF THE MORTGAGED ASSET:**  
All that the bearing house number 11-9-55/A, admeasuring to an extent of 99-75 Sq yds, equal to 83-40 Sq meters, situated at Burhanpuram, Khammam Municipal Limits, Khammam Dist. and joint sub register of Khammam dist, and bounded by, East: Plot No. N.Somalaxmi, West: Municipal Road, North: Municipal road, South: Plot No. P. Anitha.

Registered demand notice was sent to you under Section 13 (2) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002, but the same was returned un-served. The under signed has, therefore, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known addresses said borrower/s as per the Act. Hence this paper publication. As you have failed to adhere to the terms of the sanction, the account is classified as a Non-Performing Asset on 29-12-2024 as per the NHB Guidelines. You are here by called upon to pay the above said amount with contracted rate of interest thereon from 31-12-2024 within 60days from the date of this notice, failing which the undersigned will be constrained to Initiate action under SARFAESI Act to enforce the aforesaid security. Further, the attention of borrowers / guarantors is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them to redeem the secured assets.

Date: 02-01-2025  
Place: Khammam  
Sd/- Authorised Officer  
Can Fin Homes Ltd.

**HDB Financial Services Ltd.**  
REGISTERED OFFICE: Radhika, 2nd Floor, Law Garden Road, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad-380009.  
BRANCH: Shree Balaji PSR Tower, 1st Floor, H.No.1-8-616, 1, Prakash Nagar, Begumpet, Hyderabad, Telangana-500016.

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
Notice U/s 13(2) read with Section 13(13) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

You, the under mentioned borrower/ mortgagor is hereby informed that the Company has initiated proceedings against you under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and that the Notice under 13(2) of the Act sent to you by Registered Post Ack. Due for borrower/s has been returned undelivered. Hence you are hereby called upon to take notice and pay the outstanding loan amount mentioned against the said account with interest accruing there on within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the company will proceed against you by exercising its right under Sub-sec (4) of Section 13 of the Act by enforcing the below mentioned security to realize its dues with interests and costs. It is needless to mention that this Notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the company.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Mortgagor	Loan Account No.	Date of NPA & Demand Notice Date	Amount Due in Rs./ as on
1	1) SLG Brand, 19-A, Janapriya Apts, G Floor, Brundavan Colony, Saroor Nagar, Rangareddy, Hyderabad-500035, Telangana. And Also: Flat No.124B, BK No.4, H.No.10-6-274/124/2, Janapriya Apts, 625 Sq.ft Adm. 19.92 Sq.yds SV No.54.55, Linggojiguda, Saroomagar, Hyderabad-500035. 2) Chedudupu Sandhya, Flat 124B, 4th Block, Janapriya Apts, Brindavavam Colony, Saroomagar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500035. 3) Chedudupu Srinivas, Flat 124B, 4th Block, Janapriya Apts, Brindavavam Colony, Saroomagar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500035.	26715747	Date of NPA: 03.12.2024 Demand Notice Date: 16.12.2024	Rs.29,02,039.67 as of 12.12.2024 and future contractual interest till actual realization together with incidental expenses, cost and charges etc.

**Schedule of the Securities-I:** All that piece and parcel of the Residential Flat No.19-A, in Ground Floor, House bearing No.10-6-274/19/1 (PTIN No.1031001108) (Old House No.10-6-109/IV/19-A) of Block No.IV having its Plinth area 625.00 Sq.feet (Including Common areas and Balconies) in "Janapriya Flats" together with an undivided share of land admeasuring 19.92 Sq.yards or 16.68 Sq.meters in Survey No.54 and 55 situated at Sai Nagar Colony, Linggojiguda Village, Saroomagar Revenue Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, within the Limits of LB Nagar Circle, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. North: 7.3 mtr wide Road/ Road, South: 6.1 meter wide Road/ Flat No.19-B, East: 7.65 meter wide Road/ Corridor, West: Parking Space/ Tank.

**Schedule of the Securities-II:** All that piece and parcel of the Residential Flat No.124-V, in First Floor, House bearing No.10-6-274/124/2 (PTIN No.1031000778a) of Block No.IV having its Plinth area 625.00 Sq.feet (Including Common areas and Balconies) in "Janapriya Flats" together with an undivided share of land admeasuring 19.92 Sq.yards or 16.68 Sq.meters in Survey No.54 and 55 situated at Sai Nagar Colony, Linggojiguda Village, Saroomagar Revenue Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, within the Limits of LB Nagar Circle, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. North: 7.3 mtr wide Road/ Flat No.124-A, South: 6.1 meter wide Road/ Open to sky, East: 7.65 meter wide Road/ Open to sky, West: Parking Space/ Corridor.

Date: 03.01.2025, Place: Hyderabad  
Sd/- Authorised Officer, HDB Financial Services Ltd.

**SHIRAM FINANCE LIMITED**  
Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.44A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032. Administrative Office: 6th Floor, Level 2, Building No.02, Aurum Q Park, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai-400710.  
KARIMNAGAR BRANCH: H.No.2-8-233, Inside Ashoka Lodge, Mukarampura, Karimnagar.

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Possession of Immovable Property U/s 13 (4) of SARFAESI Act)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the M/s. Shiram Finance Limited (formerly known as "Shriram City Union Finance Limited" amalgamated with Shiram Transport Finance limited and converted as Shiram Transport Finance Limited as per the orders of NCLT Bench-II Chennai dated 09.11.2022) and thereafter obtained the approval to rename as Shiram Finance Ltd (Ministry of Corporate Finance letter dated 30.11.2022), is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 and also registered with RBI to do Non-Banking Finance business having its registered office at Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued Demand Notice dated 28.09.2024 calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in this Notice with further interest at the contractual rate within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower's having failed to discharge their liabilities in full, notice is hereby given to them in particular and public in general, that the under signed being the authorized officer has taken the POSSESSION of the property described herein below, under Section 13(4) of the said [Act] read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this day of 31-12-2024. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Shiram Finance Limited for the amount with further interest and other costs, charges and expenses.

S.No.	Borrower Name and Address	Amount Due as per Demand Notice
1	1) Subedari Vamshi Krishna S/o. Subedari Manohar, Age: 43 Years, Occ: Trading (M/s. Aayushman Granites), H.No.5-6-145/5/A/1, Maruthi Nagar Near Rishi High School, Housing Board Colony, Karimnagar, Pincode: 505001. 2) Vemula Ravali, W/o. Subedari Vamshi Krishna, Age: 36 Years, Occ: House Wife, H.No.5-6-145/5/A/1, Maruthi Nagar Near Rishi High School, Housing Board Colony, Karimnagar, Pincode: 505001. 3) Kalva Srinivas, S/o. Kalva Komuriah, Age: 41 Years, Occ: Business, H.No.13-4-149, Thilaknagar, Godavari Khani, Ramagundam, Karimnagar, Pincode: 505209.	Rs.38,55,828/- (Thirty Eight Lakhs Fifty Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Eight Rupees Only) with further interest at the contractual rate

**Description of Property: GDVRKTE2210280009 - DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:- Property on the name of Vemula Ravali, W/o. Subedari Vamshi Krishna. SCHEDULE OF PRESENT IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:- Recently constructed a house in the Open land pertaining to and its H.No.5-6-145/5/A/1, An Extent of 269.50 Sq.Yards or 225.30 Sq.Mtrs, Out of Sy.No.238, Situated at Maruthinagar (Near Housing Board Colony) Locality of Karimnagar Town & District, Registration District: Karimnagar, Sub-District: Karimnagar, Bounded as under: East: Land of Others Presently Now H.No.5-6-146/2 of Md.Shamshuddin, West: 30 Feet Wide Road, North: Open Plot No.14, South: Plot No.12 Kamarapu Kalyayani Presently Now H.No.5-6-145/5.**

Place: Karimnagar, Date: 31-12-2024  
Sd/- Authorised Officer, Shiram Finance Limited

**HDB Financial Services Ltd.**  
REGISTERED OFFICE: Radhika, 2nd Floor, Law Garden Road, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad-380009.  
BRANCH: Shree Balaji PSR Tower, 1st Floor, H.No.1-8-616, 1, Prakash Nagar, Begumpet, Hyderabad, Telangana-500016.

**DEMAND NOTICE**  
Notice U/s 13(2) read with Section 13(13) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

You, the under mentioned borrower/ mortgagor is hereby informed that the Company has initiated proceedings against you under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and that the Notice under 13(2) of the Act sent to you by Registered Post Ack. Due for borrower/s has been returned undelivered. Hence you are hereby called upon to take notice and pay the outstanding loan amount mentioned against the said account with interest accruing there on within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the company will proceed against you by exercising its right under Sub-sec (4) of Section 13 of the Act by enforcing the below mentioned security to realize its dues with interests and costs. It is needless to mention that this Notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the company.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Mortgagor	Loan Account No.	Date of NPA & Demand Notice Date	Amount Due in Rs./ as on
1	1) Kukatpally Tyre Service, Plot No.154, Jilella Guda, Karamanghat X Road, Meerpet, Hyderabad-500079, Telangana. Also at: H.No.18-7-297/5, Ward No.18 167.20 Sq.mts, Milban, Ali Nagar, Yakootpura, Hyderabad-500023. 2) Mohd Abdul Raheem, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, A Moula Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 3) MD Abdul Jaleel, Plot No.154, Jilella Guda, Karamanghat X Road, Meerpet, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500079. 4) Mohd Abdul Azeem, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, A Moula Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 5) Mohd Kaleem, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, A Moula Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 6) Nazia Begum, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, A Moula Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 7) Mubeen Sultana, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, A Moula Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 8) Ishrath Parveen, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, A Moula Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 9) Fareeda Begum, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, Mouliak Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500023. 10) Nazia Begum, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, Mouliak Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad-500023, Telangana. 11) MD Abdul Jaleel, H.No.18-7-297/5, Aman Nagar, Mouliak Ka Chilla, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad-500023, Telangana.	9248886 & 13890485	03.12.2024	Rs. 24,67,231.28 as of 12.12.2024 and future contractual interest till actual realization together with incidental expenses, cost and charges etc.

**Schedule of the Securities-I:** All that piece and parcel of the House bearing Municipal No.18-7-297/5 (PTIN No.1071800331) admeasuring 55.75 Sq.yards equivalent to 46.61 Sq.Meters (including Common Passage, an extent of 7.97 Sq.yards) (Out of 233.00 Sq.yards) situated at Rangeli Khidki, Aman Nagar, Imli Bun, Yakuthpura, Hyderabad-TS. North: Portion of House, South: Neighbourhood House, East: Neighbourhood House, West: Common Passage 6-0 wide.

**Schedule of the Securities-II:** All that piece and parcel of the House bearing Municipal No.18-7-297/5 (Ground + First Floor) admeasuring 55.75 Sq.yards equivalent to 46.61 Sq.Meters (including Common Passage, an extent of 7.97 Sq.yards) (Out of 233.00 Sq.yards) situated at Rangeli Khidki, North: Sub Road, South: Portion of House, East: Neighbourhood House, West: Common Passage 6-0 wide.

Date: 03.01.2025, Place: Hyderabad  
Sd/- Authorised Officer, HDB Financial Services Ltd.

## Everyone who drives should have a driving license : District SP Akhil Mahajan

**Rajanna Siricilla, Jan 2 (TIM Bureau) :** Rajanna Siricilla said that with the aim of ensuring that everyone who drives after 18 years of age has a license, the second phase of the license fair was organized under the auspices of the District Police Department and Road Transport Department for the young men and women in the district. Up to 700 applications were received. They said that learning licenses were issued to all of them after conducting an online test in stages and those who passed it would be issued a driving test within a month. SP Akhil Mahajan said that 30 people who came from different police stations were given learning licenses after conducting license tests at the RTO office on

Thursday. "Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that these days there is no house without a two-wheeler, and even if there is a vehicle, many people are coming on the roads without a driving license. Those who drive vehicles without a license are at risk of accidents due to lack of awareness about road safety. Similarly, if they drive vehicles without a license and get into accidents, the accident insurance that comes to them is not applicable. After that, driving tests are being conducted for them and driving li-



censes are being given to those who pass. An appeal to the drivers. If they are caught drinking alcohol and driving three times or more, their licenses will be recommended to the relevant trans-

port department officials for cancellation. "The SP was accompanied by Siricilla DSP Chandrasekhar Reddy, CIs Krishna and Srinivas, DTO Laxman, Vamsidhar, Rajini Devi, staff and others.

## Cold wave-like conditions grip parts of Telangana

**Continued From pg 01**  
Dense fog enveloped a few areas on the outskirts of Hyderabad and united Medak district on Thursday morning. According to the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDPS), some areas of Medak and Sangareddy districts recorded minimum temperature in single digit. Eleven out of 33 districts recorded a minimum temperature of 15 degrees Celsius or less. Sirpur in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district was the coldest place in the state with a minimum temperature of 7.3 degrees Celsius. Tiryani, also in Komaram Bheem Asifabad, recorded a minimum temperature of 8 degrees Celsius. In Kohir of Sangareddy district, the minimum temperature dropped to 8.4 degrees Celsius. Algal in the same district recorded a minimum temperature of 9.1 degrees Celsius while it was 9.5 in Nyalkal. Tekmal in Medak district recorded a minimum temperature of 11.5 degrees Celsius while Damarancha recorded 11.7 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature in Munigadapa saw a minimum temperature of 11.7 degrees Celsius while Kondapaka recorded 12.2 degrees Celsius. Minimum temperatures also dropped in Hyderabad and its suburbs. University of Hyderabad (UoH) campus in Gachibowli recorded the lowest temperature of 11 de-

grees Celsius. As temperatures dropped considerably, a layer of thick fog enveloped several places, especially Hyderabad's outskirts like Kompally, Patancheru, L B Nagar and Vanasthalipuram. Minimum temperatures in Greater Hyderabad, which was hovering between 15 degrees Celsius and 19 degrees Celsius for the last few days, dropped to less than 15 degrees Celsius. At Moula Ali, the minimum temperature dropped to 12.1 degrees Celsius while Rajendranagar recorded a minimum of 12.3 degrees Celsius. According to the India Meteorological Department, low-level winds are blowing mainly from East / North East direction. Dry Weather is very likely to prevail over the state.

## Revanth Reddy becomes Pan India CM with Allu Arjun's arrest : Congress MP

**Continued From pg 01**  
Kiran Kumar Reddy, who serves the Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency, noted that Revanth Reddy's standing has significantly improved following Allu Arjun's arrest, delivering a powerful message that all individuals are treated equally under the law. He also criticised the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) party for disseminating misleading information about the Rythu Bharosa scheme, asserting that opposition leaders are attempting to deceive the farming community. "Former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao made a misguided decision that resulted in approximately Rs. 22,000 crore being allocated to ineligible individuals under the Rythu Bandhu scheme.

## Power contracts with SECI can be cancelled only if there's proof of wrongdoing : Chandrababu

**Continued From pg 01**  
The Chief Minister emphasised that he could proceed with action against anybody only after thoroughly establishing documentary proof. He was answering questions from reporters as to why he is not acting against certain individuals. "I never indulge in political vendettas. However, I will not spare wrongdoers," he added. "We are getting proper documentation and once we get that then we will take action if there was any corruption involved. If we cancel the MoUs right away then it may lead to legal issues and unnecessary complications," Chandrababu Naidu said in an informal interaction with reporters at the TDP headquarters. The allegations have been refuted by the Adani Group. Though the US indictment does not name any official, filings by the US Securities and Exchange

Commission (SEC) allege that "Mr. Adani met with the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh during that period". From May 2019 to June 2024, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The Adani Group has also attributed a wrong understanding of the US indictment to the "incorrect" reporting about the bribery charges, stating that it offered no evidence about the alleged exchange of bribes. "The ill-founded US action and reckless false reporting have led

to significant repercussions for the Indian conglomerate, such as international project cancellations, financial market impact, and sudden examination from strategic partners, investors, and the public," the Adani Group said in a statement. Meanwhile, refuting the bribery allegations, the YSR Congress Party has said the agreement was between the state government, Discoms and SECI which is a central government organisation and there is no third-party involvement.

## TDP provides insurance coverage to all one crore members

**Amaravati, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) announced on Thursday that it has provided insurance to its one crore workers. Party's national general secretary and Education Minister Nara Lokesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with insurance companies to provide insurance to one crore party activists. The MoUs were signed with representatives of United India Insurance and Pragmatic Insurance Broking Services. TDP, which is leading the coalition government in Andhra Pradesh, claimed that it has created a history as it is the only political party in the country which is providing insurance security to as many as one crore activists. As per the agreement entered into with the insurance companies, the party paid Rs 42 crore as the first premium for providing insurance to the activists



for one year beginning January 1, 2025. The party will be paying almost an equal amount next year too. As per the MoU, every party activist is eligible for Rs 5 lakh accident-

tal insurance. The party claimed that Lokesh has been taking all revolutionary decisions ever since he took charge as the leader of the party workers' welfare.

SC hears phone-tapping case accused Thirupathanna's bail plea

Hyderabad, Jan.2 (NSS): The Supreme Court heard the bail plea of Additional SP Thirupathanna in the sensational phone-tapping case in Telangana. A bench of Justices

Nagarathna and Koteswar Singh took up hearing of the matter. Advocate Siddharth Luthra argued on behalf of the Telangana government. He said Thirupathanna was the main accused in the case and

added that all the phones were tapped at the behest of political leaders while making it clear that the phones of the High Court judges were also included in the phone tapping list by the accused.



YS Jagan congratulates Arjuna Award, Khel Ratna recipients

Tadepalli, Jan.2 (NSS): YSRC president and former chief minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy congratulated Jyothi Yarraji for being honoured with the prestigious Arjuna Award. Recognizing her outstanding contributions to Indian athletics, he lauded her for making the State and the nation proud through her exceptional achievements. He expressed admiration for Jyothi's hard work, determination, and unwavering commitment, which have propelled her to set new benchmarks in track and field events, including the 400-metre hurdles.

Chola CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED. DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002. Includes details of the borrower, loan amount, and demand notice details.

SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED (Formerly Known as Shriram Transport Finance Company Limited). DEMAND NOTICE. Includes details of the borrower, loan amount, and demand notice details.

Stressed Asset Management Branch, Hyderabad 3rd Floor, Andhra Bank Building, Sultan Bazar, Koti, Hyderabad-500095.

Stressed Asset Management Branch, Hyderabad 3rd Floor, Andhra Bank Building, Sultan Bazar, Koti, Hyderabad-500095. Tel No: 7032920743, 9982011443

NOTICE TO THE BORROWER INFORMING ABOUT SALE (30 DAYS NOTICE)

Rule 6 (2)(b) (6) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002. NOTICE TO THE BORROWER. Details of the borrower, loan amount, and demand notice details.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

SECURITIES UNDER PARI-PASSU CHARGE WITH AXIS BANK (MORTGAGED AT UBI). Property No.1: Details of Collateral Security. Full Description of Collateral Security: All that piece and parcel of land measuring an extent of 2022.22 Sq.Yds. or 1690.78 Sq.Mts. under Survey No.255/1C, 255/1G, VUDA LP No.36/2007 (RC No.1172/07/1).

Sabbavaram Sub-Registrar Office, Visakhapatnam District. Boundaries of Collateral Security: Plot No.218; East: Green Belt, South: 40 Feet Wide Road. West: Plot No.219 Site; North: Survey No.252/12A Land. Property No.6: Details of Collateral Security: Full Description of Collateral Security: All that piece and parcel of land measuring an extent of 1491.10 Sq.Yds. or 1246.72 Sq.Mts. under Survey No.255/1C, VUDA LP No.36/2007 (RC No.1172/07/1).

Bheemunipatnam Mandal Visakhapatnam District in the register at Sub-Registrar office at Bheemunipatnam. Boundaries of Collateral Security: Item-1: East: Other Land, South: Plot No.317, West: 40 Feet Road, North: Plot No.319. Full Description of Collateral Security: All the Vacant Plot No.319 measuring 82.37 Sq.Yds or 68.87 Sq.Mts in approved layout Vide L.P. No. 92/2016 Dated 06.07.2016 approved by VUDA covered by S.No.240/17 situated at Kapulapadda Village, Bheemunipatnam Mandal, Visakhapatnam District in the register at Sub-Registrar office at Bheemunipatnam.

OPINIONmail

34 DAYS FROM JUNE 21 TO JULY 24, 1991  
THAT SHOOK THE INDIAN ECONOMY

On June 21, 1991, the 70-year-old Congress veteran P V Narasimha Rao took oath as the Prime Minister of a minority government amidst massive political uncertainty over its survival. The Congress had got only 232 seats as against the usual majority of 272 in the Lok Sabha elections in 1991 out of the total strength of 543. Only one month ago, on May 21, Rajiv Gandhi was killed in the course of campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. Sonia Gandhi was in mourning and Rao was also acting as the Congress president. The next 34 days from June 21 to July 24, the day, P V Narasimha Rao's first budget was presented by the Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, had all the elements of a high octane political and economic thriller which can be made use of by an ace director to make a top-class eco-political film. The soft-spoken Brahmin, the former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh who knew 17 languages, created history by pioneering the economic reforms through his first budget and the new industrial policy presented on the same day July 24. In full collaboration with the economist finance minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Those who had the opportunity to observe the developments from close quarters in those tumultuous days, saw how resolutely, Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao protected his Finance Minister from all attacks by his senior Congress colleagues and led the senior bureaucrats to go ahead with the reforms programme despite continuous feedback from the Congress seniors that Rao was deviating from Nehruvian policies. Influential leaders like Arjun Singh, M K Fotedar and Natwar Singh were very angry and they were looking for gaps in the measures being proposed by Rao-Singh team.. Dr. N K P Salve even met the Prime Minister and told him that Dr. Manmohan Singh was a bad choice and he must remove him.

Dr. Manmohan Singh was under tremendous pressure since he was an outsider. Rao told him to go ahead as planned and he assured that he would take care of the political impact of the budget. Rao as both PM and the Congress President organised a series of meetings to explain to the seniors — including Arjun Singh, N K P Salve and Natwar Singh — the precarious status of the economy and why the steps proposed by him were absolutely needed to salvage the situation. But still, the draft new industrial policy was disapproved at the cabinet meeting on July 19. Rao agreed to make some changes, but peripheral to the main thrust of the policy, and finally succeeded in getting it approved at the meeting on July 23, just one day before its presentation in Parliament.

The Rao government had the benefit of a qualified team of senior bureaucrats who worked till late night in fine-tuning the explosive new ideas of the Prime Minister. And the Finance Minister. They were firmly behind the Rao-Singh team and did not waver even a little thinking that it was a minority government, even though Rao was also under fire from senior leaders from his own party. The team consisting of Naresh Chandra, A N Verma, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, S. Venkitaraman and Dr. C Rangarajan was always available to assist Rao whenever there was any issue requiring any clarification. They were equally aware of the importance of their efforts in making a success of the economic reforms programme pursued by Rao. This team led by Naresh Chandra—the hefty general-like cabinet secretary, made the draft ready even before Rao took oath. They knew the priorities of the new government, irrespective of the combination and kept the emergency plan ready focusing on foreign exchange management, which was primarily the work of Dr. C. Rangarajan. It was a smooth affair as Rao took over and okayed their draft with small changes. The big advantage of Rao was that despite all adverse talks in the media about the Chandrasekhar government, both the short-term Prime Minister and the Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha were persons with sharp mind and they prepared an ad hoc programme for implementation by the new government which would take over. The IMF-World Bank prescriptions were there and Rao's advisers, after taking over, found many of the proposals made by the erstwhile Chandrasekhar government fit for imple-

(By Nitya Chakraborty)



EDITORIAL  
the indian mail

Ayush Ministry committed to advancing Ayurveda as universal health solution

The Ministry of Ayush remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing Ayurveda as a universal health solution and strengthening its global presence, Minister of State for Ayush and Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav, said on Sunday. Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi for highlighting the growing global resonance of Ayurveda in the 117th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Jadhav said the ministry has been spearheading initiatives that have significantly expanded Ayurveda's footprint worldwide. "The Ayush Ministry has signed 24 country-level and 48 institute-level MoUs, fostering collaborative research and education. Additionally, 15 academic chairs have been established globally to promote Ayurveda education and research. Ayush Information Cells operate in 39 locations across 35 countries, serving as knowledge hubs," the minister informed.



Many factors distort blood pressure reading : report

More often than not, patients and even nurses and doctors are skipping steps that help paint an accurate portrait of someone's blood pressure -- how someone sits and positions their arm, whether they just had a cup of joe or chitchat with their practitioner during the measurement, and other factors can produce readings that are higher or lower than normal blood pressure. "To really make a dent at improving people's cardiovascular health, we need to screen and treat people for hypertension, but we need to do it correctly," Tammy Brady, a pediatric nephrologist at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore who studies blood-pressure measurement and cardiovascular health in children and adults, told The Wall Street Journal. "Getting the right reading is important for preventing heart attacks, strokes and other potentially fatal conditions," noted the newspaper, Xinhua news agency reported. What does it take to get the reading right? The patient should sit with both feet on the ground, legs uncrossed, back straight and your arm supported on a table or other surface, according to guidelines from the American Heart

Association and other organisations. "A cuff should be positioned over your bare arm at the level of your heart. You shouldn't talk or scroll on your phone while it is being measured, and your bladder should be empty. And you should take your blood pressure at least a couple of times in a sitting," added the report. Meanwhile, last month, a research published by experts from an international academic collaboration led by the University of Sydney and University College London, had suggested that doing five minutes of physical activity, such as walking uphill or stair climbing every day may help to lower blood pressure.

GLOBALLY, 2024 WAS MARKED BY INTENSIFYING CONFLICTS WITH NO END IN SIGHT

A year back when we entered the New Year 2024, we all hoped that the year would bring an end to the conflicts around the world and reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, even though this hope was filled with fear and scepticism. Despite the global voice for peace, truce in any of the conflict zones seems remote at the end of the year. Whereas people in relatively peaceful regions celebrated Christmas and the onset of New Year, children in Gaza have little hope in store for them. They have virtually forgotten what all these festivities of Christmas or Eid even mean! They only wish an end to Israeli aggression and the brutal killings of their kith and kin, friends and companions. They wish to go to school and to the playground. Sitting far away from the war zone in Gaza, it is beyond comprehension how they are always living in fear at this tender age.

MYANMAR'S 'TARBUJ BRIGADE' GETS SET TO ENACT A REGIME CHANGE

Longevity of a regime, democratic or otherwise, rests on its popularity. A dispensation has its days numbered after meting out reprisal to its people for what it considers to be acts of defiance. Myanmar's military junta is one such dispensation. Once feared as a monolithic regime, its signs of decay are looking at it in the face. Many of its men in uniform have turned against it. These soldier-spies are referred to as "watermelons" for being employed in the junta while serving the cause of the rebels.

The term "watermelon" ought to ring a familiar note to the people of West Bengal. Indeed a generation now past its prime had dubbed some of the leaders of the then Opposition who served the cause of the Left Front government as 'watermelon' or the 'Tarbuj Brigade'.

BELAGAVI EXTENDED CWC MEET SIGNALS NEW WAVE OF CONGRESS POLITICS

The Indian National Congress has postponed the grand convention – Jai Gandhi, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan – on the second day of the Extended Congress Working Committee Meet at Belagavi in Karnataka. Instead, a condolence meeting was held to mourn the sad demise of the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But the CWC and the party leaders were seen fiercely committed to the movement protecting the Constitution of India, an indication that signals a new wave of Congress politics in the country. As per the original schedule, the Congress was to launch the 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan Abhiyan' with a rally in Belagavi on the concluding two days of the Extended CWC meet (December 26-27) on December 27. This movement was scheduled to culminate in a rally at Mhow on the

2025 Republic Day, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Constitution coming into force and the founding of the Republic of India. Nevertheless, the Congress will continue its protests against alleged threats to the Constitution of India by those who are in power, as the Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi indicated. The party rank and file would organize rallies and marches during this month not only at the national level but also in every state, district and block levels across the country. The Belagavi meet was organized to commemorate 100 years of the Belagavi Congress Convention held in 1924.

IS BIHAR CM NITISH KUMAR SULKING FOR THE BHARAT RATNA?

The Bihar Assembly elections are to take place in October-November of 2025. Union Minister Giriraj Singh is asking for the Bharat Ratna for Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and former Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik. In October 2024, the JD(U) had put up a poster outside its office in Patna for the Bharat Ratna to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Jitan Ram Manjhi of the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) Jitan Ram Manjhi and LokJanshakti Party (Ram Vilas) Chief Chirag Paswan had supported the demand. But Union Home Minister Amit Shah had dispelled speculations that the BJP might push for a

Maharashtra-like strategy in Bihar. State BJP leadership said the NDA would contest the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections under Nitish Kumar's leadership. On December 25 senior JD(U) leaders said the same. However, Nitish Kumar's silence on the issue has fuelled speculation that he might make another political turnaround. The big question now is: if Nitish Kumar does receive the Bharat Ratna, will he retire from politics and hand over his party and government to the BJP? While this possibility seems unlikely, BJP leaders believe that Nitish Kumar might retire from active politics after getting the Bharat Ratna. This will keep his supporters in good spirits and real political power will shift to the BJP. JD(U) HAS AN ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN-SHAPED DILEMMA



The transfer of Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan to the Patna Raj Bhawan hasn't gone unnoticed. The JD(U) has welcomed the decision citing Khan's credentials as a liberal and a progressive minority face. The RJD also welcomed Khan's appointment but raised doubts and apprehensions over his past record of allegedly defying the federal structure, referring to his gubernatorial innings in Kerala. However, Khan has been at loggerheads on several issues with the Kerala government under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, while the BJP-NDA leadership believes his appointment as the Bihar governor will only help the NDA in the state.



## 10 killed in passenger bus crash in Pakistan's Punjab

**Islamabad, Jan 2 (IANS) :** At least 10 people were killed and over seven others injured when a passenger bus overturned in the Attock district of Pakistan's Punjab province on Thursday, police officials said. The accident took place on the motorway near Fateh Jang area of the district when the driver of the bus lost control of the vehicle due to a tyre burst, leading to the tragic crash, officials from National Highways and Motorway Police said. Women and children are among the victims of the unfortunate accident, the officials said, adding

that the bus was on its way to the federal capital Islamabad from the eastern Bahawalpur district when it met the accident. Upon receiving the information, police, along with rescue workers, reached the site and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital, where two passengers were said to be in critical condition. Earlier on Monday morning, a passenger van and trailer collided with each other in Naushahro Feroze district of the country's southern Sindh province, leaving six people dead on the spot and at least 15 others wounded.



## New Syrian authorities arrest 300 alleged 'Assad militias'

**Damascus, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Syria's new interim authorities have detained around 300 people since the start of a crackdown on "remnants of Assad's militias", the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The state-run news agency SANA confirmed that the interim authorities apprehended "several remnants of Assad's militias and suspects" in the coastal province of Latakia on Saturday, and in Hama on Thursday. SANA also reported the confiscation of "quantities of weapons and ammunition." The Observatory said on Wednesday, those arrested include "security informants, pro-regime and pro-

Iranian armed elements, as well as lower-ranking military officers." Security forces under the new administration launched an extensive operation Thursday targeting individuals linked to the previous authorities around Damascus, Latakia, Tartus, and Homs, Xinhua news agency reported. Those detained include former regime informants, pro-Iranian fighters, and lower-ranking military officers accused of killings and torture, Abdel Rahman said. Notable among them is General Mohammed Kanjo Hassan, the former head of military justice under Assad.

## Pakistan's largest nuclear power plant construction project gets green light

**Islamabad, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Pakistan's nuclear programme and its ballistic missile development projects have come under question many times with global bodies raising concerns over the threats they pose to the region and the global community at large, prompting superpowers like the US to sanction entities contributing to such programmes. However, Islamabad seems to continue to enhance its nuclear capabilities as it gave a green signal to the construction of its largest power plant. In a latest, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) has approved and issued a licence to construct the country's largest nuclear facility, the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5). The licence was issued by Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Author-

ity (PNRA), allowing the construction of C-5, with a capacity of at least 1200 MWe. The approval to construct makes Chashma Nuclear Power Plant, the country's largest nuclear electricity producing plant. As per details provided by PNRA, PAEC had applied for the licence in April this year. The application included a comprehensive Preliminary Safety Assessment Report along with other relevant documents, detailing the design, radiation protection, waste management.



## Australia : Man shot dead in Sydney

**Sydney, Jan 2 (IANS) :** A man who had links to organised crime syndicates was shot dead in Sydney, police said on Thursday. Emergency services were called to a street in Canley Heights, 25 km west of central Sydney, at about 6:50 p.m. local time on Sunday after residents reported gunshots being fired. Police in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said a man in his 30s was treated for gunshot wounds by paramedics but died at the scene. The man, who was allegedly involved in 'illicit drug activity,'

was shot outside his family residence, Detective Superintendent Danny Doherty said. A short time after the shooting, emergency services were called to an abandoned car on fire in a neighbouring suburb, Xinhua news agency reported quoting public broadcaster ABC. "Investigations into the incidents, which are believed to be linked, are underway," NSW Police said. Earlier on August 26, a man was shot dead in Sydney's west. Police in Australia's state of New South Wales (NSW) said in a statement that emergency services



had been called to a residence in Parramatta, a major suburb 20 km west of Sydney's central business district following reports of a shooting. Upon arrival, ambulance crews found a man, believed to be 29 years old, with gunshot wounds. NSW Police said that

paramedics treated the man, but he died at the scene. Shortly afterwards, emergency services were called to a car fire approximately five km from the shooting, where a sedan, which had been reported as stolen, was found engulfed in flames.



## Three killed, seven injured in hotel fire in Thailand

**Bangkok, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Three people were killed and seven others injured as a fire broke out at a hotel in the Thai capital Bangkok, the local fire department said on Thursday. The fire broke out at a six-floor hotel building near Bangkok's popular backpacker area of Khao San Road, at about 9:21 p.m. local time (1421 GMT) on Thursday. The fire started from a room on the fifth floor, resulting in the immediate death of a woman tourist.

Two male tourists later died from their injuries at different hospitals. Among the seven injured, there were two Thai men and five foreigners, as reported by the local fire department.

## Croatian Presidential election heads to runoff

**Zagreb, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Croatia's Presidential election will head to a runoff on January 12 as no candidate secured more than half of the votes in the recent election, the Croatian State Election Commission (SEC) announced. With 99.88 per cent of votes counted, incumbent President Zoran Milanovic, backed by the largest opposition party, the Social Democratic Party, led the race with 49.10 per cent, narrowly missing a first-round victory. His main challenger, Dragan Primorac of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union, garnered 19.35 per cent, according to the SEC. Under Croatian election law, if no candidate wins an outright majority, the top two contenders proceed to a runoff two weeks later. Addressing his supporters, Milanovic expressed gratitude and confidence in securing victory. "I believe that in two weeks we will celebrate the victory," he said. Primorac, speaking to his supporters, called the runoff "a great opportunity". "Now a great opportunity is coming. Milanovic and I will be one one-on-one, so we will see who knows what and represents what," he said. "Croatia needs changes, and in two weeks, it will be a historic day." The Croatian President serves a five-year term and can seek re-election once, Xinhua news agency reported. Although the Presidency in Croatia is primarily ceremonial, the elected President possesses political power and serves as the supreme commander of the military. Milanovic has expressed criticism towards NATO and



EU support for Ukraine, frequently asserting that Croatia should remain neutral and avoid involvement in international conflicts, despite its membership in both organisations. Additionally, he has obstructed Croatia's participation in a NATO-led training initiative for Ukraine, stating that "no Croatian soldier will take part in somebody else's war." His principal opponent in the election, Primorac, has asserted that "Croatia's place is in the West, not the East." However, Milanovic's campaign for the Presidency has been overshadowed by a significant corruption scandal that resulted in the imprisonment of Croatia's Health Minister last month and was a central topic in pre-election discussions.



## Sudan voices rejection to report on famine

**Khartoum, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Sudan rejected a report by an international organisation indicating the spread of famine in the country. The Sudanese government described the report, recently issued by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a global hunger monitor, as based on inaccurate standards and speculative results. "The report depended on outdated information, distant communications, and secondary sources, thereby raising concerns about its reliability," said a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The Sudanese government reiterates its unwavering commitment and keenness to alleviate the suffering of its people, enhance food security, and address the root causes of the humanitarian crisis," the statement added.

In the report released earlier this week, the IPC said that famine is present in at least five areas of Sudan, including the Zamzam displacement camp in North Darfur and parts of the Western Nuba Mountains. The report also noted that 17 other areas in Sudan are at risk of famine. Sudan has been gripped by a devastating conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since mid-April 2023, which claimed more than 29,680 lives and displaced over 14 million people, either inside or outside Sudan, according to the latest estimates by international organisations, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier on December 25, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was alarmed by the rapidly worsening food security situation in

Sudan and called for the parties to facilitate access to humanitarian assistance, his spokesperson said in a statement. After over 20 months of conflict, more than 24.6 million people in Sudan — over half the population — faced high levels of acute food insecurity, the statement said, citing the latest UN-backed assessment. In a report released by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the global hunger monitor, famine was confirmed to be present in at least five areas of Sudan, including North Darfur's Zamzam camp and parts of the Western Nuba Mountains. The crisis was projected to expand further, with five additional areas expected to face famine between December 2024 and May 2025.

## South Korea: Investigators seek arrest warrant for Yoon in first for sitting Prez

**Seoul, Jan 2 (IANS) :** South Korea's joint investigation team said on Thursday that it has sought an arrest warrant for President Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived imposition of martial law, making him the first sitting President to face arrest. The team said it sought the warrant on insurrection and abuse of power charges after Yoon ignored three summonses to appear for questioning. The request was filed with the Seoul Western District Court at midnight on Sunday, according to the team comprised of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO), the police and the Defence ministry's investigation unit. Investigators say Yoon led an insurrection and abused his power when he declared martial law on December 3 and allegedly ordered troops to the National Assembly to stop lawmakers from voting down the decree. Yoon has denied the charges, saying his declaration of martial law was an 'act of governance' to warn the opposition party against what he described as its abuse of legislative power.





### Bengal CM hints at 'money game' influencing Sandeshkhali movement earlier this year

**Kolkata, Jan 2 (IANS) :** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on Thursday, hinted at "money game" influencing the movement by locals at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, especially women, earlier this year against sexual harassment and illegal land grabbing the local and non-suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan. In her first public meeting on Monday at Sandeshkhali, a conglomeration of islands in that coastal pocket of the district, since the movement broke out there, the Chief Minister directly did not refer to the protest movements there but gave clear hints on what she was meaning to say. "There was a 'money game' at Sandeshkhali. The people were misled. But lies do not persist for long. So I request all of you to remain united. Do not fall in the trap of mischievous people. I request women to go anywhere if you are called by anyone," the Chief Minister said. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister also advised people to not pay any money to anyone to get the benefits under different social development schemes including rural housing schemes.

### As AAP, BJP trade barbs over voters' list, EC to publish final Delhi electoral rolls on Jan 6

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** While the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) engage in a war of words, accusing each other of manipulating the voters' list ahead of the imminent Assembly elections, the Chief Electoral Office (Delhi) is set to 'settle' the controversy by publishing the final list of electoral rolls, early next month. Sharing information about registration of new voters, the Electoral office said that since November 28 this year, about 4.8 lakh forms have been received for New Voter Registrations and the final Electoral rolls would be published on January 6, 2025. The battle for Delhi has heated up recently, with both AAP and BJP upping the ante against each other.



### Mahayuti's 2024 jackpot hits MVA hard, Fadnavis govt readies to overcome challenges

**Mumbai, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The Mahayuti comprising BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP hit the jackpot in 2024 reporting a landslide victory in the Maharashtra Assembly elections after a dismal performance in the Lok Sabha polls. BJP not only succeeded in asserting its big brother role in the grand alliance but also getting the chief minister's post which it had sacrificed in June 2022 for Eknath Shinde after he staged a rebellion against Uddhav Thackeray. The Maha Vikas Aghadi, which had outsmarted the MahaYuti in the Lok Sabha elections, met with a complete washout in the Assembly elections. MVA now faces an acid challenge to keep

the alliance relevant and more importantly, its constituents -- Congress, Shiv Sena UBT and NCP(SP) -- to keep their respective flock together while pursuing efforts for revival in the next five years. Mahayuti not only weathered the anti-incumbency factor but also worked cohesively to turn odds into opportunity by putting up a massive show of unity. BJP after the dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections, tweaked its strategy for the Assembly polls by making sure that with allies, Shiv Sena and NCP, it would regain power in Maharashtra which continues to be a leading state known for its vibrancy and leadership in political, financial and social sec-

tors with a progressive and pragmatic status. RSS, which was silent during the general elections, swung into action and pulled out its organisational network to help the BJP not only emerge as the single largest party but also get a thumping win for the Mahayuti. BJP will make all efforts to achieve its ambitious 'Shat Pratishat (winning power on its own)' in the 2029 elections as already announced by Home Minister Amit Shah during the Assembly poll campaign. On the other hand, despite winning more seats in the Lok Sabha elections, the MVA failed to create the same magic in the Assembly elections majorly due to egos, internal disputes.

### Spreads hate yet no action taken against him: Oppn leaders slam Nitesh Rane's 'Kerala mini-Pak' quip

**Mumbai, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Maharashtra's newly-appointed BJP minister, Nitesh Rane, has landed in hot water following his "mini-Pakistan" remarks on Kerala. Speaking at a programme in Pune, Rane referred to Kerala as a "mini-

Pakistan" and alleged that "only extremists in Kerala" vote for members of the Gandhi family, including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi. Rane's statement has triggered a political storm, drawing severe criticism from Opposition parties, who ac-

cused him of "spreading hatred" and demanded immediate action against him. Speaking to IANS, Samajwadi Party MP Abu Azmi slammed Rane, saying, "He is such a small person. A cabinet of hatred should be formed for him as he always talks about hatred.



Such baseless statements are made without any consequences. Even the Supreme Court has said that people who spread hatred should be punished.



### Centre's public grievance system resolves over 70 lakh citizen concerns in three years

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** In a bid to swiftly address citizen concerns, the centralised public grievance redress and monitoring system (CPGRAMS) has successfully resolved over 70 lakh grievances in the last three years (2022-2024), the government said on Thursday. From 2022 to 2024, the system enabled the resolution of 70,03,533 grievances and mapped 1,03,183 Grievance Redressal Officers (GROs) as of October 31. CPGRAMS, developed and monitored by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), is an online platform available 24/7 that connects all ministries.



### Guest teachers cheated by AAP govt: BJP MP Chandolia

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Delhi BJP General Secretary and MP Yogender Chandolia addressed a protest organised by the Guest Teachers Democratic Forum on Thursday against their alleged exploitation by the Arvind Kejriwal and Atishi governments over the past 10 years. Claiming that the protest by teachers had exposed the AAP government's claims on a world-class education model, Chandolia assured the protesting guest teachers of Delhi government schools that he would speak to Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena for regularisation of their service. He promised the protesting guest teachers that once the BJP forms a government after

the coming Assembly elections, all guest teachers will be regularised. During the protest on Thursday, guest teachers raised several demands, including a refund of Rs 15,000 for tablets purchased by 26,000 guest teachers on the directions of the Delhi government's education department, which remained unpaid for over a year. The teachers also demanded job security with a retirement policy up to the age of 60. They have also sought fixed monthly salaries with basic pay and dearness allowance and leave benefits. The agitating teachers are also demanding reinstatement of terminated or released guest teachers. Chandolia said that the Delhi government has consistently ex-

ploited guest teachers. "The insensitive Kejriwal government not only makes promises but fails to fulfil them," he said. The BJP MP lamented that it was an unfortunate situation where teachers, responsible for educating children in schools, were forced to protest on the streets for their rights. He further highlighted that guest teachers, in service since 2010, are now overage and, therefore, no longer eligible to take competitive exams for reemployment. "Guest teachers were a necessity for the government in the past, and now, the Delhi government has compelled them to protest on the streets to demand justice," he concluded.

### Stage collapse at Kochi : Blame game begins as Uma Thomas' condition improves

**Kochi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The condition of Congress legislator Uma Thomas, who sustained serious injuries after falling 15 feet from a makeshift stage at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Thursday evening, has slightly improved, according to medical reports. Meanwhile, a blame game has begun over the accident as authorities started investigating the incident. The mishap occurred during a Guinness World Record attempt for a mass dance performance in Kochi.

### K'taka railway officer took Rs 50 lakh bribe for helping candidates pass KAS exam, arrested

**Bengaluru, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Karnataka Police have arrested the Chief Railway Ticket Inspector on charges of collecting Rs 50 lakh for helping candidates clear the Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) exam. The accused was identified as 49-year-old Govindaraju, the Chief Railway Ticket Inspector attached to the South Western Railways.



### PMAY beneficiaries from MP's Morena thank PM Modi

**Bhopal, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Several public welfare schemes are being run by the Modi government and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) is one of them. Under this scheme, eligible beneficiaries are given financial assistance by the government to build their houses. Morena district of Madhya Pradesh is

also not untouched by this scheme. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, one of the ambitious schemes of the Modi government, has transformed the lives of the people in Morena. They were forced to live in rented houses for the last several decades, but now they are living in their own houses, all thanks to the PMAY.

## Audi India sells 5,816 units in 2024, reaches 1 lakh milestone

**Mumbai, Jan 2 (IANS) :** German luxury carmaker Audi on Thursday said it sold 5,816 units in India this year, along with clocking the sale of 1,927 retail units alone in the fourth quarter (Q4). Moreover, the automaker reached the mile-

stone of selling 100,000 units in the country to date. The 'Audi Approved: plus', the brand's pre-owned car business, registered a strong 32 per cent growth in 2024 compared to the previous year, informed the company. "The first half of 2024 brought supply-re-

lated challenges for Audi India, yet the continued demand for our products reflects the enduring trust our customers place in the brand," said Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head of Audi India.



## Gross NPA ratio of India's banks falls to 12-year low of 2.6 pc

**Mumbai, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The asset quality of India's banks has improved further with their gross non-performing assets (GNPA) declining to 2.6 per cent of total advances in September 2024 which is the lowest level in the last 12 years, according to the RBI's latest financial stability report. The net NPA ratio was around 0.6 per cent, according to the RBI's December 2024 issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR). "Buoyed by falling slippages, higher write-offs and steady credit demand, the gross nonperforming assets (GNPA) ratio of 37 scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) fell to a multi-year low of 2.6 per cent," the report stated. The improvement in asset quality of SCBs was broad-based across sectors and bank groups, according to the report. According to the report, the share of large borrowers in the GNPA of banks has steadily declined over the past two years. The asset quality of banks' large borrower portfolios has improved considerably.



## UPI transactions value up 8 pc to Rs 23.25 lakh cr in Dec, surges 35 pc in 2024

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** In a fresh record, the unified payments interface (UPI) transactions witnessed 8 per cent growth (on-month) in volume reaching 16.73 billion in December, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data showed on Thursday. The UPI transaction value also surged 8 per cent to Rs 23.25 lakh crore, up from Rs 21.55 lakh crore in November.



## Assocham appoints industry veteran Manish Singhal as Secretary General

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) on Thursday appointed industry veteran Manish Singhal as Secretary General. Singhal succeeds Deepak Sood, who successfully helmed the chamber for the last five years and has stepped down to pursue other interests, the apex chamber

said in a statement. Singhal earlier worked as Deputy Secretary General of The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). He also worked with various transnational companies, including Tata Motors, Eicher (Volvo), Tata Auto Comp Systems, Moser Baer India and BEML, among others. "We thank Sood for his immense contributions to rebuilding the Chamber,

which now boasts a healthy balance sheet and delivers quality," said Sanjay Nayar, President of Assocham. Nayar welcomed Singhal on board. "He has a proven track record in policy advocacy and international business, which will help the Chamber scale greater heights", said the chamber's president. Assocham is India's oldest apex chamber since 1920. It brings in actionable policy advocacy to strengthen the Indian economic ecosystem by leveraging its network of more than 4,50,000 members.

## Oil and gas industry set for long-term benefits with digitalisation

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Digitalisation initiatives could provide long-term benefits to the oil and gas industry globally, a report showed on Thursday. Certain technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, and virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR), are now part of the oil and gas industry

The GlobalData's report, titled 'Digitalisation in Oil and Gas,' highlights the role of major oil and gas companies, such as ADNOC, BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, and TotalEnergies, in the development and adoption of digital tools to solve business problems. "Field personnel are extensively using handheld devices to gather data, make notes.



## Bajaj Auto overtakes Ola Electric as top 2-wheeler EV company

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The New Year welcomed a new two-wheeler (2W) EV leader in India as Bajaj Auto overtook Ola Electric in the

month of December in terms of market share. According to the data from the government's Vahan portal, Bajaj Auto's market share in the two-wheeler EV segment increased by 3 per cent to 25 per cent in December 2024, which was 22 per cent in November.

## M&M 11th most valuable automobile manufacturer in world: Anand Mahindra



**Mumbai, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) is the 11th most valuable automobile manufacturer in the world, leaping over many competitors and erstwhile technology collaborators, its Chairman Anand Mahindra said on Thursday. In a New Year address to the employees of Mahindra Group, he said that among companies that were part of the NIFTY50 in 2002, M&M has had the highest compounded annual share price growth rate till date, and in just the past year, has soared 77 per cent. "For the fourth straight year, we were included in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index's World Index as the highest-ranked automotive OEM," Anand Mahindra wrote.

## Hyundai Motor India achieves highest-ever domestic sales in 2024

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) on Thursday said it has registered highest-ever yearly domestic sales of 6,05,433 units in 2024. The company achieved total sales of 7,64,119 units (including domestic and export) last year. In the month of December, HMIL reported total monthly sales of 55,078 units (domestic at 42,208 units and export at 12,870 units).

According to Tarun Garg, Whole-time Director and Chief Operating Officer, HMIL, the company managed to sustain sales momentum in 2024, despite strong headwinds faced by the industry at large. "Introduction of the innovative Hy-CNG Duo technology in 2024 resonated well with buyers, translating to the highest ever CNG contribution of 13.1 per cent to HMIL's domestic sales in CY 2024, against 10.4 per cent in CY 2023," Garg said.

By achieving highest-ever yearly domestic sales of 1,86,919 units, Hyundai Creta model continued to strengthen the company's position as an SUV leader. "We are confident that the upcoming CRETA Electric, will further expand the appeal of this Undisputed, Ultimate SUV," Garg noted. Meanwhile, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd on Wednesday said its overall auto sales for the month of December stood at 69,768 vehicles, a growth of

16 per cent, including exports. In the sports utility vehicle (SUV) segment, Mahindra sold 41,424 units in the domestic market, a growth of 18 per cent and overall, 42,958 vehicles, including exports. The domestic sales for commercial vehicles stood at 19,502. "The year ended on a high, as we became the only Indian auto company to attain the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) world leader status within the auto sector,"



said Veejay Nakra, President, Automotive Division, M&M Ltd. The DJSI ranking is one of the most respected global benchmarks for ESG performance, covering

over 13,000 companies across various industries and "we are ranked first among all global auto original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)," he added.

## NGT orders thermal power plants at Aurangabad's Nabinagar to comply with environmental laws

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered two thermal power plants at Nabinagar in Bihar's Aurangabad to rectify minor non-observance of environmental laws. The green tribunal registered an original application on the basis of a letter petition sent by Vijay Kumar Singh, alias Dablu Singh, a resident of Aurangabad. The complainant stated that the fuel used for the generation of electricity in two thermal power plants of National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) comprised a waste material, black filter dust and

rejected coal, causing air pollution and health hazards for local people. After being prima facie satisfied that a substantial question relating to the environment had arisen, the NGT directed the constitution of a Joint Committee comprising the Central Pollution

Control Board (CPCB), the Bihar State Pollution Control Board (BSPCB), the Integrated Regional Office of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Aurangabad's District Magistrate.



## Hand over contractor suicide case to CBI or face protest on Jan 4: BJP to K'taka govt

**Bengaluru, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The Karnataka BJP has demanded handing over of a contractor's suicide case allegedly involving the close aide of Minister for RDPR, IT and BT Priyank Kharge, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), or face a protest on January 4. Addressing a press conference on Monday in Bengaluru at the party office, BJP state President B.Y. Vijayendra warned that if the state government fails to hand over the case to the CBI, the party would stage a massive protest in Kalaburagi on January 4. "We will also lay siege to the residence of Priyank Kharge at Kalaburagi," Vijayendra stated. "Mr. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, you don't fear that

if action is taken against Priyank Kharge you will get a call from New Delhi and your position will be in danger. Do not fear and initiate action against Priyank Kharge. You claim yourself to be the champion of the Backward Classes. The contractor who committed suicide hails from the Backward Classes," he stated. "The contractor, Sachin had stated in his death note that killers were hired for executing the Andola seer and BJP leaders from Solapur in Maharashtra," Vijayendra claimed. "This is a serious matter. The BJP will wait till January 3. Let god give good sense to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to hand over the case to the CBI," he urged. "Ever since the Congress government came to power, the number of sui-



cide cases have gone up. The state had never witnessed a series of deaths like it is now. The sisters of the deceased contractor had gone to the police seeking help. The police did not bother about them for 12 hours. Instead, the police had humiliated and insulted the sisters," Vijayendra alleged. "Police negligence is a crime as their action would have saved the life of the contractor," he said.

## Assam STF nabs one more member of Al Qaeda-linked Ansarullah Bangla Team

**Guwahati, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The Special Task Force (STF) of Assam Police has arrested another member of the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), a Bangladesh-based terror group affiliated with Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), officials said on Thursday.

A spokesman of the Assam Police said that as part of 'Operation Praghat', launched by the STF, the absconding prime accused, Gazi Rahman (35) was arrested with the assistance of Kokrajhar Police. "Necessary legal action is being initiated in this matter. The STF continued its efforts to apprehend all individuals connected to this case."



## Protectors of foreign invaders: Naqvi on Akhilesh Yadav's 'Shivling' remarks

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Reacting to Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav's call for 'excavation' of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's residence over his claims of 'Shivling' beneath it, BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi rebuked him for making unjust remarks, aimed at winning the support of a particular vote bank. He also asked the SP supremo to stop behaving like a "pro-

teCTOR of foreign invaders." Speaking to IANS, Naqvi remarked, "Some people are trying to act as protectors of foreign invaders and criminal acts. They mistakenly believe that such actions will benefit them politically. Every communal disturbance is turned into an opportunity for political excavations, but it will yield no results." The remarks come amid the ongoing excavations in various districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Sambhal, which have

become a new flashpoint in state politics. Former UP CM Akhilesh Yadav, speaking on the ongoing excavations, took a jibe at UP CM Yogi Adityanath and sarcastically remarked, "Excavations are happening everywhere in the state. We believe there is a Shivling below the CM's official residence too, maybe they should start digging there as well."

## CRPF head constable found dead in Kashmir, probe on

**Srinagar, Jan 2 (IANS) :** A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) head constable died in mysterious circumstances in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district while an unidentified body was found on Thursday in Kulgam district.

The head constable was found dead late Sunday evening. Officials said that he suddenly fell unconscious. "He was immediately shifted to the district hospital in Anantnag town where doctors said he was dead on arrival," said officials.

The head constable was identified as Kharat Prakash of G Coy 116 Battalion of CRPF. He was on duty in Anantnag district jail.

"Police have registered a case in this incident and investigation started to determine the exact cause of death of the CRPF head constable," the officials said. Officials also said that an unidentified body was found on Monday near Tukutachloo village of Kulgam. "The body was first spotted by locals, who then informed the police. The police reached the spot and took the body into custody. The identity of the deceased is yet to be ascertained," officials said. The head of the cardiology department at the government medical college in Srinagar has issued an advisory based on international research about sudden deaths during extreme winters.



## Bengal school job case: Charge framing process at special court postponed after accused hospitalised

**Kolkata, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The process of framing charges in West Bengal's multi-crore cash-for-school job case, registered by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), at a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Kolkata on Thursday, was postponed after the sudden hospitalisation of prime accused Sujay Krishna Bhadra earlier in the day. The next hearing in the matter will be on January 2 and based on Bhadra's medical report, the special court judge will give a direction in the matter.

As per protocol, all those named as accused in the subsequent charge sheets filed by the ED need to be physically present at the court at the time of framing of charges. Since, that was not possible in the case of Bhadra, due to his hospitalisation, the process has been postponed till the next hearing on January 2.

Bhadra is currently under treatment at state-run S.S.K.M. Medical College & Hospital in south Kolkata where he was taken from the Presidency Central Correctional Home. He complained of uneasiness in the morning and after that, he became unconscious. Earlier this month, the Calcutta High Court granted bail to Bhadra in the case registered by the ED. However, he remained behind bars as he was shown as arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is conducting a parallel probe in the school job case.



## 'Unbecoming' of Vijayan to skip farewell for outgoing Guv, says V. Muraleedharan

**Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The strained relationship between Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and outgoing Governor Arif Mohammed Khan took a new low as neither Vijayan nor any of his cabinet colleagues turned up for Khan's farewell. BJP leader V. Muraleedharan termed

it unbecoming in the manner in which Vijayan and his cabinet colleagues behaved to the head of the state. Khan completed his tenure as Kerala's Governor and departed the state on Thursday, traveling from Thiruvananthapuram to Kochi and then to Delhi.

## 'Sheesh Mahal' should be opened for public to show Kejriwal's splurge, says Parvesh Verma

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** BJP leader and former MP Parvesh Verma advocated for the opening of "Sheesh Mahal" for the public to show how the AAP government splurged the taxpayers' money on building a house for Arvind Kejriwal, which has no parallels anywhere in

the world. In an interview with IANS, Verma slammed the AAP national convenor for making "false promises" to the people of Delhi and labelled it as his "political stunt." He also added that if the BJP wins the upcoming elections, the new Chief Minister must not reside in the "Sheesh Mahal," as it has been



built by shattering the dreams of the people of Delhi. He also talked about AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh's allegations against the BJP regarding the vote cancellation.

## One dead in clash over land dispute in MP's Bhind

**Bhopal, Jan 2 (IANS) :** One person was killed and at least three injured in a clash between two groups during a dispute over land in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind, police said on Thursday. The incident occurred in Lahchura village, under the Gohad police station area where the fighting groups opened fire at each other late at night.



## Legal battles 2024: A look at bails granted to 5 key political leaders

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** As 2024 nears its end, here are the key verdicts of the Supreme Court granting bail to influential politicians who were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on corruption or money laundering charges. Bail to Arvind Kejriwal

In September this year, the Supreme Court directed former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to be released on bail in connection with the corruption case linked to the alleged liquor policy scam. While turning down his distinct plea challenging arrest by the CBI, Justice Surya Kant, heading a two-judge Bench, ordered Kejriwal's release on bail but restrained him from making any "public comments on merits of the case" pending trial before the court. "The terms and conditions imposed by the coordinate Bench in the ED matter shall apply in this case also. The appellant

(Kejriwal) shall remain present before the trial court on each and every date of the hearing unless granted an exemption. He shall fully cooperate with the trial court for expeditious completion of trial proceedings," added the Justice Kant-led Bench. In a judgment passed on July 12, another bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna (now CJI) opined that former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal may be released on interim bail in the money laundering case, given the fact that the

right to life and liberty is sacrosanct, and he has suffered incarceration of over 90 days. The 2-judge Bench, also comprising Justice Datta, referred to a larger bench Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest and subsequent remand by the ED in the alleged liquor policy scam for an authoritative pronouncement on the questions of law involved. In the same judgment, the Justice Khanna-headed Bench had asked Kejriwal to take a call on stepping down from the CM post.



"We are conscious that Arvind Kejriwal is an elected leader and the Chief Minister of Delhi, a post holding importance and influence. We have also referred to the allegations. While we do not give any direction.



## Delhi Waqf Imams demand immediate release of salaries, warn of protests

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The All-India Imam Association on Thursday escalated their demands for the release of pending salaries, warning of protests if their grievances remain unaddressed. A group of Imams gathered outside the residence of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal to press for their demands. Speaking to IANS, Maulana Mahfooz Rehman said, "We had come on Thursday and were assured we would get an appointment with Kejriwal on Saturday, but that meeting never materialised. This is now our third attempt. If we are not allowed to meet him today, we will stage a dharna (sit-in protest) and will not leave until our salaries are released."

## Bengal fake passport racket : Arrested agent had plans to escape to Bangladesh

**Kolkata, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Manoj Gupta, the agent associated with a fake passport racket in West Bengal and arrested by Kolkata Police, had plans to escape to neighbouring Bangladesh, said sources here. It was precisely with that motive, he had shifted to the rented accommodation at Gaighata in North 24 Parganas district which is close to the district's international border with Bangladesh. Gupta was the seventh and last arrest made by the cops since December 15 for their involvement in the racket operating from the state and engaged in arranging fake Indian identity

documents, including Indian passports, for the illegal infiltrators from neighbouring Bangladesh. Sources from the city police said that following the subsequent arrest in this connection, Gupta, who was associated with a fake travel agency operating from Behala in south Kolkata, became sceptical that his turn of being arrested might be the next one. Gupta, said a city police official, became even more apprehensive about his arrest after the city cops arrested Dipankar Das, another associate of the same fake travel agency.



## BJP MP Dinesh Sharma slams Akhilesh Yadav for not inviting people to Kumbh as CM

**Lucknow, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Amid the political barbs traded at each other regarding discussions over the Kumbh Mela arrangements, former Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Dinesh Sharma, has criticised Samajwadi Party (SP) Chief Akhilesh Yadav for not inviting people to the event during his tenure as Chief Minister. "He (Akhilesh Yadav) did not invite people, it was his dereliction of duty. He should have done so, but he did not do so because his previous governments did not want people to come," Sharma said. Sharma emphasised that the Kumbh Mela is a historical event that has attracted millions for thousands of years. "Kumbh is thousands of years old, and people used to come.



## J&K: Year of peaceful people-participative elections, better security situation

**Srinagar/Jammu, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Year 2024 has been both significant and epochal in Jammu and Kashmir as it witnessed Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections for the first time after 10 years. Both these elections were peaceful and largely people participative. People chose their representatives for the country's Lok Sabha and the union territory's Legislative Assembly in a peaceful, free and fearless atmosphere. Undoubtedly, the credit for the peaceful and fair conduct of these polls must go to the Election Commission of India, but on the ground, it goes to the effi-

cient, strong and firm governance by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha. Sinha has been firm without being loud or rude. He did not harbour any misgivings or doubt that an elected government must take office in J&K. In fact, he devoted his entire attention to the security situation to control the ground so that people come out on their own and participate in the democratic exercise without fear of the terrorists. The peaceful conduct and large percentages of voters, even larger than those in peacetimes before terrorism began in Kashmir, must go to the credit of Manoj Sinha.



## How can Sanjay Singh's wife vote from two Assembly seats: BJP

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The BJP on Thursday blasted the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Singh over his claims that the BJP is attempting to delete his wife, Anita Singh's, name from the voters' list, questioning why her name is registered in two Assembly constituencies.



## Temporary hospital in Maha Kumbh Mela area sees first birth of baby

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** A significant milestone was achieved at the temporary hospital in the Maha Kumbh Mela area. Doctors successfully conducted their first delivery of a baby boy, bringing joy to everyone there. Under the leadership of Dr Gaurav Dubey, a team of three doctors carried out the delivery on Thursday. Dr Dubey, the Nodal Medical Officer of the Maha Kumbh Mela, confirmed the news, stating, "This marks the first

successful delivery at the Central Hospital in Maha Kumbh Nagar." The 20-year-old mother, Sonam, gave birth to a healthy baby boy weighing 2.4 kilograms. The delivery was managed by Dr Dubey's team, which included Dr Nupur and Dr Vartika. Both the mother and child are reported to be in good health. Dr Dubey expressed his gratitude to the dedicated team for their efforts and added, "This success highlights the readiness and efficiency of the healthcare system established in the Maha Kumbh Mela

area." The Central Hospital, located in the area of the temporary Maha Kumbh Mela setup, is offering delivery services for the first time. A fully equipped labour room has also been established to cater to expecting mothers during the Mela. Speaking about the achievement, Rama Singh, Matron of the Maha Kumbh Mela Central Hospital, said, "The delivery was carried out with utmost care and precision. It was the first and a highly successful delivery. We are proud to provide this essential service to the

community." Sonam, the new mother, shared her happiness with IANS: "I am very happy and grateful to all the staff members and doctors who ensured the safe delivery of my baby. My child is healthy, and I feel truly blessed. Whatever name the doctors and staff suggest for my child will be the name we choose." Her mother also expressed her gratitude, stating, "This region, being the Kumbh area, holds divine significance. I am thankful to the doctors and other staff who provided such dedicated service.



## UP groom cancels wedding over delay in serving food, marries cousin

**Chandauli, Jan 2 (IANS) :** A bizarre incident unfolded in Uttar Pradesh's Chandauli where a groom abandoned his wedding over an alleged delay in serving food, leaving the bride and her family stranded at the venue, only to tie the knot with his cousin later that day, police said. The bride and her family then approached the police, demanding justice, and also claimed that they had given Rs 1.5 lakh to the

groom's family hours before the ceremony was to take place. Speaking to the media, the bride said her marriage was arranged with Mehtab seven months ago. On December 22, as the wedding procession arrived at her house in Hamidpur village, Mehtab and his relatives were extended a warm welcome by her family. "I was ready since morning. The groom and his family arrived, ate and then abused and assaulted my



parents before leaving the spot. I later approached the police for justice," she said.



## Mumbai teen becomes youngest female to scale world's seven highest peaks

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** In a stunning display of determination and skill, Kaomya Karthikeyan, a 17-year-old student from Navy Children School in Mumbai, has made history by becoming the youngest female in the world to scale the highest peaks on each of the seven continents. Demonstrating an extraordinary

feat of mountaineering prowess, the 17-year-old adventurer has conquered Africa (Mt Kilimanjaro), Europe (Mt Elbrus), Australia (Mt Kosciuszko), South America (Mt Aconcagua), North America (Mt Denali), Asia (Mt Everest) and culminating the current climb in Antarctica.

## India's defence production poised to clock 20 pc annual growth in FY 2024-29

**Mumbai, Jan 2 (IANS) :** On the back of robust government reforms and increasing private sector participation, India's defence sector production is set to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 20 per cent during FY24-FY29, according to a report released on Thursday.

Indian defence sector companies are set to further enhance the country's defence capabilities, reduce import dependence, and elevate its global stature, the CareEdge Ratings report stated.

The collaboration between government and private sector entities in India's defence sector has driven advancements in arms and ammunition, aerospace, electronics, and naval technologies.

Private sector entities, both

domestic and multinational, are expected to play a pivotal role in advancing defence modernisation, leveraging their engineering and technological expertise, the report observed. This collaboration has been supported by policies such as 'Make in India' and liberalised FDI norms, which have enhanced domestic manufacturing capabilities, attracted international investments in defence innovation and driven notable growth in exports of military equipment, the report pointed out.

In recent years, India's defence budget has consistently ranged between 1.90 to 2.8 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). For the fiscal year 2024-25, a substantial allocation of Rs 6.22 lakh crore has been dedicated for the defence sector. Furthermore, India has set an ambitious annual defence production outlay of Rs 1.75

lakh crore for FY25 which is expected to grow at a CAGR of around 20 per cent to Rs 3 lakh crore (as per Ministry of Defence) by FY29, underscoring its commitment to becoming a self-reliant defence powerhouse, the report noted. Historically, India has been a net importer of defence equipment, heavily relying on foreign suppliers to meet its critical military needs. However, concerted efforts to promote indigenous defence manufacturing and technology development, supported by policy reforms such as the 'Make in India' initiative, are bringing about a gradual shift. Over the last six years ending FY24, Indian defence exports have grown at a healthy CAGR of approximately 28 per cent.



## Prashant Kishor booked over students-cops clashes, says will lodge counter FIR in court

**Patna, Jan 2 (IANS):** Political strategist turned Jan Suraj Party chief Prashant Kishor on Thursday voiced strong criticism of police excesses on candidates protesting over irregularities in the 70th BPS exam. He also vowed to file a counter FIR against the police, hours after he was booked for 'instigating' the students for violent stir.

Kishor announced his intention to approach both the court as well as Human Rights Commission to challenge the police's lathi charge on the protesting candidates. He criticized the government for filing FIRs against the protesters. "I would file cases in court and with the Human Rights Commission against the City Superintendent of Police (SP) who ordered the lathi-charge," Kishor said.

"I am not going to be afraid of

anyone in uniform or kurta pajama," Kishor declared, signaling his resolve to 'confront' both administrative and political figures. Kishor also led a delegation of five students in meeting Bihar Chief Secretary Amrit Lal Meena to present a memorandum with five demands including the cancellation of the examination in light of allegations of a question paper leak and other irregularities. Kishor stated that if the demands are not addressed, he will lead an indefinite dharna (sit-in protest) in Patna to escalate the pressure on the government. Kishor denied allegations of his involvement in the police's lathi-charge on the students, asserting that the incident occurred 45 minutes after he left the protest site. He demanded accountability from the officers involved in it. Kishor criticized the FIR filed against 700 individuals,

including him and students like Aarti Mishra and Anand Mishra, calling the charges baseless. He demanded an immediate withdrawal of the FIRs. Kishor reiterated the call to cancel the BPS exam across all centres, not just at the Babu Centre, where the question paper was 'leaked'. He criticized Nitish government over alleged corruption in examination process. The controversy began on December 13, when candidates at Babu Examination Centre boycotted the BPS Preliminary Test due to delayed question papers. Videos of mobile phone use and lack of security during the test further fuelled the protests. BPS decided to cancel the examination at the Babu Centre and reschedule it for December 4, but students demanded cancellation across all centres due to alleged irregularities.

## 'For family's privacy,' clarifies Pawan Khera on Gandhis, Congmen's absence during Manmohan's ashes immersion

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** As the ashes immersion rituals of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh gave the BJP a handle to slam the Congress party and Gandhi over their absence, Pawan Khera issued a clarification on Thursday stating that they deliberately gave it a miss to allow 'privacy to the family'. The Congress communications in-charge said that senior party leaders did not accompany the family to gather and immerse the ashes of Manmohan Singh out of our deference to the privacy of the family, however, Sonia as well as Priyanka Gandhi visited the family at their residence after the cremation for beloved departed leader, to share their grief.

Explaining the reason behind Gandhis and party brass skipping the ceremony, he said, "it



was felt that since the family did not get any privacy at the time of the cremation and some extended family members could not reach the pyre site, it would be appropriate to give them some privacy for the Phool Chunana and the immersion of the ashes which is an emotionally painful and difficult ceremony for close family members." The ashes of former PM were immersed in the Yamuna river near the Majnu ka Tila Gurdwara on Sunday by his family members, as per Sikh rituals.

## NIFTEM-K rolls out new technologies to fuel growth in food processing sector

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM-K) has made significant strides

in 2024 with the unveiling of new technologies to fuel growth in the country's food processing sector, according to a year-end review of the Ministry of Food Processing released on Thursday. The Institute's ground-breaking innovations that underline its technical prowess.



## Navy to host Half Marathon in Delhi on Feb 2 next year

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The inaugural edition of the Indian Navy Half Marathon (INHM) is scheduled to take place on February 2, 2025, in Delhi, the Defence Ministry said on Thursday.

The event, aimed at promoting health and fitness among participants from all walks of life, is expected to attract entries from across the country competing in three race categories: 21.1 km Half Marathon, 10 km Run and 5 km Run, making it an inclusive event for runners of all calibers and backgrounds, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

Preparations are underway to deliver an unforgettable ex-

perience for all participants. The event will be hosted at the iconic Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, with the race route covering India Gate and the historic Kartavya Path, it said.

The event will be attended by distinguished personalities from the Defence forces and civil society. This landmark event aims to promote health and fitness, encouraging people to embrace physical activity and adopt an active lifestyle for overall well-being.

The event aspires to create a sense of camaraderie and competition, bringing people together to forge stronger bonds with the Indian Navy and among themselves. It also aims to inspire the youth to lead adventurous lives and consider joining the Indian Navy, a career synonymous with courage, discipline, and service to the nation, said the statement.

The INHM is envisioned to become an annual event, joining the ranks of similar flagship runs conducted by the Navy in Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, and Kochi.

## Students' delegation to meet chief secretary to resolve BPS candidates' issue

**Patna, Jan 2 (IANS) :** After a daylong 'Chhatra Sansad', the Bihar government is ready to meet a delegation of five students on Thursday, officials said.

The meeting will occur between the student delegation and Bihar's Chief Secretary Amrit Lal Meena.

This marks a significant development following 13 days of protest by the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPS) candidates. The Chhatra Sansad was organised to address grievances and demands raised by BPS candidates, the event has drawn attention to prolonged administrative inaction, as highlighted by Prashant Kishor, leader of the Jan Suraj Party.

Kishor, who participated in the event, confirmed that this meeting was the first substantial engagement after 13 days of protests during which no official addressed the students' concerns. Describing the Chief Secretary as the second-highest authority in the state's administration.



## Conduct pending BMC polls before March 2025: SP urges CM Fadnavis

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Samajwadi Party (SP) legislator Rais Shaikh has written to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis urging the state government to hold the long-overdue elections to local bodies, including the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), before March 7, 2025.

The letter, also addressed to Deputy Chief Minister and Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde, highlights the prolonged delay in restoring

democratic governance to local bodies across Maharashtra.

In his letter, Shaikh stressed that the BMC, the largest local government body in Asia.



## Gaza militants fire rockets at Israel amid ongoing conflict

**Jerusalem, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Fighters in the Gaza Strip fired about five rockets at southern Israel, the Israeli military said. The rockets on Thursday afternoon triggered air raid warning sirens in the city of Sderot and other communities near the Palestinian enclave. No injuries were reported. In a statement, the military said that two of the rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-rocket system, while the rest "likely fell in open areas." This marked the second consecutive day of projectile fire from the besieged enclave as the Israeli onslaught continues.

The two long-range rockets fired on Saturday from Gaza toward the Jerusalem area were also intercepted. Israel has been striking Gaza since last October, cutting off most food, medicines, gas and aid to the territory that resulted in the deaths of at least 45,500 people, according to Gaza health authorities. Earlier on Thursday, at least nine Palestinians were killed and dozens of others wounded in an Israeli airstrike on a house in the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza Strip on Saturday, Palestinian sources said. Local sources and eyewitnesses said that an Israeli aircraft bombed a house on the outskirts of



Maghazi camp with at least one missile. Hussam Al-Daqrn, spokesperson for Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah city in central Gaza, told Xinhua that nine people were killed, including children and women, and dozens of wounded people were sent to the hospital following the airstrike. The Israeli army did not comment on the raid.

However, an Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee said in a press statement on Saturday that Israeli forces began operating at night against "terrorist targets in the Beit Hanoun area in light of prior Intelligence information about the presence of a number of terrorists and terrorist facilities in the area."

## Mozambique creates commission to investigate mass prison break

**Maputo, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Mozambique government has instituted a commission of inquiry to investigate the mass escape of prisoners from two of its penitentiary facilities in the capital Maputo. The escape involved 1,534 prisoners from the Central Prison and the Maximum Security Prison of Machava, known as B.O., resulting in clashes with the National Penitentiary Service staff, in which at least 33 people were killed, Xinhua news agency reported quoting state news agency AIM. The commission, which has already started its work, aims to understand the circumstances of the escape, identify possible internal or external failures, and determine whether there was negligence on the part of those responsible for security, the report quoted Deputy Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs Filimao Suaze as saying. Suaze said the inquiry commis-

sion will also analyse the deaths that occurred during the ongoing operation to search for and capture the fugitives. According to the deputy minister, about 280 prisoners have already been recaptured, more than 100 of them on Thursday, thanks to the cooperation of families and reports of escapes in the neighborhoods. Suaze emphasised that many of the fugitives returned voluntarily or were handed over by their relatives, who reported the escapes after noticing the irregularities. The deputy minister also denied allegations that the escape was part of a premeditated plan to eliminate the prisoners, as some information on social media suggested.



## BJP's double engine govt symbol of atrocities on youth, says Priyanka on BPSC stir

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Congress leader and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday criticised the BJP-led double-engine government in Bihar for allegedly "torturing" students protesting against the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) in Patna. On Thursday, the protests turned chaotic when the Patna Police used lathi charges and water cannons to disperse thousands of candidates demonstrating against the alleged irregularities in the 70th BPSC Combined Preliminary Examination conducted.

## South Korea suffers air tragedy with heavy casualties

**Seoul, Jan 2 (IANS) :** All the 179 people aboard a passenger jet that crashed while landing at an airport in southwest South Korea were confirmed dead except only two rescued, multiple media outlets said citing the fire authorities. The fire authorities on Thursday were quoted as saying that the bodies of 179 victims were retrieved from the scene at 8:38 p.m. local time, with only two crew members being rescued. It marked the worst air disaster in the country's modern history since 66 people were killed in a plane crash in 1993, Xinhua news agency reported. It was reported at about 9:03 a.m. local time that the airplane with 175 passengers, including 173 South Koreans and two Thais, together with six flight attendants on board crashed while attempting to land at the Muan Interna-

tional Airport, some 290 km southwest of the capital Seoul. The Jeju Air flight 7C2216 from Bangkok, Thailand landed without wheels, skidded off the runway and hit the outer wall of the runway, with its fuselage broken in half and catching fire. Only two crew members were rescued at the rear of the ill-fated aircraft, most parts of which were severely damaged. The fire authorities believed that a bird strike that led to landing gear failure may have caused the accident. After making the first landing attempt, the aircraft went around into the air due to the estimated malfunctioning of landing gear and made the second landing attempt with a belly landing that resulted in the disaster. TV footage showed a big plume of black smoke billowing out of the Boeing 737-800 engulfed by flames. Another footage showed an engine on the plane's right wing emitting smoke with flames before attempting to land.



An official with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport said at a televised press briefing that the retrieval of both flight data and voice recorders was completed to look into the air disaster. The transport ministry added that it may take at least months to years to figure out the exact cause of the accident. South Korean acting President Choi Sang-mok on Sunday announced a week-long mourning period over the tragedy.



## Over 60 Lokayukta cops transferred in MP amid recovery of gold, cash from ex-RTO constable

**Bhopal, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Amid ongoing raids in Madhya Pradesh in connection with a disproportionate assets case against an ex-RTO constable turned real estate developer Saurabh Sharma, a major reshuffle has taken place in the Lokayukta Police.

The department has shifted more than 60 cops from its Special Police Establishment (SPE) in two separate lists of transfers issued in the past three days, including 28 late on Sunday. A day earlier, 34 Lokayukta cops and four Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSPs) were transferred.

## Record 917 female cadets join NCC Republic Day Camp-2025

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** A record 917 female cadets are participating in this year's NCC Republic Day Camp-2025 which commenced at Cariappa Parade Ground, Delhi Cantonment, with Sarva Dharm Pooja on Thursday. A total of 2,361 cadets from all

28 States and eight Union Territories are taking part in a month-long camp, said Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh, DG NCC. The participants include 114 cadets from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and 178 cadets from North East region (NER) presenting a microcosm of "Mini India", said a state-

ment. In addition, Cadets and Officers from 14 Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) will be also participating in the camp as a part of Youth Exchange Programme (YEP). Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh welcomed the cadets by congratulating them on being selected for the most prestigious camp of the



NCC. He advised the cadets to display the highest qualities of character, integrity, selfless service, comradeship and teamwork cutting across the barriers of religion, language, caste in spirit of Nation First. The Republic Day Camp holds the fundamental aim of instilling a sense of patriotism, discipline, and leadership qualities among the participating cadets. This annual event serves as a platform to offer cadets valuable opportunities for training, engaging in cultural activi-

ties, and participating in social service initiatives, thereby nurturing unity and pride. On November 24, the NCC, the largest uniformed youth organisation in the world raised in 1948, celebrated its 76th Raising Day. On that solemn occasion, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh laid a wreath and paid homage to the fallen heroes on behalf of the entire NCC fraternity at National War Memorial, India Gate, New Delhi.

## Kashmir's patron saint and stir over omitted school lesson

**Srinagar/New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** When cultural heritage is sought to be safeguarded, the traditional values that instil catholicity and inclusiveness might be expected to be light-houses standing amid rough waves—but quite the contrary nearly happened in Kashmir. The mere gesture spoke volumes and drew out voices loud and assertive. When a school curriculum was altered, it was deemed "blue-pencilling" and "cultural terrorism." The omission of a chapter on Sheikh-ul-Alam from the

English syllabus of class 9 was a vehemently opposed move. CPI-M MLA from south Kashmir's Kulgam, Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami found it "deeply troubling that an entire chapter on the revered Sufi saint Sheikh-ul-Alam has been dropped from the Class IX textbook." Pointing to the backdrop of this development, he posted on X: "This blue-pencilling, carried out prior to the Assembly polls, is unacceptable to a society rooted in rich Sufi traditions." Turning to the state to redress, he urged Chief Minister Omar

Abdullah to "intervene and ensure that this crucial chapter is reinstated, thereby preserving and honouring our rich cultural and Sufi heritage." Who was Sheikh-ul-Alam? A Sufi saint by the name of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali, said to have been born in 1377 in present day Kulgam, was a mystic, poet and Islamic preacher who wielded great influence over the masses. Counted as one of the founders of the Rishi order in Kashmir, he was bestowed the title of 'Sheikh-ul-Alam', meaning spiritual guide of the world. He continues to be known as Nund Rishi as well, as he was fondly



called. "Nund means beautiful in Kashmiri," said G. N. Adfar, author of 'The Alchemy of Light', a trilogy compiling verses by the mystic poet translated in English, in conversation with IANS.



## Odisha farmer expresses gratitude to PM Modi after being mentioned in 'Mann Ki Baat'

**Bhubaneswar, Jan 2 :** Krishna Chandra Nag, a farmer from the Golamunda block in Odisha's Kalahandi district, expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for mentioning his efforts towards self-reliance in the PM's monthly programme 'Mann Ki Baat'.



## Kimberly Birrell stuns Potapova in Brisbane, makes maiden WTA 500 quarterfinal

**Brisbane, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Kimberly Birrell's fairytale run at the Brisbane International continues as she surged into her maiden WTA 500 quarterfinal after prevailing against world No. 35 Anastasia Potapova 7-6(2) 6-2.

No.8 Emma Navarro on Wednesday for her first top-10 win since she downed then-No.10 Daria Kasatkina at the 2019 Brisbane International. "I'm so totally speechless. To play here is so special and to play well and have all of you guys behind me, it just means the world and I hope that I can keep going and make you guys proud," Birrell said. "It has been a long road. I have had a few injuries but, you know, as does everyone who plays professional sport, and everyone has their trials and tribulations in life," she said.



## Under PM Modi's guidance, para-sports is getting much-needed recognition: Para-athlete Praveen Kumar

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Para-athlete Praveen Kumar, who won the gold medal in the men's high jump T64 at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, expressed his delight on being honoured with the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award and said under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance, para-sports is getting much-needed recognition. The 21-year-old Indian para-athlete cleared 2.08m, an Asian record, in the final for his second Paralympic medal. He won the silver medal at Tokyo 2020 with a clearance of 2.07m, which was also an Asian record three years ago.



## Cummins likely to miss Sri Lanka Tests due to birth of second child

**Sydney, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Australia captain Pat Cummins indicated that he might miss the Sri Lanka Tests later this month due to the birth of his second child.

## Ethan Nwaneri fully deserved that start : Arteta

**Brentford, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta hailed the impact of the 17-year-old winger Ethan Nwaneri, who made his full Premier League debut in Arsenal's come from behind 3-1 win over Brentford at Gtech Community Stadium. Nwaneri marked his first league start, back at the venue where he became the Gunners youngest-ever player as a substitute in 2022. On Wednesday night the Arsenal academy graduate was in action again at the Gtech Community Stadium, making his first full Premier League start for the Gunners. The 17-year-old winger's performance justified

Arteta's decision to hand Nwaneri his chance in the absence of Bukayo Saka and Kai Havertz. "That position wasn't because of a bug; that was a decision we made because I thought he was the best player to play in the position to start the game.



## 2025 U19 Women's T20 WC will drive more progress, says Snehal Pradhan

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Snehal Pradhan, manager of women's cricket at the International Cricket Council (ICC), believes the upcoming edition of 2025 U19 Women's T20 World Cup will be a major catalyst towards more progress for women's cricket worldwide. The upcoming 16-team tournament will be held from January 18 to February 2 in Malaysia.

## Yuva Kabaddi Series: UP Falcons edge past Chandigarh Chargers to claim Division 2 title

**Coimbatore, Jan 2 (IANS) :** The Division 2 stage of the 11th Yuva Kabaddi Series concluded in spectacular fashion at the Karpagam Academy of Higher Education in Coimbatore, marking a thrilling start to the new year. The grand finale between UP Falcons and Chandigarh Chargers was a nail-biting affair, with the Falcons emerging victorious by a single point in a dramatic 33-32 finish.

The first half belonged entirely to the Chandigarh Chargers, who dominated with a 12-point lead, leaving the Falcons on the backfoot. Bablu Singh led the Chargers' charge with seven points, supported by a well-rounded team effort.



## BGT : Won't be surprised if Rohit calls time on his Test career, says Shastri

**New Delhi, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Former India head coach Ravi Shastri said he would not be surprised if captain Rohit Sharma retires from Test cricket. He added that if Rohit has a swansong game, then he should bow out from the format on a high. Speculations over Rohit's future intensified on the eve of the final Border-Gavaskar Trophy series Test at Sydney, where head coach Gautam Gambhir said in the pre-

match press conference that the playing eleven will be decided after having a look at the pitch ahead of day one's play, while not saying if the Indian skipper is a guaranteed starter for the match starting on Friday. In the ongoing series, Rohit has made just 31 runs at an average of 6.2 in three games. "He'll take a call on his career but I won't be shocked at all (if Sharma retires) because he's not getting younger. There are other young players in the wings, there's Shubman Gill,

a player of his quality averaging over 40 in the year 2024 and not playing." "It tricks your brain as to what is he doing sitting on the bench and warming it. So I won't be surprised but it's his call. At the end of the day, if India had qualified for the World Test Championship (final) or if they still qualify for the final, then it's another thing altogether." "Otherwise, I think it might just be the opportune time - but (if Sharma plays) he should go out with a blaze of glory. If I was anywhere



near Rohit Sharma, I'll tell him, 'Just go and smash it. Just go out there and have a blast'. "Just as it is when you're trying to play the way you are at the moment, it's not looking great.



## ISL: Attacking NorthEast United FC takes on lacklustre Mohammedan SC

**Guwahati, Jan 2 (IANS) :** NorthEast United FC will host Mohammedan SC in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Sta-

dium on Friday. NorthEast United FC are enjoying a strong campaign, currently in the top half of the table, while Mohammedan SC are languishing at the bottom, having collected only six points from their 13 matches.

## Djokovic extends dominance over Monfils, advances to Brisbane QF

**Brisbane, Jan 2 (IANS) :** Novak Djokovic extended his head-to-head record against Gael Monfils to 20-0 with a commanding 6-3, 6-3 victory in the second round of the Brisbane International, here at the Pat Rafter Arena. Despite their lopsided head-to-head record, Djokovic expressed deep admiration for Monfils, who he first encountered as a junior. "We have been playing for many years. I have known Gael since I was 15," Djokovic said. "He is one of the best, if not the best, athlete in our sport over the years. Incredible flexibility, agility, and speed. He's such a great player to watch and a great character, attracting fans worldwide. Tons of respect for him, and hopefully, we can play more before we both retire." Their first encounter dates back to the 2005 US Open when Djokovic claimed his maiden win against Monfils.

Nearly two decades later, the Serbian legend is on the verge of history, aiming to become only the third male player to win 100 tour-level titles after Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103). Djokovic has started his Brisbane campaign with purpose, dismantling Rinky Hijikata in the first round and showcasing his trademark consistency against Monfils.

